



Armed Conflicts Report

Sierra Leone (1991-first combat deaths)

Update: September 2002

Although a formal peace process was initiated in 1999, the civil war in Sierra Leone was not officially declared over until January 2002 when over 45,000 combatants were confirmed to be disarmed. Elections held in May 2002 were generally peaceful and were declared free and fair by a number of independent monitoring organizations. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah defeated eight other candidates, including former RUF rebels.

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

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Number of Deaths

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Background

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Summary:

2001 In May the government and the RUF agreed to a cease-fire in order to begin the implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement. By mid-May national disarmament had begun and by August two districts had been completely disarmed with 16,000 combatants laying down their arms. Thousands of civilians were still at risk from pro-government forces and rebel reprisal attacks against villages and refugees.

2000 The latest crisis began in May, when RUF fighters attacked UN peacekeepers in violation of the Lome Peace Agreement. At one point 500 UN personnel were detained at locations around the country, and nine of them were killed. On May 17, Sankoh was arrested and after two months of negotiations and military action by UNAMSIL, all hostages were released by mid-July. As the Security Council prepared to send in more peacekeepers, clashes broke out between the neighbouring countries of Guinea and Liberia, and divisions were reported among UN personnel on the ground. Specific casualty figures were unavailable; however, it is likely that thousands of people, mostly civilians, were killed in the ongoing clashes.

1999 Rebel forces captured the capital Freetown in January, a gain that was reversed shortly after. The fighting between government forces and rebels decreased significantly after the signing of the July Lome Accord, but clashes between rebel groups and within rebel factions increased in the last quarter of the year. More than 5,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed during 1999, a fourfold increase from the estimated 1,300 deaths of the year before.

1998 The ruling military junta, a coalition of rebels and military troops who seized power in a 1997 coup d'etat, was toppled in February by Nigerian-led peacekeeping troops and militia forces supporting the elected government. An immediate resurgence of rebel attacks deliberately targeted and terrorized civilians and by late December the rebels again were advancing on the capital, Freetown.

Type of Conflict:

State control

Parties to the Conflict:

1) Government:

Led by President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

"In May 1997 RUF forces and those of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrew the elected government in a coup, driving it into exile in Guinea. The RUF/AFRC junta was itself driven out of Freetown by forces of the Economic Organization of West African States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), led by the armed forces of Nigeria, in February 1998. The Government was restored to power in March 1998, but fighting between government and RUF/AFRC elements continued." [1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Sierra Leone, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February 25, 2000]

2) Kamajors:

A militia consisting of traditional hunters, who support the democratically elected President Kabbah.

3) The Revolutionary United Front (RUF):

The RUF, led by Issa Sesay after the arrest of Foday Sankoh on May 17, 2000 (briefly shared power with the AFRC).

4) The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC):

The AFRC, led by former members of the Sierra Leonean army, collaborate with the RUF.

5) ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) peace monitoring group (ECOMOG):

A Nigerian-led West African intervention force which ousted Sierra Leone's military junta in February 1998.

"With the failure of diplomatic efforts and the escalation of tension, ECOMOG's mandate was upgraded from sanction enforcement to actual military intervention, resulting in the ousting of the AFRC/RUF in February. The Nigerian-dominated ECOMOG contingent in Sierra Leone was composed of approximately 9,000 troops, including support battalions from Guinea and Ghana. ECOMOG's intervention in Sierra Leone came at a time of sharp international criticism of Nigeria's domestic human rights situation. International Humanitarian Groups complained that ECOMOG's shelling of Freetown led to a high number of civilian casualties." [Human Rights Watch World Report, 1999]

6) UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone)

Established on October 2, 1999 to assist with the Lome Peace Agreement, disarmament and stabilization.

"UNAMSIL's mandate is to assist the Government of Sierra Leone to extend state authority, restore law and order and progressively stabilize the country, and to assist in the promotion of the political process, leading to a renewed disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program. The mission's current tasks include providing security at key installations in Freetown and southern Sierra Leone; facilitating the free flow of people, goods, and humanitarian assistance along specified roads; safeguarding and disposing of arms collected from ex-combatants; and assisting Sierra Leone's law enforcement authorities in the maintenance of law and order." [US State Department, April 12, 2001]

Status of the Fighting:

2002 In January the war was declared officially over. There were no direct conflict-related deaths reported this year but peace remained fragile with threats of renewed violence coming from break-away rebels within Sierra Leone. Clashes on the border with Liberia also threatened to disrupt Sierra Leone's nascent stability.

