

Sierra Leone: Promoting peace or prolonging violence? The duality of the UN Peacekeeping

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Abstract . *Based on different mechanisms of intervention deployed by the United Nations to intra-state conflicts – peace enforcement, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding – it is possible to assume that, in specific cases, the role of the UN in the field contributed to perpetuate the levels of the violence. Such elucidative argument is justified in accordance to the analysis provided in both missions promoted by the institution in Sierra Leone – the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone, UNOMSIL (1998-1999); and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL (1999-2005). To discuss this argument and substantiate it, this research was divided into two parts: a critical analysis of both UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL. In each peacekeeping mission, the research focused on a chronological analysis based on the documents published by the both UN missions, such as reports, statements and letters regarding their security, humanitarian, political and economic issues. This division is necessary to understand not only the role of the UN in the field, but how this same international system can influence and also be considered responsible for maintaining and prolonging violent conflicts, while its mission is to promote a world peace.*

Keywords: *Armed Conflict, Peace, Sierra Leone, UN Peacekeeping, Violence.*

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Introduction

Based on the different mechanisms provided by the United Nations (UN) to intervene in post-armed conflict countries, such as *peace enforcement*, *peacemaking*, *peacekeeping* and *peacebuilding*, it can be argued that at different times the UN, more precisely in the case of Sierra Leone, as well as promoted a negative peace as prolonged and worsened the already existing structural violence in that country. The analysis of these dynamics is developed in this paper. Given the existence of a concomitant relationship between agent and structure, it is possible to identify each of these elements to, subsequently, analyze their interaction. The structure in analysis is the armed conflict in Sierra Leone. The agents identified in this process are the Government of Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the UN, the governments of Liberia and Guinea, humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as civilians, mainly refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and others actors. However, the UN Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO) is the core of this analysis, identifying the worsening of the armed conflict and weak points of its intervention from four issues of concern: security, humanitarian, political and economic. The analysis is provided into two parts: the first one focus on the role of the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone – UNOMSIL (1998-1999); and the second on the role of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone – UNAMSIL (1999-2005). The division proposed in this analysis aims to point out how violence was prolonged faced the dynamics between all actors involved in the process of ending the war and, consequently, promoting peace. I also argue that identifying where the UN contributed to the perpetuation of the violence is not an easy task, considering that its practice and its existence, in this analysis, are in between the lines.

UNOMSIL: an observer for peace

The United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was the first peacekeeping operation authorized by the UN on 13 July 1998, according to resolution 1181 (UN, 1998a), and remained in the country until 22 October 1999, by resolution 1245 (UN 1999a). This operation was deployed as an observer character seven years after the outbreak of armed conflict in which RUF rebels were against the national government. At the time it was authorized, the security, humanitarian, political and economic structures were completely in collapse. During the period UNOMSIL was in Sierra Leone, it was supported by 210 military observers and 35 doctors and had a financial contribution of US\$ 53.6 million (UN, 1998a). Its objectives only highlighted the monitoring of military and security situations in the country; disarmament and demobilization of combatants; the guarantee of international humanitarian law and the voluntary disarmament of members of the Civil Defense Force – CDF (UN, 1998a).

Even the UN had established those objectives, the institution was interested in making the national government the main agent responsible for the implementation of a peace

process. A statement issued by the Security Council (SC) reiterated this reasoning at-testing that “a peaceful and lasting solution to the conflict in Sierra Leone remains the responsibility of the Government and people of Sierra Leone” (UN, 1999b: 2). This institutional quotation not only reminded how the UN became distant of getting involved in a peace process as, at the same time, emphasized that few UN observers which were in Sierra Leone before the deployment of the UNOMSIL warned the institution to deploy a peacekeeping mission as soon as it was possible.

Security structure

The deployment of the UNOMSIL in Sierra Leone had not provided any improvements in the country’s security structure. Throughout the designated period for this peace operation, Sierra Leone witnessed several levels of violence, further accentuating its condition of being labeled as a threat to international peace and security (UN, 1997). Actions taken by the UNOMSIL were punctual and they did not indicate a commitment to intervene directly in the armed conflict. Just after the authorization of UNOMSIL, Sierra Leone had increased the number of the attacks provided by the rebel forces, such as destruction of villages, torture, mutilations and executions of civilians (UN, 1998b; UN, 1998c). The consequence of these hostilities was a reduction in the number of the representatives of diplomatic missions in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone. At that time, the United Kingdom embassy planned the evacuation of its staff and other civilians (UN, 1999c), emphasizing that the security situation in Sierra Leone was becoming more deteriorated (UN, 1998b).

In this scenario, the work carried out by the UNOMSIL – and also by the forces of the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) – was a permanent challenge in promoting a ceasefire between the parties and, consequently, to achieve other mission’s objectives. The types of assistance regarding the security issue were demonstrated by supporting ECOMOG and training the Sierra Leone Army (UN, 1999d). While the UN was working in order to achieve and to strengthen the role of the ECOMOG as an institution capable of diminishing the hostilities in Sierra Leone, hardly the UNOMSIL was becoming involved in the process of promoting a direct intervention in the country. First, because ECOMOG was responsible for protecting the UN personnel and humanitarian agencies’ staff, as established in its mandate (UN 1998b). Second, because the external financial supports strengthened the role of the ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, such as the financial support of 1 million pounds provided by the UK to both the Government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG forces (UN, 1999c) and, thirdly, because the governments of Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Niger provided military support in sending troops to act in partnership with ECOMOG (UN, 1998b).

