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## GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

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AFRC – Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, a militia split from the Sierra Leone Army that staged a coup in 1997 and allied with the RUF.

APC – All People’s Congress, Sierra Leone political party.

CBO – Community-based organisation

DDR – Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration

De Beers – The largest diamond mining and selling company in the world.

ECOMOG – The ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group.

ECOWAS – The Economic Community of West African States.

EO – Executive Outcomes, a South African private military company dissolved in 1999 under South Africa’s anti-mercenary laws.

IDMP – Integrated Diamond Management and Policy, a USAID-funded programme to implement new policy on the diamond trade.

IMP – Integrated Management Programme, a programme of the IDMP and PDA to empower diamond diggers in Sierra Leone in cooperatives that will monitor their diamonds from “Earth to Export.”

Juju – An object used as a fetish, a charm, or an amulet in West Africa, and the supernatural power ascribed to such an object. The Kamajors in Sierra Leone believed that the use of juju, including following strict behavioral codes, kept them safe from attack by their enemies.

Kamajors – Mende hunter-warriors who fought the RUF in Sierra Leone under the leadership of Sam Hinga Norman.

KPCS – Kimberley Process Certification Scheme – A process for stopping the flow of rough diamonds from conflict areas. Came into effect globally on 1 January 2003.

LURD – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy.

NACSA – National Committee for Social Action, Sierra Leone

NACWAC – National Commission for War Affected Children, Sierra Leone

NCDDR – National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

NCRRR – National Commission for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Reintegration, Sierra Leone

NCP-SL – Network on Collaborative Peacebuilding Sierra Leone, a civil society umbrella organisation sustained by WANEP regional funding. After near-collapse in 2004, hired a consultant and revised the constitution to resuscitate its leadership in October 2004.

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

NPFL – The National Patriotic Front of Liberia, a rebel group led by Charles Taylor that overthrew Samuel K. Doe in 1990 and supported the RUF during the civil war in Sierra Leone.

NPRC – National Provisional Ruling Council, Sierra Leone. Young army officers led by Valentine Strasser staged a coup in 1992 and overthrew President Momoh's government, extending an offer of peace to the RUF. The RUF refused.

PDA – Peace Diamonds Alliance, USAID-funded NGO in Sierra Leone

RUF – Revolutionary United Front, Sierra Leone rebel group led by Foday Sankoh and main perpetrator of the civil war in Sierra Leone.

RUFP – The Revolutionary United Front Party, the transformation of the Sierra Leonean rebel group to political party formed after disarmament and demobilisation.

RSLAF – Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.

SCSL – Special Court for Sierra Leone

SLP – Sierra Leone Police

SLPP – Sierra Leone People’s Party, political party of President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

ULIMO - United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy. From 1992, received support from ECOMOG peacekeepers from the Economic Community of West African States and the Sierra Leonean and Guinean governments to help defeat the NPFL.

UNAMSIL – United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone.

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

UNICEF – United Nations Children’s Fund.

UNMIL – United Nations Mission in Liberia.

UNOCI – United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire

WANEP – West African Network for Peacebuilding, a regional peace network with offices in Ghana, Liberia, and an affiliate in Sierra Leone (see NCP-SL).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Taya Weiss wrote this monograph while a consultant to the ISS Arms Management Programme. She has travelled extensively throughout Africa and has worked on gender, small arms and development issues in South Africa and the United States.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Mano River Basin is perhaps best known for the Revolutionary United Front's campaign of amputation during Sierra Leone's civil war from 1991 to 2002. The area encompassed by Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea is rich in diamonds, timber, and cocoa, but incredibly poor in governance, stability, and literacy. There are a number of complexly interwoven threats to the fragile peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea, and to the difficult stalemate in Côte d'Ivoire. Broadly, these threats are driven by three overarching and interlinked themes: the movement of displaced people; the failure to reintegrate and return them to their homes in the post-conflict context; and the influence of illicit trade.

The UN Missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia have successfully debunked the myth that the "barbaric" conflicts in the two countries were "beyond peacekeeping" as some commentators had claimed. Both DDR processes have concluded, with mostly successful outcomes. UNAMSIL is scheduled to draw down and pull out by 31 December, 2005 (one year later than originally planned), while UNMIL still has a lot of work to do in the lead-up to elections in Liberia scheduled for 11 October, 2005. UNOCI's disarmament programme in Côte d'Ivoire is scheduled to begin on 27 June 2005, with elections to follow on 30 October 2005, and the UN has committed to monitoring the regional situation carefully before removing the 3,400 troops remaining in Sierra Leone. At its peak, UNAMSIL had 17,000 troops in the country.

One of the West's biggest concerns about the cycles of violence in this sub-region is its connection to terrorism. Al Qaeda is known to have traded in diamonds with the RUF, particularly in the months leading up to the World Trade Centre attack of 11 September 2001. The United States has already begun anti-terrorist training in other West African nations where it fears that extremists are "sprouting like anthills on the savanna." People living on less than one dollar a day should not have to build terrorist training camps before getting the attention of donor countries. However, the global nature of the trade in valuable resources and small arms does put a spotlight on conflict in the Mano River Basin. A focus on the next generation of warfare (where there

are few big, visible adversaries and a lot of small, independent ones) requires a thorough understanding of what defines and threatens peace. Previously the domain of humanitarian work, policy and conflict analysts as well as donors now need to give close attention to the movement of displaced people, the requirements of post-conflict reintegration, and the effects of international trade to build sustainable peace.



## INTRODUCTION

### RICH SUB-REGION, POOR SUB-REGION

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Someone from the Anti-Corruption Commission in Freetown referred to Sierra Leone as “a rich little poor country.” He stressed that for a country with so much mineral wealth, it was unconscionable that 70 percent or more of the government’s budget came from donors. There were many possible reasons for this, he said: but he favoured the theory that organised crime of one sort or another has a controlling stake in Sierra Leone’s economy, and that because the illiteracy rate hovered around 40 percent, “people don’t even know how to speak anymore. It has been a deliberate campaign to keep people quiet.” Meanwhile, with civil society in a nascent stage and unable to provide oversight, the “shadow state” continues with business as usual and corruption, in his opinion and that of a 2004 UNAMSIL survey, poses the greatest threat to peace and stability.

West Africa is home to the world’s sixth largest oil producer (Nigeria), one of the world’s largest cocoa and coffee producers (Côte d’Ivoire), and some of the most notorious diamond deposits (Sierra Leone) and timber exporters (Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, and Guinea). With Sierra Leone and Liberia recovering from more than a decade of devastating civil war, Côte d’Ivoire in the wake of recent peace talks to end fighting between President Laurent Gbagbo and the rebels who control the north of the country, and Guinea facing a possible future succession crisis, the region’s natural wealth is not easily monitored or controlled.

As in other areas rich in resources but poor in political stability, conflict in the Mano River Basin has consequences that reach not only the many impoverished and displaced people in the region, but around the globe. Warlords and terror networks as well as black-market businesses benefit from freedom of trade in liquid commodities that warring factions are eager to exchange for small arms and light weapons. Al Qaeda has been linked to the “conflict diamonds” mined by the RUF (Revolutionary United Front) in Sierra Leone during the civil war and sold in Charles Taylor’s Liberia to representatives of the terror network. Alluvial mining in the Kono district, a rebel stronghold, increased noticeably in 2001 before the 11 September World Trade Center attack in

New York City.<sup>1</sup> The events of this deceptively remote sub-region should be covered as frequently and in-depth as the so-called “War on Terror.”

The media’s coverage has, in fact, been quite sporadic in frequency although consistent in tone. The civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia are portrayed as unhinged, insane, and barbaric. One report in a South African newspaper quoted a young Liberian commander describing a regular ritual from that country’s civil war:

Before leading my troops into battle, we would get drunk and drugged up, sacrifice a local teenager, drink their blood, then strip down to our shoes and go into battle wearing colourful wigs and carrying dainty purses we’d looted from civilians. We’d slaughter anyone we saw, chop their heads off and use them as soccer balls. We were nude, fearless, drunk and homicidal...<sup>2</sup>

While this story is credible, it represents the extent of the (non-existent) political analysis offered by most reporters. In 1994, journalist Robert Kaplan published an essay in *Atlantic Monthly* magazine called “The Coming Anarchy,”<sup>3</sup> arguing that war and violence in Africa was occurring outside any political boundaries and citing the case of Sierra Leone as a primary example. Kaplan’s cry of impending doom implied a crisis beyond the reach or scope of peacekeeping. In his view, the perpetration of conflict seemed not only irrational by Western standards, but also external to logic on the part of the participants themselves. The essay was extremely influential, and a copy was faxed from the State Department to every US embassy in the world. In 1996 Paul Richards rejected Kaplan’s thesis in a book-length argument that presented war as “performance” rather than anarchy.<sup>4</sup> However, in attributing highly academic motives to the brutality of the RUF in their campaigns of rape and amputation this view fell at the opposite extreme end of the debate on rationality.<sup>5</sup>

The debate has moved on in the past ten years, particularly in policy circles and at the United Nations, but the public discourse never fully recovered from what Richards calls the “New Barbarism” idea. In ascribing either barbaric or overly academic motives to rebel warfare in Sierra Leone and Liberia, political motives and global consequences have been largely obscured from the public examination of conflict in West Africa. There are a number of complexly interwoven threats to the fragile peace in Sierra Leone and Liberia, as well as potential conflict in Guinea and a difficult stalemate in Côte d’Ivoire (perhaps coming to an end with elections in October). Broadly, these threats are driven by three overarching and interlinked themes: the movement of displaced

people and the resulting failure or lack of employment and education initiatives; the lack of funds for demobilisation and reintegration; and the influence of illicit trade.

The UN Missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia (UNAMSIL and UNMIL, respectively) have successfully debunked the myth that the conflicts in the two countries were “beyond peacekeeping.” Both DDR processes have concluded, with largely successful outcomes. UNAMSIL is scheduled to draw down and pull out by 31 December 2005 (one year later than originally planned), while UNMIL still has a lot of work to do in the lead-up to elections in Liberia scheduled for 11 October 2005. Côte d’Ivoire disarmament is scheduled to begin on 14 May, with elections to follow on 30 October 2005, and the UN has committed to monitoring the regional situation carefully before removing the 3,400 troops remaining in Sierra Leone. At its peak, UNAMSIL had 17,000 troops in the country and was one of the biggest peacekeeping operations in the world.

One of the biggest challenges the UN has had to deal with in its peacekeeping operations is the movement and resettlement of displaced people, both IDPs and refugees. The movement of large numbers of people whose lives have been disrupted by war has resulted in the establishment of numerous camps on the borders between Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d’Ivoire, as well as IDP camps within Liberia. Some of this migration reflects the emergency of conflict, while a secondary wave of displacement has roots in what UN representatives have described as a developing dependence on free assistance. Nina McGill of Liberia’s Refugees, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission put it this way:

If they say they cannot go back home because there are not enough schools and health centres, they know very well that even before the civil war not all villages and towns in Liberia had those facilities. Some IDPs just want to remain in those camps forever and depend on handouts. But IDPs should return home because there will be a time where there will be no assistance to them in the camps, but rather in their towns and villages.<sup>6</sup>

Informally, many youth are choosing to remain in urban areas rather than return to rural villages and systems of patrimony that are politically exclusive and the site of long-standing inter-generational conflict involving marriage and land. Marginalised youth see only a choice between rural dependency and exploitation of their labour, and the promise of a more materially comfortable

and socially free life in the city. The growth of large unemployed youth populations in the cities has already led to a seemingly increased crime rate in Freetown and the involvement of this demographic group in riots that killed 16 people in Monrovia in October 2004. The sum total of these different types of displacement includes a continued failure to increase employment in the overpopulated urban areas and to improve education and literacy rates for the next generation.

A second major issue threatening peace and stability is the lack of funds for reintegrating ex-combatants in Liberia. During the DDR process that concluded in November 2004, over 100,000 ex-combatants were disarmed and "demobilised." The demobilisation phase consisted of five days of training and discussion, only four of which were actually spent on the content of the course. Modules on Personal Development and Career Counselling, Trauma Healing, Civic Education, and Conflict Resolution and Peace Building were meant to provide the basis of transition to civilian life. Women were also supposed to be provided with reproductive health and sexually based gender violence (SBGV) counselling. With such a minimal timeframe, UN officials argued that reintegration was the phase in which the bulk of transitional issues would be addressed. However, budget predictions are grim. As of April 2005, there is still a USD39.5 million shortfall that leaves 42,000 ex-combatants out in the cold.<sup>7</sup> That is only a minor improvement on the shortfall of USD44.2 million and 47,000 excluded ex-combatants predicted in December 2004. For 42,000 ex-combatants at large in Liberia, demobilisation may have been their only exposure to assistance before the elections scheduled for October 2005.

Finally, widespread illicit trade in the sub-region continues to allow the flow of goods and people virtually unimpeded across borders. Diamonds, palm oil, cigarettes, guns, combatants, mercenaries, and child labourers move from one country to the next in a conflict economy that provides no barriers between one country's instability and the next. Even as the conflagration of Liberia's civil war was dying down to a low flame, plenty of tinder (offers of payment greater than the UNMIL's DDR programme) in Côte d'Ivoire lured combatants to the next explosive site. Ordinary trade in produce and palm oil across borders has a negative effect on building national economies and identities. People living in the Kambia district of Sierra Leone have easier access to Conakry markets than to those in Freetown; the loss of border trade to Guinea means fewer transactions among Sierra Leoneans in Leones and other clashes over taxes and border control.

With up to 70 percent of people in the Mano River sub-region living on less than one US dollar a day,<sup>8</sup> the natural resource base needs eventually to be harnessed for the good of citizens rather than faction commanders, arms dealers, and terror networks. A February New York Times editorial drew the link most likely to get donor countries' attention: "Training camps for Islamic extremists are now thought to be sprouting like anthills on the savanna."<sup>9</sup> The verb "sprout" may be inappropriate for anthills that are built grain by grain, but the connection between political instability, poverty, and global security is an important one. The United States is set to spend USD420.7 billion on the military in Fiscal Year 2005 (not including an additional USD100 billion on the conflicts in Iraq in Afghanistan).<sup>10</sup> USD19.4 billion in foreign aid was approved for Fiscal Year 2005, an 11 percent increase over 2004 spending but clearly a tiny fraction of the Pentagon's budget.<sup>11</sup>

Poverty in Sierra Leone is so dire that that the United Nations' Millennium Goals cannot even function as goalposts. There were rice riots in Guinea early this year. Liberian IDPs do not have food rations to take on their return home. People living under such conditions should not have to build terrorist training camps before getting the attention of donors. However, the global nature of the trade in valuable resources and small arms does put a spotlight on conflict in West Africa. A focus on the next generation of warfare (where there are few big, visible adversaries and a lot of small, independent ones) requires a thorough understanding of what defines and threatens peace. Previously the domain of humanitarian work, policy and conflict analysts as well as donors now need to give careful attention to the movement of displaced people, the requirements of post-conflict reintegration, and the effects of international trade to build sustainable peace.

## Methodology

The Institute for Security Studies sponsored research in Sierra Leone and Liberia in 2004 to investigate the sustainability of peace and the factors threatening to destabilise it. The research was carried out in October and November in Sierra Leone and Monrovia. Two separate monographs have resulted, one for the ISS Arms Management Programme focused on factors driving the demand for small arms, and this one for the African Security Analysis Programme on the broader regional developments and implications of threats to peace.

