CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN WEST AFRICA:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA

ABDALLAH ABDUL-MUMUNI

Title

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Abstract

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conflicts. The research questions are:

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• What were the conflict resolution initiatives employed in resolving both conflicts?
• Why did the Lome Peace Accord succeed in the case of Sierra Leone whilst the Abuja Peace Accord failed in bringing peace to Liberia?

In order to answer the afore-mentioned questions and fulfil the aim of this paper, a qualitative research method has been chosen. The study is mainly based on secondary sources such as textbooks, official documents from ECOWAS and the UN, articles, magazines and newspapers as well as internet resources. In making the comparative analysis the Conflict Transformation Model as espoused by Kumar Rupesinghe has been utilized. This model has specifically helped in explaining the reasons why peace returned to Sierra Leone but eluded the people of Liberia for a long time.

The conclusion drawn from the study is that a multi-track approach is required in dealing with conflicts in West Africa so that it would touch on the context of the conflict, the conflict structure, the intra-party as well as the inter- party divisions and the broader system of society and governance within the conflict area.

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Keywords: Conflict, Peace, Mediators, Warring factions, rebels, Conflict resolution, Conflict transformation, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

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Abbreviations

AFL- Armed Forces of Liberia
AFRC- Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC- All Peace Council
AU- African Union
CCR- Commission For the Consolidation of Peace
CR- Conciliatory Resources
ECOWAS- Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG- ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
EO- Executive Outcome
ICRC- International Committee of Red Cross
IGNU- Interim Government of National Unity
IFMC- Inter-Faith Mediation Committee
INN- International Negotiation Network
IRCSL- Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone
LAP- Liberia People's Party
LDF- Lofa Defence Council
LNC- Liberia National Council
LNTG- Liberia National Transitional Government
LPC- Liberia Peace Council
LPP- Liberia People's Party
LUP- Liberia United Party
NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFL- National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPFL-CRC- National Patriotic Front of Liberia- Central Revolutionary Council
NPRC- National Provisional Ruling Council
OAU- Organisation of African Unity
RUF- Revolutionary United Front
UN- United Nations Organisation
UNAMSIL- United Nations Missions to Sierra Leone
UNHCR- United Nations High Commission For Refugees
ULIMO- United Liberia Movement
UK United Kingdom
USA- United States of America
UNOMIL- United Nations Observer Mission to Liberia
UNOMSIL- United Nations Observer Mission to Sierra Leone
UP- United Party
UPP- United People's Party

Map of Sierra Leone

Source: www.lonelyplanet.com

Map of Liberia

Source: www.lonelyplanet.com

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Conflicts constitute one of the greatest challenges currently facing the West African sub-region. Issues of identity, governance, resource allocation, state sovereignty and power struggle, sometimes coupled with the personality question, have all conspired to cause staggering loss of life, destruction of property and environmental degradation.[1]

It is a truism that since the beginning of recorded history conflicts existed in Africa; however, the end of the Cold war brought to the fore a new path- stream of conflicts and domestic tension, which has seriously derailed the West African development process in almost all aspects. Today, while increased cooperation between various countries in West Africa has fortunately helped to reduce the tempo of inter-state conflicts considerably, the post cold war period has ushered in its wake an upsurge of conflicts across regional, ethnic, and religious lines within some nations. The breakdown of the ideological mindset and the structures of the cold war global alliances, had also unfortunately, unleashed formally suppressed ethnic and political tensions in some West African countries. In other words, conflicts have arisen within these nations from deep- rooted antagonisms that had been held in check for so many years. In effect, the end of the cold war has brought to the fore exposed conflicts, which were hitherto overshadowed by superpower rivalry. In countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea- Bissau and Cote d'Ivoire there have been outright carnage and the destruction of property and traditional institutions which used to contain domestic tension and conflicts as well as environmental decay and instability.[2] In these countries violent conflicts have, led to the dislocation of most of the population and wrecked their socio-economic infrastructure. The civil conflicts particularly in Sierra Leone and Liberia have been characterised by large economic interests involving diamonds and extreme violence against civilians The horrendous effects of such conflicts, and their implications for the economies and security of many West African states have touched the conscience of many leaders in the sub-region.

Against this background, peace and conflict resolution have emerged as issues of greatest importance in West Africa. The re-emergence of age-old conflicts has effectively challenged both West African leaders and the wider international community's capability of devising effective means of handling conflicts in the sub-region. Leaders in West Africa and the world at large have, indeed, recognised the immense importance of conflict management, resolution and transformation in the maintenance of peace and stability. In this regard, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which was initially established as an economic integration grouping is now increasingly been entrusted with security and peace making functions. In order to carry out these functions effectively, the ECOWAS Authority created the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) in August 1990 to serve as an intervention force

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[1] Bakwesegha, C.J., '' Conflicts in Africa: A New Role for the OUA?'' In Sorbo, G.M. & Vale, P. (eds.) Out of Conflict to Peace in Africa, (Motala: Motala Grafisca, 1997) p.79
[2] ibid

in West African conflicts.[3] ECOMOG has since participated in restoring peace and security in Sierra Leone and Liberia

1.1 Aim and Research Question

This thesis seeks to make a comparative analysis of the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia by looking at the nature of the conflict resolution initiatives employed in both countries. Specifically, we shall discuss the Lome Peace Accord signed in 1999 and the Abuja Peace Accord signed in 1995 to resolve the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia respectively. In the study, the following questions will be raised:
   a. What were the root causes and trajectories of the civil wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia?
   b. What were the conflict resolution initiatives employed in both situations?
   c. Why did the Lome Peace Accord succeed in resolving the Sierra Leone conflict whilst the Abuja Peace Plan (of May 1995) failed in the case of Liberia?

 In the comparative analysis, two criteria are used in judging whether a Peace Accord was successful or not and these are:

(i) The extent to which the Peace Accord has been successful in ensuring that the conflicting parties lay down their arms. More importantly, the degree of success of disarmament and demobilization exercises. For instance, whereas the only rebel group in Sierra Leone (the RUF) has completely been dissolved, in Liberia, rebel groups still exist and cyclical outbreaks of violence still occur in the country.[4]

(ii) The extent to which the Peace Accord has been able to ensure stable peace in the country.

After a thorough discussion of the research questions, some suggestions shall be made as regards resolving conflicts in the West African sub-region. For instance, it is an undeniable fact that due to the nature of conflicts in Africa, only one conflict resolution strategy cannot be used successfully in resolving conflicts in Africa and for that matter West Africa. In view of this, a multi- track approach will be proposed as a panacea to conflicts in West Africa.

1.2 Motivation and Significance of the Study

A number of factors make the comparative analysis of the conflict resolution initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia quite interesting and informative. First and foremost, both countries are in the Mano River basin area and share a common border.
Second, the conflicts in the two countries are intra-state and have a life history of not less than ten years. As a result, the conflict trajectory can be assessed in phases.

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[3] Maghar, K.P., ECOMOG Operations: Lessons for Peace-keeping, in Maghar, K.P. & Conteh-Moran, E.,(eds.), Peace-keeping in Africa, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998) p.52
[4] http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp (Accessed: 20/10/2004)

Third, Sierra Leone and Liberia were founded in the eighteenth century to serve as homes for freed British and American slaves respectively.
Fourth, the conflicts in both countries were intrinsically political in nature. In Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front under the leadership of Forday Sankoh wanted to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Ahmad Tijan Kabbah. Similarly, the main objective of the various rebel groups in Liberia was to unseat the government of President Samuel Doe.

Moreover, in both cases conflict resolution initiatives were employed. In the Liberian case, the peace initiatives failed and led to more plunder and carnage. In the case of Sierra Leone, however, the initiatives were eventually successful and the conflict came to an official end in February 2002.[5] Again, in the case of Liberia there were many warring factions involved in the peace talks and mainly international negotiators conducted the mediation. In the Sierra Leone case, there were only two parties involved in the mediation and the peace talks were organised by local, national and international actors.

Another significant difference between the Sierra Leonean and Liberian cases is the fact that "grassroots peace culture" existed in the former. People at the grassroots level saw the need and were given the chance to deal with the wave of violence in the country. For instance, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) represented the civil society in the country and played an active role in the Lome peace talks.[6] The council members used caucusing to air critical issues raised by the parties to the conflict and to encourage them to cooperate and work diligently towards reaching a consensus. Beyond the peace talks, the IRCSL members were involved in reconciliation, relief, human rights training, disarmament, democratization, and reintegration programmes.[7] Consequently, there was the development of a "peace culture" from the grassroots to the national level. Even though the "peace culture" did not immediately bring the civil war to an end, it did minimise violence.

In the Liberian situation, the civil society was not given the opportunity to play any meaningful role in the negotiation process. The peace mediators were only anxious to appease the combatants and totally ignored the contribution the civil society was willing to offer. Consequently, sporadic clashes between warring factions continued and the rebels pillaged and plundered civilians for so many years. The "peace culture" was therefore virtually non-existent in Liberia.

In view of the afore-mentioned factors, it is without any stretch of imagination that a comparative perspective of conflict resolution initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia will help us understand the root causes and trajectories of the conflicts in the two countries. The reasons why the conflict resolution initiatives failed in the case of Liberia and were successful in the Sierra Leone case will be

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[5] Richards, P., The Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sierra Leone, Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael' Conflict Research Unit, August 2003, p26 Available at http://www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/working_paper_21.pdf. (Accessed: 21/12/2003)
[6] Turay, T. M., Civil Society and Peace building: The role of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Available at: http://.www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/society.shtml (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[7] ibid

brought to light. Furthermore, the comparative analysis will help us come to grips with the overall impact of the violent conflicts in the two countries.

1.3 Research Methodology

The thesis has been based on two different periods. That is, for the Sierra Leone conflict, the period between 1991 and 2002 has been considered. This period marked the beginning of the Sierra Leone war up to the signing and implementation of the Lome Peace Accord. In the case of the Liberian conflict, the period between 1989 and 1996 has been taken into consideration. This period covers the beginning of the Liberian conflict up to the signing and implementation of the first Abuja Peace Accord.

In making a comparative analysis of the conflict resolution initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the following themes have been considered:

a. The historical background and nature of the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia. More importantly, I have attempted to discuss the root causes and trajectories of the different conflict situations.

b. The various conflict resolution initiatives that were employed in the two scenarios throughout the periods under consideration.

c. The reasons why in the Sierra Leone situation, the Lome Peace talks succeeded while the Abuja Peace Accord failed to bring peace to Liberia have also been discussed at length.

1.4 Collection of Data

Data for the thesis were mainly collected from secondary sources. In collecting data from documents, I applied Scott's four criteria for assessing the quality of documents. These are:
  i.   Authenticity: That is, whether the evidence gathered for the thesis is genuine and of unquestionable origin;
  ii.   Credibility: To find out the extent to which the evidence gathered is free from error and distortion;
  iii.   Representativeness: That is, whether the evidence obtained is typical of its kind or not; and finally
  iv.   Meaning: To find out the extent to which the evidence gathered is clear and comprehensible.[8]

To meet the afore-mentioned criteria, I tried to gather comprehensible and clear information from authentic and credible sources.

 In view of the fact that the comparative study of the conflict resolution initiatives in the Sierra Leonean and Liberian conflicts is quite a new area, enormous effort has been made in selecting relevant information. The various sources from which the research data were collected include the following:
  a.   Information from textbooks, articles and journals on the conflicts in the two countries. In addition, a textual analysis of relevant documents from

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[8] Scott, J., A Matter of Record, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) p.6

> Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), and the United Nations Organisation (UN)
>
> b. Mass media outputs such as newspapers and magazines.
> c. Virtual outputs such as Internet resources. For instance, because of my inability to travel to the ECOWAS secretariat (due to financial constraints), I have relied mainly on the internet for the various peace Agreements signed in both the Sierra Leonean and Liberian cases.

1.5 Interpretation of Data

With regard to the interpretation of my research data, I have relied solely on qualitative data analysis. Specifically, discourse and content analyses have been employed.

Discourse Analysis: According to Bryman, discourse analysis is an approach to language that can be applied to forms of communication other than talk.[9] The approach has been used in interpreting texts such as magazine and newspaper articles that have discussed the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Content Analysis: Bryman defines content analysis as an approach to the analysis of documents and text that seeks to qualify content in terms of predetermined categories and systematic and replicable manner.[10] Thus, to a very large extent, I have used content analysis in analysing documents on the conflicts under consideration.

Content analysis has some disadvantages. For instance, it is subject to increased error, particularly when relational analysis is used to attain a higher level of interpretation. Also, it is often devoid of theoretical base.[11] All these demerits were taken into account in the analysis and interpretation of the research data.

1.6 **Outline of the Thesis**

Chapter one gives a general description of how the West African sub-region has been plagued with intra-state conflicts after the end of the cold war. It also discusses the ramification of these conflicts on Sierra Leone and Liberia in particular, and the sub-region as a whole. For instance, some analysts have argued that the civil war in Liberia was a West African crisis fought out in the Liberian theatre. In other words, it represented a revolt with West Africa wide dimension. The chapter also describes the aim and research questions as well as the motivation and significance of the thesis.

Chapter two gives a review of relevant literature related to the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It also gives an in-depth discussion of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks in the areas of conflict management, resolution and transformation.

Chapter three explains the political history of Sierra Leone and goes on to discuss the root causes as well as the trajectory of the country's civil war. In addition, the peace initiatives employed at various times to resolve the conflict have been dealt with.

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[9] Bryman, A., Social Research Methods, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p. 360
[10] ibid p.180
[11] Available at http://writing.colostate.edu/references/research/content/com.2d3.cfm. (Accessed: 20/10/2004)

In Chapter four, the political history of Liberia has been clearly discussed. The chapter also gives an extensive discussion of the root causes, nature and dynamics of the Liberian conflict. The various conflict resolution strategies employed right from the beginning up to 1995 when the first Abuja Accord was signed have been discussed.

Chapter five makes a comparative analysis of the Lome Peace Accord (in the case of Sierra Leone) and the Abuja Peace Accord (in the Liberian case) using the Conflict Transformation Model of Kumar Rupesinghe. Essentially, the comparison is made to show why the Abuja Peace Accord failed to bring peace to Liberia while the Lome Peace Accord did succeed in bringing peace to Sierra Leone.

Finally, chapter six gives a conclusion of the research work and suggestions are offered for future research. Specifically, it draws conclusion based on what has been discussed in the preceding chapters of the thesis and re-emphasises the need for a generic and multi-track approach in solving intra-state conflicts in West Africa.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

Until the late 1980s there were few scholarly attempts to understand the nature and source of violent conflict and its resolution was marginal in character. To a very large extent, this state of affairs has now changed. Conflict and conflict resolution have become subjects for systematic analysis and scholarly tracts and practitioners' reflections have helped immensely to institutionalise the field and enhance the individual and collective capacity to manage conflicts.[12] As a result, a considerable body of literature on conflict management, resolution, and transformation has been added to our libraries around the globe- mostly by scholars from Western societies. Unfortunately, however, a comparative study of the conflict resolution initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia has been minimally researched. In contrast, what have attracted much attention are conflict resolution strategies employed in southern Africa particularly, Angola and South Africa. Conteh-Morgan has come close to the perspective of this thesis by examining the political and diplomatic dimensions of the interaction between Liberian and ECOWAS members in the Liberian conflict.[13] His analysis suggests that the political and diplomatic dimensions of the ECOWAS peace process in Liberia are to a large extent, determined by a condition of co-operational insecurity on the part of the main players in the conflict. Similarly, Sawyer, former interim president of Liberia has examined the nature of the violent conflicts in the Mano River Basin area and discussed the current approaches to conflict resolution and the reconstitution of order pointing to their weaknesses.[14] Furthermore, Richards has written at length on the causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone and indicated that social exclusion was the basic cause of the war. He has also assessed the likely legacy and legitimacy of war induced social change in post conflict Sierra Leone.[15] Mortimer for his part has identified three distinctive diplomatic periods in the multilateral intervention in Liberia and argues that the tribulations of ECOMOG stemmed largely from the lack of a genuine regional consensus regarding the anarchy in Liberia.[16] All these have served as valuable foundations for my analysis.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

Conflict and peace are both defined and viewed against the backdrop of security and stability. It is almost impossible to define or explain the two concepts- conflict and peace- in isolation of security and stability. This is because both terms are, nonetheless, critical variables in the analysis of security and stability. Generally, however, the usage

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[12] Bercovitch, J., Mediation in International Conflict: An Overview of Theory, A review of Practice, in Zartman, I. W. & Rasmussen, J.L.,(eds.), Peace Making in International Conflict: Method and Practice, (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1999) p.149.

[13] Conteh-Morgan, E., The Politics and Diplomacy of the Liberian Peace Process, in Magyar, K.P. & Conteh- Morgan, E., Peacekeeping in Africa: ECOMOG in Liberia, (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998) pp.32-50

[14] Sawyer, Amos, Violent Conflicts and Governance Challenges in West Africa: The Case of the Mano River Basin Area. Workshop on Political Theory and Policy Analysis. Indiana University. Available at: http://www.Indiana.edu%/~workshop/papers/sawyer_022003.pdf. (Accessed: 21/12/2003)

[15] Richards, P. op. cit.

[16] Mortimer, R. A., ECOMOG, Liberia and Regional Security in West Africa in Keller, E. & Rotchild, D. (eds.), Africa in the New International Order, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p.150

of these terms has tended to be biased towards explaining the political predicaments of states.

