



Centre for
Human Rights and
Restorative Justice

REFERENCES TO SLAVERY OR SLAVES

Sierra Leone Truth Commission

Abstract

A list of references to slavery and slaves in the Sierra Leone Truth Commission.

Links to Data Visualization

This section contains links to all data visualization for the Sierra Leone report.

Comparison Charts

- [References to Slavery and Slaves chart](#)
- [References to Slavery and Slaves excel list](#)

Word Trees

- [Slavery](#)
- [Slaves](#)

References to Slavery and Slaves

This section contains all references to slavery and slaves from the Sierra Leone report.

<Files\\Truth Commission Reports\\Africa\\Sierra.Leone_.TRC-Report-FULL> - § 120 references coded [0.65% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 0.01% Coverage

children. Yes I saw.”¹⁶

Sierra Leone saw some of the most horrific and cruel atrocities committed by people against each other. In the chapter, “Nature of the Conflict”, the Commission endeavoured to provide the context in which abuses such as amputations, sexual abuse and slavery and forced cannibalism took place.¹⁷

12 13 14 15 16

Reference 2 - 0.01% Coverage

Women and the Armed Conflict

20. Women and girls became targets for abuse in the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone. They suffered abductions and exploitation at the hands of their abductions. Their vulnerability was exploited in order to dehumanize them. Women and girls were raped, forced into sexual slavery and endured acts of sexual violence. Many suffered mutilations, torture and a host of other cruel and inhumane acts.

21.

The chapter titled, “Women

Reference 3 - 0.01% Coverage

and the Armed Conflict ²².

The Commission’s enabling Act required it to give special attention to the experiences of children in the armed conflict.²² Children were singled out for some of the most brutal violations of human rights recorded in any conflict. The Sierra Leonean conflict was characterised by the pernicious strategy employed by most of the factions in forcing children into combat. The Commission found it most disturbing that children were the main victims in the following violations: drugging²³, forced recruitment, rape, and sexual assault. The Commission found that children between the ages of 10 to 14 were specifically targeted for forced recruitment, rape, and sexual slavery.²⁴ Children were also forced, often under the threat of death, to commit a range of atrocities.

23.

The Commission paid particular

Reference 4 - 0.01% Coverage

work of the Commission.

65.

The reference to a relationship to the armed conflict also has a substantive limitation on the mandate of the Commission. Obviously, not all violations of human rights committed within Sierra Leone during the 1990s can be considered to be ‘related to the armed conflict’. For example, the practice of female genital mutilation is and has for many years been widespread within Sierra Leone. It continued to be practiced

during the period of the conflict. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa refers to female genital mutilation as a harmful practice which violates the rights of women and which must be prohibited (art. 5(b)). It is probably unreasonable, however, to refer to female genital mutilation as a human rights violation or abuse that was 'related to the armed conflict'. Nevertheless, it might well be argued that the practice of female genital mutilation contributed to a context of oppression and marginalisation of women that was manifested in violations and abuses that were unquestionably related to the armed conflict, such as gang rapes and sexual slavery.

66.

In other words, the

Reference 5 - 0.01% Coverage

reparation, truth and reconciliation 30.

As a consequence of their victimisation, people often find themselves in a condition which is not conducive to forgiveness and reconciliation. The vast majority of them live in abject poverty, some having to endure the loss of limbs and others shunned because of their personal experiences such as rape and sexual slavery. Their dependency and social exclusion are constant reminders of the suffering they have endured. Faced almost on a daily basis by those who have harmed them, it is difficult to find within themselves the capacity to forgive. The humiliation of being dependent on the charity of others and often having to beg in order to live re-victimizes the victims, leaving conditions under which thoughts of revenge fester and grow. A reparations programme will assist those whose lives have been most devastated to move beyond the position they are in currently as a consequence of the war. The cycle of suffering must be broken.

Vol One Chapter Three Concepts

Reference 6 - 0.01% Coverage

to each other, such as:

- Comparing age and sex of victims for each violation suggested that sexual slavery and forced recruitment violations were most frequent for children between the ages of 10 and 14 years old
- Examining the prevalence of each

Reference 7 - 0.01% Coverage

birth, disability Right to life

Right to be free from violence Slavery Torture Cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Wrongful arrest or detention Right to a fair trial Right to privacy Protection of home and family Freedom of movement Right to nationality Right to marry and have a family without discrimination Right to property Freedom of religion Freedom of speech Right to receive information Freedom of association Freedom of peaceful assembly (meetings) Right to vote and to democratic government Right to work Right to decent working conditions Right to equal pay for equal work Right to join trade unions Reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic paid holidays Right to food, clothing, housing and medical care Right to education Right to participate in the cultural life of the community Protection against ill-treatment of children and the elderly Right to a healthy environment Right not to be forced to enroll or participate in an armed conflict?

Vol One Chapter Five Methodology

Reference 8 - 0.01% Coverage

Reports emerged of indiscriminate amputations, abductions of women and children, recruitment of children as combatants, rape, sexual slavery, cannibalism, gratuitous killings and wanton destruction of villages and towns. This was a war measured not so much in battles and confrontations between combatants as in attacks upon civilian populations. Its awesome climax was the destruction of much of Freetown in January 1999.

3.

The war finally shuddered

Reference 9 - 0.01% Coverage

Nature of the Conflict 29.

In compiling its chapter on the nature of the conflict, the Commission used quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques to shed further light on particular patterns and trends. Areas of analysis included the types and frequencies of the violations committed, the profiles of the perpetrators, the identities and demographics of their victims and any evidence of targeting. The Commission examined sixteen specific categories of violations, although within each of these the scope of analysis was broad. For example, acts of rape were considered in multiple contexts, including abduction, sexual slavery, during attacks on villages, or when the victim was encountered at a checkpoint or in the bush.

Vol Two Chapter One Executive

Reference 10 - 0.01% Coverage

Agreement in July 1999.

Women

50. Women and girls became the targets in the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone. They suffered abduction and brutality at the hands of their perpetrators. Their vulnerability was deliberately exploited in order to dehumanise them. Women and girls were raped, forced into sexual slavery and endured other acts of sexual violence, including mutilations, torture and a host of other cruel and inhumane treatment. They were taken from their homes and villages by force. Refusal to comply with their captors often met with death. For those fortunate enough to escape, displacement invariably followed, either in exile or in camps inside or outside the country. They were not safe even in these camps, as humanitarian workers meant to protect them also violated their rights. Women and girls were compelled to barter their bodies in order to access aid to which they were rightfully entitled. Girls as young as 12 were forced to pay for aid with sex in order to gain assistance for their families.

51.

The Commission was enjoined

Reference 11 - 0.01% Coverage

the Sierra Leone Army (SLA).

54. While peace has returned to Sierra Leone, many of the wounds of war still remain open. Women and girls bear the scars of their horrible experiences. Many have borne children as a result of rape and sexual slavery. These mothers are shunned and punished by society for giving birth to 'rebel' children.

55.

The Commission believes that

Reference 12 - 0.01% Coverage

Women in Africa.

Children 56.

Like women, children were violated and abused by all of the armed factions involved in the Sierra Leonean conflict. They suffered abductions, forced recruitment, sexual slavery and rape, amputations, mutilations, displacement, drugging and torture. Children were also forced to become perpetrators and were compelled to violate the rights of others. Thousands of children were killed during the conflict in Sierra Leone. In addition, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children Affairs (MSWGCA) estimates that more than 15,000 children suffered separation from their families and communities during the eleven-year war. This resulted in their becoming refugees in countries like Liberia, Guinea, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria. In addition, many became internally displaced persons. Children were used as fighters and forced labour by the armed groups. Although the RUF was the first to abduct and forcibly enlist children as soldiers and porters, all the armed factions recruited children and deployed them to such ends.

Vol Two Chapter One Executive

Reference 13 - 0.01% Coverage

in responding to their needs.

59. While the full impact of the conflict has yet to be measured, children have been affected at all levels of their development, in particular their education and health. During the conflict, children in Sierra Leone were denied their childhood. A major area of concern is the child-headed household, a direct result of children having lost parents or guardians in the war. The breakdown in family and community structures and the loss of social values have affected children materially and psycho-socially. These effects are enduring and far-reaching. A number of excombatant children are still bearing the brunt of their forced participation in the war. Their families and communities have in many cases rejected them because of their former affiliations. Girls especially have experienced both derision and rejection because they were forced to become 'bush wives' or sexual slaves.