In Sierra Leone, I visited the following cities and their surrounding areas: Freetown, Kambia, Koidu, Kenema, Daru, and Bo. A field trip to Liberia was

limited to one week in Monrovia; the security situation at the time did not allow for travel to the provinces. Because of the sensitivities in the post-conflict context of both Sierra Leone and Liberia, interviews and focus groups were loosely structured to allow for different ways of approaching questions about peace and conflict. Questions also varied for different interview subjects: a discussion with a police officer was not framed the same way as a youth focus group in the Freetown slums. The following are questions that remained common to most interview subjects:

- Now that the war is over, what is the biggest challenge to sustaining peace?
- Can peace be sustained once the UN Mission has pulled out?
- Was DDR successful? Why or why not?
- Are there guns still present in your community even after DDR and/or CACD?
- (If yes), who in the community is keeping weapons?
- (If yes), why do they feel the need to keep weapons now that the war is over?

Interviews were conducted one-on-one with government and UN officials, corporate representatives, police officers, soldiers, and NGO staff. Focus groups were conducted with youth in both urban and rural environments and in small communities where practicality prevented individual private discussions. Youth focus groups were convened with the assistance of local NGOs conducting social work and research on an ongoing basis with the youth and community. Rather than attempting to randomise the selection of participants or organisations, local partnerships were formed on an ad hoc, ongoing basis to facilitate maximum exposure and time spent in each location. The National Movement for Justice and Development, through their head office in Freetown, staff in Koidu, and Director in Kenema, were extremely helpful in locating community-based organisations, youth groups, and peace building programs.

In Kambia, I travelled as an observer with the UNDP Arms for Development Program. I was driven in a UN vehicle by a UN Civilian Police Officer and several representatives from the Sierra Leone Police Firearms Division in

Freetown. The police conducted cordon-and-search operations in numerous villages, specifically with the purpose of certifying the area in question arms free so that development money could be released to the community. I observed and spoke with police teams as they went door-to-door, and entered many village homes to see how the search operations were conducted.

Sierra Leone, although it is far more peaceful than it was several years ago, still presents huge hurdles to travel and fieldwork, including both roads and bureaucracy that were at times impassable. Government and NGOs in Freetown have different goals and interpretations of problems than those in the provinces, a point which provincial interviewees never hesitated to make clear (“This isn’t Freetown!”). It was precisely for that reason that every effort was made to visit a representative number of people, groups, and organisations in various parts of the country.

Because many of the topics discussed were considered to be of a sensitive nature, the names of many interviewees have been withheld. All recorded interviews, transcripts, and notes will be kept for verification if required.

## CHAPTER 1

# DISPLACEMENT AND MIGRATION

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Protracted conflict in the Mano River Basin has resulted, unsurprisingly, in large numbers of displaced people both within their own countries and in refugee camps (both formal and informal) in neighbouring ones. Displacement takes various forms: those who flee fighting or the destruction of their homes in war zones; those who are trafficked by relatives or brokers to serve as labourers, sex slaves, prostitutes, or mercenaries; those who choose to pursue opportunities to fight as mercenaries; and those who relocate to urban areas seeking employment, freedom, and distance from oppressive rural patrimonial systems of marriage and land tenure. All four of these groups (which sometimes overlap) have a significant effect on the impact and spread of war from one country to another. After peace agreements have been signed and disarmament completed, as is the case in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the plight of those whose homes have been destroyed, who have no livelihoods after years of living in camps, or who have no desire to leave urban areas, places a huge burden on the reconstruction process. Peace in one country often equates rather simply to the availability of the fighters there to join other, better paid, more active militias somewhere else.

### **Roving warriors: Politics**

West Africa, partly because of its mineral wealth, has been the object of foreign intervention for decades. Liberia started as an American “colony”, the only independent state in the region while other areas were wholly under European domination. It was founded in 1822 as a haven for freed slaves from the United States, and then dominated by the new “Americo-Liberian” oligarchic class of former slaves and their “True Whig” party. They were joined by “Congos,” slaves from other parts of Africa on ships intercepted on the high seas and brought to Liberia to be freed. The history of the American settlers and their elite descendants, and the oppression they inflicted on native Liberians, is still cited today as a root of societal division. With the independence of Ghana in 1957, Liberia’s unique status as a beacon of hope and a model for both Africans and African-Americans faded dramatically. Liberia’s President



Tubman used his country's last remnants of glamour to become a founder of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the chairmanship of which Samuel Doe later used as a pulpit from which to criticise Libya in exchange for American support during the Cold War.

In the 1980s, Samuel Doe as President of Liberia became a master manipulator of American Cold War fears. Under American President Ronald Reagan, fear and loathing of Libya was at an all-time high (in the post-9/11 world, the US has reconciled with Libya, but a wariness remains with regard to Liberia in particular). Doe offered a West African regional voice to denounce Gadaffi publicly, particularly in OAU forums. He re-established diplomatic relations with Israel, and by the middle of that decade, Liberia was "home to a major CIA station, a satellite-tracking station and a Voice of America transmitter, apart from the US economic interests represented by Firestone and other investors."<sup>12</sup> Libya under Gadaffi bought an estimated billion dollars' worth of arms per year from the Soviet Union, a move that both bolstered the Soviet economy and made the American skittish about the balance of power in Africa and the Middle East.<sup>13</sup> This made Reagan more than willing to bargain with Doe: his support for America and Israel in exchange for US financial and diplomatic support for Doe's regime. In turn, Côte d'Ivoire's Houphouët-Boigny and Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara shared an aversion to Doe that drove them towards Libya. Young people all over West Africa, including in their two countries, were joining radical student movements in response to the lack of jobs stemming from the economic crisis and governments' inability to provide stability and education. With the blessing of the leaders of Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, many of these youth went to training camps run by Gadaffi's World Revolutionary Headquarters in Libya,<sup>14</sup> whence Sierra Leone's RUF emerged as a threatening force at the end of the decade.

The legacy of American involvement in Liberia remains today, with a diplomatic presence (the negotiation of Charles Taylor's release to Nigeria) as well as a corporate one dating back to the Firestone Agreement of 1926. More recently, there has been significant American investment in telecommunications companies. As in other parts of Africa, Cold War politics and superpower support, combined with global circumstances that contributed to an economic crisis in the 1980s, created a fertile ground for neighbourly power plays. The alliance-building and scheming of that earlier decade has continued, albeit with different actors, to the point where Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Burkina Faso have all funded and harboured each other's rebels at some point. A recent Human Rights Watch report concisely put this into perspective:

The Ivorian and Burkina Faso governments...from at least 1989, provided backing for the NPFL; the NPFL... from 1991, backed and provided combatants and logistical support for the RUF's insurgency against Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leonean government... from 1991, used combatants from ULIMO to fight the RUF and in turn provided them logistical backing to attack the NPFL; the Guinean government... from at least 2000, backed the LURD; the Liberian government during 2002-2003 provided troops to support an insurgency against the Ivorian government; and the Ivorian government armed and trained Liberians to assist in their military campaign against Ivorian rebels, who were also backed by Burkina Faso.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, it is not only Cold War politics or traditional state-level manoeuvring that has affected the balance of power or the movement of fighters in the sub-region. Guinea's Forest Region provides a different kind of case study, one where tribal affiliations as well as high-level support have resulted in large numbers of displaced people, a haven for combatants from Liberia who have not disarmed, and sometimes lethal tension between several different groups inhabiting the same under-resourced piece of ground. Tensions between the local Guerze ethnic group and incomers from the Konianke sub-group of the Mandingo people (who are widely vilified as "outsiders" and political troublemakers by other ethnic groups) are longstanding. Konianke traders from northern Guinea have developed a strong presence in the Forest Region since France established its colonial administration there during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the late 1990s, however, trouble began with an influx of Konianke from Liberia associated with the ULIMO rebel movement and its successor, LURD, which fought against former Liberian President Charles Taylor.

The Guinean government backed ULIMO and the LURD against Charles Taylor. During the early 1990s, ULIMO offered cash to young Guineans of all persuasions to fight in Liberia; many accepted the offer. The recruitment of young Guineans to fight in Liberia resumed in 2000 after a two-year lull in the conflict, when LURD took up arms against Taylor from rear bases in Guinea. After a peace agreement in 2003, residents in Nzerekore in the Forest Region said the town was packed with hundreds of idle Liberian gunmen and Guineans who had not given up their arms, and tensions began to simmer. While the Konianke in the Forest Region tended to support their rebel kin in Liberia, and for many years were encouraged by Guinean authorities to do so, many of the Guerze sympathised with Taylor, who belongs to their own ethnic group. One employee of an international aid agency said that: "As a Guinean from the Forest Region, it was terrible to see the recruitment operations taking

place in the main stadium of Nzerekore to fight against Taylor, a man from our own tribe.”<sup>16</sup> Guinean President Lansana Conté considered Taylor an adversary, which is why he was LURD’s main backer. Residents in the Forest Region said that so long as the civil war in Liberia lasted, the rebel movement’s fighters moved freely in and out of Nzerekore with no interference from the government security forces.

When the Liberian conflict ended in August 2003 with the departure of Taylor to Nigeria (an American-brokered deal that allows Taylor to continue living in Calabar with most of the creature comforts he enjoyed as a dictator), the Guinean army tried to clamp down on the activities of LURD fighters in Guinea. However, both Konianke and Guerze youths remained armed, and they were not the only ones. In 2000 and 2001, Taylor-instigated attacks and incursions into Guinea prompted Conté to throw together anywhere between 9 and 11,000 volunteers to form the Young Volunteers Militia that pushed the attackers back. Aid workers said that once the emergency was over and the militias were disbanded, many of these combatants kept their guns. With an estimated 7,000 of these volunteers who have not yet been either disarmed or reintegrated,<sup>17</sup> there are frequent reports of them setting up clandestine road blocks in Nzerekore at night to extort money from passing motorists.<sup>18</sup>

Religious differences between the Konianke and Guerze have also played a significant role in heightening tensions between the two communities. The Konianke are predominantly Muslim, whereas the Guerze, who by some accounts “consider themselves to be the rightful masters of the Forest Region,”<sup>19</sup> are mainly Christian and animist. One local of Nzerekore said:

The Konianke took the land, started to trade and tried to impose their own religion, culture and language on the Forest Region, causing enormous frustrations among the local ethnic groups. In many villages, Guerze tribesmen refuse to allow Konianke people to spend the night. They are highly suspicious of them and of Mandingo people in general. There is no respect at all between them.<sup>20</sup>

In this case, the political antipathy between the leaders of two countries, Liberia and Guinea, led to the funding and “training,” however cursory, of various armed groups against the other. The fallout from these high-level decisions took on a life of its own, with armed young men from various ethnic groups displaced both economically and geographically, and wreaking havoc through their dislocation. Religious and ethnic tensions among not only the fighters, but also ordinary citizens living in the border region in Guinea are

still considered ripe ground for illegal small arms trafficking and future conflict. Caches of weapons that were never turned in during Liberia's DDR process, which ended in November 2004, were presumed to have been trafficked to Guinea for possible future use by Taylor's sympathisers in case of his eventual return.<sup>21</sup>

The sovereign borders that Liberia's Tubman fought to bolster by founding the OAU begin to seem meaningless when each country is interfering so frequently in others' politics. Alliances have broken down by Anglophone and Francophone countries, by economic position, and by Cold War affiliation. The politics of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as Burkina Faso, are so intertwined that declarations of peace in one when another is at war are basically meaningless. The recruitment of fighters across borders is a symptom of the power-plays and corruption at top levels of government. One ex-fighter put it this way:

Decision-making with guns began with the government. The problem is political; a response to conflict is always to arm, to get more guns, to be ready to fight and then to send someone else to fight for you. Politicians use arms to pursue their goals. Now we have youth that are growing up in that environment, and this is what they know. They have no positive interactions. Sixty percent of the population is youth, and there are no jobs until a conflict starts. Then, even if you are promised money, they usually tell you: go and pay yourselves. This is what politics means to youth today.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, an NGO officer in Monrovia summed up what he sees as the greatest ambition of the next generation of potential leaders:

We have a failed, lost generation that allowed themselves to be used. Now they say, "I don't need to go to school to become a minister: I just need to hold a gun." We need to stop them from seeking that short cut.<sup>23</sup>

## **Roving warriors: Poverty**

While the impetus for armed insurgent groups to be armed, trained, and sometimes drugged may originate from decision-making at top levels of government, the environment for recruitment must provide strong incentives for young people to fight. Youth, particularly young men, must have reasons

to leave a peaceful environment in favour of opportunities as a paid fighter, which come along with the risk of death and the likelihood of being forced or encouraged to commit human rights abuses. Factors such as unemployment, lack of education, and the failure of reintegration to make peace as financially rewarding as war all contribute to such an environment. Sierra Leone, which completed its peace agreement, DDR and reintegration processes first out of the volatile countries in the sub-region, has provided many of the fighters to Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire's conflict.

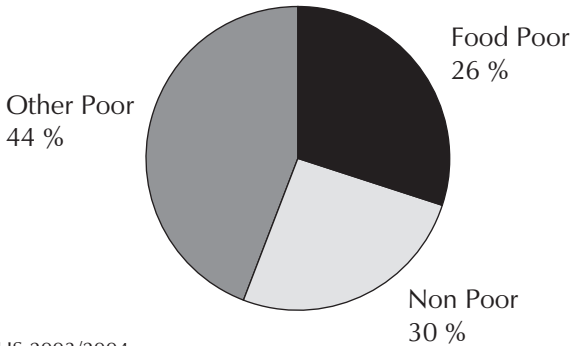
In Sierra Leone, arguably the poorest country in the world, an individual whose expenditure on food and basic needs falls below the level shown in Table 1 is considered to be poor.

**Table 1: Sierra Leone Poverty Lines (in Leones)**

	<b>Annual (Le)</b>	<b>Monthly (Le)</b>	<b>Daily (Le)</b>
Food/Core Poverty	377,045.00	31,420.42	1,033.00
Full Poverty (Food and Basic Needs)	770,678.00	64,223.17	2,111.45

Source: SLIHS, 2003/04

According to this definition, Figure 1 shows that about 26 percent of the population in Sierra Leone, or 1,248,000 people, are "food poor". This means they cannot afford even the most basic necessity, food, to the exclusion of all other necessities or comforts. When other basic necessities are added, the percentage increases to about 70 percent. The basic needs referred to are: food, safe water and sanitation, shelter, good health, basic education, and a household's easy access, both in terms of affordability and distance, to various economic and social infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, markets and public transportation.

