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„Drawing Blood from the Stone: A study of diamond
endowment and civil conflict in Sierra Leone“

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Abstract

The relationship between natural resource endowment and conflict has long been researched and diamond-related conflicts are among the most prevalent of this category. The Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002) has been hailed as an ambiguous case among scholars of civil war theory. This interdisciplinary thesis looks closely at the peculiarities of this case, focussing on the complex amalgamation of causes of the conflict. It aims to establish if and how the rich diamond endowment in Sierra Leone is related to the onset and duration of the brutal civil war of the 1990s. After establishing the historical context of the political, economic and social circumstances of the country, Collier and Hoeffler's *Greed vs Grievance* theory is used to structure the potential factors. Greed factors focus on the conflict as a resource war initiated by a rebel group lacking a fully-formed political motive. It draws also on Liberia's hand in the onset of the war, its role in the diamond trade and its financing of rebel soldiers. In contrast, the grievance argument is derived from the resource curse and its effects, as well as the failure of the government, alienation of youth and the influence of Libya. It is concluded that the causes are often a combination of both greed or grievance and that each play a role in fuelling the other. Most prominently, the diamond endowment of Sierra Leone contributed, by means of the resource curse, to the critical socio-economic situation and fuelled social discontent. In addition, the diamonds were used as currency between rebels, soldiers and international actors and were responsible for an unnecessary extension of the fighting. With this in mind, an international approach to policy on natural resource management should focus on harnessing development and growth potential for states like Sierra Leone in order to avoid further conflicts of its kind.

Abstrakte

Die wechselwirkende Beziehung zwischen der Ausstattung von natürlichen Ressourcen und Konflikten ist gut erforschter Sachverhalt. Von besonderer Bedeutung sind in dieser Kategorie Konflikte die mit Diamanten verbunden sind. Diese interdisziplinäre Arbeit befasst sich im Allgemeinen mit dem Bürgerkrieg in Sierra Leone (1991-2002) und untersucht den Zusammenhang der Diamantenausstattung mit dem Ausbruch und Dauer des brutalen Bürgerkriegs. Die Potentialfaktoren werden hierbei als Gier oder Missstand klassifiziert. Gierfaktoren verstehen Konflikte als einen Krieg dessen Fokus auf der Kontrolle von Ressourcen liegt. Elementar hierfür ist die Initiierung des Konflikts von Seiten der Rebellengruppe und das Fehlen eines politischen Motives. Eine Schlüsselrolle dabei spielte Liberias Einfluss zu Beginn des Krieges, seine Rolle im Diamantenhandel und die Finanzierung von Rebellen Soldaten. Im Gegensatz dazu konzentriert sich das Missstandsargument auf den Ressourcenfluch und den Zusammenhang mit dem Einsturz der Regierung, die Entfremdung der Jugend und den Einfluss Libyens. Die Schlussfolgerung der Analyse ist, dass die Ursachen oft eine Kombination von Gier oder Missstand sind und beide eine entscheidende Rolle spielen, um einander zu beeinflussen. Die Ausstattung von Diamanten in Sierra Leone trug durch den Ressourcenfluch zur der kritischen sozioökonomischen Situation bei und forderte generelle soziale Unzufriedenheit. Die Diamanten dienten den Rebellen, Soldaten und internationalen Akteuren als Währung und waren für die unnötige Verlängerung der Kämpfe ausschlaggebend verantwortlich. Diese Arbeit empfiehlt, einen internationalen Ansatz für die Politik mit natürlichen Ressourcen, wobei sich das Entwicklungspotenzial auf Staaten wie Sierra Leone konzentrieren sollte, um weitere Konflikte dieser Art zu vermeiden.

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorised assistance on it.

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List of Acronyms

ADMS	Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EO	Executive Outcomes
GDO	Gold and Diamond Office
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NDMC	National Diamond Mining Company
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRGI	Natural Resources Governance Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SLST	Sierra Leone Selection Trust
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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Fig. 1. Map of Sierra Leone (Geographic Guide, n.d.)

1. Introduction

In March 1991, a group of insurgents crossed the Liberian border into Sierra Leone beginning a terror that consumed the country for over a decade, and a civil war that ravaged the nation politically, socially and economically. The Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) fight to overthrow Joseph Momoh's government in order to install a supposed system of free and fair elections, social cohesion and economic justice devastated the population, rather than improving conditions. In fact, their regime was characterised by horrific human rights abuses; mass killings, drafting of child soldiers, mass rape and intentional mutilation of non-combatant civilians (Smillie, 2000: 26). The latter became a signature of the RUF, using the method as a tool of terror and punishment, especially towards those they believed had supported Momoh in the 1996 election, removing arms at the elbow, stealing the capacity to mark an 'X' on a ballot paper and, thereby, preventing further expressions of democracy in support of the government. There is a general understanding among the international community that this conflict, along with many others on the African continent, is intrinsically linked with the natural resources saturated in the region. Since 1998, with the publication of Global Witness' A Rough Trade, an investigation into the conflict in Angola and its links with the diamond trade, there has been a significant shift in the focus on the role of natural resources in conflict. In the context of the United Nations (UN) Security Council's Resolution 1306 (2000), banning the trade of Sierra Leonean diamonds, Sierra Leone's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ibrahim Kamara, claimed:

"the conflict in Sierra Leone is not about ideology, tribal or regional differences. The root of the conflict is and remains diamonds, diamonds and diamonds"

(2000, cited by Renner, 2002: 157)

International discourse surrounding the conflict in Sierra Leone, and many other civil wars in Africa, have focussed on the role of natural resources as the primary cause of tensions, territorial and otherwise, and as a catalyst for conflict. In fact, in the 1990s alone, it is claimed that natural resources were connected with around twenty major conflicts worldwide (Le Billon, 2005: 81). However, the question remains, to what extent is there truly a direct link between a state's endowment in natural resources and its susceptibility to conflict?

1.1. Research Question

How did a rich diamond endowment lead to civil conflict in Sierra Leone (1991-2002)?

This question cites two variables; a rich diamond endowment constitutes the independent variable and the onset of civil conflict as the dependent variable. It is the aim of this thesis, therefore, to establish the causal relationship between natural resource endowment and susceptibility to civil conflict within the confines of the case of the Sierra Leone civil war.

For the purposes of engaging with this question, it is important to define a number of terms in order to ensure that there is transparency and uniformity in the examination of findings and conclusions made thereafter. The time frame specified, 1991-2002, refers to the duration of the civil war, but this study will also include analysis of the long term factors that contributed to the onset of conflict, beginning with the initial exploitation of diamond mining areas under British colonial rule. However, this thesis will focus on the activities of the RUF, the Sierra Leonian Government and international external actors, for example; Charles Taylor, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the United Kingdom and the UN, within the period indicated.

Sambanis notes that there is a certain level of disagreement among scholars who have analysed civil war, stating that there is “conceptual confusion about the meaning of civil war” (2004b: 855). However, in order to conduct a sincere analysis, the term ‘civil war’ will be understood in this thesis as:

“a politically organised, large-scale, sustained, physically violent conflict that occurs within a country principally among large/numerically important groups of its inhabitants or citizens over the monopoly of physical force within the country.”

(Gersovitz & Kriger, 2013: 160-161)

In terms of this definition, the civil conflict in Sierra Leone qualifies as a ‘civil war’. The conflict was politically organised between the government and the RUF’s leadership, it was sustained as it

lasted for eleven years, physical violence was perpetuated between the Sierra Leone Army (SLA)¹ and the RUF, as well as against civilians, it was contained within the country's borders and its effects spanned the entire nation.

Sierra Leone has been historically rich in high quality sought-after gemstones. The exploitation of its diamond endowment began under British colonial rule, but continued long after independence, becoming a point of strong international interest during the 1990s. This research will examine the role of the diamond mines in Sierra Leone during the civil war, but in doing so there must be an inclusive approach, taking into account the mines under government control, those privately owned and those captured by the RUF. Moreover, as there is a focus on not only the sourcing of diamonds, but the related trading procedures, there must be consideration of the nature of subsequent production, transport and the circumstances surrounding buying and selling, nationally and internationally.

In attempting to answer the research question, this study will delve into the causes of the Sierra Leone civil war, examining factors including, but not limited to, the motivation of the rebels, state weakness, failure of effective governance, funding possibilities for rebel activity, support and interference of external parties. It appears that the aforementioned factors relate, in some way or another, to the diamond endowment attributed to Sierra Leone and these links will be imperative in the approach to the research question.

1.2. Literature Review

Research on the relationship between natural resource endowment and a nation's vulnerability to civil conflict has developed relatively quickly in the last two decades, most notably since the publication of an article by Collier and Hoeffler in 1998. This work, along with its successors, reviews the potential causes of civil war with a focus on economic factors and territorial disputes. Collier and Hoeffler's model is based on utility theory,² with the pretence that an

¹ The national army of Sierra Leone was known as the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force (RSLMF) from 1991 until 1998 and as the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) from 1999 (Richards, 2003: 9). However, for the purposes of this study, the national army will always be referred to as the SLA.

² "On the practical level, utility theory is concerned with people's choices and decisions. It is concerned also with people's preferences and with judgments of preferability, worth, value, goodness or any of a number of similar concepts." (Fishburn, 1968: 335)

intrastate rebellion will occur if the rebels perceive there to be a relatively low opportunity cost. That is to say, that their “incentive for rebellion is sufficiently large relative to the costs”; their incentive being the probability of victory and the situation thereafter, and the costs in terms of human casualties and financial strains. From this, it is asserted that in a country with a higher GDP per capita, rebels will perceive a higher cost, thereby reducing the likelihood of civil war onset (Collier and Hoeffler, 1998: 565) and suggesting that “civil war is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of low income countries” (Ibid.: 568). Developed and diversified economies are mostly coupled with developed and refined democracies and strong national infrastructures. Therefore, it does not seem a coincidence that they have been largely immune to civil war in recent years (Le Billon, 2005: 12).

Along with a second paper from 2004, Collier and Hoeffler assert that the risk of civil war is highest for a resource dependent country when their exports represent around one third of GDP (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 574). Moreover, in this work, they delve further into the theory of the causes of civil war, developing the ‘Greed vs Grievance’ theory (2004), which will be used as a basis for this thesis. They claim that there are two general routes of origin for the causes of civil war; “greed” and “grievance”. Case specific issues would fall into either one of these categories. Put simply, their grievance argument refers to a rebellion with an objective to change the status quo, this could be as decisive as changing the political system, or demanding more opportunities or representation for certain groups, and places emphasis on discontentment and frustration due to unjust deprivation of the rebel party (Taydas et al., 2011: 2629-2630). This approach is further opened up when used in conjunction with Gurr’s deprivation theory, which states that “the primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be the frustration aggression mechanism...If frustrations are sufficiently prolonged or sharply felt, aggression is quite likely, if not certain, to occur...Men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of frustration.” (Gurr, 2010: 36-37) In contrast, a greed rebellion has the primary objective of material gain (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004: 564-570) and has more of a focus on opportunity of rebels³.

Similar to Collier and Hoeffler, Fearon and Laitin note the seemingly direct correlation between GDP and conflict, yet attribute the disproportionately higher occurrence of civil wars in low income

³ More recently, modifications to the theory have been made by Collier and Hoeffler, changing the categorisation of ‘greed’ to ‘opportunity’. This broadens the definition and emphasises factors which facilitate the possibility of violence (Collier et al., 2005 cited in Taydas et al., 2011: 2629-2630)

countries to the fact that often such nations have weak governance structures and lack the capacity and capability to suppress rebellions or buy off opponents (2003: 75-76). In an article for the British Medical Journal, Stewart (2002: 343) highlights four economic hypotheses that have been used to explain civil conflict; group motivation hypothesis, private motivation hypothesis, failure of the social contract, green war hypothesis. Most pertinent to the question at hand is, firstly, the private motivation hypothesis; individuals receive benefits from the war and therefore there is motivation for sustained fighting (see Chapter 4.1). Secondly, the failure of the social contract is important as “people accept state authority so long as the state delivers services and precedes reasonable economic conditions”, when this is not the case, there is case for rebellion. Furthermore, the paper defines natural resources as a dimension of economic power as an example of horizontal inequality, further stating that “horizontal inequalities are most likely to lead to conflict where they are substantial, consistent, and increasing over time” (Ibid: 342-343). Other examples of horizontal inequalities include political participation, access to education and health services and levels of (un)employment (Ibid.: 343).

Sambanis (2004a) begins with the basis of the Collier-Hoeffler model (1998) and the Fearon-Laitin model (2003), evaluating each and identifying their possible analytical shortcomings. He asserts that these models are closely related, using the same variables to test different hypotheses of civil war initiation (Sambanis, 2004a: 261), reaching the same conclusion that, generally, civil wars are caused by the level of opportunity for the organisation of insurgency, rather than on the grounds of ethnic or political differences (Ibid.: 259). However, Sambanis criticises the fact that both models omit a number of variables, for example external influence and intervention, that would likely take effect if considered (Ibid.: 260), as often certain types of regimes and civil unrest in one country can threaten the stability of neighbouring states (Taydas et al., 2011: 2628). Moreover, Sambanis takes issue with the definitive nature of the Collier-Hoeffler model and its categorical distinction between causes precipitated by ‘greed’ or ‘grievance’, claiming these “competing motives for civil war [are] illusory, because [they] are usually shades of the the same problem” (Sambanis, 2004a: 259-260).

Sambanis also adds another interesting dimension to this discussion, questioning the definition of civil war itself, suggesting that there has been a grouping of events related to civil war without proper definition as to whether or not they developed from the same causal process, thereby arbitrarily assuming that civil wars are different from other forms of political violence. That is to say, it is an aim of his paper to establish if this is a justified differentiation, as the result will

influence the analysis and, subsequently, the recommended policy interventions (Ibid.: 260). Isolated analysis risks a possible bias, or at least an inefficiency. Sambanis ascertains, therefore, that in order to properly analyse and explain civil war, there needs to be “a theory that tells us why conflict escalation leads to civil war as opposed to other kinds of violence” (Ibid.: 260-261). In conclusion, he evaluates the shortcomings of the research on civil war theory as lacking a concrete definition, as well as developed models having distinctions between causes that are far too simplistic. His recommendations for further research should, therefore, focus on the different forms of violence and how they are organised during a period on conflict. This, in turn, will offer more relevant approaches towards policy implications that are “designed to address the risks and consequences of various forms of violence” (Ibid.:273). In critiquing preceding models and their conclusions, Sambanis highlights important factors to be considered when using these frameworks for further research.

Research into the specific role of natural resources in civil conflict has produced a number of outcomes. As Le Billon mentions, while an endowment in non-renewable resources has been linked to an increased likelihood of armed conflict, and there are several diverse examples where this is the case,⁴ there are a number of studies that have seemingly disproven a direct and strong relationship.⁵ In a model presented by Fiaschi (2004), there is focus on the consequences of the resource curse and their connections with the social conditions in which civil war can evolve. The ‘resource curse’, defined by Le Billon, is the economic underperformance of states that are dependent on their endowment of natural resources, this subsequently contributes to weak governance and leaves societies more susceptible to internal armed conflict (2008: 347). Ross criticises conclusions from previous literature on this relationship (Keen, 1998; Collier & Hoeffler, 1998; Reno, 1995, 1998; Klare, 2000; Fearon & Laitin, 2003) stating that there is too little correlation among the results of various studies to come to a firm conclusion that countries experiencing the effects of the so-called ‘resource curse’ are predisposed to conflict. Results diverge in a number of areas, identified by Ross as: the role of natural resources on the onset of conflict, the influence on the duration of conflict, the identification of which types of civil wars are influenced and whether all varieties of resources can be linked to conflict in this way (2004a: 337-338). In a second study by Ross, examining thirteen case studies, he concluded that resource wealth in general seems to correlate with civil war, acting as a contributing factor for the likelihood of occurrence, duration and level of violence (2004b:

⁴ For example, Angola, Iraq and Papua New Guinea.

⁵ The only exception to this largely disproven relationship seems to be oil (Ross, 2004a).

61-64). However, this link is not a simple cause and effect concept, there are a number of mechanisms at work in and around the nature of the resource wealth and the conflict (Ibid.). Besley and Persson's contribution agrees with the aforementioned claim that there is a disproportionately higher incidence of civil war in low income nations and, in developing a theoretical model to analyse the incidence of civil conflict (Besley & Persson, 2008: 2-3), offers the theory that a price increase of exported goods and imported raw materials reduces the incidence of civil war (Ibid: 27). The paper further emphasises the importance of institutions and economic development in their effects on conflict, as already stated in previous literature (Ibid. 27-28).

In focussing more specifically on the case of diamond rich regions, a study undertaken by Humphreys (2005) found no significant relationship between diamond endowment and the onset of conflict when a measure of diamond production was used in a civil war model based on the work of Fearon and Laitin (2003). Furthermore, qualitative analysis undertaken by Ross (2004a) concurs on the most part with this finding, asserting that “the gemstone trade appears to be causally unrelated to the initiation of conflict”. However, although gemstones can be considered to be unrelated to the onset of war, there is some evidence that they seriously contribute to the duration, lengthening the period of conflict (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Ross, 2004a, 2004b; Stedman, 2001: 2).

Honing in on Africa, Clapham claims that rebellions on the continent are derived from unfulfilled political aspirations and “reactive desperation” and, despite attempts to avoid oversimplification, he divides African insurgencies into four categories; liberation insurgencies (e.g. Algeria), separatist insurgencies (e.g. Southern Sudan), reform insurgencies (e.g. Uganda) and warlord insurgencies (e.g. Liberia) (1998: 5-7). However, the Sierra Leonean RUF insurgency does not fit into any of these insurgency typologies. Abdullah and Muana claim that the peculiarity of the RUF movement has made history with its lack of national or ethnic following, an “organisations solely driven with the survivalist needs of its predominantly uneducated and alienated battle front and battle group commanders (1998: 191-192).

In the relevant literature, Sierra Leone is presented as an ambiguous case; the role of its natural resource endowment being described as a cause, due to the lure of wealth consonant with control of the diamond mines (Ross, 2004a.: 345), a currency of war (Smillie, 2003: 31), in the sense that it facilitated the purchase of arms and acted as an important factor in the perception of increased benefits of foreign intervention (Ross, 2004a: 345), among many other interpretations. This thesis

will delve into this case and its ambiguities, in doing so it will add to the existing literature by not only analysing the intricacies of the role of natural resources in Sierra Leone, but orientating it within the wider socio-economic structure of the nation. Within an international system that is increasingly focussed on sustainable development and the human security approach, deciphering the genuine root causes of conflict is imperative. In doing so, it will become possible to make relevant policy recommendations regarding civil conflict prevention. Specifically with this thesis and its focus on Sierra Leone, conclusions will lead to proposals pertinent to regions that have similar resource endowments and social structures.