All these factors, when combined, influenced the UN in its decision-make to maintain the observer character of the UNOMSIL. The evidence of a constant direct violence in

the country and the fragility of the ECOMOG to provide security highlighted that peace promotion strategies undertaken in Sierra Leone were not the most effective ones. It was necessary to promote a 'change for better' in the scope of the UN intervention in order to reverse the level of the violence in Sierra Leone, although it was recognized that UNOMSIL should intervene directly in the armed conflict in order to facilitate dialogue between the Government and the rebels; to help reactivate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; support initiatives for the reconstitution of a national army and reform the national police; and monitor the situation of human rights (UN, 1999c). However, the situation became worse. In January 1999, rebels attacked Freetown and the country's eastern region (UN, 1999d). This confrontation resulted in the death of 3 to 5 thousand people, including rebels, and also ECOMOG's soldiers and CDF's members who were protecting the capital and citizens (UN, 1999d). In this attack, "many civilians were severely mutilated by the rebels. Up to 150,000 people were displaced in and around Freetown, and the rebels burnt down large numbers of public building and homes" (UN, 1999d, p. 1).

As the security situation in Freetown became more volatile (UN, 1999d), the UNOMSIL evacuated all its personnel, vehicles and equipment – followed by other UN agencies, government and NGOs – and, consequently, reallocated its personnel with a reduction in the number of staff (UN, 1999d). In an attempt to provide 'a change for better' in the intervention in Sierra Leone and recognizing that it would be necessary to work effectively, the UNOMSIL expanded its responsibilities. It were included: a) the strengthening and expansion of the contacts with the troops of the RUF which were established by the UNOMSIL; b) the extension of the monitoring of the ceasefire to other geographical areas; c) to assist the *Ceasefire Monitoring Committees* and the *Joint Monitoring Committee* regarding the maintenance of the ceasefire; d) monitoring the military and security situations; e) assistance and monitoring of disarmament and demobilization of combatants in areas where security should be provided; f) the operation in conjunction with humanitarian organizations and exchange of information regarding security conditions to allow access for humanitarian assistance; g) acting in conjunction with human rights agencies; h) the constant action in partnership with ECOMOG; and i) the elaboration of plans to send neutral peacekeepers troops (UN, 1999e).

The Security Council decision in creating the UNOMSIL and, consequently, in expanding its objectives, was well accepted by the Government and people of Sierra Leone (UN 1999f). Adding more functions on the mission scope did not represent any improvement in the security issue, but an adaptation of the UN faced the security challenges in the ground (UN, 1999f). The cessation of hostilities was considered a first step in the peace process in Sierra Leone, which was marked by the end of direct attacks. However, this process had become increasingly difficult to be achieved because the UNOMSIL was dependent on the military results obtained by the actions of the national government,

by the forces of the ECOMOG and by the CDF. Despite the limitations of these actions, the UN had deployed the UNOMSIL as a demonstration for both the Government of Sierra Leone and for the local population that the international community was committed to restoring order and peace (UN, 1998c), while recognizing that “the restoration of stability in Sierra Leone will be a long and arduous process and will continue to require military support as well as various other forms of assistance” (p. 16). Therefore, the emergence of the UNOMSIL was already subject to act as a palliative in the process of ending the armed conflict, once their objectives did not match with the promotion of a direct intervention to end hostilities.

Humanitarian structure

To put an end to the hostilities between RUF and the Government of Sierra Leone – represented by the end of the military attacks – meant to interfere directly in the reduction of the worsening humanitarian situation in the country. A consequence based on the reduction in the level of hostilities would have, at least, two benefits: first, a decrease in the number of refugees, IDPs and direct violence, such as mutilations and murders; and, second, a guarantee in the access of humanitarian aid supplies to communities affected by the civil war (UN, 1999g). As the security issue was less than it was expected, the humanitarian situation tended to get worse because the financial resources requested by the UN were not sent in its entirety by donor countries. In August 1998, only 5% of the amount of US\$ 20.5 million requested by UNOMSIL had been received (UN, 1998d). This condition would damage further work on the humanitarian improvements.

As mentioned the report, humanitarian organizations continued “to face fundamental questions on the modalities for the delivery of relief assistance in an environment characterized by unpredictable hostilities” (UN, 1998d, p. 10). In September 1998, UNOMSIL received several reports regarding on crimes against humanity (UN 1998b). While UNOMSIL was not able to intervene directly in order to contain the worsening of the humanitarian situation, the mission’s mandate allowed the emergence of a human rights unit to act as a means of coordination and exchange of information in different sectors – public and private ones – regarding the practice and the guarantee of human rights in Sierra Leone (UN, 1998b). Its main task was to promote assistance to the Government of Sierra Leone in order to orient the government regarding its obligations under international treaties on human rights, especially those specified on the Convention on the Rights of the Child¹, as well as acting as a facilitator for the

1 The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 November 1989. Sierra Leone ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child in June 1990 and its two Optional Protocols in September 2001 (on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography) and May 2002 (on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict). These commitments were subsequently enshrined in national legislation through the 2007 Child Rights

restoration of the judicial system in this specific issue of concern (UN, 1998b) and to encourage the leadership of the ECOMOG to sensitize all troops in order to ensure full respect for international humanitarian law. Strengthening the UN position in this issue was maintained in accordance with the results of the ECOMOG regarding the humanitarian issue (UN, 1998b).