"A field commander of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone, General Daniel Opani, has said that with the last senior rebel commanders having been disarmed, the war in the country was now over. His comments came after 11 rebel leaders gave up their guns as a symbolic last step in the disarmament process." [BBC News, January 13, 2002]

"Quoting unnamed British and Sierra Leonean officers, the BBC reported that despite the disarmament of the rebels, there was still a threat from

remnants of the RUF... The BBC reported that one senior Sierra Leonean army commander in the east said 'he was concerned by the breakaway RUF group he named as the Independent RUF.'

[IRIN, January 16, 2002]

"The threat to security has been demonstrated by a number of attacks across the border from Liberia, the most recent about a month ago. They have resulted in looting by both Liberian army and rebel units of Sierra Leonean villages, according to UN personnel in Sierra Leone. A number of Sierra Leoneans have been kidnapped in these attacks to act as porters for the Liberians, and 16 were still unaccounted for, the UN told the BBC on 10 September." [BBC News, September 25, 2002]

2001 In May the government and the RUF agreed to a cease-fire in order to begin implementation of the Lome Peace Agreement. By mid-May national disarmament had begun and by August two districts had been completely disarmed, along with 16,000 combatants. Thousands of weapons and military vehicles were turned in to agencies responsible for disarmament, and later destroyed. Although disarmament continued through the year there were minor clashes between government and rebel forces in some districts.

"RUF fighters said they suffered nine casualties in fighting against pro-government Civil Defence Forces that began on Saturday in the eastern district of Kono, the UN Mission Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) said." [IRIN, May 9, 2001]

"A joint committee monitoring the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of rival fighters in Sierra Leone has declared the process complete in the two districts of Kambia and Port Loko. In a joint communique, committee members UNAMSIL, the Revolutionary United Front and the government declared disarmament in the two districts, which started in May, a success. The committee reported that while a similar process had proceeded in Kono and Bonthe districts in June, there were 'still pockets of combatants in Kono'. It called on the pro-government Civil Defence Forces and the RUF to disarm." [IRIN, August 13, 2001]

2000 The latest crisis began in May, when RUF fighters attacked the peacekeepers in violation of the Lome Peace Agreement. At one point 500 UN personnel were detained at locations around the country, and nine of them were killed. On May 17, RUF leader Sankoh was arrested and after two months of negotiations and military action by UNAMSIL, all hostages were released by mid-July. As the Security Council prepared to send in more peacekeepers, clashes broke out between the neighbouring countries of Guinea and Liberia, and divisions were reported among UN personnel currently on the ground. On September 21, the Organization of African Unity called for a change in the leadership of the United Nations peacekeeping force.

[Sources: *The Washington Post*, 7 February 2000; *InterPressService*, 14 August 2000; *InterPress Services*, 14 September 2000; *Independent Online*, 22 September 2000]

"Currently, rebel forces made up of RUF and renegade soldiers (estimated 15000) occupy much of the north and east of Sierra Leone, including the diamond-rich Kono District." [Comments from the a policy symposium titled "Sierra Leone one year after the Peace Accord: the search for Peace, Justice and Sustainable Development, June 21-23, 2000]

"An estimated 7,000 internally displaced people arrived in Bumbuna, northern Freetown. They were fleeing fighting between government forces and RUF rebels in a number of towns including Makeni and Magburaka." [Conflict Trends, 10 August 2000]

"Tensions between Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea – which all have common borders – have worsened, with the Guinean government declaring that the 500,000 refugees in its country are causing instability." [The Economist, 16 September 2000]

1999 The rebels attacked the capital Freetown in January, seizing it from government forces and from the Nigerian-led peacekeeping force of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Freetown returned to government and ECOMOG hands in February, but not before the rebels perpetrated widespread atrocities against the civilian population. The fighting decreased significantly after the signing of the July Lome Accord, although tensions between rebel groups and within rebel factions led to several post-Accord clashes.