60.

The Commission has found

Reference 14 - 0.01% Coverage

recorded in any conflict.

23.

Children aged between ten and 14 years were especially targeted for forced recruitment. Girls between the ages of ten and 14 were targeted for rape and for abuse as sexual slaves.⁹

24. Women and girls were raped, forced into sexual slavery, tortured and suffered cruel and inhumane acts.

25. 26. 27.

Forced displacements

Reference 15 - 0.01% Coverage

Extortion

Rape

Sexual Abuse Amputation
Forced Recruitment Sexual Slavery
Drugging
Forced Cannibalism Total
Count

Reference 16 - 0.01% Coverage

2 0.1

100.2

88. Within the context of the violations reported in statements to the Commission, rape and sexual slavery were committed exclusively against females, while 89.1% (293 out of 331) of forced recruitments were committed against males.

Targeting of Children 89.

The

Reference 17 - 0.01% Coverage

males.

Targeting of Children 89.

The Commission finds that children were specifically targeted during the conflict. In particular, the Commission finds statistical patterns that are consistent with the hypothesis that children between the ages of 10 and 14 were specifically targeted for forced recruitment, rape, and sexual slavery.¹⁷ Twenty-five percent of the victims reported to the Commission across these three violations were young children: 11 years of age or younger in respect of forced recruitment; 13 years or below in respect of those raped; 12 years or younger in respect of those forced into sexual slavery.

¹⁷ More detail can be

Reference 18 - 0.01% Coverage

rape and gang rape.

136.

In the “run”, or flight from a target, the RUF systematically accrued “resources” for its sustenance as a guerrilla fighting force. Hence the RUF habitually captured civilians and took them unwillingly from their communities, often torturing them and forcing them into carrying pillaged properties. These captures were the bedrocks upon which the violations of forced recruitment and sexual slavery increased substantially.

137.

The RUF was able

Reference 19 - 0.01% Coverage

the period of the conflict.

The rights of children were violated in many ways. Children were abducted, forcibly recruited to fight for the faction that abducted them, compelled to kill or be killed. Children were tortured and maimed. They were forced into slave labour, suffered rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual abuse. Girls between the ages of 10 and 14 were particularly targeted for abuse.

468.

The Commission finds that

Reference 20 - 0.01% Coverage

and their feelings of guilt.

The Commission finds that all the armed groups pursued a policy of deliberately abducting girls with the intention of raping and sexual violating them, forcing them into sexual and domestic slavery, torturing them, forcibly impregnating them and mutilating them. The Commission holds the leadership of all fighting factions responsible for planning and authorising such brutal strategies.

471.

The Commission finds that

Reference 21 - 0.01% Coverage

of the RUF leadership.

475.

The Commission finds that the RUF was primarily responsible for the abduction of girls.³⁸ RUF combatants, with the blessing and authorisation of the leadership, raped abducted girls and forced them into sexual slavery. Abducted girls were also subjected to a host of other sexual violations.

476.

The Commission finds that

Reference 22 - 0.01% Coverage

and international humanitarian law.

479.

The Commission finds that during the conflict in Sierra Leone the CDF carried out a deliberate strategy of perpetrating rape, sexual slavery and other sexual violations on girls. The Commission finds in particular that girls and women identified as relatives or associates of the opposing forces were specifically targeted by the CDF for such violations. The Commission finds such acts to be in clear contravention of international law and holds the leadership of the CDF responsible for the sexual violations carried out by members and combatants of the CDF faction.

480.

The Commission finds the

Reference 23 - 0.01% Coverage

led to these violations.

487.

The Commission finds that the AFRC pursued a deliberate strategy of abducting girls during the invasion of Freetown in January 1999. AFRC combatants abducted girls in order to rape them, hold them in sexual slavery and to perpetrate sexual violations against them.

488.

The Commission finds that

Reference 24 - 0.01% Coverage

this problem.

Street children 493.

The Commission finds that the conflict in Sierra Leone has created a new phenomenon, that of children living on the streets. Many of these children were abducted, suffered forced recruitment and sexual slavery. They have not been able to return home. These children and youth live in abject poverty and are compelled to beg or to sell themselves for sex in order to survive.

Vol Two Chapter Two Findings

Reference 25 - 0.01% Coverage

WOMEN Primary findings 496.

497.

The Commission finds that, during the conflict in Sierra Leone, all armed groups perpetrated human rights violations against women and girls. Women and girls were targeted for rape and sexual slavery. Violations committed against women included killings, rape, sexual violence, sexual slavery, slave labour, abductions, assaults, amputations, forced pregnancy, detention, torture, enforced sterilisation, trafficking, mutilations, enforced cannibalism, displacement and economic violations such as looting, extortion, theft and the destruction of property.

498.

The Commission finds further

Reference 26 - 0.01% Coverage

Two Findings Page 100

503.

The RUF pursued a deliberate strategy of violating women by raping them and perpetrating acts of sexual violence against them. RUF combatants used women and girls (particularly those between the ages of 10 and 14) as sexual and domestic slaves and tortured them in a myriad of different ways. Women and girls were killed, assaulted and suffered cruel and inhuman acts at the hands of RUF fighters.

Findings against the AFRC in

Reference 27 - 0.01% Coverage

of sexual violence against them.

The AFRC pursued a strategy of violating women and girls by using them as sexual and domestic slaves and tortured them in a variety of ways. Women and girls were killed, assaulted and suffered cruel and inhuman acts at the hands of AFRC fighters.

506.

The Commission finds that

Reference 28 - 0.01% Coverage

the RUF and the AFRC.

The Commission finds that the CDF detained women and girls and kept them under the most cruel and inhuman conditions with the intention of violating them by raping them and exploiting them as sexual slaves.

The Commission finds the conduct

Reference 29 - 0.01% Coverage

in respect of women 512.

The Commission finds the West Side Boys responsible for abducting women and girls, holding them against their will, forcing them into marriage, raping them, using them as sexual slaves and perpetrating a range of brutal and inhuman acts upon them.

Violations perpetrated against women and

Reference 30 - 0.01% Coverage

Abduction and Forced Recruitment

513.

The Commission finds that all of the armed groups pursued a deliberate strategy of targeting young girls between the ages of 10 and 14. Women and girls were abducted for the purposes of keeping them under their control, exercising rights of ownership over them, exploiting their vulnerability, coercing them into becoming combatants and using them as sexual slaves and as forced labour.

514.

The RUF was the

Reference 31 - 0.01% Coverage

debased societal norms and customs.

o Sexual slavery 517.

The Commission finds that the RUF and the AFRC were the major perpetrators of sexual slavery and forced marriages of women and young girls.⁴⁰

o “Enforced sterilisation”⁴¹ 518

Reference 32 - 0.01% Coverage

to the RUF. 40

41

Of the 189 allegations of sexual slavery of women and girls reported to the Commission, 137 of them (72.5%) are attributed to the RUF and 22 (11.6%) are attributed to the AFRC.

The practice of disembowelling pregnant

Reference 33 - 0.01% Coverage

19

servitude and forced labour

•

Protection from slavery and forced labour

- With respect to slavery and servitude
 - 27 Equality •
- Protection from discrimination

Reference 34 - 0.01% Coverage

citizenship. This law is racist.

The mixture of various groups with different skills can be the engine room of a vibrant democratic society. It is desirable that Sierra Leone evolves into a more pluralist society, welcoming persons of all ethnic origins. Racist legislation is a perpetuation of the philosophy that justified the slave trade and colonialism, and should be unthinkable in an African democracy that has emerged from the continent's oppressive past.

85.

Citizenship should be acquired

Reference 35 - 0.01% Coverage

affected by the Armed Conflict

323. Women were subjected to systematic abuse during the conflict. Violations perpetrated against women included torture, rape, sexual abuse, and sexual slavery, trafficking, enslavement, abductions, amputations, forced pregnancy, forced labour and detentions.

324. Never again should women

Reference 36 - 0.01% Coverage

rights abuses.

Domestic Law 13.

Chapter III of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone provides a list of fundamental human rights and freedoms to which every Sierra Leonean is entitled. Those fundamental human rights and freedoms that were violated during the war include the protection of right to life, protection from arbitrary arrest or detention, protection from slavery and forced labour, and protection from inhuman treatment.

14. 15.

