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# UN Peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone: Pakistan's Role

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## Abstract

The objective of this research is to study the UN efforts and Pakistan's role to create peace in Sierra Leone during the early years of 21<sup>st</sup> C. It examines how the civil war began in Sierra Leone when the Revolutionary United Front led by Foday Sankoh invaded the diamond rich areas, which was considered the primary cause of war. Sierra Leone is a state of rich natural resources but the people are the poorest of the world. The UN intervened in the conflict and successfully resolved it. Pakistan's Military helped to disburse humanitarian aid and build infrastructure in the country. The study employed mixed methods of qualitative research; descriptive, explorative and narrative. Data was collected from the primary and secondary source; UN Reports, articles, books and interviews were conducted. The research suggests that UN efforts should be acknowledged, that the UN should continue to perform positive role for global peace.

## Introduction

The *Republic of Sierra Leone* is a West African country declared as an independent state on 27<sup>th</sup> April 1961, was a British colony and protectorate.<sup>1</sup> In Sierra Leone there has been a functioning parliamentary system exercising legislative power in an elected house of representatives, while the executive power reside in a cabinet headed by the prime minister.<sup>2</sup> In Freetown, the capital, Sierra Leone has potentially one of the greatest harbors in Africa. In view of these factors, Sierra Leone had always been on the border-line between those territories clearly destined for full Commonwealth independence and those considered not sufficiently strong to exist outside some larger grouping.<sup>3</sup>

A settlement was begun for humanitarian and economic reasons on the Sierra Leone peninsula for freed slaves, who were promised freedom after fighting on the side of the British in the American War of Independence. In 1807, the British Parliament outlawed the slave trade for British subjects and all ships captured

with slaves on board were brought to Freetown for adjudication.<sup>4</sup> First settlers of the colony were several shiploads of slaves rescued by the British navy in the 1798. Their descendants known as the Creoles represented the black aristocracy of the country and tend to dominate its society.<sup>5</sup> The sweeping victory in the 1951 elections of the People's Party was largely a reaction against former Creole predominance over the tribal peoples, of whom the Mende and Temne are the most numerous.<sup>6</sup>

As the case of many African states, Sierra Leone is also a multi-ethnic society. The two largest groups are the Mende, who occupy the southern half of the country in an east-west belt and the second largest group is the Temne of the Northern Province.<sup>7</sup> Both these groups had been dominant players in the political life before and since independence and political leaders from both the groups had often appealed to their kith and kin for support. Sometimes intense competition for political power has led to major conflicts. This was particularly evident during the first decade of independence, 1961-1970.<sup>8</sup>

Since 1950, diamonds and iron ore had greatly increased annual export earnings. In terms of natural resources, Sierra Leone is among the richest countries in the world. As the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone Peter Penfold, observed at the Consultative Conference on the peace process in Sierra Leone in April 1999,<sup>9</sup> "The tragedy of Sierra Leone is that her people are among the poorest in the world, while the country is among the richest. The reasons for this are entirely man-made. Other countries in the world are poor because of natural disasters, few resources, unfertile territory or bulging populations but not so in Sierra Leone. God blessed this land with an abundance of resources. Just a relatively few people are responsible for the misery and hardship suffered by so many."<sup>10</sup>:

### Conflict in Sierra Leone and UN Involvement

Sierra Leone had been singularly peaceful and serene, marked by no special scars of conflict.<sup>11</sup> The Civil war in Sierra Leone erupted in the early 1991, when fighters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) launched attacks against the government. During a decade of fighting, the refugees fled to the capital, Freetown, and to the neighboring states, throwing the country into chaos and threatening the stability of the region.<sup>12</sup> The RUF supported itself by looting villages and by selling diamonds from the mining-rich areas of the country for guns and other supplies. The rebels were also aided by Charles Taylor in neighboring Liberia. Both Taylor and RUF leader Foday Sankoh had undergone training in Libya to carry out their guerrilla tactics.<sup>13</sup> The worst human atrocities on record were carried out by all sides of the conflict including the kidnapping of

children for service as soldiers and slave labor and the amputation of limbs, even of small babies, as terrorist tactics.<sup>14</sup>