The work performed by UNOMSIL, as regards the guarantee of human rights and joint action with other UN agencies, is considered in the scope of this paper a construction of different mechanisms to promote a positive peace. While hostilities became more aggravated in the country, the human potentialities were increasingly likely to be neglected. Similarly, it would be with the work carried out by the UN agencies, which would not be destined to encounter the victimized population. The evidence of this scenario emerges with a constant repetition of humanitarian crises that were taking place in isolated areas of the country (UN, 1998b) as well as cases of malnutrition and deaths from diseases. The World Food Programme (WFP) continued to provide food assistance to vulnerable groups (UN, 1998b), while the World Health Organization (WHO) had confirmed a high number of deaths caused by cholera; and the child mortality rate was increased: 1,800 per 100,000 live births (UN, 1998b). In addition, the Security Council highlighted the work provided by the UN agencies regarding the number of refugees and the demand in this sector to minimize the humanitarian situation in the country (UN, 1999d, 1999g).

Parallel to the actions provided by the UN agencies, the UNOMSIL continued, with limited financial resources, to assist the Government of Sierra Leone and civil society in order to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN, 1998c). In November 1998, the UNOMSIL facilitated a monitoring program on human rights in the country which had a participation of 70 people (UN, 1998c). This program aimed to train multipliers to work throughout Sierra Leone and to develop a work in partnership with the UNOMSIL, which continued to promote a culture on the importance of ensuring human rights (UN, 1999f).

In this regard, the UNOMSIL Office for Human Rights visited Freetown and other cities in the rest of the country to monitor the situation and concluded that “the ultimate responsibility for the fighting, for most of the civilian casualties and for the related humanitarian emergency in Freetown rested with the rebels forces” (UN, 1999d, p. 5). The reason to hold accountable RUF as the main responsible for violations concerning human rights lays on the fact that the rebels have kidnapped several people in Freetown and other cities, especially children, to serve in their bases (UN, 1999d). Notwithstanding, the most interesting in this fact is to analyze rebel forces as the main

Act – which supersedes all other national laws and is considered compatible with the Convention and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

responsible for human rights violations in Sierra Leone (TRC, 2004a) while RUF was a result of human rights violations committed by the Governments of Sierra Leone in a time previous to the civil war which represented a failed state's structure (Hirsch, 2000).

Political and Economic structures

The process of ending the civil war in Sierra Leone was not based only in the restructuring of the security and humanitarian issues, but also in both political and economic ones. Since the beginning of the armed conflict in 1991, Sierra Leone had presented several damages in its politics: either through the extensive political mandates and the consequent violation of human rights or by a constant *coup d'état*. In this way, political instability has become an obstacle to the promotion of peace. Despite the scenario of instability, UNOMSIL also did not intervene in this regard. Some actions had initial support from the UK Government that "has taken the initiative of convening an international contact group on Sierra Leone in London early in November" (UN, 1998b, p. 2). Nevertheless, the responsibility for providing stability in this sector was only the government of Sierra Leone, that "has continued its efforts to consolidate its position, to restore the stability of the country and to improve relations with its neighbors" (UN, 1998c, p. 1).

In an attempt to contain further hostilities, the two presidents – Alhaji Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, from Sierra Leone and Charles Taylor, from Liberia – kept in touch by phone and took the strengthening of relations between the two countries (UN, 1998b). "The two leaders were reported to have agreed to be in regular telephone contact in order to work towards strengthening relations. I welcome this constructive approach" (UN, 1998b, p. 2). The first result of this contact was the resurgence of the *Mano River Union* (MRU)². The three heads of state – Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea – have pledged to ensure, again, compliance with the Agreement on Cooperation and Non-Aggression between these three countries. Therefore, the "three Heads of State agreed to work collectively to restore peace in Sierra Leone and [to] maintain stability in the subregion" (UN, 1998c, p. 3). But negotiations for peacebuilding in Sierra Leone only happen in an effective way if hostilities were ceased. This is what was proposed by the President of Togo, Gnassingbe Eyadema, on 7 January 1999 in a recommendation directed to the president of Sierra Leone, Kabbah (UN, 1999c). As a recommendation, the forces of ECOWAS and ECOMOG worked for peace and this mission existed to support the Government of Sierra Leone in order to put an end to the armed conflict (UN, 1999c).

2 The Mano River Union (MRU) was created in 1973 from an economic cooperation agreement between Liberia and Sierra Leone. In 1980 the Republic of Guinea was admitted as a member, followed by Ivory Coast in 2008. The agreement established an economic base with prospect of promoting peace, amity, freedom and progress between those signatories.

At that time, the Government of Sierra Leone was unable to provide advances on ending hostilities. Consequently, the political sector remained unstable. The country was totally dependent on external intervention because it was not able to manage a peace process independently. As much as UNOMSIL staved off a direct intervention, more the armed conflict got new proportions. In this situation, President Kabbah pressed the UN in order to have more effective resolutions. He asked the Security Council, especially its permanent members, to be pressure on states and individuals who continued to supply the weapons and logistics used to spillover the armed conflict.