Section 28(1

Reference 37 - 0.01% Coverage

the Dignity of Victims

42.

The conflict caused many innocent people to fall victim to the cruellest violations of fundamental human rights. As a consequence, victims often find themselves in a condition which is not conducive to living with dignity. Most have been reduced to living in poverty, some having to endure the loss of limbs and others shunned because of their personal experiences such as rape and sexual slavery. Their dependency and social exclusion are constant reminders of the suffering they went through.

11 J. Zalaquett, Extract from

Reference 38 - 0.01% Coverage

Victims of Sexual Violence 95.

Victims of sexual violence are defined as those women and girls who were subjected to such acts as rape, sexual slavery, mutilation of genital parts or breasts, and forced marriage. To the extent boys and men suffered from sexual violence, they will also be beneficiaries of this programme.

96.

The Commission decided not

Reference 39 - 0.01% Coverage

distrust, competition and intransigence.

11.

By way of example, the chiefs and peoples of the Sierra Leonean interior had originally welcomed the arrival and gradual resettlement of various categories of freed slaves⁷ on the Western peninsula. Several traditional rulers even made their land available to the freed slaves. Yet the British colonial administration promoted the notion that western values and Christianity were superior to the traditional customs and religions practised in the Protectorate. The people in the Protectorate were thus effectively discriminated against on the basis of their belief systems.

12.

In terms of land

Reference 40 - 0.01% Coverage

sociological and political divide.

13.

The British had acquired the original land in the peninsula and its environs (now known as the Western Area) for the Colony in 1787, from the Temne ruler, King Nimbana, whose northern Koya Kingdom extended to the western tip of the territory. With colonial expansion, Bonthe Island, off the south-western shore, was later added. The Sierra Leone Company, a corporate entity created by the British Abolitionists who had led the campaign to end the slave trade in the United Kingdom, administered the Colony at first. By 1800, former slaves and their descendants had developed into a distinctive social group who were known as the Creoles, or Krios. They developed a language from among their various dialects, which became known as Krio.¹⁰ By 1808, with the collapse of

7

The categories of slaves

Reference 41 - 0.01% Coverage

with the collapse of

7

The categories of slaves freed onto the Western peninsula included the black poor from England, the labourers of Nova Scotia, the Maroons and the Recaptives. For a more detailed discussion of these immigrations, see Fyfe C.; *A Short History of Sierra Leone*, London, Longman, 1962 (hereinafter "Fyfe, *A Short History of Sierra Leone*"), at pages 26, 32, 38 and 61.

8

See Gwynne-Jones D

Reference 42 - 0.01% Coverage

Leone, at page 174.

10

Krio (sometimes referred to as 'Creole') is a unique pidgin English that incorporates words and phrases used in popular dialect by the freed slaves in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is the lingua franca of Sierra Leone today.

Vol Three A Chapter One

Reference 43 - 0.01% Coverage

by the British crown.

14.

The territories of the Protectorate, meanwhile, came under British rule through the gradual and subtle advance of the colonialists into the hinterland. The British took their lead from Krio traders and Christian missionaries, whose entry into the outlying territories provided the context and the conditions for their annexation. By 1896, the British had expanded their coverage and control to a sufficient extent to be able to declare the hinterland a Protectorate. Thus, almost nine decades after the resettled former slaves had come under British colonial rule in 1808, the remainder of the population also lost their sovereignty to the avarice of imperialism.

15.

The British treated the

Reference 44 - 0.01% Coverage

rape and gang rape.

457.

The 'run' then took the form of either a retreat in the face of counter-attack or a return to the relative safety of a nearby bush base. In the process, new 'members' were habitually and unwillingly taken from their communities, tortured and forced into carrying loads. The clear demographic preponderance among abductees was young boys deemed suitable for conversion into combatants and young girls who were subjected to rape and sexual violence violations and abuses. Violations of forced recruitment and sexual slavery increased substantially during Phase II as both were more typically perpetrated in the jungle environment.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NETWORK

Reference 45 - 0.01% Coverage

people during the conflict.

13.

The list is deliberately short, numbering 16 violations. Each is precisely defined to avoid ambiguity, ensuring a common understanding of the violations recorded by the Commission. While the list is short, there is scope for a broad analysis of each one. For example, acts of rape should be considered as not only happening in the context of abduction as sex slaves or "bush wives"; but as a violation perpetrated against women during attacks on villages or as part of encounters at checkpoints or in the bush. Furthermore, the burning of property should be understood, not just as an economic crime, but on occasion, as a means of murdering the persons detained within the property.

Data Framework 14.

In order

Reference 46 - 0.01% Coverage

of Conflict Page 469

18.

The violations occurring in the context of abduction are dealt with more specifically in the chapters of this report dealing with Women, Children and Youth respectively. Indeed, sexual slavery was perpetrated mostly against women and girls. Forced recruitment was targeted at children and youths by the RUF, the AFRC and the CDF. The targeted age group for forced recruitment violations were those 10-14years.

19.

Following from the above

Reference 47 - 0.01% Coverage

violations recorded in its database:

1 Amputation 2 Forced Cannibalism 3 Abduction and subsequent long term Detention and Mistreatment

3.1 Forced Recruitment and Sexual Slavery with particular reference to children (including the Drugging violation), Forced Labour

3.2 Assault, Torture and

Reference 48 - 0.01% Coverage

this chapter.

Violation Categories 24.

The following violations are captured in the database: amputations; forced cannibalism; abduction, forced recruitment, sexual slavery; drugging; forced labour; assault; torture; rape, arbitrary detention; looting and destruction of property; extortion; forced displacement; killing and cannibalism. A general characteristic of these violations is the indiscriminate manner in which they were committed. There was no respect shown to traditional norms, or vulnerable groups. The percentage of each violation committed by the armed factions shows that none of the violations was a peculiar characteristic of any group. They all seemed to be competing to outdo themselves on who would commit the most violations against civilians. Even the government soldiers who had gone through formal training did not seem to have felt themselves bound by the laws of war. Terror became the main tool for the armed groups. Even those groups set up to defend the communities against attack made no distinction between friend and foe. This chapter is therefore very painful reading of how armed groups claiming to act on behalf of the common man turned their guns on the very people in whose name they claimed to be acting.

3

John Williams, TRC statement

Reference 49 - 0.01% Coverage

without rules. Nothing was sacrosanct.

3. Abduction, forced recruitment and sexual slavery: 49.

These violations have been dealt with comprehensively in the chapters of the report on women and children respectively. Forced recruitment is the forced or unwilling recruitment of any individual to an armed group or organisation by threat, or intimidation to self or family members and /or violence, while

sexual slavery is where the perpetrator exercised all or any of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over one or more persons, such as by purchasing, selling, lending or bartering such a person or persons or by imposing on them a similar deprivation of liberty; and where the perpetrator caused such person or persons to engage in one or more acts of a sexual nature.²⁴ The victim often known as a “bush wife” is held by one or more perpetrators.

4. Drugging: 50.

Most of

Reference 50 - 0.01% Coverage

5.1 Forced labour:

54.

The Commission defines Forced Labour as forced/unwilling labour by a victim that occurs whilst they are detained. It excludes the labour implied by being the victim of a “Forced Recruitment” or “Sexual Slavery” violation.

55.

Forced labour occurred either

Reference 51 - 0.01% Coverage

of the Conflict Page 485

73. While victims who were abducted and turned into sex slaves or bush wives suffered numerous rape violations⁴⁵, hundreds of other rape violations were reported to the Commission outside of the context of abduction, during encounters on the road or in the bush, or during village attacks.

74.

Male combatants did not

Reference 52 - 0.01% Coverage

my aunty were killed.”

132.

The AFRC soldiers who had revolted against the elected government were no different from their RUF colleagues in their treatment of civilians.⁸¹ AFRC soldiers abducted Miss X during the January 6 invasion of Freetown. She was used as a slave after refusing to submit to rape. She watched her cousin being raped.⁸²

“When we came back to

Reference 53 - 0.01% Coverage

the ‘revolution’ was launched.

186.