In March 1991, an armed conflict was ignited in Sierra Leone, becoming one of the nastiest wars the world had witnessed in the last five decades. The conflict began as a “rebel incursion” at the border between Sierra Leone and Liberia. An unknown group calling itself the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) claimed responsibility for the attacks and affirmed<sup>15</sup> its determination to “save Sierra Leone from its corrupt background and oppressive regime”. But the revolution turned horribly wrong. After the first outburst of violence, the country turned from a “stable”, corrupted and mismanaged state, into an arena of frightening brutality, one of the great human tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> C.<sup>16</sup>

The young officers of the Sierra Leone army finally overthrew a government that was ill equipped to tackle the upheaval and incapable of initiating reforms or taking vigorous action. Most hoped that with the end of the inefficient government, the war would be over but unfortunately, the government overthrow brought an escalation of violence and Sierra Leone entered into a dark era of deep despair.<sup>17</sup> What was labeled a “war of liberation” in 1991 degraded in content and ambition to the disastrous “Operation no living thing” the armed invasion of Freetown by hysterical “nihilistic rebels”.<sup>18</sup>

For years the Sierra Leone crisis, which erupted in cross-border warfare in March, 1991, was largely ignored by the international community, including the Security Council. At last, the Secretary-General's appointment of Berhanu Dinka in March 1995 as his special envoy marked the beginning of direct United Nations involvement in the conflict.<sup>19</sup> Dinka was a principal mediator in the nine months of negotiations between the newly elected Kabbah government and the RUF. The UN was one of the four moral guarantors of the “Abidjan Agreement” of November 1996. The peace agreement also provided for a neutral monitoring group to track breaches of the cease-fire.<sup>20</sup> The Security Council's role on the Sierra Leone crisis can be broadly divided into two phases:<sup>21</sup>

1. From the dispatch of a special envoy in early 1995 to the conclusion of the Lomé Peace Agreement of July 8<sup>th</sup>, 1999
2. From the establishment of UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone in 2001 to 2005

The Council's role over these phases shifted dramatically, in the first phase it was limited and reactive, leaving the initiative for whatever action was taken to end the war largely in the hands of the regional leadership of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).<sup>22</sup> In the second phase, the

Council under the UK leadership became proactive, approving an assertive mandate, expanding UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) troops strength to 17,500, adopting a two-track strategy of military pressure and negotiations with the RUF, authorizing establishment of the Sierra Leone Special Court.<sup>23</sup> The ECOWAS remained firm in its conviction that unchecked proliferation of small arms poses a major threat to national and regional security.<sup>24</sup> “This proliferation fuels, conflicts, engenders increased criminality and facilitates cross-border instability. It is imperative that we get rid of these tools of death and misery.”<sup>25</sup>

Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in Lomé, officially ending war in Sierra Leone. Among other important recommendations, the agreement provides for the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants.<sup>26</sup> After the Lomé Agreement, the role of peacekeeping started with the formation of UNOMSIL.

#### UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (1998-1999)

This mission was formed under the Security Council Resolution (SCR) 1181. The main function of this mission was to monitor the military and security situation in Sierra Leone, as well as the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants who assist in monitoring respect for the international humanitarian law.<sup>27</sup> The main purpose of the mission was to monitor disarmament and demobilization situation in Sierra Leone.<sup>28</sup> The head quarter of the mission was Freetown, with the total strength of about 200 military observers and staff and the total cost of \$ 60 million.<sup>29</sup>

#### UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (2001-2005)

The UN became involved with the Security Council Resolution, 1270, which established UNAMSIL. The UN troops were deployed slowly in 2000 and by May, the RUF had taken advantage of the weak position of the UN to launch a last attempt to gain control. The UN personnel were taken hostage some of whom were killed and 500 UN troops were surrounded and cut off from support while the rebels took their weaponry, trucks and armored personnel carries.<sup>30</sup> It took a well-armed unit of British troops to free the hostages and rescue the operation. After the crisis, UNAMSIL was reorganized and the Security Council took measures to strengthen the number and offensive strength of the troops. A new force commander and deputy (a Pakistani Syed Ather Ali was appointed) were put into place and authorized troops strength was increased to the largest troop (17500) deployment at the time.<sup>31</sup>

