

CHAPTER 3

MARKETS AND TRADE: DIAMONDS, PALM OIL, FIGHTERS, GUNS

Trillions of dollars move across the world along non-state and non-legal lines. If criminals and terrorists are hard to catch, it is perhaps because some within the state structure have made use of these same channels under cover of the shadows. Power covers its trails. Who, then, controls the profits attending to these trillions of dollars; and how are they being used? Today, wealth flows across national and conceptual borders with ease; who manages this flow will be one of the core questions defining the twenty-first century.⁵³

Diamonds

The role of diamonds in fuelling conflict not only in the Mano River Basin but also in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola is well documented. In Sierra Leone, new international measures to curb the illegal export of diamonds are beginning to make a small dent in the problems of smuggling and corruption. One major challenge ahead, if the peace holds when UNAMSIL pulls out (the draw-down and pullout are now scheduled to be completed by the end of December 2005, pending results of Liberian and Ivorian elections in October), is continuing to increase the share of reward that both diamond digging communities and the government see from the trade. A second challenge is managing the relationship between foreign mining companies, local communities, and the national government. The complexities of the interplay between these three actors encompass issues as varied as companies securing tens of millions of dollars worth of investment, government protecting its 40 percent interest in that investment, and communities striving for a gun-free environment among former mercenaries now working to guard the same areas they once fought in.

Diggers of Kono, Unite!

The terms “conflict diamonds” and “blood diamonds” are now part of the

popular lexicon, referring in the Sierra Leonean context to diamonds mined by rebel RUF forces and sold or exchanged for arms, ammunition, medical supplies, and other aids to battle. Charles Taylor, the President of Liberia during the Sierra Leone civil war and the primary external backer of the RUF, was integral in brokering diamonds to feed the rebel supply chain. Post-war and post-DDR, the new term is “development diamonds”, indicating optimism about the new role of the gems in improving standards of living in mining communities.

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS), initiated in May 2000 by the South African government and coming into international effect on 1 January 2003, has provided a framework to halt the flow of conflict diamonds. More than fifty diamond producing, trading and polishing countries are members. Member countries agree to certify that rough diamonds being exported are conflict-free, and to refuse importation without a certificate. Sierra Leone is beginning to see an increase in export data as more diamonds enter the legal system rather than being smuggled across the border to be sold in Guinea or Liberia, largely because of the Kimberley Process rather than internal reforms. Nevertheless, according to the latest Diamond Industry Annual Review, last year the government of Sierra Leone only took in USD4 million from its three percent tax on diamond sales, leaving the report to conclude that between USD30 and USD170 million worth of diamonds were still being smuggled out of the country in 2004.

Conventional knowledge holds that because communities are excluded from the process and miners are exploited, corruption and smuggling are at much higher rates than they should be. In 2001, the government implemented the Diamond Area Community Development Fund (DACDF) to put export revenue back into the community and give locals a bigger stake in the legal diamond trade. In some areas this led to reported corruption by chiefs who siphoned the money into their own pockets instead of implementing development projects. Now, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has stepped in to fund a programme with similar empowerment goals: it is called the Integrated Diamond Management and Policy (IDMP).

This programme, in association with the Peace Diamonds Alliance, a registered Sierra Leonean advocacy NGO, will try to implement policy reform and a new system called Integrated Diamond Management (IDM). IDM seeks to empower diggers who have been traditionally exploited and underpaid. The hope of IDM’s backers is that the new system will transform diggers into stakeholders, combating illegality and exploitation in the diamond industry by changing the

Table 2: Sierra Leone Diamond Export Data

2002 Export Data				2003 Export Data				2004 Export Data			
Month Amount	Export (USD)	Carats	Price/Carat (USD)	Month Amount	Export (USD)	Carats	Price/Carat (USD)	Month Amount	Export (USD)	Carats	Price/Carat (USD)
Jan/02	1,436,570	20,891	68.77	Jan/03	4,612,174	37,853	121.84	Jan/04	6,732,551	55,347	121.64
Feb/02	1,782,849	16,989	104.94	Feb/03	7,087,005	40,612	174.51	Feb/04	9,956,715	67,192	148.18
Mar/02	1,590,820	13,281	119.78	Mar/03	4,827,357	29,566	163.27	Mar/04	12,186,650	61,730	197.41
Apr/02	3,772,768	25,762	146.45	Apr/03	7,363,137	45,259	162.69	Apr/04	12,219,747	72,589	168.34
May/02	3,241,944	29,781	108.86	May/03	5,526,897	41,334	133.71	May/04	9,824,063	49,712	197.61
June/02	4,196,749	29,660	141.49	June/03	7,673,862	56,612	135.55	June/04	17,371,974	89,560	193.97
July/02	4,920,889	37,480	131.29	July/03	5,417,475	37,191	145.67	July/04	12,925,172	59,194	218.35
Aug/02	4,311,833	32,250	133.70	Aug/03	7,527,192	49,182	153.05	Aug/04	9,689,861	50,172	193.13
Sept/02	5,265,133	49,460	106.45	Sept/03	6,828,932	50,068	136.39	Sept/04	9,897,734	51,781	191.14
Oct/02	3,770,189	29,450	128.02	Oct/03	6,789,034	44,032	154.18	Oct/04	9,588,852	46,014	208.38
Nov/02	3,753,079	33,687	111.41	Nov/03	5,868,077	35,121	167.08	Nov/04	9,215,901	51,310	179.61
Dec/02	3,689,308	33,169	111.23	Dec/03	6,465,402	39,903	162.03	Dec/04	7,052,411	37,152	189.82
Total	41,732,130	351,859	118.60	Total	75,969,751		149.92	Total	126,652,634	691,757	183.09
Value to DACDF (USD)	312,991			Value to DACDF (USD)	521,409			Value to DACDF		N/A	

