

Sierra Leone Cases, 1970-2012
Last Updated: 21 January 2018

torg	gname	onset	min	max
T2258	KAMAJORS	28-May-97	1991	1998
T438	REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT (RUF)	1-Apr-91	1991	2001
T2461	WEST SIDE BOYS	10-Sep-00	1997	2000
T81	ARMED FORCES REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (AFRC)	25-May-97	1997	1999
T1078	CIVIL DEFENSE FORCE - SIERRA LEONE		2000	2000

- I. KAMAJORS
 Torg ID: 2258
 Min. Group Date: 1991
 Max. Group Date: 1998
 Onset: 1997

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: Civilian Defense Force (umbrella)

Group Formation: ~1991 (militia turns political) ; earliest mention is 1993 (Carey and Mitchell)

Group End: 2002

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

In 1991, a civil war between rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and government erupted over control of the country's mineral resources (IRB 1998; Global Security n.d.). The Kamajors are a civilian counter-insurgency founded and supported by prominent civilians in an attempt to protect against RUF rebels (Dalby 2017; IRB 1998). They emerged around the same time as the RUF (Carey and Mitchell 2013). The Kamajors are the largest and most powerful faction of the Civil Defense Forces (HRW 2000; Dalby 2017). After receiving support from the government of Sierra Leone, civilians feared potential ethnic violence incited by the Kamajors (Dalby 2017). To create a more nationalist front, the government founded the Civil Defense Forces (CDF) - an umbrella organization for civilian counter-insurgencies like the Kamajors (Dalby 2017). It

is unknown when their first attack precisely occurred, but is likely around 1991. The CDF's last recorded attack occurred on June 17, 2000, in Yiraira, Sierra Leone (GTD 2017). There were 21 fatalities (GTD 2017).

Geography

The group's control center is based in Bo (Dalby 2017). Members of the Kamajors, who were primarily of the Mende ethnicity, came mostly from the south and east of Sierra Leone (Carey, Mitchell 2013). The group is not transnational and did not have an external base of operations.

Organizational Structure

The Kamajors are led by Sam Hinga Norman, an ex-army captain (Dalby 2017). Under Norman's leadership and an influx of governmental support, the CDF transitioned into a semi-formal paramilitary force (Dalby 2017). In 2003, the United Nations arrested and accused Norman along with RUF leaders, Issa Sesay, and Morris Kallon with widespread brutality, rape, arson, torture, mutilation, enlistment of child soldiers, and plunder of civilian property (BBC 2003; BBC 2004; Washington Post 2007). The group was accused of parading severed hands and eating the intestines and flesh of their victims (BBC 2004). They were convicted in 2007 (BBC 2007). Norman died from hip surgery complications in 2007 (Washington Post 2007; Dalby 2017).

The group's prominent size is due to its location (Dalby 2017). At its peak, the CDF consisted of an estimated 36,000 fighters; in 1997, 13,000 of them were part of the Kamajors (Dalby 2017; Carey, Mitchell 2013). Children compose an estimated fifth of the government's forces (NYT 1999). To become a member, one must go through an initiation (Dalby 2017). These ceremonies involved burning herbs and pieces of the Quran, while pressing the ashes into the initiate's cuts (Dalby 2017). In addition, members were to follow a series of rules including do not drink alcohol, do not have sex, and do not turn back (Dalby 2017). Members believed if they follow the rules, they would become invincible to bullets (Dalby 2017). Members of the group, often local hunters of the Mende ethnicity, had little to no military training (Dalby 2017; IRB 1998). Ex-commanders state they were difficult to control and accused many members of joining the CDF to receive government handouts and/or take revenge on the RUF and AFRC (Dalby 2017). CDF soldiers were accused of committing crimes against civilians - some even worse than those incited by the RUF (Dalby 2017).

External Ties

The Civilian Defense Forces were supported by the government of Sierra Leone to counteract the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) (Dalby 2017). In 1997, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) launched a coup, which exiled President Kabbah

to Guinea and replaced him with military leader Johnny Paul Koroma (Dalby 2017; IRB 1998; BBC 2003). The AFRC accused Kabbah of ethnic discrimination in high government positions, mistreatment of the Sierra Leone army, and supporting the Kamajors (IRB 1998). The coup angered Kabbah and empowered him to increase military, medicine, and food support to the Kamajors (Dalby 2017). Kabbah hired a South African military company known as the Executive Outcomes to help the Kamajors suppress the RUF (Dalby 2017). Kabbah promised diamond mining concessions as payment (Dalby 2017). Nigerian troops in ECOMOG also fought in support of the government (Dalby 2017).

