

APPENDIX 3

TRANSCRIPTS OF TRC PUBLIC HEARINGS

This Appendix contains transcripts of TRC public hearings held in Freetown and the District Headquarter Towns.

The Commission has attempted to include as many as possible of its hearings with individuals, as well as its thematic and institutional hearings.

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APPENDIX 3 – PART ONE

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC)

TRANSCRIPTS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN FREETOWN

DAY ONE -14TH APRIL 2003

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

1. Bishop Joseph C. Humper - Presiding
2. Justice Laura Marcus-Jones
3. Prof. William Schabas
4. Madam Satang Jow
5. Mr. Sylvanus Torto
6. Prof. John Kamara
7. Madam Yasmin Sooka

LEADERS OF EVIDENCE:

1. Mr. Ozonnia Ojielo
2. Ms. Martien Schotmans
3. Mr. Abdulai Charm

WITNESS NAME: Tamba Finnoh

WITNESS NO: 001

REFERENCE NO: 4/150/5016

The Commission Chairman, Bishop Joseph C. Humper welcomed all present and asked that someone in the audience lead in the opening prayers. While the opening prayer was led by Rev Fornah, the Muslim prayer, Al fatiha, was taken collectively.

The Amputee Welfare Association rendered a song titled: "Fambul dem nar so den do we".

The chairman gave an opening remark and read out the hearings procedures.

The oath on Tamba Finnoh, a Christian, was administered by Bishop Humper. After that he reminded Tamba Finnoh of the rules concerning testimony.

TESTIMONY

I am Tamba Finnoh. I am currently residing at the amputee camp in Hastings. Before my present condition I was a farmer and a businessman in Kono. It all started after the ECOMOG intervention in Sierra Leone in 1998 .I hasten to note at this juncture that it is regrettable that even though we look at Kono as the economic backbone of this country, there was no security presence. Most of us were behind rebel lines with nowhere to go; because any thought of going to the South easily evaporated at the thought of the Kamajors ,which was dreadful. At that time I had no documents, and there was no way I could identify my self.

When ECOMOG intervned, they only occupied Koidu and other big towns. The areas covered by ECOMOG were the safest areas for civilians. The road that links Freetown to Kono was closed; so we had no access to relief supplies. The only alternative for us then was to go into the bush in search of food. And that was very risky.

Whilst we were in search of food one day, we fell into a rebel ambush. And I can still remember the day they caught us. We were held bound, stripped naked and then taken to a distant village called Yopomar. Suddenly, I heard a helicopter flying over us. The RUF and the AFRC who were rebel allies rushed to hide. I tried to take that opportunity to run into hiding. Unfortunately for me I was again caught and held bound. A man that I clearly recognised, that goes by the name Sahr Sessie, caught up with me. He asked me if I had the intention of escaping; but I pleaded with him to let me go and help save my life. Whilst we were on this discussion, I think the others overheard us and they ordered him to kill me if I had attempted to run. Upon this order he stabbed me with a bayonet on the side of my stomach. They gave me a good beating and my teeth were broken and they took us to Yogorma. We met one man whom they referred to as "Brigadier". He told us that we were not in support of them and so, they were going to teach us a lesson. On the same spot, a man who had attempted to escape was held and beheaded; as a warning for us not to attempt to escape. Another man had his lips pierced and padlocked and was given a letter to deliver to ECOMOG that they were coming. They lined us up and I decided to bring up the rear, with the hope that the same helicopter would fly over us again; because I was afraid of being killed. They called on us one at a time and then, began to cut off our limbs.

When it was my turn and I was beaten with a machete and my hands were chopped off. Fortunately for me, a boy came to my rescue, untied me and ordered me to leave. On my way going, I met other amputees who were dead because they could not bear the pains. However, I met one alive, but he was unable to move. I told him to get up so that we could seek medical treatment on the way but he made a sign to me that he could not. Shortly after I had left him, I

with him any longer. All I am concerned about is what the Commission, Government, International Community and the Civil Society would do for me. I am ready to reconcile with him.

Bishop Humper : What are your views about ECOMOG?

Mr. Finnoh : ECOMOG was here to liberate the country and as we all know as human beings we have our sentiments and emotions. ECOMOG felt that because of the loss of their colleagues they should be unfriendly. I think it is a lesson to all Sierra Leoneans that we should always live together.

Bishop Humper : What recommendations would like to make to the Commission?

Mr. Finnoh : The first thing is that most of us have lost our dignity and we can not physically fend for our selves any longer. We have been reduced to beggars. Even those who used to respect us no longer do so. I recommend that the Commission put in place a mechanism that will ensure sustained provisions for us and our children. Also, I want the Commission to recommend that those amputees who have basic qualification be allowed to enter the university and other Institutions if they are ready to do so. I further suggest that the Commission recommend the setting up of Micro Projects for amputees and there dependants. Although the Commission offered one month employment which helped in easing some of my problems I ask that they find a way of extending it.

Justice Marcus Jones: Did the rebels say why they were chopping off hands or why a padlock was put on the other man's lip?

Mr. Finnoh : They gave no reason why they padlocked the man's lips but for the hands, they said they were cutting them because we used them to vote for Tejan Kabbah.

Justice Marcus Jones: Did Sahr Sessie have any grudge against you?

Mr. Finnoh : I can't remember him having any grudge against me because I taught him in form three. May be as a student he may have had a different perception about certain things but I didn't do him any wrong. Initially, before he joined the rebels, we had been on the run for our dear lives together and at one point almost quarrelled with my wife when she had refused him food. When I saw him he would be my saviour. I attempted to with the rebels I thought

Commissioner Jow : Can you tell the ages of the child combatants who were with the rebels and what reason they gave for the things they did?

Mr. Finnoh: The one who actually cut off my hands was between the ages of 14-17. I want to believe these children were being manipulated because they were acting on orders of their leaders.

Commissioner Torto : Can you give the name of the man whose head was cut off?

Mr. Finnoh : His name could be either Sahr or Tamba Joe of Yorpoma .

Commissioner Torto : These people who came to help you were they actually Kamajors or Donsos

Mr. Finnoh : I think they were Kamajors because the Kamajors wherever they went, they initiated people.

Bishop Humper : Do you have any question for the commission?

Mr. Finnoh : I first of all want to say that the amputees at first refused to cooperate with the commission because we felt that the Commission's recommendation will not be adhered to as it was the case with the Lome Peace Accord which made provision for a

victim fund that up till date is yet to be set up.
So, I want to ask what guarantee the
Commission has that its recommendations
would be adhered to.

Bishop Humper : According to the TRC Act, the President must
ensure that the recommendations made by
the Commission are met. Furthermore, the
Moral Guarantors to the Lome Peace Accord
will monitor these recommendations and
ensure that they are adhered to.

Mr. Finnoh : Finally, I recommend that a member of the
victim group be included in the body that will
monitor the recommendations of the
Commission so that our interest will be
protected.

The Leaders of Evidence didn't ask questions.

DATE: 14th April

WITNESS NAME: Rugiatu Kamara

WITNESS NO: 002

REFERENCE NO: 1/150/1017

She was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner. She is a Muslim by religion. He further welcomed Rugiatu and said that he was happy that she had come to give testimony to the Commission.

TESTIMONY:

I have come to explain about the past. I reside at 9 Benjamin Lane. One morning, we were at Bundu Fence in Kingtom when we were told that ECOMOG were coming and the rebels were pulling out. At 1.p.m. we saw Kamajors and I told my brother that we were expecting ECOMOG but unfortunately I saw the Kamajors. We were all lined up out side.

My brothers were dealers in fuel; so one of the kamajors told us that they wanted to carry out routine checks . They met a drum of diesel and a drum of petrol. They asked what we were doing with them and my brother told them that they are for sale. They told him to call on all the others who were in the business. They lined up all of them and one Kamajors took out a knife and chopped all of their ears and chewed one. After this, my brother was saying to me that he is dying. Unfortunately one of the Kamajor heard what we were saying and asked what the matter was? I then spoke from behind and in response to that he called me out and said that I should laugh. My elder sister was telling me to keep quite but I refused. They then put all seven of them in a vehicle including my two brothers.

After a while they came back with seven heads (*witness started to cry*) and I started crying saying that they had killed my brothers. They then called me out side to come and identify my brothers' heads and laugh at the same time. I did it as there was no alternative.

Shortly after they left, ECOMOG came in and we were still crying. We explained everything to them and they asked me whether I could recognise any one of them and I said yes. But they were unable to find them. After some time, I went out for business at Brookfields Hotel where I saw one of the Kamajors who chopped off my brother's ear and chewed it. I beckoned to the lady that I was with but, she advised me to keep quite. The girl also spoke about an incident that occurred, when a woman was beaten and stripped naked. I was unable to tell this to my mother until some months later.

Bishop Humper : How many women where with you, when this happened?

Miss Kamara : There were a lot of women and one woman's child was also killed

Bishop Humper: How were you able to identify your brother's heads?

Miss Kamara : I had stayed with them ever since my childhood and I knew them well.

Bishop Humper : When they told you to laugh were you really laughing or pretending to laugh?

Miss Kamara : I was forced to laugh because guns were all around me.

Bishop Humper : Can you identify them?

Miss Kamara : Yes I can.

Justice Marcus Jones: When you explained to ECOMOG what did they do?

Miss Kamara : They could not do any thing because they were unable to find them.

Commissioner Torto: Did you report the matter to any of their officers?

Miss Kamara : No, I was there once when a case was reported to them; but no action was taken.

Commissioner Jow : Was your house the only house searched?

Miss Kamara : No they searched all the other houses.

Ms. Schotsmans: If I understand you well, you said you once came across one of those Kamajors, the one who chew your brother's ear and that you know their faces. Do you know any of their names?

Miss Kamara: No, I don't.

Ms. Schotsmans: Have you been able to see any one of them in town or do they live in your neighbourhood?

Miss Kamara: Following the end of the war, I was in a business at Brookfields Hotel when I saw one of them; the one who chewed my brother's ear.

Ms. Schotsmans : Have you been able to have a talk with anyone of them, about what they did to your brothers?

Miss Kamara : I was afraid to make any comment.

Ms.Schotsmans: Is there any way you can help the Commission find these people?

Miss Kamara: Even if I should see them now, the done cannot be undone. They cannot bring my brothers back to life. I just wanted to unburden

my mind through the Commission. In any case should I see them that would aggravate my anger; I live everything with God.

Commissioner Torto : What were the names of your brothers?

Miss Kamara : Their names were Mamoud and Abu Kamara.

Bishop Humper : What more do you have to tell the Commission?

Miss Kamara : I have nothing to say except that Abu left his child with me and Mamoud's child is with my mother in Bo. If the Commission can do any thing for me I would appreciate it. At present, I am the only surviving child of my mother. She even refused to come today because she does not want to recall the ugly incident.

Bishop Humper : Have you said these things to anybody before?

Miss Kamara: In fact everybody knows about it. I was forced to tell your statement taker when I met somebody talking about the incident to her without knowing the detail.

Commissioner Jow : Have you been consoled by any group or individual for all these things that you went through?

Bishop Humper : We thank you for this time which you have spent with us. We hope that you together with others will help the Commission in carrying out its mandate. You can rest assured that we'll do our best in addressing the issues as they come to us and that we will share our findings not only with you but also with the entire nation and the world at large.

Witnesses: Alusine Turay, Hassan Turay, Kolley Sesay

This time all three of them were called to take their seats and sworn on oath.

DATE: 14th April

WITNESS NAME: Alusine Turay

WITNESS NO: 003

REFERENCE NO: 4/150/5006

TESTIMONY:

One afternoon in 1998 we went to work in our uncle's farm. When we returned to town, I later went to the forest to cut wood. Upon return to town, we learnt that the town chief had lost one of his children. We were asked to bury the child because she was only two months old. We were there when I started feeling sick so I left them to go home. I had wanted to cross a path when I saw that the veranda had got a very high fence; as I was just about to consider my next line of action, three men came out of the building and asked where I was going to. Because I could not say anything they removed my clothes and tied me up and said that I should not cry or they would kill me.

Within two minutes, they started bringing people. They caught eight of us. One of the commandos said that they are going to kill all of us and pointed at my uncle and took him to the back of the house. He started begging them that they should leave him because he is a very young man. They were listening to what he was saying when the commander told them that if they did not kill him he would eliminate all of them. Immediately they started cutting our ears and started eating and said that we must all drink the blood. They gave us two letters for Tejan Kabbah after which they left us.

My brother decided that we should go to Fadugu but as we were going I fainted because of the bleeding, I could not hear what my brother was saying. I fell down again on the way going and my brothers left for Fadugu and reported the matter there. They later came and took me to Fadugu. I was brought to Freetown by the ECOMOG, and taken to Connaught hospital and from there I was taken to Waterloo. I stop so far my brother will give further information.

DATE: 14th April

WITNESS NAME: Hassan Turay

WITNESS NO: 004

REFERENCE NO: 4/150/5005

Testimony

In 1998, May 27, it was on a Saturday, we went to do some work for my uncle. We worked for him all day and returned back to town about 7pm. I took my bath and later heard that one of my sister's children had died. I went to commiserate with the family and met them digging the grave. I gave a helping hand. I had just reached a place when I met one guy who asked me whether the bad guys are around and I replied we've not heard anything about them; he was wearing a "Ronko" gown. We came to narrow path approaching the village, two strange men came and held my hands, and they took hold of me and tied up my hands.

I was there when they came with my uncle, (who is sitting by me now). He was fighting and I told him to keep quiet. They hit him with the gun and later pointed to one of my uncles and took him to the back of the house. Somebody pleaded on his behalf; but the commander overheard the conversation and said that if they refuse to kill him he will eliminate all of them. They drew a stick and hit him on his back. He was crying saying that they were killing him. The commando later came and asked whether they had finished with him.

He then called on Couple Blood and told him that he should cut off our ears. They came to my uncle saying that since he was fighting they would cut off his pair of ears; they did that and said that we should all laugh at what they had done. They later gave us a letter to take to Tejan Kabba. I was the only one who was brave and I told them that we must go back to Fadugu for medical treatment. We arrive at Fadugu and met the ECOMOG and they took us to the hospital but there were no drugs and the ECOMOG made a call to Kabala and we were taken to Kabala and from there to Freetown. But the doctors were not around; so we had to spend the night there. The next day, we were taken to Waterloo and later to the Aberdeen road camp. That is all I have for now.

DATE: 14th April

WITNESS NAME: Kolley Sesay

WITNESS NO: 005

REFERENCE NO: 4/150/5004

Good afternoon everybody. I heard of the war but thought it was far away. We never knew they were very close to us. We went to work for one of our brothers and we were not expecting anything like the rebels. We came back to town and heard people crying and they said that the chief's daughter had died. So, were told to go to the house and bury the child. While we were praying for the child, they were in the process of digging the grave. We buried the child and left for our own place. I was accompanied by one old man. I was leading he was behind me. But he was a little distance away from me. As we were going we met a man and he asked us where we were going? It was then that it occurred to me that the town was quiet.

Where I stood I saw a man behind me in a T-shirt and when I looked in front, the old man was far away running. I wanted to run also but I was caught by one of the men and they told me that if I dared attempt to escape they would kill me. I was taken to where the others were hemmed. They said that they were going to kill all of us. They took my brother Foday Sesay to the back of the house. He begged them and one of them said that they should not kill him. But one rebel said that if they did not kill him he will eliminate all of them. So, they had no alternative but to kill my brother.

He called on one "Couple Blood" and said that he must do his job. He started to cut our hands and later our ears. They came to me and said that since I was putting up resistance they would chop off both ears. And so they did. Then, they collected the blood and said that we must drink the blood. We drank the blood. They said that we must laugh which we did. And they wrote a letter and gave it to one of my brothers and they later released us and said that we must take the letter to Tejan Kabbah. After an hour an old man came and asked whether they had gone and he cut loose the rope and we were there crying. I told one of my brothers that we must leave and seek for help. He tried to get up but fell. I left him there and went ahead. We met the ECOMOG and they told us that there were no drugs; that we should find money to buy drugs. By then ECOMOG had made a call to Kabala and we were later brought to Freetown at Connaught and later taken to Waterloo. We were there again when the rebels entered in January 6.

Bishop Humper: Which group did this people belong to?

Mr. Alusine Turay : They were rebels.

Bishop Humper: Had the rebels visited areas around your village before?

Mr. Alusine Turay: They had never come around our village. We only used to

hear that they were about some forty miles away .Then at about 2p.m. on that day, we heard that they were around our town.

Justice Marcus Jones: Were you able to bury your brother?

Mr. Alusine Turay: He was buried the next day, but my other brothers were not there because they had left for Fadugu.

Commissioner Torto: Can you tell me the name of your brother that was killed.

Mr. Alusine Turay: His name was Foday Sesay

Commissioner Torto: All of you mentioned that a letter was given to you by the rebels, can you tell us the content of the letter ?

Mr. Alusine Turay: We were all illiterates.

Mr. Kolleh Sesay : The letter in my pocket was soaked with blood, so in the morning when my relatives took it out they burnt it.

Mr. Hassan Turay: The ECOMOG soldiers read the letter given to me and they told me that the rebel had written that they are around and we should inform Kabbah about it.

Commissioner Torto: Can you identify the perpetrators or has somebody told you about the perpetrators?

Mr. Hassan Turay : No

Commissioner Sooka : You all suffer from much injury, can you tell us how you feel now?

Mr. Hassan Turay : Yes. I cannot use my hands properly after some time I experience the pain all over my body.

Mr. Alusine Turay: At times I am ashamed because people are always looking at me. Even children, they sometimes run away when they see me coming. Whenever I am dressed, I have to put my

hands in my pocket. I am not feeling good at all. I am appealing that you help us.

Mr. Kolleh Sesay: You see my ears, at times when people talk to me from afar, I cannot not get them properly. If I put my hands in water it gets numb; no feeling; because of the injuries sustained. We are appealing that you help us.

Prof. John Kamara : I thank you all for coming here to tell us about what these people did to you. I would like you to make things clear to me. You all are saying that you don't know the people who harmed you. But Alusine said that somebody spoke to him in Limba?

Mr. Alusine Turay: I said that he was part of them. He was the only one who spoke to me, but there were other people who spoke different languages.

Prof. John Kamara : The person who spoke Limba to you what did he do after you had been harmed?

Mr. Alusine Turay : He consoled me. I can't say he was one of them, however, when he left me he went back to town.

Mr. Ojielo: Can you remember the kind of clothes the armed men were wearing?

Mr. Kolleh Sesay : Those that held me were all dressed in black.

Mr. Hassan Turay : They were dressed in black.

Mr. Alusine Turay : The one who held me was dressed in country clothes called "Ronko".

Mr. Ojielo : Can you tell me the approximate number of armed men who attacked your village?

Mr. Kolleh Sesay: They were over 50 in number they had women with them.

Mr. Ojielo: When these people attacked, can you tell if

other people were affected and did other people suffer injuries or lose properties?

Mr. Kolleh Sesay : Well, they destroyed and looted properties but I must assume that they didn't harm any woman. At a point, a woman was brought to the commando but he let her go. Our village is big; when they took over the village, ran away. They took all our clothes and properties. fairly
everybody
beautiful

Mr. Ojielo: In your village, was there no real fighting between the combatant groups, were there only attacks on civilians?

Mr. Kolleh Sesay : They came from Koranko area. There is a river between our village and Koranko area. We later learnt that they killed forty people from that village. I was a farmer and with my hands chopped off, I can't work any longer.

Bishop Humper: Turay, Turay and Sesay, we've heard what you have to say and we have asked you questions. Now is your turn. Do you have any question or recommendation you may want to make to the Commission.

Mr. Hassan Turay : The government should help us but if the Commission is able to help us we will appreciate it. We were farmers but we can't farm no more. My uncle who was killed had children they are all out there with nobody to assist them. Our uncle used to care for our mother now that he is dead; we have nobody to help her. We should have been the ones to look after the family now but with our present condition, we cannot. He had two wives before but one of them has left because there is no one to care for her. Also we are appealing to you to help us with medication. In addition, we are appealing that assistance is rendered to us. So that we can engage in some form of business and be able to look after ourselves and our children.

Bishop Humper : Thank you all and we'll take into consideration all that you have told us. We have come to the end of the day. I would want to inform you that as from tomorrow, all subsequent hearings will be held at the YWCA New Hall. At this point I want to announce that we have heard testimonies as to the death of fifteen people. I now ask that we all stand up and observe a minute silence in respect of all these people..... I pray that their soul rest in perfect peace.

Hearings ended for the day at 4.45pm.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

FREETOWN HEARINGS

DATE: 15th April 2003

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

1. Bishop Joseph C. Humper [Chairman]
2. Justice Laura Marcus-Jones
3. William Schabas Presiding
4. Satang Jow
5. Sylvanus Torto
6. Prof. John Kamara
7. Yasmin Sooka

LEADERS OF EVIDENCE:

1. Mr. Ozonnia Ojiello
2. Ms. Martien Schotsmans
3. Mr. Abdullai Charm

WITNESS NAME: Sahr Orlando Gbekie

WITNESS NO: 006

REFERENCE NO: 3/150/4405

Professor William Schabas welcomed all to the hearings and introduced the commissioners. He called on the audience to give opening prayers. A Muslim prayer was said by Mohamed Alhajie Samura. Christian prayer was done by Mrs Bondu Manyeh. A chorus was sung by all : “Tell papa God tenki”. Sahr Gbekie was sworn on oath.

TESTIMONY:

I am Sahr Gbekie. I reside at Babadorie Lumley. I am a retired police officer and I am married to Rebecca Gbekie. We had 7 children and 4 are alive. On the the 6TH January 1999, rebels entered the city. I was seated with my family when my son, Tamba Pujeh Gbeki, 20 years old produced the examination papers with which he sat to class examination at the Technical Institute Congo Cross on the 4th of January 1999. My daughter Kumba Gbeki, she was staying at Leona Hotel Wilberforce Street, Freetown, with her husband. On the 7th they rang us and told me that the rebels had entered the hotel, shot one inmate dead and they were now frightened out in the street. On the 8th, the rebels took them out to say 'We want Peace' in the street. They were among several thousands of inmates to say 'We want peace'.

When we heard this information from them on the telephone, my son Tamba Gbeki, said to us; me and his mother; that he was going to look out for his sister at Leona Hotel. By then ECOMOG and some CDF Kamajors had occupied the West end part of the city. He went to Leona Hotel. That day he did not come back this way again, because no civilian would have entered this end because the war was just at the bridge – Congo Bridge. He told us later that he managed to go to Thunder Hill, to his aunty – my wife's elder sister. We all stayed in that period of confusion, not knowing what must have happened to him. But when the rebels RUF entered Kissy and abducted Bishop Ganda, Tamba Gbeki and his aunty were just neighbours to Bishop Ganda; they all fled to different directions. The aunty came down to us at Babadorie, with her entire family and told us that she had been staying with Tamba, at Kissy but since the rebels had abducted Bishop Ganda, everybody fled in different directions.

We continued praying. On the 22nd January 1999, one of my nephews Charles Macarthy came to us and said T-boy was on his way. We were all happy and we prayed and indeed he came home. Not too long after we had given him soap and everything to wash, I saw one ECOMOG soldier, Cpl. Yusuf Salifu, a Nigerian ECOMOG and one SLA called Carew aka. Gibo, who was attached to one businessman as security guard around us. They came into my compound and demanded Tamba. That was around 5pm 22nd January. Then all the family members, the mother, the aunt, the sisters, we came out. I questioned Why?. He said T boy had passed their check point which was about sixty yards away from my house, without being searched. They took him away. The mother, Mrs, Rebeka Gbeki, Kumba Ngeba, (seated by me) and my other daughter Agnes Gbeki, Vice President Fourah Bay College Student Union rushed to the

ECOMOG base. They were prevented from reaching the base. They returned crying.

Later the SLA soldier came back and told me that T-boy was his classmate at St. Edwards Secondary School, but when they searched him they found cocaine in his shoe; thereby he was arrested and taken to Wilberforce guardroom. Well it's terrible. The family all gathered around me. I told them that we must put everything into prayers. Around 7 pm, Gibo the SLA and another SSD officer entered our parlour; they were smoking Cannabis Sativa – diamba. They had their AK 47 ready for action. They asked all of us to come out and sit on the floor of the parlour. That was terrible. I had children that were 7 and 8 years old around me. They were frightened when they saw the AK 47 with them. They said T-boy had given them information that he brought dollars for us, therefore they were coming to search my house. They were there, they told me not to answer telephone, told me to sit on the floor. Then I said, 'No, this is my house. If you want to kill me you can do so, but I'm sure Christ is with me. Up to 9pm, no re-enforcement came. They asked me to list down the names of the family members in the house. We were over thirty. I listed it down, gave them one copy and kept the other one. They said they were coming at 7 am the following day. And really on the 23rd January 1999 they came, started searching, went into my wardrobe. They went into the ceiling, but there was nothing to find. They asked my wife and I to go to their checkpoint to make statements. Rebeka and I left with their guns pointed at us. Just about reaching up the street, then they asked me in Krio -“Pa wi nor se nar tin. Wetin yu go do fu fri yu sef.’ I took them home; and gave them Le 30,000. They left me.

By then T-boy was already in detention with ECOMOG at Wilberforce Barracks. On 24th January, we had a telephone call and T-boy spoke to us. We asked him 'where are you?' He said:” I'm here at Wilberforce Guardroom”. To confirm that, I spoke with one ECOMOG officer again on the telephone. He said we must send him food, medicine and some clothes. The mother did that on the 24th and again on the 25th. News reached T-boy while in detention, that my neighbours, particularly the family of John Massaquoi whom I'm sharing a fence with, were alarm calls to the ECOMOG officers on the phone that T-boy was a rebel and said that he was with them at Wilberforce. On the 27th, T-boy told me, that he's heard in his detention that my neighbours, especially John Massaquoi and family had threatened the ECOMOG officers on the phone that Tamba was a rebel and if the mother continued taking food to them, they would report to Maxwell Khobe that they were siding with collaborators. Then I said to my wife, “Don't ever go there again.” She stopped going there on the 26th.

On the 28th January 1999 around 12pm we were in the house. We saw T-boy enter the compound. We gave him soap to wash and we started taking care of the wounds. Then Mrs. Jenny Massaquoi stood out in the street and started shouting 'Oona cam o rebel don cam; Tboy nar rebel'. She called out the youths, the kamajors were around and she called out to them. They came and started

firing in the air in my compound. Then ECOMOG also came. They said to them: 'You took this boy away on the 22nd and today we have seen him'. Then ECOMOG Corporal Salifu Yusuf, some CDF and the Kamajors who were around took T-boy on the 28th January 1999. We didn't know where they took him to - 7 pm on 28th January 1999, I received a phone call. Somebody called me that they have released T-boy - 7 pm. Then I cautioned the caller; 'you know curfew is 6 pm, if you release T-boy, you are sending him now to John Massaquoi and his agents. By 9 pm we were all seated, when one or two youths came down to my house they said "Pa you sidom den don chap T-boy nar dory road to Lumley, den don set tyre pan am'. That was terrible. When they asked me to go that night, perhaps my wife and I would have been the first target. So, we didn't go. On the morning of the 29th youths and some kamajors were all spread along the street, with my neighbours if some of us had gone out they would have said 'den nar rebel, nar collaborator'. We somehow managed and went to find the site. Where they had indicated, the site was completely cleaned up overnight. That was a heavy burden to my family. I telephoned my daughter in London and she said we must pack up and go away. She sent money, I went to immigration, renewed my wife's and Kumba's passports took police clearance and allowed them to cross over to Lungi on 3rd February. .

On the 3rd of February, the responsible Kono elder, chief Ngeba, a neighbour called and told me that if my wife and I did not leave my house in three days, something terrible will happen to both of us. He said John Massaquoi gave him that information. With the little money I had collected from my daughter I had managed to get them out of the country. On the 6th of February, I had my country cloth around me at 7 O'clock in the morning and with slippers in my verandah, when one of John Massaquoi's Kamajors and two ECOMOG officers entered my compound. One of the ECOMOG officers was holding a list in his hand. He said, 'who is S O Gbeki?' I said ' I am'. He asked for my wife, ' who is Rebeka Gbeki?' Then, I said she was not in the compound and she was not in Sierra Leone'. John jumped up and said I was telling lies and that he saw Rebeka yesterday night. They conducted their usual search. Based on the information three of us, including one Fatmata Kalawa my niece, were on the ECOMOG list to be arrested that morning. I told them that Fatmata Kalawa was at Malama. Before we crossed the streets to go into the ECOMOG Land rover, I saw John Massaquoi and the ECOMOG officer with a handset. I was taken into the vehicle and we went to Malama in search of my niece Fatmata Kalawa. The house was surrounded with ECOMOG officers. In that terrified manner, they took us to Hill Station; to one of their security checkpoints. We were locked up from 10am. 5pm in the evening, they sent one CID officer to take statements from us. They asked me to make a statement. When I asked why the officer told me that they had information that my son T-boy was a commando, they were in the bush fighting. He was not prepared to disclose the source of information to me. I was very composed that evening and told the officer that whosoever must have told him had lied to him that my son was an SLA, Kamajor or RUF; my son was a student. I gave him all this background in my statement. He also obtained

statement from my niece Fatmata Kalawa.

When on the 6th of February, the statement was taken up to the Captain, the senior ECOMOG officer; he came down and met me in the cell. He said that I was telling lies and that my son had confessed to them that he was a rebel. But I asked: 'Where is this son now?' He was killed on the 28th of January 1999 and you don't expect me to lie". By the time they took me to their detention I had managed to get into my room quickly, took my discharge card from the Police. I had a photograph of me in my police uniform, T-boy's passport, all his documents, and my passport. "See all these documents. I am not lying to you. I served this country for thirty eight years 1957 -95 when I was retired as Superintendent of Police". Then he said we must go home at 6 pm. Then I said "Officer, curfew is at 6 O'clock; I don't mind sleeping here. Let me not be another victim as my son". As a result of my statement as well as the evidences that I had provided in support of my position and what I told him about curfew, he provided their vehicle and escort to bring us to Babadorie. He said I must report the following day, on Sunday. Sunday he sent his vehicle for me. Then in my mind I started realizing that they had begun to take another look at the facts. The two days I visited their security post they asked me not to report again.

On the 9th February, at 9pm we heard some noise at John's compound. They were saying that they were going to burn down my house – 'We go burn am, we go burn this house today'. Then I alerted my boys in the compound that all of us should take positions with sticks. But that could not have given me much help. I used the telephone and called the ECOMOG commander and some other people that I could access. Well, we did not sleep that night and our house was not burnt down. Around 8.30 the following morning 10th February, I saw a group of people entering my compound – ECOMOG included. The person who was heading the group introduced himself as Mr. James Allie, the then Secretary to the President and said that he had heard all that has happened to me and he consoled me. He went to John's house but he was not there. He consoled me saying the situation was getting better and that the Police and ECOMOG were now functioning better. That anyone who disturbs our peace as from then on, we must seek immediate redress from the Police and ECOMOG. He warned all the CDF who were seated by the border junction leading to my house.

From the 10th of February there was some relief for my family. It was a blessing that I used the telephone in the name of God, because we couldn't have done much with sticks or any other thing if God had not intervened in the matter. I had been in my house for 22 years and my neighbour John Massaquoi came around in 1987. We had been so close; sharing everything in common. Although they carried no weapons I considered them as people whose statements brought about my son's death. On the 9th April 2000, my daughter (who sent me money from London) died there, so I travelled to London with my wife Rebeka. As a lady she was uncomfortable to come home being that my only son was killed. So she decided to stay in London. I decided to come home and

say the truth, as I am doing today. I know if we had made it very secretive, without the public knowing what happened, the son who is today in another world would continue to torment us; because it would have been a burden. When you have something to say and you don't say it, it is a load. Today I am sure the international body that helped organised this and who helped us greatly in Sierra Leone and within our own Sierra Leonean society, my mind and that of my family is free. Why we are saying that, and I am giving evidence in the open, is that we have something common in Sierra Leone that when somebody is asking for forgiveness, you must see the other side and then if T-boy had not ever come back to us and John Massaquoi and family had never used such statement as to lead to the death of my son, I would not have bothered so much. But we are very close like the two glasses sitting down; it's just a common wall. We are saying the truth. What capacity has the commission to refer some of these to neighbours who are very close to bring peace and reconciliation? If you don't know the person who burns your house then that it is the war. My family is scattered all over, some in America, Banjul, London, we thank God that we are alive today and this is my humble statement before the commission. I thank you all.

Professor Schabas : Thank you very much for that statement. You have spoken to us very frankly about your feelings and you have a story of terribly personal suffering. I want to express on behalf of my colleagues, the fact that we share your grief at the loss of your son and we also very appreciate your comments on this difficult problems of reconciliation. I am going to ask my colleagues if they have any questions for you.

Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us. A horrible one and we are sorry that you had to go through such an ordeal. Very bold of you and patriotic of you to come here to tell of what happened. What worries me is what could have been the cause of such hatred on the part of your neighbours. Do you know of any reasons why they hated you so much?

Mr. Gbeki : This is not to my knowledge. As I said, we used to do things in common. We were surprised that they had to go that length. If they were Christians or Muslims they would have come to me and my wife and said, your son has done us so much; so we could amend. But I do not know.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you we are sorry again about your loss.

Commissioner Torto Thank you very much Mr. Gbeki. I admire your

courage for relating this kind of gruesome experience with the commission and the public in general. I just have a couple of clarifications that I would want you to make for me. Since you went through this terrible ordeal did you take this matter up by any other means concerning John Massaquoi?

Mr. Gbekie: Considering the 28th January 1999 and what was very very prevalent in Sierra Leone community – was to classify somebody as collaborator so you dare not go to anybody to complain, 'nar so den do me' so then commissioner, I did not.

Commissioner Torto: Can you tell us where Gibo is at present?

Mr. Gbekie : He was an SLA at that time, 1999. He is Carew alias Gibo. He was attached to a business man called Foday Sayenu. But I don't know his whereabouts. The ECOMOG was Corp. Yusuf Salifu. I don't know their whereabouts

Commissioner Torto: Would you know the present whereabouts of Jane and John Massaquoi.

Mr. Gbeki : I said we still continue to live as neighbours

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much

Bishop Humper : I was listening to all what you said; I want to know whether John Massaquoi has children and if they had been interacting with T-boy?

Mr. Gbekie : Yes chairman. T-boy lives very much with John Massaquoi's children particularly the elder son; Junior. Junior used to stay with T-boy when things were very difficult in their house.

Bishop Humper : Would you like us to contact this man John Massaquoi ?

Mr. Gbekie: I have given my evidence. I have indicated that we are neighbours. If that suits the Commission you can go ahead and invite him; I have given my evidence in the open.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you very much for your statement. We have listened very carefully to what you have said, and we know as Sylvanus had said you are a truth patriot and that is why you stayed on so that this point in time you could come and give us your statement publicly. I just want a point of clarification. You have said in your statement that your family is abroad except for your daughter who is sitting by you. I want to know whether your family wants to come back and join in the reconciliation process?

Mr. Gbekie: Commissioner, when somebody leaves here on a personal accord to go to America, London, coming back ... To me having said it in the open, I have done so on their behalf – the Gbeki family and when they call me I'll say I've said it and we'll put it behind us. Having a refugee status does not matter, it is the mind and I will communicate with them that I have said what happened.

Professor Kamara : Thank you very much. I want to join my colleagues in appreciating what you have done. We know you have suffered terribly and therefore it has not been very easy for you to tell us what you have told us .But we need to pursue this matter and ask you a number of questions for clarification. I am particularly interested in one issue - the issue of your protection. I want to know, since you told us that from the beginning more or less you had information to contact higher authorities and you did; I want to know what held you up from the beginning until very late. Why did you did not contact those people you contacted and save your life to have saved your son?

Mr. Gbekie: The thing happened as I said simultaneously. On the 8th of January my child left in search of his sister. On the 22nd he came back and they said he was a rebel. They took him ECOMOG and others. He was released on the 28th he came back. On that same day Jenny Massaquoi and others alarmed that he was a rebel. The same day they arrested him and that same night he was killed. I was arrested on 6th February. On 9th February, they said they would burn my house. Then I knew by that time I should make reference to ... by telephone authorities, to use telephone. And

that was the only opportunity I had; I used the telephone. And it yielded some blessing for me when Mr. James Alie the then Secretary to President came to my compound on the tenth and consoled me. Since then nobody has disturbed my peace. Before then I couldn't have dared report the matter to ECOMOG or Police. If I had gone to the Police, my evidence would have been bordered on circumstantial evidence to say that this family used words. So on those circumstances, my son died and I am now connecting them to that.

- Mr. Ojielo:** I have a few questions to help the commission get a full picture of what happened to you and your family. Do you think you and your family were targeted?
- Mr. Gbemie :** Perhaps they considered that. My wife and I were married in 1964. She is Limba and I am a Kono. I don't know, perhaps.
- Mr. Ojielo:** Those that came and attacked your family and killed your son, were they of one particular ethnic group or was it a multiplicity of groups?
- Mr. Gbemie :** I cannot say because the uniform people were around, ECOMOG, CDF; I cannot tell.
- Mr Ojielo :** But like the CDF people that came and attacked your family, the commanders of that group, did you know them before?
- Mr. Gbemie:** I am relying on their agent the Massaquoi family, John Massaquoi and his wife because they invited them – 'oona cam o rebel don cam'. They had no need to go to my house, if they had not told them we were rebels.
- Mr. Ojielo:** Would you say that Mr. Massaquoi was a CDF or one of the officers of the CDF ?
- Mr. Gbemie:** I know he is my neighbour. I don't know, maybe he has some double role: I cannot tell.
- Mr. Ojielo :** Before then was he an influential person in the neighbourhood?
- Mr. Gbemie:** Very much. We usually visited each other. It was only because of that incident that I raised my fence up a

little so they could no longer see what goes on in my compound, because I need to protect myself.

Mr. Ojielo:

Do you then have any idea how the CDF was organised in your area for example?

Mr. Gbekie:

What happened was that everybody became a watchdog. They had their checkpoint, calling themselves CDF. It was not under any organised body: The one that I know of and that was operating in Freetown in January to February. They youths in certain areas will converge at certain area burning tyres at night; they usually said that they were there to keep watch.

Mr. Ojielo:

They were not reporting to anybody like the leaders in the community ?

Mr. Gbeki:

I don't. Know. At times they come to us and as elders we give them token and encourage them to keep watch.

Mr. Ojielo :

Were there other persons in your neighbourhood who also were harassed by these same youths.

Mr. Gbeki:

Quite a number, but I will not name them. Everybody has his own story.

Mr. Ojielo:

The commission is interested in knowing as many of these people as possible because when they come and tell stories to the commission or give testimony they give the commission a clear picture of what people went through.

Mr. Gbeki:

Chairman, when I am on oath and my statement is there I say things for the benefit of all present but it is not my business to say Mr. A B C was arrested. No.

Mr. Ojielo:

One final question if you don't mind. You said the secretary to the President came to your house, and then warned those boys to stop disturbing your peace and since then they have never bothered you again? Will it then be right to say in terms of control they were reporting to government?

Mr. Gbeki: I can't tell.

Professor Schabas: It's now your turn. Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Mr. Gbekie: They say Truth and Reconciliation and I made mention about that earlier. Where the victims are alive, and the perpetrators are alive, and they all seem to be living together, how could the Truth and Reconciliation bring them together ?

Professor Schabas: It is our objective as much as possible and these hearings in particular and the Truth Commission to provide a forum for victims and perpetrators to come together and we will endeavour to the extent possible to see that process take place in your particular case.

Mr. Gbeki: That's all from me; thank you very much, if you've finished with me

Professor Schabas: Thank you again for coming. You've made a very important contribution to our work and one that I think help the whole process over the months to come. I thank you again

DATE: 15TH April 2003

WITNESS NAME: MORLAI BIZO CONTEH

WITNESS NO: 007

REFERENCE NO: 1/151/1134

Morlai Bizo Conteh was called to take an oath before the hearings, and was also asked to identify himself.

Professor Schabas : Welcome to the TRC. I understand that you have a testimony to give to us about victimization that you personally suffered in 1999.

TESTIMONY;

I have come here to tell what they did to me in 1993. My name is Morlai Bizo Conteh, I am here to testify what happened to me. I was a businessman residing at 2 Leah Street and my mother was a nursing sister in Koidu Town. I wrote her a letter telling her that we had been apart for a long time. She invited me to visit her in Kono and in April 1993 I decided to pay her a visit in Kono. I bade farewell to my sister and my younger brother and told them that I was going to visit my mother in Kono.

On my way going, we fell in an ambush at Giaya town. I had in possession my bag which contained some money and my credentials. I had over a hundred and fifty thousand Leones in my pocket. We were detained and they told me that I had fallen into an ambush and should not move any further. When the rebel saw that I was trembling, they thought I was going to put up some resistance. He got hold of my throat and held on tightly to it. One of the rebels who was in military fatigue and who was also having a cutlass hit my hand seriously and chopped off the right arm. The arm did not fall off completely but hanged dangling. I bled profusely and fell unconscious. When I regained consciousness, some people came to my rescue and asked me my name and address. I told them and that I was going to see my mother in Kono. They took me to 8 Koribondu Street Kono - the residence of my mother. She was could not believe her eyes when she saw me and collapsed. After recovering, I told her that it was because of the promise that's why she was seeing me. I was treated traditional herbs and later taken to the hospital. A doctor in Koidu told us that no matter what they did to my hands it will not be cured.

I was taken to the Makeni (Arab) Hospital for a surgical operation where they cut off my hand. After a while I returned to Freetown to see my brothers and sisters. They consoled me until now that I have had the opportunity to come and testify in this commission.

Professor Schabas : Thank you for your testimony. May I ask you a question to clarify – the date when this happened was it in 1995 or 1993?

Mr. Conteh : 1993

Professor Schabas : The other victims of the ambush are they still alive, do you know?

Mr. Conteh: I was unconscious. I didn't know what was happening.

Professor Schabas: I want to tell you how much we sympathise with what you've suffered since this terrible attack and I understand that you continue to suffer. You have all our sympathies.

Commissioner Sooka: I would like to ask you some questions for clarity. Could you tell us before you became unconscious how many of you were in this group?

Mr. Conteh: I can't say

Commissioner Sooka: You said in your statement that it was the rebels. Can you tell us how you came to know that it was the rebels? How did you identify them ?

Mr. Conteh: At that time there were no soldiers around, also taking into account their manner of dressing. No one was dressed in military attire.

Commissioner Sooka : Can you tell me what they said to you when they chopped off your hand. You mentioned it in your statement but you haven't said it in your evidence.

Mr. Conteh: I can't recall that they said anything to us in the vehicle but the moment we alighted the vehicle (on their orders) they only told us that we had fallen in an ambush.

Commissioner Sooka : Can you remember the number of people that attacked you?

Mr. Conteh: The person who stopped the vehicle was not the same person who chopped my hand. Not long after we heard heavy gunshots

Commissioner Sooka : When you heard gun shots how many people do you think were around firing these shots?

Mr. Conteh: I can't tell..

Commissioner Torto: Having told your story may actually have got rid of the psychological impact you may have had by now. I just wanted you to clarify whether you could remember the people that did these things to you?

Mr. Conteh: It was an unexpected attack. I cannot remember, because it had taken a long time now; most times I have not been well, that's why I was even late today.

Commissioner Torto: During the incidence, you did not remember any name being called either?

Mr. Conteh: No, they only told us that they were rebels.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you Mr. Conteh for telling us your story. We are very sorry for what happened to you during the conflict. According to your story, you were travelling from Freetown to Koidu and you were stopped at the checkpoint? We all know the distance to Koidu is very long; can you tell us at what point in the journey, near what village for instance or town this attack took place?

Mr. Conteh: I was not conversant with the area, but I was told that it was Ngaya

Commissioner Jow: You said you were a businessman, do you think you were targetted because of your profession?

Mr. Conteh: I don't want to believe that.

Bishop Humper: Morlai, we thank you for coming; your testimony is one revealing some many things that had happened in our country. There are a few things we want you to clarify for us. Firstly, I want to know whether your mother is still alive?

Mr. Conteh: Yes, she is still alive

Bishop Humper: Are you the lone child or are there many of you ?

Mr. Conteh: We are five in all, but I am responsible for two and the others are with our mother.

Bishop Humper : When the rebels amputated your arm and gave you a letter saying ' go and give the government, which govt did they refer to ?

Mr. Conteh : NPRC GOVERNMENT

Bishop Humper : Do you have any idea or any inkling why they asked you to go and give the government ?

Mr. Conteh: They didn't say anything about that that I should go and tell the government anything.

Professor Kamara : I want to thank you too. I hope you will answer at least one question from me. Our records here don't seem to be complete about the identity of the people who

caused you this harm. We don't know their ethnic group – the tribe they belonged to, but you repeatedly told us they were saying things to you or at least to your group. In what language were they saying these things to you?

Mr. Conteh : I was unconscious for a long time. I can't remember.

Professor Kamara : When they stopped you they said you had fallen into an ambush. In what language did they tell you that?

Mr. Conteh : The one who held me was not the one who told us we had fallen into an ambush but those who had surrounded us. They spoke in krio.

Abdulai Charm : Thank you Mr. Conteh. I know you were unconscious when this thing happened to you but were you able to tell after you gained consciousness if anything happened to any of those with whom you were travelling?

Mr. Conteh : I can't say that they chopped off their arms but they too were also running away from the vehicle. However, I can say that they held me because they saw me with a heavy bag.

Professor Schabas: We are happy that you've come to testify openly about what happened and for being so cooperative and for clarifying these questions. It is now your turn. Do you have any questions or requests that you would like to make of the TRC?

Mr. Conteh: I want to know whether they have any help for me or just to testify of my experience and ordeal.

Professor Schabas: The Truth Commission is in a position to make recommendations to the government. Your experience and your testimony can contribute to those recommendations. Do you want us to make any particular recommendations in your case? Do you have anything that you think we should recommend to the government ?

Mr. Conteh : I want the government to assist me financially because I now depend on my friends to sustain me , also there is no business for me and my sister who was giving me an helping hand is no longer doing business. My brother is no longer going to school.

Professor Schabas : **Thank you Mr. Conteh, do you have anything else that you would like to say today?**

Mr. Conteh: I have nothing more to say.

Professor Schabas: I wish to thank you again on behalf of the TRC. Your participation in this process is extremely important and we appreciate it very much,thank you.

**THE SIERRA LEONE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
FREETOWN PUBLIC HEARINGS**

DATE: 16TH APRIL, 2003.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|------------|
| 1. | Bishop Joseph C. Humper | | [Chairman] |
| 2. | Justice Laura Marcus-Jones | - | Presiding |
| 3. | William Schabas | | |
| 4. | Satang Jow | | |
| 5. | Sylvanus Torto | | |
| 6. | Prof. John Kamara | | |
| 7. | Yasmin Sooka | | |

LEADERS OF EVIDENCE:

1. Mr. Ozonnia Ojiello
2. Ms. Martien Schotsmans
3. Mr. Abdul Charm

Justice Marcus - Jones greeted everyone and asked everybody to stand for the opening prayer.

Firstly, the Muslim prayer was led by one of the witnesses. The Christian prayer was said by another witness. The chorus, "I have a very big God" was sung; Mrs. Manyeh led the audience in the singing.

Marcus Jones welcomed everybody on behalf of the Commission and said that a witness would be called upon to give a testimony and that the witness was free to ask questions and make recommendations; and that at the end of the hearings the commission would write a report in which such recommendations would be included.

WITNESS NAME: ISHMEAL HARUNE BANGURA

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

TESTIMONY

The witness, a Muslim, was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner.

Testimony

Ishmeal: {He started by thanking the Almighty Allah In Arabic}. This war destroyed us. People were targeted in that during the war. People who were fortunate or had made it were those that were hated and targeted. After I graduated from Magburaka in 1993, I started teaching at Mile 91. The war spread to Mile 91 and this led to the closure of all the schools. We went to our village and started swamp farming. Rebels attacked us and burnt down the village.

At that time, whenever we got news about rebels we would run away. The rebels came to our village and crowned a man as town commander and a woman as town lady. The people in the other village had registered with the rebels. Before that, we used to get information whenever rebels were about to attack. However, since the people in the other village registered with the rebels we got information no more. We began to face surprise attacks now and then. They called on the town commander and the town lady and asked that some men and women be given to them so that they could launch attacks on other villages. People were running here and there when they learnt that rebels were on the way.

I saw a rebel who pointed a gun at me and threatened to shoot me if I moved. I was scared and I dropped my bicycle and they said that they were going to take me away, "In fact, we are going to kill you" they said. They took me away with them and when the people saw me they asked me what had happened, since most of them knew me in that village; my sisters were married there. They gave some of the looted items to me to carry for them. Since I was popular in the village, the rebels said they were not going to give me a body guard; I was left to carry the load alone. The load was heavy, so I had to drop a bag of bulgur in the bush.

One of them beckoned to me to run away, and told me that they were planning to take me to their base, so I should escape. I did not want to take any chances as I was so afraid of the consequences of any failure. However, I managed to escape. Two days later, I returned to the village and went to the place where I had hidden the bag of bulgur so that I could collect it. At that time there was no

food in the village except that when vehicles passed by the village, they dropped this bulgur for us. As I was passing by, one of their agents saw me and asked me about the bag that I was carrying. He asked whether it was rice and I said that it was bulgur. He claimed that I had stolen a bag of rice from the rebels and said that he was going to report the matter to the rebels if I did not buy him a bag of rice. He reported the matter to the commander.

The commander sent for me and said that if I refused to go they would burn down our village. My father sent for his brothers and lodged the complaint that his son had been sent for by the rebels and that he was afraid he would be killed if he went there. My father said that since that village was full of rebels he, being an older man, would rather go and plead with them and if they would not agree, he would rather die in my place. During the rainy season I had to run away, by then all the rebels knew me so I had to run to Freetown, I had not been paid for about four months.

When the rebels came, my head teacher's child was killed, and since he could not withstand the situation he had to run away. When he came back, I was putting up a structure on a plot of land which had been allocated to both of us and he saw that I had had to face a lot of suffering for water. He advised that I use the school tap. The boys who were voluntarily in charge of the tap refused to allow me use the tap which they had locked. We had a serious row; my headmaster and I versus the boys. They called my headmaster a rebel and called the kamajors on him. They were trying to drag him to Kebbay's compound, and if he had gone there he would have been killed; so I shouted out to Mr. Kanu not to go along with them.

I advised that we should go to the junction or an ECOMOG base and make a report. The other man hit me with the shovel which I was working with, on my head and they started shouting: "Rebels, rebels". None of our people came to our rescue because of fear of being considered accomplices. They continued shouting until an old man who is currently in the camp met us and identified us as teachers. He said that we were his teachers and asked them about where they were taking us. They replied by saying that we were rebels. I thought they were taking us to the ECOMOG base; instead they took us to the Kamajors. Then the old man said that where ever they took us, even if it meant killing us, he would go with us. They warned him not to come along with us, and that if he did, they would kill him. He responded by saying that that was what he wanted. The old man reminded the Kamajors that it was they who contributed their monies to ensure that they were initiated and now they wanted turn against them. The old man said that he would not budge and that where ever we were taken, he would go with us.

The headmaster and I were brought before their commander; all the false allegations were taken to their boss, they even referred to witnesses, including teachers of the school, to testify that Mr. Kanu was a rebel. It was then that that

old man stood up and said that Mr. Kanu was not a rebel and that he had been the head master since that camp was built. He further stated that Mr. Kanu' child was killed when the rebels came and that they even burnt down his house. They wanted him dead because they were envious of his position. The commander investigated the matter thoroughly and warned against toying with people's lives, because life has no spare. He also stated that whosoever was proven to be a rebel would be killed.

After this point the old man left the scene to attend a meeting and promised to come back after the meeting. They then turned round and said that the head master was not a rebel; that I was the rebel. They then turned on me and started beating me with sticks, kicking me and punishing me in various ways. According to them, they did those things to me because I had interfered in their attempt to deal with the head master. They even used guns to beat me up. I became helpless and could not even move. They forced me to walk on even though I could not walk properly, and threatened to kill me if I refused. One of the kamajors called out to me and asked me whether I knew him, he stated that it was their group that had burnt down '91, and he said his name was "After the war" but that he had become a Kamajor.

They eventually released me but by that time my legs could hardly carry me, luckily I was able to get a car which took me to Freetown. When I got to Freetown I explained my dreadful ordeal to my brother who said he had nothing to do about it because at that time there was no where to lodge such complaints and everyone was afraid of being in conflict with the kamajors. We had Carew who was our brother but he was by then working on the side of the Government in pursuit of peace. We then decided to take the matter to the mosque for special prayers. Nothing came out of it. The people who tortured me are my neighbours, and whenever I see them I feel unhappy. The Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace taught us to forgive since to fight with someone who has wronged you would lead to an endless war.

We could have used fetish practices to make such offenders go mad, but God has asked us to wait for him to fight for us. At one time a kamajor gave my brother's children loads to carry. It was approaching curfew time so my brother could not leave his children to go alone, so he went with them. When they got to their destination they asked my brother and his kids out, and at that time curfew hour was on. They forced them out and as they came into the streets they were arrested by soldiers and ECOMOG and locked up to be killed the next day. My brother told them that he was not a rebel and that he had a store at Guard Street and that the kids were his children, but the ECOMOG were still reluctant to release my brother and his children. But when the people at the stadium saw him; they all recognised him, and they confirmed that he was the owner of a store at Guard Street and that he was not a rebel. That was when they released him.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you very much for sharing with us all those

bitter experiences. We believe that having said all these, you are feeling a little better and a little relieved. Now, the commissioners will ask you some questions just for clarification.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming to testify before the commission and for sharing your experience with the commission. I just want you to make one or two clarifications for me. The people you had this incident with whom you describe as kamajors, did you, before the time of your capture, have any animosity with them?

Mr. Bangura: I had no fracas with them, but I understand that there was a quarrel between them in the school.

Commissioner Torto: Between whom?

Mr. Bangura : When the head teacher left that school and transferred to another school, the school which he built close to the school which he had left was the source of the problem; they said that he should not have built a school just by the school which he had left. but he said that we were displaced persons and that if we were lucky to have assistance from the Arabs, that was for the good of our children. That fracas continued until police from the barracks had to intervene; they said that it was right to build another school there. I was not there.

Commissioner Torto: What brought about all this misunderstanding, who was actually in control before?

Mr. Bangura: The original care taker was killed, so it was controlled by anyone; volunteers.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Jow: Ishmael, thank you for your testimony. You did mention somebody you called a Mende Pa who intervened on your behalf. Can you tell us his name and why he acted the way he did?

Mr. Bangura: The Pa is in the camp and he is a generator mechanic. His name is Pa Jasper. He is a member of the school. He would have been the head master,

but because he studied French which is not a major area here, that was why he did not become the head master. He is currently in the camp.

Commissioner Jow: O.K. one more question for clarification Ishmael. In your testimony, you said your head master; Mr. Kanu did not have the support of the teachers in the school. Can you tell us why?

Mr. Bangura: When the incident took place, most people had fled and if they said that you were a rebel people would not come closer for fear that they would be killed. The head master was the only brave man who stayed behind

Commissioner Jow: Thank you.

Ms.Schotsmans: Are you still living in the same neighbourhood or in the same camp as Mr.Maxwell and Mr. Gallo?

Mr. Bangura: Yes, We live in the same camp.

Ms. Schotsmans: And you said that every time when you see them you feel bad?

Mr. Bangura: Yes, because the pain which I have now, I am always with medicine. There times when he greets me I reply, there times when he greets me I do not reply; there times when I see him I turn my back; I don't even want to meet him on the road..

Ms Schotsmans: Did you ever have an occasion to sit down with him, or did anyone organize a meeting where the three of you could sit down and talk about what had happened?

Mr. Bangura: To bring us together is not the problem, but whenever I see him I feel bad; had it not been for the TRC and that the war will continue... because the way in which I currently feel the pain...

Ms.Schotsmans: Would you like the TRC to invite those people?

Mr. Bangura: To call them... to all what I have said, there is a witness in the camp right now, they are all in the camp. One of them was with us, he was the first to

give his statement as regards his child who was killed; he was not beaten, I was the only one who was beaten. Should they call me and call him now, the only thing which will happen is to beg; I want to surrender everything to for the world hereafter, but should they call us, I have no qualms with that. But should they give me a hundred or two hundred thousand Leones, I will not take it because that will not satisfy me.

- Ms Schotsmans:** Can you tell the commission their complete names, please?
- Mr. Bangura :** One of them is Maxwell, the other one is Kolo.
- Ms. Schotsmans:** Would you know their complete names?
- Mr. Bangura:** I can't tell you because our relationship has now gone sour. I was not beaten up by them but they caused me to be beaten up.
- Ms. Schotsmans :** Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us.
- Justice Marcus Jones :** Do you have any question for the Commission?
- Mr. Bangura:** Yes. (1) People who come to TRC to give testimonies are they supposed to be in charge of transportation?
- Marcus Jones:** TRC is willing to collect witnesses and bring them to this venue and will even help in other ways.
- Mr. Bangura:** Will TRC be able to give medications or not?
- Justice Marcus Jones:** TRC cannot give out tablets but could refer you to the briefer who will direct you to areas where tablets could be given to you.
- Mr. Bangura:** Something which should be done is that TRC should organize the hearings in the Provinces to be done according to sections because of transportation.
- Justice Marcus Jones:** Hearing will be held in Freetown for 2 weeks, and then we will move to the provinces. So, it will be between the Provinces and Freetown. Reports will be produced, at the end of the entire process.

Bishop Humper: Tell your brothers and sisters not to be afraid to come and testify because even in the provinces transportation will be made available for witnesses.

WITNESS NAME: ISATU KAMARA

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

OATH: The witness, a Muslim, was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner.

Justice Marcus Jones: So Isatu, we are all listening to you, tell us what happened to you.

TESTIMONY:

ISATU: I was born at Fogbo. My mother's name is Amie Kamara. She took me to Masiaka, when I was just a little eight year old girl. My mother had gone to sell her wares on the day the village was attacked. My mother escaped. They gathered us together and locked us in a room, and they started taking us out one after the other. Some had their ears cut off; some had their arms cut off. There was a pregnant woman whose stomach was split open; the child died and she also died. They came to me; they took me, out stretched my foot and cut it off with a cutlass. I fainted, I went unconscious.

Later, a government vehicle had to take me to town, and they brought me to Connaught hospital where they attended to me. Having attended to me, I was there for quite some time. I was later discharged, and I went to the village. The village was also attacked soon after my arrival (less than a month). We went to the other side. Where we went into hiding, we suffered a lot: water was difficult to get. We were there for quite some time; I misplaced my hospital card. This is my testimony. I do not have much to say because I was quite young then. Otherwise, I would have remembered and said more. There was a woman who was called Aminata Bangura, together we were victims. She was residing then at 5 ECOWAS Street, but she is doesn't live there any more; I do not know where she lives at present.

Justice Marcus Jones: We thank you very much Isatu, for relaying to us the very sad experience that you had which has left you with disability. We will now go on to ask you questions; just questions to clear some points and to help us write an accurate report.

Professor Kamara: Isatu Kamara, Good morning. We thank you very much for this statement you have given to the commission. The commissioners sympathize with you. You told us that after you were discharged from Connaught Hospital you went to a village, what village is that ?

Miss Kamara: Fogbo.

Professor Kamara: That is where you are living right now?

Miss Kamara: Yes.

Professor Kamara: What are you doing now for a living?

Miss Kamara: I am not doing anything.

Professor Kamara: Well, how are you supported?

Miss Kamara: My brother is there

Professor Kamara: What is your brother doing?

Miss Kamara: My brother is not doing anything

Professor Kamara: Well, if he is not doing anything; how is he supporting you?

Miss Kamara: People fish where we live.

Professor Kamara: So, he is a fisherman?

Miss Kamara: Yes.

Professor Kamara: And he is doing fairly well?

Miss Kamara: Yes.

Professor Schabas: How old were you when this happened to you?

Miss Kamara: I was 8 years old.

Professor Kamara: And how old are you?

Miss Kamara: I am 19 years old.

Professor Schabas: Do you know the people who did this to you, do you know

who they were?

Miss Kamara: I don't know them.

Professor Schabas: Do you know if they belonged to any other armed group or the army?

Miss Kamara: They were rebels.

Professor Schabas: How do you know that?

Miss Kamara: They were the ones who arrested us and locked us in a room.

Professor Schabas: How many of them were there?

Miss Kamara: They were many. I can't remember.

Commissioner Jow: Isatu, before the incident were you in school?

Miss Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: After the incident did you continue any formal education?

Miss Kamara: No.

Commissioner Jow: Was that out of choice or was there no provision?

Miss Kamara: Financial Problem.

Commissioner Jow: Have you been back to your old school to see whether they could take you in again?

Miss Kamara: It was at Fogbo, I went up to class five.

Commissioner Jow: You still live at Fogbo, don't you?

Miss Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: The question I am asking is whether you have been back to your old school to see whether they could help you?

Miss Kamara: No

Bishop Humper: Since you went back to your place did you learn any trade ?

Miss Kamara: No.

Bishop Humper : Are you desirous to develop your own skills so that you can do something to help yourself?

Miss Kamara : If I have a benefactor, I will.

Commissioner Torto: Isatu, we thank you very much for coming. I just want you to clarify something for me. From the written statement in front of me and answers to the questions especially from Commissioner Schabas; I am inclined to believe that the RUF rebels were betting over this pregnant woman's child, what was the sex of this unborn child. Do you remember how much they were betting on?

Miss Kamara: It was a boy; they were not betting on any amount. There was not cash on the bet.

Commissioner Torto:After disemboweling the woman what was the reaction after proving the sex of the baby?

Miss Kamara: They laughed and shouted.

Mr. Charm: Thank you very much Isatu, I just want to ask you a few questions for clarification. According to your statement you said there were about 200 people in the room. Although you were very young at that time can you remember whether all those people were arrested in the same village or not?

Miss Kamara: No. I don't know the names of the villages.

Mr. Charm: Can you also help us with the composition of these people; were there boys and girls or men or women?

Miss Kamara: We were mixed

Mr. Charm: So, you were not the first to be amputated from that group?

Miss Kamara: No.

Mr. Charm: Will you be able to tell us if anything happened to those who were amputated before you?

Miss Kamara: I don't live where they live?

Justice Marcus Jones: Isatu, we have been asking you questions, have you any questions you want to ask us about the work of the commission, our progress?

Miss Kamara: One of our companions whose arms were chopped off is currently being assisted by a white man to erect a structure. I want to know whether the TRC will help do the same?

Justice Marcus Jones: TRC through the debriefers, will only tell you where you can possibly get help from. Maybe you will be able to give more details of the person helping your friend to the debriefers and then the TRC will be able to direct you on how to get help.

Miss Kamara: I don't know the white man.

Justice Marcus Jones: Have you have any recommendation that you would like to make for the report? You are a young person but I'm sure you have your own ideas about a better country.

Miss Kamara: You know better and I leave it to you.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you very much. Our recommendations will include recommendations for women and for people who are handicapped like you. We thank you for coming to tell us about your experiences. Thank you.

DATE: 16th April 2003

WITNESS NAME: Bankole Isaac George Vincent

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO

Bankole Isaac George Vincent was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

My name is Bankole Isaac George Vincent and Retired Senior Civil Servant. Before the advent of the rebels, I had lived with my family of eight persons in my house at 9 Cemetery Road, Kola Tree, Allen Town.

At present I am an internally displaced citizen and I live at 37E Wilkinson Road Freetown.

On the 9th of January 1999 at about 10.30 am, a group of 10 rebels entered my

house at 9 Cemetery Road, Kola Tree, Allen Town and placed my family and my self under gun point. They requested me to give them five million Leones but I told their commando that I am a retired civil servant and do not possess such a colossal amount. Consequently, he ordered me to give them all the money I had in my possession and warned me that if I do not cooperate with them, I shall swim in my blood.

I went into my room under escort and removed the five hundred thousand Leones (he cried) I had in my box; under great shock I handed the money to them. The commando ordered one of his men to give me two slaps which he did very brutally. The commando ordered his men to lock my family and my self inside one room whilst they ransacked all the 6 rooms and the roof of the house and the store. All the articles they looted were loaded inside a lorry but before they departed, they ordered me to dance and laugh and express my gratitude to them for looting my house and destabilizing my Mercedes Benz beyond repairs. I did exactly as they ordered me; otherwise I would have been summarily executed.

The rebels promised to come back in two days time and ordered me not to vacate the house as they would bring me some good gifts including money; they also told me that if they came and did not meet my family and myself, they would hunt for us and kill us. However, knowing the notorious character of the rebels and acting on the advice which an old lady gave me, my family and myself immediately left our house and sought refuge in different places.

We were later told that just one hour after we had left for dear life, the rebels came back and enquired about us; when they did not see us, they burnt my house - my house I took 8 years to build. I laboured in Germany for 8 years; was destroyed in a twinkle of an eye- and remarked that if they had met us, they would have tied every one of us inside the house, poured petrol on us and burnt us inside the house, because they were told that we are strong supporters of the SLPP Government. These documents are on this paper and it would be handed over to the Commission, since I don't want to waste the time of the Commission. I am over 70 years old.

All the members of my family are displaced and live in different parts of Freetown under strenuous conditions. We are at present traumatised and depressed because our family life has been distorted by the rebels and "sobels".

Attached overleaf, are details of all my properties that the rebels burnt and looted.

Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you Mr. Vincent. We appreciate the distress you are telling us about and that you are an elderly man. As you said yourself, you escaped for dear life and that dear life you have now. We have seen the list

of the items in your paper but as you already know the TRC cannot give compensation; the TRC can only make recommendation in the final report. In order to be able to give an accurate account of what you have told us in our report we're going to ask you some questions.

Commissioner Sooka: Mr. Vincent, thank you for telling us your story. You mentioned that you are now an internally-displaced person. I wonder if you could tell us a little more about that; whether you live with your children or whether they are separated. Where is your family now?

Mr. Vincent: My daughter Hannah is at Wilberforce; my son, Ansu lives at Old Wharf; my other daughter Josephine Vincent lives at Kola Tree with her mother.

Commissioner Sooka: Obviously you've lost everything that you've earned, how do you support yourself now?

Mr. Vincent : It is a very good question, Commissioner. I am a retired Civil Servant. I receive only 44 thousand Leones as my monthly pension. Also in my church, Ebenezer Methodist Church, I have good friends like Mr. Doherty, Arthur Carter, Olufemi Roberts, Moshe Roberts who at times give me handouts and also I am a professional auto mobile mechanic. The boys that I trained usually come to me to seek advice on some mechanical problems they may have encountered. I often help them and like the ten virgins in the bible, at least one may come and give me some thing as a sign of appreciation. Also some of my former school mates of the Methodist Boys High School usually invite me to visit their homes, some give me money and clothes but I am not used to that. As I said earlier, my car was destroyed. Thirdly, my wife is a German. I have her picture here with me and I can show it to you if you like. We were married in Sierra Leone on 20th June 1970 at St. Mark's Church Lumley. Formerly, she used to send some things for me -pocket money and clothes. Unfortunately, some bad people told her that I have married twenty wives and thirty children-within this short period that I returned home. Naturally out of jealousy which is very common among women she has stopped assisting me.

Also unfortunate, is that whenever I applied for a job, they would tell me that I am qualified but they can't give me the job because of my age. Notwithstanding my age, I am still strong to work. What I am with humility requesting this commission to do for me, is to recommend to Government to give me a micro- credit loan of about one million Leones. I have a vast land of about 70 acres of land at my home town in Yormandu. I could engage in agricultural activities and I may be able to harvest twice a year. I must confess that there are times when I can't go to church because of my fare. As a retired Society Steward at Ebenezer Methodist Church, and Leader, after serving twenty one years, I usually feel guilty that I cannot go to church as I would love to.

Commissioner Torto – Mr. Vincent thank you very much for coming and I must

congratulate you for summing up courage after that kind of agonizing experience. From the written statement I have in front of me here, you mentioned that you are asking the Commission to tell your perpetrators to stop provoking you?

Mr. Vincent - About six months ago, I stood outside my burnt house and I saw three young men passing by and I heard one of them say, "Nar wi burn da pa dae in ose". My Lord, to be honest with you, Sir, if at that material time I had certain things I'd have asked God to forgive me. I would have shot him. I asked them if they were referring to me and they said, yes. The other one remarked that: "Since you have been supporting Tejan Kabbah, why can't he rebuild your house". Then I shivered and slowly I collapsed. I was helped by a woman who took me into the house and advised that I take some rest. I prayed to God to give me a peaceful mind and to be courageous. That is why I said that government should warn rebels not to provoke victims. The other then commented that to do evil is fine, because they who have committed atrocities and burnt people houses have been rewarded by Government with 600,000 and university, secondary and technical education. He asked what I have benefited from the government. That depressed me most. I didn't take any food for two days even with persuasion from my daughter.

Commissioner Torto - How often has this happened to you; can you remember their faces, do you know where they are?

Mr. Vincent - I don't know; I lost consciousness. I have receipts of the things I bought from Germany which were destroyed and I would like to show you, to buttress what I have just said.

Justice Marcus Jones - We believe all what you have said.

Commissioner Jow - In your testimony, you mentioned that there were two women among your attackers, were they in uniform and what roles did they play?

Mr. Vincent - They were rebels.

Commissioner Jow - What role did they play?

Mr. Vincent- They all looted, infact, it was one of them who saved my life. They wanted to kill me so Kabbah could give back my life. She told them not to kill me because I had no money. One rebel had suggested that they kill me but she came to my rescue, rubbing my chin, she commented that I am a handsome man so let them not kill me.

Commissioner Jow - Did you recognise any one of them?

Mr. Vincent - No. Also I want to add that I have handed some documents to

Ozonia, and it contains a lot of information. Sorry Bishop, I was there when you were embarrassed. I witnessed the rebels baptising little children in hot burning oil. They butchered ten women alive.

Bishop Humber -I join all the commissioners in thanking you. We believe all what you've said and we need no supporting document. The flow of your testimony itself will absolve you. Do you think you were targeted?

Mr. Vincent - Yes, although other people lost properties in the area, they told me that they did those things to me because I was one of Tejan Kabbah's strongest supporters.

Bishop Humber - Do you have school-going children?

Mr. Vincent - No.

Justice Marcus Jones - Do you have any question for the commission?

Mr. Vincent - This question is not for you directly, but since you act as the post office, for information to the government, let me ask this question - Most victims could not understand why the rebels who committed atrocities worse than Hitler are being helped by the government whilst peaceful citizens like us are left in the cold. There will be no peace without justice. I am with the grassroots; most youths are disgruntled because they are saying that if you want the Government to consider you, you have to be a hardened criminal. I have been trying to dissuade them from such thinking. However, if nothing is done, most of them are saying that if any war would break out again, they would commit worse atrocities than those already committed for the Government to consider them. I was glad when I heard on the BBC focus on Africa programme at 15.15 and 17.15pm yesterday that President Mbeki of South Africa had said that they are going to pay reparations of \$380,000 to 20,000 Apartheid victims. The Commission must ensure that justice is done to all.

Justice Marcus Jones - As regards justice during the war, the Special Court will take care of that, however, I want to assure you that, your recommendations will be seriously considered for inclusion in our final report. I want to tell you that your testimony will help the commission in its recommendations. Do you have any further recommendations?

Mr. Vincent - Yes,

- 1 Government should give reparation to victims whose houses were burnt for example, building materials.
2. Government should give micro-credit loans to victims in order to help with restoration.

3. Government should help youths who are qualified to enter into colleges and provide technical education and jobs as they have done for ex-combatants.
4. Commission should have hearings at chiefdom level to reduce transport expenses.

Justice Marcus Jones - Thank you, we hope that this peace may continue to flow in your heart. Thank you.

DATE: 16TH April 2003

WITNESS NAME; Kumba Conteh

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

Kumba she was sworn on oath. She is a Christian.

Justice Marcus Jones - Kumba I want to assure that you have nothing to worry about; take your time and tell your story.

TESTIMONY

I was at staying at Sefadu and my child was about to be married; it was on a Friday morning when the rebels attacked. My in-laws and I ran into the bush but we had nothing on us. We went into the bush, but while we were hiding, they came after us and we went further into the bush. They walked with force; they were still after us - we went to the villages; my children and I had no clothes. They told us that if we ran away, they would kill us; my children ran away. My grandchild came out of hiding and was about to run when they shot him in the chest. He was buried. After a while, we went again into the bush.

My daughter, who is alive, was trying to run away when she was shot and injured by a rebel. I cried when I saw her, I took her and started healing the wounds. She suffered in the bush, but nothing happened to her. We then ran to a village called Gbatti Fanda. We later came out of that village. When the rebels attacked, they took away my two children - Yapo and Sorie. After sometime, I was approached by somebody who asked me if I had heard anything about my

children and if I knew that they had been killed. She consoled me and told me to be strong. I was then taken to Kokyeima, to my in-laws' place.

My in-laws advised me that it would be in my best interest to come to Freetown and stay with my sister. In Sefadu, my in-laws houses were burnt; the place was burnt to the ground. It has become overgrown with weeds. All my children were killed, except my eldest daughter. She consoled me and promised to take care of me. My in-laws paid fare to come over to my sister in Freetown. I am not well. I only survived almost on kola nuts during for the five months that I was in the bush. The water was not pure. That's what they did to me. I gave birth to 12 children; the others were not killed during the war. But my two boys and daughter were.

I am here today on the advice of my daughter who asked that I should come to a place where I would be consoled. I thank God, because I was told by the old man sitting down over there to come and testify. He met me yesterday and told me to come.

Justice Marcus Jones - We can see that you're a very old woman and you have lost your house, children and grand children. We have heard your testimony but there are few questions we would like to ask.

Professor John Kamara: You told us that you had about 12 children; you lost 3, which means that you have 9 of them who are still alive.

Mrs. Conteh - No, I only have one.... People are laughing at me, I'm being scorned.

Mr. Ojielo - Have you been able to receive any help from any organization?

Mrs. Conteh - No, That's why I am here.

Mr. Ojielo - Were members of the family able to give your children a fitting burial?

Mrs. Conteh - No

Justice Marcus Jones - Do you have any question for the commission?

Mrs. Conteh - I have nothing to say, I want the commission to help me, to console me; my mind is heavy.

Justice Marcus Jones - When you leave here, you have our briefers to talk to. I thank you very much.

