The Role of United Nations in Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Case Study of Sierra Leone

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ABSTRACT
The Sierra Leone conflict which started in 1991defied all efforts to resolve it; government forces, civil defence and even the efforts of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). The situation necessitated the intervention of United Nation and United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) was deployed in 1999 to resolve the conflict. It was observed that even with the presence of UNAMSIL, the rebel group (RUF) continued their attack. The worst situation was experienced, in 2000, when the RUF attacked Freetown and took some UNAMSIL peacekeepers hostage. The continuation of attacks by the rebel group even with the present of UNAMSIL questions the preparedness of UN in the task of ensuring world peace and security. Thus, this paper examined the role United Nations played in resolving the Sierra Leone conflict. In doing this, paper utilized secondary data sourced from text books, Magazines, Newspapers and the internet materials. The paper found that United Nations helped to restore peace in Sierra Leone, but not without some challenges which hindered the efforts of UNAMSIL. The challenges include slow rate of deployment, inadequate manpower and logistics as well as non cooperation of warlords. The argued vehemently that UN can only carry out peacekeeping operation effectively, thereby maintain world peace and security if the identified challenges are adequately combated. The paper there] ore recommends quick and prompt deployment of troops by UN to conflict areas. The paper also recommends the strengthening of the sub-regional organizations in the African continent.
KEY WORDS: Conflict, Peacekeeping, Conflict Resolution, Peace and Security.

I.   INTRODUCTION

After the Second World War II, United Nation (UN) was formed primarily, among other reasons to maintain international peace and security (Abaagye and Bah, 2005). United Nations works- for solving present, emerging and future threats, major and minor conflicts. In addition, the role of UN in global politics is to deal with world problems in an effective way exploring the best solutions available in cooperation with other major countries and international organizations like the European Union, G8, IMF, World Bank and other countries.

When dispute arises between 2 governments, the parties concerned are obligated to seek a solution by peaceful means, mainly by, negotiation, reconciliation, mediation, arbitration,peaceful settlement or resort to. regional agencies. But a situation where the peaceful means fail and the dispute escalates into an armed conflict, the United Nations' Security Council (SC) may take enforcement measures to restore international peace in such situations. These measures are essentially, arms embargoes, complete or partial economic sanctions, severance of diplomatic relations, and in the last resort the use of force. The above provision is found in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Consequently, UN has intervened to resolve conflict in many countries of the world. The first actual UN peacekeeping operations were formed in 1956 during the Suez Canal Crisis (Boulding, 1989). UN peacekeeping operations in Africa, have also contributed significantly to the activities of AU, ECOWAS and SADC in peacekeeping efforts in the continent. Below is a table showing the past and present UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.

Serial	Mission	Duration
1.	ONUC	Jul 60-Jun64
2.	UNEFI	Nov56-Jan67
3.	UNEFH	Oct73-Jul79
4.	UNAVEM1	Jan89-May91
5.	UNOSOM1	Apr92-Sep93

6.	UNASOG	May94-Jun94
7.	UNOMUR	Jun93-Sep94
8.	UNOMIL	Sep93-Sep94
9.	ONUMOZ	Dec 92 -Dec 94
10.	UNAVEM II	May91-Feb95
11.	UNOSOM II	Mar 93 -Mar 95
12.	UNAMIR	Oct93-Mar96
13.	UNAVEM III	Feb95-Jul97
14.	MONUA	Jun97-Feb99
15.	UNOMSIL	Jul88-Oct99
16.	MINURCA	Apr98- Feb 00
17.	MONUC	Nov 99 - Till date
18.	MINURSO	Apr91-Till date
19.	UNAMSIL	Oct99-Dec05
20.	ONUB	Jun04-Dec06
21.	UNMEE	Jul 00- Till date
22.	MINUCI	May03-Apr04
23.	UNMIL	Sep 03- Till date
24.	UNOCI	Aug 04- Till date
25.	UNMIS	Mar 05- Till date
26.	BINUB	Dec 06- Till date

The UN has played a vital role in mediating peace agreements and assisting in their implementation, helping tp reduce the level of conflict in several regions especially in Africa. Serra Lone is one of the African Countries where UN had played a vital role in resolving their conflict.