**Figure 1: Sierra Leone National Poverty Headcount**

Source: SLIHS 2003/2004

Qualitatively, the population surveyed as part of the national participatory approach to Sierra Leone's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2005 defined poverty as "the lack of basic needs and services such as food, money, shelter, clothing, health facilities, schools and safe drinking water." Although both men and women also mentioned lack of money and shelter, the common perception of poverty from all socio-economic groups is the lack of food. Hunger is a primary concern for children in particular. Among respondents to the national outreach team, one boy described hunger: "When you are hungry you are tired. It is difficult to concentrate in school. You fall asleep. Your stomach hurts like you have worms. You fight. It is so hard; you cannot do anything except think of food." A woman in a different province said: "We feel the pain of poverty the way the chicken screams, manifesting the pains of laying eggs."<sup>24</sup>

It is important to view the movement of people and the recruitment of mercenary fighters in terms of poverty in addition to the geo-political context of countries' interference in each others' affairs. A recent Human Rights Watch report (April 2005) said that poverty and hopelessness were sending a growing number of young veterans back to work as mercenaries in conflict hotspots across West Africa even after movement towards peace was well underway in their own countries. Based on interviews with 60 male fighters, the results are representative of 15 different armed forces active in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire since 1989 and emphasise a clear link between economic factors and conflict:

The regional warriors unanimously identified crippling poverty and hopelessness as the key factors which motivated them to risk dying in

subsequent armed conflicts. They described being deeply affected by poverty and obsessed with the struggle of daily survival, a reality not lost on the recruiters. Indeed they were born in and fight in some of the world's poorest countries. Many described their broken dreams and how, given the dire economic conditions within the region, going to war was their best option for economic survival. Each group with whom these combatants went on to fight with has, to varying degrees, committed serious human rights crimes against civilians, often on a widespread and systematic scale. The brutal armed conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire have resulted in tens of thousands of civilians being killed, raped or maimed.<sup>25</sup>

Some interview responses from combatants sound the warning of hunger as a graphic and immediate reality that overrides considerations of peace and rehabilitation. One Human Rights Watch respondent said: "We thought things would be ok, but they went bad again. There was no food. It was the African way – I had to feed my parents. The commanders said there wasn't money to pay us, but that we could pay ourselves, which meant looting."<sup>26</sup> Another ex-combatant said: "My children eat once a day and at times go to bed hungry. I see the chiefs, the big men, the ministers - they send their children to study abroad, whilst we live to suffer. They even use their money to buy justice in the courts. Let them heed this warning. We are talking about this now - we want another revolution."<sup>27</sup>

Sierra Leone occupies the lowest possible rank of the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index (HDI), in 177<sup>th</sup> place. Côte d'Ivoire's rank is 163, and Guinea's is 160. Liberia has not even been included in recent Human Development Indices (including the 2004 Index) because of its civil war.<sup>28</sup> Unsurprisingly given the devastation of a conflict that rivalled Sierra Leone's in brutality and length, the living conditions there may be worse than any country ranked by the UNDP. According to Liberia's Millennium Development Goals report, the GDP per capita was just USD169 in 2002,<sup>29</sup> whereas Sierra Leone's was USD520. And while 57 percent of the Sierra Leonean population lives on less than a dollar per day,<sup>30</sup> the Liberian figure is 76 percent,<sup>31</sup> more than three-quarters. Is it surprising, then, that Liberian fighters were both volunteering and being recruited at enormously high rates as the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire flared up in November 2004?

While some young people find their way independently into conflict zones looking for "work", others are actively recruited. The majority of underage combatants enter the life of a mercenary through a recruiter like the one that

authorities are currently investigating: a Liberian suspected of recruiting child soldiers to fight in Côte d'Ivoire. Liberian security sources said police and UN peacekeepers arrested Adama Keita in April 2005 on suspicion he was recruiting child soldiers to fight across the border. According to IRIN news reports, he was picked up in eastern Zwedru, close to the Ivorian border, but security sources would not disclose whether he had been charged. A top Liberian intelligence officer explained that, "Both the government and UN security networks have been suspicious of this gentleman's activities around the borders with Ivory Coast and we are questioning him about his involvement in the recruitment of ex-combatants in that region to fight in Ivory Coast."<sup>32</sup> Adama is said to be a member of the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), a former rebel faction during the civil war backed by the Ivorian government.

The Human Rights Watch Report emphasised that many children from Liberia and Sierra Leone are headed to Guinea to fight for or against the government of President Lansana Conté and to Côte d'Ivoire, where rebels occupying the north of the country have been locked in conflict with President Laurent Gbagbo, who controls the south. It is not only rebels who recruit children: pro-government forces were not above it during Sierra Leone's civil war, and Gbagbo supporters in Côte d'Ivoire are doing it now. Some mercenaries said they had contacts as high up in the Ivorian army as Colonel, although the Ivorian government has repeatedly denied these claims.<sup>33</sup>

Displacement, poverty, and recruitment find their nexus in refugee camps. UNHCR has reported that Liberian children have been recruited from camp in Côte d'Ivoire. The UN Secretary-General's February 2005 report on children and armed conflict claimed that 20 child soldiers were recruited from the Nicla camp for Liberian refugees, close to the town of Guiglo in western Côte d'Ivoire, although the timeline of this is unclear. UNHCR seems to have indicated that the camp was militarised several years ago. Still, the recruitment of former combatants is an ongoing problem in the Côte d'Ivoire and Liberian border region. Especially with the dense forest and lack of border patrols, children, mercenaries, recruiters, and guns move easily, undetected by authorities. Two-thirds of the Liberians interviewed for the April Human Rights Watch report had been approached since April 2004 to fight for one faction or another in a fighting "mission" abroad.<sup>34</sup> According to one of the report's authors:

Most would rather not go to war but they had few skills and the recruiters preyed on this. What really came out in this report was the



complete despair about their lives. The money they earned was used for legitimate concerns - hospital bills, support for family members, micro-credit loans to a brother, perhaps.<sup>35</sup>

There are different types of mercenaries; those who choose to fight because they see it as part of their identity, those who are recruited with promises of wealth, and those who might volunteer for “humanitarian” reasons to sustain their families. Displacement of families to refugee and IDP camps makes recruitment easier. It also makes conflict among refugee and host populations more likely. If the displaced people are combatants or former combatants rather than civilians, like those in the Forest Region of Guinea, the situation can lead to the terrorising and extortion of local communities by armed recruits left unemployed by peace agreements. One thing most “roving warriors” have in common is that they started young.

## Youth and urban migration

“Youth” can be broadly defined as anyone between the ages of 15 and 35, and occasionally people over 35 who are not married or financially independent. Data from most sub-Saharan African countries suggest that over half of the population is under the age of 18, and continent-wide it is estimated that half the population is under the age of 15.<sup>36</sup> Child soldiers barely old enough to hold a gun are fighting in West Africa’s conflicts. Children who are abducted, coerced, and forcefully recruited into armed groups face different challenges to those who are old enough to show some agency in the decision even if they are not considered adults. The militias engaged in conflict in Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d’Ivoire are stacked with such adolescents who have been alienated from a traditional social system that makes land ownership and even marriage difficult or impossible without total deference to elders and “Big Men.” One NGO strategist highlighted this issue by saying that “major changes in the institutional frameworks for rural social solidarity are necessary to get youth to give up guns and return home.”<sup>37</sup> In the meantime, young people who have been fighters are far more likely to settle in urban areas where crime is the only available employment opportunity, rather than returning to a life of tradition.

In *Young Africa*, Nicolas Argenti addresses the changing definitions of youth and culture, pointing out that we should question conceptions of youth that have changed dramatically from pre-colonial times to the post-modern, globalised world. While there is a huge diversity of cultures and traditions that vary from region to region, some factors remain constant. In most rural societies, young

men and women are often still subject to the control of male elders. The definition of youth that stretches into the mid-thirties age range and beyond reflects the fact that:

Men were not classified as ‘children’ as a result of their biological age, but rather because they had not achieved the level of economic importance that would permit them to acquire wives, build their own compounds, and become economically viable agents. Childhood thus refers to a position in a social hierarchy more than it does to biological age... The category ‘youth’ is therefore a moveable feast, a category used by different interest groups to define ever-shifting groups of people.<sup>38</sup>

One participant in a youth focus group in Sierra Leone defined youth as “between the ages of 15 and 35, but if you are older, even if you have nothing, you are still a youth. If you are living very well, and you have money, even if you are young, we start calling you ‘pa’ and you leave the group.”

As several theorists have noted, the youth population can no longer be categorised as a marginal sub-group of society. However, donors and governments continue, at their own peril, to plan programmes and solicit funding without a mainstream approach to politically empowering and including youth. Young people are frequently denied agency and are seen as pawns or victims of more “legitimate” power structures:

The phenomenon of children participating in violent conflicts has generally been viewed as a by-product of clashes between real conflict stakeholders (governments and armed insurgents, for example), much in the same way as happy, healthy, educated children are seen as a collateral benefit of peaceful, functional and prosperous states.<sup>39</sup>

While youth are clearly vulnerable in ways that adults are not, they continue to become empowered by access to information and resources that change their expectations based on a more global view of political, participation, consumerism, and power. Dennis Bright, Minister of Youth in Sierra Leone, challenged his colleagues:

Just go and do a small study on the nicknames [of ex-combatant youth]. Then you know how connected they are. Some of them are Beckham, others are Ronaldo, others are Rambo, others are Tupac, others are Notorious B.I.G. in a very remote corner of a village. To me, this is an indicator that these people know more than you think. They

are not desperately rural and backward young people anymore.<sup>40</sup>

This new connectedness is often portrayed as threatening; and it is. The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers estimates that there were some 300,000 child combatants active worldwide in 2001. Information has the power to mobilise change, and when the status quo still reflects child labour, abuse, and trafficking, children will find ways to fight for their own rights, or be co-opted by external forces with promises of empowerment. Argenti summarises the two extremes of youth portrayal:

While African governments may tentatively sing the praises of youth as the ‘promise of the future,’ they equally often fear them as the source of today’s instability. Two stereotypes have thus simultaneously emerged, one portraying youth as ‘heroes,’ the other as ‘villains.’<sup>41</sup>

In terms of policy development, these stereotypes are reflected in a split-personality donor and government approach that tends to hype the threat of violent youth when it comes to the criminal justice system or politically repressive measures, and yet under-fund or ignore solutions that would positively empower young people to use their power for economic or social advancement. There is a general failure to recognise that the same power and ingenuity used to fight wars can and should be harnessed to prevent them. The executive director of a youth organisation in Kenema stressed that

Youth are the core of the labour force but they have no jobs. We’d like to lure youth to agriculture, since that would affect our food insecurity and make the country more productive. But, we will also need to accept the mechanising of agriculture, and figure out ways to make farming generate income. The lifestyle of rural youth has already changed and will continue changing. They are not interested in subsistence farming. We need roads to get goods to market, especially in border areas, and we need points of intervention: youth who were victims but not perpetrators were excluded from DDR. Those who were 5 years old during the war and are now 16 have never gone to school because of displacement. Whatever we can do to get youth away from the cities and gainfully engaged in building infrastructure or producing food, we should do it.<sup>42</sup>

An interview with a youth worker in Kono, Sierra Leone, highlighted some of the ways in which his programme is trying to reverse negative perceptions of youth.

***Interview with Network Movement for Justice and Development  
Youth Empowerment Programme Director, Kono, 28 October 2004***

Q: People are very afraid of youth here. They say youth are dangerous.

Well, that is what we are facing. A lot of stories we are told about youths, how youths are volatile. But through coalition meetings, we are conscientising [sic] them to forget about those youths from yesterday, where they were just used as a political weapons of politicians, who were giving them drugs to take and go on the offensive. The recently concluded local government elections have proved that there are responsible youth in Kono, and that what we have been thinking about them is very, very wrong. For example, most of them were elected into the council; about 70 percent of the councillors of Kono are youths. So the idea of Kono youths: you could remember another time when the rebels were in control, but the MOCKY group [Movement of Concerned Kono Youth] is a firebrand group, asking these rebels to move out of their land. For that reason, people are looking at them as a difficult force.

But they were also fighting against corruption and corrupt actions. Many NGOs were not delivering what they were supposed to do after the war, and this group will pounce on them to ask what their main objectives are. Responsible youths come up with problems from chiefdoms, and they solve them. We have had five meetings, taken youth to regional and national trainings, and they are doing well. There is a lot of fear, but not all of it is justified. The last workshop we had was on human rights; we looked at the economic, social, and cultural rights of the individual. UNAMSIL, and others, explained their rights that they never knew they had. They don't want violence, but to have their rights through lobbying.

The last time, there were some football players, recreational things because there was a scuffle between two youth groups in this town here, MOCKY and Kono Youth League. So the police had to intervene, and take everything to the police. Later, when this coalition has been formed, they decided to advocate as a coalition. When they went there as a coalition, the police listened to them. They are changing, they are transforming. Initially, if they were going to the police, they would have gone there to cause a riot. But this time, they went to negotiate, and he saw to them and gave them everything. I was asked

whether the coalition has been formed, the youth leader was there, everything was handled properly. They actually tried, somehow.

Q: There are not many drug rehabilitation programmes. How many of the youth you know or work with had problems with drugs during the war; are the problems lasting?

Most of these guys are in the mines. They take these drugs in the mines when they are digging. The more they drug, the more they work. They work to the extent of ruining themselves without even knowing. But the idea of seeing ghettos around, I have not seen such actually. When we call them on meetings, we talk to them about drug addiction; they are the future leaders of this country. If the brain is damaged, development will also get damaged. And in fact, one of the youth leaders of MOCKY, in one of their meetings, suggested that in fact these drug centres are to be destroyed and come up with recreational centres for youths so they can learn skills training for their own development. At least 90 percent of the youths hailed and welcomed this idea.

Q: In terms of work, are they being exploited? Are they working without being compensated fairly?

They are actually exploited. You can look at someone who is working in the mines for the whole day, you give that individual LE500, which I cannot even estimate it; LE500 and a cup of rice for the day. They do the entire job, and at the end of the day, they don't even know the value of the diamond. So when they take the diamonds, they give them to their bosses, who can play on them. They can just give them chicken change, which cannot last them for long. Some of them today you see them with money, after a week it is finished, while those in charge buy mansions, fabulous cars, and so forth. So they are actually being exploited.

Q: Do you think there is a lasting connection between economic/social empowerment of these youth and the sustainability of the peace in Sierra Leone?

As long as these youths are empowered economically and socially—because like I said, 90 percent of these youths took up arms. And up to this day, the government pronounced that the war was over,

but after that, it's like something that is still standing still. If anything happens, the youth will take back to arms. They are on the margins of society, grumbling with hard times, they don't have a job. The ideas of economic and social empowerment will help them. One of the most outstanding things that the youth need in this country is job opportunity. It's not there. Working in the mines is not fair employment. Lots of youth around have come from universities, they have still not got job to do, they are grumbling, so the idle brain is the devil's corner.

Anything that happens, these guys will go back to the same thing. We are now agitating for economic, social, even political emancipation for the youths. I went to Kainkordu to see a problem between the youths and the newly elected councillors. They don't want to include the youths into the ward committees. The youths themselves thought it was their duty and responsibility to be in the ward committee. The council took their stand, the youth took their stand. There was no developmental activity going on in that particular chiefdom. Yesterday there was a big forum and we started to iron out some things. The chief administrator was there, and told them about the importance of youth. And if those youth are not included in the ward committees, they will get back to where they were. Because no matter which amount of work is being done, the youth will always oppose and criticise it. But if they are involved with the ward committees, they will be pleased because they will see what is happening, and will follow what is given by the central body to their own ward instead of the councillor choosing his own committee members dancing to his own tune. They must be incorporated politically, so they become stakeholders instead of agitators. Their voices are supposed to be heard.

Q: Was DDR successful? Are there still arms?

We have armed robbery and most of these guns—they have sophisticated guns up to this time—the only source of getting them was the war. I am sure some of them did not hand over all of their guns. They have decided to become night robbers and so forth. DDR was successful a little bit, because youths were disarmed, they were also reintegrated, they received skills training. But the majority of the youth were not having the chance because if you don't disarm with a gun, it means you were not a fighter. And most of those didn't

go through the process because they were not having guns. When the time came closer, the commanders seized the guns from them. Because the more guns you give, the more money you get. And they never went through training. Some of them are now in the mines, grumbling with difficulties in life. They went to the war, it seems as if they lost everything in life, they lost the war, the battle was also lost, and we are all living and up to this time they are the same people crying now, the economics of the day.

