

Building The “State” Without “Peace” Or Making “Peace” Without The “State”:The Paradox Of State-Building And Peace-Building In Sierra Leone

Ekaette Ikpe, Kamau Nyokabi & Abiodun Alao

Integrated Field Research Report

This paper is a part of an African Leadership Centre Research project supported by the International Development Research Centre. The paper was presented at the project’s review and validation workshop convened on 18-19 April 2016 in Nairobi. The paper integrates the revised baseline studies, field research notes and reviewers comments.

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
The Inevitability of Instability: Extracting Relevant Historical Trajectories in the State-Building Conversations in Sierra Leone	6
Recalcitrant Issues of Contention in State-Building Discourses in Sierra Leone ...	13
<i>Natural Resource Management and the Politics of State-building in Sierra Leone</i>	13
<i>The impact of the Lebanese business community on the economy</i>	17
<i>Chieftaincy</i>	18
<i>Youth issues</i>	19
Civil Wars, the Politics of Peace Agreements and the Intrigues of State-Building in Sierra Leone	21
<i>Distinct Features of the Pre-Settlement and Settlement Process</i>	22
<i>The multiplicity, and shifting alliances of the main protagonists</i>	22
<i>The main Peace-Building actors and their varying motivations and interests and cross purposes</i>	23
<i>“Flawed” Peace Agreements: Abidjan, Conakry, and Lome Agreements</i>	23
<i>Uncoordinated International Response</i>	26
How Easy Thereafter: The Juggling of Peace-Building and State-Building in Post Civil War Sierra Leone	28
<i>International institutional capacity building approach</i>	29
<i>Continuation of divisive party politics along ethnic lines</i>	31
<i>The management of intergroup relations in post conflict statebuilding conversation</i>	33
<i>Natural Resource Governance</i>	35
<i>Corruption and Management</i>	36
Gender Dimensions of Peace-Building and State-Building	37
On-Going Developments Relevant to Peace-Building and State-Building in Sierra Leone	42
<i>The EBOLA Virus Disease</i>	42
<i>Tenure Elongation Controversies</i>	44
Conclusion: The Future from Where We Stand	47

Building the “State” without “Peace” or Making “Peace” without the “State”:

The Paradox of State-building and Peace-building in Sierra Leone

Introduction

“Peace” and “Conflict” in Sierra Leone are integral parts of Politics. The elites have manipulated both and the gullible masses cannot see through elite deception. The truth is that Sierra Leone is a weak state and any peace you have in a weak state is fragile peace that will keep sliding in and out of conflict.¹

More than many African countries, Sierra Leone has had a portion of challenges that are not commensurate with its population or geographical size. Military coups, dictatorship, acrimonious inter-group relations and bitter civil wars have underlined the affairs of the former British colony with a population of just about 7 million and geographical perimeter of about 70,000 square kilometres. Battered and bruised from these experiences, the country provides a context for exploring how underlying politics and governance factors might impact its recovery. In this light of particular concern is the necessity of the joint pursuit of peace- and state-building as essential foundational blocks to lasting peace. Indeed, of all the paradoxes that characterised the country, none seems to have been more profound as how the country has balanced the crucial subject of “peace-building” and “state-building” after a bitter civil war that resulted in the death of more than 100,000 people and brought about the displacement of more than a million people. Among others, key issues about how international assistance in the search for peace has coalesced with national realities and desires have been crucial barometers in assessing how the past can predict the future of the country.

¹ Participant in Focus Group Discussion

Reframing national constructs after situations of intense peace and security breakdown that affected intergroup relations is a tedious but important national exercise. Here it is necessary to consider how the mutually reinforcing subjects of “peace-building” and state-building” come into the equation of national politics. Crucial to these processes is the nature and extent to which the management of the outbreak of conflict facilitates a society to revisit of the central issues in its post-conflict state-building conversations. Addressing these issues allows for the location of peacebuilding as part of the continuum of state-building in which peacebuilding represents an interlude in the state-building process that has transitioned into violence.

For Sierra Leone, the peacebuilding process after its eleven years bitter civil war provides a rich empirical basis for the examination of fundamental issues of governance at the heart of its state-building conversation. As such, it allows us to locate the mutuality between peacebuilding and state-building. This research raises a number of inter-woven but mutually exclusive questions, some of which include:

1. What is Sierra Leone’s historical trajectory in relation to the state-building conversation that took place before the civil war?
2. What was distinct about the process leading to the post-conflict settlement? What are distinct features of the settlement and considerations that dictated the settlement?
3. To what extent has the formal agreements reached after conflicts brought credible long-term peace?
4. To what extent has peace-building returned the Sierra Leonean society to the original state-building “conversation” and how have fundamental issues of governance been addressed in the aftermath of the conflict?
5. What identity issues that were part of the State-Building conversation were taken into consideration in the settlement and post settlement arrangements?
6. Have the gender regimes that predated conflict altered? If so, how? Does this differ from other identity conversations pre- and post conflict? ²

² These are the general questions that underline all the five case-studies in this project: Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Cote d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone.

These questions, often previously asked rhetorically, are examined in considerable details this paper.

The central argument advanced in the paper is that four issues are central to the state-building conversation in Sierra Leone. These are: the identity conversation in the quest for nationhood; the search for a legitimate, and effective national political culture; the politics (and intrigues) involved in the management of its natural resource endowments; and the re-engagement of societies and communities at the margins of the state. This study posits that efforts to address these four issues have underlined the state-building conversation in the country and that lasting peace will depend on the extent to which these issues are addressed.

A discussion on the methodology employed for this study is necessary at this juncture. The first step was a review of the available literature on the subject. This led to the preparation of a baseline study that drew upon secondary sources to provide an overview of the key issues underlining peacebuilding and statebuilding processes in Sierra Leone. This process generated a key component of the research process: a set of propositions that were tested during field research in January 2016. Field-based study utilised unstructured interviews and focus group discussions across Sierra Leone. The interviewees and FGD participants were drawn broadly and selected to satisfy the ethnic, gender, political and religious diversities of the country, using the snowballing sample method.³

Broadly, the rest of this study is divided into seven sections. In the first is an attempt to extract relevant historical trajectories that are relevant to state-building in Sierra Leone. The objective here is to identify how much of history has been at the roots of the challenges subsequently engulfed the state. The second section identifies the key issues that underline state-building politics in Sierra Leone, especially those issues that were to become relevant to the breakdown in law and order, while section three interrogates the Sierra Leonean civil war and the politics of Peace settlements. In the fourth section is a discussion on the intricate politics of peace-building and state-building in Sierra Leone, focusing specifically on how the country has fared with its post-civil war agreements. The gender dimension of peace-building and state-building intersection in

³ The process and results of the field-based study are detailed in a fieldwork report.

Sierra Leone is discussed in the fifth section, while section six provides a discussion on the on-going developments relevant to peace-building and State-building in the country. The seventh section concludes discussion in the study by taking using past and on-going developments to look into the future of the West African country.

The Inevitability of Instability: Extracting Relevant Historical Trajectories in the State-Building Conversations in Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leonean state has always had a fundamental internal crack. What we witnessed with the civil war was just merely an expansion of the crack into an open sore. The way the war manifested was sufficient evidence to the fact that we have had contradictions that went back into the evolution of the state. Consequently, the question should not be why the state of Sierra Leone collapse but whether there was a state in the first instance.⁴

As a former British colony established by freed slaves, Sierra Leone was, until the outbreak of its civil war in 1991, one of West Africa's beacons of admiration.⁵ One of its tertiary institution, the Fourah Bay College, had trained many of West Africa's early elites,⁶ and the relatively political stability, was sufficient to win it a measure of respect in a region with littered history of civil wars, military coups and acrimonious inter-group relations.⁷ However, within this historical evolution lay many issues that were to play redoubtable roles in some of the developments that now characterise the political and economic outlooks of the country.

There was a peculiarity with the way the British administered Sierra Leone between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries and this was to be at the centre of quite a number of problems that subsequently occurred in the West African nation. Between

⁴ Interview with Dr Max Ahmadu Sesay

⁵ The country's beaches have historically attracted visitors to the country and the general peace that existed in the neighbouring countries for the period immediately after independence were sources of further attraction.

⁶ Fourah Bay College was the first Western style university college in Africa and its contribution to educational development of the region has recently been captured in the first major book on the University, See, Anthony Karim Kamara, A Concise History of Fourah Bay College 1827 – 2003,

⁷ As of this time, Ghana had experienced military coup and Nigeria had experienced both military coups and a bitter civil war.

1896 and 1951, the British divided the country into two administrative entities: the Crown Colony, which had been constituted in 1808, and Protectorates, which had been conquered by 1896. The former was mainly the domain of the Creoles, the descendants of the freed slaves, and the latter being territories occupied by other segments of the population. The Creoles were privileged with more education and access to political social and economic benefits of the state. Although not as profound as the situation in neighbouring Liberia, it was, to a large extent, similar.

These sociological and geo-political divisions resulted in the privileging by the British of the Krios over the indigenous populations and undermined the interdependence and cultural understanding between the two broad groups. As a consequence, the Krios were highly educated and occupied most of the professional positions in the colonial administrations at the expense of the indigenous populations broadly described as illiterate.⁸ This subsequently reinforced the air of superiority of the Krios over the indigenous populations. The Krios who were more educated and Christians felt that they had a mission to expose the ingenious populations to ‘light’ and civilisation. The indigenous populations fiercely resisted these perceptions of cultural, religious and racial superiority. These racial and prejudicial distinctions however underlined and structured the legal, administrative, political and social relations between and within the colony and protectorate.⁹ The main underlying point of tension at the heart of this identity conversation was the contestation over political equality and control of the state.¹⁰

With increased political mobilization of the Krios against colonial rule, the British established legal policies that increased political and public participation of the indigenous populations in the governance process.¹¹ In essence, the colonizers deployed the ubiquitous divide and rule tactic. Additionally, the British and the natives realigned their economic and trade relations with the Krios following the arrival of Lebanese immigrants in 1907.¹² This further widened the ethnic rift between the natives and the

⁸ Interview with Dr Osman Gbla, Department of Political Science Fourah Bay College

⁹ Jimmy D. Kandeh 1992 Politicization of Ethnic Identities in Sierra Leone African Studies Review, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Apr. p.83

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ TRC Report: Chapter One Historical Antecedents to the conflict pp.9-10

¹² Lansana Gberie, War and Peace in Sierra Leone: Diamonds, Corruption and the Lebanese Connection. p.10

Krios. As independence approached, the contestations between the numerically larger native populations and the minority Krios centred on the control and domination of the post – independent political project. Remnants of these divisions continue to reverberate throughout the post-independence period. It, however, needs to be pointed out that, although the division between the Krios and other segments of the Sierra Leone society remained crucial throughout the period of conflict in the country, it was less significant than the general ethnic differences between the North (namely Temnes) and the south, (largely Mendes).¹³

The arrival of competitive politics in the 1950s also brought a string of challenges, especially as democracy was nascent and not embedded in the culture. The literacy rate at the time was also very low thus challenging the expectations of votes to be cast based on issues as opposed to identity. Sierra Leone has 16 or 17 ethnic groups. Against this background, this identity conversation shifted to reflect political contestations predominantly among the Mendes, Temnes and the Limbas elites over the control of the state and its resources. This resulted in the instrumentalization of ethnic identities by the elites for their narrow interests.¹⁴ As such, political organizations and divisions in the country were formed and historically and contemporaneously mirrored ethnic identities. The post-independence ruling political party, the Sierra Leone's People Party, attracted support predominantly from the Mendes and was stigmatized as a Mende party.¹⁵ Conversely, the All Peoples Congress led by Siaka Stevens was formed as a counterforce to SLPP and the Mendes and drew its support principally from the Temnes, and the Limbas.¹⁶ Stevens' dictatorship for instance ensured that his dominance, reinforced by ethnic favouritism in the security forces, continued until the transfer of power to Joseph Momoh in 1985. The preference for Momoh was predicated on the belief by Steven that only a loyal person from his own ethnic group (the Limba) could protect his interests while he was outside a formal position of political power.¹⁷ When the SLPP won office in 1996 for the first time in nearly 30 years, it was widely

¹³ We thank Ismail Rashid for drawing our attention to this point.