Conceptually, conflict presents a serious problem, particularly with the increasing expressed scepticism about realist definition used to describe it. According to some analysts, conflict often expresses itself in the form of violence, noting that once it assumes this character, " it becomes both undesirable and counter- productive.[17]" It is, however, important for us to note that the concept itself does not carry any threatening connotations. For example, Rubin, Pruitt and Kim explain it as "perceived divergence of interests or beliefs that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously."[18] Even though they accept the fact that conflict is capable of wrecking havoc on society, they maintain that it is not inherently violent, dangerous and inimical to peace and security. For their part, Bercovitch and Allison have argued that conflict can lead to mutual satisfaction and growth or it may produce acrimony, hostilities and violence. [19] Galtung has complemented this definition by arguing that conflicts have both life-affirming and life-destroying aspects and they form from contradictions in the structure of society. Once formed, conflicts undergo a variety of transformational processes: articulation or des-articulation, conscientisation or de-conscientisation, complexification or simplification, polarisation or de-polarisation, escalation or de-escalation.[20] Galtung proposes a model of conflict that encompasses both symmetric and asymmetric conflicts. He asserts that conflict could be viewed as a triangle, with attitude (A), behaviour (B) and contradiction (C) at its vertices. Galtung argues that all the three elements need to be present together to make up a full conflict. In his view, a conflict structure without conflictual attitudes or behaviour is a latent conflict. He asserts that conflict is a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviour are constantly changing and influencing each other.[21] In that case, when a conflict emerges, it becomes a conflict formation as the interests of parties come into conflict or the relationship they find themselves becomes oppressive. Conflicting parties then organise around this structure to pursue their interests. They develop antagonistic attitudes and conflicting behaviour and as time goes on the conflict formation starts to grow and may widen, draw in other parties, deepen and spread, generating secondary conflicts within the main conflicting parties or among outsiders.[22]
Similarly, Bloomfield, Ghai, and Reilly say conflict itself is not necessarily a negative process. It is one of the most powerfully positive factors for change in a society.[23]

Essentially, two different types of conflict are discernible from the above definitions. One is harmful and dangerous to mankind and the other is harmless. It is the former

[17] Maltosa, K., Conflict Management: Lesotho Political Crisis After the 1998 Elections in Lesotho Social Science Review 5, No. 1, June 1999 p.166.

[18] Rubin, J. Z. et al, Social Conflict: Escalation, Stalemate and Settlement (2ed),(New York: McGraw Hill, 1994) p.5

[19] Bercvitch, J. & Allison, H, The Study of International Mediation: Theoretical Issues and Empirical Evidence in Bercovitch, J., (ed.), Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p.11

[20] Galtung, J. Peace by Peaceful Means (London: Sage,1996) p.90

[21] ibid, p.72

[22] Miall, H., et al., Contemporary Conflict Resolution: The Prevention, Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) p.15

[23] Bloomfield et al, Analysing Deep-Rooted Conflict in Harris, P., and Reilly, B., (eds.), Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators (Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), 2003) P.32

(i.e. harmful conflict), which plagued Sierra Leone and Liberia and prompted the formation of the ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)

Regarding security, Wolfers says it is the absence of threats to acquire values…. and the absence of fear that such values will be attacked.[24] For Lippmann, a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid conflict or war with the adversary.[25] Ballamy says security itself is a relative freedom from war coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will be a consequence of any war that will occur.[26] For Khadiagela, security is ultimately the reduction of vulnerability impinging on states.[27]

Article 58 of the ECOWAS revised Treaty provides for the creation of a regional security framework. Security, peace and stability are some of the Community's guiding principles. It defines the provision of defence and security as one of its objectives and each member state is obliged to cooperate in the area of politics, diplomacy, international relations, peace and security.[28] The ECOWAS conception of conflict, peace and security does not differ from the afore-mentioned theoretical definitions.

Even though conflict is an attendant feature of human interaction and cannot therefore be eliminated completely, it is important for it to be properly managed, resolved and transformed so as to ensure peace, security and stability. Bloomfield and Reilly define conflict management as the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, [it] addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive process, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable and cooperative system for the constructive management of differences.[29] For conflict management theorists, resolving conflicts is seen to be unrealistic and so in their view, the best that should be done is to manage and contain them (conflicts), and occasionally reach a compromise.

In Miall's view, conflict resolution is about how parties can move from zero-sum destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive outcomes.[30] Generally, conflict resolution emphasizes intervention by skilled but powerless third parties working unofficially with the conflicting parties to foster new thinking and new relationships.[31] It is more than a simple matter of mediating between parties and

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[24] Wolfers, A., cited in Baylis J. & Smith, S.(eds), Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations (Oxford: University Press,1999) p.225

[25] Lippmann, W., cited in Baylis, J. & Smith S. (eds.), Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations (Oxford University Press, 1999) p.225

[26] Bellamy, I., cited in Ngubane, S. & Solomon H., Southern Africa's New Security Agenda: Reflections in the Evolution of Human Security and its Application to Southern Africa, Africa Insight 32 No. 1, March 2002. p.58.

[27] Khadiagela, G., Regionalism and Leadership in Africa, in Lesotho Social Science Review 3, No.1, June 1997.

[28] Malu, L., Collective Peacekeeping in West Africa, Available at: http://www.monitor.upeace.org (Accessed: 21/12/2003)

[29] Bloomsfield, D & Reilly, B., The Changing Nature of Conflict and Conflict Management in Harris, P. & Reilly, B.,(eds.) Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict,(Stockholm: Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1998) p.18

[30] Miall, H., Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task. Available at: http://www.berghot-handbook.net/miall/text.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)

[31] ibid

reaching an integrative agreement on issues that divide them. It must also touch on the context of the conflict, the conflict structure, the intra-party as well as the inter-party divisions and the broader system of society and governance within which the conflict is embedded.[32] In contrast to the conflict management theorists position, Conflict resolution theorists argue that it is possible to resolve conflicts if parties can be assisted to explore, analyse, question and reframe their positions and interests.

Regarding conflict transformation, Miall says it is the process of engaging with and transforming the relationships, interests and discourses and if necessary, the very constitution of society that supports the continuation of violent conflict.[33] It is often argued by conflict transformation theorists that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes. People within the conflict parties, within the society or region affected and outsiders with relevant human and material resources should all have complementary role to play in the long-term process of peace building.[34]

Most importantly, the fundamental thing that needs to be noted in the above analysis is the fact that, the theory of conflict resolution invariably draws on many of the familiar concepts of conflict management and conflict transformation. In fact, all the three concepts –conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation – rest on the same tradition of theorising about conflict.[35]

To sum up, what is most essential, in my opinion, is for peacemakers to manage, resolve, and transform conflicts simultaneously rather than dealing with each strategy (i.e. conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation) at separate times. Such an approach would, undoubtedly, help in ensuring peace, security and stability.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

It is an undeniable fact that a comparative analysis of conflict resolution initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia will be of little significance unless this was placed within a broader theoretical framework. By doing so, it will in a large measure assist us in determining the strengths and weaknesses of the different conflict resolution strategies that were employed and allow us to draw relevant conclusions that could be applied in a wider dimension.

Even though theory helps us in understanding situations, there is no denying the fact that theoretical paradigms are often too rigid and fragmented in their formulation to adequately interpret the conflicts plaguing the world.[36] Some conflict theories are undoubtedly, too rigid for the purpose of explaining and designing initiatives for managing conflicts. One of such theories is Michael Lund's Strategy of Preventive

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[32] Miall, H et al Contemporary Conflict Resolution, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) p.183
[33] Miall, H, Conflict Transformation: A Multi-Dimensional Task, op.cit
[34] ibid
[35] ibid.
[36] Solomon, H. & Mngqbise, K., Towards Conflict Transformation in the Democratic Republic of Congo With Specific Reference to the Model of Kumar Rupesinghe Available at: http://.www.up.ac.za/academic/libarts/polsci/uafs/congo.html. (Accessed: 21/12/2003)

Diplomacy, which seeks to place preventive diplomacy within the conflict area. [37] Lund recommends the use of specific preventive diplomacy initiatives to suit a particular stage in the conflict cycle. According to him, preventive diplomacy would depend on an early warning system, regional and or global powers willing to support preventive action, credible third parties willing to intervene early, and autonomous domestic factions willing to moderate their words and actions. Generally, Lunds theory tends to assume that the conflict cycle will constantly follow a predictable sequence and so preventive diplomacy initiatives would have to follow suit. In real life situation, the sequence of events is very different from what Lund tends to imagine. His theory is only useful in mapping out preventive diplomacy initiatives in a given conflict milieu and may yield little success if it is used in designing an intervention strategy to resolve a conflict. This is because, issues relating to the conflict will be dealt with in compartments and the complicated cross influences may be ignored.[38] Clearly, a broader and generic model of conflict transformation is required.

Other theories tend to be fragmented and an example is Stephen Ryan's work on ethnic conflicts. According to Ryan, "peace building is the strategy which most directly tries to reverse those destructive processes which accompany violence…. This involves a shift of focus away from the warriors whom peacekeepers are mainly concerned to the attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of ordinary people. Therefore, it tends to concentrate on the context of the conflict rather than on the issues, which divide the parties.[39] It is important for us to note that such divisions between peacekeeping and peace building and between warriors and ordinary people are false. In Africa and for that matter West Africa where there is a move from professional soldiers to private militias; it is increasingly difficult to make a distinction between a warrior and an ordinary citizen. In the same vein, in times of conflict it is important to deal with the causes and context of the conflict as well as the issues, which divide the parties.[40]All these need to be dealt with in a simultaneous way.

Perhaps Lederach's work on conflict transformation is more comprehensive. According to Lederach "*conflict transformation must actively envision, include, and promote the human and cultural resources from within a given setting. This involves a new set of lenses through which we do not primarily "see" the setting and the people as the" problem" and the outsider as the "answer". Rather, we understand the long term goal of transformation as validating and building on people and resources within the setting*". [41]He sees peace building as a long-term transformation of a war system into a peace system inspired by a quest for the values of peace and justice, truth and mercy.[42] The important dimensions of this process are changes in the structural, relational, cultural and personal aspects of civil war brought over different time periods and affecting different system levels. For instance, Lederach discusses the idea of the

[37] Lund, M., Preventing Violent Conflict: A Strategy for Preventive Diplomacy, (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996) p.37

[38] Solomon, H. & Mngqbise, k., op. cit.
[39] Ryan, S., Ethnic Conflicts and International Relations, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company, 1995) p.129
[40] Solomon, H & Mngqbise, K., op. cit.
[41] Lederach, J. P., Preparing For Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995)
[42] Lederach, J. P., Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997)

pyramid with high ranking officials and decision makers at the top, followed by leaders of social organisations, churches, top journalists in the middle level and grassroots community leaders at the bottom. The model is undoubtedly, very helpful in distinguishing which activities need to take place at the different levels of action. One fundamental weakness, however, of Lederach's work is that it gives limited attention to the autonomous processes of change that occur within the political system of the society that has been affected by the conflict. Moreover, it does not thoroughly discuss which types of leaders are better suited to activities within each of the levels being referred to in his model.

In view of the foregoing, there is no gainsaying the fact that a broader theoretical framework is required to tackle the conflicts plaguing the West African sub-region. In other words, we need a more eclectic theoretical model, which is holistic enough to be applicable to intra-state conflicts like those that occurred in Sierra Leone and Liberia. In this thesis, the model of Kumar Rupesinghe has been applied as the theoretical framework. In his application of the model to the conflict in Sri Lanka, Rupesinghe states that peace building requires a strategic design, the articulation of a framework, and the identification of gaps in the mediation process and the development of an overarching plan that provides for sustainable peacemaking at different levels. [43] Additionally, it requires the development of peace constituents concerned with particular conflicts at both national and international levels.[44] It is worthy of note that generally, conflicts differ very much in history and context, issue and character and even intensity and outcome. In this regard, processes to address them must be responsive to each other. If a process is designed and it is not appropriate to a context, it may be defeated before it even starts. There is therefore the need to recognise the uniqueness of each conflict situation so that universal prescriptions can be avoided.

The reasons why Rupesinghe's conflict transformation model has been applied in this analysis are as follows:

To begin with, Rupesinghe's model places emphasis on intra-state conflicts and as such is more appropriate in the West African sub-region where such internecine conflicts are rampant.

Second, Rupesinghe stresses the need for a multi-sectoral and multi-level approach to conflict transformation that emphasizes the creation of frameworks for developing sustainable citizen-based peace building initiatives, the effective linking of those initiatives to the parties to the conflict and the development of an overall environment conducive to making peace and sustaining it.[45] His approach is a much broader approach to conflict transformation and also flexible in application. In this regard, it is more suitable for resolving conflicts, which are multi-dimensional in nature.

Third, Rupesinghe's multi-sectoral approach lays emphasis on the fact that the number of actors involved in the peaceful transformation of a conflict needs to be increased to reflect all constituencies of broader society. In other words, there should be the

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[43] Rupesinghe, K., Mediation in Internal Conflicts: Lessons from Sri Lanka in Bercovitch, J., (ed.), Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p.166
[44] ibid
[45] ibid

development of engaged, visible and varied constituencies that are linked to the political elites of all sides and also to external supporters of peacemaking.[46] This is very necessary because:

a. All constituencies of society have a stake in peace as well as the peace process

b. It is the constituencies, which will be playing a key role in post conflict reconstruction. Rupesinghe is of the view that the mere transfer of power is not meaningful conflict transformation. He asserts that meaningful transformation of conflict involves sustainable structural and attitudinal changes within the broader society and the emergence of new institutions to address outstanding issues.[47]

c. The involvement of non-state actors is also crucial, especially in situations of internecine conflicts where the state cannot play the role of non-partisan mediator because in most cases, the state is a party to the conflict.

Rupesinghe's conflict transformation model has the following as the framework for sustainable peace:
(i)   Pre-negotiation stage
(ii)   Understanding root causes
(iii)   Ownership of the peace process
(iv)   Identifying all the actors
(v)   Identifying facilitators
(vi)   Setting a realistic timetable
(vii)   Sustaining the effort
(viii) Evaluating success and failure
(ix)   Strategic constituencies
(x)   The role of outside peacemakers
(xi)   The role of local peacemakers[48]

Utilizing his model in the case of the Sri-Lankan conflict, Rupesinghe states that the strategic purpose of the pre-negotiation stage is to reduce the sources of intractability and to create a suitable environment that would make it possible for conflicting parties to move to the negotiating table.[49] This stage therefore serves as a process for moving *toward resolution* rather than conflict resolution itself.[50] Rupesinghe asserts that during the pre-negotiation phase, problem-solving techniques can be useful in defining and developing a citizen based peace process. This certainly involves creating a peace constituency, and getting parties to be accountable to it, expanding the space for democratic action, developing political will, creating social networks that can easily persuade conflicting parties to negotiate and establishing linkages between communities in conflict and the political process.[51] In Rupesinghe's view, it is possible

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[46] ibid, p.167
[47] Rupesinghe, K., Conflict Transformation, (London: Macmillan Printing Press, 1995) p.77
[48] Rupesinghe, K., Mediation in Internal Conflicts: Lessons From Sri Lanka in Bercovitch, J., (ed), Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p. 165
[49] ibid
[50] ibid
[51] ibid

for the development of a multi-layered and effective peace constituency to create an environment that is conducive to counter-balancing problems associated with negotiations and keeping the formal process on track.[52]

Rupesinghe further argues that identifying skilled facilitators is very helpful because they can introduce very innovative approaches into seemingly intractable situations.[53] For instance, they could act as messengers or provide a larger canvass for discussion of issues not directly related to the conflict such as economic or social development of strategic constituencies. Essentially, all these can provide a basis for other broad and peace-related initiatives

Rupesinghe also explains that involving outside actors and placing a local conflict in a wider context, whether global, regional or both can, to a large measure, decrease the salience of that conflict. Citing the conflict in Sri-Lanka as an example, he argues that it is evident that India, for instance, cannot be ignored in any effort to achieve a lasting peace.[54]

In the next chapter, an attempt is made to use each component part of Rupesinghe's model of conflict transformation to make a comparative analysis of the conflict resolution initiatives used in the Sierra Leonean and Liberian conflicts.

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[52] ibid
[53] ibid
[54] ibid

Chapter 3
The Sierra Leonean Conflict

3.1 Sierra Leone's Political History

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.[55]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.[56] 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.[57]

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 expanding at a reasonable annual rate of 4 per cent between 1965 and 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.[58] The ascendancy to power by the opposition APC, indeed, turned Sierra Leone into a beacon of democratic change worthy of emulation by her neighbours. Unfortunately, however, this was short-lived. Siaka Stevens administration ended up the perception of instability but speeded up the descend into greater ethnic-based political exclusion and higher levels of corruption and rent seeking.[59] 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.[60]Mismanagement, illegality and corruption became the source of livelihood as public educational and health services were almost non-existent.