Mrs. Conteh - I feel good now. I thank you, especially Mr. Kamanda who

brought me here. At times people say that I'm mad. I can't eat. People should not be taunted; it is not good to taunt people.

Justice Marcus Jones - We thank you.

Name: Joe Fancy Yusuf Black Kamara

Witness No.

Ref. No.

Good morning audience. My name is Joe Fancy Yusuf Black kamara. I'm here purposely at this commission to blow and clear my chest for the unlawful death of my late father Chief Alhaji Abulagbu Black Kamara former Temne Tribal headman Western Area and to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute, to defend the rights of the poor and needy in our family.

My father was a prominent trader in the Western Area and was inaugurated by the Minister on Interior and the Temne people of this country to succeed Paul Kamara that was in 1991. When the NPRC took power from the APC in 1992 he was arrested and detained at the Pademba road prison for one and half day and by the power of the God Almighty he was released and proven to be innocent of any political charges.

Failing to work with the resolution of the NPRC in 1996 he was suspended by the cabinet of the NPRC and when the SLPP won the election his throne was given to another person for no comprehensible reason.

On 25th May 1997 he was invited at the National Stadium for contributions towards the search for peace by the AFRC junta force and he responded with his own suggestions towards a peaceful solution concerning the conflict in our beloved country.

On the 12th February, when the ECOMOG led force dislocated the AFRC junta force out of Freetown, some supporters of the SLPP and ECOMOG officers entered our father's compound, broke into his residence and destroyed all the beautiful treasure, and ended up burning the houses of our father including one Mercedes Benz which was his patrolling car.

On the 14th February at 2.00 p.m. in the afternoon our father was captured by youths of this country who were in an identified SLPP uniform at the Montague streets and also one Gibrilla Mansaray, who lives at 7 Manfred Lane, was the

first person to hit at my father with a stick and throw water all over his body. In a hopeless condition some ECOMOG officers rescued him and took him to the Pademba road prison with no medical care.

On the 15th February, I Joe Fancy Yusuf Black Kamara and some family members sought refuge in Mambolo town, Kambia district. There we heard about the death of our late father. That was on the 28th February 1998. His corpse was released from the prison and buried on the 2nd March 1998 by the Temne people of this country.

An honorable man: Governing over four hundred people inside his residence; a prominent peaceful citizen of this country with seven wives and twenty three children. Elders of this land and in respect of this commission, I want you to speak and judge fairly for us, as required by law to the loss of our father. As you all know the law is supreme. A person is presumed innocent until he \she has been proved guilty. A person can only be punished for distinct breach of law established in a manner before the court of the land

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. The story was very clear and I want you to clarify something for me. When was your father arrested?

Mr. Kamara: When the NPRC took over power he was accused that he was a collaborator between one party to another.

Mr. Ojielo: In what uniform were the SLA soldiers?

Kamara: They were wearing the SLPP T-shirts.

Mr. Ojielo: Who takes care of your younger brothers and sisters?

Mr. Kamara: I take care of them.

Mr. Ojielo: You mentioned about Gibrilla Mansaray?

Mr. Kamara: Gibrilla was a handicap and our relative. I was surprised that he should behave in such a manner.

Mr. Ojielo: Would you like the Commission to call both of you to iron it out?

Mr. Kamara: Yes. It will be an everlasting peace.

Justice Marcus Jones: Do have any question to ask the commission?

Mr. Kamara: Yes, I want the Commission to speak the truth for us.

Justice Marcus Jones: The Commission would like to see what the SLPP

Government will do towards these issues. Do you have any recommendation to add to our report?

Mr. Kamara: Commissioner, my family is handicapped. So, I want you to look into my plight.

Justice Marcus Jones: The commission will looked into your recommendation and we hope you will have the courage to go through your life. We thank you.

DATE: 16TH April 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Jonathan Kenawa Kamanda

WITNESS NO;

REFERENCE NO:

TESTIMONY

Jonathan Kenawa Kamanda was called upon to take his seat. He was asked if he is a Christian or Muslim he said he is a Christian and he was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner.

Justice Marcus Jones - I am happy that you are here to testify in this public hearing. We want you to tell the Commission about your experiences and what happened to you.

TESTIMONY

After leaving school, I was employed at the Sierra Leone Railway. I worked there for seventeen years. After the closure of the Railway, I took up appointment as a Police Officer in the Freetown City Council. I was retired during the AFRC but later recalled.

When I got my annual leave, I went to my wife at Bakonia Chiefdom in the Moyamba district. After 2 weeks, we heard that there was an attack at Buedu. When they entered, they fired shots into the air and we all went into the bush. When we came back, we realised that all our properties had either been destroyed or taken away. They entered by Taiama. They took away five goats and many fowls. Five houses were burnt including my sister-in-law's house - Fatmata. Even in the bush, we suffered and sustained injuries. My son fell down and injured his arm. We were there till the end of July and I badethem farewell and returned. All what I had gathered for a lifetime and stored with my wife were all taken away.

Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you for coming here to testify. We may now want to ask you some questions for clarification.

Commissioner Torto - Thanks for coming, we appreciate you. We know you have gone through a lot of trauma. I want some clarifications. The people who attacked you which group did they belong to?

Mr. Kamanda - They were in a group of ten to fifteen and they were dressed in military fatigue.

Commissioner Torto - Are they SLA, RUF or Kamajors?

Mr. Kamanda - Since they were in combat, I could not identify the group.

Commissioner Torto - In your statement, you mentioned, Kumba Conteh. What was the nature of her involvement at the time you were giving the statement ?

Mr. Kamanda - In 1992, I came to know Kumba in Kono (at her sister's) and I intended marrying her.

Professor John Kamara - Thanks for the experience you have shared with us, we sympathise with you for all that you have lost. We can see that you are interested in agriculture in producing food for this country. What I want to know is, whether you came back to Freetown after this ugly incident in 1994, or that since then you have never been back because you've lost your properties?

Mr. Kamanda – Yes, I came back in 1999 and I was still working at the Freetown City Council. I have been going to my wife, although her house was burnt down. She is still in Moyamba living with a neighbour.

Professor John Kamara - Are you still working for the Freetown City Council?

Mr. Kamanda - No, I retired last year. I am planning to go back to the provinces. Things are not that bad but I am barely surviving.

Mr. Charm - We would like to know if there was fighting between the warring factions that led to the destruction of your village?

Mr. Kamanda - The formation of the CDF and Kamajors came in the later stages of the war. It was only the government soldiers and the rebels who were engaged in combat.

Mr. Charm- For how long were these rebels in your village?

Mr. Kamanda - They were operating from outside; while attacking the village

intermittently.

Mr. Charm - Did anything happen to the other inhabitants in the village?

Mr. Kamanda - As far as I know, only five houses were burnt and about five people killed but this was not in the statement.

Mr. Charm- Can you name these people?

Mr. Kamanda - I can't tell because I am not familiar with the people in the village.

Mr. Charm - Were people abducted to carry loads?

Mr. Kamanda - Yes, anytime they entered, they captured young boys, I know of one boy whose name is Sorie.

Charm - Were there females among group of people who attacked you?

Mr. Kamanda - Yes, they had women and children.

Justice Marcus Jones - Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Mr. Kamanda - Yes, does the commission have any way of assisting us with the distress that we went through?

Justice Marcus Jones - You must know that there are several people who suffered the same loss, but the TRC does not have the money to give to people that are victims of the war. But there are things that the Commission could recommend that may be done in your community and help individuals.

Jonathan - If the commission could help I would be grateful. I suggest that this exercise reach the grassroots in the provinces.

Justice Marcus Jones - I assure you that the TRC will go to the province and all recommendations made will be included in our final report. Thank you for your testimony. We have now come to the end of today's hearing session. Today the TRC has heard testimonies as to the tragic loss of a number of victims. As a mark of respect to these people, I ask we stand and observe a minute silence for these people.

DATE: 17TH April 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Retired Captain Moigboi Moigande Kosia

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

The Presiding Commissioner Professor Schabas called the session to order by a welcome note, and requested for an opening prayer by the audience;

Christian prayer: Mrs Manyeh, A chorus "Tell papa God Tenki" was sung by all.

Muslim prayer: Mr. Charm (Al fatiah) by all.

Mr. Ozonnia Ojiello, Leader of Evidence called the first witness of the day. The witness Rtd. Capt. Moigboi Moigande Kosia was then sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner Prof. Schabas.

Testimony

In the first place, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all officials here for the formation of the TRC; a lot of innocent people had suffered in silence. And nothing had been done. I thank God today, that I am here to give this testimony before the TRC. Before I start my testimony, I would like to crave the indulgence of the Commissioners to allow me to introduce myself.

My name is Retired Captain Mogboi Moigande Kosia. I was born in Pendembu in Kailahun and also a retired commissioned officer of the Sierra Leone Army. I was enlisted in the army in 1954 as a boy soldier at the age of 13. In 1959, I was absorbed into the main service in the Army and I was posted to the Army Headquarters, which was the seat of the Force Commander. I was the first serving officer in the Sierra Leone Army, to go to Nigeria as a student, when their Academy was opened.

In 1964, I took the qualifying examination to become an officer and I was successful. I spent 18 months in the Military Academy. Upon return, I was posted to Moa Barracks in Daru as a Recruiting and Training Officer. In 1971, I Moigboi Moigande Kosia sitting before you today, was one of the accused officers, in the first court martial trial for one John Amadu Bangura and eight others. At the end of the trial, I was honourably acquitted and discharged because I was falsely accused. I was still at the Pademba Road Prison, when four of the eight convicted officers: Brigadier John Amadu Bangura; Major F.L.M. Jawara; Major S.E. Momoh and Lieutenant Kolugbonda were executed.

After my release, I was roaming the streets of Freetown seeking employment. Fortunately for me, I met one of the soldiers with whom I had trained; he was a Security at State House to the then President Siaka Stevens. He arranged a meeting for me with the President and after listening to my story, I was later reinstated in the Army. I was posted again to Moa Barracks, but some officers

were not happy. In 1973, two weeks to the general elections, I was hurriedly and unceremoniously sent back to Freetown; two days later I was given a letter of retirement. I tried all I could to see Momoh who was then the Force Commander but I could not. I wrote a letter of petition to the President through the assistance of one Junior Officer, who had some political connections. I was then invited to see the President once again. At the President's office, I met Momoh, he told the President that during my stay in Daru, at about the time of the elections, I was campaigning for the SLPP in my chiefdom and other chiefdoms. He further told the President that I was training people in my chiefdom as mercenaries. At that time, I was training some officers in life firing exercise. I was dismissed.

I was abandoned, neglected and I started roaming the streets of Freetown once again. Then I had no political affiliation and wherever I went to seek employment, I was asked to produce a party card or they'll ask if I was sent by a politician. Whenever there was a coup or an attempted coup, I was always the first to be arrested. I was in this condition when I finally resolved to go back to my home town with my family and engage in small scale farming. I was there till 1991 when the war broke out. I was captured in my home town Pendembu, on April 10th 1991. I was with the RUF throughout these years until I was disarmed and demobilised and reintegrated. So, that the brief history of myself.

Before I start my testimony, I would like to crave the indulgence of the commissioners to have patience with me because I have a long history to tell.

Some of the fundamental reasons which gave birth to the war started in the Army. In 1965, immediately after the Africanisation of the army; when it was left in the hands of Sierra Leoneans, after the last British Force Commander, Brigadier R.G. Blackie had left, that was when nepotism, tribalism and segregation started in the army. The first black enlisted officer in the Army, Brigadier David Lansana, was made Force Commander and his deputy was Brigadier John Bangura who was the second black man to be enlisted in the army. Lansana came from the East and his allegiance was to Albert Margai and the SLPP whilst John Bangura who came from the North his allegiance was to Siaka Stevens and the APC. They were like two parallel lines that would never meet. As a result of this division between these senior officers, the army was deeply divided right down the ranks. We had the North-Western alliance and the South-Eastern alliance.

As a result of this division, the military experienced the first coup attempt in 1967, masterminded by Brigadier John Bangura and senior officers from the North. These officers Brigadier John Bangura, Abu Noah, Farrah Jawara, A.O. Kamara, M.S. Tarawallie, P.G.O. Caulker, Seray Wurie and some other ranks were all detained at the Pademba Road Prison before, during and after the election in 1967. After the election in 1967, Brigadier David Lansana declared a martial law

in Sierra Leone. Less than two hours, there was a counter coup led by Maj. Charles Blake, Maj. S.B. Jumu and Major Kaisamba and the National Reformation Council (NRC), was formed. Late Juxon Smith was called from London to head the NRC. The army was split by then and the detained officers were still at the Pademba Road Prison. In his first address to military officers at the Myhuang Officers Mess, he told us that as soldiers, we must stay away from politics. He further said that politics was for politicians.

In addition to that, he said that he was not going to allow any military coup in Sierra Leone. He said that he had evidence to try and convict all the detained officers at Pademba Road Prison for treason in a court martial. However, in order to rebuild the military and in order for unity to prevail once again in the military, he was not going to try anyone. He therefore decided to send the two senior officers; Lansana and Bangura, out of the country on external appointments. In addition to this, all other detained officers at Pademba Road Prison from 1966 were released and reinstated into the military with their full ranks.

The NRC began its work and many Commissions of Enquiry were set up. For the first three months, the NRC was working as a group; after that, they were divided. Brigadier Smith had his own group and Blake, Jumu and Kaisamba had their group. Later Juxon-Smith was accused of being power conscious and that he was not listening to advice. As a result of these divisions, the NRC became ineffective. It was like a "chicken trying to sit on a hammock"; it existed but only on paper. At that time, late Lansana and Bangura had been given external appointments. We started hearing rumours, that John Bangura was in Guinea recruiting and training men and it was then that the ISU started. Soldiers started running to Guinea. This information started flying like wild fire. Since the NRC was divided, the senior officers didn't do anything to educate the junior officers about Brigadier John Bangura's presence in Guinea. Thus, the NRC decided to hand over power to a civilian government, after an election that was to include all the political parties which contested the 1967 elections.

In a meeting at the Officers Mess at Wilberforce, Juxon Smith sought our opinion as to how to go about the transition. Some officers were in favour of the transition whilst some were against. Some were of the opinion that it must be done gradually since the Commissions of Inquiry that were set up had started bringing out some results. Most former ministers and civil servants who were found guilty were to be banned from holding any public office for ten years. Midway through these deliberations, news of this meeting was scattered all around Freetown. Towards the end of the meeting, the politicians were all around the barracks; inciting junior officers that the Queen of England had sent money for all soldiers which the senior officers had eaten. This angered the junior officers and since Blake, Jumu and Kaisamba were against Juxon-Smith, they master minded a coup which was led by Rogers, Patrick and Kengenyeh; who were all junior officers.

Some senior officers including myself and senior police officers were arrested and detained at Pademba Road Prison. Whilst we were in detention, an argument ensued among the coup plotters as to who was to head the army. Bangura was finally selected; he came back to Sierra Leone and was appointed head of the army. He however handed over power back to Siaka Stevens. We were at Pademba Road Prisons, when some officers were released and reinstated back into the army; whilst we the officers from the East and the South were left in detention. For some of us, we were lucky to be released and reinstated because of our popularity among the other ranks. Bangura succeeded in dividing the army. He established the Military Intelligent Branch (MIB). He brought into the army something which had never existed in the army before i.e tribal returns in a bid to know the number of Temnes, Limbas and those from the South-East were shortlisted. Every four months, Officers from the South-East were prematurely retired. Most of us were pre-maturely retired. We were there but had nothing to do just moving about.

This continued for a while. Then in 1970, another political party was formed by someone. Late Bangura, switched his allegiance to this new political party. Bangura who had been a close friend of Siaka Stevens became unpopular to him and J.S. Momoh then became the President's "blue eyed boy". There were rumours filtering that Bangura would be retired and given an external job but he was against it. That brought about the coup in 1971 and I was falsely accused because I was in Freetown to take the qualifying examination for promotion from lieutenant to captain. As the coup was being planned, Bangura wanted the coup to go on but Momoh was against. Some junior officers were aware of what was happening but others were not. A very serious quarrel ensued amongst the senior officers and their juniors. It was then suggested that Momoh should be arrested but his supporters were there to protect him and it was also suggested that Bangura should be arrested but his supporters were there to protect him. So, there was chaos. Everybody was in a state of confusion; not knowing what to do and Guinean troops were in Freetown with their jet flying all over the city.

A junior officer then suggested that both Momoh and Bangura should come forward and explain what their positions were. When Bangura was asked to speak, he spoke in riddles but he failed to make a definite statement and Momoh when he was called forward did not say anything. Foday Sankoh, who was attached to the SLBS TV as a photographer, was around when the coup took place. He saw all of us lining up. When Momoh and Bangura failed to say anything that could convince us, he came forward and told them that they were the leaders but if they failed to come to a unified solution, then they, the other ranks, will take charge of things and he promised them that they'll all be detained as it was the case in 1968. Immediately after he had spoken, Momoh and Bangura embraced themselves and Foday Sankoh took their photograph and it was that photograph which took him to prison.

He was detained at Pademba Road. Whilst in detention he vowed that since he had been jailed for a coup he was not part of, even if it took him 20 years, he will definitely revenge. He was later released and he was in Freetown for a while and later he went into hiding. He went somewhere, someplace. He later surfaced in Kailahun, taking pictures and inciting people that APC had destroyed the country and they have escaped many coups. He even said that even the students who had made a legitimate call for a change of government, the ISU had been sent on them to shoot and kill them without any justification. He further said that Joseph Saidu Momoh had been imposed on the people as and he even made mention of the press with particular reference to Pious Foray. He further said that people like Kebbie, who was the president of the Labour Congress and Fatorma who was the Student president had been bought by the APC. He said that he was of the opinion that no strike, no coup, student demonstration or political party would be able to remove the APC from power. He said the only thing that could remove the APC from power would be the arms which they had they been using to kill people.

He later sought assistance from people who had been dismissed from college. They went to somewhere in North Africa. He then met with a brother from one of our neighbouring countries, who was training his people for an attack on his country; he was ready to offer him a helping hand. This man came to Sierra Leone to see how best he could use Sierra Leone as a base to launch his revolution and after some monetary exchanges; the man was arrested and deported. He however went to another country which he used as a base to launch his revolution in his country.

After the man launched his revolution, Foday Sankoh met him and they decided to be friends. Later Sierra Leone was made ECOMOG base to fight against this man. This didn't go down well with this big man, he therefore arrested most Sierra Leoneans who were in Liberia and whenever an NPFL rebel was killed in an ECOMOG air raid, ten of these arrested Sierra Leoneans would be executed. I would want everybody to know that during the war in Liberia, our soldiers who were deployed at the border had befriended the rebels from Liberia. They jointly organised football matches and other recreational activities. They were also engaged in a barter system by exchanging commodities such as rice for looted properties from Liberia.

However, the soldiers were unfaithful to these rebels, so a complaint was lodged to the section chief of the area who was called Von Kallon but nothing was done. The last straw which broke the camel's back was when a looted vehicle; a pick up van, was swindled by a Sierra Leonean officer for his own personal use and he refused to pay the NPFL fighters. The NPFL commanding officer who was Anthony Bengonabe then decided to launch a long range attack in order to retrieve all their swindled looted goods. They then launched a simultaneous attack on both Bomaru and Koindu.

Then Foday Sankoh was still at his base unaware of the situation. He however pleaded with this man for the release of these detained men so that they could join his training at his base. These were called the Vanguard of the RUF. After this initial attack into Sierra Leonean territory, the international media was with the impression that it was this big brother who had invaded Sierra Leone. This big brother then felt that Foday Sankoh should immediately put his war machinery into gear and make use of the opportunity offered, to begin his revolution. Although Foday Sankoh was not fully prepared as he lacked some basic logistics, his big brother instigated him and he provided him with added man power, arms and other logistics.

I would like to inform the Commission that although the 1991 attack would come have, it would not have come so early. It was hijacked by somebody. This man placed his men in charge of everything and they were over 5000. On the 10th April 1991, they made a simultaneous attack on both Bomaru and Koindu. Within a week, almost all the villages and chiefdoms in the Kailahun District had been captured. Our officers who were deployed at the border ran away for their lives leaving all their logistics and the civilians whom they were supposed to protect at the mercy of the rebels. They retreated and mounted a check points behind Bunumbu Moa. Thus, anybody who attempted to cross over was captured and beheaded. Civilians were afraid to cross over the Moa River. By then the NPFL and the RUF had merged under the guise of RUF.

I want would like to tell you the intention of this man, and I will tell you later how I came to know about all that I am saying here today. After capturing these places, the desire was that these areas will become part of Liberia and a defensive wall was to be mounted to provide defence against ULIMO K, ECOMOG or the SLA entering into Liberia. However, after capturing these places, they became complacent and they engaged in widespread looting because they felt they had reached Kuwait. For three months they were doing nothing until ECOMOG was deployed, at Daru Moa Barracks.

After capturing these places we fell under the control of RUF, Foday Sankoh paid his first visit to Kailahun at Pendembu. We were all assembled at the Court Barri and I was singled out, my people were frightened, they thought I would be killed. Foday Sankoh then addressed me as his boss, his officer and his colleague. There and then I was appointed as General Staff Officer 1(GSO1) in the RUF. I was not with them till then. After a while, the NPFL soldiers were withdrawn and we were under immense pressure and our supply line from Liberia cut off by the ULIMO K. Also our base was coming under heavy attack from ECOMOG, Kamajors, and Sierra Leone Army forces.

I therefore decided to take my men out to the jungle but on our way, one of my men was captured and he disclosed my position. I was later captured and

detained at the Pademba Road Prison until after the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed and I was released and left with nothing in Freetown. I tried to contact some influential people in the country but they refused talking to me on the excuse that we brought war to Sierra Leone. They were ignorant of what was actually happening because they were in Freetown and all what they knew was hearsay. I was in Freetown during the May 25th 1997 military takeover by the AFRC. I was then invited by Mosquito and others to once again be part of the RUF as an Administrator. I was with them until the ECOMOG intervention in 1998 and I went together with them into the bush. At present, I have been disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated with my family.

A ten minutes break was observed.

Prof. Schabas: I understand that you've known Foday Sankoh for some time now; can you tell us, what was your relationship when you first met him?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: I had known Foday Sankoh since 1957; not only that, Foday and myself worked together and I should say he was my stepfather because he married my mother's younger sister.

Prof. Schabas: You spoke about the formation of the RUF long before now when exactly was the RUF formed?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: It was formed immediately after the 1973 general election.

Prof. Schabas: Can you tell us the kind of people who were part of the RUF in those formative stages?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: It then consisted of politicians, former students, business men, Paramount Chiefs, foreigners, and a lot of other disgruntled people in the country who were victimised by the former regime of the APC.

Prof. Schabas: You are referring to this organisation, was it then known as RUF during those early years?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: It was later named RUF; it was a loose organisation formed by disgruntled Sierra Leoneans.

Prof. Schabas: Can you name some of these people?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: Dr John Karefa Smart, Sir leaf Easmon, Late Alikali Modu, Kassim Basma of Kono, former students from our university like Rashid Mansaray and Mohamed Tarawally and others.

Prof. Schabas: If this organisation was not called RUF then which name was it referred to then?

Rtd. Captain Kosia : During the early days, there was no name given to this organisation it was just called “Rescue Operation”. It came to be known as the RUF at about 1989.

Prof. Schabas: In your testimony you referred to one country in the North, is this country Libya?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: Yes.

Prof. Schabas: Did you know the people who went to Libya for training?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: Yes, Foday Sankoh, Mike Lamin, Rashid Mansaray, Mohamed Tarawally, Tankora etc...With some students who later broke away from the organisation because of money transaction. These were referred to as the Special Forces.

Prof. Schabas : Can you tell the number of people who went to Libya for training?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: They were 30 in number, only eight of them returned; they broke up because of monetary squabbles.

Prof. Schabas: Do you know the nature of the training that was given to these people, was it military or political?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: They received training on military affairs, political ideology, revolutionary ideology, jungle training, the Green Book and RUF too wrote a book titled *Footpath to Democracy part 1 and 2...*

Prof. Schabas: Mr. Kosia we've already heard testimonies from people about atrocities against them such as the amputation of limbs. Can you tell anything about these malpractices? Was it done by the RUF or by somebody else?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: I am under oath here, I am going to say all that I know and all that I saw. In 1993 some RUF fighters who were captured by the soldiers had their hands chopped off and they were sent with a note that if the RUF did not drop their guns they would continue to amputate their limbs. Upon seeing this, the RUF too responded in like manner whenever they captured an SLA. To be honest with this Commission, these things happened only when Foday Sankoh was not around because he had put a stop to it. Amputation in the Frontline became widespread during the run up to 1996 elections; when it was done in the North to prevent people from voting. Amputations only took place in the absence of Foday Sankoh. Also it happened from 1991 to 1993 when the NPFL were

around.

Prof. Schabas: So, you are saying that the limbs of civilians were not chopped off during these early periods?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - If you talk of looting, harassment, rape and the molestation of civilians, I can accept; but for amputation it was only done in 1996 when the elections were approaching.

Prof. Schabas: You spoke about looting and harassment, I take it that this was looting and harassment against civilians in the 1993 period?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Looting, molestation, rape, started when the RUF was combined with the NPFL. In the RUF we had three groups; NPFL who were Liberians, also we had Sierra Leoneans who were captured and trained here in Sierra Leone and we had Liberians and Sierra Leoneans who were trained in Liberia. These are the Vanguardians. Let me explain who the Vanguardians were. We had two groups; Liberian citizens who during the war had no food and had nothing to survive on, they were recruited into the RUF. The other group comprised of Sierra Leoneans who were arrested in Liberia by Charles Taylor, to be killed in retaliation to the raids made by the ECOMOG jet. Foday Sankoh took them from him and recruited them into the RUF and gave them training at his base called Camp Nyama which is commonly referred to as Camp Zogoda. These people were; Jonathan Kposowa who was the General Adjutant, Eldred Collins, Peter Vandi, Prince Taylor, Augustine Gbao, Philip Palmer, Mosquito, Morris Kallon, Issa Sesay who was recruited in the Ivory Coast and others.,

Prof. Schabas: You mentioned some atrocities carried out against civilians. Were these carried out as policy of the RUF or was done by some undisciplined units within the RUF?

Rtd. Captain Kosia:As the GSO1 by then, I drew up rules and regulations on warfare for our combatants and there were punishments for offenders. If it pleases the commission I would give some of these regulations. Rape, unlawful killings, smoking of marijuana and others were prohibited. As for rape, it was execution. I can recall four incidences when combatants were executed because of rape. During the time of the NPFL we were unable to control the combatants but after the split, we were able to control our boys.

Prof. Schabas: Can you tell us about cannibalism during the conflict?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: Cannibalism started in 1991. But it was carried out by especially the Gios and Manos from Liberia. It was not widespread. It became widespread in 1992 when the civilians and the junior commandos, were tired of the treatment meted out to them by the NPFL, we therefore decided that they must go back. So, Edward Fengbe who was one of the Vanguardians and Morris

Kallon decided that these people should go back. I established a base at an undisclosed location in Kailahun; called Borbor Gawei to give advanced training to the newly recruited soldiers; so that they will be able to drive out the NPFL soldiers. I was there with about 300 men but NPFL eventually came to know about our plans. The NPFL by then who had a very large number, detained a lot of these soldiers but others like Mosquito and Issa Sesay went into the jungle. Unfortunately for me, I was caught along side some other officers; I was detained in Liberia. That was when cannibalism came into effect. By 1991, they had eaten all the cattle, the dogs and all the other animals, therefore by 1992, they started eating human beings. I knew of a village where they had a big pot in which human beings were boiled for consumption. I also knew the people who were doing it. They had a Liberian called Jim Kawei and another called Tapor. They had certain villages like Nyandewu Manbab and Mende Buwima, if any civilian attempt to venture there, he'll be eaten.

Prof. Schabas: The people who went to Libya, later returned to West Africa. Was the Government of Libya involved on continuing basis during the conflict here?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: I don't know. What I know was that, Foday Sankoh told me about one of his friends in Libya who was helping him. He was sending support through our senior brother Charles Taylor in Liberia.

Prof. Schabas: You said that the SLA were chopping hands of the RUF, did the RUF revenge and do likewise?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: Foday Sankoh was not around by then, so the rebels too started revenging and when he returned he stopped the amputations.

Prof. Schabas: You said in your statement that amputation started again when the elections was approaching in 1996?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: Yes, the RUF started it in the North. The amputation started again when the RUF were chased out by ECOMOG. In 1996, the aim was to prevent voters from voting, those who were caught at the polling station had their hands chopped off. In 1998, the AFRC/RUF did it to punish civilians who they claimed were against them.

Prof. Schabas: You referred to a period when you were at the Pademba Road Prison. After your release did you resume active service with the RUF?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - I was at Pademba Road Prison from mid 1994 on to 1996 after the signing of the Abidjan Peace Accord. After my release from Pademba Road Prison I was still in Freetown because the rebel war was still on, and at that time the rebels were at my village in Kailahun, if I had gone back to Kailahun, I would have been killed. In 1997, when the rebels came to Freetown, I was

located by Mosquito and I was again reinstated into the RUF. Prior to that time, immediately after my release, I went to people in authorities for them to understand the causes of the war, but I was ignored.

Prof. Schabas: I may want to know the period you are talking about?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: It was in 1996, after my release from Pademba Road Prison.

Prof. Schabas: During the period of 1996, when the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed on to July 1999 when the Lome Peace Accord was signed, did you have knowledge of any atrocity committed by the rebels?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: In 1996, the RUF, were in the jungle all around the provinces, I am not in a position to talk about what I heard from the commanders because I was in detention. However, I am in a position to tell you what I saw in 1998 when I was with them. I am in the position to tell you what happened during that period on to 2001.

In 1998, when we retreated, we passed through Makeni and Kono on our way to Kailahun where we referred to as Burkina Faso. In Kailahun, I was asked to establish a training base at a place called Bunumbu. All the civilians that we had abducted went through the training until they were commissioned. They were later distributed to the various frontlines. In 1998, when Kono was captured I was in Buedu. Mosquito asked me to go to Kono and establish a training base at Yengema at the Secondary School there. When Makeni was captured, all the abductees were sent to Kono and I knew of all the atrocities committed. Apart from being GSO1, I also held various posts. I was Chairman, Joint Security Board of Investigations and President of the Court Martial Board. I knew of all the atrocities which took place except the ones which were not brought before me. I knew of all the molestations faced by civilians during these periods. I became an advocate for the civilians and I knew of a number of rape cases committed by the RUF. I have documents to prove although some had been destroyed. I have evidence of atrocities committed by RUF, in, 1998, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

The atrocities only stopped after the DDR had commenced. A lot of people - both civilians and junior commandos of the RUF, were killed for things like diamond, gold and foreign currencies.

Prof. Schabas: What was the role of diamonds in the conflict in Sierra Leone in your opinion?

Rtd. Captain Kosia In 1991, the RUF only had command over a small portion of the Kailahun District. By then small scale mining was embarked on in places like Jojoima, Dodokotiema and Geiwa. We started mining on a large scale in 1999 when Kono and Tongo were captured. We had mining units and Issa

Sesay was in charge. We had the different officers who were mining commanders. The diamond we were mining were handled by Mosquito & co. If a junior rank is caught with a diamond, he will be beaten until he's killed. When we had the diamond, it was transported to Issa and then from him Mosquito. Later it is taken to our sister country in Liberia what happened after I cannot tell but it was from these diamonds that we got arms and other logistics. This continued until when the Kono people returned to their base.

Prof. Schabas: Where children recruited into the RUF?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: I was responsible for recruiting and training, according to my military knowledge, I set up a recruiting team in all the units. In my letter to them I always told them not recruit children. Whenever an attack was launched all those who were captured were recruited.

Some of the commandos and their wives normally abducted these children, to use them as slaves, and spies. They would be with them in their houses. I can remember when I was in Kono, I am asking the Commission to find out, I had over 85 SDUs and SBUs with me at Camp Lion base in Yengema. These children were captured, from Magburaka, Makeni and some other places, some were captured and some joined us voluntarily. After the training I gave them passes to go their parents. Some of the commanders refused to let go of them. Some even took them and married them.

Prof. Schabas: You told us that you were a boy soldier yourself at the age of 13 or 14. Were these boys abducted about this same age?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: To say the truth, some of them were even below the ages of 13 and 14.

Prof. Schabas: Did these things happen earlier in 1991/92 or in 1998/99?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: In 1993, some children were abducted and they were between the ages of 14,15 and some were even at the age of 9. In 1998, when we were chased out by ECOMOG, some the children we abducted were between the ages of 13 and 14.

Prof. Schabas: You spoke earlier of atrocities that were committed against civilians in 1998/99 and that you were the head of a court martial. Can you tell us the people who were responsible for these atrocities?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: In 1998, some abducted civilians who were with us, on the way, some of them wanted to escape, they were executed, but this was not to the knowledge of the high command.

In 1999, except, civilians wanted to escape because when the jet was flying over, they may want to cross over to Guinea or Liberia, most of the commanders who were manning check points killed civilians who were attempting to escape. After some of these civilians had left for Guinea and they want to return they would be accused of being spies. A lot of civilians were killed because of diamonds. I have documents to prove, but it was not to my knowledge, it was only when investigations were made that I became aware. When some of the combatants are detained for these crimes, at night, some top officials would release them on the excuse that they need men to fight and you cannot question that.

Prof.Schabas: Were you witness to some of these atrocities you are talking about?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: I witnessed some of these atrocities. For instance, in 1991, I was at the base, when some recruits, who were sent from Makeni, were undergoing training, but some of them were unable to go through, and they decided to escape. Unfortunately, they were caught by the RUF and were sent back to base. The training commandant informed his immediate commando who was Issa Sesay and he ordered that they should be executed. I was not around, on my return I met all the boys, I told the commander to wait, so that I could negotiate with Issa. However, there was one who was singled out as the ringleader among the boys, he was killed and later the rest were killed on Issa's orders.

Civilians were killed because of diamonds, if your husband was a miner and he is suspected of having diamonds, you'll be tortured until you die. I witnessed about four or five of such cases. The other thing I witnessed was between an SLA - I have forgotten his name and Morris Kallon. He was killed because he said he was unable to join his colleagues to destroy a bridge. After they had been instructed by Morris Kallon, in a mustard parade.

Also on one occasion, Issa, Morris and I were travelling in a vehicle, and unfortunately one of Issa's body guard's trigger mistakenly went off and hit Issa's brother. He was killed by Issa with a pistol. I witnessed a lot of these incidents.

Rtd. Captain Schabas: Would you be ready to assist this Commission by bringing these documents forward?

Rtd. Captain Kosia -Most of the records have been destroyed; but the ones which I could lay hands on would be tendered to the Commission. Some of these records were top secrets and they are not here with me. I left them up country.

Prof. Schabas: You have spoken about the evil deeds of the commandos, I want to ask: was the RUF high command which you were part of aware of these atrocities?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: As far as I can tell the leader of the RUF didn't have these intentions initially. It was the people who made it what it turned out this way.

Prof. Schabas: You have spoken a lot about the atrocities perpetrated by the RUF; I want to know whether you yourself feel any personal responsibility for some of these things?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: I feel guilty of the atrocities committed by the RUF, but that doesn't mean that I was a perpetrator. For me personally, inhabitants of Kailahun and its environs would testify that I have never committed any atrocity to any one.

Justice Marcus Jones: It is good to have you here with the TRC, I only have a few questions to ask you. Were you comfortable to remain one of the RUF?

Rtd. Captain Kosia: No, but, when Foday came, he told us that he had come to liberate us from the rotten system. Since I was one of those victimised by the APC regime, I joined him.

Justice Marcus Jones: Did you get any benefit for the time you spent with them?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - No, because the people he came with had corrupted the revolution, I did not get any benefit. However, the only alternative I had at that time was to stay with the RUF because if I had come over to the other side they would have arrested me because I was being accused of deserting the army to become a rebel.

Justice Marcus Jones - Were you given any nickname?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - I was the GSO I. I was responsible for training and recruiting. I was called Jungle Wizard.

Commissioner Torto - We really appreciate you for coming. I have series of questions to ask you. You have named a few people that were in the RUF such as Kassim a Lebanese; can you tell me the role he was playing?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Foday told me that those people were the founding members of the RUF and they were giving their support to the RUF before the initial attack in 1991.

Commissioner Torto - One of your responsibility as the GSO I was to plan attacks, we would want to know why the highways were ambushed?

Rtd Captain Kosia - We started ambushing the roads when we were under immense pressure. I was the master planner of those attacks. As a "Jungler",

when you leave in the jungle you have to find ways to survive .

Commissioner Torto- If I understood you clearly, the aim of the ambushes was for food, but many a time people were killed and brutalised?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - I am sorry that those things happened. It was because the commanders were not responsible enough to carry out their functions. They were going out of stipulated rules and regulations.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much, I may want to ask you some questions for you to clarify certain things for us. I want you to tell us the name of the “big brother” you were referring to in your testimony?

Rtd.Captain Kosia - The Big Brother I was talking all these while about was Charles Taylor, his nickname by then because of security reasons was "Butterfly".

Commissioner Sooka. We would like you to tell us the link that was between Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - In my testimony, I said that in 1991, during the first attack at Bomaru, Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh were in the dark. Foday was still at Camp Zogoda training his men. But when the international community blamed Charles Taylor for the attack, that was when he convinced Sankoh to launch his revolution.

So, he sent his men with very few vanguards. I want the Commission to know that of the 3,000 RUF recruited in Liberia, the majority were Liberians. The Liberians were fully in charge and Charles Taylor’s personal security and bodyguard was in overall command. I want the Commissioners to know that Foday Sankoh had no say in the organisation then. We took all instructions from NPFL; they had the arms, vehicles, radio. So, all instructions came from Charles Taylor.

Commissioner Sooka - What were the roles played by Charles Taylor?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Diamonds were transported to Charles Taylor in Liberia, what he did there I don’t know.

Commissioner Sooka - Earlier you told us that you were in charge of court martials ,did you report any of these atrocities to the high command?

Rtd Captain Kosia - If something happened in the war front, if I did not get any situation report, I would not have knowledge of anything. After I had conducted the investigation which composed of all the units in the frontline, if the leaders agreed, I mean when Foday, Issa were there , they may take any action.

When we were under the command of Foday Sankoh, we were surrounded by boys who took marijuana. In fact, most of the things they did in their houses, they were more often than not available in the office. When I investigated and made recommendations ; I was accused of being a dictator.

From 1991 up to 1994, I was the only combatant officer in the ranks of the RUF; so if I had not used my head, I would have been in the grave by now.

Commissioner Sooka- you said that you were responsible for recruitment and training, were women amongst those that were recruited and trained by the RUF?.

Rtd. Captain Kosia - We had women recruits and instructors up to 1994. In fact, the latest training commander I had was a woman. However, at a point in time, I suggested that we should not recruit women into the RUF because they took arms against themselves out of jealousy and quarrels.

Commissioner Sooka- You spoke about rape and molestation, could you tell us something more about these things?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Raping was rampant in 1991 up 1993 but from 1994 upwards it was not too rampant. But they were still doing it, not forgetting that we had rules and regulations. I have documents to the effect. Some commandos and some fighters were involved in raping, for instance, when they captured a town or an area they raped people. But some girls and even some women were ashamed to say it out and if it is not reported, no action would be taken.

Commissioner Jow - I would like to ask you few questions, in personal details. You told us that you were trained as a boy soldier when you were 13 years old, the Commission would like to know if this was a policy of the Colonial Administration?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - They told us that we were being trained to become future leaders in the country. It was a policy to train young men to become technicians and leaders of tomorrow. I want the Commissioners to know that most of us who passed through the boy's army, eventually became commissioned officers; like Hinga Norman and myself.

Commissioner Jow- Can you tell whether this policy continued after independence?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - No, I wish I knew.

Commissioner Jow- Can you tell us the criteria used to recruit boys into the RUF?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - In 1991, people went with the idea that people joined the RUF voluntarily. At about 1992, 1993 boys were abducted and forced to join the RUF, if you attempted to escape you'll be killed and their parents would be killed and their houses burnt down. There were those who joined the RUF because they were tired of being used as human caravans.

Commissioner Jow- Can you tell us what these boys' duties were?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Most of these small boys were behind their commanders, they were trained to use weapons. They were also used as spies and they were mostly sent on espionage missions by their commanders. In 1991, these small boys were used to execute people. They were also instructed to give punishments to civilians, some were even sent to the battle fronts to fight.

Commissioner Jow- I may want to say that somewhere along the way the RUF lost control of its fighters?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - That happened in 1992, when the NPFL knew that we wanted to get rid of them, all. I was one of those arrested; we were taken to Gbarnga, Foday was not there, he had gone into the jungle in hiding, so the only control that existed was that of the NPFL, that was the time killing was widespread. Immediately, they went away, I can tell you that there was no loss of control in the RUF.

Professor Kamara - Mr Kosia , permit me to ask you few questions. I want to take you back to your early statement, especially your reference for the cause of the war itself. You said, what you considered to be the cause of the war, was the split in the army, you joined the army in 1954, about seven years later, we got independence, so you knew what the conditions were in the army before and after independence, can you tell the Commission the major thing that caused the split in the army?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - There are other fundamental causes within and outside the army. I said some of the root causes originated in the army. It started with tribalism and sectionalism, because the two leaders have different loyalties and that went down the ranks. This division was such that we had the North-Western alliance and South-Eastern alliance. This went through right down to the rank and file in the army. That was the primary cause for the first military coup in 1966.

Professor Kamara- After this coup in 1966 which was masterminded by Brigadier Bangura which led to his arrest. You also said that there was an immediate counter coup after the election in 1967, I want to know what was the reason that led Brigadier Lansana to arrest the then Governor General and the

then sworn Prime Minister?

Rtd Captain Kosia - After the election, we understood that there was a tie between the APC and the SLPP and because of Brigadier Lansana's connection with the SLPP and Sir. Albert Margai, people thought that he wanted to impose Sir Albert Margai and the SLPP on the nation. That led to his arrest by Blake, Jumu and Kaisamba following a counter coup.

Professor Kamara- Juxon Smith was called to head the government that was formed and you said that there were factions in the army based on region. Was this counter coup masterminded by one of these factions?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - In 1966, there was an attempted coup led by the late Amadu Bangura, with support from officers from the North and West against the SLPP government. These officers were arrested in 1966 and they were detained at the Pademba Road Prison during and after the elections in 1967. After the election in 1967, there was a tie between the SLPP and the APC, the late Brig. Lansana stepped in claiming that the full result had not yet been declared. He ordered the arrest of Siaka Stevens and the Governor General whilst they were at the swearing in ceremony. That was when he was apprehended Blake Jumu and Kaisamba. The NRC came in as a sort of rescue package and Juxon was called upon because he was seen as a neutralist. When he came he told us that he did not want to know anything about tribalism and that we were all Sierra Leoneans.

Commissioner Kamara- Blake and Jumu were encouraging the junior officers to stage a coup in 1968. But I heard you say that after the coup had taken place, they arrested all the officers including Blake, Jumu and Kaisamba, I want you to clarify that?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Yes Sir, I did say that, these officers had wanted to remove the late Juxon Smith from power, the coup boomeranged on them. The initial intention was to arrest all NRC members. However, they lost control of the situation; so all senior officers, including senior police officers were arrested. Prior to that, I had wanted to use a platoon which was under my control to launch a counter coup but I was restrained by a senior officer who said he did not want further bloodshed.

Professor Kamara- In 1971 there was an attempted coup; you said that Sankoh went in and made a statement, to the two senior officers and they made comments. However, when reaction was made to the coup, only one of the officers was arrested. Can you tell us why that happened?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - By 1971, Bangura was the Force Commander and Momoh was Battalion Commander. Whilst the fracas was on at the Wilberforce Barracks between the other ranks, that was when Momoh and Bangura were called to

come forward and make certain clarifications. Momoh was really not in favour of the coup. It was Bangura who wanted the coup to take place. It was when he had instructed that the coup be staged, that was when Sam King and Caulker went on the air to announce that everything was under control. It was after this announcement that Bangura and others were arrested. At about the time we were at the meeting, Momoh was in constant communication with Siaka Stevens because they had formed the MIB and there was someone going in and out of the meeting.

Bishop Humper - I may want to ask you one personal question. What would you say; are your experiences when you were in the jungle and also when you were enlisted in the Army before?

Rtd.Captain Kosia - I think it is a very bitter experience I would not forget in a hurry. For the past thirty years, my family has suffered a lot. It was not through my own making. My duty to join the Army; was to contribute towards the development of my country. To my dismay, I was unjustly and hurriedly dismissed, so I decided to go back to my home town. After that I joined the RUF. On to this day, I am regretting it. It was a very sad experience.

Mr. Ojielo - I would like you to explain about the command structure in the RUF and what was the role of the key players in the RUF?

Rtd.Captain Kosia – Between 1991/1993, the command structure was in the hands of the NPFL, all the commanders were members of the NPFL. After the withdrawal of the NPFL, Foday called a meeting and he formed a seven man High Command and we were all non-combatants. Foday Sankoh was the Chairman and Tengbeh, myself, Deen Jalloh and three others whose names I can't remember, were members. At the frontline, we had the Brigade Commander who was called Mohamed Tarawallie aka.Zino (deceased), also we had Rashid Mansaray who is also dead and he, together with Zino were trained in Libya. We had Mosquito who started to fight in Pujehun, when he was chased out of that axis by the Kamajors, ULIMO K and the SLA, he came back to join us in Kailahun. Issa was also a frontline commander.

Mr. Ojielo - Between 1997 and 1999, who were the various frontline commanders in the various regions?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - I left them in 1994 but before I left them, I wrote an Operation Order on Guerilla Warfare. The RUF frequently changed commanders. In the different areas I knew that Mosquito was responsible for one of the provinces, so also was Issa Sesay, Dennis Mingo, Morris Kallon and Mohamed Rogers who were all different commanders in charge of different areas. They were responsible for the training and supervision of their own men. However, the headquarters was still at Kailahun.

Mr. Ojielo - Can you tell us about the attack and looting of Makeni?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - In what year ?

Mr. Ojielo - In 1998 or 1999

Rtd. Captain Kosia - When the AFRC/RUF were retreating, a lot of looting took place, not forgetting that there were SLA and RUF in Makeni. By the time we reached Makeni, we met the town completely looted and vandalised. I walked on foot from Freetown to Makeni so it was practically impossible for me to loot. In all honesty, I would say that the RUF, SLA and AFRC were all responsible.

Mr. Ojielo - Who was in charge of Makeni?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Morris Kallon was in charge, but SLA commanders were there representing the AFRC. Morris Kallon was the senior. We had the RUF, AFRC and the SLA in Makeni. The same for Lungi, Bo, including Kono.

Mr. Ojielo - Was there any punishment for those who looted Makeni and if there was what type of punishment was meted out to them?

Kosia - To my knowledge, in 1998 whilst we were retreating there was no punishment for looters. It was after December 1998 when Kono was captured and in 1999 when Makeni was captured; when the junior commandos had started looting, that was when Issa said that nobody should loot his hometown. As a result, confusion ensued because people like Dennis Mingo were of the opinion that since other peoples places had been looted, nobody was going to stop them from looting Makeni. There was killing and Issa started killing people who were looting.

Mr. Ojielo - I want to get this right. Issa said that people should not loot and then people started looting. He killed those that were looting and that caused problems between him and Dennis Mingo?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Yes.

Mr. Ojielo - Could you discuss the abduction of UN Peace Keepers and can you tell who were responsible for these abductions?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - There was a time at about the time ceasefire was in effect and the RUF boys were running short of money. In order to get money, they will go the UNAMSIL Peace Keepers with their arms on the pretext that they wanted to disarm and in exchange the Peace Keepers will give them money. After a while these boys would return to get back their weapons and the Peace Keepers will disagree. So Morris Kallon and Issa Sesay, were in charge, decided that the

only way to bring pressure to bear on these peace keepers was to arrest them. I would say that Morris Kallon and Issa Sesay were responsible. They took them to Kailahun, via Kono.

Ms. Schotsmans - The first thing I wanted to ask is a question about amputation. Would you confirm that this was a policy from the RUF high command?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - I disagree with you, it was not a policy from the RUF high command, I am a living witness to testify that there were rules and regulation governing the RUF on issues like harassment, molestation and amputation. When the boys were at the frontlines, it was difficult for the high command to know of they were doing.

Ms. Schotsmans - Are you telling me that RUF high command was not aware of these amputations?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Well then I must say I was at the rear. It was not everything that I had knowledge of. Maybe some people had knowledge of these things or they may have instructed the boys to do such things but I must say I was not aware.

Ms. Schotsmans - Are you saying that the high command of the RUF put in place a structure they had no control of and did things that they could not know of?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Prior to the institution of the high command, the NPFL was in control. After it was set up, I did not spend much time with them and when I returned, I don't think the high command was in operation any longer.

Ms. Schotsmans - Up to what level were commanders aware of what was going on in the frontline?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - In the frontline, we had the battlefield commander who was responsible to move around and monitor what was happening at the battlefield. Then we had the battle-group commander who was responsible for making recommendations to the high command and the company commanders and people like Mosquito and Issa Sesay were meeting with these people to evaluate and assess the needs of the operations. Most things were settled out in the frontlines.

Ms. Schotsmans – So, these people that you named, Mosquito and Issa Sesay, they knew what was happening?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Yes, they were aware, because they had vehicles, hand sets, security guards who monitor people's activities. They must have known.

Ms. Schotsmans - Did they give orders to stop such acts?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - If they were part and parcel of it, could they give orders?

Ms. Schotsmans- If they knew what was going on do you think they could have given orders to stop such violations?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Not to my knowledge. I have never seen a memo. written to commanders in the frontline to stop them from looting. Whenever, a rape case is reported to me the person would be detained. Before I could conclude my investigations, the accused will be released and sent to the war front. On many occasions, that was the situation.

Ms. Schotsmans -In your opinion, no punishment was given except to detain the perpetrator in the guardroom?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - There were punishments. I am a living testimony, when the NPFL were withdrawn, two boys were executed for rape; most times people were detained for negligence of duty.

Ms. Schotsmans - You said boys and girls were abducted and later used as wives or slaves. I want you to clarify how these marriages came about. Did the girls consent?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - We do not have mother-in-laws and father-in-laws in the jungle; when a beautiful woman was captured she automatically became a wife to a commando.

Ms. Schotsmans - Can you tell their ages?

Rtd. Captain Kosia - Some were grown-ups and some were between the ages of 14 and 15 years old.

Professor Schabas - You have been with us for the past 6 hours, now its your turn to ask us question or give us some recommendations to include in our report.

Rtd. Captain Kosia - I want to thank the Chairman and Commissioners for their patience and understanding in letting me give my testimony. If I say I should go on I would continue like this for three years. I had waited for such an opportunity in pain, in sorrow and with bitterness; for thirty years. Also, I want to assure this Commission that I will avail myself any time they need me. If there is any document that you may require from me, I will be ready to come forward with them.

I want to make this known to the government through this Commission that I had suffered for so long and other people too had gone through this same ordeal. I have been victimised in the army since 1973, I was stripped of all my benefit.

I want Momoh and others to come and testify here, Mr. Chairman, if I had seen Momoh at Kailahun he would have been in his grave .

For people like us who were prematurely retired, I would want them revisit the army structures and ensure that that these issues are addressed and those whose benefits are due receive them.

When the war started, you were in the city, the soldiers who were responsible for what had happened, they came out and told lies, I would like them to be brought before the commission.

Professor Schabas - If you have any other recommendations, you can write them and send them to the commission. We want to thank you for the courage.

Date: 17th April, 2003.

WITNESS NAME: ALFRED BOYZI TUGBE TOBY

WITNESS NO.

REFERENCE NO.

THE OATH:

I, Alfred Boyzi Tugbe Toby, do solemnly swear, before this commission, that the testimony I shall give, shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So, help me God.

TESTIMONY

Mr. Chairman, before the commencement of my testimony, from the bottom of my heart, I say, to God be the glory, for the implementation of this commission. I wish the Chairman and his Commissioners success in their endeavours for a good report that will benefit both present and future generations of this our beloved nation.

Bishop Humper : Thank you, you can go ahead to give your testimony.

TOBY: My testimony is this. I recall the dates; 12TH / 13TH February, 1998 when the news of the departure of ECOMOG intervention contingent led by the late Mitikishi Maxwell Khobe from Kosso town to Freetown had been the talk of the town. May his soul, rest in peace. On that day I had been threatened by a brother in the faith, whose name I do not want to disclose because I love him still .His threat caused me to abandon my home until ECOMOG contingent took control of the entire city on the 13th instant. On the very 13th, I moved from my hideout to see my family at Ferguson Lane, and on seeing my wife, I composed myself with a smile. And regrettably, her response was a responsible shock to me; the news of my son, Frederick Toby's critical condition with the Red Crossers. And, according to her his condition resulted from a Rocket Propelled Grenade attack where he and some others had sustained wounds. The grenade attack hit them at the Ferguson Street Municipal School compound where the entire Ferguson Lane community had fled to for safety when a bomb blast had killed two people within the said Ferguson Lane community. According to information, the weapon was used as a vengeance strike by the supporters of the then illegitimate government which the ECOMOG Contingent successfully and triumphantly unseated, to facilitate the reinstatement of the legitimate government then in exile. The suspects in the shooting incident were allegedly: {1}. A soldier named Desmond Johnson and a police; SSD, known as Koleh, both of Benjamin Lane, Freetown. On the very 13th instant, I went to the Red Cross Centre to see my son. But to my utter dismay, I was told that Frederick had died in the early hours of the 13th and that he had been buried in a mass grave. It was as if the cloud was resting upon my head. I encountered a sudden depression in my nervous system; only Jesus, on that spot, sustained me. Sometime this year, a TRC male statement taker called at my address and informed me of his mission. He was welcomed. I gave him the necessary information he required with a documentary evidence of my son's death. Subsequently, I was invited at the TRC office on the 8th instant, to which I responded and entertained accordingly, to my delight. That's all I have to say.

Bishop Humper: Brother Toby, we'll give you a few minutes to catch your breath. We want to thank you for coming to this commission today. We know what it means to lose a child. We hope that your coming here will make a difference in your life. I will like to invite commissioners, may be they may have some questions to ask for clarification.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you for your testimony. We thank you for your courage in appearing before the T R C. We are sorry and, we sympathize

with you about what happened to your son. We would like to ask a few questions to clarify your testimony further. In your testimony you did say that you left your home because you were threatened by a brother. The commission would like to know the nature of the threat; not the name of your brother, and why?

Mr. Toby: He threatened me because I was not in support of the government at that time, that illegitimate government; and I was one of those that were expecting the intervention. So, when the news came that the ECOMOG contingent was on the way coming to Freetown, the brother approached me and said to me, in Krio language: “Yu Pa Toby, na una de sopot intavenshon, if intavenshon fail, a go point yu”. That was his remark.

Commissioner Jow : Thank you Mr. Toby, a further question, how are you getting on with this brother, are you still living in the same area?

Mr. Toby: No.

Commissioner Jow: Would you like the commission to arrange a meeting between you and your brother for the purpose of reconciliation?

Mr. Toby: To me, the essence of this commission is to know the truth and forgive. I have forgiven him, I don't want him to meet with me; I've forgiven him as a Christian. What he had meant for me, God didn't allow it to happen; so I am an overcomer, there is no need for me to meet with him. I talk to him now and again, we meet, we chat. There is no need.

Professor Kamara: Mr. Toby thank you for what you've done, I would just like you to clarify this point. Do you, at any time, or perhaps even now connect this shooting at this campus with this threat which your brother made?

Mr. Toby: No.

Bishop Humper: The soldier and police, who were they?

Mr. Toby: They were members of the AFRC.

Commissioner Torto: Please make one thing clear for me. According to your testimony, Koleh and the soldier saw a group of boys playing soccer in that school yard and shot into them, was it then that your son was killed?

Mr. Toby: Yes; the elders were in the building and the children were in the

field, playing. I was not in the area, I was told by those who were around.

Commissioner Torto: Is there anything to show that your son was targeted?

Mr. Toby: My son was not the only one who was killed; other children died too; they were buried in a mass grave.

Commissioner Sooka: How many children died that day, since you said that your son was buried in a mass grave?

Mr. Toby: I cannot say exactly, but I know a friend, one David Greene, who also lost his 21 year old son.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you for coming to help the TRC. Have you any idea where the mass grave is?

Mr. Toby: Yes. The address is written in the testimony I gave to you. It is Calmont Road.

Ms.Schotsmans: We sympathize with you. Did you know these two perpetrators before the shooting?

Mr. Toby: One I knew as a school boy, but I am sure he had nothing against me, it was just that they were working in support of their government.

Ms. Schotsmans: I believe that these two perpetrators are still living in Freetown?

Mr. Toby: The other one was showed to me and I have no business with him. Kolley I had known even when he was going to school and I have no close dealings with him.

Ms.Schotsmans: After your son's death, did you ever meet with them or ever had cause to talk with them?

Mr. Toby: No.

Ms. Schotsmans: The commission will like to call them to come and testify since you have mentioned their names.

Mr. Toby: I can't stress that on the TRC because I have no evidence; I only learnt this by hearsay.

Bishop Humper: Thank you for coming. We have been asking you questions, do you, in turn, have any question or recommendations to make to the commission?

Mr. Toby: Just a recommendation, in respect of the lawlessness in the country, due to idleness. Government should do something about it. We need a responsible and good structured government which will care for its people, give better accommodation, building schemes, low cost housing for less fortunate people. The wealth of our country is all over the world; there is no reason why people should suffer. There should be job opportunities and better salaries, medical facilities, quality education. Agriculture should be given a priority; a state farm should be implemented; reinstatement of the railways will help the country greatly. The judiciary; people's time are wasted unnecessarily when they know that the matter has no legality; poor police investigations done willfully to receive bribes; Anti-corruption should be given the mandate to look into matters.

Bishop Humper: Thanks. I think that your recommendations are all embracing, we will look into the matter, and the TRC will continue to identify itself with you and prays that God continues to touch you.

WITNESS NAME: SAHR MEH-MEH NICOL

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

THE OATH:

I, Sahr Meh-meh Nicol, do solemnly swear that the testimony I shall give before this commission, shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So, help me God.

TESTIMONY:

I thank the TRC for the opportunity given to me to lighten my bosom. I was at the east end of town, 36 Newcastle Street, Kissy. I was a CDU and we used to mount check points at Newcastle Street junction, via Passonage Street. By 1:00pm one night, a group of people from Calaba town area came around. We interrogated them and they told us that rebels had entered into the city.

We told them that those people were not rebels; by then it had been announced on 98.1 Radio that ECOMOG was on a mopping up operation in the hills. At 1:30 the same night, we saw another large group of people, and we told them the same story. They told us that those were not ECOMOG. The firing became more intense and we woke our neighbours up and told them that the rebels had come. We ran to the city hall. In the morning, we tried to move towards Congo town, but we saw rebels coming from Connaught and Government Wharf. So, we decided to go back to city hall. We were afraid to continue our journey because of the way in which we were dressed; we were afraid of being termed as rebels. I decided to return home; I saw some of our neighbours in our vicinity. That night, my neighbours and I slept in the cemetery; we were afraid of sleeping in our houses.

On the 7th, I had SLA and RUF visitors. One of the SLA soldiers was my close neighbour and my "name sake". I accommodated them out of fear; they had guns. We all sat together, but Sahr came with a girl whom he had abducted. They slept together in the house and I slept in the cemetery. In the morning of the following day, one of the rebels accused us for not sleeping in the same place with them, and that we came around in the morning only. I told them that I did not sleep in the house where they slept because of the lack of enough space to accommodate all of us. At that time they were setting houses on fire; in the process, the girl whom Sahr had brought to the house, escaped. When he came back and did not find the girl, he asked us her whereabouts? But we did not know anything about her whereabouts, and we told him that. He was very angry and was mad at us. He asked his colleagues to take their possessions out of the house. After they had taken out their possessions, Sahr set the house; our house, ablaze. I was there until the flames came down. He then gave me his belongings to carry. When we went to his own residence (former residence), he went into the house, came out and then asked me to go with him. As we went up the hills towards Mess-Mess, we heard the sound of the ECOMOG jet and we dashed into hiding. When we got to Brima Lane, the jet fired shots and they rushed into hiding. I then threw his load which I was carrying, and I took another route. I saw a friend whose two arms had been chopped off. I met the guys who had chopped off the arms of my friend I took a by-pass route. A sergeant Blood asked me to stretch my hands, but I began to plead with him. He did not listen to my plea, and since I did not have anybody to plead on my behalf, I decided to put up a fight. They had an axe with a wooden short handle and a metal head which they said that they got from Dock Yard. As we were wrestling, one of them hit and wounded my hand. I was shouting as I ran away; they were shooting at me.

On my way, I met a woman who wrapped my hand with her wrapper. We walked through Leicester unto Sorie town. I met a woman who had lived in the east end of town, who helped me greatly. She took me to a Dr. Dumbuya and paid the bill for the treatment of my hand. However, my hand was not properly treated; I feel pain whenever the weather is cold. When the raining season approaches, I usually ask aunty to put money aside for P.O.P which is

always put on my hand until the end of the rainy season.

Bishop Humper: We thank you for coming.

Justice Marcus Jones: Did the other Sahr, the SLA, have any grudge against you?

Mr. Nicol: No.

Justice Marcus Jones: Why do you think he did not give you any help?

Mr. Nicol: I don't know.

Justice Marcus Jones: Sahr, do you think he was under the influence of any drugs?

Mr. Nicol: Yes.

Justice Marcus Jones: Do you know the whereabouts of the other Sahr?

Mr. Nicol: He lives at 65 Davies Street, Kissy.

Commissioner Torto: Is he still with the army?

Mr. Nicol: I don't see him in military fatigue anymore, so I don't know.

Commissioner Torto : Is there any relationship between you now?

Mr. Nicol: No, instead when he sees me now, he does not look at me in my face.

Commissioner Torto: Would you like the commission to arrange a meeting between you?

Mr. Nicol: Yes.

Professor Kamara: Let me take you back to Sahr, your friend, as you said you said, you knew him well, before the incident of 6th - 8th January. How much did you really know Sahr; were you close friends?

SAHR: He was not my close friend, but there was a woman who sold cooked rice in their compound, and I used to go there to buy food. We used to see and talk to each other, and when he learnt that we had the same name, he began to call me "Torma".

Professor Kamara: You said that you would like to meet with Sahr so that he could testify you have said the truth. Would you like to go beyond that to, at least, settle your differences?

Mr. Nicol: Yes, because I have no grudge for him, and I hate it when he looks away whenever he sees me.

Professor Kamara: Do you know the present address of the woman who helped you?

Mr. Nicol: Yes, I don't live in the east end anymore; she lives at Congo town, and I also live in a camp at Congo town.

Ms Schotsmans: Do you know Sahr's second name?

Mr. Nicol: No, I only know his first name.

Ms. Schotsmans: You said that Sahr came along with a girl, did she come along voluntarily or was she forced?

Mr. Nicol: She was abducted.

Ms. Schotsmans: Was this girl raped?

Mr. Nicol: I wouldn't know; they stayed in a separate room.

Ms.Schotsmans: How old do you think she was?

Mr. Nicol: She must have been between 20 and 25 years.

Ms. Schotsmans: Was she one of your neighbours?

Mr. Nicol: No.

Bishop Humper: We have asked you questions, now it is your turn to ask questions or make recommendations to the commission.

Mr. Nicol: All I ask the government is to help all those who had been victims of the war.

CHAIRMAN: We thank you and we sympathize with you for your loss. We hope and pray that you and those helping to put the report together will help to keep your respect and dignity.

WITNESS NAME: IBRAHIM

REFERENCE NO:

THE OATH:

I, Ibrahim, do solemnly swear, before this commission, that the evidence I shall give, shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing, but the truth. So help me Allah.

TESTIMONY:

Bishop Humper: You are a special person to the TRC and we welcome you. You are just as important as any other person around. You will help the commission to help the nation solve some of its problems.

IBRAHIM: I thank the TRC for encouraging me and giving me the opportunity to meet with important personalities. I thank God and pray that I will be like them some day.

On a Friday, January 22nd, I was at home preparing food for me and my friends to eat. Then my wife had just put to bed and had travelled. My two friends and my brother were in the house cooking, when we saw boys enter the compound and surround the house. When my in-law saw them he dashed into hiding under a bed in the bedroom. My other friend hid himself in the mattress by the wall. They came and captured one of my friends and me, and enquired about the inmates. I told them that the others had escaped and that I had no authority to keep people. My response angered them and one of them threatened to shoot at us; there were six of them but only one of them had a gun. One of them that was drinking beer threw the empty pint at me, but I dodged it. The friend who was with me was very nervous whilst I was talking to the rebels. I tried to console him by telling him that even if we were going to die, we should die like men. At that point, the guys who came said that I was a great guy because I was not afraid of them. The guy who was drinking the beer, and who had thrown the empty pint at me, took the gun from his colleague and shot at my friend. My friend had a shirt on, and I was half naked. Seeing that, I thought that the next target was me, so I rushed at the guy who had shot at my friend, and I grabbed the gun; they had only one gun, and I even doubted whether they had enough ammunition. They then shouted out that they had seen Kamajors. That they had shot at my friend and that they had started referring to me as Kamajor. I put up a stiff fight. I had knocked four of them to the ground, and was wrestling with the fifth one who seemed to be the fittest, when I saw another group approaching. I had to run away. I was running towards TEXACO when I met another batch at Ferry

junction. I had no means of escape, so I had to stay with the rebels. I told them that I had lost my brother and that I wished to go with them into the jungle. One of them whose face was familiar asked whether I actually wanted to go with them into the jungle, and I said yes. He advised me to escape; he pointed a gun at me in the guise of threatening me, and told me to use that as a cover to escape. On my way, in the east end of town, they arrested me and accused me of being a rebel. I told them my father had left me in the house, and that if I was a rebel, I would not have been there; I told them that I was even there the previous day. After they had beaten me, they sent to ECOMOG that they had caught a rebel; they hoped that ECOMOG would come and kill me. I was wounded, and should I shave my head, even now, you would see the scars. The guy who had run away from my house was among the crowd which came to see who the rebel was. When he saw me, he intervened on my behalf; he even brought out a picture which we had taken together. At that point, a taxi driver called Mohamed, came with a long stick and hit me on the back; when I raised my head, he recognized me and he threw the stick and started pleading with the crowd on my behalf. He told them that I was his friend's son, and that whenever he went to our house, I gave him water to drink. By that time, ECOMOG was approaching. I was then taken to the Rev. Father for identification and he testified that I was not a rebel. I was then released and I went down the street to a man who administered medication to me. He stitched my head without anesthetic.

Justice Marcus Jones: I thank you very much Ibrahim. Do you know what happened to your friend who was shot, did he die?

Mr. Ibrahim: We came back to take care of the corpse.

Justice Marcus Jones: When and how did you do that?

Mr. Ibrahim: A while after I had been treated, I got some friends who helped to drag the corpse to clay factory where we shabbily buried the body. When the whole thing subsided, his body was exhumed and given a befitting burial by a group which went around for that purpose.

Commissioner Torto: We sympathize with you, most people cannot go through all what you went through. I have one question for you. Do you know the group of people who attacked?

Mr. Ibrahim: They were the junta men who came on January 6th.

Commissioner Torto: Could you identify which group they belonged to; kamajors, donsos, rebels or what?

Mr. Ibrahim: I am convinced that those were not kamajors or SLA, they were the jungle group.

Commissioner Jow: I join other commissioners in thanking you. In your statement, you said, “Boys”, were they really young boys?

Mr. Ibrahim: No.

Commissioner Jow: You said that they had arms, can you tell which kind?

Mr. Ibrahim: They called it G3.

Commissioner Jow: Can you identify any one of them?

Mr. Ibrahim: No, it’s a long time now. I think that it was towards the end of the disarmament process that I saw one of them; a fair in complexion one.

Commissioner Jow: Was Santigie your true biological brother?

Mr. Ibrahim: No, we grew up together and we planned and did every thing together.

Commissioner Jow: Did his family know about his death and did they bury him properly?

Mr. Ibrahim: Yes.

Bishop Humper: I have a few questions for you. Talking about what you saw and your experiences at the stadium, you said that they entered and were killing suspected rebels, is that correct?

Mr. Ibrahim: Yes. I left the stadium because the kamajors were arresting and killing indiscriminately, and by then I had sustained injuries, so I had to leave lest the worst should befall me.

Bishop Humper: Did you see any killings take place at the stadium?

Mr. Ibrahim: Yes, the kamajors killed a woman called Zainab.

Bishop Humper: Was the security at stadium manned by the kamajors alone?

Mr. Ibrahim: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Were they the only security present?

Mr. Ibrahim : Yes; where I was at the stadium; I was at the hostel, I did not walk about because I felt pain; I sat on the piazza and went inside when I was tired. The only security I saw were kamajors.

Bishop Humper: We have asked you a lot of questions, do you have any questions to ask, suggestions or recommendations to make?

Mr. Ibrahim: I do not have any question to ask, but I have a recommendation.

I thank the TRC for this opportunity. May god bless all the leaders who mean well and want to bring peace to this country so that generations yet unborn will enjoy. We have wasted ten years of our lives. All those who have suffered should be properly taken care of and I am appealing to you that we all join hands together to work for the good of this country.

CHAIRMAN: We thank you very much for coming to testify before the commission.

Date - 22 April, 2003

Witness Name - Moses Sam Kossaba

Witness No:

Reference No :

The witness was sworn on oath by the Commissioner Satang Jow, the Presiding Commissioner. He is a Christian.

Testimony:

I am 33 years old. I live at 105 Pademba Road Freetown. I am here on behalf of my late brother who was killed in a Kamajor ambush. He was travelling to Kono from Tongo on some diamond business. On his way to Kono, he fell in an ambush. Three of them were arrested. They were searched and beaten with machete from which they sustained some severe injuries. The Kamajors discovered that my brother had some money and diamonds on him. As a result of this, they then decided to take my brother away from the others. One of the other two abductees said that they heard the commander saying he was not satisfied with my brother because he was

very strong; he felt he was a soldier. The commander said they were going to prepare my brother for their meal. He was taken further into the forest but not too far from where the others were waiting. Shortly after, they heard a gunshot and it was followed by jubilation and merry-making from their captors. At that time, night was fast approaching. The other two decided that it was an opportunity for them to escape because they felt that after Sam Kossaba - (my brother), it will be their turn. Whilst they were hiding in the bush, they said, they saw the Kamajors carrying some meat which they placed on palm fronds. They were able to manoeuvre and they left the area for another village. The people in that village provided lodging for them and the following day facilitated their return to Koidu.

Commissioner Sooka ...Who told you what happened because you were not present at the scene?

Mr. Kossaba : One of the men who had escaped. They were admitted at the Koidu Government Hospital. I met them there and one of them narrated this to me.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell where they are at presently?

Mr. Kossaba: No.

Commissioner Sooka :Can you tell us the name of this individual who told you about the incident?

Mr. Kossaba : His name is Sheku, but I don't know his surname.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you know anything about your brother's business?

Moses He was dealing in diamonds.

Prof. Kamara - Where did this incident take place?

Moses Between Kono and Tongo

Prof. Kamara - Did you try to find out what happened to the body of your brother?

Moses I tried but the Kamajors were everywhere.

Prof. Kamara - Did people in the village where these two boys went to, tell you anything more than what the other boys in the hospital said to you?

Moses No. My father sent his brother who was living around the village to

gather more information about the incidence but he couldn't get anything to add.

Prof. Kamara - Could you tell of any other such incidence of cannibalism beside that of your brother?

Moses That was the first incident I heard about. However, I later heard of about two or more of such incidences.

Justice Marcus Jones - Did these other fellows see the Kamajors eating the flesh of your brother?

Moses. They did not say that to me

Justice Marcus Jones - Whilst these Kamajors were jubilating, were these boys able to identify in what language they were jubilating in?

Moses They were singing in Mende.

Comm. Torto .Since you know that it was the Kamajors who arrested your brother, did you make any move to take the matter up with any higher authority?

Moses No. Many people in Kono knew about the incident. Also we don't know who in particular to hold responsible.

Comm. Jow - Did your brother have any other influence in Kono?

Moses No

Comm. Jow - Did he associate himself with any military or political group?

Moses No

Martien Schotmans thanked the witness and said that she has no question to ask Moses.

The chairperson I thank you for coming to testify. Have you any question to ask.?

Moses..... I have no question. I am a Christian and believe in God. I have no recommendation. I am here in the interest of peace.

Thank you for coming.

HAWAH KOROMA - 2ND WITNESS

Hawah Koroma was sworn on oath. She is a Muslim.

It was on a Friday that the war reached us. My grandchildren and I were three in the house. One was pregnant. The other was an adolescent and in puberty age. A man holding a gun approached us in the house and shot into the air. My grandchildren fled the house running and they were pursued by the attackers. The pregnant woman was shot and killed; the adolescent one was also killed. I fled into the bush and wept. I was there for the rest of the day crying and did not see them. Those who returned to the town told me that they have killed my grand-children. I cried. I did not know whether they were given befitting funeral. Also Alhaji Umaru was killed. All our belongings left in the house when we went away, were looted. We were in the bush for quite sometime. Later I went to Kenema and one day I heard sporadic gunshots. There was pandemonium and people were running helter-skelter. I was not properly dressed at that time and the weather was very cold. I slept in the bush and in the morning, people came and told us to go back to town. After that nothing happened again. This is my testimony.

Comm Jow – We thank you for coming despite your age. We at the TRC, are happy that you brought out the truth and we are happy that once the truth has been acknowledged we can sustain the peace in Sierra Leone.

Comm. Torto - Who was this Alhaji Umaru?

Hawah - He was a prominent personality in Janjahun. He was a learned man but I could not remember his status.

Comm. Torto - Was he a chief?

Hawah - He was a prominent man and a learned man.

Comm. Torto - Were these people speaking in languages you do not understand?

Hawah - Yes.

Justice Marcus Jones - We are sorry for the experience you had and the loss of your third grand daughter. Did she have treatment for her bullet

wound?

Hawah - She was treated and she is now married.

Prof. Kamara - We are in sympathy with you. We know that you went through a very difficult time and now I see that your address here is No.6 Wilson Street, Freetown. When did you come down to No. 6 Wilson street, Freetown?

Hawah - During the dry season this year.

Prof. Kamara - All the time you were in the province. Was it in Kenema?

Hawah - I was in Kenema. It was when I left Kenema that I came to my current abode.