Group Outcome

In 2001, the UN launched a disarmament campaign, offering CDF fighters to return their weapons for cash and employment (Dalby 2017). The civil war ended in 2002 and was followed by Kaabah's electoral presidential win (BBC 2003). 500,000 estimated people were victims of the conflict (Washington Post 2007; BBC 2007). The group's last incident was around 2001 or 2002 (GTD 2017; Dalby 2017). Kamajor leader Sam Norman died from hip surgery complications in 2007 (Washington Post 2007; Dalby 2017).

Notes for Iris:

- other different militias under the CDF, but the Kamajors are the main source
- does the group form in '91 or '97?
- the group became more powerful after the 97 coup; active as early as '91, but they accelerate their campaign in '97 following the coup
- this group is even more violent than some of the main groups in the DRC!
- did the group politically oppose the government? No - they received some support from the Sierra Leone government when it delegated security to them

II. REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT (RUF)

Torg ID: 438

Min. Group Date: 1991

Max. Group Date: 2001

Onset: 1991

Aliases: Revolutionary United Front (Ruf), RUF, Revolutionary United Front

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1989/1990 (Rashid 2016)

Group End (Outcome): 2002 (disarm)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

It is unknown precisely when the RUF formed, but it emerged in 1989 or 1990 when a group of students returned from guerrilla training in Libya (Rashid 2016). The leader, Foday Sankoh, modeled the group after the Liberian NPFL and decided to overthrow the Sierra Leone government (Waugh 2011, 203; Rashid 2016). The RUF opposed the APC regime because of strict austerity measures, corruption, and the denial of education to youth members (Jang 2012). Sankoh was heavily influenced by Mao’s writings on

revolution and pan-African revolutionary sentiment (Waugh 2011, 205-206). It's unclear if the group ascribed to these ideologies as well. The group's first violent incident was in 1991 when it invaded Sierra Leone from an external base in Liberia (Rashid 2016; Global Security n.d.).

Geography

RUF primarily operated out of Bo in the south of Sierra Leone. It is unclear when the RUF moved into Liberia, but they established an external base of operations in Liberia around 1990. In 1991, they launched an initial cross-border raid against the Sierra Leone government with 200 RUF members and a handful of Liberian foreign fighters (Waugh 2011, 208). Individuals in Sierra Leone initially thought the raid was a spillover incident of the Liberian Civil War which had been going on for over a year at this point, but it was actually the start of the Sierra Leone Civil War (Waugh 2011, 209). The RUF was active in Pujehun, Kailahun, Bo, Kenema, and Kono districts (Rashid 2016). The group was transnational. It is tied to a couple suspected attacks in Guinea against Sierra Leone refugees and refugee assistance programs (GTD 2017).

Organizational Structure

Corporal Foday Sankoh and a group of students founded the RUF in 1989 or 1990 (Waugh 2011, 203; Rashid 2006). Sankoh was heavily influenced by Mao's writings on revolution and pan-African revolutionary sentiment during the 1970s (Waugh 2011, 205-206). Sankoh was part of the Sierra Leone military in the 1960s, served on a UN PKO in the Congo, and received military training in Libya in 1988 (Waugh 2011, 206-207). Several other students had also traveled to Benghazi, Libya to receive guerrilla training from the Qaddafi regime (Rashid 2016). In 1991, the group initially started with 360 members (Rashid 2016). At its height, the group had thousands of members (FAS 2003). It forcibly recruited children to serve (Human Rights Watch 2000). The group notably funded itself through the sale of diamonds (Global Security n.d.). The RUF had a political wing known as the RUFF.

External Ties

Sankoh and other students initially received training from the Libyan government prior to the start of the RUF. The RUF heavily coordinated operations with Charles Taylor and the Liberian NPFL (FAS 2003; Rashid 2016). Two NPFL generals trained and oversaw RUF operations early on as well (Rashid 2016). The RUF had an external base of operations in Liberia that it shared with the NPFL. The group also shared training camps and resources with the NPFL (Rashid 2016). The group also allegedly received material support and weapons from Gambia and Burkina Faso (FAS 2003).