In 1991 the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group moved into Serra Leone from Liberia, triggering a conflict that only finally ended in January 2002. The conflict had its roots in mismanagement and corruption within the state, neglect of the provinces, poverty, disaffected youth (many of whom were recruited or co-opted as child combatants), and the involvement ofexternal actors, such as former Liberian President Charles Taylor, who supported the RUF. The conflict was further exacerbated by a proliferation of small arms in the region, and by the availability of large income streams to rebel groups from the mining of diamonds.

Attempts by regional and international actors to end the fighting during the 1990s, which involved not only the RUF and government forces but civil defence forces (CDF), were inconclusive. Equally, the effort of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) could not stop the devastating activities of the rebel forces which had taken over most of Freetown between February-March 1998. Although ECOMOG managed to drive the rebels out but their effort was not sufficient. This necessitated the intervention of international community. It is at this period that United Nations intervened. At first it was the unarmed observer mission (UNOMSIL) and later the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), deployed in 1999.

However, it was observed that even with the presence of UN, the conflict continued. The worst situation was experienced in 2000, when the RUF attacked Freetown and took UNAMSIL peacekeepers hostage. This helped trigger UK military intervention to secure Freetown. The continuation of conflict even with the present of UNAMSIL questions the preparedness of UN in the task of ensuring world peace and security. Thus, the aim of the paper is to examine the role of UN in conflict resolution in Africa, using Sierra Leone as a case study. Some of the questions the paper will provide answers to are: (1) what are the major cause of conflict in Serra Leone? (2) How was the conflict resolved by UN peace keeper? (3) What are the challenges UN peacekeeping forces encountered in Sierra Leone.

The Concept of Conflict

According toMengistu (2015), conflict is an active disagreement between people withfeel tied; over status, whether people believe they are treated with respect and dignity and whether their traditions and social position are respected; and over values, particularly those embodied in systems of government, religion, or ideology.

Burton (1990) maintained that conflict like sex is an essential creative element in human relationship. He goes further to state that without conflict society becomes static; that conflict is neither to be depreciated nor feared. To Mayer (2000) conflicts can be explained through a three dimensional lens. That is 'conflict as perception,' 'conflict as feeling' and 'conflict as action.' As a perception, Mayer identifies that conflict is often theconviction that 'one's own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else's (Mayer, 2000). As a feeling, conflict can be expressed through several emotions including 'fear, anger, bitterness, sadness, hopelessness; or the combination of these (Mayer, 2000). Finally, Mayer highlights that conflict involves actions which may be 'violent or destructive' (Mayer 2000).

Imobighe (2008) maintained that since conflict is an inevitable part of human relations, it is important that when conflict occurs, it should be managed productively to avoid its destructive effects. He further stated

that while we cannot eliminate conflict completely, we can, at least prevent it from escalating into violence and transform it into a creative element.

Harks, (2000), defined crisis as "catastrophe, calamity, emergency, disaster". A crisis is said to exist when a conflict persists for too long a period of time and seems to defy easy solution. This means that *crisis* is the central position that separates non-violent conflict and violent conflict. Crisis "is an extreme situation of the conflict. It is said to happen when the conflict has reached a turning point, where there are critical decisions that have to be taken or else the conflict escalates to a point of extreme violence."

Sani (2007:43) defined conflict as "a moment or time of danger or great difficulty, turning point, disaster, emergency, calamity or catastrophe, as level of conflict with tense confrontation between mobilized armed forces". Otite (2001) cited in Oji (2014) argued that conflicts at any level arise from divergences of interests, desires, goals and values aspirations in the competition for resources to meet imposing demands on social life in a defined socio-physical environment. Mengistu (2015) opined that interests can diverge in many ways: over resources-territory, money, energy sources, food — and how they should bedistributed; over power, how control and participation in political decision-making are allocated;over identity, concerning the cultural, social and political communities to which people feel tied; over status, whether people believe they are treated with respect and dignity and whether their traditions and social position are respected; and over values, particularly those embodied in systems of, government, religion, or ideology.

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Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is concerned with addressing the fundamental causes of conflicts and aim to produce solutions which are mutually acceptable to all parties. Conflict resolution operates at a number of levels or tracks, and encompasses a range of techniques from conciliation to mediation, negotiation, and problem solving. Resolution of conflict implies thatthe deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed, changing behaviours so they are no longer violent, attitudes so they are no longer hostile, and structures so they are no longer exploitative.