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[55] Bundu, Abass. Democracy by force? A Study of International Military Intervention in the Civil War in Sierra Leone From 1991-2000, (London: Universal Publishers, 2000) p.19
[56] ibid
[57] Juma, Lawrence, The Human Rights Approach to Peace in Sierra Leone: The Analysis of the Peace Process and Human Rights Enforcement in a Civil War Situation. P. 86. Available at: http://www.law.du.edu/ilj/online_issues_folder/juma.final.11.3.pdf (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[58] Chege, M Sierra Leone: The State that Came Back From the Dead, The Washington Quarterly, Summer2002 p.151 Available at: http://www.twq.com/02summer/chege.pdf. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[59] Sawyer, Amos, Violent Conflict and Governance Challenges in West Africa: The Case of the Mano River Basin Area. Workshop on Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University, 2003
[60] ibid

In 1985, Siaka Stevens handed over the administration of the country to his chosen successor, Major-General Joseph Saidu Momoh. 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.[61] 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.[62]

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 the country's diamond became more rampant and uncontrollable and competition for economic resources grew more relentless.[63] Disoriented young people had no other option than to turn to fantasy, drugs and recreational violence with real deaths.[64]

3.2 The Genesis of the Conflict

On 23rd March 1991 the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under the leadership of Foday Saybana Sankoh launched an insurgency into Sierra Leone from the Liberian territory controlled by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).[65] Before the attack, Forday Sankoh was based in Libya and had recruited a fighting force among Sierra Leonean exiles and dissidents caught up in the Liberian civil war.[66] 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.[67]

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.[68] 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.[69] The indoctrinated captives were then forced by the RUF commanders to kill community leaders, family members and government officials. The

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[61] Lord, D., Introduction: The Struggle for Power and Peace in Sierra Leone. Availalable at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/intro.shtml (Accessed:07/07/04)
[62] Sawyer, A op. cit p.14
[63] Lord, D., op. cit
[64] Chege, M op. cit. p. 153
[65] Richards, P. The Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sierra Leone, 'Clingendael', Conflict research Unit, Working paper21, August 2003
[66] Fanthorpe, R., Neither Citizen nor Subject? "Lumpen" Agency and the Legacy of Native Administration in Sierra Leone, African Affairs, (2001), 100, p364
[67] Chege, M., op. cit. p.142
[68] Lord, D. op. cit
[69] ibid.

RUF had a practice of tattooing new recruits and this made it difficult for them to escape because they could face death at the hands of government soldiers or being lynched by ordinary citizens. Villages were being vandalised and a 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. [70] 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 Joseph Momoh's initiative was that he did not follow it up with direct talks and after the government 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 government army had the military might to defeat the insurgents. Meanwhile, the RUF continued to infiltrate areas, which hitherto, were held by government soldiers.

3.3 The National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC)

In April1992, 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 wakened 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"*.[71] 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.[72]

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.[73]

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[70] Gbesie, Lansana, First Stages in the Road to Peace: The Abidjan Peace Process (1995-96) Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/first.shtml. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[71] Conteh-Morgan E., & Kadivar, S., Sierra Leone's Response to ECOMOG in Mgyar, K.p., & Conteh-Morgan E., (eds.) Peacekeeping in Africa, (London: Macmillan Press, 1998) p.144
[72] ibid p.145
[73] Gbesie, Lansana op. cit.

By October 1992, the RUF took over Kono, Sierra Leone's principal diamond mining district. In response, the NPRC launched a mobilisation 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.[74] 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.[75]

In December 1993, Captain Strasser announced a unilateral ceasefire and called on the RUF to surrender. The rebels did not give heed to the announcement and renewed their offensive operations with surprising strength and over ran key army positions. This was possible because the government army had no training or capacity for jungle warfare and was only limited to vehicle-based operations along roads.[76] 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 Foday Sankoh'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.[77] 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.[78]

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, the coup came as a result of anxieties about Strasser and other NPRC members' commitment to democratization.[79] 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.[80] 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 Foday Sankoh to let them talk peace. The latter initially expressed his willingness to talk peace and even announced that President Henri Konan Bedie of Ivory Coast and the Burkinabe president, Blaise Campaore were making arrangements to mediate for a peace deal. Regrettably, however, Sankoh later came out with a

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[74] ibid
[75] Richards, P. op. cit p.14
[76] ibid
[77] ibid p.16
[78] ibid.
[79] Gbesie, Lansana op. cit.
[80] ibid

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 Rawlings also suggested that the general elections be postponed. In response, the head of state said that it was only Sierra Leoneans who will decide whether the elections should be postponed or not and suggested that they both meet in Ivory Coast to iron out issues. Meanwhile, in Sierra Leone, the combined force of the government army the Executive Outcome and the Kamajor militias had severely overran 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 Foday Sankoh to meet with the NPRC in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

A day after the peace talks started, the elections were conducted as scheduled and Ahmed Tijan Kabbah of the Sierra Leone People's Party won with an overwhelming majority.

3.4 The Abidjan Peace Accord

 On 25TH February 1996, the Sierra Leone peace process started in the Ivorian official capital, Abidjan.[81] In effect, the peace talks coincided with the general elections. Amara Essy, the then Ivorian foreign minister, chaired the meeting. The NPRC attended it with a fourteen-member delegation led by Lt. Charles Mbayo while the RUF's Mohammed Barrie led an eight-person delegation. Also present were facilitators from the UN, the then OAU, the Commonwealth, and International Alert.[82] In the Agreement, which contained 28 Articles and a short annex, the conflicting parties agreed to end the war with immediate effect so as to ensure that a total cessation of hostilities was observed and to give the establishment and consolidation of a just peace priority.[83] Under the Agreement, the national commission for the consolidation of peace would be established within two weeks after the signing of the Accord to monitor implementation of the provisions. The peace commission would establish, coordinate and facilitate the work of six new bodies namely; a socio-economic forum, citizens' consultative conference, a multi-partisan council, a trust fund for the consolidation of peace, a demobilization and resettlement committee and a national budget and debt committee.[84] In addition, the peace commission would have enormous powers at its disposal to organise its work in the way in which it sees most appropriate and to make its findings transparent. The proposed trust fund would provide funding for the implementation of

[81] ibid

[82] ibid

[83] Bangura, Yusif, Reflections on the 1996 Sierra Leone Peace Accord. Available at: http://www.un.ngls.org/documents/publications.en/voices.africa/number8/9bangura,htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)

[84] ibid.

the peace agreement.[85] Warring factions would be disarmed in designated assembly zones and their demobilization and reintegration into society would be carried out as soon as possible after the disarmament process. The government and the peace commission, assisted by the international community would be charged with the responsibility of looking after the welfare of encamped combatants.[86] Under the Agreement, the demobilization and resettlement committee would coordinate the encampment, disarmament, demobilization and resettlement of all RUF fighters. The demobilization committee would identify all combatants not later than three months from the signing of the peace agreement.[87] A joint monitoring group comprising representatives of the government and the RUF would observe the afore-mentioned activities at all stages. Also, a neutral monitoring group from the international community would be deployed for an initial period of three months to monitor breaches of ceasefire.[88] Executive Outcomes would be withdrawn six months after the signing of the peace Agreement.

The Agreement also made a provision allowing the RUF to register as a political movement within 30 days of the signing of the accord and the international community would be approached to contribute resources to a trust fund. This would be used in helping the RUF to transform itself into a political party.[89] Under the Agreement, no action would be taken against any member of the rebels in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their motives as members of the RUF up to the time of the signing of the accord. In addition, legislative and other measures would be taken to ensure that the rebels and political exiles would enjoy their full civil and political rights within the framework of the law.[90]

Also, an independent National Commission on Human Rights would be set up to promote human rights, monitor human rights violations and institute legal proceedings where it deems appropriate.[91]

Furthermore, an Ombudsman would be created to raise the standards of accountability, probity and integrity in the public service. There would also be a reform of the electoral system to ensure full participation of citizens and their organisations in the political process and the independence and integrity of the National Electoral Commission.[92]

In the Abidjan meeting, the government and the RUF agreed to respect the civil and political liberties of all individuals as enshrined in international declarations of the UN and the OAU and the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, and to ensure the release of all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

The meeting went on for several days but in the end, peace did not return to Sierra Leone. Within a very short period, the warm feeling of political fervour and hope that had greeted the signing of the peace Agreement faded into the dull grey of scepticism,

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[85] ibid
[86] ibid
[87] ibid
[88] ibid
[89] ibid
[90] ibid
[91] ibid
[92] ibid

doubt and hopelessness.[93]   The UN Security council failed to fulfil its promise of sending 720 peacekeeping troops, 60 military observers and about 276 civilian staff, drawn by the UN Secretary-General in January 1997.[94] Foday Sankoh, for his part, had also opposed the establishment of a UN peacekeeping mission in Sierra Leone. Consequently, sustained fighting broke out anew between government forces and the RUF and more civilians continued to die as a result of hostilities by the combatants.

According to Richard's, the following reasons account for the failure of the Abidjan Accord: The 1996 general elections were conducted in haste, thus not giving the RUF the opportunity to participate in the political process.[95] In other words, Sierra Leoneans opted for elections before peace, thereby excluding the RUF from democratic politics.[96] As a result of this, Foday Sankoh and his RUF rejected the election results and refused to cooperate with the Kabbah administration.

Besides, there was no timeframe provided for various aspects of the work of the peace commission. The agreement did not state the period within which each aspect of the commission's work was to be carried out.

Again, the Accord did not mention the essential problem of atrocities, which were carried out by both the government forces and the rebels.

Stating the flaws of the Abidjan Accord, Bangura argues that the Agreement made no reference to the Kamajor fighters; it rather mentioned the withdrawal of the Executive Outcomes and kept silent on the issue of the Kamajor militia fighters.[97]

Moreover, the Agreement failed to guarantee a power sharing arrangement between the constitutionally elected government of president Kabbah and the RUF. Apart from the military and the national electoral commission, RUF participation in most state institutions was completely ignored by the Agreement.[98]

Finally, there was no provision in the Agreement, which spelt out vividly how to resolve major differences of interpretation of the articles if they occurred or how to replace members who may have been found to be unsuitable for the work of the peace commission.[99]

In view of the above-mentioned reasons, the implementation of the peace Agreement became problematic and the arrest of Foday Sankoh in March 1997 in Nigeria further compounded the problem of implementation[100]

3.5 The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)

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[93] Juma, Lawrence, op cit p. 106
[94] ibid
[95] Richards, P. op. Cit. P.16
[96] ibid
[97] Bangara, Yusif, op. Cit.
[98] ibid
[99] ibid.
[100] Juma, Lawrence, op. cit. p. 106

After the collapse of the Abidjan peace Agreement, President Tijan Kabbah's government was subsequently overthrown on 25ᵗʰ May 1997 in a palace coup by Major Johnny Paul Koromah.[101] Koromah claimed that the takeover was necessitated by the fact that the Kabbah government failed to bring peace to the People of Sierra Leone. He also blamed the government for polarizing the country into regional and tribal factions.[102] Presumably, the army's loss of political power and marginalization from lucrative political and economic processes by Kabbah's government may have prompted the coup. Also, the preferred use of the Kamajor militias instead of the regular army was not taken kindly by the military.

In its reaction to the turn of events in Sierra Leone, the UN condemned the coup with the Secretary-General reiterating that the UN and the international community firmly uphold the principle that the will of the people should be the basis of governments' authority and that democratically elected governments should not be thrown out of office by force.[103]

On 26 May 1997, the OAU vehemently condemned the coup and called for the immediate restoration of the constitutional order. It also urged ECOWAS to take necessary action against the coup plotters. Consequently, the ECOWAS Authority extended ECOMOG from Liberia to Sierra Leone so as to prevent the total breakdown of law and order and to restore the constitutional order.

3.6 Conakry Peace Plan

The total collapse of the Abidjan Peace Agreement and the subsequent change of government brought in its wake, new challenges to the Sierra Leone peace process. This time around, new actors came unto the scene: the ECOWAS Authority and its peacekeeping forces- the ECOMOG. For their part, ECOWAS foreign ministers suggested three approaches to the crisis in Sierra Leone namely; negotiations, embargo, and the possible use of force to oust the AFRC junta.[104]

In August 1997, ECOWAS Authority imposed sanctions on Sierra Leone and established a sub-regional force to enforce the embargo. The UN Security Council, for its part, imposed an arms and petroleum embargo on the military junta and encouraged ECOWAS to work for the peaceful restoration of constitutional order in Sierra Leone.[105]

In view of the growing strength of ECOMOG and the increasing international support of a military action against it, the AFRC invited the RUF to join it.[106] Even though Foday Sankoh was still in custody in Nigeria, he was given the post of a vice chairman in the AFRC/RUF alliance. Both Sierra Leoneans and the international community vehemently condemned the alliance between the AFRC and the RUF. Meanwhile, the effects of economic sanctions imposed on Sierra Leone were devastating to the extent

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[101] ibid. p.107
[102] ibid
[103] See Overview of Pre- UNAMSIL Intervention Available at:
http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/No68/chap2.html . (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[104] Juma, Lawrence op. cit. p.108
[105] ibid
[106] ibid p.109

that it was extremely difficult to get petrol in the capital, Freetown. Also, there was shortage of essential drugs and government revenues fell drastically as a result of lack of foreign financial support.[107] Moreover, ECOMOG, spearheaded by Nigeria, exerted more pressure on the junta to relinquish power to the ousted constitutionally elected government of Tijan Kabbah. At this point, the ruling junta had no other alternative than to negotiate for the return of democratic governance to Sierra Leone. As a result, they agreed to participate in a peace plan in Conakry on 23 October 1997.[108] The negotiations were basically between ECOWAS and the AFRC at which a six- month plan was reached. Among other things, the plan envisaged an immediate ceasefire, disarmament of rebel forces, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and the reinstatement of Tijan Kabbah as president and head of a more broadly based government on 28th May 1998.[109] In addition, the agreement provided for an immediate cessation of hostilities and the supervision of the ceasefire by ECOMOG and UN military observers. Furthermore, the plan contained a clause granting an unconditional immunity from prosecution to the May 25 coup makers.[110] President Kabbah pledged to cooperate fully with ECOWAS and its peacekeeping force, ECOMOG and the UN.

In spite of the seemingly good outlook of the Conakry peace plan, the military Junta did not respect it. Johnny Koromah announced his intention to hold on to power until fresh elections were held. He also called for the immediate withdrawal of all Nigerian troops from the Sierra Leonean territory. For its part, the RUF announced that its combatants would not disarm until the Nigerian authorities released Forday Sankoh unconditionally.[111] In subsequent months, fighting between the junta and ECOMOG forces took a larger scale with both sides losing some of their men on the battlefield. By December 1997, the Conakry peace Agreement was at a standstill.[112]

In response to an attack by the junta on 28th February 1998, ECOMOG, with the assistance of arms and ammunition from Sandline limited, (a UK company) and a strong force of about 5000 Kamajor militias, launched an attack on Freetown.[113] This attack brought about the collapse of the junta and its expulsion from the seat of government. Subsequently, ECOMOG expanded its force so that it would be in position to secure the rest of the country. On 10th March1998, the constitutionally elected government of Tijan Kabbah was returned to office.[114]

In order to maintain security and promote national reconciliation, the UN Security Council in June 1998 decided to establish a small United Nations Observer Mission to Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) for an initial period of six months.[115] Regrettably, little progress was made towards the achievement of these mandate when on January 6, 1999 rebel fighters belonging to the RUF and the deposed AFRC overwhelmed ECOMOG defences and advanced into Freetown, killing thousands of innocent civilians and

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[107] ibid
[108] ibid
[109] ibid
[110] Juma, Lawrence op. cit p. 110
[111] ibid
[112] Bangura, Yusif, op. cit
[113] Juma, Lawrence, po. Cit. p.111
[114] See Overview of Pre- UNAMSIL Intervention. Available at:
http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/monographs/No68/chap2.html (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[115] ibid

systematically dismembering tens and thousands of others.[116] Over all, about 5000 people lost their lives in the renewed fighting and up to 150000 people living in and around Freetown were displayed and large numbers of buildings were burnt.[117]

3.7 Lome Peace Agreement

The negotiations towards the Lome peace Accord was as a result of many reasons. First and foremost, the apparent waning public support for ECOMOG's military activity in Sierra Leone coupled with great anxiety due to the possibility of an RUF overrun of Freetown made it very necessary for Tijan Kabbah to negotiate with the rebels.[118]

Second, there was growing international pressure on the government to open negotiations with the AFRC/RUF alliance so as to reach a peace agreement.