¹⁴ Discussion during Focus Group Discussion

¹⁵ Jimmy D. Kandeh (1998). Transition without Rupture: Sierra Leone's Transfer Election of 1996. *African Studies Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Sep.), p.92

¹⁶ *ibid*

¹⁷ *ibid*

perceived as the return to power of the Mendes.¹⁸ The dominance of northerners in the army remained a legacy from Stevens' time. Hence, the military coup of May 1997 also reflected some shift in the ethnic complexion of power.

The emergence and development of ethno-regional political identities have played a significant political and developmental role through class formation and domination in the Sierra Leone State-Building conversation.¹⁹ As will be shown later, after the conflict, ethnicity became more prominent in the understanding of national politics. For the purpose of our discussion in this project, what is crucial to note is that political elites have wired their interests to ethnicity and they have introduced zero-sum tendencies to national politics on this basis. These are crucial factors in the politics of state and peace building due to the degree to which they have undermined the emergence and development of a collective sense of national identity. From 1967 to 1990 Sierra Leone experienced a host of problems including, the one party rule, coup d'état, and clampdown on student protests, a powerful executive president, political repression, dictatorship, militarisation, clientele patronage relationships, and marginalization. Although it needs to be pointed out that issues like military coups and one-party rule were symptomatic of political development in many parts of Africa at the period, they all opened up the fragility of the Sierra Leone state.

The post-independence political elites were ruthless in how they responded to dissent both within the opposition and within their regimes. From 1960, divisive party politics largely between the SLLP and APC grounded on ethnic and regional alliances and weak support bases fragmented the political system in Sierra Leone and with it hopes of a collective national identity. Political mobilization centred on the construction of a multiparty system and a democratic culture. The political dissent by a broad constituent of Sierra Leoneans immediately precipitated the replacement of Sir Milton Margai, following his death, by his Sir Albert Margai. The issue at this point was the qualifications of Sir Albert Margai. Against the background of the oppositions against him, Sir Albert Margai attempted to establish a one-party rule. This was widely opposed

¹⁸ But Kabbah tried to heal ethnic divisions by including representatives of other parties into the government

¹⁹ Jimmy D. Kandeh, *Politicization of Ethnic Identities in Sierra Leone* African Studies Review, Vol. 35, No. 1 pp. 81-99 April 1992.

and resulted in the uncovering of a coup plot against him.²⁰ Margai's desire to consolidate power further entrenched regional and ethnic polarization, cronyism in the public sphere and the narrowing of the political space.²¹

Albert Margai's loss of election in 1967 to Siaka Stevens precipitated three military coups within the space of one-year.²² Once he assumed office, Stevens began the process of arrogating more powers to himself, a process that resulted in the establishment of a one-party-state in 1978. A key feature and development of the Steven administration was the way he dealt with opposition and the consequences this was to have on the country's future. While the Margai brothers were somewhat tolerant of opposition, with Sir Milton Margai even providing money for opposition political parties to organise campaigns, Steven responded ruthlessly to dissent. In May 1971, a coup attempt by John Bangura, who had earlier handed power to Stevens, was uncovered at conception and Bangura and other plotters were hanged.²³ To convince Sierra Leoneans that the plotters had been killed, their bodies were displaced for public view. The killing of Bangura marked the beginning of an unfortunate sequence that was to plague Sierra Leone. From that moment, bloodshed became a part of Sierra Leonean politics and governance. Countrywide student demonstrations in 1977 against the corrupt and repressive APC regime marked the first attempt at political mobilization against the regime.²⁴ The APC however responded ruthlessly by closing all schools and colleges, arresting and detaining scores of students.²⁵ The regime dissolved parliament and conceded to student demands for national elections. However, after elections characterized by extensive violence, the Steven's regime introduced a one-party

²⁰ In response to the coup, Sir Albert Margai signed a Defence Pact with Guinea, thus providing a prelude to the complex regional involvement that was later to occur in the country. He ruled until 1967, when he lost election to Siaka Steven's All People's Congress (APC).

²¹ Discussion with Dr. Max Sesay

²² The first, led by David Lansana, a Brigadier in the army and a close friend of Albert Magai, who overthrew Stevens few hours after assuming office in April 1967. Another coup led by Andrew Juxton-Smith later removed Lansana in March 1968. This regime too was overthrown the following month by Brigadier John Bangura, who reinstated the constitution and brought Siaka Stevens as Prime Minister.

²³ This was in spite of the impassioned speech in which Bangura recalled his long association with Stevens and the assistance he gave in ensuring that Stevens became the Prime Minister.

²⁴ Jimmy D. Kandeh(1998).Transition without Rupture: Sierra Leone's Transfer Election of 1996.African Studies Review, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Sep.), pp. 91-111

²⁵ Ibid p. 93

constitution in 1978, incorporating members of the opposition party and narrowing the political space even further.²⁶

In 1986, Stevens retired from politics and specifically chose Joseph Momoh, who had previously been the head of the Sierra Leone Army, to be his successor. There was no major shift in policy towards governance under Momoh. Like Stevens, he too took strong actions against coup plots and, in fact, had his Vice President, Francis Minah, hanged in 1989 for one of such alleged coups. Abuse of power continued under Momoh and it was not surprising that it was under him that a civil war that was to redefine the outlook of Sierra Leone occurred. As the 1996 elections demonstrated, the change of government did not lead to the transformation of institutional practices of government.²⁷ All these political contestations and associated repressions and brutalities created a reduction in the value of human life among Sierra Leoneans, a trend that was to be displayed to its most abysmal level during the civil war.

Military coups are crucial parts in the historical evolution of the postcolonial Sierra Leone state. These unmasked political contestations among the political and military elites in Sierra Leone and had redoubtable impacts in the State-Building conversation. In March 1971 another military coup was organized by soldiers loyal to Bangura. One of those arrested and jailed for this coup was Foday Sankoh, a name that was to become the most infamous in the history of Sierra Leone as the head of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). In fact this turn of events posits the potential impact of discontent with the political elite by excluded groups. It also impacts on the State-Building process as Sankoh sought to reengage this in some way through the civil war. From here the links between political governance and the antecedents of violent conflict are well established. There was another alleged plot in July 1974, which saw eight people executed. The 1997 AFRC/RUF coup, which though took place in the middle of the civil war, equally reflected the deepened failure of democratic renewal in Sierra Leone and the delinking of democracy and development.²⁸ These contestations of power among the various leaders had considerable impact on state-building in at least two ways. First, it

²⁶ Jimmy D. Kandeh (1998). Transition without Rupture: Sierra Leone's Transfer Election of 1996. *African Studies Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Sep.), p. 93

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Jimmy D. Kandeh, op-cit.

created an impression that later became entrenched in the country that control of political power at the centre was to be aspired for with desperation and that holders of political power at the centre can use the control of state resources to intimidate the population. Second, it marked the beginning of the marginalisation of segments of the society, especially youths and minority ethnic groups.

However, far more prominent in explaining the ills that subsequently led to the civil war was the nature and extent of corruption in the country.²⁹ This was a means of utilising the state's material resources to reinforce political power. The governments, especially the Steven's, was notoriously corrupt and it made use of extensive patronage that effectively undermined all the principal institutions including the parliament, police, armed forces and civil service. Similar to the APC, and NPRC, the SLPP under Tejan Kabbah remained an unregenerate patronage party which devoured that state.³⁰ The perceptions of a hegemonic ethnic group in the APC additionally coloured any vestiges of a national identity and contributed to the introduction of nepotism and cronyism in state institutions.³¹ Even at this early stage, the various contradictions that have underlined state-building in Sierra Leone began to define politics in the country.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Jimmy D. Kandeh (1998). Transition without Rupture: Sierra Leone's Transfer Election of 1996. *African Studies Review*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Sep.), p. 107

³¹ TRC Report p,20

Recalcitrant Issues of Contention in State-Building Discourses in Sierra Leone

Apart from ethno-regional political divide and the legacies of colonial rule, a number of other issues have been at the centre of state-building discourses in Sierra Leone and a discussion of these issues are crucial to understanding the situation in Sierra Leone both before and after the country's bitter civil war. Crucial among these are four main issues: the politics of natural resource governance, especially the major role of diamonds; the role of the Lebanese in the economy and politics of Sierra Leone; Chieftaincy Matters and youth concerns. In this section, there is a discussion of each of these and how they connect to the politics of state-building and subsequently, to peace-building discourses in Sierra Leone.

Natural Resource Management and the Politics of State-building in Sierra Leone

There is a popular anecdote among Sierra Leoneans that effectively captures the relationship between natural resource endowments and the politics of their management in the country. According to the anecdote:

When at creation God blessed Sierra Leone with enormous mineral resources, other nations of the world complained at the favourable disposition of God towards the country. In response, God told them: "Wait till you see their leaders.