## UN Security Council mandated Peace Operation

Since October 1999, under the SCR 1270 and 1289, it was originally established to cooperate with the government of Sierra Leone and the other parties to the Lomé Agreement in its implementation, including assistance in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.<sup>32</sup> In 2000, the mandate was revised to include the tasks to provide security at key locations and government buildings, to facilitate the free flow of people, goods and humanitarian assistance along specified thoroughfares, to provide security in and at all sites of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration program, to coordinate with and assist the Sierra Leone law enforcement authorities in the discharge of their responsibilities and to guard and destroy the collected armaments.<sup>33</sup> The main purpose of the mission was to implement Lomé Peace Agreement to end the ten-year civil war, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and to rebuild and stabilize the country.<sup>34</sup> The head quarter was Freetown and the total cost was estimated at \$ 543 million. For that mission, the maximum troops were 17,500, while the military observers were 260 and civilian police 125.<sup>35</sup>

UNAMSIL has built on previous peacekeeping operations in a number of ways and has added innovations of its own. Sierra Leone has been able to benefit from the new policy of Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR). In this process, former combatants from both sides of the conflict were gathered in camp areas, where they lived together for several weeks and handed over their weapons, which in many cases were personally disabled before submitting them for destruction.<sup>36</sup> They then went through a registration process during which they received an identification card and were asked to state what profession they wanted to enter. They were next given transportation and pay and taken to a camp near their village of origin, where they went through an education program.<sup>37</sup> The vocational training centers in carpentry, mechanics, sewing and other skills were set up with the help of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The program had been very successful and over 70,000 former combatants had been demobilized and disarmed and some 40,000 weapons and 5 million pieces of artillery had been destroyed.<sup>38</sup> Some finished the vocational training and began reintegrating into civilian life and others had found trade on their own but so far none had returned to violence. The program had been so successful that noncombatants complaining of the lack of an equal program for them. The World Bank and other NGOs had now begun community development programs in order to benefit everyone and help to rebuild the country, which was badly damaged during the war.<sup>39</sup>

## Security Council Sanctions

In October 8<sup>th</sup> 1997, under SCR 1132 they imposed an oil embargo, an arms embargo, travel sanctions on members of the Junta and their families, and conditioned the lifting of sanctions on the Junta relinquishing power.<sup>40</sup> The ECOWAS went further, authorizing its military arm to use force to unseat the coup leaders. This was the second time ECOWAS authorized a collective security operation without consulting the Security Council (the first was in Liberia). The forces under Nigerian command ousted the junta in February 1998 and restored the Kabbah government to power.<sup>41</sup> In March 16<sup>th</sup> 1998, under SCR 1156 was lifted the oil embargo. On June 5<sup>th</sup> 1998 under SCR 1171 they confirmed the removal of sanctions on the government, re-imposed the arms embargo and travel ban on the RUF and members of the former military junta.<sup>42</sup>

The Security Council subsequently lifted the arms and oil embargoes on the Sierra Leone government but retained them on the RUF. The RUF launched another attack on Freetown in January 1999, but after some fierce fighting, the troops were able to recapture the capital.<sup>43</sup> There was continued military stalemate and mounting pressure from the international community, and consequently the two sides signed another peace agreement in July 1999. The Council established a peacekeeping force to monitor implementation of the agreement. But the RUF again sabotaged the peace process, ambushing UN troops and confiscating their weapons. In May 2000, the RUF killed four UN peacekeepers and kidnapped 500 more.<sup>44</sup>