President Kabbah stated that it was no longer enough for the Council to condemn the activities of the rebels, but to consider the possibility of taking further action, not excluding the threat of force, against the rebels in order to give effect to the Council's previous demands that the rebels cease all violence and seek genuine dialogue for the restoration of lasting peace and stability in Sierra Leone (UN, 1999d, p. 4).

Kabbah's request, which referred to a more active UN intervention, can be analyzed based on the normative power that the institution sets to a certain structure. But, in contrast, did not result in a structural change. Even the Security Council "condemned" the attacks of the rebel force, its position at different times of the armed conflict in which the SC "demands that the rebels lay down their arms immediately and cease all violence" (UN, 1999g, p. 1), "stresses the importance of dialogue and national reconciliation for the restoration of lasting peace and stability to Sierra Leone", "expresses its concern at the serious humanitarian consequences of the escalating fighting in Sierra Leone" (UN, 1999g, p. 2), "urges all States urgently to provide resources (...) to help maintain an effective peacekeeping presence in Sierra Leone", "expresses its intention to continue to monitor the situation closely, and to consider urgently any further action which may be necessary", "commands, once again, the continued efforts of the Government of Sierra Leone and the ECOMOG (...) and calls for sustained support for ECOMOG from the international community" (UN, 1999b, p. 1) and "[s]tresses the urgent need to promote peace and national reconciliation and to foster accountability and respect for human rights in Sierra Leone" (UN, 1999h, p. 2), did not represent any intention to promote an intervention, but the UN estrangement in establishing and promoting peace, both negative and positive.

The second result obtained with the contact between the three leaders of the *Mano River Union* was the announcement by the Government of Liberia, in which stood out, with the UN, the repatriation of citizens, and offered amnesty to Liberians who were participating in the Sierra Leone civil war (UN, 1999d). Even the UN wanted to abstain from a more direct intervention in Sierra Leone, the political processes among the countries of the *Mano River Union*, had an influence on the institution's performance.

The future of the UNOMSIL – based on the scope of the mission, its mandate and its configuration – depended on two factors: the signing of any peace agreement between the government and RUF and the strengthening of activities performed by ECOMOG (UN, 1999i). The assignment of the Lomé Peace Agreement took place on 18 May 1999 (UN, 1999i) and was considered a milestone in the peace process in Sierra Leone because the parties involved in the armed conflict, especially RUF/AFRC (Armed Forces Revolutionary Council), proposed some conditions and demands to end the violence, such as amnesty for all RUF/AFRC's combatants and the establishment of four years of transitional government (UN, 1999i).

In response to the conditions presented by RUF/AFRC, the Government of Sierra Leone emphasized that the proposed amnesty for all combatants would be examined with the prospect of building a permanent peace, while many violations of human rights were committed against Sierra Leonean citizens (UN, 1999i). Besides that, the "government statement endorsed the importance of the transformation of RUF into a political party and pledged the Government's full support for that process" (UN, 1999i).

The signing of the agreement represented to the UN an opportunity to repair some damage caused by the armed conflict and to be an instrument for the promotion of peace and the establishment of prosperity (UN, 1999f). However, the peace process in Sierra Leone was conceived in being a result based on national effort in partnership with international assistance. The second factor – strengthening the activities of ECOMOG – was uncertain. Since the beginning of its operations in Sierra Leone, the strengthening of ECOMOG was a response faced its vulnerability to the hostilities of the RUF/AFRC's attacks, even then the UN has established that "ECOMOG should remain in Sierra Leone as a stabilizing influence, with a well-defined mandate that would include ensuring the security of vital areas of the country" (UN, 1999i, p. 12). However, the UN recommended the Security Council the deployment of a *United Nations force* that, in joint operation with the military observers from the UNOMSIL, should integrate the new phase of the intervention in Sierra Leone, called the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone – UNAMSIL (UN, 1999f).

UNAMSIL: a peace mission?

The hostilities occurred during the attempts to promote peace in Sierra Leone evidenced the need for direct intervention in the country. It was evident that the objectives proposed by UNOMSIL had to be redesigned and expanded to put an end to these hostilities. The constant weaknesses in security, humanitarian, political and economic issues, as well as the shortcomings of the Government of Sierra Leone, the forces of ECOMOG and the CDF in dealing with the armed conflict, resulted in the emergence of a new UN intervention phase in the country – the United Nations Mission in Sierra

Leone (UNAMSIL). Authorized by the Security Council on 22 October 1999, pursuant to resolution 1270 (UN, 1999j), the UNAMSIL remained in Sierra Leone until 31 December 2005, by resolution 1620 (UN, 2005a), totaling six years of intervention. Different from the first mission, UNAMSIL was more active in Sierra Leone, regarding its amount of military to act in the peace process, its units spread over almost the entire territory of the country, as also its responsibility on ensure the safety of its staff, without excluding the responsibility of the Government of Sierra Leone and ECOMOG to act together in this sector (UN, 1999j).