The RUF leadership did nothing to prevent the targeting of chiefs and other community symbols. The Leader, Foday Sankoh, according to some accounts objected to certain acts committed by the insurgent forces, particularly by the NPFL fighters, on the basis that they were ‘counter-revolutionary’. Among the objects of his alleged disapproval was rape, for which it was claimed that he introduced an express rule that anybody found to have committed rape would be executed. Sankoh himself committed rape and sexual slavery in the forcible detention and conversion of Agnes Deen Jalloh to his bush wife. On the

issue of killing Chiefs, Sankoh remained conspicuously silent. Indeed he lent the practice his implicit endorsement by proceeding to keep a house in the same Sandeyallu Village in Kailahun District where the incumbent Town Chief had been so brutally and publicly murdered in 1991. It may have been that Sankoh was in favour of such tactics on the misplaced premise that they struck a blow against 'the system' he so despised.

TARGETING ON THE BASIS OF

Reference 54 - 0.01% Coverage

1997.

Targeting of Nigerians 192.

The relationship between Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans blossomed from the colonial era. The colonial authorities recruited many Sierra Leoneans as missionaries and civil servants in Nigeria. Many of them subsequently settled in Nigeria. Furthermore thousands of slaves who had been freed from the slave ships arrested on the high seas and resettled in Sierra Leone were able to trace their homes in Nigeria and re-establish contact with their family members. The links between both countries have therefore been very strong. Up until the start of the war, majority of the students at the Fourah Bay College were Nigerians. Inter marriage between both nations had been quite strong and thousands of Nigerians had settled in Sierra Leone carrying on legitimate business activities

193.

It was no surprise

Reference 55 - 0.01% Coverage

torturing you to death.”

353.

Then, they are subjected to harsh and humiliating trials in a bid to put them in a position of vulnerability. New rules are introduced some of which can be illogical. Some of the humiliating acts could be carrying food and other support items for the initiators, wives being raped in the presence of their husbands or girl children being used as sex slaves. Some commented that in the training, they also had to walk naked during hours in the bush.

“The second phase is the

Reference 56 - 0.01% Coverage

for several days.”²³⁸

190.

The same witness complained about mistreatment to Brigadier Issa Sesay, but the abuses increased after the complaint. Another witness described similar violations near Tombudu and in Sandoh, Kono District, in 1998. The witness was forced to spend 4 days cleaning the pump in the water, without rest. The group of abductees was forced to mine day and night, without rest and with very little feeding, for 2 weeks.

They were released and replaced by a new group of abductees.²³⁹ This was a system of slavery used by the RUF. Instead of letting the workers rest, they used them to the point of exhaustion and replaced them, to improve productivity.

191.

The Commission received testimonies

Reference 57 - 0.01% Coverage

Government of Sierra Leone 30.

At the request of the Sierra Leone government, Nigeria sent a small force in late 1991 and they guarded RSLMF bases and installations. Apart from formal requests or protocols for military assistance, officials of both Nigeria and Sierra Leone pointed to socio-cultural ties between the two countries as good reason for Nigerian support. Socio-cultural ties between Sierra Leone and Nigeria have their genesis in the end of slavery and the establishment of Freetown as a haven for freed slaves. Slaves from Nigeria bound for the New World, freed by British naval boats, were resettled in Freetown. These ex-slaves from the Americas and Britain became known as the Krios, with a cultural identity that drew much from Nigerian heritage. President Olusegun Obasanjo talked about this 'blood relationship' between Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans as the foundation and justification for Nigeria's military and diplomatic intervention in Sierra Leone.⁵⁰

47

Western Area, October 2003

Reference 58 - 0.01% Coverage

in the eastern hinterland.

3.

In the eighteenth century, the abolitionist campaign led to the decision in Britain to relocate freed slaves to Sierra Leone. The British government purchased land from a Temne King in order to settle freed slaves on and around the western peninsula. This new community took on the name "Freetown" and its population became known as Krios. In 1808, the British created the Crown Colony, centred on Freetown and its environs, and in 1896 made the outlying areas into a Protectorate. For over 150 years the British dominated all spheres of life in the country. It was during this period that the Freetown-based Krios advanced educationally and economically at the expense of the people in the hinterland. The Krios developed into a highly educated group of colonial subjects compared to their counterparts in the Provinces.

4.

Sierra Leone celebrated its

Reference 59 - 0.01% Coverage

Sierra Leone Page 85

6.

Women and girls became particular targets of malice and violence during the conflict. They suffered abduction and exploitation at the hands of the various perpetrator factions. Their vulnerability was deliberately exploited in order to dehumanise them and perpetrate against them the most gross of violations. They were raped, forced into sexual slavery and endured acts of great sexual violence. They suffered mutilations, torture and a host of cruel and inhuman acts. They were taken from their homes and villages by force. Refusal to comply with the demands of their captors often met with death. For those fortunate enough to escape, there followed displacement and separation from families. While some went into exile, many were housed in camps in Sierra Leone and in neighbouring countries. Shockingly, women and girls were not safe even in these camps. Humanitarian workers – meant to offer them respite and protection – also violated their rights. Women and girls were compelled to barter their bodies in order to survive and access aid to which they were rightfully entitled. Girls as young as 12 were forced to pay for aid with sex to secure assistance for their families.

7.

Statistics pertaining to the

Reference 60 - 0.01% Coverage

positions as Deputy Ministers.²⁵

53. While some women in Sierra Leone, especially the Krios, became deeply involved in politics quite early on in the post-independence period, it was much later that women from the Provinces were able to join the bandwagon. The Krios, on the whole, were better educated than those in the outlying areas and that disparity applied to Krio women as well. Their exposure to education led to their clear understanding of the need for women to be involved in the political process. Their links internationally meant that they were also exposed to the growing debates in the world on issues such as the suffrage of women, the abolition of slavery, the rise in African nationalism and the struggle for independence.

54. Women in Freetown had

Reference 61 - 0.01% Coverage

marriage and sex independently.

85.

The abductions and use of young girls and women as bush wives and sex slaves by armed groups during the war could be attributed to the traditional beliefs that governed this issue prior to the war. Some of the armed groups did not consider it an aberration to rape young women or use them as sex slaves. A testimony to the Commission from a girl child who went fishing with other children and was captured during the conflict illustrates this point:

“I was a small girl

Reference 62 - 0.01% Coverage

to women and girls.

144.

Sexual offences that are linked with the “moral character” of the victim are not gender sensitive and are a violation of the right to be free from sexual violence and the right to physical integrity. Perpetrators can escape punishment by alleging that the victim is a prostitute or a woman of immoral character. The punishment of two years’ imprisonment under this Act is inappropriate and unlikely to deter offenders from committing such crimes. In particular, in view of the widespread rape and sexual slavery that characterised the conflict in Sierra Leone, there is a high risk that victims of the conflict who attempt to prosecute rape or crimes of sexual violence in peacetime may be challenged and dismissed because of their experiences during the war.

145.

The complex provisions of

Reference 63 - 0.01% Coverage

to Violations during the Conflict

149. Women suffered a multiplicity of violations during the war, including abduction, forced recruitment, detention, forced displacement, forced labour, assault, torture, forced drugging, amputation, forced cannibalism, forced cannibalism, rapes, sexual slavery, sexual abuse, extortion, looting, destruction of property and killing.¹⁰² Many of these violations constitute crimes under Sierra Leone’s criminal law.

Torture, forced drugging and amputation may be prosecuted as assaults under the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861. The killing of women may be prosecuted as murder or manslaughter. Detention may be prosecuted as false imprisonment. The acts of extortion, looting and destruction of property may be prosecuted under the Larceny Act 1916 or the Malicious Damage Act. The national laws of rape under the common law, indecent assault and procuring for prostitution could be applied to crimes of sexual violence committed during the war.

150. While it is reassuring

Reference 64 - 0.01% Coverage

Rape and sexual violence¹⁴³ 170.

Rape remains the silent war crime in Sierra Leone and in the world: throughout history, the rape of hundreds of thousands of women and children in all regions of the world has been a bitter reality.¹⁴⁴ Reversing this legacy remains the obligation of every transitional justice institution charged with examining or prosecuting crimes committed during conflict. It is critical to ensuring inclusive and non-discriminatory justice as well as to combating the stigma and blame that are at the core of the shame, isolation and abandonment suffered by women in post-conflict situations. Whilst international humanitarian law has long prohibited rape, it was characterised as an offence against honour and dignity¹⁴⁵. The Fourth Geneva Convention continued the practice of characterising rape as an attack on women's honour. The list of grave breaches of Common Article 3 does not refer explicitly to rape. Again in 1977, in Protocol II while offences of sexual violence were explicitly included, they were characterised as offences against dignity and honour or humiliating and degrading treatment as listed as rape, forced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault. As a consequence, women whether combatants or civilians, have been consistently targeted for sexual violence such as rape, sexual mutilation and sexual slavery, while for the most part their attackers go unpunished.