Prof. Kamara - How are you managing to survive?

Hawah - I am currently leaving with my son. My children are the ones taking care of me. The person who catered for me was killed. It was towards the end of the war that he was killed.

Prof. Kamara - Was he killed by rebels or through natural death?

Hawah - I left him in Kenema where they killed him.

Mrs Jow - Can you tell us why your three grand daughters were leaving with you in that village?

Hawah - When they attacked their place, they moved to my place.

Mr. Charm - Apart from your two grand daughters and this Alhaji Umaru who were killed - were there other people killed?

Hawah – No. When we were hiding in the bush they told us that other people were killed.

Mr. Charm - Apart from this incident do you know of anything in the village?

Hawah - I will lie if I say anything. I can't say anything

Comm. Jow - This is now your turn to ask questions or you may wish to make any recommendation for the commission to consider.

Hawah - Just the killing of my three grand children I went through a lot of suffering. I did not get anything to eat only empty sauce.

Comm Jow – We thank you very much for coming and I want to assure that what you have said will be included in our report.

ADAMA BABY SANKOH - 3RD WITNESS

22ND April, 2003

Witness name Adama Sankoh.

My name is Adama Sankoh. I am a muslim. sworn by the Quoran.

The rebels burnt down my grandfather's house. He had wanted to resist them but they hit with a stick before the house was burnt. One of my aunt and her children who were up the provinces; she was partly blind and was killed at the place she had gone to seek refuge; my elder brother's body was mutilated; he couldn't withstand the pain. He eventually died. This is my story.

Prof. Kamara - I thank you for coming and for your testimony. What happened to you after the incident in 1999?

Adama My grandfather's house was burnt and he was beaten with sticks because he resisted them and my aunt who was partly blind had wanted to escape but was killed. My elder brother was beaten with a machete.

Prof. Kamara - What did you do and where did you go?

Adama I was in Freetown.

Prof. Kamara - Did you go to any of the camps?

Adama I did not go anywhere.

Prof. Kamara - I see you have your baby with you. Are you with your husband?

Adama I am with my mother in law who is taking care of me and my baby.

Bishop Joseph Humper - Were you present when your aunt was killed? If no, who told you about it?

Adama My cousin, her son.

Bishop Joseph Humper - Do you know the name of the son?

Adama Yes. His name is Mohamed Conteh.

Comm. Sylvanus Torto - You said those who did this thing to you were rebels. How did you know they were rebels? What type of rebels?

Adama I cannot tell which group they belonged to because my cousin told me about it.

Comm. Jow - In your testimony you said that your cousin told you about what happened. Is he still around or was he in the village when that happened?

Adama Yes he was there.

Comm. Jow - Did you know whether he made statement to the statement takers?

Adama No. I donot think so.

Comm. Jow - Is there any way we can contact Mohamed?

Adama Yes.

Comm. Jow - Where does he stay?

Adama He usually moves up and about. Most time he is in the provinces and at times in Freetown.

Leaders of Evidence

No questions

Comm. Jow - Adama, We have heard your story. We have asked you questions. It is now your turn to ask questions and make recommendations.

Adama - Now this thing has happened we have forgotten about it. Since you send your statement takers to take statements, we have testified. We do not know what you will do for us.

Comm Jow – The TRC cannot do anything for you readily. However we have listened to your story and I want to assure that what you have said will form an integral part of our report.

DATE: 23rd April, 2003.

CLOSED HEARINGS

WITNESS NAME: FATMATA KAMARA

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

TESTIMONY

The witness was sworn on oath by the Commissioner Yasmine Sooka, the Presiding Commissioner.

She is a Born Again Christian.

Comm. Sooka While many of our staff know what the purpose of the hearing is, it might be useful just to explain for your benefit, that it is really an opportunity for people to come forward to talk about their experiences but also to ensure that we are able to put mechanisms in place so that these things don't happen again. And so we would welcome not only your testimony but also your own feedback about what can be imposed so that people can get on with their lives.

Testimony

I was staying at Kingtom when the rebels came into Freetown. When the rebels entered the city they started shooting, but I did not know that the rebels had entered. We asked some people running from Kroo Bay what happened but they refused to tell us. A man told us that we should be on the run, as rebels had entered Kingtom. The rebels wanted to take over the power house that was why we were told to leave Kingtom. Some ECOMOG officers were at the power house. The rebels wanted them to leave the power house or else all the civilians would be endangered. I and my sister went into hiding at Prince of Wales School but bullets were flying all over so we were unable to stay. The rebels asked all of us to leave the area. The elders were asked to leave the place and find somewhere safer. My father asked me to leave the area but I refused. My brother, myself, and one of my elder sisters, left for a mosque at Kingtom. We

were at the mosque and the area was bushy. There was a lady who was cooking outside and she saw the rebels. As soon as we heard the woman talking to the rebels, we realized that they had located us. We were advised to hide at Fawaz compound at Kingtom, the place was very quiet initially and the rebels didn't know that we were there. They later located us and demanded that we give them some pigs. We were not sure whether somebody had not told the rebels that we were inside the mosque. Later on at night, they came back to the mosque and knocked; we suspected that some boys had told them that we were there.

They called out a man's name; he was surprised they knew his name. A woman advised that we must not open the door. I was afraid.

They started firing into the mosque and killed some people; six of us had to hide. My younger sister was afraid, because a bullet had hit her on the shoulder. I had to hold her on my chest but out of fright and pain, she shouted and the rebels knew that people were there. Immediately they entered and pointed guns at us and we were asked out of the building.

The rebels were dressed in full combat uniform. So they took my sister and said that because I didn't respond to their earlier call, they will kill my sister. They beheaded my sister and took us to Seven Up garage. They killed two of my friends. At that time I was a virgin, I have done nothing wrong, they have killed my sister, my mother and father. (Crying)

After they had chopped off Aminata's head, the commando said that I was good looking and he raped me. The commando was not satisfied in doing so, he also ordered one of his boys and he too raped me. I told them that they should kill me instead of raping me. "Oh God, Why me."

After amputating my friend's hand, he called one of his boys and he raped me, they said they were still not satisfied, they tied us and chopped off our feet, after chopping my feet I became unconscious. I was there for four days no body came to my aid. My feet were rotten and maggot was coming out of my feet. After four days I gained consciousness, I called out one of my friend who was lying close to me, but she was dead. Then I said that it was useless for me to be alive. On the fifth day, I was half conscious and I saw some of the ECOMOG soldiers, they were in a burnt house; as soon as the ECOMOG soldiers wanted to pick me up I became unconscious. I was later taken to the Connaught hospital, not knowing the whereabouts of my friends. I was taken to the theatre and after regaining consciousness, I asked for my friends. I saw the ECOMOG officers again, they told me that they picked me up from Kingtom, but did not know the whereabouts of my friends and parents.

Monica promised me that I would be admitted at ward one. Unfortunately for me, Monica's husband was abducted and his feet amputated. She had promised to take me out of the country before then.

I overheard one Dr Bundu, explaining that I was pregnant. He was afraid to give me the information but Monica counseled and consoled me. She lifted me up and put me on the wheel chair and took me to the back of the hospital and explained everything to me, saying that I was pregnant. As soon as she told me that I fell down from the Wheel chair and started knocking my stomach. I asked Monica what would happen to me. She said that I must choose what I would like her to do with the pregnancy. I told Monica that I had no parents, how can I be pregnant without boyfriend and no parent. I told her to do abortion. Monica advised me not to do the abortion. I told her that the baby would have no father; she said no and promised to take care of the baby. The next morning, they were preparing breakfast using some bread knives; I took one of the knives and said if they refused to do the abortion, I would kill myself and anybody who attempted to come closer because I had no where to go. I later came to stay with one of my friend at Bay. I was later directed to the Amputee Camp, where I am still residing. I later attended a class at one hairdressing saloon, I have completed the course but I had no tools to do the job. I have nothing to eat, at times I had to go down to town begging for alms. That is my story.

Comm. Sooka - We are deeply touched by what you told us. What we want to do now is to ask you questions that will help us to understand what happened to you and your friends.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Thank you Fatmata for sharing your experiences with us, we are deeply sorry for what happened to you. We want to ask you some questions. The time you were hospitalized, can you describe your experience in the hospital?

Fatmata – I was not feeling good when I was hospitalized, because I was pregnant without a husband and it wasn't out of pleasure. I had an abortion but that is not the point for me now. The problem for me now is I have been taught a trade without having help from people. I have to go out in the street begging alms. I am begging the Commissioners that the people who had committed these atrocities, if by any means they would get hold of them, my suggestion is that they should pay the price.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Do you know their whereabouts?

Fatmata – I don't know their names, but if I set eyes on them I can recognize them.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Were you strong to complete this course?

Fatmata - I was having some problems with my amputated legs.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Do you have peaceful night rests?

Fatmata – I do not have peaceful nights because I am always thinking of my hairdressing tools.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Have you been able to contact any of your family members?

Fatmata – No, because my former residence was burnt.

Comm. Jow – I want to join my colleagues in thanking you and I admire your courage, we are all women and we have children. We have understood all your ordeals, we have tried to empathise with you. I want to ask you some questions to clarify what you have told us. We would like to know your personal circumstances before the incidence. What did your family comprise of? Who were the people you lived with?

Fatmata – I was staying with a friend of mine.

Comm. Jow - You mentioned about your parents?

Fatmata – My mother was staying in Lungi, she only came for visits

Comm. Jow - Do you have any other relative?

Fatmata – Yes, they are all staying in Lungi, because of the transport problem, they are unable to visit.

Comm. Jow - How old were you when they raped you?

Fatmata - About 15 to 16.

Comm. Jow - Have you ever been to school?

Fatmata– No, there was no money. My parents were in the village and I was brought up by my grandparents. When they died I went to live with my friend.

Comm. Jow - After this ordeal, have you got any formal education. Can you read and write?

Fatmata – No.

Comm. Jow- Would you like to have formal education?

Fatmata - Yes

Comm. Jow - Apart from your amputation, do you have any medical problem related to the rape you suffered?

Fatmata – I have pains, but I have my normal period?

Comm. Jow - Since the incident, have you any relationship (love affairs)

Fatmata - Yes.

Comm. Jow - It is a different relationship, would you like to marry and have a family?

Fatmata– yes.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Where do you do this hairdressing?

Fatmata – I started with one woman at Kingtom called Kosoh.

Comm. Marcus Jones – For the time being have you explored the possibility of working with her in her saloon?

Fatmata – Her shop was burnt and she went out of the country.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell me, how many of your own relatives were killed in the incident?

Fatmata – Three people, I do not know the whereabouts of my parent, my sister's head was chopped off and the woman I was staying was killed and her house burnt down.

Comm. Sooka – Who is Aminata to you?

Fatmata – Aminata was my best friend

Comm. Sooka – How many of you were raped?

Fatmata – I was the only one raped.

Comm. Sooka – What happened to your nephew?

Fatmata – Nothing happened to him, I am now taking care of him and I have sent him to my grandmother at Waterloo.

Comm. Sooka – Apart from staying in the amputee camp, do you have anybody to stay with?

Fatmata – I have no body to stay with, I don't want to stay with my uncle.

Comm. Sooka - What are the facilities you have in the camp?

Fatmata – Some people from America and Arab state, Red Cross used to visit us and give us some assistant.

Comm. Sooka - Is there any plan to prepare a proper structure for the amputees?

Fatmata – Yes, I am on the waiting list.

Comm. Sooka - Did you feel any instant pain, after you were raped,

Fatmata – After the rape, I was unconscious.

Comm. Sooka - Did the doctor examine you?

Fatmata – After the abortion I was given some stitches.

Comm. Sooka - After the incident, how are you feeling now?

Fatmata - I am not feeling good.

Comm. Sooka - Are you able to sleep at night?

Fatmata - My problem now, is that I don't have my tools for me to practice my hairdressing.

Comm. Sooka - The time you were raped, you felt guilty and started crying “why me”

Fatmata – I felt bad, because I had done nothing to them. After killing my sister, I begged them to have mercy. But they told me that God is on top and they were down.

Comm. Sooka - How old were the perpetrators?

Fatmata - They were youths

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell me their ages?

Fatmata - I can't tell their ages, because the commando was an elderly person.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell me the language they spoke?

Fatmata - They spoke in some Liberian accent, I only heard the Commando who spoke krio once.

Comm. Sooka - Do you know the name of the one who raped you?

Fatmata – The second one was called “blood money”.

Comm. Sooka – Do you recognized them as rebels?

Fatmata - They were putting on full combat fatigue.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell us something about Monica’s husband?

Fatmata - Monica’s husband was transporting drugs to different places

Comm. Sooka - Where did they attack Monica’s husband?

Fatmata - The attack was on the Kenema highway.

Comm. Sooka - What happened?

Fatmata - I was not around, I was told that the rebels amputated him.

Comm. Sooka - What did they tell you about the attack?

Fatmata – when they were attacked, Monica’s husband was about to enter his car, when they were interrogated, they said he must offer some treatment to them. When he was about to perform that he was beaten and amputated.

Comm. Sooka - You said you don’t know their names, but can you identify them?

Fatmata – Yes , if the perpetrators saw me, they will not say anything.

Comm. Sooka – Have you ever seen any one of them after this incident?

Fatmata - I saw some of the them when they visited the amputee camp, and they apologized to me.

Comm. Sooka – Did they go to the camp?

Fatmata – I saw one of the perpetrator, at the amputee camp, but he was only on the scene, he did not tamper with me, the time I saw him I had accepted Jesus as my personal saviour. The man went down on his knees begging me.

People were asking who the man was, but I refused to tell them anything. I told the man to go but he refused, I left him and went to the Aberdeen Bridge.

Comm. Sooka - Mrs Satang asked you whether you are currently in a relationship?

Fatmata yes.

Comm. Sooka - Have you ever been forced to have sexual relationship when you were in the camp?

Fatmata - No.

Comm. Sooka - So you feel quite safe in the camp?

Fatmata – I say thanks to God.

Comm. Marcus Jones – You said you were staying at Kingtom, did these people thought you were having any connection with the Army or Police?

Fatmata – While I was staying at Kingtom, I have never been in contact with any police officer?

Comm Jow - Are you using any preventive?

Fatmata - No.

Comm Jow - Have they sensitized you about aids?

Fatmata yes.

Comm Jow - Do you have a permanent relationship?

Fatmata - yes.

Comm. Jow - You spoke about Monica, have you heard about her?

Fatmata – No, I don't have her contact address, because she was worried when she left.

Comm Jow - Have you met a sierra Leonean, who was nice to you as Monica do?

Fatmata - No, it was only when I came to this Commission.

Martien - You were asking about your friends?

Fatmata - The ECOMOG did not see any of my friends, I was surprised.

Martien - In your written statement, you said that forty people were abducted, do you know what had happened to them?

Fatmata – No, I did not see them again.

Martien – Were they abducted when you were conscious?

Fatmata - Yes.

Martien - How did you know that those people were abducted?

Fatmata - I saw them whilst we were at the building

Martien - What did you see happened?

Fatmata - After they had beheaded my sister, I was worried, I did not know anything that happened to them?

Martien – Have you met those people you were staying with when you were at the mosque?

Fatmata - no

Martien – How many of you were in the Mosque?

Fatmata – We were plenty in number.

Martien - Did the ECOMOG tell you how they came to know that you were lying somewhere injured?

Fatmata - It was a woman who told them that some people were in the mosque. When I regained my consciousness, the ECOMOG soldiers explained to the Doctor and I was later told the story.

Martien –have you ever been with an NGO responsible for handicaps, can you explain why you were not given artificial feet?

Fatmata - They said I did not have any balance (weight) so I was taken to the phsio, they thought me to use the crotch, whenever I wanted to stand up I have serious pains on my feet. My feet were not strong enough for me to use them.

Martien - Can you tell the Commission all that you would need to go ahead with your practice?

Fatmata - There is no light at my saloon, If I can have Le200 or Le300,000 to start with it will be appreciated.

Comm. Sooka - Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Fatmata - I have already asked some of my friends present here. The question is I want to know why these rebels did these things to us?

Comm. Sooka - We are asking these questions because we wanted to know the root cause of these atrocities caused by the rebels.

Fatmata – I thank the Commission for what they were able to do for us, if you were not here the people would have started to mock us. But by saying these to the Commission these people will not mock us again. I say thanks to the Commission and I pray for God's protection.

Comm. Sooka - we are sorry that we have made you to recall your trauma. Without stories like yours, we would not be able to give report on this issue. I thank you for coming.

DATE: 23rd April 2003

WITNESS NAME: AUGUSTA AMARA

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

The witness was sworn on by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Yasmine Sooka. She is a Christian.

TESTIMONY

On January 6th, 1999, we were sitting down in our house at 28 Looking Town, when we heard that there was a curfew, so we went into our house. My father was inside the house when the rebels came. They said they wanted to take my father out, my brother had wanted to open the door, my stepmother told him not to do so. I went to the back of the house and my dad and brothers ran away, so I went to a neighbouring house and hid underneath a bed. They wanted to abduct my stepmother but she convinced them to abduct me instead. She took them to the place where I was hiding. When they asked for me, they were told that I was not around. Later, a rebel took out a machete and chopped off the old man's hand and the man told them that I was under the bed, I came out. They took me to the private school that I was attending. They said they would not kill me but they would write RUF on my leg. They did the same to all those who were around. Later, I tried to sneak but I did not know my whereabouts, so I had to stay with them. I was with them when we were chased out. We were taken to Benguema Barracks, where I was deflowered. I started bleeding and a woman came and asked me what had happened. The woman said I should take her to the person who raped me. I did that and the man's hand was amputated. I was bleeding till we went to six mile. I was bleeding continuously and the woman was worried and said that she would not be able to carry her luggage and at the same time carry me. So she ordered a man to kill me. The man told the woman that she should not have taken me along with her to the bush, if she knew; she would be unable to take care of me. The woman said that I was a witch and I was taken to an HERBALIST endorse her accusation. The woman asked the herbalist to tell her whether I was a witch. The herbalist told the woman that I was not a witch it is because I had been deflowered and said that I should be rushed to the hospital or else I will die. The woman asked the herbalist to give her some herbal treatment. The woman was with me until I regained consciousness. Then I started walking with a crotch.

When the alpha jet was bombarding, we had cause to go to Magbele, I was still with the woman who asked me to do something for her. But the woman refused to let go of me. One day they made an announcement that all children must be released. The woman refused and said that she liked my behaviour, and said she would not release me until she is back in Freetown. I insisted because I wanted to attend school. At that time, I was in Class 3, but the woman refused, and started beating me with stick. The woman's husband helped me to escape. I went to my sister but the woman continued searching for me. They told her that I have gone with the UN. By the time she could chase the lorry that the UN provided to convey us to Freetown, we had left.

When I came back, I met my daddy dead, so they said they would not release me because I was under age. They later informed my brothers that I was with ECOMOG. When my brother went to their base, they told him that I have been taken to the Lakka village. So he went to Lakka and signed for my release. As soon as I saw him, I asked about my dad. They said they would not bury my dad

in my absence. They took me and my mummy back to the house, where I am presently residing.

Comm. Sooka – we are going to ask you some questions so that we can capture the details about what had happened to enable us give our report.

Comm. Jow – Augusta, can you tell us about the rebels who came to your house, on the 6th January, were they in uniform?

Augusta – they were putting on T-Shirts.

Comm. Jow – How many of them?

Augusta A large number.

Comm. Jow – Can you tell us about your father?

Augusta – They also mentioned my grandfather's name but he was dead. They met my father, they wanted to break the house, they wanted to kill him so I went to the back of the house, opened the door and he escaped.

Comm. Jow – Can you tell me your father's name?

Augusta - Mr. Amara, he was a boat builder.

Comm. Jow – Can you tell us about your stepmother?

Augusta - She didn't have children for my dad, she was a fetish woman. I caught her one day when she was preparing okra soup for my father when she spit into the soup, so I reported the matter to my dad, that was the time we became enemies.

She was maltreating my brothers. I was later adopted by one woman who was a Creole. But still my stepmother did not accept me because she had already asked my brothers out of the house. My grandfather said that I should not go anywhere, I must stay with my father, my daddy was treating me fairly unlike my stepmother. My dad was praying earnestly, but my stepmother overcame him. I came to stay with them in August 1998. It was in 1999 when the rebels came that my stepmother sent them after me. I was unfortunate, the rebels located my hiding , the rebels were in sympathy with me because we spoke the same language, they disclosed everything to me and even showed me the knife which my stepmother had given them to kill me. After they had left that was the time my father was killed. Before my stepmother left the house, she promised that my father would be dead in two weeks time. He was killed before the end of the two weeks. People had known that whenever she is married to a man, she would kill the man and burn down the house.

My mother came after my father's burial, and offered some prayers in the house. But my stepmother came and buried some charms in the compound. After the burial of my dad, my stepmother went to the cemetery and buried some charms there saying that my dad would be powerless.

Comm. Marcus Jones – I express my sympathy, where was your mother before the rebels came?

Augusta – My mother was in the provinces because she was having problems with my stepmother.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Was your mother aware of all that happened to you?

Augusta - My mother was unaware of all that happened but some people went to the provinces to report the matter. She went to my father and told him that I am her only daughter, if anything happens to me, she would have my father to blame.

Comm. Marcus Jones – When your mother came for your father's burial, did you explain anything to her?

Augusta – yes,

Comm. Marcus Jones – What did she do?

Augusta – She said I should pray to God and I was later taken to the hospital.

Comm. Marcus Jones – You told us that you have stopped bleeding, are you okay now?

Augusta - Yes, but I lost weight.

Comm. Marcus Jones – How long were you in hospital?

Augusta - I was not admitted but I reported for medical checks for over a year.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Why were you taken to the hospital?

Augusta - I was taken to the hospital to undergo an operation to remove the RUF sign on my chest.

Comm. Marcus Jones – what are you doing now?

Augusta – I am going to school.

Comm. Marcus Jones – What form are you?

Augusta - I am in form one.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Are you treated normally in school?

Augusta - yes.

Comm. Sooka - how many of you were abducted when the rebels entered?

Augusta - I was unable to count, because I had no experience at the time

Comm. Sooka - How girls were in the room when you were raped?

Augusta – we were 20 in number.

Comm. Sooka - from where did you walk to?

Augusta –We walked, from Freetown to Makeni unto Magbele

Comm. Sooka – Where were you raped?

Augusta – I was raped at the Benguema barracks, I had been with them for a month.

Comm. Sooka - How many times did they rape you?

Augusta - only once

Comm. Sooka -What was your physical condition like, when you were raped?

Augusta – I was unconsciousness, because I was forced.

Comm. Sooka – What was the name of the man that raped you?

Augusta - His name is Abdul.

Comm. Sooka - Is he a commando or an ordinary member of the group?

Augusta - No, he was only a guard.

Comm. Sooka – Who was the commando by then?

Augusta - She was a woman, named Gbessay.

Comm. Sooka – Where you raped in front of the other people?

Augusta - I was with other people when I was raped.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell us something about the Commando?

Augusta - She was annoyed when I told her that I wanted to leave.

Comm. Sooka – You said that the woman was annoyed with the one who raped you, and she had the hand of the perpetrator chopped off?

Augusta - Yes, she said I must identify the one who raped me, and she then amputate his hand.

Comm. Sooka – What happened to the other girls who were raped?

Augusta – I was unconscious when I was raped, when I became conscious I saw them bleeding.

Comm. Sooka – What kind of medication were you on?

Augusta – They gave me herbs and drugs.

Comm. Sooka -Did you have any problem after you were raped?

Augusta – The only problem I encountered was with my menstruation.

Comm. Sooka – Have you started menstruating before you were raped?

Augusta – I started a year before I was raped

Comm. Sooka - Who wrote the RUF on your chest?

Augusta - She was a member of the RUF, but I cannot tell her name, I had them calling her “ Money people”.

Comm. Sooka – How long were you with the rebels?

Augusta – I was with them for 8 months.

Comm. Sooka- You were forced to work, who did you work for?

Augusta – The “Mamy Queen”

Comm. Sooka – During the time you were with the rebels, were you forced to marry any one of them?

Augusta – No, but I was forced to work.

Comm. Sooka - Were you prevented from harassment from the rebels?

Augusta - No.

Comm. Sooka - when you came back to Freetown, did you tell anybody your ordeal?

Augusta – I told my story to UNAMSIL and in the hospital near me.

Comm. Sooka – Which hospital?

Augusta – PCMH

Comm. Sooka - Do you remember the name of the UNAMSIL personnel you told your story to?

Augusta - No

Comm. Sooka - do you always have a flash back of what had happened to you?

Augusta – yes, whenever I am in a quiet mood.

Comm. Sooka - did anybody counsel you?

Augusta - yes,

Comm. Sooka - have you had any sexual relationship with any other person after you were raped?

Augusta - yes.

Comm. Sooka – Is he your permanent boyfriend?

Augusta – yes, he had proposed to marry me?

Comm. Sooka - Did you have any side effect or any pains when you were raped?

Augusta - No.

Comm. Sooka - Did your principal, or member of staff know about what had happened to you?

Augusta - No , only my Business Studies teacher.

Comm. Sooka – Did you want your principal to know?

Augusta - Yes.

Comm. Sooka - How are you coping with your studies?

Augusta – I am trying very hard to succeed.

Comm. Jow - Have you been in any way connected with FAWE?

Augusta - Yes,

Comm. Jow – Have they offered some counseling to you?

Augusta - yes.

Comm. Jow - Why didn't you attend the FAWE school?

Augusta - I was not aware of such a school.

Comm Jow – Who is responsible for your education?

Augusta - My mother.

Comm. Jow - Have you met anybody who would be in place to help you?

Augusta – No.

Comm. Jow – Will your mother be able to take care of your education right through?

Augusta – I don't know, but she is trying her best.

Comm. Jow – How do you feel about men generally?

Augusta - I am afraid of them.

Martien - Which part of the country did this happen?

Augusta – We walked through the bushes and came in to town.

Martien – When you were with these rebels, did they attack any village?

Augusta - No, they did not attack any village, it was only the ECOMOG who attacked their position.

Martien - When you were with these rebels for eight months, did they engage in any violation?

Augusta - Yes, I saw them doing many atrocities.

Martien - Can you tell us some of these activities?

Augusta - I saw houses burnt, dead people lying on the road.

Martien – How many rebels were you staying with?

Augusta – A large group

Martien – Were they in one group?

Augusta - No, they were separated.

Martien - What was your job when you were with them?

Augusta – I carry their luggage and fetch water for them.

Martien - While you were with these rebels, did you see them rape other girls?

Augusta – No, only the time that I was raped.

Martien – Those rape victims, were they forced to marry these rebels?

Augusta - Yes, some of the girls were forced to marry.

Martien – Can you tell me their ages?

Augusta - They were adults.

Martien – Those that abducted you, were there women or children among them?

Augusta – Yes, there were two women, and the rest were men, but I was the youngest.

Martien – You said one of these women was a commander?

Augusta - Yes.

Martien - Were you treated fairly?

Augusta – During my first three months, the woman treated me fairly, but after a while they started maltreating me; I was beaten and locked up in a round box made of board.

Martien - How long were you locked up in those boxes?

Augusta – For a long time.

Martien – How many times were you locked up in those boxes?

Augusta – Two times.

Martien – What did they use to beat you?

Augusta - They used stick.

Martien – How many times were you beaten?

Augusta - Many times. If we fail to do our work, we will be beaten.

Martien – Did you have any injury in the cause of these beatings?

Augusta - Yes, I sustained one.

Martien - Were you given enough food?

Augusta - Yes.

Martien – Did they share your food?

Augusta - No, those of us who were abducted ate from the same place.

Martien – Did you eat with the rebels?

Augusta - No, they ate all by themselves.

Martien – Have you ever been starved?

Augusta - No

Martien - Have you ever seen the rebels taking drugs, Marijuana, cocaine etc.?

Augusta - No.

Martien - What would you like to do after leaving school?

Augusta - I want to study law.

Comm. Sooka – Do you have any question to ask the commission?

Augusta – I want to talk about my education, I want you to assist me with my education because I want to learn. I want you to assist my mother because I have lost my father.

Comm. Sooka – We would not be in a position to help you now, but we will state in our report all that you have said. Do you want the government to do anything for you?

Augusta - Yes, I want them to assist in my education.

WITNESS NAME Aminata Sannoh

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

The witness was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner, Yasmine Sooka.

TESTIMONY:

When the rebels, came, I was at home with my husband, we were at home for about nineteen days and had nothing to eat. We were there when the Ramadan came. On the 20th day, they wanted to burn down our house but they did not. On the 21st day, they came and burn down our house. After that my husband advised that we should not stay together. My younger sister and I went out of the house. After the house was burnt down, my husband took the burnt zincs to put them together but he sustained cuts on his hands. I had left, when the Kamajors came and attacked my husband; he ran for safety and hid in a nearby mosque. I was at Kissy when I heard that my husband had left the mosque. I had left Kissy before my husband got there. On the 22nd I had to sleep at Kissy. On Friday the 23rd I was able to reach Kissy, I met some ladies who told me that my husband had left kissy. We agreed to meet at a certain place, but when I went there, my husband was no where to be found. I looked everywhere but my husband was not around, people knew that my husband had been killed, but they were afraid to tell me. After seven days, I went to his sister to enquire about him. Whilst we were waiting for his arrival, some boys told me that he had been killed by kamajors because of his cut on his hands, the kamajors thought he was a rebel.

Comm Marcus Jones - Were you the only two in your family?

Aminata – We had a daughter, 13 years old.

Comm. Marcus Jones – How old was she then?

Aminata – I gave birth to her in 1990.

Comm. Marcus Jones – What happened to the child?

Aminata – The child was with me, I left my husband and she is still with me.

Comm. Marcus Jones – When you were running away was the child with you?

Aminata - Yes when we were running away the child was with me because my husband advised that we must separate.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Is she going to school, what class is she?

Aminata - she is attending, the St. Michael's Primary and she is in class 6.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Have you been able to settle down without your husband?

Aminata - When my husband died, I was leaving with my sister, but things were not too good, so I had to stay with a friend who is taking care of me.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Is he your boyfriend?

Aminata - Yes, he has promised to marry me?

Comm. Marcus Jones – Do you have any child with him?

Aminata - Yes, a boy.

Comm. Jow - Did the house belong to your husband?

Aminata – The house was my husband’s family house. He lost both parents and we were living there not paying rent.

Comm. Jow - Was your house the only house burnt down?

Aminata – No other houses were burnt down, but I am only particular about my own house.

Comm. Jow - Did you remember how many of them came into your house?

Aminata – They were in large number, they wore military uniforms, a neighbour came to help us put out the fire, but he was shot and later buried in front of the house.

Comm. Jow - In your statement, you said that a small boy killed your neighbour, can you tell me how old was the boy?

Aminata – He was around the age of 10 but I could not identify him.

Comm. Jow - The two weeks you were in search of husband, did have any help from people?

Aminata - No, I had no other help. I was with my daughter, we used to go around in different camps enquiring about my husband.

Comm. Jow - Can you tell us about your brother-in-law who told you that they killed your husband?

Aminata - It was my husband’s elder brother, who told me not to search for him because they saw him over CNN.

Comm. Jow - Did you see the remains of your husband?

Aminata - No, they only told me that his corpse was taken somewhere for burial.

Comm. Sooka - Did you try to find out from anybody after your husband was killed?

Aminata – Yes, those who saw his corpse.

Comm. Sooka - what did they tell you?

Aminata - They were able to identify him, by the clothes he wore and the cuts he sustain when he was shot?

Comm. Sooka - Did you go back to the house where you were staying?

Aminata – Yes, I went there for the burial rite, I normally go there to visit them and my child also goes there for visits.

Comm. Sooka – Do you the names of the witnesses who told you of your husband's death? Will they be willing to come and testify?

Aminata – I don't know whether they will be in place to testify to the TRC.

Comm. Sooka – What happened to your sister in law?

Aminata – I thank God, nothing happened to her.

Comm. Sooka -In your statement, you said that your daughter was abducted by the rebels and stayed with them for almost nine months. I want you to clarify that.

Aminata – the child in question in my statement is not the one I had with my husband. She was a child of my husband from a different mother.

Comm. Sooka – Where is the child now?

Aminata - She is now staying with my sister

Comm. Sooka - Did she tell you of what she went through when she was with the rebels?

Aminata – She told me that she was raped, given marijuana to smoke, after she came back I enrolled her in a school, but now she has left the school and roaming about, so I had to take her to live with my mother in the provinces.

Comm. Sooka - Was she pregnant at any stage?

Aminata – When she came back, she was taken to the hospital and a family site for medication.

Comm. Sooka –Is she not going to school?

Aminata – No,she is at home, but my sister wants her to learn something.

Comm. Marcus Jones - the child you spoke to me about is she the child of your husband?

Aminata - yes.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Do you care for your first daughter?

Aminata - Yes, I do care for her, though she is staying with my sister, she is my first child.

Comm. Jow -Where was your daughter when she was abducted?

Aminata - she was leaving with my sister?

Comm. Jow - How were you informed about what happened, was it the same time that you lost your husband?

Aminata - Yes, it was the same time.

Comm. Jow - How did you cope?

Aminata - I stopped going to the mosque, and started going to church, the pastors, visited and comforted and prayed for me.

Comm. Jow - When did she return from the jungle?

Augusta - Three of them came back, she had no hair on her head, I was shocked, by then I was staying with my sister.

Comm. Jow - Were you happy when you saw her?

Aminata - Yes, I was happy, after that, I was sad again, because I had lost my husband.

Comm. Sooka - Was your daughter able to talk to you freely about her experiences?

Aminata - when she came back she couldn't say anything, I started putting pressure on her, after a while she explained that she was raped and tied up.

Comm. Sooka - Was she forced to be a member of the movement?

Aminata - Yes, but she did not kill, but they went about looting and taking things from people forcefully.

Comm. Sooka -We know that she was not forced to go with the rebels, did she tell you where they have been for the past nine months or were they moving from place to place?

Aminata – They were stable, they were not moving from place to place, they stayed in a village around Okra Hill.

Comm. Sooka - Apart from looting was she asked to do any hard thing for the rebels?

Aminata – She was asked to smoke marijuana.

Comm. Sooka – When she came back, did she continue smoking?

Aminata – No she did not continue to smoke, but now she is so indisciplined.

Comm. Sooka - Did she know the person who abducted her?

Aminata – No, but she knew the person who raped her.

Comm. Sooka – Do you know the name of your daughter's commander?

Aminata – No

Comm. Sooka – Do you know the person who killed your husband?

Aminata - No.

Martien - When was your daughter born, and when was she abducted?

Aminata - She was born in 1983 and abducted in 1999.

Martien - Did you know the group of people who abducted your daughter?

Aminata - she might know them, but I do not.

Martien – How many times did she say she was raped?

Aminata - The first man who raped her, was tied and beaten, after that she went with another man.

Martien – so two of the them raped her?

Aminata - yes

Martien – Do you know whether she was given as wife to one of the rebels?

Aminataa – No except the one who took her away.

Martien – After she came back did she tell you that she saw the person who raped her?

Aminata - No

Martien - Did she tell you whether she was beaten by these rebels?

Aminata - No, she came back well.

Martien - Do you know, when she came back if she was helped by any NGO?

Aminata - Yes, she had been assisted by the City Council?

Martien – Do they still continue their support?

Aminata - yes

Comm. Sooka - Does your husband help you to take care of your daughter?

Aminata - yes

Comm. Sooka - Did you have any question to ask the Commission or would you like the government to help you?

Aminata - Yes, all I want is some assistant for my daughter who has lost her father.

Comm. Sooka - What type of help do you need?

Aminata - I want my daughter to be educated.

Comm. Sooka - we can't make any promises now, but we have taken all your testimony and we will send our report to the government.

Comm. Sooka – we thank you for coming, we know that it was not easy for you to come here to testify.

Aminata - yes, that is why I am here, to say something about the death of my husband and daughter.

Comm. Sooka – we thank you for coming.

DATE: 23rd April, 2003.

WITNESS NAME: KADIATU KOROMA

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

TESTIMONY:

My name is Kadiatu Koroma. I am a muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Sooka.

When the rebels came on the 6th of January 1999, I was staying at 91 Blackhall Road. That night when they came, they knocked at my door and said that the people who we were waiting for are now here. I went outside, I was there with my kids, till the next day when they killed a gentleman who was staying in my compound. I had to run away. That night the rebels came and stripped me

naked and said that I must give them all that I have. I had some money that I had collected for osusu, I did not know how much was in my pocket and I was stripped naked in front of my children. I was separated from my kids that night, the next day, my husband advised that we go to 17 Cassell Farm with my kids. When we got to Cassell farm we slept there for three days, the next day was Pray Day. That same day, they burnt down my house. My daughter, Aminata Koroma, came to tell me that my other daughter Fatmata Koroma was killed but I was unable to go to the area where she was shot.

Not too long after that, my brother came to tell me that my husband was injured on his foot by a fragment. My daughter was living at Hastings with my sister. I had to move to Ferry Junction after our house at Casell Farm was burnt. My sister came to tell me that my daughter had been killed. I went to cottage where I was told she was admitted at ward four. We were there but I had still not seen my daughter who was shot. My child was at connaught but there was no proper treatment for the foot, so I had to take her away for native treatment, she has still not recover from that injury, I am now staying at 91 Blackhall road with my children, that is all I have to say.

Comm. Sooka – We would like to ask you some questions.

Comm. Jow – Can you give us the names of all your daughters, were they all staying with you when the rebels entered?

Kadiatu – Yes they were all with me, but I do have some who were my wards. The six children are all mine, two boys and four girls.

Comm. Jow – They were all staying with you?

Kadiatu - They were all staying with me except the one who was staying with my sister at Hastings and she was killed.

Comm. Jow – Can you tell us about the rebels who came to your house?

Kadiatu - I don't know them, I cannot identify them because it was at night, all they said that we must give them all that we had.

Comm. Jow – What was the reaction of your two sons?

Kadiatu – One of my sons told me to give them the money I had collected for osusu.

Comm. Jow – Can you tell us why you were stripped naked? Is it for your money?

Kadiatu – Yes, it was because of my money.

Comm. Jow – Can you tell us where you kept the money?

Kadiatu – The money was kept in the pocket of the trousers I had on.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Which house did the rebels burn down, was it the one at Cassell Farm or Blackhall Road?

Kadiatu- 91 Black hall Road .

Comm. Marcus Jones - Have you gone back to 91 Blackhall Road.

Kadiatu - yes

Comm. Marcus Jones - Do you have a dwelling place there?

Kadiatu - yes

Comm. Marcus Jones - Can you tell me the name and age of your daughter who was shot?

Kadiatu - She is 21 years old.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Can you tell me where she is at present?

Kadiatu - I don't know, she was pregnant, so I asked her out.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Does she have problems with the foot?

Comm. Marcus Jones - Yes, and at times she could not walk properly

Comm. Marcus Jones - Don't you know that she needs your support?

Kadiatu – She is now staying with the man who impregnated her.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Don't you think that you should reconcile with her?

Kadiatu - Well I don't know, her sister said that she is going to visit her this Sunday.

Comm. Marcus Jones - What happened to your husband, you said he was wounded?

Kadiatu - We took him to the hospital, his foot was cured, and he is doing fine.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Is he doing any work now?

Kadiatu - No,he was a tailor, his machine was burnt down

Comm. Marcus Jones - What are you doing for your living?

Kadiatu – I am engage in small scale business and heading an osusu club.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Have you repaired the house which was burnt down?

Kadiatu – No, we were on rentage, there is some quarrel over the land and nobody knows who the right owner is.

Comm. Marcus Jones - How secure and safe are your children in the house you now live?

Kadiatu – I am a business woman, who had established in that area, my father has a house but I could not go there because of my business.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Are your children going to school?

Kadiatu – yes

Comm. Sooka – Do you know how many people were killed when you were attacked?

Kadiatu - No

Comm. Sooka – Are you the bread winner of your family?

Kadiatu - yes.

Martien – You said your daughter Mariatu was not staying with you?

Kadiatu – she was not staying with me, she was leaving with my sister.

Martien –How old was she then?

Kadiatu - She is now 21 years old.

Martien - Was your sister there when your daughter was killed?

Kadiatu – No

Martien –Was you sister at home when your daughter was killed?

Kadiatu - I don't know, we were not living in the same house, all I know was that my daughter was killed.

Martien – Have you met your sister since 1999?

Kadiatu - No she has gone back to the provinces, it was the rebel war that brought her to Freetown.

Comm. Sooka - We want to know whether you have any question to ask or any recommendation that will enable us give a comprehensive report?

Kadiatu - I thank you very much, but I don't know what the Commission would like to do for us.

I don't have questions to ask, all I want is for the Commission to assist me.

Comm. Sooka – we are going all around collecting statement from people so that we can understand what had happened to you when you were attacked by rebels, so that we can give a comprehensive report about the sufferings of you all during the war. In that same report we will report all these things to the government and hope that the government would look into your matter. We thank you for sharing your story with us.

1 DATE: 25th April, 2 003.

The presiding commissioner Comm. Prof. John Kamara welcomes all present. He then went on to read the hearing procedures after which he introduced the commissioners present. Opening prayers were offered and first witness was called by the Leader of Evidence Martien Schotsman.

Opening prayers: Muslim - Abdul K. Kamara
Christian - From the audience

WITNESS NAME: **Ibrahim Brima Kamara:**

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

The witness was sworn on oath on the bible by the presiding commissioner, Comm. Prof. John Kamara.

Testimony

I bless you all, we are happy that TRC came to Sierra Leone; they have to rebuild our country. As you have come to rebuild, we believe that it is the truth that you want. I thank you all for that. May God help you to succeed.

I will start with my statement I gave to the statement takers. I ask for your forgiveness, I know that is what you want.

There is something which we thought was very difficult, we sat peacefully and we saw rebels entered our country. Some of them came from Burkina Faso, we are happy that they were removed from the country. But our brothers turn around and started doing what those boys were doing. The rebels were in the bush, destroying the country, destroying life and properties. Those who were responsible to defend us joined them in order to destroy lives and properties. We realized that we should not sit back and see this country destroyed. We stood up to defend our country.

In 1995, we formed ourselves into a group to defend our country, after we have formed CDF. We did not have any weapons. But we had our plans. There was a time when we received a letter from the Government inviting us to defend our country. We must stand strong to defend our country. We were happy because we were told to defend our country. The paramount Chief, who dispatched this letter, said that he would take the matter up to the Government. "Those who have single barrel guns should take it up to defend our country." We saw it happened. We received supply from government.

In 1997, when the rebels entered, we were not expecting them; they captured most of us, young boys. Now that they have started, whenever they came we were ready for them. They went and attacked a village six miles off from our location. When we went there we met them. They killed one of our colleagues, Osman. We told civilians to leave the area. We went there but we were repelled. Wherever we were deployed we told the civilians to leave the area and find a safer place for them. We told them that anytime they heard gunshots they must go into hiding. After that, we heard that all CDF must be trained. Those of us who formed that security group were not in large number. We did not disturb any civilians. They told me that rebel had attacked their village. But it was a lie; it was their relatives who wanted to see them.

When we arrived, they told us that they have burnt down our village. I had my wife and children there. I will tell you that person who claimed to be a CDF, but he was a rebel. He went and took some boys at Madina; he recruited them into his own CDF. He was born of the area. He held six of them and two of them escaped. One of them who was called Abdul took the message to us. If we had not gone there that morning he would have killed the remaining four people. He

wrote a letter and gave us two policemen as escort, the letter was handed to him and he read the letter but he gave us negative answer, he said that they were not with him. I told him that he was telling lies. He had killed them, because he claimed to defend civilians but had started killing them; it was a surprise to me. We took the matter to Makeni but because the war was on, they said that we should wait. One man told us that the rebels had attacked the same village again. We slept and we left there in the morning hours on a Friday. We told ourselves that we were happy because we did not meet rebels there. But they had gone into hiding, so we were happy. They got information that the CDF were in that village. So they opened fire on us, but we were unable to fight back. When my colleagues, saw that I was shot and bleeding, they left. I tried to take care of myself, but I could see the rebels from my hiding place. They chased my colleagues, shooting, they went to one village and burnt down the whole village. I went into a farm house to hide, I did not have anything to eat or drink, but I thank God.

Somebody took me from that area and I was brought to 34 Military Hospital, the doctor refused to touch me but I begged him to.

When I was discharged they took me to Hinga Norman. I was with him in his house. I told him that we were not supposed to be in his house. He said he would find a place for us to leave in. He finally said they have located Brookfields Hotel for us. We were staying there when somebody told me that they would produce artificial limbs for us. We went to the amputee camp but they refused to let us stay there claiming that we were kamajors, we were not supposed to be there. We were there at the Brookfields Hotel suffering. We went to Hinga Norman again to make complaints but he said that he was tired of begging the government for us. He insisted that he had nothing to do and that we should go back to our villages. He told us that in time to come we will enjoy.

We were given two bags of rice to be repatriated to our villages. But some of us had wives and children. We were confused, we were there for sometime and they stopped giving us our ration. If you fail to assist us now who then should we put our burden on.

We know that we have not done anything wrong. For us it is only God that will console us. At times if people stare at me for a time long, I always feel bad. We decided that the government is there. We went to S.B Marah, we were 15 in number. I thank God that our Chairman is here with us. SB wrote a letter and our names were listed, the letter was later forwarded to Norman but he refused to do something. The response S.B Marah got from Hinga Norman was negative; he said that he (S.B. Marah) must not interfere in his office. So we had no alternative other than to appeal to the government to assist us. I am an illiterate, I have my children and they are not going to school. When I was physically fit, I used to work hard for my living. We have asked for the erection of houses for us,

as they have done for other amputees, we had done a lot but up till now we have not seen any response. That's why we have come to TRC, so that they can pass on our message to the Government for assistance in the future.

Comm. John – I thank you very much. I will now ask my colleague Commissioners to ask you questions for clarification.

Justice Marcus Jones - I want you to tell us, I want you to react to the allegation made by you people. They said that you people were involved in looting, raping and killing of civilians.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - No, if we did that, it means that we were not fighting for the civilians, we were not guilty of such offence.

Justice Marcus Jones - How long were you at the Brookfields Hotel.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - We went there in the year 2000.

Justice Marcus Jones - How long were you there?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Till 2003.

Justice Marcus Jones - Could you describe how your days were at the Brookfields hotel when you were lack of supply?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - When we were called by Hinga Norman, he neglected us; it was only the inmates who sometimes assisted us. We were there when the government said that they wanted the building. We were given Le10, 000 and a bag of rice.

Justice Marcus Jones - Some people say that they were equally afraid of you just like the rebels.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - In spite of the fact that the country is small, as the saying goes “one bonga fish spoil the whole fish” but if you look into the matter we were not guilty of such offence.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell me what you were doing before you joined the Kamajor.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - I was a farmer.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell me the type of training you received before you joined the Kamajor.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Were trained to maneuver and to hide from our enemies.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell us who were responsible for the training? Your commander?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - The man was taken from Bo, he was an ex soldier called Dumbuya.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell us about the composition of the unit, were there smalls boys recruited.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - When we started initially, we did not recruit children, because we did not want to go against the wishes of civilians.

Comm. Sooka - Can you tell us some of the atrocities you did to the rebels?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - According to my testimony, we joined the CDF, in the year, 1997 , they entered unexpectedly, some of our colleagues were abducted, I went to the war front only once, the second time I attempted to go that was when I sustained this injury.

Comm. John Kamara - Did I hear you say Burkina Faso, NPFL rebels, and the soldiers were fighting them, and they were chased out by the soldiers? You also mentioned that after these people were chased out, our soldiers too join force and fought alongside with them.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Yes,

Comm. John Kamara - did I hear you say that the CDF, stood firm to defend the country and have support from government.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Yes, they usually send us some rice.

Comm. Sooka - Many of the witness indicated that they suffered from the CDF as they did from the rebels group, can you tell something about that?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Like I told you, it was not a secret, the country is small but it is very deep, I was staying in a different area, I only knew about myself, if they committed atrocities, I don't know because I was not with them. I made a parable earlier "one bonga fish spoil all of the fish". You should not fight for civilians and at the same time harass them. If you go back to my village nobody will tell you that the CDF committed any atrocities there, now I am willing to go back to my village.

Comma Sooka - You mentioned Hinga Norman, and you know that he had been indicted in the Special Court to answer for the atrocities caused by the Kamajors.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - I can't tell you, the reason for which Hinga Norman was arrested. I cannot say I was against or I am happy, because I do not know the crime he has committed. So I can't say anything concerning that.

Comm. Sooka - So to your knowledge, you can testify that your own group of CDF, did not commit any atrocities, like burning of houses, looting?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara:- As you are sitting down, and hear that enemies are approaching you and when they came they took all your property you would be considered as enemy to that person. We were only defending the civilians not to harass them. We did not rape. God is our witness.

Martien - How long have you been in that group, since you were recruited before you sustain that injury?

Ibrahim - We were trained in 1998, and I sustained the injury in that same year.

Martien - How many months?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara:- I said it earlier, it was only two months.

Martien - How many men were recruited in this unit?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - According to registration for training in our chiefdom, we were 316, but some of them did not continue.

Martien - Do you know whether other chiefdoms recruited CDF?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Yes

Martien - Who was the highest commander?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Hinga Norman

Martien - Did you meet him during this training?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - He promised to visit but I can't tell whether he was there after I sustained my injury.

Martien - Who was the person next to him?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Dumbuya

Martien - Can you tell me his rank?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - I can't tell.

Martien - Can you tell us something about the Paramount Chief?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - We did not tell him everything, when our colleagues were killed that was the time we went to inform him.

Martien - Did the paramount played any role in recruiting and training?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara:- No, the only thing he did was that he gave us material support by providing cow for us when we were passing out.

Martien - You said you were involved in two attacks with the rebels.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - yes

Martien - I would like you to tell us something about the attacks.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - On the first attack, one of our colleagues was killed, so we had to retreat because we were not properly armed.

Comm. John Kamara - We want you to ask us any questions you wish to ask.

Ibrahim - my question goes to you, is it bad that when we fight for our country, we were left out? We defended our country and they have forgotten about us.

Comm. John Kamara - I can't answer, and I don't think any one of us will be in place to answer this question.

Bishop Humper - You said that you were not cared for, what we want from you is to have your testimony, and in our final report all that you have said will be taken into consideration.

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: I wanted to say something, later the former VP called us to a meeting and said that they will prepare a pension scheme for us but up till now we have heard nothing from them.

Comm. John Kamara - Do you have any recommendation or question to ask?

Ibrahim Brima Kamara: - Earlier, I said, our children are not going to school, we want assistant from the government. We are appealing that they put up some structure for us as they did for other amputees. We want government to assist in

medication because we are now sick and we don't have money to take care of ourselves. We also want the pension scheme to be in effect.

Comm. John Kamara - I thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Abdul K. Kamara:

Witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the presiding commissioner, Commissioner John Kamara.

Testimony

I thank you Mr. Chairman, and members of the Commission. I want to grave you indulgence to forgive me for what I am about to say if it is not conducive in the terms of this commission. I want to start by quoting what the President Tejan Kabba said "Peace is a process, it is not as some people seeing it, a single act." I will quote again what Kadie Sesay said "Peace, it has become categorical, if we deny it means that we want to destroy" I want to draw your attention in a proverb in the Bible "train up a child the way he should grow so that he will not depart from it" train your child so that he will not become a rebel. "Every new born child is clean like a new pig" a saying by our Prophet Mohamed. After the child had been badly disciplined, they will begin to blame the teacher, from the teacher to mother, from the mother, to the father, from the father to the police.

I was in Kambia in 1995, I heard that the rebels wanted to attack, so I left for Port Loko, I was there again when they said that rebels were going to attack Port Loko so I left there and went to Lunsar. I was there again when I heard that rebels wanted to attack that village, all my properties were burnt down, I left there, walked for 15 miles to Waterloo, I had a very nasty experience. I came to stream, I had no money so I had to sell one of my Arabic suit which I bought it for Le30, 000 but I sold it for Le6,000 for me to cross over. When I went to Waterloo, I went straight to the ECOMOG base and reported the matter and after that I went down to Freetown, later I went to Guinea, after the election I heard some information and I had to come back to Freetown. I went straight to State House, I met the Chief of Protocol, I told him that I wanted to see the President but he said that there are people who had come to see the President for two weeks. In such I told him that I have come to relay an important message to the President for national issue. He said that I must tell him the message and he will pass on the message to him. I refuse, I said that it is only the President that I wanted to see

and talk to. I left there in anger, and headed for his house at Juba, I saw the security and explained my mission to them. I sent my brother-in-law to buy me a piece of paper and wrote a letter to the late 1st lady. I do not know whether she got that letter, I sat there until the President came. I greeted him he answered me but he couldn't pick me up, after he entered I open the gate and entered. I was interrogated by the security and he told me that "the Pa is just coming back and he is tired." I persisted that I must see the President for national issue, I said that I have spent over Le30, 000 to come and relay this information.

I told them that they must go and tell the President that somebody has come from Guinea, I want to see him. I told them that they are married women; they have been married to all the presidents before.

I was later called to see the President; I wanted to tell him all that had happened to me. I asked him that if he knew Honorable Hassan Conteh, he went to Kambia to campaign for the SLPP; he told me that you were contesting. I have known him for the past 30 years that was the time he asked me my name.

After that I went to Guinea, a few months later he was overthrown, I was in Guinea when he went there, I was unable to see him because of security reasons, two weeks later I heard that 18 soldiers have been killed by Kamajors. The other time I heard that 30 soldiers have been killed by kamajors. I came down to Freetown.

I heard sporadic shooting, with very abusive language. When I opened the door, the said "you bastard," they went upstairs and said that we must all come down, and they said we must sing "we want peace" we did that for the whole night, they were based at Patton Street, Savage Squire. When they wanted to loot they would tell us to go upstairs, after we would be ordered to come down, that was how we suffered for two weeks, one of my brothers was killed in Kambia. They ask one man who we were staying with for money, he said he has no money and he was stabbed with a bayonet. Then they came to me and asked me for money, I told them that they have attacked me several times, but at that time I was communicating with my God, I told them I have no money if they like they should kill me, they called me "popay" I told them that I am not there father.

I want to tell you that every Sierra Leonean is wicked, people in authority are responsible for all that had happened.

I told them that everybody present in that hall is a rebel, if I don't proved it they must kill me
I gave them instances.

Mr Chairman that VP is a rebel, that minister is a rebel, in fact they are worst than the rebels in the bush, why, because I am going to kill

During the fast month I did not break my fast, some people did, I went around town to view the area, some ECOMOG were killed and the uniform was worn by the rebels, I saw so many dead people. I was up stairs, when I saw a Nigerian business man, being killed, he was burnt down, the same place again, they said that one man was a rebel, he was shot dead, even when he produce his identity card to prove himself.

Money were stolen from the Ministry of Education, over Le15 billion, some of these ministers have sent their children to Europe to further their studies.

You talk about sustainable peace when people are stealing government money, they are the rebels.

Everybody in this country, all the fighting force, you belong to any ethnic groups, we are all rebels, and we must all change our attitude. I want this Commission to tell these people to change, and it must start from the authorities, the average Sierra Leoneans should learn from this war.

I want to stop so far.

Comm. Torto - You made a statement and spoke about looting, but in your verbal testimony you diverted from what you have said, you said that the rebels forced their way into you compound.

Comm. Marcus Jones- I hope that by expressing your views you will be feeling a little bit better now. I want to know what prompted you to run away to Guinea.

Abdul K. Kamara: - I don't want to be killed.

Bishop Humper - the leader of evidence will meet with you for further details.

Comm. Sooka - We look forward to see you when we go to the phase of thematic hearing and would like to take a statement from you.

Abdul K. Kamara:- I want to say all these things in public.

Comm. John Kamara - Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Abdul K. Kamara: - To what extent will you tell the truth to this nation?

Prof John Kamara - If the people are ready to testify in this Commission.

Abdul K. Kamara: - How are we going to reconcile?

Prof John Kamara - Reconciliation in the context as you refer to the President, reconciliation is an ongoing process, the Commission will start it and it would be continued by the community, it will have to go a long way.

WITNESS NAME: Tamba Ngaujah:

The witness was sworn on oath by the presiding commissioner, Comm. Prof. John Kamara.

TESTIMONY:

I say thank you all that you make it possible for me to be here, we have been praying and indeed God has answered our prayers. Before I proceed I want us to observe a minute silent for my colleagues who have lost their lives during this war.

I am Tamba, I came from Kono District. I recall I don't think that I am by myself. The first thing I want to tell you, since the war started in 1991 in Sierra Leone, I was the first victim of amputation, I am now roaming the streets of Freetown, in search of food, but I thank God, as long as there is life, there is hope, I believe God.

In 1991 when the war break out in Sierra Leone, sometimes in 1991, military men were deployed to our areas, they met our Paramount Chief and informed him that they have been deployed but they were not sons of that chiefdom, but they asked for people who know the area for assistant. At that time I was a hunter, so we were handed over to the military. Unfortunately in 1992, the rebels attacked our village and I was captured. I had an identification paper with inscription Hunter. They saw it and said that we were the people they wanted to apprehend. They said when they went to attack, they were killed by these hunters, so they said they will not spare our lives, we were four in number. It was about 4 in the morning when we were captured, we suffered, and one commander told us that he is called C.O Trouble. We were with them, when the commander asked us few questions; he asked why we were joining the military to fight against them. He said we were only paid 10, 000 and a bag of rice, we were suppose to be earning over Le.250. 000 and that if they took over the soldiers will enjoy. He said that the hunters will be killed. At the time they said that we were going to be killed, we were lined up and our hands were placed on stone; The killer came with his machete, cut off the head of one man, the second man was squeezed until he died, the next man's head was be chopped off, I was the last. When it

was my turn, there were some arguments, and then he said it now his turn and he wants to play with blood. After the arguments, the commando said that they must not do anything to me. They must release me for a while. The commando decided, and called his secretary he was a teacher at Bunumbu College, he told him to write a note, he said "we the RUF, we are freedom fighters, if you see anything we are responsible, after this, Kono District would be captured, in two weeks time we will head to Freetown" The letter was placed in an envelope tied around my neck; there was also another argument that any soldier captured should be killed. It was a command, they said that they have killed three of my colleagues; they were not going to take it lying down. The last order was that they should cut my left hand off, they chopped my left hand but the machete was not sharp and he said that I was a strong man. They must chop off my hands by all means; my bone was smashed to pieces. After that, my hand was chopped off and I saw my hand on the ground jumping. I was unconscious and after I became conscious, I saw both of my hands chopped off. I tried to get up but I was unable, my hands were bleeding profusely, I then realized that I was losing sight, but that was my area, after that I went into a bush and saw a stream and fell into the water, hoping that the bleeding will stop. I was there until morning, I was bleeding, I had to stay in the bush for three days, until I found my way, out of the bush and came to the nearest base of our colleagues. I was apprehended thinking that I was a rebel, they told me that they had overran the rebels, but some people were killed and amputated, but they never knew it was me.

I was taken to Major, now Colonel Davies, who ordered his boys to take me to the war front hospital. I met the doctor who bandaged my hands and gave me some drugs. The soldiers were surprised, saying that they had never seen such cases since the war broke out. The major said that I should be taken to Freetown for proper medication, they used the vehicles in which the traders had wanted to bring their goods to Freetown; it was taken from them because of my condition, bad odour has started coming off my body, I entered the vehicle, there was stench all over the vehicle, the driver smoke almost a packet of 555. I was taken to 34 Military Hospital and the operation was carried out.

In 1993, my colleagues sent a letter to enquire about me, the CDS told me that I would be enlisted into the Army, and said that as from that day I was enlisted in Army as a full SLA officer. After the training my colleagues were sent to war front. From May 1993, I was promoted to the rank of Lance Corporal before Bio handed over power to Pa Kabba, I was promoted to full corporal. From 1993 to date I am still enrolled in the army.

Whilst I was in the hospital in 1997, they started amputation, I was taken from the 34 to console victims at Connaught, I told them that since we were victims our only hope was with God and nobody else, the first few months they will be ready to assist you but after a while they would not. Before when I called my daughter, she will run to answer to my call but now when I call her she will tell me to wait.

After listening to my advice, some of them were annoyed; a little girl asked me whether her hands will grow again and I cried. As time went on, they realized my advice, and with prayers, some of them are saying thanks to God because NGOs have taken care of them now, each one of them has now been resettled. When I went to register, they told me that I am an SLA, government should be responsible for our problems. I appealed to them for assistance but they refused. I commit everything to the Lord in prayer. I heard information from one man saying that the SLA were the first to amputate people's hand. I was the first person to be amputated. After my amputation then the SLA started retaliating.

My children are there, I am the only one responsible for them. I only had some assistant from some of my personal friends, but I put my thrust in God Almighty. If I continue to call on God, I will achieve. I thank you very much.

Marcus Jones - We are sorry for your horrible experience in life, it was a miracle that you were not killed, once there is life there is hope. You were amputated in 1992 that was a long while, I wonder why they were not healed

Tamba Ngaujah: - I have received my healing but I bandaged it because if anything touches it I feel pain. I bandage my hand for protection, there is no sore on it.

Marcus Jones - Have you been rejected when you applied for artificial limb?

Tamba Ngaujah: - At that time it was locally made, the foreign ones were expensive, the local ones were very heavy, I cannot use them.

Comm. Satang - You said that in 1991, you joined the army as a vigilante; I want you to tell me more about that group.

Tamba Ngaujah: - When I was recruited I was staying in my chiefdom.

Comm. Jow - How many of you were recruited?

Tamba Ngaujah: - We were about 30 in number.

Bishop Humper - We all know that you were the first person to be amputated. What you have told us about accommodation is a pressing issue. What we would want to know, is why you were not helped by the NGOs?

Tamba Ngaujah: - I told you earlier on, that it was because I was an SLA soldier

Bishop Humper - Have you spoken about this issue to your senior in the Army?

Tamba Ngaujah: - It seems as if nobody wants to know about me in the Army.

Comm. Torto - Were you able to identify the group of people who did this to you?

Tamba Ngaujah: - It was the RUF, in 1997, when the military coup took place, I saw the man who said that they must use a sharp instrument, it was the very man who said that they must kill me. When I saw him, I asked him if he knew me, he said no, I went on to explain to him, if he could remember when they were fighting, when they went on a patrol, he said he remember when they killed and amputate some people. He said yes, he said that the man whose hands were amputated is dead; I told him that it was me. He asked for forgiveness, he said even if you don't forgive us, it has already happened and nothing will change it. That same day, I went to Cockerill to one of my boss A.A Sesay, luckily Mosquito, told him to shake hands with me. He said he knew me. He said they heard about me. The information was sent to them. He thought that I was dead. He said if they succeed I will be the number one person to help.

Comm. Torto - From that time you never saw him again.

Tamba Ngaujah: - No

Comm. Torto - At the time you saw him, what group did he belong to?

Tamba Ngaujah: - Peoples Army

Comm. Sooka - I want you to tell me the age of those perpetrators.

Tamba Ngaujah: - The man who chopped off my hands was about 25 years, it was only because of the gun, I would have put up a fight.

Comm. Sooka - Did they give you the reasons for cutting off your hands?

Tamba Ngaujah: - They said that it was because we assisted the soldiers to fight them.

Professor John Kamara - Where these people, Mende, Fullah, Temne, were they Sierra Leoneans?

Tamba Ngaujah: - The man who chopped off my hands, his accent was a Liberian, I don't know whether he was pretending, but when we met in 1997, he spoke krio very well.

Prof. John Kamara - You said that the artificial limb was expensive, do you know the cost of it?

Tamba Ngaujah: - I don't know, one thing is if any human being loses any part of his body it becomes artificial, the only thing we need is assistance. If I am

retired from the Army I need financial support, if people are seeing me roaming the street begging it is not out of desire but out need. My first son is attempting the WASC exams this year, my second daughter is attempting the NPSE, so at this stage as regards the artificial limbs it is fine but I need your support, I need accommodation, I need financial support to take care of my children.

Martien - You said the amputees Association had refused to help you.

Tamba Ngaujah: - We had an association in 1997, unfortunately, our Chairman by then was arrested, the government decided that all amputees must be removed from the Army, luckily for me I was given two days pass. When I wanted to return I heard that all the victims were taken to Pademba Road, until 1999 when the rebels came, some of them lost their lives, our Chairman after the release he was seen over SLBS speaking on behalf of the rebels, he was on his way to Ferry Junction when he was caught by some youths who branded him as rebel, before the ECOMOG could intervene the kamajors had shot him. From that time our association collapsed.

Prof. John Kamara - I want to ask you whether you have any questions to ask.

Tamba Ngaujah: - I don't have any question to ask, but to make an appeal to the Commission if they would enroll us in any organization to help alleviate our problems, because we the victims have three major problems: accommodation, financial and our children's education. I know that this Commission your signature is very important, both at the national and international level.

Prof. John Kamara - We will submit our report to the government.

WITNESS NAME: Kadiatu Fofanah:

TESTIMONY:

My name is Kadiatu Fofanah, I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by the Presiding Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

TESTIMONY

I say thanks to the Commission for inviting me here today, things had been very difficult with me.

In 1998, when ECOMOG bombarded the city, I went to Makeni, with my children and my husband. We were there for about six months. We returned after things had quietened down, but we lost everything. In 1999 January 6th my husband woke me up and said that rebels had entered the city. There was sporadic shooting all around the area. My husband said that we must leave the area and went into hiding in the west end of Freetown but I told him to be patient; so we had to sleep in the house. The house I was staying, I own it, when I was doing my business that was when I put up that structure.

In the morning, we the women went to the market to cook for our children. At night the rebels were jubilating, they came from Cline Town unto Up Gun, telling people to dance. When I saw them they said I must not run and if it was Tejan Kabba I wouldn't run. They said we should dance with them. They said this time if they do not say the truth Freetown will turn into dust. As soon as it was night, we were ordered to come out of our houses to dance. On the 12th they started burning houses at Fourah Bay, my husband said that we must leave, but I told him that I don't know anywhere to go. At that time I had some money on me, over Le200, 000. My first son Mohamed, said "mama how are you going to leave us alone in the house." I told him to go with me, but he refused, saying that somebody must be in the house to watch. The landlord ordered us to not leave the house. That the situation became tense and my husband advised that we should leave the area immediately. I said that this might be the last and he said that the war was tense, so we ran out, I had seven children. When we approached Kennedy Street, the rebels passed us and my son told me to lie down on the ground. I said 'my child'. As we went to Emmanuel Street, we met three boys who had already been killed. My child said that we must move on. We went and we used Kissy Road Cemetery by-pass to come to Black Hall Road. I told him not to go but he insisted and he said that his dad had gone. I told him "you are crying for your dad what about me." The rebels had mounted a check point at the point we decided to take a rest.. I told him to talk to the rebel, he refused and then I told him that we must go back. I saw one rebel by the name of "Born Naked", he helped us cross to the other part and that was the time I saw children I had never seen in this country. We arrived back home at around 4p.m. but I met none of my family members. At about 5 p.m my husband came with three of the children. He said that he had been fetching water for the rebels. He helped them cook and he was released. From the 12th of January, we were

at Rose Street. On the 18th over a thousand rebels, ordered us to come out of the house. They said we were politicians. They said they are going to kill all of us and we started crying. We asked them what we have done and they told us that we were dancing for Pa Kabba. One of the rebels said that we must take all the money we had with us. One woman said that we must contribute and we ended up giving them Le500, 000; they said that we had money. They said that they are leaving now but the evils ones were behind, "you can't compromise with them".

By that time my husband had taken my children to Leicester, I told him that I was unable to climb the hill, at that time Ibrahim was seven months old. I gave him Le50, 000 to go with the children, but he refused. I told him that we were not born on the same day. But he refused. I told him that if we all perished the same day it will be pathetic. About seven o'clock on the 20th of January, the evil rebels came, they said "bastard." They said they wanted to set fire on our houses. Before we could realize what was happening, they hit one man on the back. The house we were leaving in belonged to one rebel, so they said they must not burn the house because it belongs to the colonel. We were taken to another place where they set fire on the house, we never knew who opened the door, and they started saying that "so you don't want to die". All of us came out trying to escape. They gathered all of us together and separated the men from the women. A rebel called junior was ordered to open fire on the men. I started weeping, saying that I am going to lose my life. After that they came to the women, they said that they were going to send a message to Tejan Kabba. I was the last I was carrying my baby, and an 18 years of age boy came and chopped me; he wanted to chop my boy's head, I grabbed the knife from him but I was unable to get up, I looked at my son, it was night, there was nobody around. Our house had been burnt. One man came and I told him to help me, I told him to take my child the rebel helped me, I dragged myself like snake, I laid down with my child amongst the corpses. I pray that it will never happen in my life again. I took my son in my arms and I said to myself that my husband had told me to go with him. At night some dogs came around to bite my feet but I took stones to hit them. In the morning some came around and said that they wanted to kill my son but one of them said that they must not kill him. Later an SLA was passing and I told the SLA that he should shoot me, I was there again when one rebel said that he wanted to take my child with him but he was afraid of further attack. By that time, they had set fire on the house and the heat of the fire came on me until the house was completely burnt down. The rebel said I am lucky, and I told him that was the reason why I wanted him to shoot me.

I saw a man whom I knew his name was Pa Foday; he said "Kadiatu are you there?" I told him to take my son with him. He said I should wait, by then I had Le5,000 I had tied in my lappa. I knew that I was going to die. He went and informed the commando that I am his wife. He said that he must take my son from me. He was taken to the commando, I overheard them saying that they have contributed in making them loose the war, because that was not their initial aim. He called on five rebel women and ordered them to wash my son, and said

that they must carry me. By then the alpha jet was flying, so I was rejected at that point. Two rebels were coming from the hills saying that I was lying with my big buttocks we were the one enjoying Tejan Kabba.

At around 2 p.m., some SLA soldiers came to my aid, they gave me some medication, because at that time I was half naked, I ask them for water, the said that I will die if I drank water. They looked around for food but Ibrahim could not take anything solid. There was no breast milk to breast feed Ibrahim. I heard Margaret shouting "Kadiatu", I told her that I was in the room, I told her to go because the rebels were around. She sneaked and reported the matter to my foster child.

My husband and my son were informed about my condition and they came to take me.

Also some other women went to take their husbands, but they were told not to enter the house. I was lifted from the ground, somebody carried Ibrahim on his back, the alpha jet was flying but my son continue to carry me; by the cemetery we met thousands of dead people. But God gave me the strength to sustain me. They gave the driver Le10, 000, we went to Connaught, I was taken to the theatre, and my feet were placed on a board. We were there for three days, not knowing that the medicine was not good enough. I told my husband to plead with the doctors to kill me. My husband consoled me. He said I must trust in God. The following morning, Dr Maggie, took me back to the theatre, applied another medicine, but thanks to our Christian brothers who were praying for us, the pain subsided. We were there for one month when the MSF staff came; they said that there was no alternative but to cut my feet because they had gone bad. My husband consoled me, 'if my feet were chopped off what will happen to my children?' all my relatives wept. On March 15th, I was taken to the theatre where they chopped my feet. The doctors said that they will give me artificial limbs. After that I was taken up to annex, after regaining consciousness after the operation, I turned around but I did not see my feet. I almost died. They prayed fervently for me. When I asked about my husband they said he had left, because he thought I was dead, I was there for one month. They ask me what I wanted to do now; my house had been burnt down. They later took me to my house, for one year. My husband started putting different attitude towards me. So I decided to go to the camp. I met the Chairman who told me that there was no place for me. But I persisted, I went back to Connaught Hospital, I told them that I now wanted to go to the camp. I was taken to the camp with the MSF staff. I went to stay at the camp, when my husband came, I told him that I am an amputee; I told him that in the future, he will be disappointed but the government will always take care of me. After three days he came back to collect me saying that people will say that he was ungrateful, so I refused to go with him. By that time I say thanks to God, people were coming from all over the world to assist us. We then engaged in petty trading, Red Cross came to our aid, after that Cause Canada came to teach us some skills.

The white man had promised that he would give me artificial feet. A woman Georgiana from America came to my aid, she promised that she will put my case across; she said she will come back for me. In two months time, she sent a letter to me that she will come and collect me, indeed I went with them, and the white doctors said that they were unable to do so.

I started going through my Koran and I realized that the artificial leg, I will benefit from them, so I insisted to come back to Freetown, so that is how I came back, I have now got my house, my toilet, some people are helping my children and that is why I say I am ready to forgive. I am appealing to donor agencies to be assisting us, by visiting us. Murray Town is not an amputee camp, they must be looking out for us. We were not born beggars, we were ashamed to beg, so far I think I will stop here.

Marcus Jones - I admire your courage, in spite of everything, I would call your story a successful story, I believe that quite a number of people have heard your speech. . As a woman I am curious to know what happened to your husband.

Kadiatu Fofanah: - Nothing happened to him he was with the children.

Marcus Jones - Where is he now?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - He is staying with another woman.

Commissioner Sooka - If I could take you back to the incident, do you know how many men and women died on that day?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - 30 men who were killed on the scene, I can recall that, I was the only one that was chopped all over my body. A woman's husband was killed; another woman was also chopped off, the others fled for their lives.

Commissioner Sooka - Can you identify any one of these perpetrators?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - It was at night time so I cannot recognize any one, but the boy who chopped me was about 18 years.

Commissioner Sooka - Can you remember their names?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - I don't have there proper names, they were called all sorts of nick names, Colonel Cut foot and the likes.

Commissioner Torto – We appreciate your courage and willingness to forgive.

Comm. Satang - Can you tell us something about this boy who chopped your feet, was he in uniform?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - He was wearing black trousers and t-shirt.

Commissioner Satang - Did you belong to any political party before this problem?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - No, I was a petty trader, selling cooked food.

Comm. John Kamara - Have you seen any of the abductees after this incident?

Kadiatu Fofanah: - Yes , Ya Marie is back she was pregnant, but she lost the baby, another girl also was pregnant but she lost the baby. The others who were abducted during the January 6th invention escaped when they were at Calaba Town.

John Kamara - We are happy about the successes you have made unlike some of your colleagues. I would like you to ask any questions or make recommendations to this Commission.

Kadiatu Fofanah: - I want to ask a question on behalf of the amputees. What should we do to cater for our hospital and medical needs? We would not like you to leave the entire burden to us for taking care of our children.

Ibrahim always said that he will retaliate in the future. We are appealing to the government not to neglect the children of the amputees.