By regional standards, Sierra Leone's natural resources are significant, even if not exceptional. Apart from its land that is fertile for agriculture, the country also has considerable mineral resources, such as Gold, Diamond, Bauxite, Rutile, and Iron Ore and has the third largest mining deposit in the world and the largest in Africa. Of all these, however, diamonds are the most important, and consequently, most controversial. The resource was discovered in Sierra Leone in 1938, and since then, it has dominated the country's economy. The deposits are located in three main fields: Koidu-Yengema (Kono), Tongo and Zimmi. These fields run south of Zimmi town along the Mano River down to the Liberian border. The deposits are shallow and require minimal exploitation to guarantee returns. The location as a gateway to war-torn Liberia also made it strategic during Liberia's conflict. The same applies to gold, which,

after its discovery immediately contributed to the country's national economy. But apart from gold and diamonds, there is iron ore at Marampa and it was a major foreign-exchange earner until mining there was closed down in the mid-1970s.³² In terms of the economic benefits accruable from these resources, its relatively small population of about 5 million people should ordinarily have advantaged Sierra Leone. However, the failure to manage these resources efficiently brings the issue of natural resource governance into focus of attention. Indeed, as will be discussed later, it is the mismanagement of these resources that brought diamonds to the focus of attention in the country's civil war.

In looking at the Sierra Leone economy, there is the need to look at other resources apart from Diamond. For example, between 1970s and 1990s, it could be argued that iron ore (which closed down production in the mid-1970s) and rutile (shut down during mid-1990s civil war) have also had substantial impact on the Sierra Leone economy. Furthermore, while the Kimberly process and the postwar reorganization of the diamond industry has increased the minerals contribution to the economy, the restarting of iron ore production in Marampa has also been significant in the postwar economic calculations of the Sierra Leone political elite. The bulk of the Sierra Leone economy is actually agricultural production (mainly for international consumption and for export). The inability of the country to harness production of agricultural resources (which it did for most of its colonial history) and maritime resources are also an important part of the mix.³³

As with most African countries, the central government manages Sierra Leone's mineral resources. In the case of Sierra Leone, the government was completely irresponsible and unresponsive in the way the management was done. Although structures were established to manage the resources these were again undermined by the government in what looked like self-inflicted sabotage. These further weakened the state. The first attempt to ensure the participation of Sierra Leoneans in the management of diamonds extraction in the country was the establishment in 1976 of the Alluvial Diamonds Mining Scheme (ADMS). Although ostensibly this was to ensure the participation of all

³² More recently again, bauxites have been discovered in the north.

³³ We are grateful to Ismail Rashid for drawing our attention to this point.

Sierra Leoneans in the management, the interest of the resource producing communities was to be at the fore of attention however, was not to be the case, as the introduction of the ADMS later became an opportunity for foreigners, especially Lebanese to become more deeply involved in the affairs of the diamonds business. As a way of going round the activities of the ADMS, many fictitious companies were set up by Sierra Leonean elites and the Lebanese. Consequently, despite the official attempt by the government to ensure the participation of people from the diamonds-producing communities, to these people, diamonds mining was an activity undertaken by “strangers”, either “racial” or “ethnic”.

The controversies of resource control were further made more difficult by break-down in traditional authority and the blurring of ethnic identities of the migrant workers who worked in the diamonds fields. In essence the decentralization and privatization of extraction was expected to assist the redistribution of the proceeds among a broader base of Sierra Leoneans. However the success of this ‘broadening’ attempt was limited on account of a poor base for involvement on the part of the domestic private sector at the local level due to a history of exclusion on various levels, including access to basic social and physical infrastructure as is highlighted later in the section. Rather it undermined inadvertently the control and power of the state as a construct to manage the mineral resource sector. It also fuelled challenges to the monopoly of the state, not least over the use of force. Arguably it impacted on the state-building process as access to these resources represented stronger voices in power negotiation as evidenced by the main group during the civil war, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

In 1985, the government established the Government Gold and Diamond Office (GGDO), the primary responsibility of which was to collect revenue.³⁴ But while in theory this institution existed, most of Sierra Leone’s diamond and gold were still smuggled out of the country. All across the country, artisan miners smuggle diamonds out of the country and the significant role that some of the neighbouring countries were later to play in the affairs of diamond mining and illegal exploitation began during this period.

³⁴ In 2004, the name of this body was changed to Gold and Diamond Department (GDD).

Contrary to what is often assumed natural resources have been at the roots of controversies before the outbreak of the war in 1991. Indeed, what actually happened during the war was that a particular natural resource, diamonds, gained prominence in the politics of the conflict in the West African nation. While not underestimating the importance of diamonds in the war in Sierra Leone, especially its introduction of multiplicity of actors and brutality into the conflict, the recognition diamonds also attained during the war was because of other on-going wars where the resource was playing important roles, as in the cases of Angola and the DRC.

In looking at how mineral resources underlined state-building and peace-building, four features of the mineral resource governance sector needs to be identified, even if not discussed in any significant details. The first was the role of the level of corruption and elite greed, which permeated all facets of the sector. It was a well-known fact that successive governments have illegally used resources from diamonds for personal enrichment. As would be discussed later, this was to be a major cause in the civil war.

Second, were the activities of the “illicit” miners; it is impossible to know the exact number of those who were undertaking this activity before the beginning of the war but a figure going into several thousand will not be an exaggeration. These people who came from all over the world were illegally exploiting the resources at the expense of the local population. Thus, the people of the diamonds producing region were victims of both the official government exploitation and those of the illicit miners. However, of these two actors, the local population felt more comfortable with the illicit miners because they were paid some money for the diamonds they were able to get.

The third consideration was the use of the security agencies to monitor the activities in the diamonds producing regions. Right from the time of independence, the government had used the security forces to impose “order” in the diamonds regions. For example, the government of Sir Albert Margai used police and the army. During the period of President Siaka Stevens, the repression became more profound as the government, allegedly through the introduction of Lebanese business men like Jamil Said Mohammed, hired Palestinian fighters to protect diamond fields. Indeed, by the early 1980s, many diamond dealers had transformed their tributors into armed personal

bodyguards. The implication of these was that the only official government presence in the diamonds producing region of Sierra Leone was the security and this was mainly to suppress the population.

Fourth and most profound of all was neglect of the diamond-producing region of the country. It was a well-known fact that the diamond producing parts of Sierra Leone are the least developed, with no electricity, pipe-borne water. Indeed, the region has nothing to show for producing the resource that is the life-wire of national economy.³⁵ This was to be a crucial reason for the bitter civil war.

The impact of the Lebanese business community on the economy

The role of the Lebanese in Sierra Leone economy has always been a source of considerable controversies. Indeed, it is widely known that the Lebanese have played an important role in the politics of diamonds production in Sierra Leone. According to the authoritative Partnership Africa Canada, “from the late 1970s to the early 1990s, aspects of Lebanon's civil war were played out in miniature in Sierra Leone, [as] various Lebanese militia sought financial assistance from their compatriots in Sierra Leone, and the country's diamonds became an important informal tax base for one faction or the other” Indeed, the link between Lebanese business interest and the trade in diamond during the war was to become a major factor in explaining the prolongation of the war. It has also been noted by scholars that Sierra Leone diamonds was used to finance part of the civil war in Lebanon. ³⁶ Over the years, they have also developed complex networks of relationship with successive government functionaries at the expense of the state.

Many of those interviewed during the field trip and those who took part on Focus Group Discussion also recognised that fact that the peace settlement did not accord any special attention to the role of Lebanese in the economy. Ironically, however, most of the respondents did not link this to the civil conflict or the re-occurrence of conflict. To them the issue of the Lebanese has been there for a long time and that it was not a major cause of the conflict, even though some believe that it could have been remotely

³⁵ Lans Gberie, *op-cit*

³⁶ Lansana Gberie *War and Peace in Sierra Leone: Diamonds, Corruption and the Lebanese Connection*

connected. Those who clearly connected Lebanese business community to the civil war equation in Sierra Leone allege that their involvement in the economy dispossesses the local community of their hold on the economy, thus making the society vulnerable to conflict.

However, in looking at the activities of the Lebanese, it needs to be pointed out that the issue is not only that of their involvement in the diamond industry and their entanglement in state-supported corruption, though these are very prominent in public perception. The question is also one of national identity. Even though this was not directly tackled during the peace settlement, it now being considered tackled in the ongoing constitutional review. It should also be noted that the Lebanese are not unified group, as there are Afro-Lebanese sub-groups who were born in Sierra Leone lay claim to Sierra Leonean citizenship, travel with Sierra Leone passports but have been excluded from participating in politics.³⁷

Chieftaincy

The other issue was that of the institution of Chieftaincy. In Sierra Leone, Chieftaincy is like the monarchy. But the British had balkanised these empires into tiny little chiefdoms. So there are now 149 chiefdoms. The British did not want people with large kingdoms to become too powerful. So they broke them into tiny little pieces of territories which they call Chiefdoms, headed by Paramount Chiefs and then sub chiefs. The Paramount Chief was a hereditary ruler as opposed to being a titled chief. But this was an extremely extortionist and abusive system. But the British had to rely on it to govern the rest of the country (protectorate). The chiefs were engaged in serious abuses: forced labour etc. At independence the SLPP had to rely on the paramount chiefs as their political base because the Prime Minister himself came from a chieftaincy family. Indeed by 1904/5 the British had established a School called the Bo School (Government Secondary School for Boys at Bo) for the education of the sons and nominee of chiefs to groom future leaders and yet this was a system of government that imposes heavy burden on the population. So all these structures were there at independence and it required a visionary and creative leader to review all these

³⁷ We are grateful to Ismail Rashid for drawing our attention to this point.

institutions and find a way of developing a more cohesive system that will remove these anarchic systems of government.

Youth issues

This generated quite a lot of discussion. Many of the youths interviewed and those who took part in FGD were of the opinion that youth concerns were quite crucial to the outbreak of the civil war. Indeed, some of those interviewed mentioned that a popular British scholar described the war as a crisis of the youth. Participants in the discussion believe that although the Lome agreement considered the concerns of the youths, this was done more in the context of trying to resolve the war rather than having a long-term plan to address the various issues concerning the youths. Some of the youths who took part in deliberations argued that there is a difference between looking at ways of placating the youths to end the civil war and looking at a long term ways of addressing issues surround the youths. The youth argued that those who took part in the Lome Peace agreement did not consider the problem in the context of their historical relevance. This according to them explains why the problem of youth still continues till date. There was visible demonstration of anger and frustration on the part of most youths, especially those who took part in the first FGD. Some argued that much praises has been given to the Lome Peace Agreement but that the agreement was more to placate the situation than to address long-term implications of youth concerns. When asked why the youths have not resorted to war despite the fact that post-civil war life was tough and not considered to have taken due cognisance of youth concern, there as a split. While most argued that this was largely because of patriotism and the desire of not wanting to see another round of civil war, few maintained that it was mainly because there was no disenchanting base to exploit again for protest and violence.