Source: Diamond Industry Annual Review, Sierra Leone 2004. The Diamonds and Human Security Project.

way diamonds are managed and marketed. IDMP, in partnership with the PDA and the Ministries of Mineral Resources and Trade and Industry, trains diggers in cooperative management, new mining technologies, and diamond valuation as well as trying to facilitate access to finance and better prices for mining cooperatives. In return, the cooperatives agree to mine ethically, incorporate environmental sustainability, and track production from “earth to export”. The PDA web site quotes the US Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Thomas Neil Hull III, as saying:

The United States government takes reform of the diamond sector most seriously. Diamonds can contribute to Sierra Leone’s recovery or they can be a source of instability and violence. The United States will continue to assist diamond-producing communities to become more prosperous and secure by realizing a reasonable return on their resource. Illicit diamonds also fuel the corruption that undercuts democracy, and they can be exploited by terrorists who intend to harm my country and others.⁵⁴

According to PDA, the Rapaport Group and Kono’s Hope are two private sector PDA members that are financing a total of five cooperatives in the 2005 pilot phase. Diamonds will be purchased at values set by government valuers. The diamonds will then be sold at tender internationally and any excess profits from the tender will be returned to the diggers under the watchful eye of British NGO Global Witness, which will be monitoring the system. Twenty-five artisanal diamond miners’ cooperatives have been registered, each with some 50 members. The hope is that by combining social and economic empowerment and incorporating ethical vigilance, the IDM programme will create a more effective system of governance than traditional policing by government authorities. Outside of the diamond industry, similar logic is being used in considering the use of civilians for monitoring porous borders instead of relying only on traditional policing. When asked whether the PDA programme would help exploited miners, a youth worker in Kono said:

It will be a good alternative. PDA, from what I know, these cooperative units could be a nice thing. If they accumulate the diamonds and sell it to the appropriate authorities, I’m sure they can realise something beneficial. But most of these bosses in charge of these mining areas when they get diamonds, some of them are from Gambia, Abidjan and other areas, they smuggle them out. So at the end of the day the diggers will not realise benefits. But if the PDA, instead, helps them make their own bulk and sell, it will be more beneficial to them. One

of their challenges is to remove the child miners out of the mines, to create something beneficial for them. World Vision is also doing such things, caring for child miners. Even when you see this, you will see the children back in the mines the following week, doing the exact thing you want them not to be doing.⁵⁵

Securing investment/Securing peace

The “other” source of conflict around diamonds emerging in a newly peaceful Sierra Leone is about corporate ethics, government responsibility, and community participation. Because the country seems to be returning to stability, corporate mining interests are also returning, particularly those ready to make the necessary investments in Kimberlite mining. Kimberlite mining requires blasting to extract high-quality stones from deeper within the earth, a technique that was largely ignored during the mining history of Sierra Leone. Alluvial diamonds, which can be plucked from the surface by men, women, or children using pickaxes and sieves, is much easier and has had a high yield (although now in some areas that yield appears to be decreasing, leading to “gold rush” style movements to new territory).

Two companies, Koidu Holdings Ltd. and Sierra Rutile Ltd., have moved in to fill the existing technology gap. They have both been sources of great controversy because of their security practices: practices which are extremely sensitive since they are meant to protect, in the case of KHL, over USD21 million in shareholder investment. Blasting requires strong explosives, which have to be transported and stored on the company’s premises and guarded against theft. A large expatriate population is brought in to live at the site and run its day-to-day operations along with a large local workforce. The camp houses and feeds the expatriates and goes through 9,000 gallons of diesel fuel per week running five generators 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A fuel truck comes several times a week from the coast as part of a contract with Mobil.

