



**Chair:**

Bonnie Jin

[bonniehjin@berkeley.edu](mailto:bonniehjin@berkeley.edu)

**Vice-Chairs:**

Yoojin Kim

Sana Naeem

## United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC)



## A Framework for Peace Building for Sierra

### Leone and Burundi

#### Introduction

It seems to be a trend for countries who have dealt with conflict to never successfully maintain peace in their countries. They always somehow manage to regress into conflict, most likely unable to overcome the numerous challenges that they face. Thus, realizing the never-ending cycle of conflict, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in order to monitor and assist in the process of post-conflict recovery emphasizing on reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development. Created by both the General Assembly and Security Council, “the Commission is a new intergovernmental advisory body that would help countries emerging from conflict to consolidate peace and prevent the relapse back into violence.” Requested by the Security Council and other Member nations, Sierra Leone and Burundi were chosen to be the first countries to be assessed by the PBC.

#### Elements of a framework (This portion was written by Ani Vemprala.)

A “one size fits all” solution to peace-building efforts does not exist in this day and age because various components go in to determining success in stabilizing an emerging nation. Often these components are inter-connected and inter-dependent, making the task of creating a prioritized listing even harder. Yet, a definite plan of action and a clear vision of responsibilities and goals is required not only for rallying support around a peace building effort but in gaining the confidence of donors and other supporting organizations whose

commitment is often needed to ensure a successful peace building mission. In reference to past UN experiences, a UN policy group identified some important elements of peace building activities:

#### (i) Political Agreement:

Though it is likely to be the case that peace building operations under the purview of the PBC have already entered the post-conflict stage through some political agreement, the nature of this agreement can have many consequences on the trajectory of the peace building efforts for the nations involved. This consensus and agreement needs to extend beyond the warring parties and include the various organs of the UN, member states (including neighboring countries) and NGOs that would be marshalling resources to rebuild these regions.

#### (ii) Relief and Humanitarian

Assistance:

Most regions emerging from conflict often are in need of critical supplies like food aid, survival kits, primary health care etc. Though acquiring this aid in the right quantities and at the right time can be difficult, the more challenging issues faced by recovery teams are often logistical. Certain conflicts also call for different priorities in assistance – in the case of El Salvador, for example, the removal of landmines was of utmost importance. Such differences would need to be accounted for.

#### (iii) Disarmament,

Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR):

These three steps are considered key in any effort to build a lasting peace in a region. Disarmament refers to the laying



down of weapons on the parts of the military units involved in the conflict. Demobilization is the disbanding of armed groups and reintegration is the process of assimilating combatants into civil society. The DDR process requires certain prerequisite conditions in order for it to be successful.

(iv) Economic Reconstruction:

Economic inequities need to be addressed in the post-conflict phase since they are at times the root cause of disputes that develop into violence. Though there are variances from country to country, reconstruction is generally required for infrastructure like public works, transportation, health care and education. This usually coincides with the development of a stronger national economy, promoting jobs and a better livelihood for its citizens.

(v) Social Rehabilitation

Conflict also ruptures the social fabric of a nation. There is a need for re-integrating disenfranchised members of society, providing women equal opportunity, protecting the rights of minorities and children etc. In the case of particularly harsh conflicts involving genocide and mass murders, there is a need for “truth commissions” to investigate atrocities, address injustices, and reconcile the past.

(vi) Institutional Factors

One of the pressing issues in post-conflict reconstruction is the establishment of a balanced and representative government along with a reliable judiciary. Related to the political aspects, the UN as an institution might have to weigh its options wisely before committing peacekeepers. James Dobbins makes the case from the UN’s more recent, successful

experience in East Timor that it “... is perfectly capable of executing a robust peace enforcement mandate in circumstances where the scale is modest, the force includes a core of capable First World troops, and the venture has strong international backing” while more complex operations are better left in the hands of capable US-led multinational forces. If this is correct, one has to consider the importance of having ‘First World’ troops involved in peace-building operations.

## **CASE STUDY: Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone is quite infamous for its diamond trade. Thus, ever since its independence in 1961, Sierra Leone had to deal with the government profiting massively from the mining of diamonds. However, the wealth was not distributed equally to the civilians, for the government only worked in the interest of benefiting itself. Eventually, frustrated by the government’s history of patronage and corruption, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), under the leadership of Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor, who was the president of Liberia, launched attacks in the eastern region of Sierra Leone for the purpose of seizing the trade on diamonds. This Civil War became the beginning of Sierra Leone’s atrocities and human rights violations for the RUF was notorious for their cruelty in physical mutilation and child abduction. Because the Sierra Leone government was distracted by its own internal corruption, they were too weak to subdue the belligerent RUF. On April 29, 1992, a military coup led by Captain Valentine Strasser overthrew the former president Momoh, and the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) established itself as Sierra Leone’s ruling



authority. However, the NPRC also failed in suppressing the RUF and its continued acts of committing atrocities. Over the next several years, Sierra Leone experienced constant military coups and instability in the government, while thousands of civilians continued to be murdered or wounded. Despite the new governments being established, no improvements were being made for they constantly failed to suppress the RUF and resumed corrupt practices. Thus, Sierra Leone reached a point where the international community had to intervene to resolve their domestic problems.