Third, with presidential election and campaigns going on in Nigeria and each presidential candidate pledging to ensure the withdrawal of Nigerian troops from Sierra Leone, Malian troops withdrawing to Freetown after suffering heavy casualties in Port Loko and the general reluctance of neighbouring leaders to provide more support, pursuing peace seemed to be the only available choice for President Kabbah.[119] For their part, the AFRC/RUF alliance opted for negotiations because the peace talks was to present an opportunity for them to obtain freedom for its leaders, amnesty for war crimes and legitimate political power through elections.[120] In a letter dated 12th May 1998 to British Prime Minister Tony Blair, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, President Sani Abacha of Nigeria and Ivorian President Konan Bedie, the RUF requested "a negotiated settlement to the crisis in the country".[121]

In view of the foregoing reasons, the Lome peace Agreement was signed on 7th July 1999. This was after deliberations had lasted for about six weeks and the key players were the government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. Mediators of the peace accord included the government of Togo, the UN, OAU and ECOWAS. The governments of Nigeria, Ghana, Libya and Liberia together with Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone and Sierra Leone's civil society representatives attended the meeting as observers as well as facilitators.[122]

Under the Agreement, both government forces and the rebels were to ceasefire and stop hostilities with immediate effect. Ceasefire monitoring was to begin immediately by a ceasefire-monitoring group.[123] The Accord recognised the role of the UNOMSIL in monitoring the ceasefire and ECOWAS was requested, under the Accord, to revise the mandate of ECOMOG to include peacekeeping, security, protection of UNOMSIL and

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[116] ibid
[117] ibid.
[118] Juma, Lawrence op. cit p.112
[119] ibid
[120] ibid
[121] ibid
[122] Hallowell, Elvis, G. Our hope in the Lome Peace Agreement, Available at: http://www.share.iwarp.com/our_hope_in_the_lome_peace_agreement.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[123] See Lome Peace Accord. Available at http://www.c-r.org/accord9/keytext.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)

disarmament/ demobilization of personnel.[124] In its efforts to ensure that the ceasefire was effectively monitored, the UN Security Council decided on 22nd October 1999 to terminate UNOMSIL and to establish the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), a much larger mission with a maximum of 6000 military personnel, including 260 military observers.[125] UNAMSIL was given the following mandate:

- To provide at key positions and state buildings, important intersections and major airports;
- To facilitate the free movement of people, goods and humanitarian aid along specified thoroughfares;
- To coordinate with and assist the Sierra Leone Law enforcement authorities in carrying out their work;
- To provide security in and at all sites of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes; and
- To safeguard ammunitions and other military equipment collected from ex-combatants and to help in their subsequent destruction.[126]

The RUF was to be transformed into a political party and it also made provision enabling RUF members to hold public office and join a broad based government of national unity through cabinet appointments.[127]
The Agreement established a commission for the management of strategic mineral resources, national reconstruction and development and appointed Forday Sankoh as its chairman. In addition, he was to enjoy the status of a vice-chairman answerable only to the president.[128]

Again, under the agreement, a Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (CCP) was established and chaired by Johnny Paul Koroma. This was as a result of the fact that there had been a break in relations between the RUF and the AFRC and so a position had to be found for Koroma. The CCP was responsible for supervising the implementation of the peace process and monitoring of all the other commissions and committees set up by the Agreement. In addition, it was to ensure that all institutions established under the Lome Accord were given the necessary resources so that they would be able to realise their respective mandates.[129] Through the CCP, civil society had influence over the implementation of the peace Accord and further direction of the peace process. The CCP, albeit a difficult start, has come to play an increasingly central role in bringing peace to the people of Sierra Leone. Part of its mandate is to "implement a post-conflict program that ensures reconciliation and the welfare of all parties to the conflict."[130] Besides this role, the CCP has also now committed itself to supporting disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme and national reconciliation that should include families, relatives, close friends and collaborators of the rebels as well as of the victims.[131]

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[124] Juma, Lawrence op. cit p.113
[125] Jean's Intelligence Review "UNOMSIL: A Long Road to Peace", 18July 2000 Available http://www.janes.com/geopol/editors/UNOMSIL.html. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[126] ibid
[127] see the Lome Peace Accord,
[128] ibid
[129] ibid
[130] Meijei, Guus, Reconstructing Peace in Sierra Leone: Some Civil Society Initiatives, Centre For Development Research, Bonn, 14-16 December 2000, p.4
[131] ibid

Apart from the above-mentioned commissions, the Agreement also set up human rights commission to address commission to address the grievances of people in respect of alleged human rights abuses. The commission was to operate as a quasi- judicial organ.[132]

The Agreement further made provision for the release of all political and war prisoners as well as abductees. It also guaranteed the security of all refugees and displaced persons.[133]

A truth and Reconciliation Commission was established under the Agreement to deal with the question of Human Rights abuses since the eruption of the Sierra Leone conflict in 1991. It was to provide a forum in which victims and perpetrators of crimes would narrate the side of their stories so as to promote reconciliation and national unity.[134]

Regarding the issue of amnesty, the accord provided a blanket amnesty against violations to all members of the RUF and the AFRC. The government was to take "appropriate legal steps to grant Foday Sankoh absolute and free pardon."[135] In the same vein, all combatants were pardoned for any acts they may have committed in pursuit of their objectives up to the time of the signing of the Agreement.[136] The reason for this was to promote peace and national reconciliation. It is interesting to note, however, that this aspect of the Agreement was widely condemned by international Human Rights organisations. In their opinion, it was only fair that perpetrators of war crimes, international crimes of genocide, and crimes against humanity are made to face justice. However, the USA and UK saw nothing wrong with the granting of amnesty to war criminals and therefore supported the Accord. They argued that it represented the most practical way of ending the fighting and restoring democracy in Sierra Leone.[137]

Under the Agreement, all the parties to the conflict were mandated to commit themselves to the promotion of and the respect for human rights and humanitarian law. Article XXIV of the Agreement provided that: "*the basic civil and political liberties recognized by the Sierra Leone legal system and contained in the declarations and principles of Human Rights adopted by the UN and OAU, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, shall be fully protected and promoted within Sierra Leone society"[138]*

Furthermore, the Accord placed much emphasis to the right to life and liberty, freedom from torture, freedom of conscience, expression and association, the right to fair trial and the right to participate in the governance of the country.[139]

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[132] see the Lome Peace Accord, Available at: http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html (Accessed: 07/07/04)

[133] ibid

[134] ibid

[135] ibid. Article IX

[136] Juma, Lawrence, op. cit. p. 115

[137] ibid.

[138] see Lome Peace Accord, Article XXIV

[139] Juma, Lawrence, op. cit. p113

Acting in accordance with the provisions of the Lome Peace Accord, the government offered the RUF one senior ministerial position, three other cabinet positions and four deputy ministerial positions.[140]

It is worthy to note that at the initial stages of the implementation of the Lome Peace Accord, the peacekeeping force undoubtedly, suffered some setbacks. This was so because, it was so poorly trained and equipped that, it could protect neither itself nor the civilian populations, against the RUF. This explains why in May 2000 the RUF was able to launch series of attacks on towns and UN personnel in Freetown, killing about four Kenyan soldiers. That apart, it also succeeded in wounding and capturing several other UN soldiers.[141] In the course of further events, the RUF eventually captured about 500 UNAMSIL officers as hostages.[142] It took the UN soldiers enough efforts before they could get their colleagues released by the rebels. Heavily armed UN soldiers had to move into the main headquarters of the RUF, Kailahun to save the captured UN peacekeepers.

The reason for these attacks by the RUF was that, Foday Sankoh was still not pleased with the concessions granted him under the Lome Peace Agreement. Besides, he was apparently not sure of his electoral prospects.[143]

In order to therefore dislodge Sankoh's RUF combatants, there was a substantial increase in UNAMSIL's size to 17500 troops. With the assistance of British troops, the mission was able to gain access to formerly held rebel territory and organised the demobilization of thousands of ex-combatants.[144] Subsequently, Sankoh himself was arrested as a result of a show of force by British and UN peacekeeping forces and public demonstrations by civil society groups.[145] By this turn of events, the implementation of the peace settlement was not unduly disrupted. To prop up the fragile peace, the government of Sierra Leone has established a reconciliation process. A truth and reconciliation commission has been established with the assistance of the UN and other donor countries.[146]

 To conclude, even though there were hitches here and there, including a return to hostilities and ceasefire violations, it is of superlative importance for us to note that it was, indeed, the Lome Peace Accord that effectively ended the war in Sierra Leone. Several reasons account for the eventual success of the Lome Peace Accord. First, the RUF rebels accepted wholeheartedly to join programmes of disarmament, demobilization, resettlement and rehabilitation.

Second, the RUF realised that it had lost its appeal as its various experiences have shown that it was a group that simply had no goal, no programme and no ability to

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[140] ibid
[141] Neething, Theo, Limitations of UN Peacekeeping where Conflict Did Not Result in Victory For Any Side: Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone, Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies, Vol.1, No.2, November 2000, ISSN 1563-4019
[142] ibid
[143] Sawyer, A. op.cit. p.20
[144] Thayer, H., The Political Economy of War and Peace. Available at: http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/POLITICAL_ECONOMY.pdf (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[145] Sawyer, A., op. cit. p.20
[146] ibid.

govern.[147] The public demonstrations by civil society groups against the RUF are a pointer to this fact. Finally, former president Charles Taylor of Liberia pulled back his support for the RUF after receiving intense pressure from the international community. In view of this, the rebels had no other option than to stop fighting and accept peace.

[147] Nuamah, K. & Zartman, I., Case Study: Intervention in Sierra Leone Available at: http://www.cissm.umd.edu/Nic/nuamahzartman.pdf (Accessed: 07/0704)

Chapter 4
The Liberian Conflict

4.1 Liberia's Political History

Liberia has a rather long political history. This is mainly due to its early attainment of political Independence. Liberia was founded in 1821 after the American colonization society, a private organisation decided to send African-American freed slaves as an alternative to emancipation in America.[148]

In subsequent years, thousands of freed slaves from America arrived leading toward the formation of many settlements and this culminated into the declaration of Liberia's Independence in July 1847.[149] Joseph Jenkin Roberts, a wealthy merchant, was elected the first president of the Republic of Liberia. Roberts achieved enormous international recognition before leaving the presidency in 1856.[150]

After Robert's term of office, Stephen Allen Benson became the next president of Liberia. Benson had previously served as a vice president and so he had a practical knowledge of the country's local people and social institutions.[151]

In 1864, Daniel B. Warner succeeded Benson as president of Liberia and served the republic until 1868.[152]

The next president after Warner was James Spriggs Payne and he ruled Liberia until 1870. In fact, it was during Payne's reign that the True Whig Party was founded and in the late 19th century up till 1980, it was, and remained the dominant political party in Liberia.[153]During this period, Liberia was characterised by social and political inequalities between indigenous Liberians and Americo-Liberians.[154]

The last member of the True Whig Party to rule Liberia was William Tolbert. He was sworn in as president in January 1972.[155] During his tenure of office, President Tolbert amended the constitution lowering the voting age from twenty-one years to eighteen. President Tolbert also encouraged women to become involved in politics and appointed the first women to the national cabinet.[156]

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[148] See History of Liberia Available at http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/liberia/history.htm. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[149] ibid.
[150] ibid
[151]See Liberia, Available at: http://www.africanamericans.com/Liberia.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[152] ibid
[153] ibid
[154] See Liberia: Homepage, Available at: http://www.africanet.com/africanet/country/liberia/home.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[155] Available at :http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/1985/liberia_1_tolbertpresidency.htm. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[156] ibid

In spite of these changes made, however, it must be mentioned that Liberia remained essentially a tightly knit oligarchy under Tolbert's presidency.[157] The economy was still controlled by about a dozen interrelated Americo-Liberian families. By questionable methods, family members had monopolies in the transportation, fishing and food catering industries.[158] Besides the high degree of nepotism, the Tolbert administration was also full of corrupt practices. High-level government officials committed fraud in the letting of government contracts, involved themselves in questionable real estate acquisitions and embezzled government funds. Additionally, they evaded taxes and used government properties for their private use. Tolbert's maladministration began to face public criticism but the president established harsh laws to deal with the opposition. There were also reports of frequent violations of human rights under his presidency.[159]

As the harsh rule of Tolbert continued, so many Liberians began to express their dissatisfaction and on 12th April 1980, a group of army personnel under the leadership of Master Sergeant Samuel Doe staged a coup. President Tolbert and some other members of his regime, mostly of Americo-Liberia descent were publicly executed.[160] Master Sergeant Doe then formed the People's Redemption Council, suspended the constitution and assumed full legislative and executive powers.[161] The overthrow of Tolbert's government and the formation of the People's Redemption Council brought the political domination of the Americo-Liberians to an end.

Samuel Doe initially presented himself as a progressive person who was fully prepared to implement the political agenda of progressive citizens, including ending the continuous rule by Americo-Liberians and installing majority rule not based on ethnicity, but a more equitable distribution of the nation's resources.[162]

Saddled with an inherent depressed economy and generous offers of help from the US in consolidating his power, Doe decided to drop some of his progressive collaborators and embarked upon unrestrained militarization of the Liberian society.[163] From his viewpoint, the brute force by which he ascended to power seemed the only means of maintaining him in power. Doe therefore found it politically prudent to fill the Liberian political atmosphere with a lethal combination of autocratic rule and militarism.[164]

Political parties remained banned in Liberia until 1984 when the Doe administration had to lift the ban as a result of international pressures. A new constitution was therefore issued to allow the return of political parties. Subsequently, Samuel Doe established a political party, the National Democratic Party of Liberia and presented his candidacy for presidential elections. On 15 October 1985, elections were conducted and Samuel Doe's National Democratic Party won. Some analysts believe though, that the elections were characterised by widespread fraud and rigging by Samuel Doe and his associates.[165] Other political parties that contested the elections included the Liberia

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[157] ibid.
[158] ibid
[159] See Liberia Homepage, op. cit.
[160] Available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1980.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[161] ibid
[162] Dunn, D. Elwood, op. cit. p.103
[163] ibid
[164] ibid
[165] As in 170

Action Party (LAP), Liberia Unification Party (LUP), United Party (UP), United People's Party (UPP) and Liberia People's Party (LPP)

Samuel Doe's National Democratic Party increasingly adopted an ethnic outlook during its days in power. Members of his Khrahn ethnic group dominated both military and political life in Liberia and the other ethnic groups were neglected. Doe attempted to consolidate his power base by favouring his tribesmen with economic and educational advantages and by promoting them in the police and army. In general terms, the Doe regime was characterised by sustained levels of political violence, dramatic economic decline precipitated by widespread corruption and lack of progress in political reform.[166]

Few months after the elections, there was an attempted coup led by General Thomas Quiwonkpa and this led to massive reprisals against the Gio and Mano ethnic groups in Nimba County. The fact is that these ethnic groups were generally considered to be supporters of the coup plotters.[167]

4.2 The Genesis of the Conflict

The civil war in Liberia erupted on 24th December 1989 as rebels known as the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor, a former minister in the government of President Samuel Doe attacked Liberia from neighbouring Ivory Coast.

Vogt asserts that because of the extraordinarily brutal style of Samuel Doe's administration, most Liberians felt increasingly unsafe and so decided to join the NPFL, which they saw as a liberation movement[168]. For the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, it was an opportunity to end the killing of innocent citizens and the wanton abuse of peoples' rights.[169] In view of this, Charles Taylor had a lot of goodwill at the initial stages of the civil war and so he capitalized on it to terrorize the country. Within a short time, chaos reigned and Liberia's social infrastructure lay in ruins. Many civilians were killed and hundreds of thousand others were displaced.

By mid 1990, Charles Taylor's NPFL had taken control of a greater part of Liberia and had besieged the capital, Monrovia. As the fighting ensued, there were attacks on foreign embassies and most civilians were massacred. The disruptions and atrocities committed by the conflicting parties were so alarming. The impasse was reinforced when a small group broke ranks with the NPFL and united under the leadership and banner of Prince Yedou Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). As the Armed forces of Liberia (AFL) was seen more or less as an establishment for the protection of the interest of President Doe and his ethnic group, the Khrahns, Liberia was now bedevilled with three warring factions which were not marked by any clear political agenda.

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[166] Sessay, M.A., Bringing Peace to Liberia, Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/lib/accord1/sessay1.shtml (Assessed:07/07/04)
[167] Available at: http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1985.htm (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[168] Vogt, M.A., The Involvement of ECOWAS in Liberia Peacekeeping in Keller, E.J. & Rotchild, D. (eds.), Africa in the New International Order (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p.165
[169] ibid

All this time, neither the United Nations (UN) nor what was then the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) or even the western countries undertook any measure to stop the conflict. Many reasons accounted for this state of affairs. With the end of the cold war, Liberia had obviously lost its former strategic importance in the eyes of the United States of America. Moreover, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, which had taken place at almost the same time, focussed western attention firmly on the Gulf area.[170] The OAU for its part was beset with lack of resources and political will reinforced with the fresh memories of its failure in averting the Chadian war in 1981.

Faced with this diplomatic inertia, most of the countries in the West Africa sub-region, particularly Nigeria and Ghana increasingly believed that there was no other alternative but to attempt to resolve the conflict themselves. Upon long deliberations, ECOWAS officially addressed the crisis in May 1990 with the establishment of the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC).[171]

4.3 The Standing Mediation Committee

The standing Mediation Committee was established on a de facto basis in mid 1990 upon Nigeria's initiative.[172] In May 1990 at the ECOWAS summit in Banjul, the formation of the SMC was formally approved. The committee was made up of five ECOWAS member states namely: Nigeria, Ghana, Gambia, Togo and Mali.[173] As a start, the SMC convened a meeting in Sierra Leone in July 1990 and devised a peace plan that among other things, called for an immediate ceasefire and President Doe's resignation The then executive secretary of ECOWAS, Abass Bundu carried out a mission to Liberia and held a meeting with Charles Taylor and President Doe. They both expressed their willingness to abide by the peace plan. However, few days later Taylor's NPFL advanced steadily towards Monrovia and he declared his intention to unseat Doe rather than abiding by the peace plan. In view of this, the SMC had to convene another meeting once again in August 1990 to launch an intervention in Liberia, which was now characterised, by horrendous atrocities and acts of unimaginable savagery including cannibalism.[174]

One of the vital principles of traditional peacekeeping is that an intervention force can only be deployed after securing the consent of all the warring factions. This is because the main objectives of such an intervention force are to maintain and supervise ceasefires already agreed upon by the belligerent groups. The ECOWAS secretariat did not secure the consent of all the belligerents neither did it have the political backing of all the ECOWAS member states. The secretariat argued that since there was ample evidence that the Liberian central Authority had collapsed, ECOWAS was justified in launching an intervention out of humanitarian considerations.[175] Describing the scene in Monrovia to the SMC, the executive secretary of ECOWAS wrote, *" the orgy of killings and wanton destruction continued unabated involving thousands of innocent*

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[170] Walvaren, K.Van., Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West African States: Lessons from the Intervention in Liberia, 1990-1997, (The Hague: Clingendael, 1999) p.28

[171] Mortimer, R.A., ECOMOG, Liberia and Regional Security in Keller, E.J., & Rotchild, D., Africa in the New International Order, (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p.150

[172] Howe, H., 'Lessons of Liberia, ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping', in International Security, Winter 1996/97 p.151

[173] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit. P.12

[174] Ellis, S., Liberia 1989-1994: A study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence in African Affairs, 187-197

[175] Vogt, M. A. op. Cit. P.170

civilians-barbaric acts that convened all recognised standards of civilized behaviour. Thousands of foreign nationals, including community citizens, were also trapped in Liberia without any means of escape of protection".[176]

Up to this stage, ECOWAS had its support only from the Anglophone member states. President Blaise Campaore of Burkina Faso criticised the decision to intervene in the Liberian crisis arguing that the SMC did not have the competence to intervene in such an intra-state war but could only intervene in conflicts between member states. He further asserted that it was absolutely wrong for ECOWAS to intervene without the consent of all the parties to the conflict.[177] Ivory Coast and Senegal also expressed their disquiet feelings about the plan to intervene in the crisis. Togo and Mali (both members of the SMC) refused later to contribute troops to the operation. Thus, the deployment of an intervention force was largely disputed and marred by legal irregularities. Generally, the francophone countries were of the notion that the establishment and operation of an intervention force was essentially a Nigerian fait accompli and that President Babangida of Nigeria was only encouraging the operation so as to consolidate his country's position as a regional hegemon.