We who are sitting on wheel chairs, must be supplied proper wheel chair, we have seen wheel chairs in Europe which can take you to a long distant without being pushed. We have requested for a bus but they refused to give us. In New York, they have access buses for disable people. We are pleading, some of us are business like people, and we like to engage ourselves in petty trading. If I had got no children when I went to America, I wouldn't have come back. So you please help us so that we can forgive with all our hearts.

Professor John Kamara - All that you have said will be taken into consideration. We thank you very much.

APPENDIX 3 – PART TWO

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC)

TRANSCRIPTS OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

HELD IN THE DISTRICT HEADQUARTER TOWNS

PORT LOKO DISTRICT

DATE: 29th April, 2003.

COMMISSIONERS: MARCUS JONES AND SYLVANUS TORTO

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: ABDULAI CHARM

WITNESS NAME: Ibrahim Bundu Kanu

WITNESS NO: 001

REFERENCE NO: 1/78/535

The chairman welcomed all for coming and further explained the goals of the TRC. She further presented the Commissioners to the public she said they have seven Commissioners but they are divided into sections to work with their mandates. And called the first witness to take his seat, He was asked to introduce him self. Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones, the presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

My name is Ibrahim Bundu Kanu. I sit in front of you this morning to tell you what happened on the 8th June 1995. It was 8 pm when the rebels attacked Port Loko and I was in my house at Falaba Road when I heard the first gunshot; followed by continuous shooting. My family and I ran into the house. The firing became intense as the rebels drew closer to our house and by then it was raining. The rebels entered my house but my family and I escaped through the back door and hide in the toilet. They entered the house and looted our properties; the remaining things they could not make away with were placed on the mattress and burnt. However, a man called Pa Santigie Bangura was the only person brave enough to stay behind and succeeded in putting out the fire although it was too late. In the morning, I left Port Loko for Lokomasama. On 20th August 1999, the rebels attacked Lokomasa and they burnt down all the houses. As I am talking to you now, I have no home; I'm almost living in a shack. After that, I left Port Loko for Lungi together with my family and we were assisted by the Red Cross. In 2001 at around the time the DDR process had commenced, we came back to Port Loko. During the disarmament in Port Loko, I met a lady by the name of Haja who was an ex-combatant. She was narrating how she and the rebels burnt our house and ate our food. She did not know that the house they burnt belongs to my family. I became furious. I would have killed her but was afraid of the reaction of the government. I thought that war victims should benefit but it seems that only the perpetrators are being cared for in spite of all their deeds whilst the victims are left to languish in agony. As victims we have nothing to do but to look up to God. I find it very difficult to educate my children. I depend on friends for my survival. This is my experience during the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were there women amongst the attackers?

Bundu: From the voices I heard, it was a mixture of men and women

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How were they dressed?

Bundu: It was night time and I could not identify the clothes they were wearing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us the real name of the Haja you spoke about? Can you also locate her?

Bundu: This Haja I was referring to was an ex-combatant and I cannot locate her but her name was Haja Kamara.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Let me go back to the issue about giving help to the perpetrators. When the war was raging, people wanted peace at all cost. When peace came, these rebels were to be integrated into society and to be made useful. For that reason, they have to be trained so that they can fit into society, so that your children and my grand children will be able to go to school in peace and not loose more houses. I hope you will appreciate what is happening and whatever is being given to them will not be forever. When there is peace we will be able to have development in our country and you will benefit from it.

Commissioner Torto: Can you tell what group does your attackers belong to?

Bundu: I can't tell. Even though we found military caps the following day it was difficult to tell what group they belong to.

Commissioner Torto: What language did they speak?

Bundu: They spoke Krio.

Commissioner Torto: Can you tell if there were foreigners amongst them?

Bundu: It was difficult to tell.

Commissioner Torto: Were you the only one who suffered or were there other people who suffer during this attack?

Bundu: I was not the only sufferer there were other people who suffered and several houses were burnt down and people drowned along the Port Loko River.

Commissioner Torto: Whilst you were running away to Lokomasama was your family with you?

Bundu: I ran with my children and my wife who was pregnant. We walked about 25 miles.

Commissioner Torto: Would you be ready to meet with these people who did these things to you and reconcile with them?

Bundu: If the Commission says so, I am ready to forgive them.

A. Cham: The Haja you mentioned, were you able to talk to her to find out the other people who were with her?

Bundu: At that time I didn't think about it.

A. Cham: During the statement you mentioned one Abdul Keista Bangura. Can you tell what happened to him?

Bundu: Abdul Keista Bangura was my neighbour. His house was also burnt.

A. Cham: Were you able to identify the assailants?

Bundu: I was unable to identify them.

A. Cham: Can you roughly tell me the age of Haja when you met with her?

Bundu: She was around 20 -22 at the time I met her.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions for the Commission?

Bundu: Yes I have a few questions. The first question is, as a Commission what recommendations will you make to government with regards victims' plights?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Commission does not make recommendations on victim's behalf. What recommendations do you want the Commission to include in its report?

Bundu: Will the Commission make its report public?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The report will be made public and your name will be included as one of the witnesses who testified.

Bundu: There are people who are ignorant and apprehensive in coming forward to testify to the TRC and they are victims of this war. How can they come forward and testify to what happened to them?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In my explanation, I told you that it is not possible to meet all the people in all the villages. In any case, there are only seven Commissioners and we are divided into two groups. We have many people assembled hear today. I am sure if everyone is to go out and tell those who are not here about the work of the TRC, it will reach the people in the whole District. Also, I said before those with radios will be able to listen to the hearings and understand what is going on. Do you have more questions?

Bundu: I only have recommendations for the Commission. I want to recommend to Government that they should do all in their power to assist the victims as they did for the perpetrators for the sake of peace. I said this because most of the victims have their children who had left school because of the devastation of the war on the parents.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming.

**THE TRTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
DISTRICT HEARINGS
PORT LOKO DISTRICT
29th April, 2003.**

Commissioners: Marcus Jones and Sylvanus Torto.

Leader of evidence: Abdulai Charm

WITNESS NAME: ISHMAEL KANU

WITNESS NO: 002

REFERENCE NO: 1/78/521

TESTIMONY

The Presiding Commissioner swore the witness on oath. He was a Christian.

The testimony I am going to give is about what happened to me as an individual and not anybody else. When Port Loko was first attacked on the 8th June 1995. I left Port Loko for Kasirie town Samu chiefdom in the Kambia District. I stayed in Kasirie for two months and I decided to go back to Port Loko to collect my belongings. On My way to Port Loko, I didn't know there were rebels in the village. I walked a distance of 8 miles to Lungi and rested for sometime at Katoma. At Bundulai I met a friend with whom I attended the Ansarul Islamic Secondary School in Lungi. He had a bike. At that time, there were no vehicles plying the route to Port Loko. He eventually gave me a ride on his bike. On our way, we saw a checkpoint and I thought it was mounted by the SLA. I then saw a small boy emerged from the bush and grabbed the bike. The moment I had wanted to beat the boy, I saw a large crowd coming behind us. The boy ordered us to descend the bike and took the bike and went into the bush. Another small boy came and told us to lie on the ground on our backs. They searched us and I was having money (Le5,000) hidden in my pants. They took my cap and wore it; others remove our slippers and wore them. They dipped their hands into my pants and remove the money. Only God can tell how I felt. My friend was treated in like manner and we were left naked. They were carrying guns with no bullets. When I say bayonets in the guns, I had some relief. I asked God to save my life. We were beaten severely. After the beating, one of the rebels said there was no need to waste their time on us. He told them that we were the ones who asked the government to invite ECOMOG to kill them. I told them that I don't know ECOMOG. He ordered them to kill me. One of the rebels came from the bush saying that no instruction was given by Maskita to kill. They beat and slapped me and I became helpless. They were carrying sticks and guns with no bullets. They beat me and kicked me and I was bleeding through the nose, mouth and my entire body. We pretended as if we were dead and they departed. I raised my head and found my friend severely wounded and helpless. I dragged myself across to him and asked, "What do we do?" He replied, "We have to die here as there is no one to assist us". We saw another group coming our way and we had to had no where to go but to go back to Samu. We walked some distance and rested and arrived at Katoma along the Little Scarcies River at about 1 am in the morning. I knocked on the door of a friend and he ferried me over the Mambolo. On arriving at my aunt's house, she started crying when she saw the wounds on my body. I was admitted at Mambolo for 2 months. She called for my mum. I stayed in Mabololo for two months and returned to Kasirie.

Rebels again attacked the village this time it was during nighttime. They found me with a pack of cigarettes. I ran into the bush and slept in a hole with no clothes on and it was raining. Since then, I had been experiencing cold. In the morning, I went to the town and found the entire town looted. Fortunately for me I did not close my room and God did not lead them to my room. The rebels act was continuous, I then told my parents to leave Kasirie as I have once been beaten by rebels and do not want any repetition. We went into a nearby, I started experiencing the pains of

the beating. My mother took me to Kasirie. Upon examining my body, the doctor asked whether I fell from a tree or beaten. My father responded that I was beaten. The doctor told them if I had not gone on time for medical attention, I would have been dead. The doctor did well to save my life. On the day I was discharged from the hospital, I had a bout of cholera and my parents took me to the same doctor. He treated me and I recovered. I told my parents we should depart Lokomasama when I heard the disarmament was about to commence. We bade farewell to our host and came to Port Loko. Shortly thereafter I lost my father. This is my story.

QUESTIONS

Commissionerer Marcus-Jones: In your story, you mentioned a friend, what happened to him?

Ishmael: I noticed he had a wound on his leg.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you been able to trace him since then?

Ishmael: I have not been able to see him.

Commissioner Torto: You mentioned that the rebels said Maskita did not give those orders to kill and knowing that Maskita belongs to the RUF; do you want to say that the attackers were RUF?

Ishmael: Yes, they were RUF dressed in military pants and different shirts

Commissioner Torto: What was the name of the doctor who treated you? Was he an NGO, government or private doctor?

Ishmael: He was a private doctor and his name was Dr. Yandi.

Commissioner Torto: Can you locate him?

Ishmael: No

Torto: Did he request payments after your treatment?

Ishmael: Yes

Comm. Torto: How much

Ishmael: He requested fifty thousand leones, we negotiated and paid twenty-five thousand leones.

Martien: Can you clarify the year in which the event happened?

Ishmael: It was around 1997-1998

Martien: In your statement you mentioned that the rebels identified themselves as Westside Boys. Is this correct?

Ishmael: Yes.

Martien: Did they call themselves West Side Boys or did you imagine them to be west side boys.

Ishmael: I identified them as west side boys because that was the area they were residing.

Martien: Do you remember the government at that time?

Ishmael: Yes, it was the SLPP regime.

Martien: Was it before the coup by AFRC?

Ishmael: Yes

Martien: How old were these boys?

Ishmael: They were between the ages of 17 and 18 years.

Comm. Torto: What languages did they speak?

Ishmael: They spoke Mende, Temne and Limba.

Martien: You mentioned several attacks in this village, were children abducted?

Ishmael: No, they did not abduct any body they only looted properties.

Martien: Did they kill anybody?

Ishmael: No, they only looted.

Martien: Have you any consequences of the beaten you undergone?

Ishmael: I suffered internal pains and I have to see the doctor every three months.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Have you any question for the Commission?

Ishmael: I have one question. The commission has asked us to clear our minds what is the next step.

Comm. Marcus Jones: After clearing your mind I hope you feel better. You have done something for Sierra Leone by sharing your experiences. Whatever went wrong would be corrected and there would be no repetition of such. Do you have any question for the Commission?

Ishmael: No more questions.

Comm. Marcus Jones: What recommendations do you want the Commission to include in its final reports?

Ishmael: I want the government to assist all victims who suffered during the 10-year war.

Comm. Marcus Jones: Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with us. Your recommendations will be included in our reports.

WITNESS NAME: Aminata Sampa BANGURA

WITNESS NO: 003

REFERENCE NO: 1/78/528

TESTIMONY

My name is Aminata Sampa Bangura. I am a Muslim; Commissioner Marcus Jones administered the oath.

I was in a village called Romoria where I was married. One day I was in the village in our farm preparing millet for the evening meal when my husband called out to me to leave what I was doing because the rebels had attacked the village. I did not hear him clearly. By the time I got the message properly, I was face to face with the rebels. I had never seen a rebel before and they captured me. I was so frightened that I urinated on my pants. They captured me together with fourteen others. We were taken to the highway to board a vehicle but there was no vehicle plying the road. They then took us into the house of a Pa Keku Kamara. In this house, my co-wife was first called into a room and she was raped. One of them then called me into the room and asked me to have sex with him. I pleaded that I was a suckling mother; he could not hear my plea. He in fact threatened to kill my child if I don't do as he commanded me. I had no alternative but to accept. After sex he left me to call another woman. During the interval, I escaped through the back window and ran into the bush where I passed the night. In the morning, I traveled through the bush and met with my husband. We then traveled to Port Loko and stayed at Mrs. Fokie Sokoi's house. Whilst in Port Loko, I realized that my child was partially paralyzed. Madam Sokoi advised that we take the child to the government hospital. After the treatment, my child was still paralyzed. Eventually I lost the child. I started suffering from severe stomachache. I got pregnant on two occasions but lost both pregnancies, no known cause. I told my husband that I wanted to go to my brother in Freetown to seek medical attention. He agreed and I departed. Whilst in Freetown, my husband never came to visit or take me back with him. I got married to another man and I now have a child. After childbirth, I am still experiencing severe stomachache. As my husband lives in Benguema, things are very difficult for me here in Port Loko. I solely depend on my aunts and uncles. My sister and I are taking care of our widowed mother. This is all that I have to say.

QUESTION

Comm. Marcus-Jones: The other husband you married in Freetown, are you still husband and wife?

Aminata: Yes. He stays in Freetown and I stay in Port Loko.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Does he know that you are testifying to the Commission?

Aminata: Yes. I had long told him that whenever the Commission sits, I would be going to testify.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Did he agree with you?

Aminata: Yes.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: I hope other husbands will take the lead as Amanita's husband has done.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: The person you referred to be staying in Benguema, who is he?

Aminata: My present husband

Comm. Marcus-Jones: When you went to Freetown to seek medical attention, you mentioned that your husband did not visit you at any one time. Why didn't you come back to him?

Aminata: After a year has passed by and he did not visit me in Freetown, I came back to him but he did not sympathize with my situation, therefore I had to return to Freetown.

Comm. Torto: Can you remember your captors by their faces?

Aminata: I don't know them

Comm. Torto: Can you identify them if they face you?

Aminata: I can't because it was nighttime.

Comm. Torto: What languages did they speak?

Aminata: They spoke Mende, Temne and krio.

Comm. Torto: What fighting forces do they belong to?

Aminata: They were the West Side Boys.

Martien: What year did this happen?

Aminata: I cannot remember. Well I can only remember that it was during the second attack in Port Loko in 1998.

Martien: How old were you at the time of the attack?

Aminata: That was the time I had my third child. I will be 28 years of age this year.

Martien: You mentioned fourteen people captured. What happened to the others?

Aminata: I escaped after I was raped so I cannot tell what happened to the others.

Martien: Can you tell how many times you were raped and by how many men.

Aminata: I was raped by only one of them.

Martien: Can you tell the Commission what is your present health situation?

Aminata: I am not very healthy and I have not been getting proper medical attention. I'm only using native herbs.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: What is the health condition of this baby you are carrying?

Aminata: Fairly satisfactory.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Do you have any question for the Commission?

Aminata: Now that I have made my submission to the Commission, what is the Commission going to do.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: The Commission is going to include your testimony in its report to show one of the ways in which women suffered during the conflict. The Commission is mandated to report particularly on women and children and the Commission will be making recommendations from all what it is gaining from witnesses, particularly women and children in particular. During the war no matter where, women and children are always targeted and we hope our reward would be able to ease the problem in Sierra Leone.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Have you any other question?

Aminata: No.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation for a better life for women in Sierra Leone. This is your opportunity to say it now.

Aminata: Looking at all our sufferings, I propose that the Commission recommends to the government to assist women to regain their health and secondly to empower them.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for coming we appreciate your courage and we advise that you hold to yourself and baby

DATE: 29th April 2003

WITNESS NAME: Momoh Koroma

WITNESS NO: 004

REFERENCE NO: 1/78/531

TESTIMONY

My name is Momoh Koroma and I am a Christian. My story is this. My mother gave birth to ten of us. She had difficulties during childbirth. She lost nine of her children and I am the only survivor. The four other women my mother depended on are also dead. I had to join a society to feed my mother. When I joined this group, my father was left behind to care for my mum.

On 30th January 1998, the rebels attacked our village and we all had to run into the bush. My father was left behind and was killed. What surprised me most was that after they had killed my

father, the rebels went in search of me, shouting my name. I was hiding in the bush and did not answer. They finally found my sister and she led them to where I was hiding. I had no option but to follow them. At this time I never realized they had killed my father. They carried me to where my father was lying and ordered me to bury him. I asked some of my friends and other people around to help me bury my father in the bush. We collected his remains and buried him.

I cannot really recollect the faces of the attackers but they spoke Temne, Mende and Krio. They warned us not to be afraid of them but we should be afraid of ECOMOG and the Apha jet. I told them we are afraid of them because they had killed my father and do not know who the next person would be. My father had lots of herds; we were herders in our family. The rebels stayed in the village for more than two weeks, they looted all they can. After they had left, we left the village for Port Loko town. Presently, we are still in Port Loko and we are finding it very difficult to live.

QUESTIONS

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Thank you Momoh, I don't have any question for you

Comm. Torto: Can you remember the person that called you after the death of your father?

Momoh: I cannot remember. Those who came to carry me from the bush were four in number

Comm. Torto: Can you distinguish the fighting force that attacked your village? Where they Kamajors, RUF, Donsos, ECOMOG or SLA?

Momoh: I cannot distinguish them but they were wearing Tupac T-shirts, with military uniform tied around their waist.

Comm. Torto: If you could think properly, who you think the attackers were or which fighting force do you suspect they belong to.

Momoh: I suspected them to be RUF.

Martien: According to your statement, you mentioned that the rebels asked you to come to your father's house. Is that true?

Momoh: Yes.

Martien: What happened thereafter?

Momoh: When they killed my father they searched for my sister and she directed them to where I was hiding.

Martien: Did the rebels take you to your father's house?

Momoh: When they found us in the bush where we were hiding, they grabbed me and took me to my father's house. At that time, I did not know they had killed my father.

Martien: What did they do to you?

Momoh: They did not beat me up or treated me in any brutal way. All they asked was that I should bury my father, but I was afraid. They didn't cause any harm to the other members of my family. All they did was to loot. They looted rice, sheep, money equivalent to one drum of oil and the tape my father had.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions for the Commission

Momoh: Looking at the whole situation I am now an orphan. My father whom we depended on has been killed. My father's relations do not care about us. Therefore, I am asking the government to help us.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Are there any recommendations you would like to make?

Momoh: I am recommending that Government build houses for us so that we cannot continue to suffer.

**THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
DISTRICT HEARINGS
PORT LOKO**

DATE: 30TH APRIL 2003

WITNESS NAME: Hassan G. Kanu

WITNESS NO: 006

REFERENCE NO: 2/86/2128

TESTIMONY:

My name is Hassan G. Kanu. I am a Muslim. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto, the Presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

Opening prayers – Christian – the prayer was lead by Mrs. Manyeh, a chorus was sang “leh we tell am tenki”

Muslim - The Alfathia was recited.

TESTIMONY:

I am Hassan G. Kanu, I lived in a village called Mamusa. I stayed in this village for sometime, when I started hearing treats of rebel attack. We were convinced that the rebels would not attack the village. On the 2nd December 1998 we heard the rebels had attacked a village called Kabata. Since this village was a long way from our village, we were still convinced that the rebels would not reach our village. At night we saw a lot of people carrying luggage on their heads. When we ask them, they said the rebels had attacked their village but they did not see the rebels. They stopped at our village to rest.

I sat a while with the strangers, and then went into my room to sleep. By then my wife was pregnant she told me that she was going to her mother to give birth. At about 2pm on 3rd December 1998, I had wanted to ease myself, as I tried to open the door; I heard the sound of a radio. I was afraid to open the door however; it was my late headmaster and one of my colleagues who were outside the house. The headmaster called and told me not to be afraid; finally I got out of the room. I sat with them for sometime, the headmaster told others and myself to go to bed because he was also convinced that the rebels would not attack the village.

At that time, my wife was with her grandmother. As I was about to sleep, I heard the first gunshot and the first time to hear of a rebel attack in that village. The whole village was in a state of confusion. The rebels were uttering abusive languages and obscenities. I tried to open the lock, but couldn't because I was in a panic state. My intension then, was to open my room, so I could run to my wife in the next village. I went through the window. I was unable to take my belongings; I only had my shirt and a short on.

On the way, I met my wife in the bush, I asked her for the baby and she told me that the baby was with her grandmother.

At 5 pm, we came back to the village, I started looking out for my wife's grandmother and the grandmother was looking for my wife as well. At 9 am the following day, I was able to see the grandmother, I asked her for the child. She told me that she thought my wife had the child with her. I went to the house and I found out that the house had been burnt down. When I entered the house, I saw chaff and some tiny bones. The child was burnt in the house. The child was exactly 10 months old at that time. He was born on 3rd of February 1998 and killed on the 3rd December 1998.

QUESTION

Comm. Torto – Thank you for your testimony and we appreciate your coming forward to testify. We are sorry for the loss of your child. Can you tell us who the attackers were?

Hassan: I cannot identify them during that night, but the following morning when we came back to the village, I saw on the burnt walls the inscription "RUF/AFRC".

Comm. Torto: What were your headmaster and friend doing outside your veranda?

Hassan: They were killing time before going to sleep.

Comm. Torto – What was the distance from your house to their houses?

Hassan: We were very close. We shared a big compound.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: We are sorry that you lost your baby; we are glad that you have come to share your experience, was that the only time the rebels attacked your village?

Hassan: Yes

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Apart from your house, how many other houses were burnt down?

Hassan: All the houses in the village were burnt down.

Comm. Torto: Was your wife in the house during the attack?

Hassan: We were not in the same house. She was with her grandmother.

Martien: How many people were killed in the attack apart from your child?

Hassan: Another child was also burnt in a house and five others killed.

Martien: – What was the name of your child?

Hassan: His name was Santigie Kanu

Comm. Torto: – We have asked you so many questions; do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Hassan: I have one question. What is the essence of this Commission?

Comm. Torto: – It is a good question. It is unfortunate that you were not around yesterday when we explained the reasons for the formation of this Commission. It was formed with the aim of forestalling a recurrence of what happened during the ten-year war.

Comm. Torto: – Do you have any other question?

Hassan: No

Comm. Torto: What recommendations would you want to make to the Commission that we may include in our report?

Hassan: My recommendation to the Commission for onward transmission to the government is, I know that my child is already dead. No amount of money can be equivalent to the life of my child. My only recommendation is for the government to assist in the development of my village and the community as a whole especially, as the rains is fast approaching.

Comm. Torto: – We thank you, but the TRC Act does not give us the mandate to compensate victims, the Commission does not have the money to give for reparation. We can recommend to government to assist victims of the war. Your testimony will be studied closely and necessary recommendations will be made.

DATE: 30TH April 2003

WITNESS NAME: Brima Kabia

WITNESS NO: 007

REFERENCE NO: 2/86/2110

TESTIMONY:

My name is Brima Kabia. I am a Muslim. Commission Torto the presiding Commissioner administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

I came from a village called, Katik in the Marampa chiefdom. I was in this village with my children. We had a common boundary with Masemira Chiefdom. One day we heard that the rebels were making attempts to ferry across to our village. At the time they informed us that the rebels were heading for our village they did not show up for a about a week. So we considered the information to be untrue. Our belongings that we had kept in the bush, we had to take them back to the village. Three weeks thereafter, about 4:30 am we heard the first gunshot in the village, we were all confused; we all ran and hid in the bush. My wife was left behind and she was captured together with fifty. At about 9 pm that same day we came back to the village, I could only find my kids. I looked everywhere and later realized that my belongings had been looted. The rebels looted all I had. They captured captives were taken to a village called Rokfollah. After the captives had carried the looted goods to this village they were released. They stayed with the rebels for five days before their released. When they came back their feet were swollen, because of the long distance they had traveled. I then asked my wife to narrate her ordeal. I asked whether she was beaten, I further asked whether the rebels had intercourse with her she said yes, naturally I was not happy so I stopped asking questions, we had a dispenser in our village and I took her to this doctor for medical treatment. There was another attack; this attack was the last attack before the end of the war. Everybody in the village ran to another chiefdom. We stayed there for about ten months. It was during that time that security prevailed in the village. We return to our village to see what destructions the rebels had done. On our return I found out that my house was not burnt down but everything was looted, even the roof. My other house in the next village was also vandalized. I discovered that the roof was also removed from the house. This is my own experience in the war.

Comm. Torto: Did your wife know any of the people who raped her?

Brima: She could not tell.

Comm. Torto: What group did these attackers belong to?

Brima: I personally cannot identify the group the attackers belong to, but my wife told me that they were in military fatigue.

Comm. Torto: In narrating her ordeal to you, did she mention any killing?

Brima: Nobody was killed in the village all those who were captured were released.

Comm. Torto: From your written statement, you mentioned about Captain Peace, Could you tell me about him?

Brima: My wife mentioned that name to me.

Comm. Torto: Was she a bush wife to this captain?

Brima: Yes, it was Captain Peace who temporary married her.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: What is your wife's present health condition, or immediately after her stay with the rebels?

Brima: My wife's health had been critical from the time she was captured until now she is still not herself.

Comm. Marcus Jones: What is the name of the village in which your wife was taken to?

Brima: The village is called

Martien: In what year did the rebels attack your village?

Brima: I can't remember, but the second attack was in 1999.

Martien: Was it before the general election or after the election

Brima: The first attack took place after the elections in 1996

Martien: I am very sorry for what happened to your wife. It is very important that you had come to testify. You mentioned that your wife is experiencing difficulties. What kind of difficulty is she experiencing?

Brima: She is not very healthy, but once on a while I take her for medical check up.

Martien: Did you take her to the hospital?

Brima: I normally take her to the village dispensary.

Martien: Has the treatment helped her in any way?

Brima: Whenever she goes to the dispensary, after some treatment she feels better but it lasted only for a short while.

Comm. Torto: – Do you have any question to ask the commission?

Brima: I do not have any question to ask the commission, but I have some recommendations to make to the commission. As far as I am concern, one of the reasons for the war is the high rate of unemployment. I want the government to do its best to provide employments for youths in the country.

Comm. Torto: There are some NGOs who can assist and others create avenue for skill training. Do you have any more recommendation to make to the commission?

Brima: No, that's the only recommendation I have.

Comm. Torto to include the final thanks

DATE: 30TH April 2003

WITNESS NAME: Thomas Forfanah

WITNESS NO: 008

REFERENCE NO: 2/86/2118

My name is Thomas Forfanah. I am a Muslim. Commission Sylvanus Torto, the Presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

I spent most of my lifetime in Kono in a town called Masabendu. One day the rebels attacked and we ran into the bush. It was rainy season and we slept in the bush. Those who ran towards the river came back and told us that the rebels had killed Pa Yayah and Pa Musa. We asked our informant about the situation in town. They told us that after they had killed the two people they stabbed the others and departed. With the assurance that the rebels had left, we came back to the village. When we came back to the village we tried to identify the grave where Pa Musa and Pa Yayah were buried. This moved me so much that I decided to go back to the house but was so afraid that I left all my belongings behind. I went to Masabendu Junction where ECOMG were deployed. We stayed there for one month. This period was difficult because there was no food. We had to live on cassava. When the farm owners were not around, we rooted their cassava and ate them. On their return, they found out that their cassava farm had been stolen from. They then reported the matter to the ECOMOG Commander at Massbendu Junction. A group of soldiers was ordered to carry us and we were faced with Captain Sesay who told us that the allegation against us was that we left our village to steal cassava in another village. He then ordered us to brush and clean the surround. I was hit with a stick on the by one of the soldiers..

On the 26th of March 1998, the rebels attacked our village, at about 1.30 a.m. I had malaria and was just from the toilet as I was experiencing frequent stools. As I was about to go to bed I heard gunshots. The rebels had attacked the village. I could see the bullets coming closer to me from where I laid. I had to hide under the bed. There was sporadic firing. From my hiding place, I heard people screaming, the rebels were engaged in killing and stabbing. One of the rebels eventually kicked my door and entered the house, a little while, another entered. They found three people asleep and they woke them up, they then entered my room and found me. We were all assembled in the sitting room while they looted all our belongings. The youngest of us all was taken away and ordered that we be killed. They discovered a bag, which belonged to one of our colleagues who was in Masingbi at that time. The rebels wanted to open this bag so we were

asked for the keys. We told them that the owner of the key was not here. They insisted that if we do not produce the key they would kill us. So they started to beat us. I told the rebel to destroy the bag in order to open the bag rather than beating us. Finally they discovered the key and the open the bag the contents were looted away. Another rebel entered and told his colleague that he was wasting time on us. Immediately he started firing. By then I was lying on the floor. One of my colleagues was shot on his bed another was shot on the stomach. I was already helpless thinking that I would be the next. The man next to me was still alive. One of the bullets released by the rebels hit part of my buttocks. They were all standing looking at us. I pretended as if I were dead. They pointed a touch at us to confirm that we were dead; we all lied down as if we were dead. They went into the room took a foam mattress and set it ablaze. When they realize that the house was on fire, they departed. We managed to escape. Only two out of five survived. The other three died. I was bleeding profusely, I discovered that the bleeding came through the bullet wound but the pain was not severe. From where I was hiding, I was not very far from the house and I saw it burnt to ashes. I later went over to the house and found out that the others had burnt down to ashes.

In the morning I called one of the survivor's wives Abie, I informed her about the death of her husband and we went over to the burnt house. On our way, we found out that another person was also killed that night. We decided to leave the village, as it was no longer safe. We walked on foot from..... to there we boarded a vehicle. I still had this wound on my buttocks but there was no medical facility. I had to walk all the way to

During the night the pain became severe, I was almost at the point of death. My sister's husband immediately took me to Makeni, I was admitted there for one week then I was taken to Masingbi hospital, I stayed in the hospital until I recovered. This is all I have to say.

QUESTIONS

Comm. Torto: In order to help us make some judgments in your testimony we would like to ask a few questions. How many people were killed at Masabendu Junction?

Thomas: They were many; I cannot give the exact figure.

Comm. Torto: Can you give the name of the persons killed in the house?

Thomas: Ya Adama Koroma, Amara and Saidu

Comm. Torto: What is the complete name of Pa. and what happened to his body?

Thomas: I cannot tell exactly what happened to his remains. They were all abandoned in the village

Comm. Torto: Can you tell the names of your attackers?

Thomas: It was difficult for me to identify the particular group, I knew they were rebels

Comm. Torto: Can you identify them, were they RUF, Kamajors, AFRC etc., can you identify the particular group

Thomas: They were RUF

Comm. Torto: What was the name of the captain who hit you on your head?

Thomas: Captain Sesay, and he belongs to the SLA

Charm: *you said you have to I by the time of the attack, where these ECOMOG still at the Msasabendu junction*

Thomas: yes

Charm: Where there any fighting between the ECOMOG and the RUF?

Thomas: There was no fighting at that time

Comm. Torto: Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Thomas: Yes, we observed that the government is taking care of the perpetrators rather than the victims.

Comm. Torto: That's a good question; a lot of witnesses have asked this same question. One reason is; what we are enjoying today - Peace, we have to pay the price for peace. If there had been no peace, the Commission would not have been here today. What had happened to you would have continued. It was agreed in Lomé that some form of incentive should be given to the rebels to help deviate their minds. No body is compensating them for what they have done. I am neither a politician nor a government but I know of some mechanisms that are put in place by some NGOs to assist war victims. That is a form of compensation to victims. We are sorry for what had happen to you. Please don't think that they are compensated for the wrongs they did. Do you have any other question?

Thomas: No

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations to make to the commission?

Thomas: I want to make an addition regarding the last attack, about the continuity of the war after the Lomé Agreement. After the agreement we all thought it was the end of the war but the war continued, today I have been made an orphan. My only brother was beaten to death in Lunsar when the fighting broke out again after the Lomé Agreement.

Comm. Torto: Do you know the perpetrators?

Thomas: They were rebels. My sister was also beaten to death, in the village on the Lunsar, Port Loko highway.

Comm. Torto: Can you remember their names?

Thomas: I cannot identify them

Comm. Torto: You will agree with me that a lot of incidence happened after the signing of the Lomé agreement. You will also remember that on May 8 some people were killed, and the Lomé peace accord had granted amnesty to all fighters for that period. 7th of July 1999.

Thomas: – My recommendation is that the government should do everything in its power to create employment.

Comm. Torto:

DATE: 30TH April, 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Hawa Kanu

WITNESS NO: 009

REFERENCE NO: 2/86/2119

My name is Hawa Kanu. I am a Muslim. Commission Sylvanus Torto, the Presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

I stayed in the village of Mabaseneh. One evening my husband joined others for the evening prayers in the mosque. After he had left, a madman by the name of Osman beat up the wife of an SLA Officer. After the beating, people alerted the officer and then soldiers entered the village. When the soldiers came they entered the mosque and started beating up the people. My husband and others fled, but my husband fell on the wayside. The soldiers found him and gave him severe beating thinking he was the madman. Eventually my husband managed to reach the house. He narrated his ordeal. After a short while, my husband died as a result of the beating inflicted by him. Now I am a widow and single parent and I have to bore all the family responsibilities.

Comm. Torto: Did Osman enter the Mosque?

Hawa: Yes, he use to go to the mosque everyday

Comm. Torto: When did he enter the Mosque?

Hawa: He entered the mosque when he was chased by the soldiers

Comm. Torto: How many soldiers entered the mosque?

Hawa: Four

Comm. Torto: How many people were in the mosque?

Hawa: They were in large numbers.

Comm. Torto: Do you know where the soldiers came from?

Hawa: I cannot tell where they came from.

Comm. Torto: You mentioned that one of people in the congregation was beaten to death. Can you tell the name of that person?

Hawa: It was my husband

Comm. Torto: Did you take him to the hospital?

Hawa: No, there was no hospital at that time

Comm. Marcus-Jones: I am happy that you are here to give your testimony. That was an unfortunate case of missing identity. We are sorry that you lost your husband. How many children do you have?

Hawa: Three

Comm. Marcus-Jones: You said you are responsible for their welfare, Is that correct.

Hawa: Yes

Comm. Marcus-Jones: How old are they?

Hawa: The eldest is a boy, the second is not going to school; the third is a girl she is at the verge of getting married

Comm. Marcus-Jones: The third is a girl, how old is she?

Hawa: she is about 18 years

Comm. Marcus-Jones: what is she doing for a living

Hawa: she is a farmer

Comm. Marcus-Jones: Did you marry after the death of your husband

Hawa: No

Charm: Do you know which fraction did the attackers belong to?

Hawa: SLA

Charm: Can you tell where they were staying?

Hawa: They were deployed at Lunsar; these groups of soldiers that entered were staying at Mabeseneh village

Charm: Do you know the name of the wife of the soldier that was beaten

Hawa: No

Charm: In your written statement, you mention about one Mr. Tee can you tell me about him

Hawa: Mr. Tee was a soldier he was deployed at Mabeseneh

Charm: Was he one of them?

Hawa: I don't know.

Charm: Apart from your husband do you know of any other people beaten by the soldiers?

Hawa: Everybody in the mosque was beaten.

Charm: Did you know of any other person who died as a result of this beating?

Hawa: I only know of my husband.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any question for the commission?

Hawa: I don't have any question; I only have a suggestion and a recommendation. The only recommendation is that government should assist me now that my husband is dead and the responsibility of the children is solely on me considering the fact that I am a widow and single parent.

Comm. Torto: – There is a stipulated mandate that these functions can be performed. It is regrettable that the commission did not have the means but we have the mandate to forward these recommendations in our final report.

I thank you for coming.

DATE: 30TH April 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Abu Bakarr Baloster Saccoh

WITNESS NO: 010

REFERENCE NO: 2/86/2113

My name is Abu Bakarr Baloster Saccoh. I am a Christian. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto, the Presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

On the 21st of June 1995, the rebels eventually infiltrated into Lunsar after the ninth attempt. At about 4 pm, I heard sporadic firing. I ran into the bush with my family. I could not go with my car. We spent the night in the bush. The following day at about 9 am, I came out of my hiding place. To my utmost dismay, I found my compound grounded and it in flames, my car also was partly in flames. Before then, the SLA was living with us in the village, but on the day of the attack, they were nowhere to be found until the following morning. I asked Yamahokati, the commander in charge in Krio "what happened that you were unable to protect us". He replied that the rebels overwhelmed them. My houses were grounded, until now I could not rebuild them. I am presently a displaced.

On 3rd December 1998, the rebels attacked Mamusa at about 2 a.m. unfortunately for me; I was also in this village. I was asleep when my driver alerted me that the rebels had attacked the village. I was having a car in Mamusa. I escaped through the window by the boy's quarter into the bush. Luckily, the rebels did not do any shooting. I stayed in the bush for sometime then the rebels began to shoot. Upon hearing the gunshots, I lifted my head and saw the village on fire. I then said to myself, "oh! My house had been burnt again".

In the morning, I did not leave my hiding place for fear that I was being targeted. I was a petrol dealer, farmer and a politician. When I came out of my hiding place, I found that my house was grounded, car vandalized and my petrol station burnt. Going around, I found 15 corpses, some of

their faces burnt and used to mount roadblocks. I departed for Lunsar where my house had been burnt. Fortunately for me, the store and toilet building of the house were not burnt down and I had to use the store as a living room. On the 4th December 1998, two of the abductees at Mamusa showed up in Lunsar. I met with them and they asked me if I knew S.A.J. Musa and that he was one of their captors. They stated that I was very lucky to escape as I was their target and they were going to launch another attack in Lunsar. The following day, 5th December, Lunsar was again attacked. They attacked the ECOMOG base. A mathematics teacher and some ECOMOG officers were killed during the battle. I again escaped and slept in the bush together with my family. I ferried across the Rokel River to Masimera Chiefdom reroute to Freetown. I returned to Lunsar after normalcy because at that time, Lunsar was a no mans land. As I had given the opportunity to testify this afternoon, I do not have much to say. I was reluctant to testify but as a Christian, "what has been done cannot be undone". The scripture tells us in Hebrews 11:6 "Without faith it is impossible to praise God. For whosoever comes to Him must believe that He exist and He reward those who honestly serve Him". So all is vanity? Mr. Commissioner and all those concern I thank you very much.

Comm. Torto: I am very impressed with the testimony you made, as you rightly said, you were reluctant at first, I am sure that as you have testified, your psychological burden will ease. I urge you to keep the faith as a Christian. Did you loose members of your family?

Abu Bakarr: No, I only lost properties.

Comm. Torto: You talked about your car which of the cars was burnt?

Abu Bakarr: I had two cars.

Comm. Torto: What was your relationship with Yamahokati and his colleagues during the war?

Abu Bakarr: He was the Ground Commander in Lunsar, he was an SLA officer. We regularly held meetings on security issues and the defense of the town. As I did say, the rebels made nine attempts before they eventually succeeded in attacking. The rebels tried to attack Lunsar during the reign of Yamahokati but they did not to succeed. That was why we relied on him for security.

Comm. Torto: Did he tell you where they were after talking to him?

Abu Bakarr: Yes, he said he spent the night at Foredugu and I did see him the following morning coming from Foredugu because I spent the night at a village called Makomb.

Comm. Torto: How would you classify the people that did these things to you, which faction did they belong to?

Abu Bakarr: As I did say, I had a compound which was grounded, when I showed up the following morning, I saw RUF written on my gate.

Comm. Torto: We are grateful that you have come to help the TRC, we are sorry for all the material loss you had and for the anxiety. Once there is life, there is hope. It is good to realize that you have confidence in God. You told us that you were a politician, a businessman and a farmer. Can you point out any definite reason why you were targeted?

Abu Bakarr: As a petrol dealer, I was able to purchase a large amount of fuel and that means money. I was in charge of Mobil station in Port Loko and Mamusa village. The petrol companies needed money as they had run short of cash. They suggested that we should pay in notes rather than bank drafts. I want to believe there were people monitoring our daily movements. They might have seen me offloading my products.

Comm. Torto: Did they succeed in getting the money?

Abu Bakarr: Yes they succeeded in getting my money and some of my petroleum products because at that time our oil company had wanted physical cash. We told them about the dangers involved. Even taking the cash to Freetown was not easy, but we had no alternative because the boss is always right.

Martien: You mentioned about three different attacks, the first one was in 1995, I would like to know if anybody was killed?

Abu Bakarr: Yes, people were killed.

Martien: How many people were killed?

Abu Bakarr: Two people were killed.

Martien: How many people were abducted?

Abu Bakarr: I was told that many people were abducted, including boys and girls.

Martien: Do you have any idea how many people were abducted and their present health status?

Abu Bakarr: When they showed up, some were not quite ok, they had to be taken to the hospital.

Martien: Do you know what happened to them during their stay with the rebels?

Abu Bakarr: I don't know because I was not in their camp.

Martien: Did they tell you or other people what happened to them?

Abu Bakarr: Yes, I saw a suckling mother; she told me her ordeal when she was with the rebels. An NGO called Save the Children, came to Lunsar and collected the abducted children.

Martien: Did they tell you whether they were raped?

Abu Bakarr: Some of them told me that they were forced to go to bed with them; some were forced to carry their arms.

Martien: I want to take you back to the second attack on 5th December 1998; you mentioned that a teacher was killed in that attack. I want to know whether other people were killed.

Abu Bakarr: At the ECOMOG base, they killed one Sgt Major, he was an ECOMOG Personnel, and they were in the same compound with the teachers.

Martien: Was there a fight between ECOMOG and the RUF?

Abu Bakarr: When they left Mamusa, we were expecting them to go to Freetown but they made a U turn and come to Lunsar, where they attacked the ECOMOG base.

Martien: Were the ECOMOG able to defend the people of Lunsar.

Abu Bakarr: They were overwhelmed by the rebels.

Martien: You said, you are a politician, what is your political affiliation?

Abu Bakarr: I was an aspirant of the SLPP and I am still loyal to the government of the day.

Martien: Could that be a reason why you were targeted?

Abu Bakarr: I very much doubt it, being an SLPP member does not mean that I have money, it was because I was a petrol dealer.

Martien: The 2nd attack in 1998, which group of rebels attacked you?

Abu Bakarr: I guess it was a mixture of them, on my return I saw a writing on my gate "AFRC/RUF heading for Freetown".

Comm. Torto: Could you give us a rough estimate of the cash you loose in the hands of the rebels?

Abu Bakarr: I cannot tell at the moment.

Comm. Torto: Since we have asked you so many questions do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Abu Bakarr: What is the composition of the commission?

Comm. Torto: I am sorry, you were not here yesterday, the Commission is composed of 7 members, 4 nationals, i.e. Sierra Leoneans and three international staff, of the four Sierra Leoneans; we have Bishop J.C. Humper who is now in Bo and he is the Chairman, we have Justice Marcus Jones who is the deputy of the Commission, Prof. John Kamara, who was former principal of Njala, Sylvanus Torto, Head of Administration Department at IPAM. The international Commissioners, Yasmine Sooka, she is a South African who was a member of the TRC in South Africa, Prof. William Schabas from Canada and Ireland, a renowned Human Rights Lawyer and Madam Ajaaratou Satang Jow, a Gambian, she was a Minister of Education for a while in The Gambia. The panel was selected by the United Nations.

Abu Bakarr: Now that I have heard the composition of the Commission, I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. I do not doubt your integrity and credibility. I do not have any question to ask.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendation?

Abu Bakarr: Lunsar is an unfortunate town when it comes to rehabilitation. The rebels vandalized a town like Masiaka and it has been rehabilitated, on the way to Mabora, villages were vandalized; they had been now rehabilitated. On to Rogbere Junction also on the same highway to Lunsar it was vandalized and it has now been rehabilitated. The big question is what Lunsar has done to be neglected in areas of rehabilitation. I am craving your indulgence so that you can recommend to Government for them to rehabilitate the houses in Lunsar. We now have a young and dynamic Paramount Chief and if given the opportunity he will do well. I thank you.

Comm. Torto: The commission will take your recommendation to the government there are some NGOs who are responsible in assisting victims for rehabilitation.

Comm. Marcus-Jones: I just want to comment that Mr. Saccoh is a politician of the SLPP and he must have some connections in the government of the day, I believe he can advocate for the development of Lunsar.

DATE: 30TH April 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Sheka Kabia

WITNESS NO: 011

REFERENCE NO: 2/86/2108

TESTIMONY

My name is Sheka Kabia and I am a Muslim. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto, the Presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

My name is Sheka Kabia. I am a native of Lunsar in Marampa Chiefdom. I was a trader. On day I went to buy palm oil and groundnut at Konta in Masimera Chiefdom. At about 2 pm, I had collected my goods when I saw lots of men in military uniforms. When the people saw these men in military uniforms, most of them ran away. At that time I had no chance to run away. I was standing with my friend, called Unisa. The men in military fatigue asked me, what I was doing in the village. I told them that I was on business, the rest of the men in uniform shouted at me. By the time I could realize what was happening, two of the men in uniform placed me on the ground and the others turned their attention to the house where my goods were. The others were beating me; they lay me on the ground and some kicked me on the head, some on the chest and some on the buttocks. The one I identified as the head asked the others what I have done to them. They told him that I have not done anything, just that they suspected that I was transacting business for the SLA. He stopped them and ordered my release. The people in military fatigue were then approaching me then I had the opportunity to escape. I went into the bush and I traveled through the bush until I came to the highway between Masiaka and Mile 91. There I boarded a vehicle and returned to Tombo where my sister was staying. Since that time, it was difficult for me to go back to the provinces. This was the ordeal I went through. Until present, I am not doing well at all. I have my mother, wife and my two children to care for.

Comm. Torto: During this attack, did they kill anybody?

Sheika: No

Comm. Torto: What group; did your perpetrators belong to?

Sheika: I believe they belong to the RUF, because they were not in military fatigue they were putting on civilian's clothes.

Comm. Torto: Can you remember their faces if you are to come face to face with them?

Sheika: No.

Martien: I have few questions to ask, how do you know they were RUF?

Sheika: I suspected the group to be RUF because those who attacked us were very young boys; between the ages of 15 and 18. The army does not recruit young boys

Martien: Were there women among them?

Sheika: Yes.

Martien: Who was in charge, was it one of these young boys?

Sheika: He was a man

Martien: In what year did it happen?

Sheika: In 1998.

Martien: – Did you remember the languages they were speaking?

Sheika: Some spoke Krio, Mende, Temne and some spoke Liberian pidgin.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Sheika: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendation to make to the Commission for onward transmission to the government?

Sheika: My recommendation to government is; I suspect that one of the causes of this war was greed and the other was unemployment.

I therefore recommend that government create employment opportunities, and they must ensure that everybody have a share of the national cake.

Comm. Torto: I have a point of observation, I am not defending the government, before the attack you were doing well, you were self- employed, and comparatively you were better than some employees. If one or two of your friends had follow suit, there would not be much problem of unemployment. However, your suggestion will be taken into good part and we sympathize with you for what you suffered.

I thank you very much for coming.

The session ended at 3: 00 p.m.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

DISTRICT HEARINGS

PORT LOKO

DATE: 01 May 2003

WITNESS NAME: Foday Abdulai Kamara

WITNESS NO: 012

REFERENCE NO: 2/85/2094

My name is Foday Abdulai Kamara, I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones the Presiding Commissioner.

Opening prayers: Christian – Mrs. Mayen - Chorus: “We give you thanks”
Muslim - Interpreter - A-lfathia by all.

TESTIMONY

My name is Foday Abdulai Kamara. One day, I was in my village called Kamasondo, in the early hours of the morning we heard the sound of gunshots. At that time my dependants were all with me. So I tried to escape with them to a nearby village, we spent the night in our hiding place. It took me the entire day to find a hiding place, we suffered a lot in the bush, we finally spent the night in the bush, unfortunately, it happened during the rainy season. The following morning, I told my family to stay where they were so that I can go back to the village to see what had happened. When I went to the village I discovered that the village was burnt down. I personally inherited three houses from my late father; all those three houses were burnt down. I went round to inspect the other houses in the village I also discovered that they were all burnt. I discovered that one of our elders in the village was killed, I found his corpse. I discovered the corpse of my sister, one of my friends was also killed and a village sub chief was killed. When I saw these corpses, I was terrified, at that time the rebels were around. I later went back to my hiding. I advised that we should move from there to another village.

My step mother who was with me, was so hungry that she was unable to go any further, however, we managed to prepare some porridge for her. We finally get to Lunsar, the rest of my family were dispatched to Freetown. Few of us returned to find out whether the rebels were still occupying our village, fortunately for us they had gone back to their base. All our cattle and sheep were carted away by the rebels. Since we wanted to stay in the village we put up some temporary structure. The house was overcrowded, the following year I got some seed rice and brushed a farm. The rebels came back when it was time to harvest, they harvested all my rice. I will not be able to recount all the problems I encountered during the rebel incursion.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Thank you Foday for giving such a testimony. I am going to ask you few questions to clarify issues you made in your statement. Do you know any Kalilu Sesay?

Ans: Yes.

Comm. Marcus Jones - who is he?

Ans – He is my brother.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Did anything happen to him?

Ans - Yes, his houses were burnt down.

Comm. Marcus Jones – How old was your stepmother at that time?

Ans - I can't tell her age.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Is she with you?

Ans - She is dead.

Comm. Marcus Jones– Is it because of the rebel attack?

Ans - She was not killed by the rebels, she fell ill and die.

Comm. Marcus Jones– Have you been able to improve on those shacks?

Ans - I have actually improved on the shacks because I used the zinc that was burnt by the rebels but I still experience leakages.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Did you know any of the rebels?

Ans - It is difficult to identify them, because when they entered any village nobody was able to look at them.

Comm. - Can you identify them?

Ans - No.

Comm. Marcus – the commission is mandated to work with religious leaders, you are a member of the Muslim Jamaat, have you made any effort to bring these people onboard so that they can continue to live normal lives again?

Ans - I have been doing that, each time we went to the mosque we preached about forgiveness to the people.

Comm. Torto - Can you tell me who Osman Kamara was in Kamasondo?

Ans - Osman Kamara is my son.

Comm. Torto – Did he witness the attack?

Ans - We were together.

Comm. Torto - He does not seem to know anything that happened to you.

Ans - When we escaped to the bush, we were all scattered.

Comm. Torto- You said that you were all scattered around, how did he know what happened to you?

Ans - We were separated in the bush, but we met again later.

Martien – In which year did the rebels attack you?

Ans - It was in 1996.

Martien – Was it before or after the election?

Ans: Immediately after the election.

Martien - You said you found dead bodies in the village?

Ans - Yes.

Martien – Can you give the names?

Ans - Yabowarrah Kamara, Fatu Kamara, Amadu Foulah, Yusuf and O'bai.

Comm. Marcus Jones – We have been asking you questions, do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Ans - My question is - now that I am poor and cannot embark on profitable farming. What will the Commission do to assist me?

Marcus Jones –You did tell us that when you returned to your village, you started farming. Unfortunately, the rebels came and get away with all your harvest. Now that we have peace, you have a better climate to go ahead with your farming; I believe you should go farming. If you cultivate in your farm you will make a lot of profit for you to live a better life, the country should be able to create these facilities for you and to help you get medical facilities in your community. That is why this Commission is formed, so that recommendations and suggestions made will be included in our report for you to benefit in future.

Comm. Marcus Jones -Do you have any other question?

Ans- My next question relate to shelter, like I told you in my testimony, all the houses in my village were burnt down. What assistant can we get so that we can have proper shelter?

Marcus Jones – It is important you look for some NGOs to assist in constructing a better structure for you, they might not be able to give you all the money you required, but they will be able to assist in giving you building materials. The TRC does not give money to people and also it would not be possible for government to go all over the country giving money to people to restructure their burnt houses. It would not be even advisable for TRC to give out money to people because some people will come out to give elaborate story or terrible lies. The Commission is interested in knowing the truth and made its recommendation to government. That is the work of TRC.

Ans - I want to comment on this last response you made to me. You told me that the Commission is mandated or have not got the resources to give to people but there are NGOs who are responsible for that. I am an illiterate and I don't know how to go about finding these people?

Marcus Jones – You can talk to our briefer they will advice you on what to do. Any more questions?

Ans - During the war we have to send some of our children to Freetown at that time Freetown was safe, unfortunately, Freetown was also attacked by the rebels; our children were sent back to us, what we will do now that we are displaced.

Marcus- Jones – In our report, the Commission will make recommendations to the government and these recommendations will be implemented in the future.

Marcus Jones: Do you have recommendations to make to the Commission for onward transmission to Government?

Ans - My recommendation is that Government should assist us get better accommodation so as to forestall overcrowding and the spread of disease. I also recommend that government build a school for our community.

Marcus Jones – I thank you for helping us. We urge you to be a little bit patient and we will be living in a better country in future.

DATE: 01 May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Ramatu Sesay

WITNESS NO: 013

REFERENCE NO: 2/85/2093

TESTIMONY

My name is Ramatu Sesay. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

I say thanks to God. I was with my husband in Kono when the war started and we ran to Makeni. From there I came to a village called Komasendo. I went there to buy palm oil, I bought ten drums. I later sent for my husband to join me in the village. We took the palm oil to Makeni, we spent two days there and on the third day, my husband asked me to go to Kono. I traveled to Kono on a Thursday, I took the palm oil with me, and I arrived in Kono the same day. When I arrived in Kono I found my relatives packing their belongings they asked me why I was there, I told them that I never knew what was happening. Then one of my customers bought a drum of palm oil from me. I left the others in the store. I returned to my house with the intention of getting a vehicle to take me back to Makeni but I couldn't. I was worried because of the information I got from my parents. I spent that night in Kono. At about 5 a.m, I heard gunshots and I woke my brother to inform him about the gunshots I heard. On my way to the store, I met people running helter-skelter. There were firing all over the place, I went back to my brother and told him that I have lost all my commodities. By the time I reached the Community Centre, the whole Koidu Town was in a confused state. I finally left for Kamasondo on my brother's advice. I told him that I cannot return without my goods, he insisted that I must go back to the village, I refused and he left me behind and came to Makeni. On his return to Kono he persuaded me to return back to Makeni, on our way going we met so many corpses. I met one man who asked me where I was going, I told him that I am going to Safroko, we then continue our journey. We walked on feet until we reached Masingbi and then finally board a vehicle to Makeni. At that time my feet were swollen and he took me to the hospital. After I recovered and I went back to the house. I finally decided to go back to Kamasando. The little money I had on me I used to buy 250 bushel of rice, 27 bags of salt, 2 Cartoons of Cosmos Cigarette, 2 bags of soda. It was after I had collected all

these goods that the rebels attacked Kamansondo again, I ran to the bush with my husband. Whilst in the bush, we were hiding on top of a hill, he saw rebels entered our house and he told me that rebels had entered my house. They didn't take anything from my house. They went out and there was no way we could go to our house. On the 3rd day they took a vehicle and looted all our belongings. On that day, they found me in the house. A small boy said that I should give him money. I told him I have no money and I asked him why. I then saw many people coming with arms. The little boy took my shoes and he ordered me out to sit under the sun and looked as they went away with my properties. I also have 31 bags of garri in a nearby village, my husband told me to go that village, because the highway was blocked by the rebels. He advised that we follow a by-pass route to Gbinti en route to Port Loko. My husband then returned to the village. After selling my garri, I then went to Freetown to stay with my relatives. Whilst I was in Freetown I had information that the SLA had gone to Kamasando, and they have passed through my village. I was worried about my children who I had left behind in the village. I boarded a vehicle for Port Loko. No sooner the people, who knew me saw me, they started making some gesticulations. I asked them why but they didn't say anything. I asked them about my husband some couldn't talk but others advised that I go to the village. Upon reaching, I met my house wide open, the windows and doors damaged. I saw my children and I asked them about their father, they started crying and told me that he had instructed them to go ahead. As he was going, he met rebels; they beat him and asked him for money. The rebels then asked him about his wife and he told them that I am not around. As they were interrogating him a rebel came out and said that it's the woman who kept the money. They beat him until he was helpless. They gave him their luggage to carry and about 31 people were abducted. When they reached their base, they gave him a bag of husk rice to pound. Wherever he wanted to go, he was given a guard. Any time he wanted to drink they would not allow him and as they moved to their final destination they killed him. I tried to find his corpse but I couldn't. We followed the road and I found my husband's shoes and shirts, the abductees later informed me that my husband was killed. I told them to continue to follow me so that I will find my husband's corpse, but my relatives did not allow me. After two days, I paid some people the sum of 200,000 Leones to help me find the corpse of my husband. I had wanted to give him a fitting burial rite. On the way, there were rebel road blocks, the rebels asked where I was going, I told them that my husband was killed in the next village, I told them that I wanted to find his corpse but they advised that I should not go. When I insisted to go, the rebels took my bag from me. Since it was impossible to get the corpse of my husband, I decided to go back to his village Rosint, in Sanda Chiefdom. Some of his relatives said I should forget about him, some people told me that the rebels had eaten his body; others said that vulture had eaten his body and some also said that his body has decomposed. So I did the traditional memorial rite for him in his village and I came back to my village but I couldn't stay because I was not in a good condition. I decided to go to Freetown but I find life very difficult so I had to return back to my village. Up till now, things are not favorable with me. I have no capital to start business, and no shelter. I depend on my relatives for survival. I used to live well but now I am poor. This is my story.

Comm. Marcus -Jones – we are moved and sorry to hear your testimony, we sympathize with you for the loss of your husband.

Ans - That is my greatest problem; if he was alive I would not have suffered this way.

Comm. Marcus –Jones - I know, but your husband would want to see you brave to take care of your children. You told us about your children, you said your husband sent them ahead, which was how they escaped the rebels. So your husband was very thoughtful about the children. It is now your duty to go on and take care of those children. We thank you for coming to this Commission and giving your testimony, we have heard all you told us, people in their homes or at work place have heard you, and we all acknowledge your suffering and of others during the war. It is now for all survivors to go on and take care of their family and live in a better country where there will be no such violence any more. Will you be able to answer some questions now?

Ans - Yes, I will be able to answer.

Marcus Jones – I would ask some questions for clarification, who were your attackers?

Ans - I can't identify them.

Marcus Jones - Do you know the fighting group they belonged to?

Ans - I was told that the group belongs to the SLA who retreated from Makeni.

Marcus Jones – Do you think you were targeted because of your influence?

Ans - I think so, because people knew I was well to do, the other houses were not attacked by the rebels.

Marcus Jones – who gave you the details that your husband was manhandled by the rebels?

Ans - The abductees who escaped from the rebels. In my testimony, I told you that about 31 people were abducted; some of them escaped and they gave me the information about the death of my husband.

Marcus Jones – Where they able to tell you what happened to the corpse of your husband?

Ans - Some of these abductees told me that the corpse of my husband was eaten by the rebels in a village called Makabo in Marampa Chiefdom.

Marcus Jones - Was your brother abducted as well?

Ans - My brother was unable to tell me that my husband had been killed because it was heavy for him. He was abducted but he escaped.

Marcus Jones -My question was whether your brother was abducted?

Ans - He was abducted but he later escaped.

Marcus Jones - Did your brother see what happened to the corpse of your husband?

Ans - My brother found the corpse of my husband on the way, but they were not allowed to stay, he did see the corpse.

Comm. Torto – We thank you for coming to relate your experience with us. I want to encourage you to make few clarifications. Does the name Sheku Sesay, mean anything to you or what did it remind you of?

Ans - Sheku Sesay was my brother, he was one of the abductees.

Comm. Torto – In your statement you mentioned that your brother was forced to prepare food before he was released?

Ans - I cannot remember making that statement, he was my brother, according to him, somebody helped him to escape when they were cooking, he did not do the cooking himself.

Martien - In what year did this happen?

Ans - I can't remember, the only event I can recall was the time the SLA retreated from Makeni.

Martien – What is the condition of your family now?

Ans - I am going through very difficult times with my family, since my husband was killed by rebels I am staying in my village but I am suffering I did not have any assistance from anybody unless my relatives. I also have a friend called Sarah Kobi who occasionally helped me.

Marcus Jones – I want to ask you some question about your husband’s corpse that the perpetrators did like killings, cannibalism, raping etc. Now that you have answered all these questions do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Ans - Now that the rebels had killed my husbands, looted all my properties, how do I stand now?

Marcus-Jones – That is a difficult question for the Commission to answer. It is for you to decide how brave you are going to be, the example you are going to take from others and how you hope to continue your life in future. It is for you to answer these questions. Whilst you are alive, you are not disable you have your children, you have your relatives, you have your friend, everything is not finish as yet, “as long as there is life there is hope”. Do you have any recommendation to make that we can include in our report?

Ans - Yes I have, out of five children, I buried four of them there is only one survivor. I am appealing for assistance to educate the only one I have now. I would recommend that government assist in education, health and the general welfare of my community as a whole.

Marcus- Jones – Did these children die as a result of this war?

Ans - No, they died naturally.

Marcus-Jones - We thank you for sharing your testimony with us. We appreciate your courage. We know you will make it.

WITNESS NAME: Gbessay Kamara

WITNESS NO: 014

REFERENCE NO: 2/85/2104

TESTIMONY

My name is Gbessay Kamara. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

When the war started, I was in Boajibu. I was there together with my family, but didn’t feel quite safe. We managed to get food for our survival. My wife advised that we leave another village Kendema which is bigger. When we went there at about 7pm we heard gunshots from across the river. Everybody in the town at that time was confused; I had my kids with me. I told my wife that I will go ahead with some of our belongings and she will have to stay behind. She told me that I should not live her alone with the children; I realized later that we should all go together. Since the attack was about 7pm, we traveled all night to seek refuge. Finally, we slept in a village called Rogbanti and the following morning we managed to get food for the children at this stage the children were unable to walk on foot, they refused going any further, at this point in time there was no vehicle plying the road. We spent the night in the village. Whilst we were there we heard the sound of gunshots and we saw people running away, in the process one of my children got missing from that time I had not been able to set eyes on my child. Since then I became helpless, I decided not to go anywhere, but there was no alternative, I had to move and finally I

got to Masingbi and we boarded a vehicle that took us to Makeni. On the next day, I managed to get to my village, Kamansondo. I was there together with my wife and children. I joined my relatives in the village to do some farming but I was very unhappy when I think of my son that got missing. The following year, the rebels attacked Kamansondo. On the first day of the attack they looted all my belongings. It was on a Sunday. At that time we were listening to the result of the 1996 general elections. During this time I saw someone carrying a gun. The first shot I heard, hit one of my brothers who was carrying a bundle of zinc. So all of us had to run away into the bush for quite sometime. While we were in the bush we saw smoke coming from the town. We were informed that the whole village had been set on fire. We asked ourselves what we should do as the village had been burnt. We went to seek refuge and we met my step mother and my brothers. I decided to leave my people in hiding to find out what was happening in my village but I was advised not to go the village. I therefore returned to my parents and told my people that the village had been burnt. The children were hungry as there was nothing for them to eat. I told my father that he has to manage to travel to the highway so that we can board a vehicle to take us back. Upon that decision we resolved to leave our hiding place.

Since the family was large we separated and my mother and father with my family, went to Freetown, whilst my brother and myself went to Makeni, we were advised there by our family to go to the camp. We registered in the camp and stayed there until the end of that year. During that time we were informed that the Lome Agreement had been signed. That all displaced persons must return to their homes. At that time the Red Cross provided vehicles to take us back to our villages. The Red Cross together with our family helped with that process. We manage the burnt zincs to get shelter. We were there leaving happy. On a certain day the rebels attack Kosawai and as usual we escaped. We were in the bush at that time and the rebels were in the habit of hit and run. When we venture to go back to the village thinking they had gone, we saw a large crowd of rebels entering the village, when they got to the village they told us that they have not come to civilians, whilst they were saying that some were entering people's houses looting their properties. They were just cajoling us; they wanted to keep us in the village for human shield. I was not satisfied, I had to escape, I was later told that the rebels had left the village; I was told that they abducted many people in the village.

Some of them stay behind, the ones that were left behind, three men and one woman. I went into my room got some salt, as soon as I was about to come out, a rebel pointed a gun at me. I wanted to run away but I couldn't. I fell on the ground and the rebel picked me up from the ground. The rebels asked me to show them the wealthy people in the village. They took me to their colleague, the one that held me did not beat me, one of his colleagues, slapped me. I saw my nephew and one suckling mother with them. One of them told me to carry his gun. They found a sheep in the village and said I must carry the gun and at the same time carry the sheep but I was unable to move fast because the sheep was sluggish to walk. Unfortunately for them, they follow the wrong route and their colleagues were on there own. In the next village, we met few people in the village but as they saw us they all started running away. The rebels asked the people in the village whether they have seen soldiers in the village they said no. They later removed the gun from me and handed it over the village head man; the suckling mother was later released. They continue to beat me on the way going. Finally we got to another village where we found other rebels and they stopped beating me. The person in charge of that group was called Kosowai; he took the looted goods from us. My child was hungry I told them that I wanted to find something for her to eat. So we were released by those rebels. We all went back to our village; some of the abductees were also released.

Marcus Jones – Have you recovered from the beaten you got from the rebels?

Ans – I must confess that I am impotent, I have lost my manhood.

Marcus Jones – Did you not seek medical advice in your village after your release?

Ans – I did not seek medical attention because I had no money at the time and it was unsafe to go back to the village.

Comm. Torto - I thank you for coming and sharing your experience with us. You were used as human shield for torture. I want you to make some clarification. Who actually abducted you and do you know which of the fighting groups they belonged to?

Ans - The rebels.

Comm. Tort – Which of the rebel groups?

Ans - The SLA.

Comm. Torto - Can you identify their faces?

Ans - I can identify the one who beat me if I see him.

Comm. Torto – Can you remember the name Alhaji, “Kill man no law”?

Ans - The rebel that captured me and took me along with the gun and sheep told me that he is Alhaji.

Comm. Torto – A tall, black man that came from Lunsar?

Ans - The Alhaji that captured me was fair in complexion, very tall, speaks krio and he hailed from Lunsar.

Mr. Charm – You said that when the rebels attacked your village in 1996 one of your brothers was killed; can you tell me the name of your brother?

Ans - It was not my brother but my sister, her name was Fatmata Kamara

Mr. Charm - Was it after the Abidjan Peace Accord or the Lome Peace Accord that you returned to your village

Ans - I cannot tell, all I know was that it was after the last accord.

Mr. Charm – Can you tell whether they were small boys or adults?

Ans - They were youths. There was a young woman with them.

Mr. Charm – How many people were abducted?

Ans - I cannot tell, I was told that they were large in number.

Mr. Charm – How long were you with them?

Ans - I did not spend the whole day with them.

Mr. Charm - Did they identify themselves as RUF?

Ans - One of the women in their group had RUF inscribed on her back.

Mr. Charm – Where you able to speak to this woman to know why RUF is written on her back?

Ans - I was not able to talk to her because she was carrying a whip and she was flogging the suckling mother.

Mr. Charm - How are you coping with your family?

Ans - I want to thank our Paramount Chief who has gone out to get seed rice from some NGOs. It is these seed rice that we are using to farm, from the proceeds we take care of our family.

Marcus Jones - Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Ans - I want to know the relationship between the Commission and victims?

Marcus Jones – The relationship between the Commission and Victims is a very strong one. The Commission is victim-oriented; we want them to share their testimony with us and we later addressed these issue so that there will not be a recurrence of such things in the future. There is a very strong relationship between the Commission and victims.

Apart from relaying their experiences, we encourage the victims to give recommendations and suggestions that will be included in our report for onward transmission to the government. Our report will be dedicated to a large extent to the victims.

Do you have any recommendations to make to this Commission that will be included in its report?

Ans - Yes, I have two recommendations; firstly, now that our community had become inaccessible, the bridges had been destroyed by the rebels it is very difficult for us to go to the market. We are recommending that government restructure our bridges. We have few primary schools but we do not have a secondary school, our children had to go to Freetown or Makeni for their secondary education. The problem is that these children will go astray when they get to those big towns because the parents are not to there to take care of them. We need a secondary school in our Chiefdom.

Marcus Jones – Thank you very much for coming to this Commission. Your recommendation will be included in our report and submitted to government. I encourage you not to give up, but to continue and seek medical attention. I hope you are feeling better now.

Ans - Yes, I now see the essence of the Commission, as I sit here I seem to be getting some relief.

WITNESS NAME: Karayemu Sesay

WITNESS NO: 015

REFERENCE: 2/85/2089

TESTIMONY:

My name is Karayemu Sesay. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones, the presiding Commissioner.

My experience during the conflict. The SLA that retreated from Makeni and abducted me. They found me in my village Kamasondo and they captured me I was with them for 18 days, I was beaten, they beat me with their guns. I stayed with them throughout the 18 days. We were 43 in all that was abducted. We came down to Mamusa. I was there when they killed Ramatu's husband. They also killed my brother Amadu Sankoh in the village; our children were beaten when they were asked to give them money. When it was night they put on their military uniform and raped us. We were taken as their wives for 18 days. The men who were abducted with us were able to escape; fortunately, I escaped from them when we reached Makeni.

They told us that when we were going back if we were interrogated by ECOMOG we should tell them that we were captured by the rebels. When we explained to the soldiers they provide vehicle for us. We walked for a long distance. When I finally get back to my village, I found out that my relatives were killed. I had nothing to do now that my brothers had been killed by the rebels. The rebels burnt down our village; my husband was beaten and up till now he has not recover from that problem. In our village we have no medical facilities. Our children are not going to school. When I was released I got some medication to treat myself from sexual transmission disease but now I am feeling better except my left eye which is still disturbing me.

Marcus Jones – we are sorry you suffered so much during the war; they attempted to take away dignity from you but I can see that you have recovered in a way and that you have come here with a great courage. We thank you for coming so that others could hear to your story. We would like to ask few questions, to clarify points which are not quite clear to us. Whilst you were held for the period of 18 days how many of them treated you as wife?

Ans - Four of them.

Marcus Jones – You said you were present when the last witness husband was killed?

Ans - Yes, we were captured together, I was present when the rebels hit him and he fell down and eventually died.

Marcus Jones – Were you present when they ate him?

Ans - there were two groups of rebels, the group that captured us beat him and he fell on the highway but the other group actually killed him. I am not sure whether they ate him.

Marcus Jones – Where is your husband and how is he feeling now?

Ans - He is at home healing gradually.

Marcus Jones - You had treatment when returned home but I can see you still have problem with one eye, was it as a result of the time you spent with the rebels?

Ans – Yes I got this eye problem as a result of the beating I got from the rebels.

Marcus Jones – Can you tell us something about your children?

Ans - When the rebels captured me and took me away I left my children behind, they were beaten by the rebels. They took away all our belongings including the food my children were to eat, I returned to find my children in a state of malnutrition. Even if you had money at that time, there was nothing to buy.

Marcus Jones – How many children have you?

Ans - Two sons.

Marcus Jones - Did they suffer any injury?

Ans - Except for the beatings they received from the rebels.

Martien – Apart from your two boys, do you also have a baby daughter?

Ans - Yes I have one daughter, on my return I found her dead and my brother was also dead.

Martien: How old was your daughter?

Ans She was one year two months old.

Martien - How did your child die?

Ans - She died because she had no care and there was no food. She died because of lack of care.

Martien - How old was your brother?

Ans - I cannot tell the age of my brother.

Martien – Can you tell of the circumstances of your brother's death?

Ans - My brother was killed by rebels.

Martien – Can you tell us his name?

Ans - His name was Amadu Sankoh, my brother left his children and they are now with me.

Martien- During your abduction, how many people were abducted along with you?

Ans – We were 43 in number.

Martien – Did all of you come back?

Ans - Out of the 43, 20 were able to escape on the day we were captured, 23 of us were carried away, but all of us returned except for the one who was killed.

Martien – What did they do during this 18 days, did they attack other places?

Ans - We were not stable.

Martien - Where the abductees present when the rebels attacked other villages?

Ans - No

Martien - Where were you when the rebels were attacking other villages?

Ans - From the time they captured us, the rebels did not attack any other villages, all the other villages were rebel free.

Martien – Did they make other women wives as well?

Ans – We were all used as their wives, it is impossible for the rebels to capture a woman not make her a wife.

Martien – How many women were there with you?

Ans - We were 15 in number.

Martien – Can you tell the age of the youngest amongst you?

Ans - The youngest was about 12 years.

Marcus Jones – You said the rebels put on military uniform at night what did they wear during the day?

Ans - The same military uniform.

Marcus-Jones - Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Ans - Yes, the question I want to ask is about the welfare of my community. I know that we have to forgive, forget and reconcile. Our community had been destroyed by the rebels; no school, no road; our goods are perishing. What assistance can we expect from the government?

Marcus Jones - It is more likely that communities rather than individuals are going to benefit from the recommendations and suggestions we have from these hearings. I will be happy if you receive that assistance. We thank you, we are impressed that you are interested in forgiving and reconciling with the rebels and also interested in community development.

Do you have any recommendation to make to the Commission?

Ans - It is our Paramount Chief had made effort to help us rebuilding our lives, but he cannot do it alone, we are appealing to government to assist us in rebuilding our community.

Marcus Jones – Thank you for coming, the commission wishes you good health, improvement on your eye, and wishes you a brighter future.

WITNESS NAME: Mohamed Sankoh

WITNESS NO: 016

REFERENCE NO: 2/85/2084

My name is Mohamed Wusu Sankoh. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones, the presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

I lived in the village of Kamasondo and there I was, when the rebels the attacked and abducted me with my younger sister. The first day I was taken to a place called Kabere. When they captured us, they assured us that they will not do any harm to us we should not be afraid. However, the following in this village, they started killing and raping women. I was in captivity for three days together with my younger sister. So after three days, they asked us to go back when we got to Kamasondo, a woman was killed, they also burnt the village. About 4 people were killed in the village that same day. Beside the four they killed that day, we discovered two other corpses in the bush. On the fourth day, my younger sister was raped; she was nine years old at that time. Our duty was to carry their ammunition. Since my sister was raped, she was unable to travel with us and we were told that the Gbethis were on the offensive. I found my younger sister bleeding; I carry her on my back, together with one woman who helped me attend to my sister. We went to Mile 91 where we found some people that came from Bo; they were there to render medical assistance to the displaced. They attended to my sister. I had one my sister, Karayemu Sankoh who was staying in mile 91. I left my sister with her. On my return, I was informed that about 200 people were killed by the rebels in the village. At about this time, one Rev Fr. Mario went to find out whether this number of people was killed. When peace came, it was the time when the rebels stopped killing they went on looting. That was the time the rebels looted all our cattle. When they took the last cow, I insisted, I told the rebel that enough is enough. Because of that statement they gave me a very nasty slap that gave me some teeth problem.