"In January 1999, rebels from the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched an offensive against the capital Freetown, capturing it from government troops and soldiers from the Nigerian-led peacekeeping troops of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The battle for Freetown and ensuing three week rebel occupation of the capital was characterized by the systematic and widespread perpetration of all classes of atrocities against the civilian population, and marked the most intensive and concentrated period of human rights violations in Sierra Leone's eight-year civil war. Government and ECOMOG forces also carried out serious abuses, including over 180 summary executions of rebels and their suspected collaborators." [Human Rights Watch World Report, 2000]

1998 Fighting, intense throughout the year, was marked by two waves of insurgency. In February, the military junta, composed of RUF/AFRC rebels who seized power the previous May, was toppled by forces of the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). With the reimposition of the elected government of President Tejan Kabbah, roles reversed but the fighting continued. The RUF/AFRC mounted an extended and vicious new insurgency, with the killing and maiming of civilians suspected of government sympathy, or even of neutrality, becoming the target of new attacks. In December, the conflict reached a critical juncture

as the rebels moved to capture Freetown and once again overthrow the government.

Number of Deaths:

Total: Estimates of the total conflict deaths range from 20,000 to over 50,000. In addition, 30,000 civilians, including children, have had limbs hacked off by the rebels. An estimated 215, 000 to 257,000 women were victims of sexual violence during the civil war.

2002 Violence surrounded the elections in May but there were no reported conflict-related deaths in the first nine months of 2002.

"The riots broke out between supporters of the ruling party, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) when they tried to march past the offices of the former rebels of the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF). Both sides blame the other for starting the stone-throwing - with the RUF adding that their offices were trashed and looted by SLPP." [*BBC News*, May 12, 2002]

2001 Dozens of deaths were reported before October, a significant decline from 2000. Thousands of refugees and civilians also were at risk due to both government and rebel forces retaliating against supposed sympathizers.

"Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels are raping, abducting and killing refugees fleeing camps in Guinea, thereby casting doubt on the viability of a proposed safe passage for the refugees through RUF lines, Human Rights Watch reported." [*IRIN*, April 3, 2001]

"Recent killings of civilians in northern and eastern Sierra Leone are 'the most serious' in several months, Human Rights Watch reported. It said the pro-government Civil Defence Forces (CDF) militia and the anti-government Revolutionary United Front (RUF) had been killing civilians in Kono, in the east, and Koinadugu in the north of the country. 'Civilians are being targeted in deadly battles of retaliation', Peter Takirambudde, executive director of Africa at Human Rights Watch, said. HRW findings are drawn from 'extensive interviews' with numerous victims and witnesses who described attacks by the CDF militias in June and July against the RUF controlled towns of Worodu, Yiraia, Sukudu and Mansofina. HRW said at least 24 people were killed, including nine women and nine children. Another 19 people, 11 of whom were children were wounded. The most serious recent incident was on 17 June, when CDF militias-commonly known as Kamajors or Donzos-killed at least 21 civilians in the town of Yiraia. These deaths were in apparent retaliation for RUF raids against surrounding villagers whom they accuse of supporting the CDF militias. The RUF killed at least 3 civilians, wounded several, and abducted 16." [*IRIN*, July 24, 2001]

"A new study released today by Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), with the support of UNAMSIL (UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone)... reports that internally displaced women and girls in Sierra Leone have suffered an extraordinary level of rape, sexual violence and other gross human rights violations during their country's civil war, with half of those who said they came into contact with RUF (Revolutionary United Front) forces reporting sexual violence." ["*War-Related Sexual Violence in Sierra Leone*", Physicians for Human Rights, January 23, 2002]

2000 Specific casualty figures were unavailable; however, it is likely that thousands of people, mostly civilians, were killed this year in the ongoing clashes.