The Koidu Holdings camp is like an oasis of modernity in the middle of war-scarred Koidu. There are flush toilets, hot showers, Castle beer from South Africa, air conditioning, and a volleyball court. South African and Israeli employees end the day with a competitive game, with a few Sierra Leonean guards observing or joining in. One older man who does technical surveying for the company said, “For those of us who have someone, the time we spend with our partners is real; being here in our male camaraderie is a kind of limbo until we can be with our partners again.” The swimming pool and koi pond

were under construction, and a mobile clinic employs a rotating roster of South African-qualified medics from Netcare. There are several gates at the entrances to all of this, but they could be breached. The perimeter of the actual mining area is not closed off, as evidenced by the fact that a cow wandered past in full view of the processing plant. Security under these circumstances, in a still-unstable post-war environment, requires the visible use of guns.

The Tankoro community living in the immediate vicinity of the KHL mine and its regular blasting is unhappy that Koidu Holdings has “attached” armed police divisions to its own security managers. Many of these private security men (they are all men), just like at Sierra Rutile, are former mercenaries who were involved in the civil war. The community is also angry about the company’s failed relocation plan, claiming alternately that poor-quality houses were built and that there were too few of them. Conflicts of interest arise for police at Koidu Holdings when community members protest against relocation policies. Complaints about abuse at the hands of police and private security officers have created a growing threat of conflict between community, government, and corporate interests. The Sierra Leone government takes 40 percent of the companies’ profits in taxes and fees, making the President and Vice President’s frequent helicopter visits to Koidu Holding’s private compound a clear statement of support for company leadership.

The population near Sierra Rutile, still traumatised from war, has threatened to re-arm in the face of clashes with Sierra Rutile’s private armed security forces, exempt by government agreement from the law forbidding any form of civilian gun ownership. Community leaders say their people feel squeezed out of any representation in disputes over land, relocation, and environmental issues. They see the company’s armed security as just another militia with the potential to seriously harm them. Leslie Mboka, the Executive Director of CADEP (Community Advocacy and Development Project, an NGO based in Bonthe), explained:

One contentious issue where we want the government to intervene is Sierra Rutile having its own private army. Sierra Leone is a country emerging from war. We think the government should solely be responsible for security matter, not leaving it in the hands of private business people and multi-national corporations. These guys are not accountable to the communities, not even to government. They take orders from their corporate managers. They will tell them, “Go and attack such and such a community,” and they will go. They follow directives. They do a lot of things: beating women, farmers, and that

kind of thing. We want the government to make sure these people are disarmed.... The communities are lobbying the government, they have raised protest, but the government is doing nothing about it. And it is for the government to disarm that corporate entity. Otherwise, we will forcefully disarm them or we will find a way to re-arm ourselves. Because we have been subjected to a lot of humiliation. They enter our house and they start beating women.⁵⁶

The standoff between corporate interests and communities in the face of what appears to be government partisanship is not a new phenomenon limited to the diamond industry or to Sierra Leone. Nigeria's oil industry is notorious for such conflicts, and the timber trade in Liberia is also something to watch. The companies say they are, by extension of their local employment records, supporting thousands of people who would otherwise be destitute. They can point to instances where it seems clear that communities take advantage of bad-faith opportunities, like building houses near blasting sites in order to receive the benefits of payment or relocation later. None of the foreign operations in Sierra Leone, with the 40-percent tax rate and the slow process of starting from scratch after war, are yet making much of a profit according to their records. And yet the communities have made valid claims about the behaviour of security workers and the failures to implement Environmental Impact Assessment plans. It is the government in this equation, in the role of mediator, which will most need to re-evaluate its priorities and plans for brokering peace, protecting investors, and guaranteeing its citizens' human rights.

In an interview with the Peace Diamond Alliance in Koidu town, Kono, links between diggers' welfare, diamond smuggling, and small arms trafficking were discussed.

Interview: Peace Diamond Alliance, Kono, 30 October 2004

Q: How are conditions for the diggers now?

They enjoy some credit facilities, and though the winnings are not coming like they were, mining is now intensive mining, but some are still making it. And especially around the periphery of Kono. It is a bit overmined, and therefore the winnings are slower now. But if you go to peripheral chiefdoms, these chiefdoms are getting winnings. What I will ascertain from the research we have done, is that because they are marginalised, there are illegal dealers, who are playing between legal

dealers and the diggers and miners who are being marginalised. They are acting as a force to export diamonds illegally and that is a potential for corrupt and armed groups out there if they want to infiltrate the system.

For whatever reason, money is power and money can do everything. Diamonds are valued all over the world. Many groups want to convert their resources into diamond resources. They can easily get access to the diamonds, and if they get access to the diamonds, they can convert them into arms, into money, into anything they need. That's just a possibility. It happened during the war. I'm not saying it's happening, but it's a possibility. It's a porous channel. Large goods can be carried across the borders easily, so what about 10 carats, 20 carats of diamonds? They can pass through any of the porous borders around Sierra Leone. And these guys are potential forces. They are coming with diamonds from Guinea, from DRC, from Liberia into Sierra Leone after the war. During the war they were taking it from Sierra Leone to these areas, and therefore it's just a possibility.