From Kamasondo, they went to Lunsar where they killed about 20 people. That is my experience during the conflict.

Marcus Jones – Thank you Mohamed, you have done well to come to TRC to give your testimony. How is your sister doing now?

Ans - My sister cannot walk properly now.

Marcus Jones – How old is she now?

Ans - She is about 15 years old now.

Marcus Jones – Was she able to go to school?

Ans - She was going to school before she was captured by the rebels.

Marcus Jones – Is she going to school now?

Ans - No.

MARCUS Jones – Is it because of the injury she incurred from the rebels?

Ans - It is not for the bad foot, it is because there is no school in our community and we do not have the resources to educate her.

Marcus Jones – Does she work at all?

Ans - She is not gainfully employed and since I can no longer afford to educate and take care of her, I have given her to a husband.

Marcus Jones - Is she happily married?

Ans - It is better for her to get married than to sit down doing nothing.

Marcush Jones - Can you tell me something about Fr. Mario.

Ans - Fr. Mario got to Kamasondo and later returned to Lunsar.

Comm. Torto – Mohamed thank you very much for your testimony. I have some issue for you to clarify, in your written statement; you spoke of a certain victim. What victim, is it Mahawa Sankoh?

Ans - Mahawa Sankoh is my younger sister. She was raped by the rebels; I and one woman took her to mile 91.

Comm. Torto – Can you remember the faces of these rebels?

Ans - I cannot remember them, during the time they were raping my sister I was locked up in a room. I got to know when I found her bleeding in the morning.

Comm. Torto - What was Fr. Mario doing in your vicinity?

Ans - During the war the Father was supplying us bulgur.

Comm. Torto – Behind rebels' lines?

Ans - He supplied us bulgur immediately after our village was attacked.

Comm. – Torto - Which of the fighting forces attacked your village?

Ans - It was difficult for one to identify the attackers, because all of them wore military uniforms.

Comm. Torto - So you cannot remember any one of them?

Ans - It was difficult at that time to identify any one of them, when you are given their loads to carry, so it was difficult for someone to turn around and watch their faces.

Comm. Torto – You voluntarily went to found out what had happened to your people or were you forced to do that?

Ans - What happened was that we were in a dilemma in our village, the Gbethis will come and call us rebels and the rebels would come and call us Gbethis.

Comm. Torto – I hear you say that Gbethis were maltreating civilians?

Ans – I witness one incident, to show that the Gbethis were harassing civilians. Amongst the civilians they beat was my mother-in-law, secondly they burnt my father's house, and we were forced to carry their loads.

Marcus Jones – Do you have any question to ask the commission?

Ans - Now that we have shared our testimony with you and most of our people are not well, their health is not normal, what would the commission do to help such people?

Marcus Jones - The commission in its final report, will also include your recommendation and the recommendations of others to let the government know the things that people need in their communities. We hope that you will be able to read the report and see all the recommendation

made in it for your community and other communities. You have also helped yourself by coming here to tell us all you have suffered, because it is not enough to say you have forgotten it, it helps when you come in the open to talk about it for others to hear about your sufferings. Any other question

Ans - Yes, now that we have honored your invitation by coming to testify we are urging you to seek assistance from NGOs to help us rebuild our community, especially in reconstructing the bridges; we would also like you to assist us in building secondary school.

Marcus Jones – We had similar pleas this morning for you to get access to your village, and the construction of a secondary school as well. There are NGO who are in charge of rehabilitation. The interpreter has said it loud and clear for all NGOs to hear about the recommendations of these people in Kamasondo village. Do you have any recommendation to make to the commission?

Ans - The recommendation I want to make to government through this Commission – is that our community is dire in need of a secondary school. We are in dire need of proper accommodations and communication.

Marcus Jones – Do you have more questions to ask? If none, then I want to take this opportunity to thank Paramount Chief Bai Banta N'Kennedy the second for bringing his people here today to give their testimony in this Commission and to bring their problems out to the public. We hope other Paramount Chiefs will cooperate with us as we go to other towns.

WITNESS NAME: Pa Santigie Kamara

WITNESS NO: 017

REFERENCE NO: New

My name is Pa Santigie Kamara. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY:

It was on a Friday morning after the early Morning Prayer, just a few seconds after the prayer, we heard the sound of a gunshot from our neighboring village, that village is called Gbonkli Yama. We also heard another gunshot from another village called Druthongo and another was heard from Rokonta. All these villages were very close to my village called Manarma. As soon as the rebel got into our village and fired the first shot, the Gbethis and the SLAs who were there to protect us, fled to Port Loko. There was a grave which had been dug to bury one woman who had died before the attack but the husband had however refused her being buried in that site so it was open; I went in there to hide. I saw that the rebels had white handkerchiefs on their heads, the others from the other village had no clothes on I saw them captured my children. Those who came from the other village captured five of my children together with my wives from their hiding place. They brought them to town, spread a mat on the floor and they took out a machete. While I was hiding inside this grave I was peeping, they had a solar panel, the commander who was sitting at the verandah made an order and my child Abass was killed, his head was chopped off and he struggled before he finally gave up. The next person was my daughter, Rugie Kamara

was also killed. I also saw my wife killed, my second wife Kadiatu Turay was also killed and they also killed my son named Mamudu Kamara. They also killed my elder brother named Mamudu Kamara. They also killed one Gaima Kamara, my sister Koloneh was also killed, my son Allie Kamara and my other wife Aminata Kamara was also killed. My daughter Rugie Kamara was pregnant at the time she was killed; the child was removed from her stomach. These people who did this act, they wore t-shirts with writings at the back and front and they had white bands on their heads. Those that came without clothes had long hairs and those that came from Lunsar, had military uniforms, boots and red cloth tied on their hands. They killed sixteen people on that spot.

I escaped from the grave, before it was 6 in the morning; they had burnt down my four houses. They also went to Rokonta and burnt my two houses. I took eleven days to I bury my family and that was when I discovered that some were killed by bullets, some stabbed, and some had burnt mark on their bodies. They collected 73 people in the village locked them up in a house and burnt them alive. If you are to go to this village, you will find their skulls, the village is called Manarma. I was not myself I became temporarily insane.

I went to Freetown and I stayed at 10 Mammy Yoko Street. I spent some time with my relatives there, after some time we were told that the area is free from rebels, so I decided to come back. When I came back, one of my children Yabom Kamara, somebody told me that they saw her with the West Side Boys and N'nadaywa Kamara. After I got this information, the rebels again attack this village. As far as this chiefdom is concern it will be an individual, who suffered like me during this conflict. Almost all my wives were killed; my children were killed; the only survivors are little kids, I had decided not to testify, because all they have to say is sorry. This is what I suffered during the conflict. The education of my five children is coming to an end; my village is some distance away from Port Loko town. The rebels had burnt all our houses; I have managed to get some plastic sheets to cover my house so that I can manage with my children. We came together to establish a community school but thieves stole the materials like plastic sheet we bought.

Marcus Jones – You said you really don't want to come because all they would have to say is "sorry". I must say that this is not the instance where one person will say sorry to you, but the country as a whole. Can you tell us a little bit about your present status, since you are a traditional leader?

Ans - I am a section chief.

Marcus Jones - Do you think this made you a target?

Ans - I don't think I was a target of the rebels because of my traditional position; it was because of my hard work in the village. I am one of those who are doing fine. I only have to say that is the will of God.

Marcus Jones – What are you doing now?

Ans - It is difficult for me to sit in the village and operate as a section chief. I do not have shelter, wife and no money, so there is no need for me to sit in the village.

Marcus Jones – Can you help the Leaders of Evidence to trace the village where the skulls are?

Ans - yes, I will. (Commissioners and staff visited the site and were shown the site)

Comm. Torto – Thank you for coming. I congratulate you for your courage to give such a testimony. Is there any kind of traditional ceremony to perform for the death of such a large number of people in your Chiefdom?

Ans - I did that after I buried my entire relative, it took me about one year before I returned to the village. I have done so.

Comm. Torto – We are deeply sorry for what happened to you, as the Chairperson had earlier said, would you be ready to lead us to the spot where these skulls are?

Ans - I am quite ready to lead your personnel to this point.

Comm. Torto – How many miles from here to this village?

Ans - Nine miles.

Martien – You said 73 people were burnt in a house, where there other houses burnt beside your own?

Ans - Yes, of all the houses in the villages, 34 houses were burnt down, and I owned four of these houses.

Martien – You said that houses were burnt down in the nearby villages, were your houses also burnt in those villages?

Ans - My two houses were burnt down in Rokonta and also two were burnt down in Makalissa.

Martien – Were other houses burnt in these two villages?

Ans - Besides my houses, they burnt another fifteen houses in Makalissa.

Martien – You told us that two of your daughters were abducted by the rebels, who told you that they were seen with the West Side Boys.

Ans - I was informed by one of my sisters who was also captured by the West Side Boys, but later escaped.

Martien – Where was that?

Ans - They were at camped at Rogbere Gbana.

Martien – Since then did you hear anything from or about them and their whereabouts?

Ans - From the time I got that information, up till now I have not heard about them, I am sure they are alive but I don't know their whereabouts.

Marcus Jones – We are grateful that you have come here today. It will help ease your pain. Can you just tell us who carried all these killings?

Ans - I cannot identify any of these people, all I know is that they emerge from three villages, some came half naked, some had military uniform with red cloths tied round their hand, and some had white cloths on their head.

Marcus Jones - Have you any question to ask the Commission?

Ans - No - I don't have question but I have a recommendation to make to the Commission. I have two recommendations, firstly, is that of my children, I was told that they were with the West Side Boys, I would like this Commission and the Government helps me recover my children. They are Nnadawa and Yabom Kamara, I would be very grateful if you can help me trace my children.

Secondly, is that of education, we have built a school that had 300 children which was destroyed by the rebels. I would like the government to assist this community in building schools in our area.

Marcus Jones – This Commission is not in place to help you with that, but the briefer will help direct you an organization that could help you. I thank you very much for coming.

Ans - I got the information that my daughter, Nnadawa is in Moyamba, I went there and visited the Police Station but I was unable to make progress because of the language barrier.

Marcus Jones – There is a media which you can go through in helping you trace the whereabouts of your daughters.

The session ended at 4.30

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

DISTRICT HEARINGS

PORT LOKO

DATE: 02 May 2003

WITNESS NAME: Hawa Sheriff

WITNESS NO: 018

REFERENCE NO: 3/77/4488

Opening Prayers: Muslim Prayer by my Charm and Christian Prayer by Mrs. Bondu Manyeh; she asked all to recite the 23rd Psalm

Testimony

My name is Hawa Sheriff. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Torto the Presiding Commissioner.

I was in Kono during this conflict when the rebels attacked Koidu; I left and went through Kabala to a village called Faya in the Koinadugu District. I was there with my daughter. We were there for some time and the rebels attacked the village one night. As they were firing, one bullet hit my daughter's head and another hit me on my foot. We bled profusely all throughout the night as there was no where to seek medical attention. The following morning, I saw two men and asked them for a blade; one sold a blade to me which I used to operate on my daughter's head and on my foot. I was not able to identify any of the attackers because when we heard the firing, we went into hiding.

Torto: We are happy that you come forward to testify and that you successfully perform the operation. Since the incident have you sought proper medical treatment?

Hawa: Yes, I took my daughter to Conakry, where I was given a card as a refugee. When we got to the hospital, the doctor said that if the bullet is removed from my daughter's head she will go mad or die. The doctor's name is Dr. Jakitay.

Torto: Where the child?

Hawa: She is here with me.

Torto: What is her present health situation?

Hawa: At present she is attending school but she experiences frequent head aches?

Torto: How old is she?

Hawa: She is 11 years old.

Martein: You said you have the X-ray with you; can you produce it for us to see?

Hawa: Yes. (She produced it)

Torto: You mentioned one bullet and we are now seeing three. How can you explain it?

Hawa: When you look at the x-ray, you may want to think that there more than one bullet but it is actually one.

Torto: Have you any question?

Hawa: I would like this Commission assist my child regain her normal health and also people who have similar problem

Torto: Where do you stay?

Hawa: I stay at Lokomasama.

Torto: Is there any hospital or clinic around that area?

Hawa: Yes.

Torto: Have you tried to contact any of these places in the Lokomasama or Lungi area?

Hawa: Yes. I have made effort to take my daughter to Lokomasama they gave me paper to go to Lungi and then we referred to Mabieseneh.

Torto: Is she getting treatment now?

Hawa: From Mabieseneh, one woman took us to Freetown and after examination; I was told that it is a fragment and not a bullet.

Hawa: My greatest problem for now is that I do not have money to take my daughter to hospital.

Torto: What are you doing in Lokomasama?

Hawa: For now, I have a groundnut farm.

Torto: The government has the micro-credit and I want to believe Lokomasama benefited from it. I want you to explore that avenue to improve your condition. In any case, I don't think I will ever access the micro-credit because it is not being fairly distributed.

Hawa: I only heard about the micro-credit. I was not privileged to get it because am a returnee there, not an indigene. In any case, I don't think I will ever access the micro-credit because it is not being fairly distributed.

Torto: Have you any recommendation?

Hawa: I am pleading with the government through the Commission to help me regain my daughter's health.

Torto: Thank you. I will encourage you to continue your search for better medical treatment for your daughter.

Sinneh Thaim Kamara

WITNESS NO: 019

REFERENCE NO: 3/77/4496

My name is Sinneh Thaim Kamara. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Torto the presiding commissioner.

TESTIMONY:

I live in a village called Lungi Lull, in the Lokomasama Chiefdom. At the time the junta attacked the F.M. 98.1 radio station, they stopped at Lokomasama. They were driven by ECOMOG from Lokomasama. They came to Lungi Lull and stayed in my house. By that time, my wife was not with me; she was staying with her parent. When I woke up, I asked who they were; they said they were the people's army. I had nothing to do because they have surrounded my house and when I looked around; I did not see any body. They told me to open the door for them, I refused to open but they forced the door open. They asked me to lodge them. I have a store very close to my house; this was where I lodge them. I was asked to remove there luggage from the vehicle and one of them pushed me and hit me with a gun in the mouth. I lost three of my teeth. I fell down and fainted up to 7 a.m. when they saw the condition I was in, they sympathized with me. I was with them for 4 days and on the 5th day, I escaped from them. However, they caught up with me and cajoled me to join them. I went back to my house to discover that the two drums of palm oil which I had wanted to sell were gone. Also I had 80,000 Leones which they took. I eventually left the village for the bush. My wife left me because I lost my teeth. They stayed in my village for 2 months and during that period, they ate all my cattle. This is the end of my testimony.

Torto: Thank you for your testimony, in your written statement, you said that they gave you two radio set on their way to attack the radio station, on their return, did they asked you any question or they just came and pounced on you?

Sinneh: Whilst they were going to attack the radio station, they did not pass through my village.

Torto: So they did not talk to you at all, on there way going?

Sinneh: I saw the vehicle whilst they were passing through the village but we did not talk?

Torto: When they caught you and cajoled you to join them, did you join them?

Sinneh: No I was afraid to join them.

Torto: Did you remember these?

Torto: I can not remember their faces but I can recall some of their names. There was Lt. Tafaikoh, "Nasty killer" Patrick, Junior and others.

Torto: Can you identify them by face if you see them?

Sinneh: I would not be able to identify all of their faces.

Torto: Do you know where they could be now?

Sinneh: No.

Torto: Is your wife around?

Sinneh: No.

Torto: Where is she?

Sinneh: She is with her parents.

Torto: So she left you because of the dental problem?

Sinneh: That is what I imagine.

Torto: Which village is she in? Is she easily accessible?

Sinneh: She stays in a village called Masheka, along the Port Loko Creek. It is a remote area.

Torto: What are you doing now?

Sinneh: I am a farmer.

Marcus -Jones: We are sorry for the injury you sustained and for the problems you now have with your wife. These people who attacked you, which group did they belong to?

Sinneh: AFRC.

Marcus Jones: How did you know that?

Sinneh: Because it was the time they invited the RUF to join them.

Marcus Jones: Was there any female among the group?

Sinneh: No, there was no woman in the group.

Marcus Jones: What language did they speak?

Sinneh: They spoke Krio and Mende.

Charm: Since you were with this group for four days, will you tell us the number of armed men in the group?

Sinneh: I can not remember the number.

Charm: Apart from you, were there other victims in your village?

Sinneh: No.

Charm: Do you know whether they destroyed any other village?

Sinneh: All I know is that they looted in other villages but they did not kill any body.

Torto: Do you have any question for us?

Yes

Sinneh: Yes why did the Commission invite me to come and give testimony?

Comm. Torto: The Commission invited you so that you can share your experience with the Commission and with everyone. We want to know what happened to you, who did it but above all the Commission wants to hear from you, your recommendations to pass on to Government. The Commission is interested in you as individual but over and above all, at the end of the Commission, the Commission would be able to know what happened and to know what recommendations to make so that it will not happen in our country again.

Sinneh: I must confess, I really came to get assistant from the Commission because my wife has left me for a year now. I would not be easy for me to get another wife with my dental problem; except a woman who have dental problem like me.

Torto: That was why I asked where the woman was so that we could try and counsel her.

Torto: Do you have any children with the woman?

Sinneh: Yes four.

Torto: Did she take them along?

Sinneh: She took two and left the two with me. I want to ask if you can tell how many years I have been with this woman.

Torto: I have no way of knowing that.

Sinneh: I have stayed with this woman for over 20 years she only left me when I got this problem.

Torto: Do you have any recommendation to make to the Commission?

Sinneh: I have no recommendation.

Torto: Thank you very much for coming, our staff will talk to you about being counseled.

WITNESS NAME: Santigie Kabia

WITNESS NO: 020

REFERENCE NO: 3/77/4491

I am a boat captain. One my friend invited me to collect some items from Lungi Lull to take to Freetown for him. When I left Freetown for Lungi Lull, I we slept at Mabome. At about 10 pm, I went to bed and the rebels attacked the village at about 11 p.m. My friend who took me to this village slept with me and fortunately he was not sleeping yet, he woke me and he went away and left me in the room. Immediately, the rebels entered the house and they found me and my apprentice. My apprentice escaped and the rebels captured me. They removed my trousers, watch and money I had on me. They took me out of the house and their leader at the time, told them not to harm me. One rebel was to guard me and he told me to take off the only short I had on. I refused to give him the short because it was the only thing I had on me. I engaged in a struggle with this rebel but another group saw us and they intervened on their colleague's behalf. They beat me up and released me and took me to another house. They broke that house and looted all the properties. Whilst in this house, they asked me to untie a bag of millet and in the process; I started feeling some the pains. They then told me to carry the bag of millet on my head and follow them. When the others left the room, the few left behind, threatened to kill me. Since the place was dark, I managed to escape and I ran to where my boat was. When I got to the river, they stopped following me and I swam across the river. I got to the other side of the river, that was when the pain became excruciating. However, I managed to pass through the bush. When people heard me screaming, they came to my aid and in the morning, they sent for my parents. I was then taken to a village called Rodaren, where I for about a month. The following day attacked this second village and looted my parents' properties. They did not kill anybody. This is the end of my testimony.

Torto: Thank you very much. During this attack was the whole town attacked or you were singled out by these people?

Santigie: The whole village was attacked?

Torto: Nobody was killed

Santigie: Yes

Torto: Did you identify personalities as you claimed that they were RUF?

Santgie: I can not identify them because they were large in number.

Torto: Can you name the group?

Santgie: It was the RUF

Torto: Can you show us the area in your where you were stabbed?

Santgie: Yes. (He showed the spot.)

Marcus Jones: We are sorry for the way you were treated and for the injury you sustained. When you came from Freetown to collect the load, which village did you go to?

Santgie: I went to Mabome.

Marcus Jones: Which village did your people take you to?

Rodaren

Mr. Charm: The first attack was at the night, when was the second attack?

Sinneh: It took place at about 3. a.m.

Will you be able to know whether there were women or girls in this group?

Yes there were men and women.

Did these women played any active part?

Yes. In fact, it was one of them who took my uncle bicycle.

Have you any question?

Sinneh: Yes, the ordeal I went through left me with so many pains what could the Commission do to assist me?

The assistance you will get is psychological we sympathized with what happened to you and we very much understand your plight. We've said many times that the Act establishing the TRC did not give us the mandate to compensate victims. For various reasons, they left that out. When the Commission shall have made it recommendation to government, a War Victims Fund will be set up to help those who suffered during the war. I don't any of any situation were individual compensation are paid to victims of war. Not even after the Second World War.

Torto: do you have any recommendation for the Commission?

Sinneh: I don't have any recommendation.

Memunatu Kamara

WITNESS NO: 021

REFERENCE NO: New

I was in my village called Rosint in the Masimera Chiefdom when the rebels attacked. One day, after working in the farm for the whole day, we went home to prepare food. At about that time, my younger brother paid me a visit. When he arrived, my younger sister gave me her child so that she could prepare more food. We didn't know that the rebels were coming closer to our village. They captured me, my friend and my mother who was in the house packing her things. Also another woman was captured; her name is Amie Kamara. They took us to a veranda where there is a big tree including another captured man called Abdulai Kargbo. Another lady who was hiding in the mosque was also captured and she joined us under the tree. We have no where to go to. The rebel with the machete had no clothes on but a big cap that was almost covering his entire face. He brought a big stick and he took my mother's hand, placed it on the stick chopped it off. I attempted to get up but the rebel beat me with his gun and he took me to a different place with the stick. I pleaded with him not to cut my hand and my mother also pleaded with him but he refused. In fact, when I pleaded with him to take me along instead, he took my child and killed him with his machete. He eventually cut my hand and my friend who had wanted to escape was caught and he stabbed her all over her body. He then cut Pa Abdulai Kargbo's hands and released him with a message for Tejan Kabbah that they were around. They took Amie Kamara behind the house, although I did not see what transpired, she was killed. They then go back to my mother and they killed her and they raped me before leaving us. I ran into the bush and I helplessly walked through. At a point, I heard a voice calling from behind and when I stopped, the person came but he was unable to carry me. He however promised to sought help for me in the next village. I managed to walk to a farm hut where I met some people but they were afraid so they abandoned me. I continue my journey until fell down and slept in a cassava farm. Finally, some people came around and carried me to the nearest village which was deserted. I painfully walked until I reached Lomanso where I met one my uncles. My uncle sent a message to Lunsar and my relatives came and they took me to Lunsar from where I was taken by a Rev. Fr. To the Mabaseneh Hospital. Whilst in the hospital, I was informed that my son was also killed. When I was discharged, I went to Lunsar but I left because of insecurity. I eventually went to my sister in Waterloo and she eventually arranged for to go the Amputees Camp in Aberdeen. Fortunately, I am now living in a house which was constructed for me by the Norwegian Refugee Council at Masiaka.

Torto: I want tell you that we feel sorry for this agonizing experience you went through. Do you know the people who did this to you?

Memunatu: I don't know them.

Torto: Can you identify them facially?

Memunatu: I don't want to lie to you. I can't identify them. All I know is that they wore military uniforms and they told us that they are rebels.

Torto: In your written statement you mentioned Karayemu's baby and mentioned one Amie, what happened to them, were they killed?

Memunatu: Aminata joined me later at the hospital; she told me that Karayemu's child was killed.

Comm. Marcus Jones – Memunatu, TRC is sorry that you lost so many people and as you loss a limb as well. It is a miracle you were not killed, for that reason you should be grateful to God. I just want to ask one question. Did you mention your father in the testimony?

Memunatu: No

Comm. Marcus Jones: Where is he now?

Memunatu: He is in Masmera

Mr. Charm: We are sorry for all that happened to you. When did this incident happened to you

Memunatu: April 1997

Mr. Charm – you mentioned one Abdulai Kargbo who was amputated do you know where he is now

Memunatu: he is in Freetown

Mr. Charm - where you able to know the amount of people that were killed in your village at that time

Memunatu: Yes, whilst I was in the hospital, I WAS TOLD that eight of us were killed, they buried with our limbs, in the village

Mr. Charm – where there any CDF in your village at that time

Memunatu: No

Mr. Charm - what is your health position now

Memunatu: from the time I had this experience with the rebels, I had low blood pressure

Mr. Charm - You mentioned about your sister do you know what happened to her?

Memunatu: fortunately, my sister was not captured; she is staying in the village

Comm. Torto - Have you any question for the Commission?

Memunatu: my question relates to my welfare, now that I have lost my limb, I have my children to take care, what assistance did the commission have for us as amputees

Comm. Torto – what you will benefit is the reasons for your presence before this commission. In accordance with this commission in its report all the recommendations made in these hearings will be forwarded for onward transmission to Government to implement your future benefit. We as commissioners are investigating body; we do not have the resource to compensate victims. Your appearance is not a waste of time. Any other question

Memunatu: No

Comm. Torto – do you have recommendations to make to Government through this Commission?

Memunatu: Yes, before this time I was a business woman, now I am disable by the rebels, I thank God that they have built a house for me. There are people I have who render assistant to me because of my disability. These people are running away from me. Because I cannot take care of them. I would like this commission through the government provide assistance for us as amputees, people who will be responsible to assist in our domestic affairs, to provide subsidies, for our helpers.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

DISTRICT HEARINGS

PORT LOKO

DATE: 03 May 2003

WITNESS NAME: Adamsay Bangura

WITNESS NO: 022

REFERENCE NO: New

Christian Prayer: Pastor John Bull

Muslim Prayer: The interpreter

My name is Adamsay Bangura. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus Jones the presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

I am Adamsay Bangura born of Tonko Limba Chiefdom in the Kambia District. During the time the rebels attacked our village in 1995, I was 11 years old as I was born in the year 1984. When they attacked, we ran away to a village called Maseneta; we stayed in this village for a period of six month but there were few people in the village.

One day, we ran out of food and we were asked to go back to our village to collect some food. When we got there we packed all our belongings and as we were returning, the rebels captured me. I was a suckling mother. I pleaded with them to release me but I was asked where the people kept their rice. I told them that I don't know and they said they are going to kill my child. However, when they removed the child from my back, they didn't kill the child. I traveled to the town with the rebels to collect the rice; unfortunately, another group of rebels had taken the rice. They entered into an argument as to whether to kill me or not. They took my child from me and started beating me.

As I was going along with them, one of them slashed my child's head with a machete and the brain gushed out. Eventually, the child died. When they killed the child, I told them that they should have killed me instead of killing my child and I attempted running away from them. They caught me and then slashed my head; after which one of them raped me. After he had raped me, he took me out side and cut my hand. When the rebels abandoned me, I decided to seek refuge some where but when I remembered the corpse of my child, I came back for it with my hand chopped off. I went to the next village where the rebels had gathered some bags of rice and there was an empty bag which I used to tie my hand. I could have taken my child along and since could not; I took a bowl to cover the corpse from the rains.

Eventually, I got to my village but my father did not know of the ordeal I went through. When I told him that they killed my child and cut my hand, he could not believe until he saw the blood on my

hand. I told my father to set fire as the weather was cold and I needed food. For some time after my hand was cut, I received no medical treatment. One day, my mother carried me on her back and took me to Maseneta but since there was no medical centre there, a message was sent to a Rev. Father in Madina, who eventually arranged for me to be taken to Kambia. My hand was operated on at the Kambia Government Hospital and after three months, I was taken the Connaught Hospital in Freetown. I was in Connaught when I got information that my father and mother were later killed by the rebels. From there, I was taken to the Aberdeen Amputee camp until a house was constructed for me at Masiaka by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Marcus Jones: The Commission feels sorry for you and the audience here is in sympathy with you because you suffered a lot; you lost your parents, your child and your hand was amputated. Can you recall the time this incident happened?

Admasay: Yes it was in 1995.

Marcus Jones: You told us you were 11 years and you went on to say that you were a suckling mother, was that a mistake or you were having the baby at that time?

Admasay: Yes. I had a child at the time. In our village, you are given for marriage at any time and you are not to argue.

Marcus-Jones: Where is that husband?

Adamsay: The man abandoned me because the child was killed.

Torto: I want to express our sympathy. Were you able to know the people who did this to you, or their names?

Adamsay: If I see them, I will be able to identify them.

Torto: Do know where these people are now?

Admasay: No.

Torto: Were you able to identify the fighting group they belonged to?

Adamsay: They were the RUF.

Torto: What languages were they speaking?

Adamsay: They were speaking krio.

Torto: When these happen, were you the only victim or there were other victims?

Adamsay: I was the only victim at the time.

Martein: I want to say sorry for what happened to you. You told us that your father and mother have been killed in the village. Were there other people killed in the village?

Adamsay: Yes but not in my village.

Martein: Can you tell us something about your health condition now?

Adamsay: My present health problem is continuous headache.

Martein: Did you go for medical treatment?

Adamsay: Well I did not go to the hospital because I do not have money.

Marcus-Jones: Who is that sitting next to you?

Adamsay: This man is my fiancé. He has been helping me since I had this problem.

Marcus Jones: Have you any question you may want to ask the Commission?

Adamsay: One of the problems I am having in the community where I stayed is that people taunt me because of my disability. I want this Commission to try in its own way, to put a stop to this.

Marcus Jones: We will make a note of what you have said; people in this country don't have sympathy of people it is because they are not educated. Because if you are educated and you know what we went through during the of rebel war, you would not in your life time laugh at any body. Do you have any other question?

Adamsay: I want to know what the TRC is all about.

Marcus Jones: Is that question from the fiancé or the witness herself?

Adamsay: Yes.

Marcus Jones: She her self should be able to say what she wants to say. However, I will answer the question.

Marcus Jones: The TRC is mandated to make a record of all the violations that took place in this country during this ten year war. The TRC also have to look into the needs of the victims and having heard of these needs, the Commission will write it report based on the recommendations of the victims. The TRC also has to address impunity. When these people listen to your testimony, they will realize that the whole country has heard of what they did and they would realize that they should not do it again. The ultimate result of this whole exercise is that people should never again bring about such suffering and destruction to this country.

Marcus Jones: Do you have any recommendation for the Commission?

Adamsay: The only recommendation I have is that I am pleading to the Government through the Commission to assist me. I am a disable, an orphan and I have my brothers and sisters with me. I would be grateful if the government will assist me.

Marcus Jones: Thank you very much for you recommendation. We've noted it and it is applicable to other people who suffered like you. We are grateful that you have a supportive fiancé beside you. That also should give you hope and courage to move forward and forget about the past. I thank your fiancé as well.

WITNESS NAME: Abdul Sankoh

WITNESS NO: 023

REFERENCENO: New

My name is Abdul Sankoh. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY:

On the 29th April, 1999, we ran from our village called, Madigbo to escape from a rebel attack; we went into the bush to seek refuge. Those brave enough, slept in the village, every afternoon we came to look for our colleagues in the village. One day, when we were coming to the village we didn't know that the West Side Boys, had captured some people in our village, unfortunately, we met some of these rebels, they were eight in number and they put us under gun point. At that time I was together with one Yusuf Sankoh, they asked us to return to the village. Upon arrival to the village, we found they had captured 16 people; they then tied Mr. Usuf and myself, they started flogging these people they had earlier captured, until they killed two of them, and the rest were wounded. They told us to carry some gari and foofoo for them. We left Madigbo and went to a village called Ma Ansumana. On our way going one of our captors, called Hassan Sesay, asked whether I know him but I said no. He told me that he knew me and that I had a friend who was a member of the police force. He said, he is going to kill me because the teachers and police were against them. One of them told him not to kill us because we were young men. Upon arrival, they burnt some houses and a school, we then went to Magbele Junction where we found another group of west side boys numbered up to 60. Hassan still insisted that he wanted to kill me, his colleagues, told him not to kill me, he requested for an axe and they brought it to him. Then he laid me on the main Masiaka - Waterloo highway, he got hold of my right hand and he chopped my hand 27 times with the axe and removed all my fingers. I pleaded with him not to cut my left hand because I am a left-hander; he then chopped it off and gave it to my friend Usuf. I told him to kill me, but he refused, he said that he will make sure that I will no longer write on the blackboard. I started abusing him so that he would kill me; instead, he took a bayonet and cut my upper lips. I continue to abuse him because I wanted him to kill me; he then again took the bayonet, and cut my ear he said that it was because I had lips that was why I was abusing him. I became unconscious, I was thirsty there was no water I drank my blood. I managed to get up and I walked to a village called Magbilla. When I got to this village, I lie down and then I saw one gentleman; I asked him to get me a coconut so that I will drink the water, as soon as he saw me, he ran away. After he had left, I managed to walk to the next village Masiaka. At that time ECOMOG was in control of Masiaka and Mile 38. When I got to Masiaka and when the ECOMOG soldiers saw me, they opened fire at me. They stopped firing when they saw me advancing towards them. They went to me; they asked me who treated me this way. I told them that it was the West Side Boys, I was taken to their medical department, and they put me on intravenous treatment. They eventually brought me to Freetown and took me to the military hospital in Wilberforce. They told me to go to Connaught Hospital. At the hospital I met one ECOMOG soldier who was very friendly to me, we slept in the hospital. In the morning, the first doctor that saw me was one Dr. Dumbuya; he advised that they must remove my upper lips. I abused his mother and told him that had he been my father he would not have said that. I was later treated by a German doctor who worked for one MSF-France. At that time, my family didn't know what had happened to me. It was the Paramount Chief who told my relatives about my plight, my father went to the hospital and he was assisting, until later when my wife joined me. We spent three months in the hospital, until we were taken to the Amputee Camp in Murray Town. The MSF opened a school at the Amputee Camp. I was sent to the psycho-social who trained me to write through Handicap International. I had a friend who helped me with the device, which I studied for three days until I became perfect. During the time President Kabba, went to the camp to hand over some items, I was in the classroom teaching, I was told to write on the blackboard

“Welcome President Kabbah”. I was in the camp until the Norwegian Refugee Council built houses for us in Masiaka, where I am residing with my family. I thank God. That is the end of my testimony.

Marcus Jones - I thank you for coming, I realize that you are somebody that has a fine attitude, and I see that you are determined to move forward. Did you in reality not know Hassan Sesay, or were you pretending not to know him?

Ans - I knew him. He was my school mate; we attended the same primary school in Kambia.

Marcus Jones – Did he have any against for you?

Ans - I don't know. Only he and God know.

Marcus Jones – Where you in conflict before?

Ans - No.

Marcus Jones – Did he have another name?

Ans - He was called Papay.

Comm. Torto – We have heard your story, we are sorry, we want to make some clarifications, and you said that you met your wife in a village. Under what circumstances?

Ans - I didn't say I met my wife in a village, it was one man who told my wife that I have got my hands amputated.

Comm. Torto – Where is Hassan Sesay now?

Ans – My friend told me that Hassan was killed in an attack by ECOMOG at Masiaka.

Comm. Torto – You said that you and Mr. Usuf were tied, how did you manage to untie yourself?

Ans – When my limbs were cut, they were given to Mr. Usuf, it was him who buried my limbs, and he later escape to another village.

Comm. Torto – Where is Mr. Usuf now?

Ans - He is in Madigbo or Mansumana.

Comm. Torto – Mr. Usuf was the one who saw it all, I think he would have been the right person to tell the story to your parents, Why did he not tell them?

Ans - Mr. Usuf was captured at that time he only escaped later.

Comm. Torto – I thank you, and I praise your wife for staying with you. There was an incident yesterday when a man's wife abandoned him because of his dental problem. I encouraged her to continue to stay by you.

Martien - During this incident, were there other victims?

Ans - Yes, they killed two and wounded fourteen.

Martien – Did other people suffer amputations?

Ans - During the time they captured me, I was the only one amputated. I don't whether they did it to other people in other villages.

Martien - Would you explain what the daily life of somebody who has lost both hands like?

Ans - Firstly, I have faith in God, with my present disability, I am unable to do what I had used to do but I thank God that I am receiving assistance from people?

Martien – Do you receive assistance from NGOs?

Ans - Yes, I received assistance from Caritas, World Hope and Handicap International.

Martien: Where you given artificial limbs?

Ans - I did have my artificial limbs but I am more comfortable with my hands as they are and whenever I had these artificial limbs on I easily get temperamental.

Martien – You said you were a teacher in the amputee camp, are you still a teacher?

Ans - No.

Martien – how do you survive?

Ans - I received assistance my friends but I don't go out in the streets begging. I thank God that whenever I want food He provides it for me.

Marcus Jones – Do you have questions for the Commission?

Ans - According to Lome Agreement, there was provision for the setting up of the war victims' fund. How is it going to be effected if it will ever be?

Marcus Jones - The agreement still stands, in the final report of the Commission we will ask the government to implement this that provision. In any case, we hope that the civil society will do something to urge the government to facilitate it. Any other question?

Ans - No

Marcus Jones – Do you have recommendations to government?

Ans - I want to recommend to government through this Commission, that medical care and education provided for our children and to support our wives in micro credit scheme to help them support us.

Marcus Jones – We have heard your recommendations and some other victims had made the same recommendation. We are sure that your recommendation will be included in our final report. I thank you very much for coming to give your testimony, I am advising that you don't allow your ability to waste as you are a teacher, in your community gather the children and help, so that your knowledge will not be wasted.

The session ended at 11.45 a.m.

THE FIRST DAY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN BO DISTRICT AT THE BO TOWN HALL ON TUESDAY 29th APRIL, 2003.

THE OPENING CEREMONY

COMMISSIONERS

Chairman, Bishop J.C Humper - Presiding

Satang Jow

Professor John Kamara - Recording

LEADER OF EVIDENCE

Ozonia Ojielo

TRANSCRIBER

Emmanuel Koivaya Amara

SECRETARIES

Donella Williams

Malorie Barinda Pratt

Bishop Humper called the session to order. The session started with Christian Prayers offered by Bishop Ghandi and Muslim Prayers was said by an Imam in Bo. Bishop Humper gave a brief explanation of the goals, aims and objectives of TRC, which included the writing of an impartial record of violations of human rights committed during the conflict; addressing impunity; responding to the needs of victims and promoting healing and reconciliation. "TRC is here to give all those affected by the war a chance to come and tell their testimonies. We believe that all those who come to give their testimonies will feel lighter and will try to be at peace with those who have hurt them. We also hope that even the perpetrators will show remorse for their wrong deeds. We hope that a better understanding of the price of human suffering and the responsibilities of both local and international bodies regarding the war will prevail amongst the people of Sierra Leone. Lastly, we pray that this process will not only bring peace between individuals but also to the nation as a whole." The Chairman presented the commission to the people of Bo; he told them that the commission was made up of National and International Staff. He then introduced the commissioners and other TRC staff present at the hearing. The Chairman also spoke on the selection of witnesses. He said that witnesses who were called to testify were those who gave their statements during the statement taking phase and they came from different religious and cultural backgrounds. Those who testified, according to the Chairman, would narrate their experiences about atrocities which were committed at different times and at different places during the war and which they witnessed or heard about. "The commission has encouraged witnesses to give statements on a voluntary basis and whosoever wishes to do so hereafter is encouraged to", said the Chairman. The Chairman read out the procedure of the hearings. After which the Leader of Evidence, Ozonnia Ojielo, invited the first witness.

1st

Witness: Kadie Gbongo.

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by the Chairman of the commission; Commissioner Bishop J.C Humper.

Commission Humper –The public and the commission appreciate your coming, Kadie. We know it is not easy to do what you are about to do. You are a very important personality in this country and one of those who will help change this country. Please remain calm and share your experiences, during the war, with us. We are all here to listen to you.

KADIE GBONGO'S TESTIMONY

I was in my house when I heard shooting, and people said that the rebels had come. I asked who rebels were, and they said they were those who had come to catch people. People further told me that the rebels had only come for chiefs, wealthy people and Lebanese. I was in my house when people came running to tell me that two Lebanese; Rada and Mingo, had been killed and they advised that I should go into hiding. I was told that my daughter's shop had been vandalised and they were already making away with everything. By then, my daughter and her husband had fled. I wanted to go to the shop and see for myself, but I was advised not to go there because the rebels had come for chiefs. I was at the riverside when I heard people asking for me, so I hid myself. I heard them saying that they had come for the head of madam Gbongo, so I went to the Sewa river and crossed over to the other side; I could swim. Owing to the fact that my son-in-law was a Lebanese and that the rebels were looking for me, wherever I went, the villagers sent me away; they would not accommodate me. I had to walk through a cave until I got to a town. By then, there was firing behind me. I walked through several towns until I got to Bo. We stayed in Bo for quite some time until we were told that the war was over and we could go back home. I had no problems with accommodation in Bo because I had built a house here. In fact, I opened

the Gbongo market. When I went back home, after a year, we heard firing again and learnt that the rebels had come again. I had twenty seven {27} dependants and the rebels killed three {3} of them. During the last rebel incursion of my village, I lost all that I had; everything I had was burnt down, including my family tomb. I ran to a village and built a house there, but the rebels came after me again. They even asked the people in the village to lead them to me, as they wanted my head. I heard the news, and I ran away. I heard of the rebels, but I never saw them nor did they ever see me. I lost, literally, all that I had. There was a time when we were again told that the war was over, and I went back home.

Mr. Johnny Paul Koroma's regime was the worst for me. People were clearing the bushes to chase me wherever I went into hiding. I never saw the corpses of my dependants who were killed during the war; they were never buried. I got a cut off and I could not come to Bo. The paramount chief was in sympathy with me and he sent food for me. Unto this day, it is through the help of the paramount chief that I even eat good food. The war really devastated me. The rebels were hunting for me because they said I was wealthy. They said that if they killed me, people would have peace in that village. I had many dependants and then I did have the resources to take care of all of them. But now, if Chief Steven Bio does not give me food, I would not have anything to eat. They killed my grand - children, my son-in-law and they were hunting for me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mama Kadie, we have heard your testimony. We know that you are one of those who have gone through difficulties from one stage to another. We have a few questions to ask you in order to clarify a few issues. Is it that you were a target that those who came, came purposely for you?

Mama Kadie: I do not know if I was a target, but people told me that the rebels were looking for me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What happened to your Son-in-law?

Mama Kadie: My Son-in-law was not killed; he ran away together with my daughter.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You said that when you came back, after the first attack, you met all your property intact.

Mama Kadie: Yes. We made a shed in the bush where we hid all my property. The first set of rebels were neither looking for goods nor were they burning houses, but the last set of rebels did. They killed my grand daughter, Jenneh. They also killed my nephew, Sidi, whom I brought up. They killed and burnt the house of my host where I went to seek refuge.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Madam Kadie, we appreciate your coming here and, like the chairman said, we sympathize with you. That is why we appreciate your coming. In spite of the difficulty, we know, you had as you narrated in your story; you have given us good information. However, there are a few issues we would like you to clarify. You said that when the people came they were looking for chiefs, Lebanese and wealthy people. How many people do you know, apart from your Lebanese son-in-law and yourself, who were pursued like you were?

Mama Kadie: Even our Paramount Chief was pursued. He became sick, and they did everything for him, but he could not make it; his children had to take him to Bo. The chief's compound was burnt down. They were looking for him in order to kill him; therefore he had to run away. The rebels followed people into the bushes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara – Did you then or up till now believe that those people were acting on information given to them about you?

Mama Kadie: They had information about me; that I was wealthy and that got all my wealth through trading. They then took all my wealth and killed my dependants. They went in search of me from village to village, but I thank God that even though I lost everything, I still have my life.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Do you suspect anybody for this?

Mama Kadie: There was one Foday Sanpha who told them that he knew my hiding place. They told him that if they could not find me, they would kill him. When they went to the supposed hiding place and could not find me, they took him to Tisana, a village, and slaughtered him because he had told a lie to the rebels. Foday followed to every town I went. He even asked me for food sometimes. Little did I know that he was closely keeping watch on me for the rebels. Up to this day, Foday's wife and children are in the village.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You told us about two sets of rebels. You said that the Johnny Paul Koroma's rebels were good, can you explain that better?

Mama Kadie: I said they came in three stages; two came before Johnny Paul Koroma's. By then rebels were engaged in massive looting and killing, and they had no respect for people; they even said that there were no longer chiefs. We saw people we could not identify; they were involved in looting. On all the three occasions when the rebels came, we went into hiding. We went back, upon the instructions of the Kamajors, and we have not seen any rebels since then. Our president had also declared that the war was over. We are happy that we have peace now; though we are poor.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We thank you in your happiness and we hope that this peace will hold.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you for your testimony. We admire your courage and your bravery throughout this period. You have given us a lot of information, but please allow me to ask you a few questions. Apart from your business, did you belong to any other strong group in your community?

Mama Kadie: I was the Women's Leader of my Chiefdom; I belonged to a back yard farming group; I had also given a piece of land in order that a school be built there; I also gave accommodation to soldiers who were sent to my community.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was your relationship with people in your community cordial?

Mama Kadie: I had cordial relationship with all the women at Lugbu. I was the societal head; if I stood out and shouted, all the women would come out running. I have been a section chief for thirty one years. I am eighty seven years old. I don't believe I should have enemies in Lugbu because I have done so much for my people; I don't know why people at Lugbu should hate me. May be they did, but they did not express it openly.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you Madam Kadie, I would ask the Leader of Evidence if he has any questions for you.

Leader of Evidence: I don't have any questions except to ask whether she still wants to come to the closed hearings.

Mama Kadie: I cannot come on Thursday because I am undertaking a construction.

Comm. Bishop Humper – Do you have any recommendations to make to the commission which we could incorporate in our report?

Mama Kadie: I recommend that the government helps to build a hospital at Sumbuya. There are five chiefdoms in that area. If they can have a hospital with doctors and a theatre where surgical operations can perform, that will be fine. I am also appealing that a bridge be built over the Sewa River and that a ferry service be also made available to the communities.

2nd Witness: Mr. Samu Lebbie

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by the chairman, Commissioner Bishop Humper.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We welcome you and we hope that by the time you finish telling your story, you will have peace of mind.

SAMU LEBBIE'S TESTIMONY

We were at Yambama when the rebels came, and we were driven into the bush. We were there, but we had nothing to sustain us. One day, my father asked me to accompany him to Bo. On our way to Bo, we came across the rebels. They arrested us and tied us up with twines. At that time, they were arresting and killing people. They were looking for young people to recruit. They held me up, head down, and started butchering me on the back of my neck. Should it please the commission, I will show them the knife marks on my neck. When they had drawn the knife several times across my neck, I laid on the ground as if I was dead. When the rebels left, the soldiers came, and they picked me up, put me in their vehicle and took me to the hospital. At the hospital, the expatriate doctors came and helped me with my wounds. I later learnt that all of my relatives had been killed. The whites were responsible for my feeding and shelter and I was with them for four months. We were there until the war calmed down and we were taken back to our respective homes. This is what I experienced during the war.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We know what you must have gone through. We know that you have a story to tell this nation. I want you to clarify one point for all of us. You didn't mention a name but we want to know the group that attacked you. Did I hear you say that they were rebels?

Samu Lebbie: They said that they were rebels. However, I could not identify them because they attacked the village late in the night.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: I appreciate your story, we know you have gone through a terrible experience, but we are happy that with God's help you are able to come here today and tell us this story. As you have said, many of your friends and relatives are not here today. I know it won't bother you that with that terrible experience we still ask you questions. You have not given us an exact estimate, but can you tell the number of people with whom you were on that day and how many of them were slaughtered?

Samu Lebbie: Twenty of us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Where they all members of your family?

Samu Lebbie: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You mentioned white people who helped you; where did they come from?

Samu Lebbie: I don't know, they only said that they came from overseas.

Prof Kamara: Where they all white or where there also blacks?

Samu Lebbie: Well, there were some blacks, but the one who treated me was white.

Comm. Prof. Kamara – Was it an organized health center or hospital?

Samu Lebbie – It was a hospital, here in Bo, and I was in ward 2.

Prof Kamara – What are you doing at the moment?

Samu Lebbie – I am alone at the moment. I am not doing anything; my brothers help me out. I feel pain on my neck whenever I raise or bow down my neck?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow – Were other people in the village when you were attacked?

Samu Lebbie – Yes, the rebels came in and attacked the entire village.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: For how long did you stay in the bush?

Samu Lebbie: Two months.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us about conditions in the bush?

Samu Lebbie: When we were in the bush, we lived on the little provision we had taken along with us, and when that got finished, we were on our way again.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us more about the rebels who attacked you?

Samu Lebbie: I can't tell the number of rebels that attacked because it was dark.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were they in uniform?

Samu Lebbie: Yes, they wore military outfits.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: As they chopped you at the back of your neck, what exactly did they say to you?

Samu Lebbie: They were saying that we were informants and that we gave information to the soldiers.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You did mention your cousin, who was abducted. Has he been traced since then?

Samu Lebbie: All of them were killed, except me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: With your experience, did you receive any counselling apart from the medical treatment?

Samu Lebbie: Not yet, but the government says we should forget about all what happened to us.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How do you survive?

Samu Lebbie: Thanks be to God. But for the pains from the wounds I sustained, I am fine.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you prepared now to forgive the perpetrators who did this to you?

Samu Lebbie: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you able to perform burial rites for your relatives who were killed by the rebels?

Samu Lebbie: Yes, I was able to travel to my other relatives and we did perform the rites.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Who discovered the dead bodies of your relatives?

Samu Lebbie: Nobody did. However, after some time, the bones were collected and taken to my relatives and the rites were performed.

Leader of Evidence: The group leader did you remember the name of their group; did they have any alias or nick names?

Samu Lebbie: I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: When they attacked you and your family, didn't they call out any names or say anything?

Samu Lebbie: I cannot recall any name at all. All the rebels were saying was that we were collaborating with the soldiers and we were going to be killed for that.

Leader of Evidence: Since the attack, have you ever seen any of the perpetrators?

Samu Lebbie: No.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thanks for coming; we appreciate your being with us. Do you have any recommendation which you would like us to forward to the government?

Samu Lebbie: I need help from the government; I want to be making garden at the back of my compound so that I can sustain my family and myself.

3rd Witness: Brima Moiwo

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by the chairman, Commissioner Bishop Humper.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What you are about to share with us today will not stay with only us, but will go all over the world. Also, at the end of this commission, you will not regret having come here today.

BRIMA MOIWO'S TESTIMONY

I am here today to tell the truth. I am happy about what the commissioner has said to me. We realize that you people consider us and think about us. In 1991, at the beginning of the war, I was in Sumbuya where I had been for forty years; it was in Sumbuya that I had all my kids. I learnt that the rebels would be coming to Sumbuya on a Monday. I saw people getting their property together. The rebels never hit by surprise; they always gave notice. I had, in all, twelve dependants, so I ran away, into hiding, with my family to a village; the rebels were attacking big towns and not villages. The rebels attacked on a Saturday, but they did not attack the village where I was. On Sunday, the rebels came, and everybody, including ECOMOG, went into hiding.

We ran to Madina and the rebels came and took over Madina, and all the people ran away. Whilst we were there, one of my children fell sick; I could not get medication so Kadiatu, my daughter, died. At that time of her death, the rebels entered where we were and asked us to dance for them. I told them about the death of my daughter, and they asked us to throw it away since they were not responsible for her death; they did not want to see the corpse. When we went to Tormia, the rebels went there again and took over the village. They imposed curfew which started at 4 pm; we couldn't come out. My other daughter fell ill and died because of lack of medication; she was 5 years and 6 months old. A leader of the rebel group gave orders to throw away the child, but we went and buried her. Five days after the imposition of the curfew, we learnt that soldiers were on their way; the rebels ran away because they were afraid of the soldiers. The curfew was immediately called off. After three days, the soldiers came and asked everybody to come out of the bush. My children and I joined the first food supply truck that entered into the village in order to move out of the village. I went to a town where I had hoped to meet my relatives. However, all of my relatives had left by the time I got to the town. At Kambia, I made bold and bravely approached one of the rebels and I told him that I wanted to go home together with my people. He enquired about where I wanted to go and, when I told him, he was happy because, according to him, they were in control of the area to which I wanted to go. If I had said that I wanted to go to Bo, they would have killed me. They asked me to list down the names of my dependants; then I had six dependants left. They ordered me to go to my village and that I should pass through Mattru, where another set of rebels were. The only thing which helped me was the Koran; I had wanted to put it on the ground when one of them asked me why I wanted to put it on the ground. I cannot tell the name of the rebel who asked me to take my Koran and released me; but I believe that he was a Muslim. On my return, I found out that one of my kids had died. The day on which I got to Sumbuya was the day somebody gave me the information that one of my wives was also dead and that she was killed in the mosque. I did not have the opportunity of attending the funeral ceremony of my wife; she was like a mother to me. We had six children with only one surviving; he is now in this town. I was sleeping when a rebel knocked at my door; I came out together with my wife. The rebel asked whether I was the one who sold salt; I was not trading in salt. They assembled everybody in the town and asked their chief to ask me if I sold salt, he did, and I said 'no'. They then tied me up tightly; I can still show the marks. They said if I continued to deny the fact that I traded in salt, they would beat me to death. As the argument was going on, one of them hit me on my head, with a gun; unto this day, I experience serious headache and snort, sometimes, run from my nostrils. All those who were with me ran away; they thought that I was dead. At any rate, the rebels came back looking for me later; they found me and treated me. I then decided that I should go and pray, but one of them said that even if I went and prayed, God would not answer me; I responded by saying that he was not my creator. Another rebel said that I could go and pray, so I went. I came back and I reported myself to them. They then sent me to call my wife. When she came, they tied her up and gave her fifty strokes of the cane. Each time they hit her, she would say "my husband does not sell salt". One of the rebels who came from Mattru investigated the matter; he asked them to produce evidence of the salt for which they had been punishing us. Their reply was that they had searched everywhere, but they had not found salt. The rebel who came from Mattru then told the rebels who had been punishing us that they had gone against the objectives of their course. He took them to Sumbuya, and I was happy about the way in which they were punished. During the war, six of my children died, but none of them was killed by rebels. My family house was burnt down and unto this moment, I have not been able to erect it again.

Comm. Bishop Humper: I have heard all what you have said. I need to ask a few questions for clarification. Did I hear you say that in one of the areas, to which you went, you told the rebels that you wanted to go back home?

Brima Moiwo: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did they tell you that all those areas were under their control?

Brima Moiwo: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you have any reason for going back home?

Brima Moiwo: well, if one were killed in an area where one were known one would be buried, but if one were killed elsewhere, ones corpse would rot.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You said that there was a curfew, who imposed the curfew?

Brima Moiwo: Indeed it was the rebels who were in the area at the time.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say that during the war rebels did not kill at all?

Brima Moiwo: I said some of them did not kill; some did.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you. Like the Chairman, I will ask you a few questions. It will be on the atrocities committed by rebels. Where did you live between 1991 and 1999?

Brima Moiwo: I was at Sumbuya all the time, in the chief's compound.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All the time; you did not move at all?

Brima Moiwo: I was at Sumbuya when I heard about the rebels, so we had to move; we were moving from place to place.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You spoke about rebels all the time; was there any difference between those rebels?

Brima Moiwo: There was no difference between them. The first set of rebels spoke in Liberian accent but, apart from that, there was no other difference.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You said that the rebels at Sumbuya who maltreated you and your wife were not killing or looting property?

Brima Moiwo: I was not at Sumbuya when they got there, I was at Madina where I was told that a Lebanese had been killed.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: When they were beating you, they said that it was because you traded in salt; didn't they want any other valuables?

Brima Moiwo: All I can tell the commission is that when they got to my house they were only looking for salt. I can't tell whether they wanted any thing else.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You said that something awful was done to those who punished you, but you never told us what was done to them. What was that?

Brima Moiwo: They were flogged for telling lies on me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In your testimony, you said that your children died, but that were not killed by rebels.

Brima Moiwo: Yes. They died because of lack of medication.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you see other children from other families die?

Brima Moiwo: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell how many other children died?

Brima Moiwo: I can't say anything about others. I know the figure only for my own children who were dead.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us how your first wife was killed?

Brima Moiwo: I can't tell because I was not there.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thanks for coming to share your testimony with us. Now can you make any recommendation to help us in writing our report?

Brima Moiwo: I am appealing to the government, through this commission, to consider me for help. I have four children all of whom are going to school. Only God knows how we survive. Even my house is in a very poor condition, and I need help.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have heard your recommendations. We are going round the country to get your testimonies and - in the end - we will compile and submit our report. Thank you very much for coming.

4TH Witness: Mr. Hassan Daco Sallu

The chairman welcomed Hassan Sallu who swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Bishop Humper. The chairman commended Hassan Sallu for accepting the invitation to come and give his testimony. He encouraged him to testify and told him that his testimony would greatly help the commission in writing the report.

HASSAN DACO SALLU'S TESTIMONY

I, who sit here before the commission, am a Mende by tribe and a Sierra Leonean born in Sierra Leone. I think not of any other country other than Sierra Leone. When the war broke out, I was one of the Kamajors who fought for this country so that it could not be destroyed. At that time, I did not understand the causes of the war; a war which was perpetrated by the people of this country. The elders and local authorities called us together and told us that we should do something for our country. Our own brothers went to our village and told us that our village and Njayama Bongor were neighbours and that we should not sit by and witness the destruction of our villages. Owing to my love for this country, in spite of my mother's advice and protest, I joined the Kamajors. The Burkinabes did not enter into our village; it was our own people, Sierra Leoneans, who did. At that time, Hinga Norman was a chief at Njayama Bongor. We were asked to come together and fight in order to protect our territory. When we returned, our people tested us by drawing our noses in order to know whether we were dead or alive. At one time, the NPRC asked us to set up a Civil Defence Force unit so that we could protect ourselves. When the war actually broke out, we ran away to Bo. In Bo, we had nothing to eat; our sisters had to go fetching food for us. When our sisters normally went out for food, they were detained at Sewa defence and all the food they would have collected would be prepared for the rebels. Our people resolved that we should go and fight against those who had abducted our sisters and to fight for our country. There were about twenty five {25} of us, and we were taken to Hinga Norman. He said that he was a chief in that area for the British. He told us that throughout his schooling, he had military training, and that he would not sit back and allow people to take this country. By 5:45 pm on a Thursday in April, 1994, we were attacked by rebels. Some survived, but some did not; only seven of us survived. Arthur Demby, the brother of the former Vice President, died during that attack. About 22 of us were in a particular house, about 10:30 am, when we saw some people, who were in very neat military outfits, passing. They were asking our brothers whether people were being trained to fight against them. Later, I opened the door and watched; two of my other

colleagues joined me and the others closed the door. As soon as we went out, they fired RPG at us; we fell to the ground as if we were dead and we later crept into a cassava farm. Idriss Kamara and Hinga Norman were in an armoured car and they asked whether we were those who were being trained and who attacked on that day. Hinga Norman said that we were his children. All the people in Hinga Norman's house were killed and buried at the back of the house. While we were there, a native society emerged, and we were then taken to Bo. In 1996, we joined the Kamajor society, we were initiated in Bo, and our aim was to bring our people, who had fled from the rebels, back home. We met Lt. Mbriwa who was the commander. We crossed the Sewa river at night, released nine hundred and fifty five {955} and brought them back to Gerehun. There was a camp called "Kenema Highway camp"; we removed the rebels from there. There was another camp called "Tamaboro", we also removed them from there. The day on which we captured that place soldiers were sent to give us reinforcement. The leader of that group was a soldier named Marah. We went to a place called "Supermarket", where we found little children; one of them was a male child whose skin had been removed down to the sole of his feet. A small girl told us that the child had been treated like that because the rebels believed that his father was against them. We went and captured "Zogoda", there was a training base there and we took all of those we captured to Kenema. Falla Sewa, who was the brigade commander then, took photographs; there was dancing and jubilation. We handed over to the soldiers all the guns we had taken from the rebels. One of our brothers, Alex Gumu, died during the attack on Zogoda; we brought the corpse back with us. We went to places around Matotoka and drove the rebels out of the area. By the time the "Johnny Paul Koroma" war came, we had been fighting alongside the soldiers. However, they asked that the Kamajors be disbanded. While we were there, we saw police and army personnel in a truck and they said that they had come to join us to make peace. Some of the Kamajors joined the truck; I did not; I walked to the police station instead. I was afraid that they may have set an ambush for us. There were armoured personnel carriers and ammunition there; the Guinean contingent was there. They stood by the brigade and we stood on the other side. The only person there was the CPO. The CPO asked us not to fight against the soldiers as they formed the government of the day. Moreover, they had arms and we didn't. We told them that we believed in God and that we voted for a government whose overthrow we won't compromise. A group of women, who went singing, told us that there were other groups of people who were coming to attack us; I ran away with my hand on my head; we didn't have any guns. RPG was fired at us, the CPO ran away. We didn't have any guns, so they started pushing us until we left the town. They said that we should not come to the town again, so we went into the bush. When we heard of the reinstatement of the government, we came to town and drove the rebels out. It was during that time that I was shot in my leg. Should the commission allow me, I will show the part of my body where I was shot. After I had been shot, ECOMOG entered into Bo. When ECOMOG entered, they took me from the scene and sent me back to the village. There was a lady who was treating me with native herbs. A doctor told me that my leg should be amputated. Dr. Jah was the first doctor who did a surgical operation on me. Neither I nor anybody paid him anything. I was there for three days before I was taken to Freetown. I was still hospitalised at Curney Barnes hospital when the January 6th attack on Freetown took place. The hospital was partially burnt down; it only God who saved me. I still feel pain, but I have come back. I now take care of the children of my brothers who were killed during the war. At one time, a rebel asked me a question, he said "You have been fighting for your people and your country, what have they done for you?" The NCDDR is not doing anything for some of our brothers who were disarmed; they still have their cards. Some who were supposed to be trained for one year have had their training reduced to six months; those who were supposed to be trained for six months have had their training reduced to three months. NCDDR has cut down everything. I am saying that everybody in Sierra Leone should be part of the peace and should be happy. Those of us who suffered during the war, for this country, should be considered.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you for coming to share with us something we had not known before; that through you, some 995 women were released - that is very vital for the TRC. You have said a lot about how you became a part of those who were fighting for the country. Did you say that Burkinabes were also fighting?

Hassan Sallu: Yes, they were in the country.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How long do you think the Burkinabes took here?

Hassan Sallu: They were here only during the time of the NPRC.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How many of you were attacked?

Hassan Sallu: About twenty five {25} of us, but only two survived.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You should be regarded as a hero. You have done a lot and have suffered a lot in order to bring peace to this country; we salute you. I have a few questions for you, and I believe that they will help us to understand your story better. You mentioned Hinga Norman and Idriss Kamara; what were both of them doing at that time around that area?

Hassan Sallu: Hinga Norman was the regent chief at Telubongor. Idriss Kamara was the Secretary of State in Bo at that time, so when he heard that that village had been attacked, he went to see what was happening.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: That happened during the NPRC time?

Hassan Sallu: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: This means NPRC encouraged Kamajor activities.

Hassan Sallu: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You also mentioned the training, how long was the training?

Hassan Sallu: We had had only one week training when we were attacked. As a result of the attack, we went to fight and no one had the guts, after that, to go back for training.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: The Kamajors and other groups who were fighting along side the government came to be known as CDF.

Hassan Sallu: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: There were the Tamaboros, Kamajors and other groups. Did I hear you say you attacked and drove the Tamaboros?

Hassan Sallu: Whatever it was, they were all the same.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You spoke of a child whose skin was removed; what group did that?

Hassan Sallu: The child which I spoke about was taken from Bo, here, and he suffered that treatment because his father was allegedly against the rebels.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Who did this?

Hassan Sallu: The rebels.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: When you came to Kenema, you said you handed guns over to Falla Sewa; why did you, when you yourselves needed guns?

Hassan Sallu: The rebels were saying that they got guns from the soldiers and that was why we handed the guns over to the head of the brigade.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: When you were recruited into the Kamajor militia, what kind of training did you receive? Was it traditional or conventional warfare training?

Hassan Sallu: Traditional.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us more about the command structure of the Kamajors?

Hassan Sallu: We copied from the soldiers; we used the same ranks.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us what the civilians suffered in the hands of the Kamajors during the conflict?

Hassan Sallu: I wish to say this in the name of God. The people under my own command, in my own area, did not suffer at all.

Leader of Evidence: One of the key mandates of the TRC is that you should tell the truth about all what happened during the war. I am therefore going to ask you questions to help clarify certain things. In 1994 you were one of the first to join the vigilante group, and you joined the Kamajors in 1996. So when did you receive your training?

Hassan Sallu: When we went to Hinga Norman, the ULIMO'S were there; they could train you overnight and you would know a lot of things.

Leader of Evidence: You said you lost some of your men; did they die during training or during an attack?

Hassan Sallu: They were killed during the war, after the training.

Leader of Evidence: You also said that you were trained in traditional warfare and not conventional warfare?

Hassan Sallu: That is correct.

Leader of Evidence: Can you explain, for the benefit of the commission, how that training was done and what was the nature of that training?

Hassan Sallu: We were initiated overnight and we all came out the following morning and prayed to God so that He could help us to fight against those who had taken arms against our people. After that, all the initiates went out and fire shots at one another. From that point, you were a Kamajor.

Leader of Evidence: Does that mean they fired at you and bullets didn't go through you?

Hassan Sallu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Where do you think those powers came from?

Hassan Sallu: We believed that an initiate must not have any erotic contact with a woman. The initiate had certain food which he was forbidden to eat. A Kamajor was also forbidden to fight against his own people.

Leader of Evidence: Were there also children who were trained together with you?

Hassan Sallu: In my own battalion, NCDDR can prove it; we had no children amongst us.

Leader of Evidence: What about the other battalions; did they train children?

Hassan Sallu: There was a ruling that children should not be given guns.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the TRC the nature of the initiation?

Hassan Sallu: I will tell you whatever you want to know about the Kamajors. If you wish to know about the initiation, I will tell you. During the war, if a Kamajor chanted a few words on a cup of water and splashed it on somebody who was not a Kamajor, and that person was shot at, nothing happened to the person. If I was a Kamajor, and I perspired and rubbed the sweat on you, no bullet shot at you would pierce through your body; soldiers can attest to this.

Leader of Evidence: As a commander, what was the strength of your battalion?

Hassan Sallu: In the Kamajor society, whoever was resident in your area automatically fell under your command. Even the chief was under my control at that time; so I cannot exactly tell the number of people whom I had under my command.

Leader of Evidence: I mean Kamajor men.

Hassan Sallu: I had fifty {50} men under my control. Out of that number, only two people died and I was shot.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have any nick name?

Hassan Sallu: Yes, Hassan Dokor was my nick name.

Leader of Evidence: Many people came to Freetown and claimed that atrocities such as drinking of human blood and the cutting off of ears were committed by the Kamajors. Can you attest to that?

Hassan Sallu: The people who have been making these claims are those who came and destroyed their own people. Our society, the Kamajor society, had rules. Kamajors were forbidden to deal with filth or anything that was unclean; we were very Godly. The people of Bo will tell the TRC that the rebels gave Kamajor outfits to non Kamajor fighters and whatever evil things that those people did reflected on the Kamajors.

Leader of Evidence: As battalion commander, what areas were under you command?

Hassan Sallu: Five villages were under my command and I fought against the rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Were you involved in Operation "Black December"?

Hassan Sallu: It almost coincided with the December/January invasion.

Leader of Evidence: Can you explain Operation "Black December" for the commission?

Hassan Sallu: The man, who had all the powers that would enable one to enter into the enemy camp unnoticed, is dead. He was an old man and his name was Jawara.

Leader of Evidence: A lot of people have come to the commission and have testified that you, the Kamajors, did a lot of bad things which included punishing people whom you claimed to be collaborators. How were you able to identify collaborators?

Hassan Sallu: When the Kamajors finally decided to fight, it was to defend the people of this country. Now the very people for whom we fought are saying that the Kamajors committed atrocities. It must be made known that the intention of the people who started the war was to take away everything from this country.

Leader of Evidence: My question was that people have been to this commission to say that you punished people whom you claimed to be collaborators. How did you – as a Kamajor group; not you as a person - identify collaborators?

Hassan Sallu: I want you to understand that the Kamajors had no magic to tell who was a collaborator or not. Soldiers were in the towns, and the civilians for whom we fought, told us who was who.

Leader of Evidence: What was the punishment for these collaborators?

Hassan Sallu: No form of punishment was actually stipulated.

Leader of Evidence: Does that mean it would be left with the commander to decide?

Hassan Sallu: As commander, at that time, we never meted out any punishment; people here can attest to that.

Leader of Evidence: People gave statements that a lot of atrocities were committed by Kamajors against people who belonged to other tribes and lived in the South. Can you make any statement on that?

Hassan Sallu: In my own area, it never happened. There was no incident in which Kamajors committed atrocities against people on the basis of tribal difference. Nothing like that ever happened. I want you to know that, during the fight against the rebels, all tribes were involved. Even when we were fighting as Kamajors, we had people from other areas and tribes. Why then could the Kamajors have decided to commit atrocities against people from other tribes? If I, a Mende, witnessed an incident in which a Fula was trying to inflict pain on any of my Mende brother, I would fight for my brother.

Leader of Evidence: The commissioner asked you a question about the command structure and you said you followed the same pattern as the soldiers?

Hassan Sallu: Yes, I did.

Leader of Evidence: So you are saying you had the same command structure with the army from the lowest rank right on to the highest rank?

Hassan Sallu: Yes; we had all.

Leader of Evidence: How many battalions did you have during the intervention?

Hassan Sallu: We had five battalions during the intervention.

Leader of Evidence: Can you name them and where they are based?

Hassan Sallu: First battalion was in Dambala, Second Battalion at Gerehun, Third battalion was at Bumpeh, Fourth in the North, and the Fifth battalion was in Pujehun district; towards the border.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you. How many divisions and where are based?

Hassan Sallu: There were divisions in the South, North and West.

Leader of Evidence: West would be the Western area?

Hassan Sallu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Who was commander in the west?

Hassan Sallu: The commander in the west was a Creole, I don't know his name.

Leader of Evidence: What about the Commander in the North?

Hassan Sallu: Commander Dumbuya was Commander in the North.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where he is now?

Hassan Sallu: It is quite some time now since we stopped operations; I can't say exactly where he is currently.

Leader of Evidence: But I hope that he survived the war.

Hassan Sallu: Nothing happened to him; he did not sustain even a scratch in the course of the war.

Leader of Evidence: What about in the South; who was Commander in the South?

Hassan Sallu: Eddie Mansallay was the Commander in the South.

Leader of Evidence: Where is he now?

Hassan Sallu: As I said earlier, I can't say where he is now.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether he is in Bo or Freetown?

Hassan Sallu: I don't know. Since the government announced that the war was over; we all became civilians. I therefore cannot tell the whereabouts of anybody. If I were able to tell where he is now, that would presuppose the continuing existence of the Kamajor society. In the course of the war, if I were awoken from a deep slumber and asked about the whereabouts of any Kamajor, I would have stated it without any problem. There is democracy now, and even a child knows about his or her rights.

Leader of Evidence: How many members were in the war council; just numbers – we are not asking for names here?

Hassan Sallu: I must say, as I have sworn on oath to say the truth, I don't know. By the time the war council was moved to our end, I had sustained injury and I was not opportune to know its composition.

Leader of Evidence: Could you describe, for the benefit of the commission, what base zero looked like – the structure, size and environment?

Hassan Sallu: That was a base and if you were an enemy, you would never know or set eyes on base zero. Base zero was not in the bush; it was in town - in Sherbro land; it was located in a school compound. As long as you meant bad for this country, even if you flew over it, you would not see Base zero. There was a white man who did not believe anything; he came in the

ECOMOG helicopter to find Base zero. He flew round and round, but he could not see the base. Civilians can attest to the fact that Base zero was in town and not in the bush.

Leader of Evidence: Would you like to describe the relationship that existed between Kamajors and soldiers? What led to the fight between the Kamajors and SLA?

Hassan Sallu: One morning at Telubongor, they launched an attack about the time when people were going to the mosque in order to offer the fajir prayer. While the soldiers and UNAMSIL personnel who were on the ground had guns, we had no guns. Some people were still asleep when the attack was launched that morning. People were taken out of their beds and their heads were chopped off by the attackers; a lot of people were killed. When some people heard the sound of the gun, they went into hiding under their beds. The attackers shot through doors and people got killed.

Leader of Evidence: Can you describe for TRC what happened at Koribondo?

Hassan Sallu: I can't tell the Commission about anything that happened at Koribondo because I was not fighting on that axis. It was only after the intervention that the Kamajors were based at Koribondo.

Leader of Evidence: You said that before the war you were a miner, but now you can't do anything for yourself. Can you tell the Commission the conditions that must be met for someone to mine in your area?

Hassan Sallu: We took licenses in order to enable us embark on mining activities. Everyday, we hear the rules regarding the mining ad sales of diamonds on the wires. We abide by these rules in our area that is why Baoma is rated high; we do not mine without licenses.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thanks for coming and for your brilliant answers to questions asked so far. Is there any recommendation that you wish the commission to forward to government?

Hassan Sallu: I want the commission to ask the government this question. After the overthrow, and considering the number of months we spent in the bush, what compensation did they give to the Kamajors? I want the commission to help me so that my voice can reach His Excellency. We are not asking for rewards but, like a rebel once asked me, "after fighting for this nation, what has the government done for you?" Should my children ask me, what would I say to them in response? I want to ask the commission to tell the government to help people who have suffered in the South. We heard that there are structures for amputees; they are putting up buildings here and there, but when we ask them for help, they would say that the South was the first to see the end of the war. We are appealing to the TRC to tell the government to show concern for us who fought and suffered for this country. The children and girlfriends of ministers are either abroad or around driving luxurious cars, while we continue to suffer. I fought, during the war, so that the country could not be destroyed. Now I am injured, so please tell the government not to forget about us. If there is a trust fund for those who were injured during the war, we will be happy because the funds will take care of us. So please don't forget us. I am very thankful to the commission.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Hassan, we thank you for coming. We have listened to your recommendations and we will include them in our report.

THE SECOND DAY OF HEARINGS HELD AT BO TOWN HALL ON 30TH APRIL, 2003.

COMMISSIONERS

Bishop J.C Humper {Chairman}

Professor John Kamara : Presiding

Satang Jow : Recording

LEADER OF EVIDENCE

Ozonia Ojielo

TRANSCRIBER

Emmanuel Koivaya Amara

SECRETARIES

Malorie Barinda Pratt

Donella Williams

The hearing was opened with the usual Christian and Muslim prayers. The presiding commissioner then asked the leader of evidence to invite the first witness for that day.