Conflict resolution involves diagnosing the nature of conflict and applying appropriate methodsin order to:
✓ Diffuse the negative emotional energy involved;
✓ Enable the conflicting parties to understand and resolve their differences;
✓ Resolve the differences so as to achieve solutions that are not imposed, which have beenagreed by all the key parties, and which address the root cause of the conflict (Ndiomu,1999).

The Sierra Leone Conflict

Founded in 1789 as a British colony for freed slaves yearning for a home, Sierra Leone became an independent state in 1961 and inherited from its colonial masters a Westminster style of parliamentary democracy (Bundu, 2000). During the early years after independence, Sierra Leone experienced, relative peace and stability until 1964 when Albert Marghai became the Prime Minister on the ticket of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). His period of administration marked the beginning of constitutional degeneration in Sierra Leone. It also marked the beginning of the period in the history of Sierra Leone when cronyism and ethnicism took a significant form (Bundu, 2000). Albert Maghai's regime was characterised by high levels of corruption, mismanagement and political highhandedness. There was no freedom of speech as the government cracked down hard on pro- opposition journalists and muzzled the judiciary (Juma, 2003). In 1967, the All People's Congress (APC) won the general elections and Siaka Stevens, a trade unionist became the prime minister. The APC government inherited an economy whose cocoa production was[1] expanding at a reasonable annual rate of 4 per cent between 1965and 1973 against an annual population growth rate of 1.9 per cent. Also, average personal incomes rose steadily while life expectancy rose from 37 in 1961 to 47 in 1979 (Chege, 2002). The ascendancy to power by the opposition APG indeed, turned Sierra Leone into a beacon of democratic change worthy of emulation by her neighbours.

Unfortunately however, this was short-lived. SiakaStevens administration ended up the perception of instability but speed up and descended into greater ethnic-based political exclusion and higher levels of corruption and rent seeking (Sawyer, 2003). With a high ambition, Siaka Stevens created a one-party state under his personal control, gradually emasculated the Sierra Leone parliament and banned all opposition-parties. As time went on, struggles for the redistribution of the countries scarce resources developed as political elites of the north felt increasingly marginalised. The appropriation of public goods by political leaders operating in concert with Lebanese businessmen seemed to attain higher proportions (Sawyer, 2003). Mismanagement, illegality and corruption became the source of livelihood as public educational and health services were almost non-existent.

In 1985, Siaka Stevens handed over the administration of the country to his chosen successor, Major-General Joseph SaiduMomoh. Even though there was a change of leadership, the political and economic situations did not change. Corruption continued to rear its ugly head in Sierra. Leone and politics became more polarized, ethnicized and centralized. The nation was polarized into two: the clients of the APC and a growing number of aggrieved political and business rivals (Lord, 2003). The African Development Bank and the Bretton Woods institutions made frantic efforts to revive the Sierra Leone economy but to no avail. Successive missions failed to sufficiently impress the Momoh government of the importance of probity and accountability in the management of public affairs (Sawyer, 2003). By 1990, Sierra Leone was economically and politically,:at; the verge of collapse. It became impossible for the state to mobilise revenue out of taxes and redistribute resources effectively. Moreover, smuggling of thecountry's diamond became more rampant and uncontrollable and competition for economic resources grew more relentless (Lord, 2003). Disoriented young people had no other option than to turn to fantasy, drugs and recreational violence with real deaths (Chege, 2002).

