

INTRODUCTION

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The international community has invested an enormous amount of time, effort, and over US\$2 billion in an expensive, but presumably successful, peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone. It was this investment that made the presidential and parliamentary elections of May 2002 possible. However, the ability to meet the arduous challenge of rebuilding and changing the political, economic and social landscape will ultimately determine whether or not that money and effort will have been largely wasted. It will determine whether Sierra Leone is destined to become a permanent breeding ground for war, chaos and illegal commercial activity, or whether it is destined for a far more peaceful future that may be compared to post-conflict Namibia and Mozambique. In many ways, Sierra Leone is a litmus test for the United Nations' re-engagement in African peace missions and for its 'post-Brahimi' determination to do things better.

Assessing performance in peace operations has become an increasingly difficult undertaking with the evolution of multi-functional peace missions during the 1990s. Initially, there was a high degree of consensus that success was achieved with 'expanded peacekeeping' interventions in countries such as Namibia (1989) and Mozambique (1992–1995), where regional and global changes had enabled antagonists to escape from an impasse and where conflicts had run their course to the point of exhaustion. By the end of the decade, however, it had also become apparent that some of the success stories of multifunctional peacekeeping may not be destined for a very happy ending. The challenge of determining the success of a peace operation therefore implies a longitudinal evaluation of where a country such as Cambodia is today. It involves a focus not just on the security dimension, but also on aspects of democracy, governance, economy and development.

On the other hand, the multi-functionality of contemporary peace operations and the need to incorporate peace-building aspects as early as possible in the mission, means that longer term concerns are also pertinent to attempts to determine success *in* a particular peace operation. Both the conditions that give rise to civil wars, and those that result from them, call for a more holistic approach to intervention that goes beyond military and security priorities to

address issues of governance, legitimacy, political and social inclusiveness, and economic equity. International assistance to war-torn societies has to extend way beyond the initial intervention if these issues are to be resolved and the host society made resilient to new rounds of violent conflict.

The strategic and operational challenges are thus both one of how to pull together the various elements of international assistance that coalesced separately at both ends of what was conceptualised as a 'continuum between relief and development', and how to leverage the short-term presence of intervention forces to create the building blocks for a 'sustainable' peace. It was in this context that the concept of post-conflict re-construction, or 'peace-building' emerged as an essential adjunct to peace operations.¹

While highlighting the multiple and complex needs of war-torn societies, this approach largely avoided issues of priorities among the various peace-building activities and of overlapping or contradictory mandates. As Cousens puts it, the 1990s approach to peace-building "amounted to an inventory of those needs that could be filled by international actors, with the larger purpose of peace-building remaining vague".² Past peace-building efforts have thus, all too often, amounted to little more than support for formal election processes that allow for the termination of a peace mission once a legitimate government has been elected, followed by the funding of inchoate attempts by a plethora of NGOs to 'build civil society'. While this minimalist approach to governance provided a handy exit strategy for missions such as the ones in Cambodia, Angola and Haiti, it also led to significant reversals in the peace process that cost thousands more lives, wasted millions of dollars, and ultimately undermined UN credibility.³

The common and hastily pursued electoral end-state indicates that for the most part, interventions have simply aimed at the facade of political participation, without much attention to the actual political power relationships in the host nation. Moreover, in countries such as Angola, Bosnia, Cambodia, and Liberia, disarmament rituals did little to change the distribution of power. On the other hand, where interventions have been at least partially successful, there have been strong linkages between the continuing presence of a credible intervention force, a successful reorganization of the state's security apparatus, and an effective new government.

According to the Deputy SRSG for Organisation and Management, it is too early to make pronouncements on the success of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone. A period of two years is obviously far too short a time to conclude a

peace process, or even to address the country's security challenges.⁴ Nevertheless, UNAMSIL has achieved two such significant benchmarks—the completion of disarmament and demobilisation, and the successful staging of national elections—that few would argue that the intervention has not been a qualified success. UNAMSIL's transition from peacekeeping to peace-building was made easy by the phased, district-based approach to disarmament, which simultaneously encouraged confidence-building measures.⁵

The disarmament programme was declared successfully completed on 17-January2002. A total of 72,490 combatants completed the disarmament programme, including 24,352 RUF and 37,377 CDF forces. (Of those disarmed officially, 6,845 were children.) While there remain suspicions of hidden arms caches, UNAMSIL is satisfied that the majority of the weapons, especially heavy weaponry, have been forfeited during this process.