1.3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis will be generally grounded in post-colonialist theory, considering the socio-economic circumstances in Sierra Leone, shaped by the attainment of independence in 1961, yet permeated by the legacy of British imperial rule. In addition, the principle of Collier and Hoeffler's 'greed vs grievance' theory (2004), as referenced in the previous chapter, will be used to delve deeper into the intricacies of the Sierra Leonean case. The dichotomy presented by this theory, although criticised for its simplicity, will be used primarily to structure the causes and social pre-conditions that can be identified in the case of Sierra Leone's civil conflict, for example, the resource curse, the legacy of British imperialism, guerrilla culture and corruption. Although it is to be expected that the categorisations of such will not always be clear-cut and there may be some overlapping, the division allows for a structured analysis of the role of natural resource endowment in the Sierra Leone civil war. In completing an isolated analysis of this case, Sambanis' criticism surrounding a definition of civil war in comparison to other forms of political violence is not particularly relevant, as a comparative analysis with other cases will not be completed, although this would be an interesting avenue for further development and research. However, his observation on the lack of consideration of external influences in the causal process does seem to hold in this case and should be taken into account. Therefore, attention will be paid to external actors that may have played some part in causing, perpetuating and sustaining the civil conflict in the region. Furthermore, engagement with issues of human security, human rights and development will also be necessary to cast light on the overall social situation pertinent to this conflict.

In short, by using deductive reasoning, a comparative analysis will be conducted. By examining and evaluating a comprehensive list of potential internal and external factors relating to the onset and course of the conflict, Collier and Hoeffler's theory will be tested in the case study of the Sierra Leone civil war. In terms of greed, the characteristics of a 'resource war' will be the main focus, whereas with grievance, the notion of the 'resource curse' and its effects will be explored. The following hypotheses will, therefore, be evaluated:

- i. The RUF acted on the basis of 'grievance' when initiating the armed conflict. The resource curse related to the high natural resource endowment (IV) did not play a direct role in the onset of the war (DV), rather contributed only to the postcolonial social circumstances, in which discontent and motivation for rebellion matured.
- ii. The control of the mines and the trade of diamonds served only as a means (i.e. a currency) for the RUF to obtain weapons and supplies.

From this point, the Sierra Leone model and its elements can be clearly established. In doing so, conclusions will lead to the development of recommendations with regard to natural resource management and conflict prevention on a wider scale.

1.4. Methodology

This thesis will take its predominant focus from the field of International Relations. However, in the course of conducting the necessary research, aspects of primarily history, but also elements of economics and international law will be touched upon. The sources consulted will pertain to both sides of the conflict, in as much as relevant data is accessible. Such sources will be contemporary to the topic and include press releases documenting the internal and external perception of the conflict and legal documents, for example UN Security Council Resolutions and rulings of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. Economic analyses will be reviewed to assist in examining diamond exports of Sierra Leone, but also of neighbouring countries, as many diamonds were smuggled across the border before being sold to, mainly, Belgium and the United Kingdom. It will, therefore, be necessary to consult documentation surrounding the diamond imports into the aforementioned nations. Secondary literature from academics will also prove a useful source of information, as many conducted on the ground research and interviews. Furthermore, while previous research has

concentrated on the analysis of the onset of civil war from a purely economic point of view, many studies fail to include the human security aspect. Therefore, an important source will be reports from organisations focussing on human rights and development: Global Witness, Amnesty International and the UNDP Human Development Report, among others. In such consultation, the focus will be on the following indicators: GDP, education and health etc. While these indices were not as developed as they are nowadays and did not consist of such a comprehensive set of indicators, they will still provide an interesting and comparable insight into the human security situation before, during and after the civil war. Notable trends will allow for conclusions to be drawn as to whether there may have been other social aspects working in parallel to factors pertaining to natural resource endowment, serving as an additional dimension of the causes of the conflict at hand.

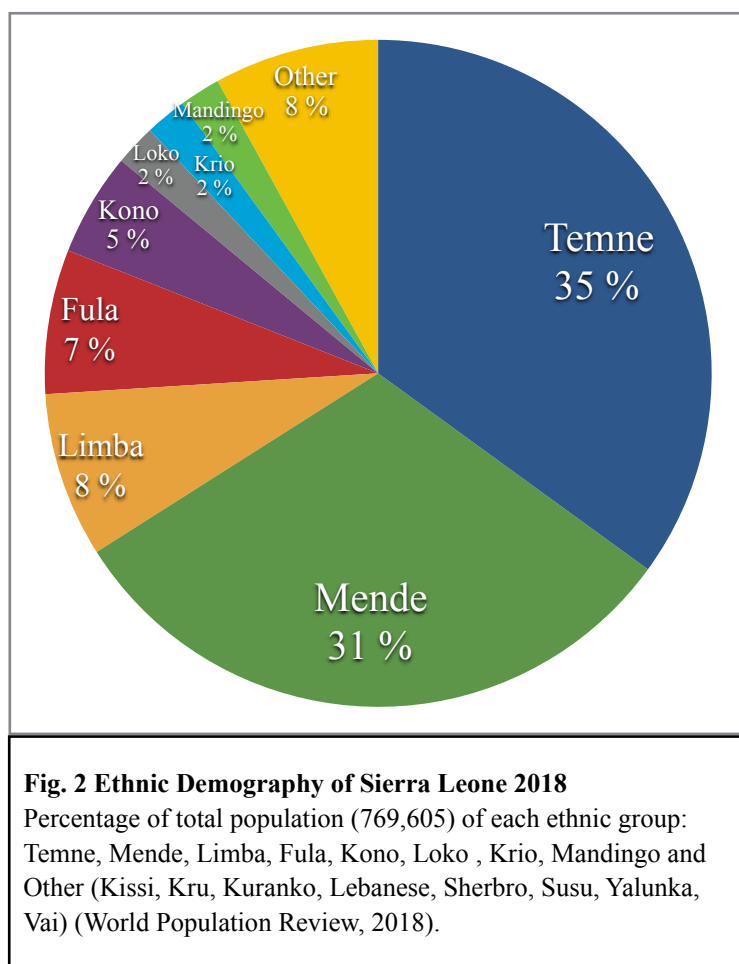
2. Historical Context

2.1. British Rule

The history of Sierra Leone became intrinsically linked with Europe and the Atlantic world from the late fifteenth century with the beginning of the Trans-Atlantic slavery system. As the activities of slave traders began to dwindle in the late eighteenth century, “The Province of Freedom”, which later became known as Sierra Leone’s capital Freetown, was established by a British charity, the Committee for the Relief of the Black Poor. In reaction to the squalor and hardship endured by the African and Asian population in London, the philanthropic organisation acted on their idealism and marked out and used the newly created province as a base for the campaign for the abolishment of the slave trade (Flynn, 2007). Despite the largely unsuccessful attempt, the mission was taken up by the Sierra Leone Company in 1792, who aimed to resettle Black Loyalists after the American War of Independence (1775-1783). Hence, by 1855, the region became home to over 50,000 formerly enslaved Africans (UNDP, n.d.). This was a critical step, without which the British would not have been able to establish such dominance over the subsequent century.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the British formed the Crown Colony of Sierra Leone out of the Freetown settlement and expanded the territory that led to the creation of what is loosely Sierra Leonean territory today (BBC, 2018). In 1821, Freetown was declared the capital of British

West Africa,⁶ which encompassed what later became the independent countries of Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Gambia. The governing structure of Sierra Leone by the United Kingdom changed



once again in 1896 when the British Protectorate over the Freetown Hinterland was established. Due to the melange of native inhabitants, repatriated slaves and their descendants, and the fluid nature of tribal movements and cross-border migration, a number of distinct ethnic groups appeared, still existing today (See Fig. 2). The repatriated slaves and their descendants, whose culture developed throughout history with a strong connection to British colonial masters, are known as the Krio (or Creole) and make up around 2% of Sierra Leone's current population, they reside mainly in and around Freetown.

An added dimension to political struggle and conflict in Africa has developed out of the fact that during the colonial period, arbitrary borders were drawn by Europeans, cutting across tribal lines and grouping together different peoples (Cartwright, 1970: 3). However, despite what would be expected for such an ethnically diverse nation, due to the heterogeneity there would be increased tensions among the different factions of society, the civil war in Sierra Leone did not have a strong ethnic dimension. It seems that the RUF did not have any discernible, and certainly not a substantial, ethnic following (Abdullah and Muana 1998: 191), unlike other African conflicts that also took place at the end of the 20th Century under similar post-colonial conditions; Ethiopia (1971-1991), Nigeria (1983-2005) and Rwanda (1990-1994).

⁶ Freetown remained the capital of British West Africa until 1874.

Despite the perceived domination of European colonial powers in Africa at the time, direct rule was not universally imposed by the British in Sierra Leone. The position and authority of local chiefs was, in some regions, recognised by the colonial officials and treaties were agreed upon by the two parties to maintain a certain level of control, but also to avoid the costs of imposing direct rule (Reno, 1995: 29-31). Nevertheless, officials consistently tried to influence and make deals with (often corrupt) chiefs to exercise indirect rule. This quiet diplomacy, albeit often illegal and corrupt, was particularly important in diamond mining regions (Bangura, 2013: 251) and proved a cost-effective means for the colonial power to keep a hand on internal affairs (Reno, 1995: 33).

2.2. Independence Movement

In the aftermath of World War II, when European colonial powers were recovering socially, politically and economically from the ravages of global conflict, the process of decolonisation began to gain momentum. Governor Sir Hubert Stevenson submitted a proposal for the constitutional advancement of Sierra Leone in October 1947 (Cartwright, 1970: 43), and acting on such proposals, the new constitution set forth by the British in 1951 offered substantially more representation for Africans in policy-making in the Legislative Council⁷ (Ibid.: 55). The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) was conceived by a number of political figures from the Protectorate's bourgeoisie with the goal of a transfer of power to them from the British. They showed no interest in garnering the support from the general population and bringing the average citizen into the political debate, in fact, their disregard for mass participation paved the way for their inability to handle the demands of the proletariat in subsequent years (Ibid. 55-63).

The official and legal transfer of power was facilitated through a framework for decolonisation developed by the SLPP. Sir Milton Margai, the leader of the SLPP, was appointed as Chief Minister of Sierra Leone in 1954 and led the delegation and negotiations for independence (BBC, 2018). The first general election was held in 1957 and proved the dominance of the SLPP over other parties,⁸

⁷ The Legislative Council had a total of thirty seats, from 1951, twenty-one of which were filled by Sierra Leoneans; direct election of seven from the Colony, one from each of the twelve District Councils and two from the Protectorate Assembly.

⁸ SLPP won 45.7% of the votes. Other parties in the 1957 general election; United Progressive Party (12.6%), National Council of Sierra Leone (1.8%), Labour Party (0.7%), Sierra Leone Independence Movement (0.7%), Independents (37.5%) (Nohlen et al., 1999: 799).

with Margai being reelected outstandingly as Chief Minister (Cartwright, 1970: 96). In a House of Lords debate on 5th May 1960, the Earl of Perth, Minister of State for Colonial Affairs stated:

“Constitutional talks have been held with an all-party delegation from Sierra Leone... On behalf of Her Majesty’s Government my right honourable friend the Colonial Secretary agreed that Sierra Leone would become independent on April 27, 1961...the Conference was marked with cordiality and good-will. At the end of our discussions the Conference reaffirmed the long tradition of friendship between Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom, and the representatives of both made it clear that it was their intention that their cooperation and friendship should continue.”

(UK Parliament, 1960)

2.3. Post-Colonial Years

“The postcolonial governments and power elite of Sierra Leone further aggravated and perpetuated existing conditions of poverty, marginalisation of civil society, inequalities, dependence and overall underdevelopment”

(Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 93)

Sierra Leone was effectively a one-party state during the years after independence (Cartwright, 1970: 210-238) and despite the emergence of a number of opposition parties to the SLPP since their inception, it wasn’t until the 1967 general election that “Sierra Leone passed the critical test of a competitive political system” (Ibid.: 4). The All People’s Congress (APC) obtained a 44.9% majority in comparison to the SLPP’s 37.1% share of the votes (Nohlen et al. 1999: 799) under the leadership of founding member of the APC, and former founding member of the SLPP, Saika Stevens. Despite a coup after the election in 1967, a subsequent counter-coup in 1968 restored the APC’s victory (Cartwright, 1970: 78). The APC’s ideology promoted “radical improvement in the political, economic and social conditions of the toiling masses” (APC, 1965 cited in Reno, 1995: 72), however they faced the immense challenge of developing the structures that would allow such a goal to be achieved (Ibid.). Ultimately, Stevens’ selective policies and conflicting interests meant

economic changes benefitted only political elites and foreign investors (Ibid.: 80; Bangura, 2013: 252).

After declaring a state of emergency in September 1970, due to alleged plots by military officers to oust him, Stevens faced an, albeit unsuccessful, military coup by Colonel Bangura in March 1971 (New York Times, 1971). Party to the coup was Corporal Foday Sankoh, who would later become instrumental in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF); he was sentenced to seven years imprisonment for his involvement (Harris, 2013: 64-65). A month later, a declaration by Stevens promulgated the new constitution which abolished the strong connection with the British Monarchy (that had been maintained since independence in 1961) and changed Sierra Leone from a sovereign state, with Queen Elizabeth II as head of state, to a republic. Stevens' position subsequently evolved from Prime Minister to President, "rapidly [tightening] the screws on any real or potential threat to his rule" (Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 106). Stevens' rule, as both Prime Minister and President, was characterised by violence, corruption, exploitation, intimidation and a firm grip on almost absolute power. The lack of research and development in the production and mining sectors meant that Sierra Leone's minerals were exported only in raw form, with almost no added value (Keen, 2005: 16). Further economic decline and widespread social discontent ensued (Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 100-112). Alarmed by the performance of the SLPP in the 1977 elections, a referendum was held on whether the one-party state should be reinstated, this time with the APC as the singular party. Stevens claimed that this would reduce the electoral violence sweeping the nation. A resounding, but suspicious, 95% of the population voted in favour and, as such, Sierra Leone became, once more, a one-party state in 1978. Nevertheless, the violence continued and actually increased in certain areas (Harris, 2013: 67).

Under the APC, there were two dominant opposition groups; students and chiefs (Harris, 2013: 69). The period saw a number of student riots, denouncing the APC's politicisation of education and demanding more funding for students and opportunities to shape education and politics, most notably the 1977 uprising of students at Fourah Bay College, Freetown (Keen, 2005: 29). A student of the college at the time of the demonstrations described his experience, saying:

"the Sierra Leone scholarships were given to APC supporters and relatives...Many of those students who for special scholarships and privileges were not up to their studies. But some would come back as lecturers...They had nothing in their heads!"

(Keen, 2005: 29)

Hindolo Sumanguru Trye, who later became Sierra Leone's Minister of Labour and Social Security, was involved in organising such demonstrations and said:

“the strike was as a result of the state of the country at the time. It was a one-party system and there was massive corruption.”

(Remoe, 2012)

Like many other individuals who were involved in the demonstrations, Trye was exiled following the events. Expelled students relocated to neighbouring countries, including Liberia, Guinea and Ghana (Keen, 2005: 176-177).

At the age of eighty, Stevens announced his retirement and that his successor would be Force Commander Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh. In 1985, in the second election of the one-party state, Momoh stood and won as the only candidate (Harris, 2013: 68). Despite hopes that Momoh's regime would bring about more transparency and rid the government of the corruption that had become so commonplace in the Stevens administration, the same pattern of economic decline and further alienation of the general population continued. In November 1987, Momoh declared an economic state of emergency and published a number of measures that he hoped would be able to finally crack down on illegal smuggling activities (Kpundeh, 1999: 222). However, the military became complicit, if not involved, in illegal activity due to low wages and the monetary incentives that came with smuggling, rendering many of Momoh's initiatives counterproductive (Keen, 2005: 32).

2.4. Civil War

On 23rd March 1991, small groups of rebels,⁹ under the command of Foday Sankoh and calling themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), crossed over from Liberia and began to capture the border towns and villages (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 178). The APC government did not

⁹ It is estimated that there were around 100 fighters (Hirsch, 2001: 31)

deploy adequate service to these vulnerable regions, thus, these captured communities, e.g. Kailahun and Pujehun, became strongholds of the RUF and were used as camps for indoctrination and recruit training (Ibid.). Sankoh, after being imprisoned following the 1971 coup against Stevens, developed a relationship with Charles Taylor. Taylor, the leader of the Liberian rebel group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), soon became engaged in his own civil war. This comradeship meant that the Sierra Leone civil conflict was incredibly interwoven with Liberia from the very beginning (Hirsch, 2001: 31). It became a quid pro quo arrangement; when Momoh provided soldiers from the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) to support the forces of the Economic Community of West African States Cease Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)¹⁰ in Liberia to fight the NPFL, retaliation by Taylor constituted providing support, in the form of weapons, to the RUF (Ibid: 32). By the end of 1991, the RUF was executing strategic and intensified attacks on economic targets (diamond mines) and rural villages, dramatically increasing their body count as they proceeded. By 1992, the RUF had succeeded in taking control of the diamond-rich Kono region.

In wake of the deteriorating economic conditions, there was growing discontent among military individuals regarding salaries and conditions. As such, Captain Valentine Strasser led a coup against Momoh's administration in 1992, forcing the President to flee to Guinea (Hirsch, 2001: 32). On seizing power, young officers, who expressed the necessity to rid the government of corruption and turn around the desperate economic circumstances of the country, established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), with Strasser as its Chairman (Ibid.: 35).

The RUF's activities continued and their strategy was characterised by violence, intimidation and human rights abuses. The NPRC began to escalate its efforts to recruit and build up a force. In addition to the SLA, they recruited anti-NPFL fighters and, from 1993, they were also assisted by Guinean and Nigerian soldiers who had a vested interest in protecting the ECOMOG bases of the peace-keeping operation in Liberia (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 181). As their leadership was made up of high ranking and experienced officers, this left inexperienced soldiers on the front line fighting the RUF, giving the RUF an advantage (Ibid.: 181). The army was deployed throughout the country and became unpopular with the general population, due to their ineffectiveness and the fact that they often exploited their position. In fact, many even came to believe the propaganda of the RUF, becoming collaborators and earning the label '*sobel*' - "soldier by day, rebel by

¹⁰ The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), made up of 16 nations and formed in 1975, set up the armed monitoring group, ECOMOG, in reaction to the Liberian Civil War (BBC, 2004)

night” (Hirsch, 2001: 32). The NPRC’s regime was criticised for disregarding human rights after carrying out extrajudicial executions of political detainees (Amnesty International, 1995: 16-20) and, thus, lost a large amount of international support (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 182). Like their predecessors, the government was still racked with corruption, as the high officials learned of the wealth that could be garnered in such positions.

By 1995, with the rising disillusionment with the NPRC and knowledge of the *sobels* among citizens, the RUF regained strength and had a number of camps scattered across the country, with “secured bush trails” towards Freetown (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 183-184). The government took on a new strategy of outsourcing the security task; Executive Outcomes (EO), a South African based security firm that had experience in fighting in other African conflicts¹¹ (Harris, 2013: 99), was employed to give training in counter insurgency and help the SLA with intelligence (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 185). EO was charged with securing Freetown, destroying RUF headquarters and regaining control of areas under RUF control (Hirsch, 2001: 39). One of their most important tasks was to rescue the Kono diamond mines from the RUF’s grasp (Adams, 1999).