The Security Council responded to the hostage crisis with a more assertive collective security approach. It expanded the mission troops with the mandate to coerce the RUF into meaningful negotiations. It established the 'Sierra Leone Special Court' with jurisdiction over war crimes against humanity committed during the conflict,<sup>45</sup> it imposed sanctions on Liberia for its support of the RUF, and it adopted sanctions against illegal diamond exports in an attempt to thwart RUF access to weapons. The second time, the Security Council imposed diamond sanctions and it was part of a more comprehensive approach to create peace in Sierra Leone. The third time the Council imposed diamond sanctions – against Liberia in 2002 – they were also linked to Taylor's support for the RUF in Sierra Leone.<sup>46</sup>

On July 5<sup>th</sup> 2000, under SCR 1306, they imposed diamond embargo and requested the government of Sierra Leone to establish an effective certificate of origin regime for trade in diamonds. This was second time the Security Council established a diamonds embargo on Sierra Leone, prohibiting the sale of all diamonds except those certified by the government of Sierra Leone.<sup>47</sup> The purpose of the sanctions was again to prevent rebel groups from gaining access to weapons and further fuel a civil war, which in Sierra Leone had killed over

60,000 people and displaced over two million people. This conflict was particularly brutal, including the widespread use of child soldiers, rape and sexual slavery, and deliberate amputations.<sup>48</sup>

The Council authorized an oil embargo, an arms embargo, and travel sanctions in October 1997 when a military junta toppled a democratically elected regime. It ended the oil embargo in March 1998 and replaced the remaining prohibitions with travel sanctions in June 1998. In July 2000 it banned diamond exports that funded the RUF. The diamond ban continued.<sup>49</sup>

Other innovations had been the formulation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, established because of the horrendous nature of the atrocities committed during the war. The Lomé Accords, which brought agreement to end the war, included amnesty for all the perpetrators of human rights violations.<sup>50</sup> This was considered necessary in order to gain the cooperation of the RUF. However, the UN added a "reservation" to the amnesty clause, saying that it reserved an exemption from granting amnesty if it should decide to prosecute on its own. Therefore, while the TRC takes testimonies from victims and witnesses, it is obliged to honor the amnesty provisions and cannot prosecute or pass evidence for prosecution.<sup>51</sup> One of the innovations of the TRC, which builds on the truth commissions in El Salvador and later in South Africa, is the introduction of not only open hearings regarding specific atrocities, but also "thematic hearings" in which community leaders discuss the structural deficiencies of the governance system that allowed such atrocities to perpetuate. By May 2003 the TRC had taken some 7,000 private testimonies and was holding public hearings in each of the fourteen districts around the country.<sup>52</sup>

In contrast to the TRC, the Special Court, which was operated by the UN in agreement with the Sierra Leone government, prosecuted and convicted those found guilty of major human rights and crimes committed between 1996 and 2000. Several leaders had already been indicated and imprisoned, including RUF leader Foday Sankoh (who died of natural causes in 2003, while being held) and Sam Hinga Norman, internal affairs minister and former head of the Civil Defense Force, also known as the Kamajors.<sup>53</sup> The Special Court prosecutor, David Crane (of the United States), also issued an indictment for the arrest of Charles Taylor, who stepped down as president of neighboring Liberia in 2003. The maximum sentence the court had imposed was the life in prison, in keeping with the general UN policy.<sup>54</sup>

The Sierra Leone and Liberia diamonds sanctions were relatively effective because the work of the Angola sanctions committee had created momentum for a global certification process. It was also the first time that an international agreement had been negotiated and adopted on the basis of consensus between

governments, industry and civil society acting as equal partners.<sup>55</sup> It contributed to the political progress that ended the civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, and it could become a model for dealing with other natural resources illegally exploited to fuel conflicts, including timber, oil, Cotton and gold.<sup>56</sup>

UNAMSIL had stayed on past the first elections of May 2002, carefully monitoring certain benchmark of development and stability before drawing down its forces gradually. By February 2003, there were still 15,255 troops and 256 military observers in the country. Military observers made daily rounds of camps,<sup>57</sup> communities and general hot spots and reported back to headquarters on conditions and potential troubles that might be brewing. Both UNAMSIL and government officials met daily to discuss reports. In this way, the UN or the government not only can step in before things get out of control, but also can assess the stabilization process.<sup>58</sup> By 2003 training of both the police and the military was also under way. In addition, efforts were being made to stabilize the region so that the ongoing civil war in neighboring Liberia would not threaten stability in Sierra Leone. The UN peacekeepers, with support from the United States were sent to Liberia in August 2003 as Charles Taylor was pressured to leave office.<sup>59</sup>