Though there are still many complaints by former combatants about the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (NCDDR) (including late payment of benefits), these tend to be related to isolated and localised problems of individuals or small groups of individuals. Often it is not the NCDDR which is to blame, but also NGOs and ex-combatants themselves who try to extract double benefits or other benefits to which they are not entitled. In general, the NCDDR is doing a remarkable job of delivering the promised benefits of the DDR programme to a huge number of demobees countrywide.⁶

By April 2002 most of the 150 chiefdoms in Sierra Leone had been declared (by a joint UN-government committee) safe for resettlement by internally displaced persons (IDPs), with the exception of 11 in the former rebel-held eastern district of Kailahun. The government, in collaboration with UN agencies, donors and NGOs, implemented a Resettlement Strategy which aimed to support the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced, refugees and ex-combatants with their dependents back into their communities.⁷

Over 65,000 IDPs and returnees were resettled in two phases between May 2001 and February 2002 mainly in the Western Area, Southern Province and the north-western districts. In the third phase, which began in March 2002, some 155,000 IDPs registered for resettlement in the Northern Province and the eastern districts of Kono, Kailahun and Kenema. This brought the total number to 163,517 refugees who had, since 2000, returned to Sierra Leone from Guinea and Liberia ahead of the elections. To encourage participation in the general elections, the National Electoral Commission allowed people who

registered in their area of displacement to transfer their voter registration to their home area.

The first round of national elections for President and parliament was held on 14 May 2002. The preparation and conduct of the elections was relatively free of violence and intimidation, with only occasional incidents of low-level violence reported. The many rallies organised by the various political parties, and the wide extent of public engagement in the elections, were interpreted as encouraging signs of a widespread commitment to peace.

Nine political parties contested the presidency, and eleven parties the 112 parliamentary seats. Final results indicate a clear victory for the incumbent, 70 year-old Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who, by winning more than 70% of the vote has secured another five-year term. His Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP) will also retain a majority in parliament by winning 83 seats. To a great extent this comes as little surprise, given the obvious advantages of incumbency and the widely held perception that President Kabbah was instrumental in returning the country to a peace long overdue.

The All Peoples' Congress (APC) came a poor second with about 22% of the presidential votes and 27 seats in parliament, while Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) took less than 2% of the presidential vote and failed to secure a single parliamentary seat. Besides Johnnie Paul Koromah's Peoples' Liberation Party (PLP), which won about 6% of the presidential votes and secured two parliamentary seats, none of the parties made much impression at all. The voting was carried out in an atmosphere of peace and calm throughout the country, with the only source of worry being the difficulty in managing the heavy turnout – estimated at about 80% of the 2.3 million registered voters.

This was the first truly non-violent vote in the country's history, in large part because of the successful disarmament and the continued substantial presence of UNAMSIL peacekeepers. Of course, no election is ever perfectly 'free and fair', and a number of concerns were expressed by analysts about the familiar issues of electoral fraud and coercion, as well as the substantive outcome of the vote and the re-constitution of a SLPP-dominated executive and legislature. Nevertheless, expectations remain high that the legitimisation of the government, following the elections, could herald the arrival of much needed international financial support.

Freedom of movement has improved significantly and trade and commerce are beginning to revive across the country. The Sierra Leone armed forces and

police are also being deployed throughout the territory, following ongoing assistance with re-training and re-equipping by the UK and other partners. The deployment of district administrators and other senior officials has also marked the beginning of the restoration of state authority, with all areas now accessible to government departments, UN agencies, and NGOs.

Ultimately, government legitimacy, in the eyes of its own citizenry and the international community, will demand a careful balancing act involving the attempted conformation to two different sets of standards – international standards of good governance and rule of law; and local standards that have evolved from the recent history of grievance and conflict, traditional political organisation and practice, the local balance of power, and the influence of outside players.⁸

According to Hamre and Gordon, successful peace-building involves four distinct yet interrelated categories of tasks, or “pillars of reconstruction”⁹, viz:

Security, which addresses all aspects of public safety; particularly the creation of a safe and secure environment and the development of legitimate and effective security institutions. Collective and individual security is the precondition for achieving successful outcomes in the other three pillars. It involves securing the lives of civilians and restoring the territorial integrity of the post-conflict state.

Justice and reconciliation, which addresses the need to deal with past abuses through formal and informal mechanisms for resolving grievances arising from the conflict and to create an impartial and accountable legal system for the future – including an effective law enforcement apparatus, an open judicial system, fair laws and a humane correctional system.

Social and economic well-being, which addresses fundamental social and economic needs, in particular, providing emergency relief, restoring essential services to the population in areas such as health and education, laying the foundation for a viable economy, and initiating an inclusive and sustainable development programme.

