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Paper No. 2 of 12

October 2008

Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007

Governance and Security Sector Reform

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The working paper series on Sierra Leone is part of the research programme 'Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007'. These working papers present perspectives from both Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom regarding the implementation of activities broadly defined as security sector reform (SSR) in the period towards the end of and following the Sierra Leone war.

Following a core narrative constructed around four key events in the history of post-war Sierra Leone, starting in the mid-1990s and finishing with the successful General Elections of 2007, the work draws on a range of experiences from the process that may be used to inform future SSR policy and implementation. The final output of this research is a book documenting the security system transformation activities in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007.

This series is both an intermediate stage and an important output in itself. All papers were written by Sierra Leonean and British participants in security system transformation activities. The philosophy of the series is to edit as little as possible so that the views and opinions of the individuals are expressed, as much as possible, in their own words. As such, while the papers vary considerably in style and length, they provide a unique, collective insight into the Sierra Leone security system transformation process.

Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht

Background

Upon achieving independence in 1961, Sierra Leone inherited from the British colonial administration public administration institutions that delivered generally effective services, including maintenance of law and order. However, by the early 1970s, service performance had declined; public institutions were weak and poor governance prevailed. In particular, the decision in 1972 to dissolve the District Councils, which had provided popular representation through direct elections, heralded the over-centralisation of power and resources in the capital city of Freetown. This situation undermined the institution of local government and deprived the rural population of participation in the political decision making process at district and chiefdom levels. The judiciary also went through an integrity crisis and was characterised by poor administration of justice.

The rebel war, which started in 1991, aggravated the situation and resulted in destruction of the country's social, economic and physical infrastructure. The country went through many difficulties and challenges in the succeeding years. A military government held power from April 1992 until March 1996, when it was replaced by the democratically-elected government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. In February 1997, a National Strategy for Good Governance and Public Service Reform was prepared by three national consultants with funding from the Overseas Development Administration (ODA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Among other things, the strategy recognised that if democratic governance was to be effective, there was an urgent need for reform of the entire criminal justice sector, including police, judiciary and prison systems. It also identified the need to reduce the size of the armed forces to a lean, manageable, loyal, efficient and disciplined unit; provide adequate training for the armed forces to protect life, property and the integrity of the state and improve military/civilian relations.

In May 1997, there was yet another military coup which ousted Kabbah's government. The country experienced a reign of terror by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) until February 1998, when a sub-regional intervention force of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) forcibly removed it from power. The civil war raged on, causing untold hardship and misery for the people of Sierra Leone.

Following the restoration of relative stability in the country with assistance from a United Nations peacekeeping force (UNAMSIL), the government declared in February 2002 that peace had been achieved. At the time of UNAMSIL's departure in December 2005, the government's authority had been re-established and public sector institutions were functioning again, albeit with severe capacity and structural constraints. A Governance and Civil Service Reform Programme is now in place. Its objective is to rebuild the Government of Sierra Leone's capacity to provide services and enhance the welfare of its citizens by implementing a number of key public service reform programmes through the Governance Reform Secretariat.

The Public Sector institutional Environment

Public sector governance in Sierra Leone is saddled with various problems, including cumbersome and outdated procedures; obsolete regulations which are mostly ignored; a paucity of skilled managerial, professional and technical personnel; woefully inadequate civil service incentive systems resulting in poor performance, brain drain and absence of a serious work ethic; weak accountability and transparency; haphazard, unsystematic and uncoordinated human resource development; an unnecessarily bloated civil service, especially at lower levels; unavailability and/or inaccessibility of physical resources; financial constraints; lack of accurate and accessible personnel information; and low morale, lax discipline and sporadic attendance.

In October 1998, the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DfID) funded a diagnostic study, undertaken by Keith Bastin and Peter Edmond, of the civil service in Sierra Leone. The erstwhile Ministry of Internal Affairs and Local Administration was one of the ministries selected for the study. At that time, the Ministry had oversight over police, prison, fire and immigration services. However, there was lack of capacity within the Ministry to provide analytical advice to the Minister on policy and technical issues. The Commonwealth Police Development Task Force had proposed that a Police Department be set up in the Ministry to provide effective police services advice to the Minister. The consultants undertaking the diagnostic study discussed the proposal

with the Permanent Secretary, who not only supported the idea, but further proposed the establishment of a police policy secretariat in the Ministry. Out of a total of fourteen ministry reviews to date, the security sector-related ministries that have been reviewed are Defence (2003) and Internal Affairs (2007).