Although not stressed too far, there were also subtle comments about the traditional assumptions that youths are not supposed to challenge adults and that the latter know what is in the best interest of youths. Indeed, there were those who argued that youths were not involved in the management of many of the discussions about the future of youths held during the efforts to formulate youth's future during the war. Some of the youths complain that the youths that were able to make inroads into decisions during the period were only those who were recognised because they were involved in

violence. According to some, those who could logically discuss youth concerns were not involved in key decisions. In conclusion most of the youths with whom discussions were held during the field trip were of the opinion that the concerns of the youths were not considered against the background of their historical trajectories.

On the other hand, interview with youth leaders from the national youth councils gave a somewhat positive view of the youth issues in the country. These youth leaders noted that there is some kind of space for youth participation for example the district youth councils, the youth commission and a number of youth programmes. The youth argued that before the war, local councils were not empowered. Now there are local councils in every ward and there are head chiefs in the parliament.

However, it is important to question the extent to which these leaders have been co-opted into elite designed and driven national youth councils. Indeed, one respondent argued that although a youth commission was set up to address youth issues the commission is not effective. It is only entrenching party power at the level of the youth. Additionally the ministry of youth employment is a political gimmick, which is ineffective as a stand-alone ministry.

On the whole, in concluding this section that discusses the over-arching issues of contention in Sierra Leone, it needs to be pointed out that the hap-hazard management of them and the ways they ultimately got connected served as major factors in igniting the bitter civil war.

Civil Wars, the Politics of Peace Agreements and the Intrigues of State-Building in Sierra Leone

The Sierra Leone civil war (1991 – 2002) was undoubtedly the most important landmarks in the history of the country. It is also a topic that has attracted its own range of academic attention.³⁸ The war started when the Revolutionary United Front, (RUF), a hitherto unknown movement took up arms against the government of President Momoh. The force was led by Foday Sankoh, a former army photographer who deserted the army after having been court-marshalled for involvement in a coup against Siaka Stevens. The causes of the war are diverse, but they centred around four main factors: (i) the mismanagement of the country's natural resources; (ii) the absence of credible democracy; (iii) the total neglect of the rural community; and (iv) the contagious effects of the war in neighbouring Liberia.

Three characteristics of the war are worthy of note because of their contributions in shaping the future of Sierra Leone. These are: the extent of the brutality; the diversity of the actors that participated; the role of diamonds; and the nature of the final cessation of the conflict. The brutality that manifested in the war was severe and at a stage, the RUF became one of the world's most brutal insurgent forces, using youths to perpetrate most of its atrocities. On the whole, about 50,000 people died and up to half a million people displaced. Again, in what became its most gruesome signature, the war produced up to 4,000 amputees – including babies as young as three months. It was this brutality that brought the war to the focus of international attention.

On its part, the diversity of actors was a factor that made the war potentially confusing, with ephemeral alliances changing the tides of battle fortunes. It also made the peace

³⁸ See, for example, Krijn Peters and Paul Richard, "Why we Fight: Voices of Youth Combatants in Sierra Leone", *Africa: Journal of International African Institute*, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1998; "Sierra Leone Prisoners of War? Children Detained in Barracks and Prisons, Index: London: International Secretariat of Amnesty International; Paul Richards, "Rebellion in Liberia and Sierra Leone: A Crisis of Youth?" In O. Furley (ed.), *Conflict in Africa* London: I. B. Tauris, 1995 and Ibrahim Abdullah, "The Lumpen Proletariat and the Sierra Leone Conflict" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2, June 1998. These include David Shearer, *Private Armies and Military Intervention*, London: IISS Adelphi Paper; 1998, William Shawcross, "In Praise of Sandlines", *The Spectator*, August 1998; Funmi Olonisakin, "Mercenaries Fill the Vacuum", *World Today*, June 1998. Examples of these include Funmi Olonisakin, "Nigeria and the peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, July 1998; Paul Conton, "The Battle for Freetown", *West Africa*, 2 – 15 March 1998; Desmond Davies, "Peacekeeping: African Style", *West Africa* 4 – 17 May, 1998. See, among others, E. Garcia, *A Time of Hope and Transformation: Sierra Leone Peace Process Report and Reflection*, London: International Alert, 1997.

process more complicated. At the beginning, it was between the rebel force and the government forces, then loyal to the late President Joseph Momoh. In April 1992, a coup sent Momoh into exile and established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). The NPRC proved equally ineffective in dealing with the RUF and by 1995 the RUF controlled most of the countryside and had arrived at the outskirts of Freetown. In the attempt to address the situation, the NPRC hired several hundred mercenaries from the firm Executive Outcomes. A civil militia group, known as the Kamajors also emerged after the coup. To all these various actors were to be added the (*Sobel*) a sobriquet for those who operate both as rebel and soldier.

The third aspect of the war with long-term implication was the link with diamonds. Indeed the war attained notoriety because of the desperate desire of all the warring sides to have access to diamonds. This was also to explain the multiplicity of external actors that came into the politics of the civil war. The important role of diamonds in explaining the external ramifications of the conflict is evident in the subsequent conviction of former President Charles Taylor of involvement in the Sierra Leone civil war. This now leads to a discussion of the peace process.

Distinct Features of the Pre-Settlement and Settlement Process

The efforts to end the war in Sierra Leone began almost as soon as it started. However, the various truncations it experienced meant that the impacts were often not noticeable. As in all cases, the initial effort was to end the war and create a crude semblance of order around which post-conflict reconstructions can commence. The peace process in Sierra Leone was characterised by a number of events with their associated distinctive features, which had an impact in the prolongation of the conflict, and defined the complexity Peace-Building process and the degree to which it laid basis for lasting peace.

The multiplicity, and shifting alliances of the main protagonists

The process of bringing peace to Sierra Leone was quite complex for at least two reasons. First, there were some actors whose position was not formally recognised for a very long time, even though they were widely recognised as being dominant actors in the conflict. Perhaps the best example here was Charles Taylor, who, because of his role

then as a warlord, could not have been formally invited to come into the negotiation table in some of the early discussions. Consequently, his non-involvement in the process meant that he was not even legally liable to any violation accusation. This was to be a major factor in the prolongation of the conflict.

Second, the patterns of alliances were constantly shifting and the main actors were multiplying accordingly. There were militia groups, mercenaries, rebels, and government soldiers all shifting and re-juggling alliances; at a stage the rebels and the soldiers fought alongside each other against the regional force. In circumstances of this nature, the extent to which enduring Peace-Building could be quickly implemented is severely limited.

The main Peace-Building actors and their varying motivations and interests and cross purposes

To a very large extent, those who intervened to bring peace and restore the statehood of Sierra Leone were dictated by circumstances. With actors already involved in neighbouring Liberia, those who went into Sierra Leone were those somewhat “seconded” from Liberia and these were the regional organisation, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations. While the intentions of both were the same, the extent of motivation differed. For ECOWAS, the location of the country ruled out indifference as an option to the organisation, while the United Nations felt that another state collapse after Liberia would destabilise the entire Sub-region. Second, the regional organisation that was determined to bring peace to the country, ECOWAS, was again not operating as a united front. Indeed, one of the countries, Cote d’Ivoire was known to be a sympathiser of the rebel force in the country. Other lesser interveners that intervened, albeit on a lesser scale, were UK, the African Union and hired mercenaries. Notwithstanding the prominence of these actors, Sierra Leone was not without an organized civil society, which had clarity about the causes of the war and a preferred path to stable peace.

“Flawed” Peace Agreements: Abidjan, Conakry, and Lome Agreements

Three main agreements were signed to end the Sierra Leone Civil War. The first was the Abidjan Peace Agreement, signed between the government of President Kabbah and the

RUF in November 1996 and terminated following the May 1997 coup. The second was the Conakry Agreement, signed in October 1997, between the military Junta (AFRC) of Johnny Paul Koroma and ECOWAS. This agreement was terminated when ECOMOG removed the AFRC Junta from power before the due date stipulated in the agreement. This was later followed by the Lome Peace Agreement, signed in July 1999 between President Kabbah and the RUF and remained among the most controversial agreements ever signed in the sub-region.³⁹

A common feature that underlined the design of these three agreements was the extent to which the agreements sought to appease the main protagonists and therefore end the conflict at the expense of addressing the structural causes of the conflict that lay at the State-Building conversation. Tied to this was the erroneous assumption regarding the willingness and commitment of the RUF and the capacity of the government of President of Kabbah to building lasting peace.⁴⁰

The Abidjan Agreement granted a general amnesty to RUF in return for the rebels ending their activities.⁴¹ The main aim of the Conakry Agreement was to allow for the return of the overthrown government of President Kabbah within six months.⁴² This baseline study however focuses on the Lome Agreement as it was central to the peace process for it provided for the entry of the largely externally driven Peace-Building process.

The Lome Agreement was emblematic of a number of omissions and concessions that undermined the sustainability of the peace process. The Lome Agreement granted significant and controversial concessions. The agreement legitimized the RUF, and basically indemnified its brutal actions by granting the rebel group public offices.⁴³ Article V especially dismayed Sierra Leoneans, for it specifically allocated cabinet

³⁹ President Kabbah did not want to sign any further agreement with the RUF, but domestic and external pressure forced him to capitulate. Domestically, the rebels controlled the controlled the main diamond mines, which meant that some form of agreement had to be reached. External pressures came from Britain and Nigeria. Britain needed a face-saving agreement after the controversial Sandline Affairs. Sandline Affair, which saw the British Labour government, accused of contravening a UN arms embargo by allowing a private military company to supply arms to the Sierra Leone government and ECOMOG forces. Nigeria on the other hand was finding the human and financial cost of regional peacekeeping difficult to sustain.

⁴⁰ Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit* p.120

⁴¹ See Abidjan agreement

⁴² See Conakry agreement

⁴³ The movement was allocated four ministerial and four deputy ministerial positions Article IV of Part Two

appointments to members of the rebel force⁴⁴ Articles III to IV also allowed for power sharing with the government through the transformation of RUF into a political party and the formation of a broad based government of national unity. This provisions belied RUF commitment to peace.

Furthermore, the agreement ensured the disarming of the RUF by controversially pardoning Foday Sankoh for treason and granting him the position of chairman of the commission (with equivalent rank of a vice president) that oversaw Sierra Leone's diamond mines and therefore unreserved control of Sierra Leone's strategic natural resources.⁴⁵ The agreement made Sankoh answerable only to the President of Sierra Leone. The Lome Agreement as such is also distinct and infamous in the extent to which it individualized the peace agreement around the person of Foday Sankoh. This and the lack of a credible sanction regime to deal with non-compliance with the agreements gave Foday Sankoh and the rebel group room to manoeuvre and therefore opportunity to delay the peace process.⁴⁶

Additionally, the agreement excluded key actors in the conflict including local militias, Karamajors, and remnants of SLA from the negotiation and implementation of the agreement.⁴⁷ Article XI of the agreement also controversially granted RUF 'absolute and free pardon ... in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives, up to the time of the signing of the Lome agreement⁴⁸ and as a result denied justice to the victims of RUF atrocities.⁴⁹ This blanket amnesty resulted in internal and external backlash against the UN and other external parties to the negotiation. The accord however provided for the establishment of a TRC, while renegeing of the agreement by RUF following the events of May 2000 forced the UN to rethink the amnesty offer therefore allowing for the set up a special court.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit* p.123

⁴⁵ See Article VIII of the Lome Peace Agreement For more discussion on the Lome Peace Agreement, see, Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero: "Cut Short for Taking Shortcuts: The Lome Peace Agreement on Sierra Leone", *Journal of Civil Wars*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Autumn, 2001.