On 23rd March 1991 the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under the leadership of FodaySaybanaSankoh launched an insurgency into Sierra Leone from the Liberian territory controlled by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) (Richards, 2003). Before the attack, FordaySankoh was based in Libya and had recruited a fighting force among Sierra Leonean exiles and dissidents caught up in the Liberian civil war (Fanthorpe, 2001). It is worthy to note that around that time, neighbouring Liberia was in the throes of a grim war and the APC government decided to provide an air base to the West African peacekeeping force that intended to dislodge the NPFL (Chege, 2002:142). At the onset, the RUF pledged to overthrow the APC government, restore multi-party democracy, redistribute the country's wealth to ordinary citizens and bring exploitation to an end. Having heard these seemingly convincing intentions, most Sierra Leoneans initially welcomed the rebel operations. Many people, especially the youth who had suffered abuses from, chiefdom authorities or who had no real opportunities to gain an education or employment readily joined the rebels (Lord, 2003). Instead of utilising guerrilla training, Sanko chose to exploit criminality, torture, drugs, plunder and pillage in battle. New recruits and captives were sent to forest camps where they were indoctrinated into the rebel movement (Lord, 2003). The indoctrinated captives were then forced by the RUF commanders to kill community leaders, family members and government officials. The RUF had a practice of tattooing new recruits and this made it difficult for them to escape because they could face deathat the hands of government soldiers or being lynched by ordinary citizens. Villages were vandalised anda lot of villagers fled their homes. Some of the rebels took undue advantage of the situation to seek personal scores and economic gains through looting. As time went on, hostilities were high and fighting between the government army and the RUF intensified with both sides losing their men on the battlefield. The situation was getting out of hand and so a peaceful settlement had to. be sought. In a bid to appease the insurgents therefore, President Joseph Momoh signed into law a new multi-party constitution and promised, general elections for late 1992 (Gbesie, 2003). He further allowed the formation of political parties and broadcast a call to the RUF to stop fighting and join the political process. The unfortunate thing about JosephMomoh's initiative was that he did not follow it up with direct talks and after the army was able to check the first advances made by the RUF, he misconstrued it to mean that everything was under control. In other words, Momoh thought that the army had the military might to defeat the insurgents. Meanwhile, the RUF continued to infiltrate areas, which hitherto, were held by government soldiers.

In April 1992, a group of young and largely inexperienced army officers under the leadership of Captain Valentine Strasser staged a coup d'etat. As has been noted by Conteh-Morgan and Kadivar, "an economic and social disequilibrium produced by the enormous burden on the economy already weakened by years of inflation and mismanagement, generated demands for the reallocation of political power and rewards which intensified the frustration of those directly suffering the burden of war, thereby resulting in conflict between the APC regime and junior army officers" (Conteh-Morgan and Kadivar, 1998:144). The coup leaders' stated intentions were basically three:

a. To make sure that the rebel insurgency was brought to an immediate end followed by post war reconstruction and rehabilitation;

b. To pursue a genuine democratization process in Sierra Leone; and

c. To continue providing support to ECOMOG whose operation was tied to the national security of Sierra' Leone,(Conteh-Morgan 'and Kadivar, 1998:145).

Initially, the NPRC made some efforts in talking peace with the rebel group and publicly offered amnesty to the rebels in return for unconditional surrender. Regrettably, however, the promising start to peace did not gain momentum. Captain Strasser did not follow the offers made with further overtures and even dismissed the RUF referring to them as bandits who have been sent to wreak havoc in Sierra Leone(Gbesie, 2003).

By October 1992, the RUF took over Kono, Sierra Leone's principal diamond mining district. In response, the NPRC launched amobilisation campaign to get rid of the rebel force at its forest base. Fighting between the two belligerent groups intensified as the days went by, and by June 1993, the RUF had to pull back to its remote base camps (Gbesie, 2003). The rebel movement was at the .verge of losing even its small village

enclaves in the Kailahun district and so the leadership took a decision to abandon heavy weapons and vehicles and go to ground in the Gola forest, a network of three forest reserves running from the middle portion of the Liberian territory, to the Kambui Hills south of Kenema (Richards, 2003). In December 1993, Captain Strasser announced a unilateral ceasefire and called on the RUF to surrender. The rebels not convinced by this announcement, renewed their offensive operations with surprising strength and over ran key anny positions. This was made possible because the army had no training or capacity for jungle warfare and was only limited to vehicle-based operations along roads (Richards, 2003). The war became incrementally horrendous in the subsequent months.

Meanwhile, the government had launched the Kamajor militia fighters (a civil defence force) to help outwit FodaySankoh's RUF. This did not help the NPRC to avoid pressure and so it turned to the international private security sector and recruited a company based in the Isle of Man, United Kingdom. The company withdrew its services later after the RUF killed one of its commanders and twenty others during a reconnaissance mission (Richards, 2003:16). At this point, the NPRC regime became desperate and accepted an alternative offer from a South African based company, Executive Outcomes (E.O.) to provide bush warfare training, air support, sophisticated tracking and communications equipment (Richards, 2003). In subsequent months, the NPRC came under intense pressure from the international community to concede elections, even before a peace process facilitated by a London based conflict resolution organisation had began. In response to the overwhelming pressure, the NPRC fixed February 1996 for general elections..Unfortunately however, on 16th January 1996, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio staged a palace coup. According to Gbesie (2003), the coup came as a result of anxieties about Strasser and other NPRC members' commitment to democratisation. Moreover, Brigadier Bio had a personal stake in talking peace with the rebels so as to get his elder sister and her husband who had been abducted in 1991 by the rebels freed. In Brigadier Bio's view, Captain Strasser's handling of the peace process was rather clumsy and some improvement was urgently needed (Gbesie, 2,003). It must be mentioned that the palace coup did not however, prevent the general elections from coming on as scheduled.