Q: But it was their own commanders who took away that opportunity?

Yes, the commanders went through, and even gave the guns to their own family friends, members, who never fought, because DDR was a big thing with education: university level even, they were paying for them. So they saw it as an opportunity. Those who fought were robbed of that chance, and the opportunity was given to those who never fought in the war. So some people are still carrying guns, committing crimes with them. And there are some caches around, with UNAMSIL leaving, just in case. About one or two months ago there were armed robbers revolving in this district, in the night, you see they were wearing military combats, attacking in the night. Citizens complained to the police, police had security meetings. And now there is police patrol every night, walking, and it has died down. But one cannot take it for granted. In case the police stop, they will come up again. And this is a diamond area, it is prone to attack. I'm not saying it will happen again. But if it does, this will be the first town they attack because they will want money. They will get the youths who are still idling in the mines, labour, get the diamonds, get guns. It can happen again just as easily as it died down. And that's why we need to empower the youth in the mines who are grumbling.

## CHAPTER 2

# REINTEGRATION AND RETURN

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Demobilisation was not done properly. There is not enough trauma counselling, and only five days in the camps. Post 1996, there were problems when Taylor was elected. DDR wasn't done properly and then they became part of continued conflict. In the recent conflict and rioting, people were caught with AKs. Monrovia is overpopulated. The best way to secure yourself is to keep some arms with you. The security sector cannot defend you. National security has no capacity. Mob violence is there; in seconds, conflict can erupt. Guns are dangerous when ex-combatants are being reintegrated without proper demobilisation.

-Interview with CEDE programme officer in Monrovia, 12 November 2004.

## Liberia

The failures of reintegration in Liberia represent one of the biggest threats to peace in the sub-region. The UNDP and the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) warned the international donor community in the early months of 2005 that the successful disarmament and demobilisation of former combatants in Liberia's 14-year civil war was facing "serious risks of reversal."<sup>43</sup> With a budget shortfall of USD39.5 million, the most important implication of the lack of funds for the Reintegration and Rehabilitation part of the DDRR process is that 42,000 ex-combatants have no access to programmes, with elections rapidly approaching. In April, Sweden increased its contribution to the UNDP DDRR Trust Fund with an additional 25 million Swedish Kroner. This still leaves a monumental gap.

The demobilisation phase at the 11 cantonment sites in Liberia lasted for only five days. Training was intended to help ex-combatants gain the skills and insights to transform from fighters (or, as in the case of many women and children who participated in the DDR process, the equivalent of indentured servants) to civilians ready to assume the duties of life in peacetime. Participants



joined trainers for pre-discharge orientation activities in the areas of Personal Development and Career Counselling, Trauma Healing, Civic Education, and Conflict Resolution and Peace Building. Women were also supposed to be provided with reproductive health and sexually based gender violence (SBGV) counselling.

One of the trainers for FIND (the Foundation for International Dignity) worked with ex-combatants at Tubmanberg for six months and then at Voinjama as a supervisor for another three months. He described a four-day process, since the first day was dedicated to logistics.<sup>44</sup> On day one, participants learn “to understand conflict and how to resolve and cope with it;” on day two, they move on “to start a process of redefining one’s life through the development of a healthy self-image and self perception,” on day three they strive “to understand our basic responsibilities to our nation and fellow citizens,” and finally, on day four, they get to talk about trauma and healing, “to understand the effects of trauma, how it is able to destabilise a normal person and ways to cope with it.”<sup>45</sup>

FIND is contracted by the Liberia Community Infrastructure Programme (which is, in turn, funded by USAID) to do conflict resolution and reconciliation. Two trainers there admitted that “four days is a drop in the bucket.” In almost a year of working with ex-combatants, they believe strongly that the lack of adequate counselling could be directly responsible for prolonged or renewed conflict, or at least fail to stop its momentum:

We need to get the ex-combatants back to their communities before another outbreak of violence like the one in Monrovia on 28 October.<sup>46</sup> We want them to extend similar messages to their communities like the ones they receive in our training. There is a lot of work to be done, especially among youth. The energy fuelling this war is not the guns; it is the people who physically engage in armed conflict. We need to rebuild the education system, tear down and rebuild their values. We say to these guys at the camp: “If a Big Man gives you a gun and says, kill this person, will you do it? If it is a woman or child? Will that Big Man ever ask you to kill his son or himself? No. He will always be using you to kill people just like you.” When they start to think about it, some of them cry. We send them away like that sometimes, having opened another wound of what they have done but with no time to close it properly.<sup>47</sup>

A counsellor at a different organisation offered more evidence for the absurdity

of trying to rehabilitate ex-combatants in only a few days, with very little continuing NGO support. "Many of these people come to accept or believe that they are murderers," she said. "They have killed family members, friends, and even small children during the war. Psychologically, they are in need of a lot of support. We are worried that the few people working on this are not enough."<sup>48</sup> An interview with two trainers who worked with ex-combatants at the camps revealed the challenges.

### ***Interview: Demobilisation trainers, Monrovia, 15 November 2004***

I ask them, those who gave you arms to kill, what if you turned around and said, instead of killing the people you want me to kill, I will kill you. I say to them, the people you kill, they are vital. They could be your friends. Because they did not offend you personally. Someone somewhere, feels offended by them, but the person has not done you any harm. So the essence is, we need to identify our brothers and sisters, redirect them, that's the way out. The big bosses, those who fuel the war, the warlords, will never stop hunting people down, but they don't have to use these innocents, these virgins, who know nothing about crisis or about war. But they continue to use them, marginalise them, to abuse them, to get their aims accomplished. So the second question I ask is, "How many times have your warlords asked you, 'how are you doing?' They gave you arms. How many times have you seen them? Do they care about you? No, they have abandoned you. And tomorrow, if you accept again to be used, they will forget you again". So either way, the conclusion is that working constructively with the ex-combatants is the way out. Because if you can educate them, or give them the tools to resist being used, then there is no fuel for the people at the top. The people at the top might still want to fight, but they will not have any place to go. They are in the vehicle but they can't drive anywhere because there is no fuel. Those people will have learned to resist them. The population, predominantly the youth, constitute the energy base.

That's part of what we have been fighting. One of our processes which is important is personal development and career counselling; the level of ignorance is alarming in our country. Every time we lecture, every day we lecture, we see in their faces, the interests to go get an education, to be able to handle themselves, to respond to challenges, and so in our personal development course, we try to build the self-

esteem, which is the core. A lack of self-esteem, if a man feels he is nobody, he cannot rise to heights where others are, so he goes for anything. But if his self-esteem is good, in the way that he believes in himself, if he believes he can make a life, there are many, many things that he can turn his back on. So we try to get them to understand that what others can do, if they work hard, if they get something or skills, they will be able to challenge and stand up for themselves.

Q: What do you say to a young person who has gone so far as to get skills training and there are no jobs?

Such training should inculcate peace education. Training in carpentry will afford you the opportunity to maximise your skills in terms of economic reward. But you also need to build peace. What that will mean is, people need to move in environments that enable them to let live. People will migrate to communities where they can make a living. But I think that is much better than resorting to war or violence. For where we are, this nation is degenerating so bad, that no amount of economic promise will be able to assure all the people who have skills training, but at least they have some sense that they can resort to. Having a skill, even if you can't make money with it, it's part of peacebuilding. It's something they have other than a gun. If you can create a vision that you can pursue, rather than the gun, you can wait for an opportunity then sit back and have big dreams.

Q: Do you think that educating the youth is the most important thing to sustaining the peace?

The need for education is the most important thing. They have realised that they have been used because they are not educated. Man who has a master's, or who has gone as high as a PhD, he can do something not to resort to hostility. If you realise that I have a 50-50 chance to survive, they can choose to die, if I choose to die, if I choose to go for education, it means that education is the way out. Because once our youths are educated, they will know what is good for them. But if they are not educated, they become the prey of those who want to achieve bad aims. And there are plenty of people still around who are interested in their own agendas. Look at the government, in the peace process. See where we are. There is a need for us to have awareness for transformation. When you look at the present activities

of the “stakeholders” in our government, there is a lot of dissatisfaction still looming around. People are still not satisfied. And so, they will be looking over their shoulders. If they do not work with the youth, they could be using them. Because these stakeholders are respected by their constituencies. If we want to build a peace, we must begin with awareness; build it among the youth, especially the youth.

Q: Will people move to Guinea or Ivory Coast if there is a conflict?

Yes, I think it is so. People are so similar. It is so difficult to distinguish a Liberian from an Ivorian, or from a Guinean. But when you work positively with youth, and they are really rehabilitated, that too will spread. Just as the bad things spread, so the good things will spread. It will affect others who they associate with. If we do a good job, instead of bad things spreading, the good things will spread. That is our belief.

The process of peace building is correcting what went wrong before. Liberia served as a land of asylum for many Africans. But then the nation started to degenerate, especially in the 1980s and so Liberia became a ground for hate. We must correct that. This nation needs urgent support of the international community so that our borders are protected. This nation is a loving nation. There is peace in Liberia, it can affect Ivory Coast, and other places. This is the only place you come and people don't harass you. But nobody cares about you, unlike neighbouring countries and if you are prospering it's an offence to someone. The international community needs to get through and we will become a haven, we can accommodate and provide solutions. So Liberia again must be given the needed attention beginning with DDDR and reconstruction process.

Some of the optimistic views expressed by these two trainers highlight their passion for their work. However, without funding to provide the needed counselling and education, “personal transformation” seems a long way off for the 42,000 ex-combatants currently left out of the reintegration phase. There are other ongoing projects to address the need for general “demobilisation” not just of ex-combatants but also within communities that must prepare to re-absorb former fighters into their homes, villages, businesses, churches, and mosques. Civil society is not optimistic about the reintegration and rehabilitation (“RR”) phase of DDDR, and although at least one UNDP official responsible for civil society funding has openly acknowledged that she is “stingy” because

of a lack of technical capacity in the sector, it may fall to these underfunded groups to pick up the slack of the underfunded UNDP.

There are problems with civil society taking on the burden of filling this gap, beyond just the lack of technical capacity and funding. Where religion may enter into rehabilitation issues, there are almost no Muslim peacebuilding organisations in Liberia (this is true in Africa in general; most funding from Muslim donor countries and individuals goes directly to humanitarian work and schools, rather than peace or conflict resolution programmes). Most Christian groups include a proselytising element to their counselling and other work; there is a risk of alienating those with different belief systems or those who need help but are not ready or willing to profess faith in a particular religion. One NGO worker said:

Ninety-nine percent of the peace practitioners are Christians. If there was religious violence here today, we would have a difficult time navigating as peace builders. This is probably a large structural problem or issue, at the donor level. Christian groups are interested in funding peace work specifically, and maybe Muslim groups internationally are afraid to get involved.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, how equipped are NGOs to provide job training and alternatives to violence? The equation can be reduced, at its core, to the economics of employment and trade. Civil society, driven by donor concerns about peacebuilding themes and education, may not have the follow-through or staying power with young people to offer them real alternatives. In mid-2004, while disarmament was ongoing, UNMIL noted that it had received reports from people living near the frontier in Liberia that guns used in Liberia's civil war were being traded in neighbouring countries for consumer goods such as bicycles and motorbikes.<sup>50</sup> This piece of information, though it only garnered three lines in the middle of a larger media story, was corroborated by several respondents during fieldwork in Monrovia and Daru (on the Sierra Leone-Liberia border). Many of the young men trading AK variants for motorbikes, in particular, hoped to use the bikes to start small businesses and earn money transporting people and goods locally near their homes. When asked whether this kind of entrepreneurial spirit could be part of peacebuilding, several NGO workers responded that they wouldn't know where that kind of activity fit into their agendas, and that they would have no advice for these particular ex-combatants.

## Sierra Leone

In Sierra Leone, reintegration is still very much an issue, particularly in the context of unemployed youth. Although the DDRR process was widely hailed as a success, problems like drug addiction and a lack of psychological support have left some communities burdened with crime and potential instability. Youth populations are unemployed and instil fear even in political leaders, who cite them as the biggest risk to the sustainability of peace. Civil society is under-equipped and financed to deal with this burden and the Ministry of Youth and Sport in the post-war context is relegated to onlooker status when it comes to questions of security. A government official in Kono stated that the biggest security threat facing one of the richest diamond mining areas in the world was, quite simply, unemployed youth.<sup>51</sup> This view was corroborated by other government representatives and people living in Koidu town. In Koidu particularly, libraries and resource centres were considered to be necessary for keeping the peace, since there was no other way to “occupy the youth” other than violence.

Because of the way both warfare and demographics have changed during the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, children and youth are increasingly becoming both perpetrators and victims of instability, whether manifested as crime or civil war, or some combination of the two. The major “threat” cited so often in Sierra Leone and Liberia is less focused on youth as soldiers and more on the possibility of a growing criminal element such as Kono’s prostitutes and Freetown’s drug pushers. Small arms proliferation and conflict in West Africa, particularly the Mano River Union countries, relies on an economy that excludes the majority of youth from legitimate employment. However, it has been repeatedly shown that given the option to pursue non-violent livelihoods, young people will do so. Argenti argues:

Given the chance, young people do not vent their frustration in the form of anarchic violence. On the contrary, all the evidence suggests that young people only become involved in warfare or other forms of violence as a rational choice in a zero option political and economic climate.<sup>52</sup>

With UNAMSIL pulling out, Sierra Leone has yet to face the challenge of maintaining peace without international reinforcement. Creating a climate of political inclusion through reintegration and an active civil society and local government structures can diffuse the threat of a rekindled conflict. Providing education and job opportunities for youth is likely to anchor them within their communities, helping to remove the pull of mercenary work or

easy recruitment into armed groups both within their own country and in neighbouring ones. Sierra Leone's slow devolution of power from Freetown to local governments, where a quota of the representatives must be youth, is an excellent first step in this direction.

## CHAPTER 3

# MARKETS AND TRADE: DIAMONDS, PALM OIL, FIGHTERS, GUNS

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Trillions of dollars move across the world along non-state and non-legal lines. If criminals and terrorists are hard to catch, it is perhaps because some within the state structure have made use of these same channels under cover of the shadows. Power covers its trails. Who, then, controls the profits attending to these trillions of dollars; and how are they being used? Today, wealth flows across national and conceptual borders with ease; who manages this flow will be one of the core questions defining the twenty-first century.<sup>53</sup>

## Diamonds

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict not only in the Mano River Basin but also in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola is well documented. In Sierra Leone, new international measures to curb the illegal export of diamonds are beginning to make a small dent in the problems of smuggling and corruption. One major challenge ahead, if the peace holds when UNAMSIL pulls out (the draw-down and pullout are now scheduled to be completed by the end of December 2005, pending results of Liberian and Ivorian elections in October), is continuing to increase the share of reward that both diamond digging communities and the government see from the trade. A second challenge is managing the relationship between foreign mining companies, local communities, and the national government. The complexities of the interplay between these three actors encompass issues as varied as companies securing tens of millions of dollars worth of investment, government protecting its 40 percent interest in that investment, and communities striving for a gun-free environment among former mercenaries now working to guard the same areas they once fought in.