Q: What are the problems with the system that the PDA is trying to change?

Well, these people are not getting the necessary power to get the kind of profits or benefits they really deserve to get from their winnings or their diamonds. Because they have been marginalised. Because the fair market is not created, and because of all these problems around, you have political problems that are really marginalising them there and keeping them there in the labour without getting the desired benefits. That is why the PDA is stepping in to empower them, so they have fair market, fair prices, and what have you. But in addition to that, because of the rampant smuggling that was going on in previous regimes. Because there was this kind of favour for whatever group to penetrate or infiltrate the diamond industry, because of these factors, the American government through USAID said that we need to arrest some of these problems if we want to stop terrorists really penetrating these industries. Also, to improve the communities, definitely you need to empower these people, the youths especially. But there are also the larger issues of terrorism and smuggling, which attract donor money to the cause, which is a good thing. The fact that there was this loophole, and putting a lot of efforts into monitoring these systems, they are themselves open to terrorist attacks. Because when they make more money from such illegal means, they can attack.

Q: What activities are you carrying out?

Environmental activities, to see that the diamond industry itself is carried out in an environmentally sound area. But also impacting on empowering the Ministry of Mines and monitoring to give them bikes and communication systems and so on to empower them so that they are capable enough to carry out their duties. Some of these conflicts that we are coming on in the diamond industry, either between chiefdoms, or miners, PDA strongly associates with such problems. Typical case is the conflict between the Koidu Holdings and the Tankoro people. The PDA is trying to get a better way out. The total motive of PDA is actually to see sanity in the diamond industry. And sanity is a big language there, which can be associated with security, smuggling, illegal dealings, community marginalisation. And conflict resolution. We mediate between Koidu Holdings and Tankoro people.

Now what we have done is identified some of these problems; through more than four months of research we have just completed the analysis. We have really got to know problems and see if it is possible to create a fair market. That is by bringing in buyers who can buy at standard prices or with credit facilities by cooperative miners. We try to organise these diamond diggers into groups. We try to form some of these cooperatives so that they are not dependent either on Lebanese dealers or Lebanese exporters, or so on for their mining activities. If they can manage their own sources of income, we want to see how that will change the status of organised diggers and miners. They keep what they find until they have enough to sell at a commercial bulk. One of the criteria of forming the cooperative is that they have their own account at the bank. By so doing if any winning is found, we keep the winning safe in the bank, and whatever is collected there will be sold, and we hold them accountable for whatever is being got. And that is just one way of checking the illegal movement of diamonds, by cutting out people in the middle and by getting the diamonds kept at the bank. That will keep proper record of what they are doing.

Q: Is the monitoring understaffed?

I am not in that Ministry, it is difficult for me to say if they are understaffed. What I can say for sure is that the fact that they are not effectively carrying out their duties, some of the areas are so large that it is difficult for them to cover. Security matters are not matters of the

ministry. Bringing community members on board in monitoring some of these areas and really giving them the right training and sensitisation, I think that would be better rather than getting 2,000 people at the Mines Ministry there. Put it more into the hands of the community, train them, empower them, give them the right equipment and things like that. They need to be responsible for their own security. You can't just put it in the hands of the central government.

Power is information. The fact that information is going out, and most of them are now being informed, that is one empowerment that I am really happy about. Organising the cooperatives, they have their meetings where issues are discussed. That is another form of empowerment. The last phase that we are looking at is really forming and testing these things; are they going to abuse the money, or will they use the money the right way? USAID is funding that.

When the roads are in terrible conditions—it cannot be 2,000 people in the Ministry of Mines doing this job. It has to be the communities. First you have to pave the roads, if the roads are paved up to the land borders, then probably you can expect such monitoring to be effective. Where these mine officers or monitors cannot reach for the next two years, we are really revealing to them. It is like that for markets in everything; cigarettes, everything.

Q: Is the government suspicious about recommendations to empower communities, since security is largely considered the government's exclusive domain?

What I know for sure, if you are talking about government, you are talking about everybody's business and everybody's responsibility. Recommendations that have been sent, they have to use their own judgment and wisdom. We are just coming from the war, probably which might increase their fear. A war in which everyone played his or her own part. To empower groups now would be something difficult. But I know with time, these are things that will definitely come into play. It's not a matter of giving them arms. It's a matter of training them how to collect information and pass them on to military men, people who matter. It's really information and intelligence collection. Not giving them arms to carry out security matters. Whether it comes to diamonds or anything else.

Q: There are breaks between the mining and the health, well-being of the community. How can these be eliminated?