On July 7, 1999, with the help of the UN and international community, President Kabbah and RUF leader Sankoh signed the Lomé Peace Agreement, which made Sankoh Vice President and gave other RUF members positions in the government. Also, according to the agreement, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which was a multilateral armed force with the cooperation of several African nations, and the UN were to deploy international peacekeeping forces with the establishment of United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). However, the RUF broke the accord when they held UNAMSIL personnel hostage and confiscated their arms in 2000. Thus, immediately, Sankoh and other senior members of the RUF were arrested and ousted of their positions in government for their violation of the agreement.

A cease-fire established in May 2000 failed once again due to the RUF's continuation to attack. Thus, a second Abuja Agreement to resume the peace process was made in May 2001, firmly enforcing Demobilization, Disarmament,

and Reintegration (DDR). As the disarmament procedure persisted, the Sierra Leone government was able to gradually reassert its authority in areas once controlled by the RUF. As progress was shown with the disarmament and demobilization of 72,000 ex-combats, on January 18, 2002 President Kabbah officially declared the conclusion of Sierra Leone's civil war.

Ever since then, UNAMSIL began to slowly withdraw peacekeeping troops with the end of the UNAMISAL mandate in December 2005. Now that the war had ended, efforts to build peace in Sierra Leone Under the Security Council Resolution SC/8487, UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) was mandated with the cooperation of regional organizations in West Africa in order to "deal with cross-border challenges such as the illicit movement of small arms, human trafficking and smuggling and illegal trade in natural resources." Much cooperation from the UN and international community has improved the security situation in Sierra Leone; however, Sierra Leone is still a country facing "enormous challenges of rebuilding the country and consolidating the peace."

### **Critical Issues to Focus On**

Since multiparty elections in 2002, Sierra Leone has institutionalized democracy along with an evident growing civil society. However, political problems still seem to pose a threat to the peace process. There is lack of participation of women, human resources, and technical capacity in the political process. As national elections are held, the discourse from political parties is showing signs of growing intolerance and parties still have



difficulty in expressing public opinion. Despite the fact that “democracy” might be implemented in Sierra Leone, its current system still has missing links and is nowhere near what the international community views democracy as. Sierra Leone's civil war has created a huge humanitarian crisis in the country. It is estimated that 2 million out of the population of 4.5 million people have been forced to leave their homes and are now living in refugee camps in neighboring countries. Survivors of the RUF's campaign of amputation now live in communal amputee camps. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees estimates that there are more than 700, 000 people of concern in Sierra Leone, and these refugees are in dire need of help, both in Sierra Leone and the surrounding region.

In addition to the refugee problem, living conditions in Sierra Leone have not drastically improved, which leaves room for instability and corruption. State institutions are incapable of completely halting the proliferation of small arms. Also, the lack of employment and educational opportunities allows former combatants and large youth populations to have difficulty in rehabilitating themselves back into society. Stated by the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, “many ex-combatants testified that the conditions that caused them to join the conflict persist in the country, and if given the opportunity, they would fight again.” Even more shockingly, the majority of the worst atrocities were committed to and by children. When children were abducted by the RUF, endless amounts have surfaced of infants with their hands and feet amputated, and young girls constantly raped. These abductees return to Sierra Leone, brainwashed and heavily influenced by

drugs, and eventually become the perpetrators of some of Sierra Leone's most shocking crimes. Many of these younger children know nothing more than the use of a gun, so it is crucial that proper education be provided to the younger generation. This lack of education poses a huge threat to the civil society in Sierra Leone, for the next generations will constantly live in fear and violence unless proper rehabilitation takes place.

### Questions to Consider:

1. What support can be provided by the international community to further promote democracy and freedom of expression through the political process and not through violence?
2. Because of the huge disconnect between the capital, Freetown, and the surrounding rural areas, how can the gap be reduced between the rural and urban sectors?
3. What measures can be taken to build trust and confidence between the government and civil society, and to ensure that the civil society has a chance to participate and contribute to the post-conflict reconstruction challenges?
4. What are the necessary steps in assisting the younger generations to eliminate all memories of the past regarding the RUF and allowing them to move forward with their lives?