## Diggers of Kono, Unite!

The terms “conflict diamonds” and “blood diamonds” are now part of the



popular lexicon, referring in the Sierra Leonean context to diamonds mined by rebel RUF forces and sold or exchanged for arms, ammunition, medical supplies, and other aids to battle. Charles Taylor, the President of Liberia during the Sierra Leone civil war and the primary external backer of the RUF, was integral in brokering diamonds to feed the rebel supply chain. Post-war and post-DDR, the new term is “development diamonds”, indicating optimism about the new role of the gems in improving standards of living in mining communities.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), initiated in May 2000 by the South African government and coming into international effect on 1 January 2003, has provided a framework to halt the flow of conflict diamonds. More than fifty diamond producing, trading and polishing countries are members. Member countries agree to certify that rough diamonds being exported are conflict-free, and to refuse importation without a certificate. Sierra Leone is beginning to see an increase in export data as more diamonds enter the legal system rather than being smuggled across the border to be sold in Guinea or Liberia, largely because of the Kimberley Process rather than internal reforms. Nevertheless, according to the latest Diamond Industry Annual Review, last year the government of Sierra Leone only took in USD4 million from its three percent tax on diamond sales, leaving the report to conclude that between USD30 and USD170 million worth of diamonds were still being smuggled out of the country in 2004.

Conventional knowledge holds that because communities are excluded from the process and miners are exploited, corruption and smuggling are at much higher rates than they should be. In 2001, the government implemented the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF) to put export revenue back into the community and give locals a bigger stake in the legal diamond trade. In some areas this led to reported corruption by chiefs who siphoned the money into their own pockets instead of implementing development projects. Now, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has stepped in to fund a programme with similar empowerment goals: it is called the Integrated Diamond Management and Policy (IDMP).

This programme, in association with the Peace Diamonds Alliance, a registered Sierra Leonean advocacy NGO, will try to implement policy reform and a new system called Integrated Diamond Management (IDM). IDM seeks to empower diggers who have been traditionally exploited and underpaid. The hope of IDM’s backers is that the new system will transform diggers into stakeholders, combating illegality and exploitation in the diamond industry by changing the

**Table 2: Sierra Leone Diamond Export Data**

2002 Export Data				2003 Export Data				2004 Export Data			
Month Amount	Export (USD)	Carats	Price/Carat (USD)	Month Amount	Export (USD)	Carats	Price/Carat (USD)	Month Amount	Export (USD)	Carats	Price/Carat (USD)
Jan/02	1,436,570	20,891	68.77	Jan/03	4,612,174	37,853	121.84	Jan/04	6,732,551	55,347	121.64
Feb/02	1,782,849	16,989	104.94	Feb/03	7,087,005	40,612	174.51	Feb/04	9,956,715	67,192	148.18
Mar/02	1,590,820	13,281	119.78	Mar/03	4,827,357	29,566	163.27	Mar/04	12,186,650	61,730	197.41
Apr/02	3,772,768	25,762	146.45	Apr/03	7,363,137	45,259	162.69	Apr/04	12,219,747	72,589	168.34
May/02	3,241,944	29,781	108.86	May/03	5,526,897	41,334	133.71	May/04	9,824,063	49,712	197.61
June/02	4,196,749	29,660	141.49	June/03	7,673,862	56,612	135.55	June/04	17,371,974	89,560	193.97
July/02	4,920,889	37,480	131.29	July/03	5,417,475	37,191	145.67	July/04	12,925,172	59,194	218.35
Aug/02	4,311,833	32,250	133.70	Aug/03	7,527,192	49,182	153.05	Aug/04	9,689,861	50,172	193.13
Sept/02	5,265,133	49,460	106.45	Sept/03	6,828,932	50,068	136.39	Sept/04	9,897,734	51,781	191.14
Oct/02	3,770,189	29,450	128.02	Oct/03	6,789,034	44,032	154.18	Oct/04	9,588,852	46,014	208.38
Nov/02	3,753,079	33,687	111.41	Nov/03	5,868,077	35,121	167.08	Nov/04	9,215,901	51,310	179.61
Dec/02	3,689,308	33,169	111.23	Dec/03	6,465,402	39,903	162.03	Dec/04	7,052,411	37,152	189.82
Total	41,732,130	351,859	118.60	Total	75,969,751		149.92	Total	126,652,634	691,757	183.09
Value to DACDF (USD)	312,991			Value to DACDF (USD)	521,409			Value to DACDF		N/A	

Source: Diamond Industry Annual Review, Sierra Leone 2004. The Diamonds and Human Security Project.

way diamonds are managed and marketed. IDMP, in partnership with the PDA and the Ministries of Mineral Resources and Trade and Industry, trains diggers in cooperative management, new mining technologies, and diamond valuation as well as trying to facilitate access to finance and better prices for mining cooperatives. In return, the cooperatives agree to mine ethically, incorporate environmental sustainability, and track production from “earth to export”. The PDA web site quotes the US Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Thomas Neil Hull III, as saying:

The United States government takes reform of the diamond sector most seriously. Diamonds can contribute to Sierra Leone’s recovery or they can be a source of instability and violence. The United States will continue to assist diamond-producing communities to become more prosperous and secure by realizing a reasonable return on their resource. Illicit diamonds also fuel the corruption that undercuts democracy, and they can be exploited by terrorists who intend to harm my country and others.<sup>54</sup>

According to PDA, the Rapaport Group and Kono’s Hope are two private sector PDA members that are financing a total of five cooperatives in the 2005 pilot phase. Diamonds will be purchased at values set by government valuers. The diamonds will then be sold at tender internationally and any excess profits from the tender will be returned to the diggers under the watchful eye of British NGO Global Witness, which will be monitoring the system. Twenty-five artisanal diamond miners’ cooperatives have been registered, each with some 50 members. The hope is that by combining social and economic empowerment and incorporating ethical vigilance, the IDM programme will create a more effective system of governance than traditional policing by government authorities. Outside of the diamond industry, similar logic is being used in considering the use of civilians for monitoring porous borders instead of relying only on traditional policing. When asked whether the PDA programme would help exploited miners, a youth worker in Kono said:

It will be a good alternative. PDA, from what I know, these cooperative units could be a nice thing. If they accumulate the diamonds and sell it to the appropriate authorities, I’m sure they can realise something beneficial. But most of these bosses in charge of these mining areas when they get diamonds, some of them are from Gambia, Abidjan and other areas, they smuggle them out. So at the end of the day the diggers will not realise benefits. But if the PDA, instead, helps them make their own bulk and sell, it will be more beneficial to them. One

of their challenges is to remove the child miners out of the mines, to create something beneficial for them. World Vision is also doing such things, caring for child miners. Even when you see this, you will see the children back in the mines the following week, doing the exact thing you want them not to be doing.<sup>55</sup>

## Securing investment/Securing peace

The “other” source of conflict around diamonds emerging in a newly peaceful Sierra Leone is about corporate ethics, government responsibility, and community participation. Because the country seems to be returning to stability, corporate mining interests are also returning, particularly those ready to make the necessary investments in Kimberlite mining. Kimberlite mining requires blasting to extract high-quality stones from deeper within the earth, a technique that was largely ignored during the mining history of Sierra Leone. Alluvial diamonds, which can be plucked from the surface by men, women, or children using pickaxes and sieves, is much easier and has had a high yield (although now in some areas that yield appears to be decreasing, leading to “gold rush” style movements to new territory).

Two companies, Koidu Holdings Ltd. and Sierra Rutile Ltd., have moved in to fill the existing technology gap. They have both been sources of great controversy because of their security practices: practices which are extremely sensitive since they are meant to protect, in the case of KHL, over USD21 million in shareholder investment. Blasting requires strong explosives, which have to be transported and stored on the company’s premises and guarded against theft. A large expatriate population is brought in to live at the site and run its day-to-day operations along with a large local workforce. The camp houses and feeds the expatriates and goes through 9,000 gallons of diesel fuel per week running five generators 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A fuel truck comes several times a week from the coast as part of a contract with Mobil.

The Koidu Holdings camp is like an oasis of modernity in the middle of war-scarred Koidu. There are flush toilets, hot showers, Castle beer from South Africa, air conditioning, and a volleyball court. South African and Israeli employees end the day with a competitive game, with a few Sierra Leonean guards observing or joining in. One older man who does technical surveying for the company said, “For those of us who have someone, the time we spend with our partners is real; being here in our male camaraderie is a kind of limbo until we can be with our partners again.” The swimming pool and koi pond

were under construction, and a mobile clinic employs a rotating roster of South African-qualified medics from Netcare. There are several gates at the entrances to all of this, but they could be breached. The perimeter of the actual mining area is not closed off, as evidenced by the fact that a cow wandered past in full view of the processing plant. Security under these circumstances, in a still-unstable post-war environment, requires the visible use of guns.

The Tankoro community living in the immediate vicinity of the KHL mine and its regular blasting is unhappy that Koidu Holdings has “attached” armed police divisions to its own security managers. Many of these private security men (they are all men), just like at Sierra Rutile, are former mercenaries who were involved in the civil war. The community is also angry about the company’s failed relocation plan, claiming alternately that poor-quality houses were built and that there were too few of them. Conflicts of interest arise for police at Koidu Holdings when community members protest against relocation policies. Complaints about abuse at the hands of police and private security officers have created a growing threat of conflict between community, government, and corporate interests. The Sierra Leone government takes 40 percent of the companies’ profits in taxes and fees, making the President and Vice President’s frequent helicopter visits to Koidu Holding’s private compound a clear statement of support for company leadership.

The population near Sierra Rutile, still traumatised from war, has threatened to re-arm in the face of clashes with Sierra Rutile’s private armed security forces, exempt by government agreement from the law forbidding any form of civilian gun ownership. Community leaders say their people feel squeezed out of any representation in disputes over land, relocation, and environmental issues. They see the company’s armed security as just another militia with the potential to seriously harm them. Leslie Mboka, the Executive Director of CADEP (Community Advocacy and Development Project, an NGO based in Bonthe), explained:

One contentious issue where we want the government to intervene is Sierra Rutile having its own private army. Sierra Leone is a country emerging from war. We think the government should solely be responsible for security matter, not leaving it in the hands of private business people and multi-national corporations. These guys are not accountable to the communities, not even to government. They take orders from their corporate managers. They will tell them, “Go and attack such and such a community,” and they will go. They follow directives. They do a lot of things: beating women, farmers, and that

kind of thing. We want the government to make sure these people are disarmed.... The communities are lobbying the government, they have raised protest, but the government is doing nothing about it. And it is for the government to disarm that corporate entity. Otherwise, we will forcefully disarm them or we will find a way to re-arm ourselves. Because we have been subjected to a lot of humiliation. They enter our house and they start beating women.<sup>56</sup>

The standoff between corporate interests and communities in the face of what appears to be government partisanship is not a new phenomenon limited to the diamond industry or to Sierra Leone. Nigeria's oil industry is notorious for such conflicts, and the timber trade in Liberia is also something to watch. The companies say they are, by extension of their local employment records, supporting thousands of people who would otherwise be destitute. They can point to instances where it seems clear that communities take advantage of bad-faith opportunities, like building houses near blasting sites in order to receive the benefits of payment or relocation later. None of the foreign operations in Sierra Leone, with the 40-percent tax rate and the slow process of starting from scratch after war, are yet making much of a profit according to their records. And yet the communities have made valid claims about the behaviour of security workers and the failures to implement Environmental Impact Assessment plans. It is the government in this equation, in the role of mediator, which will most need to re-evaluate its priorities and plans for brokering peace, protecting investors, and guaranteeing its citizens' human rights.

In an interview with the Peace Diamond Alliance in Koidu town, Kono, links between diggers' welfare, diamond smuggling, and small arms trafficking were discussed.

***Interview: Peace Diamond Alliance, Kono, 30 October 2004***

Q: How are conditions for the diggers now?

They enjoy some credit facilities, and though the winnings are not coming like they were, mining is now intensive mining, but some are still making it. And especially around the periphery of Kono. It is a bit overmined, and therefore the winnings are slower now. But if you go to peripheral chiefdoms, these chiefdoms are getting winnings. What I will ascertain from the research we have done, is that because they are marginalised, there are illegal dealers, who are playing between legal

dealers and the diggers and miners who are being marginalised. They are acting as a force to export diamonds illegally and that is a potential for corrupt and armed groups out there if they want to infiltrate the system.

For whatever reason, money is power and money can do everything. Diamonds are valued all over the world. Many groups want to convert their resources into diamond resources. They can easily get access to the diamonds, and if they get access to the diamonds, they can convert them into arms, into money, into anything they need. That's just a possibility. It happened during the war. I'm not saying it's happening, but it's a possibility. It's a porous channel. Large goods can be carried across the borders easily, so what about 10 carats, 20 carats of diamonds? They can pass through any of the porous borders around Sierra Leone. And these guys are potential forces. They are coming with diamonds from Guinea, from DRC, from Liberia into Sierra Leone after the war. During the war they were taking it from Sierra Leone to these areas, and therefore it's just a possibility.

Q: What are the problems with the system that the PDA is trying to change?

Well, these people are not getting the necessary power to get the kind of profits or benefits they really deserve to get from their winnings or their diamonds. Because they have been marginalised. Because the fair market is not created, and because of all these problems around, you have political problems that are really marginalising them there and keeping them there in the labour without getting the desired benefits. That is why the PDA is stepping in to empower them, so they have fair market, fair prices, and what have you. But in addition to that, because of the rampant smuggling that was going on in previous regimes. Because there was this kind of favour for whatever group to penetrate or infiltrate the diamond industry, because of these factors, the American government through USAID said that we need to arrest some of these problems if we want to stop terrorists really penetrating these industries. Also, to improve the communities, definitely you need to empower these people, the youths especially. But there are also the larger issues of terrorism and smuggling, which attract donor money to the cause, which is a good thing. The fact that there was this loophole, and putting a lot of efforts into monitoring these systems, they are themselves open to terrorist attacks. Because when they make more money from such illegal means, they can attack.

Q: What activities are you carrying out?

Environmental activities, to see that the diamond industry itself is carried out in an environmentally sound area. But also impacting on empowering the Ministry of Mines and monitoring to give them bikes and communication systems and so on to empower them so that they are capable enough to carry out their duties. Some of these conflicts that we are coming on in the diamond industry, either between chiefdoms, or miners, PDA strongly associates with such problems. Typical case is the conflict between the Koidu Holdings and the Tankoro people. The PDA is trying to get a better way out. The total motive of PDA is actually to see sanity in the diamond industry. And sanity is a big language there, which can be associated with security, smuggling, illegal dealings, community marginalisation. And conflict resolution. We mediate between Koidu Holdings and Tankoro people.

Now what we have done is identified some of these problems; through more than four months of research we have just completed the analysis. We have really got to know problems and see if it is possible to create a fair market. That is by bringing in buyers who can buy at standard prices or with credit facilities by cooperative miners. We try to organise these diamond diggers into groups. We try to form some of these cooperatives so that they are not dependent either on Lebanese dealers or Lebanese exporters, or so on for their mining activities. If they can manage their own sources of income, we want to see how that will change the status of organised diggers and miners. They keep what they find until they have enough to sell at a commercial bulk. One of the criteria of forming the cooperative is that they have their own account at the bank. By so doing if any winning is found, we keep the winning safe in the bank, and whatever is collected there will be sold, and we hold them accountable for whatever is being got. And that is just one way of checking the illegal movement of diamonds, by cutting out people in the middle and by getting the diamonds kept at the bank. That will keep proper record of what they are doing.