As individual management and functional reviews progressed in key ministries, weaknesses were identified in the overall government policy-making and implementation machinery that contributed to lack of a comprehensive and coherent strategic direction across the architecture of ministry structures. The joint Government/ Donor Task Force on Capacity Building reviewed the entire structure of government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and recommended where rationalisation, amalgamation, transfer of responsibilities or other management models, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), would support more effective reform implementation.

In early 2006, a horizontal review (HzR) was conducted to identify an appropriate government-wide structure that would facilitate the functions and mandates that enable public administration to effectively perform the necessary core functions of government. The study revealed a high level of overlap in both functions and statutory frameworks across ministries and commissions. It also identified statutory overlaps between the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the area of national security intelligence. The report, which recommended blueprint structures for both the general architecture of government as well as for individual ministries, is still awaiting submission to the Steering Committee on Good Governance.

Civil Service and Governance Reform Impact on the Security Sector

It has been acknowledged in various reports, including the Governance and Corruption Survey of 2002, the Sierra Leone Vision 2025 and the PRSP, that there can be no meaningful and sustainable development in Sierra Leone without adequate security. Equally so, it is accepted that peace can only be sustained if public institutions are reformed to make them responsive to the needs of the people, particularly by reducing poverty and improving the level of human development. In the threat analysis contained in the 2005 Sierra Leone Security Sector Review Report, some of the threats identified relate to the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. They include bad governance, corruption, lack of effective implementation and monitoring of government policies, an over-centralised political and administrative system, ill-equipped and poorly paid security forces and institutions and poor service conditions.

Considerable work has been undertaken through the Governance and Civil Service Reform Programme (GCSRP) to create a lean, efficient and performance-oriented civil service that provides effective service delivery. The joint Government/DfID Annual Review of the GCSRP, conducted in May 2006, assessed the programme as having registered significant progress in terms of technical preparation for the reconstruction and reform of the public service in Sierra Leone. The following initiatives are geared towards addressing capacity issues that will make the state administration function effectively:

- A diagnostic study of the Architecture of Government of Sierra Leone (a horizontal review across ministries).
- Management and Functional Reviews (MFRs) of fourteen ministries.
- Ongoing work to create a Human Resource Management Office (HRMO).
- Strengthening of the Cabinet Secretariat.
- Introduction of new regulations and rules and a Civil Service Code.
- A Records Management Improvement Programme (RMIP) has already completed the reconciliation of personnel records to Staff Pin Codes (used for the payroll) in the Establishment Secretary's Office (ESO) and the Ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture. It is now reviewing and strengthening personnel files and linking them to payroll verification.
- Development of a Training Policy and implementation plan, approved by the Cabinet in April 2007.
- Resuscitation of the Civil Service Training College (CSTC) and the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM).
- Design of a comprehensive pay and grading strategy and a public sector pay policy framework approved by the Cabinet in January 2007.

- Development of a draft Public Sector Reform Strategy, now awaiting consideration by the Steering Committee on Good Governance (SCGG) for onward transmission to the Cabinet.
- A Selected Market Salary Survey, conducted in February 2006.

The expected outcomes of these reform initiatives are:

- Strengthened national, regional and provincial institutional framework.
- Improved co-ordination, resource mobilisation, delivery and monitoring of the PRS programme and strategic development of Sierra Leone.
- Senior managerial capacity for policy formulation, systems design, implementation and support for decentralised service delivery.
- An improved institutional environment capable of retaining capacity and nurturing communication, cross-fertilisation and policy development initiatives.

It is pertinent to mention that while some achievements have been realised, progress has been slow in implementing the overall vision for civil service reform. While the need for attitudinal change is still evident, the problem of the government's inability to pay living wages continues to act as a demotivating factor and a disincentive to attracting the right types of skills into the Civil Service. The problem is compounded by the existence of Project Implementation Units (PIUs) staffed by contract personnel whose remuneration is more attractive than that of other civil servants. This disparity in remuneration packages creates resentment among civil servants who are expected to work with and understudy the contract personnel; very little transfer of skills is taking place between the two groups.

In 2003, the government decided to tackle this problem by restructuring public service management levels to create a Senior Executive Service (SES). The SES would consist of highly competent senior civil servants selected on a transparent basis through a competitive assessment process. They would initiate, sustain and manage proactive public sector changes, promote reform efforts and enhance the strategic output of government. The SES would consist of civil service grades 11-14, which would receive enhanced salary and other types of reward linked to performance. The complete pay package incorporating

allowances and monetising all forms of services and "in kind" payments would be extended to the rest of the public service. Key issues pertaining to the SES are now being discussed, including the abolition of dual hierarchies, integration of senior management posts in ministries into a single management structure and the integration of PIU or contract officer posts in ministries into the Civil Service.