This second phase of intervention can and should be analyzed as a result of the process of interaction between the different agents of the conflict considering the issues' dynamics analyzed in the first UN observer mission. And the result of this interaction can be seen both in the change provided by the UN regarding its objectives:

- a) cooperate with the Government of Sierra Leone and other parties to the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement; b) assist the Government of Sierra Leone to implement the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration plan (DDR); c) establish a presence in key locations in the territory of Sierra Leone; d) ensure the security and freedom of movement of UN personnel; e) monitor the ceasefire as set out in the Lomé Agreement; f) encourage the parties to create confidence-building mechanisms and provide support for its operation; g) to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance; h) to support the operations of United Nations officials; i) support, when required, the elections (UN, 1999j, pp. 2-3).

At this stage, UNAMSIL achieved some objectives, such as the disarmament of hundreds of ex-combatants, assistance in the presidential elections, support in rebuilding the police force and contributing to the functioning of the government's infrastructure and basic services to the community (UN, 2001a). However, its presence in the field has proved vulnerable to the hostilities in Sierra Leone, where hundreds of peacekeepers were kidnapped in May 2000 (UN, 2000a) and later, when the peace process was influenced by the outbreak of conflict in Liberia (UN, 2000a). These situations had an influence on the Security Council in order to make it authorizes, again, a change in the mission's scope, providing a character of *peace enforcement* on it, regarding the adoption of the Brahimi report by the UN as the strengthening of peace missions.

In addition, it would be essential for the international community to demonstrate the necessary will and resolve to sustain such a commitment to impose peace in Sierra Leone. If such conditions cannot be met, UNAMSIL would unduly raise expectations, increase the risk of loss of life, and undermine the credibility of the Organization. (UN, 2000a, p. 15).

As in the first mission, the analysis of the extension of the armed conflict by the UN will be made from the involvement of UNAMSIL in security, humanitarian, political and

economic issues. The purpose is to identify gaps at different times of the peace process in the second phase, but also to emphasize the progress made by the UN in each of the mentioned sectors and justify the need to maintain the UN presence in Sierra Leone even after the end of the armed conflict in 2002.

Security structure

The security situation that has spread since the beginning of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone can be considered one of the main factors in which the UN's interventions became vulnerable on the ground. The change in the mission's scope did not have an immediate positive impact on the UN's responsibility in promoting the cessation of hostilities. Therefore, the mission continued to work in partnership with ECOMOG's forces to ensure security in the country and to implement the DDR program (UN, 1999j). Gradually, the situation became more hostile, resulting in attacks in October and November 1999 as a result of violations of the cease-fire agreement and abuses of human rights (UN, 1999j). The weakness in the security issue hindered the development of the mission, which became the subject of the RUF attacks such as occurred on 3 January 2000, when 100 fighters tried to attack a UNAMSIL's unit which was responsible for the disarmament program (UN, 2000b).

In this sense, the UN acknowledged that establishing and maintaining security in the country – which was characterized by the removal of the threat from the implementation of the reintegration program of ex-combatants and the promotion of a recovery into the social and economic issues in Sierra Leone – were essential conditions for the success of the peace process. At that time, UNAMSIL assumed gradually more responsibilities in the security issue once peace process was still fragile (UN, 2000b). The first step taken was to assume the responsibility of the ECOMOG based on the increase of the UNAMSIL's field of work (UN, 2000b; 2000c). Although resolution 1289 (UN, 2000c) have increased the number of the UN militaries, hostilities undermined peacekeepers' work, compromising the effectiveness of the mission. The peace process established by peacekeepers suffered several attacks, such as the detention of the UN personnel and the destruction of one area which was available to the DDR program (UN 2000a).

Under these circumstances, the recommendation provided by the UN which was directed to itself was based on the advice of assuming the control in Sierra Leone to, consequently, minimize the hostilities and the differences between the national government and the RUF rebels as also between RUF rebels and the UN peacekeepers. The recommendation proposed by the UN to prevent hostilities were based on the reinforcement of the peace process, regarding the defense of strategic positions, such as at the airport in Lungi and other places in East and West of the country, as well as the increase in the number of peacekeepers, rising to 13.000 military (UN, 2000a). In this sense Pinto (2011) emphasizes that “the lack of adequate preparation of peacekeepers and their

vulnerability to the belligerents (...) expose the weaknesses and inadequacies of the current peacekeeping molds”³.

Fearing that the security situation became more tenuous in establishing a peace process, the UN sent troops to the UNAMSIL in four phases (UN, 2000a) as a strategy to provide necessary actions to monitor the mission and as a result of other actors’ interference in the conflict. The first phase consisted in the presence of the UNAMSIL in strategic locations to the West and East of Sierra Leone and the inclusion of a monitoring unit by the sea, with a foothold in Freetown (UN, 2000a). The second phase depended on the conditions on the ground and it was associated with the activities established by the DDR program. Once it was able, the UNAMSIL would move gradually eastward, depending on a careful analysis of the situation on the ground and ensure safety as the inclusion of former combatants into the society. The third phase was marked by deploying troops in the diamond-producing areas and border areas in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone (UN, 2001b). The last one was marked by a transition of responsibilities, in which UNAMSIL would begin to hand over its security responsibilities to the Government and, gradually, to reduce its strength (UN, 2000a).