Q: Is the monitoring understaffed?

I am not in that Ministry, it is difficult for me to say if they are understaffed. What I can say for sure is that the fact that they are not effectively carrying out their duties, some of the areas are so large that it is difficult for them to cover. Security matters are not matters of the



ministry. Bringing community members on board in monitoring some of these areas and really giving them the right training and sensitisation, I think that would be better rather than getting 2,000 people at the Mines Ministry there. Put it more into the hands of the community, train them, empower them, give them the right equipment and things like that. They need to be responsible for their own security. You can't just put it in the hands of the central government.

Power is information. The fact that information is going out, and most of them are now being informed, that is one empowerment that I am really happy about. Organising the cooperatives, they have their meetings where issues are discussed. That is another form of empowerment. The last phase that we are looking at is really forming and testing these things; are they going to abuse the money, or will they use the money the right way? USAID is funding that.

When the roads are in terrible conditions—it cannot be 2,000 people in the Ministry of Mines doing this job. It has to be the communities. First you have to pave the roads, if the roads are paved up to the land borders, then probably you can expect such monitoring to be effective. Where these mine officers or monitors cannot reach for the next two years, we are really revealing to them. It is like that for markets in everything; cigarettes, everything.

Q: Is the government suspicious about recommendations to empower communities, since security is largely considered the government's exclusive domain?

What I know for sure, if you are talking about government, you are talking about everybody's business and everybody's responsibility. Recommendations that have been sent, they have to use their own judgment and wisdom. We are just coming from the war, probably which might increase their fear. A war in which everyone played his or her own part. To empower groups now would be something difficult. But I know with time, these are things that will definitely come into play. It's not a matter of giving them arms. It's a matter of training them how to collect information and pass them on to military men, people who matter. It's really information and intelligence collection. Not giving them arms to carry out security matters. Whether it comes to diamonds or anything else.

Q: There are breaks between the mining and the health, well-being of the community. How can these be eliminated?

This is a very poor country. People are desperate to make money, regardless of how they make it. What the government needs to do is monitoring. Without proper monitoring, you end up in the same mess. And that is really what was lacking. What they have decided is to now channel money through the local government, for the local government to be the eyes and ears of such money. If that is properly done, it will be good. And bringing to book chieftdom authorities to properly implement whatever. Second part of it is that some chieftdoms bring their own project proposals now, wherein the local government will go to monitor such projects. They have stopped giving the money to chiefs now. If you want to develop a proposal, you need to get serious. I need to undertake my project, write it and understand it. That's the first step.

Q: In this ongoing conflict between companies like KHL and the community, can you describe the conflict of interest?

Government desperation to have investors in and protecting the local communities. That is why the conflict is complex now. But once the investors are in, the government will start to realise they need to protect their communities and not just encouraging investors, being bad or good. I think that the conflict will be something easy. These things are all documented, they are all on paper, what these people need to carry out before they start mining and blasting. It is a matter of making them implement what is in the document. They need to be held accountable for what they already said they would do. The government needs to say, "Implement what you said or else stop mining," and things will settle down right away. But government hasn't done this. That is why the conflict is difficult. They are just coming from war, and this is the money coming in. The government is scared to take some stance.

Looking at the country as a whole and looking at the communities where these riches are coming from. The government's concentration is on the whole country for now, which is a bit wrong I would say. From where are these riches are coming from. Try to get money into government coffers, and probably that is the reason. But the local authorities also need to do something in their own parts. Because you

have the part of these agreements with development funds and surface rents and things like that, to the good tune of thousands of dollars. Which if really utilised should at least encourage the communities in some ways. But that is also not done. We need to know how these funds are utilised, where they are going.

Q: Is there a possibility that this situation could result in further conflict?

From the communities we are dealing with, we visited two districts where this research was carried out, people will say, enough of war, at least in the near future. No matter what happens now, Sierra Leoneans will try to resolve their conflict in other forms. Everybody had a taste of the war and we are fed up with war. We are really attacking the issue. In the next twenty years, maybe we can have problems. But not in the next five or ten years.

The PDA is optimistic about its digger empowerment programmes' ability to level the playing field in the diamond industry and to forestall armed conflict between diggers, communities, and corporate mining interests. Others are not as sure; a resident in Koidu in an area that was to be evacuated for Kimberlite blasting told me casually that "I am scared, but the government doesn't care. They only care about their money. There could be another war, although we are not praying for that."<sup>57</sup>

## Timber

Like diamonds, timber is one of the most valuable exports in the Mano River Basin, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. It is well known that Charles Taylor used timber exports to fund his regime's excesses and maintain his grip on power.<sup>58</sup> In a Global Witness report urging the United Nations to maintain sanctions on timber exports from Liberia (which it has), the private security issue arose in much the same way it has surfaced with foreign diamond mining companies in Sierra Leone: as an armed employment opportunity for former combatants and a threat to local communities. The report clearly identifies one of the consequences of prematurely lifting sanctions as the possibility that logging company security forces will re-arm ex-combatants:

With UNMIL providing inadequate up-country security, logging companies will likely hire armed security forces to protect their investments; such forces have historically been composed mostly

of ex-combatants. Elements of some logging security forces were responsible for abuses including torture, sexual exploitation, arbitrary arrest and destruction of private property. This poses a serious internal security threat to Liberia, with the potential to spill-over into Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone.<sup>59</sup>

Like the government mining offices in Sierra Leone, the Forestry Development Authority in Liberia, which is responsible for oversight of the logging industry, is drastically under-equipped and unprepared to monitor timber exports should sanctions be lifted. As it is, there are consistent reports of sanctions violations, particularly with regard to funding the violence in Côte d'Ivoire, including reports of timber being trafficked from Monrovia's port.<sup>60</sup> Logging "for the domestic market" is legally continuing in Liberia, and has saturated the supply within the country. Near the border with Guinea in the Forest Region, timber continues to be felled and the forests further depleted. Logging trucks can frequently be seen carrying timber into Monrovia, where it is unlikely they will only be sold to domestic buyers. The FDA, because of logistical problems and fear of confronting armed ex-combatants involved in the timber trade, had not investigated these trucking activities as of the publication of the Global Witness report in December 2004.

As with diamonds, timber is a primary source of funding for armed groups and needs to be controlled. However, it is not always only the sale or exchange of diamonds and timber for illicit weapons that pose a danger to peace or stability. The way companies hire and manage ex-combatants as workers, and secure their investment through armed private security, creates the possibility of an equally devastating threat. In Liberia, DDR came to a close on 31 October, 2004 (and unofficially in many outlying areas on 24 November). With very little funding available for reintegration, the presence of armed corporate militias comprised of ex-combatants will not have a positive effect on communities still traumatised by, or even experiencing, conflict. In the meantime, sanctions on timber to avoid an escalation of its use to fund armed non-state actors in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, as well as strengthening and reform of the FDA, should continue.

## Fighters and guns

Sierra Leone won't hold if Liberia doesn't hold, and Liberia won't hold if Côte d'Ivoire doesn't hold. Sub-regional arms flows and conflict require sub-regional solutions. The way to curb arms flows is not technical; it is by dealing with peace and conflict.

– Conmany B. Wesseh, Civil Society Representative to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly and long-time advocate for the reduction of small arms proliferation. Interview, 16 November 2004.

The movement of small arms and the fighters who wield them is still being documented in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire on a daily basis. There are many factors that influence the trade: poverty and unemployment drive young people to seek paid work as mercenaries; disarmament packages offer combatants incentives to cross borders to DDR camps to collect fees for turning in weapons; and the basic laws of supply and demand function for people and weapons just as they do for natural resources. When a conflict flares up, the stakeholders demand resources that can pay to strengthen their forces and increase their chances of gaining power. When the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire began in earnest in November 2004, youth interviewed in both Sierra Leone and Liberia expressed strong consideration for the option of "joining up", even though there were opportunities for peace where they were. Money is a big motivator in countries where unemployment afflicts at least two-thirds of the population.

In addition to individual motivations of mercenary soldiers, DDR processes in neighbouring countries create instant demand across borders by setting prices differently. Informal accounts hold that the ebb and flow of conflict has sometimes been instigated or held back by faction commanders to influence the timing or planning of disarmament. Peacekeeping operations that are not well coordinated can build the biggest markets for the movement of arms and the enrichment of those with the means to broker deals. By increasing coordination between programs in neighbouring areas and recognising the importance of demobilisation, reintegration, and reconciliation to the actual disarmament process, DDR processes can avoid becoming part of the markets they are trying to dismantle. A UN Report in 2004 acknowledged that:

There are worrying signs that some of the heavy weapons are not being turned in during the disarmament exercise and, in several instances, have been smuggled across the borders of Liberia. In this

regard, UNMIL found a cache of 81-millimetre and 61-millimetre mortar grenades and several 107-millimetre BM-21 missiles at Camp Alpha in Lofa County. On 3 May, the Swedish explosives ordnance disposal team from UNMIL force headquarters visited the camp to destroy the munitions.<sup>61</sup>

The disarmament statistics from UNMIL, officially concluded on 31 October 2004 (excluding “mop-up operations” which continued into November), are staggering: over 100,000 ex-combatants have been disarmed. And yet border regions were the last to be reached, and UNMIL internal intelligence shows that there are still substantial small arms caches in the country as well as some larger, Taylor-era weapons that have not been recovered. As the country heads for potential elections in October 2005, the implications of disarmament failures will become a primary security concern. Additionally, clear evidence of 2001 and 2002 Chinese AK variants having been trafficked into Liberia despite an arms embargo introduce the spectre of outside complicity in continued political demand.<sup>62</sup>

An UNMIL DDRR representative interviewed on 13 November 2004 in Monrovia was forthcoming about the logistical failures of the disarmament process. At the time, although formal DDR was closed at the end of October, there were still 4,000 ex-combatants coming under “mop-up” operations in Voinjama who needed to be processed in less than one month, before 1 December. The representative said it “would have been easier to keep camps open since the caseload is too high”, but in large part due to financial considerations, that was not possible.

The five-day cantonment period is too quick, with little counselling. The first sites were three or four hours’ drive from Monrovia. By the time other sites opened, the rainy season was here and the conditions were difficult; the process was, therefore, slower and more difficult on the borders. It is more expensive and logistically prohibitive for ex-combatants to get to sites in the rain, especially marginalised groups on the borders where the need is greatest to bring them in. At the VOA site, we got false ammunition filled with sand and a lot of unserviceable weapons. The board of enquiry found ex-combatants’ late claims of exclusion baseless, especially because so many of them turned in unserviceable weapons. Women and children didn’t have to turn in a weapon to be part of the process and receive the allowance of two times one hundred dollars (three hundred total). All they needed was three hundred rounds of ammunition. Many took advantage of

this, I think. The real weapons will be found in Côte d'Ivoire if they offer nine hundred dollars, which is obviously three times what they can get in Liberia.

Guns are worth money and they are bought, sold, and used like any other commodity. It follows the basic laws of supply and demand. Abidjan is a more advanced and expensive city—like Manhattan in one section. So 900 US dollars does not mean the same thing there as here. We know people are considering disarming there. More coordination would have been useful. They will not give 900 dollars when they start the process now; maybe we should have only given them 50 dollars and saved 250 to invest in reintegration or training opportunities. But, it's too late now.<sup>63</sup>

The statistics show that the original UN estimates of 38,000 combatants to be disarmed was far surpassed, with a total of over 102,000 participants in the DDDR process. Of these, 11,221 were children and 22,020 were women, and neither group was required to present a weapon or ammunition to gain admittance. Charles Achodo, the DDDR Programme and Policy Advisor at UNDP, indicated that the eligibility requirements were looser than they had been in Sierra Leone after complaints about a lack of child and gender sensitivity. He said, "the larger numbers may be because we allowed more women and children into the programme, or it may just be that more males took advantage of the criteria (specifically, only 150 rounds of ammunition per fighter) to disarm more easily for the "RR" benefits like training."<sup>64</sup> Whatever the case, Liberia's ratio of disarmed ex-combatants to weapons collected was noticeably high.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement outlined that DDDR was to target the three main warring parties: former Government of Liberia forces and other paramilitary groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). There were 11 separate cantonment sites managed by UNMIL personnel: Buchanan, Ganta, Gbarnga, Harper, Kakata, Schefflin Barracks, Tappita, Tubmanburg, VOA, Voinjama, and Zwedru. In order to qualify for the programme, applicants had to present a serviceable weapon or ammunition which met the required entry criteria, be an under-18 year-old child associated with the fighting forces (CAFF), or be a woman associated with the fighting forces (WAFF).

**Table 3: Liberia DDDR Statistics** <sup>65</sup>

<b>Total Ex-Combatants Processed</b>		
<b>ADULTS</b>	<b>M</b>	68,952
	<b>F</b>	22,020
<b>CHILDREN</b>	<b>M</b>	8,704
	<b>F</b>	2,517
	<b>TOTAL</b>	102,193

<b>Total Weapons Collected</b>	
<b>Rifles/Sub-Machine Guns</b>	20,458
<b>Machine Guns</b>	690
<b>Pistols</b>	641
<b>RPG Launchers</b>	1,829
<b>Mortars</b>	178
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	4,008
<b>TOTAL</b>	27,804

<b>Total Ammunition Collected</b>	
<b>Small Arms Ammunition (SAA)</b>	7,129,198
<b>RPG Rockets</b>	8,703
<b>60/81mm Mortars</b>	12,287
<b>82mm Mortars</b>	15
<b>Hand Grenades</b>	10,410
<b>Surface-to-Air Missiles</b>	12
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	1,103
<b>TOTAL Ammunition (excluding SAA)</b>	<b>32,530</b>

The UNOCI (United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire) disarmament process is scheduled to begin on 14 May 2005, after the UN Security Council voted to extend the Mission for 30 days until 4 June 2005. In 2004, a false start circulated rumours that USD900 would be paid to ex-combatants, compared to only USD300 in Liberia. Now that Liberia's DDR process has concluded, coordination between UNMIL, UNAMSIL, and UNOCI is still crucial to



maintain stability while the DDR process begins, to control borders, and to prepare for October elections in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. One UNMIL official said:

Sub-regional dynamics are the most important element of ending war. Côte d'Ivoire and even Guinea could destabilise Liberia and lead to difficulties; so could Sierra Leone. Côte d'Ivoire will be more difficult, though. Liberians are invested in peace and rebuilding, exemplified by the faction leaders disarming to the UNMIL force commander. But still, significant weapons have been found in Limba and Lofa counties, and many say some very heavy weapons have been taken back to Guinea by Taylor's supporters. Those who are going to work in Côte d'Ivoire know that they will get a chance to disarm later, possibly for more money.

## **Palm oil, cigarettes, and sheep**

UNAMSIL's DDR programme succeeded in disarming over 70,000 ex-combatants by its close in January 2002. Following DDR, the Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme was aimed at collecting from communities arms such as hunting rifles, pistols, and other guns that were not necessarily owned or used by fighters during the war. That programme was managed by the SLP with UNAMSIL, and covered the entire country in three phases (Phase I targeted the western area, covering the Port Loko and Kambia districts in the northern region and Moyamba in the south, Phase II covered Bombali, Koinadugu and Tonkolili districts in the north and Bonthe in the south, and Phase III covered Pujehun, Kenema, Kailahun and Kono in the eastern region).<sup>66</sup> By its close, the programme had retrieved approximately 9,660 weapons and 17,000 rounds of ammunition. At the end of the amnesty period in 2002, it became illegal to possess arms.