Notwithstanding all the odds, the Anglophone confronted their opponents with a military fait accompli. With Nigeria dominating the multilateral force, ECOMOG in every respect, it entered Monrovia on 24 August 1990. In a bid to thwart the ECOWAS efforts, Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso decided to support Charles Taylor to carry out his attack on Liberia.[178]

In the first three months of ECOMOG'S Operation in Liberia, it found itself apparently engaged in overt hostilities with Charles Taylor's NPFL. All this time, however, the strategy was that of "passive resistance". [179] General Arnold Quainoo, a Ghanaian was appointed the first commander of ECOMOG and during his leadership, Prince Johnson's INPFL managed to capture President Doe at the ECOMOG headquarters. This happened when General Quainoo and his forces scrambled to save their own lives as a result of the hostilities they faced from Charles Taylor's NPFL.[180] Subsequently, ECOWAS had to replace the Ghanaian commander with a Nigerian, General Joshua Dogonyaro. Immediately after his appointment, the seasoned Dogonyaro gave direction to ECOMOG's early peacekeeping strategy, which included a rapid escalation to a shooting war against the NPFL.[181]

The initial round of hostilities between ECOMOG and the NPFL paused somehow, in November 1990 when under both military and political pressure, Taylor agreed to go to the negotiating table.[182] It is of profound importance for us to note that all this time Nigeria was and remained the strongest member of the SMC and ECOMOG was perceived by the NPFL as a party to the conflict rather than a buffer between the

[176] West Africa, July1-7, 1991 p.1085
[177] Anning, E.K., Managing Regional Security in West Africa: ECOWAS, ECOMOG and Liberia, Centre for Development Research , Working Paper 94.2, Copenhagen, 1994, p.11
[178] Mortimer, R.A., op. cit. p.153
[179] William, A., Regional Peacemaking: ECOWAS and the Liberian Civil War, in Newsom, David, D. (ed). The Diplomatic Record, 1990-1991(Boulder, Colorado: West view Press, 1992), p.225
[180] Magyar, K. P., ECOMOG'S Operations: Lessons for Peacekeeping in Magyar, K.P., & Conteh-Morgan, E. (eds.), Peacekeeping in Africa, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998) p.58
[181] ibid
[182] Mortimer, R.A.., .op. cit. p.152

various combatants. As a result, the NPFL refused to treat ECOMOG as a neutral force and branded it as a puppet of Nigerian hegemony. On November 27-28, 1990 an extra-ordinary summit was organised in Bamako, Mali.[183]

4.4 The Bamako Peace Accord

Under the command of General Dogonyaro, ECOMOG began to weaken Taylor's position. Also, the annihilation of President Doe made it extremely difficult for Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast to still stand by the excuse that ECOMOG was in Liberia to defend him. Based on this, the ECOWAS Authority was able to organise a meeting on 27-28 1990 in Bamako, Mali, which was attended by representatives of all the ECOWAS member states and the warring factions. At this meeting, heated discussions transpired and Burkina Faso and Ivory Coast again expressed their dissatisfaction about ECOWAS operations. Particularly, they asked why the intervention force had prevented Charles Taylor from capturing the Liberian presidency. In spite of the heated discussions, however, the opponents of ECOMOG had to accede to the final decision taken by the ECOWAS authority .The opponents gave due cognizance to the fact that Taylor, who happened to have their favours at the time was militarily incapable of withstanding the military might of the intervention force.[184] Thus, all the ECOWAS member states approved the decision of the SMC to establish and deploy ECOMOG, the contents of the ECOWAS peace plan and in the near future, the formation of an interim government.[185] All the warring groups were made to sign an immediate ceasefire and agreed that ECOMOG should monitor it.[186]

4.5 The Lome Peace Accord

The Bamako peace plan ended in fiasco because of the continuous mistrust that existed amongst the armed groups on the one hand and between ECOMOG and the factions on the other hand. In view of this, another conference had to be convened in Lome, Togo in February 1991. The AFL, NPFL and INPFL were pressed into signing a new ceasefire and the formation of an interim administration under the leadership of Dr. Amos Sawyer. In the Lome Agreement, the armed factions reiterated to bring all hostilities to a stop and to refrain from the importation and acquisition of arms or other war materials.[187] More importantly, all the leaders of the conflicting parties agreed unreservedly to confine their troops to positions to be determined by the intervention force in consultation with the factions. The various factions were also to help ECOMOG draw up a buffer zone to separate them.[188] The war leaders acceded to the fact that an interim government would collaborate with ECOMOG to disarm the armed groups. Furthermore, they promised to desist from engaging in any activity that is likely to derail the mediation process.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned issues agreed upon by the warlords came to naught. Since in their view they had at their disposal considerable destructive power, the warring factions saw military option as a viable one. For them, allowing the formation

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[183] ibid
[184] Walvaren, K., Van, op. cit. P.47.
[185] See Decision A/Dec 1/11/90 & Decision 2/11/90
[186] Walvaren, K., Van. Op. Cit. P.47
[187] ibid p.48
[188] ibid

of an interim government did not constitute an attractive option. The warlords took undue advantage of the situation in Liberia to amass wealth by exploiting Liberia's varied natural resources.[189] Walvaren observes that "…the control and exploitation of the hinterland became a primary objective for several factions, as war reaped economic benefits which in turn, were necessary for perpetuating the war." [190]

4.6 The Yamoussoukro Peace Process

Even though an interim government of national unity was formed, Charles Taylor refused to recognise it and established his own administration in Gbarnga in the Liberia hinterland and so the country became partitioned.

Subsequently, the NPFL launched an offensive into Sierra Leone, to punish the country for participating in ECOMOG operations and also to pursue some pro-Doe soldiers who had fled across the Sierra Leone border after the annihilation of the president.[191] Saddled with the apparent violation of ceasefire and the failure of ECOMOG to restore peace or weaken the NPFL militarily, the ECOWAS Authority decided to persuade the opponents of the intervention force to help in maintaining peace in Liberia. Ivory Coast eventually took up the challenge and was encouraged by the US.[192]

 Outside observers for their part, realised that it was of superlative importance for other countries to help both in the negotiation process and in the multilateral force, particularly countries, which had opposed ECOMOG's operations. [193] A day before the annual ECOWAS summit that was to be held in Abuja in 1991, Houphoet Boigny invited the president of Nigeria, Gambia, Togo and Burkina Faso as well as Charles Taylor and interim president Amos Sawyer for an ad hoc meeting in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast. The object of the meeting was principally to reconcile Taylor and Sawyer[194] and disabuse the minds of the Ivorians and Burkinabes that ECOMOG was, indeed, a Nigerian fait accompli. The meeting also decided to involve Jimmy Carter's International Negotiating Network (INN) in the monitoring of the ceasefire. The state of affairs made it necessary for ECOWAS to seek a new face for ECOMOG and so the SMC phase had to be brought to an end in June 1991. The INN was therefore to cooperate with a new committee called the Committee of Five made up of Gambia, Togo, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Ivory Coast. The involvement of INN was meant to enhance the acceptability of the intervention force among the conflicting parties.[195] The Nigerian government did not object to the Committee of Five even though it was not represented. The fact is that, its command over ECOMOG gave it enough influence to prevent any unwarranted political shift in the Liberian conflict.[196] In addition to monitoring the ceasefire, the Committee of Five was also charged with the

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[189] Walvaren, K. Van. The Netherlands and Liberia: Dutch Policies and Intervention with Respect to the Liberian Civil War, (The Hague: Clingendael, 1999) p.24
[190] ibid
[191] Mortimer, R. A., op. Cit. p.152
[192] Mortimer, R.A., Senegal's Role in ECOMOG in Magyar, K.P.& Conteh-Morgan, E., (eds.) Peacekeeping in Africa, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998) pp. 296-297
[193] Walvaren, K. Van, op.cit. p.49
[194] See Communiqué of the meeting held in Yamoussoukro 29-30 June 1991
[195] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit p.49
[196] ibid. P.50

responsibility of handling the mediation process and asked to create the necessary conditions for the holding of free and fair elections within a period of six months.[197]

The ECOWAS summit held in Abuja in 1991 appealed to ECOWAS member states that had not contributed to ECOMOG to send their troops to take part in the operation so that the capacity of the multilateral force could be strengthened. The US for its part, invited President Abdou Diof of Senegal on a formal state visit to Washington and strongly urged him to contribute a contingent of Senegalese forces to ECOMOG. As an incentive, the US pledged to pay a major portion of the operations costs and provide logistical support.[198] The pentagon promptly supported the Senegalese peacekeepers with $15m worth of military equipment.[199] In addition, the US contributed $8.6m to ECOWAS for the peacekeeping operations. [200] These inducements made the commitment palatable enough for President Diof to ignore any objections from France and to assume the political risks, which fatalities in Liberia might cost him.[201]
Over all, the formation of the Committee of Five was an advantage because it had the confidence of Charles Taylor and also committed the Ivory Coast to the mediation process.[202] Having received pressure from the US, Ivory Coast could no longer offer support to the NPFL. It was expected to bring parity and confidence to the peace process. Thus, between July and October 1991, the Committee of Five held a number of peace talks in Yamoussoukro, Ivory Coast. These peace talks were later known as the Yamoussoukro II, III, and IV. The Yamoussoukro II held various consultations with the various factions, which later led to Yamoussoukro III that took place in September 1991. It was in agreement with the various warlords to implement the encampment of their troops in designated areas and ECOMOG was to supervise their disarmament. After all these arrangements, the agreement again ended in futility because with the exception of Charles Taylor, none of the other warlords attended the meeting. The INPFL leader made it clear that his troops will not be disarmed. Charles Taylor on the other hand said his troops would only disarm if the number of Nigerian troops participating in ECOMOG was reduced. Few days later, he agreed to disarm his troops but refused to surrender to the intervention force.[203]

Because of the aforementioned predicaments, there was little progress made and so Yamoussoukro IV was convened in October 1991. At the meeting, an ad hoc supreme court was established to take care of disputes arising from future elections. A buffer zone was to be created between Liberia and Sierra Leone and all RUF rebels were to be expelled from the Sierra Leone territory. All these were to be monitored by ECOMOG.[204] The Yamoussoukro IV further drew up a "programme of implementation" showing the implementation of modalities for the establishment of the necessary conditions for peace and security.[205] This was done with a view to establishing confidence among the warring factions and a good environment for

[197] ibid.
[198] Mortimer, R.A., ECOMOG, Liberia and Regional Security in West Africa, in Keller, E.J., & Rotchild, D., (eds.) Africa in the New International Order, (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996) p.155
[199] ibd
[200] Africa Watch, "Liberia in Waging War" p.29
[201] Mortimer, R.A., op. Cit p.155
[202] Walvaren, K. Van. Op. Cit. p.50
[203] ibid. P.51
[204] ibid.
[205] ibid

elections, which were to be conducted within a period of six months.[206] All the warlords were going to be provided with security and in addition, there was to be the provision of grounds for the strategic installations, the clearing of minefields, and the search for hidden and lost weapons.[207] A two-month timetable was drawn for the programme and it was to begin on 15 November 1991.[208]

In spite of the seemingly good outlook of the Yamoussoukro IV, it failed like the previous accords. The reason is that most of the warlords did not attend the meeting and so their troops did not feel obliged to accede to the agreement. On the contrary, the armed groups continued to buy more arms and openly obstruct the negotiation process. In an attempt to solve this problem, President Houphoet Boigny called a meeting of 'informal consultative group' of his committee in April 1992 in Geneva.[209] President Sawyer, Taylor and Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Senegal attended this meeting and it noted the problems so far associated with encampment, disarmament and the establishment of a buffer zone along the Sierra Leone – Liberia border. It therefore reaffirmed the validity of the Yamoussoukro IV and called on all parties to the conflict to cooperate with ECOMOG in its efforts to bring peace to Liberia. It also made provision for the NPFL to send unarmed observers to the ECOMOG-manned buffer zone near Sierra Leone and all other entry points. The Geneva meeting further acknowledged the new faction that had been established-United Liberia Movement (ULIMO) and devised a new task for ECOMOG. The communiqué of the Geneva meeting set a new timetable for the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Accord.[210]

Taylor, remained persistently intransigent despite the numerous concessions that were provided to him. In May 1992, the NPFL clashed with Senegalese troops and succeeded in killing a number of them.[211] The ECOMOG Authority vehemently condemned this act and threatened to impose sanctions on the NPFL and the areas it controlled unless Taylor complied fully with the Yamoussoukro Accord.[212]

Even though ULIMO was uncooperative because of its proclaimed objective to discourage the alliance between Charles Taylor and Forday Sankoh of Sierra Leone, it was actually Taylor's intransigence, which was seen as a major obstacle to the Yamoussoukro Peace Process. Taylor had no trust for ECOMOG and this was reinforced in 1992, when ULIMO Swept through areas in the Northwest of the country, which were formally under the NPFL control.[213] After the attack on NPFL by ULIMO, not only did the former lose substantial territory to the latter, but also its southeast flank came under threat from a new faction, the Liberia Peace Council (LPC).[214] Also, ULIMO was now divided into two groups: ULIMO-J led by Roosevelt Johnson and ULIMO-K under the command of Alhaji Kromah. In October 1992, Taylor decided to launch "Operation Octopus" and this constituted the complete breakdown of the

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[206] See final communiqué, Yamoussoukro 30 October 1991
[207] Walvaren, K. Van, op. cit. P.51
[208] ibid
[209] ibid.
[210] See Final communique 7th April 1992
[211] Walvaren, K. Van, op. cit. P.53
[212] ibid
[213] ibid
[214] Vogt, M.A., The involvement of ECOWAS in Liberia's Peacekeeping in Keller, E.J. & Rotchild, E., (eds.), Africa in the International Order., (London, Lynne Rienner, 1996) pp.173-174

ceasefire agreement.[215] The Liberian crisis entered a new and complicated epoch and its political scene witnessed a proliferation of more warring factions, all vying for political and military advantages. It took a full-scale land, sea and air battle to arrest the situation and to force the various warring factions back to the negotiating table.[216]

According to Mortimer, the Yamoussoukro Accords failed due to the fact that, the well-orchestrated strategy unrealistically relied on President Houphoet Boigny to close the Ivorian border and talk Charles Taylor into accepting a peace deal.[217] The Ivorians themselves were not committed to the realisation of the provisions stipulated in the Yamoussoukro Accords.

For Mortimer, the second failure of judgement lay in believing Taylor when he said that the problem with the intervention force was Nigeria.[218] In his testimony before the House sub-committee on Africa about Senegal's impending contribution of troops to ECOMOG operation, Assistant secretary Cohen said, "now this should give Charles Taylor the confidence that he needs."[219] Regrettably, Taylor was still not satisfied.

Walvaren for his part has argued that the Yamoussoukro peace process failed because of the fact that no sanctions were imposed on the importation of arms and ammunition and no economic embargo imposed on the NPFL[220].