"United Nations monitors say former rebels in Sierra Leone are continuing to rape, loot and mutilate civilians in the north, despite a peace accord... They report that some 2,000 former rebels looted nine villages in the second week of January. The UN report says people have been regularly abducted while out gathering wood and food, with men taken as labourers and women to cook and for sexual purposes." [*BBC News*, 2 February 2000]

"Human rights abuses – for example, murder, systematic rape, amputations, forced labour—are widespread in rebel-controlled areas." [*Comments from the a policy symposium titled "Sierra Leone one year after the Peace Accord: the search for Peace, Justice and Sustainable Development*, June 21-23, 2000]

1999 More than 5,000 people, mostly civilians, were killed during 1999.

"At least 6,350 people killed in fighting in Sierra Leone's capital in January have been buried in mass graves health authorities said Thursday. The United Nations had put the figure at an 5,000 in a provisional report in February on two weeks of fighting between rebels and West African forces defending Freetown." [*Reuters*, March 25, 1999]

1998 More than 1,300 people were killed in the conflict during 1998, with civilians making up the vast majority of the dead. In addition, thousands of people were permanently maimed by rebel forces who hacked off arms and feet as a part of a terrorist policy when they entered towns and villages.

"Some members of the security forces, including the Civil Defense Forces, committed extrajudicial killings, and tortured and beat suspected rebels and rebel collaborators. Prison and jail conditions remained harsh and sometimes life-threatening. Government forces sometimes interfered with humanitarian relief efforts. In the period directly following the removal of the junta from power, there was a significant number of vigilante-style extrajudicial killings by citizens; upon being restored to power, the Government, with EGOMOG support, acted forcefully to end these killings." [*1998 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Sierra Leone*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, 1999]

Political Developments:

2002 The first nine months of 2002 saw the success of efforts to implement the Lome Peace

Agreement. The large-scale disarmament of former combatants was largely successful and other peacebuilding efforts, including the operations of the special tribunal set up to prosecute those responsible for atrocities committed during the civil war, were well underway. President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah defeated eight other candidates in free and fair elections in May, the first elections since the end of the war. His success was not contested by competitors, and the elections marked the almost complete disintegration of the RUF which received minimal popular support. The UN Security Council agreed in September to extend the UN mission in Sierra Leone for another six months, with plans to begin reducing the number of peacekeepers present in mid-2003.

"President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was declared the winner today of Sierra Leone's first postwar elections, signaling a sweeping rejection of the rebels who waged one of Africa's most ruthless conflicts...Kabbah took a new oath of office just hours after the last votes were tallied and urged his followers not to take retribution against losing sides in the vote, and called it 'our right and collective responsibility to work together' in rebuilding." [*The Washington Post*, May 20, 2002]

2001 Presidential and parliamentary elections were postponed in January due to continuing insecurity in parts of the country. The High Command of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) created a Political and Peace Council to start formal dialogue on peace and in May the Council met with Sierra Leonean government officials in Nigeria and agreed to a cease-fire. In January Britain announced that its military would remain and rebuild the Sierra Leone military until the RUF was defeated by war or diplomacy.

"British troops, engaged in rebuilding the Sierra Leonean army, will remain until the Revolutionary United Front has been defeated by war or diplomacy. 'We will leave when the war is either won or resolved on favourable terms,' Jonathan Riley, the British brigadier commanding the operation, said on BBC Radio 4. British troops have been training 6,000 Sierra Leonean soldiers, in the effort to reestablish a professional army under civilian control. Another 4,500 troops are still to undergo retraining. These troops are expected to put additional pressure on the RUF whose situation, Riley said, was 'getting worse'." [*IRIN*, January 4, 2001]

"The High Command of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) endorsed in Makeni all six members of its newly formed Political and Peace Council. The objective of the six-member council was to start 'formal dialogue' with the government and the international community so as to resume the peace process interrupted in May 2000 when the RUF detained over 500 UN troops." [*IRIN*, March 30, 2001]

"The Revolutionary United Front met in the northern town of Makeni and unanimously ratified an agreement reached with the Sierra Leonean government in the Nigerian capital. At the Sierra Leone cease-fire review meeting, the RUF reiterated its commitment to return all arms, ammunition and equipment seized from the UN and ECOMOG by 30 May 2001. The rebel group also agreed to withdraw from the northern district of Kambia, where cross-border attacks have been taking place. It promised to enrol its fighters in the country's disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme with a view to absorption into the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) after screening." [*IRIN*, May 7, 2001]

2000 In January, Kofi Annan requested an increase in troops for the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) from 6,000 to 11,000 to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of more than 4,800 soldiers of ECOMOG, with the mandate of implementing a plan to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate the warring factions. By the beginning of August 13,000 troops were in place. Concerned with Sierra Leonean rebels' diamond exports to finance their operations, the United Nations Security Council imposed a ban on illicit diamond exports, until the government sets up a proper certification system for the gems and regains access to diamond-mining areas under rebel control. In August, the Security Council agreed to establish a "special court" to try Sierra Leoneans accused of committing crimes against humanity and war crimes.