171.

The 1993 World Conference

Reference 65 - 0.01% Coverage

admitted in evidence.”¹⁵⁰

174.

Sierra Leone is a signatory to the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). The Rome Statute of the ICC¹⁵¹ does not apply to the events occurring in Sierra Leone, as the treaty is not retroactive. The Rome Statute of the ICC lists a significant range of sexual crimes as both war crimes and acts constituting crimes against humanity. These acts include rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation and any other form of sexual violence. In addition, the Rome Statute has recognised persecution based on gender as a crime against humanity. In addition to the explicit naming of these crimes of sexual and gender violence, the ICC encompasses the principle of gender integration implemented by the ad-hoc tribunals,

¹⁴⁶ The Prosecutors of the

Reference 66 - 0.01% Coverage

the ad-hoc Tribunals.

176.

The Statute of the Special Court in Sierra Leone gives the Court jurisdiction to try cases occurring since 30 November 1996. Crimes the Court will prosecute are crimes against humanity, which includes gender-

based crimes of rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy any other form of sexual violence when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian population.¹⁵² Rape, enforced prostitution and any other form of indecent assault can be prosecuted as violations of humanitarian law in Common Article 3 and Additional Protocol II. The Special Court Statute ignores the more forward-looking provisions of the Rome Statute, instead utilising the wording of Article 4(2)(e) of the Additional Protocol II.

Applying international law to the

Reference 67 - 0.01% Coverage

and gender-based violence¹⁷⁹.

The Rome Statute and the Statute of the Special Court of Sierra Leone list the sexual crimes of rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilisation and other sexual violence. While the Rome Statute includes these crimes as both crimes against humanity and war crimes, the Statute of the Special Court does not explicitly recognise any of these sexual violence crimes, except for the crimes of rape and enforced prostitution, as war crimes. The Commission has dealt with sexual violence on the basis of internationally recognisable crimes.

¹⁵² See the Statute of

Reference 68 - 0.01% Coverage

Sierra Leone

Sexual slavery¹⁶¹ 183.

The two essential elements unique to the crime of sexual slavery are the “exercise of any of all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over one or more persons...” and the forced participation in one or more acts of sexual violence.¹⁶² The ICC adds the requirement that this be accomplished by such acts as “purchasing selling, lending or bartering such a person or [persons, or by imposing on them a similar deprivation of liberty” which can include reducing a person to a servile status under the international law or forced labour. Sexual slavery is a form of enslavement identified by the fact that the perpetrator must cause the victim(s) to engage in one or more acts of a sexual nature.

184.

Forced “marriage” is a

Reference 69 - 0.01% Coverage

of a sexual nature.

184.

Forced “marriage” is a form of sexual slavery as is the detention of women in “rape camps” or any circumstances under which women are subjected repeatedly to rape or the threat of rape or any other sexual violence. In Sierra Leone, as well as in many other conflicts, women and girls were given as “wives” to commanders and combatants. These sexual slaves are widely referred to as “bush wives”. When “forced marriage” involves forced sex or the inability to control sexual access or exercise sexual autonomy, which, by definition, forced marriage almost always does, it constitutes sexual slavery, as recognised by the Special Rapporteur for Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery and Slavery-Like Practices during Armed Conflict.¹⁶³

Forced pregnancy¹⁶⁴ 185.

As a

Reference 70 - 0.01% Coverage

Enslavement (crime against humanity) 194.

Enslavement is named as a crime against humanity (Art. 7(1)(c) Rome Statute and Art. 2(c) Special Court Statute). It is also prohibited by numerous international human rights and humanitarian law instruments and is one of the original universally condemned crimes under customary international law. Enslavement is also a jus cogens violation.¹⁷⁹ The sexual form of enslavement is now codified as “sexual slavery”. Beyond that enslavement takes many forms, some of them gendered. Young girls and boys, men and women can be enslaved in one of many ways: in domestic labour, mining, arms factory, demining and medical experiments. It becomes a gender crime when an individual is enslaved because of his or her particular function in the society: women used for domestic labour (cooking, washing, cleaning, and serving, educating children), men for transport or fighting, young girls for spying, girls and women for sex and reproduction.

178 179

See the Furundzija

Reference 71 - 0.01% Coverage

THE CONFLICT IN SIERRA LEONE

200. Women and girls in Sierra Leone were deliberately targeted by all of the armed groups involved in the conflict in Sierra Leone. They suffered a multiplicity of violations at the hands of their abusers. The violations included a range of sexual crimes such as rape, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, and other crimes of sexual violence. Women and girls also suffered abductions, enslavement, torture and forced labour. Many women and girls were also killed in the most brutal circumstances. Many women and girls became displaced, many were forced to flee and become refugees. They also suffered extortion and looting. Despite their experiences, brutal though they were, many have managed to survive and have offered their testimonies to the Commission.

201.

Of the 40,684

Reference 72 - 0.01% Coverage

boy or young girl.

209.

The violation of abduction placed the abductees under the absolute control of their perpetrator grouping, which then gave the perpetrators a licence to commit a range of further violations against the abductees. These violations included being coerced into becoming a combatant, being compelled to perform forced labour, or forced into sexual slavery and forced marriage. In terms of testimony collected by the Commission, a total of 6,054 abductions were recorded in the Commission’s database. Women account for 2,096 of recorded violations.¹⁹³ While all the armed groups stand accused of perpetrating this violation, the Commission has found that the RUF was responsible for the highest number of abductions.¹⁹⁴ The RUF is responsible for 1,368 (65,3%) of the Commission’s recorded violations against women and 2,337 (59,3%) of the Commission’s recorded violations against men.¹⁹⁵

210.

The act of abduction

Reference 73 - 0.01% Coverage

violations against men.¹⁹⁵

210.

The act of abduction placed the victim under the total control of the perpetrator grouping. Women were particularly vulnerable, as they were deliberately abducted in order to be exploited for the purposes of sexual violence, forced labour and sexual slavery.¹⁹⁶ Young girls were deeply traumatised by the experience as they were snatched from the bosom of their families, forced to endure separation from family members and the society they belonged to, raped and sexually brutalised and forced to endure a brutally savage life to which they were unaccustomed. Many died in captivity.

211. A former abductee of

Reference 74 - 0.01% Coverage

died during my abduction.”¹⁹⁸

212. Women were abducted in a myriad of places, including their homes in villages or towns, from the bush or while they were walking along the road,¹⁹⁹ or during ambushes. Abductions kept the numbers high in the armed groupings and became a mechanism for armed groups like the RUF to service various needs besides swelling the ranks, as abductees served as porters, advance troops, sexual slaves and forced labour. Abductees were also required to carry items that had been looted.²⁰⁰ As a result of the war, a large number of women were separated from children and spouses and also suffered years of horrendous abuse in the hands of their abductors even as some died in the process and never made it back to their families. Young girls were separated for many years from their families and many did not make it back.

213.

The Commission finds that

Reference 75 - 0.01% Coverage

not make it back.

213.

The Commission finds that all of the armed groups pursued a deliberate strategy of targeting women and young girls between the ages of 13 and 22, abducting them for the sole purpose of keeping them under their control, exercising rights of ownership over them and exploiting their vulnerability, coercing them into becoming combatants, using them as sexual slaves, sexually violating them and using them for the purposes of forced labour and servicing the needs of the armed group. The RUF, of all the armed groups, is found to have been the major perpetrator of abduction and related violations.

¹⁹⁸ ¹⁹⁹ ²⁰⁰

TRC confidential

Reference 76 - 0.01% Coverage

the future.

FORCED LABOUR 237.

Abductions in modern warfare provide armed forces with a new source of labour that does not have to be paid for, which can be fed on scraps and is completely at the mercy of the group that assembles it. The armed perpetrator groupings in Sierra Leone, particularly the RUF, relied to a great extent on those who had been abducted to perform slave labour. Forced labour was used for both military and civilian tasks. Arms and ammunition had to be carried to the front. Looted items had to be carried back to the camp. Wood was needed and ordinary tasks of a domestic nature required free labour of which abductees

constituted the main source.²²⁸ Captives were forced to take drugs to ensure that they endured the pain and the hardship of the labour they were assigned to do. A female victim, who was a mother of one when she was abducted in 1992 by fighters she suspects were ULIMO, told the Commission:
“When they captured my son

Reference 77 - 0.01% Coverage

I became unconscious...”²⁷⁶
280.