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## CASE STUDY: BURUNDI

Ever since the colonial period, Burundi has been divided ethnically into two groups: Hutus and the Tutsis. Despite similarities in appearance and culture, both have much pride for one's ethnicity, which becomes a strong contributing cause of the problems in Burundi. When Burundi attained its independence in 1962, Mwami Mwambutsa IV, a Tutsi, became the official ruler. This spawned a Hutu rebellion in 1965, leading to atrocious Tutsi retaliations. In 1966, Ntaré V, Mwambutsa's son, took over the government. Once again, Ntaré was overthrown in a military coup; however, Premier Michel Micombero who was also a Tutsi had initiated the coup, ironically. Thus, in the beginning of 1970, Burundi endured a civil war, leaving more than 100,000 Hutus dead.

With the establishment of the First Republic in 1972 came the genocide against the Hutu community. Although the Hutus initially killed some 2,000 Tutsi, ultimately an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 Hutu were killed. All the educated Hutus were eliminated, eventually leading to the deaths of 5 percent of the population. More than 100,000 Hutus fled the country to avoid horrible fates. The massive killings exacerbated the deeply rooted hatred of the two ethnicities.

In 1976, Jean-Baptiste Bagaza led a coup and claimed himself the president, and he quickly used his authority to suspend the constitution and announce that a 30-member Supreme Revolutionary Council would be the governing body. Continuing with Burundi's history of coups, Bagaza was overthrown by Pierre Buyoya, who assumed the presidency. Although ethnic hatred had never completely been subdued,

it heightened in 1988, when approximately 20,000 Hutu were slaughtered. In response, Buyoya initiated reforms to resolve the ethnic disputes that have consumed most of Burundi's history. The Burundi Democracy Front's candidate, Melchior Ndadaye, won the country's first democratic presidential elections, held on June 2, 1993. However, unfortunately Ndadaye, the first Hutu leader in Burundi, was assassinated during a coup. The second Hutu president, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was also killed on April 6, 1994, when a plane carrying him and the Rwandan president was shot down. This definitely allowed the ethnic tension to skyrocket with the beginning of another civil war. Hutu youth gangs began massacring Tutsi immediately, and in response the Tutsi-controlled army killed the Hutus.

In 1995, Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania moderated the peace talks that had been initiated among the rival factions. The Arusha Agreement was finalized in 2001 under the leadership of former president of South Africa Nelson Mandela, who had assumed the role of mediator after Nyerere's death in 1999. Under the terms of the Arusha Agreement, a multinational group of troops would be deployed into Burundi to maintain peace and order. In addition, the peace plan also devised a power-sharing agreement that has been somewhat successful. Buyoya, a Tutsi, governed the new transitional government for the first 18 months; then in April 2003, a Hutu president, Domitien Ndayizeye, became the successor. In 2005, former Hutu rebel leader Pierre Nkurunziza was elected president by the Parliament. Seemingly, the peaceful transferring of power to a democratically elected leader indicated the conclusion of Burundi's brutal 12-year civil war. As of right now, peace



talks between the government and Burundi's only remaining rebel group still persist.

## Points to Consider

Ever since the civil war, much cooperation from the international community exists in order to build and maintain peace and stability in Burundi. The UN Common Action Plan and the UN Development Assistance Framework both work towards the goals of prosperity, repatriation, reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-combatants, and providing easy access to basic social services in health, water and sanitation and education. However, what can the PBC do differently from the already existing programs and frameworks? That is your main objective, and if you research thoroughly about the situation in Burundi, you can devise a plan that has never been seen or heard of before. We all can agree that it is essential to stabilize Burundi, but how exactly can the UN and international community commit to this project? Focus on various issues such as the political process where most of the problems of Burundi are prevalent. Is their current government working, from your country's perspective? Is there room for improvement? Also, Burundi seems to be surrounded by countries who have similarly dealt with conflict before and have not fully recovered. Thus, how can the PBC assist in strengthening Burundi to avoid the influence of the regional instability prevalent in that part of Africa? Lastly, how can Burundi rebuild its economy since it has been left destitute since the colonial period? Of course, these are suggestions, but do feel free to broaden your horizons to include issues that have never been discussed before.

## Last Remarks

The simulation for this committee will be somewhat different from the typical committee format. First and foremost, follow the typical position paper format for the two countries: Sierra Leone and Burundi. Then, at the end, explain in your papers which country is more urgent for the PBC to consider first. Provide a persuasive argument proving that either Sierra Leone or Burundi needs the urgent help that the PBC is willing to provide, but only one country at a time. With your arguments, when you attend the conference, delegates will work on resolutions creating a framework but you can only support one country (Sierra Leone or Burundi). Thus, just like in your position papers, you will take a stance convincing the chairs whether either Sierra Leone or Burundi gets priority in the PBC. Lastly, at the end of the committee, we will vote on these resolutions just like any other committee, but we will also see if Sierra Leone or Burundi will be the first country to implement the framework you have created. If this seems confusing at all, feel free to email me at [bonniehjin@berkeley.edu](mailto:bonniehjin@berkeley.edu). Good luck and hope to see you in March!

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