

## Sierra Leone

In 2001, Sierra Leone was the site of the UN's largest peacekeeping mission. The post-conflict stabilization—resulting in the withdrawal of the last peacekeepers in December 2005—constituted, in the words of the UN Secretary-General, a “remarkable turnaround.” The establishment of the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) in 2006 was intended as a channel for continued international support for peacebuilding. Despite the end of the civil war, consolidating peace in Sierra Leone continues to face difficult challenges: crime and corruption are on the rise, governing institutions remain weak, and the border dispute with Guinea remains a source of concern. UNIOSIL is a new breed of peace operation that combines the features of a political support mission and a country office with the aim of strengthening state institutions. The mission also represents a means of monitoring Sierra Leone's fragile stability in the run-up to the 2007 elections.

Civil war broke out in Sierra Leone in 1991. Three decades of rule by weak and authoritarian regimes caused an erosion of state authority, during which the diamond-rich territory had the lowest ranking on the human development index. Clashes between the government and Foday Sankoh's Revolutionary United Front (RUF), supported by former Liberian warlord-turned-president Charles Taylor, spiraled into a ten-year conflict marked by gruesome human rights atrocities. The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (1999–2005) played a major role in supporting elections in 2002, and the restoration of security and state authority across the country, including a disarmament and demobilization program for 76,000 former fighters. UNAMSIL's

withdrawal by December 2005 was linked to progress on five benchmarks: capacity building for the army and police, reintegration of ex-combatants, restoration of government control over diamond-mining, extension of state authority throughout the country, and progress toward peace in Liberia.

The Security Council's decision to establish UNIOSIL reflects recognition that Sierra Leone's peace remains fragile. The “integrated office” has three functions. First, it is intended to help the government achieve a wide range of governance and development objectives related to peace consolidation. Second, UNIOSIL has a security, monitoring, and liaison function, advising the local security forces “and other partners” on internal and external threats. Third, it has a coordination and liaison role with international bodies whose activities have security implications for Sierra Leone, including the Special Court and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). UNIOSIL's executive representative is concurrently resident coordinator of the UN country team, and UN Development Programme (UNDP) resident representative.

The security situation has remained generally calm. However, violent protests became more frequent in 2006, reflecting the worsening economic situation and hostility to perceived government corruption. The UK-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) will remain operational until 2010. UNIOSIL is working with the government to develop a youth employment strategy to address the security concerns associated with disaffected and unemployed youth. The mission also supported the organization of

Sierra Leone's first international investment conference in March. The police force has reached 9,000 officers (500 less than its target level), but there are concerns about discipline and financial sustainability. UNIOSIL's police section provides training and mentoring, with officers embedded in regional headquarters and in divisions dealing with human resources. Reform of the armed forces is proceeding, despite existing resentment of plans to downsize that would lay off a significant number of senior officers and soldiers.

A critical milestone in the year ahead will be the elections scheduled for 28 July 2007. Rising tensions have accompanied increased activities by political parties. A national electoral commission was established, and a security plan for the election period was being prepared as 2006 drew to a close. Meanwhile, the government's ability to deal with any unrest that may result from the trial of Sam Hinga Norman, former leader of the Civil Defense militia, will be a test.

Sierra Leone is widely regarded as a peacekeeping success story. At the request of the government of Burundi, the UN plans to replicate the UNIOSIL model for peace consolidation in Burundi, and both countries have been chosen as the first "clients" of the newly established Peacebuilding Commission. At its first-ever country-specific meeting on 13 October 2006, the government of Sierra Leone presented its proposals to the commission, where it was decided to recommend support to the country from the newly established peacebuilding fund. Meanwhile, UNIOSIL has improved integration of security and development activities, and has kept Sierra Leone on the Security Council agenda. However, the country faces challenges ahead. The ability to deal with corruption and an increasingly disenfranchised and swelling number of unemployed youths, as well as the elections, will affect the success of Sierra Leone's continuing effort to consolidate peace through 2007 and beyond.

#### UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)

• Authorization date	31 August 2005 (UNSC Res. 1620)
• Start date	1 January 2006
• Executive Representative of the Secretary-General	Victor da Silva Angelo (Portugal)
• Chief military liaison officer	Colonel Sven-Olof Broman (Sweden)
• Senior police adviser	Rudolfo Landeros (United States)
• Budget	\$23.3 million (1 January–31 December 2006)
• Strength as of 30 September 2006	Military observers/liaison officers: 9 Police: 19 International civilian staff: 66 Local civilian staff: 184 UN volunteers: 22

*For detailed mission information see p. 286.*



UNAMSIL peacekeepers depart from Freetown, Sierra Leone, in December 2005 at the end of the mission's mandate.