With the help of troops from Guinea, Nigeria and EO, the war was brought under a level of control the country had not seen for almost five years. After Strasser was ousted in a peaceful internal coup and succeeded by Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio (Hirsch, 2001: 42), the relative peace seen in the country meant that the political elite felt it possible to hold elections in early 1996¹² (Harris, 2013: 100). Before the election, it is claimed that the RUF leadership made an agreement with the potential government of Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, to negotiate a final peace. This was to the contrary of Sankoh’s previously strong position of refusing to negotiate with any Freetown government, who he saw as “responsible for plundering the nation’s resources in collusion with foreign business interests” (Hirsch, 2001: 42). However, these negotiations would provide the prospect for a power-sharing arrangement with which Sankoh could finally exert the authority he had hoped for. Meanwhile, the RUF foot soldiers were exercising a number of brutal attacks on villages, predominantly in the north and east, in the hope of convincing people to boycott the elections. These attacks, and subsequently the image of the civil war, were defined by incredible human rights abuses; indiscriminate mutilations and amputations (Ibid.: 43-44). The message sent by the RUF

¹¹ E.g. Angolan War

¹² This was the first election in Sierra Leone since the 1991 referendum, determined by 80% of the votes, that reestablished the multi-party system and gave more power to parliament (African Elections Database, 2012).

that if people used their hands to mark the ballots in the elections, they would violently lose them (Hirsch, 2001: 45). Nevertheless, the election went ahead with a turnout of over one million, thanks to the support of the SLA in ensuring ballots reached small villages (Ibid.). The first round of Presidential Elections were held on 26th February and, as no candidate received more than 55% of the votes,¹³ a second round was held on 15th March. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, of the SLPP, won the election with 59.49% of the votes (African Elections Database, 2012).

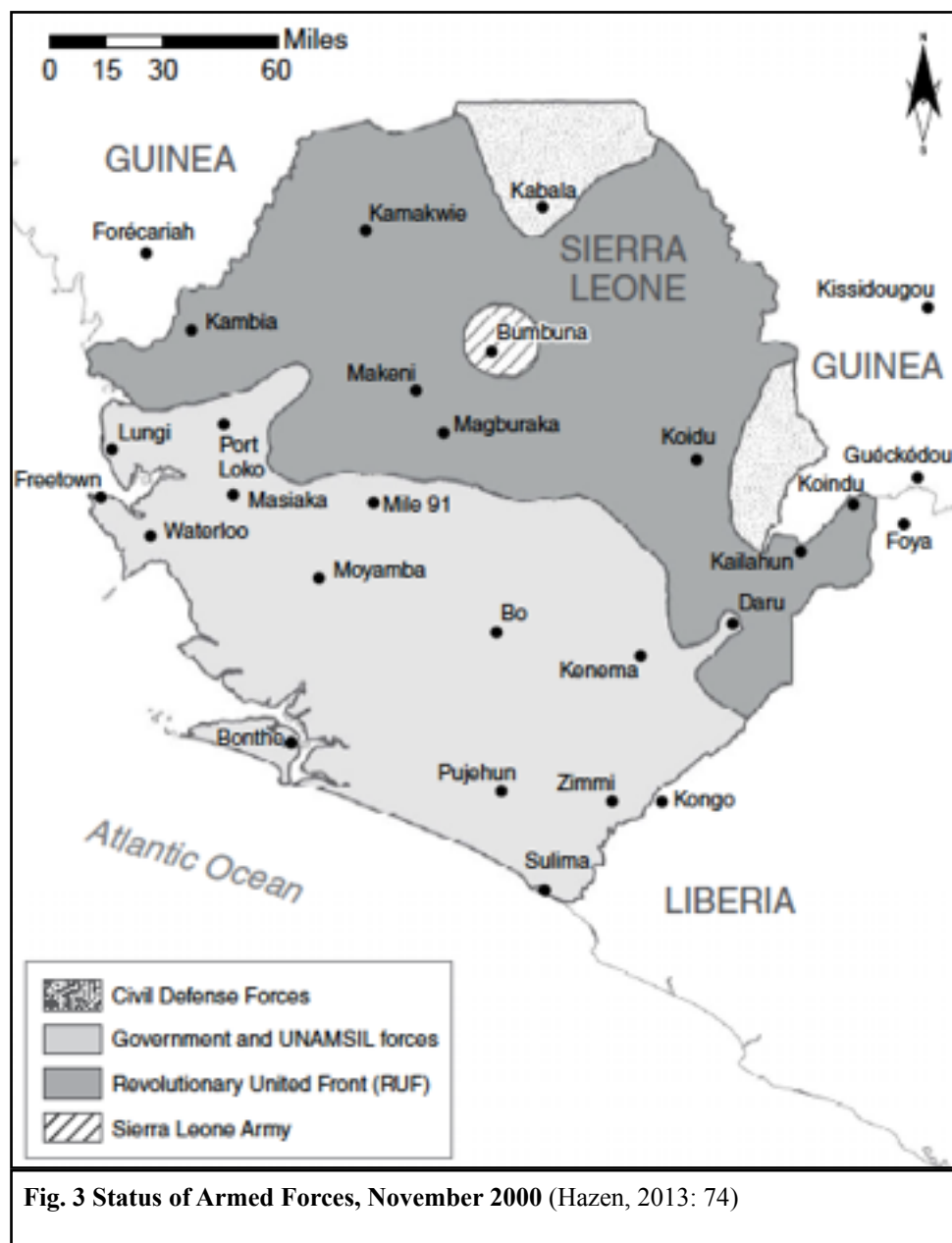
The newly re-established multi-party state and a representative election provided an optimistic prospect of democratic rule and a road to economic growth and human development (Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 136). In November 1996, the Abidjan Peace Accord was agreed between Kabbah and Sankoh, stipulating the withdrawal of EO,¹⁴ establishing an international fund that would allow the RUF to become a legitimate political party (Keen, 2005: 158-159) and, most surprisingly, stating there would not be any judicial proceedings against RUF members, despite their participation in human rights atrocities (Hirsch, 2001: Ibid.). Moreover, Sankoh ensured that the question of his position in the government was addressed, with the hope that he would be given the role Vice President. These efforts proved futile as Kabbah insisted that, by doing so, he would be impeached due to electoral rules stated in the 1991 Constitution. However, clearly the risk of Sankoh attempting to institute an internal coup from a position of power was also a factor (Ibid.).

The failure in implementation of the agreement came as little surprise, but the extraordinary and brutal joint coup that ensued on 25th May 1997 could not have been foreseen (Keen, 2005: 193). The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), under Colonel Johnny Paul Koroma, joined forces with the RUF and managed to overthrow Kabbah. This military alliance employed strategies much like those of the RUF before, the group was incredibly violent in their robbing, looting and destruction of civilian towns and villages (Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 143). The rule of law crumbled and the international community placed an economic embargo on the country and demanded the return of democratic order to Sierra Leone (Amnesty International, 1997). In March 1998, ECOMOG had managed to reinstall Kabbah as President (Brown, 2000) and soon after he

¹³ SLPP (35.80%), UNPP (22.62%), PDP (16.07%), NUP (5.31%), APC (5.14%), DCP (4.93%), PPP (2.89%), NDA (2.33%), PNC (2.12%), NUM (1.06%), SDP (0.70%), NPP (0.53%), NADP (0.50%) (African Elections Database, 2012)

¹⁴ While the RUF initially argued for withdrawal of all foreign forces (i.e. EO and the troops from Guinea and Nigeria), this was rejected by the government as this would have left the SLA incredibly vulnerable should the RUF not keep up their side of the agreement (Hirsch, 2001: 52).

declared a state of national emergency. ECOMOG led a successful campaign against the AFRC/RUF, retaking the Kono District and the RUF headquarters in Kailahun. In reaction, the RUF threatened a terror campaign and they managed to recapture a few areas in the West. However, an immense humiliation for ECOMOG forces and the government was the RUF's successful assault on Freetown with mass devastation and indiscriminate violence against civilians, reasserting their power (Harris, 2013: 112). The remaining areas controlled by the RUF were zones of terror and their activities to undermine ECOMOG were coined 'Operation No Living Thing', with the aim of waging war against civilians to convince them that there was nothing that ECOMOG, or the government, could do to protect them (Hirsch, 2001: 75).



International actors who were instrumental in the conflict in support of the Sierra Leone Government, namely Nigeria, USA and UK, took the opportunity to facilitate another attempt at mediation. President Kabbah spoke with Sankoh (who was now on death row after being convicted of seven counts of treason) in an attempt for a cease fire, something the latter claimed he could not agree to while he remained imprisoned (Hirsch, 2001: 78-79). The determination for a peace settlement eclipsed the stubbornness of the international democratic forces and the Sierra Leone government was worn down by the bitterness of the preceding eight years, paving the way for the extreme concessions they made for the RUF (Ibid.: 80). The Lomé Peace Agreement, of July 1999, reiterated many of the points of the Abidjan Agreement, with provisions for disarmament, end to hostilities, the transformation of the RUF into a political party, amnesty and reintegration for RUF combatants (Ibid.:30). In fact, the text of the agreement was based on that of the Abidjan agreement with increased focus on the wording regarding RUF amnesty, as many high-ranking RUF and AFRC members were facing the death penalty and wanted to ensure that these would be overturned (Hayner, 2007: 14).

“In order to bring lasting peace to Sierra Leone, the Government of Sierra Leone shall take appropriate legal steps to grant Corporal Foday Sankoh absolute and free pardon...[and] also grant absolute and free pardon and reprieve to all combatants and collaborators in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives...”

(Lomé Agreement, 1999. Art. IX(1-2))

Surprisingly, this was not the most controversial issue faced by the negotiating team or, in the aftermath, the Sierra Leonean public. Rather, the offering of senior governmental positions to some of the rebels was the contentious issue for the negotiators and outraged the national and international community (Hayner, 2007: 21). Many believed that this entrusted Sankoh with authority and access he did not deserve, correctly foreseeing that such would be a recipe for continued war (Harris: 2013: 113). Sankoh was offered the position of Chairman of a the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development¹⁵ and further stating:

¹⁵ Established with Article VII of the Lomé Agreement

“For this purpose he shall enjoy the status of Vice President and shall therefore be answerable only to the President of Sierra Leone”

(Lomé Agreement, 1999. Art. V(2))

During the implementation of the agreement, over 50,000 combatants were demobilised (Hayner, 2007: 29). However, new RUF government members did not benefit from their positions as quickly as they had hoped (Harris, 2013: 13-14) and, even by the end of the year, there was a remaining divide between ECOMOG controlled areas and RUF controlled areas (Hirsch, 2001: 85). In fact, while Sankoh’s official line was for demobilisation, his second in command was in the field announcing that his troops would not disarm (Ibid.:86). Despite an increase in UN presence in Sierra Leone (Ibid.),¹⁶ there was a re-ignition of violence around Freetown, culminating in the capture of UN soldiers by RUF combatants, marking the thorough evaporation of hopes for sustained peace (Brown, 2000). Subsequently, Sankoh was arrested on 17th May 2000 and the Sierra Leone government requested that the UN inaugurate a Special Court to convene and try Sankoh and other rebels (Hayner, 2007: 23).

The Lomé Agreement had effectively failed, due to Sankoh’s tactical signing in order to gain power and the incredibly high level of instability continued, resulting in the postponement of the 2001 elections. In March 2001, the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1343, demanding that Liberia expel all RUF members and end their financial support of the RUF (Gberie, 2005: 170). After a number of military defeats, the RUF was forced into peace negotiations and on 18th January 2002, the war was declared officially over by President Kabbah (Harris, 2013: 119).

By 2002, it is estimated that the conflict resulted in around 490,000 refugees, almost one million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and between 20,000 and 50,000 conflict related deaths. Furthermore, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) estimated that there had been around \$79 million worth of humanitarian spending for 2001 alone (Cook and Merrow, 2003: 60-61).

¹⁶ The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was established as a peacekeeping mission with around 6000 troops and 260 observers (Hirsch, 2001: 86)

3. The Diamond Economy of Sierra Leone

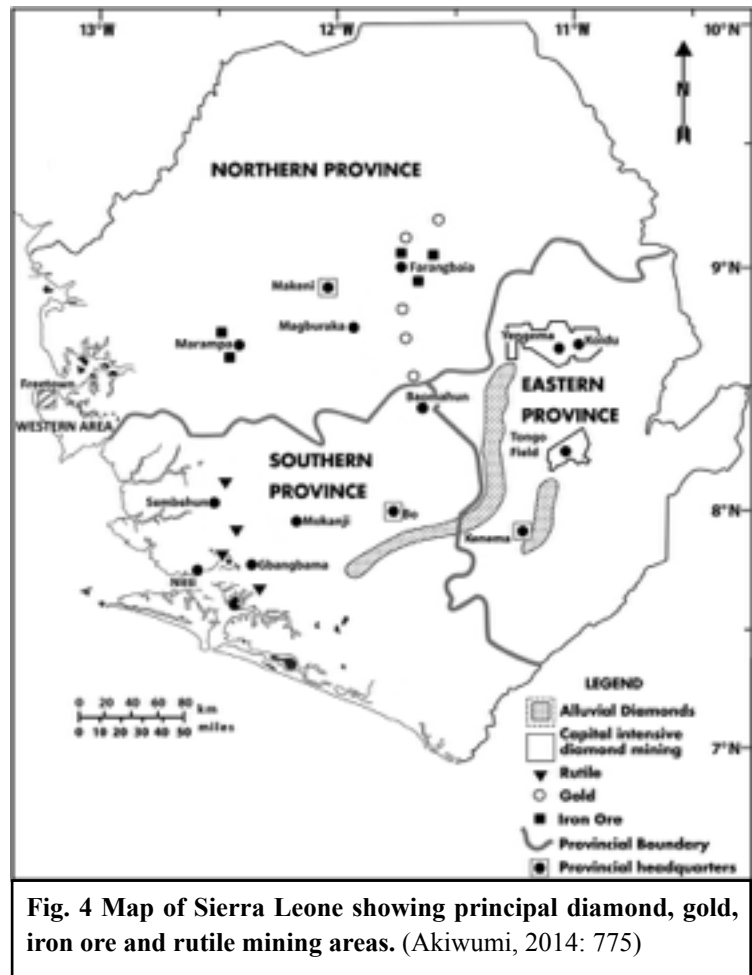
Sierra Leone is without doubt an incredibly resource-rich country, with an abundance not only in diamonds, that are found in around a third of the country's territory (Physicians for Human Rights, 2002:19), but also a number of other minerals; bauxite, rutile, iron ore and gold (Bangura, 2013: 251). However, its diamond endowment has been source of envy, dispute and mystery for almost a century, since they were discovered in 1927 when Sierra Leone was under British Control (Reno, 1995: 47). Diamond production in Sierra Leone is characterised by gems of the highest quality; the most famous of which is the 'Star of Sierra Leone',¹⁷ an incredible 969-carat stone found in the Kono District (Smilie et al., 2000: 4).

Le Billon (2005, 32-35) classifies natural resources in the following way: diffuse or point, proximate or distant. Point resources are found and exploited in limited areas (e.g. oil, copper etc.), usually having a low value to weight ratio. In contrast, diffuse resources (e.g. minerals, agricultural products etc) are exploited by a large number of small groups and their deposits are scattered over a large area. Due to their high value to weight ratio, they are considered as highly 'lootable' and, therefore, are perfectly suited for smuggling activities. Being a 'distant resource' also increases likelihood for smuggling activities due to their geographical locations, for example in the territory of an opposition group, near borders and/or in remote territories, which leave them difficult to police. However, illicit activity of proximate resources is easier for governments to manage as they are able to physically maintain control. Using this classification system, it can be said that diamonds, found in Sierra Leone and elsewhere, are a diffuse-distant resource.

While almost all districts in Sierra Leone are naturally equipped with possibility for mining extraction (Le Billon, 2008: 362), diamond mining activity is primarily located in the Eastern Province, which encompasses the Kailahun, Kenema and Kono districts. Within these areas, diamond mining has been the main source of economic activity since their discovery in the 1930s. As can be seen in Fig. 4, diamond mines are also located in the Southern Province, spanning the Bo District. In the process of this study, we will see how the widespread diamond endowment in Sierra Leone was controlled by the political elite, private companies and foreign investors, rather than benefitting the population and working to increase development opportunities for Sierra Leone.

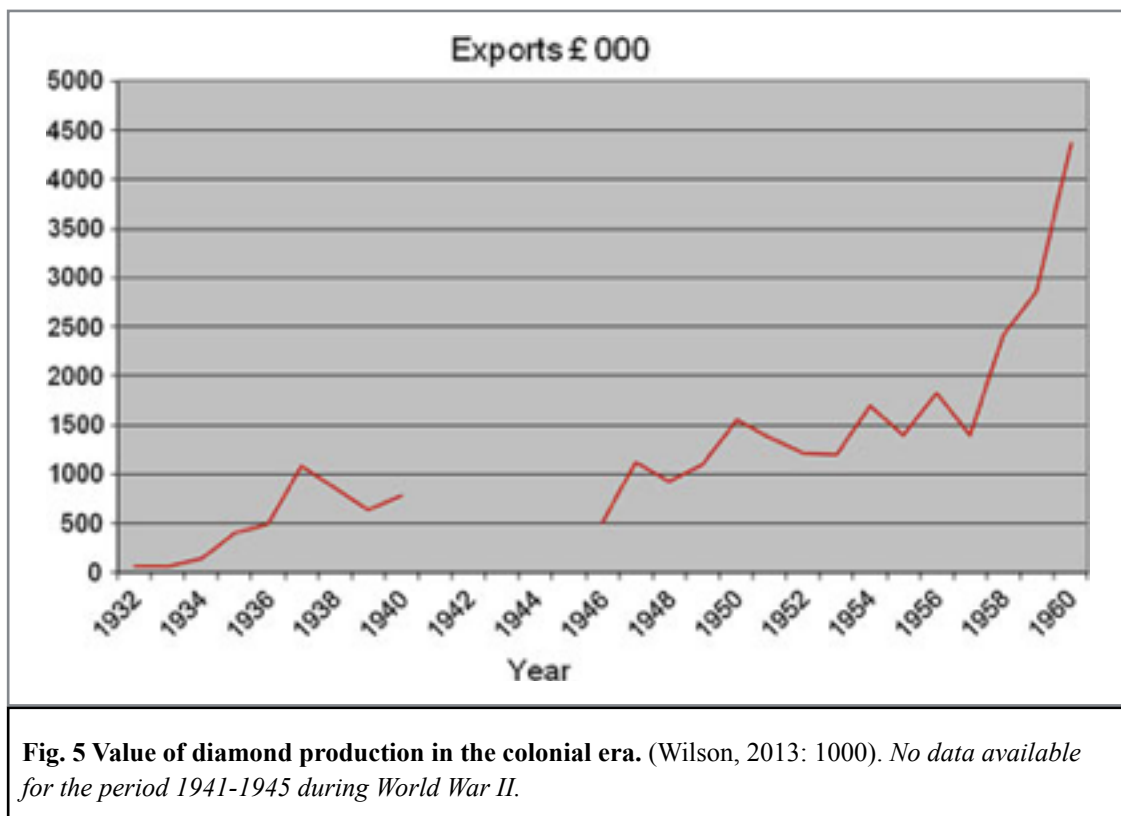
¹⁷ The 'Star of Sierra Leone' was bought for around \$2.5 Million by New York Jeweller Harry Winston in 1972 (New York Times, 1972).

Soon after the discovery of diamond mines in Sierra Leone, the British capitalised on the diamond-rich region at their disposal and by 1935, significant production had begun (Smilie et al. 2000: 4). The colonial power brokered a deal with the Sierra Leone Selection Trust (SLST), a subsidiary of the De Beers cartel and granted them a 99 year monopoly on exploration and mining (Reno, 1995: 47). This meant that De Beers had sole control over all diamond mines in Sierra Leone and, under the law, Sierra Leoneans were not allowed to mine their own diamonds (Keen, 2005:12). However, due to the ‘distant’ nature of diamonds, illicit mining and smuggling activities were already taking place. By the mid-1950s, it is estimated that there were around 75,000 people illegally mining in the Kono district alone (Smilie et al. 2000: 4). The breakdown of the system led to the need to tighten security measures surrounding the mineral but, of course, this prompted the offenders to move their projects elsewhere, most notably to neighbouring Liberia. This did not go unnoticed and diamond companies also began to set up offices in the country. Recognising the diminishing control of their precious cargo, De Beers even set up a boring office in Monrovia in 1954 (Ibid.).