### The Special Court

At the request of the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the Sierra Leone government entered into a formal agreement in October 2000 to establish the Sierra Leone Special Court, an independent body.<sup>60</sup> The Court is authorized “to prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for the commission of crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law”.<sup>61</sup>

### International Consideration

The regional priorities and interests of the United States and the United Kingdom largely determined the timing and nature of the Security Council’s role in Sierra Leone. The United Kingdom played an important multifaceted role both in the immediate days of the hostage crisis and thereafter. Prime Minister Tony Blair took the political decision to immediately deploy 600 British forces and a Royal Navy Task Force to Freetown.<sup>62</sup> The deployment was presented initially as limited to the evacuation of British nationals, it quickly expanded into the defense of Freetown and the western region, including the international airport. The UK also took the lead in the Security Council, drafting the mandate for a strengthened UNAMSIL and the progressive enlargement of the force initially to 11,000 troops and thereafter to 17,500.<sup>63</sup>



The United States also played a major part in strengthening the Security Council's commitment to a more forceful and effective UN role. On the operational level in close consultation with London and the "United States Operation Focus Relief", whereby the US Special Forces provided training for six battalions from Nigeria and Ghana which established subsequently became members of UNAMSIL.<sup>64</sup>

### Pakistan's Role, Contribution and Deep Support

In 2001, after the withdrawal of the Indian Army, Pakistan took the control and successfully completed their task. They developed infrastructure and built roads, schools, mosques, churches, hospitals etc. The Pakistani army helped people to settle into peaceful life after the worst crisis. From July 1998 to October 1999, Pakistan's total strength was 30 troops and per year were also 30 for UN Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL).<sup>65</sup> The total troops of Pakistan for UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) were 13,626 and per year were 4255 from 2001 to 2005.<sup>66</sup> The UN first appointed a Deputy Force Commander (DFC) and then Force Commander (FC) from Pakistan. The credit goes to our following two military officials appointed by UN:

- Maj Gen Syed Ather Ali (DFC, UN Mission Sierra Leone 2001-2003)
- Maj Gen (later Lt. Gen) Sajjad Akram (FC, UN Mission Sierra Leone, 2003-2005)

The Pakistani Deputy Force Commander took control in 2001, when the situation was very critical there and Indian force was already attacked by local community. Major General Syed Ather Ali took control and as a Deputy Force Commander started rehabilitation in Sierra Leone. Their efforts were acknowledged not only by the locals and government but international community also acknowledged it. Pakistani Forces through different charities helped the effected persons there. They built roads, churches, mosques, schools, hospitals etc.<sup>67</sup>

In 2003, the UN appointed Force Commander UNAMSIL from Pakistan, Maj Gen (later Lt. Gen) Sajjad Akram, who took control there. Maj-Gen (later Lt. Gen) Sajjad Akram visited Pakistan Contingent-III at two stations to bid them farewell. Pakistan Army Contingent II in August 2004, after successful completion of the mission was now being relieved by Pakistan Contingent IV.<sup>68</sup> While congratulating members of the contingent on successfully completing their mission in Sierra Leone, the force commander appreciated the display of a very

high sense of dedication, an unflinching commitment to the cause of peacekeeping in the area of responsibility and a conduct par excellence that won accolades of the world community not only for the Pakistan Army but also for the entire Pakistani nation. He also highlighted that Pakistani contingents have been the flag bearers of UNAMSIL in the most turbulent and volatile region of Sierra Leone since 2001.<sup>69</sup>