1st Witness: Theresa Blackie

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Please relax and very quietly tell us what you went through.

THERESA BLACKIE'S TESTIMONY

I am here, before this commission, to narrate my experiences during the war. We were by the hearth one morning when we learnt that the rebels had come. We learnt that the back of one of our brother's foot had been slashed. Not too long after we had got the news of our brother's injury, we saw a man, who was dressed in military fatigue, rushing toward us. We all fled into the bush. As we took to our heels, one of the rebels came upon us. Among us was a pregnant woman who was assaulted by the attacker. She was dumped into the water several times and, after that, we were asked to drink from that stream. That was the stream from which, prior to the attack, we fetched water to drink. The town Chief was shot dead and his corpse laid in front of the

house. Our brothers asked us to set up a dance which would look like a native dance, and we did. Those who came to release us from the rebels were shot to death. The old people who could not run were locked up in houses and burnt to death. Even my brother who took care of me was also assaulted. My own very sister was assaulted in such a way that she couldn't withstand the pain; she died. Another sister of mine, who was pregnant, had a miscarriage and died in the process. All the houses in that village were burnt down and now there is no place in which members of the family could live. I can't take a stranger to my village now because it has been devastated; the attackers burnt down all the eight houses which we had. My grand father could not flee from the scene, and I had to boil cassava for him which he lived on until he died. I am very incapable of taking care of my children now; I have lost everything. One of my brothers who was a farmer and who was helping to take care of the family was also killed. My mother is getting old and can't do much. I am a woman and I also can't do much.

Prof Kamara: I know that people have suffered in this war, but people like you have suffered more, especially for the fact that you are a woman. The interpreter has been using the word "assaulted", what do you actually mean? You said your brother was assaulted, how was he assaulted?

Theresa Blackie: They would pursue any one they saw and they would either kill or injure you.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: How was the woman who was dumped into the water assaulted? Did they dump her in before or after her death?

Theresa Blackie: She had gone to the river to seek after her daughter when they met her. They had sexual intercourse with her several times before they killed her and dumped her into the water.

Prof Kamara: You said that you have a lot of children to take care of, how many children in all?

Theresa Blackie: They are twelve in all; some are my brother's children.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: What is the current state of the village which was destroyed?

Theresa Blackie: We have still not started any constructions; we live in make-shift houses.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We have listened to all what happened to you and we admire your bravery and courage. I will now ask you a few questions. The rebels who attacked you, what were they like; what did they look like?

Theresa Blackie: The attackers that came to my village were people that I can't identify.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were they in uniform?

Theresa Blackie: They were in combat fatigue and when we saw them, we ran away.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell whether they were young boys?

Theresa Blackie: They were a mixture of people; old and young. However, we were in danger and we did not have time to look at them properly.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you remember what language they were speaking?

Theresa Blackie: I can't tell, they were just going round the place.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You spoke of rape; can you say how many people raped your sister?

Theresa Blackie: I can't tell, I only came upon my sister in that condition.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you able to give those people decent burial?

Theresa Blackie: I was not around to witness my sister's burial. The husband came around, after twelve days, to look for his wife, but by then the body had decomposed so he dragged it and buried it in a piece of land nearby.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The events have been too traumatic for you, have you received any form of counselling?

Theresa Blackie: No, except that I spoke to the TRC staff.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you received assistance from any NGO?

Theresa Blackie: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The children you spoke about, are they going to school?

Theresa Blackie: No, they are not going to school; they go around looking for food.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know why your village was attacked?

Theresa Blackie: No, I don't have any idea, but each time they came they took our property and we ran away.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you for coming to give this testimony. We've been hearing stories that rebels would only enter into a village if they were being led by a native of that village?

Theresa Blackie: It is not to my knowledge whether any one of them was a member of our village. There was none as far as I know.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Can you say that your village was some sort of a target?

Theresa Blackie: Because of the festive occasion, those people normally came from the neighbouring villages to attack us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you say, in your statement, that the rebels said that that was your drinking water so, after they had killed the lady, they dumped her into the water?

Theresa Blackie: As the pregnant lady noticed that the perpetrators were approaching, she was afraid and she tried to escape. When the rebels saw her, while she was crossing the river, they attacked and killed her.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Where was your mother when that happened?

Theresa Blackie: She liked being in the farm house. When the attack took place, we jumped through the window and ran away.

Comm. Bishop Humper: So how did you know about the manner in which those people were killed? Did somebody tell you?

Theresa Blackie: When we came back to the village, we saw the corpses scattered all over the place.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Has anything been done for the reburial of your sister's corpse?

Theresa Blackie: It cannot be possible now because when the rains came, since the grave was shallow, most of the bones were washed away. However, we still have a few of the bones there.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is it not a tradition that the remains of the dead should always have a proper burial?

Theresa Blackie: Even the chief that was killed, his brother came later and buried his bones. In the case of the pregnant woman, women attended to her dead body because the men could not be involved in that kind of business.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have heard your story and we have asked questions; have you any questions to ask?

Theresa Blackie: Owing to the hardship which I went through in the course of the war, I would like government to step in and help.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is that all?

Theresa Blackie: I would like government to help me especially in the rebuilding of my house. Should that assistant be rendered to me, I would be happy.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have heard all what you have said. We will compile all in our report and when we get to that stage we shall remember your request along with others. For now, we appreciate all what you have said and we sympathize with you for what you have gone through.

2nd Witness: Sheku Macauley

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

SHEKU MACAULEY'S TESTIMONY

When I was in my village, I got a message that they had burnt down a nearby village and that they were coming to my village. They said that they were coming to Baiima and that they needed food. I bought about two bags of cassava. There were twelve strong men who were taking care of the village; they had some machetes. Times there were when, during the day, two men would be assigned to each soldier. One day, we learnt that those men who were protecting the village had been tied up. We also learnt that it was the soldiers who had tied them up. We went and untied them. Later, we heard gun shots, and we ran away. When we came back, the whole town had been burnt down.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We thank you. That was a fairly short, but traumatic testimony. I am confused about the different groups you have mentioned. "They" said they were coming after burning the next village, who are the "They"?

Sheku Macauley: “They” were soldiers; not rebels. They were the people who had run away from the village that had already been attacked.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Was it the rebels who attacked the neighbouring village?

Sheku Macauley: They said it was they, but I did not see them.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So soldiers were sent to protect your village?

Sheku Macauley: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Who was this Carew?

Sheku Macauley: He was in charge of the men in Bo.

Prof Kamara: According to what we have here, he was supposed to be a Brigade commander.

Sheku Macauley: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Do you know where he is now?

Sheku Macauley: No.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Can you tell his rank in the army now?

Sheku Macauley: I don't know, but I was told that he was elevated in the army.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You did mention a security group that was associated with the army; what group was this?

Sheku Macauley: They were all working together.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Who were the others?

Sheku Macauley: Those men were taken from each of the villages around to protect the area.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You said your companions were tied?

Sheku Macauley: Yes, I did.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Now, about burning the village. If those security people were there, then who burnt the village?

Sheku Macauley: I wouldn't tell because that was what we saw; everything was mixed up.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Were there no rebels at that time?

Sheku Macauley: There were no rebels, there were only soldiers.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: There were no rebels; only soldiers, but why did you run?

Sheku Macauley: Because we heard shooting.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Now, in your own opinion, what would you conclude?

Sheku Macauley: All I know is that those who had guns were shooting.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And those who had guns were soldiers; so they were shooting?

Sheku Macauley: Yes.

Prof Kamara: Led by this Carew?

Sheku Macauley: Well, he only took them there and, after a short while, he left.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say it was before 1997 that you had these attacks?

Sheku Macauley: I was at Baiima during the first attack; it was the attack which took place after the first one that I witnessed.

Comm. Bishop Humper: This incident was in 1997, you say?

Sheku Macauley: It is about eight years ago.

Comm. Bishop Humper: So they were CDF?

Sheku Macauley: That was how they called them.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How did you manage to survive it all?

Sheku Macauley: I survived by the grace of Allah.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In your statement, you mentioned a Lt. Turay at Baiima; can you tell us more about him?

Sheku Macauley: Lt. Turay was with us at Baiima; he left after two months. I did not see him do any bad thing.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know his whereabouts now?

Sheku Macauley: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You also spoke of a Kamajor in your statement; why was he tied?

Sheku Macauley: I have told you that I don't know why he was tied.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What was the relationship, then, between that Kamajors and the soldiers?

Sheku Macauley: He left peacefully. In fact, when he was leaving, I went to see him off and he gave me some amount of money. He even came to visit us from time to time.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that you were feeding the soldiers; for how long did you feed them?

Sheku Macauley: For just one day.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What was the role of the women in the village in all these?

Sheku Macauley: The women were not there.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You spoke about the disappearance of three people; can you clarify that?

Sheku Macauley: As it were at that time, if you learnt that rebels were coming to attack, everybody would run away.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We are not happy that you cannot keep dates of events which should help us in our write up. Any way, the Leader of Evidence will now talk to you.

Leader of Evidence: I can understand that some of your experiences do traumatize you and make you not to remember certain things, but also bear in mind that this commission is not a court of law and that no one you mention here will have to suffer any consequences with the commission or face the Special Court. Your statement will help us, greatly, to write our report, so relax and let's go through some of what we have in your statement. You said that before 1997 your village was attacked; who attacked your village?

Sheku Macauley: What I know, like I said in my statement, is that the rebels first attacked, but I was not there; I was in my village.

Leader of Evidence: You know that we had different groups being referred to as rebels; which one attacked?

Sheku Macauley: All I know is that those who came were in military fatigues.

Leader of Evidence: So, if I understand you, the SLA soldiers were already in Baiima before the second attack?

Sheku Macauley: The men who were brought by Mr. Carew were there before the second attack.

Leader of Evidence: If they were there before the attack, what were they doing when the attack took place?

Sheku Macauley: I know that they were there, but I was not there, so I don't know what they were doing during the attack.

Leader of Evidence: If the soldiers were there before the second attack, what role did they play?

Sheku Macauley: The soldiers were there, but they had gone before the attack; I was not there so I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: From 1997, how long did you stay in Baiima?

Sheku Macauley: After the attack we went back from the bush to Baiima and we stayed there.

Leader of Evidence: How long? Three Months?

Sheku Macauley: I was there for over two or three years.

Leader of Evidence: The SLA soldiers; how long did they stay there?

Sheku Macauley: They were there for five months.

Leader of Evidence: Whilst they were there, how were they getting their food?

Sheku Macauley: They were supplied by the army battalion.

Leader of Evidence: There was no instance when villagers had to supply them with food?

Sheku Macauley: No.

Leader of Evidence: They themselves never forcefully went to people's houses and took food?

Sheku Macauley: I never had complaints of that.

Leader of Evidence: What did the relationship between the people and soldiers look like during the latter's stay?

Sheku Macauley: As far as I know, it was cordial, except that if one stole, one was flogged.

Leader of Evidence: Was any member of your family injured or harassed at any time?

Sheku Macauley: The rebels did a lot of harassment, they burnt so many houses.

Leader of Evidence: If I understand you Mr. Macaulay, there were soldiers at Baiima, at what point did the rebels come in to burn your house?

Sheku Macauley: When the soldiers had left, the village was attacked four times.

Leader of Evidence: Were you attacked?

Sheku Macauley: Yes, about four years ago. They shot me in my hand.

Leader of Evidence: Was any other person injured when you were shot in your hand?

Sheku Macauley: Yes, they killed about three people and the bullet hit me in my hand.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give the commission the names of the people who were killed?

Sheku Macauley: Well, they killed one Mr. Bundu; Mr. Foday and Madam Boya.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We have asked you a number of questions; do you have any questions for the commission?

Sheku Macauley: I am an illiterate, I have been called to come and testify and I have done that. What is the purpose of doing this?

Comm. Bishop Humper: We are not asking questions, but posing questions for clarification of information. Mr. Sheku gave a statement where four groups were involved, so we need to pose questions for clarification which will help our records for historical purposes. What TRC is doing is national.

Sheku Macauley: I don't have any questions, all I am saying is that those of us who have suffered in this war should be considered, especially those of us in Baiima; all our houses were burnt down.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We have taken down your recommendations and we will do our best.

3rd Witness: Mr. James Umaru

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

JAMES UMARU'S TESTIMONY

What happened to me during the war that was really painful to me is that at one time, we had normally spent our day when, in the evening, we were attacked. My wife was in the house, and she was not able to leave the house. I ran away into the bush. The attackers took control of Tikonko town and nobody was able to go close to the town; we slept in the bush. The following morning, we went watching the town. My wife's intestines had been removed and the house had been burnt down. The only clothes I had were the ones which I had put on prior to the attack. The corpse laid there for the rest of the day. That night, I resolved that I was going to sit by the corpse of my wife, even if it meant that I had to be killed. After two days, my children and I went and buried my wife. Following the burial, we went back to the bush camp; nobody was able to stay in Tikonko by then. There was no food, so we lived on palm kernel. After two weeks, one of my daughters decided that she was coming to Bo in order to look for bulgur so that we would not die of hunger. Since we did the burial, up to this time, nothing has happened to me.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much, we have heard your story and we hope you will be patient to answer a few questions. You said they attacked, who are "they"?

James Umaru: The rebels attacked us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: How were you able to identify them as rebels?

James Umaru: I was able to identify them as rebels because I knew that they were the people who committed those types of atrocities.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Can you tell how they were dressed?

James Umaru: At that time, we could not stand to look at them. However, most of them were in military fatigues, while some of them were in plain clothes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You went into the bush and when you came back, they had killed your wife. From the appearance of the corpse, can you tell whether they killed her before or after the house was burnt?

James Umaru: They killed her, took her out of the house and covered her face with a piece of cloth.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So the fire did not affect the body?

James Umaru: No.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: I know it was not easy for you, but did you notice any missing parts from the body of your wife?

James Umaru: We came back to the village after a whole day. By then, the body had started decomposing so we could not tell. However, I don't think that any part was removed.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Also, would you have guessed the reason for which her body was opened?

James Umaru: I don't think it was any reason other than mere cruelty.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you for your story. We are sorry for what happened to you and your family. Do you have any idea when this incident occurred?

James Umaru: It was during the time of Johnny Paul.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us of what happened to other people in your village?

James Umaru: What happened to me is what I have explained. Tikonko is the seat of the paramount Chief; it s a big town.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I would like to know if there is a mass grave in Tikonko.

James Umaru: Yes there is.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you have any idea how many people were buried in that mass grave?

James Umaru: Thirteen {13}.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Why was your wife not with you when you ran into the bush?

James Umaru: It was because of the way in which we were attacked; my wife was not with me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How do you survive now that all this has happened to you?

James Umaru: I live by God's grace because I can't farm any longer.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you for coming, it is sympathetic to hear you as we hear others tell their story. You loved your wife and sat by the corpse and said you would die by her. In your statement, you stated "Sobel", I don't know whether it was you or the statement takers who used that word, please clarify it for the Commission.

James Umaru: Yes, I said "Sobels" because when we were in our town, none of these happened until those people came.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Who are "Sobels"?

James Umaru: Those people who came to destroy.

Comm. Bishop Humper: I guess you buried your wife in haste; are you making any provision for the traditional form of burial?

James Umaru: No, I do not have that plan. Even her burial was hastily done because I did not have anything that would have allowed me to do a fitting burial. If I have the opportunity, I will do so.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Before handing you over to the Leader of Evidence, I will ask you two questions outside your statement. Did you have soldiers in Tikonko all the time to safe guard the town?

James Umaru: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Whilst they were there, were there any attacks on the village?

James Umaru: They did not attack us whilst they were there.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Can you recall the name Tafaikor?

James Umaru: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Was he involved in that attack?

James Umaru: I can't tell; he left the town before the attack.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Who was this Tafaikor?

James Umaru: He was a person.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: I know, but tell us more about him.

James Umaru: He was a soldier, and he was once deployed at Tikonko, but while he was there I never saw him commit any atrocities.

Leader of Evidence: At the time of this incident that led to the death of your wife, were the soldiers still stationed at Tikonko?

James Umaru: At that time, soldiers were not based at Tikonko.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We share your sorrow over the death of your wife; we hope that you will continue to cope. We have asked you all these questions, and now we would like you to ask us questions if you have any.

James Umaru: You have asked me and I have explained all that I know to you. All I want you to know is that I don't have a dwelling house now and I have still not performed the burial rites for my wife who was killed. People are traumatised, especially me; I go around really traumatised.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We have heard all what you have said, and when the report is written and recommendations of all testimonies taken into consideration, we will see what can be done. We wish you a better life.

4th Witness: Mr. James Legg

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

JAMES LEGG'S TESTIMONY

At one time, I was in Bo; it was in 1999. It was on December 5th of that year that my sister went to town and came back with a message that our child, Angela, had injected the child of a Kamajor. The child, according to the report, got abscess as a result of the injection and, for that reason, Angela was tied up. After tying her, she was abandoned until a passer by came to her rescue; untied her and took her to a lady called Dikpama.

A message was sent to me. As soon as I receive the message, my sister and I went to the scene. We travelled for about twelve hours. When we got there, people were crowded around her; she

could not talk properly. I introduced myself to her and she began to cry. Her speech had been affected by the tautness by the tight knot. We stayed there that night and, in the morning, we went round the town to confer with the relatives and elders.

We went straight to the Kamajor battalion commander of the 19th battalion in Bo; Mr. Ngaujah. He gave us a paper to go to the police. We made our report and then took Angela to the hospital. I left her there and came back home as there was another sick person at home. Later, my other sister came to say that she had passed away. The police who had taken the statement was there when she died. We were asked to make another statement which the child of the deceased made. ECOMOG was around at that time and we reported the matter to them; they promised to investigate.

Five trucks of Kamajors were loaded to go and bring the culprits, but they later decided that they could be possibly ambushed. They asked Kosseh Hindowa, who was the battalion commander for Bo district, to apprehend the culprits and bring them forward. On the day of the burial, the culprits were brought. I went there to see them myself. We went back home and, while the funeral ceremony was being arranged, the culprits were asked to make a statement. After the burial, we went to Kosseh Hindowa and enquired after the culprits, but he told us that they had been released and sent back to their home village. He said that the culprits were Kamajors and shouldn't witness such an occasion that was why, according to him, they were released. After the burial, we went to Kosseh Hindowa. He promised that he would send for them. Whenever we went to see Hindowa, we would go to the police as well.

The police cautioned Kosseh Hindowa that the matter should be treated seriously, but it was as though Hindowa had no respect for the police and our own rights were cast aside. So I had to explain to TRC when the statement takers came around. Apart from telling Hindowa and the police, we also had it announced on the radio station in Bo. We also contacted late Prince Brima and told him our story. He confronted Hindowa, but all was to no avail. After some time, we gave up all pursuits of the culprits.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: There is not much difference between some other testimonies and yours; it's just that you went through all the normal processes. However, what did the police say eventually?

James Legg: The CPO advised us to keep our cool since it was during a period of war. He further stated that one day the matter would be picked up.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Since the end of the war, have you ever been to the police to resurrect the matter?

James Legg: No.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Why?

James Legg: Because we were tired of running around, so we have decided to leave everything in the hands of God.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You said that the lady who was killed administered an injection to a child and that the child got abscess; whose child was that?

James Legg: The child of a Kamajor.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Who injected this child?

James Legg: My niece.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Is the child still alive?

James Legg: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Was your niece, Angela, a trained nurse?

James Legg: Yes, she was a nurse in training at Serabu.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Who did you report the matter to when you came to Bo?

James Legg: We reported the matter to Ngaujah, the commander in charge of the 19th battalion in Bo.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Was he the one who ordered the arrest of the culprits?

James Legg: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How did Hindowa come in?

James Legg: We had to bring him in since he was our boss; he was in charge of the Kamajors in Bo.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Can you remember the name of the CPO who asked you to wait and deal with the case at some later date?

James Legg: No.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Can you remember the year?

James Legg: Yes, it was on December 5th 1999.

Leader of Evidence: You said there was a post mortem result?

James Legg: They are in the hands of the doctor and the police. They have never shown it to us.

Leader of Evidence: Did they give you any other report from the police?

James Legg: They never explained anything to us.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to the photographs that were taken?

James Legg: They were in the hands of the police, we never saw them.

Leader of Evidence: Can you help the commission with the whereabouts of Mr. Hindowa?

James Legg: I know the address of his residence, but I don't know whether he is in town.

Leader of Evidence: TRC will give you a letter signed by me, and one of the staff will go with you in one of our vehicles to get Mr. Hindowa to come to the commission tomorrow and give his own version. What of Mr. Ngaujah?

James Legg: I also know his contact address.

Leader of Evidence: The commission will try to reach him also. Those people responsible for killing your sister, do you know their names or can you tell the commission about their whereabouts?

James Legg: One of them is here right now and his name is Mr. James.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know the name of any other?

James Legg: No, I don't know, and I don't want to tell a lie.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where Mr. James is at the moment?

James Legg: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: The commission will try to reach him.

James Legg: The lady that was killed has a daughter here in the audience and she knows all the people who killed her mother.

Leader of Evidence: So she was there when her mother was tortured and killed?

James Legg: Initially, she was there but, after awhile, she came to Bo.

Leader of Evidence: How old will this child be now?

James Legg: She will be about 18.

Leader of Evidence: I will ask a statement taker to take statement from her and, before the commission closes down on Saturday, she will come here to testify. When you went and saw your niece, what situation was she in and what was her condition like?

James Legg: She was in a critical state; she could not talk; she only made signs showing the marks on her body.

Leader of Evidence: The child that was injected, where is that child now and where are the parents?

James Legg: I can't tell, but I believe that they are still within this town.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Mr. Legg is very precise about the date 5th December, 1999. Our mandate falls within the period March 1991 and December 1999. I am not a lawyer so I can't say you have a right to take this matter to court, but if you want us to take it from a reconciliatory point, we will. We are interested in it and we will do all within our power to help. Now I will ask you to ask us questions if you have any.

James Legg: I am not handling this matter single handed so I will have to go and hang heads with other family members. We have the maternal and paternal sides of the family, so I will have to meet with them before taking any decision.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: That is not a question but a statement.

James Legg: The mother of the deceased has left for somewhere else and I am the only one who is taking care of the kids, I am asking the commission to help me with the children.

5th Witness: Kadie Youngah

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

KADIE YOUNGAH'S TESTIMONY

When my husband and I were in Daru, I received a letter with regards to the death of my father. While we were travelling from Daru, there was a cut off on the road. As a result of the cut off on the road, my husband and I were forced to stay in Kenema. We were in Kenema for sometime. Although we did not know anybody in Kenema, my husband, my kids and I were put up by a kind lady. It did not take before we were driven away on the basis of the point that soldiers and their relatives were being sought for. My husband left us and went to check whether the road had been reopened. Kamajors later came and surrounded the house in which we lived. They took my husband out of the house, hit him on the head and took him away. As they were taking my husband away, I shouted out to them that I would give them all the money I had on me; that was the money which I was taking for my father's burial. They took away all our belongings and the money, and they also took my husband away. When they had taken him away, some people came to us and asked us to hide as the Kamajors had sworn to come back for me and my children after they would have killed my husband. One day, a brother of mine was passing by; he did not see me, but I saw him. I called out to him and told him about the death of my husband, and I also told him that I needed help. We later went to Tikonko. While we were at Tikonko, there was another attack. We went to another village which also came under attack. During the attack on the village, I was recognized as the wife of a soldier.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We know that things have been difficult for you as you have just explained in your story. However, we will ask you some questions in order to clarify a few points that you have mentioned in your testimony.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We have listened to your testimony and we sympathize with you. We will ask you a few questions to clarify certain things. You told us that you hailed from Tikonko, but your husband was stationed in Daru?

Kadie Youngah: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: From Daru, were you going back for the funeral rites of your father?

Kadie Youngah: Yes, but we did not get there.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us more about the lady who lodged you?

Kadie Youngah: I was told by my husband that she was his aunt.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us more about the Kamajors who attacked your husband?

Kadie Youngah: They were dressed in their traditional Kamajor outfit.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know why your husband was attacked?

Kadie Youngah: They attacked him because he was a soldier.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know where he was taken to?

Kadie Youngah: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Since then, have you been able to perform any funeral rites for your husband?

Kadie Youngah: No, I have to take care of the children and I don't have the resources for that now.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What do you do for a living?

Kadie Youngah: I do petty trading.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you identify any of the people who killed your husband?

Kadie Youngah: I was in a state of worry by then; I couldn't identify anyone.

Comm. Bishop Humper: The lady who lodged you drove you from her place, was that where you were when the rebels came?

Kadie Youngah: No, we were in another house.

Comm. Bishop Humper: So, can you say that people disclosed your identity?

Kadie Youngah: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: When you say they split open your husband's stomach and took out his intestines, was he dead or alive?

Kadie Youngah: I said they hit him on the head and carried him away.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You have done well in telling us your story. We have asked you questions, do you have anything questions to ask us or recommendations to make that we might include in our report?

Kadie Youngah: I want to make an appeal to this commission, I have a lot of kids and my husband is dead. Even the house in Daru was burnt down; please do something to help me.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Have you heard of NaCSA? Do you know to what extent they have helped people in your area? Do you know about other NGO'S?

Kadie Youngah: No, I don't.

Prof .Kamara: We have heard you and we will include your recommendations in our report. Thanks for coming.

CLOSED HEARINGS {Children and Victims of Sexual Violence who testified during Closed Hearings Remain Anonymous; The Commission has the Responsibility to Protect such Witnesses by Preventing the Disclosure of Their Identities} HELD IN BO ON 1ST MAY 2003

COMMISSIONER PRESENT

Satang Jow

TRANSCRIBER

Emmanuel Koivaya Amara

SECRETARIES

Donella Williams

Malorie Barinda Pratt

1st Witness: Lady Asay.

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Satang Jow.

Commissioner Satang Jow: Lady Asay, on behalf of the TRC, I wish to welcome you to this special hearing in Bo. The TRC was established by an Act of parliament in 2000 and was given a broad mandate to create an impartial historical record of violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed during the armed conflict; to respond to the needs of victims; to address impunity; to promote reconciliation and healing, and to prevent a reoccurrence of what happened during the conflict. However, the Act also gives us a different mandate to focus on women and children because we are aware that women and children suffered immensely during the conflict and the report we are going to present to the government and the international community will not be complete unless we collect your records. That is why we are very happy that people like you are giving statements and are also appearing for hearings. I want to tell you that there is nothing to be afraid of. All we want to do is to set the records straight and to make recommendations which will help women like you. The information you are going to give to us today will remain confidential. We will not reveal your identity, but the information you give to us will be very important for the commission. I want you to feel relaxed, take your time and tell us your story. We want to know what happened to you during this period of armed conflict in Sierra Leone. You may now begin your testimony.

LADY ASAY'S TESTIMONY

I am Lady Asay and I come from Kasama. One morning, the rebels caught me and took me to an oil plantation. The rebels wore military fatigues. They then flogged me for sometime and they told us to cook for them. In the evening, they caught a man called Joe and killed him. That night, two male rebels had sexual intercourse with me. We slept in that oil plantation and, the following morning, we went to town. The rebels then began to set fire to our houses. In addition to burning our houses, the rebels also looted most of our properties. That was what they did to me. The children, to whom I have I have given birth, cannot go the school. I have let them learn Arabic. After that incident with the rebels, I did not get pregnant for six years, and when I got pregnant, I was discharging puss and other offensive smell from my female organ. However, I was able to deliver. Unto this day, I experience the same problem each time I get pregnant. Up to this moment, I have no money to rebuild my house. I am residing in somebody else's house. I still do not have money to see a medical doctor.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I have listened very closely to your testimony. Your experience has been a very painful one and I have no doubts that other women have gone through the same experience. We admire the courage you have and we are happy to note that you are trying to rebuild your life. But I would like to ask you a few questions in order to clarify the testimony you have just given to us, and to fill in some of the details wherever we need them. Asay, can you tell us something about yourself; how old were you then?

Lady Asay: I was 25 years.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you married?

Lady Asay: I was married with two children.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us your husband's name at the time?

Lady Asay: ...

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How old were your children at the time?

Lady Asay: 8 years and 5 years.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Asay, you told us that when the rebels attacked your village and many other villages, they abducted people; can you tell us how many of you were taken away?

Lady Asay: I cannot remember the number now. There were many women including women from other villages.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you all taken to the same place?

Lady Asay: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did they abduct only girls or were young boys also abducted?

Lady Asay: They abducted young men and boys. Some of them, since they were taken away, they are coming back only now.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us what they looked like?

Lady Asay: When I saw them, they were dressed like soldiers. Since soldiers usually went to the village, we were, initially, not afraid of the rebels. When they later went to the plantation, they declared that they were rebels; they introduced themselves as the people who killed, looted and burnt down houses.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How far was the plantation?

Lady Asay: A short distance from the village.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Asay, you told us, in your statement, that the only thing which you did was to cook for them. Is that right?

Lady Asay: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us how many of the rebels raped you?

Lady Asay: Two of them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was it continuous or was it one after the other?

Lady Asay: They did it one after the other.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was anybody present while you were raped?

Lady Asay: There was a crowd, but it was dark. However, but my mate witnessed the incident.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know of any other person that was raped?

Lady Asay: There was a woman who was abducted from Kojja; she was raped. But after the incident, the woman went away.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell me what the rebels were saying to you as they raped you?

Lady Asay: They were speaking Mende, and they told me that they needed to have sex with me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you plead for mercy?

Lady Asay: I did not say anything; I was afraid of them because they had guns. I was not the only victim. They were raping women all over.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did they kill any victim during that period?

Lady Asay: Yes; one Pa Joe was killed.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Why did they kill him?

Lady Asay: I don't know why he was killed him, but I witnessed it.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was he the only person killed?

Lady Asay: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were there any women amongst the rebels?

Lady Asay: They had women among them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you give us an idea of how many women were with them?

Lady Asay: They were many.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What was the role of the women?

Lady Asay: They were also carried guns and wore uniforms.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us the age group of the two men who raped you; were they old or young men?

Lady Asay: They were young men.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What happened after they had raped you; did they abandon you or help you to get up?

Lady Asay: I was with them until the following morning when I went to town together with them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you clarify how long you stayed with them?

Lady Asay: I was with them for one day and one night; from morning until the following morning.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you recall any name which they used?

Lady Asay: I cannot recall their names.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Would you be able to identify anyone of them, if you saw them?

Lady Asay: I cannot identify them because the act was done at night.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did the rebels have camps or just an open space?

Lady Asay: It was in an oil plantation, but they had a big hut there. That was where the people stayed to work in their plantation.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How did you feel after you were raped? Tell us about your reaction.

Lady Asay: I was angry, but I was powerless and could not do anything.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you still angry?

Lady Asay: Now that I have children whom I have to bring up, my power has subsided.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In your written statement, you said that they asked you to go back and bring all their belongings.

Lady Asay: They did not send me to town. When they went with me, I was there until they returned.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did the rebels take your properties with them?

Lady Asay: Yes; they took a lot of my properties.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did they burn any houses?

Lady Asay: Yes; they burnt my husband's house and also burnt my father's house.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you talk to your parents about what happened to you in the bush?

Lady Asay: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What did they say to you?

Lady Asay: They told my husband to take me to a hospital in Bo because it was a problem, and it was serious.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you discuss this with your husband?

Lady Asay: Yes; he took me to Bo and I was treated.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was he very sympathetic?

Lady Asay: Yes; he felt sorry for me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us about the hospital in Bo?

Lady Asay: It was not a real hospital. We went to a nurse, Sister Monica, who gave me injections and some medicines.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that you encounter problems, especially when you are pregnant;
have you been to the hospital?

Lady Asay: It is only when I get pregnant that I experience this problem.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you receive any traditional treatment?

Lady Asay: I did not take any traditional medicine; I only took the treatment which Sister Monica gave to me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you telling us that you have this discharge only when you are pregnant?

Lady Asay: Yes, It is only when I am pregnant that I experience it.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you saying that you are o. k now?

Lady Asay: Yes, I am quite o. k, except that when I am pregnant, I experience it.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Physically, what is your condition?

Lady Asay: I am quite o. k.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mentally, how do you feel?

Lady Asay: Mentally, I am o.k.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Before the incident happened, were you engaged in any work?

Lady Asay: I was engaged in making garden and petty trading.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you still engaged in these activities?

Lady Asay: Yes. Since the rebels burnt down all our houses, we had had a set back. My husband was involved in diamond mining, and we used to put some money aside for the children. But since that of the rebel attack and destruction, we have been left with nothing.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How many children do you now have? You said that prior to the incident, you had two children and, after the incident, you also had two children?

Lady Asay: I have three children. I have given birth to five; I lost two and suffered two abortions.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was it after the incident?

Lady Asay: After the incident, I gave birth to one child and he is still alive; he is five years old. I had another pregnancy and I gave birth to a set of twins which did not survive.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Where did you deliver?

Lady Asay: At the place of the same nurse whom I spoke about; Sister Monica.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Asay, I would like to know whether you did any medical test.

Lady Asay: No, I have not done any test.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Why, is it that nobody advised you?

Lady Asay: I had no advice from anybody.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was that the first time you suffered rape?

Lady Asay: That was the only time the rebels raped me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Has this incident affected your relationship with your husband?

Lady Asay: It has not affected my relationship; there are no disturbances. He was in sympathy with me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Asay, you can ask the commission any questions or make recommendations.

Lady Asay: Since we have narrated all what happened to us, including the humiliations which we have suffered, and considering the fact that we do not have money to educate our children, we need assistance from the Commission and the government.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Asay, this is why we have called you to talk to the commission. We will make recommendations to the government for people like you. The report will be sent to government and the Security Council and the government of this country is bound to implement the recommendations made by TRC. We are hopeful that, as a result of these recommendations, your situation, and those of women generally in Sierra Leone, will be improved and your children, and your children's children and all those who come after, will live in a more peaceful Sierra Leone where things like this will not happen to you again.

Lady Asay: In the name of God.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: If you were to make recommendations to the government on what happened to you, what recommendations would you make?

Lady Asay: Government should help in providing training for us.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Asay, do you have anything to tell us?

Lady Asay: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I wish to thank you again for coming to this commission and for sharing your experiences with us. We have noted your concerns and the recommendations you have made to us, and we will consider them along side with those of other women in our final report. We would like you to have faith and courage because the TRC will ensure, through its recommendations, that the condition of women is improved and that what happened to you; the violations you experienced, will never happen to your girl child. You may now stand down.

2nd Witness: Lady Taj.

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Satang Jow.

LADY TAJ'S TESTIMONY

At a time when the war was tense, we were in our village. It was in December and Christmas was approaching when we heard that rebels had attacked. There was an exodus from the surrounding villages into our village. We were gripped by fear and we had to leave the village; we went into the bush. During our first week in the bush, no rebel attacked our village. It was during our second week in the bush that the rebels attacked our village. We were in the bush, and we heard them. The rebels attacked us in our hide out at night. When the rebels attacked our own shed, I was asleep. I was awakened by the noise. When I woke up, people were running helter-skelter. I immediately took to my heels, but as I was running, a rope caught me on my feet and I fell down; the rebels caught me. The rebel who caught me raped me where he caught me. I could not, however, clearly figure him out because it was dark. The rebels took our belongings away from where we had hidden them. The rebels ordered those of us whom they had captured to accompany them. We were half way through the journey when the rebels sent some of us back on the grounds that they had a lot of people already. We returned to the bush where we stayed until we were told that soldiers had recaptured the village. We were then asked to leave the bush and return to town, which we did. The soldiers had advised that a craft was coming to drop bombs in the bush. We therefore left the bush and went to town. Upon our arrival in the village on a Sunday, the village was attacked. We ran away, leaving our remaining belongings in the village; we could not take them along. When the rebels went away, we came back to the village and saw that our houses had been burnt down.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you very much for that testimony. We have listened to the testimony and we are sorry for what happened to you. Can you tell us how old you were at the time of the incident?

Lady Taj: I cannot guess my age; I don't know. But I have a son who is 19 years old this year.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Prior to the attack, were you living with your parents or husband?

Lady Taj: I was staying with my husband, together with my parents. But I later went to the camp together with my husband; I was married.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How old was your child at that time?

Lady Taj: I cannot remember.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In your testimony, you told us that a lot of people started coming to the village and that you went into the bush when you saw them.

Lady Taj: Yes, people were coming to the village and I was afraid and, therefore, went into the bush.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were they rebels?

Lady Taj: They were civilians from other villages.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What did you hear?

Lady Taj: I heard from those who came from the town {*Witness did not understand the question asked by Commissioner Jow because of the interpreter's incomprehension of the question*}

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that during the second week of your stay in the bush, the rebels started coming to the village. You lived in a shed, in the bush. Can you tell us what the shed looked like?

Lady Taj: It was a farm hut.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How many people were in the hut with you?

Lady Taj: There were three of us who were women, and there was one man; my husband.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was your child with you?

Lady Taj: The child was with his father and, by then, the relation between me and my child's father had been severed.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What were the rebels saying in the bush?

Lady Taj: The people who were in the bush were the ones shouting that the rebels had come.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that you fell down and you were caught. Can you tell us how many people caught you?

Lady Taj: Only one person caught me, but two of them had sexual intercourse with me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was he in uniform; the man who caught you?

Lady Taj: I cannot tell which clothes they wore, but they had guns.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did the rebels rape you in the presence of other people?

Lady Taj: I cannot tell, because everybody was running away. After the first rebel had raped me, the other rebel also raped me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us what the person, who raped you, was saying as he was raping you?

Lady Taj: When the rebel who caught me initially wanted to rape me, I attempted to shout, and he warned that if I shouted I would be given a big cut in the flesh. When the other rebel then came to rape me, I pleaded with him to put his gun aside.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us what language they were speaking?

Lady Taj: They spoke Mende and they spoke Liberian Creole.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you plead with them?

Lady Taj: I pleaded with them, but they could not be persuaded.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you hear them call their names?

Lady Taj: They did not disclose their names. When they caught me, they were speaking Mende, but after they had raped me, they started speaking Liberian Creole.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us their ages?

Lady Taj: They were all young boys.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you see anybody else being raped?

Lady Taj: No, but I heard from the people of another village that the rebels went there and raped a lot of girls.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you sustain any injuries?

Lady Taj: I sustained stomach ache.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you received medical attention?

Lady Taj: The only medication I have received is traditional herbs.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are there times when you feel depressed and cannot eat; do you feel sad?

Lady Taj: Yes I feel depressed because the stomach pain, sometimes, becomes so painful that it appears as though I am going to die.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: When you went back to the village, who did you talk to?

Lady Taj: I talked to my aunt, my father's sister, and she prepared native medicines for me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What about your actual parents?

Lady Taj: My mother and father are dead.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What about your husband; did he also return to the village?

Lady Taj: My husband came back to the village, but he left me because of this incident. He picked a quarrel with my aunt because of the medicines she provided for me and, as a result of that, he left me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did the husband know about what happened to you from other sources?

Lady Taj: Yes, he has heard about it from other sources; after our separation. I did not tell him because I was ashamed.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you alone or married?

Lady Taj: I am alone.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you have discharges or any bleeding?

Lady Taj: I have painful menstrual cycles and I experience discharges which wet my pants.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Why did you not go to a medical health centre for help?

Lady Taj: I was ashamed and, in addition to that, I had no money. My aunt therefore advised me to use the native herbs.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you have any children apart from the boy you mentioned?

Lady Taj: I don't have a child of my own, but I adopted a child. It is that child alone that I have.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What is your feeling at the moment; do you have any other relationship?

Lady Taj: I get involved in relationships with men. One man even said that he was interested in marrying me, but the man has been sent to Freetown by his relatives in order to learn and acquire skills; now I am on my own.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you interested in getting married?

Lady Taj: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I will like to know the reaction of your community when you returned.

Lady Taj: They accepted me and I went along with them amicably. Most of them do not know what happened to me because it happened at night.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Is this the first time you are speaking about this incident in detailed or have you spoken to any NGO about it?

Lady Taj: I have never spoken to any NGO. I have, before today, only shared my experience with the TRC statement taker who took the statement from me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How do you feel now that you have spoken to the TRC?

Lady Taj: Today I feel a bit better because it is the TRC and the government to which I have narrated my story. I would not have felt good if I had explained this ordeal to any other person.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that when you went back to the village, everything had been destroyed. Can you tell us what you lost?

Lady Taj: I lost all my clothes, cooking utensils, bags and everything that I had in my house. My father's house and property were also burnt down and my father died as a result of that.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How do you support yourself; are you being assisted in any way?

Lady Taj: I have nothing. The boyfriend who was going out with me gave me Le10, 000 in order to be doing petty trading and to up keep my child. Even this year, I want to embark on my garden work, but I have no money.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you for answering my questions and now it is your own time to ask questions and make recommendations to the commission.

Lady Taj: I want to know whether – now that you have listened to my testimony – the Commission only wants to know what happened to us or whether we have been asked to narrate our experiences so that the Commission will provide help to those of us who need it.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We all know that victims suffered. Women also suffered tremendously. We have been asked to make a report and make recommendations in the report. It is only when we know what happened to you that we can make recommendations for government to implement. This is why we are undertaking this exercise to get first hand information from people like you. That is why we are going to note your concerns so that we can incorporate them in the recommendations we shall make to government.

Lady Taj: I want the government to help us with shelter. Government should also give us grants so that we can embark on petty trading.

3rd Witness: Lady Sama

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Satang Jow administered the oath.

LADY SAMA'S TESTIMONY

I was living with my parents at Bumpeh. I was a pupil at the time when the rebels attacked Bumpeh; the attack took place was on the 15th August, 1994. When the rebels attacked Bumpeh, there was fighting between them and the soldiers. Owing to persistent firing in the town, nobody was able to run away. My parents and I went into the house and hid ourselves under the bed; we were there until the firing subsided. We did not know the whereabouts of the soldiers who had been in Bumpeh; the rebels took over the town. We were in the house when the rebels entered and started taking people out of their houses. The rebels removed me from under the bed and had sexual intercourse with me; they took away my chastity. At the time that the rebels took away my virginity, none of my relatives was around. When I came out of the house, after the incident, I did not know what had happened to me; all I knew was that I was bleeding and discharging. Outside the house, I met my elder sister, Mahinteh. I told her that the rebels caught in the house and had sex with me, and that I was bleeding and dizzy. She told me to sit down while she brought water for me to drink. The rebels came again to the house and met me and Mahinteh. The rebels said that they were going to take us along with them; they took us to a village called Sihena. I knew the village. The rebels also caught people at Sihena and gave them loads to carry. When we arrived in Mattru, the rebels, who had abducted us, presented us to their elders, saying that we were the people whom they had caught. The elders then ordered that we should be killed. However, as God could have it, we got somebody who pleaded on our behalf. We also pleaded with them that we knew nothing about the conflict in our country. The man who pleaded for us had to also sign for us; they told him that if we escaped, they would kill him. The man promised the rebels that he would take care of us; he took us to the rebels each morning. I was thirteen years old by that time. I later got somebody who volunteered to take care of me. I would work for the person as though I were the person's child; I did household chores. I was still living with that person when we went back into the bush. I was with the rebels until I grew up. When we

came out of the bush during the AFRC regime, I used that opportunity to come to my parents who live here, in Bo, here; I introduced to them the people with whom I stayed in the bush. During the ECOMOG intervention, the rebels came looking for me in my parents' house. My parents hid me in the house, but the rebels came and took me away again; they went along with me. I was with the rebels until the disarmament process began. After the disarmament process, parents were going to look for their children at demobilisation centers and other places. However, my parents did not go in search of me; may be, they did not have the chance to do so. I took permission from the person with whom I was staying; I told her that I was coming to look for my parents; I didn't know whether they were dead or alive. At least some of them must be alive, I thought. She allowed me to come to Bo and search for my parents. Since I came back to Bo, the person with whom I was staying in Makeni has not come to look for me. I stopped going to school because of the war. My parents do not have the upper hand to educate me. I just stay at home with my mother. When I came back from the bush, I had given birth to two children. I cannot afford to do anything for even my two children. My children and I depend on my parents. Since I came back, my parents have been doing everything for me; they are taking care of my children. My caretaker hasn't come back to look for me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I admire the clarity with which you have told us your testimony. You explained everything very clearly. Can you tell us about yourself before the attack; what level you were in school and the name of the school you attended?

Lady Sama: I was attending Bumpah High school. I had just been promoted to form two when the rebels attacked Bumpah.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You remember the date very well, 15th August, 1994. Before this date were there any other attacks on Bumpah?

Lady Sama: The rebels had attacked the town twice; that was the third attack.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Who was taking care of the town?

Lady Sama: The Sierra Leone Army; the government soldiers.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You have told us that during the attack of 15th August, there was an encounter between the rebels and the soldiers; what happened to the soldiers?

Lady Sama: I would not know; by then, I was in the house, hiding under the bed. By the time I came out, there were no soldiers around.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You were hiding under the bed and they asked you to come out; how did the rebels tell you to come out?

Lady Sama: Two of them removed me from under the bed and one of them raped me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was he a young man or an old person?

Lady Sama: One of them was a child, but the one who raped me was a young man.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Would you identify him, if you saw him?

Lady Sama: I cannot identify him now because it has been a long time. Since that time when I was taken to Mattru Jong, I have not seen him.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: As you were being raped by one of the rebels, what was the other rebel doing?

Lady Sama: The other rebel was asking me about my parents and the properties in the house. I told him that my parents were farmers and they had no money.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you raped only once or more than once; how long did it last?

Lady Sama: I was raped only once and it lasted for over an hour.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you plead with them?

Lady Sama: I pleaded with him, and I was even crying, but he could not be persuaded; he stayed on top of me until he was satisfied.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What language were they speaking? Did they wear uniform?

Lady Sama: They spoke Mende, and they wore uniform.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that you had not started having sex before the incident; when did you start seeing your menses?

Lady Sama: I had not started seeing my menses by then. I started seeing my menses during the war, while I was with them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did your mother know about it? If she did, what did she say to you?

Lady Sama: I did not know where my mother was at that time.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did your sister suffer any violations?

Lady Sama: They did not do anything to her because she was a suckling mother by then.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you say that after this incident the rebels went away.

Lady Sama: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: But they came back the second time; how long did it take for them to come back?

Lady Sama: When they left us : after they had raped me : they went into town and came back on the same day.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: This time they decided to take you and your sister away.

Lady Sama: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: And you went along with them.

Lady Sama: Yes, we went along with them because they said they would kill us if we did not. We pleaded with them to release us, but they refused.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How did you travel?

Lady Sama: We walked through the bush on foot. By the time we arrived in Mattru, since I was not used to covering long distance on foot, my feet were swollen.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that rebels abducted other people and gave them loads to carry; what sort of loads did they carry?

Lady Sama: They were given bags of rice, tins of palm oil and baggage to carry.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were they looted items?

Lady Sama: They were looted items, and all those items were looted from Bumpeh.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us whether those who were abducted were only women, or were there other groups?

Lady Sama: They also abducted girls and women.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How many rebels travelled from Bumpeh to Mattru Jong?

Lady Sama: Their number was large, but since I was not happy on that day, I would not know.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In your testimony, you said that when you arrived in Mattru Jong, the rebels presented you to elders; who were those elders? Were they commanders?

Lady Sama: Those were rebel leaders; I do not know their ranks.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The elders had asked that you should be killed, but you were spared. Were there others who should have been killed or was it you and your sister only?

Lady Sama: They spared all of us; they did not kill anybody.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The man who pleaded on your behalf; was he called by any name?

Lady Sama: I don't know his name.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: For most of the time you lived with them; you saw how they were operating; can you tell us a little bit about them?

Lady Sama: I was there with the rebels, but I was also living with a woman who was also abducted.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What is the name of this woman?

Lady Sama: Her name is Hawa.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How long did you stay with Hawa?

Lady Sama: I was with her for quite a long time because I was small.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was she kind to you?

Lady Sama: There were days on which she was kind to me and there times when she was not kind to me. There were times when she would ask me to cook and she would not give me my share of food; I had to find food for myself.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you ever been locked up? Because we have heard testimonies about abductees being locked up in a box.

Lady Sama: I have never been locked up in a box. I was not actually punished, but sometimes the woman was harsh with me and they gave me hard chores to do.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you assigned to any of the rebels as wife?

Lady Sama: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: After the first incident, did any of the rebels have sexual intercourse with you again?

Lady Sama: No, I was attached only to the woman that took care of me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that you were able to go back to your parents during the AFRC period; how were you able to go back?

Lady Sama: I was talking about Bo, here. By then, nobody was in the village. I came to Bo, here.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: When you came to Bo, did you find your parents?

Lady Sama: When I came to Bo, I was able to see my parents through the help of my former teacher who told me that my parents were in Bo, and he actually took me to them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us how you managed to leave the bush and come to Bo?

Lady Sama: When the AFRC came to power, they were going for us and bringing us to town. I was still with the rebels and my care taker when, at one time in Bo, I met my teacher who told me about my parents.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: During the ECOMOG intervention, the rebels came back and took you away. Is that true?

Lady Sama: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Where did they take you to?

Lady Sama: The day on which the intervention started, I left the rebels and came to my family. They went after me and enquired about me to my parents. They threatened that if I was not handed over to them, they would Kill my parents and burn their house.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: For how long were you with them?

Lady Sama: I was with them from 1997 to 2000.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that you came back with two children, who is the father of these children?

Lady Sama: Their father is a boy who was a trader; his name is Sama.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How old are they?

Lady Sama: The first one is three years and the other is eleven months.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you have them after or during the incident?

Lady Sama: My husband too was abducted; he went to my care taker and made arrangements with her. That's how our relationship started.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What is your condition like now?

Lady Sama: Praise be to God! Some times I get headache; but when my children get sick, I am worried.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us how you feel generally, are you angry?

Lady Sama: I feel distressed because my companions together with whom I went to school are now taking their WASCE exams; I cannot continue.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you received any medical attention?

Lady Sama: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you no discharges, no bleeding?

Lady Sama: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: When you were having your children, did you encounter any problems?

Lady Sama: I had no problems.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you spoken about your ordeal in detailed to anybody?

Lady Sama: I have not told anybody. Apart from my mother, the only other people I have told are personnel of the TRC.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What happened to your sister?

Lady Sama: My sister knew the terrain in which we were, so she escaped.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you seen her since then?

Lady Sama: I have seen her. She is still with her former husband and she has given birth to three other children.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you received any assistance from other NGO's?

Lady Sama: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you take part in any reintegration program?

Lady Sama: No. I was trying to enroll in one of the skills training institutes, but because of the lack of money, I could not. As for the children, my mother will take care of them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Is your husband still with you?

Lady Sama: I am not with my husband. I heard that he is in Kenema. He was also abducted.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How do you support yourself?

Lady Sama: I depend solely on my parents.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Finally, you have gone back to Bumpeh. How does the community there accept you?

Lady Sama: When I came, a lot of people came to the house and welcomed me. They thank me for taking care of myself and the children.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: For how long were you abducted; from 1994 to when?

Lady Sama: From 1994 to 2000.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Sama, you can now ask us questions.

Lady Sama: I want the TRC and the government to support me in order to learn a trade and to assist other girls, like me : who have suffered in the same way : to rebuild our lives again.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: From our records you are still young; you are only 22 years, and there is a lot you can do. We know that there are some NGO's which are offering these kinds of assistance. We will try and put you in line with some of these NGO's.

4th Witness: Lady Dikpama

The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Jow.

LADY DIKPAMA'S TESTIMONY

This is a very stressful thing to me. I cannot state, in English, the year in which the war started. However, it was during the fourth month in that year that we were attacked in our village; Gboyama. Yes! The attack on our village was in April; on the 4th day in that month. The village was attacked in the evening. I had prepared the evening meal and we had just finished eating when they attacked the village. The rebels surrounded the village and made sure that they held all the roads leading into and out of the village. After they had blockaded the roads, they then started shooting and setting fire to houses all over the village. My husband and I grabbed our children, my mother and father and we found our way out of the village. We went to a place where we normally went, during the day, to farm. It was about the raining season and we stayed in that place for quite some time. My mother fell ill and I gave her medical treatment. All of our children were around; they were all very young. We were there when we saw the rebels advancing towards us in large numbers; the rebels surrounded us. As soon as the rebels arrived at the place where we had gone into hiding, they arrested my husband. When I asked them to proffer a reason for the arrest of my husband, one of them replied: "You are asking us why we have arrested your husband? Your husband is a Kamajor and we are going to kill him". I told them that my husband was not a Kamajor and I pleaded with them not to kill him. They asked for the profession of my husband and I told them that my husband worked at PWD. They asked me about his work location and I told them that my husband worked on the roads in the chiefdom. I

told them that that was what he did and that he had never been a Kamajor. The rebels said that they were going to kill him. My father, Jusu Komba, called one of the rebels and enquired about what my husband had done that he should deserve death. The rebel repeated that they were going to kill my husband. The old man pleaded with them not to kill him. The old man told the rebel that my husband was like a father to him and that they should kill him instead. The old man further told the rebel that since he was an old man, he would prefer to be killed so that the life of my husband is spared. He pleaded with the rebels to allow my husband to live so that he could take care of his children. The rebels could not be persuaded. The rebels asked my husband to lay prostrate and they used his machete to kill him. The rebels continuously hit my husband until his brains dashed out. The rebels tied my husband and said that they would make sure that he did not see his wife again. After that, they used the machete to cut the veins on the back of his leg. After they had killed my husband, a rebel turned to me and asked whether I was pleased with what he had done: "What do you say?" he asked. I told him that he had killed my husband and that my husband was not a Kamajor, and then he was asking me about what I had to say about it. I said to the rebel: "Look at all the little kids that I have". Hawa, who was the eldest child, was just nine years old; the rebels raped her right in my presence. She was devirginated. The rebels said that they were going to take Hawa along with them, and I asked: "You have killed my husband, and now you want to take my child away; if you take her away, who will help me?" They told me that I had to wait until the other children grew up in order that they would help me. When they were taking Hawa away, she was crying. I have another child whom I got after Hawa. He is called Vandí. He was also in school when the rebels attacked us. He was seven years old. Eventually, everybody went his or her own way. When we returned home, I told Vandí that I was going to send him back to school, though his father was dead. "God will provide", I said to myself. In the future, should he be educated, he will be in the position to fend for the home. By the grace of God, I will be empowered to support him. He is very clever. When he went for his training on the Koran, it didn't take long when his master told me that he, Vandí, had finished his training. He sat for his examination last year. He scored the grade that was set for admittance into Ahmaddiya Muslim Secondary school in Bo. I was informed that Vandí passed the examination, but at that time, I hadn't money to send him to school. We went together to look for somebody who could lend me some money, but I could not find anyone who was willing to lend me the money. This is the result of the war. I told Vandí to have faith in God and to wait for the appointed time. If it is the will of God that Vandí will go back to school, God will make it happen. I put my trust in God and I look up to Him. This is the end of my testimony.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that your husband was attacked because they thought he was a Kamajor?

Lady Dikpama: When they were working at PWD, they used to wear black t-shirt; that was the t-shirt the rebels met on him. That was why they said he was a Kamajor. The rebels accused my husband of being a Kamajor because of the t-shirt which he had on.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you know of any Kamajor in your village?

Lady Dikpama: There were no Kamajors.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us about the rebels in your village; were they in uniform?

Lady Dikpama: They were in combat fatigues.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were they with guns?

Lady Dikpama: They had many guns.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us about the rebel who killed your husband?

Lady Dikpama: There were a lot of them and I could not identify the one who killed him?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What language did they speak?

Lady Dikpama: The people who did this act spoke Mende; some were speaking other languages.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We know of instances when rebels asked people to sing and dance when they killed people; did they do that to you?

Lady Dikpama: I did not see that, but I forgot to mention something. After they had killed my husband, the rebels asked me to clap. A rebel told me that if I did not clap, I would also be killed. I told him that if it was the will of God, I would be dead, otherwise, God will judge. Then he raised his machete and wanted to hit me; but a commander presently came from the back and grabbed his arm. I told the commander that that man had killed my husband, and that he wanted to kill me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What did the commander do?

Lady Dikpama: Nothing.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You told us that your husband died; were you able to give him a fitting funeral after his death?

Lady Dikpama: No, I did not.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How long did you stay in that farm?

Lady Dikpama: As soon as my husband was killed, we left that place and went into the bush.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that your daughter was nine years old when she was raped; did you plead with the rebels on her behalf?

Lady Dikpama: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you have an idea why they did that to her?

Lady Dikpama: I cannot say; I have no idea.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did they ask you to stand and witness the rape?

Lady Dikpama: They just caught her and laid her right by me, whilst I was crying.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you able to get your daughter back from the rebels?

Lady Dikpama: About three months ago, some announcements were made about abducted children. I was determined and I went into the bush and finally found her. She is staying with me now, but I found her with two children.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was she a bush wife?

Lady Dikpama: I cannot tell whether she was married. But I found her with two children. Today is the fourth day since I brought her back. She is confused and I am giving her time to come to her senses.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you giving her all the support?

Lady Dikpama: Yes, I am giving her the support I can afford. I even go out of the way to lend money in order to support her.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Will she be willing to talk to the TRC?

Lady Dikpama: The only problem now is that she doesn't appear to be too normal.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Dikpama, do you have any questions to ask the TRC?

Lady Dikpama: I don't have any questions. May be one concerning Hawa: The situation is this; I have brought Hawa with two children, now I don't even have a means of maintaining a livelihood. This is the situation; you can finish it for me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We have noted all the concerns you have raised; particularly the one about education for your son, Vandi. There are many other women like you who have told similar stories. In the report we are going to present to government, we will incorporate recommendations to improve the situation of people like you, your son and Hawa, but I want to suggest that Hawa needs immediate attention. She cannot wait for the conclusion of our report. There are a number of NGO's across the country, and they offer emotional and material support to girls like Hawa. Through the Regional Coordinator here, we will try and put you in line with some of these organizations. That is all I can say for now Dikpama. Have faith in the TRC.

AFTERNOON SESSION OF CLOSED HEARINGS HELD IN BO ON 1ST MAY, 2003

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Bishop J.C Humper {Chairman} : Presiding

Satang Jow

Prof. John Kamara : Recording

LEADER OF EVIDENCE

Leader of Evidence Ojielo

TRANSCRIBER

Emmanuel Koivaya Amara

SECRETARIES

Donella Williams

Malorie Barinda Pratt

1st Witness: Master Rokono

Comm. Bishop Humper – We called you here this afternoon because our Mandate is, among other things, to create an impartial history of the conflict in this country. At the conclusion of these hearings and the work in totality, the commission will submit its report in which it will make recommendations to the government and the international community. I want you to know that you are not in a court. You will share your experiences during the war with us; we represent your parents and elders. Feel free and relax your minds; we are here to support you and to journey with you throughout your life. At the Lome peace agreement, the RUF and other warring factions came together and thought it fit to establish the TRC. Seven commissioners were appointed; four nationals and three internationals. Here, with me, are commissioners Professor John Kamara; a national commissioner, Satang Jow; an international commissioner, and Bishop Humper, who is talking to you. I am the chairman of the commission and I am a national commissioner. There is another team which is in Port Loko, and there are some other commissioners on that team. With your mother, father and grand father here with you, you are at home. Feel free and talk to us. We will be the last people to take you to court; our ultimate goal is to make you become a full grown person with all the potentials of helping this nation. At the end of all this, we will ask you what you want to become that will make you a great gentleman of this nation.

MASTER ROKONO'S TESTIMONY

Before the war broke out in our part of the country, I was in class one in a school in Mattru. We were on holidays in a village around Mattru when the rebels attacked us. The rebels killed some people and they abducted us. They asked us to join them and, wherever they went, they took us along with them. They were stealing from some people and cutting off some people's hands and arms. They trained us and gave us guns; they punished me a lot. We would attack places, kill people and take some of the people away. We also took creatures away during such attacks. At one time while we were in the bush, we went short of food and water and two of us were sent to fetch water. At another time, they sent us again and we ran away from them; we took our guns with us. As we were trying to escape, we went to a town because we were thirsty and we wanted to drink water. The people in the town asked where we were coming from, and we told them that we had been abducted by rebels, but that we had escaped and were trying to run away. They tied us and laid us in the sun, but some people pleaded for us and we were released. As we were going, we met some other set of rebels and they wanted to kill us; we explained our story to them and we joined them. We went to a town where rebels and soldiers were fighting and we took advantage of the situation and ran away; I went to my home town. When I got to my home town, my mother decided that I should go back to school and I started going to school.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We can imagine what you went through. You said that they punished you a lot; what kind of punishment did they give to you?

Master Rokono: They would tie us and, at other times, flog us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How many of your type were with them?

Master Rokono: Just two of us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Amongst the group, were there girls?

Master Rokono: Girls were there.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is it that whenever they went to attack those villages they captured girls?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What were they saying about the country?

Master Rokono: I cannot remember.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Do you say you are going to school; what class are you in now?

Master Rokono: Class six.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What would you want to become when you grow up? Or you have not thought about that yet; you are waiting until you finish your NPSE?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: When the rebels attacked your village, how many of you, young boys, were abducted.

Master Rokono: Two of us.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: And the two of you stayed together right through?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The other boy, what's his name?

Master Rokono: David Sandy.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You live in the same village?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that when you were with the rebels they did a lot of bad thing; can you tell us some?

Master Rokono: They would burn people's houses, kill people, loot property and take people away.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you say anything to them on such occasions?

Master Rokono – No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said you were trained; can you tell us some of the training you went through?

Master Rokono: We were made to parade for long periods; they tied us and asked us to roll.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you trained to use guns?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: On what occasions did you use the guns?

Master Rokono: On many occasions.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Who was your commander?

Master Rokono: Corporal Gborie.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was it a nick name?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: That was what they called him.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know the names of the other rebels?

Master Rokono: I don't know.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How did you relate with them?

Master Rokono: We called them corporals.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What was your rank?

Master Rokono: I had no rank; I was only a follower.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you, at any time, take part in amputations?

Master Rokono: I did not amputate, but I killed people.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How did you feel at the time you were doing it?

Master Rokono: We were forced to kill.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you, at any time, object?

Master Rokono: Sometimes I did, but, at such time, they would threaten to kill me if I didn't obey their orders

Comm. Kamara: I can imagine how young you were in 1994; so the story you are telling us took place when you were barely six years old. According to your statement, you were at one time forced to open a woman's belly?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Kamara: How soon after you were abducted were you made to do that horrible act?

Master Rokono: It was after some time.

Comm. Kamara: When you say some time, can you guess whether it was a year after or two years?

Master Rokono: It was after about a year.

Comm. Kamara: After a year; when you were just seven years?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Kamara: Has your mind ever gone back to that time?

Master Rokono: It used to.

Comm. Kamara: How have you felt whenever you thought of that?

Master Rokono: I don't feel good about it.

Comm. Kamara: Can you remember the person who made you do that?

Master Rokono: I don't.

Comm. Kamara: You say you are now in school; you are 15 and you are in class six. How do you find going to school?

Master Rokono: I have now come to realize that where we were was a bad place.

Comm. Kamara: Now, you are happy at school?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Kamara: Have some of those friends you've made at school got the same experience like you?

Master Rokono: No.

Comm. Kamara: There are no other young boys, in the school, who have gone through your kind of experience?

Master Rokono: No.

Comm. Kamara: Do the other boys and girls in the school know you have gone through this experience?

Master Rokono: Yes, they do.

Comm. Kamara: And they encourage you?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Kamara: Do you find it easy to learn?

Master Rokono: No.

Comm. Kamara: When did you start going to school? Can you remember when your mother said you should start going to school? Was it during Johnny Paul Koroma's time or when was it?

Master Rokono: I cannot remember.

Comm. Kamara: Thank you very much for your information, Master Rokono.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did they give you drugs?

Comm. Bishop Humper: They never gave me anything of the sort.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Can you remember some of the names of the rebels?

Master Rokono: I can remember only one, I have forgotten the rest.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Who is that?

Master Rokono: Lt. Sorie.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you hear any name like Akim?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you hear any name like Issa Sesay?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mosquito?

Master Rokono: Yes, but it was only Mosquito whom I did not see.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have been asking you questions to help us in writing our report, now you are going to ask us questions or make suggestions as to what you think the government should do so that young boys like you will never again be victims of war in the history of this country. Do you have any questions?

Master Rokono: I don't have any questions.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In the written statement, you said that your parents were killed by RUF; were you told or did you witness it?

Master Rokono: I was told by people.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: So your parents are no longer alive?

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you say that your parents were killed?

Master Rokono: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Who is taking care of your education?

Comm. Bishop Humper: My grandmother sent me to school, but she is dead. My uncle now takes care of me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is your uncle working? If yes, where?

Master Rokono: Yes, at the Education office.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What message do you have for your brothers out there? What message do you have for this country?

Master Rokono: The only thing I have to tell them is that they should stop doing bad things; we should all come together.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Are you physically fit?

Master Rokono: No, not much.

Comm. Bishop Humper: When you came back, were you taken to the hospital?

Master Rokono: No, nothing like that happened.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You have had the courage to come to this commission, there are some of your brothers out there, what is your message to them?

Master Rokono: The only message I have for them is that they should stop doing evil acts; we should all come together and be one.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What would you like people to do for you?

Master Rokono: The only help I want from any source is help to go through my education.

2nd Witness: Master Bowanag

Comm. Bishop Humper: We welcome you to this commission. We are a family you can relate to. We have three commissioners here, Commissioner Satang Jow of the Gambia, Commissioner Kamara and myself, the Chairman of this commission, Commissioner Humper. This is a very big day. Initially, you said that you will do something before we do anything; you said that you will sing a song. Are you ready now to sing the song? There is also a song called "Promise" which you said you will sing for us.

Master Bowanag: {Sang two songs}

Comm. Bishop Humper: In your songs, you spoke on behalf of all your brothers. Your songs will go out not only for this country, but for the entire world. Feel relaxed; all the commissioners and staff here are your people. Say whatever you want to say to us this afternoon; this is the only opportunity you have. You have told us so much in your songs. So, now, tell us what you went through during the war; we are now listening to you.

MASTER BOWANAG'S TESTIMONY

At one time, while I was living with my father and step mother in Kenema, my step mother sent me to fetch water. At that time, my father was not around. My step mother was used to maltreating me; she would send me out of the house; to stay in the street, etc. When I went to the stream to fetch water on that fateful day, I heard gun shots. When I heard the gun shots, I went to the direction from which the sound of the gun supposedly came from in order to see what was happening. I went there and the rebels grabbed me and asked me to go with them. They captured a lot of other children and took us along Hangha road; we headed for Hangha and finally got to Bo Njeila. After four days, we got to their base. There was a lady called Monica to whom we were handed for training. After training, they gave us guns. When we went to the bush to be trained - it was at Zogoda - we were there for a year. We were given training in what we referred to as 'firing squad' and we were also trained how to dodge bullets coming from the enemy. Some of the children who were with us died during the training. There was a hole over which a rope was hung. During the training, we were requested to go over that hole; swinging on the rope. If one got tired and could no longer hold onto the rope, one would fall into the hole and die. The hole served as the grave of victims who died during that process. There were five holes, and when about twenty children would have fallen into one hole, the rebels would close that hole and go on to use the other hole. Some of us endured that training, but some could not. A lot of children died during that training. When the newly captured children came, I was in sympathy with them. One day, I was asked to go with one of the newly captured boys to fetch water, and I proposed to the boy that we should run away. They normally sent us around with security so that we would not run away. The boy hit the man, who was sent to keep watch on us, on his head with the bucket. While they were struggling, I used the gun to secure me and my friend. We went into the bush and we stayed there for fifteen days. At one moment, he said that he wanted to drink water and I told him that I did not have water. He then asked me to kill him. I told him that he had not done anything and therefore I had no reason to kill him. However, he insisted that I should kill him or else he would kill me. I then shot him, but he didn't die on the spot. As I was walking away, he called out to me; he shot at himself. Before he died, he said that I should always remember him

and that I should bury his body. So I covered his body with leaves and continued my journey. I took six days in the bush. When I went unto the road, I saw the Kamajors and I went into the bush again. As I went back into the bush, I saw another group of Kamajors who grabbed me and asked me to lead them to the rebels or they would kill me. I told them that we should follow the route on the map which led through the hills because if we followed the straight path, the rebels would see us and they would kill us. I told them that the rebels were using the technique of placing empty containers on the way and once one stepped on them, they would know that someone was coming and they would way lay and kill the intruder. I led them through that hilly path and we came upon the rebels and attacked them. After that, we came back to the Kamajor zone and I was handed over to a David Johnny. Owing to the maltreatment the Kamajors gave to me, I escaped and went to Dambala where I stayed with a lady. It was at that point that I heard of the Unaccompanied Street Children's program. When I enquired, the lady told that me I would have to come to Bo in order to know more about the program.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you for sharing this testimony with us. We want to get one thing clear. Which was the first to capture you; the rebels or Kamajors?

Master Bowanag: The rebels were the first to capture me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you say your step-mother had already asked you out?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Was she in town when the rebels came?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you hear anything about her when you were in the bush?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You said you landed in the hands of the Kamajors?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Can you tell us why they were maltreating you?

Master Bowanag: They claimed that I was a spy for the rebels; that's why they were maltreating me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Apart from killing your friend in the bush, did you kill any other person?

Master Bowanag: No Sir.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We have heard your story and we believe your songs will reach out to all Sierra Leoneans. Did you say you were living in Kenema when you were abducted?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you say your father was out of the country or out of Kenema when this incident happened?

Master Bowanag: Yes, he was out of Kenema.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said you were living with your step-mother, where was your mother?

Master Bowanag: My mother was in Bo; she and my father had separated.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us more about Libya?

Master Bowanag: That was a camp for ex-combatants.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How many children were in that camp?

Master Bowanag: Many.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were there young girls?

Master Bowanag: Many.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What were they doing?

Master Bowanag: Some cooked, some were women of the commandos, and some were being raped.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you there when they were raped?

Master Bowanag: Yes. There was also a house called “Iron house”, that was where they took pregnant women to burn them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You mentioned Monica, what was her role?

Master Bowanag: She trained the children how to fight; she would take them to the bush?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell what she was like?

Master Bowanag: She spoke Krio but she also spoke Mende, she is now at Daru camp.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you seen her since?

Master Bowanag – The last time I saw her was when we came for training.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Apart from Monica, who else trained you?

Master Bowanag: Super man, Mingo and Mosquito who originally started training me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us what type of training was given to you?

Master Bowanag: They were training us so that we could go to the war front and fight?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that some children died during that training; can you tell us how many children died?

Master Bowanag: Two hundred of us went for the training, but only one hundred and fifty of us came back.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How were those children buried?

Master Bowanag: They were covered in those holes into which they fell, and that was their grave.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You mentioned Zogoda; tell us about Zogoda.

Master Bowanag: That was a place where advanced training was taking place. A lot of people died there also. They trained us how to escape bombs and bullets. They would fire live bullets and bombs and you were expected to try and dodge them otherwise you would be killed.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: At your age, you should not have the kind of experience you have just told us about; unfortunately you were in that situation. In accordance with your songs, I hope it will help other children not to be in this same situation : as you have just explained to us – which you found yourself in. You said you were sent to fetch water then you had gun shots, instead of running back to the house, you went to investigate. Why did you react that way?

Master Bowanag: I did that because my brother was at home and on my way going to look out for him, I met the rebels.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So they took you to Bo Njeila, to Hangha, to Libya; after training, you went to Zogoda. How long was this training?

Master Bowanag: Six months at Libya and six months at Zogoda.

Comm. Kamara: The friend whom you advised to escape; were you all trained together?

Master Bowanag – No, he was one of those who were newly abducted.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: After the Zogoda training, did you participate in any rebel attacks?

Master Bowanag: We used to go on attacks, but I would stay behind. Whenever we were sent to loot, they would send one Burkinabe soldier with us; we had seven Burkinabe soldiers with us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: How many such expeditions can you remember; either looting or killing?

Master Bowanag: About ten times.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Did you witness a lot of killing and looting?

Master Bowanag: Yes. They were also burning houses and looting at some point; we had no bosses with us, so at that time, I was shot on my foot.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Your friend asked you to shoot him and you refused. How many guns did you have?

Master Bowanag: He had one and I also had one.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And because he threatened to kill you, you decided to shoot him?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Kamara: Did you really want to kill him?

Master Bowanag: No, that was why I shot him on the leg.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You buried him?

Master Bowanag: I did not dig a hole, I only cut leaves and covered his body.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: I want you to make clear your journey to the rebels with the Kamajors.

Master Bowanag: I told them that we should use a bye pass route up the hills since camp Zogoda was in the middle. I did not want the rebels to take notice of us when we would be approaching. If they did, they would kill us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Where was camp Zogoda?

Master Bowanag: Near Zimmi.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: How did you discover the program in Bo?

Master Bowanag: A woman whom I met at Dambala told me about the program for war affected children, and I was advised to come to Bo.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Zimmi and camp Zogoda are two extreme points, so how did you get there?

Master Bowanag: We walked.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Can you tell us some of the incidents you encountered on the way?

Master Bowanag: We met rebels on our way when we were going towards the north, but the Kamajors advised that we leave them alone as we hadn't much ammunition.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: At camp Zogoda, did you meet with Foday Sankoh?

Master Bowanag: Yes. Red Cross were also coming there in their helicopter; they brought medicines and ammunition for us and we, in turn, gave them diamonds.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Did you say that Red Cross was supplying ammunition to rebels?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Did they land at any spot?

Master Bowanag: They would come to our camp and use our landing area, but they did not quite land; they lowered their helicopter and used a rope to send down medicines and ammunition to us, and we, in turn, did likewise to send diamonds up to them.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: How did the diamonds get there?

Master Bowanag: By a rope.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have asked you a lot of questions; do you have any questions to ask?

Master Bowanag: When you wanted to bring this TRC program to this district, did you sensitize the people?

Comm. Bishop Humper: Yes, we did.

Master Bowanag: People are saying that the TRC and the Special Court are the same, and if you testify at the TRC, you might end up being arrested.

Comm. Bishop Humper: There are thousands of your kinds out there, but people like you will get the others to know that they can come here and tell their stories and they will not be arrested. What do you want us to write in our recommendation; to tell the government?