The UNDP's Arms for Development Programme is a joint initiative of UNDP and the Government of Sierra Leone, in partnership with the Sierra Leone Police, the DDR/Community Development section of UNAMSIL, the German Technical Cooperation International Services (GTZ), the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA), and grassroots communities. The AFD is a cost shared initiative partially funded by Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom. AFD began with pilot projects in 2003 in four chiefdoms. As a continuation of promoting arms-free communities, AFD has

been celebrated as finally implementing a programme that makes a direct link between concrete local development and arms-free communities.

The Kambia district in Sierra Leone has been a success story for AFD, which is perhaps one reason why the police seem far more concerned about the transport of cigarettes and palm oil across the border than drugs or guns. In Kono, an RUF stronghold during the war and the mining centre of the country, extensive interviews with police and community policing liaisons revealed that palm oil, kola nuts, cocoa, coffee, and pepper were being illegally exported to Guinea and sheep, goats, cigarettes, rice, and “cooking ingredients” were coming in across the border. This attention to such seemingly insignificant contraband reflects larger issues surrounding the ways in which border communities experience trade and conflict across national boundaries. A police report listed five possible conflict drivers in the border trade situation between Sierra Leone and Guinea:

1. High taxation by Guinean border securities and Local Authorities
2. Guineans determine the price of all goods entering their country to the detriment of the producers from Sierra Leone
3. Guineans do not allow Sierra Leoneans to fish and put canoe [sic] in the River Meli which serves as boundary between Guinea and Sierra Leone
4. Guineans demand for Immigration documents is to extort money from Sierra Leoneans on trivial issues – Passport ID CARD.
5. Guineans maintain that they own part of Kono District and not the Meli River.

Special Branch comments that followed: “Government and all security Agencies and other Stake Holders should address these issues without delay, otherwise ex-combatants at the border will intend to react violently if Guineans continue to violate protocols.”<sup>67</sup>

Beyond arms trafficking or the movement of smugglers across borders, local police are becoming very focused on maintaining peace in their areas. Ex-combatants are seen as a volatile force, and disputes over land ownership in border villages, excessive taxation, and arguments over fishing rights are

seen to have the potential to cause violence outbreaks. On the other hand, “community policing” is coming into vogue, and an interview at the Kono Police Station with the LUC (Local Unit Commander) and Community Policing Board members revealed a desire to involve these same “civilian” ex-combatants more in monitoring security where the police are understaffed.

***Interview: Community Policing, Kono, 29 October 2004.***

Community Policing Board Member (CPBM): We hope to do something about security. Since the police personnel are very few, and cannot effectively police these areas, we have decided to recruit civilians who will be trained and will work with the police and under supervision of the police, so they will not take the law into their own hands. But the people we want to use are not just ordinary people. During the civil war, we had these Civil Defence Forces. These people are now resident in areas they came from originally. These are the people who used those porous areas as bypasses to dodge the enemy forces. They know about the porous areas. Those who are resident in these areas, they know the places, so they are going to cover these places more effectively than sending people from elsewhere who don't know as much.

Q: Will they be armed in any way, and what is their incentive for participating?

CPBM: No arms at all. We will not give them weapons, with this arms collection thing going on. What they are going to do will be lawful. We have suggested that we have customs, so that when they collect, if people are made to pay dues, it will be agreed upon that something from the dues will be given to these people as some inducement so that they can do their job contentedly. We are working on this now. It is not yet confirmed.

LUC: People can come to the nearest police station and report things. Our relationship with those communities is quite good. We get information in.

CPBM: People used to be afraid to report information. Now we are sensitising people, the police force is a different thing now, they are looking after the community and the community information can

make police more effective. We have a very progressive chief here. He is very unique. He thought of an idea that we should organise a road walk, every Saturday. This would involve everybody in the community, no exceptions. Women, men, old and young, whatever. This should be between the civilians, the police and the army. How can we differentiate ourselves and get the combination of three sets of people? The police should wear white T-shirts and their blue trousers. The army should wear white T-shirts and their fatigue trousers. Civilians should wear white T-shirts and their own trousers. We would start at 7 in the morning, walk a distance, and then return to a point where we could all be together. Policemen, civilians, soldiers, conversing together. You just converse leisurely as you cover the distance. Everybody will be mixing, the stiffness will go away and information sharing will take place as people become familiar with each other. In the end, the physical exercise will be good for everyone's health, and then people mix, break barriers, the lowest man can talk to the highest person. In the end, if someone out there gets vital information to pass over, he won't be afraid to come to the LUC or any authority at all.

Contraband trade in goods like palm oil and cigarettes, along with border disputes, are a long-term threat to peace. In the traditional sense of spurring conflict, it is true that ex-combatants could be inflamed to violence by Guinean border officials' continuous needling on issues of fishing rights and taxation. They could also collaborate with police to make the borders safer. More important is the bigger picture of how a lack of roads and infrastructure isolate border towns and villages economically from markets in their own country. An NGO director who works with youth and comes from an area close to the Guinean border indicated that roads are the most important step towards sustaining peace:

The first thing to look at now is the roads. This is an agricultural area—if you think these people should survive and not have another war, build roads and allow people to sell their goods. Not sell too cheaply to Guineans who can afford to get to them, but sell at fair prices to their fellow Sierra Leoneans. Freetown is not Sierra Leone. It is fed by the provinces. Every two weeks I go to my village and the roads are so bad, I feel terrible. There are no good vehicles. This is the breadbasket, but we are not supporting it. Shelter is also a big issue. Eight feet of zinc roofing costs LE450,000. You can use plastic sheeting, but in the rainy season it leaks and in the dry season it is too hot. The greatest challenge to peace is making life easier in a basic way for people who make a living sustaining themselves in agriculture.<sup>68</sup>

## CONCLUSION

### INTERRUPTING THE CYCLE

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The lethal combination of corrupt or destructive leaders, porous and unmonitored borders and rootless or hopeless young men has made some of these regions incubators of international terrorism and contagious diseases like AIDS. Others are sanctuaries for swindlers and drug traffickers whose victims can be found throughout the world.

—New York Times editorial page, 27 February, 2005.

#### **Making peace popular**

In Monrovia in 2004, UNMIL made a deal with 60 of the city's video parlour owners. These parlours in Liberia, as in many other African countries, consist of very basic rooms or even outdoor setups where people can pay a small fee to watch double or triple features on the small screen. Televisions and VCRs are mounted on a table or, if outdoors, sometimes wedged up in a tree, and viewers sit on hard wooden benches or plastic patio chairs to enjoy the show. Genres are fairly limited: Nigerian movies combine violence, chase scenes, romantic betrayals, and a heavy dose of juju and witchcraft. Kung-fu movies and action flicks feature Chuck Norris, Sylvester Stallone, and Arnold Schwarzenegger along with a host of other muscled tough-guys whose careers fizzled out sometime in the mid-1980s.

UNMIL's five-minute video-clip-for-peace is to be played before and after the main attractions at each of the video parlours that became party to the deal. The clip is meant to instil the values of peace and reconciliation in viewers, with an introduction by Gyude Bryant, the leader of the NTGL that begins: "We have fought for a long time. Look at what fighting has done to our country." The short message is followed by a montage of images showing the destruction of weapons and featuring former commanders and faction leaders smashing what some audience members seemed surprised to point out looked like perfectly functioning guns. Words on the screen reinforced this observation: "UNMIL will destroy all weapons, for true." After the public service message, it

was time for the main feature, that infamous 1987 Vietnam War movie *Jungle Rats* (advertised on a sign outside as “Non-Stop War Action!!!”).

Can five-minute messages of peace make a difference when they are followed by hours-long images of extreme fighting, shooting, and blood? Rebel commanders used war movies to train troops throughout the civil wars in both Sierra Leone and Liberia,<sup>69</sup> and the cheap, wide availability of violent films has been cited in use in both tactical training and recruitment for gangs and criminal elements in urban slums from Freetown to Nairobi. This does not imply that the movies themselves are the cause of heightened violence; but they are a symptom of a culture where poverty is endemic, life is cheap, and young people want to build lives that are globally connected and free from subjection to arbitrary power. In trying to use a popular medium to spread a different message, UNMIL’s outreach team has at least acknowledged the power of audio-visual communication to reach the most involved, and the most vulnerable, population in the post-war context. Sierra Leone’s Minister of Youth and Sport believes that installing a satellite dish, generator, and refrigerator at a youth centre in Kailahun (where the rebel war began) could mean the difference between war and peace:

If they don’t want to go back to their homes, most of them it’s not because they don’t want to go home—it’s just because home does not provide some of the basic things they want. They wouldn’t mind to go home if they have a good football field and if they can watch Manchester United and Arsenal... that guy is not staying here [in Freetown]; he is rolling up there. It’s so simple, I tell people; but they feel it’s so complicated. They feel the youth problem is so complicated, it needs a big construct. And this is not what they need. These people, they need something to attract them *now*.<sup>70</sup>

## Catalysts and disruptors

Conventional discourse on conflict in the Mano River Basin nearly always includes a standard lament about porous borders. The movement of people, goods, and guns across national borders that fatten localised conflicts into full-scale wars is a problem. It is also part of a much larger cycle of supply and demand that must be interrupted in several different locations to be stopped. The catalysts of conflict cycles are poverty; unemployment; lack of education and literacy; unethical corporate behaviour; lack of oversight and control over natural resources; and high-level political manoeuvring.

If poverty is alleviated through targeted and well-monitored programmes, young people will become less likely to end up committing human rights abuses on the orders of “Big Men” who pay them by commanding them to loot for themselves. If economies can be built beyond 70 percent donor dependence, jobs may become available from the private sector, especially to those who have been able to take advantage of at least a primary school education (which should, eventually, become free). If the private sector is regulated by government according to high standards of human rights compliance, conflict with communities will become avoidable, or at least manageable. If reintegration receives the funding and attention it needs to reach the remaining 42,000 ex-combatants in Liberia, elections there are more likely to go smoothly, interrupting the opportunity for high-level political meddling by dictators or appointed leaders. Finally, if the international community, particularly the African Union, pushes with funding and diplomacy for the development of democracy and the oversight of natural resources, perhaps the culture of impunity that today fosters corruption and organised crime will begin to recede.

It is unlikely that illicit weapons trafficking, mercenary activity, and warlordism can be stopped simply by promising more border patrols or, for that matter, by distributing videos about peace. It will take the smart maintenance of sanctions against diamonds and timber in Liberia, more and smarter funding for post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation, and real coordination between the sub-regional UN presence in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d’Ivoire to plant the seeds of peace in the soil of war.

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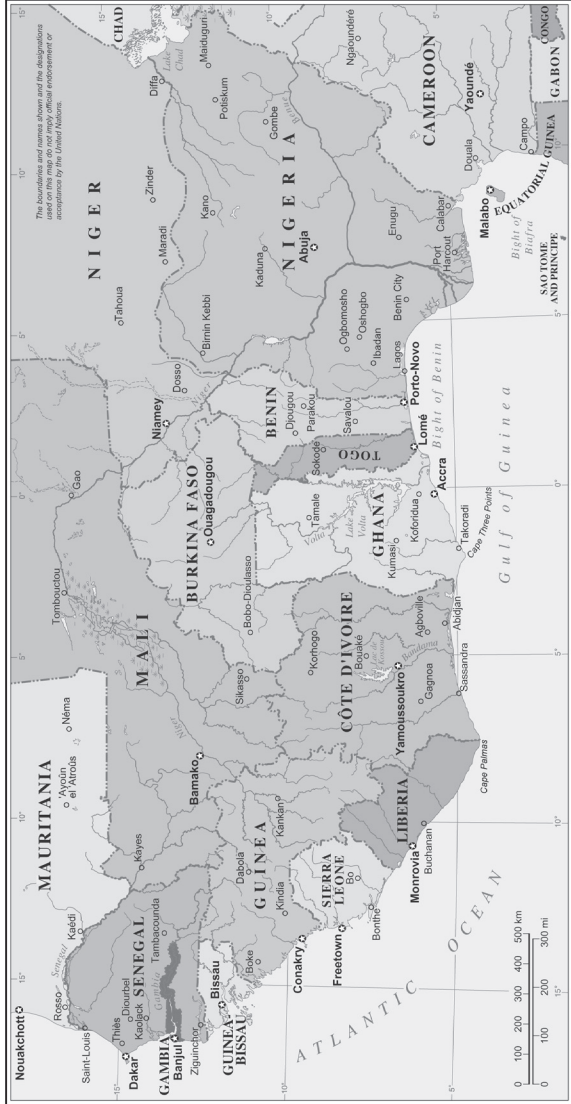
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# MAPS

## MAP 1 West Africa



This book and its contents have been prepared by the publishers from their maps and do not necessarily conform with the exceptions by the United Nations

Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
Geographic Section

MAP No. 4242 UNITED NATIONS  
February 2005

# ANNEXURE A

# MAP 2 Liberia



# MAP 3 Sierra Leone



Map No. 3962 Rev. 5 UNITED NATIONS  
January 2004

Department for Peacekeeping Operations  
Cartographic Section

## ANNEXURE B

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### CONFLICT TIMELINES AND BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Without going into extensive detail about the histories of each country in the Mano River Basin sub-region of West Africa threatened by or engulfed in conflict, it is worth noting that the individual development of socio-economic and ethnic tensions in historical perspective is a crucial part of understanding current situations. The “repatriation” of black slaves from America to the Liberian coast in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century led to a colonial system in which those who had been oppressed and enslaved replicated plantation life, this time living it as the elite and discriminating against indigenes. In Sierra Leone, a long history of post-independence corruption and a culture of patrimonialism alienated and excluded the country’s youth for decades before the outbreak of civil war. Continuing tension in all four countries (Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d’Ivoire) between underpaid militaries and their government leaders has created instability and a history of coups. The following timelines are meant to provide an abbreviated reference to events in the countries discussed in following chapters.

#### **Liberia timeline**<sup>71</sup>

##### ***Early days***

1847 - Constitution modelled on that of the USA drawn up.

1847 July - Liberia becomes independent.

1917 - Liberia declares war on Germany, giving the Allies a base in West Africa.

1926 - Firestone Tire and Rubber Company opens rubber plantation on land granted by government. Rubber production becomes backbone of economy.

1936 - Forced-labour practices abolished.

1943 - William Tubman elected president.

1944 - Government declares war on the Axis powers.

1951 May - Women and indigenous property owners vote in the presidential election for the first time.

1958 - Racial discrimination outlawed.

1971 - Tubman dies and is succeeded by William Tolbert Jr.

1974 - Government accepts aid from the Soviet Union for the first time.

1978 - Liberia signs trade agreement with the European Economic Community.

1979 - More than 40 people are killed in riots following a proposed increase in the price of rice.

### ***Instability***

1980 - Master Sergeant Samuel Doe stages military coup. Tolbert is murdered and 13 of his aides are publicly executed. A People's Redemption Council headed by Doe suspends constitution and assumes full powers.

1984 - Doe's regime allows return of political parties following pressure from the United States and other creditors.

1985 - Doe wins presidential election.

### ***Taylor's uprising***

1989 - National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor begins an uprising against the government.

1990 - Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sends peacekeeping force. Doe is executed by a splinter group of the NPFL.