Besides this, Walvaren is of the opinion that the neutrality of ECOMOG was highly questionable. Thus, it made it extremely difficult for it to broker between the conflicting parties. Moreover, ECOMOG overt support to factions like ULIMO showed clearly that its commitment to the Yamoussoukro process was not unlimited.[221]

4.7 The Cotonou Accord

The apparent failure of the Yamoussoukro peace process meant that the peace mediators had to look for an alternative in order to break the deadlock. Thus, in October 1992, a meeting was convened in Cotonou, Benin for the signing of a new Agreement. Representatives from Benin, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Mali, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Conakry, IGNU and observers of the OAU, UN and UNHCR attended it. President Amos Sawyer, the Alhaji Kromah-led ULIMO faction and the NPFL led by Charles Taylor, signed the agreement. It covered issues pertaining to ceasefire and arrangements for the monitoring of its violation, disarmament of the factions' forces and the general disarmament and demobilisation of all the combatants and non-combatant but armed groups.[222] The Accord provided for the replacement of the IGNU by a five member Transitional Council, three of whose members would be nominated by the three parties to the agreement. The remaining two members were to be chosen from a list of candidates after due consultations.[223] The meeting also made provision for the holding of elections in February and March 1994. It threatened possible sanctions

[215] Walvaren, K. Van, op. cit.p.53
[216] Vogt, M. A., op. Cit. p.172
[217] Mortimer, R. A, op. Cit. p.155
[218] ibid
[219] See US Congress, Crisis in Liberia, p.33
[220] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit p.53
[221] ibid
[222] Vogt. M.A., op.cit. p.174
[223] ibid

on the warring factions if they failed to comply with the agreement. There were heated discussions at the meeting and ULIMO-K accused the Ivorians and Burkinabes of supporting the NPFL and threatened to extend hostilities to the Ivory Coast border.[224] Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso in turn, blamed ULIMO for atrocities and Nigeria and Guinea-Conakry expressed their anger about Taylor's intransigence.[225]

After accusations and counter accusations, the factions agreed to disarm to ECOMOG, following the procedure provided for in the previous peace agreements arrived at in Yamoussoukro and Geneva. The UN observer mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was to monitor and verify the disarmament process.[226] In addition, a monitoring team called the Committee of Nine was set up to supervise the Yamoussoukro Accord. The Committee was made up of Nigeria, Guinea- Conakry, a merger of the SMC and the Committee of Five and other ECOWAS Member states.[227] ECOMOG was expanded with contingents from East African countries. Generally, there was the conviction that the involvement of the expanded ECOMOG and UNOMIL would add greater credibility to the delicate process of disarmament. The Conotou Agreement itself was perceived as an opportunity for the Francophone countries to take control of the peace process from Nigeria in particular and the Anglophones in general.[228]

 The implementation of the political aspects of the Cotonou agreement became a problem. It was neither successful in resolving all the contending issues nor in moving the peace process forward. The peace process was therefore interrupted along the line with increased fighting. The NPFL refused to proceed with the agreement's disarmament provisions and argued that its position was highly threatened by new warring factions many of whom Taylor claimed were being supported by the Nigerian elements in ECOMOG.[229] Furthermore, Taylor insisted on being the first vice president of the Transitional council, with a provision for him to head the interim administration if for some reasons the position became vacant.

Charles Taylor's continuous intransigence made it necessary for ECOWAS to impose sanctions on the NPFL in November 1992 and later the UN Security Council followed suit with Resolution 788, which instituted a binding, full military embargo on Liberia.[230] The Resolution, however, excluded arms delivery to ECOMOG but called for the appointment of a UN special representative in order to introduce a new mediator into the picture.[231]

The Cotonou peace process largely focussed on the interest of the warlords, ignoring that of civilian population. According to Alao, *ECOMOG's efforts to establish a power-sharing arrangement between the various factions went so far as, to risk the elimination*

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[224] Walvaren, K. Van. Op. Cit. p 54
[225] Weller, M., (ed), Regional Peacekeeping and International Enforcement: The Liberian Crisis, (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1994). pp.223-225
[226] Vogt, M.A., op. cit. p..174
[227] Walvaren, K. Van, op. cit. P.55
[228] Vogt, M. A., op. cit. P.175
[229] ibid,
[230] Walvaren, K. Van, op. cit. p. 55
[231] Mortimer, R. Senegal's Role in ECOMOG in Magyar, K.P. & Conteh- Morgan, E., (eds.), Peacekeeping in Africa, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998) p.132

of the civil state.[232] The civilian society did not take these developments kindly and so criticised the Cotonou Accord. For instance, in 1994, the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee reacted to the direction that peace negotiations took and even went on a 'sit home' strike in 1995 and 1996 to express their dissatisfaction about the form and direction of the Cotonou Accord. [233]

Notwithstanding the civilian protests, the Cotonou peace process went as scheduled. In the peace arrangements, disarmament was considered a prerequisite for peace and elections. UNOMIL observers were to act as forerunners, after which ECOMOG would join. Unfortunately, this plan did not work because the number of UNOMIL troops was too small and even some of the observers were unsuitable for their job.[234] In addition, the timetable drawn for the implementation of the accord was derailed as a result of lack of logistics.

Apart from the problems associated with its implementation, the Cotonou Accord itself had some shortcomings. In the first place, it did not make provision for resolving disputes in the council of state. There were quarrels, which centred on the allocation of remaining cabinet posts and posts in public corporations and autonomous agencies.[235] Moreover, the Accord did not make it clear whether those who were appointed to the Liberia National Transitional Government (LNTG) would represent the interest of the government or the interest of the factions that nominated them. Representatives from the various warring factions were nominated by their leaders to serve on the council of state, as they would not be able to contest elections if they became members of the council themselves. Later most these representatives broke relations with the war leaders who nominated them.[236] The result was that there was a proliferation of more warring factions and an increase in hostilities. Walvaren observes that *"the Cotonou Accord did not only fail to stop the proliferation of militias but it was also unable to prevent the resumption of hostilities, in which Taylor's NPFL was considerably weakened by splits".*[237] In late 1993 and early 1994, new warring factions like the Liberia Peace Council (LPC) and the Lofa Defence Force (LDF) got involved in the Liberian conflict to the extent that the situation became highly uncontrollable. The LDF was an organisation of citizens of a segment of Lofa County formed with the purpose of resisting ULIMO and NPFL and the LPC presented it as a non-ethnic, non-religious and non-partisan movement advocating the protection of the rights of exiled and displaced citizens as well as the restoration of constitutional democratic leadership in Liberia.[238]

Nigeria was reluctant in seeing to the successful implementation of the Cotonou Accord and ECOMOG continued to support some of the factions in their effort to dislodge Taylor from his headquarters in Gbarnga.[239] The situation became more complicated when the NPFL and ULIMO refused to provide ECOMOG access to their bases. The

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[232] Alao, C.A., 'A Commentary on the Accords' in Accord: An International Review of Peace Initiatives, Issue 1 p.70
[233] Walvaren, K. Van op. Cit. p57
[234] ibid
[235] ibid p.58
[236] ibid.
[237] Ibid p.59
[238] Dunn, D.E., Liberia's Response to Interventionist Efforts in Magyar, K.P., & Conteh- Morgan, E., Peacekeeping in Africa: Ecomog in Liberia, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998) p.100
[239] Adibe, C.E., The Liberian Conflict and the ECOWAS-UN Partnership in Third World Quarterly, 1997 p.479

militias also refused to disarm because of apparent lack of trust between them and ECOMOG on the one hand, and among the factions themselves on the other.

4.8 The Akosombo Agreement

The full implementation of the Cotonou Accord eventually became problematic because ECOMOG could not respond effectively to ceasefire violations by the factions. The political and military situation had become even gloomier, with various warring factions trying to build an alliance with ECOMOG and some UNOMIL staff.[240]

 In 1994, President Rawlings of Ghana took over as Chairman of ECOWAS and as a first step, sought to find a lasting solution to the Liberian imbroglio. In Ghana's view, Liberia needed a political solution with the collective concern of all the warring factions and a strictly neutral role of the intervention force. President Rawlings also sought to work on the premise that an amicable solution to the civil war in Liberia had to come from the warring factions themselves, particularly the NPFL. Somehow, the Cotonou Accord already set the first step in this direction but did not follow it to a logical conclusion.[241] Rawlings was also of the conviction that in order to disarm the militias it was of profound importance to entice them with a political prize. In this regard, it was necessary to transform the LNTG into a more powerful administration that constituted a more attractive, non-violent channel through which the various factions could pursue their objectives.[242] In view of this, President Rawlings organised a conference at Akosombo in September 1994 and invited all warring factions including the new ones that had emerged as a result of splits. All the factions except the LPC and LDF attended the meeting and participated in debates. There was also a delegate from the LNTG but he was not a party to the Accord since he was not representing any armed faction. The main object of the Akosombo conference was to bring all the war leaders together so that they could smoke a peace pipe. Ghana believed that if the warlords could be lured into a mutual consensus on a more powerful LNTG, a foundation could be laid for a more realistic and effective peace accord. In the meeting all the warlords agreed to declare a new ceasefire and reaffirmed their commitment to comply with the provisions of the Cotonou accord. This time around, however, the implementation of the Agreement would be a joint responsibility of ECOMOG, UNOMIL and the new LNTG.[243] It was also agreed that the enforcement of compliance with the ceasefire would be undertaken by ECOMOG and the LNTG if that became necessary. Furthermore, the seizure or abduction of property or persons would constitute a violation of ceasefire and the creation of new factions would not be recognised by the Cotonou Accord. Under the Agreement, it would be prohibited to carry a weapon in Monrovia but the personal securities of the warlords were to be allowed to carry weapons. The Akosombo agreement further put the AFL at par with the other factions debunking the idea that it represented the national armed forces of Liberia and called on the LNTG to form "appropriate national security structures" that included the NPFL, ULIMO and AFL troops.[244] Provisions concerning the council of state in the Cotonou

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[240] Walvaren, K. Van, op cit p.59

[241] ibid

[242] ibid p.60

[243] ibid

[244] Woods, S. K, Civic Initiatives in the Peace Process, p.30 Available: http://www.c-r.org/accord/lib/accord/woods.shtml. (Accessed: 07/07/04)

Accord were also amended. Those to serve on the council included representatives from the NPFL, AFL, ULIMO-K, Liberia National Council (LNC), a civilian initiative and the last representing both ULIMO-K and NPFL. A chairman and two vice- chairmen were to be chosen within seven days of the signing of the Agreement. The Akosombo Agreement scrapped the ineligibility clause in the Cotonou Agreement, which prohibited members serving on the LNTG from contesting parliamentary and presidential elections.[245] Regarding posts in public institutions, the agreement made it clear that existing factions would be taken into consideration when deciding on vacancies in ministries, public corporations and autonomous agencies. In addition, factions would through the council of state have the right to change appointees to the posts allocated to them. Furthermore, the Transitional Legislative Assembly would have forty-eight members.[246]

To a very large extent, the Akosombo Agreement strengthened the positions of the factions, more especially ULIMO-K and NPFL. This was widely condemned by the civilian population in Liberia who interpreted it as an attempt by the ECOWAS Authority to install a military government in Liberia.[247] The misgivings expressed by the political class in Liberia were partly fuelled by the fact that the defunct IGNU lost one of its two seats on the council of state and the presidency.[248] Some ECOWAS governments also registered strong resistance. The Nigerian government in particular was not happy with the additional powers that the agreement gave to the warlords. It condemned the plan to make Charles Taylor the vice- chairman of the council of state in charge of security and foreign affairs. That post would have given him the authority to determine the status of ECOMOG troops in Liberia.[249] In Nigeria's view, the Akosombo Agreement gave undue favours to the NPFL and ULIMO-K. On the whole, the Nigerian government felt that all the diplomatic and military efforts it had made in the past were going to be unsuccessful. In response, it tried at all cost to thwart the Ghanaian initiative by way of the factions under Nigerian influence.[250]

Some of the warring factions were equally aggrieved because they had been left outside the Agreement. They felt maligned and relegated to the background. The result was that they became uncooperative and command structures were weakened.

Thus, the changes made in the Akosombo Agreement brought about a lot of confusion. The chairman of the first LNTG even refused to step down and sacked the chief of staff of the AFL, Hezekiah Bowen. As a de facto leader of the AFL, Bowen refused to leave his post. The UN aggravated the confusion when it invited the chairman of the first LNTG to speak in his capacity as the head of state of Liberia to the UN General Assembly.[251] In effect, due recognition was not given to the New LNTG formed by the Akosombo Agreement. In order to calm the situation, the governments of Nigeria, Ghana and Togo tried to persuade the members of the first LNTG to step down for the new members to take over the helm of affairs. All the warring factions were also invited to a meeting in Accra, the capital of Ghana in December 1994.

[245] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit. p.61
[246] see Akosombo Agreement p II section A
[247] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit p.61
[248] ibid
[249] Riley, S. & Sesay M., 'Liberia: After Abuja', in Review of African Political Economy, 1996, p.431.
[250] Walvaren, K. Van, op cit p. 61
[251] ibid.

4.9 The Accra Agreement

The Accra conference was aimed at amending the Akosombo Accord and to include all the warring factions that had been left out in the agreement. It also attempted to put in place a ceasefire and introduce several safe havens and buffer zones in accordance with the Cotonou and Akosombo Agreements.[252] In addition, the Agreement made provision for the reorganisation of the police, immigration and other security agencies to include combatants from the various warring factions, just like it was done for the armed forces under the Akosombo Agreement. Furthermore, the council of state was still made up of five members comprising of one each from the NPFL, ULIMO-K the LNC, and AFL coalition, (an alliance of AFL, LPC, ULIMO-J, LDF and NPFL- Central Revolutionary Council). A traditional leader, Chief Tamba Tailor nominated jointly by NPFL and ULIMO-K was be the fifth member.[253]

The aforementioned arrangements did not prevent continuous hostilities from occurring. UNOMIL and the Nigerian contingent were reduced to 85 men and 3000 troops respectively. Tanzanian and Ugandan troops who had earlier been sent to Liberia under the Cotonou Agreement were withdrawn altogether leaving ECOMOG with only 9000 troops at its disposal. This was far less than what was required to commence the implementation of the peace Accord. As a result of these developments, ECOMOG and UNOMIL began to show signs of despair because it was militarily incapable of stopping the hostilities. [254]

Considering the above problems associated with the Accra conference, there is no gainsaying the fact that while it succeeded in bringing new warring factions into the peace process, along with those who were left out under the previous accords, it did nothing to find a lasting solution to the Liberian morass. The various factions failed to reach a consensus on the composition and chairmanship of the council of state. Essentially, the Accra Agreement attempted to co-opt the LNC (the civilian group) without heeding its concerns on the militarization of the peace process.[255]

4.10 The Abuja Peace Accord

After enormous efforts made to bring peace to Liberia failed, the Ghanaian president had to back out for President Sani Abacha of Nigeria to handle the peace process. The Akosombo Agreement actually pointed the way forward in the sense that the only way to solve the crisis was by way of giving due recognition to the fact of the military stranglehold that the warring factions had on the country.[256] That, notwithstanding, more needed to be done so as to bring a lasting peace to Liberia.

In a bid to finding an amicable peace settlement in Liberia, President Sani Abacha first of all invited Charles Taylor to Nigeria in June 1995 for a rapprochement. When Taylor got to Nigeria, he was given a warm reception by the president and they both exchanged apologies for past misunderstandings. They also took steps for reconciliation. While

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[252] ibid p.62
[253] ibid
[254] ibid.
[255] Alao, C.A., Commentary on the Accords, Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/lib/accord1/alao.shtml. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[256] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit. P.67

making all efforts to bring peace to Liberia, one thing was quite clear: having indulged itself in partisan intervention, colluding with some factions and encouraging splits, it was extremely difficult for Nigeria at this juncture to now put the lid back on the Pandora's Box.[257]

 In spite of this, however, in August 1995, President Abacha managed to set a new pace for the peace process by convening a meeting in Abuja, Nigeria inviting representatives from all the warring factions to sign another Peace Agreement. The Abuja Accord declared a new ceasefire and confirmed an earlier Agreement between the factions to expand the council of state from five to six. This now gave the AFL a separate representation from that of the coalition. Thus, the council of state comprised of the NPFL, ULIMO-K, the coalition, LNC, Chief Tamba Tailor, and Wilton Sankawulo, an academic.[258] Roosevelt Johnson's ULIMO-J was not to have representation on the council of state. The argument given was that the Khrahn ethnic group, to which Johnson belonged, constituted only 4 per cent of the Liberian population and should therefore not have more than two seats in the council. Johnson's fellow Khrahn, George Boley of the LPC-coalition and Oscar Quiah of LNC had already been offered a seat each.[259] In order to compensate ULIMO-J for its lack of representation on the council of state, it was to obtain four ministries, four deputy ministries, and a number of posts in public corporations. All those who held positions in the new LNTG and wanted to contest the presidential and parliamentary elections were to vacate their posts three months before the election date. Under the Agreement, Chairman Sakumolo was not eligible to contest the first elections.[260]

Even though the Abuja peace Accord succeeded in bringing all the warring factions into the transitional government, it could not bring peace to Liberia. Discontent continued to fester within people who felt that they had been sidelined in the peace settlement. Tensions intensified and warring factions continued to guard their territorial and commercial resources.

Within three weeks of the signing of the Abuja Peace Accord fighting erupted between ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K in western Liberia. There were also new ceasefire violations involving other warring factions in October 1995.[261] In addition, the council of state was bedevilled with factional rivalry and Sakumolo was virtually powerless to bring it to order.

 Charles Taylor progressively strengthened his position and behaved as a de facto government leader usurping much of the powers of the council's presidency.[262] He wielded power as though he was the chairman of the LNTG and took orders from nobody.

The situation ran completely out of control when on 6th April 1996 the police with the support of NPFL and ULIMO-K fighters went to arrest the ULIMO-J leader, Roosevelt

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[257] ibid p.63
[258] ibid. p.64
[259] ibid
[260] ibid.
[261] Sesay, M. A., Politics and Society in Post War Liberia, in Journal of Modern African Studies, 1996 p.402
[262] Walvaren. K. Van, op. cit. p.67

Johnson on charges of murder. Many Khrahns interpreted this as an attempt to monopolize the presidency and vice-presidency by Taylor and Alhaji Kromah respectively. Johnson fought back with the help of his fellow Khrahn, George Boley and the Khrahn dominated AFL.[263] The effect was that over one thousand civilians were killed and some ECOMOG troops were taken hostage. With this turn of events, the ECOMOG Authority tried to save the situation by convening an emergency meeting but Charles Taylor and Alhaji Kromah refused to attend.[264]

For Walvaren, one of the reasons why the Abuja Peace Accord failed was because of lack of direct representation for Roosevelt Johnson's ULIMO-J in the council of state.[265] This obviously made him completely dissatisfied with the peace deal.