⁴⁶ Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit* p.122-123;127

⁴⁷ Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit* p.122-123

⁴⁸ The Lome Accord (Government of Sierra Leone, Freetown, July 1999).

⁴⁹ Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit* p.124

⁵⁰ UN 'Fifth Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone', UN document S/2000/751, 31 July 2000, para. 9. Abidoun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit* p.118

The contradictions and defects within the Lomé agreement allowed for the compromise of the position of Sierra Leone and demonstrated the limits and dangers of externally imposed peace at the expense of building a sustaining peace process.

Uncoordinated International Response

The first set of international response to the war in Sierra Leone came from the West African sub-region through the ECOMOG peacekeeping mission. Although this was a major intervention which was carried out with enormous determination, it later required the assistance of the international community. This international response to the conflict in Sierra Leone represents a model of disengagement. The international community's indifference to the unfolding crisis in Sierra Leone was due to the fact that Sierra Leone represented minimal economic and strategic importance to the West.⁵¹ Indeed, the initial experience of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) instructively demonstrates the inadequate and uncoordinated international response to the civil war. UNAMSIL would however later become a model UN Mission.⁵²

The operationalization of the Lomé Agreement allowed for the departure of ECOMOG and the entry of a United Nations Team to supervise the ceasefire, disarmament and demobilisation plans. However, faced with low troop numbers, a weakened mandate and conflicting contingents, UNAMSIL's 500 peacekeepers in May 2000 would find themselves hostage to the obstinate RUF rebels. This eventually led to the collapse of the Lomé agreement. The May 2000 events demonstrated improper assessment of the situation in Sierra Leone and the lack of contingency planning on the part of the UN peacekeeping force, the overreliance and erroneous assumption that the peace agreement would work and the single-minded focus on the demobilisation and disarmament tasks.⁵³ Additionally, the uncoordinated and inadequate deployment of 6000 troops to UNAMSIL reflected the unwillingness of the UN member states to offer sufficient personnel, logistical and technical support to UNAMSIL.⁵⁴ This apathy sums

⁵¹ Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008 p.10

⁵² Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008 p.10

⁵³ Abiodun Alao and Comfort Ero *Op-cit*

⁵⁴ Funmi Olonisakin, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: The Story of UNAMSIL*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008

up the UN's reluctance and inaction to respond decisively throughout the civil war until the events of May 2000.

To further compound UNAMSIL's problems, the UK intervention aimed at evacuation of British and European nationals was merely a show-off of UK military might rather than a genuine attempt to reinforce UNAMSIL.⁵⁵ These "over-the-horizon" displays and British unwillingness to commit troops under UN auspices heavily dented UN's already tarnished image, challenged the mission's *raison d'être* and explicitly demonstrated the lack of faith in the UN.

Chantal de Jonge Oudraat argues that 'Sierra Leone showed that the political and operational lessons from failed UN missions in Rwanda, Bosnia and Somalia had not been learned'.⁵⁶ UNAMSIL's initial experience highlighted the mismatch between mission mandates and the lack of resources and support from UN member states of the UNSC that continued to plague UN peacekeeping operations. As the Brahimi report articulated UNAMSIL represents the problems of international peacekeeping including lack of greater cohesion and direction, better rules of engagement, resources, well-structured command and control, adequate equipment and political will and support from UN member states.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *ibid*

⁵⁶ C. De Jonge Oudraat, "Humanitarian Intervention: The Lesson Learned", *Current History*, December 2000, p. 420.

⁵⁷ August 2000 UN of the Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations into the state of peacekeeping

How Easy Thereafter: The Juggling of Peace-Building and State-Building in Post Civil War Sierra Leone

A key feature of the external post-conflict Peace-Building programme in Sierra Leone was the promotion of transitional justice through national reconciliation and healing and the prosecution of those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Leonean law committed since November 30 1996. These two agendas were enshrined in the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court respectively and are by products of the Lome Agreement.⁵⁸

Notwithstanding the funding and operational challenges that marred the two processes⁵⁹, there were questions regarding the extent to which both institutions achieved their main objectives and therefore set Sierra Leone back to its State-Building conversations. A major criticism relates to the tensions regarding the overlapping mandates of the two institutions. In particular, the work of the Special Court was undermined by the reluctance by perpetrators to the conflict to appear before the TRC for fear that their testimonies would be used against them in the Special court.⁶⁰ Second, the confidence of the special court among Sierra Leoneans was undermined by the failure of the court to try perpetrators who bore the greatest responsibility for the war. With the exception of the trial of Charles Taylor, Issa Sesay and others, the deaths of key perpetrators of the war without trial including Foday Sankoh, Sam Hinga Norman, Sam Bockarie and Johnny Paul Koroma undermined the mission of the Special Court. Third, by seeking to try persons who bore the greatest responsibility the court failed to prosecute the actual perpetrators of the atrocities who carried out the orders of their commanders. On the contrarily, the foot soldiers were integrated in the national armed forces. The Final Report of the TRC also highlighted the lack of focus on the plight of the victims noting that meaningful truth telling cannot occur without adequate reparations for victims of conflict.⁶¹

⁵⁸ See article 1 of the statute of the Special Court (REF?) and REF?

⁵⁹ See Sierra Leone's Truth And Reconciliation Commission: A Fresh Start?

⁶⁰ Lansana Gberie 2003 The Special Court of Sierra Leone Source: African Affairs, Vol. 102, No. 409 (Oct., 2003), pp. 644-8 Post War Regimes and State Reconstruction in Liberia and Sierra Leone p.65. See also Sierra Leone's Truth And Reconciliation Commission: A Fresh Start? p.4

⁶¹ See Final Report of the TRC,(REF?)

Furthermore, the mandated timelines for the two institutions further raise questions regarding the extent to which the two processes revisited the historical State-Building conversation that lay at the roots of the conflict. The Special court was only mandated to deal with atrocities committed after 30 November 1996. This however fails to capture most of the atrocities that were committed before this date. Additionally, section 6 of the TRC Act of 2000 tasked the commission with the objective of creating a historical record of the violations of human rights from the beginning of the conflict in 1991 until the signing of the Lome Peace agreement.⁶² These timelines again cut off the historical period in the Sierra Leone State-Building conversation. Furthermore, legislation for the establishment of the TRC provided for a 12-month operational phase. These limited-time mandates pale in comparison to the historical period in the State-Building conversation and therefore puts in doubt the meaningfulness and efficacy of the national reconciliation and rebuilding process.

Broadly, a number of issues are worth interrogating about the connection of state-building and peace-building in Sierra Leone. These are: the level of effectiveness of the international institutional capacity building approach; the nature of inter-group relations since the end of the civil war; the management of natural resources since the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement that ended the war; and how the country fared on the crucial issue of corruption. These issues have been selected because they are the main issues that accounted for the war and also were the fundamental issues that the peace agreement attempted to address to prevent recourse to war. Since Sierra Leone has not returned to conflict since the signing of the agreement in 2002 (thus breaking a decade possibility of relapse rule) there is the need to investigate whether the agreement was effectively well packaged to address all aspects of the war or whether there were other factors that prevented a relapse.

International institutional capacity building approach.

The post conflict international state-building process in Sierra Leone thus followed the tried and tested post conflict institutional reconstruction model. This approach largely

⁶² See Article XXVI of the Lome Agreement and the Final Report of the TRC: Chapter One: Mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission pp.23-25

focused on rebuilding of state institutional capacity including the reconstruction of courts, prison and police buildings. This institutional State-Building approach in Sierra Leone with its emphasis on institutional efficiency and technocratic support, microeconomic stability and consolidation of state authority is articulated in the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) of June 2001 and Sierra Leone National Recovery Strategy of 2002.⁶³ However as Christof Kurz argues, donor driven analytical and policy prescriptions influenced by neoclassical economics ideas with their focus on individual decision-making and functionalist formal institutions ignore the historical and sociological process in the Sierra Leone state formation process and elsewhere.⁶⁴ Though his diagnosis of the flawed assumptions inherent in international peace and State-Building processes are correct his alternative analytical framework of understanding the state formation process in Sierra through clientelism also fails to capture adequately the State-Building conversation in Sierra Leone.

This international institutional peace building approach has encountered many challenges. Significant to this is the extent to which these international institutional building has contributed to the governance process and therefore mediated the post conflict State-Building conversation in Sierra by addressing the governance issues between the elites and the people. All participants mentioned that there has been the setting up of various institutions such as the anticorruption commission, ombudsman, and human rights commission, and the passing of various laws including the three gender laws. There is a level of satisfaction within the society with the enactment of these laws and the setting up of these institutions that did not previously exist before the war. However, the biggest challenge is guarantying that these institutions are effectively running, are free of state or political inference and thus able to address the above recurring issues that were and are at the statebuilding conversation in Sierra Leone. Despite the enactment of these laws and the building of institutions, the main challenge lies with the judiciary, there are challenges with the interpretation of law, the lack of evidence, delays in sittings that can take up to two or three years.

⁶³ Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL), 2005. Sierra Leone poverty reduction strategy paper. (SL-PRSP), 2005-2007, Freetown; Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and European Community, 2007. Country strategy paper and national indicative programme for the period 2008-2013. Freetown.

⁶⁴ Christof P. Kurz (2010) What You See is What You Get: Analytical Lenses and the Limitations of Post-Conflict State-Building in Sierra Leone, *Journal of Intervention and State-Building*, 4:2, 205-236

Most participants highlighted the judiciary in particular as undergoing significant challenges and thus setting the state back to its fragility. This includes a general lack of rule of law and state control of the judiciary. Most participants noted that despite the 14 million DFID funding for the Justice and Security Sector reforms a lot of the issues that affected the judiciary in the pre-war and war period have shown a return. For example the judiciary lacks independence, and the police remain undemocratic, rise in corruption within the judiciary and the lack of free and fair trials. One participant from the civil society argued that these issues have shown a reversal because the body politics has not changed. He attributed this to the fact that donors do not want to touch politics in Sierra Leone. As such, there has not been a sober conversation in Sierra Leone on politics. The structures created after the Peace-Building process are there although there are challenges with the working of these structures. Even though they are not working effectively, there is some level of confidence with these structures since they did not exist before the war. There is some level of confidence that there is some form of mechanism for redress.