However, in 1955, the British repealed the monopoly of SLST and limited their agency to Yengema and Tongo Field. Furthermore, a new programme was introduced in 1956 that allowed Sierra Leoneans to obtain licences for mining and buying; the Alluvial Diamond Mining Scheme (ADMS). The system brought opportunity for the population of Sierra Leone to be involved, albeit in a limited fashion, in the mining sector. For the economy, it created “significant production with legal and taxable channels” (Keen, 2005: 13). However, as already learned, due to their nature, the sector was still rife with illicit activity with smuggling representing an estimated two-thirds of the value of production (Hall, 1970: 7). Despite the newfound access to mining and the ability to legally

mine and trade, it was no longer necessary to smuggle to bypass the law. However, the monetary incentive prevailed, citizens and chiefs alike benefitted from the informal income from such operations (Reno, 1995: 73). Therefore, the government established the Gold and Diamond Office (GDO) in 1959, run by Diamond Corporation Ltd., a subsidiary of the De Beers cartel. Traders could secure higher prices by selling to the GDO than those that could be obtained by smuggling, in the hope that this would remove the monetary incentive and control over the sector could be secured once and for all (Hall, 1970: 7; Keen, 2005: 13; Van der Laan, 1965: 128, 132). In parallel, security was dramatically increased, to the point where some chiefs have described the ‘police-state’ maintained by the British during the period; the employment of undercover agents, checkpoints and a private security force aimed to extinguish smuggling operations. Although not fully suppressed, it is noted that legal diamond exports increased (see Fig. 5) (Hall, 1970: 7) and smuggling decreased to £1-2 Million a year (1959-1962) from a staggering £10-15 Million (1954-1962) (Saylor, 1967: 135).



While well meaning, the crackdown on illegal trading and smuggling left the government a relatively small amount of profit to tax (Van der Laan; 1965: 140); there was an immense gap between the high prices paid by the GDO and the amount that the GDO could obtain when selling

on the world market. In fact, their value on the world market was thirty times that which was obtained from diamonds produced under this system (Ibid.: 27).

The combination of SLST, ADMS and GDO resulted in the potential profits from diamonds to continue to be mismanaged and underexploited; wealth either left the country through De Beers' cartel in areas still under SLST administration or was dissipated in the struggle to restrain diamond activity to legal endeavours. This resulted in the government being consistently unable to obtain meaningful tax revenues from its dominant industry; public services remained practically nonexistent and "the country remained chronically underdeveloped" (Keen, 2005: 13). From the outset, the diamond sector of Sierra Leone proved incredibly difficult to govern and streamline. While the corrupt and ineffective government of Sierra Leone struggled to control the mining sector post-independence, as the remainder of this chapter will explain, it is incredibly important to recognise that even the British, at the time one of the most powerful nations of the world, found it difficult to contend with the task (Bangura, 2013: 251). The colonial policy of 'indirect rule' often resulted in a trade off between the preservation of the rights of traditional rulers and economic and administrative efficiency and functionality (Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 95-96).

The diamond sector was a fundamental issue in the independence negotiations between the SLPP and the British (Cartwright, 1970: 73), indeed in the years after independence, the political elite were very keen to keep hold of their power in all areas, but as power comes with riches, control of the diamond sector was paramount. Especially after the APC's rise to power after the 1967 elections, the political elite distrusted local african entrepreneurs to take hold of the countries natural resource wealth and did not welcome them into the elite fold in a newly independent Sierra Leone. They avoided developing, what would in hindsight be considered healthy entrepreneurial partnerships to forward economic growth development, rather cultivated relationships with foreign businesses, most notably with Lebanese companies who were perceived as non-threatening, due to their lack of political agenda in the region, for the production and trade of natural resources. In 1968, 85% of licensed dealers in diamonds were African, but by 1973 that proportion had dropped to 22%; the rest of the market share engulfed by the Lebanese (Bangura, 2013: 252; Reno, 1995: 90). These foreign companies and their investors had free reign to exploit the mines and profit from their activities. However, as they did not have a vested interest in the economic growth opportunities for the country and the well-being of its inhabitants, they did not channel funds into

economic and social development. The corrupt nature of the government at that time meant that this was also not a priority of the state, thus the general population was forgotten (Ibid.:253).

Due to the fact that 70-80% of export earnings for the first ten years of independence were incurred from diamonds (Harris, 2013: 73), under the rule of President Siaka Stevens, the continued presence of the SLST and diamond mining in general became a heavily politicised issue (Smilie et al, 2000: 5; Reno, 1995: 104). He effectively nationalised the SLST and, in doing so, created the National Diamond Mining Company (NDMC) (Smilie et al., 2000: 5). The nationalisation was in pursuit of increasing the revenues from diamond mining and funnelling them directly to the central government (Reno, 1995: 89), in the hope of “[increasing] the living standards of [Sierra Leonean] citizens through further Africanisation of [the] economy” (Government Notice No. 648, Ministry of Mines, cited in Ibid.: 105). However, this new system was not a far cry from the colonial one; it was selective and elitist, allocating benefits mainly to politicians (Ibid.: 108) and proved useless for local communities (Ibid.: 105). Furthermore, due to insufficient safeguards against illicit mining and trading, legal diamond exports continued to fall. As such, figures show that they dropped to 595,000 carats in 1980 and to 48,000 carats in 1988 from what has been over two million carats in 1970 (Ibid.). Due to private mining for foreign operatives, by 1980, the NDMC has only 29% of legally produced diamonds, compared to 94% in 1973 (Bangura, 2013: 153). Furthermore, the government’s ability to obtain substantial and meaningful profits from the sector were once more undermined by smuggling activity, discouraging foreign capital investment and, once again, stunting prospects of economic growth. (Reno, 1995: 89, 105)

In the 1970s and 1980s, Sierra Leone endured a dramatic overall decline in the efficacy of political and economic relations, due to the mismanagement of development schemes, repressive policies and power-consolidation expenditures of the Stevens and Momoh administrations, as well as the country’s over dependence on diamonds (Harris, 2013: 63) and the permeating effects of global economy crises (Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999: 93). This resulted in the involvement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose stabilisation programmes became a cornerstone of Sierra Leone’s national economic policy in the period. The steady deterioration of the economy and its institutions has been attributed to the strong adverse effects of the informal market economy, that is to say continued smuggling, embezzlement and corruption (Ibid.: 93-94).

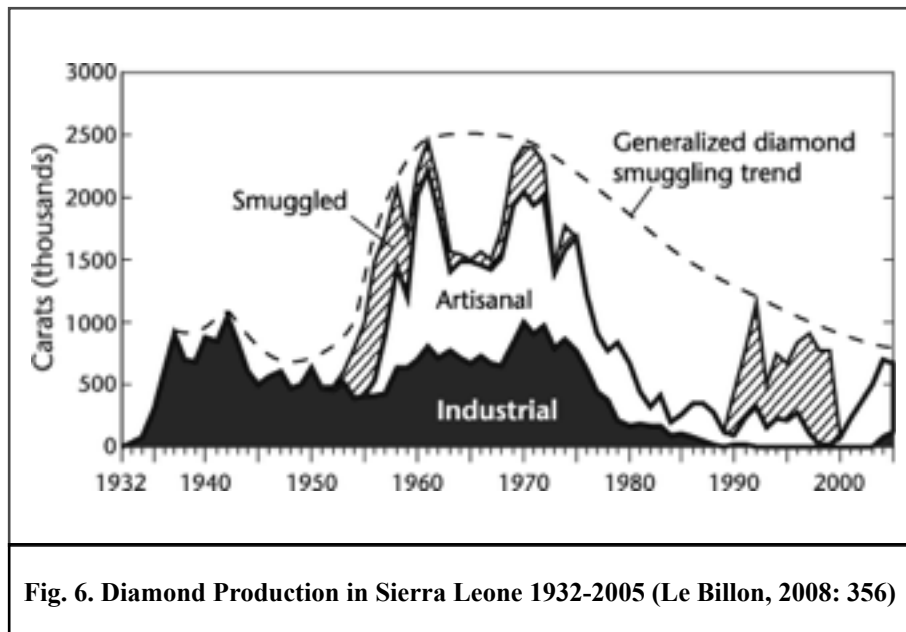


Fig. 6. Diamond Production in Sierra Leone 1932-2005 (Le Billon, 2008: 356)

The Momoh regime's approach to diamonds shared many of the characteristics of that of Stevens, that is to say exclusivity of licences for foreign investors and the political elite. However, due to the increased influence of the IMF and the World Bank, there were new incentives and drivers to curb illicit activity. 'Operation Clean State' of 1990 aimed to weaken the Lebanese hold on the diamond sector of foreign influence, especially that of the Lebanese network that had been organised by Stevens (Keen, 2005: 33). New opportunities emerged for investors from elsewhere, particularly notable were Israeli investors that had connections to the Antwerp diamond trade, but also criminal groups and families from Russia and America (Smilie et al., 2000: 5).

Smuggling is a characteristic that was present in Sierra Leone's diamond trade from its beginnings in the 1930s. The nature of the borders imposed on the continent by colonial masters, often cutting through naturally made tribal and ethnic boundaries, meant that smuggling, especially within these tribal and ethnic groups, was much easier and could even be considered by many of the natives as legitimate (Keen, 2005:13). Diamonds were smuggled predominantly through Liberia and Guinea, but also Burkina Faso (Cook, 2003a: 48). The inability of governments to control the diamond trade from the 1930s onwards set the stage for what would become a brutal and persistent conflict that resulted in mass devastation, socially, economically and politically. The Sierra Leone civil war, as documented in the previous chapter, is among seventeen diamond related conflicts that took place between 1946 and 2005 (Le Billon, 2008: 353). Resources that are found to be linked with aspects

of war have been dubbed “conflict resources”. Global Witness’ definition, which is generally and widely accepted, and what will be used for the purpose of this study, states:

“Global Witness defines conflict resources as natural resources whose systematic exploitation and trade in the context of violent conflict contributes to, benefits from, or results in the commission of serious violations of human rights, international humanitarian law or violations amounting to crimes under international law.”

(Global Witness, 2006: 7)

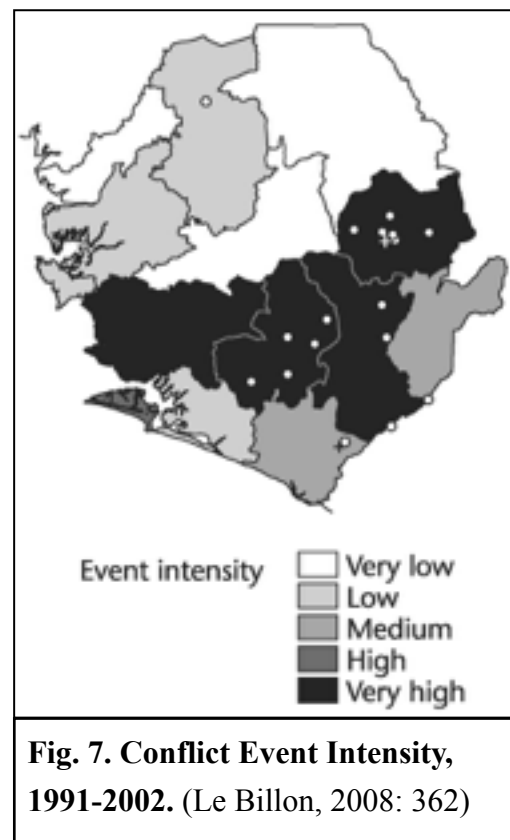
This term is, by no means, exclusive to diamonds and encompasses all types of resources; oil, gold, coffee, iron, rubber etc. (Le Billon, 2008: 353). However, due to the high rate of wars that are diamond-related, the term ‘conflict diamond’ has been scattered across the media and in UN Security Council Resolutions for the past two decades. The UN describes this term as:

“...diamonds that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognised governments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the Security Council.”

(Campino, 2003: 74)

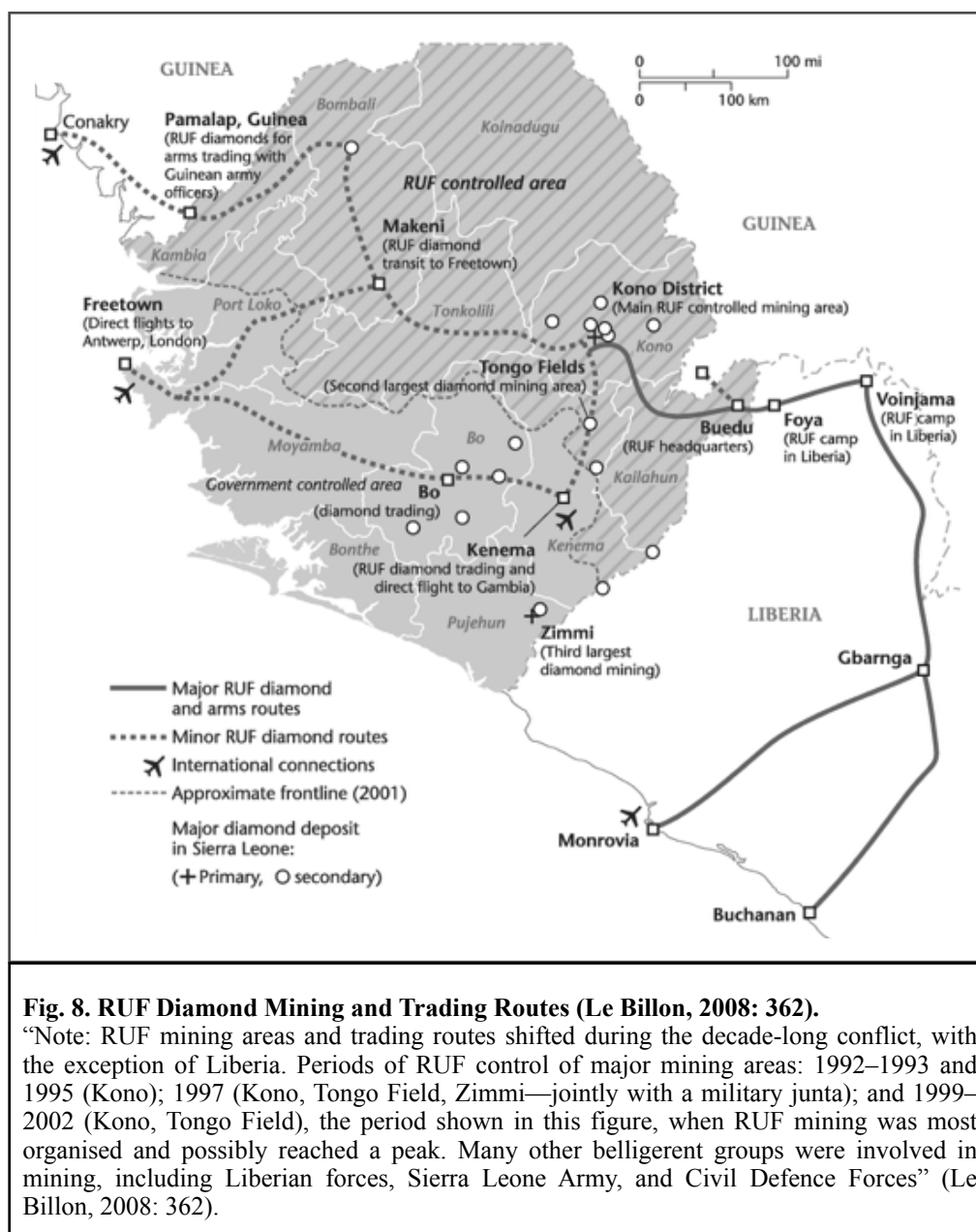
This definition allows for the assertion that conflict diamonds were an instrumental part of the Sierra Leone civil war; the stones originated from areas controlled by the RUF (Fig. 6), as well as being used to fund the activities of the RUF and the Sierra Leone government, as will be explored later in the study. The ‘lootbaility’ of alluvial diamonds, the lack of necessity for substantial capital resources (Richards, 2003: 19) and their enormous presence in Sierra Leone, especially in the Kono Region, meant that “anyone who could get there with a shovel and a sieve” could take advantage of them; the RUF did (Hirsch, 2001: 25). The very high conflict event intensity seen across the country (Fig. 7), saturated in the districts of Kono, Kenema, Bo and Moyamba, loosely correlates with the diamond mining regions. The background of the RUF fighters, with many from diamond areas and border regions, as well as Liberians, meant that they had a strong knowledge of the smugglers’ routes out of the diamonds areas and through to Liberia. The RUF began waging war on diamond fields from 1992 (Hazen, 2013: 84) and by taking control of diamond mining regions, particularly Kono and Tongo field, which they had consistent control over from 1994 until 1996, and from 1997

to 1999 (Wilson, 2013: 1005), they were able to take advantage of this knowledge to use the already available networks, but also to establish and run diamond smuggling arrangements of their own (Keen, 2005: 182). Furthermore, smuggling activities offered the opportunity for personal gain; the RUF soldiers were not being paid to be so (*Footpaths to Democracy*, 1995, see Annex), rather, they used their position of intimidation to loot villages, but they also hoped to personally gain financially from illicit diamond trading. These networks allowed for the trading of diamonds in exchange for arms, food, fuel, medical and logistical support, primarily from the Liberian government (Le Billon, 2008: 363). Furthermore, this arrangement facilitated mutually beneficial RUF bases stationed in Liberia; in Foya and



Voinjama (Fig. 8). Of course, the diamonds did not remain in Liberia and this resulted in a massive increase in diamonds making their way into the world market, supposedly originating from Liberia. Around 31 million carats, valued at \$1.96 billion, were recorded as originating from Liberia between 1994 and 1998, despite the fact that Liberia does not have a large enough industry to produce a quantity of diamonds so high (Wilson 2013: 1005-1006). While the De Beers buying offices in Belgium and London claimed they played no part in the illicit activity and took no responsibility for the continuation of the civil war, Global Witness claimed that it was “virtually inconceivable that De Beers is not - in one way or another - purchasing diamonds that have been smuggled out of Sierra Leone” (Smilie et al., 2000: 2).

As well as the reasons of the rebels in involving themselves in the diamond sector, along with their other illicit activities, many troops became ‘*sobel*s’ due to the allure of the potential individual profit from diamonds (Le Billon, 2008: 362). Moreover, there are reports of international peacekeepers, deployed to alleviate conflict, working for both sides and profiting from diamond smuggling; including Nigerian soldiers from the ECOMOG forces, as well as troops of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (Wilson, 2013: 1006; Richards, 2003: 22).



The Lomé agreement’s provision of positions for members of the RUF provided it’s leadership with further opportunities, and legal ones at that, to exploit the diamond trade. Most clearly, this can be seen in Sankoh’s position as Chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development; he was able to use his position to gain legal access to the country’s mineral wealth as well as assert his authority to cut informal deals (Hirsch, 2001: 85; Harris, 2013: 114). More than ever before, Charles Taylor’s role was shown as pivotal; so long as he had a vested interest in Sierra Leone’s diamonds, they would continue to support the RUF and the fighting would persist (Hirsch, 2001: 89).