Julius Bio's first approach after being sworn in as the new Head of state was to make a terse appeal to FodaySankohto let them talk peace. The latter initially expressed his willingnessto talk peace and even announced that President Henri Konan Bedie of Ivory Coast and theBurkinabe President, Blaise Campaqre were making arrangements to mediate for a peace deal.

Regrettably, Sankoh later came out with a condition that if any progress was to be carried out towards the peace talks, then it was important that the scheduled elections be postponed. It must be mentioned that apart from Sankoh, some ECOWAS leaders such as' Sani Abacha of Nigeria and Ghana's President Raw lings also suggested that the general elections be postponed. In response, the Head of state said that it was only Sierra Leoneans who would decide whether theelections should be postponed or not and suggested that they both met in Ivory Coast to iron out issues. Meanwhile, in Sierra Leone, the combined force of the army, the Executive Outcome and the Kamajor militias had severely over run the rebel strongholds and pushed them away from the diamond-rich areas. The NPRC organised a national consultative conference and civil society leaders demanded that the elections be conducted as scheduled. Strong appeals were made for the restoration of constitutional democracy and the disbanding of the Kamajor fighters. Besides, there was considerable pressure from the international community on both the government and the RUF to come to the negotiating table. In this connexion, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and International alert, the OAU and the Ivorian foreign minister, Amara Essy tried and convinced FodaySahkoh to meet with the NPRC in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. A day after the peace talks started, the elections were conducted as scheduled and Ahmed TijanKabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party won with an overwhelming majority. Causes of the Sierra Leone Conflict

In April 2001, International Crisis Group (ICG) noted that 'the underlying causes of Sierra Leone's war are frequently forgotten in the face of the immediate conflict. These include corrupt and unaccountable government, manipulated ethnicity and alienated youth and that peace cannot be sustained without addressing these factors.' (ICG, 2001). However, the major factors that caused the Sierra Leone conflict are:.–

State Failure

One important feature of Sierra Leone which led to it crisis was the growing weakness of the State throughout 1970s and 1980s, ultimately leading to its collapse 1990s (Rotberge, 2003). As William Reno puts it the failure of the Sierra Leonean State does not derive from a sudden vacuum of power but from a deliberate strategy pursued by political leaders to undermine state structure, public service and institutions while monopolizing economic resources (Ducasse-Rogier, 2004). Weak military, corruption, mismanagement and misappropriation of resources, and inability to deliver public goods all contributed to state failure in Sierra Leonean

Diamonds

The relationship between diamonds and the Sierra Leone conflict can be described as a double one: first diamond contributed to and aggravated state failure (which in turn facilitated the eruption of conflict); secondly, diamond contributed to prolonging the conflict. Illegal mining activities contributed to creating a violent climate that eventually led to war. Besides, diamond fuelled the conflicts as it became the main motive for all of the parties to continue the war. Ducasse-Rogier (2004) argued that diamond was among the RUF major war aims. In addition, private actors seized the opportunity provided by the war to 'enter the market' without hesitating to forge alliance with the warring parties whenever necessary (Smillie, Gberie and Hazleton, 2000) and this helped to prolong the conflict.

External Support

The leader of the RUF, FodaySankqh and Charles Taylor the then president of Liberia were very good friends. Their relationship dates back to the end of the 1980s. Both were trained in Libya and were involved in Blaise Campaore's seizure of power in Burkinafaso (Ducasse-Rogier, 2004) Between 1988 and 1991, Sankoh and his associates travelled extensively toLiberia in order to .gather support for their cause, while RUF fighters occasionally fought alongside .Taylor's .rebel movement; the National Patritic Front of Liberia (NPFL), which had launched an insurgency in Liberia in December 1989 (Abdullah, 1998). In return, Taylor offered important support to the RUF$_5$ providing weapons, training, financial help and even fighters to the Sierra Leonean movement. Significantly, the 1991 RUF attacks were also staged from NPFL territory (Riley, 1996).