One participant from the civil society argues that there has not been a building of capable political parties and the effective oversight institutions like the parliament. He further argues that a lot of money has been spent on the executive and oversight institutions have been left out. He further argues that the government budget has focused on buying water-guns for the police demonstrating that Peace-Building is yet to change the logic of the state. This lack of effective and inclusive institutions is a threat to democracy.

Continuation of divisive party politics along ethnic lines.

The electoral contestation during the November 2012 elections largely between Ernest Koroma of the APC and Maada Bio of the SLPP re-invoked old rivalry between the two political parties and has further underlined the role of ethnicity in national politics with the Mende supporting the SLPP and Temne supporting Koroma. Ethnic and sectional fault lines have also galvanized post-election tension and violence. The fiercely contested 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections that brought the opposition APC party to power left the country deeply divided along ethnic and regional lines that

have the potential to ignite violence upon the slightest provocation and plunge the country once more into chaos. The same could be said of the July 2008 Local government elections. In 2011, political violence first erupted on the national level in July when APC supporters allegedly attacked the SLPP nominee and flag bearer, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. In the ensuing violence, one person was reported killed and 20 people suffered injuries. Several buildings were also burnt down, including the local APC party office. The incumbent President Koroma won the election and the impact of ethnicity on politics has continued ever since.

After the conflict, there was a failure to deal with the winner takes all approach to politics during the peace process. Most participants noted that people are very tied to their political parties. This issue is undermining the performance of the government. With some respondents arguing that few in the government are working for the nation but instead for their political parties. The issues that led to the civil war in the first place such as patrimonialism, lack of rule of law, political interference in state institutions, corruptions and youth unemployment continue to be recurring issues in the post conflict state building conversation in Sierra Leone. One participant from the civil society noted that these issues do not appear within the political strategies of political parties. He further argues that there was no party strengthening after the conflict to oblige political parties and especially SLPP and APC to peace. Some respondents argued that the former president Kabbah ran an inclusive government. However, APC changed everything for the worse. The style of governance that characterised the pre-war period is the same with a weak opposition to offer alternative leadership

Divisive party politics between the SLPP and APC continue to undermine the development of a collective national identity. These divisions have largely shaped regional divisions in the country. These party divisions moreover have shaped regional development. Most respondents noted that there has been a lot of development in the North and the South remains largely neglected. The current ruling party therefore has been accused of development its regional strongholds. While a majority of the respondents, argued that regional differences instead of ethnicity current form part of the identity conversation in Sierra Leone is it intricate to disentangle ethnicity from regional divisions. This is because the different regions represent the different

geographical locations to which the different and competing ethnic groups reside. This intricate relationship between the region and ethnicity is also representative of and is shaped by the historical and contemporaneous party divisions between the SLLP and APC are which are grounded on ethnic divisions.

The management of intergroup relations in post conflict statebuilding conversation

There is a huge question about the extent to which the post settlement agreements addressed identity issues in Sierra Leone. While ethnicity was not a cause of the conflict, political elites have continued to manipulate ethnicity and regional differences. Regional differences in particular have acquired a more pronounced saliency in comparison to ethnicity in the post conflict State-Building conversation. While most respondents argued that ethnicity is not a major issue in Sierra Leone, ethnicity is also deeply and intricately intertwined with regional divisions. Although they do not highlight ethnicity as a major issue they are aware of how politicians manipulate ethnicity to wire and achieve their own self-interest. Although Diversity issues were half way addressed by the post settlement agendas, there is an appetite for cohesion in Sierra Leone. Most participants noted that there are numerous inter marriages along ethnic, racial and regional lines. These inter marriages are also present at the top political level for example at the cabinet level with both the current and previous presidents marrying from different regions other than their own.

However, there was no agreement about the saliency of ethnicity in post conflict Sierra Leone with some participants arguing that ethnicity is not a major issue while others argued that it is very profound. The participant from the civil society noted that there is no real tribalism in Sierra Leone. However, politicians want people to think more of tribe than of service. The management of ethnic relations is therefore a matter of political strategy. However, two participants (youth and civil society) noted that politicians have realised that no single ethnic group can clinch the 51% majority required to win the elections and therefore they have to mobilise the other ethnic groups. The two participants also noted that major political divisions are between the Temne and Mende with the youth arguing that these two ethnic communities are the major problems. The participant from the women market association noted that ethnicity is an undertone and concurred with the other participants that it is only

occurring at the governance level or elite level but the ministry of internal affairs is trying to neutralise it. However, it is still playing out because of fear and suspicion. The head of the Women's market association argued that people are tied to their political party and by implication to their ethnicity. This is undermining the performance of the government, as there are few government officials who are working for the nation and not for the party. The youth also noted that ethnic divisions express themselves along party lines. The journalist noted that Sierra Leone is going back to the pre-war divisive ethnic politics. The head of the women's market association argued that ethnicity is very personal. The talk of ethnicity in Sierra Leone is part of propaganda and disruptive elements. People will always easily gravitate to their ethnic affiliations. Politics is therefore local and people will always hold on to their values and cultural backgrounds for affiliations. There was a failure to deal with the winner takes all approach to politics. The Journalist believes that Sierra Leone is going back to the pre-war divisive ethnic politics. He argues that ethnicity is profound and there are no ideological positions within the body politics. Elections are about money and power.

Regional divisions therefore characterise the identity conversation in post conflict Sierra Leone. Most respondents noted the discrimination in the allocation of resources along regional divides. However, the participant from the opposition party argued that the regional divide is increasing although a lot of effort is being made to integrate the north, southeast and west. A member of MP argued that during the post construction period the government has paid more attention to the North than to the south. In a very short period, there are cleaner streets, more hotels, more mining companies, more agricultural input in the north, the south suffers from marginalisation. Moreover, some participants noted that the development of infrastructure is driven by which party is in power. For example the APC government has constructed a 31 KM urban road in Makeni in the North of the country, which is its strong hold. Moreover, the journalist argued that the north has more political positions than the south and the MP argued that the constitution of Koroma's government is increasingly made up of people from his region. The MP argued that the regional divide is more pronounced than tribalism. However, the regional divide is related to ethnicity.

All participants agreed that religion is not an issue in Sierra Leone. The formula that stipulates that if the president is Muslim the vice president has to be Christian has enhanced integration and harmony between Christians and Muslims. This formula is also present within parties. However, faith is not a factor in the appointment of political positions.

Natural Resource Governance

Since the end of the war, efforts to manage natural resources have been relatively impressive, both because the country needed the money coming from these resources and also because of the realisation that any mismanagement could return back to a bitter conflict. In an attempt to appease the diamonds producing region of the country and also address international condemnation that was coming to the country because of its treatment of the diamond regions, the government later came up with a scheme whereby a percentage of the resources coming from diamonds is used to develop the local community. This initiative was, however, believed to have come too late and it was also considered as being too little. Diamonds have also played an important role in Sierra Leone's post war recovery. The coming into place of the Kimberley Process, the international regulatory mechanism that was established to monitor international trading in illegal diamonds, also assisted in ensuring that diamonds in Sierra Leone was quick to make a reverse from the negative image it had established during the period of the war.

With the increase in diamond production and the end of the war, it then became possible for the government to divert more resources to post-war recovery. However, although increase in diamond revenue has assisted the government, it is also important to point out that the extent of destruction was too much for what this can address and as such the bulk of the money used for post-war reconstruction have been through donor funding. One aspect of post-war recovery's link with diamonds is the gradual increase that seems to be emerging in the social responsibility of some of the foreign diamond businessmen in the country. In some of the diamond producing regions of the country, Lebanese businessmen and local -population are coming together to discuss issues of common concerns,

including the provision of security. Although this has not gone round all the regions, it is an initiative that seems to be attracting the interests of the local community.

Sierra Leone natural resources base is also growing with exploration of mining, marine and oil resources. Like many other natural resources, the government is also making plans to come up with a major policy position on the management of marine resources. There are however concerns with the illegal exploitation of these marine resources by foreign vessels and their management.⁶⁵ Sierra Leone's economy is now about to be turned around significantly with the discovery of oil.⁶⁶ In 2009, the President established a Task Force to develop a new Petroleum Policy. The draft policy reflects concerns regarding good governance and prudent economic management of oil revenues for current and future generations. There can, however, be no doubt that the success will depend on the commitment and capacity to translate policy into action. The government is also trying to set up a National Oil Company. Also since the announcement of the find, a number of donors and NGOs have been involved in Petroleum governance and policy reform. One of the most prominent concerns of stakeholders is that oil might make Sierra Leone to fall victim of what has been described as "The oil-tragedy".

Corruption and Management

Corruption has reduced considerably, even though it is still a major issue in Sierra Leone. The presidency of the late Tejan Kabbah was marred with allegations of corruption against top government officials, although none was proven and nobody was convicted. The current President Koroma also has allegations of corruption on his neck. Although the President is widely considered to be above board on the issue of corruption (he was, in fact the first President to declare his assets) he is surrounded by

⁶⁵ Presently there are over 100 licensed vessels and more than half that number poaching. This is as a result of the fact that Sierra Leone had constantly been unable to supply the resources/logistics to protect its marine resources from unlicensed fishing, resulting in an over exploitation, lack of benefits to the country and an overall damaging effect to the resources eco-system. This has seen a number of attacks on local fishermen and the destruction of their fishing equipment. In some instances, the attacks have led to deaths and capture of citizens from neighbouring countries especially Guinea. There are, however, growing concerns now about the management of marine resources and in August 2012, there was a major protest by irate fishing mongers about the government's policies which they claimed was preventing them from having access to quality fish.

⁶⁶ In September 2009, the United States independent oil firm, Anadarko, announced the discovery of a hydrocarbon system off the Sierra Leonean coast. The company operates the Venus B-1 exploration well in its offshore block SL-6/07 on behalf of its partners Woodside Australia Repsol YPF (Spain) and Tullow (UK/Ireland).

people believed by people believed to be more controversial on issue of corruption. Some of the corruption issues have been to the top of government and President Koroma's Vice President, Samuel Sumana, faced a major allegation of corruption over logging in Sierra Leone levelled by the Al Jazeera News.