Group Outcome

Initially, the RUF quickly overran several districts in Sierra Leone and faced little resistance (Rashid 2016). The Sierra Leone government doubled the size of the military from 3,000 to 6,000 men in response (Global Security n.d.). In 1991, ULIMO formed in Sierra Leone to fight both the Sierra Leone government and the RUF (Global Security n.d.). The Sierra Leone government suffered a coup in 1992 due to discontent by military commanders over the counterinsurgency fight (Global Security n.d.). New militias known as Kamajors formed to fight against the RUF (Global Security n.d.). In 1996, a private security firm known as the Executive Outcomes entered the fight to force back the RUF from the capital of Freetown (Global Security n.d.; Gleditsch et al. 2013, 623). In 1998, ECOMOG intervened in the conflict to help the government (Canada IRB 2003; BBC 2017). ECOMOG shifted troops from Liberia to Sierra Leone to combat the RUF (Rashid 2016). In 1999, the group launched a new offensive against ECOMOG and Sierra Leone forces (Global Security n.d.). In 2000, Guinea and British forces intervened. Soon after, the RUF signed the Lome Peace Agreement with the Sierra Leone government (Global Security n.d.; Canada IRB 2003). The group's last violent incident was in 2001 and ceased completely with the Declaration of the End of War in 2002 (Global Security n.d.; Canada IRB 2003; BBC 2017).

Notes for Iris:

- interesting second-order effects for popular support between ULIMO, RUF, and Sierra Leone government
- conventional student base here. Notable they had an education-tied grievance according to Jang (2012)

“The biggest victims of the patrimonial system collapse were, in fact, young people who were not able to be educated and employed in this deteriorating situation. To make things worse, President Momoh delivered a speech in the eastern district of Kailahun saying that education was not a right but a privilege and then, not surprisingly, the RUF promptly used his speech as ‘one of its justification to go to war’ (Peters 2011, p. 46).”

III. WEST SIDE BOYS
Torg ID: 2461
Min. Group Date: 1997
Max. Group Date: 2000
Onset: 2000

Aliases: None

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: West Side Ni**az; West Side Junglers

Group Formation: 1997

Group End: 2000 (repression)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The West Side Boys are a maverick group notorious for their constant drunkenness and extravagant clothing, including women's wigs, the bloodied uniforms of their enemies, and flip flops (BBC 2000). It is either a splinter group of the SLA (US State Department 2001; Utas and Jorgel 2008, 487) or the AFRC (HRW 2003). That said, the AFRC is ex-SLA members.

The group has no political or ethnic objective, but expressed loyalty to the AFRC's Johnny-Paul Koroma, after he replaced Kabbah in a coup in 1997 (BBC 2000). The group's support for Koroma was repealed after Koroma spoke out in support of President Kaaba (BBC 2000). The West Side Boys are regular listeners of the BBC (Sherwell, Blair 2000). The date of the group's first attack was not found, but was likely around 1997 to 1998 following the coup d'état. In 1999, the group captured 41 members of a UN-led delegation (HRW 2003). Members included COMOG soldiers, religious leaders, aid workers, and journalists who came to the Occra Hills to release abducted children (HRW 2003). The group is one of Sierra Leone's greatest perpetrators in sexual violence against women (HRW 2003). Members use rape as a terror tactic (US Department of State 2001).

Geography

The group is strongest in the city of Masiaka, east of Freetown, the country's capital (BBC 2000; Guardian 2000c). The group operates in other areas outside of Freetown (HRW 2003). They have led a series of looting raids in the Occra Hills near Freetown (HRW 2003). The group is not transnational and did not have an external base of operations.

Organizational Structure

Members of the West Side Boys include ex-fighters of the Sierra Leone army, the RUF, and civilians (BBC 2000). In 1997, the AFRC launched a coup and overthrew President Kaaba (Dalby 2017). During this coup, (which the West Side Boys claim to have taken part in), many prisoners from Pademba Road Prison were released - several would later join the West Side Boys (BBC 2000). The group is led by Foday Kallay (Guardian 2000b). Members include female and child soldiers, however most fighters are in their teens (BBC 2000; Guardian 2000c). As of 2000, the West Side Boyz consisted of less than 400 fighters (Sherwell, Blair 2000). The group held Sierra Leonean women captive to serve as "sex combatants," otherwise known as "morale boosters" (Guardian 2000c).