During the conflict in Sierra Leone, women were systematically raped and sexually violated. The Commission received more than 800 statements from women and girls reporting and describing acts of rape. Girls in the age group from ten to 18 years were most likely to be the victims of rape. Women were gang raped and suffered multiple rapes as well as being kept in sexual slavery. In instances where women and girls were abducted, their capture was often the prelude to being handed over to and assigned to one of the fighters with the sole purpose of being his sexual slave.

274 275 276

Mohamed Jalloh

Reference 78 - 0.01% Coverage

of the TRC data.
288.

The special coding exercise reflected a whole range of rape violations against women, including: women who suffered a single rape; women who suffered gang rape; women who were abducted and kept as a sexual slave or as a “bush wife”; and women who suffered rape or gang rape on more than one separate occasion.

289.

In terms of the

Reference 79 - 0.01% Coverage

in Sierra Leone Page 162
SEXUAL SLAVERY 299.

In terms of international law, the two essential elements unique to the crime of sexual slavery are the “exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership over one or more person” and the “forced participation in one or more acts of sexual violence”.²⁹⁸ In Sierra Leone, hundreds of abducted women and girls were compelled to endure the violation of “sexual slavery”. The Commission identified the act of “forced marriage” as synonymous with “sexual slavery”. This violation is colloquially referred to by Sierra Leoneans as being forced to become a “bush wife”. In describing the experiences of what the Commission has termed “sexual slavery”, the pattern that emerged was as follows: women were captured and abducted; they became part of the entourage of the armed group to which their captors belonged; and they were continuously sexually violated as their captors moved along with them. Again this violation was particularly prevalent for the RUF and the AFRC, who kept women as sexual slaves under what could only be termed “roaming detention”, which could last for time periods ranging from one or two days to several months and years.

300.

Another pattern identified as

Reference 80 - 0.01% Coverage

Sierra Leone Page 163

301.

In the course of the violation of “forced marriage”, or the “bush wife” phenomenon, abducted women and girls abducted were also given out to combatants, commanders or superiors for the purposes of sex and domestic duties.³⁰⁰ Women assumed the traditional role of “wives” to the combatants who captured them. In many instances, these abducted women lived with their captors until the cessation of hostilities in Sierra Leone.³⁰¹ In terms of international law, “forced marriage” is as much a form of sexual slavery as is the detention of women in “rape camps” or any other circumstances under which women are subjected repeatedly to rape or the threat of rape or other sexual violence. “Forced marriage” involves forced sex or the inability to say no or control sexual access or exercise sexual autonomy. The Special Rapporteur for Systematic Rape, Sexual Slavery, and Slavery-Like Practices during Armed Conflicts recognised “forced marriage” as a form of “sexual slavery”.³⁰²

302.

The manner in which

Reference 81 - 0.01% Coverage

Sierra Leone Page 164

304.

The RUF adopted a guerrilla mode of conflict during the period 1993 to 1996. Their fighters moved between bases in the bush. The AFRC was also a highly mobile force, initially fleeing Freetown towards Koinadugu in 1998 and then returning to invade Freetown in January 1999. It is this roaming character, common to both these perpetrator groups, which explains their tendency to abduct women and use women as “sexual slaves” and “domestic slaves”.

305.

Tragically for many of

Reference 82 - 0.01% Coverage

dare to abort.”³⁰⁹

307.

Abducted women and girls who lived with the armed groups for long periods of time were subjected not only to the trauma of living in captivity, forced to endure sexual slavery and daily humiliation, but were also compelled to live under the constant fear of attack from opposing armed groups. Moreover, even if they managed to escape the combatant group, they experienced hostility from civilians and were ostracised from society.³¹⁰ One victim began recounting her ordeal to the Commission in the following terms:

“Immediately the Kamajors caught me

Reference 83 - 0.01% Coverage

Koinadugu District, 11 December 2002.

Various submissions to the Commission listed some of these factors as the consequences of sexual slavery violations that women suffered during the conflict. Among the noteworthy submissions in this regard were from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children’s Affairs, the Women’s Forum

and the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), as well as those received during the TRC Special Thematic Hearings on Women, Freetown, 22 to 24 May 2003.

Vol Three B Chapter Three

Reference 84 - 0.01% Coverage

reporting this category of violation.

Given the testimony of the women who came to the Commission, the Commission finds that all of the armed perpetrator groupings were responsible for the sexual slavery of women and girls. The Commission finds that the RUF and the AFRC were the major perpetrators of sexual slavery and forced marriage of women and young girls.

SEXUAL ABUSE 312.

The Commission

Reference 85 - 0.01% Coverage

REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT (RUF) 331.

The Commission's records reflect that the RUF was the major belligerent group in the conflict and dominates accounts of having committed the most savage acts against the civilian population. While it not only holds the record for the highest number of violations, the RUF is also responsible for most of the acts of rape and sexual violence recorded by the Commission.³²⁹ As reflected in the Commission's narrative of the conflict, the RUF by 1994 switched from conventional warfare to guerrilla warfare. With the change in tactics, there was a corresponding change in behaviour towards women and girls. The number of women abducted began to rise. The TRC estimates that the number of victims abducted and kept in sexual slavery in 1995 was double that in 1991.

NPFL / RUF in Pujehun District

Reference 86 - 0.01% Coverage

that round house."³³²

335.

In terms of statements recorded by the Commission, the RUF and AFRC were the groups most likely to coerce women and girls into sexual slavery and forced marriages. A possible reason for this was that from 1993 to 1994, the RUF adopted a guerrilla mode of warfare and so its units were constantly on the move between bases in the bush. The fighters demanded women to perform domestic chores and to perform sexual services for them. Women and girls were vulnerable in their communities, so it was quite easy for a fighter to abduct them, force them under his immediate control and compel them into sexual slavery and forced labour.

336. While victims experienced some

Reference 87 - 0.01% Coverage

to be attacked.³³⁵

341.

In terms of the testimony provided to the Commission, it is clear that the RUF had a policy deliberately to target women and girls with the clear intention of abducting them and holding them for various purposes described in this report. One of the main reasons for abduction was to violate women and girls by raping

them and holding them as sexual slaves. The RUF cannot deny this modus operandi in the face of overwhelming evidence that, immediately after an attack, women seized in a raid were assigned to either commanders or combatants for the purposes of using them as “bush wives”. The TRC did not receive any report of an RUF commander who attempted to return abducted women and girls to their families, nor was any effort made by the RUF High Command to condemn this practice or to stop it. The RUF leadership must therefore accept that they are responsible for the violations that took place.

342.

Immediately after the Abidjan

Reference 88 - 0.01% Coverage

by the RUF.³³⁹

346.

The Commission finds the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) responsible for pursuing a deliberate strategy of abducting women and girls with the express intention of keeping them under their control, exploiting their vulnerability and sexually violating them either by raping them and causing them to be harmed by acts of sexual violence, using them as sexual and domestic slaves, torturing them and practicing a range of cruel and inhuman acts upon them.

CIVIL DEFENCE FORCES (CDF) 347

Reference 89 - 0.01% Coverage

to their immediate communities.

352.

In the latter period of the conflict, from 1997 onwards, the Commission has noted a massive increase in the number of violations attributed to the CDF. From anecdotal testimony received by the Commission, it appears that CDF forces acted with almost the same amount of savagery as the RUF towards women and girls.³⁴¹ According to the Commission’s database, the CDF was responsible for 6% of the total violations recorded.³⁴² It is worthy of mention that for sexual violations recorded in the Commission’s database, the percentage of allegations against the CDF is as follows: rape 12%; sexual slavery 0.8%; and sexual abuse 7.3%.³⁴³ These figures indicate that the CDF perpetrators whose violations were recorded in the Commission’s database demonstrated twice as high a propensity to commit rape than their propensity to commit violations overall. The figures support the theory that, at least as far as the Commission’s database can indicate, elements of the CDF made a point of committing rapes in the latter period of the conflict.³⁴⁴

353.

As CDF units were

Reference 90 - 0.01% Coverage

of the conflict.³⁴⁴

353.