Gender Dimensions of Peace-Building and State-Building

2015 is perhaps a strategic moment to assess how far Sierra Leone has gone with the placing of gender in the State-building and Peace-building equation, as the year marks exactly 20 years since the Bintumani 1 Conference, where Sierra Leone women came out forcefully to demand that the military regime hold election that eventually led to the resolution of the civil war. But in looking at how much things have changed, there is the need to first provide a brief summary of what existed before and during the war. Like most West African countries, gender considerations in Sierra Leone before the civil war was something everybody considered important but which nobody took seriously. The deep-seated patriarchal nature of the society was strong enough to stifle any strong attempt to advance the interest of the country's female population. Although women played an important role in the country's struggle for independence,⁶⁷ this soon paled into insignificance shortly after independence. What further eroded the significance of women in national politics were the plethora coups, counter coups, one party rule that bedevilled the country. In short, by the time the civil war in the country began, the era of women in political activism had literally come to an end in Sierra Leone. Among others, issues such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, low employment and poor education were the order of the day.

The civil war had a most devastating effect on the female population in Sierra Leone and this has been the focus of attention in several detailed studies.⁶⁸ Where they had not been forced into become combatants, they had been raped and brutalised, not to talk of thousands who were killed. Several thousand too were forced into refugee camps outside the country while possibly up to a million internally displaced. Moreover, all the various forms of violence against women point to the violent masculinities inherent in

⁶⁷ One such woman was Ex-Paramount Chief Madam Ella Koble Gulama, who succeeded her late father, Julius Gulama, as Paramount Chief of Kaiyamba Chiefdom, Moyamba District, in 1953 and went on to play an important role in national politics.

⁶⁸ Jean Friedman-Rudovsky, "The women who bear the scars of Sierra Leone's civil war", The Telegraph, 16 November 2013

the society and made worse by the conflict through for example rape of women. It is thus against this background that women played a significant role in the politics of peace settlement.⁶⁹

Possibly against the background of the role they played in the peace efforts high profile campaigns to increase women's representation in Sierra Leone's public life started during the peace settlement. Indeed, the gender dynamics that existed before the outbreak of conflicts began to change, if somewhat slowly. Although there is still a gender disparity in the holding of political positions, the gender conditions that excluded women from full participation in society before the war are beginning to shift. A member of the parliament interviewed during the field trip noted that UNSCR 1325 has helped a lot to change the gender dynamics. It has been used as a campaign tool to say that women should be involved. After the conflict, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) advocated for the first past the post system. This proportional representation system helped women achieve key positions in the parliament. Additionally, the CSOs advocated for the zipper system within political parties that has helped to increase the number of women candidates in parties. This increased the number of women in parliament to 16. However, the constituency replaced this proportional representation system based electoral system. Although the TRC provided for 30% quotas for women participation, this has not materialised, and increasingly the country is sliding back to the level of women participation in politics to the pre-war conditions. With the constituency electoral system, it is difficult for women to gain political positions although there are now 14 MPS and 1 cabinet minister.

The declining in women participation in politics is equally supported by statistics. For example, during the 2007 Elections the rate of women participation was 17%. This figure has continued to decline since. Out of 124 members of parliament and 12 paramount chiefs there are only 14 women parliamentarians.

It was noted by people met during the field trip that with the coming of the constituency electoral system it is now difficult for women to be involved. Women candidates are

⁶⁹ For more on the role of women during the civil war in Sierra Leone, see, [Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff](#), "Sierra Leone Women and the Peace Process", ACCORD, Conciliation Resources, 2000

known and accepted by the political parties. Campaigns have also become more violent thus limiting for women. The cultural limitation that prevents women in most parts of Sierra Leone to be Paramount Chiefs has also limited participation in politics, while sexual harassment has also reduced women participation by marginalising and silencing them for fear of reprisal.

There is increasing sexual harassment within government ministries at all levels. This low participation by women translates to low interest in women issues. Successive post-war administrations have not put in place structures for women security, development and participation. While pillar 8 of the current government's Agenda for Prosperity focused on women there is nothing tangible. Additionally the APC Agenda for Change does not focus on women at all. While superficially there are flashes indicating women participation at the grassroots level, they are not at the forefront of politics. Political parties also do not appoint women to strategic positions. Some efforts are being made to bring women into local governance structures. However, it is still very difficult for women to attain top positions within these structures. Ironically, the extent of the patriarchal nature of the society even mean that women are more likely to support their husbands' political parties than their women folk.

Parliament has passed a number of laws that provide for the legal protection of women. Before the war and after the war, the parent of the wife had to pay everything for divorce. This made divorce very difficult for women. However, parliament passed the registration of customary marriages and divorce that legalized divorce. Additionally the sexual offence act that includes the definition of marital rape provides for legal redress. The devolution of estate act gives women the right to estate. Previously, customarily women were not allowed to inherit land. Third, the domestic violence act protects women against domestic violence and obliges the police to treat domestic violence as abuse. An academic argued that parliament passed the sexual violence act because it is less political. People at the top are manipulation a lot of issues. For example although the rate of FGM is very high any party coming to government will not touch on this as the opposition will argue that the government is trying to erode their culture. In addition while Sierra Leone is a signatory to the Maputo protocol, politicians still support FGM arguing that it is against their culture.

Sierra Leone has also ratified the clauses on the Maputo protocol that discourages harmful traditional practices. Women reproductive and sexual rights were ratified. However, the president due to pressure from the religious council did not sign safe abortion approved by parliament. The 1861 offences against persons act criminalize abortion and anybody considered any accomplices to abortion. The act also allows the women to die. However the proposed act allows for abortion under supervised conditions and decriminalizes any support offered by doctors and others. It allows the doctors to save the woman. Free health care has also helped a lot of women

Parliament has also looked at obsolete laws and passed a number of laws that relate to child marriages, and child recruitment, and passed the three gender laws, and criminalized rape. There are a number of instruments that have been set up to address the practice that allowed men to kick women out of the house following cohabitation no matter the number of years. Such acts include the domestic violence act, the devolution of estate act and the sexual offences act. The high literacy rates remain a challenge to changing some of the customs and traditions that interfere with the constitution. For example, the customs do not allow women to take part in decision-making processes. The large illiteracy rates in the county means that you have to set up a five year plan to educate and create awareness within the society.

All participants noted that parliament has passed a number of laws that have advocated for gender equality such laws include the sexual acts law and the gender laws. The civil society participant noted that there has been some change in the gender dynamics at the community level but this change has not materialised at the state level, which remains largely patriarchal. The family support unit that provides for reporting, medication and lawyers for victims of harassment lacks a budget for its running. Before the war, women had no rights legally. Most participants noted that controversial section 27 of the current constitution, which bans discrimination but argues that culture and traditions prevail before the law. This proviso is controversial for it allows women to be discriminated on cultural grounds. There are however efforts to expunge this from the constitution. Once this is eliminated women will gain more.

Girl child education remains a challenge. Before the war there was no education for women and boy child education was favoured. Girl child marriages were very common and there was no protection for women. These gender dynamics became very clear during the war. The post war development package encouraged awareness for girl child education. This was supported by the government and in turn increased women skills. Also, there has been an increase in school enrolment for the girl child as a result of the increasing awareness of the importance of education. There is a lot that is needed to promote women participation in science and technology and in higher education.

Despite some form of progress that has been made, there are still profound and disturbing situations of gender violence that do not come to national attention. A recent one that caught national attention was the case of 17 years Hannah Bockarie who was brutally assaulted and murdered and her body left on Lumley Beach.⁷⁰ This led to huge outcry from women-groups in the country and brought to the fore the support available for victims of gender violence in the country. This study was able to found out that although there is the Family Support Unit in Sierra Leone that is charged with investigating reported cases of rape, the Head of the Unit, Superintendent Mira Koroma, concedes that the Police remain unequipped to undertake the task and that they have been relying on old methods to deal with sexual violence. The budget of the Unit is just Le 2,000,000 per quarter, a situation that has been forcing the unit to rely on donor funding.⁷¹ There are quite a number of Family Support Unit's initiatives that have now been forced to stop, including the "Operation Dusk" initiative which will allow the Unit to go into Nightclubs and arrest under-age participants and the naming and shaming of convicted sex offenders in Newspapers and Social media. On the whole, issues of rape and sexual violence are now coming to the fore of attention because people are now reporting them officially, unlike in the past when such issues were handled by "Mammy Queen" or Paramount Chiefs for mediation. Many in Sierra Leone are coming to reality with the position of the country's Legal Access through Women Yearning for Equal Rights and Social Justice (LAWYERS) that rape is not about sex, but about Power. Despite all these, much still needs to be done in support of women-centered program programs like the FSU, the persistence FGM and of violence against women, the low

⁷⁰ Mohamed Lamin Kamara and Paul Corn were subsequently charged with the murder of the teenager.

⁷¹ Are Women winning the War on Sexual Violence? *Sierraeye*, Vol. 25, December 2015 – February 2016, p.19

levels of girls in schools and the relative impoverishment of women. However, what remains a major paradox in Sierra Leone is the early and active women's engagement in peacemaking process and the lack of active engagement in the postwar political conversations.

On-Going Developments Relevant to Peace-Building and State-Building in Sierra Leone

Since the establishment of a semblance of peace in Sierra Leone, two developments have emerged to test the socio-economic and political resilience of Sierra Leone. These developments also have connections, albeit remote, to state-building and peace-building conversations in the country. These are: the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease and the controversies surrounding rumours of a 3rd Term desire by the incumbent President Koroma. Interrogation of how these tie to the Peace-building and State-building conversations in Sierra Leone is worth discussing.

The EBOLA Virus Disease

In May 2014, there was an outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in Liberia, and like a cosmic hurricane, it spread to neighbouring countries of Guinea and Sierra Leone. On the whole, it is believed that up the 3000 died as a result of the outbreak and since the end of the civil war, the outbreak of the EVD was the most profound crises that confronted Sierra Leone and in a way, it tested the success of some of the policies and strategies adopted to address the legacies of the bitter civil conflict. The EVD is connected to the whole discussion on Peace building and State building in three ways: the circumstances of outbreak; the management during the outbreak; and the post-outbreak management.

While, of course, most people in the country recognise that the actually outbreak was not the fault of the government and that there was very little that could have been done to prevent it, many people still used the opportunity to blame the government for the very basic medical facilities in Sierra Leone. They believe that since independence, there has never really been any attempt to give the health of the people in the country any

attention.⁷² The condition of the health situation was cited as one of the causes of the disaffection that resulted in the war. The inability of successive governments since the end of the war to take the health of the populace into consideration was seen as one of the failures of state-building in post-civil war Sierra Leone and the outbreak of the EVD was seen as the most visible manifestation.