In July 2000, the UN Security council issued Resolution 1306, imposing an embargo on the sale of diamonds from Sierra Leone. It called for states to “*take the necessary measures to prohibit the*

direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Sierra Leone to their territory". Furthermore, it requested the establishment of an effective Certificate of Origin regime. It also mentions the role of the the International Diamond Manufacturers Association, the World Federation of Diamond Bourses, the Diamond High Council and all other representatives of the diamond industry in their responsibilities to contribute to helping control illicit trading (UN Security Council, 2000).

4. The Case for 'Greed'

In a number of wars during the last fifty years, natural resources have played a pivotal role in a country, or region's, level of risk for territorial disputes surrounding control of their extraction, trade and, thus, the revenues from the commodity (Le Billon, 2008: 353). Without a doubt, diamonds played a role in the onslaught and duration of the Sierra Leone civil war (Hirsch, 2001: 15). However, due to a number of other factors and causes, that will be considered in subsequent chapters, the question remains to what extent were disputes of this kind at the core of its inception?

4.1. Resource War

At this point it is important to differentiate between the terms 'resource war' and 'conflict resource'. While these are corresponding terms, they are not mutually exclusive. Resource conflicts relate to the geographical dimension of the conflict in connection with the 'risk factor', i.e. the resource is available and, therefore, may be the source of dispute. On the other hand, conflict resources deal with the 'opportunity', i.e. the relationship between the natural endowment, its geographical location and the actors that wish to exploit it (Le Billon, 2008: 349). While the 'greed' argument encompasses both of these to some degree (there is, of course, some overlap with such complex terms), it is mainly related to resource war. That is to say, greed plays into the fact that there are resources that could be exploited for immense power or wealth gains, therefore there is motive to go to any length to obtain and maintain control. In this sense, in relation to the Sierra Leone civil war, diamonds provided a geological cause, built on economic aspirations of the major groups, as well as the individuals involved.

Diamond mines in eastern Sierra Leone were the primary scene of operations and fighting from the very beginning of the civil war (Hirsch, 2001: 15). The opportunity for quick and direct access to resources and the associated wealth was particularly appealing to the poor youth in the diamond-rich border regions, who lacked education and opportunity, for which they were angry with the state of national politics and their inability to advance (Abdullah & Muana, 1998: 178). Alongside the incentive for violence and control over the mining regions for personal gain, the diamond trade constituted a region that had been long managed by the political elite; the group that the RUF wanted to fight back against. Control of the area did not only represent a source of wealth and fulfilled economic aspirations, but also a source of power that the Sierra Leonean population had long been denied. In fact, this may have been even more of a causal factor than the prospect of personal monetary gain, shown by the fact that although there was almost constant rebel activity in the Kono district, almost none of the rebels on the ground had an increase in personal wealth from their work in the RUF diamond fields (Keen, 2005: 51). However, the involvement of the SLA, ECOWAS and UNAMSIL troops hangs solely on personal gain, these soldiers were able to use their authority and access to areas unavailable to the RUF troops to make extra money on the side by becoming a cog in the RUF's smuggling mechanism.

The duration of the war was, allegedly, lengthened beyond its natural course by members of the Sierra Leone government who embody the greed argument. NPRC leaders, despite the fact they overthrew the APC government due to allegations of corruption, engaged in illicit activities for personal gain and there were even reports of an elaborate laundering scheme, involving Strasser himself. It soon became clear that a political economy was appearing, that allowed a few at the top to personally benefit from war revenues (Keen, 2005: 101). This continued the long legacy of the powerful political elite personally gaining from the illegal trade at the expense of the general population.

4.2. Political Motives of the RUF: *Footpaths to Democracy*

“RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone

RUF is fighting to save our people

RUF is fighting to save our country

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone

[...]

Our people are suffering without means of survival

All our minerals have gone to foreign lands

RUF is hungry to know where they are

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone”

(RUF Anthem, see Annex)

Footpaths to Democracy: Towards a New Sierra Leone (1995, see Annex), the manifesto of the RUF, was developed from an original document first written by students expelled from Sierra Leone to Ghana in the 1980s (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 192). It outlined their ideology, goals, a justification of their actions of rebellion, their intention to continue fighting and how they would do so. However, by the beginning of the 1990s, the majority of students who had been involved in the initial murmurings of the RUF had left the group and it developed from being political and intellectual into the military movement with little international political support (Hazen, 2013: 86). Funding by illicit diamond activity and the heinous crimes that ran parallel earned the rebellion a reputation of criminality and greed which undermined any political motives they had (Le Billon, 2008: 362). Additionally, the contradiction in what they claimed as their goal and the means by which they sought to achieve it ensured that their movement lacked any real credibility (Keen, 2005: 40-46). This section will briefly look at the disparities between the political motives and means of revolution, as described in *Footpaths to Democracy*, and the factual account of the events of the war. In doing so, this will highlight the lack of a legitimate and cohesive political motive of the RUF, showing insufficient evidence of a balanced and considered grievance argument.

In this document, the RUF leadership describe Sierra Leone as being “*in the hands of a generation of crooked politicians and military adventurers*”. “*Sierra Leone is endowed with natural resources...Yet, the mass of our people live in state sponsored squalor and our children are denied a brighter future. We have a clique, a handful of unscrupulous elite, who enjoy our resources...We either destroy this horrible system or we perish by it.*”. It is rather ironic, therefore, to draw attention to the ‘crooked’ behaviours attributed to Sankoh and the rest of the RUF leadership from the outset of the war. As the war went on, the continued criminal smuggling activity and the fact that Sankoh became one of the political elite, a pivotal figure in natural resource trade and distribution as the Chairman of the Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development, completely contradicts the sentiments displayed in the

manifesto. Furthermore, the lack of appreciation for human rights with orders for mass abuses, as well as arbitrary killing; for example ‘Operation No Living Thing’, meant that the population was not only denied a brighter future, but many denied any future at all.

They claim their fight was to escape the “*mantle of the corrupt APC system and its sordid successors*” (the NPRC) and establish “*a new Sierra Leone of freedom, justice[,...] equal opportunity and access to power to create wealth through free trade, commerce, agriculture, industry, science and technology*”. However, the RUF deployed an arsenal of freedom-less, brutal strategies; holding citizens hostage in the diamond regions and exposing them to forced labour (Keen, 2005: 52). The lack of justice when RUF combatants were granted free pardon in the Lomé Agreement and a strong grip of the wealth that remained in the hands of the few; but now, with a proportion of those few hands belonging to RUF leadership (Hayner, 2007: 21). The goal of free trade was perverted by encouragement of smuggling, the revenues of which went on to finance violence and bloodshed. While they claimed their rebellion was to improve the living standards of the impoverished Sierra Leonean public, the war efforts only led to further economic decline that affected all facets of society.

The RUF expressed their “*abiding faith in the necessity of democratic empowerment*” and, in recognising that “*political and economic powers are inalienable rights of the people*”, “*call for a national democratic revolution*”. In both cases, they stretch the term ‘democratic’ to breaking point, as one of the focal points of their campaign was the amputation of hands and arms of all members of the population to dissuade them from exercising their democratic right to vote in the 1996 election. Twice in the document the phrase “*force will be met with force, reasoning with reasoning and dialogue with dialogue*” is used; focussing the blame for their actions on that of the government, SLA and Sierra Leone’s international supporters. Despite their expression of willingness for reasoning and dialogue, in the latter years of the war, RUF leadership showed a consistent lack of commitment to peace talks. Not only were their negotiations insincere, they failed to hold up to their side of the bargain once agreements had been reached.

However, it is important to recognise that while these were the claims of the individuals at the top of the RUF, many citizens joined their forces out of perceived necessity; either because they were forced to, or because they saw no other option but to fight against the corrupt government that had left them practically destitute and, enslaved to poverty due to the lack of development and economic

growth. There was clearly a chasmic separation between the RUF leadership and the rebels on the ground; one pretended to nobly pursue the objectives, while the other, the one who was really in need of such change, did anything the leadership asked in the hope of a better future. Furthermore, while the manifesto makes many claims as to the necessity of the rebellion and its noble cause, there is no solid political plan in place to give it credibility; saying only that they have trained and given arms to a large number of men and women of Sierra Leone, that the cause “*will not relent until the task is accomplished*” and that “*the strategy and tactics of this resistance will be determined by the reaction of the enemy forces*”. There are no tangible plans for the new Sierra Leone, only a vision blurred by contradictory action and, in hindsight, by the lies of the RUF leadership. It has been argued that the political motives expressed in the manifesto were simply a smokescreen put up by Sankoh in order to politically legitimise the RUF’s fight to gain control of the diamond fields. In addition, while the intellectual capacity of the RUF leadership has remained a controversial topic for discussion, a point often overlooked by scholars is that the RUF and its leadership were able to quickly and effectively adapt to the changing political and social circumstances in Sierra Leone throughout the duration of the war (Richards, 2003: 15); altering strategies, motivations and goals as they saw necessary.

4.3. Liberia’s Influence

As a young man, Sankoh was recruited for ‘military’ training in guerrilla warfare in Libya, due to his connections with the network of expelled Sierra Leonean students in Ghana. A group of those who had been trained in Libya¹⁸ began recruiting in Freetown, but they also travelled extensively throughout the country and to Liberia to spread their ideas. While there, in 1988, Sankoh met Charles Taylor (Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 176-177), the charismatic leader of the NPFL and the one believed to be responsible for the assassination of President Doe. Liberia experienced its own civil war between 1989 and 1997, skilfully sustained by Taylor’s cultivation of foreign exchange sources. This war economy spilled over into Sierra Leone, and Taylor kept a strong hand on the lucrative transferred trade fuelling and financing the war (Reno, 1996: 213). Similarities can be shown between the two neighbouring and parallel conflicts; Reno asserts that the core of conflicts like the one in Liberia is wealth and control for rebel leaders, not about ideology (Ibid.: 215).

¹⁸ In addition to Sankoh, this included Abu Kanu and Rashid Mansaray.

The influence of Liberia and its warlord, Charles Taylor, was paramount in the period leading up to the war, its trigger and its duration. Contact between NPFL soldiers and Sierra Leoneans, and engagement in illicit commerce became commonplace from 1990 on the Sierra Leone-Liberia border (Ibid.: 213). Despite apparent intelligence of a planned invasion from Liberia, the Sierra Leonean government did not take steps to prevent it. Consequently, when an alleged disagreement between an SLA soldier and an NPFL soldier resulted in gunfire at the Liberian border, Taylor gave Sankoh the go-ahead to begin the invasion. This was carried out with immediate effect, so as to offer the SLA as little time to prepare as possible (Hazen, 2013: 76-77). However, this also meant that the RUF had little time to set up their own network in advance and they did not expect the war to go on for very long, thus strong support system was not deemed necessary. Therefore, as the war waged longer than expected, their military strength, access to resources and ability to trade with Liberia were heavily dependent on their international supporter, Taylor (Hazen, 2013: 75, 78). To ensure consistent support from the NPFL in the continuing conflict, that was becoming more and more of a burden on both economies, it was important that the RUF maintained their access to what Taylor wanted; diamonds. However, “diamonds did not provide a source of consistent income until 1997” (Ibid.:78). Nevertheless, fighters from Liberia¹⁹ and Burkina Faso saw the opportunity to jump on the bandwagon of the RUF’s rebellion, to take advantage of the looting and mining prospects (Keen, 2005: 48-49). There are reports that the first attacks on the diamond mines, in 1992, were attributed to the Liberian faction of the RUF, at the command of Taylor (Hazen, 2013: 84). Evidence of smuggling routes into Liberia can be seen in the rise in Liberian diamond production in 1999 beyond Liberia’s production capacity, believed to be attributed to Sierra Leonean diamonds (Cook, 2003a: 48; Wilson 2013: 1005-1006)

In 1998, Major General Maxwell Khobe, Sierra Leone's chief of defence staff, accused former leaders and members of the NPFL of supporting RUF forces and contributing to the Sierra Leonean crisis (Ejime, 1998). Furthermore, when addressing the UK Parliament in June 2000, British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, claimed that Liberia was consistently profiting from illegal diamond activities and that “there [was] continuing evidence establishing close links between the rebels in Sierra Leone and supporters in Liberia” (IRIN, 2000). Liberia’s continued substantial

¹⁹ While Liberian NPFL fighters constituted part of the RUF forces, Liberians also made up part of the SLA’s forces; many were Sierra Leone-based refugees who opposed Taylor’s regime (Richards, 2003: 10)

influence on the conflict, although sometimes sporadic,²⁰ is exemplified in the necessity seen by the international community for the UN Security Council to issue Resolution 1343 in 2001. The Resolution stated that findings of the Panel of Experts showed that the majority of RUF diamonds had been transported out of Sierra Leone through Liberia and it was believed that this could not have taken place without the knowledge and involvement of Liberian government officials. The Panel of Experts also presented “unequivocal and overwhelming evidence ... that the Government of Liberia [was] actively supporting the RUF at all levels” (UN Security Council, 2001: 1).

5. The Case for ‘Grievance’

5.1. Resource Curse

According to the Natural Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), countries that are rich in natural resources have immense opportunity, but also an incredible challenge; when used in a productive manner, they have the chance to provide prosperity and overall growth. However, as stated in the NRGI’s Natural Resource Charter, when this condition is not fulfilled, either by inefficient management or use in the context of corruption, there is a risk of them causing instability, environmental damage and conflict (NRGI, 2014: 4). With this in mind, the same institute describes the *resource curse*, or the *paradox of plenty* as:

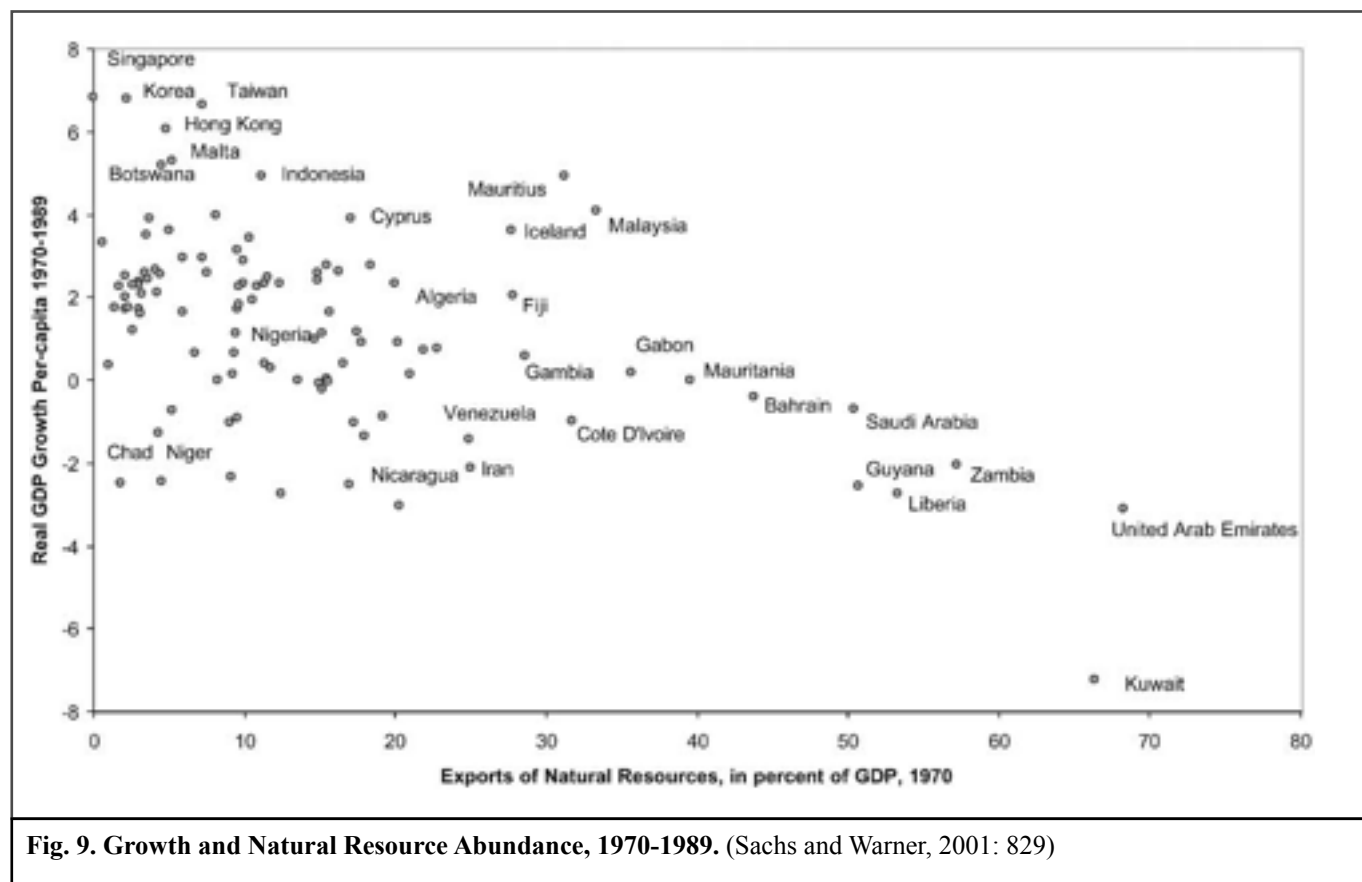
“The failure of many resource-rich countries to benefit fully from their natural resource wealth, and for governments in these countries to respond effectively to public welfare needs.”

(NRGI, 2015: 1)

Establishing whether a country has fallen victim to this alleged curse calls for the evaluation of certain social indicators, for example those which are used by the Human Development Index; education level, mortality rate, life expectancy, GDP etc. Evidence has shown that there is almost no country that has both a high natural resource endowment and a high GDP (Sachs and Warner, 2001: 828), with the only notable exceptions being, perhaps, Chile and Malaysia (Le Billon, 2005: 11-12).

²⁰ Taylor removed a large number of his forces in 1993 due to internal issues, reinstated them again once he was elected as Liberian President in 1997, but again withdrew when he was facing his own insurgency in 2000 (Hazen, 2013: 79, 84).

Fig. 9 shows that, generally, countries that have a high endowment in natural resources in 1970 did not show rapid growth over the following 20 years.



The phenomenon leaves states vulnerable to continued underdevelopment, poverty, inequality, corruption and conflict (Le Billon, 2005: 11-12). Their inability, due to weak political and economic structures, to effectively harness their natural resources for growth and development, means that living conditions and the economy cannot hope to be pulled out of the slump. Sierra Leone is a classic example of this (Bangura, 2013: 251). Natural resources have a direct effect on economic growth, which in turn translates to lower GDP and lower socio-economic conditions, which fuels incentive for conflict. Furthermore, the undermining of effective governance results in an insufficient capacity to tackle insurgencies and rebel movements, due to lack of resources and structures (Le Billon, 2008: 348).

Another important dimension of the resource curse, which offers an explanation into why it exists and is so prevalent, is the origins of tax revenues. In countries that are not resource-rich, tax revenues come from the population paying taxes (i.e on income), thus, individual citizens have a

vested interest in where their tax money is being spent; they monitor and criticise government spending. However, in a resource-rich country, the extractive industries pay the majority of the taxes, also because relatively few revenues are made from income taxes on a country with very low GDP per capita, a category into which resource-rich countries often fall. Citizens, therefore, are less likely to monitor and scrutinise government spending as they don't see it as the government spending 'their' money and, perhaps, don't see there to be a duty of the government to provide certain public services. Furthermore, as there is less monitoring activity there is a lower standard of accountability for governments. As such, there is a tendency for democracy to fall by the wayside and corruption to prevail in countries with low GDP (NGRI, 2015: 2). It is clear that this has the potential to become a downward spiral. Once a state is engulfed by the possible effects of the resource curse, it is difficult to escape, an experience attested to by the Sierra Leone case. Moreover, if conflict erupts, the effects are exacerbated and, thus, the cycle begins once more; less than desirable socio-economic situation results in incentive for change, this develops into rebellion, the conflict worsens the socio-economic situation, and so on.