The conditions of Sector East were most difficult to tackle. Being the hub of activities in the decade long civil war, becoming the worst affected area thereof, it posed some of the most complicated and multi-dimensional challenges that required tact and perseverance of the highest order.<sup>70</sup> The performance of the contingent, characterized by a unique symbiosis of high standards of conventional peacekeeping operations and a vibrant humanitarian spirit, had undoubtedly given a new dimension to the peacekeeping operations. The contributions made by Pakistan's contingents had not only been crucial but have also been the corner stone of UNAMSIL's successful operations which were widely acknowledged by all.<sup>71</sup>

He congratulated the members of the Pakistan's contingent which received letters of appreciation and encouragement from the President of Pakistan and the Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf, President of Sierra Leone Ahmad Tejan Kabah, American ambassador in Sierra Leone and many other revered personalities who were deeply satisfied with the performance of Pakistan Contingent III.<sup>72</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by the local population which incessantly conveyed their deep sense of grief and sorrow for having to bid farewell to the Pakistani troops, which was a clear manifestation of the sincerity of the efforts made by Pakistan Contingent III.<sup>73</sup>

The efforts made to bring about an improvement not only in the quality of life of the local population by providing assistance in basic facilities like provision of medical assistance beyond the mandate of UN but also in the long term social welfare projects like construction of skill training centers, construction of mosques, schools and basic infrastructure.<sup>74</sup>

Sierra Leone, in West Africa, emerged peaceful from a decade of civil war in 2001 with the help of Britain, the former colonial power, and a large UN peacekeeping mission. More than 17,000 foreign troops disarmed tens of thousands of rebels and militia fighters.<sup>75</sup> The Sierra Leone Civil War began on 23 March 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), with support from the special forces of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) intervened in Sierra Leone in an attempt to overthrow the Momoh Government, sparking a gruesome 11 year civil war that enveloped the country and left over 50,000 dead.<sup>76</sup>

These developments were not without difficulty, as the departure of Indian and Jordan's contingents underscored the tensions between the Council, the Secretariat and the major troop-contributing countries. But the deployment of Bangladeshi and Pakistani troops in the first quarter of 2001 and the air bombardments from Guinean airplanes finally broke the remaining RUF resistance.<sup>77</sup> At a follow-up meeting in Abuja on May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2001, the government and the RUF undertook to remove remaining roadblocks and to proceed with simultaneous disarmament of RUF and the Civil Defense Forces and the RUF again promised to return captured UNAMSIL weapons.<sup>78</sup>

The day before, President Republic of Sierra Leone Alhaj Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah inaugurated the Major Impact Project (MIP) at Wilberforce Barracks, west of Freetown. Kabbah was highly appreciative of the quality of work undertaken by the troops of Pakistan Army Engineers and their countrywide support.<sup>79</sup>

Lauding the role of Pakistani peacekeepers, President Kabbah paid glowing tributes to Pakistani contingents for their marvelous contribution towards peace building and humanitarian assistance thereby setting lofty standards for others to emulate. He said the Pakistani troops had generously contributed in all spheres while going beyond the call of duty. He said the living conditions of the troops and their families were deplorable and were affecting their morale.<sup>80</sup>

"The renovation work has provided an opportunity to 8,000 residents of the area to live in comfortable and dignified environment," the President said. Appreciating all such projects undertaken by the Pakistani Engineers and funded by UNAMSIL and UNDP, President Kabbah reiterated that such projects would create lasting impact towards improving the capabilities of the security agencies of Sierra Leone to fulfill their constitutional obligations.<sup>81</sup>

Praising Force Commander UNAMSIL Maj-Gen Sajjad Akram, the Sierra Leone President said: "he had always given us unflinching support whenever and wherever we desired". He lauded his personal contributions for restoring peace and stability besides ensuring completion of a number of development projects across the country. He said that although "Gen Sajjad Akram would bid us adieu very soon but we will not use these words as the people and the government of Sierra Leone will always hold him in their grateful memory".<sup>82</sup>