Specific Reforms in Security Sector-Related Ministries

Ministry Of Defence

Through a bilateral agreement between the Governments of Sierra Leone and the UK to train the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) and reorganise the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the MoD was established in January 2002 as a joint civilian/military institution. According to its Mission Statement, its goal is "[t]o formulate, implement, monitor and evaluate strategic defence policy for the new Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces that is effective and fostered within the framework of democratic government". In October/November 2003, a joint team of Sierra Leonean and UK consultants carried out a management and functional review of the organisation, structures and processes of the MoD. The recommendations contained in the report were approved by the Cabinet in September 2004; implementation is ongoing. Key recommendations that impact the security sector include:

- The Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991 should be amended to provide for a single Joint Force Command; the Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces Act of 1961 (the country's primary defence sector legislation) should be reviewed, consolidated and updated to meet present day requirements.
- MoD development of a personnel policy that covers civilian staff.
- Development of an annual management plan setting out key MoD objectives, priorities and resource inputs, as well as timescales and assigned responsibilities for delivery of specific activities.
- Budgetary structures should be reviewed to indicate proposed expenditures within each directorate. In addition, processes should be put in place to scrutinise, review and propose needs and priorities, as well as procedures to monitor and manage activity or programme performance against budget.

- The internal audit process should be strengthened.
- The procurement process should be reviewed in order to simplify and reduce current time-consuming procedures and create a more manageable system.
- The present MoD committee structure should be reviewed and guidelines established for future committee operations.
- An appraisal reporting system should be introduced at the earliest opportunity.
- The Establishment Secretary's Office should undertake an evaluation of senior civilian posts to assess and determine the appropriate grading for the positions in question.

Although the report acknowledged that the mix of military and civilian staff operating together with common goals epitomizes the new working relationship in Sierra Leone's defence sector, it also pointed out two areas of concern. The first is the heavy reliance on the expertise and support provided by the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) set up by the UK in 2001; the second concerns the wide disparities existing between civilian and military staff in terms of grading and remuneration.

In the area of communications, the report recommended that links between military and civil society organisations should be re-activated in order to improve mutual understanding and increase public trust.

Concerning accommodation and material resources, the MoD is comparatively better accommodated and better resourced than other MDAs; morale seems to be slightly higher among its staff. There is a general feeling that MoD reforms have been more successful than those of other MDAs.

Ministry of Internal Affairs

A management and functional review of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) was carried out in September/October 2006. This Ministry is classified as one of the key ministries in Sierra Leone, primarily because of its strategic oversight of agencies involved in the maintenance of internal safety and security. (The Ministry is responsible for the Sierra Leone Police, Prisons Department, Immigration Department, National Fire Fighting Force and the National Registration Secretariat.) As stated in the review report "[s]uccessive changes in structure and allocation of responsibilities to outside agencies have given rise to a strengthening of these institutions' autonomy, whilst inadvertently undermining the relevance of the central role of the MIA". It further states "[i]t could be said that the significant development of agencies such as the Police negates the need for the MIA to continue in its present form. However, there is need for a permanent civil regulatory framework and a means of providing adequate political oversight." A number of measures were recommended to revitalize the MIA to enable it to fulfil the role of strategic coordination of the sector. Some of the key recommendations include:

- Strengthening the Senior Management team as a priority.
- Revising and updating the statutory framework governing MIA operations and making them relevant to the present day.
- Revising of functions and organisational structures.
- Clarifying MIA's relationship with its partner security and safety institutions
- Using the new Policy Development and Strategic Planning Directorate to lead the MIA in its planning and budget prioritization processes.
- Revamping relationship management processes with stakeholders and the public.
- Ceding the decentralized functions of the Ministry to other appropriate agencies or institutions.
- Review of existing staff inventory and staffing arrangements.
- Strengthening human resource management functions and revamping records and information management.
- Identifying priority equipment needs.
- Creating institutional arrangements for managing change and change processes.

Whilst these recommendations were awaiting consideration by the Steering Committee on Good Governance (SCGG) and Cabinet, the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary Elections established a new government under the leadership of H.E. Ernest Bai Koroma. Subsequently, the configuration of MDAs has witnessed a transformation involving, *inter alia*, the merging of the MIA with the erstwhile local government ministry to a new Ministry of Internal Affairs and Rural Development. The new ministry is still responsible for the aforementioned security agencies; as a supervising

ministry it still has the statutory authority to fulfil its mandate effectively. However, as stated in the review report, the present role of the Office of National Security vis-à-vis the Ministry regarding security coordination is not clear and the ministry appears to be marginalised. It has been recommended that the Ministry and the various institutions under its aegis should work collaboratively in defining their respective roles and responsibilities to facilitate effective coordination of security directives and policies. The boundaries of the Ministry's oversight responsibility should also be clearly defined.