Master Bowanag: I want to tell government to reach out to those children, like me, who have suffered; some have even suffered more. Government should open a center because some children are rejected when they go to their people; they are called rebels. I want them to help us with our education. In my case, for instance, my head master has been threatening that I will not take the NPSE mock exams because my program did not pay for it. I am asking the government to help me go through my education. As for me, I don't want to be with my parents because they don't want me to become educated and be what I want to be in future in order that I can take care of myself. I don't have even school materials. This is all I have to say.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: what is your state of health?

Master Bowanag: I am not sick, my present plight is that I lose memory of things easily.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Since your return, have you ever been to see a doctor?

Master Bowanag: I don't have anybody to take me to a doctor.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you had any counselling before coming to talk to the TRC?

Master Bowanag: Yes, the Unaccompanied Child Protection Group did counsel me.

Comm. Kamara: The two songs you sang just now, who composed them?

Master Bowanag: Myself.

Comm. Kamara: Are you interested in music?

Master Bowanag: Yes.

Comm. Kamara: Do you have the opportunity to pursue this course?

Master Bowanag: I don't, if I have the opportunity I will be happy.

Comm. Kamara: When did you compose those songs?

Master Bowanag: When I was with Talking Drums Studio.

Comm. Kamara: If you are with them, why won't they help you?

Master Bowanag: They won't do it.

3rd Witness: Master Japo

Comm. Bishop Humper – You are welcome. We want you to know that here, in this room, you have mothers, fathers and grand fathers. I will first of all introduce the commissioners to you. We have Commissioner Jow from the Gambia, Commissioner Kamara and me, the Chairman, Commissioner Humper; we are both Sierra Leoneans. You heard about the Lome Peace Accord that gave rise to TRC so that people like you will go back to your people and join the society; our

law in this country does not allow children to be sent to jail. I want you to know that we know much more than you do, but we want you to tell us all that happened to you during the war as it will be useful to us in the writing of our report.

MASTER JAPO'S TESTIMONY

I am retired Capt. Master Japo; they used to call me "War Blood". I was born in Bo in 1984. My mother and father were in Bumpeh when this war started; I was in Bo, here, going to school. One day, my friend and I went in search of food at Kabama; we went to pick mangoes. It was then that I heard that people were packing out of the town; little did we know that there were rebels and SSD'S in the area. When Foday Sankoh initially came, he had SSD men and one SLA. My friend advised that we rush back to town. As we were going to town, we saw some men who had dread locks and others had red caps; the ones who had red caps spoke Krio. They asked us to carry ammunition boxes. We complained that the boxes were heavy, but they said that if we complained, we would be killed. We arrived in a village where many people had been captured, and there was fire on many of the houses. When we dropped the boxes, I saw my mother and father; they were naked. There were also other people there. They ordered all the women to have sex with their fathers; and all the men were ordered to have sex with their mothers. I shouted out that I had never done that. They asked me to identify my mother. When we got to the top of the bush, they put them all in a house, sprinkled petrol on the house and set the house on fire. They asked us, who had carried the boxes, to follow them. I had no relatives left, so I went with them. We walked and came to a place called Mosenesi junction where they said we should join them. They eventually took us to Rutile where the mining was done. There was a restaurant where I saw a Pa, who was not too old, and a woman. They then said that they had captured boys because boys were needed. There was no way for me to escape. They said that if we attempted to escape or do otherwise than obey their instructions, we would be killed. That Pa had a country cloth on, and he asked us to sit down so that he could address us. He told us that he was taking us to a place, and that we would never see the place where we were again. Whilst we were there, the Guineans who were here had heard that rebels were at Sierra Rutile; the Pa then asked us to go to Moriba town; down the market place. We were there for a while and one of my friends escaped. The following morning, when they did not see my friend, they said that I was a brilliant boy and that I was going to join the revolution. I said "No", but they said that I would be a gun carrier, so I agreed. They moved with us and we walked to Taninahun junction. They asked us to use the road that leads to Freetown; I had never been to Freetown. We got to a place where, according to them, was our destination. The lady and the old man asked me to help do the washing up of cooking utensils so that in the morning we would move on. We came to Bo and then to Kailahun; that was a very strange experience. They then selected me and my friend, Abdul, and told us that we would be going to Liberia. They showed me something yellow and said that I was sick, but I said I was not. They then struck me on the leg. With that kind of experience, I became hostile and I hated my friend whom I had loved. After we had finished eating, they told us that some people would take us from Senegal Park to Burkina Faso. We travelled all day and night, and they told us that that would be our final destination. They told us that they were planning a dangerous war in Sierra Leone and that we were going to be trained as spies. I then saw two fresh human heads on a stick and I also witness the death of children. We were told to run. There was food, but since I was used to eating rice, I could not eat anything other than rice. I was then prepared to fight because I had lost both parents. They then gave me, other boys and big men marks on the sides of our stomachs. Each morning, we went jogging; at times we would run and never get tired. There were times when we would be in the bush for long hours, and there were times when we would squat with our guns on our shoulders for about five hours.

One day, they told that they were going to teach us to swim with a rope. During that exercise, some men died. When it was time for me to swing on the rope, I prayed that the souls of my late parents be with me. They pushed me and I held on to the rope till I crossed over. They then said that they would take us to Liberia and that we would be there and then move on to Kailahun. It

was in Kailahun that I met Sam Bockarie. General Mosquito requested that I become his boy; I was to be responsible for washing his uniform. However, the Pa said that I was a trained man and that I should be in the jungle; by then we were trying to enter into Koribondo.

We walked a long distance, captured Koribondo and we were based there. It was then agreed that I was a brilliant boy and, as a result of that, I was sent on a mission to capture a village. It was 6 in the morning and I made a 'one lock' ambush. I went to one door and knocked; a Pa opened and when he saw me he was afraid; he locked the door. I then whistled to give a signal to my colleagues and we overran the town. We went to several villages and took them. I was then a small boy, but I considered myself a big man. I had a commander who was called Ibrahim Koroma, a.k.a "Flash". There was another one who did not talk and did not take bath. Whenever it wanted to rain, he was afraid; since that was my terrain, I would manoeuvre with him when the clouds showed signs of rain

In 1996, they told us that our men were coming to join us in order to capture Bo. One of my men, Richie, who was a trained SLA, said that he would be with me, and that I should not be afraid of anything. We hit New London in Bo. We were inside the brigade, yet the kids did not know anything about us; they gave us food. When the Burkinabe was arrested, we changed our tactics. We had an identification card which was the two Leones note. We had a mark which we were given upon completion of training. We hit Bo, but we did not succeed; we pulled out and went to Kenema. We went to a place called Sembehun junction, and It was agreed that I should be a spy. I went to parties and danced all night. I watched them carefully; I stayed with them and sent news to my colleagues. The first time I did that, my men came and they hit, but they did not succeed. They came again a second time. We agreed that we would attack Kpetema, and that if we settled there, we would be able to get troops from Liberia. They asked me to attack Kpetema. They agreed that they would add Bobor Pain and another boy, both of whom hailed from that area, to the attacking force that would be led by me. We hit and we succeeded; we abducted the men in the palm wine booth and asked them to join us.

They asked me to attack another village, and I asked for weapons. There were fifteen of us. We hit again and I succeeded. I was then promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. I was then a big man in the jungle. I had no one to look back to, so I fought without fear. We fought and took many villages. One evening, General Mosquito came and said that he had heard of my successes. I then had my boy who later died when he was with me; I asked him to hold my weapon while I climbed a tree where I could not be seen; and I asked him to go and tell the other men to come at night because I was keeping watch on the town. I told myself that we would succeed in that town. The people had come from prayers, and I had thoroughly studied the town and had found my escape route in case my movements are found out. By then my boy had taken the message that I had entered into the town. There were Nigerian soldiers hiding in trenches and I read their maps; so I sent a message to my men saying that they should come at night. One Ecomog soldier suspected our movements and he was presently killed. That day, many men died; out of forty five men, fifteen died. We sent for more men, but they refused to send us men, so we went back and reported the matter to Sankoh. Sankoh said that we should not destroy his mission, so he sent us back to fight. We fought for three days; we took all the ammunitions of Ecomog and we used the road that leads to Daru, from Freetown. On our way, we saw a truck and we laid an ambush; it drove into the ambush, we shot at the tyres and it somersaulted. We took everything that was in the truck and we moved on. When the people of the village heard gun shots, they knew that we had come. Guineans were there. I had a shot very close to my ears and, as I turned round, I saw a huge man; I told my men that we should pull out. As we were pulling out, we saw a truck and those who were in it told us that they were going to Magbosie. I was told that I should capture that village in order to get promotion in the jungle. There was a Lt. Jongopie and others who wanted to know me. By then I was a small boy and everybody wanted to know me. We were then in control of Magbosie right unto Okra Hill; we made a bye pass route from Magbosie to Okra Hill. Magbosie was called Foday Sankoh's garage; there were a lot of cars there. We were there for a long time; people did not realize what we were doing; but in Mile 91 and the surrounding villages; the Temne area, people knew that rebels were there. We decided to start looking for women; we

laid ambushes for vehicles. Lungi and the surrounding villages were my area; when you approach the town from the direction of Bo, the first storey building which faces you was where I had my office. I captured five SLA soldiers. I am not denying that I kill or burnt houses, but I never killed an innocent person. If one asked me not to kill him or her, I would ask that person to join the revolution.

Since we were big men in the revolution, I advised that we take a move to capture Daru. Some of my colleagues said that Daru was an SLA base, but my bosses told me that I should not be afraid, so I went on. I left Koribondo and I never went there again. We went to Kenema and slept at Labamba hotel. We had some big men whom we sold diamonds to and we asked them to help us sleep in the hotel with the understanding that we would leave the following morning. We all went on board a truck and sealed it as though we were taking supply items. We did not enter into the town; we disembarked half way to the town. I knew the zone well, even the routes that lead to Guinea and Liberia. The first time I saw Charles Taylor, I knew that he was a Jew. Alimamy Balay came from Guinea and bribed us to sell diamonds to him; they bribed us to sell diamonds in exchange for food and wearing apparels. There was an air field so helicopters came with food for us. We made contacts with South Africans who gave us fuel and we gave them diamonds. Alimamy Balay, Charles Taylor and Poto all sent representatives.

The revolution took a different turn; some big men came and started using me, so I went to tell Pa Sankoh. He told me that it was peace time so I should try to fend for myself. We captured some men together with whom we did things in common; we would attack together. We opened a mining company and the South Africans joined us; they would go to Freetown and load fuel and land on our air strip. Ecomog refused to join us, so we gathered our full squad and decided to drive Ecomog out by force; we removed Ecomog finally. Bunumbu, Daru and all the other places were free for us, and we decided to enter into Tongo. There was a man called Banya who was born and bred in Tongo; we convinced him and he joined us. We gave him a lot of dollars; the South Africans were behind us; Charles Taylor, Alimamy Balay and Poto were all supporting us. Then we had a good force; we fought for the whole day, but they repelled us. We attacked again and took over Tongo. We asked Banya to take one area and we asked Rambo to join him and we warned them not to allow anybody to take the area from them. When we captured the headquarters, we launched our attacks from there. When we found our diamonds, the big men would search us and take everything away from us. We fought, we killed and we decided to leave Tongo. We captured Bunumbu and there was a fellow called Bobor Pain; that was where he hailed from, so we asked him to lead us. We hit Bunumbu once and we failed. We hit again and we succeeded. There were soldiers in that terrain; we did not spend a month there when we were attacked. We fought and burnt an armoured car. Ecomog came and we burnt their military truck. Another set came and sprayed us; that caused much bodily harm to many of our men. We resolved that we would not leave Bunumbu until the last man was killed. So we decided to convince the soldiers in Daru. Papay Sankoh made an arrangement and asked us to enter in the early hours of the morning; we attacked and took Daru. We were there until we had a programme to enter into Liberia for further training. We shook hands with Charles Taylor and other big men. However, all that we had was taken away from us; what we had was claimed to be government property. We were fighting; therefore we decided to go our several ways in order to fend for ourselves. We went directly towards the Guinean border; into Mallehany. Any rebel who did not trust himself to be strong would not survive. We were there until we heard gun shots in the bush one morning. We then advanced to see what was happening and we saw that two fowls were fighting for rice and there were two men with plastic shoes. We asked them to identify themselves, but there was no response from them. When two of my men rushed towards them, they were gunned down; there were only three of us left then. We left a boy at the scene as a camouflage, hoping that if they saw the boy they would think that we had left. Seven Kamajors led by their commander, Sidique, came from the bush. I told one of my colleagues to go up the hill and I laid on the floor; I instructed that we should pick them one after the other. As they attempted to take the rice, we shot at them; we killed them one after the other as they came out to take the rice. They wanted to dodge, but we were up the hill and we were using motherly invectives. We were there when some other men came, disguised as rebels, and when my

personal body guard shouted “Identify”, they shot and killed him. I then retreated, but one of my men had RPG so I called out and, when those men turned towards me, I launched the bomb at them.

We went to another village where we were captured; they stripped us and each man gave us a hundred strokes of the cane. The Kamajors left us with five men to keep watch on us. I told my colleague that I had no gun and that I was wounded, so he should help and save me as I had saved him on many occasions. I told him that as a trained man, I could open the door to the room in which we were placed. I had a swollen foot as a result of bullet wounds, so I held the door and my boy helped me to open it. We killed the first two Kamajors whom we saw. My body guard then took the guns of the Kamajor guards and since they were heavily drugged, they knew nothing; we gunned them down and took their guns. We met some men on our way and we exchanged our usual codes; the ULIMO boys then recognized me and I identified myself. I was dumped into a hole where there was a boar constrictor. I initially thought that it was a human being and I beckoned to it. When I realised that it was a snake, I ran out of the hole and I went to a farm house. People were at the farm house. I opened a bullet, put it in water and rubbed it on my foot; I was hoping that my flesh would split open and the bullet would come out. My boy was still with me and he urged me to move on. What bothered me most was the treatment I was getting from my bosses; all they gave me were capsules. I was getting fed up when they came with a pen knife and removed the bullet. My wound started fettering and the foot was getting rot, but I still held on to my gun; I not afraid of anything in this world. We then went to Bunumbu again; I was captured again and I was beaten thoroughly. I wanted to leave the movement, but I had to go on because I had no relatives. I went back to Tongo; we mined diamonds and did sober business. We were in Tongo when Balay came with Lansana conteh’s son. He came to get men who would launch an attack on Guinea. He said that there was eight hundred thousand Leones for each fighter who would be involved in that deal. We left Tongo and went to the air field from where we took off and went to Bunumbu. There was a road that led to Guinea, so we went by that road and we were based somewhere around Guinea. We did not understand the terrain so we took children’s school uniforms and the teachers’ uniforms too. We decided that we were going to cross over into Guinea, so we tied ourselves to drums and we crossed the river over to Gegedu; there about five hundred of us. We wore those school uniforms and told a lie that we were school children, but they suspected us. We took another strategy; we dressed as though we were going to the night club, but our presence was suspected due to the way in which we spent money. They didn’t know that we had our bomb carriers with us; it was a risky programme. There was a boy whom we asked to show us the terrain; as he pointed to the direction we were asking for, they killed him because if we had allowed that boy to go back that would have been a problem. We sat by the bank of the river, waiting for 6 a.m. The Guineans had three groups; soldiers, police and vigilantes. When we arrived, people were praying, so we decided that somebody should enter into the Mosque and take the imams gown which we would use. Whilst we were on this mission, some of our men were cooking; we went back later and ate. When we entered into the town, the police were sleeping. We tried to enter quietly, but they suspected us so we decided to enter with force; we put on our full combat fatigues. For three days and nights, we were engaged in active combat. We crawled close to them and one of our men hit the barracks. We challenged men no matter how huge they were. The Guinean soldiers had a filthy armoured car. However, our Generals were greedy. We were on a hilly side and when we shot at them, it got to them, but when they shot at us, it did not reach us. When they came close to us, we shot at the armoured car. They therefore brought together all their three forces. We had eight Generals; no child died in that battle, all of those who died, on our side, were big men. I went into one house and took out a box. When I opened it, it was full of money. Major Trust Me asked me to give him the box, but I refused. However, my boss ordered me to give it to him and I did; but he was not satisfied. We went to Karefa Smart’s hospital and we succeeded in opening it, but whoever attempted to jump over that gutter was fired; major Trust Me was fired and his guts came out. We continued to fight. When one of them saw me, we shot at each other several times. His cap fell down, and when he was trying to retrieve it, I took note of him and that was his end. That night, we left Sierra Leone for Guinea.

If you attempted to leave Tongo in order to come and participate in the disarmament programme, you were in trouble. Some Generals started harassing me because of my women. One night, I had a dream; in that dream, somebody told me to go and the person promised to be with me. The following morning, I took my gun and left. On my way, I saw a jeep filled with some of our men, I hid from them and when they had gone past me, I shot and killed them. When the others heard the two gun shots, I was in danger, so I escaped and walked on to Mano junction. It was a problem to enter into the town; I thought that they were going to kill me. I was the first man who came to be disarmed. I asked for medical treatment, but they made no effort; I asked for benefit, nothing happened; they said that I was a child so they sent me to CARITAS.

The day on which I got to CARITAS, they asked me to go into a vehicle, but since I still had drugs in my system and I became outrageous. I was taken to the 34 hospital and I was given some drugs in order that I could sleep. When I woke up, I felt better. They tried to trace one of my aunts.

I entered for the BECE exams and Tucker paid 45 thousand Leones, out of his pocket, for me. When I went to the DDR office, they treated me shabbily; IRC is worse. Should I become somebody, it is through the help of Steven Tucker; he does everything for me.

I thank God and I thank you all.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Master Japo, we thank you for your testimony. We know that you went through a lot of troubles unduly. Although we believe every word that you have spoken, we will, as part of the procedure, ask you questions in order to make clear some of the points you have raised. What one thing it was that moved you to join the RUF?

Master Japo: I had no relative again.

Comm. Kamara: You spoke of the Foday Sankoh garage; did you take part in the massacre which gave that place its name?

Master Japo: I am neither denying nor am I acquiescing, but any time there is war, there must be death tolls.

Comm. Kamara: Did you take part in that massacre which gave that place its name?

Master Japo: Yes, I was there.

Comm. Kamara: You spoke about a fight over rice, you said people were killed on either side, how many?

Master Japo: Three on our side and four on their side.

Comm. Kamara: You also said that Alimamy Balay and Lansana Conteh's son came to recruit you and they gave you some money, how much?

Master Japo: Any man who went and returned, and if the mission was successful, would be given eight thousand Leones.

Comm. Kamara: You spoke of Karefa Smart's hospital; where is that?

Master Japo: Near the bank.

Comm. Kamara: Where is that?

Master Japo: Gegedu.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Whilst in the RUF, you rose to the rank of captain, and you had your own unit, tell us something about the command structure within the RUF.

Master Japo: We were in groups of five headed by mosquito and, later, by Eagle.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you in the top command structure?

Master Japo: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you speak to people like Foday Sankoh?

Master Japo: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you receive salary?

Master Japo: No, what you grabbed was what you ate. A very tough man from Liberia, Poto and another man from Kenema sold our items for us, and they would take needed items back to us.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You spoke of drugs given to you, did you take other drugs?

Master Japo: Yes, soberly; there were different types.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How were those drugs acquired?

Master Japo: People with whom we did business outside the country brought them for us; without those drugs, we couldn't work.

Comm. Kamara: Do you know of any instance in which the International Red Cross came to any base to give arms and ammunitions?

Master Japo: We were in a bad zone, you could neither come out nor enter; you would be asked to go back.

Comm. Kamara: Can you tell us a little bit about how you captured Koribondo?

Master Japo: We went in and spied on them; we left all our uniforms and ammunitions outside. After that, we entered into the town. It was at Lungi that we planned to enter into Koribondo.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What happened there; were people killed; were houses burnt?

Master Japo: It was a war; all that should happen.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you ever go to camp Zogoda?

Master Japo: Oh! I forgot all my camps.

Leader of Evidence: The year you were captured, was it the same year you were sent to Burkina Faso?

Master Japo: No, the following year, 1995.

Leader of Evidence: How long did you stay there?

Master Japo: About seven months.

Leader of Evidence: How many small boys were there?

Master Japo: Many; about fifty.

Leader of Evidence: Did Foday Sankoh come to see you?

Master Japo: Yes, he came to spur us on.

Leader of Evidence: The drugs they were giving to you, did they give it to you continually?

Master Japo: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You were given dedrugged in Freetown; where?

Master Japo: At a hospital.

Leader of Evidence: Do you still feel like taking drugs?

Master Japo: Yes, but I don't take any other drug other than marijuana.

Leader of Evidence: So you were Sankoh's CSO until he got arrested in Nigeria?

Master Japo: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know anything about Zambians?

Master Japo: No.

Comm. Bishop Humper: This was quite an exercise; you are not only helping small children, but also the nation as a whole. What questions or recommendations do you have for the government?

Master Japo: I don't have any support now except from this man who is helping me. As for the NGO's, they are not helping in any way. I am appealing to the government to help me, I want to learn; I am not happy with the trade I am learning right now, I don't like it, but my aunt with whom I am staying is poor.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say you have no permanent place?

Master Japo: Yes, my aunt lives in a single room and we are about twenty of us who live in that house. I have to go into the bush and get wood which I split to sell. I get help from Tucker; I sometimes knock on his door late at night for food. He has to go looking for me all over these days; he was not happy about how and where he met me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: If you want this commission to send a message to the government, in its report, concerning children in this country, what would that be?

Master Japo: There should be no war in this country any more; children have suffered. I was living with one man, but his wife harassed me; she works at IRC and they are supposed to protect us. My stature does not portray how much I suffer. I depend on Tucker largely, but he too is a family man and he can't do more than the ordinary; he too is a family man.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You are a clever person and I know that if you have the opportunity, you will do great things. This will be the opening message for this country; if there are any of your

brothers moving around, please encourage them to come to the commission before Saturday, when we shall leave here, and tell their stories. You have a double barrel; you are a victim; you watched your parents being killed, and you were also a perpetrator.

Master Japo: I did not want to come; I thought I was going to be jailed. But Tucker convinced me and explained to me because I was about to run away to Liberia. I have something to say; I am a sickler and very recently a bullet was removed from my body, and it was this man who gave me money and sent me to a doctor. Please do not forget me.

Comm. Bishop Humper: By God's grace, something will be worked out for you. Thank you for testifying to the Commission.

HEARINGS HELD ON 2ND MAY 2003 AT THE BO TOWN HALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Satang Jow : Presiding

Bishop J.C Humper {Chairman} : Recording

Prof. John Kamara

LEADER OF EVIDENCE

Leader of Evidence Ojielo

TRANSCRIBER

Emmanuel Koivaya Amara

SECRETARIES

Donella Williams

Malorie Barinda Pratt

The usual Muslim and Christian prayers were said before the start of the hearings. The Leader of Evidence called the first witness for the day.

1st Witness: Ann Ellie

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Satang Jow administered the oath.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Ann, I welcome you, on behalf of my colleagues. We want you to feel relaxed as you relate your experiences. We are now ready to listen to your testimony.

ANN ELLIE'S TESTIMONY

At the beginning of the war, we were at Njala when the strangers came. We were in the hall that day and the rebels told us that they were going to protect us. We started doing things normally. The rebels missed their way and after a month and a half, they started threatening the men in the town. Then there was the monthly general cleaning. One night, a man told my husband that my husband and the other men were not taking instructions from them; the man claimed that he had reliably learnt that each time my husband and the other men heard gun shot, they ran away. One morning, we were awakened to the sound of gun shots all over the place. The town was held in complete panic. When we got to the point of convergence, they gave instructions that if anybody heard any gun shot, they should hide under their beds. We wanted to go out of the town, but the rebels did not allow us to go anywhere; we should continue to be under the beds, they told us. The rebels started killing people. They then went to our own house; I was in my own room and my husband was in his own room. The rebels came and said if we did not open the door of the house, they would kill all of us. When my husband opened the door, they put a gun on his chest and shot at him. My mother was also killed. They took all our properties away and, at the moment, we have nothing. That is what is paining me now. This is the end of my testimony.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We thank you for your testimony. We will, however, ask you a few questions for clarification. Who were these people that attacked your village?

Ann Ellie: They were rebels.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How were you able to escape?

Ann Ellie: While they were shooting, we bowed down and carefully ran away from them; that was how I escaped.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you have a fitting burial for your mother and husband?

Ann Ellie: All of those who were killed were buried in one mass grave.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You spoke of soldiers coming to your village and then you said that those soldiers misbehaved; is that true?

Ann Ellie: Well, there were three rebels during the attack who, when we got back to the town, were forcefully taking properties and abducting people. They were doing that all the time. After looting our properties, they would begin to shoot and everybody was afraid of getting close to them.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: They were not different from the rebels; is that so?

Ann Ellie: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: There were soldiers in the town to protect the town. Where were those soldiers when the rebels attacked?

Ann Ellie: They were in the town and they did not go anywhere.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Whose child was your mother carrying?

Ann Ellie: My child.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Where is the child now?

Ann Ellie: The child is with me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How many times did the rebels attack the town?

Ann Ellie: Two times.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Was it in the same year?

Ann Ellie: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you describe the way they were dressed?

Ann Ellie: They had the same uniform as the soldiers.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you recall any name that the rebels were calling?

Ann Ellie: They had some Mende names, but I cannot recall them. There were so many names.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I want to know if they had nick names.

Ann Ellie: There were so many names, but I can only recall "C.O".

Leader of Evidence: What was your mother's name?

Ann Ellie: Her name was Jane Bockarie.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We have had your testimony and you have answered several questions. Now it is your turn to ask us questions or make recommendations.

Ann Ellie: The only thing I have to say is that my husband and mother are dead. I have children and there is no father to take care of them; my children left school because of school fees. I don't have money to pay their fees.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I will like to tell you that this commission will complete its assignment and submit its report to government and, in this report, we will also make recommendations. A number of people had made recommendations and these recommendations will be incorporated in the report. We know you have immediate concerns and the commission's staff will try to refer you to certain agencies around Bo who will assist you as soon as possible.

2nd Witness: Michael R. Conteh

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. Michael Conteh, we welcome you. Relax, feel free and feel at home as you give your testimony. The TRC is not a court. You can now begin your testimony.

MICHAEL R. CONTEH'S TESTIMONY

When the war started in this country in 1994, we heard that the rebels had been to Koindu. I hail from Njala Komborya; nine miles from Koindu. I went to my village, which is seven miles away. While I was in my village, I heard that the rebels were three miles to Njala. The rebels burnt down the house of the current paramount chief. We were terrified; the rebels said that they had missed their way, and they went back. That same year, in September, the rebels came again to

Njala town. While we were at Njala, we thought that they would provide security for us, but we realised that they didn't want to defend us. A woman, whose son was a soldier, came from Tongo. That woman told me that as long as the soldiers were around, we were safe. The following day, I went to my village. In my village, I was told that the rebels had gone to Njala. On September 8, the rebels killed over twenty people at Njala. Four days after that incident, nobody went to Njala in order to see what had happened. It was then that I told my children to go and see what had happened. When the rebels went to Njala and the soldiers saw them, they shouted at them. They did not burn down my house, but they burnt down several houses. Since I was worried, I went to Njala and learnt that the soldiers were occupying my house. I told the soldiers that I was there so that I could take my belongings to Bo. In February 1995, the rebels attacked again. During that attack, the rebels completely burnt my compound and my two children who were in one of the houses that the rebels burnt down, were burnt to death. We did not hear anything about the children until after two days. When the other brothers got there, they found out that the compound was completely destroyed and two of their brothers were dead. The soldiers shouted at the boys, but they took the corpses of their brothers and to the trench where they were buried. Since then, I have been a worried man. My eldest son was the first to be burnt to death. That is the world in which I live now. This is all I have to tell the commission.

Comm. Bishop Humper: we are sorry for what happened to you during the war. At your age, you should now be sitting down and expecting your children to help you. You are considered as one of the victims of the war. The commission would like to know if you are an old soldier.

Michael Conteh: I was an officer in the army up to 1969.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say that while you were there, the rebels attacked those villages around the town?

Michael Conteh: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You asked your eldest son to go and find out what was happening; what did he come back to tell you?

Michael Conteh: When they returned, they told me that they had burnt down houses in Njala.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say that your two children were burnt to death? My question is whether the soldiers help the two boys to bury their brothers?

Michael Conteh: They were shouting at them to hurry up and get out of the town.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How did these children survive the war?

Michael Conteh: They were with me; we lived in a village, seven miles to Njala.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Would you say that the rebels and soldiers were in connivance?

Comm. Bishop Humper: I would think so because a man told me a story. One Sergeant Komeh told me that as long as soldiers were in Njala, the rebels would get there.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Did you have Civil Defence Forces in Njala or any of the villages?

Michael Conteh: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: During the crisis, were you in Njala?

Michael Conteh: No; I was in my village.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You also told us that you were worried about the soldiers. Can you tell us what exactly they were doing?

Michael Conteh: As I stated in my testimony, I am an ex-army officer; I know what soldiers should do to defend the people. They were taking things like goats and other properties away; the soldiers were engaged in looting rather than in the defence of the people.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that you got information most of the time and you sent your sons to find out. Where are these sons, are they still alive?

Michael Conteh: They are alive.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are they old enough to give statement to the commission?

Michael Conteh: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can we have their names?

Michael Conteh: Joseph McCarthy and Thomas McCarthy; the latter is at Bo Teachers' college.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. Conteh, what do you do to support yourself?

Michael Conteh: Well, for a long time, I was not doing anything.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you willing to reconcile for the sake of peace?

Michael Conteh: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Would you know any of these rebels?

Michael Conteh: I don't know them.

Leader of Evidence: At what rank did you retire from the army?

Michael Conteh: In 1969.

Leader of Evidence: At what age did you retire?

Michael Conteh: I was born in 1940.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the commission why you retired so early?

Michael Conteh: At one time the soldiers stood firm against the officers in the army and they arrested me and put me in jail for seven months. One day, they wrote a letter to me, notifying me that I had been retired.

Leader of Evidence: Looking back on your days in the army, what do you think has changed in the army?

Michael Conteh: There is a difference! One of the differences is that when the soldiers got there, they promised that they would defend us, but they did not.

Leader of Evidence: As an officer in the army, what were the causes of coups in the army?

Michael Conteh: The other ranks did not like that government.

Leader of Evidence: Does this imply that during the time you were in the army, some senior Officers were corrupt?

Michael Conteh: That is what is happening and that was why we fought.

Leader of Evidence: Could you like to tell the commission what was responsible for this?

Michael Conteh: I said I can't tell what they were doing. I used to take orders from the senior officers.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of reform would you like to see in the army so that things will change?

Michael Conteh: What I know is that, at any given point in time, the soldiers will respect the government in power.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What changes do you want to see in the military? Since you HAVE said that your own days in the military were not the same as it is now, should the commission ask you to make a submission; will you be prepared to do so?

Michael Conteh: I will go there and say what I know.

Comm. Bishop Humper: How many cows, or pigs, or goats did they take from you?

Michael Conteh: They took nine goats from me. However, there were other goats in that village; over two hundred.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Mr. Conteh.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Over to you Commissioner Kamara.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Right! Thank you Mr. Conteh. You have interested us in your evidence particularly after the leader of Evidence has questioned you. I hope you will permit me to just ask you a few other questions. You said that you were a Lieutenant in 1996 when you retired; when were you promoted to that rank?

Michael Conteh: If you were commissioned, you would be made a second lieutenant and, after a year, you would be automatically promoted to the rank of lieutenant. I was commissioned in 1966. I was a cadet, trained in Britain.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Alright, thank you. So you were a commissioned officer in 1967; the year of the election?

Michael Conteh: That is correct.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You were, therefore, part of the administration of the NRC.

Michael Conteh: It was not every officer that was made minister in the NRC government; people were appointed to form that government.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Mr. Conteh, you know the circumstances or, let me start by saying this. You know that you lost Black Staff House in late 1967 and early 1968...it got burnt; you can remember that now.

Michael Conteh: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Do you know the circumstances? Can you tell us?

Michael Conteh: We were on duty when we heard that Black Staff House was on fire.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Alright let me ask you the other way round. Who was occupying Black Staff House at the time?

Michael Conteh: Major Kai Samba.

Comm. Kamara: What were the stories going around at that time?

Michael Conteh: I went there to put out the fire when we were told that the house was on fire.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Yes, and what did you discover?

Michael Conteh: I saw the fire only.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Alright, thank you.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. Conteh, thank you for giving us an insight into the military during your days. From the questions we have put to you in these areas, we know that you have a lot of information to give us, and we are happy to know that you are ready to cooperate with us in this direction; and the Commission will follow up on the invitation extended to you by the chairman, for you to appear at the thematic hearings in Freetown. Our senior staff will talk to you about this, and we are hopeful that you will continue to cooperate with this Commission. Mr. Conteh, we have asked you a number of questions, and I thank you for your help; your contribution and for the clarity in which you have answered our questions. It is now your turn. If you have any questions; if you have any recommendations, you may now make them before this Commission.

Michael Conteh: I have no question, but I have recommendations to make. May there be peace in this country. As you work towards it, may we have peace and reconciliation in this country. Here am I now, I have no where to live, and I am not the only victim. I know that the government cannot replace the children we have lost. However, if we have a place to stay until death, that will be great. There are also a good number of widows and half orphans and orphans; government should consider them. That is all I have to say.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. Conteh, once again, thank you for those valuable recommendations which you have made to this commission. We, as a Commission, have a duty to this nation. At the end of our assignment, we have to forward our report to government. This report will include a number of recommendations, and this is why we are conducting this kind of exercise so that people can tell us their testimonies and also give us ideas as to how to build a better Sierra Leone. We have noted your concerns along side those of many others. When we come to write our report, we will incorporate some of these useful recommendations. Mr. Conteh, on behalf of all of us here, we thank you very much. You may now stand down.

Michael Conteh: I thank you also.

3rd Witness: Mary S. Lebbie

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Satang Jow.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mary, thank you for coming to the Commission this morning to share your experiences with us; to tell us what happened to you during the armed conflict. It takes courage to accept such an invitation. We thank you for your cooperation. We want you to feel very comfortable in our midst; we are not a court of law. We are here to consolidate the peace process and to bring reconciliation and healing to this country. So, in this context, we want you to narrate your story very carefully and clearly. You may now begin.

MARY S. LEBBIE'S TESTIMONY

At the beginning of the war, I left Njala and went to my relatives. I was with my relatives for sometime when, one morning, I saw people. They told me that the rebels had attacked Gumahun, our village, the previous day and had burnt down our house. That was the first set of rebels that entered into Njala Komborya. I hosted the people who came from our village, and we were there for sometime. A week later, they returned to Njala. After a while, my husband went to Njala and, when he returned, he confirmed that they had burnt down our house. After sometime, people came with news that the rebels had attacked Njala, burnt so many houses and killed a number of people. They people who came with the news from Njala stayed with us. My husband ran into the bush. No too long after that, another set of people came and reported that Njala had been totally destroyed. That set also joined us. We were all at Saan when the rebels got there one day. We all ran in different directions into the bush. We were in the bush when they burnt down the entire village. After the village had been burnt down and the rebels had retreated, people came out of the bush; the went spy on the village. Each household had somebody who went to spy on the village. They returned to tell us that Saan was no more. The following morning, people started pursuing the rebels with the intention to catch them. In the process, one of my brothers, Momoh, was grabbed by a rebel; we were not there because it was not possible for a woman to be there. Our brother and the rebel had a fight and, when Momoh was over powered by the rebel, made bold to cry out for help. People went to his rescue and grabbed the rebel. The rebel was brought to the village and people urged him to see what they had done; they had burnt down the village. They said that they were going to accompany the rebel; they went and came back. The men in the village who had captured the rebel told us that the number of rebels who came to destroy the village was large, but that the other rebels had retreated. They went to escort the rebel. We were in the bush when another set of rebels came. They completely burnt down the village. We went hiding in the bush until we got to Nengbema; my sister lived there with her husband, and we went with them into a bush camp. It rained for the rest of that night, and we wanted to proceed to Bo. My sister's husband went to us and advised us not to go. He told us that they had been to the stream in a bid to walk on foot, and that the rebels were there and they were throwing people into the stream. By then people were coming from Tonge, Mongere, Njala Komborya, Ngelehun Baja, Ngalu Bagbeh and there was a huge crowd of people; they were throwing people into the stream through out that night. We went back and took another route through Manguama and got to this town. We have been in Bo since then, but we go in search of food; we walk to Saan to harvest some cassava. During one of such trips, the rebels came again met us in the bush. The zone to which they went was not part of our terrain. Those who lived in that area came to us and told us that the suckling mothers who were there and were engaged in some traditional Bondo rite activities had had their heads hit on the rock, their heads smashed and they had been thrown into the stream. We ran away again and stayed in Bo permanently until the Kamajors ordered that they were going to.... [didn't complete the sentence]

When we were here in Bo, we went out to look for food at one time, and the rebels met us in the bush. The people in the nearby village told us that the rebels had thrown children into a river. When I got to Njala, I learnt that they had burnt down all the houses. The only house which we had after the rebels had burnt down the others, and which we had hoped to occupy, was looted. I did not go back to Saan because if I went there, the rebels would be my host; my brother was killed.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mary, we have carefully listened to your testimony. The Commissioners and Leader of Evidence would ask you questions, and you would be given the opportunity to ask questions and make recommendations after all.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mary, I want to join my colleague commissioners in thanking you for cooperating with us. You are one of the people who are helping this nation. I just have three questions for clarifications. What did you survive on while you were in the bush?

Mary Lebbie: We had cassava in the bush, and sometimes we would go to our swamps to collect rice.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Do you have an idea of how many people the rebels pushed in the river?

Mary Lebbie: As far as I know, in my own town, my sister, the father-in-law of my sister and the children were thrown into the river. There were other people, who were thrown into the river, but I cannot tell the exact number.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You said that they caught the rebels and the people escorted them?

Mary Lebbie: They only said that they were going to escort him; I don't know whether they did; I did not see them.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Have you children?

Mary Lebbie: Yes

Comm. Prof. Kamara: How many?

Mary Lebbie: Six children.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You had to be moving with them because occasionally you were not with your husband; is that right?

Mary Lebbie: They were with their father at the time when I was running here and there. I had had a quarrel with my husband so I went to my people. The children were at Baoma because they were attending school.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Those people that captured your brother, were they CDF, rebels or soldiers?

Mary Lebbie: I don't know; all I know is that they were in military fatigue.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You had men and officers of the army in your village?

Mary Lebbie: No.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: According to what you said in your statement, this incident took place between 1993 and 1995; what happened to you in 1995?

Mary Lebbie: All I can say is that in 1995 they burnt all the places that belonged to us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Where have you been living?

Mary Lebbie: In Bo.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Have you now been reunited with your husband?

Mary Lebbie: Yes; a very long time ago.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Are the children also reunited?

Mary Lebbie: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that some of your relatives were thrown into the river; did you witness the incident or were you told?

Mary Lebbie: I was in the bush when a sister of one of the victims came weeping and she told us that her sister had been thrown into the river.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you able to perform a fitting burial rite for those who died?

Mary Lebbie: No. After a while, when the water level reduced, we went looking for the corpses. Wherever we found one or two corpses, we buried them there.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do the villagers still use this river for domestic use?

Mary Lebbie: Some of the bodies were eaten by the fish in the river.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you very much Mary. We have asked you a lot of questions. It is now your turn to ask questions or make recommendations if you have any.

Mary Lebbie: I have no questions, but I have recommendations to make. All I can say is that most of us who are victims are very old. I crave your indulgence to ask that the government helps us.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: I want to thank you very much. However, I want to inform you that the commission cannot give assistance to individuals. What I will assure you of now is that your recommendations will be included in the report.

4th Witness: Bobor Jabatie

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Kamara.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Mr Bobor Jabatie, you are welcome to this session of the hearings. If you were here this morning, you would have observed that everybody who has given a statement here was quite relaxed. And we want to assume the same attitude in giving a very complete and truthful statement about what you experienced during the war.

BOBOR JABATIE'S TESTIMONY

I was with my father, together with other relatives including my brothers, in the house one morning, when the rebels came and surrounded the house. My father was a Kamajor, but when the rebels asked him, he said that he was not. They arrested all of us and took us away to Kpetema. When we arrived at Kpetema, the five gallon container in which we put palm oil was lit up and they asked him to sit down; he sat under the burning container as they dropped the it on him. He was punished for some while. There was the carcass of a vehicle in Kpetema village. They laid him on the ground and were pushing that carcass over him. They did that until he died. When he died, they asked to take his corpse for burial; then I was very sad and discouraged. We did not give him a fitting burial. They took away from that point unto the hills. When they took us there, they gave us husk rice to pound. After that, they took us by the Sewa. When we got there, I escaped and went to my village. This was what the rebels did to me.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. Jabatie.

Bobor Jabatie: I also thank the Commission.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: We are happy that you have given us a very up to the point statement about what you and your family experienced. The incident you narrated took place in 1996. Do you want to tell us that after that, nothing else happened to you or your family which would warrant your narrating it here?

Bobor Jabatie: By the time the statement takers went to take statement, a lot of things had happened to me, but I did not have the opportunity to narrate it all because I was in a hurry.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And you can't think of anything that you might have experienced during the war; that pertain to the war that you tell this Commission.

Bobor Jabatie: By the time they killed my father, my brothers and sisters; I am the eldest son; they were released and they returned to Kpetema where they built a hut in the bush camp. When I returned to Kpetema, I fended for all of them; I was the bread winner.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you, but let us go back to this incident in 1996. You said that you were taken from Benduma to Kpetema; the entire family. When you arrived there, how long did it take before your dad was finally killed; before they pushed this vehicle over him?

Bobor Jabatie: When they took us to Kpetema, they did a lot of bad things to us. It was on that same day that they killed my father.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: During that time, what were they doing to you; the children?

Bobor Jabatie: I was, by then, worried at heart. Actually, they did not know that he was my father so they did not do anything to us at that time. My father died on the day we were captured.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: They didn't do anything to you; what do you mean?

Bobor Jabatie: They did nothing to me, except that they took us up the hill to pound husk rice.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you. I hope you would allow other Commissioners to ask you a few questions.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: After they killed your father, how long did you stay with the rebels?

Bobor Jabatie: The rebels moved around with us. After the death of my father, I was with the rebels for approximately one week.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you describe the rebels to us; what were they like?

Bobor Jabatie: Those people, when they attacked and arrested us, together with our father, they had military fatigues and carried guns. When they captured my father, they told him "the rebels have captured you this day".

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did they, on any occasion, tell you why they were doing such things to you and your family?

Bobor Jabatie: When they captured my father that night, they accused him of being of a Kamajor.
My father was not a Kamajor, he was a Reverend.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: In your testimony, Mr. Jabatie, you also said that there were many captured people at the base where you were; who were these captured people?

Bobor Jabatie: The people who were our neighbours in the other villages.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were there young children among them?

Bobor Jabatie: I would not recall because I was under tremendous stress when I was captured.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. Jabatie, you have also told us that you joined the Kamajor in 1997; where were you based as a Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: When the rebels killed my father and we left our village and its surroundings and came to Bo, we stayed here unto 1996 when we returned to our village; Benduma. When we returned, that was when they told us to join the Kamajor so that we could defend our land.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us where the information came from that you should join the Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: The message came from the chiefs in the area.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: O.K my last question to you; who was the leader of your Kamajor group?

Bobor Jabatie: Sheku Abu.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you Mr. Jabatie.

Bobor Jabatie: I also thank the Commission.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mr. Jabatie, we want to thank you for coming today. It is painful to witness the death of your father and be unable to take him out of the hands of people. I want you to clarify a statement for me; it is here, but we want to get it from you. Why did you join the Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: I joined the Kamajors after the death of my father; my brothers, sisters and other relatives were still alive and we did not want a recurrence of what had happened to my father. We could prevent the rebels from wrecking further havocs. I joined the Kamajor in order to protect our territory and people.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mr. Jabatie, will you agree with me that, according to you, you joined the Kamajors because the soldiers failed to protect your people?

Bobor Jabatie: Where we were, soldiers did not go there to protect us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Listen! I said that you joined the Kamajor to do what the Sierra Leone Army could not do; that is to protect your people.

Bobor Jabatie: That is correct.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Will I be right to say also that it had something to do with the death of your father? Did the death of your father influence you, in any way, to join the Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: When a man dies, he is dead and gone; I had other relatives and other people to protect. So I joined the Kamajor in order to protect my territory, my people and the country as a whole.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mr. Jabatie, is your mother dead?

Bobor Jabatie: No.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did she die a natural death?

Bobor Jabatie: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you Mr. Jabatie. I will now ask the Leader of Evidence whether he has any questions for you.

Leader of Evidence: Yes Commissioner. Mr. Jabatie, I just have one or two questions for you. Where were you based as a Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: I was at Benduma.

Leader of Evidence: For how long?

Bobor Jabatie: I was there from 1997 unto the end of war.

Leader of Evidence: Did you go for any operations outside Benduma?

Bobor Jabatie: While we were at Benduma, they would arrange us into groups and sent for operations when we learnt that there were rebels somewhere. As a result, we went to a number of places including Yamandu, Gerehun, etc.

Leader of Evidence: So could you give the Commission a fair idea, apart from these two places, of the places where you had fighting with the rebels?

Bobor Jabatie: Yamandu, Gerehun and even Bo.

Leader of Evidence: In the course of those operations, how many rebels did you people capture?

Bobor Jabatie: I did not capture any rebels. When we went to battle, we were in groups; in our group, we did not capture any rebel. We chased them away. I personally neither killed nor caught any rebel.

Leader of Evidence: So what happened to the rebels you people engaged with? Did they run away or what?

Bobor Jabatie: When we went to battle, for instance at Yamandu, and actually found out that they were rebels – we had people who went on reconnaissance moves – we surrounded the town and launched an attack. They rebels would then run away.

Leader of Evidence: So do I understand you, Mr. Jabatie, as saying that there was very limited fighting between you and the rebels in the areas you operated as a Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: If you were in your village and somebody came with a gun threatening to fight and kill you, if you had the means, you would do all you could to defend yourself.

Leader of Evidence: So do I understand you as saying, Mr. Jabatie, that there was actually some fighting?

Bobor Jabatie: I was trained to fight in order to defend my country.

Leader of Evidence: I am not arguing against that at all; I just wanted to understand what happened in the course of the conflict; that's the work of the Commission.

Bobor Jabatie: Like I said earlier on, if you were a man and somebody threatened to kill you, you would definitely fight back. In the course of that, whatever happened counts not.

Leader of Evidence: So my next question would be, how many rebel prisoners did your group capture?

Bobor Jabatie: I had said earlier that, in our group, we did not capture rebels.

Leader of Evidence: They died?

Bobor Jabatie: Like I said earlier, if an evil person sets your house on fire while you are still within, should you come out and find that person, you either leave the person there or the person leaves you in the fire.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Jabatie the Commission is not evaluating whether what you did was wrong or right that is not the intention of the Commission. The question is only to understand what happened; and if there was fighting, how deep was the fighting; how ferocious, because these are the things that the Commission must bear in mind in making recommendations that it does not happen again. So what I understand you to be saying is that whether you were a

Kamajor or a rebel, nobody took hostages; before the man thinks he can kill you, you kill him first. Is that correct?

Bobor Jabatie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Then tell us what happened.

Bobor Jabatie: When we went to battle and met the rebels in town, after the exchange of firing, their brothers as well as our brothers were killed in the process. After the battle, we saw corpses.

Leader of Evidence: How long were you trained as a Kamajor?

Bobor Jabatie: Kamajor is a society; you have to be initiated.

Leader of Evidence: So, once you were initiated, you were sent to the war front?

Bobor Jabatie: It is society once you get initiated into it, you got the urge to go to battle.

Leader of Evidence: How long does an initiation process take?

Bobor Jabatie: Except one was not resident in the village where the initiation took place, but if one was resident there, it took only one night. After that, the following morning, if there was a battle somewhere around the territory, you were sent to fight.

Leader of Evidence: So do I understand you, Mr. Jabatie, to be saying that if you were, for instance, nominated by a chief, you would go for initiation for one night and the other day you were sent to the battle front?

Bobor Jabatie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And were you not taught how to use guns; how to defend yourself; how to understand the terrain in which you were; were you not taught any of those things – about how to deal with civilians who were not fighters?

Bobor Jabatie: When we were initiated, we had only single barrel guns, those were what we took to the battle front. When we got to the battle front and got guns from the enemy, upon return to the village we gave guns to our brothers who had witnessed the shooting of a gun by a soldier. One was taught to fire a gun in one day.

Leader of Evidence: Which is to say that the only thing you got taught then was how to fire a gun.

Bobor Jabatie: Yes; we started with single barrel guns.

Leader of Evidence: In all the years you were a member of the Kamajor, were there instances where some of your colleagues died; you lost some of your colleagues?

Bobor Jabatie: At one time we went to fight at Gerehun, a man called Foday died; that's what I can recall. The only way by which we realised that we had lost colleagues was when we returned to our village after battle.

Leader of Evidence: I understand that, and I can agree with that. My question is that the number of years you spent, either in your group or people you knew as

Kamajors; were there occasions that some people died in the war as a result of fighting?

Bobor Jabatie: What I saw is what I can report. In our own group, only Foday died. However, I heard of deaths from other groups, but I never saw them.

Leader of Evidence: And they were dying at the war front?

Bobor Jabatie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And What about injuries : battle front injuries : were there those that sustained battle front injuries like bullets piercing their arms or shrapnel, RPG, bullet wounds – either in your group or those that you heard of?

Bobor Jabatie: In our own town, it never happened. However, within the chiefdom, a lot of people sustained injuries. Even at Benduma, Foday, whom I spoke about just now, there was a man called Daiffi Musa who stood behind Foday when we went to battle. When Foday was shot, the bullet went through Foday and injured Daiffi; he got injured and he is still alive.

Leader of Evidence: As part of your one day initiation, were you taught anything like first aid, in case you had any injuries at the front?

Bobor Jabatie: They taught us; the leaf directed us.

Leader of Evidence: I need to understand that last part – the leaf would direct; could you explain what you mean by that?

Bobor Jabatie: As Kamajors, we had concoctions which we applied to the injuries of our colleagues at the front until we were able to take them to a medical practitioner.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Mr. Jabatie. The man that was your commander; what was his rank?

Bobor Jabatie: We had two commanders; one who would take you to the battle front – Patrol Commander; and the one who inspected you when you returned from the battle front.

Leader of Evidence: The one that sent you to the battle front; what was his rank?

Bobor Jabatie: I cannot say what his rank was; we only referred to him as Commander – we do not know English; a Kamajor does not know English.

Leader of Evidence: You don't know his rank?

Bobor Jabatie: Like the Police would refer to Corporal or a Sergeant? We did not have those ranks. There was a Commander who was in town – Town Commander; when you were going to war, after the alignment of fighters, there was somebody who led the troop to battle – Patrol Commander; that was somebody who had more charms than any other fighter that was taking part in that particular battle – he led us to the battle front. We, Kamajors, did not have many titles.

Leader of Evidence: The one that would send you to fight; he also fought with you?

Bobor Jabatie: Yes. He was the one that even emboldened us.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether he was a trained soldier; was he a member of the Sierra Leone Army?

Bobor Jabatie: He had no formal military training, he was a hunter.

Leader of Evidence: So he had no prior military experience?

Bobor Jabatie: He knew nothing about the military.

Leader of Evidence: So you only passed through the same one day initiation and you became a fighter?

Bobor Jabatie: He was a hunter.

Leader of Evidence: He hunted animals?

Bobor Jabatie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Mr. Jabatie.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you. Mr. Jabatie, you have given us so much of your time. You have told us your experiences and you have answered the questions that we have asked you. Now, I am sure, you will have something in your mind that you will one to clarify yourself. So we give you the opportunity to ask us any questions you have in mind or, if you haven't, then you can, perhaps make suggestions on the type of recommendations you would like us to make to the government.

Bobor Jabatie: I am asking that although we suffered so much during the war; in fighting for our country, we have not been considered. Since the death for my father, I have still not been able to perform a fitting burial rite. I have younger brothers who are going to school, and I need help. Please consider us; not me alone, but all those who suffered during the course of this war. Assist us so that we can support our younger ones and perform fitting burials for those whom we lost during the war. That is all I have to tell the Commission.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Mr. Jabatie, we want to thank you, and we have noted what you have just asked us to do. Indeed, there are too many things left undone, and it is going to take a very long time for those things to be taken care of. So many people have died without any proper burial and something has to be done to carry out the ceremonies that would put their souls at rest and also satisfy the sensibilities of people. We take note of what you have asked us and we shall do everything possible to get the support of people like you; the community, to do everything that should be done to appease the dead. In addition to that, the Commission, at the end of its work, will produce a report which will carry all the recommendations that will embody all that you and other people have given and have proposed. For now, we only want to tell you that you have added a little, but important piece of block, to the structure we are trying to construct. So we thank you very much for that.

Bobor Jabatie – I thank the Commission as well.

Comm. Prof. Kamara – You can step down.

5th Witness: Dauda M'bayoh

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Jow.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Dauda, you have now taken the oath, and we will like to welcome you. We thank you for accepting our invitation to appear for public hearings. We will like you to feel at ease, relax and narrate your experiences during the war. You may now start.

DAUDA MBAYOH'S TESTIMONY

I am the town chief of Dambala. One evening, as I was relaxing at home, ten soldiers came and said that I should be their host. In deed I put them up and, the following morning, breakfast was prepared for them and they partook of it. After they had had breakfast, they asked for some oranges. The oranges were picked and peeled for them. After that, I was on the piazza when one of the rebels used the back door entrance into the house to make his exit. I stepped out in the open to urinate and, while I was urinating, the other soldiers left and went up a hill where their colleagues who provided defence for us in the village were. Not too long after their departure unto the hills, I heard the sound of a truck from the direction of Mandu; it was a truck load of people. I could, however, not identify the people who were in the truck. Not too long after the truck had stopped than we heard gun sound in the air. I had a house on the precinct of the village and when one of the rebels went running after me, I went into that house. My wife and my three children were in the house. When I entered the house, I told them to get up so that we could run into the bush. I went into hiding with two of the children and the other child and my wife were left in the house. The rebels surrounded the house and set fire to it. My wife and child were shouting in the house. The other children and I scurried into hiding in the bush. While we were in the bush, the rebels set fire to the entire village. We were in the bush until the following day. I had two machines which I bought in Freetown and six boxes of my clothes in the house; they took those out and burnt them. I then stealthily returned to the village to see whether the rebels were still around so that I could see them and know exactly who they were. I did not see anybody. I saw the remains of my wife and my child and then I went back into the bush. This was what I witnessed.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you for your testimony. We have listened very carefully to your testimony and we are sorry for the loss of your wife and child. We will like to spend some more time with you for further clarifications and questions. So I now hand you over to the commissioners for questions.

Bishop Humper: Pa Dauda M'bayoh, we are very sorry for what happened to you. I am sure you must have said that out of your generosity you had to suffer in the hands of other people. I want to clarify a few points. You said that ten soldiers entered and you provided accommodation and food for them. The following morning, they left and they went into the hill. After they left that was when you saw a vehicle coming and then you heard firing. My question is did you consider those who came to be different from the soldiers who had slept in your house?

Dauda M'bayoh: They were in the same uniform. Even the ones who came in the truck were in military fatigue; it is difficult to distinguish them.

Comm. Bishop Humper: If you were to call them by name – now that you have said they had the similar outfits, what name would you call them by?

Dauda M'bayoh: I would call them rebels.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Pa Dauda M'bayoh, we are asking these questions; they are not deliberate questions. We want to know those category of people who went there; whether they were soldiers or otherwise. You said that they were in similar fatigue, but from what you are now saying, it seems to you that they were rebels.

Dauda M'bayoh: I can draw a line of distinction between them because they had similar outfits.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Finally, Pa Dauda M'bayoh, did you tell any one that those who went to you were "sobels"?

Dauda M'bayoh: Yes I said so.

Comm. Bishop Humper: All right, thank you Pa Dauda M'bayoh.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Professor Kamara.

Prof. Kamara: Mr. M'bayoh, we are very much in sympathy with you. To lose your wife and child is not a good thing and it is not an easy thing to narrate. We know you are only doing this because of the interest you have in the country; knowing that by making this presentation you will help the commission to get at the true story and to come up with the right recommendations. So we will ask you to continue to allow us ask you questions to probe this unpleasant experience. Did you say that the ten soldiers that slept in your house and whom you had just fed, left you to go up a hill where there were soldiers?

Dauda M'bayoh: They went there right away.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So you had these soldiers; what were they doing; were they to protect the village?

Dauda M'bayoh: At first they came to Dambala every day in order to protect the town.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, then these ten soldiers arrived; why did they not join the others? Why did they come to you to accommodate them?

Dauda M'bayoh: They came at night.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Yes they came at night, but they were soldiers and when they get to any place, they will join the other soldiers.

Dauda M'bayoh: When they returned late from their trips, it was usual for us to put them up.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So, they attacked that morning and you fled.

Dauda M'bayoh: Yes, that is correct.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: When you came there the following morning to investigate, were they still based on the hill?

Dauda M'bayoh: I did not concentrate on the hill.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: A few days after, you must have found out the situation in Dambala town itself; can you tell us whether – after a week, two weeks or whatever – these

soldiers continued to stay on that hill or whether they left the town and returned to wherever they came from?

Dauda M'bayoh After they had burnt down the village, they brought another set of soldiers to protect us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Fresh soldiers! What happened to those who were on the hills; they left the town?

Dauda M'bayoh: They were very alike; one could not distinguish between and among them. They were still in the town, together with the fresh set of soldiers.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Nothing happened - Because this was in 1994 - after that; were there further attacks on the town?

Dauda M'bayoh: I had left Dambala and I went very far away from Dambala after that bitter experience.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So you did not even enquire about what was happening in Dambala?

Dauda M'bayoh: I did not; I was afraid.

Prof: Where did you go?

Dauda M'bayoh: I went into the bush and built a hut there.

Comm. Jow: Through out the war; until 2002 when the war was declared over?

Dauda M'bayoh; I was still there.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, thank you.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. M'bayoh, thank you for your answers. Can I just put a few more questions to you? When these soldiers went to your village, you fed them and you accommodated them. How long did they stay before the incident?

Dauda M'bayoh: They spent only a night and the following day the village was burnt down.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you have time sit down and chat with them?

Dauda M'bayoh: Yes, it is customary that if one had guests, one would entertain them and chat with them. We had a nice chat that night and they did nothing bad to me.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you recall any of the things that they said to you?

Dauda M'bayoh: All that they were saying was that they were there to protect us.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you know any of their names?

Dauda M'bayoh: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you very much. Leader of Evidence!

Leader of Evidence: I have just one question for the witness. Could you tell us the name of your wife and the child who died?

Dauda M'bayoh: My wife was Fatu M'bayoh and my son was Joe M'bayoh.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you Leader of Evidence. Mr. M'bayoh, do you have any questions to ask the commission or do you have any recommendations to make?

Dauda M'bayoh: All I have to say is that I am old man now and cannot even fend for myself. My wife who used to fend for me is no more. I am asking for assistance.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mr. M'bayoh. once again, thank you very much for your corporation and your contribution to the work of the commission. We have noted your recommendations and, alongside other recommendations, we will incorporate them in our final report which we will start writing after the hearings are over. It will be the responsibility of government to implement these recommendations. And once they are implemented, Victims like you will benefit. However, at the end of it all, we hope to see a peaceful and prosperous Sierra Leone where violations we have heard of this morning will never happen again. We thank you very much Mr. M'bayoh. You may now stand down.

6th Witness: Sallay Goba

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

Jow: Mammy Sallay we thank for coming before the commission this morning to share your experiences with us. We welcome you heartily. We ask you to relax and narrate your experiences as clearly as you can. You may now start.

SALLAY GOBA'S TESTIMONY

My family and I were at Mattru on the rail when the soldiers went there. They told us that they had been there to protect us. We were making merry during the Christmas season when we heard gunshot from the direction of Tikonko. We left the town that night and went into the bush. I did not take anything along with me. I left my colleagues in the bush and returned close to the village; I was spying on the village. We later realised that those who came in the guise of protecting us had set fire to our village. We were frightened and we went back into the bush. We were there, horrified, when we heard continuous gun shots. We were in the bush for two weeks. When we learnt later that they invaders were to "comb the bushes", we left the bush and came to Bo town. When we were in Bo things were extremely hard, so my child and I went to fetch wood and for vegetables that we took to Bo for sale. One day, I asked my child to rest while I went to the bush alone. I had got the vegetables, placed them on the veranda desk and I was bathing in a stream in preparation to return to Bo. I never knew that they had been mutilated people on the other side of the road. When I finished having my bath, I was waiting to dry up when a group of people accosted me and asked whether I had knowledge of the presence of the enemies. One of them held my cloth and asked me to direct show him the road that lead to Wongibor. I told him that I did not know the route that led to that village. The rebel asked whether I would have lived in that town without having knowledge of the route that leads to Wongibor; he threatened to kill me. He held me by the arm and took me towards the village. He then decided against killing me and said that he was going to give me a letter that I would take to Bo. By then, my entire body had grown

numb; I was unconscious. He said that he was only waiting for the man who carried the machetes. When we arrived at a point where there was a stump of wood, he asked me to stop. When the man who carried the machetes arrived at that scene, he asked me to place my arm on the stump of wood. I pleaded with him not to amputate my arm, but he rather repeated the command that I should place my arm on the stump more robustly. I first placed my left arm which he continued to hit until the bones were almost completely broken. He then asked me to place the other arm; my right arm, on the stump. I pleaded with him that I was a woman so he should not amputate both arms. I even told him that I preferred death to double amputation. He told me that if he wanted to kill me, he would have done so long ago, and he repeated that he was going to give me a letter that I would take to Bo. He ended up amputating both arms. After the amputations, I was asked to get up and go to Bo with the message that the rebels were around; that they had gone to Towama and would get to Bo later. There was a fellow called Mba ba Ngorma; he was the one that actually perpetuated the act. I arrived in Bo with one arm chopped off and the other dangling; I carried the amputated arm in the dangling arm. When I arrived at New London, the police took off my waist cloth and wrapped my arm in it. They took me to the hospital where they completely amputated my left arm. I was at the hospital for a while undergoing medical treatment. When I was discharged from the hospital, they took us to the camp. In the camp, MSF provided food and medical facilities for us. We were at the camp for some time and they asked us to return to our houses; we did. About that time, the white workers who had been putting plans in place to assist us with, at least, artificial arms and limbs left the country without executing the plan. I current plight is deplorable; no shelter, no food. My daughter has abandoned her husband in order to stay with me in the single room where I live; she does literally everything for me. We have school going kids, yet we cannot afford to pay their fees; that's a big lump of distress that we carry in our hearts. We are neither engaged in trade nor do we have the means of starting it. I am therefore asking the government to ensure that we are provided with shelter and food. We had struck peace with the perpetrators, but they are catered for while we are left to suffer. That is the end of my testimony.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mama Sallay, thank you very much for that testimony. We have heard what has happened to you and we are very sorry. We sympathize with you in your present plight. We have no reason to doubt your testimony because the testimony speaks for itself, but we will like to ask you a few questions just to clarify a few areas and, if need be, to give us more details. So I will invite my colleague commissioners to ask you questions. Chairman, Commissioner Bishop Humper!

Comm. Bishop Humper: Mama Sallay, we want to give thanks to God for your life. I do not have much to ask you. The one important one that I want you to let us know is what were the combatants who went "combing the bush" searching for?

Sallay Goba: It was when the soldiers went "combing the bush" that we left the bush and came to Bo.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Our understanding is that they going into the bush in search of rebels.

Sallay Goba: I think they went looking for the rebels – I am not sure – but they asked us to leave the bush.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you say that the name of the rebel was did this evil act to you was "Mba ba Ngorma": "Do not blame"?

Sallay Goba: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Mama Sallay Goba, we thank you very much for coming. We are all praying to God that our children or our Children's children do not go through the trauma that

we have all gone through. In that connection, we appreciate what you are doing now and what you will continue to do by answering our questions. This story of what happened to you started by – you said, and I hope I am correct, that one day one of your children or child in the house when out to fetch wood. Is that correct?

Sallay Goba: I was the one that went to look for vegetables.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Yes, but before that you said your child went to fetch wood and you went to fetch vegetable.

Sallay Goba: I told my child to rest while I went to the village in search of vegetables; I wanted to help her.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, my interest is what happened to that child?

Sallay Goba: I left her in town here. After they had amputated my arms, when I returned to town, I told the people that I saw to tell my relatives that the rebels had killed me. My daughter and I lived at Kissy town, at my brother's. When she got the news of my amputation, she abandoned the dish she was preparing for me and went to the hospital where I had been taken.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Yes, but what happened to the family members? Are they still alive; are they with you?

Sallay Goba: My brother on whom I relied is dead.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Now, the soldiers asked you to leave the bush; do you know what they did when, perhaps, the news went out that rebels were committing these atrocities?

Sallay Goba: You mean in our village? The whole village was burnt down.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: What did the soldiers do?

Sallay Goba: We did not see any soldiers.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: But even before the rebels attacked – as you said – the soldiers scared you away.

Sallay Goba: When they came and told us that they had come to protect us, it was not too long when we heard that gun shot that threw us into disarray. When we returned to spy on the village, they were setting the houses in the village ablaze.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So, was it then the soldiers that burnt the village?

Sallay Goba: I don't know whether it was the soldiers that set fire to the houses. All I know is that the soldiers said they had come to protect us; they might have fled from the attackers, I am not sure.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And this man, who gave his name as Mba ba Ngorma, how was he dressed; was he in uniform like a soldier?

Sallay Goba: He was in combat.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you Commissioner Kamara for those questions. I have a few more questions for you Mama Sallay. In your testimony, you mentioned your son and your daughter; we will like to know whether you have any other children.

Sallay Goba: I have five grand children.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are they all living with you, currently?

Sallay Goba: They are all going to school. They do not live with me because I don't have the upper hand to take care of them; they are living with my brothers and sisters.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mama Sallay, you told us that when you left the hospital you went to a camp. Can you tell us where the camp is; is it in Bo or outside Bo?

Sallay Goba: We were at the camp that was in the compound of the water supply company on Tikonko road.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How long did you stay in the camp, Mama Sallay?

Sallay Goba: We spent nearly a year there.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What organization was taking care of you in the camp?

Sallay Goba: We were taken care of by MSF.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you Mama Sallay, final question. You have told us that you are destitute; how are you being supported - who supports you right now?

Sallay Goba: I am destitute and I depend on God. I have nothing doing. I have not got the means of even beginning petty trade.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Are you a member of the amputee association in Bo?

Sallay Goba: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do they provide any help?

Sallay Goba: We go around begging, but we have had no help from the association.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you very much. Leader of Evidence, do you have any questions?

Leader of Evidence: No questions Ma.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mama Sallay thank you very much for your corporation with the commission. Not only have you told us your story, but you also gave us time by answering all our questions. Do you have any recommendations or questions?

Sallay Goba: I will like to make a request. I am appealing for assistance; giving my current state.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Mama Sallay, the commission has a mandate and part of that mandate is to respond to the needs of victims. You are, indeed, a victim and one of the reasons we have asked you to come here is to hear from you and to ask you to make recommendations. Some amputees like you have also appeared before the commission narrated similar stories and

made recommendations to the commission. So at the end of our assignment, we will make a report and submit it to government and we hope to make very valuable recommendations which, when implemented, will definitely improve the conditions of people like you as well as ensuring a better life for those who will come after us. So Mama Sallay, once again, I will like to thank you and I will ask you to stand down.

7th Witness: Andrew Cooper

The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by commissioner Jow.

ANDREW COOPER'S TESTIMONY

On April 24th 1995 I was travelling to Freetown to buy drinks. I was representing my grandfather a distributor of drinks. We saw a pick up van going towards Masiaka. After one hour we were told to use the road as it was safe. By the time we got to Masiaka we came under heavy firing. The bullet hit me on my foot and seriously damaged it. The other passenger came down and ran away. I managed to come down from the vehicle and lay at the side of the road. Most of the people I saw were soldiers and I knew. One of the soldiers was asking the other why he fired at me and he said he was trying to fire at the tyre and the bullet hit me. Whilst all this was going on, the others were off loading the vehicle. They told me to tell all those wishing to travel not to use that road. They complained that while they were there suffering their colleagues were in town enjoying and that they too wanted to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of the NPRC. When they were off loading the loads out of my vehicle they saw my bag containing 21 Million Leones. They started arguing as to who should take the money bag and the one who shot at me said he should have the bag. They decided to burn down my vehicle but one of them said "we have shut this boy let us don't burn down his vehicle". Then one said if we don't burn down this vehicle they will say the act was done by soldiers but if we burn down the vehicle people will say it was done by rebels. As we approached the bridge when they heard the sound of a vehicle they commanded everybody to go in to the bush. By the time the van got close they launched an RPG at it. They went into the vehicle and took everything out. There was a container at the side of the vehicle which contained fuel. They sprinkled it on the passengers in the vehicle and lit them up. Two people survived. One was a pregnant woman and the other a suckling mother. There was another vehicle travelling in the same direction. By the time the vehicle was going down the hill we saw it burning. They then opened firing again and went to the vehicle. I was still lying down at the side of the road with the pregnant woman and the suckling mother and her child till the following day. On the following day at about 11:00am we saw vehicles escorted by the military. I cried out for them to come to my aid and they said I was either a rebel or bait used by the rebels. They passed on and left me still lying there. They had wanted to kill me but one driver asked why they should kill me after burning my vehicle. He packed his vehicle in the middle of the road and helped me into the vehicle. They wanted to help the two women but we were not going the same direction. When the soldiers saw me they were surprised as they were expecting me to be dead. At the Bo government hospital, a Dr. Bangura finally amputated my leg. The following day some local journalist of FM 104 and some other reporters for BBC came to see me and I narrated everything to them. The brigade commander also came to see me at the hospital and asked me this question "Did you say you were ambushed by soldiers". I said yes. I know three of them. The Commander then said even the rebels wear military combat why do you then say that your attackers were soldiers. I said I recognised my attackers and if taken to the scene were the incident took place I will be in the position to identify them. He threatened me saying I was a wounded lion. I was in the hospital until I was discharged.

In February 1998, the juntas and rebels came and drove everybody out of Bo. I could not escape because of my condition. They asked me for money. They were still dragging me even when I told them I had nothing. After that they looted everything I had on me.

One Lt. Johnson came and rescued me, he gave me back my eight battery cassette player tape. He said he did not want to see any soldier around my dwellings and they all left.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say that a military truck passed you?

Andrew Cooper: Yes. By the time we got to camp Charlie at 9:00am they said they were going to check if the road was safe.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Do you know the soldiers by name?

Andrew Cooper: No.

Comm. Bishop Humper: If you see them can you identify them?

Andrew Cooper: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you say that when they brought you to the Bo government Hospital Col. Tom Carew came to see you?

Andrew Cooper: Yes

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did he see you?

Andrew Cooper: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What did he say to you?

Andrew Cooper: He asked me "Did you say that soldiers ambushed you"? And I said 'Yes'.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Are you implying that Dr. Bangura amputated you in order to save you?

Andrew Cooper: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You have mentioned Col. Tom Carew in 1995. On this incident in 1998, was he still in Bo?

Andrew Cooper: He was not there at that time. There was one Boisy Palmer he was the Commander and one Mr. Sesay who was the Resident Minister.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Do you know where Col. Carew is now?

Andrew Cooper: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Who conducted the BBC interview here in Bo?

Andrew Cooper: The current reporter for BBC in Guinea.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What exactly did you tell him?

Andrew Cooper: I told him everything I have just said here.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: According to your statement Col. Carew asked you to withdraw your statement. Did you withdraw your statement?

Andrew Cooper: No.

Leader of Evidence: After the soldiers approached the second vehicle where did they go to?

Andrew Cooper: They went back into the bush.

Leader of Evidence: When the brigade commander came to the hospital you offered to make identification. Did he allow you?

Andrew Cooper: No.

Leader of Evidence: Were there any witnesses when the Col. came around?

Andrew Cooper: No. I was placed in a cubicle in the hospital.

Leader of Evidence: Did he tell you what measures will be taken against the soldiers?

Andrew Cooper: No. He only removed them from that position.

Jow Andrew, we have asked you a lot of questions, do you have any questions to ask us or any recommendations to make

Andrew Cooper: I have no questions.

I was telling the Regional Coordinator that we the amputees were afraid to come to the hearings for security purpose. What security measures have been put in place for amputees who show up at the hearings?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The government of this country is supporting the TRC. Therefore the commission depends on the government to provide any kind of security for anybody. Apart from security all round the country. Any witness who comes before the commission to give evidence has maximum security. You can be rest assured that within the mandate given to us we are enjoying the cooperation of the army and police. I want you to tell your brothers and sister to come to the commission without any fear.

8th Witness: Samuel Senessie.

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Pffessor Kamara administered the oath.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Mr. Senessie, you are here, as you know, to tell the commission and everybody present about what you went through in 1996. We are asking you to have no fear about what the consequences of your testimony will be. Please feel relaxed, comfortable and just tell us your story in the way you would like to tell it as long as it is complete and truthful. You may now begin.

SAMUEL SENESSIE'S TESTIMONY

We were at Benduma one morning when people attacked us. I jumped through the window into the coffee plantations. All of us – my mother, sisters and I – went into the coffee plantations. My elder brother, Braima Senessie, was at Fawoma while we were at Gboyama. While we were at

Gboyama, Braima came and requested that his wife and child go with him to Fawoma. The wife refused to go with him and rather suggested that he could go with the child if he chose. He gave his child a country cloth and they left. On their way to Fawoma, they fell into a rebel ambush at Benduma. That was where they killed Braima – they slit his stomach. The rebels took the child away. We could not bury Braima. When the threat lessened, we went into the bush camp at Fawoma. We were there, but a swampland separated us from grandfather. Our grandfather was and others were at one end and we were at the other end of the swamp. One night, we heard three gunshots. Little did we know that they had killed our grandfather and his wife – his wife was about three months' pregnant. They disembowelled her belly and took the child out. We were unable to bury them. We left the farm hut where we were and went into the bush. We lived in the bush until we found our way to Bo. WHILE IN Bo, we fetched fire wood that we sold in order to buy food. That was what we were doing until the war subsided and we returned to our village.

In addition to killing my brother and grand parents, they also destroyed the roof of our house that was used for garri processing. This is the end of my testimony.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much, Senessie. You have been cooperating and you continue to cooperate with us – we commend you. For the losses that you suffered, we sympathise with you very much. We know that the story you have told us is complete, but we need to ask you a few questions in order to clarify some aspects of it. I would like to start by asking the other members of the commission to ask you any questions that they may have.