In his address, Maj-Gen Sajjad Akram said that the improvement in the living conditions of troops would definitely leave a positive and lasting impact, which would ultimately increase the operational and functional efficiency of the troops. He also dilated upon other MIPs that are currently in progress at Murray Town and the proposed work in Benguama, Juba and Kenema.<sup>83</sup> "This initiative has been very successful and hopefully will be adopted throughout the world in other missions," he added. The force commander highly praised the craftsmanship of

troops while highlighting the salient features of the project.<sup>84</sup> It's also handed over computers, sewing machines, sports gears and medicines worth \$ 15,000 to the President of Republic of Sierra Leone which were donated by the Pak Contingent for the welfare of the RSLAF troops and their families. Victor Angelo, UNAMSIL, in his address, said the project which entailed enthusiastic involvement of the RSLAF personnel, UNAMSIL and UNDP was a model of a successful partnership.<sup>85</sup>

Paying glowing tributes to the force commander for his leading and dynamic role in early completion of the project, he said, "Gen Sajjad Akram is about to complete his tour of duty and his presence at today's inauguration ceremony is the best farewell honor we could accord him."<sup>86</sup> "This is his final touch as a man of excellence," he added. In his opening remarks Chief of the Defense Staff, Maj-Gen Sam Mboma extended his thanks to the UNAMSIL, Pak Army Engineers and the force Commander for taking keen interest in early completion of the project, which would definitely help the RSLAF troops and their families to live with honor and dignity.<sup>87</sup>

## Conclusion

One of the biggest challenges for the UN is to combat the negative image created by the media, which much prefers to cover crises and failures.<sup>88</sup> The peacekeeping operations were going smoothly, however these were not considered newsworthy and successes went unnoticed. The UN has used radio in the past UNAMSIL has its own radio station but often the UN has had to broadcast over government run stations, which has been problematic. The local goodwill within communities has been enhanced by the peacekeepers themselves.<sup>89</sup> Many UN peacekeeping contingents, at their own country's expense, run local programs to build schools, offer medical and dental care, and undertake any number of community development projects.<sup>90</sup>

Morale among the UN staff and peacekeeping troops can be very low when the public does not appreciate their hard work and dedication and the risks they encounter. The UN itself needs to do a better job of promoting its work. But expectations will often outstrip information and the capacity or willingness of Member States to respond.<sup>91</sup> The UN Security Council has embraced much of human security agenda in 2004. It has warned the stake-holders failing to maintain domestic order and disregarding democratic elections in Sierra Leone. It has cited the existence of refugees and related humanitarian crises as a threat to international security in many cases including the Sierra Leone. When the war was over, Sierra Leone was literally the worst place in the world to live, ranking last out of 173 countries on the 2002 UN Human Development Index.<sup>92</sup> Several

broad lessons relevant to future United Nations peace operations in Africa and elsewhere can be derived from the Sierra Leone experience.<sup>93</sup>

Strong leadership by a P-5 state, in this case the United Kingdom, was essential to ensure sustained Council engagement. This was particularly important in the immediate aftermath of the May 2000 hostage crisis, as well as in maintaining the focus on the requirements for long-term peace-building.<sup>94</sup> The Security Council and the Secretariat need to establish better lines of communication with troop-contributing countries both in the formulation of the mandate of a peacekeeping force and in its implementation. The Council needs to recognize the regional political and economic dimensions of intrastate conflicts and incorporate them into shaping its mandates and guidance to the Secretary-General.<sup>95</sup>

Sierra Leone represents a major test for the Security Council's approach to complex peace operations. The recovery and refocus of the UNAMSIL mission demonstrates the ability of the United Nations system to learn from past mistakes. The flexibility at all levels to adopt positively in a difficult situation is highly commendable.<sup>96</sup> The government and the people of Sierra Leone stood steadfast through some of the most brutal experiences in recent warfare and the conduct of the May 2002 elections was satisfactory overall, albeit with some regrettable electoral frauds.<sup>97</sup>

In sum, by late 2003 Sierra Leone remained at a crossroad, seeking to deal with the devastation of the recent past while lacking the capacity to move beyond emergency and humanitarian operations to full recovery.<sup>98</sup> The international, regional and domestic actors need to work closely together on a broad security, reconstruction and development agenda. The Security Council so far needs to find the energy and political will to remain engaged for at least the next five years as observers.<sup>99</sup>