[Sources: *InterPress Service*, 13 January 2000; *InterPress Service*, 13 January 2000; *BusinessDay*, 7 July, 2000; *InterPress Services*, 2 August 2000; *InterPress Service*, 14 August 2000]

"The 'special court' will be a blend of a national court and an international tribunal, such as those set up for Rwanda and Yugoslavia. The court will 'have personal jurisdiction over persons who bear the greatest responsibility' for committing 'crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law, as well as crimes under relevant Sierra Leonean law'." [*InterPress Service*, 14 August 2000]

1999 The Lome Accord signed by the government and the RUF in Togo granted a sweeping amnesty to rebel members for crimes committed during the conflict. In October, the UN Security Council established a peacekeeping operation, the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), to help implement the Accord. Kenyan and Indian peacekeeping contingents began arriving in December, while Nigeria and other ECOMOG members were reducing or withdrawing their forces.

"The UN Security Council approved a 6,600 member peacekeeping operation, the U.N. Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Kenyan and Indian peacekeeping forces began arriving in December, even as the Nigerian, Guinean, Ghanaian, and Malian ECOMOG components were preparing to leave Sierra Leone." [*1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Sierra Leone*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February 25, 2000]

1998 In February, ECOMOG deposed the ruling junta of the RUF/AFRC. President-elect Tejan Kabbah was reinstated in March, fulfilling by force the mandate of the 1997 Conkary Peace Plan. The new government was unable to take full and effective control of the country however, leaving the rebel insurgents with room to begin another serious counter-attack on the capital in December.

Background:

The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) styled itself as a liberation movement when it began a guerrilla campaign against the government of President Joseph Momoh in March 1991. The war has defied solution since, with the RUF refusing to attend talks and fighting aimed more at gaining control of the country's lucrative diamond deposits than attaining a political end. The emergence of a Civilian Defence Force militia of traditional hunters known as Kamajors has complicated matters: nominally auxiliaries of the army, they have been known to act independently, even attacking the army itself. In spite of rebel threats of violence and harassment by government forces, 1996 elections clearly selected a civilian government under President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). With the assistance of the government of the Ivory Coast, the new government met with RUF leader Foday Sankoh and agreed to a ceasefire extension and later a peace agreement. In May 1997, the government was overthrown by junior army officers and Major Johnny Paul Koroma, Chairman of the new Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), offered the RUF an opportunity to join the junta. The Kamajors, with support from the Nigerian Army, attempted to reinstate the elected government but after suffering major losses against forces of the AFRC, the Nigerian Army left the country. When the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and UN economic sanctions and military embargoes did not succeed in removing the rebel junta, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops undertook direct military action in February 1998. The elected government of President Kabbah was reinstated in March but was unable to take full and effective control of the country, leaving the rebel insurgents with room to begin another counter-attack by the end of 1998. In 1999 the Lome Peace Accords, signed between the government and rebel forces, were intended to create peace and stability and promote disarmament and the reintegration of rebel fighters back into Sierra Leonean society. However, it was not until January 2002 that the war was declared officially over and 45,000 combatants were disarmed. Free and generally fair elections were held in May, 2002. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP enjoyed a sweeping victory. In contrast, the RUF received only minimal support and subsequently dissolved almost completely.

"More than nine years of war in Sierra Leone have devastated a country that was already impoverished, deeply indebted and suffering from years of mismanagement and failed development initiatives. Sierra Leone is currently ranked last on the UNDP's Human Development Index, with the lowest life expectancy in the world—35 years, highest maternal mortality rate in the world and one of the highest infant mortality rates. The war has curbed agricultural production drastically, cut government revenues from mining and seen the destruction of hundreds of schools, health clinics, and administrative facilities. Forced displacement has effected more than half the population estimated at 4.5 million.. At present, about two-thirds of the population is accessible to humanitarian organizations seeking to provide emergency relief. Even in government controlled areas, there has been increased vulnerability to malnutrition and disease." [Comments from the a policy symposium titled "Sierra Leone one year after the Peace Accord: the search for Peace, Justice and Sustainable Development, June 21-23, 2000]

"With the breakdown of state structures and the effective suppression of civilian opposition, wide corridors were opened for trafficking of small arms and ammunition and drugs, all of which eroded national/regional security and facilitated crime within the country and between Sierra Leone and Liberia and even Guinea...