Governance and participation, which addresses the need to create legitimate, effective political and administrative institutions and participatory processes. Governance involves setting rules and procedures for political decision-making and for delivering public services in an efficient and transparent manner. Participation refers to a process of giving the broader population a voice in gov-

ernment through developing a civil-society structure that generates an exchange of ideas through advocacy groups, other civic associations, and the media.

This concept of peace-building, and the lessons of the past, is well understood by the UN in Sierra Leone. The UN country team,¹⁰ in collaboration with UNAMSIL, has prepared a UN Strategy to Support National Recovery and Peace-building, that has been guided by national policies and priorities that have been established through the National Recovery Programme and articulated in the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.¹¹ The aim of the UN strategy paper is to provide guidance on how the United Nations (including humanitarian and development agencies and UNAMSIL) can contribute in a cohesive manner in the process of transition from relief to recovery, or from peacekeeping to peace-building.

The strategy defines focus areas for UN assistance in five closely-related fields, viz:

- strengthening the security framework within Sierra Leone and encouraging regional security co-operation;
- facilitating the reintegration of former combatants, refugees and displaced people;
- poverty reduction and employment creation;
- fostering good governance and promoting human rights; and
- encouraging the process of national reconciliation.

The strategy document is intended to lead the way to an appeal for 2003, and a UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2004. Although conceived within a five-year framework, the intention is to update the strategy on an annual basis, in accordance with the evolving situation in Sierra Leone.

This monograph follows on a similar ISS report published in January 2002, entitled "Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight" ISS Monograph no.68),¹² the purpose of which was to report on progress with the peace process in Sierra Leone, with specific emphasis on the role of UNAMSIL in support of the Abuja II Agreement, and on its progress in reaching the electoral benchmarks set by the UN Secretary-General. The aim of this publication is to provide an update of the remarkable progress with the peace

process that has been made since the national elections of May 2002, with a specific emphasis on the practical aspects of what happens in a peace mission after the high water mark of elections begins to recede. In other words, our interest was in examining the transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, against the background of the enormous body of theory and literature that has emerged on the topic over the past decade.

To this end, the authors (Sarah Meek, Mark Malan, Jeremy Ginnifer and Thokozani Thusi)¹³ visited Sierra Leone over the period 19 – 29 August 2002, where they were provided the opportunity to interview and be briefed by a range of interlocutors who were playing key roles in supporting the post-election recovery of the country. However, it is impossible to highlight the remarkably successful transition from peacekeeping to post conflict peace-building, without reference to the earlier 'benchmark' phase of disarmament and demobilisation, and the ongoing process reintegration into society of ex-combatants.

Chapter 1 therefore provides an overview of what must be considered one of the most successful exercises in disarmament and demobilisation ever conducted under the auspices of a complex UN peace operation. The chapter outlines the mechanics of the disarmament process (including operational plans, implementation schedules, weapons collection, storage and disposal/destruction, monitoring and verification). It provides a brief assessment of the disarmament programme, as supervised by UNAMSIL, including the facts and figures that emerged on completion of the process. The chapter also reviews the Sierra Leone Police-led Community Arms Collection and Destruction (CACD) programme, which has brought in weapons remaining in the hands of non-combatants while the government develops a new firearms licensing system.

Reintegration in Sierra Leone faces the barrier that is still an extremely poor country, despite external aid. Securing employment for ex-combatants, many of whom do not have formal training, represents a major challenge. The danger of disgruntled ex-combatants drifting into criminality or even renewed conflict remains a potential threat. The drifting of youth back into conflict remains a particular fear in the future if their needs are not met. **Chapter 2** examines some of the key reintegration initiatives being undertaken in Sierra Leone, how they are structured, and identifies the key issues and problems to be overcome if the reintegration is to continue to make headway.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the structure and composition of UNAMSIL, as the Mission adjusts to post-election tasks and priorities. It includes an overview of the mandate and mission of the Force, and a snapshot of the

military's role in peace-building – with specific reference to the work being done by Sectors 4 and 5, as well as the Military Observers. Plans for the adjustment, draw-down and ultimate withdrawal of the force provide the backdrop for a discussion of the increasingly important civilian component of UNAMSIL, including the Civilian Police, Civil Affairs, Political Affairs, Public Information and Human Rights sections.