CharlseTaylors motives to backup the RUF are manifold: in addition to the fact that he was in a way returning the RUF previous assistance, he also had his own reason for opposing General Morrioh (who was then in power in Sierra Leonean). In 1988, he had been arrested and jailed in Freetown while he was attempting to convince Momoh to help him overthrow Samuel Doe, the then Liberian President. And in 1991, when the first attack were launched Momoh was actively 'supporting the Nigerian-led ECOMQG, the Exconomic Community of West African State Monitoring' Group which was deployed in Liberia and in fact opposed the NPFL (Smillie, Gberie and Hazleton, 2000).

Liberian trafficking activities (arms and diamond) fuelled the Sierra Leon conflict for years.. Accordingly, Taylor and his associates sustained the war in order to uphold the economic gains he was getting from the conflict. Taylor and his inner circle seized the opportunity to develop their personal wealth'. He also benefited .politically from the Sierra Leon conflict as the trafficking business provided his NPFL with the necessary resources to maintain and develop its own military capability.

The Role of United Nations in the Resolution of Sierra Leone Conflict

As previously stated, Sierra Leone saw two UN intervention missions. The first, theUnited Nations .Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL), was established with theSecurity Council Resolution 1181 on 13 July 1998) (Ryan, 2012).The mission's main objectives were to monitor the military and security situation in the country, and to monitor the disarmament and demobilization of former combatants. As the mandate stated, the mission was established to observe the situation and report its findings back to the Security Council. The mission was not actively involved in ending the conflict. This is seen when the RUF in late 1998 and early 1999 reinitiated fighting and overran the majority of Freetown. The UN mission did relatively little to prevent the return of fighting, and instead relocated to Conakry, Guinea which was when the Security Council then decided to downsize the mission) (Ryan, 2012). If simply analyzing the proposed hype thesis based on this mission, it would be apparent that in those civil wars that are expected to last shorter UN missions do not have a direct correlation with altering a war's duration/However, upon UNOMSIL's departure the Security Council established a second mission; the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (Ryan, 2012).

UNAMSIL was established in October 1999 and its main objectives were to assist in the implementation of the disarmament and demobilization plan established under the Lome Peace Agreement, to provide security at important locations in Freetown and surrounding areas, and to assist the government in extending its authority throughout the country (Malan 2003, cited in Ryan, 2012). Initially, it seemed as though UNAMSIL would be no more effective in curbing violence than was UNOMSIL, .as the available troop strength was too low to allow a widespreaddeployment (Malan et al. 2002, cited in Ryan, 2012).

UNAMSIL was deployed hastily without sufficient troops largely because the lack ofcommitment by the RUF to stop fighting and the withdrawal of ECOMOG required the UN tomake an attempt, even if rushed, at keeping the peace and resolving the conflict. In April 2000,in order to facilitate the demobilization and disarmament process, a subgroup of UNAMSILopened new demobilization camps in RUF controlled locations. Instead of this quickening the process of disarmament, in actuality, it delayed the peace process in that RUF reneged on the peace agreement and attacked the UN camps in Makeni and Magburaka, taking over 500 UN hostages. It is thought that the original state of dysfunction of UNAMSIL "inspired both sides to renege on commitments made in the peace accords" (Howard 2008, cited in Ryan, 2012). The RUF as a result of the attack on UN troops captured the armored personnel carriers used by the UN in order to launch an attack on Freetown.

Inadvertently, the UN gave the RUF capacity and opportunity to resume fighting. Upon this apparent failure of the UN mission, the UK sent in paratroopers and warships in order to protect British nationals, these troops however ended up assuming the role of the UN in defending parts of Freetown and the Lungi international airport (Malan et al. 2002, cited in Ryan, 2012). A top UK official even stated that Britain was essentially running the day-to-'day operations of UN forces. The above-mentioned situation shows that UNAMSIL increased the duration of the conflict, however this increase was mainly due to structural and organisational problems within the mission itself.

Challenges of UN (UNAMSIL) in Resolving the Sierra Leone Conflict

Some of the challenge's experienced by UN (UNAMSIL) in resolving the Sierra Leone Conflict are, slow rate of deployment, inadequate manpower and logistics as well as noncooperation of warlords. Others are non effective mandates, ineffective enforcement of arms embargo, non tackling of root cause of conflict and non participation of troops from developed nations (Agada, 2008). Research has shown that delay in the deployment of troop gave room for the belligerents to arm themselves effectively and prepare for the conflict (Agada, 2008). EquallyAjayi (2008) identified lack of clear mandates, disparities in logistics and remuneration, and divergent approaches to issues such as sanctions, and elections as the challenges encountered byUN peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone. As such, even though there were some useful consultations between the UN Security Council and ECOWAS, the above factors created a disconnect between the political decisions that were made and their implementation in the field.