As CDF units were usually attached to a specific town or village for a specific period of time, they were not as mobile as the RUF or the AFRC. Thus in contrast to the “roaming detentions” of the RUF and the AFRC, the preferred modus operandi of the CDF in terms of sexual violations was to abduct women and girls and take them prisoner. They would then be confined to a single secure location, usually in a village or town where they were freely available to be used as sexual slaves. They would be held under the

custody and complete control of the CDF and would be raped, either singly or gang raped, in a multiple number of ways. They would often be held naked and had to be freely available for sex.³⁴⁵

340

341 342

343 344

Reference 91 - 0.01% Coverage

SLA or the AFRC.

355.

The Commission finds that the CDF, particularly in the latter period of the conflict, pursued the deliberate strategy of abducting civilian women and girls believed to be in any way connected to the RUF or who had collaborated with them, and detained them in a cruel and inhuman way, with the intention of deliberately violating them, either by raping them or using them as sexual slaves. The Commission finds it particularly reprehensible that the CDF behaved in this manner when it was duty-bound to protect the civilian population and prevent violations being perpetrated against them.

ARMED FORCES REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (AFRC)

Reference 92 - 0.01% Coverage

as “The People’s Army”.

357.

Together the alliance of the RUF and the AFRC were incredibly brutal and savage in their conduct. They were responsible for the many atrocities and violations women and many others suffered during the infamous invasion of Freetown on 6 January 1999. It is worthy of mention that, in the Commission’s database, the percentage of sexual violations recorded against the AFRC is as follows: rape 12,6%; sexual slavery 3,5%; and sexual abuse 31,8%. Overall, the AFRC is accountable for 11,1% of the sexual violations recorded in the Commission’s database. The fact that the AFRC is responsible for three times as many sexual abuse violations recorded in the Commission’s database as overall violations recorded in the Commission’s database supports the theory of a deliberate plan to commit sexual abuses.³⁴⁶ While the Commission has not been able to obtain the precise statistics of the numbers of women that were tortured and sexually violated during this period, the NGO group FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists) in partnership with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) provided medical treatment and counselling to 1,862 female survivors of sexual violence.³⁴⁷

alone is responsible for 7

Reference 93 - 0.01% Coverage

recorded by the Commission.³⁵³

362. SLA units, like their CDF counterparts, were typically attached to a specific town or village. SLA soldiers would be garrisoned in barracks or assigned to protect a location for several months. They were not mobile and thus tended to target women and girls by abducting them with the intention of detaining in a confined, secure location to be used at their whim and fancy as sex slaves. The Commission heard that women and girls detained in this way by the SLA were often kept naked to be available freely for sex or other abuses.

349 The Commission’s database allowed

Reference 94 - 0.01% Coverage

statements and victim testimonies.
374.

The Commission finds the West Side Boys responsible for pursuing a policy of abducting women and girls, holding them against their will in forced marriages, raping them and using them as sexual slaves, perpetrating a range of cruel and inhuman acts upon them.

360 361 362 363
364

Reference 95 - 0.01% Coverage

children up to adoption.
437.

Despite the pressure to bury the issue and to lapse into silence, some women in Sierra Leone have been brave enough to disclose their experiences publicly. Again it is the large number of women who experienced sexual violations in Sierra Leone that brought the issue to the fore. Women have complained to the TRC of stigmatisation in their various communities because some people have labelled them “rebel wives”.⁴²⁶ Re-integrating into their societies is difficult for those who have been forced into sexual slavery and in reality they are being penalised by society for matters totally out of their control and which occurred as a result of the conflict. Negative reception by family or community tends to accentuate their feelings of dislocation and social exclusion. Many women have expressed to the TRC their extreme sense of “rejection” and their “fear that they may never be able to lead a normal life”. Many would like to get married and have children and yet feel that no one will want them.⁴²⁷

438.

In those instances where

Reference 96 - 0.01% Coverage

violations they have experienced.

Marital

relationships have broken down dramatically, with most spouses unable to deal with the fact that their wives have been sexually violated.⁴²⁹ Many of the women who were displaced and separated from their husbands lived in rebel-held areas and are now unable to return to their original relationships because they have been “other men’s wives”⁴³⁰ A victim who was raped and subsequently made a sexual slave testified to the Commission as follows:

“When I returned, my former

Reference 97 - 0.01% Coverage

UNPLANNED AND UNWANTED PREGNANCIES ⁴⁵⁵.

Another consequence of the conflict in Sierra Leone has been the numerous unplanned and unwanted pregnancies that affected the vast majority of women abducted and forced into sexual slavery and who suffered sexual violence. Unwanted children are an aspect of this legacy.⁴⁴⁶

For many women already
affected

Reference 98 - 0.01% Coverage

the east and southeast.

2.

The abundant potential of Sierra Leone's natural landscape is mirrored in its population of just 4.5 million people. The inhabitants of the Provinces represent a culturally and demographically diverse heritage, with seventeen indigenous ethnic groups spread across 149 chiefdoms. The capital city, Freetown, originally a settlement for emancipated slaves, hosts the oldest university in the region and gained a reputation as the "Athens of West Africa". Most important of all, despite the trials and tribulations of history, Sierra Leoneans are resilient and resourceful, such that each new generation of children of Sierra Leone brings with it fresh hope, fresh direction and fresh human resources for the country.

3.

British colonial rule in

Reference 99 - 0.01% Coverage

ipc/www/idbnew.html.

7.

The conflict in Sierra Leone impacted heavily on children, as their rights were systematically violated by all of the armed factions. Children suffered abduction, forced recruitment, sexual slavery and rape, amputation, mutilation, displacement and torture. They were also forced to become perpetrators and carry out aberrations violating the rights of other civilians. In assessing the experiences of children in the conflict in Sierra Leone, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, submitted as follows:

"Particularly vulnerable to abuse were

Reference 100 - 0.01% Coverage

at page 5.

6 7

while others added all the children associated with the fighting forces in various capacities such as cooks, porters, spies, sex slaves, manual labourers and others.

8 9

See the National

Reference 101 - 0.01% Coverage

Sierra Leone Page 240

38.

In Sierra Leone children are not allowed to speak for themselves before the elders and chiefs. In the course of its work, the TRC received testimony from many youths who had been sanctioned for contravening this rule. The offenders were not allowed to speak in their own defence and became embittered at the exceedingly onerous punishments often imposed on them by the Chiefs and elders for defying this custom. Punishment often included the levying of exorbitant fines and resulted in many offenders working as slave labour in order to defray the costs. Many discontented youth fled their villages in order to avoid such punishments and when the conflict broke out became easy converts to the cause of the RUF. Their embitterment also manifested itself in acts of revenge against elders and Chiefs during the conflict.

CHILDREN AND HEALTH 39.

The

Reference 102 - 0.01% Coverage

CHILDREN IN SIERRA LEONE

45.

The eleven-year conflict in Sierra Leone involved the systematic violation of the rights of children in Sierra Leone. The violations that children suffered included abductions, forced conscription, rape, sexual violence and abuse, forced slavery, torture, slave labour, amputations, mutilations, killings, forced displacement and cruel and inhuman treatment. Having examined the violations committed against children, it is clear to the Commission that most of the armed factions pursued a deliberate policy to target children and violate them. The Commission in this section highlights national and international law that has specific application to children.

23

See Government of Sierra

Reference 103 - 0.01% Coverage

International Criminal Court (ICC) 61.

Sierra Leone is also a signatory to the permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). The Rome Statute of the ICC⁴⁹ does not apply to the events occurring in Sierra Leone, as the treaty is not retroactive. The Rome Statute of the ICC lists a significant range of sexual crimes as both war crimes and acts constituting crimes against humanity. These acts include rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation and any other form of sexual violence.

47 48

See CRC, at

Reference 104 - 0.01% Coverage

Violations during the Conflict 111.

Children suffered numerous violations during the war. These include abduction, forced recruitment, detention, forced displacement, forced labour, assault, torture, forced drugging, amputation, forced cannibalism, forced separation, rapes, sexual slavery, sexual abuse, and death. While most of these violations constitute crimes under Sierra Leone's criminal law, it is unlikely that national prosecutions will ever happen given the amnesty provision in the Lomé Peace Agreement and the capacity of the current judicial system to taken on perceived political crimes.

112.