Despite Sierra Leone's potential for economic development through its natural resource sector, an important obstacle that it failed to overcome was the transformation from the colonial exportation of raw materials, rather than initiating a production process that would move on from this very basic specialisation. By doing so, much like the exceptions to the resource curse rule,²¹ the exportation of manufactured products would have provided a higher level of revenue for citizens, rather than that profit going to foreign companies and landowners (Bangura, 2013: 254, 261). Therefore, the Sierra Leone economy continued to fall short in providing for its citizens, resulting in widespread inequality and resentment. From the time of independence, social services and human development were very low; there were limited health and educational services, a 9% literacy rate, only 52 doctors and little over 1000 hospital beds for a population of 2 million. Any services that were available were concentrated in Freetown, rendering them accessible to only a fraction of the population and with a severe gender imbalance. Spending did increase in the 1970s, but it was insufficient to fulfil the public's needs and the economic crisis of the 1980s worsened the situation entirely, with a depreciation of the Leone and high inflation (Ibid.: 255-256). By the time the civil war began, the dire situation many found themselves in served as a rationale of a large proportion of those who sympathised with and joined the RUF's movement (Le Billon, 2008: 359).

²¹ Malaysia and Indonesia, specifically, were able to transform their natural resource sector by moving the focus of their economy from minerals to manufactured goods (Bangura, 2013: 254)

5.2. War Resource

Le Billon (2008: 348) explains this facet of the debate as relating most closely to *opportunity*; as already mentioned, the nature of diamonds means they can be transported, stocked and traded relatively discreetly, meaning they are often the ideal choice for the financing of illegal activities (Ibid., 2005: 33). In the early years, when they did not have a consistent income from diamonds, the RUF sold agricultural products, cultivated through forced labour. As the RUF failed to quickly overthrow the government, they needed to find sufficient funding opportunities to sustain their military operations long enough to declare victory (Hazen, 2013: 75). Once the Liberian faction of the RUF had pushed for the control of the Kono region, Sierra Leone's diamond economy developed into a war economy built on diamond smuggling (Ibid.: 78, 82). As such, diamonds served as a means of exchange, and even a currency, for rebel soldiers to obtain weapons and necessities from allies, i.e. Liberia and others (Keen, 2005: 51).

Reports claim that the RUF got less than 10% of the market worth of the diamonds (Farah, 2001) and there is no evidence that the RUF as a whole obtained substantial profits or an increase in overall wealth due to control of the diamond fields, despite estimates that they had revenues of at least \$25 million per year from diamond sales (Hazen, 2013: 85). This means of exchange was not only employed by rebel forces. Government revenues failed and both sides became dependent on the war economy to finance their activities (Kaldor and Vincent, 2006: 10). The diamond endowment provided the otherwise impoverished NPRC with means to make international 'payments'; by using concession to mine in diamond fields and shares in legitimate diamond mining companies as their currency. The services offered by EO were reimbursed with ownership of a company, Branch Energy, and the ability to operate in Koidu (Hirsch 2001: 38; Adams, 1999). As more forces entered into the country from 1998, with the deployment of ECOMOG forces, further drains on already limited resources meant that diamonds became the only way to fund the war (Richards, 2003: 22).

5.3. Government Collapse, Corruption and Inequality

“In a context of extreme poverty, the vague prospect of improvement could be enough to win converts from the RUF even among those who had been abducted.”

(Keen, 2005: 55)

By the end of the war, in the fifty year life span of Sierra Leone, there had only been twenty-one years of relative political stability, interjected with periods of one party rule, military dictatorship and civil war. The repressive and authoritarian one-party state of the 1980s, and the economic issues and failed reforms that characterised it, set the scene for economic discontent in the 1990s (Keen, 2005: 32-35). By then, money laundering and a comprehensive smuggling network for Sierra Leone's most valuable natural resource meant that there was almost no revenue base for the government to provide any kind of public services outside Freetown. This level of neglect left a chasm of disconnection between the government and society (Kaldor and Vincent, 2006: 9).

In addition to the 'resource curse', detailed earlier in this study, the lack of support from institutions continued to drive a wedge between potential and reality. Public services are funded by tax revenues; in a society where citizens pay a small proportion of the taxes and the rest is funded by natural-resource extraction industries, it is important that there is a transparent payment from those industries in order to fund development. Researchers argue that weak institutions in resource-rich countries are derived from the fact that wealth is saturated with the elite and the elite focus attention on maintaining control over the resource and its production, rather than investing in a sustainable way; i.e. in job-creating industries and development programmes that can contribute to public service delivery (NGRI, 2015:4-5). As has been shown, this was the case in Sierra Leone; from the discovery of diamonds in the region, the exclusion at the heart of the industry led to immense inequalities in society (Keen, 2005: 50). Initially, Sierra Leoneans were banned from the mining and trading operations and, therefore, were not given the opportunity to establish native companies within the sector. The sector's extensive corruption and smuggling meant that this condition was not fulfilled; the potential was not reached and the provision of public services fell by the wayside, resulting in extreme poverty and underdevelopment (Keen, 2005 : 55). During the war, under each government, there was negative GDP growth (Wilson, 2013:1006); downward spiralling circumstances that were the result of the war expenditure and the dependence on the spoils of war to finance continued fighting.

5.4. Youth

In addition to President Momoh's infamous declaration that education was a privilege and not a right (Diski, 2011), the lack of social provision and policy for development of the youth population alienated a large selection of the population. This trend was evident from the beginning of the post-colonial period, a seemingly inherent characteristic of Sierra Leone under the successive corrupt government regimes and state collapse. It is estimated by World Bank that the provision of education is mainly funded by households (44%), followed by the government (35%), with other donors making up the remainder (22%). The strengthening of human capital and the empowerment of youth requires substantial funds (Bangura, 2013: 257). It is no surprise, therefore, that with the population of Sierra Leone's low income post-independence and pre-conflict, education was incredibly underfunded.

Therefore, the RUF became attractive as a opposition to the corruption, whether because of the claims of the RUF ideology or because of immense frustration and a simple lack of other options. There was a strong sense of youth identity, all without recognition and respect and suffering the negative effects of the failed system that deprived them of opportunity in education and the workforce (Kaldor and Vincent, 2006: 10, 14). This youth identity was not only apparent on the side of the RUF. To some extent, the 'lumpen youth' and the sentiment that they were being taken advantage of was also present in the 1992 coup and subsequent takeover by the NPRC (Kandeh, 1996: 387-388). They had limited access to the media, but enough to see that there was something they were missing out on, that they were not being allowed to reach their potential (Richards, 1995: 136).

Abdullah and Muana (1998: 172-174) describe the situation of the youth as resembling the 'lumpenproletariat', hailing back to Marxist theory and the European revolutions of 1848; alienated, lacking education, fuelled by drug use. The UN Development Programme claim that the high level of youth unemployment was a key cause of the conflict (UNDP, n.d.) The question remains, however, as to whether this desperate and impressionable group were quickly convinced by the RUF leadership of the necessity and possibility for social change and they were empowered to achieve it through violence (Ibid.: 179), or they were sucked into the 'zone of anarchy' perpetrated by the Liberian conflict and its spillovers; "where armed young men fight because they have little else to do" (Reno, 1996: 211). It is important to note that the result was not without any social

improvement. In fact, there is evidence that in RUF bubbles, in villages where they had complete control, there were levels of public provision; free education and medical services (Keen, 2005: 40). But it cannot be forgotten, that the provision of such would have been financed through criminal activity, exchanged with Liberia and the violent capture of the villages in the first place.

The alienation felt by the youth was not only on the national level, but also at the community level. Their status, and ability to find a wife and start a family, was determined by their employment status. As many were unable to find work in farms and there was mass youth unemployment, they were also stunted in their social development (Keen, 2005: 53). The connection with the diamond trade can be derived from the elite nature of the sector and the exclusion of Sierra Leoneans from it; the attraction of diamonds and the status that being involved in their mining and trading had always had was perhaps viewed as a step in the right direction to achieving their potential, not only relating to wealth, but also to opportunity for social advancement.

5.5. International Influence and Support

The 1970s and 1980s were a time of political discontent all over Africa. In response to this, Libyan leader, Colonel Muammar al-Gaddafi, took advantage of the opportunity to foster an overall African revolution and make the move towards a United States of Africa. In doing so, Libya offered support to revolutionary groups across the continent, including the demonstrating students in Sierra Leone. Many students, at the time of their exile, travelled to Libya and received training in military action and underwent ideological moulding in accordance with 'The Green Book' (Fofana, 1998). At its heart, this document denounces Western Democracy and the 'fraudulent' democratic process of elections (Richards, 1996: 55), arguing that the solution would be a system of 'Peoples' Conferences', where members of society could directly partake in policy making. Furthermore, it emphasises liberation from exploitative regimes (Muhammad, 2010). Many of the Sierra Leonean students that were involved in such training later became members of the RUF leadership, including Foday Sankoh (Hazen, 2013: 87). In fact, it was in Libya that Sankoh met his future comrade Charles Taylor (Hirsch, 2001: 31).

Claims were made that Sankoh received over two million US Dollars from Libya soon after the RUF's entry into Sierra Leone in March 2001 and that early RUF recruits received initial military training for a number of months in Benghazi (Fofana, 1998). Conflicting reports state that while the Green Book philosophy may have played a role in the moulding and establishment of ideas within the RUF's founders, Libya's support extended neither to the activities of the RUF during the civil war, nor individual members of the group itself (Hazen, 2013: 87). After travelling to Libya to request funds to help rebuild the war-torn Sierra Leone, President Kabbah announced that Gaddafi had donated 500,00 US Dollars (Neville, 2002) and, in relation to the Lomé Peace Agreement, Libya's role focussed more as an 'African Peacemaker', with its former Permanent Representative to the UN, Ali Trieki, and the Libyan Ambassador to Togo presence during a number of informal meetings with the conflicting Sierra Leonean parties (Hirsch, 2001: 81).

Moreover, during the war, the RUF did little to garner international support or reach out to important actors on the global stage. It seems, however, that its leadership did believe that they would be supported in their mission by the western world. In *Footpaths to Democracy*, the RUF called on the US and the UK to support them in encouraging "the UN Security Council to place a universal arms embargo on Sierra Leone", but this was as far as their attempt to procure allies went (Hazen, 2013: 86). Furthermore, in an interview undertaken by Hazen, it is claimed that Sankoh told his troops that the British would be quick to step in and assist them if the war lasted any significant period of time, as the British also had vested interests in changing Sierra Leone's political system (Hazen, 2013: 77-78; Abdullah and Muana, 1998: 181). From factual accounts of the war, we see that this faith in British intervention was misplaced.

6. Observations and Summary of Findings

In the preceding chapters, a number of factors pertaining to the origins of the Sierra Leone civil war have been noted and analysed, drawing on long term socio-economic and political factors and shorter term triggers. Each instance has linked closely with the diamond industry, this core principle being a factor in its own right, but also a contributor to the national situation.

In completing this investigation, difficulties have arisen when attempting to distinctly categorise issues as either a greed or a grievance factor. Many of the points made are an amalgamation of both,

the most pertinent example would be of the economic discontent in youth (Chapter 5.4). Here, it can be argued that the grievance of youth, predominantly lack of opportunity and support from the state, is derived from the greed of others, i.e. the effects of efforts of the elite to maintain control of diamond production and trading. Furthermore, the greed of the youth to take hold of natural resources, and therefore their future into their own hands, stems from their grievance, i.e. they strive to enhance their economic opportunity due to the poverty caused by lack of a sufficient provision of education and employment. Throughout this investigation, it has been seen that the Collier and Hoeffler model for civil war susceptibility is flawed, in the sense that it is not always clear into which category a factor should fall. It also fails to take into account the vicious cycle that can occur, as documented above with the possibility of both factors being at play and influencing each other, in the case of the youth argument.

Nevertheless, use of this model for this study has offered a framework through which the analysis of the Sierra Leone civil war and the role of the diamond endowment can be structured. Therefore, the conclusion of this thesis will not state, in a sterile manner, whether the main cause of the Sierra Leone civil war can be attributed to greed or grievance, rather an overview of the most important factors at play and how they relate to the rich diamond endowment will be offered. However, the distinction between diamonds as a motive to fight or their role as a facilitator can be concluded. It is the belief of the author, and other scholars (Kaldor and Vincent, 2006: 10; Keen, 2005: 48; Taydas et al., 2011: 2629), that by reducing the causes of civil war to these two categories, and by viewing greed and grievance as mutually exclusive, one can easily discard imperative issues, resulting in a limited analysis and potentially misleading conclusions.

In reflecting on the causes outlined in this thesis' analytical chapters, it would appear that the diamond endowment in Sierra Leone played two instrumental roles in the conflict. Firstly, the rich diamond deposits and the turbulent and corrupt system of managing it, from the imposed British system through to Momoh's regime, failed to materialise into a profitable and sustainable industry that would lead the country to its development potential. This failure resulted in dire socio-economic conditions in the country and failed to provide the necessary services and support for the advancement of Sierra Leoneans and, in turn, the country's economic development. Secondly, the Sierra Leonean diamond deposits were effectively used as a 'currency of war'. In attracting the attention of Liberia's Charles Taylor, their smuggling potential became their primary attribute. Realistically, without the network of smuggling routes and opportunities provided by Liberian

forces, the individual members of the RUF would have had little to gain from taking hold of the mines. The motivation of RUF soldiers to obtain diamonds, was to trade them for sustenance and weaponry. The allure of the diamonds was not defined by their value on the world market, as has been previously stated the RUF was trading them for goods of much lower value. Their true worth for the rebels was the diamonds' capacity to prolong their efforts and act as a driver for their cause.

7. Conclusion

From the shadow of the Star of Sierra Leone, another substantial diamond, at 709 carats, was found in 2017. There are hopes that this discovery, and the naming of the stone the "Peace Diamond", will change the perception of diamonds in Sierra Leone; from the facilitator of violent conflict to a natural resource that can be harnessed for the sustaining of peace and economic development in the country (Mcintosh, 2017). Sierra Leone's characteristics of its colonial legacy, turbulent political history, foreign interest and intervention and less than favourable socio-economic conditions are shared among many other sub-Saharan countries (Akiwumi, 2014: 775). Therefore, it would be only a minor leap to say that lessons learned from this peculiar case can be applied to other similar states, for processes of political transformation, economic development, civil conflict recovery and management of natural resources.

The resource curse, as noted in Chapter 5.1, has left many African countries in development limbo. It is clear that sixty years of the model undertaken by many African states after their independence from European colonial masters, that is to say the selling of raw materials in exchange for money to modernise their infrastructures, has not been universally successful. Africa is still struggling to develop, finding 73% of their states in the bottom 21% of the Human Development Index²². However, as can be seen by the experiences of Chile and Malaysia (see Fig. 9), innovative and correct use of natural resources can translate into real growth, but it is impossible without strategic planning, coordination and eradication of corruption (Bangura, 2013: 252).

In 1998, in the midst of the conflict, Global Witness argued that a shift towards corporate responsibility in the diamond industry would be imperative in reducing conflict possibilities in areas

²² Out of Africa's 48 states, 35 were categorised as having Low Human Development in the 2016 Human Development Report (UNDP, 2016).

where combatants had used diamond revenues to finance their operations. Other industries, especially the petroleum industry was looked at as a potential model, where Shell and RTZ had already taken steps to develop accountability strategies for their activities.

“There is a clear role for De Beers and the CSO to take the lead on this process of transformation because given the scale of their involvement in, and control of the industry, no progress can be made without their willing participation.”

(Global Witness, 1998: 6)

In the past, there has been a tendency for companies to be concerned with only their direct activities. The chain of deals, contracts and operations stemming from one decision of business executives has a web of consequences and impacts. It is, therefore, imperative for companies to investigate their supply chains to establish the extent of and eradicate their participation in the exacerbation or sustaining of inequalities, contribution to poor governance and corruption and complicity in human rights abuses (Le Billon, 2005: 69-70). This has been institutionalised with the introduction of targeted regulations. With UN Security Council Resolution 1173 (regarding Angola), UN Security Council Resolution 1306 and the Fowler Report, that the Kimberley Process was established in March 2000, in reaction to the proliferation of diamond related conflicts and conflict diamonds in the global supply chain. As such, the Kimberley Process constitutes an international certification scheme which functions under the principle of ‘burden-sharing’. Under the agreement, the 54 participants²³ are subject to stringent requirements and extensive transparency rules, in order to safeguard the trade of ‘rough diamonds’ in certifying that they are conflict free (Kimberley Process, 2018). In addition, recent legislation from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)²⁴ and the EU²⁵ have explicitly regulated supply chains that may include natural resources from conflict zones and high risk areas.

This is not a comprehensive or foolproof solution. With the imposition of trade regulations, there is the possibility of continued marginalisation of developing economies in reaction to their activities.

²³ The participants represent 81 countries, as the European Union and, thus its 28 Member States, are considered as one participant.

²⁴ The OECD introduced its *Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas* in April 2016.

²⁵ The EU published Regulation (EU) 2017/821 in May 2017; “laying down supply chain due diligence obligations for Union importers of tin, tantalum and tungsten, their ores, and gold originating from conflict-affected and high-risk areas” (EU, 2017)

Therefore, there is need for inclusive policy at the international level that does not throw developing countries experiencing conflict by the wayside. As much as the trade sanctions, imposed by the UN on Sierra Leone from the late 1990s, contributed to the end of the war, the starting on the path towards constructive and transformative changes at the heart of the diamond industry constituted the most important role of the international community in the conflict. In general, when dealing with policy related to natural resource wealth, it seems that the focus should be shifted from maximum revenues for governments, to maximum development opportunities for local populations and economies. This changes the goal from obtaining the highest price for raw materials in the short run, to developing systems that allow for increased profitability and reduced inequality, in monetary terms and in relation to standard of living and opportunities, in the long run.

Of course, this comes with difficulties. On the national level, economic and social policies are necessary to reduce inequalities created by the past system; as we have seen in Sierra Leone, these policies failed to be implemented in the latter half of the 20th Century. This is, perhaps, due to the fact that those in power were the ones that were benefiting most from the social imbalances and the contemporary functioning of the diamond industry. This possibility for corruption and individual gain of the political elite should be eradicated from the system to prevent such personal investment in the national economy affecting citizens on the ground. Furthermore, in tackling such inequalities the elimination of poverty and the improvement of educational and health services is imperative (Stewart, 2002: 344). Sierra Leone still finds itself very close to the bottom of the Human Development Index,²⁶ and any improvements that had been made in the areas of education and health in the decade proceeding the war were abruptly halted with the Ebola outbreak of 2014. Many schools were closed for almost a year and, having learned the hard way in the previous decade that limited access to education can inflict serious damage in youth culture, the Sierra Leonean government has taken important steps to ensure that the correct processes are put into place to avoid the repeat of their turbulent history (Powers, 2016).