This is a very poor country. People are desperate to make money, regardless of how they make it. What the government needs to do is monitoring. Without proper monitoring, you end up in the same mess. And that is really what was lacking. What they have decided is to now channel money through the local government, for the local government to be the eyes and ears of such money. If that is properly done, it will be good. And bringing to book chieftdom authorities to properly implement whatever. Second part of it is that some chieftdoms bring their own project proposals now, wherein the local government will go to monitor such projects. They have stopped giving the money to chiefs now. If you want to develop a proposal, you need to get serious. I need to undertake my project, write it and understand it. That's the first step.

Q: In this ongoing conflict between companies like KHL and the community, can you describe the conflict of interest?

Government desperation to have investors in and protecting the local communities. That is why the conflict is complex now. But once the investors are in, the government will start to realise they need to protect their communities and not just encouraging investors, being bad or good. I think that the conflict will be something easy. These things are all documented, they are all on paper, what these people need to carry out before they start mining and blasting. It is a matter of making them implement what is in the document. They need to be held accountable for what they already said they would do. The government needs to say, "Implement what you said or else stop mining," and things will settle down right away. But government hasn't done this. That is why the conflict is difficult. They are just coming from war, and this is the money coming in. The government is scared to take some stance.

Looking at the country as a whole and looking at the communities where these riches are coming from. The government's concentration is on the whole country for now, which is a bit wrong I would say. From where are these riches are coming from. Try to get money into government coffers, and probably that is the reason. But the local authorities also need to do something in their own parts. Because you

have the part of these agreements with development funds and surface rents and things like that, to the good tune of thousands of dollars. Which if really utilised should at least encourage the communities in some ways. But that is also not done. We need to know how these funds are utilised, where they are going.

Q: Is there a possibility that this situation could result in further conflict?

From the communities we are dealing with, we visited two districts where this research was carried out, people will say, enough of war, at least in the near future. No matter what happens now, Sierra Leoneans will try to resolve their conflict in other forms. Everybody had a taste of the war and we are fed up with war. We are really attacking the issue. In the next twenty years, maybe we can have problems. But not in the next five or ten years.

The PDA is optimistic about its digger empowerment programmes' ability to level the playing field in the diamond industry and to forestall armed conflict between diggers, communities, and corporate mining interests. Others are not as sure; a resident in Koidu in an area that was to be evacuated for Kimberlite blasting told me casually that "I am scared, but the government doesn't care. They only care about their money. There could be another war, although we are not praying for that."⁵⁷

Timber

Like diamonds, timber is one of the most valuable exports in the Mano River Basin, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. It is well known that Charles Taylor used timber exports to fund his regime's excesses and maintain his grip on power.⁵⁸ In a Global Witness report urging the United Nations to maintain sanctions on timber exports from Liberia (which it has), the private security issue arose in much the same way it has surfaced with foreign diamond mining companies in Sierra Leone: as an armed employment opportunity for former combatants and a threat to local communities. The report clearly identifies one of the consequences of prematurely lifting sanctions as the possibility that logging company security forces will re-arm ex-combatants:

With UNMIL providing inadequate up-country security, logging companies will likely hire armed security forces to protect their investments; such forces have historically been composed mostly

of ex-combatants. Elements of some logging security forces were responsible for abuses including torture, sexual exploitation, arbitrary arrest and destruction of private property. This poses a serious internal security threat to Liberia, with the potential to spill-over into Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone.⁵⁹

Like the government mining offices in Sierra Leone, the Forestry Development Authority in Liberia, which is responsible for oversight of the logging industry, is drastically under-equipped and unprepared to monitor timber exports should sanctions be lifted. As it is, there are consistent reports of sanctions violations, particularly with regard to funding the violence in Côte d'Ivoire, including reports of timber being trafficked from Monrovia's port.⁶⁰ Logging "for the domestic market" is legally continuing in Liberia, and has saturated the supply within the country. Near the border with Guinea in the Forest Region, timber continues to be felled and the forests further depleted. Logging trucks can frequently be seen carrying timber into Monrovia, where it is unlikely they will only be sold to domestic buyers. The FDA, because of logistical problems and fear of confronting armed ex-combatants involved in the timber trade, had not investigated these trucking activities as of the publication of the Global Witness report in December 2004.

As with diamonds, timber is a primary source of funding for armed groups and needs to be controlled. However, it is not always only the sale or exchange of diamonds and timber for illicit weapons that pose a danger to peace or stability. The way companies hire and manage ex-combatants as workers, and secure their investment through armed private security, creates the possibility of an equally devastating threat. In Liberia, DDR came to a close on 31 October, 2004 (and unofficially in many outlying areas on 24 November). With very little funding available for reintegration, the presence of armed corporate militias comprised of ex-combatants will not have a positive effect on communities still traumatised by, or even experiencing, conflict. In the meantime, sanctions on timber to avoid an escalation of its use to fund armed non-state actors in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, as well as strengthening and reform of the FDA, should continue.