The group funds itself by controlling roadblocks and stealing from passing civilians ((C) The Guardian 2000). In addition, the group has led a series of looting raids throughout the Occra Hills (HRW 2003).

External Ties

The West Side Boys express loyalty to the AFRC's Johnny-Paul Koroma, who in 1997 replaced Kabbah in a coup (BBC 2000). The group's support for Koroma was repealed after Koroma spoke out in support of President Kaaba (BBC 2000). In 1999, the group fought alongside their previous enemies, the RUF (Sherwell, Blair 2000). The temperamental West Side Boys have no lasting loyalties (Sherwell, Blair 2000). The

group's fighters have been seen using British issued guns (Guardian 2000c). There is no evidence of external support for the group from other state actors.

Group Outcome

In 1999, Kaaba and the RUF signed the Lome peace accord (BBC 2000). Members of the group were angered that they were excluded from the agreement (BBC 2000). In 2000, the group's leader, Foday Kallay denounced war and sought to become a politician (Guardian 2000b).

In 2000, the group held eleven British soldiers hostage for 16 days (BBC 2000; Sherwell, Blair 2000). The soldiers were rescued (BBC 2000). After the hostages were rescued, Kallay, the group's leader, was arrested by the Sierra Leonean and British police (Guardian 2000). He recorded a statement, asking his followers to disarm (Guardian 2000b). After Kallay's arrest, the UN launched a counterinsurgency offensive against the West Side Boys (Guardian 2000b). UN peacekeeping troops cleared roadblocks controlled by the West Side Boys (Guardian 2000c). Although initially effective, group members continued to steal from civilians driving from the capital to the airport (Guardian 2000c) Despite the disarmament and reintegration of some members, many West Side Boys fighters continued to incite violence in militias as late as 2000 (Guardian 2000c; GTD 2017).

Notes for Iris:

- this group is similar to Mai-Mai - mostly criminal running around and harming civilians
- WSB is not loyal to any one group. They mostly just want to insight violence. They continue 'fighting' after the AFRC loses power.
- There are disputed reports about the group's activities. The UN PK operation is effective in curtailing violence, but they are likely violent as late as 2000-ish. After 2000-ish, they disappear.

IV. ARMED FORCES REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (AFRC)

Torg ID: 81

Min. Group Date: 1997

Max. Group Date: 1999

Onset: 1997

Aliases: Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Afrc), Afrc, Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, AFRC (Sierra Leone)

** this is a coup

** this is not the Ghanaian AFRC

Part 1. Bibliography

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Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: None

Group Formation: 1997

Group End: 2001 (disarm)

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

The AFRC was founded by a group of ex soldiers from the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) (RIC 2000). In 1997, the AFRC led a coup which overthrew President Kabbah and replaced him with their leader, Major Johnny Koroma (AFR 1997). The group was angered by President Kabbah's inability to uphold peace in Sierra Leone following a peace agreement in 1996 (AFR 1997). They accused Kabbah of inhibiting democracy, favoring tribalism in government positions, a lack of resources for the national army, and government support of the Kamajors (AFR 1997).

When the group seized power, they suspended the constitution, banned political parties, and ruled by military decree (HRW 1999). In addition, the group incited political repression by conducting countless arbitrary arrests and detention (HRW 1999). The coup was strongly opposed by a vast majority of Sierra Leonean society (AFR 1997).

Koroma, as Kabbah's replacement, promised to stay in power for 18 months and reinstate a multiethnic government (AFR 1997). Public sector workers protested the coup regardless of AFRC threats of dismissal (AFR 1997). During the coup of 1997, the AFRC announced the establishment of the People's Revolutionary Courts - an ineffective system composed of people without legal training (AFR 1997).

The AFC incited terror and violence against civilians in an effort to control the population (RIC 2000). These human rights abuses include physical mutilation, rape, abduction, torture, and murder (RIC 2000). The group's first recorded attack was the coup d'état in 1997 (AFR 1997). There were 96 fatalities (GTD 2017).