Besides, the Accord also allowed the faction leaders to enter Monrovia with their militia intact. According to Walvaren, *the entrance of the capital by the warlords marked the beginning of Monrovia's militarization, with large numbers of militias taking up positions as "armed protection" for their superiors*.[266] In view of this, there was no progress made on disarmament and encampment. What even made matters worst was the fact that Charles Taylor decided to recruit a lot of fighters for the national police which he had control over.

All the aforementioned peace Accords failed to find a way out of the Liberian morass because effective mechanisms were not put in place to establish and monitor embargoes on illicit trade. Charles Taylor for instance, mobilised a lot of revenue from illicit trade and this was what he used in perpetuating the conflict.

Secondly, the mediators of the peace process sought to accommodate the demands of the warring factions by ceding power to them rather than supporting civic and political institutions.[267] This made all the Agreements highly vulnerable to the emergence of new warring factions. Some of these factions did not sign the peace deals and so never felt obliged to respect or abide by them.

Thirdly, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, civil society was not encouraged to help in finding a lasting solution to the conflict. At best, local peacemakers could have been identified and involved in the peace initiatives.

Fourthly, there were inadequate resources available for the full implementation of the Accords. For instance, ECOMOG did not have enough logistics to supervise ceasefire.[268]

Finally, there were no established mechanisms put in place for resolving disputes over the interpretation of provisions. On several occasions this brought about misunderstandings between the warlords.

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[263] ibid. p.65

[264] Riley, S., and Sesay M.A., 'Liberia: After Abuja' in Review of African Political Economy, 1996, p.436

[265] Walvaren, K. Van, op. Cit. p.64

[266] ibid

[267] ibid, p.72

[268] ibid

From the above, it is crystal clear that whereas in the case of Sierra Leone peace constituencies and civic constituencies were established to promote peace, these were absent in the Liberian case. Hence, the inability of the people of Liberia to reach a peaceful settlement about nine years after the Abuja Peace Accord was signed

Chapter 5
A Comparative Perspective of Conflict Resolution Initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia

This chapter gives a comparative analysis of conflict resolution initiatives in Sierra Leone and Liberia utilizing the theoretical framework as put forward by Kumar Rupesinghe. In making this analysis, each component part of his Model of Conflict Transformation is taken into consideration.

5.1 Pre-Negotiation Stage

There is the need to attain viable comprehensive peace settlements and embedding mechanisms and attitudes so as to sustain and develop such settlements over a definite period. According to Rupesinghe, the aim of this stage is to bring conflicting parties into the negotiation process with the purpose of outlining a logistical framework and timeframe for negotiations. *"The 'strategic intent' of the pre-negotiation phase is to reduce intractability, to formulate and design a time table necessary for a successful negotiating exercise."* [269] Indeed, it is during the pre-negotiation stage that problem - solving technique can be useful in defining and developing a citizen- based peace process.

In the case of Sierra Leone, even though both the government and the RUF went to the negotiating table with entrenched positions, they were flexible in their posture so as to ensure that the peace talks did not stalemate. Sierra Leone was fortunate to have had leaders who understood the immense importance of putting the national interest first in their endeavours. This was clearly seen when Bio was sworn in as the new head of state of Sierra Leone in early 1996. He immediately made a terse appeal to the Leader of the RUF to let them talk peace. Similarly, when President Tijan Kabbah even won the presidential elections in 1996 and was awaiting his inauguration, he reiterated his willingness to enter negotiations with the RUF leaders. Consequently, he and Foday Sankoh met on 22nd April 1996 for the first time in Yamoussoukro to begin the peace talks. [270] Again, in March 1999 President Kabbah concerted to a consultative and preparatory "family meeting" between Foday Sankoh and his commanders. [271] From the perspective of the RUF, the belligerents were simply fed up with their long stay in the bush after the arrest and imprisonment of Forday Sankoh by the Sierra Leonean government.

Besides the compromise that was exhibited by the two conflicting parties, another unique feature about the Sierra Leonean case is that the alacrity to enter into negotiations came from the local actors like the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra

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[269] Rupesinghe, K., op. cit. (1995) p.80
[270] Available at: http://www.wcrp.org/Rforp/conflict/SIERRALEONE.html (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[271] ibid

Leone. (IRCSL). The IRCSL served as the most effective facilitator, mediator and advocate for peace in Sierra Leone.[272]

Moreover, the existence of a peace culture in Sierra Leone, as mentioned earlier, played a momentous role in the peace talks.

Based on the above factors, the parties to the conflict eventually realised that military confrontation was no longer a viable option and so they agreed to form a government of national unity.

In the Liberian case, the combatants were not willing to go to the negotiating table. In the first place, there were attempts to put the various rebel groups into a peace process whose aims they held in contempt. External mediators actually brought pressure to bear upon all the parties to the conflict, including the government of Cote d'Ivoire who was clandestinely supporting Charles Taylor and his NPFL.[273]

It is clear from the above that, all the parties to the Liberian conflict went to the negotiating table not because they were really ready to talk peace, but because the peace negotiations were imposed on them. In violation of the Abuja Accord, sporadic fighting continued amongst the warring factions and plunder and spillage became the order of the day. Apparently, there was lack of will by the belligerents to honour the Abuja Peace Agreement. Alao observes that " *the Abuja Peace Accord managed to bring the leaders of all the warring factions into the transitional government, which was installed with due ceremony in September 1995. As such, it represents in many ways the fulfilment of the aspirations of the post Cotonou peace process. It did not, however, bring peace to Liberia. Discontent continued to fester within groups and individuals who believed themselves sidelined in the settlement. Factions continued to guard their territorial and commercial resources jealously, with on going violence between the NPFL and LPC and between various sub groupings of ULIMO"*[274]

Prior to the organisation of a peace process it is always important to assess the will of the conflicting parties to stand by the modalities of the agreement and their commitment to peace.

5.2 Understanding Root Causes

Invariably, settlements, which ignore the root causes of a conflict, lead to further confrontation. Rupesinghe points out that "*it is abundantly clear from the experiences in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia, Sri Lanka and elsewhere that there is a need for a clear conceptual and theoretical understanding of the root causes and the sources of intractability of a given conflict."*[275] It is therefore imperative that conflict resolution facilitators come to grips with how and why a conflict erupted so that the sources, which generated the conflict, can be addressed. This would then form the basis of the conflict resolution process

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[272] ibid
[273] Mortimer, R. A., Op. Cit. p154
[274] Alao, Charles, A., "Commentary on the Accords" Available at: http://www.c-r.org/cr/accord/alao.htm. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[275] Rupesnghe, K.,op. Cit., 1996, p.166

In the Sierra Leonean case, the root causes of the conflict had more to do with the social exclusion of the young and the poor.[276] There was outright marginalization of rural population and of the youth throughout the country. Besides this, however, the presence of a corrupt and bankrupt political system characterised by patrimonialism and clientilism and by the use of manipulation and violence accounted for the conflict.[277] In effect, the Sierra Leonean conflict was as a result of disintegration and decay caused by governance failure. The peace negotiators in the Lome Peace Accord therefore gave due cognizance to the aforementioned root causes of the conflict in order to reach a peaceful settlement. For instance, the commission for the consolidation of peace under the chairmanship of Major Paul Koromah has tried to address fundamental issues and root causes of the conflict such as marginalization of youths, unresolved local conflicts, oppressive systems of justice at local level and impunity at top level.[278]

In the Liberian case, ethnic rivalry was the main cause of the conflict. According to Howard, there existed "politics of tribe" where specific ethnic groups were targets of persecution.[279] For instance, the Krahn people, the small ethnic group to which the late President Doe belonged, were the greatest benefiaries of his regime and the non-Khran indigenous ethnic groups as well as Americo-Liberians were maltreated. The Gio and Mano groups of Nimba County were particularly singled out for persecution because of the perception that they were opposed to the Doe administration.[280]

Apart from ethnicity, another underlying cause of the Liberian conflict was personal ambitions. For instance, Charles Taylor's main aim was to become the head of state of Liberia and embark on a witch hunting exercise in order to annihilate his enemies. One of the main failures of the Abuja Peace Accord was its inability to recognise this fact. The facilitators of the Accord rather thought that organising successful elections to choose a president was going to stop the war outright.

From the foregoing it is clear that whereas the Lome Peace process took into consideration the root causes of the Sierra Leonean conflict, the Abuja Peace Accord wittingly or unwittingly ignored the root causes of the Liberian civil war.

5.3 Ownership of the Peace Process

Rupesinghe notes that "*the principle for ensuring sustainability must be the empowerment of local actors as the primary architects, owners and long-term stakeholders in the peace process*"[281] He argues that imposed settlements that do not

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[276] Richards, P., op.cit. p.7
[277] Meijer, G. Reconstructing Peace in Sierra Leone: Some civil Society Initiatives, Available at: http://www.zefoda/download/ethnic_conflict/meijer.pdf (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[278] Meijer, Guus, Reconstructing Peace in Sierra Leone: Civil Society Initiatives, Centre for Development research , December 14-16 2000, p.4
[279] Howard, R., Civil Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa: Internationally generated… International Journal, 1995/96,L1, Winter
[280] West Africa, March 1983
[281] Rupesinghe, K., op.cit. 1996, p.166

involve representatives of the majority who are in favour of a peaceful solution are likely to post pone further confrontation due to the little internal support.[282]

From the perspective of the Sierra Leonean case, local actors played a major role in the peace process. Civil society organisations have played very important roles in the Lome peace process both at the level of putting pressure on the conflicting parties to agree to the Accord and also participating in the peace negotiations. As alluded to earlier on, the Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) represented the civil society and served as a major facilitator as well as advocator for a peaceful solution to the Sierra Leonean conflict. Even in January1999, when the RUF launched an offensive on the Sierra Leonean capital, Freetown, the IRCSL was invited to broker negotiations between President Kabbah and the RUF leaders in summer that year.[283] Besides, in the Lome Peace Accord, the Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone and other civil groups complemented the total mediation team in its efforts at finding a lasting peace for the people of Sierra Leone. The peace process was, indeed, truly owned by all parties, more especially by the people of Sierra Leone and so they had an interest in maintaining it.

In the Liberian case, civil society was kept out of the peace process. In May 1990 before fighting had reached Monrovia, peace initiatives were being co-ordinated by the Liberian Inter-Faith Mediation Committee and in June 1990, the committee convened a weeklong peace talks between Doe's government and the NPFL of Charles Taylor at the American Embassy in Freetown, Sierra Leone. However, as time went on, the civil society in Liberia was gradually marginalized and relegated to the background by peace facilitators. The facilitators were seeking to accommodate the demands of the armed combatants rather than shoring up civic and political institutions.[284] What is significant here is that, Liberians themselves did not own the negotiation process and so they did not feel obliged to adhere to its terms. Thus, unlike the Sierra Leonean situation where civil society and the conflicting parties were given ample opportunity to participate in the peace talks, it was a different ball game in the Liberian situation. The civil society was not afforded the opportunity to contribute its quota to the Abuja Peace Process, hence its eventual failure in bringing peace to Liberia. At best, there needed to be a greater coordination of effort between the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee and ECOWAS as regards mediation, with the former providing the domestic Liberian ingredients (appreciation of the dynamics of Liberian politics) and the latter making serious consultations in the sub-region with a view to reaching a consensus. What we need to note is that, the responsibility for preventing, managing and transforming intra-state conflict lies with the domestic populations of the countries in question.

5.4 Identifying the Actors

It is important to identify all the actors associated with the conflict so as to reach a peaceful settlement. According to Rupesinghe, "*the visible and articulate elite as well as the less visible, less articulate but still influential opinion shapers and leaders must*

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[282] ibid.
[283] http://www.wcrp.org/Rforp/conflict/SIERRALEONE.html (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[284] Hallowell, E. L., Our Hope in the Lome Peace Agreement, Available at:
http://www.share/warp.com/our_hope_in_lome_peace_agreement.htm. (Accessed: 07/07/04)

all be identified and brought to the negotiating table."[285] For example, women should be included around the negotiating table because their experience, values, and priorities as women can bring a perspective that can help find a lasting solution to the conflict. Rupesinghe notes that *" it is imperative that non-military actors be fully involved in the peace process because exclusive reliance on highly visible political or military elites has proved disastrous in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia and even Sri Lanka."[286]*

In the case of the Lome Peace Accord, which sought to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Sierra Leone, the emphasis was on an all-inclusive process that involved both the belligerents and the Sierra Leone civil society. Right from the beginning of the peace talks, the facilitators saw the need to bring the RUF, the government and the civil society to the negotiating table so as to make the negotiations more credible amongst the people of Sierra Leone. As mentioned earlier in chapter four, it was not just the parties to the conflict that were involved in the signing of the Lome peace Accord. Other actors included the Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone civil society.[287] In short, all the actors that mattered were duly identified and brought to the negotiating table.

In the case of Liberia, little effort was actually made to involve all the stakeholders in the peace process. The process was handled as though only the armed groups mattered. Due cognizance was not given to less articulate but still influential opinion shapers within the civil society in Liberia. The Abuja Peace Accord included representatives from the NPFL, NPFL-CRC, APC, The Lofa Defence Force, APC, ULIMO-J, ULIMO-K, the Liberian Council and the Armed Forces of Liberia. Local opinion shapers were not offered the opportunity to contribute towards the peace settlement.

From the aforementioned, it is clear that whereas in the Sierra Leonean case accurate identification was made of all significant actors, it was not so in the case of the 1995 Abuja Peace Accord. The objectives of the latter were therefore not met.

5.5 Identifying Facilitators

In Rupesinghe's view, it is crucial to make accurate identification of people who have the background Knowledge as well as the analytical and mediation skills so that a positive contribution in the design of a particular peace process can be made.[288]

In the Sierra Leonean case, there was a large and experienced pool of mediators from Togo, the UN, the OAU (now AU), and ECOWAS. In addition, observers of the Accord included governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone's civil society.[289] Moreover, local facilitators such as Alimany P. Koroma (Co-chair of IRCSL) and Rev. Fornay Usman, a Wesleyan minister and member of the IRCSL played a predominant role in the Sierra

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[285] Rupesinghe, K., op. cit. p167
[286] ibid
[287] Hallowell, Elvis, G., op. cit
[288] ibid

[289] Halloway, E. L. op. cit.

Leone peace talks.[290] On the whole, the required skills and goodwill were available to facilitate the resolution of the conflict and to sustain the peace initiative even after reaching an agreement.

In the case of Liberia, it was rather the reverse. In the first place and as alluded to earlier, the peace negotiation was imposed on the belligerent groups. The leaders of the factions were still not ready for peace. Perpetuating the civil war was a better option for them since they could conveniently amass wealth under such a circumstance through the sale of the country's rich resources. Charles Taylor's NPFL controlled the rubber plantation in Liberia while Alhaji Kromah and his ULIMO-K controlled most of Liberia's diamond and other mineral resources.

Secondly, all the facilitators of the Abuja Peace Accord came from neighbouring African countries. It was important for the facilitators to look beyond the sub-region as was done in the case of Sierra Leone and bring in other facilitators to help find sustainable peace to the Liberian imbroglio.

Thirdly, the Abuja Accord allowed the various faction leaders to enter Monrovia with their militias intact, which was a big mistake[291]. Moreover, the Accord did not make provision for Roosevelt Johnson, leader of ULIMO-J to be part of the Council of State. The argument put forward was that the Khrahn, to which Johnson belonged, constituted only about 4 percent of the Liberian population and should therefore not have more than two seats in the Council of State. Already, his fellow Khrahn George Boley of the LPC-coalition and Oscar Quiah of the LNC had been allocated a seat each. The sponsors of the peace Agreement failed to identify facilitators who had the requisite mediation skills to make a positive contribution to the design process. Consequently, a false peace was produced for Liberia and the belligerent parties went back to the battlefield. Within two weeks after the signing of the Abuja Peace Agreement, fighting erupted between ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K in the diamond areas of western Liberia and the ramifications were quite devastating because it left in its wake, more carnage and plunder in the country.

5.6 Setting a Realistic Timetable

Rupesinghe notes that *another element of a peace building design should be an understanding of the stages of conflict resolution and the need for realistic timetables for accomplishing such phases as the identification of root causes and significant actors, through cease fires, to the elaboration of mechanisms of political and social accommodation.*[292] Essentially, timetables set for peace processes must neither be too short nor too long. Any timetable set to carry out peace negotiations over a short period of time may result in a situation where most of the tasks are being carried out ineffectively and inefficiently. By the same token, any timetable drawn to protract peace negotiations over a considerably longer period of time may result in the failure of the whole process.

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[290] Turray, T.M. op. cit

[291] Walraven, K. Van, Containing Conflict in the Economic Community of West Africa States: Lessons from the intervention in Liberia, 1990-97 (The Hague: Clingaedael, 1999) p.64

[292] Rupesinghe, K., op. cit.,1996, p.167

In the Sierra Leonean case, the Lome Peace Accord called for the immediate end to armed conflict between the government and the RUF, the establishment of a ceasefire monitoring group, the transformation of the RUF into a political party, a formation of a broad based government of national unity, an establishment of the commission for the consolidation of peace and the disarming and demobilisation of ex-combatants among others. These were to be carried out within a period of 456 days and well beyond.[293] The timetable set for the implementation of the Lome Peace Accord was neither too short nor too long. It was just enough for all the issues spelt out in the Peace Agreement to be dealt with. Besides, the implementation of the Accord underlined the need for flexibility, not only in terms of technical fixes, but also in the minds of stakeholders who should be ready to tackle unforeseen problems as they arise.[294]

In the case of Liberia, the situation was different. The schedule of implementation of the Abuja Peace Accord from ceasefire to inauguration of new government was only about thirteen months (i.e. from August 1995-September1996).[295] Considering the numerous warring factions involved in the Liberian case, a period of thirteen months was very short for the main issues in the Accord to be dealt with. The timeframe was just too short for disarmament and demobilisation of all the warring factions, organising general elections and forming a national government. It did not therefore come as a surprise when the facilitators of the Abuja Accord found it prudent to get a revised version signed on 17th August 1996.