It is unlikely that

Reference 105 - 0.01% Coverage

in Sierra Leone, UNICEF stated:

“Children have been forcibly abducted from their families and held in abominable conditions, mistreated both physically and sexually, and denied basic human needs. They have been forcibly conscripted into military and paramilitary activities and forced to commit heinous acts against others, often drugged, all the while undergoing brutal treatment by their superiors. Girls have been captured as sex slaves to serve as

“wives” to combatants who treated

Reference 106 - 0.01% Coverage

of young people.”⁹¹
125.

The TRC database recorded violations against children in every one of its violations categories. In certain categories, children suffered disproportionately high levels of violations, leading to the conclusion that children were deliberately targeted. These categories included abduction, forced recruitment, rape and sexual slavery, as illustrated by the graphs in Figure 2, below.

Figure 2: Selected violations categories

Reference 107 - 0.01% Coverage

carried their ammunitions...”⁹⁹
131.

Children soon found that gender and age did not matter to their perpetrators as they were used in various roles for the war effort. In addition to being used as fighters, girl-children were also used as sex slaves and domestic labour. A ten-year-old girl told her story of capture at the time of an attack:

“It was sometime in 1997

Reference 108 - 0.01% Coverage

my head...”¹⁰⁰
132. 133.

Younger children were not initially used to fight and instead were used as load carriers and domestic labour. Later on they graduated to becoming sex slaves and fighters in the case of girls, or fighters in the case of boys.

Some of the children abducted

Reference 109 - 0.01% Coverage

displaced “in the bush”.
145.

Many children found themselves alone without kith or kin in both refugee camps and camps for the internally displaced. Their experiences were very harrowing. The lack of a normal family structure amidst the difficult new environment was a bewildering experience for children. Sadly many suffered even further violations in these camps perpetrated by those meant to protect them. Many children did not survive these experiences. The sexual exploitation of Sierra Leone children in refugee camps has been well documented in the UNHCR and Save the Children UK report of February 2002.¹¹⁹ In addition, they also suffered other violations such as economic exploitation and slave labour. Children were forced into adulthood before their time.

114 115

TRC confidential statement

Reference 110 - 0.01% Coverage

Sierra Leone

Page 267

149.

Many children testified to the Commission of how hard they had to work, often on an empty stomach. They were punished for the slightest infraction and any perceived “misdemeanours”. They then suffered further violations. It was mostly girls and very young children who were used in this way. Some of the children testified of their experiences as load carriers and domestic slaves:

“Rebels got to Tarinahun Pesseh

Reference 111 - 0.01% Coverage

SLAVERY AND SEXUAL ABUSE)

152.

The Commission has not been able to establish conclusively how many children were raped or suffered sexual violence and sexual slavery due to the difficulties with statistics in Sierra Leone. However the Commission’s database and the testimonies recorded during TRC hearings confirm that all of the armed forces perpetrated rape, sexual slavery and sexual violence. The Commission’s database points to the systematic nature of sexual violence during the conflict period and how it affected mostly girl children.

153.

From the commission’s data

Reference 112 - 0.01% Coverage

affected mostly girl children.

153.

From the commission’s data, 25% of rape victims with ages documented were 13 years of age or younger and 25% of sexual slaves with ages documented were children aged 12 or under.¹²⁵

Also, 50% of sexual slaves with ages documented were children aged 15

Reference 113 - 0.01% Coverage

most deplorable violations.¹³⁶

166.

A major characteristic of sexual violence in Sierra Leone, including rape, has been the systematic breaking of all taboos by the perpetrators. They have respected neither age nor custom. Many of the children raped were pre-pubescent and had not begun menstruating. Yet they were still raped and taken as sexual slaves. Acts of rape and sexual violence were often carried out in the presence of helpless family members, who in turn were forced to watch. In other instances, family members were forced to commit such acts against one another.

167.

A victim who attempted

Reference 114 - 0.01% Coverage

in Sierra Leone

SEXUAL SLAVERY 170.

Girls were captured, abducted, detained and used as sexual slaves throughout the course of the conflict in Sierra Leone. Many of the girls were detained for longer periods and were forced to move around with their captors. In many instances they were compelled against their will to become members of the armed groups. Most girls abducted by the RUF and the AFRC were forced by their captors to be “sexual slaves”. Armed combatants would be assigned a woman who had been captured to use for the purposes of sex. These girls were compelled to be available to their captors for sex. This form of sexual slavery was peculiar to the RUF and AFRC and resulted in the “bush wife” phenomenon. Even girls who were detained for short periods of time by their captors were forced into sexual slavery. The Commission reveals testimony given to it by some of the girls who suffered this experience:

“On 6 March 1994, on

Reference 115 - 0.01% Coverage

they took us away...”¹³⁹

171. While some of the girls were assigned and attached to one partner, such attachment did not prevent other perpetrators from using them, particularly if the combatant they were attached to was not a senior commander. As the following testimony indicates, sexual slaves had to be available to all:

“On our arrival we were assigned to the wives of commanders and later given to commanders or fighters to be their bush wives. As a bush wife, my duties were to provide for him anything he requested, including sex at any time of the day. I was used as a sex slave for each commander when they came to our camp, especially because my bush husband was not a senior commander. I was with them for six years.”¹⁴⁰

138 139 140

TRC confidential

Reference 116 - 0.01% Coverage

host communities and governments.

319.

Sierra Leonean refugees have experienced such a backlash in Guinea. In September 2000, President Lansana Conté of Guinea made a public announcement accusing all refugees in Guinea of being rebels and/or harbouring rebels.²⁸⁰ This speech resulted in attacks and violations against Sierra Leone refugees, including children, by Guinean authorities and civilians alike. Refugee camps were attacked and non-camp –based refugees were detained en masse. Many refugee children were raped and many were killed or died in detention due to the abominable conditions in which they were held. Many refugees fled back to Sierra Leone, only to suffer further violations such as abductions and sexual slavery at the hands of the armed factions.²⁸¹

276 277 278 279 280

Reference 117 - 0.01% Coverage

following submissions to the Commission:

“The war aggravated the involvement of children in mining activities. In Kono District and elsewhere, many children were captured and conscripted into the RUF and AFRC fighting forces. Those children captured... were forced to engage in mining activities, where they were used to provide slave labour. These child combatants and other abducted children were ultimately seeking fortunes for their

commandos. Many of the children and youth who escaped capture by the RUF were later recruited by the CDF, the Kamajors. The children who were with the Kamajors were later to become miners too.”²⁹⁵
336.

As at June 2003

Reference 118 - 0.01% Coverage

conflict.

STIGMATISATION, OSTRACISATION AND ISOLATION

380. A number of ex-combatant children are still bearing the brunt of their forced participation in the war. Their families and communities have rejected them because of their former affiliations with some of the armed factions and those violations they had committed while in the group. They are punished by their societies and “re-victimised” for having been forced into becoming soldiers in the conflict. Girls particularly have experienced both derision and rejection because they were forced to become “bush wives” or sexual slaves. In the case of those who came back with babies, both mother and child have been rejected and taunted. Ironically the society that failed to protect them from the violence of the conflict has revictimised them through not fault of their own. Sadly the fear of rejection has resulted in many of these children refusing to go back to their communities in the first place.

381.

Many of the children

Reference 119 - 0.01% Coverage

where they had children.

401.

Girls were marginalised from the DDR process, as it did not take into account the gender-specific roles played by many of the girls in the conflict. It was premised on the concept of male combatants and their roles. The girls with the armed factions were not merely “camp followers”, since many of them had been with the armed groups for lengthy periods and had performed multiple roles during that time. If one were to accept the definition of a child soldier in the Cape Town Principles, it would include “any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members.”³⁵² Based on this definition, the majority of girls should have had full access to the DDR programme. While the girls had varying experiences, all of them had contributed in some way to the war. Many young girls started out as porters, later graduating to becoming fighters, as well as simultaneously acting as sex slaves, or “bush wives”, to their captors. Their very existence and the complexity of their situations were not considered in the conception of the DDR process and their needs were subsequently neglected.

402.

Another contributing factor to

Reference 120 - 0.01% Coverage

please forgive me.

Ahmed One:

I’m kindly making an appeal to all of you to be forgiven for what had happened during the war. Crimes we had committed against humanity... using women for sexual slavery, looting properties, burning of houses and many others... we did not initially plan it. I am taking responsibility and I am taking the name

of the Lord, asking for forgiveness. I am kindly asking you to forgive us; this is my plea to you in this community. I am pleading, please forgive me and talk to my people to forgive me.

Joseph S. Bangura:

We are