Geography

The AFRC controlled the capitol in Freetown from 1997 to 1998. After Kabbah's reinstatement in 1998, ECOMOG forces controlled the majority of the country for a few months (HRW 1999). However, later that year, the AFRC led a series of offenses and seized control of the diamond-rich Kono district as well as a few other strategic towns (HRW 1999). The group operates and is based in Sierra Leone. It is not transnational.

Organizational Structure

The group was accused of human rights violations despite leader Koroma's denouncement (AFR 1997). The inability for the group's leader to halt these violations stem from the unorganized, reckless demeanor of AFRC soldiers (AFR 1997). When the RUF and AFRC joined the Lome peace agreement, the AFRC leadership asked to be written as RUF/AFRC (IRIN 1999). Together, the RUF and AFRC consisted of an estimated 45,000 soldiers - many of whom were untrained (Gleditsch 2013, 625). Alone, the group's size decreased over time (Gleditsch 2013, 626). In 1997, it had 8,000-14,000 troops (Gleditsch 2013, 626). By 1998, it had fallen to 2,000-4,000 troops (Gleditsch 2013, 626) When the AFRC overthrew the government in 1997, its size was equal to that of the government's (Gleditsch 2013, 626).

External Ties

The AFRC faced international pressure over its overthrow of democratically elected president Kabbah (AFR 1997). The group was joined by RUF soldiers, and the two groups ruled from May 25, 1997, until February 13, 1998, when ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group) intervened and restored President Kaabah's presidency (RIC 2000). ECOMOG troops received significant support from Nigeria, Ghana, and Guinea (RIC 2000). Group forces have also fought against the RUF and Kamajors (AFR 1997). Countless civilians have died from fighting between the many groups (AFR 1997). There is no evidence of external support for the AFRC.

Group Outcome

The AFRC faced international pressure over its overthrow of democratically elected president Kabbah (AFR 1997). After failed negotiations, the international community established a global economic embargo in addition to military intervention (AFR 1997). On October 23, 1997, the AFRC/RUF agreed to allow Kabbah return to power by April 1998 (HRW 1999). Promises of peace were soon broken as the AFRC/RUF began to stockpile weapons and attack ECOMOG troops (HRW 1999). In February 1998, ECOMOG forces along with the Kamajor militia launched an offensive and drove AFRC/RUF forces out of Freetown (HRW 1999). In March 1998, Kabbah was reinstated as president and ECOMOG forces controlled the majority of the country for the following months (HRW 1999).

The group's last recorded attack occurred on May 5, 1999 in Porte Loko, Sierra Leone (GTD 2017). There were 11 fatalities (GTD 2017).

Later in 1999, the RUF signed the Lome Peace Accord that promised a unified government (RIC 2000). After the agreement, the AFRC began to disappear and was considered to be officially ended in 2001 (Gleditsch 2013, 624). Later that year, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed to help establish the agreement (RIC 2000). However, efforts to halt violence against citizens were allegedly ineffective (RIC 2000).

Notes for Iris:

- in 96, there's a tentative ceasefire, but it falls apart. ex-SLA mobilize to overthrow.
- ECOMOG makes it hard for the AFRC to stay in power
- AFRC was ineffective when in power (IRIN News Source) - they tried to broker a power-sharing agreement with the RUF in 1998 to form the RUF/AFRC
- IRIS: think about RUF actions in 97-98 in line with AFRC in power

V. CIVIL DEFENSE FORCE - SIERRA LEONE

Torg ID: 1078

Min. Group Date: 2000

Max. Group Date: 2000

Onset: NA

Aliases: Civil Defense Force (Cdf), Cdf - Sierra Leone, Civil Defense Force - Sierra Leone

Part 1. Bibliography

- GTD Perpetrator 10082. Global Terrorism Database. Study for Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. Last modified June 2017.
<http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?perpetrator=10082>

Part 2. Basic Coding

Aliases: This is an alias for the Kamajors. (Part of larger umbrella group)

Group Formation: This is an alias for the Kamajors.

Group End: This is an alias for the Kamajors.

Part 3. Narrative

Group Formation

This is an alias for the Kamajors.

Geography

This is an alias for the Kamajors.

Organizational Structure

This is an alias for the Kamajors.

External Ties

This is an alias for the Kamajors.

Group Outcome

This is an alias for the Kamajors.