This background to Sierra Leone's descent into anarchy and chaos shows that the root causes of the years of civil violence could be found in political injustice, manipulation of elections, ethnic politics, disruption of the rule of law, and the political corruption of the principal institutions of the State, notably the courts, the police and the military.<sup>100</sup> The mismanagement of resources and economic corruption, misappropriation and embezzlement of state funds; these were compounded by lack of accountability and transparency in the management of state resources.<sup>101</sup> Social injustice stemming partly from political injustice and partly from economic injustice, led to the marginalization of whole groups like the youth and the rural poor, who were to become recruits for armed rebellion.<sup>102</sup> The over-centralization of state powers and state resources led to the total neglect of the vast majority of the population with the total collapse of local governance and the erosion of chieftain authority was deliberately

engineered by Siaka Stevens. Mass poverty and mass illiteracy with a growing culture of violence and the fact that these same factors that in our region are “conflict is a shared risk”.<sup>103</sup>

The UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which came to a close at the end of 2005, may serve as a prototype for the UN’s new emphasis on peace building. The efforts of the international community to end an 11 year civil war and move the country towards peace enabled Sierra Leone to enter a period of democratic transition and better governance.<sup>104</sup> Since 2002, Sierra Leone has enjoyed a much improved security environment and continues to work towards consolidating peace and national reconciliation. After a decisive intervention by British troops in 2001 the UN helped disarm and demobilize some 75,000 combatants.<sup>105</sup> UN peacekeepers reconstructed roads, renovated and built schools, houses of worship and clinics and initiated agricultural projects and welfare programs. The UNAMSIL also helped Sierra Leone to ensure that the rights of its citizens are fully protected to bring to justice those who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law through the UN-backed ‘Special Court for Sierra Leone’ and to develop a professional and democratic police force.<sup>106</sup> Finally, over all it was a success in terms of settling the conflict peacefully.

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- \* Dr. Ferzana Rizvi, Ph.D. (Pakistan Studies)
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34. Ibid.
35. Krasno, *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, 266.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 257.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid., 257-258.
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41. Frederking, *The United States and the Security Council*, 67.
42. Malone, *The UN Security Council*, 674.
43. Frederking, *The United States and the Security Council*, 67.
44. Ibid.
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61. *Ibid.*
62. *Ibid.*
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*, 530.
65. Interview with military personal.
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67. An interview UN Deputy Force Commander in Sierra Leone, Syed Ather Ali.
68. Noor ul Haq, "UN Peacekeeping Operations and Pakistan", *IPRI Factfile*, (January 2006): 67.
69. *Ibid.* An interview with UN Force Commander in Sierra Leone, Major General Sajjad Akram.
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74. Military personnel interview.
75. *Ibid.*
76. *Ibid.*
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79. *Ibid.*
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81. *Ibid.*, 83-84.
82. *Ibid.*, 84.

83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Ibid.
87. Ibid.
88. Krasno, *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, 260.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Frederking, *The United States and the Security Council*, 29, 67.
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94. Ibid.
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97. Ibid., 534.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ayissi, Poulton, ed. *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, 34.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. Ibid., 34-35.
104. United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping: Meeting New Challenges* (United Nations: Department of Public Information, 2006), 21.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.

Note: Interviews, UN Deputy Force Commander in Sierra Leone, Syed Ather Ali, and UN Force Commander in Sierra Leone, Major General Sajjad Akram.

**Lomé Peace Agreement:**

Lomé Peace Agreement under S/1999/777 was signed between the Government of Sierra Leone (President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah) and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), (Corporal Leader Foday Sankoh) on 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1999, in Lomé, Togo where the negotiations took place and signed. The major objectives were the Cassations of Hostilities, cease-fire monitoring, Governance- recognizing the right of the people of Sierra Leone, transformations of RUF into a political party, consolidation of peace, management of strategic resources, pardon and Amnesty, review of present constitution and the date of next election and the post war Rehabilitation and reconstruction.