A rehabilitation strategy for Sierra Leone needs to focus on the broader issues of governance, institution-building and capacity building of government, if the other aspects of rehabilitation are to be sustainable." [Comments from the a policy symposium titled "Sierra Leone one year after the Peace Accord: the search for Peace, Justice and Sustainable Development, June 21-23, 2000]

Arms Sources:

In the mid-1990s, the government of Sierra Leone received military assistance from the United States and combat helicopters from Belarus. The government also secured weapons from China and Ukraine. Both the government and the RUF bartered diamonds for weapons and the services of mercenaries.

"A scandal broke out in early May when the UK media exposed an arms shipment to ECOMOG from Sandline, a private security firm based in the UK. The secret shipment of approximately thirty-two tons of arms, allegedly delivered in February with the consent of the British government, appeared to violate U.N. and UK arms embargoes against Sierra Leone. U.N. legal analysts subsequently determined that the embargo had not been violated, and on June 5, the U.N. Security Council lifted the arms embargo except as it applied to the AFRC/RUF". [Human Rights Watch World Report, 1999]

"Most diamonds from rebel-held areas are smuggled through Liberia and on to world markets from Monrovia. Diamond profits are reportedly used for the purchase of arms and ammunition, hiring of mercenaries and other war-related activities." [Comments from the a policy symposium titled "Sierra Leone one year after the Peace Accord: the search for Peace, Justice and Sustainable Development, June 21-23, 2000]

"In a March 28 letter to Campaore, the New York-based group Human Rights Watch asked for an 'urgent' investigation into evidence that 68 tonnes of weapons and ammunition destined for Burkina Faso's army and flown from Ukraine were diverted to the RUF in March 1999. The shipment included 3,000 AKM Kalashnikov assault rifles, 50 machine guns, 25 rocket-propelled grenades, five SA-7 surface-to-air missiles and five Metis antitank guided missile systems. The letter noted that while Burkina Faso signed the end-user certificate for the shipment, the military here has been using NATO-standard weapons." [The Washington Post, 5 May 2000]

"During the (hostage-taking) fiasco, the United Nations lost hundreds of weapons, thousands of rounds of ammunition, communications equipment and 13 armored vehicles (to rebel forces). [Washington Post Foreign Service, 15 May 2000]

"The equipment would be part of a \$20 million aid package pledged by President Clinton to strengthen the United Nations peacekeeping effort in

Sierra Leone. The New York Times, citing unnamed Pentagon officials, said several hundred special forces will be sent from Fort Bragg, N.C., later this month and next to train the West African battalions." [*Associated Press*, 8 September 2000]

Economic Factors:

With Sierra Leone rich in gold and diamonds, the government and rebels strove to control access to mines. A report produced in 2000 by Partnership Africa Canada, 'The Heart of the Matter', claimed that RUF rebels illicitly traded diamonds for arms and drugs by smuggling them through Liberia and other countries. The report helped generate support for international certification systems, like the Kimberley Process, designed to stop the trade of illegal conflict diamonds.

"The point of the war may not actually have been to win it, but to engage in profitable crime under the cover of warfare. Diamonds, in fact, have fueled Sierra Leone's conflict, destabilizing the country for the better part of three decades, stealing its patrimony and robbing an entire generation of children, putting the country dead last on the UNDP Human Development Index." [*Partnership Africa Canada*, *The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security*, 2000]

"As yesterday's report by Partnership Africa Canada revealed, diamonds from Sierra Leone fueled the brutal conflict in the West African country..." [*The Globe and Mail*, *January 13, 2000*]

"That is what makes it so difficult for the United Nations or anyone else to come in and make peace a lasting proposition,' said the longtime diplomat in the region. 'You are touching the lucrative livelihood, not just of rebel groups but of the states that support them. That reality should give us all pause.'" [*The Washington Post*, 6 May 2000]

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