The implementation of these phases would require a very strong presence for the maintenance of peace, which should operate on the basis of a clearly defined and implementable mandate with pragmatic deadlines (UN, 2000a). While the reduction of UNAMSIL troops was not held, its actions were committed to strengthening its military power (UN, 2000a). The strengthening could arise through the acquisition of materials that could monitor the area for 24 hours (UN, 2000a), but also other external actors such as the United Kingdom Government’s support, announcing a military assistance package both for the Government of Sierra Leone and for the UNAMSIL, which included the training of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone to work together with the UN peacekeeping (UN, 2000d).

The clashes on the borders of Sierra Leone with Guinea in 2001 intensified hostilities and brought another dimension to the armed conflict: conceived firstly as an intra-state, it passed to the intrastate level, further aggravating the security situation in both countries. In response to the cross-border attacks, Guinean forces intensified shelling and launched helicopter attacks in positions that were supposed points of support of the RUF, causing civilian casualties and increasing the number of IDPs (UN, 2001c). All these events in Sierra Leone highlight the continuing deterioration in the security issue, which hinders the peace process. According to the UN (2002a), two challenges emerged: one, based on the impact of the armed conflict in Liberia on Sierra Leone’s

3 Free translation from the portuguese quote “a falta de preparação adequada dos peacekeepers e a sua vulnerabilidade face aos beligerantes em contextos em que a sua presença não é amplamente aceite, expõe, as fragilidades e a inadequação dos moldes actuais do peacekeeping” (p. 162).

stability remained a source of serious concern. It was inconceivable to contemplate sustained peace in Sierra Leone in an unstable neighborhood.

The second challenge in this process was related to the lack of preparation and lack of capacity of the Sierra Leone's armed forces and civil police in assuming the security issue throughout the country after the end of UNAMSIL (UN, 2002a). As the armed conflict ended in 2002, the UN's concern about the capacity of Sierra Leone in assuming the security in the country was due to the knowledge of the weaknesses regarding this sector by the national government (UN, 2003b). In this sense, was the government of Sierra Leone prepared to assume its security issue after UNAMSIL leaving the country? Regardless of the answer be 'yes' or 'no', UNAMSIL began to reduce its contingent.

Moreover, the gradual decrease of UNAMSIL occurred because the UN did not believe that there were "security threats" in the country and that the internal peace process depended directly on the subregion peace process, especially in Liberia and the Ivory Coast (UN, 2003c). Parallel to the decrease in the mission contingent, UNAMSIL continued to provide support to the Government of Sierra Leone with regard to the joint work to strengthen the structure of the state and police in the border of the country, while the UK Government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) led efforts to equip the police and rehabilitate its infrastructure.

In this regard, resolution 1562 (UN, 2004) which authorized the permanence of UNAMSIL until the end of 2005, provided a new phase to the UN intervention in the following years in order to justify that the United Nations were "not leaving Sierra Leone altogether, but will be adjusting its strategy in the light of new challenges" (UN, 2005b, p. 14). To continue on the work to strengthen state's structures and, consequently, attend the demands of these new challenges in promoting peace, it was necessary to establish a sequence of actions in the security issue, such as supporting the military and civil police in patrolling the diamond production areas, supporting the civil police in maintaining internal order and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, assisting Sierra Leone in the recruitment program, training and monitoring the police staff and protecting the UN personnel (UN, 2004). However, the situation in Sierra Leone remained fragile (UN, 2005b) and much more still needed to be done in regarding the security issue in order to promote stability in Sierra Leone and recover it from the consequences of the armed conflict.

Humanitarian structure

Hostilities in Sierra Leone affected directly humanitarian issues in the country. During the second phase of the UN mission, the situation regarding human rights has proved worse. The frequency in which the attacks occurred further hindered the free movement of civilians and humanitarian supplies access (UN, 1999j). The result of this reality can be observed by 2.6 million civilians who remained without food and medical aid

for months (UN, 2000b). Moreover, this fact was negatively influenced by RUF attacks against UNAMSIL officials which took place in May 2000 (UN, 2000d). And even there was an end to the armed conflict, human losses were to perpetuate for the long run. This analysis is based not only on the structural damage of the country, such as destruction of buildings, houses and roads; but also those damages regarding others types of violence committed against children, women, IDPs and refugees.

This scenario is the main challenge – both for the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN peacekeeping mission – with regard to the promotion of the human potentiality. Taking into account that there was a gap of seven years between the beginning of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone and the deployment of the first UN intervention, violence against this international was also aggravated, constituting a threat to the future of the country. During the UNAMSIL completion plan, the recommendation was to strengthen the Government of Sierra Leone's structures and programs and its partners in order to protect children who acted in the civil war, whether defending RUF or defending the Government of Sierra Leone (UN, 2000d; 2003c).

To facilitate the implementation of this task, UNAMSIL began a joint work with the non-governmental organization *Physicians for Human Rights* and local researchers in order to collect information about children who acted defending RUF and women and girls who were sexually abused. The data was used to elaborate a better plan to protect those them (UN, 2001a; 2001c). Besides children, the situation of women during the armed conflict was also considered a case of constant concern for the UN. The UNAMSIL's Human Rights Section continued to promote women's rights from the monitoring program in order to collect information regarding cases of sexual abuse committed by both RUF rebels as by UN peacekeepers (UN, 2005d).