Fighters and guns

Sierra Leone won't hold if Liberia doesn't hold, and Liberia won't hold if Côte d'Ivoire doesn't hold. Sub-regional arms flows and conflict require sub-regional solutions. The way to curb arms flows is not technical; it is by dealing with peace and conflict.

– Conmany B. Wesseh, Civil Society Representative to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly and long-time advocate for the reduction of small arms proliferation. Interview, 16 November 2004.

The movement of small arms and the fighters who wield them is still being documented in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivoire on a daily basis. There are many factors that influence the trade: poverty and unemployment drive young people to seek paid work as mercenaries; disarmament packages offer combatants incentives to cross borders to DDR camps to collect fees for turning in weapons; and the basic laws of supply and demand function for people and weapons just as they do for natural resources. When a conflict flares up, the stakeholders demand resources that can pay to strengthen their forces and increase their chances of gaining power. When the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire began in earnest in November 2004, youth interviewed in both Sierra Leone and Liberia expressed strong consideration for the option of "joining up", even though there were opportunities for peace where they were. Money is a big motivator in countries where unemployment afflicts at least two-thirds of the population.

In addition to individual motivations of mercenary soldiers, DDR processes in neighbouring countries create instant demand across borders by setting prices differently. Informal accounts hold that the ebb and flow of conflict has sometimes been instigated or held back by faction commanders to influence the timing or planning of disarmament. Peacekeeping operations that are not well coordinated can build the biggest markets for the movement of arms and the enrichment of those with the means to broker deals. By increasing coordination between programs in neighbouring areas and recognising the importance of demobilisation, reintegration, and reconciliation to the actual disarmament process, DDR processes can avoid becoming part of the markets they are trying to dismantle. A UN Report in 2004 acknowledged that:

There are worrying signs that some of the heavy weapons are not being turned in during the disarmament exercise and, in several instances, have been smuggled across the borders of Liberia. In this

regard, UNMIL found a cache of 81-millimetre and 61-millimetre mortar grenades and several 107-millimetre BM-21 missiles at Camp Alpha in Lofa County. On 3 May, the Swedish explosives ordnance disposal team from UNMIL force headquarters visited the camp to destroy the munitions.⁶¹

The disarmament statistics from UNMIL, officially concluded on 31 October 2004 (excluding “mop-up operations” which continued into November), are staggering: over 100,000 ex-combatants have been disarmed. And yet border regions were the last to be reached, and UNMIL internal intelligence shows that there are still substantial small arms caches in the country as well as some larger, Taylor-era weapons that have not been recovered. As the country heads for potential elections in October 2005, the implications of disarmament failures will become a primary security concern. Additionally, clear evidence of 2001 and 2002 Chinese AK variants having been trafficked into Liberia despite an arms embargo introduce the spectre of outside complicity in continued political demand.⁶²

An UNMIL DDRR representative interviewed on 13 November 2004 in Monrovia was forthcoming about the logistical failures of the disarmament process. At the time, although formal DDR was closed at the end of October, there were still 4,000 ex-combatants coming under “mop-up” operations in Voinjama who needed to be processed in less than one month, before 1 December. The representative said it “would have been easier to keep camps open since the caseload is too high”, but in large part due to financial considerations, that was not possible.

The five-day cantonment period is too quick, with little counselling. The first sites were three or four hours’ drive from Monrovia. By the time other sites opened, the rainy season was here and the conditions were difficult; the process was, therefore, slower and more difficult on the borders. It is more expensive and logistically prohibitive for ex-combatants to get to sites in the rain, especially marginalised groups on the borders where the need is greatest to bring them in. At the VOA site, we got false ammunition filled with sand and a lot of unserviceable weapons. The board of enquiry found ex-combatants’ late claims of exclusion baseless, especially because so many of them turned in unserviceable weapons. Women and children didn’t have to turn in a weapon to be part of the process and receive the allowance of two times one hundred dollars (three hundred total). All they needed was three hundred rounds of ammunition. Many took advantage of

this, I think. The real weapons will be found in Côte d'Ivoire if they offer nine hundred dollars, which is obviously three times what they can get in Liberia.