Concerning the MIA's relationship with other MDAs, it has been recommended that a core Directorate should be developed to act as a liaison with security agencies. The Ministry should not only be able to coordinate and integrate national responses to riots, disasters, drug trafficking and other security threats; it should also be able to influence and determine the appropriateness of security and safety policy and activity. In 2008, the GRS will conduct an institutional appraisal of the newly-combined Ministry of Internal Affairs-Local Government and Rural Development to ensure efficient and effective transition and development of organisational structures which support the combined mandate. Within the security sector's national strategic policy framework, the combined Ministry of Internal Affairs-Local Government and Rural Development will take the lead in thwarting one of the threats to good governance, i.e., the existence of an over-centralised political/administrative system in order to pursue the national vision of a decentralised public and local government administrative system. The Ministry will also partner with other MDAs to establish the national vision for strong political will, effective border security, a safe and secure environment, efficient justice system and well-trained, well-equipped and highly motivated security forces.

One issue also worth noting is that with the enactment of the Local Government Act of 2004, District Offices have been closed and their functions transferred to Local Councils and the Provincial Secretary's Office at regional headquarters. One of the functions transferred to the Provincial Secretary's Office is supervision and monitoring of Chiefdom Councils, including appointing and training chiefdom police, resolving disputes, and maintaining law and order. During the management and functional review of the erstwhile Ministry of Local Government and

Community Development, conducted in September/October 2004, discussions with local stakeholders revealed concerns that chiefs do not encourage their police to take a professional approach; in many cases, they do not pay them a regular salary. This is not conducive to the promotion of local democracy and the rule of law, and could lead to friction with Local Councils/Councillors. The review report recommended that the Ministry should conduct a study of the chiefdom police and persuade the Government to develop and articulate a clear policy on their role and remove any current uncertainties about their operations. The amalgamation of the two ministries dealing with security and decentralisation provides a unique opportunity for this issue to be examined in depth.

The Impact of Reform on the Security Sector

It is mentioned elsewhere in this paper that some of the security threats identified are connected with the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The ongoing reform initiatives will help to thwart those threats. Implementation of the recommendations of the Management and Functional Reviews will result in rationalised structures, procedures and staffing in MDAs, including those of the security sector. The new Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) has begun to introduce improved Human Resource Management policies, practices and institutional arrangements that will build civil management capacity and increase performance efficiency and effectiveness. Pay reform will respond to compensation issues and poor service conditions; implementation of the training policy will promote manpower planning, development and utilisation in a coordinated and cost effective manner. Capacity-building within the Civil Service Training College (CSTC) and the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) will promote staff development and training for civil servants. The Records Management Improvement Programme (RMIP) has already introduced a modern records management system in the HRMO and three other Ministries (Health, Education and Agriculture), which will be extended to other MDAs. All of this will strengthen the capacity of a civilian-led security sector that supports the national vision for a safe and enabling environment that fosters peace and development.

Footnotes

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The Sierra Leone Working Paper Series

1　Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P. (2008) *Issues and Themes of the Sierra Leone Security System Transformation Process, 1997-2007.*

2　Coker, E. B. O. (2008) *Governance and Security Sector Reform.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

3　Major General Alfred Nelson-Williams. (2008) *Restructuring the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF).* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

4　White, M. (2008) *The Security and Development Nexus: A Case Study of Sierra Leone 2004-2006.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

5　Gaeta, A. (2008) *Operation Pebu.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

6　Kondeh, A-H. K. (2008) *Formulating Sierra Leone's Defence White Paper.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

7　Howlett-Bolton, A. C. (2008) *Aiming for Holistic Approaches to Justice Sector Development.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

8　Fakondo, K. (2008) Reforming and Building Capacity of the Sierra Leone Police, 1997-2007. (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

9　Brigadier General (Ret) Conteh, K. H. (2008) *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone and the Role of the Office of National Security.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

10　Ashington-Pickett, r. (2008) *National Security and Intelligence Reform in Sierra Leone - 2000-2003.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

11　Brigadier Le Grys, B. J. (2008) *United Kingdom (UK) Military Intervention and Progress in Sierra Leone 2001-2006.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)

12　Hanson-Alp, R. (2008) *Civil Society's Role in Sierra Leone's Security Sector Reform Process Experiences from Conciliation Resources' West Africa Programme.* (ed Jackson, P. and Albrecht, P.)