The situation of IDPs and refugees was a direct reflection of the increase in hostilities in Sierra Leone. According to the UN, the protection of IDPs and refugees continued to be a source of great concern, which needs to be urgently resolved (UN 2000a). IDPs and refugees not only suffered the loss of their homes as they have also become victims of abductions and forced labor committed by RUF (UN, 2000a). During the attacks against the UN staff in May 2000, there were more than 300,000 new IDPs. Consequently, the expansion and the creation of new camps to accommodate all of them were not enough, which generated up to three times overcrowding in comparison to the actual capacity of the camps. At that time, the armed conflict had affected 1.5 million people. One million of this total amount was in inaccessible areas under RUF control and lacked humanitarian assistance (UN, 2000d).

In 2001, the armed conflict has generated 1 million of refugees (UN, 2001d). The constant movement of refugees and IDPs had serious implications on the recovery process of the national government, to the population of the sub-region and to the international community. The reason for that is based due to the fact that refugees and IDPs

were constituted by government officials, teachers and professionals working in basic services in the country. As the United Nations mentioned, the promotion of a better security and political conditions was directly related to the improvements for refugees and IDPs, but the institution believed that there were not favorable conditions for their return (UN, 2001d).

In an attempt to punish the crimes against humanity committed in the country, the government of Kabbah sent a letter to the UN on 12 June 2000 requesting the institution's assistance to establish a Special Court for Sierra Leone. The Court's jurisdiction included genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other violations regarding the international humanitarian law. Concomitantly, UNAMSIL continued to work with the national government to restore the functioning of basic public services such as clinics for hospital care, schools and seed distribution programs with the help of UNICEF, WFP and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations – FAO (UN, 2001b). Schools began to be reopened in all parts of the country from 2004 and were carried out programs for training teachers. This action resulted immediately in increased enrollment by 70% compared the last two years (UN, 2004). Despite the advances to contain and minimize the humanitarian weaknesses, the UN presence after the end of UNAMSIL would be required to continue the monitoring work on the human rights situation in the country because factors such as high levels of poverty, illiteracy, discrimination against woman, corruption and high unemployment continued to cause concern to the international community (UN, 2004, 2005b), emphasizing the idea that peace cannot be promoted without political, economic and social marginalization are resolved in Sierra Leone through intervention.

Political and economic structures

When the UN authorized the first peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), it was found that its main interest was to let both national government and Sierra Leoneans assuming the end of the armed conflict and, consequently, in promoting peace. The second mission was not different in this issue. The main UNAMSIL's objectives focused on the restoration of the Government of Sierra Leone's authority, restoration of the justice and order to gradually stabilize the situation in the country "and to assist in the promotion of a political process which should lead to a renewed DDR programme and the holding, in due course, of free and fair elections" (UN, 2001c, p. 9).

This second phase of the UN intervention was marked by the inclusion of four RUF/AFRC's members to integrate the Government of National Unity and the transformation of the rebel force into a new political party: the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) on 22 November 1999, which was conceived in the Lomé Peace Agreement (UN, 1999j). Despite the apparent political progress, the sector was still unstable because it would be necessary to maintain a dialogue with RUF to negotiate the end of hostilities

and to promote political stability in the region, especially in Liberia. One evidence of this instability in the region took place on 21 November 2000, when the former Liberian president, Charles Taylor, requested the withdrawal of UK troops which were active in Sierra Leone, if they had not been requested by the UNAMSIL (UN, 2000d).

Another evidence happened after the kidnapping of the UN peacekeepers when the UNAMSIL became able to maintain contact with RUF on 27 November 2000. The UN mission received a letter containing RUF's responses regarding its participation in a workshop based on peacebuilding activities. This exchange of letters resulted in a meeting between UNAMSIL and RUF on 1 December 2000. During the discussions, "the UNAMSIL representatives emphasized the urgent need for RUF to show concrete signs of compliance with the ceasefire agreement of 10 November; in particular, the confidence-building measures contained therein" (UN, 2000d, p. 2). Consequently, there was a new meeting between UNAMSIL and RUF on 8 December 2000 and UNAMSIL stressed the importance of maintaining a constant communication with the rebel forces in order to intensify efforts to promote peace in Sierra Leone.

As a result, RUF proposed to assume some responsibilities, such as opening the roads that were in its control, delivering all weapons and equipment to UNAMSIL, accepting the deployment of military observers and troops from UNAMSIL in the country and allow NGOs and government organizations in providing humanitarian activities in the areas in which the national government had no control. Another challenge, given the political instability in the country, would be to provide support to the presidential elections scheduled for 2002. The aim was to prevent atrocities which occurred in previous years, such as mutilation of the hands of civilians during the electoral process in 1996 (TRC, 2004b). Regarding this scenario, the UN was faced with new adaptations of its intervention strategy (UN, 2000d; 2001b).

The strategies used for elections were authorized by resolution 1370 (UN, 2001e) in which it recognized that extending the administrative activities of UNAMSIL, as well as the holding of elections "fair, free and transparent" were necessary to promote sustainable peace and development in Sierra Leone. The engagement of the UNAMSIL in this process was considered important because it was a way to protect elections from hostilities. After elections, UNAMSIL troops remained on alert in 39 locations in order to avoid any disturbance to public order (UN, 2002a). The 2002 elections marked the consolidation of the second phase of UNAMSIL and began the third one, which aimed to monitor the new government elected as its political authority conquest (UN, 2002b).