Guns are worth money and they are bought, sold, and used like any other commodity. It follows the basic laws of supply and demand. Abidjan is a more advanced and expensive city—like Manhattan in one section. So 900 US dollars does not mean the same thing there as here. We know people are considering disarming there. More coordination would have been useful. They will not give 900 dollars when they start the process now; maybe we should have only given them 50 dollars and saved 250 to invest in reintegration or training opportunities. But, it's too late now.⁶³

The statistics show that the original UN estimates of 38,000 combatants to be disarmed was far surpassed, with a total of over 102,000 participants in the DDRR process. Of these, 11,221 were children and 22,020 were women, and neither group was required to present a weapon or ammunition to gain admittance. Charles Achodo, the DDRR Programme and Policy Advisor at UNDP, indicated that the eligibility requirements were looser than they had been in Sierra Leone after complaints about a lack of child and gender sensitivity. He said, "the larger numbers may be because we allowed more women and children into the programme, or it may just be that more males took advantage of the criteria (specifically, only 150 rounds of ammunition per fighter) to disarm more easily for the "RR" benefits like training."⁶⁴ Whatever the case, Liberia's ratio of disarmed ex-combatants to weapons collected was noticeably high.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement outlined that DDRR was to target the three main warring parties: former Government of Liberia forces and other paramilitary groups, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). There were 11 separate cantonment sites managed by UNMIL personnel: Buchanan, Ganta, Gbarnga, Harper, Kakata, Schefflin Barracks, Tappita, Tubmanburg, VOA, Voinjama, and Zwedru. In order to qualify for the programme, applicants had to present a serviceable weapon or ammunition which met the required entry criteria, be an under-18 year-old child associated with the fighting forces (CAFF), or be a woman associated with the fighting forces (WAFF).

Table 3: Liberia DDDR Statistics ⁶⁵

Total Ex-Combatants Processed		
ADULTS	M	68,952
	F	22,020
CHILDREN	M	8,704
	F	2,517
	TOTAL	102,193

Total Weapons Collected	
Rifles/Sub-Machine Guns	20,458
Machine Guns	690
Pistols	641
RPG Launchers	1,829
Mortars	178
Miscellaneous	4,008
TOTAL	27,804

Total Ammunition Collected	
Small Arms Ammunition (SAA)	7,129,198
RPG Rockets	8,703
60/81mm Mortars	12,287
82mm Mortars	15
Hand Grenades	10,410
Surface-to-Air Missiles	12
Miscellaneous	1,103
TOTAL Ammunition (excluding SAA)	32,530

The UNOCI (United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire) disarmament process is scheduled to begin on 14 May 2005, after the UN Security Council voted to extend the Mission for 30 days until 4 June 2005. In 2004, a false start circulated rumours that USD900 would be paid to ex-combatants, compared to only USD300 in Liberia. Now that Liberia's DDR process has concluded, coordination between UNMIL, UNAMSIL, and UNOCI is still crucial to

maintain stability while the DDR process begins, to control borders, and to prepare for October elections in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. One UNMIL official said:

Sub-regional dynamics are the most important element of ending war. Côte d'Ivoire and even Guinea could destabilise Liberia and lead to difficulties; so could Sierra Leone. Côte d'Ivoire will be more difficult, though. Liberians are invested in peace and rebuilding, exemplified by the faction leaders disarming to the UNMIL force commander. But still, significant weapons have been found in Limba and Lofa counties, and many say some very heavy weapons have been taken back to Guinea by Taylor's supporters. Those who are going to work in Côte d'Ivoire know that they will get a chance to disarm later, possibly for more money.

Palm oil, cigarettes, and sheep

UNAMSIL's DDR programme succeeded in disarming over 70,000 ex-combatants by its close in January 2002. Following DDR, the Community Arms Collection and Destruction Programme was aimed at collecting from communities arms such as hunting rifles, pistols, and other guns that were not necessarily owned or used by fighters during the war. That programme was managed by the SLP with UNAMSIL, and covered the entire country in three phases (Phase I targeted the western area, covering the Port Loko and Kambia districts in the northern region and Moyamba in the south, Phase II covered Bombali, Koinadugu and Tonkolili districts in the north and Bonthe in the south, and Phase III covered Pujehun, Kenema, Kailahun and Kono in the eastern region).⁶⁶ By its close, the programme had retrieved approximately 9,660 weapons and 17,000 rounds of ammunition. At the end of the amnesty period in 2002, it became illegal to possess arms.

The UNDP's Arms for Development Programme is a joint initiative of UNDP and the Government of Sierra Leone, in partnership with the Sierra Leone Police, the DDR/Community Development section of UNAMSIL, the German Technical Cooperation International Services (GTZ), the Sierra Leone Action Network on Small Arms (SLANSA), and grassroots communities. The AFD is a cost shared initiative partially funded by Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom. AFD began with pilot projects in 2003 in four chiefdoms. As a continuation of promoting arms-free communities, AFD has

been celebrated as finally implementing a programme that makes a direct link between concrete local development and arms-free communities.