Chapter 4 expands on the role of the media in Sierra Leone in general, and the Public Information Section of UNAMSIL in particular. Broad public support has been and remains central to the attainment of the Mission's objectives. As stated by the author, the aim of this chapter is to highlight the role of the media and public information in the Sierra Leone peace process, with a view to identifying lessons that can be broadly applied in other peacekeeping environments. A brief but insightful account is provided of how UNAMSIL set about meeting the public information challenge, with specific reference to radio and the print media, community liaison, and the all-important role of the Mission Spokesman's office.

Chapter 5 deals with the related issues of security and military reform in Sierra Leone. Attention is paid to the perceived security challenges that the country is still facing, and the progress that the armed forces of Sierra Leone is making towards meeting these challenges. Key to consolidating national security is the ongoing transformation of the armed forces into a professional and loyal instrument of the state and people of Sierra Leone, and the chapter concludes with a focus on this aspect, with specific reference to the assistance provided by the British Government and the International Military Advisory and Training Team.

The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) are obviously an integral part of the national and individual security equation in Sierra Leone, but their role is discussed separately in **Chapter 6**. Like the army, the SLP has been seriously compromised over the years by corruption and mismanagement, and its ranks were much depleted during the war by murderous attacks that systematically destroyed the police infrastructure, records and communications. This chapter reports on efforts to re-build the SLP, with specific reference to training, recruitment and deployment, and the invaluable assistance being provided by both UNAMSIL Civilian Police and the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP). It concludes with a summary of the challenges that lie ahead for the policing component of the larger rule of law project for Sierra Leone.

Chapter 7 focuses on the extension of state authority throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, and on the prospects for the country's economic recovery. It is

envisaged that the gradual and phased draw-down of UNAMSIL will provide the government of Sierra Leone the opportunity to build up its capacity to govern effectively – including the ability to address the remaining emergency relief needs of the population and to re-build the economy. This chapter provides an account of prospects for economic recovery, which will require substantial donor support, as well as for the extension of functioning governance structure to the interior of the country. It also addresses the inter-related issues of attempts to deal with corruption and to impose effective government control of the diamond industry, as pre-requisites for any meaningful level of economic recovery.

Chapter 8 provides an examination of progress made in meeting the twin challenges of justice and reconciliation in post-war Sierra Leone. It begins with a brief overview of the extant state of the Sierra Leone judiciary, before providing an update on the status of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The chapter concludes with the opinion that, although vitally important to national reconciliation, the latter two high-profile, internationally sponsored measures for short-term transitional justice should not overshadow the importance of meeting the long-term needs of the judiciary. Ensuring ongoing and effective access to justice is indispensable to any peace-building or recovery process that aims at sustainable peace and development.

Notes

- 1 E Cousens, Introduction, in E Cousens & C Kumar (eds) *Peacebuilding as Politics: Cultivating Peace in Fragile Societies*, Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp 1–2.
- 2 Ibid, p 7.
- 3 R Orr, Governing When Chaos Rules: Enhancing Governance and Participation, *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, p 142.
- 4 Interview with Mr Behrooz Sadry, DSRSG (O&M), Freetown, 21 August 2002.
- 5 Interview with Amb Oluyemi Adeniji, UNSRSG for Sierra Leone, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 6 Interview with Col Fred Hughton, Deputy Chief Military Observer, Freetown, 20 August 2002.
- 7 IDPs and refugees returning to Sierra Leone were offered resettlement packages including a two-month food ration, household utensils and plastic sheeting. The strategy also offers support to community based rehabilitation programmes which were destroyed during the war. Priority areas include agriculture, health, water, sanitation and education.

- 8 R Orr, op cit, p 143.
- 9 JJ Hamre & G R Sullivan, Towards Postconflict Reconstruction, in *The Washington Quarterly*, Autumn 2002, pp 91–92.
- 10 In Sierra Leone, the country team is comprised of: The UN Resident Co-ordinator (Mr. Alan Doss, who is also the Humanitarian Co-ordinator and the DSRSG for Governance and Stabilisation); FAO; IOM; OCHA; UNAMSIL Political Affairs; UNDP; UNFPA; UNFSO; UNHCR; UNICEF; WFP; WHO and the World Bank.
- 11 United Nations draft document, *Consolidating Peace and Laying the Foundations for Sustainable Development: UN Strategy to Support National Recovery and Peace-building in Sierra Leone*, Freetown, 24 June 2002.
- 12 M Malan & P Rakate & A McIntyre, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight*, ISS Monograph, no 68, January 2002.
- 13 Mr. Patrick Coker, who contributed the chapter on “The Role of Media in Sierra Leone”, was serving in the Public Information Section at UNAMSIL Headquarters at the time.