

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

According to the United Nations Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Organisation and Management, it is too early to make pronouncements on the success of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone. A period of two years is obviously far too short a time to conclude a peace process, or even to address the country's security challenges. Nevertheless, UNAMSIL has achieved two significant benchmarks – the completion of disarmament and demobilisation, and the successful staging of national elections. Few would argue that the intervention has not been a qualified success. UNAMSIL's transition from peacekeeping to peace-building was made easy by the phased, district-based approach to disarmament, which simultaneously encouraged confidence-building measures.

This monograph follows on a similar ISS report published in January 2002, entitled 'Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight' (ISS Monograph no.68). The aim of this publication is to provide an update of the remarkable progress that has been made by the peace process since the national elections of May 2002. Specific emphasis will be placed on the practical aspects of what happens with a peace mission after the high-water mark of elections begins to recede. In other words, our interest lay in examining the

transition from peacekeeping to peace-building, against the background of the enormous body of theory and literature that has emerged on the topic over the past decade.

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

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

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

**Chapter 3** provides an overview of the structure and composition of UNAMSIL as the mission adjusts to post-election tasks and priorities. It includes an overview of the mandate and mission of the force, and a snapshot of the military's role in peace-building – with specific reference to the work being done by sectors 4 and 5, as well as by the military observers. Plans for the adjustment, draw-down and ultimate withdrawal of the force provide the backdrop for a discussion of the increasingly important civilian component of UNAMSIL, including the civilian police, civil affairs, political affairs, public information and human rights sections.

**Chapter 4** expands on the role of the media in Sierra Leone in general, and the public information section of UNAMSIL in particular. Broad public support has been and remains central to the attainment of the mission's objectives. A brief but insightful account is provided of how UNAMSIL set about meeting the public information challenge, with specific reference to radio and the print media, community liaison, and the all-important role of the Mission Spokesman's office.

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

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

**Chapter 7** focuses on the extension of state authority throughout the territory of Sierra Leone, and on the prospects for the country's economic recovery. It also addresses the inter-related issues of attempts to deal with corruption, and efforts to impose effective government control of the diamond industry, as pre-requisites for any meaningful level of economic recovery.

**Chapter 8** provides an examination of progress made in meeting the twin challenges of justice and reconciliation in post-war Sierra Leone. It begins with a brief overview of the existing state of the Sierra Leone judiciary, before providing an update on the status of the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The chapter concludes with the opinion that, although vitally important to national reconciliation, the latter two high-profile, internationally sponsored measures for short-term transitional justice, should not overshadow the importance of meeting the long-term needs of the judiciary.