These positive developments made by Sierra Leone since the war, implemented in order to prevent further conflict and promote social change, have been largely due the role of international organisations and the international community. Support from the UN, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union in the implementation of

²⁶ Sierra Leone ranks at 179th place, out of 188, in the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2016)

transformative policy and the monitoring of its progress has been imperative. In November 2010, with Resolution 1941, the UN Security Council lifted certain sanctions on Sierra Leone that had been in place since the late 1990s. In addition, it is important to recognise the importance of these organisations in reference to a preventative approach, taking into consideration the lessons learned from this conflict; i.e. increasing transparency, building the trust relationship between the population and the government, and improving social conditions.

With the recent discovery of Sierra Leone's 'Peace Diamond', a new President, a renewed commitment to economic growth and the consistent efforts of the international community to regulate conflict resources, there is hope that the wrath of the resource curse will soon come to an end in Sierra Leone and countries like it. Without a doubt, the diamond endowment was instrumental in the fortunes of the small West African state, from its colonial days to the civil war, one hopes that its natural richness will play a more fruitful role in its development in the future.

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9. Annex

Footpaths to Democracy: Towards a new Sierra Leone is the manifesto-like document published by the RUF in 1995, stating their cause and their planned actions against the government of Sierra Leone.

FOOTPATHS TO DEMOCRACY TOWARD A NEW SIERRA LEONE

Prologue

RUF/SL Anthem

Forward

What Are We Fighting For?

Why the Armed Struggle?

Why, we continue to fight?

The Ideas and Ideals We Believe in

PROLOGUE

Each generation must out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it or betray it. (*Frantz Fanon*)

When a society demands a change there is no need attempting to change it on old principles. (*Foday Saybana Sankoh*)

In furtherance of sustainable peace, we call on the UN Security Council to place a universal arms embargo, including the importation and use of land mines, on Sierra Leone forthwith. (*People's War & Peace Council*)

We deem as more dangerous the quick-fix and prescriptive hidden-agendas of self-seeking mediators. We have every right to be suspicious of those who have made careers out of Africa's plight. They invariably end up as meddlers in internal conflicts prolonging the suffering of our people. (*Foday Saybana Sankoh*)

RUF/SL Anthem

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone

RUF is fighting to save our people

RUF is fighting to save our country

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone

Chorus: Go and tell the President, Sierra Leone is my home

Go and tell my parents, they may see me no more

When fighting in the battlefield I'm fighting forever

Every Sierra Leonean is fighting for his land

Where are our diamonds, Mr. President?

Where is our gold, NPRC?

RUF is hungry to know where they are

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone

Chorus: Go and tell the President, Sierra Leone is my home

Go and tell my parents, they may see me no more

When fighting in the battlefield I'm fighting forever

Every Sierra Leonean is fighting for his land

Our people are suffering without means of survival

All our minerals have gone to foreign lands

RUF is hungry to know where they are

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone

Chorus: Go and tell the President, Sierra Leone is my home

Go and tell my parents, they may see me no more

When fighting in the battlefield I'm fighting forever

Every Sierra Leonean is fighting for his land

Sierra Leone is ready to utilise her own

All our minerals will be accounted for

The people will enjoy in their land
RUF is the saviour we need right now

*Chorus: Go and tell the President, Sierra Leone is my home
Go and tell my parents, they may see me no more
When fighting in the battlefield I'm fighting forever
Every Sierra Leonean is fighting for his land*

RUF is fighting to save Sierra Leone
RUF is fighting to save our people
RUF is fighting to save our country

Forward

We can no longer leave the destiny of our country in the hands of a generation of crooked politicians and military adventurers...It is our right and duty to change the present political system in the name of national salvation and liberation...This task is the historical responsibility of every patriot...We must be prepared to struggle until the decadent, backward and oppressive regime is thrown into the dustbin of history. We call for a national democratic revolution - involving the total mobilisation of all progressive forces. The secret behind the survival of the existing system is our lack of organisation. What we need then is organised challenge and resistance. The strategy and tactics of this resistance will be determined by the reaction of the enemy forces - force will be met with force, reasoning with reasoning and dialogue with dialogue. (*Basic Document of RUF/SL*)

We entered Sierra Leone through Liberia and enjoyed the sympathy of Sierra Leonean migrant workers some of whom joined us to cross the border to start our liberation campaign. This generation of Sierra Leoneans who have had to migrate to make a living in Liberia are now referred to as "mercenaries and bandits" by the Freetown-based military junta. The military junta has also used this fact to gain support from Guinea, Nigeria, Ghana, the US and Britain in its avowed policy of war to rid Sierra Leone of "alien rebels".

We do not deny the fact that some of those who volunteered to join our cause were veterans of the Liberian civil war but majority were of Sierra Leonean parentage. However, this minor "alien" involvement in our just and human cause was curtailed as early as May 1992 when it became a

nightmarish experience for our civil population. Ever since we have fought a self-reliant war depending mainly on what we capture from the troops of the rebel National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) of the regimes in Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana and of the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO).

The RUF/SL is surrounded on all sides by hostile forces. To the north and west, Guinea exercises a strangle-hold on the common border. To the east and south, the Liberian counties of Lofa, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount sharing a common border with Sierra Leone have been controlled by ECOMOG by way of ULIMO. The sea and air space are patrolled by ECOMOG. With the situation as it is, how do we get supplies from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) or for that matter from anywhere else? The NPFL could not have lost those three strategic counties if it had sufficient arms to spare. Therefore, the theory and accusations that we receive weapons and ammunition from Libya by way of Burkina Faso and the NPFL and at the same time being a conduit for the supply of materials to the NPFL are nonsense. These are calculated lies to justify the pursuit of a policy of military option by the Freetown-based military junta against our entreaties for peace through dialogue. It is an insult to every patriotic Sierra Leonean for the "Libya card" to be played to confuse as well as betray the genuine democratic and equal opportunity demands of our people. In respect of the above, we, hereby, challenge the US and Britain to support and see to the implementation and monitoring of our call for the UN Security Council to place a universal arms embargo on Sierra Leone, forthwith. We are tired of being demonised only to prolong the civil war which, left to themselves, the African people of Sierra Leone are capable of resolving through an enlightened process of dialogue. And for this process of dialogue to be successful, it has to be entirely owned by the people as a vehicle for their empowerment.

It has become quite clear now, even in Freetown, that the NPRC was "introduced" to hi-jack the revolution and betray the cause of the uprising against a rotten plantation system which impoverished Sierra Leone while at the same time enriched its slave masters. Why is it therefore strange to the backers of the besieged NPRC that the historically neglected, used and abused countryside would rise up to the simple call that "No more slave, no more master" and "Arms to the people; power to the people and wealth to the people"? It is this rallying call that has been set to song as the RUF Anthem which journalists are jailed for, for publishing and distributing this motivating anthem in Freetown.

What is clear is that the patriotic and democratically minded Africans of Sierra Leone are waging a successful guerrilla warfare using their feet and brains, footpaths and by-passes to surprise, disarm and totally disorganise the offensive operations of the rebel NPRC. The rebel NPRC has made its priority the defeat and destruction of the RUF/SL. Why seek to defeat and as well as destroy your own brothers and sisters that you were forced into conflict with? Why inherit the destructive policies of the masters you overthrew if you mean peace when you say so? Where does the rebel NPRC want to drive us away to? May be this is why the regime in Guinea is fighting on the rebel NPRC side to prevent an anticipated spillover which has never occurred because the RUF/SL has no quarrel with the people of Guinea and likewise Nigeria, Ghana and Britain.

Our self-reliant revolution deserves a more objective study and analysis. We continue to be demonised by those who benefit by doing so. As Pan-Africanists, we are proud of our self-reliant struggle. Initially we fought a semi-conventional war relying heavily on vehicles of mobility. This method proved fatal against the combined fire power of Nigeria, Guinea and Ghana. By late 1993 we had been forced to beat a hasty retreat as successful infiltration almost destroyed our ranks. We were pushed to the border with Liberia. Frankly, we were beaten and were on the run but our pride and deep sense of calling would not let us face the disgrace of crossing into Liberia as refugees or prisoners of war. We dispersed into smaller units, whatever remained of our fighting force. The civilians were advised to abandon the towns and cities, which they did. We destroyed all our vehicles and heavy weapons that would retard our progress as well as expose our locations. We now relied on light weapons and on our feet, brains and knowledge of the countryside. We moved deeper into the comforting bosom of our mother earth - the forest.

The forest welcomed us and gave us succour and sustenance. The forest continues to be our main sources of survival and defense to date. We regained our composure and engaged ourselves in a sustained period of intensive self-examination and self-criticism. We moved forward with a clearly defined programme and liberation ideology. We learned from our mistakes and laboured hard to correct them. We continue to make mistakes but we are not overwhelmed by them. Our collective sense of discipline continues to mature and the result is an effective command and control procedures and structures in our administrative territory.

We have created settlements, we call *sowo* bushes (i.e. sacred grove for the initiated). We endeavour to provide limited health care, schooling, housing and seedlings, free. Our civilians receive no

humanitarian assistance. Efforts by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to supply much need relief aid have been undermined by the rebel NPRC. The rebel NPRC behaves as if we are despicable aliens from another planet and not Sierra Leoneans. We bear all these deprivations with equanimity and a collective sense of purpose. We have not lost our sense of humanity.

We have learnt the value of treating captives and prisoners of war with utmost civility. Our ranks keep swelling daily. We have no need to conscript by force. Forced conscription is an inferior method which tends to pose security risk in the long run. Those forcibly conscripted, when they manage to escape, lead enemy troops back to locations they are familiar with. Experience and honesty have been our best teacher.

We do exercise limited martial rule in our liberated zone for the sake of internal security. We are religiously Godly in our bearings and beliefs. We enjoy communal prayers and communication twice daily and on all occasions prayers are said both in the Islamic and Christian ways. The people, through their own initiative, have removed doctrinal differences from their way of worship. They say if there is one God/Allah then there ought to be one congregation. In respect of this awakening there has emerged the Jungle United Christian Council (JUCC) and the Jungle United Muslim Council (JUMC). The different divisions in Islam and Christianity respectively worship under one roof and under the guidance of a Chief Imam or Priest and a church Mother.

We survive by hunting, gathering and vigorous rice farming. We tend the cocoa, coffee and palm fruit and fruit farms and we find ways to barter them for drugs, clothes, footwear, supplementary food items, schooling materials and of course, radios, music cassettes and batteries. Sometimes we have the presence of mind to indulge our young ones with sweets and toys.

It is our collective sense of purpose, the ideals and ideas we believe in and discipline that have brought us so close to Freetown. Often times towns have fallen to our advancing troops without a single shot being fired. The rebel NPRC troops run away leaving behind quantities of weapons and ammunition. We are blessed by God/Allah because of our just cause.

It has become crucial that the world knows that there is something happening in the Sierra Leone countryside. A change for the better has gripped Sierra Leone. A consciousness of ourselves as an enterprising people has developed because of the self-reliant struggle. We are daily diversifying our

stock of food and eating habits. We are discovering new nutritional values in the flora and fauna that we have grown to respect as our embodiment. We have become pro-active conservationists as we live close to and by the soil, rivers, streams, hills, valleys and mountains. In effect, we have come to know our country better and understand the potential of its pristine flora and fauna and the resources that lie underneath our soil. The developing consciousness is all embracing and enriching. We continue to say that we are blessed and by God/Allah. We are therefore guided by a liberation theology consistent with our pride in ourselves as Africans.

No more shall the rural countryside be reduced to hewers of wood and drawers of water for urban Freetown. That pattern of exploitation, degradation and denial is gone forever. No RUF/SL combatant or civilian will countenance the re-introduction of that pattern of raping the countryside to feed the greed and caprice of the Freetown elite and their masters abroad. In our simple and humble ways we say, "No more slave and no more master." It is these very exploitative measures instituted by so-called central governments that create the conditions for resistance and civil uprising. The importation of the "apartheid dogs of war", Executive Outcomes, to strengthen the chosen policy of war by the rebel NPRC is a case in point. What irks the population most is the fact that these mercenaries are business men to the boot and they are mining away the non-renewable resource of diamonds. If they came to fight the RUF/SL that would not have bothered the population because they know that the "apartheid dogs of war" will be handled the same way the Gurkhas were disgraced to a man on the battlefield.

As much as we continue to seek a peaceful solution to our internal civil conflict we do not at the same time seek to become a casualty of peace. We have every reason to mistrust military juntas and particularly those who are waging war against us, even if they have mutated into mufti-Presidents. How they came to power and how they manage their countries are a matter for their own people. With Sierra Leone, our people continue to say no to the rotten system of the All People's Congress (APC) party which the rebel NPRC has inherited as a matter of course because they were the watchdogs of the APC government.

We continue to appeal to Guinea, Nigeria, Ghana and Britain not to interfere. We have put these concerns to song and sing them knowing that the people of these countries do not support the warring policies of the ruling elite. In this respect, we find it so reasonable to make a simple demand that all foreign troops, including military and intelligence advisers and trainers leave the

soil of Sierra Leone to give the required space for Sierra Leoneans to settle their own internal conflict. The presence of foreign troops and the importation of mercenaries indicate a continuation of a policy of war and the choice of the military option. It signals that all the declared intentions of the rebel NPRC for a negotiated settlement have been mere prattles. This also justifies our conviction that the hopes of our people for an enriching and enterprising democratic culture cannot be placed in the hands of a military junta.

As a practical demonstration of our commitment to peace we call for a universal arms embargo to be placed on Sierra Leone forthwith. We herein appeal to the United Nations Security Council to seize itself of the grave matter of the spread of small arms and the planting of anti-personnel mines. The constant use of heavy artillery and cluster bombs have devastated the countryside. We demand an arms embargo now in anticipation of the problems associated with disarmament and demobilisation. The RUF/SL is confident that it can disarm its freedom fighters as soon as it becomes necessary to do so. Our stringent discipline is such that every single bullet is recorded and accounted for.

The RUF/SL is open to dialogue and has consistently demonstrated this fact by risking to meet with representatives of independent civic groups, peace movements, labour unions, teachers, students, professional bodies, religious leaders and chiefs and elders. In late 1994 we risked to meet with a Freetown-based peace group at the Mano River bridge but a scouting jet bomber forced us to abandon that contact. In September 1995, we entertained the idea of trying another meeting and went ahead and spoke with some political leaders and peace activists. An independent delegation being put together was rudely interfered with by the rebel NPRC which objected to the inclusion of certain personalities. Such is the character of military juntas that seek to control every aspect of national life in order to feel secure.

The RUF/SL seeks the path of peace. In this respect, our unilateral declaration of cease-fire announced in April 1992, as soon as the rebelling government troops seized power from their masters, still stands. We remain steadfast to this cease-fire declaration so far as we are not attacked and the civil society is allowed to determine its own future through a representative sovereign national conference leading to a people's constituent assembly which in turn would form a government of national unity.

We recognise that, even in the event of victory, they RUF/SL will have to sign a political, economic and social contract with the rest of society in keeping with the demands of democratic governance. We are democrats and we stand for progress through work and happiness. The New Sierra Leone we are striving for can only be built by the combined energy and industry of all Sierra Leoneans and others of good will in a programme of work and happiness drawn up by the empowered people to create that essential wealth vital to the elimination of the scourge of poverty and human degradation.

Our liberation ideology and theology are therefore clear and unambiguous.

Foday Saybana Sankoh

The Zogoda

Sierra Leone

What Are We Fighting For?

We continue to fight because we are tired of being perpetual victims of state sponsored poverty and human degradation visited on us by years of autocratic rule and militarism. But, we shall exercise restraint and continue to wait patiently at the rendez-vous of peace - where we shall all be winners. We are committed to peace, by any means necessary, but what we are not committed to is becoming victims of peace. We know our cause to be just and God/Allah will never abandon us in our struggle to reconstruct a new Sierra Leone. (*Foday Saybana Sankoh*)

We are fighting for a new Sierra Leone. A new Sierra Leone of freedom, justice and equal opportunity for all. We are fighting for democracy and by democracy we mean equal opportunity and access to power to create wealth through free trade, commerce, agriculture, industry, science and technology. Wealth cannot be created without power. Power cannot be achieved without struggle. And by struggle, we mean the determination, the humanistic urge to remove the shame of poverty, hunger, disease, squalor, illiteracy, loafing and hopelessness from this African land of Sierra Leone blessed with minerals, forests, rivers, and all that is required to restore the dignity, prestige and power of the African as an equal competitor on the world stage. This is what we are fighting for and this is why we are fighting to save Sierra Leone. For, a society has already collapsed when majority of its youth can wake up in the morning with nothing to look up for.

Why the Armed Struggle?

We have chosen the long and winding road (footpaths and by-passes) to democratic salvation. Sooner or later the citizens of Freetown, Bo and Kenema shall wake up to our call and with brooms and dusters, buckets and pans, sticks and stones, they will rid themselves of the rotten APC system along with its watchdogs, including the apartheid dogs. (*Foday Saybana Sankoh*)

Why not, when those who by our votes or default use state power to enrich themselves by accumulating wealth and property in foreign lands while teachers, doctors, nurses, civil servants, the police, soldiers and workers are not paid for weeks and months? And what happens to them, their children and other dependants, when they say "enough is enough" and ask for what is theirs? And what happens to them when in addition they demand wages they can survive on? What happens to them when they point out the fact that it is immoral for those who hold state power to run down the health services and go abroad periodically for medical check-up with all expenses paid out of state funds? What happens to those journalists and press houses who take up the cause of the suffering and denied and comment on it?

What did the All People's Congress (APC) regime do in response to the above? Where were the avenues and channels of protest, mediation and restitution? Why did the youth, particularly school children, take to the streets in support of their striking parents? And what happened to these school children who life had taught that if they did not stand up then they would be the next victims of the collapsing society where their seniors graduate without hopes of job and any form of social security; where their parents cannot make ends meet? The APC regime both under Siaka Stevens and Joseph Saidu Momoh showed "them where power lies."

Whenever society complained about their state of poverty, hunger, disease and hopelessness, the security forces were deployed against them. Intimidation, violence and threats of violence were used to control and contain the anger and frustrations of the suffering people. The APC regime will intimidate the people by a show of force with guns to "show the people where power lies". It is experience that has taught the suffering Africans of Sierra Leone that power lies in the gun and whoever controls the guns controls the means of suppression and the means to steal the wealth of the country. And the only way to stop this corruption of power is for the people to take up arms in order to take back their power and use this power to create wealth for themselves and generations to

come by reconstructing a new African society in Sierra Leone consistent with the highest ideals of our glorious past and the challenges of the modern world we live in.

What we are saying is that the only way to a democratic future for all the Africans of Sierra Leone lies in the abolishment of militarism and dictatorship. And the only force that can defeat militarism and dictatorship is the armed force of the suffering people as expressed in a guerilla campaign. The guerrilla is the people in arms. It is the guerrilla who removes the fear imposed on society by the uniformed "men in arms". These watchdogs' of the corrupt and rotten APC regime are still with in the form of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC).

With continued pressure from below and also from the international community Siaka Stevens transferred power to Joseph Momoh who would protect Stevens and his stolen wealth from the angry population. The pressure continued under Momoh who responded with cosmetic reforms which were not far-reaching enough to transform the whole of society. Momoh was playing with the intelligence of the voting population by initiating an electoral process that would ensure the continued hold on power of the APC. It was at this juncture in March 1991 that the RUF/SL came out in the open and stated categorically that there will never be elections under Momoh. The RUF/SL demanded a process towards genuine democratic transformation of society within ninety days or the Momoh militaristic regime would be removed by force of arms. The APC scorned the RUF/SL and provided the spark that set off the armed challenge on 23 March 1991.