The Kambia district in Sierra Leone has been a success story for AFD, which is perhaps one reason why the police seem far more concerned about the transport of cigarettes and palm oil across the border than drugs or guns. In Kono, an RUF stronghold during the war and the mining centre of the country, extensive interviews with police and community policing liaisons revealed that palm oil, kola nuts, cocoa, coffee, and pepper were being illegally exported to Guinea and sheep, goats, cigarettes, rice, and “cooking ingredients” were coming in across the border. This attention to such seemingly insignificant contraband reflects larger issues surrounding the ways in which border communities experience trade and conflict across national boundaries. A police report listed five possible conflict drivers in the border trade situation between Sierra Leone and Guinea:

1. High taxation by Guinean border securities and Local Authorities
2. Guineans determine the price of all goods entering their country to the detriment of the producers from Sierra Leone
3. Guineans do not allow Sierra Leoneans to fish and put canoe [sic] in the River Meli which serves as boundary between Guinea and Sierra Leone
4. Guineans demand for Immigration documents is to extort money from Sierra Leoneans on trivial issues – Passport ID CARD.
5. Guineans maintain that they own part of Kono District and not the Meli River.

Special Branch comments that followed: “Government and all security Agencies and other Stake Holders should address these issues without delay, otherwise ex-combatants at the border will intend to react violently if Guineans continue to violate protocols.”⁶⁷

Beyond arms trafficking or the movement of smugglers across borders, local police are becoming very focused on maintaining peace in their areas. Ex-combatants are seen as a volatile force, and disputes over land ownership in border villages, excessive taxation, and arguments over fishing rights are

seen to have the potential to cause violence outbreaks. On the other hand, “community policing” is coming into vogue, and an interview at the Kono Police Station with the LUC (Local Unit Commander) and Community Policing Board members revealed a desire to involve these same “civilian” ex-combatants more in monitoring security where the police are understaffed.

Interview: Community Policing, Kono, 29 October 2004.

Community Policing Board Member (CPBM): We hope to do something about security. Since the police personnel are very few, and cannot effectively police these areas, we have decided to recruit civilians who will be trained and will work with the police and under supervision of the police, so they will not take the law into their own hands. But the people we want to use are not just ordinary people. During the civil war, we had these Civil Defence Forces. These people are now resident in areas they came from originally. These are the people who used those porous areas as bypasses to dodge the enemy forces. They know about the porous areas. Those who are resident in these areas, they know the places, so they are going to cover these places more effectively than sending people from elsewhere who don't know as much.

Q: Will they be armed in any way, and what is their incentive for participating?

CPBM: No arms at all. We will not give them weapons, with this arms collection thing going on. What they are going to do will be lawful. We have suggested that we have customs, so that when they collect, if people are made to pay dues, it will be agreed upon that something from the dues will be given to these people as some inducement so that they can do their job contentedly. We are working on this now. It is not yet confirmed.

LUC: People can come to the nearest police station and report things. Our relationship with those communities is quite good. We get information in.

CPBM: People used to be afraid to report information. Now we are sensitising people, the police force is a different thing now, they are looking after the community and the community information can

make police more effective. We have a very progressive chief here. He is very unique. He thought of an idea that we should organise a road walk, every Saturday. This would involve everybody in the community, no exceptions. Women, men, old and young, whatever. This should be between the civilians, the police and the army. How can we differentiate ourselves and get the combination of three sets of people? The police should wear white T-shirts and their blue trousers. The army should wear white T-shirts and their fatigue trousers. Civilians should wear white T-shirts and their own trousers. We would start at 7 in the morning, walk a distance, and then return to a point where we could all be together. Policemen, civilians, soldiers, conversing together. You just converse leisurely as you cover the distance. Everybody will be mixing, the stiffness will go away and information sharing will take place as people become familiar with each other. In the end, the physical exercise will be good for everyone's health, and then people mix, break barriers, the lowest man can talk to the highest person. In the end, if someone out there gets vital information to pass over, he won't be afraid to come to the LUC or any authority at all.

Contraband trade in goods like palm oil and cigarettes, along with border disputes, are a long-term threat to peace. In the traditional sense of spurring conflict, it is true that ex-combatants could be inflamed to violence by Guinean border officials' continuous needling on issues of fishing rights and taxation. They could also collaborate with police to make the borders safer. More important is the bigger picture of how a lack of roads and infrastructure isolate border towns and villages economically from markets in their own country. An NGO director who works with youth and comes from an area close to the Guinean border indicated that roads are the most important step towards sustaining peace:

The first thing to look at now is the roads. This is an agricultural area—if you think these people should survive and not have another war, build roads and allow people to sell their goods. Not sell too cheaply to Guineans who can afford to get to them, but sell at fair prices to their fellow Sierra Leoneans. Freetown is not Sierra Leone. It is fed by the provinces. Every two weeks I go to my village and the roads are so bad, I feel terrible. There are no good vehicles. This is the breadbasket, but we are not supporting it. Shelter is also a big issue. Eight feet of zinc roofing costs LE450,000. You can use plastic sheeting, but in the rainy season it leaks and in the dry season it is too hot. The greatest challenge to peace is making life easier in a basic way for people who make a living sustaining themselves in agriculture.⁶⁸