Another major challenge of UN in its peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone was its acquisition of troops from western developed nations, hi 1991 only 2 of the top 10 TCC were developing countries, Ghana and Nepal. As at June 2006 of the top 10 contributors 9 were from developing States. Of the nearly 73,000 peacekeepers a mere few thousands are from western industrialized nations with France ranked twenty second being the largest contributor with 588 troops 12. As the process of peacekeeping in the Post-Cold War era becomes more dangerous and complex, western nations are becoming increasingly reluctant to provide troops to the UN for peacekeeping operations. Thus, towards the end of the civil war only two towns within RUF controlled areas had UN deployments, and no towns within diamond producing areas had a UNpresence (Hirsch 2001, 148-149).   .

Another challenge experienced by UN peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone was the high
sensitivity of Sierra Leoneans, to their culture and traditions as well as religious practices, which attracted hostile reactions Sierra Leoneans to UN peacekeepers.
As a result of the above challenges UNAMSIL could not record much success in Sierra Leone. For instance, stemming production of contraband would have lessened its profit to the RUF and presumably shortened the conflict, but UNAMSIL could not achieve this.

UNAMSIL was unable to demobilize the central combatants, hence the difficulty it experienced in the disarmament process, hi addition, while the UN mission did have a role in bringing all parties to the negotiating table, the evidence suggests that UNAMSIL had a smallnegative effect on the war's duration, meaning the UN missions in Sierra Leone slightly increased the duration of the civil war.

Despite the above challenges, UN disarmed more than 75,000 ex-fighters, including about 7,000 child soldiers; assisted in holding national and local government elections, which enabled people to participate in decisions that affected their daily lives; helped to rebuild the country's police force to itspre-war strength and contributed towards rehabilitating the infrastructure and bringing government services to local communities. The UN also helped the government stop illicit trading in diamonds and regulate the industry. Now diamonds have become an engine of growth, with government income from diamonds soaring from just $10 million in 2000 to $160 million.

UNAMSIL monitored and trained dozens of Sierra Leoneans in human rights and was instrumental in setting up the Special Court for Sierra Leone to try those most responsible for war crimes. The mission also assisted the government in setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, tasked with healing the wounds of war by bringing together perpetrators and victims of atrocities.

In addition, UNAMSIL troops reconstructed schools and clinics, launched and funded agricultural
projects and sponsored free medical clinics in far-flung areas.

II.   CONCLUSION

Obviously, the United Nations peace keeping operation in Sierra Leone helped to restore peace in the country. However, one cannot say that UN's performance in Sierra Leone was satisfactory considering the organization's experience in peacekeeping operation. The unsatisfactory performance of UN in could be attributed to the challenges the organization encountered while maintaining peace in Sierra Leone. The challenges are responsible for thedifficulty UN is. experiencing in carrying out its tasks, hence the organisation's

failure in peacekeeping operations in Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and Sudan. The poor performance of UN in peacekeeping operations is also responsible for the lost of respect for the UN.

These challenges that impeded the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone and Africa generally are not unique to the continent. They also affect the peacekeeping efforts of the UN in other parts of the world. The paper therefore argued vehemently that UN can only carry out effective peacekeeping operation effectively and there by maintain world peace and security if the identified challenges are given adequate consideration. Proffering proffered remedies to challenges may strengthen the capacity of UN to manage future peace keeping operations in Africa. Some of the strategic remedies are;

a. There should be quick and prompt deployment of troops by UN to conflict areas. This prevents the chance of rebels acquiring arms and ammunitions in preparation for conflict. It will also help the UN to record a successful mission.

b. The UN should ensure proper training of all peacekeepers in mission specific peace keeping operations before their deployment to such mission areas.

c. The US and other western nations should seriously reconsider contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa.

d. The UN should ensure the effective implementation of disarmament and arms embargo it imposes on waning parties

e. African countries should be committed to contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations.

f. African leaders should strengthen the sub-regional organizations in the continent; this will make them more effective in settling African disputes. This is very important because African problems can only be settled effectively by Africans.

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