



RIJ
国際難民支援会

Building a
Future for
Refugees

Sierra Leone



Courtesy: Merriam-Webster

Reasons for Displacement:

Internal displacement was caused by the 11-year civil conflict. The primary reason for fleeing was due to bombing carried out by helicopter

gunships under the direction of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA). On top of that, there was the impact of the war: shortage of food and fear of human rights abuses by rebel Revolutionary Front (RUF) forces including killings, rape, forced labour, and abductions forced hundreds of thousands to flee. The situation worsened in 1998 when renewed fighting erupted during Sierra Leone's "hungry season", when the food supplies were at their lowest due to the rainy season. Then, people from the Northern Province left their homes and fled to Port Loko and the capital Freetown. Others spread elsewhere in RUF controlled areas or crossed the border into neighboring countries such as Guinea.

Refugee and IDP Communities:

Many displaced people were in hazardous positions and had limited access to humanitarian assistances. Many major towns such as Kambia were deserted and hospitals, schools and civil health-clinics were forced to close down or were abandoned.

Since the end of the conflict, civil administration has returned throughout the country and over 543,000 displaced persons returned to their homes. 'UN Development Assistance Framework 2004-2007' comprised 3 programmes of Peace, Recovery, and Development helping to achieve both the emergency relief needs and immediate recovery requirements. Also, under the auspices of UNHCR and several NGOs, Community Empowerment Projects were implemented in all areas of return in a range of sectors including agriculture, health, and sanitation. This helped support the refugees and IDPs to return to their villages with different experiences and skills.

Number of refugees:
1,372 residing in Sierra Leone;
4,997 originating from Sierra Leone
[source: UNHCR]

Number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):
0
[source: UNHCR]

History:

- 1961** — Sierra Leone becomes independent
- 1991** — Start of civil war. Former army corporal Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front (RUF) campaigns against President Momoh and captures towns on border with Liberia
- 1997** — The peace signed in the previous year is unravelled; the AFRC suspends the constitution, bans demonstrations and abolishes political parties
- 1999** — UN intervenes and Rebels backing Sankoh seize parts of Freetown from Ecomog
- 2000** — Rebels close in on Freetown and rebel leader Sankoh is captured
- 2001** — Government postpones presidential and parliamentary elections and the disarmament of rebels begins
- 2002** — War is declared over
- 2012** — First elections since the end of the civil war are held without UN oversight
- 2014** — Ebola virus epidemic breaks out in Sierra Leone

Assistance:

- RIJ has funded projects including emergency support to older internally displaced and returnee people, training in post-harvest practices and a psycho-social programme for returnee children
- UNHCR implemented about 2,000 Community Empowerment projects. Among others, UNHCR and IOM supported the process of repatriation and reintegration of Sierra Leonean refugees

