

WAR, CONFLICT AND ORGANISED CRIME

**Sierra Leone Country
Presentation**

22-23 March 2005

SAIIA

Background

- Population of 4.9 million
- Borders on Guinea and Liberia
- 958 km of land borders and 402 km of coastline in unstable region
- 44% of inhabitants under 14 years
- 80% of population live under \$1 per day
- Rich mineral resources e.g. diamonds,
- Civil war from 1991- 20 000 killed, 50% displaced and 80% of infrastructure destroyed.

History of conflict in Sierra Leone

- 1961- Smooth transition to independence
- Economy in 'foreign' hands- British, multinationals companies and Lebanese
- (1% of population owned all most productive sectors of economy).
- 1967- Siaka Stevens (APC) won election- ousted by military coup.
- Stevens reinstated by coup in 1968.
- 1978- SL- one party state- opposition SLPP drawn into government.

History of conflict in SL

- 1987- Foday Sankoh (RUF) and others received training in Libya.
- 1985- Stevens handed power to Joseph Momoh.
- 1989- IMF structural adjustment programme.
- 1991- RUF & Liberia & Burkina Faso mercenaries launched attacks into SL (backed by Charles Taylor)
- Forcible recruitment of civilians- mainly children.
- 1991- NPRC under Valentine Strasser stages coup & recruited EO .
- 1996- NPRC held elections- Ahmed Kabbah won.

History of Conflict in SL

- 1997- RUF & SL army officers (AFRC) ousted Kabbah.
- UN imposed travel, economic and military sanctions amended in 1998 to exclude government.
- 1998- ECOWAS troops reinstalled Kabbah.
- 1999- RUF/AFRC raided Freetown.
- 1999- Lome Peace Accord- Sankoh - VP/S Minerals
- 2000- UNAMSIL
- RUF did not abide by terms of accord.
- 2001- UNAMSIL (17500 troops)- Special court.

OC IN COLONIAL ERA

- OC predates civil war in Sierra Leone-alluvial diamond deposits and increased demand after WWII.
- 1950S- Diamond rush- illicit miners selling to Lebanese and Madingo traders. 10% farmers migrated.
- Large armed groups raided SLST (corporate monopoly) areas.
- Higher prices available in Liberia due to lower taxes.
- Illicit mining - 50% of production. Alluvial Diamond Scheme introduced.

OC IN 1960s

- SL government reduced taxes on value of diamonds to 7.5%. SL export revenue for diamonds \$ 212 million.
- Diamond smuggling and contraband trading viable-Liberia maintained USD as currency.
- Low inflation
- Member of West African Currency Board-foreign currency available- no black market.

OC in 1970s-1980s

- State bought and marketed agricultural products-paid low prices to farmers. No credit and transport systems phased out by 1970s- urbanisation and migration to diamond mining.
- 1968- Stevens era- Kleptocracy and political repression. Corruption, patronage and nepotism institutionalised.
- Allied with 5 powerful Lebanese businessmen (Jamil Mohamed).
- Stevens nationalised mines (NDMC).
- Mohamed- NTC- marketing rights for 87 commodities.

OC in 1970-1980

- Official diamond exports dropped to \$ 9 million.
- Youth recruited by APC- drawn from 'potes' (drugs).
- Price controls and artificial exchange rate for foreign currency- black market grew and smuggling increased to Liberia etc.
- Government used proceeds of illicit sale of diamonds to buy fuel and sold them on black market (ML).
- Economy- informal and progressively dominated by criminal networks.
- Legitimate companies undercut by OC groups (capital flight).
- Beneficiaries- Lebanese (Funds to Lebanese war)
- Marketed diamonds- price cartel.

OC during civil war

- Large-scale industries closed due to rebel invasion.
- Looting & war-related trade increased.
- Hard drugs -available in Africa and used to recruit and control combatants in SL.
- Internal displacement - urbanisation and crime in Freetown -increased cross-border smuggling because of disruption of markets.
- Core group of mercenaries involved in fighting and OC activity in region.

OC during civil war

- **Weapons**
- RUF- weapons from EE through private brokers & air companies- Libya, Liberia and BF provided end-user certificates.
- Acquired weapons from SLA, ECOMOG and UNAMSIL.
- **Diamonds**
- TRC - RUF acquired control of diamonds in 1996-7.
- Commanders supervised mining. Profits diverted.
- Bah & Lebanese traders (Nassour)- Liberia-Antwerp.

OC during civil war

- **Drugs (cocaine, crack, heroin)**
- AFRC -recruited youth with drugs.
- RUF used drugs to control troops (80% of RUF addicted to drugs).
- Freetown invasion- AFRC/RUF -looted Drug Control Centre's offices.
- **Human Trafficking**
- RUF & Kamajors abducted civilians- combatants, menial labour or sex slaves.
- Parents sold children to Lebanese.

OC in post-conflict SL

- **Diamond smuggling**
- Kimberley process, Community Diamond Fund
- Mine inspectors under-resourced, corruption.
- Diamond fund- corruption among traditional chiefs.
- Illicit trade continues- Guinea, Liberia, Gambia & BF- Israel or Belgium.
- Crime networks: Lebanese, Senegalese, Nigerian, Malian & Italian. ML (no legislation- exchange biureaus)
- Politicians use fronts to mine diamonds (MME TRC).
- Options- marketing monopoly, mining monopoly , credit schemes.

OC in post-conflict SL

- **Drugs**
- Use of drugs increased. Sold in 'potes'- "Baron" distributes to smaller dealers.
- Senior govt officials & police linked to 'drug barons'.
- Transit route for drugs - Europe- land and air borders- powdered milk, videos, stationery, diplomatic pouches.
- Juvenile delinquency- 400 clubs & gangs- petty crime.
- National Drug Commission- updating legislation.

OC in post-conflict SL

- **Commodity smuggling**
- Rice, coffee, cocoa- Guinea, Liberia
- Informal traders and OC- Mano River
- Fish- MRU- 90% fish- Russia, Spain- corrupt officials.
- **Counterfeit goods**
- Cigarettes, cola, used car parts (Germany)-
- Counterfeit dollars and Leones (LE 10,000)- Nigerian & Liberian networks.
- Black market foreign exchange - Central Bank-
currency shortages

OC in post-conflict SL

- **Customs fraud**
- Exploits differential tariffs
- Round tripping, undervaluation (ACC)
- **AFF scams- Nigerian/Liberian**
- Counterfeit diamonds
- AFF letters, customs fees
- Black dollar
- **Human Trafficking**
- Children to Europe & Asia- No legislation.

OC during post-conflict SL

- **Expired medicines**
- Dumping of medicines in SL
- 4000 pharmacies
- Theft of medicine from state facilities- exported to Europe.
- **Armed robberies**
- Increase in Freetown- armed- ex-combatants.
- Chinese
- Specialised unit
- Lower due to firearm control.

Conclusion

- Extensive reconstruction- police, judiciary
- Independent institutions- ACC
- Extensive donor commitment & support
- Build capacity- professionals
- International efforts focusing on region-
coordination