1991 - ECOWAS and the NPFL agree to disarm and set up an Interim Government of National Unity.

1992 - The NPFL launches an all-out assault on West African peacekeepers in Monrovia, the latter respond by bombing NPFL positions outside the capital and pushing the NPFL back into the countryside.

### ***Tentative ceasefire***

1993 - The warring factions draw up a plan for a National Transitional Government and a cease-fire, but this fails to materialise and fighting resumes.

1994 - The warring factions agree on a timetable for disarmament and the setting up of a joint Council of State.

1995 - Peace agreement signed.

1996 April - Factional fighting resumes and spreads to Monrovia.

1996 August - West African peacekeepers initiate disarmament programme, clear landmines and reopen roads, allowing refugees to return.

1997 July - Presidential and legislative elections held. Charles Taylor wins a landslide and his National Patriotic Party wins a majority of seats in the National Assembly. International observers declare the elections free and fair.

### ***Border fighting***

1999 January - Ghana and Nigeria accuse Liberia of supporting Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone. Britain and the US threaten to suspend aid to Liberia.

1999 April - Rebel forces thought to have come from Guinea attack town of Voinjama. Fighting displaces more than 25,000 people.

1999 September - Guinea accuses Liberian forces of entering its territory and attacking border villages.

2000 September - Liberian forces launch "massive offensive" against rebels in the north. Liberia accuses Guinean troops of shelling border villages.

2001 February - Liberian government says Sierra Leonean rebel leader Sam Bockarie, also known as Mosquito, has left the country.

2001 May - UN Security Council re-imposes arms embargo to punish Taylor for trading weapons for diamonds from rebels in Sierra Leone.

2002 January - More than 50,000 Liberians and Sierra Leonean refugees flee fighting. In February Taylor declares a state of emergency.

2002 September - President Taylor lifts an eight-month state of emergency and a ban on political rallies, citing a reduced threat from rebels.

### ***Rebel offensives***

2003 March - Rebels open several battlefronts and advance to within 10km of Monrovia. Tens of thousands of people displaced by fighting.

2003 June - Talks in Ghana aimed at ending rebellion overshadowed by indictment accusing President Taylor of war crimes over his alleged backing of rebels in Sierra Leone.

2003 July - Fighting intensifies; rebels battle for control of Monrovia. Several hundred people are killed. West African regional group ECOWAS agrees to provide peacekeepers.

2003 August - Nigerian peacekeepers arrive. Charles Taylor leaves Liberia after handing power to his deputy Moses Blah. US troops arrive. Interim government, rebels sign peace accord in Ghana. Gyude Bryant chosen to head interim administration from October.

2003 September/October - US forces pull out. UN launches major peacekeeping mission, deploying thousands of troops.

2003 October - Gyude Bryant sworn in as head of state.

2003 December - UN peacekeepers begin to disarm former combatants, deploy in rebel territory outside Monrovia.

2004 February - International donors pledge more than USD500m in reconstruction aid.



2004 March - UN Security Council votes to freeze assets of Charles Taylor.

2004 October - Riots in Monrovia leave 16 people dead; UN says former combatants were behind violence.

2004 November – UN announces successful disarmament of over 100,000 former combatants and the disarmament and demobilisation phase of DDR comes to a close.

2005 – Elections scheduled for 11 October. Voting will not be allowed in camps; only IDPs who return home will be able to vote.

## **Sierra Leone timeline<sup>72</sup>**

### ***Early days***

1787 - British abolitionists and philanthropists establish a settlement in Freetown for repatriated and rescued slaves.

1808 - Freetown settlement becomes a crown colony.

1896 - Britain sets up a protectorate over the Freetown hinterland.

1954 - Sir Milton Margai, leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party, is appointed chief minister.

### ***One-party rule***

1961 - Sierra Leone becomes independent.

1967 - Military coup deposes Premier Siaka Stevens's government.

1968 - Siaka Stevens returns to power at the head of a civilian government following another military coup.

1971 - Sierra Leone is declared a republic and Stevens becomes executive president.

1978 - New constitution proclaims Sierra Leone a one-party state with the All People's Congress as the sole legal party.

1985 - Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh becomes president following Stevens's retirement.

1987 - Momoh declares state of economic emergency.

### ***War and coups***

1991 - Start of civil war. Former army corporal Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels begin campaign against President Momoh, capturing towns on border with Liberia and taking control of Kailahun.

1991 September - New constitution providing for a multiparty system adopted.

1992 - President Joseph Momoh ousted in military coup led by Captain Valentine Strasser and the NPRC. Under international pressure, Strasser announces plans for the first multiparty elections since 1967.

1996 January - Strasser ousted in military coup led by his defence minister, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

1996 - Ahmad Tejan Kabbah elected president in February, signs peace accord with Sankoh's rebels in November.

1997 Peace deal unravels. President Kabbah deposed in May by coalition of army officers led by Major-General Paul Koroma and members of the RUF; Koroma suspends the constitution, bans demonstrations and abolishes political parties; Kabbah flees to Guinea to mobilise international support.

1997 July - The Commonwealth suspends Sierra Leone.

1997 October - The United Nations Security Council imposes sanctions against Sierra Leone, barring the supply of arms and petroleum products. A British mercenary company, Sandline, nonetheless supplies "logistical support", including rifles, to Kabbah allies.

1998 February - The Nigerian-led West African intervention force ECOMOG storms Freetown and drives rebels out.

1998 March - Kabbah makes a triumphant return to Freetown amid scenes of public rejoicing.

1999 January - Rebels backing RUF leader Foday Sankoh seize parts of Freetown from ECOMOG. After weeks of bitter fighting they are driven out, leaving behind 5,000 dead and a devastated city.

### ***UN intervention***

1999 May - A ceasefire is greeted with cautious optimism in Freetown. In hospitals and amputee camps, victims of rebel atrocities express hope that eight years of civil war may soon be over.

1999 July - Six weeks of talks in the Togolese capital, Lomé, result in a peace agreement, under which the rebels receive posts in government and assurances they will not be prosecuted for war crimes.

1999 November/December - UN troops arrive to police the peace agreement - but one rebel leader, Sam Bokarie, says they are not welcome. Meanwhile, ECOMOG troops are attacked outside Freetown.

2000 April/May - UN forces come under attack in the east of the country. First 50, then several hundred UN troops are abducted.

2000 May - Rebels close in on Freetown; 800 British paratroopers sent to Freetown to evacuate British citizens and to help secure the airport for UN peacekeepers; rebel leader Foday Sankoh captured.

2000 August - Eleven British soldiers taken hostage by a renegade militia group called the West Side Boys.

### ***Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration***

2000 September - British forces mount successful operation to rescue remaining UK hostages.

2001 January - Government postpones presidential and parliamentary elections - set for February and March - for six months because of continuing insecurity, which it said made it impossible to conduct free and fair elections nationwide.

2001 March - UN troops for the first time begin to deploy peacefully in rebel-held territory.

2001 May - Disarmament of rebels begins, and British-trained Sierra Leone army starts deploying in rebel-held areas.

2002 January - War declared over. UN mission says disarmament of 45,000 fighters complete. The UN and the Government of Sierra Leone sign the agreement that establishes a Special Court to try war crimes.

2002 May - Kabbah wins a landslide victory in elections. His Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) secures a majority in parliament.

2002 July - British troops leave Sierra Leone after their two-year mission to help end the civil war.

2003 July - Rebel leader Foday Sankoh dies of natural causes in prison while waiting to be tried for war crimes.

2003 August - President Kabbah tells the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that he had no say over operations of pro-government militias during the war.

2004 February - Disarmament and rehabilitation of more than 70,000 civil war combatants officially completed.

### ***War crimes trials***

2004 March - UN-backed war crimes tribunal (Special Court for Sierra Leone) opens courthouse to try those people "who bear the greatest responsibility for war crimes" committed after 30 November 1996.

2004 May - First local elections in more than three decades.

2004 June - War crimes trials begin.

2004 September - UN hands over control of security in capital to local forces.

## **Guinea timeline**<sup>73</sup>

### ***Early days***

1891 - France declares Guinea to be a colony, separate from Senegal.

1898 - Defeat of resistance to French occupation led by Samory Toure, great-grandfather of future President Ahmed Sekou Toure.

1906 - Guinea becomes part of French West African Federation.

1952 - Ahmed Sekou Toure becomes secretary-general of the Democratic Party of Guinea.

### ***Independence***

1958 October - Guinea becomes independent, with Ahmed Sekou Toure as president.

1965 - Sekou Toure breaks off relations with France after accusing it of plotting to oust him.

1984 March - Sekou Toure dies.

1984 April - Lansana Conté and Diarra Traore seize power in bloodless coup. Conté becomes president while Traore is installed as prime minister.

1985 - Attempted coup organised by Traore following his demotion to education minister.

1990 - Constitution paving the way for civilian government is adopted.

### ***Democracy without peace***

1993 - First multiparty elections are held; Conté confirmed in office.

1995 - Conté's Party of Unity and Progress wins 71 of the National Assembly's 114 seats.

1996 - Some 30 people are killed and presidential palace set on fire as 25 percent of Guinea's armed forces mutiny over low pay and poor conditions.

2000 September - Alpha Conde, leader of opposition Guinean People's Rally, is sentenced to five years in prison for endangering state security and recruiting foreign mercenaries. He is pardoned in May 2001.

2000 September - Start of incursions by rebels in Guinea's border regions with Liberia and Sierra Leone which eventually claim more than 1,000 lives and cause massive population displacement. The government accuses Liberia, the Sierra Leonean United Revolutionary Front (RUF) rebel group, Burkina Faso and former Guinean army mutineers of trying to destabilise Guinea.

2001 February - Government deploys attack helicopters to the front-line in its fight with rebels.

## ***Referendum***

2001 November - Official results show constitutional referendum, boycotted by opposition, endorses President Conté's proposal to extend presidential term from five to seven years. Critics accuse Conté of trying to stay in power for life.

2002 March - Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia agree on measures to secure mutual borders and to tackle insurgency.

2003 November - Opposition leader Jean-Marie Dore detained, subsequently released, after saying President Conté is too ill to contest December's presidential election.

2003 December - President Conté wins a third term in elections boycotted by the opposition.

2004 April - Prime Minister Lounseny Fall resigns while visiting the US.

2005 January - President Conté survives what security officials say is an assassination attempt. Shots were fired as his motorcade passed through the capital.

## **Côte d'Ivoire timeline**<sup>74</sup>

### ***Early days***

1842 - France imposes protectorate over coastal zone.

1893 - Côte d'Ivoire made into a colony.

1904 - Côte d'Ivoire becomes part of the French Federation of West Africa.

1944 - Felix Houphouët-Boigny, later to become the first president, founds a union of African farmers, which develops into the inter-territorial African Democratic Rally and its Ivorian section, the Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Party.

1958 - Côte d'Ivoire becomes a republic within the French Community.

### ***Independence***

1960 - France grants independence under President Felix Houphouët-Boigny. He holds power until he dies in 1993.

1990 - Opposition parties legalised; Houphouët-Boigny wins Côte d'Ivoire's first multiparty presidential election, beating Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI).

1993 - Henri Konan Bédié becomes president following the death of Houphouët-Boigny.

1995 October - Bédié re-elected in a ballot that is boycotted by opposition parties in protest at restrictions imposed on their candidates.

1999 - July - Alassane Ouattara, a Muslim, leaves job at International Monetary Fund and returns to run for president in 2000; his plan to challenge Bédié splits country along ethnic and religious lines. Opponents say he is national of Burkina Faso, not Côte d'Ivoire.

### ***Coup***

1999 - Bédié overthrown in military coup led by Robert Guei. Bédié flees to France.

2000 October - Guei proclaims himself president after announcing he has won presidential elections, but is forced to flee in the wake of a popular uprising against his perceived rigging of the poll.

2000 October - Laurent Gbagbo, believed to be the real winner in the presidential election, is proclaimed president. Opposition leader Alassane Ouattara, excluded from running in the poll, calls for a fresh election.

2000 October - Fighting erupts between Gbagbo's mainly southern Christian supporters and followers of Ouattara, who are mostly Muslims from the north.

2000 December - President Gbagbo's Ivorian Popular Front (FPI) emerges as the biggest single party in parliamentary elections.

2001 January - Attempted coup fails.

2001 March - President Gbagbo and opposition leader Ouattara meet for the first time since violence erupted between their supporters in October 2000 and agree to work towards reconciliation.

2001 - Reports of a child slave ship off Africa's west coast spark allegations of child slavery in cocoa plantations, straining international relations. Government moves to tackle the issue.

2001 March - Calls for fresh presidential and legislative elections after Alassane Ouattara's party gains majority at local polls.

2001 June - Amnesty International criticises government's human rights record over alleged extra-judicial killings of 57 northerners during presidential election campaign in October 2000. Eight gendarmes accused of the killings are cleared in August.

2001 October - President Gbagbo sets up National Reconciliation Forum. General Guei refuses to attend in protest against the arrest of his close aide Captain Fabien Coulibaly.

2001 November - Opposition leader Alassane Ouattara returns, ending year-long exile in France and Gabon.

2002 August - Ouattara's RDR opposition party is given four ministerial posts in new government.



## ***Rebellion***

2002 19 September - Mutiny in Abidjan by soldiers unhappy at being demobilised grows into full-scale rebellion, with Côte d'Ivoire Patriotic Movement rebels seizing control of the north.

2002 October-December - Short-lived ceasefire in October gives way to further clashes and battle for key cocoa-industry town of Daloa. Previously unknown rebel groups seize towns in west.

2003 January - President Gbagbo accepts peace deal at talks in Paris. Deal proposes power-sharing government.

## ***Power-sharing***

2003 March - Political parties, rebels agree on new government to include nine members from rebel ranks. "Consensus" prime minister, Seydou Diarra, tasked with forming cabinet.

2003 May - Armed forces sign "full" ceasefire with rebel groups to end almost eight months of rebellion.

2003 July - At presidential palace ceremony military chiefs and rebels declare war is over.

2003 August - Group of suspected mercenaries and their backers detained in France; they are said to have planned to assassinate President Gbagbo.

2003 September - Rebels accuse President Gbagbo of failing to honour peace agreement and pull out of unity government.

2003 December - 19 killed in armed attack on state TV building in Abidjan. Rebels rejoin government of national unity.

## ***Hostilities and the road to peace***

2004 March - Deadly clashes during crackdown on opposition rally against President Gbagbo in Abidjan. The former ruling party, the Côte d'Ivoire Democratic Party (PDCI), pulls out of the government, accusing President

Gbagbo of “destabilising the peace process”. First contingent of UN peacekeeping force deployed.

2004 May - UN report says March’s opposition rally was used as a pretext for a planned operation by security forces. Report says more than 120 people were killed and alleges summary executions and torture.

2004 November - Outbreak of hostilities: Ivorian air force attacks rebels. French forces enter the fray after nine of their soldiers are killed in an air strike, destroying the Ivorian air force fleet. Violent anti-French protests ensue. The UN imposes an arms embargo.

2004 December - Parliament passes key reforms envisaged under 2003 peace accord, including abolishing need for president to have Ivorian mother and father (which would allow Ouattara to enter his candidacy in an election).

2005 April - Government, rebels declare an “immediate and final end” to hostilities. The move follows talks in South Africa. Gbagbo invokes Article 48 of the Constitution to allow Ouattara to contest an election, a controversial move since it opens the door to other uses of the Article’s executive power. Elections are scheduled for 30 October, 2005.

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