It was the successful challenge of the militaristic APC regime by the armed uprising of the historically denied and exploited countryside which brought a strain in the hitherto impregnable APC political machinery. The young, disaffected and demoralised soldiers who were deployed against the RUF/SL freedom fighters received education from RUF/SL vanguards at the frontline. We were patient with the government soldiers. We spoke to them and pricked their consciences as to why they were fighting us as we all were suffering at the hands of their commanders and politicians they kept in power with their guns. Why should they be fighting their own suffering brothers? We pointed out to them that for the first time they were out of the security of Freetown and the barracks into the insecurity and poverty of the countryside. They were now getting to know their country and they could see for themselves what all the diamonds and gold taken from the countryside have done to the environment and the people. The land has been despoiled and the irresponsible and corrupt mining magnates leave the villagers only with the gift of pits and craters

that breed mosquitoes, malaria and cholera. Farmlands are destroyed in the insatiable quest for diamonds and gold. The only way out of their cringing poverty is for the youth and able to yield to the false attraction of urban and cosmopolitan life. We opened their eyes to the widening cycle of poverty and degradation and the increasing opulence of the very few. We encouraged them to rebel. We encouraged them to desert. We encouraged them to join us. Some did join the RUF/SL. Some left the army. It will be dishonest to attribute this education process to the RUF/SL alone. We believe that the ECOMOG experience in Liberia fertilised the minds of these young government soldiers.

By this process of education and armed struggle the RUF/SL strategically weakened the apparatus of government on which the APC rested. Panic struck the political apparatus and the loyalty of the armed forces was broken by hard economic realities. The unpaid, ill-armed and disgruntled front-line government troops, who had benefitted from RUF/SL political education and ideology, one day decided to leave the hard life of the bush to Freetown to demand their earned income and also to complain about their neglect by their commanders. Emboldened by a new consciousness and "the power of the gun" these young soldiers took to the streets of Freetown and to their surprise the military General turned President, Joseph Saidu Momoh and his APC stalwarts, took to flight at the mere sight of the barrel of the gun. The Commander-in-Chief really knew "where power lies". The young soldiers seized state power by virtue of its concentration in Freetown. In effect Freetown was Sierra Leone and has always been Sierra Leone, like Monrovia was Liberia and Port au Prince was Haiti.

How did RUF/SL react to the coup d'tat later to be led by ECOMOG/Liberia war veteran, Captain Valentine Strasser-King? The leader, Foday Saybana Sankoh, called a public meeting of the chiefs, elders, religious leaders and citizenry of Kailahun district. This is what ensued. Sankoh told them that he brought the war to remove the rotten APC system and now that the APC had been removed by their own brothers in arms peace must be sought and the war brought to an end to pave way for national reconciliation, reconstruction and development. Sankoh frankly told the gathering of his mistrust of coup-makers and military rulers but he was willing to stretch an olive arm for peace, development and progress if the gathering advised him to do so. The chiefs and elders asked for three days to think over matters.

They gathered again to listen to the chiefs and elders. They said they promised and offered him support to wage a liberation war and also to rebuild the country after victory and peace. Their conviction remained the same and if he felt that it was time for peace, he had their support, and if he felt the liberation war should continue, he had their support. Sankoh, after reflection, told the gathering that it was time for peace and with their blessing he would approach the coup leaders and ask for peace talks backed by a unilateral declaration of cease-fire.

Sankoh communicated the offer of the olive branch and peace by radio to the young soldiers and some senior officers, who knew him personally. They reacted positively and particularly to the unilateral declaration of cease-fire. We proposed a representative and sovereign national conference of all Sierra Leoneans at a mutually accessible location to present a way forward for the bringing into being a new Sierra Leone.

The coup-makers promised to get back to us. The next thing we heard over the air was what amounted to summoned visits to the military rulers of Ghana and Nigeria, J J Rawlings and I B Babangida respectively. They returned to Freetown and without coming back to the RUF/SL announced a continuation of the APC policy of war. Assured of sponsorship, the young coup leaders opted for a military solution and made the defeat and extermination of the RUF/SL as their priority. It is said that birds of the same feathers flock together. It is sad that West Africa was under the boots of military dictators at that historical period and the NPRC chose to go the way of all dictators. The RUF/SL has been defending itself, ever since, from unprovoked military operations with various enthusiastic cod names (like Operation Clean Sweep for Kono district; Operation Destroy All for Kailahun district and Operation Locate and Destroy, to name a few).

The RUF/SL waited and hoped that the international community would wake up to the implications of the continuation of a policy of war. Locked up in the forest with no access to the outside world we could not communicate our frustrations and fears. We hoped that the junta would not be recognised in the light of the global call for democracy and good governance. We believed that the international climate did not favour coups and waited in anticipation for denunciations and condemnations.

Why, we continue to fight?

Each generation has the onerous task to judge the performance of its institutions, particularly the government. The African people of Sierra Leone evaluated the performances of the APC regime and the consensus was that in order to save the nation from its perennial political, social and economic predicament, the entrenched systems could only be changed by the armed uprising of the people imbued with a clear ideology. And now what do we see? The watchdogs of the rotten APC system, the army, is standing in the way of the chosen path of the people, organised in their guerilla action. The struggle continues... (*Revised Basic Document of RUF/SL*)

We conferred again among ourselves and it dawned on us that it was suicidal to place the hopes of a society struggling to free itself from state sponsored poverty, denial and degradation in the hands of military rulers. And that militarism is an anathema to democracy. As liberation fighters it was unbecoming of us to have misread the situation. We therefore embarked on a serious study of coups and liberation movements and the historical tendency of the military holding on to power by any means necessary became obvious to us. The military can never be trusted. Nigeria under military rule points very well to the way of all military dictators. But, the African people of Sierra Leone do not want half-way measures to democracy. The African continues to be schooled to be satisfied with inferior measures, mediocre leaders and with crumbs from the tables of slave masters and plantation owners. The sickening mind-set of the "house niger" remains with us and it is only such a mentality that can import "apartheid dogs" to extract wealth, in diamonds, from a bleeding nation. Militarism and autocratic rule continue to stand in the way of the suffering African masses whose only salvation lies in democracy secured through their own seizure and protection of state power.

This seeks to explain our mistrust of the APC watchdogs, NPRC, and all military regimes. We accept our failure in explaining ourselves to that we can gain the support and understanding of all democratic forces and governments. The RUF/SL has been demonised and continues to be referred to as bandits even by no other international personality as James Jonah, a former UN under-Secretary General, who is now supposed to be an independent and neutral electoral commissioner. In order to justify their policy of war the NPRC must continue to demonise the RUF/SL. In order to gain support from the international community the NPRC must continue to demonise the RUF/SL. How long can this continue? How long will the international community allow itself to be misled and used by the military junta whose claim to power has been confined to Freetown ever since it seized this town, by default, from its masters, the APC?

By lending recognition to the NPRC military junta, in a civil war situation, ECOWAS, dominated by military rulers, set a pattern for the OAU and UN to follow without critical examination of the consequences. A military incursion, civil uprising and sustained pro-democracy campaigns bring to question as well as challenge the centres of power and governance in a given nation state. In a successful guerrilla campaign, in the light of a full blown civil war, there the only source of strength and capability to engage the guerilla movement lies in external support and interests, the national capacity to resolve the conflict is removed by these very same external forces and interests. For it is their presence and contribution which prolong the civil conflict by ever confusing the balance of power on the ground. A state of permanent war develops only to the benefit of the hawkers of military hardware and those who benefit from the arms trade.

The rebel NPRC seized power from its masters whose hold on the country was the symbolism of the state capital. This is what the APC watchdogs (NPRC) have inherited. The APC watchdogs exercise no governance or administrative control over the whole of Sierra Leone. They can only extract taxes and custom duties in Freetown. The rebel NPRC can only play the game of governing without governance at the behest of its military backers. It is the blind recognition of these APC watchdogs by the international community which fuels the civil war situation in Sierra Leone. ECOWAS, OAU, Commonwealth, European Union and the UN have no business lending recognition to military regimes in the wake of Nigeria and Zaire. If the international community through pressure or through direct intervention can act in Haiti, Sao Tome and Principe and the Comoro Islands then it is not too late to act in Sierra Leone. The hopes of democracy in Africa cannot be placed in the hands of military juntas and mufti-Presidents.

The rebel NPRC, brought up and fed on the rotten and corrupt culture of its masters, the APC, like the proverbial house niger, can only mimick the habits of its masters. The rebel NPRC conjures opponents and executes them. The rebel NPRC jails and harasses journalists, closes down press houses, takes away the daily bread of presumed potential political opponents, and it has unleashed a pack of spies, informers and security agents on the population of Freetown. Freetown has reverted to slave town under the whip and boots of Captain Valentine Strasser-King and his cohorts. All our minerals are still unaccounted for and like Siaka Stevens when a valuable gemstone is found they jump into a plane and shoot off to Europe to sell the diamonds trusting no one but themselves. The greed and rush to accumulate wealth and property is such that even the elder Strasser-King works in the Executive Outcomes' controlled diamond fields as a commander. A thief is always a thief and

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those who steal power can steal the wealth of a country, like Mobutu of Zaire and Bokasa of Central African Republic. And when foreign diplomats, like the German, Karl Prinz, complain about corruption, human rights abuse and denial of civil liberties they are forced to be recalled.

In short, the rebel NPRC is cast in the image of its masters, the APC and it continues to be the watchdog of the APC rotten system that it plans to play musical chairs with. And who else would fall for this politricks but the same old politicians? The politicians are lending themselves to be used by the APC watchdogs to solve the problem faced by all military rulers and autocrats - the problem of legitimisation and succession. It is therefore not an accident that Rawlings' neo-colonial castle has become the second home of the APC watchdogs. These politicians dancing to the tune of the rebel NPRC should seek advice from the politicians in Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea and Togo. We, the African people of Sierra Leone, do not want this curse to afflict us for we have suffered enough and continue to suffer under the rotten APC system. We are tired of the state sponsored poverty and degradation. We are tired of our children dying of preventable diseases. We are tired of drinking muddy water. We are tired of our rural folks being exploited day in and day out and not by apartheid dogs brought into the diamond areas by the APC watchdogs. These dogs are not only exploiting the wealth of the countryside but they are planting anti-personnel mines all over. What do they care about peace and the problems and challenges of peacetime reconstruction?

Against this background, patriotic and democratically-minded Africans of Sierra Leone are left with the option of armed struggle to remove the rotten APC system now bolstered by apartheid dogs.

It is also against this background of twenty-five years of APC misrule and its continuation by the rebel NPRC that the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone was and is still conceptualised and transformed into action by mobilising and organising patriotic Africans of Sierra Leone; the marginalised, neglected and excluded of society, intellectuals, workers, professionals, members of the armed forces and police, students, traders, farmers, chiefs and elders and people of all shades of opinion for a protracted and sustained armed struggle to remove the rotten APC system. A rotten system cannot be reformed. When a society demands change there is no need attempting to change it on old principles.

Each generation has the onerous task to judge the performance of its institutions, particularly the government. The African people of Sierra Leone evaluated the performances of the APC regime and

the consensus was that in order to save the nation from its perennial political, social and economic predicament, the entrenched system could only be changed by the armed uprising of the people imbued with a clear ideology.

The Ideas and Ideals We Believe In

We seek preventive solutions to our endemic state of poverty and hopelessness. We deplore squalor and poverty. There is no virtue in being poor for God/Allah created us in the majesty of his own image. Poverty dishonors Allah/God. Poverty is a human imposed affliction which only the redeemed, organized and empowered population can eradicate. (*Foday Saybana Sankoh*)

The RUF/SL is committed to democratic ideals and holds as sacrosanct the right of a people to organise themselves to re-take power when a government fails to be representative and sustaining in all intent and purpose. Through the armed struggle we, the African people of Sierra Leone, have chosen not to fold our arms and sit on the fence while our society collapses in front of us. We have chosen to act to remove a rotten system and to own and champion our destiny. In pursuance, therefore, of the sacred objective of total empowerment of the people for genuine democratic order or culture, the RUF/SL has divided the struggle into three phases:

One: "Arms to the People "

Believing that it is an organised and informed people who constitute the motive force of any political and economical revolution, the RUF/SL has trained a large number of men and women including the elderly, youth, children and the disabled from all corners of Sierra Leone and given them arms to mantle the corrupt APC system and its sordid successors. This phase is currently being vigorously pursued and the RUF/SL will not relent until the task is accomplished. The RUF/SL believes that the possession of arms should not be the monopoly of a privileged group. Everybody should be a fighter to defend their rights.

Two: "Power to the People"

The RUF/SL has abiding faith in the necessity of democratic empowerment of the people in order to wipe out the scourge of poverty and human degradation that affects us as a people. The power to initiate policies, and to make decisions must be the preserve of the people. Politics, the RUF/SL is convinced, is the process by which the people provide the standards of judgment and choose the

government officials to apply them so as to get results that will not be intolerable to any section of the community.

Political power can only stand the test of time when it originates from the people themselves. This is the kind of political power the RUF/SL aspires for. All local government structures are going to be overhauled so that everybody participates fully and actively in the decision making and implementing processes according to their ability. RUF/SL's mission is to redeem Sierra Leone from economic, political and social enslavement and to radically bring about a change of positive attitudes so that people will live as humans should in an enabling environment.

Three: "Wealth to the People"

We all know that Sierra Leone is endowed with natural resources that would have ranked us as one of the richest in the West African sub-region. Yet, the mass of our people live in state sponsored squalor and our children denied a brighter future. We have a clique, a handful of unscrupulous elite, who enjoy our resources. This horrendous situation cannot be allowed to continue if posterity should live meaningful lives. We either destroy this horrible system or we perish by it.

When the RUF/SL voices out the slogan "Wealth to the People" this is what it means. It means that the people should empower themselves in order to harness their resources and use them for their own survival and development. The natural resources are the natural property of the people, therefore, the exploitation of these God/Allah given resources must be to their natural benefit. In the past we have seen how our resources have been snatched from us by small selfish groups. The wealth of this blessed nation of ours belongs to all of society. It should not be monopolised by anybody.

As stated clearly in the **Basic Document of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF/SL): The Second Liberation of Africa**, prepared in 1989:

"We can no longer leave the destiny of our country in the hands of a generation of crooked politicians and military adventurers who, everyday since independence, have proved beyond all reasonable doubt that they are inefficient, irresponsible and corrupt. Posterity will never forgive us if we sit passively by while a few desperate men and women, who are nothing but an organised bunch of criminals, continue to despoil, rape and loot the people's wealth. It is our right and duty to challenge and change the present political system in the name of salvation and liberation. We must

build a political system over which we, the oppressed people of Sierra Leone, must have absolute control. It must be reflective of our needs and aspirations; a political system that will give maximum priority to popular participation and control. This task is the historical responsibility of every patriot. We must be prepared to struggle until the decadent, backward and oppressive regime is thrown into the dustbin of history. We call for a national democratic revolution - involving the total mobilization of all progressive forces. The secret behind the survival of the existing system is our lack of organisation. What we need then is organised challenge and resistance. The strategy and tactics of this resistance will be determined by the reaction of the enemy forces - force will be met with force, reasoning with reasoning and dialogue with dialogue.

The economic crisis today is enough evidence to justify the level of determination. We are told that our foreign debt stands over one billion dollars. What happened to the money? Mismanagement, poor economic planning and shameless thievery of public wealth stand as the root causes of the loans having no impact. The 'vouchergate' and 'squandergate' phenomena have assumed a more frightening proportion under the much defamed regime of 'new order'.

We are determined, through our collective struggle, to liberate the economy from all forms of domination, both local and foreign. The wealth of the land belongs to the people.

The parasitic and unscrupulous few will have to live or perish on the people's terms. A people and environmental friendly, self-reliant, flexible and interdependent economy is our goal. The major sectors of the economy; agriculture, mining, industry and energy will have to feed each other in the noble task of national reconstruction. Cash crops production in itself does not help in the anti-neo-colonial struggle for genuine independence. This is because the crops goes to feed the industries of Europe and North America. In turn, we buy finished products at incredibly high cost. In the end we produce what we don't consume and consume what we don't produce. The centuries of unequal exchange can be corrected only through an integrated economic program that is designed, tailored, suited and implemented to fulfill and satisfy our internal, sub-regional, African and Pan-African needs and aspirations.

The RUF/SL position on the social plight is a radical social transformation of our society. To achieve this, the RUF calls for a cultural revolution whose main objective will be the liberation of our minds to instill in everyone of us a high sense of African patriotism. The building of alternative

social structures created by the people and for the people is the only way to destroy the existing corrupt and rotten ones.

There is a need for a complete overhauling of the present educational system. The prevailing system is a major contributing factor to our current state of industrial and technological backwardness. The educational system was initially a colonial imposition, which did not take into consideration the aspirations and needs of our people. The sole intention was to train passive and obedient Africans to man the colonial state structure. What was expected of any serious minded African ruling class was to radically alter the inherited educational system immediately after the attainment of independence. In our country, the ruling class simply continued from where the British colonialist left. Now it has become a common dictum of the APC ruling class that education is a privilege and not a right.

The way to end exploitation and oppression, economic and social injustice, ignorance, backwardness and superstition is to make education available to all - both the young and old, male and female, and also the disabled. We need to create a new educational system that is more purposeful, dynamic and relevant, which will take into consideration the demands of the present scientific and technological world and value of research, critical thinking and creativity.”

In summary, from the conceptualisation of the revolution, the RUF/SL has firmly believed in the organized power of the people as the motive force critical to the radical transformation of society and in our particular circumstances in the reconstruction of a new Sierra Leone. It is with this conviction that the RUF/SL has mobilized the people to pursue the armed struggle to bring about the demise of the decadent system. Every citizen in the liberated zone is made responsible for the security of the zone by the formation of a civil defense unit.

The RUF/SL believes that the new Sierra Leone cannot afford to keep a standing army for the defence of the state, because the experience has shown that a state army is manipulated by dictators to perpetuate their regimes and terrorise the people. What the RUF/SL is doing now during the "Arms to the People" phase is the development of a nucleus of a people's defence system, wherein every citizen will be equipped to defend the state at any time so no one person or a cabal of conspirators can monopolise the tools of physical violence.

The RUF/SL revolution is a democratic revolution whose aim is to create the enabling space for the democratic empowerment of the people. It is only an organised people who can liberate themselves from political suppression and economic exploitation.

It is the aspiration of the RUF/SL that the new Sierra Leone will decide on an economic policy that is consistent with our national and Pan-Africanist interest. We must seek not to be polarised to either state capitalism or private capitalism, instead, the RUF/SL believes, we must seek enabling and turn-key partnership with investors in the exploitation of the natural resources. It must be a partnership which leaves no opening for anybody to claim economic hegemony over others.

The RUF/SL is of the conviction that both political and economic powers are inalienable rights of the people. In recognition of this fundamental principle, the RUF/SL has encouraged and motivated the people in the liberated zone to form administrative structures through which they can effectively manage their resources and direct the course of the armed struggle to its successful conclusion.

This is our vision for in the period of the second liberation of Sierra Leone. Our mission therefore is to contribute to the task of total political and economic liberation and unification of Africa.

Available at <https://fas.org/irp/world/para/docs/footpaths.htm>