Far more profound, however, was the management after the outbreak. This has two main dimensions: the uncoordinated response after the outbreak and the corruption allegations that have plagued the disbursement of international aid. Many people in Sierra Leone are of the opinion that the response of the government was somewhat slow and that this could have resulted in the increase in casualty figures.⁷³ Some of those with whom discussions were held during the field trip were also of the opinion that the nonchalant attitude demonstrated at the outbreak of the virus was characteristic of the way the country had historically been run. However, the second issue – the alleged mismanagement of international donor money to fight EVD – has far more profound impact on the linkage between peace-building and State-building. The Sierra Leone’s Auditor General came up with a public pronouncement that the EVD funds have been misappropriated and that misappropriation could have slowed down the national emergency response in combating the virus. In response to the scandal, the government immediately decided to investigate and prosecute all those involved of having mismanaged £12 million assigned to combat the virus. Indeed, a top government official interviewed for this research informed us that at a stage, foreign countries and international organisations preferred dealing with NGOs rather than the government.⁷⁴

For many Sierra Leoneans, the mismanagement of the EVD fund brought out the main problem facing the Sierra Leone State: the neglect of the populace by the government. Indeed, many people see it as yet another case of the bad culture in which people opt to achieve personal ambition and greed at the expense of the people. The situation was not helped by the controversy between the Parliament and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) over procedural matters emanating from the Audit report.

⁷² Focus Group Discussion

⁷³ “Ebola Audit Report: A National Disgrace”, *Sierra Update*, Issue 0026, Spring 2015, p. 5

⁷⁴ Interview with Dr Max Ahmadu Sesay, Chairman, Public Service Commission.

The third way the EVD has become intertwined with the whole discussion on peace-building and State-building is the belief of what the people think the government has learnt from the whole experience. In the course of the research, we discovered that many of the people interviewed that the government has not learnt anything from the experience and that an outbreak of another outbreak of a medical emergence would still be met with the same level of unpreparedness and apathy. In the course of one of the focus group discussion one of the participants argued that there is nothing to indicate that the government is different from the previous ones that have ruled the country since independence. To many Sierra Leoneans, there was no serious state-building in certain aspects of life, despite the bitter civil war that was meant to address some of the anomalies that have characterised the Sierra Leone state. On the whole, what EVD brought out is that, for the first time since the end of the war, it put the crucial issue of human survival at the centre of debate in the country, and as a Presidential aspirant of the opposition political party put is succinctly: “What Ebola taught us is that anyone elected President of this country has a duty to ensure that thousands of his compatriots no longer die so needlessly on his watch”.⁷⁵ This same trend is arguably noticeable in the way the whole issue of Climate Change has been addressed in the country.

Moreover, the EVD crisis has been politicised. Respondents argue that during the Ebola outbreak the government took advantage of the ban on public gathering to limit political participation. According to respondents these highlights the declining freedom of expression with some arguing that unlike the former president Kabba who allowed the youth to critique the government the current government has led a campaign of clampdown on several musicians who have been critical of it. This declining space for political participation and critical debate is reminiscent of the pre-war political repression especially the clampdown on student protests.

Tenure Elongation Controversies

Without doubt, a subject that is currently most contentious in Sierra Leone is the issue of term elongation for the current President Ernest Koroma, whose current term ends in

⁷⁵ Interview with Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella,

--- at the completion of the mandatory two-terms. A number of things, however, makes this controversy unusual, the most important being the fact that, while there has really never been anything official about it, it is being widely discussed in a way that would not have been different even if the currently President had in fact officially declared his intentions along that line. Indeed, it is the most important subject of political discussion in the country and the passionate debate being generated is of such profundity that many believe that it has the potentials of leading the country to another round of civil war, especially against the background of the historical antipathy between the two main political parties. A major political development in the country, the President's sacking of his deputy, has further added another layer to the intrigues surrounding tenure elongation.⁷⁶ The sacking of the vice president and the lands minister without giving any reason to the public has also been understood by the respondents as an attempt by the president to limit political participation and debate. Some understood this as a demonstration by the president to push and pass his own agenda.

In terms of its origin, it is really difficult to determine when and how the whole controversy of tenure elongation started. What is, however, beyond dispute is that by – it has become a key feature of debate in the country. As would be expected, the whole issue has divided the country along party lines, with the SLPP warning that there would be dire consequences if there is any attempt, in whatever guise to manipulate the constitution for the extension of the current tenure of President Koroma and the APC either keeping silent on the possibility or openly advocating for it. On the part of the President himself, while there has been no official confirmation, there is, significantly, no denial.⁷⁷ Additionally the “more time” agenda has been used to weaken the opposition through intimidation and buying out of its members.

The Tenure Elongation controversy is relevant to the Peace building and State-building discourse in Sierra Leone in a number of ways. First, it is bound to raise the

⁷⁶ Tenure elongation controversies centre around the suspected desire of the incumbent President Koroma to extend his terms of office beyond the mandatory two-terms

⁷⁷ APC supporters are busy going about with the slogan “*After you, na, you*”, a Creole statement which means “After your term, it will again be your term”, or simply, “You will succeed yourself”. The SLPP, on its part has been writing articles drawing the attention of Sierra Leoneans to the failed attempt by the former Nigeria President, Olusegun Obasanjo to elongate his term. They are also quick to inform Sierra Leoneans that Obasanjo was a political mentor of Koroma.

fundamental question as to whether any state-building lesson has been learnt from the whole experience of post-conflict Peace-Building. There are now growing concerns that such a step, if it was ever dared, would indicate that no lesson has been learnt from the bitter civil war. There are also distinct possibility that such an unconstitutional act could thorough the country back to civil war. Second, the whole possibility of tenure elongation, in whatever guise, would increase the tension between the two main political parties. What is most likely to make this tension more profound is the fact that some of those at the forefront of the call for tenure elongation, including Robin Farley, were former member of the SLPP.⁷⁸ This latest undemocratic tactics was first mumbled by Leonard Balogun Koroma, Minister of Transportation, before he was compensated with a ministerial post by the president.

⁷⁸ Falay was seen by many in the SLPP as a political maverick persistently in search of relevance and survival. He was defeated in the 2012 parliamentary elections, shortly after he left the SLPP, the party that thrust him into the national political space immediately he returned from the United Kingdom.

Conclusion: The Future from Where We Stand

The general belief in Sierra Leone is that the issues that led to the civil war in the first place such as patrimonialism, lack of rule of law, state control of the judiciary, lack of transparency with the awarding of mineral concessions, corruption, manipulation of opposition parties, cronyism, youth unemployment, and the lack of judicial and legislative independence continue to be recurring issues in the post conflict state building conversations.⁷⁹ There are indeed some who feel that there are still issues that some of the on-going developments, especially the issue of tenure elongation, can result in conflict. Although others who took part in the FGD did not share this view, they nevertheless caution against overstretching of the people's desire for peace.

There is also the general belief in the country that the constitution needs to be reviewed. The present constitution is now about 25 years old (1991) and some post-war developments have shown the weakness in some of its clauses. A specific one is the electoral requirements for the President. As it is now, to avoid a Run-Off, a candidate must have 25% of the total national vote. Because of the way the two parties have divided the country, this is becoming very difficult. On one occasion when there was a run-off (2007), there was such tension and the country almost went back into the war before the ruling party eventually conceded defeat. So that part of the constitution will be reviewed and follow other countries where it is just 50% + 1. This and a number of other issues are now being addressed through the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) process. The committee is expected to make its recommendations to the government.

Also noticeable is the setting up various institutions such as the anticorruption commission, ombudsman, and human rights commission, and the passing of various laws including the three gender laws. There is a level of satisfaction within the society with the enactment of these laws and the setting up of these institutions that did not previously exist before the war. However, the biggest challenge is guarantying that these institutions are effectively running, are free of state or political inference and thus

⁷⁹ One participant from the civil society noted that these issues do not appear within the political strategies of political parties. He further argues that there was no party strengthening after the conflict to oblige political parties and especially SLPP and APC to peace.

able to address the above recurring issues that were and are at the state-building conversation in Sierra Leone. Despite the enactment of these laws and the building of institutions, the main challenge lies with the judiciary, there are challenges with the interpretation of law, the lack of evidence, delays in sittings that can take up to two or three years.

The structures created after the peace-building processes are there although there are challenges with the working of these structures. Ironically, even though they are not working effectively, there is some level of confidence with them, especially as they did not exist before the war. There is some level of confidence that there is some form of mechanism for redress. Some believe that there has not been a building of capable political parties and the effective oversight institutions like the parliament. There are also concerns that a lot of money has been spent on the executive and oversight institutions have been left out. Also there is the argument that the government budget has focused on buying water-guns for the police, demonstrating that Peace-Building is yet to change the logic of the state. This lack of effective and inclusive institutions is seen by some as a threat to democracy.

Economic management is also a central issue that politicians continue to undermine. For example, politicians and their relatives have been accused of bankrupting two of the major banks in Sierra Leone. Economic ratings have improved along with regional indexes. There are regional imbalances in development. Although the economy has improved, recent economic events are worrying. This include, the drop in iron ore prices, job cuts in the mining industry, Chinese hostile takeover over mining companies that have gone into administration, the Chinese are asking to reduce the workers from 3500 to 350, loss of the Sierra Leone currency against the dollar, prices increase and the increases in PAYE tax by the government from 35% to 40%. The economic growth has thus been revised to 18%. Additionally the economic growth has had little impact on ordinary Sierra Leoneans. However, people's expectations are very high and this is good for peace-building.

There is the concern that the freedom of expression is declining. Opposition party members argue that while former president Kabbah allowed youth to critique the

government through art, the current government has led a campaign of clampdown on several musicians who have been critical of it. During the Ebola outbreak the government took advantage of the ban on public gathering to limit political participation. An opposition Member of Parliament argues that what passes is the president agenda. This is demonstrated for example by the sacking of the vice president and the lands minister without giving any reason to the public. This has resulted in the weakening of the opposition due to fear or political buyouts. In particular, the “more time” agenda has allegedly been used to weaken the opposition through intimidation and buying out of its members.

Most Sierra Leoneans expressed satisfaction with the holding of elections. There have been four peaceful elections since the end of the war. Although there has been some electoral related violence, these elections have been largely peaceful and have brought about a level of democratisation. This is attributable to civil education, voter education, the women situation room and the national election watch by CSO that monitors and observes all elections in the country. The youth felt that the coming of multiparty system has increased youth participation in election processes. There has however, been reported cases of political intimidation of the local population along the party lines in the country. For example during the bye election campaigns in Kono, the vice president who comes from the ruling party is reported to have threatened to withdraw development assistance to the local community if they did not vote for the ruling party, APC.

On the whole, in looking at the broad subject of peace-building and state-building in post-civil war Sierra Leone, it would appear that the peace agreements, though largely externally sponsored, recognised that there are deep-seated internal contradictions the hold the key to enduring peace in the country. However, the urgency to end the carnage forced on them the need to prioritise their intervention strategies and to focus on key issues that would put temporary cessation to the conflict, in the hope that subsequent governments after the agreements would, over time address deep seated issues once broad frameworks are laid. The wisdom or otherwise of this strategy is left to professional historians.