The distinct feature about the Sierra Leonean case is that, the timeframe for the implementation of the Lome Peace Accord was realistic and so it succeeded in bringing the civil war to an official end in February 2002. On the other hand, the Abuja Peace Accord backfired because the timetable drawn for its implementation was highly unrealistic.

5.7 Sustaining the Effort

In Rupesinghe's view, "*a sustained commitment to adequate investment of financial resources and patience, and a complementarity of efforts and resources are required for a comprehensive approach to be carried out.*"[296]

In the Sierra Leonean case, the sponsors of the Lome Peace Accord committed some amount of resources to the peace process. Even in the build up to the negotiations in Lome, Conciliation Resources (CR) sent an expert to the region to provide technical support to and influence the parties and increase the chances of a sustainable inclusive agreement in which underlying issues would be adequately addressed and the voice of civil society represented.[297] Apart from this, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided funding for a team to make informal contact with many of the principal actors offering technical advise and helping to analyse the unfolding

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[293] Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/summary.shtml (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[294] Bright, Dennis, Implementing the Lome Peace Agreement Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/implement.shtml. (Accessed:07/07/04)
[295] Available at: http://www.usip.org/library/pa/liberia/liberia_08191995.html. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[296] Rupesinghe, K., op.cit. 1996, p167
[297] Available at: http://www.c-r.org/pubs/anreps/annualreport99/wafrica.shtml (Accessed: 07/07/04)

dynamics. The team also held fruitful discussions with a number of civil society groups including the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone.[298]

Even though some analyst have argued that some of the pledges made for the implementation were later not forthcoming, in relative terms, more attention was given to the Lome Peace Accord than that of Abuja. In order to make ceasefire monitoring effective, the UN sent more troops to Sierra Leone. This effort was later supplemented by Britain when a team of British troops were sent to Sierra Leone for peacekeeping exercise.[299]

In the Liberian case, economic problems hampered the ability of the facilitators to successfully implement the Peace Agreement. There were inadequate finances of even the electoral commission and the expectation that international donors would assist with adequate funding ended in a fiasco. When the election (provided for in the Accord) was about to start, only countries like Denmark, Taiwan, Japan and the US provided a woefully inadequate sum of money. The effect was that there was not enough voter education exercise carried out and if even the election was free and fair, fundamentally it did not address the ethical questions involved.[300]

Clearly, whereas in the case of the Lome Peace Accord, a relatively huge financial support was committed into its implementation, in the case of Abuja it was a complete disappointment because adequate resources were not provided for a comprehensive approach to be carried out.

5.8 Evaluating Success and Failure

According to Rupesinghe*," another key element of any peace-building design should be a process for evaluating whether the main interests of the parties are being addressed, the precedents and principles used in searching for a solution and their usefulness, the obstacles encountered, factors that led to progress, alternatives and missed opportunities, coordination with other peacemaking activities and lessons to be learned from the process."*[301]

In the Sierra Leonean case, issues raised by both parties to the conflict were clearly put on the agenda so that progress towards a peaceful resolution could be adequately assessed. In the case of the RUF, the demands included the future role of its members in the new government of national unity. After putting this on the agenda, both the facilitators of the peace accord and the key actors could now look at ways of resolving the conflict and on that basis, an evaluation of successes and failures can be made. It is worthy for us to note that being able to identify what the points of divergence are forms

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[298] ibid
[299] Thayer, Hotel, The Political Economy of War and Peace, Available at:
http://www.ipacademy.org/PDF_Reports/POLITICAL_ECONOMY.pdf (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[300] Yoroms, G. J., & Anning, E.K.,West Africa Regional Security in the Post Liberia Conflict Era: Issues and Perspectives ,CDR Working Paper 97.7, November 1997 Available at:
http://www.cdr.dk/working_papers/wp-97-7.htm. (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[301] Rupesinghe, K., op. cit.1996, p.167

the basis for the successful resolution of the conflict. Indeed, it is the first step in evaluating the success or failure of a peace process.[302]

During the implementation process of the Lome Accord, the need for flexibility both in terms of technical fixes and in the minds of stakeholders of the conflict was recognized. In this regard, changes were made as and when the need arose.

This was not the situation in the Liberian case. A better system was not designed into the peace process to evaluate the successes and failures of the process. As mentioned earlier, an unrealistic timetable was drawn and so no provision was made to evaluate whether the requirements of each phase was being met. Besides, the root causes of the conflict were not clearly spelt out in the Abuja Peace Accord. In this regard, it would be difficult to assess whether divergent views were adequately addressed or not. Clearly, in the Liberian case, enough attention was not given to the evaluation of the success and failure of the peace process. If mechanisms were put in place to evaluate successes and failures, the peace accord would not have collapsed as it did.

5.9 Strategic Constituencies

Rupesinghe notes that "*if peace processes are to be sustained overtime, strategic constituencies must be identified and these should include the media, human rights and humanitarian institutions, independent scholars, former members of the military, members of the business community, intergovernmental and governmental officials and donors. To maximise their impact, various constituencies can form strategic alliances focussed on a particular aspects of violent conflict or the overall goal of prevention.*"[303] In his view, the role of the strategic groups is crucial in directly influencing both the pre-negotiation and negotiation stages and helping to form and sustain the linkages between the conflictants, non-governmental organisations, the inter governmental community and between the strata within the conflicting societies.[304]

In the Sierra Leonean case, strategic constituencies were carefully identified and allowed to play a role in the Lome Peace process. For example, civil society played a major role by erecting powerful institutions of transparency, orderliness and more importantly, drive around the Agreement. The Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone became an integral facilitator of the peace process in Sierra Leone and sometimes, even acted as a 'go-between' to convince the conflicting parties to go to the negotiating table.[305] In addition, it participated directly in the Lome peace talks and negotiated in the release of abducted children by the RUF. Also, throughout the peace process up to elections, public opinion in favour of peaceful settlement between the rebels and the Sierra Leone government was voiced through the media and even mass religious rallies.

Again and as has been mentioned earlier, Major Paul Koroma, a former leader of the AFRC, was made to chair the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace. This was

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[302] Gounden, V. & Solomon, H, Conflict Resolution in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Angola and South Africa
[303] Rupesinghe, K. op. cit. p.167
[304] ibid
[305] Woods, S. Kofi, Civic Initiatives in the Peace Process. Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/lib/accord1/woods.shtml. (Accessed: 07/07/04)

aimed at giving him the opportunity to bring his experience as a leader to bear on the peace initiative.

The Abuja Peace Accord on the other hand was characterised by a complete marginalization of civil society. As stated earlier, the Liberia Inter-Faith Mediation Committee was coordinating peace efforts during the early days of the conflict. However, when ECOWAS took over as mediators of the peace process, Liberian civilians were gradually marginalised and kept out of the peace process.

One important distinction is clear in the above analysis. Whereas in the Sierra Leonean case, the Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone served as a conduit in the peace process between the civil society, government and the RUF, the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee of Liberia was relegated to the background and not given the opportunity to partake in the Abuja Peace Agreement. Essentially, civil society through representation by NGOs and religious groups are important actors if the objective is to attain sustainable peace. In other words, the degree of participation of civil society may well determine the future conflict trajectory in any country faced with civil war.

5.10 The Role of Outside Peacemakers

Rupesinghe observes that traditional "…diplomacy and outside nongovernmental peacemakers have important roles to play in mediating the mitigation or resolution of violent internal conflict.[306]

In the Sierra Leonean case, even though the contribution made by local actors like Rev. Fornah Usman and Alimany P. Koroma (both members of the IRCSL) cannot be overemphasized, the role played by outside peacemakers was enormous. As mentioned earlier on, the Lome Peace Accord involved outside peace brokers from the UN, USA, and UK. Once more, the Sierra Leone experience underscores the need for outside actors to help in finding sustainable peace to an area. In the Sierra Leonean conflict, the involvement of outside peacemakers in providing both financial resources and expertise helped significantly in bringing peace to the war ravaged country. For instance, the UK government spent huge amount of money in the demobilization exercise as well as in the retraining of the Sierra Leone national army.[307]

In the Liberian case, the peace process was mainly organised by international actors who did not commit enough resources to sustain it. In addition, the conditions on the ground were not well understood and as mentioned earlier, an unrealistic timetable was drawn. Moreover, the main rebel group, the NPFL, had no trust in Nigeria which was a major facilitator of the peace process. What is discernible here is that outside peacemakers can put a peace process into disarray especially if enough efforts are not committed into the process.

5.11 The Role of Local Peacemakers

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[306] Rupesinghe, K., Conflict Transformation, (London: Macmillan Printing Press, 1995) p.84
[307] Thayer, Hotel, p. cit.

According to Rupesinghe, *" members of local communities with a first hand knowledge of conflict, actors, the political and economic situation and the cultural background will have a distinct 'comparative advantage' over other potential peacemakers wishing to act as third party mediators"*[308]

As has been stated already, Sierra Leone had local peacemakers who were afforded the opportunity to take part in the Lome peace talks and they played a significant role in making the conflicting parties lay down their arms. Even before the Lome Peace Agreement, members of the Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) met with both President Tijan Kabbah and Foday Sankoh for peace negotiations. Also, even though civil society groups were accorded only observer status in Lome, they played an enormous role as mediators behind the scene during the peace negotiations.[309] The Lome peace Accord even made provision for the civil society in the peace building processes. Article VI of the Accord made mention of the establishment of a commission for the consolidation of peace which would have representatives from civil society.[310] Also, under the Lome Peace Accord, the IRCSL was given a predominant role in the council of Elders and Religious Leaders, which was to be responsible for mediating disputes of interpretation of the Accord. Although the council was not set up but all these show the extent to which the strength of the roles played by civil society had been recognised.

After the signing of the Lome Peace Accord, the IRCSL organised the free distribution of copies of the Accord to civil society groups, local and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Apart from this, it also continued to reach out to the civil populace and the rebels, through bi-weekly sessions on various themes of the Accord.[311] The sessions had been very helpful because they provided a forum for discussions regarding the implementation of the Agreement as well as issues in connexion with the civil war in Sierra Leone.[312] The sessions also provided an opportunity for former fighters to ask for forgiveness while allowing war victims to articulate their experiences regarding atrocities and other human rights abuses.[313]

Additionally, civil society organisations like the Centre for Democracy and Development and the Campaign for Good Governance have sought to provide platform of dialogue for the various stakeholders in the Sierra Leonean conflict to discuss, create better understanding and appreciate each other's position.[314]

In the Liberian case, there were no local peacemakers involved in the official peace process and the outside peacemakers played a rather inconsistent and ambivalent role in the mediation process. For instance it was increasingly clear that Nigeria, which was a major contributor to the peace process, was partial. Neither the Francophone leaders

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[308] ibid, p.85
[309] Adejumobi, Said, The Civil Society in Conflict Management and Peace Building in Africa Available at: http://unpanl.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/IDEP/UNPAN002409.pdf (Accessed:07/07/04)
[310] ibid
[311] Turay, Thomas, M. Civil Society and Peacebuilding: The Role of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone. Available at: http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/society.shtml (Accessed: 07/07/04)
[312] ibid
[313] ibid.
[314] Adejumobi, Said, op. cit.

nor Taylor had trust in Nigeria. Perhaps, if the inter-faith Mediation Committee had been given the opportunity to participate in the Abuja peace negotiations, their closeness to the conflict and deeper understanding of the situation may have brought a better appreciation of what was possible within a realistic framework. In addition, it could bring a more sustained presence that may have yielded a better result.

In spite of the seemingly good outlook of Rupesinghe's conflict transformation model, one important factor, which is lacking in his analysis is the role played by political culture. According to Coxall and Robins, political culture refers to the understandings, feelings and attitudes, which dispose people towards behaving in a particular way politically.[315]

Unlike Sierra Leone, Liberia's political history has been mainly violent and militant. For many years in Liberia there have been frequent struggles between the Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians and in some instances, lives were lost. The Liberian society and political structure was arranged in such a way that the Americo-Liberians were more powerful and so they dominated the political scene. This brought about continued dissatisfaction among the indigenes and in 1955 there was a political blood – letting as President Tubman crushed his opponents.[316] Also, as part of the struggle and as has been mentioned in chapter four, the late Master sergeant Doe overthrew the Tolbert government and ordered the execution of President Tolbert and other Americo-Liberians.

Moreover, unlike Sierra Leone, powerful West African actors were actively involved in the Liberian conflict right from the onset. Ivory Coast and Burkina Faso were supporting rebel leader Charles Taylor to get to the Liberian presidency. On the other hand, the Nigerian dominated ECOMOG forces were bent on dislodging Taylor's NPFL. As a matter of fact, some of the ECOWAS member states had individual support for the contending factions.[317] This made the situation in Liberia extremely difficult. Under such circumstances, it is highly unlikely that any of the warring factions could have accepted defeat. At best, such circumstances encourage conflicting parties to play zero-sum game

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[315] Coxall, B. & Robins, L., Contemporary British Politics, (Houndmills: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1998) p.101

[316] Dunn, D.E., op. cit p .83

[317] Conteh-Morgan, The Politics and Diplomacy of the Liberian Peace Process, in Magyar, K.P. and Conteh-Morgan, E. (eds.) Peacekeeping in Africa: ECOMOG in Liberia, (London: Macmillan Press, 1998) p.41

Chapter 6
Conclusion

What this thesis has attempted to do was to make a comparative analysis of the conflict resolution strategies used in resolving the conflicts in Sierra Leone and Liberia utilizing the theoretical framework as espoused by Kumar Rupesinghe. The focus of the study was to find out the reasons why the Lome Peace Accord succeeded in bringing peace to Sierra Leone whilst the Abuja Peace Accord failed in the case of Liberia.
In the analysis it is clear that a proper identification and commitment of all local and regional players and the international community at large are needed in addressing the root causes of any conflict.

In addition, the identification of facilitators requires extra care so that the exclusion of potential players can be avoided. More importantly, there is the need to engage external dynamics by involving the actors in finding solutions to conflicts. In the preceding analysis it was clear that the Abuja Peace Accord did not identify key facilitators who could have helped in bringing stable peace to Liberia.

Moreover, it is important that a dynamic civil society and strategic constituencies are formed so that they will play a crucial role in guiding and influencing belligerent groups to accept peace. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, the civil society in Sierra Leone played an important role in influencing both the rebels and the government to sign and accept the conditions of the Lome peace Accord. On the other hand, the Liberian peace process marginalised the civil society and its focus was rather on finding ways of appeasing the warring factions.

Again, the provision of adequate resources is required if a peace process is to succeed. There is the need for enough logistics to be provided for demobilization and disarmament exercises to be carried out. This is so because any failure in an attempt to demobilise and disarm warring factions could bring the peace efforts to naught. In the Sierra Leonean situation, both regional and international players provided resources for demobilization and disarmament exercises as well as ceasefire monitoring.

Also, there is the need to occasionally revise strategies in an attempt to solve a conflict. For instance, in the Liberian peace process, it was important for the facilitators to have had an understanding of why the peace process went the way it did so that measures could be taken to improve the situation. In other words, the success and failure of a peace plan need to be evaluated from time to time.

Finally, there is the need for a realistic timetable to be designed if a peace plan is to be successful. This is because ample time is needed for ceasefire monitoring demobilization, disarmament, democratization and reintegration programmes.

To sum up, while conflict resolution continues to gain currency all over the world, there is still much to learn operationally about how the concept can be applied in practice. It is significant for us to note that it is not just a simple matter of mediation between conflicting parties and arriving at an integrative agreement on the issues that divide

them. As such, it is of superlative importance for third parties seeking to resolve a conflict to understand the broader context in which such intervention takes place. This includes an adequate understanding of the political culture and an assessment of the nature of vested interests and how it impacts on the conflict. It is imperative that conflict resolution deals with the main parties as well as the social, psychological and political changes that are necessary to address the root causes, the intra-party conflicts that may prevent the acceptance of a peace settlement, the context which affects the incentives of the conflicting parties and the social and institutional capacity that determines whether a settlement can be made acceptable and practicable.[318] A multi-track approach is required so that it would touch on the context of the conflict, the conflict structure, the intra-party as well as the inter- party divisions and the broader system of society and governance within the conflict area. Conflict resolution experts need to provide the best possible analyses of conflicts by viewing them from as many perspectives as possible. They need to be learners first so that in the learning and listening process, they can be helpful to the belligerent groups in understanding the issues, changing unhelpful attitudes and modifying negative behaviours and structures. All these would, in a large measure, help in resolving conflicts in the West African sub-region.

Suggestion for Future Research

Since Ivory Coast is currently bedevilled with internal conflict and shares a common border with Liberia, a research could be carried out in future to compare the conflict resolution strategies employed in both situations. In addition, the contribution of the ECOWAS Authority in resolving conflicts in the West African sub-region could also be considered as a possible research area.

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[318] Miall, et al, Contemporary Conflict Resolution, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) p.158

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