Recognizing the need to keep UNAMSIL on the ground, the mission was extended for more six months until September 2002, pursuant to resolution 1400 (UN, 2002c). Even that, the UN declared that the elections without hostilities were not a sustainable solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone. Although the political situation in the country remained

relatively stable until 2005, year that marked the end of UNAMSIL, there were numerous factors considered as potential threats to the stability of the country, such as the widespread of poverty, unemployment especially among young people, corruption in the public sector, shortcomings in the judicial system, and resource constraints that may inhibit the government to provide services to the population (UN, 2005c).

Although the economy is not included as a primary cause of the armed conflict in the scope of this argument, the economic situation, especially the diamond trade, was considered a major factor for its extension (Hirsch, 2000). And the decisions provided by the UNAMSIL regarding the security, humanitarian and political issues had a direct influence on the economy of the country because the economic growth depended on the results obtained by the actions of both the national government and UNAMSIL. The UNAMSIL's efforts were directly related to the attempt to curb the illegal trade and thus prevent the support of the conflict.

Emphasizing that the legitimate diamond trade is of great economic importance for many States, and can make a positive contribution to prosperity and stability and to the reconstruction of countries emerging from conflict, and emphasizing further that nothing in this resolution is intended to undermine the legitimate diamond trade or to diminish confidence in the integrity of the legitimate diamond industry (UN, 2000c, p. 1).

The main objective of this measure was to enable the Government of Sierra Leone as a regulator of diamond trade and security provider in the diamond mines (UN, 2001f) by two factors: in one hand, the illegal mining and the international diamond trade played an important role in fostering violent conflict in Sierra Leone, and remained a potential source of instability (UN, 2002d) and, on the other hand, because UNAMSIL began its withdrawal plan. Therefore, "[r]estoration of effective government control over diamond mining has become even more urgent as UNAMSIL draws down" (UN, 2002d, p. 6) and the national government would be responsible for keeping track and monitor diamond trade in the country to prevent non-state actors to begin to control this sector. When the national government assumed the control of the diamond trade there was an increase in the number of diamond mining licenses which rose from 900 in June 2002, to 2091 by the end of 2003, while consolidated exports of diamonds increased from US\$ 10 million in 2000 to US\$ 76 million in 2003 (UN, 2003c; 2004). Even the national government started monitoring the diamond trade, the international community did not identify safety-related efforts (UN, 2003d). Lacked policing in diamond mines and this aspect constituted a vacuum (UN, 2003a) which could be considered a factor in the resurgence of hostilities. "The Government [of Sierra Leone] is making further efforts to improve the quality and number of mine monitors in key areas and has also commenced publishing diamond export analyzed on a monthly basis." (UN, 2003c, p. 7).

In this regard, the continuous improvement of the security situation, combined with sound macroeconomic policies and large external aid flows, has stimulated the beginning of the economic recovery and price stability, after years of depression and high inflation. Inflation was slightly negative in 2000, while real GDP expanded almost 4 percent and the agricultural sector, rice production increased 78%, but still accounted for only 50% of current needs (UN, 2001f). This recovery was the result of a 47% increase in the total area planted, due to the increased access of farmers to their land, and seed distribution program, benefiting 144,000 farmers with 5,772 tons of rice. The apparent growth of the economy would not mitigate the short-term crisis. The social and economic problems continued to be a catalyst for frustration among the population, because the prices of the commodities and imported goods continued to rise in Freetown and throughout the country, with the record of a series of public sector strikes as the late payment of wages and benefits (UN, 2004).

Conclusion

The UN Peacekeeping Operations deployed in Sierra Leone – UNOMSIL and UNAMSIL – not only brought to the surface the challenges to achieve a positive peace as well as became an issue of concern by the international system. The issues analyzed in this paper – security, humanitarian, political and economic – enabled a comprehensiveness, not on success or failure, but how the UN peacekeeping operation became vulnerable on the ground. In both missions, the UN became an easy target for the rebels forces. If the first mission has been defined in this paper as a palliative mission regarding the necessity of being on the ground with a military force, the second one revealed how the UN was fragile face different types of vulnerabilities. In this mission – UNAMSIL – 300 peacekeepers were kidnapped, representing a gap in what was specified by UNAMSIL's mandate and its work in the field. Besides that, the second peacekeeping operation faced the spillover effect of the armed conflict in Sierra Leone, regarding the influence which emerged in Liberia and Guinea.

Therefore, it was a hard work in providing security stability in this issue considering that scenario. Consequently, structural violence put in practice by the national government before the outbreak of the armed conflict is directly related to the level of violence perpetrated by the Revolutionary United Front during the civil war and, also, the same level of violence which was put into practice by the UN peacekeepers, who were also responsible for sexual abuse against women and girls. Even the armed conflict had an end in December 2002, Sierra Leone does not remain in peace. The end of the direct violence between RUF and the national government does not represent and end in the structural violence in the country. Sierra Leone is one of the most poorer countries in the world. Once the UN is responsible for providing international security and peace, one question is necessary: what kind of peace? Just a negative one, symbolized by the end of direct violence, marked by the end of hostilities in that case; or a positive peace,

symbolized by an equitable society? In the case of the missions analyzed, there are much more of negative peace than positive one, which pose unaccountable challenges in providing peace before, during and after an armed conflict.

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