Comm. Bishop Humber: Senessie, I have only one question for you. Is it still true that your brother's son that was taken away has not been seen?

Samuel Senessie: We still do not know his whereabouts.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Samuel, how did you know that those that attacked you were rebels?

Samuel Senessie: I know because rebels attacked us and we ran away.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us who gave you the information? You were not there.

Samuel Senessie: If people were shouting that rebels had attacked and they were running helter-skelter, would you have stood there to ask questions?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What was the status of your brother in the village – did he belong to a fighting group?

Samuel Senessie: He was the head of our household. By the time they killed him, the Kamajor initiations had not started. We were all civilians.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Currently, where is your brother's wife?

Samuel Senessie: She is still at home; she has not left the house.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Would she like to come and testify before the commission?

Samuel Senessie: They all asked me to come and testify on their behalf.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you. Senessie, I am a little confused here. These towns – Benduma and Bendema – are they different places or the same place spelt wrongly during the statement taking?

Samuel Senessie: I am resident in Benduma.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Now, you are talking about 1996. During that period – they used to send soldiers to locations in order to protect the people in the area. Did they send soldiers to protect your area?

Samuel Senessie: In Benduma, there were no soldiers.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Were soldiers ever sent there at any time during the war?

Samuel Senessie: Excepting that the soldiers passed through the town in a vehicle, they never settled there to protect us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Did Benduma contribute to the CDF in the district?

Samuel Senessie: Yes, they did, but later. After the rebels had entrapped us and killed many of our relatives, one of our brothers that was a Kamajor priest went to the chiefdom. We were asked to return to the village; he defended us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: What year was that – can you remember?

Samuel Senessie: We spent a year in Bo, and we returned to our village the following year.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: That was after the incident you are describing to us had taken place.

Samuel Senessie: Yes, that incident took place before the introduction of the Kamajor society in our town.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Were you in Benduma throughout the war?

Samuel Senessie: When they killed my brother and grand parents, my mother, other relatives and I went into the bush and we were there until we arrived in Bo.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And you stayed in Bo until the end of the war.

Samuel Senessie: Yes

Comm. Prof. Kamara: When did you go back to the village?

Samuel Senessie: I cannot remember the date. However, this is the fifth year since I returned to the village.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Was it when you returned that you found out that your home had been destroyed?

Samuel Senessie: That was when I found out because that was when I went there.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Where are you staying now, or have you rebuilt your home?

Samuel Senessie: I have built a house that is roofed with thatch and that is where I live.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right - thank you.

Leader of Evidence: I just have one question for the witness. Mr. Senessie, I just want to know the names of your grand father and his wife who you said they killed.

Samuel Senessie: My grand father was Kpana and his wife was Yema Kpana.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, Mr. Senessie, you have given us all this narrative and we have asked you all these questions – do you have any question to ask us?

Samuel Senessie: Yes, I have something to say. Our parents gave birth to two sons only, and my elder brother had been killed; my grand parents were also killed. We could not perform a fitting burial ceremony for them. I am asking the government to help us to undertake the funeral ceremonies.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, if that is all that you have, we thank you very much for your cooperation. We have noted your concern and what you would want to be done for you. However, if you were here during the testimony of the previous witness – I will like to repeat what I told him. There are a lot of things that have been left undone because of the confusion, destruction and perpetrations that took place during the conflict. We hope that before we are through, an attempt would be made to at least do those things that are necessary. I would, however, like to say that in the case of funeral ceremonies, it may not be possible to have every individual ceremony attended to. In the chiefdoms, districts or at the national level, something would be done to appease the dead and set the souls of the departed at peace. Therefore, we hope that, in time, something would be done that would set your mind at rest. We then want to thank you very much for what you have done this day and hope that you would, in time, discover the benefit it would bring to you and the nation. Thank you very much. You may now step down.

LAST DAY OF HEARINGS HELD AT THE BO TOWN HALL ON SATURDAY, MAY 5TH, 2003

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Bishop Humper - Presiding

Professor Kamara - Recording

Hajaratu Satang Jow

LEADER OF EVIDENCE

Ozonnia Ojielo

TRANSCRIBER

Emmanuel Koivaya Amara

SECRETARIES

**Donella Williams
Malorie Barinda Pratt**

1ST Witness: James Gibrilla

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Bishop Humper administered the oath.

Comm. Bishop Humper: James, we welcome you to this session here today. The commission has received well over seven thousand statements from all over the country and I will say that there was a substantial contribution from Bo district. To our greatest surprise, many would have loved to come to the public hearings, but we had to select a representative session and you now happen to be fortunate ones to come and help us and also the nation. You are before your family; you are before your people, so you must feel relaxed to say whatever you want to say before us this morning. Tell us nothing short of what you are supposed to tell us. We now invite you to give your testimony.

JAMES GIBRILLA'S TESTIMONY

At one time we were in the village when we heard that the rebels were coming towards Baoya in Njala Komborya from Borkor. We went to town at once in order to collect our belongings; little did we know that the rebels had come to the village and were in an ambush. When I got into the house and wanted to take out my belongings, I was arrested. They accused me of being a soldier. I was paraded in the village; they flogged me and meted out other types of punishment as we went round the village. I told them that I was not a soldier and they asked me to prove that I was not a soldier. I told them that the chief in that village knew me. I assured them that if the chief came and said that I had been out of that village for even two consecutive years, then their allegation that I was a soldier would be confirmed. They invited the chief whose testimony corroborated my argument; they set me free. In spite of the fact that they had flogged me, I was glad that they released me. I attempted to leave the village at once. We did not realise that the rebels were not sincere to us. On 20th September that year, they came in large numbers from Borkor and attacked Baoya in the evening. They arrested my brother, James Nabieu. The rebels accused him of dodging them in the past, and they vowed that they would not release him; they tied him. By then, I was also in their custody, but they had not done any harm to me. That night, James was beaten to death. The reason that the rebels put forward was that James had escaped twice when he was captured and asked to transport goods. They added that that was to serve as a lesson for those of us who were in their custody; that if any one escaped and he was caught, he would suffer death. They put dried palm fronds on him and burnt him as though he were a goat. After that, we collected a few items and set out to settle in Bo. My mother went towards Mongere. When she arrived at a river near Mongere, she was so terrified that in spite of the swelling, she jumped into the river. She was rescued by some men who later arrived at the scene. After she was rescued, she slept in that village. I went through Blama towards Nengbema. After the incident, my mother fell sick and died in less than one month from the time of the incident. While I was trying to escape, I was captured by the rebels again around Blama. Gabriel Gibrilla, my brother, was also abducted. I was with the rebels for eleven days at Konjo-Ngiyehun; I escaped from them. My brother could not escape and unto this day, none of us know anything about his whereabouts. His wives and children are staying with me. However, I find it difficult to take care of the children's education. My other brother, Karimu, together with whom I lived at Baoya, was killed at Kauwandor; they beheaded him and placed his head on a drum. The rebel who abducted

me and with whom I lived at Konjo-Ngiyehun was called Sergeant Yorpoi. That was what happened to me in the course of the war.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have heard this awesome experience of yours – James. I will want to ask my colleague commissioners if they have a few things for you to clarify for them. But before that, I want to ask this question so that I will set the context in which to ask questions for clarifications. In your testimony, you persistently referred to “they”; who are “they”? At some point you mentioned a name, but we want to know who “they” refer to.

James Gibrilla: I was referring to he rebels.

Comm. Bishop Humper: All right, my colleagues will now engage you.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you, Mr. Gibrilla, for coming to give us everything that you went through during the war. As the chairman said, we need to go back to you so that you can clarify some of the information you have given to us. How many times were you abducted? Because each time they caught you, you seemed to have had the ability to escape.

James Gibrilla: I was abducted twice.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Twice! Was the first one when you were at Baoya?

James Gibrilla: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And then when was the second abduction?

James Gibrilla: I was moving towards Blama with the intention of coming to Bo when I was abducted again.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Now, you also mentioned the killing of your brother; how many of your brothers were killed?

James Gibrilla: They killed two of my brothers and they abducted one; I don't know whether he is still alive.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, thank you. In what year did you escape for the last time? Was it the same year – 1994?

James Gibrilla: It was between 1995 and 1995.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: And since then, you have lived in Bo?

James Gibrilla: I was here unto 1996 and, when I heard that they were no longer around, I returned to the village; Baoya.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Between 1996 to the end of the war – when you returned – did you receive any protection in Baoya?

James Gibrilla: Yes.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Who were the people; what form of protection did you receive?

James Gibrilla: At that time, the Kamajors protected us.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: When you returned in 1996 and had this protection, was Baoya attacked again?

James Gibrilla: When they heard that the Kamajors were around they were scared and they never attacked the village again.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: All right, thank you.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you for your testimony. I will also ask a few questions for clarification purposes. In your testimony, you did say that your village was attacked by the rebels. Apart from abducting young people like you, what else did the rebels do to the town?

James Gibrilla: When they attacked on 20th September, they burnt sixteen houses; it was a fairly large village – a hamlet.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What about the second attack; was there similar looting and destruction of property?

James Gibrilla: They were setting fire to rice bands; it was during that confusion that I escaped.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: James, in your testimony, you also said that you were accused of being an SLA soldier; did you have any connections with the SLA or any other group in the village?

James Gibrilla: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that when they abducted you, they took you away; for how long did you stay with them?

James Gibrilla: I was with them for eleven days.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: How many people were in the group; people who were abducted?

James Gibrilla: Three of us were abducted from Baoya.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Apart from household chores and carrying loads for the rebels, what else did you do for them?

James Gibrilla: We pounded husk rice and leaves like cassava leaves for them; we did not cook – they cooked their food; the women.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did they train you in warfare?

James Gibrilla: No; they did not even allow us to get close to the guns.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you see them commit any other violations when you were with them?

James Gibrilla: Excepting the use of obscenities, I did not take note of any other violations.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: But for those eleven days you were with the rebels all time; were you not?

James Gibrilla: Yes, but if they saw husk rice or any other items that they wanted, they would send us to bring them to the base. In fact, it was during one of such times that I escaped.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What did you see them do during those eleven days; what were their activities around you?

James Gibrilla: Well, I saw their colleagues come from Bandahor and I also saw them communicate; they had communication sets and I always heard them say that they had messages. However, they always kept a distance and did not allow us to get close to them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Did you hear them call themselves by name or nickname?

James Gibrilla: I heard names like Sergeant, Born Trouble, and Poison.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you tell us something more about the sergeant you – Yorpoi – you mentioned in your testimony?

James Gibrilla: He gave me a hundred and twenty cups of rice to a village by the Sewa River; I did not know the village so I escaped.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Finally, Gibrilla, you mentioned three brothers in your testimony; am I right?

James Gibrilla: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: One was killed; am I right?

James Gibrilla: One of them also escaped and met me in Bo.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You said that one was abducted and he has not appeared since then

James Gibrilla: Yes.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Do you have any idea where he is?

James Gibrilla: No.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you made any effort to trace him?

James Gibrilla: I have investigated from sorcerers; they have told me that he is still alive, but I don not know his whereabouts.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: One of your brothers was tortured and released; where is he currently?

James Gibrilla: I mentioned it in my testimony that the cut off his head; we buried him.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you Gibrilla for your answers.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We will continue to clarify some more points that you mentioned. Your testimony is not long, but it is very important to the commission. Where was your mother when she tried to run away.

James Gibrilla: She was at Baoya and she was trying to escape and come to Bo so that she could move to Mandu; she fell in the river near Golahun.

Comm. Bishop Humper: You said that you spent eleven days with the rebels; is that right?

James Gibrilla: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What was the composition of you who were captured; were there women, boys or girls?

James Gibrilla: We were there with some women. They used to keep us – men – in the mosque; they locked us in.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What did they do to those women?

James Gibrilla: They were also locked up in the church; they let everybody out in the morning.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you see boys among them?

James Gibrilla: Yes there were boys among them who abducted in Makeni; they were Temne boys.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Did you experience anything happening to the girls or the women in the camp?

James Gibrilla: I did not see them do anything to them.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Now we come to the year. You said that this incident happened in 1994.

James Gibrilla: That was when the first attacked us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: And you said that the SLA was frustrating the RUF.

James Gibrilla: I spoke about the Kamajors.

Comm. Bishop Humper: They were Kamajors and not RUF?

James Gibrilla: The Kamajors were providing protection for us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: James, let us get the story straight. This is what I am saying. Did you say that the SLA soldiers accused you of being a rebel?

James Gibrilla: It was the rebels that accused me of being a soldier.

Comm. Bishop Humper: The soldiers or rebels; who were your captors?

James Gibrilla: The rebels captured me and told me that they were actually rebels.

Comm. Bishop Humper: So by this you are saying that the RUF did not want to see the soldiers; they were enemies?

James Gibrilla: That was what they were saying to us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Was there any other time, after 1994, that you discovered that something else had developed among them – in terms of relationship.

James Gibrilla: I did not witness anything like that.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you James. I will now call on the leader of evidence if he has any questions for clarification.

Leader Of Evidence: Thank you chair person. James I have just a few questions for you. Your two brothers who died; could you give me their names?

James Gibrilla: James Nabieu and Karimu Alpha.

Leader Of Evidence: What about your mother's name?

James Gibrilla: Mamidi Gibrilla.

Leader Of Evidence: Finally, this sergeant Yorpoi; do you know where he is now?

James Gibrilla: No; since I escaped from him, I have not seen him.

Leader Of Evidence: Among those rebels who arrested and tortured you, have you seen any one of them in the recent past?

James Gibrilla: No, I have not.

Leader Of Evidence: Thank you very much James. That is all, Commissioner.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you for all the clarifications you have made. Our process is to get the witness to clarify his testimony so that we will get a clear picture of what you are saying. Now it is your turn to ask questions, make recommendations or get us to clarify issues that relate to our work.

James Gibrilla: I have the children of my brother who was abducted and the children of the one who was killed. They children are going to school and I find it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to sponsor their education. I am asking for assistance in this area.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is that all?

James Gibrilla: That is all.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you, James. Part of our work is to look into some of the issues that you have raised. Our mandate does not cover dealing with individual cases. If I got you right, the issues you raised constitute two recommendations; one is educational facility for children and the second is medical services. The commission will take these and other related issues into consideration. Even while the commission is still carrying on with its work, I will like to share with the audience this vital information. It is the objective of the government to establish community health centres in every part of the country. It is my understanding that in most of the villages there is what we call cost recovery systems. I am saying this because I want you to know that such facilities exist. But please do not go to that medical centre and say the chairman of the commission has sent me here. I am saying what we should all do together in order to help this country, and I hope that we will all work together to make a better Sierra Leone. Once more, I thank you very much. You may now step down.

2ND Witness: Paramount Chief Alfred Lamboi Foray

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Bishop Humper administered the oath.

Comm. Bishop Humper: P. C Lamboi Foray we want to welcome you in a special way to this session. It will go into the records of the commission that you are the first Paramount Chief to testify at the commission's public hearings. You are opening the gate for all other Paramount Chiefs to come before this commission when deemed necessary. This commission will not complete its work without paying special attention to Paramount Chiefs - in a way. We will want to have a reasonable portion of the information that we need to come from Paramount Chiefs. We want you to know that you are a symbolic representation of all the Paramount Chiefs; you are

representing them as they listen to you this morning. We ask that you be cool and relaxed as you give your testimony. P.C we will now like to listen to your testimony.

PARAMOUNT CHIEF ALFRED LAMBOI FORAY'S TESTIMONY

Chairman of the commission, I wish to testify the truth. Since the commission has begun its work, I have not heard that a paramount chief has testified at the commission's hearings, but I manifested my desire to testify. Now I will start my testimony. By the end of 1994 and early 1995 {not sure of the exact date}, I was in my house one morning when my local militia men came to my house and told me that the rebels had attacked one of the villages – Nagbema - in my chiefdom. I had deployed my local militia, before the advent of the Kamajor movement, to keep watch in the chiefdom and inform me about any rebel threat or attack. They told me that the rebels had gone to Nagbema, captured eight {8} goats and that the rebels were preparing the goats for food by the time they left the village. In addition to that, the militia reported that the rebels had captured and tied people as they prepared their food. The rebels had further stated that they would head for Gbaima when they would have finished eating. Indeed, it happened exactly as the militia reported; they attacked Gbaima. However, before the rebels arrived at Gbaima, I had left the village and gone to the highway when I heard the news of their potential attack. I was lucky to have seen the project manager of SALCOST, Pically - he was going to Taiama; he arrived at the scene where I was by 6:30 a.m. I stopped him, went close to the vehicle and told him that I had been informed about the potential attack of the rebels on Gbaima and their plan to proceed to the quarry. I then asked him to make a u-turn so that he could take me to Bo in order that I make a report. He did as I told him, and we arrived at the Brigade Headquarters in Bo by 8.a.m. I reported to the Brigade Commander, K.E.S Boya, that the rebels were due to enter into Gbaima by 10 a.m and I requested that he gave me soldiers so that they deploy at a strategic point on the route that the rebels would use; I had been reliably informed on the route that they intended to use. Pically and I made the report. K.E.S Boya told us to wait. While we were waiting, I went to the District Officer, the Commissioner for Police and the Secretary of State, Williams, and made reports. After all, I went back to the Brigade Headquarters. Mr. Commissioner, I must tell you that this war was "a chameleon war". The soldiers were not sincere. The Brigade Commander did not assign soldiers to respond to our report until after 10.30 a.m; by then the rebels had attacked Gbaima and caused a lot of havoc; my belongings were scattered all over the place. By the time the soldiers got to Gbaima, the rebels had left. The soldiers were seated on my veranda. I realised that they had killed my personal bodyguard, Francis Musa, and five other people. When we were going to Gbaima, from Bo, the soldiers that I was travelling with and who were to forestall the rebels' attack on Gbaima, disembarked from the vehicle seven miles to Gbaima. They asked their driver to move ahead; the rebels killed the driver and burnt down the vehicle. When I asked what their disembarking was supposed to mean, especially noting the fact that the rebels might have attacked the village, their response was that I had no business asking them: "Chief, you have no hands in our work. As long as you have made the report, leave us to do things our own way - this is a rebel war and this is what we have decided to do". I could not get to Gbaima that day. Three days later, I resolved, in spite of the security threats, to go to Gbaima and see what had happened. Gbaima is the chiefdom headquarters and, besides that, I had left my wife and children there when I went to make the report in Bo. My wife and children had gone into the bush and they were in Senehun. I went there and collected my wife and children in the vehicle that was given to me by SALCOST. I then went to Gbaima where I found out the deaths that I have mentioned. I then decided to go back to Bo, get some shroud in order to bury the dead. It was on that day that they attacked SALCOST and Molendeh - I had passed through that village in the morning and there was no security upheaval. By the time I was going to Bo that same day, I realised that the village had been attacked. A man came from the bush - unto the street - when he heard the sound of the vehicle, stopped the vehicle and pointed at Molendeh. That man advised me to return to Gbaima lest I am killed. The driver made a quick u-turn and we returned to Gbaima. I told the soldiers who had been sent to protect us that the rebels had attacked Molendeh and they were heading for the

quarry and that they should get ready presently so that we could go there and stop the rebels. Talking to them was like pouring water on duck back. They had cooked the rice that they had taken from my store and the goats that they slaughtered and were eating; they did not listen to me. I did not attempt to scold them; I went towards Taiama so that I could warn any vehicle that was moving towards Bo to get back to Taiama junction where we would all converge. We passed the night in Taiama and, by 4 p.m the following day – Saturday – I saw Carew, the current Chief of Defence Staff; I think he was a Major. He brought all the vehicles that were in Taiama to Bo - in a military convoy. They burnt all my houses and properties in my hometown; I do not have a house there now. My daughter had sent sixty five thousand dollars {\$65,000} so that I could buy a house for her; they took everything including five hundred thousand Leone {Le 500,000} which was my personal money. They carted a lot of other things away. As though that was not enough, they killed my son who was a soldier; he was a lieutenant. These are the documents of my late son {presented the documents to the Commission}. I have been to the ministry repeatedly; the paper inside that file was the only thing that they gave to me. They have money to the tune of seventy five thousand, but nobody has been willing to talk to me about it. When they came to Bo, everybody fled, but since I could not, I was in my house when they went there; two of them. They enquired who I was, and I told them that I was a watchman. They said “your bloody fool, watchman; you get dollar” and I said that I did not understand what they were saying. When they insulted me, I thanked them because I wanted to prove to them that I did not understand what they were saying. They damaged two of the doors on the house at the back of my compound; I was seated on the veranda desk. They went into the house, brought out two pairs of jeans and they asked me to take into my room, but I told them that I was a watchman. They would ask me to open a door and when I did and they entered, I would say “watchman sir” and they would say “fuck off”. They took a radio from one of the rooms, but when they realised that it was not good, they threw it at me and abused me. As they were going, they fired a shot and I thought that they had shot at the house because the sound was too heavy. I went out and maintained an expression of despondence on my face; I made sure that they saw me. They insulted me and promised that they would not harm; they returned to me and bade me farewell. I made bold to tell them that I had gone for two days without food and that I was hungry; they took out a five hundred Leone note and threw it at me. That was what happened to me during the war. I had a hundred and fifty cows and they killed of them; I had forty-five goats and seventy sheep in Gbaima town; the soldiers ate all. They took away all my personal effects. They turned my chieftom up side down; they killed many people there. Three chiefs ran into the bush and, unto this day, we do not know their whereabouts. There is not a village where they did not burn a house. That is our trouble in Gboo chieftom.

Comm. Bishop Humper: paramount Chief Lamboi Foray, we share your grief, loss and suffering. As chairman of the commission and you being the first Paramount Chief to testify before this commission, I will start by asking a question for clarification and then ask my colleagues to do the same; I may come to you later. Chief, we want you to clarify the expression - that critical and crucial – “this war was a chameleon war”. What does it mean? I am asking you this question because my understanding of a chameleon is that it changes colour with the environment it finds itself. Now, chief, what are you trying to tell us; please educate us.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: When I said that this war was a chameleon war, there were soldiers who were supposed to be protecting this nation, yet they were rebels. They would kill any soldier who prosecuted the war honestly and sincerely in the interest of the nation. My son is an example. I am, myself, an old soldier; I went to Burma. The war we fought was different from the war that we have just experienced. They told us that we should report every security issue to them; I was at the brigade headquarters for over five hours before they could release soldiers to go with. That was why I said “this was a chameleon war”.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you chief; I will now have my colleagues to engage you for the moment.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much, chief. You are the first to have come out very frankly and definitely to give us an opinion on the relationship between the military and the people they were meant to protect. When you used the expression “not honest”, I was going to ask you to give an example of dishonesty among soldiers. However, you have now explained by using what I consider a stronger word; that they were chameleonic – they were changeable. In one case, they were soldiers and in another case, they were rebels and no wonder that people in this country were saying “sobels”. So chief you have a very strong conviction that those soldiers that went after your report to protect Gbaima were the people who were destroying the place.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: They changed completely. In fact, they were the ones that were looting our property and bringing them to Bo. They even built stores; Williams, the Secretary of State, had a separate store where his own shares of looted items were kept.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: For how long did they stay in Gbaima?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: They were there for some time; I left them there. When my daughter heard that they had attacked and, in fact, killed me, she spoke to the police and they went to tell me that my daughter wanted to talk to me. My daughter sent a ticket for me to go abroad; I did not return to this country until June 1st. I met soldiers in the town; a different set of soldiers. They were there for about two years.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So when you went back, you were again forced to leave – is that correct? The time you went through Taiama to go to Freetown.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: When I returned, they had burnt down my house and I did not have a place to sleep in Gbaima, so I only visit the town from Bo.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: So it was not because the military had returned to Gbaima?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: I had left Gbaima since I came to report the potential rebel attack on the town; the soldiers that were sent to the town were worse than rebels because they looted our property. I only went there to see how things were going.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Chief, are you saying that when the rebels left Gbaima, the rebels took their place.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: what I want to tell the commission is that on the day the rebels attacked and destroyed Gbaima and took away a lot of women whom they used as sex slaves in the bush, that was the same day that I came to ask for soldiers to defend Gbaima.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Yes, but after that, the soldiers went and occupied Gbaima and also destroyed, looted and caused a lot of damage; then they left. Did the rebels come back after that?

Comm. Prof. Kamara: The rebels went there intermittently; if they were moving towards Bo, from Freetown, they would stop at Gbaima and cause a few havocs and the same thing happened if they were moving towards Freetown or Makeni, from Bo. Gbaima is on the main road.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Tell us what happened at Taiama. You got to Taiama and found Carew, Major Carew at that time. Was he the one who helped you to get a transport to go to Freetown?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Carew was resident in Koribondo. He led a convoy of vehicles that went to Freetown. When he went on that day, he arrived at Taiama junction by 4 p.m and brought the vehicles at Taiama junction in a convoy to Bo.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Now again, I want you to clarify the statement you made about your son. Your son, you said, was killed; who killed him?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The soldiers killed him in Pujehun.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: You are saying that they killed him because he was not treacherous; he was trying to be a sincere soldier?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Exactly.

Comm. Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much.

Jow; Paramount chief, I join the other commissioners in welcoming you here, and I thank you for coming to speak on behalf of your chieftom and, in fact, the whole nation. I will just ask a few questions. In your opinion, chief, who did more damage during the war? Was it the rebels or the soldiers?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: They caused equal percentage of harm.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You did mention in your testimony that when you were coming you saw a number of corpses among which was your personal guard, Foday Musa. Who was responsible for killing those people?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The soldiers were not there; the wee killed by the rebels that attacked the town; nine of them – three females and six males. They were buried by the soldiers in a mass grave; three to a grave.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: You have told us also that your son was a plateau commander in Pujehun; did he die in Pujehun?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: They killed him in Pujehun.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: We know that you were not present, but do you know how he was killed?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: He was in a vehicle together with his men and they went on inspection; the soldiers they met killed all four of them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Can you clarify this further? Were they killed by other soldiers or by rebels?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Soldiers killed them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Were you able to recover his body for fitting burial?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: They brought his corpse to the mortuary in Bo and they sent to call me in Gbaima. I came to Bo and requested that Brigadier Gottor, the Force Commander, give me his corpse so that I could bury him. Brigadier Gottor refuse to give me the corpse; he said that my son was a hero and therefore they buried him at the war grave.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Have you visited the site since his burial?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: I was there when they buried him.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: The other thing I will like to know, chief, is the state of recovery in your chieftom. There was a lot of destruction, a lot of looting; what has been the state of recovery in your chieftom? Have people been able to reconstruct their houses and get on with life?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The war has ended and we have been asked to return to our villages. Those whose houses were burnt have constructed huts. Nothing has been done; there is hunger and other problems, no money and no NGO have been there to help us. Before the war every important personality that passed through Gbaima would enter into the town on sight seeing, if I invite you to Gbaima now – I invited the president - you will realise the height of the destruction that they caused to it.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Paramount Chief, do you believe in reconciliation?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: What about the people in your chieftom, are they ready to reconcile – have they started doing it? Are people ready to forgive?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The government is like an umbrella; it covers all of us. We do not know that caused the destruction in our chieftom, but if we see them, we will embrace them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you very much, chief.

Comm. Bishop Humber: Paramount chief, we want to continue to thank you for your resilience, courage and your acute perception of events and accurate recording of same. As I said earlier, you are the first paramount chief to come to this commission and you are going to be the first paramount chief to open the doorway for others to follow suit. Chief I want to ask this question for information. Have you been attending the sessions since we started on Tuesday?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: well, not all.

Comm. Bishop Humber: Paramount chief, do you know anybody by the name of Sheku Macauley, from Gbaima?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes, I was here when he testified at one of your sessions.

Comm. Bishop Humber: And did you listen to him carefully?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: I was very perturbed when I listened to his testimony that day; I did not expect to have said all what he said given the fact that he is a section chief.

Comm. Bishop Humber: I am asking this question for information. Were you here when he was testifying?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humber: And you heard what he said?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humber: That is all we want to know at this moment. The next point is that you came here to the brigade when the rebels attacked you; what year was that?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Between 1994 and 1995.

Comm. Bishop Humber: It means that those who were here as secretary of state and provincial secretary have their names in the records, is that so?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much. That was what I wanted you to clarify for us. Chief, when do you think that SLA and rebels became comrades in arm?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: 1994.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much. Chief, by mentioning Major Carew's name, are you, by that reference, inferring that, in fact, Major Carew would know the soldiers that were stationed this area at that time, or he would have knowledge of some of them and would know them by name.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The names I have mentioned are the ones of those that were in high offices and with whom I used to meet.

Comm. Bishop Humper: All right, let me ask you another question for clarification. The Major Carew you are talking about – is he still around?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: He is the Chief of Defence Staff.

Comm. Bishop Humper: All right, thank you very much, chief. He should know the soldiers that were deployed in in this area. Do you think that he has knowledge of those people?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: K.E.S Boya, Carew – Carew was in Koribondo and he used to come to Bo in order to help K.E.S Boya. Those two names that I have mentioned would know the soldiers that were deployed here.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, chief.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: And Williams, former secretary of state.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Would you like us to bring them together so that you could come together?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Do you know some of your colleague Paramount Chiefs that have similar experiences? Have you heard of them or have they told you some of their stories?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: If it is the desire of each and everyone to sincerely have peace in this country, I do not believe that there is a chief – excepting those that died – that did not suffer in one way or the other.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, chief. What we want to know is whether there are one or two of your colleague Paramount Chiefs that had shared their ordeals with you, or with who you have shared your ordeal.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: I shared my ordeal with our late Honourable Paramount Chief J.K. Boima.

Comm. Bishop Humper: O.K., ha is dead, but did you tell any other person, even if in passing?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: No, I discussed it with no other chief.

Comm. Bishop Humper: All right, thank you very much. Leader of Evidence!

Leader of Evidence: I wish to clarify your testimony if you do not mind. You told the commission that those soldiers that went to Gbaima ate all your animals and the food you had. Did they pay for them?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: No, I was not there and they grabbed everything.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have the opportunity of complaining to somebody in higher authority, like when Major Carew gave you a ride?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: When the rebels were at Mongere, I asked SALCOST for a vehicle in which I packed all the things that I cherished. The soldiers stopped the vehicle at the brigade headquarters and asked the driver to return with the items to Gbaima. This happened at a time when I was in town to make a report to the Provincial Secretary. When the soldiers went to Gbaima, they looted all my property.

Leader of Evidence: Let me understand this, chief. You took a vehicle, went to Gbaima, got your most important properties and brought them to the brigade headquarters.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes, that was before the attack on Gbaima.

Leader of Evidence: Yes - before the rebels attacked. Right there at brigade headquarters they sent the vehicle back. Who was driving the vehicle?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: SALCOST gave me a driver.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you. So the soldiers sent the vehicle back to Gbaima.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Back to Gbaima!

Leader of Evidence: When, at that point, it was obvious that there would be nobody to protect that property?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes. They met the window open and they threw the properties into my house. At the end, they were afraid of a lieutenant whose name I cannot recall. The lieutenant had driven with me so that I could show him the direction from which the rebels went into the town. That was what they did for me.

Leader of Evidence: If I heard you right, sir, you are saying that this was before K.E.S Boya and Captain Kamara.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Captain Kamara was the ringleader; he sent the vehicle back.

Leader of Evidence: So, a senior officer of the Sierra Leone Army, when you brought your property, directed that your property be returned to your village, which was unprotected.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: In fact, he accused me of having knowledge about the war. That was even more reason why he ordered the return of my property.

Leader of Evidence: If I understand you well, a senior officer of the army was accusing you, a paramount chief, of being a rebel.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: He said that I had knowledge about the war.

Leader of Evidence: Because you brought your property for safe keeping in Bo?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes, because I brought my property for safe keeping in Bo.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where this Captain Kamara is now?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: He was part of that group – a group had left.

Leader of Evidence: Do you also know where K.E.S Boya is now?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: K.E.S Boya is in Freetown.

Leader of Evidence: Is he still in the army?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes, in fact, he holds a bigger position in the army.

Leader of Evidence: He is currently a big man in the army.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes – if he were here, I would tell him to his face.

Leader of Evidence: Do you also know where Mr. Williams is now?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: I do not know, but I learnt that he is alive and that he also holds a big office in the army.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Williams is still in the army.

P.C; Yes

Leader of Evidence: So, some of the most important people that you identified - Major Carew, K.E.S Boya and Williams – are still in the military.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes

Leader of Evidence: When it became clear to you that the soldiers, according to your testimony, were responsible for the looting and destructions in your community – Gbaima, did you have access to an alternative protection mechanism?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: What they did was to make me a witness so that I could testify against the soldiers that were attacking Molendeh and the quarry. They, however, told neither the Provincial Secretary nor the Honourable Member of Parliament – the Paramount Chief. I went and informed them about it lest they went with me and killed me.

Leader of Evidence: Can I understand this right, sir – who asked you to go and give evidence about what happened?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: K.E.S Boya.

Leader of Evidence: He asked you to go to Freetown, to Army headquarters, and give evidence about what happened.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes, he did. That was after I had reported to the soldiers in Gbaima that the quarry and the village were attacked.

Leader of Evidence: Sorry, chief, if I am being a little bit persistent, I just want to understand. You complained formally to K.E.S Boya.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Did he set up a disciplinary enquiry or an investigation?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: They referred all of us to Freetown.

Leader of Evidence: Meanwhile, K.E.S Boya was the brigade commander in BO, but he referred you to Freetown.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Did he tell you who to report to when you got to Freetown?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: We went to the Chief Provo - the colonel of army police.

Leader of Evidence: But, according to your testimony, you were already afraid that if you could not deal with it in Bo, may be on the way to Freetown they will kill you.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Any way, they were officially right that I should to Freetown and give evidence. We appeared before the colonel of army police and he told me that I should report the following day, but I went there, he said that the man had already admitted. There was therefore no need for me to give evidence; he said that I should return to Bo.

Leader of Evidence: I need to understand this very well Sir. The matter was taken up formally with Freetown, and they sent you an invitation through the SDO so that you could go and give evidence. You went to Freetown, appeared before a colonel, and he said that you should come back the following day. Then when you came back the following day, whom did you meet again?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The same colonel told me that the man who had been accused, arrested and brought from Bo had admitted everything about the attack on he village and he quarry. He also admitted that he ate some of my livestock. The colonel then said that I should return to Bo.

Leader of Evidence: Can you recall this colonel's name?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: No, I cannot, but if I see him, I will recognise him.

Leader of Evidence: This colonel told you that the man who was responsible for stealing in you house and destroying your community had admitted.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Including the fact that they failed to prevent the rebels from attacking Molendeh and the quarry.

Leader of Evidence: So there was no reason for you to give evidence any more; you should return home?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: That was what I was told.

Leader of Evidence: Did this colonel tell you that they had recovered some of the property the man stole from you?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Property?

Leader of Evidence: Yes

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: [LOL] The man was in Freetown; K.E.S Boya who was here did not tell me anything about that, and you are asking about my property. All my country clothes

that my father had left as legacy for me together with what I had made in thirty years when I worked at the Ministry of Works as a Senior Superintendent in the east.

Leader of Evidence: Did this colonel tell you that they had meted out punishment to this man who had confessed to be responsible for the destructions and looting?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: No Sir. He only told me that the man had admitted.

Leader of Evidence: So to your knowledge, up to this time, the man had not been punished?

P.C; I don't know whether they punished him or not.

Leader of Evidence: Was there an apology from the army to you - either in Freetown or in Bo?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: No apology.

Leader of Evidence: All the simply said was that you should go home, that the man had admitted.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Since the soldiers were at Gbaima for two years and they kept on looting and wrecking other havocs, how did the people of Gbaima protect themselves?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: That is what I was telling you about. After the looting and all, I had no place to stay so my daughter sent a ticket for me to travel abroad. When I came from America on June 1st, and the road to the provinces was blocked, I stayed in Freetown until sometime in December when government told us that we should stay in the district headquarter towns if our villages were still unsecured. Since then, I have been in Bo.

Leader of Evidence: I know that you left for abroad and then stayed on in Freetown and, finally, in Bo, but what about the people who were staying at Gbaima? To your knowledge, they were at the mercy of the soldiers and the rebels.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The lieutenant that I met at Gbaima; Lieutenant Turay, treated me hospitably when I went back to Gbaima. This lieutenant was in charge of security at Gbaima; but I don't know what happened in my absence. However, when I returned to Gbaima, I realized that more houses had been burnt down.

Leader of Evidence: Now, let me ask you this chief; it is actually an opinion. In your opinion, why did the army behave the way they did; why did they steal your property, why did they destroy your town?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Well, they wanted to enrich themselves overnight; they did not have the requisite training as soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: So what you are saying is that part of the problems in the military during the war was that there was corruption...

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Definitely!

Leader of Evidence: And secondly, they had very little training.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Exactly!

Leader of Evidence: Were there other problems that you can identify that affected the performance of the military during the war?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Another problem was that there was no head; even a non commissioned officer cannot listen to his senior officer. That was my observation.

Leader of Evidence: So there was no discipline in the army?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: No discipline!

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that these problems are still continuing?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: As an ex-service man, I am keenly observing, but I have not noticed that lately.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of reform would you like to see in the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces? What needs to change?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Firstly, all the senior officers who are currently in the army should go on retirement and let there be soldiers that are trained by the British government. If the old hands in the army continue to stay on, the army will still remain corrupt.

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that this issue of corruption is as a result of poor pay or may there be other reasons for the corruption in the army?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The soldiers are well paid now; during our days in the army, we were paid a shilling per day. Soldiers now receive a handsome salary, but I observe that people want to be enriched overnight.

Leader of Evidence: This issue you see in the army, do you also see it in the rest of society as a government issue – like anybody who occupies an important position in government?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: That is the worse; those who hold high as well as other offices are corrupt. This is found even in the civil service.

Leader of Evidence: So would you like to give the commission some suggestions about what needs to change?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: My suggestion is that people should be recruited and trained so that all those senior officers and officials will be retired.

Leader of Evidence: Can I ask one last question on Koribondo; would have any idea what happened in Koribondo – who was responsible for the destruction? There was an SLA detachment in Koribondo.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Well, that is not my chiefdom, I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Paramount Chief. That is all, Commissioner.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Paramount Chief, in the Sierra Leonean context and, as far as we are concerned, you are one of the greatest men in the country. We have asked you questions, now it is your turn to ask questions that relate to our work or to make recommendations.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: The Commissioners and staff of the commission have asked me many questions on the issue of the soldiers, Kamajors and all. What I want to understand is

this: why is that the government continues to give support to the rebels who had perpetuated so much harm and we that have suffered are left uncared for?

Comm. Bishop Humper: Paramount chief that is a very important question. We try as much as possible to put people in different categories, at least for the sake of convenience. You are not the only one that is very much apprehensive and aggrieved that perpetrators are being pampered while the victims go on suffering. This is the thinking of the commission. At the Lome peace agreement, we said that we wanted peace and that is what we are still pursuing; to ensure that there is peace in the country. The international community that support this country put a mechanism in place to ensure that the most immediate issue – the need for the perpetrators to be disarmed, demobilized and reintegrated – be addressed. In other words, take the guns from these people and get them in an environment that will prevent a recurrence of the war. That is why the international community and government paid and continue to pay attention to those who did wrong – the perpetrators. This commission was established to pay specific attention to victims like you. Article 29 of the Lome Peace Agreement stipulates that there should be a war victim's fund. That fund is supposed to be established by the government with the help of the international community, and this commission is mandated to pursue the establishment of that fund. That is why we ask people who give testimonies to make recommendations so that those recommendations will be incorporated in the report that we shall have to present to government. I do hope that this explains the reason why government is doing that – to maintain peace and tranquillity so that we will prepare ourselves to concentrate on the victims of the war. The government and the international community will not forget about the horrors that the victims have gone through during the war. We are committed to making such recommendations as to address the needs of the victims in this country.

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: I thank you. We are the leaders of our people and they sometimes ask us these questions, which can be difficult to answer. However, I appreciate that you have taken your time to explain and it is good that they are also listening to the session. My message to the government is that there is no part in this country where the soldiers and the rebels did not wreck havoc; the abducted wives and other women whom they sexually abused with impunity; they looted people's properties and prevented the owners of such properties from protesting. My message to the government is generally on behalf of the country and particularly on behalf of Bo district. There is no village where they did not enter; for instance, they destroyed every section, town and village in Bumpeh excepting Taninahun; there was a time when the soldiers turned this town into a ghost town – they were looting houses and forcing people to carry the looted items.

Comm. Bishop Humper: What is your recommendation to government in this regard?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: In consideration of the truth that the commission stands for and the integrity it has, I am asking you to tell the government to ensure that every victim be compensated somehow so that there will be absolute peace in this country.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is that all?

Paramount Chief Lamboi Foray: Yes

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, chief. We will take all of these into consideration when we put our report together for the government and the international community. However, I will say, here and now, that our mandate does not include compensation to individuals, but I believe that the government and the international community have something in store for victims although we cannot say now what it is. Perhaps, some day, not too long, some one from overseas will come and ask that he/she visits your place in order to see the height of the destruction that was done to it and to help. We want to thank you at this moment and to give you the assignment of reaching out to your colleague Paramount Chiefs and tell them that the commission will like to hear from them as well. We thank you very much. Thank you.

3rd Witness: Bana Smith

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Bishop Humper administered the oath.

Comm. Bishop Humper: On behalf of the commission and the audience here present, I will want to welcome, Brother Smith. I will say this to you, those who have testified to this commission and those who will testify that your names will go down into the history of our country as being men and women who have played pivotal roles in the achievement and sustainability of peace in our country. Your honest testimonies will be crucial to the commission's work of precisely determining what went wrong in this country, and what all of us – survivors – will do to prevent the recurrence of such sufferings in this country. So to us, today, you are a VIP. We encourage you to remain calm in the process; you are assured of all the protection that you need and the commission will graciously ask you to give your testimony.

BANA SMITH'S TESTIMONY

I wish to give a faithful testimony of what we went through in the course of the war. Firstly, I must say that I am Bana Smith. I was born at Yanihun village, Wonde Chiefdom in Bo district. I will begin my testimony with the activities of the soldiers. Most of what we suffered was in the hands of the soldiers of the 14th Battalion in Koribondo. When the war broke out in this country, Major Mansaray was the first Battalion commander that was sent there. When he went there, he paid a courtesy call to the Paramount Chiefs and told them that he would like to deploy soldiers in areas within the chiefdoms. The Paramount chiefs gave their approval for the deployment of soldiers in the chiefdoms. We gave the soldiers a treatment that befits strangers; we gave them food and many more. When Mr. Freeman went to that part of the country, he and Major Mansaray worked together amicably. They pursued the Burkinabe rebels beyond Pujehun district. After that, Major Samura replaced Major Mansaray as Brigade commander in Koribondo. When Major Samura took over the command of the battalion in Koribondo, we realized that no matter what we did for the soldiers, they would never be happy if there was no war. I witnessed the period during which they trained our brothers, sons and other relatives in Koribondo to enter into the army. Whenever they completed training a set of our relatives in order to prosecute the war, they would disappear after about a month. Little did we know that they were going into the bush and were becoming rebels with the aim of returning to loot our towns and villages. After the rebels looted Ngagwehun Ngiiyela, we decided to pick up the guns that were owned by our grandfathers. The soldiers from Koribondo went to Ngagwehun Ngiiyela and took those guns from us. About two days after that incident, over fifty inhabitants of Ngagwehun Ngiiyela were killed. We all fled from that part of the country. We did not understand the intricacies of the conflict and we returned to our villages almost immediately. When we returned, Major Samura and a Lieutenant taxed us to take care of their needs. We later learnt that they had stored the looted items in a building of DEC school at Bathurst. Whenever the Sierra Leone Army soldiers attempted to transport the looted items to Koribondo, they were ambushed by ULIMO. In the same way, whenever ULIMO attempted to transport the looted items, they were ambushed by the SLA soldiers. There was an attack that left some of the ULIMO and SLA fighters running into the woods; some were not conversant with the terrain. One of them found himself in our village. Since we knew that rebels wore combat fatigue and, most of them, did not carry guns, the local hunters in our village dealt with him; they left him in the bush. After that incident, the local hunters took some representative items to the Brigade in Koribondo.

When we arrived with the items, Lieutenant Kamara commended us. However, the eye carries not a load, but it can determine its weight. When the items were taken to the MP office, they examined them closely. The soldiers at the MP office did not know that we understood Krio; they were saying, in Krio, that the items were similar to those of one of their colleagues. Two days after we returned to our village, the soldiers attacked the village; they looted houses and killed many people. It was during the command of Major Samura that residents in parts of Pujehun and Bo districts were displaced. Afterwards, it dawned on us that we had been actually displaced.

While we were here, we got a lot of information as regards the atrocities that were being committed against our people back in the villages; some were amputated. One did not see any rebel; all one saw were people who wore the same outfits as soldiers of the SLA – the ‘rebel’ in the bush wore military fatigues. During the 1996 general elections, some of us were in Koribondo where we voted. By the grace of God, the SLPP won the elections. Not too long after the elections, we saw groups of men referred to as Kamajors – come to Koribondo. They chased the rebels away from Merlin into Bonthe. I was resident at a junction called Bathurst; that was where the Kamajors stopped chasing the rebels.

Major Allieu was in command at Koribondo then. He dispatched his men to go and determine what was happening at the junction. After their encounter with the Kamajors, rebels never attacked Merlin or its surrounding villages again. The rebels were only present in our chiefdom – Wonde chiefdom – and areas in Small Bo chiefdom. All the Paramount chiefs in Bo district came together under the leadership of late Paramount chief Lagbenor of Njala Komborya in order to embark on initiations into the Kamajor society. The initiation drive was taken in a bid to ensure that people return to their towns and villages. Four chiefdoms from the Kpaa Mende land joined five of our chiefdoms on this other side to undertake the initiation drive. Nine chiefdoms sent representatives and we were initiated by Kamoh Sheriff at Bobor Kombor in Bo. After our initiation into the Kamajor society during the raining season in 1996, we wanted to go to our chiefdom but we had no clearance from our chief. It reached a time when we were fed up. We went to the Paramount chief and told him that in spite of the risk involved, we were ready to return home. If my memory serves me right, Kamajors from our chiefdom were the first to liberate their chiefdom without the aid of an initiator. When we got the permission of the paramount chief, we split into two groups; one went through Koribondo and the other went through Blama. We met Major Kamara in Koribondo and briefed him on our resolve to liberate our chiefdom from the rebels. If my memory serves me right, it took us only three days to throw the rebels out of Wonde chiefdom. We repelled them to as far as Lamblama and Nyawa. Not too long after we had repelled the rebels, rebel soldiers attacked us. Those who attacked us at Wonde kambowa cannot forget about what we did to them in a hurry. Those who came out safe returned to their colleagues with news that a stronger force was needed to throw us – Kamajors – out of Wonde. They got troops from Tongo, Kenema and Daru, among other places, to attack us. At the time of the attack, we had come to see our relatives in the camps in Bo. The soldiers of the 14th Battalion in Koribondo then told their colleagues that there was a Kamajor initiation on course at Telu Bongor so they should launch their attack there instead. All of them went and attacked Telu; Telu was inhabited by only the Kamajors. What happened during the encounter is in records. Afterwards, we realised that the entire Bo district or even the entire Southern province was relatively safe. We were taken to battlefronts in Kenema and Kailahun district. We returned home when we completed our assignments. The soldiers took over the reigns of government on the day we were commemorating the death of Paramount chief Mojjueh of Fouta Kpejeh. We were all confused and did not know what to do. Before the soldiers took over the reigns of government, we were not friends. We were confined to our villages; if one went to Koribondo and one was identified as a Kamajor, one was instantly killed. At that time, Major Keita was in command of the Brigade in Koribondo. We, Kamajors, resolved to reverse the coup. Now and again, Major Keita sent his soldiers to attack villages around Koribondo; the soldiers looted and killed during such attacks. There was a time when the soldiers in Koribondo asked the rebels who were in Bo to join them.

Major Keita took rebels to Koribondo. The rebel commander in Koribondo was Corporal Amara. While Corporal Amara was in Koribondo, we had no respite in Njama Bongor, Tikonko, Merlin Bagbor, Wonde and Sowa chiefdoms. A combined force of rebels and soldiers were always afoot to attack us. During the nine months of junta rule, Major Keita gave us no breathing space in that area; they wrecked a lot of havoc in our area. They completely looted and burnt down Yanihun, Gaula, Bathurst and other villages in that area using their attacks of Kamajors as subterfuge. We thank God that we were not killed on that day. However, they looted all our properties and took them to Koribondo. At that time, we returned to our initiators who initiated us into the Kamajor society and gave a report on the situation. We told them that we had neither arms nor ammunitions. We resolved that we would reverse the coup against the democratically elected SLPP government; a government we, as well as the soldiers, voted for. We left our chiefdoms. In fact, there was news in Koribondo that I, Bana, had gone into hiding. We moved to Bonthe district where we were sure of getting some supply of ammunitions. In the course of our stay in Bonthe district, Major Keita sent three hundred and fifty soldiers to be based at Bandajuma sowa; our people had no respite and they were sleeping in the bush. When we came back, we arrived at Fobu on a Sunday. The following day, Monday, we rested while we prepared for a battle against the soldiers at Bandajuma sowa. On Tuesday, we burnt their Anti Aircraft (AA) gun and drove them out of Bandajuma. Since then, no soldier or rebel went towards Pujehun - for about a week, no soldier went towards that direction for the simple reason that we had burnt three AA gun. Owing to the treatment meted out to us by Major, our resolved was strengthened and, a week later, we attacked Koribondo. By God's grace, we drove the rebels and soldiers out of Koribondo. These are some of what the rebels and soldiers did to us in Wonde and other chiefdoms. Wonde chiefdom has been safe since then. We lost our Paramount Chief, but we thank God that we were able perform the burial rites fittingly. The government then appointed our brother, Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh, regent chief. However, we had some of our brothers, the Daboh's, who were opposed to Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh's appointment. Their opposition to the appointment of Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh supposed a challenge to the authority of the government. Everyone knew what Wonde chiefdom used to be. There was a split over the appointment of Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh as regent chief. The Daboh's were opposed to it while we were in support of it. Those who were appointed were presented to the Resident Minister, South – Foday Sesay – and it was in the local radio news. We resolved that as long as the Daboh's would not accept Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh as regent chief, we would be opposed to anyone who had their support for the position. After that, the Daboh's came to the SDO, Vandii, and invited Kosseh Hindowa who was the coordinator of the Kamajors in Bo district. In that meeting, the Daboh's argued that the position of regent chief in Wonde chiefdom – considering the preponderance of the Kamajors – could best be handled by a Kamajor. That was a ploy to have Kosseh Hindowa as regent chief. The intention of the Daboh's was to have Kosseh Hindowa so that he could silent the Kamajors in the chiefdom on the issue of paramount chieftaincy. When they presented the matter to Kosseh Hindowa, he said that he would first consult with chiefdom supervisor and the Battalion commander, Joe Timinde. I was then the chiefdom supervisor of the Kamajors. Kosseh Hindowa sent for us – Joe Timinde and me. When we got to his office, Kosseh Hindowa told us that the Daboh's had asked him to take the position of regent chief in Wonde chiefdom. When I asked whether that was why he summoned us, Kosseh Hindowa answered affirmatively. I then asked him a simple traditional question, "when a paramount chief dies, who takes decision on the issue of a regent chief – the people of the chiefdom or government?". He agreed that it is the government's responsibility to appoint a regent chief. I then told him that we had a regent chief, Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh. I told Kosseh Hindowa that the Daboh's were our brothers, but if they had rejected our brother, Mualemu Mustapha Sannoh, who had been appointed by government to fill the position of regent chief, their like will forever be our dislike. In addition, I told Kosseh that he was an administrator and therefore he was my boss. In that regard, I would give him the respect due him in Bo, but if he accepted the position of regent chief and went to Wonde, nobody would respond to his call. I advised Kosseh to tell the Daboh's to talk to another person to fill that position. The Daboh's were not the government. If they were not ready to go by the decision government had taken, we were also determined to go against any of their decisions on the chieftaincy issue. Dickson Kosia, the deputy battalion commander at Koribondo, was there as witness. Little did I know that

Kosseh Hindowa had told Kosia and Joe Timinde the same thing and that their responses were similar to mine. They reminded Kosseh Hindowa of what they had earlier told him. Pa Kosseh then gave me five thousand Leones as fare. He then said that if he were to go to Wonde, we would be his host, but if we were against him going there, then he would keep off since he did not know what obtained in our chiefdom. He said that he was going to tell the SDO and the PS that he could not go to that chiefdom. I returned to the village. He, Kosseh, latter called the Daboh's and told them what had transpired between us. The response of the Daboh's was that they had advised Pa Kosseh against us and that the solution to the problem was to humiliate or liquidate me. He did exactly what they told him.

While they were going to present Kosseh Hindowa as regent chief, they passed through Blama and Gboyama before they went there, I had taken some Kamajors and we were undergoing training at Matato, Mongere chiefdom. One day, before Kosseh Hindowa was taken to Wonde chiefdom to be presented to the people, our father, Chief Sam Hinga Norman, took a message to us at the training base; he did not know that people from Wonde chiefdom were present. He told us that a Kamajor had been appointed regent chief. My heart jumped into my mouth; it occurred to me that he was talking about Wonde chiefdom. Indeed, he was referring to Wonde chief. In addition, he said that he had learnt that some Kamajors were opposed to Kosseh Hindowa. He stated that he knew what he would do to any Kamajor that opposed Kosseh Hindowa. At first, I took it lightly, but it was serious and I wanted to rise up and ask a few questions. One of my colleagues advised me against asking questions - at that training base, no investigations or action was taken if any trainee was killed. I listened to my colleague's advice. I then allowed Chief Norman to say what he wanted to say. He threatened to deal with anyone who was opposed to Kosseh's appointment. A week later, Kamajors were mobilised to accompany the team that went to install the regent chief; they carried many arms and ammunitions in the vehicle. When they went to Wonde chiefdom, they maltreated most of our people. Mr. Magona who was in Pujehun headed the troop that went there; Mr. Magona was sent there by Kosseh Hindowa. They were there for a week. Some Kamajors who went on the trip from the training base complained that they would never go to Wonde – not even if Pa Norman gave them a million leones each. They reported that Wonde chiefdom was full of evil and that they nearly lost their lives. They complained that their host did not feed them. After the training, I returned to my village. Many complaints were falsely made against Alhaji Momoh and me to Kosseh. There was a trade fare centre at Bathurst where people gathered every Sunday. People told Kosseh Hindowa that he should stop me from undertaking initiation ceremonies if he wanted to control the trade fare. He then passed a law that no initiation should take place in that area – both male and female initiations. My grandfather owned the land where the trade fare took place at Bathurst. After some time, when we did not apologise, somebody advised Kosseh to reopen the trade fare. I told you earlier that what we, the people of Wonde, wanted was rejected by the Daboh's; there likes were therefore our dislikes. We stood our ground that if they wanted to open a trade fare centre, they should do that on their own piece of land, not on ours. Supporters of the Daboh's came to Bo and reported what I said to Pa Kosseh. Pa Kosseh thought of himself as the president of Sierra Leone because he sent troops to arrest us without consulting with either the SDO or PS or the Police Commissioner. He sent the troops to Joe Timinde who was battalion commander in Koribondo with the instruction that I should either be killed or brought to him alive. When the Kamajors arrived in Koribondo, they briefed Joe Timinde, but Joe Timinde knew what was going on in Wonde. He spoke outright about his disapproval of the step Pa Kosseh took. He made clear the fact that asking me to come to Bo was no problem for him, but that rebels had not attacked Wonde and therefore there was no need for such a large troop. The troop Pa Kosseh sent was led by Huggard Bockarie – (a.k.a Daddy Bock). The Islamic leader that was among the troop was Kamoh Lahai Massaquoi. They all went to Joe Timinde who told them that I was like a son to him and a respectful junior colleague. He then decided to send seven Kamajors to represent him and to report on what would happen. The report that was given to Kosseh – false report – was that I was in an ambush. Joe Timinde released his boys to join the troops that came from Bo. They did not even meet me in the village; I was neither at Bathurst nor at Yanihun. I was resident at Yanihun. The troop of Kamajors that were sent by Kosseh attacked Yanihun in the same way that rebels launched their attacks on towns and villages. They looted many things

from Yanihun. Supporters of the Daboh's that were resident at Yanihun told the Kamajors that I usually went into hiding at Lagor Njama and advised them to ambush the road that leads to Lagor. Huggard Bockarie deployed the boys round the town. RSM Dauda told them that he did not want them to go where I was; one of Joe Timinde's boys made that suggestion. They gave in to the suggestion. Dauda and his other six colleagues from Koribondo went to me at Ngaola. As they approached, I saw them carrying RPG, AK58, LMG and other weapons. When they arrived, I came out from where I was and they told me that they had come to summon me before Joe Timinde who was at Yanihun. When I asked why they were carrying such weapons, they replied that if a warrior had information there laid a trap ahead of him, he knew what to do –they were acting on the nature of the information they had received. I asked whether they fell in an ambush and they said no. They said that, in fact, that was the first proof that they had lied against me. I agreed to go with them. They told me that Joe Timinde had asked that I take the town chiefs and speakers of Yanihun and Ngaola with me. I informed all of them and we left. In less than two hundred yards walk from where I was, I heard a gun shot in the direction of Yanihun. I did not raise any alarm because I did not want to scare them away. We went on and later found that a man had shot himself. While we were approaching Yanihun, we were in an ambush without knowing. When I entered Yanihun, I saw Kamajors following me into the village. I was presently placed under gunpoint. When we arrived, I was handed over to Kamoh Lahai Massaquoi. When I greeted Kamoh Lahai, his response was cold. However, I introduced myself – mentioning his brother who initiated me – and he walked up to me and shook my hands. From his countenance, I read that he had calmed down. RSM Dauda then told me to walk to the barray and choose five people who would go with me to Koribondo, since Joe Timinde had just returned to Koribondo. As I was walking to the barray, Huggard told RSM Dauda that my boys had been in an ambush and was a gunshot that killed one of his boys. He alleged that I had killed his boy. According to what I learnt, they had gone to one of my elder brother's - Alusine Bawoh – during their looting spree. They wanted to enter into his house, but the wife was there – she was a Kamajor woman. She told them that it was over her dead body that they would enter into that house. They did not know that she was a Kamajor woman and a Kamajor stepped forward and slapped her. I am sorry the woman is not around due to lack of transportation. The woman, in turn, slapped the Kamajor. The boy who died was called Ogena. He cocked the gun to shoot the woman, but his boss advised him against that. He did not replace the safety catch when he hung the gun on his neck. According to testimonies of witnesses that witnessed the incident, the gun slipped from his neck and fired when he bowed down to get firewood in order to light marijuana. That was how he killed himself. According to the testimonies, there were three of them – the other two shouted that Ogena's gun had killed him. Fortunately, an intelligent officer recorded it. When we arrived in Koribondo, they explained everything to Joe Timinde. He reminded them of what he said before they left and told them that he could not settle a matter that involved death. He therefore advised that they take the matter to Kosseh that sent them. All of us, including the corpse, travelled in the same vehicle to Bo. When we arrived at Sembahun 17, the Kamajors started to stab me on the bases of the orders that they had received from Kosseh. Seven of us travelled with them from Yanihun. They beat, wounded and nearly killed all of us. They continued to manhandle us until we arrived at Shelmingo. When we arrived at Shelmingo, we did not know that they were communicating with Kosseh on the radio. By the time we arrived at the Kamajor office – 88 Mahei Boima road – there were many members of the Daboh family who were not Kamajors. Upon arrival at the CDF office, we were treated like none entities. They took us to the back of the office where we saw Kosseh, Sidique Daboh and many other Daboh's. The first utterance that Sidique Daboh made was "why did you bring Bana alive". Kosseh Hindowa ordered that they beat us to death. On that day, we preferred death to life. We arrived at the office by 4.30 pm and we were tortured unto 6 pm. They shot at us, but in vain – we had the blessing of God. One of the boys who was among the Kamajors that went to arrest us called Mr. Fefegula aside – Mr. Fefegula still remains a father to me – and told him that all the allegations made against me were false. Pa Fefegula – he was a strong man – came and pushed aside all those that were beating us. He took us into a cell. We were in the cell when Kosseh Hindowa ordered that I should be tied with an "FM". If rebels had knowledge of the "FM" that we had they would have killed everybody in this country. Kosseh Hindowa ordered that five "FM'S" be brought for me. Had it not being the grace of God, I would have died on that day. The "FM" was fixed on me

four times – it cut each time they drew it. The fifth time, Pa Fefegula hit the boy and said that if he could not tie me, he would be tied instead. They tied me for twenty-five minutes. The Daboh's pointed guns at us and threatened that they would kill all of us and take our corpses back to Wonde. Meanwhile, Pa Fefegula had called O.C Kamara of the Criminal Investigations Department and told him that if he did not come to the CDF Office at 88 Mahei Boima road, there would be another war. The O.C immediately came with the vehicle. He asked Pa Fefegula to summon us to him when he arrived. While we were coming out of the cell, I was on the left of Pa Fefegula – on his right were Kamajors who had sticks in their hands to hit me on the head - there were eight of us. Two people later died because of the torture. When we went on board the police vehicle, a Kamajor called Sojegbowangoe hit my right eye – I thought that I had lost my sight. They would have inflicted more physical injuries on us if the driver were not smart. Pa Foday, one of the detainees, was rushed to the hospital, while we were taken to a police cell. For about three days, the police were afraid that CDF would attack them. In addition to their fears, there was an intelligence report from Gboyama that Kamajors had mobilised to come to Bo in a bid to free me. Fortunately, our fathers back home advised our brothers against launching an attack on Bo. I was in the cell for eight days. I gave a statement on the second day. O.C Kamara understood what was happening in Wonde. My brother in this auditorium also made a statement. O.C Kamara asked the police that was taking statements from us to close the files and prepare to go with him to Koribondo. When O.C Kamara returned from Koribondo, he walked up to me, shook my hands and said that I was a straightforward man. He then said that henceforth we would stay out of the cell until dusk – we slept in the cells for security reasons. After they had taken statements from us, O.C Kamara invited Kosseh Hindowa and two section Chiefs and we were taken out of the cells to where they were – Pa Kosseh Hindowa was busy telling lies. Even the two section chiefs made allegations against us. The PS, Kallon and O.C Kamara had carried out investigations and were able to detect that we were innocent. They released us when the Commissioner returned to Bo.

We also made a report against Kosseh Hindowa and his men. I obtained a doctor's report and later went to inform my brothers in Freetown. This matter was brought to the knowledge of the I. G. who instructed that I give a statement at the CID in Freetown.

I came back when I heard of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We later went to see the president and we were able to prove that they had told a lie concerning the fact that Pa Kosseh's appointment came from the president. Unto this day, I am determined to contest Pa Kosseh in court. This is my testimony.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, Bana Smith. My address is with reference to your statement. Perhaps my colleagues may want to ask you few questions, but let me put things in perspective. I want to begin from the end. Bana Smith, did I hear you say that you sued Kosseh Hindowa to court?

Bana Smith: I reported the matter to the police.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Is the matter still pending?

Bana Smith: At the time of the incidents, there was still war in the country. Even the police in Bo were afraid.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Do I therefore assume that you have come to the commission to seek redress?

Bana Smith: Well, yes. Everything good or bad must end.

Comm. Bishop Humper: If that is the case, we as a Commission and the audience, will like to know the sequence in which you have narrated your experience – we want to be as brief

as we can. Did I hear you say that the Burkinabes were those that launched the initial invasion into Sierra Leone?

Bana Smith: They did not come to Bo.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Well, I am not talking specifically about Bo, I mean the Sierra Leone.

Bana Smith: The Burkinabes came to Bandajuma Sowa.

Comm. Bishop Humper: O.K.! Did I hear you say that the SLA and ULIMO had an encounter because of looted items?

Bana Smith: The ULIMO and SLA were in Koribondo. The looted items were stored in a school at Bathurst. The civilians in Koribondo could not have seen their properties without commenting, so they went to collect the looted items at night. The SLA ambushed ULIMO when they learnt that the latter were going to collect the looted items, vice versa.

Comm. Bishop Humper: It appears to me that there was a change in the pattern of prosecuting the war.

Bana Smith: What do you mean?

Comm. Bishop Humper: You said that SLA was fighting against RUF - then the Kamajors had not come in. Was that so?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: When they took a different turn – according to your statement – the Kamajors emerged. Am I right?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: That continued unto 1997, o.k.?

Bana Smith: Yes, then they came together.

Comm. Bishop Humper: That is what I want to understand.

Bana Smith: It was after the military had overthrown the government that they came together.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Now, we move on - how many ruling houses do you have in Wonde?

Bana Smith: We have the Kaweh's and the Manyeh's - there are two ruling houses.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Will you agree with me that apart from the rebel war and all its attendant atrocities, one of the key issues you have expressed is chieftaincy?

Bana Smith: Yes, that was why Kosseh Hindowa was hostile to us.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Let us go systematically. You have gone through all of those wars, those horrors – that is your story. I am only trying to see whether we understand your story, and we are confirming that story. As you narrated your story, your heart bled when you recounted all the atrocities committed against you and your people. However, you suffered not because of the war, but because of the battle for chieftaincy – am I right?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much. Now, in this whole process you are saying that the government made a pronouncement about who should be regent chief and later you mentioned Chief Hinga Norman whom you said brought another news to you.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: The culminating point is that the man who was your district administrator then considered himself a regent chief – was that the problem?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Comm. Bishop Humper: We have the entire story. Commissioner, do you have any questions to ask?

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Bana Smith, we thank you for your very detailed testimony, but I will take you back to the beginning when you joined the Kamajor. You told us that you were a CDF section commander. We are interested in the various factions that took part in the civil strife. Can you clarify two things for me? Can you explain to us the structure of the CDF in Bo district? What were the names of the chief commanders?

Bana Smith: I will begin to answer your questions by telling you that I was made section commander when I joined the Kamajor. When B. M. Conteh, my brother, who was the section coordinator, died, I took over as section coordinator. I was later promoted to the position of supervisor for Wonde Chiefdom. I represented Wonde chiefdom at our battalion headquarters.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Sorry, can I cut you short? I am talking about the organisation of the Kamajors, not the chiefdom. How did you organise yourselves in Bo district?

Bana Smith: We had the administrator, Kosseh Hindowa – he was the overall boss for Bo district. Below the administrator were the battalion commanders – our own battalion commander was Joe Timinde. Below the battalion commanders were deputy battalion commanders. We had company commanders below the rank of deputy commander. Below the company commanders were supervisors, followed by section commanders, patrol commanders and chiefdom Kamajors who were in charge of all the Kamajors in the chiefdom. We had squad commanders. That was how we were organised.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you, Bana Smith for that information. While you were defending the motherland and fighting against the various other factions - did you commit atrocities against the civilian population?

Bana Smith: I thank you for that question. In our own case in Wonde chiefdom, we went to fight faithfully so that our relatives would return to their villages. I do not think there is any civilian in Wonde chiefdom who can speak evil about Kamajors. I cannot speak on behalf other chiefdoms, but we were responsible for the return of our relatives to Wonde Chiefdom. We did not harm them.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: If I got your statement right, Bana, you talked about defensive and offensive operations. According to this, you defended your villages, but you also carried out offensives against other villages.

Bana Smith: Yes! When soldiers and or rebels attacked us in our villages, we retaliated if we had arms.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: And during those offensive attacks, atrocities were committed against the rebels – am I right?

Bana Smith: If a rebel attacked and killed my brother, I would kill him if I could.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Finally, Bana, because of all the problems you encountered in the chieftaincy, particularly with your boss – did you leave the Kamajor at any time?

Bana Smith: The position of supervisor was taken away from me by Kosseh when he was made regent chief by the Daboh's.

Comm. Hajaratu Satang Jow: Thank you very much.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, Bana Smith, for your cooperation. I would not want to spend much more time rather than to ask the leader of evidence whether he has questions for you.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you chairperson, Bana Smith, I have a few questions for you so that we can put all the experiences in context for the benefit of the commission. At the beginning of your testimony you said that when there were rebel activities, the soldiers then came in from Koribondo to Wonde chieftom, right.

Bana Smith: Yes!

Leader of Evidence: And you people were providing them food and other supplies.

Bana Smith: Yes!

Leader of Evidence: Was it voluntary provision?

Bana Smith: It was voluntary because we wanted them to defend us so that we would not be displaced.

Leader of Evidence: So, all through the period they were there, was the community willingly giving them food?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: The ULIMO soldiers, what were they doing in your neighbourhood?

Bana Smith: I saw the ULIMO through Mr. Freeman, who came to chase the Burkinabes out of Pujehun district.

Leader of Evidence: So the ULIMO's were fighting on the side of the government.

Bana Smith: Yes, that was during the time of Mr. Freeman.

Leader of Evidence: Something is not clear to me; I will ask you to clarify it. You said that at some point your brothers were accused of being rebels and there were operations to flush them out of the community – is that correct?

Bana Smith: When the soldiers ousted the government, they killed any Kamajor that they saw in Koribondo.

Leader of Evidence: O. k, I see what you mean – I will come to that very shortly. When the elected civilian government was overthrown, we had the people’s army – was it the people’s army that was in charge in Koribondo?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know the commander of the people’s army?

Bana Smith: Their commander was Major Keita.

Leader of Evidence: Then the Kamajor movement came to fight against them?

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So, what I hear you say is that you had a number of operations in Koribondo to flush out the people’s army.

Bana Smith: We in Wonde Chieftdom did not attempt to attack Koribondo after the coup, until when we were attacked by the junta.

Leader of Evidence: I need to understand you very clearly. The people’s army were targeting Kamajors – you say they were killing Kamajors in Koribondo.

Bana Smith: Yes!

Leader of Evidence: And so there was heavy fighting over a period before you people finally succeeded.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So, who was then doing the attacking – you said they were killing Kamajors already so you people went to fight them to be able to take over Koribondo from the people’s army.

Bana Smith: Sometimes I heard that rebels had attacked Ngiema, Kpetewoma Lugbu, etc, and the Kamajors fought back – sometimes close of Koribondo. Whenever Koribondo was attacked, we clearly heard gun sounds.

Leader of Evidence: Anytime, the people’s army attacked Kamajors, you would retaliate in Koribondo.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: The people’s army occupied Koribondo for the length of time the AFRC was in power.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So, if I understand you well, they were based in Koribondo and in order for you to liberate Koribondo you had to fight in Koribondo – is that not correct?

Bana Smith: If we did not fight against them in Koribondo it would have been difficult for us because they always went on looting sprees in our houses. We no longer lived in the towns - we were in the bush.

Leader of Evidence: After you had liberated Koribondo, how were you able to identify civilian collaborators in Koribondo?

Bana Smith: When we liberated Koribondo – Joe Timinde who was our battalion commander, was good and cool and we were friendly because we were born in the part of the country. If Joe Timinde was bad, considering the number of Kamajors that were killed in Koribondo, and the number of houses burnt in Njama Bongor chiefdom, they would have wrecked more havoc in the town. Joe Timinde did not allow that to happen. A day after Koribondo was liberated, the civilians began to return to the town. That was what I saw.

Leader of Evidence: What can you say about the witnesses who told the commission that they were targeted for being collaborators of AFRC in Koribondo, and that the Kamajors destroyed Koribondo? More specially, your national commander is said to have ordered the destruction of Koribondo because they collaborated with the AFRC.

Bana Smith: I am in to answer this question; I asked a woman who went to Wonde chiefdom. Apart from Daru where there were government troops, the entire country, especially Bo district, depended on the battalion that was in Koribondo. The battalion in Koribondo was one that created problems in this country. Any soldier that went there committed some sort of atrocity. My dear brother, if you were in Koribondo and you had boys whom you sent to commit atrocities ranging from looting to death – should the oppressed have had the upper hand, would he not throw you out of the town?

Leader of Evidence: So, it was legitimate for the Kamajor movement to destroy towns in order to liberate it from AFRC.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Smith, my interest is not what was right or wrong. The commission wants to write the true account of what happened. My job is not to say what you did was good or bad – I just want the true account. Did the Kamajors have to destroy the town in order to liberate it.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much, Bana Smith. When you joined the movement, how long did your training last?

Bana Smith: We were in this town for one month and fifteen days – after our initiation.

Leader of Evidence: And you were undergoing training during that period?

Bana Smith: Yes, we were undergoing training at the Milton Comprehensive Secondary School field – here in Bo.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of armaments were you trained to use?

Bana Smith: AK47, AK58, G3, FM – I could use those.

Leader of Evidence: So, in the course of all the fighting - how many rebels did you take as hostages?

Bana Smith: When we launched the attack to liberate Wonde chiefdom, we rescued approximately one hundred civilians and captured about twenty-five rebels. We brought all of them here.

Leader of Evidence: And what about in Koribondo?

Bana Smith: We did not meet any rebel in Koribondo; they had all come to this town because we left the road to Bo open.

Leader of Evidence: You were talking about the intensity of the training before you were arrested on the orders of Chief Hindowa – you were in training and you wanted to respond to your national coordinator's statement, but your colleague warned you. What was the nature of the training? Would you be killed for opposing authority?

Bana Smith: I did not think about that. My brother advised me against talking because that was a strange place.

Leader of Evidence: And because you were afraid that you might be killed.

Bana Smith: Well, I was a stranger there.

Leader of Evidence: Now, you also said that when the Kamajors came to arrest you, they looted property and killed people.

Bana Smith: Many!

Leader of Evidence: What year was that?

Bana Smith: 2001.

Leader of Evidence: Do you have an idea of the month?

Bana Smith: I think it was in January.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give the commission an estimate of the number of people who were killed?

Bana Smith: Only one person – a Kamajor – died.

Leader of Evidence: Just that one, but were properties destroyed?

Bana Smith: Many!

Leader of Evidence: Was it in the nature of the Kamajor movement to attack its own people just because they wanted to arrest somebody?

Bana Smith: That was Pa Kosseh Hindowa's squad.

Leader of Evidence: So, if I understand you correctly, you had different squads that had loyalties to different kinds of commanders.

Bana Smith: Yes, but Pa Kosseh did that simply because he had been appointed regent chief.

Leader of Evidence: I understand you clearly on that. An implication of what you are saying is that sometimes people could use the movement for personal purposes, not for things connected to fighting the war.

Bana Smith: They did that to satisfy themselves.

Leader of Evidence: Was it a practice – were some commanders doing that?

Bana Smith: I did not witness that in our battalion. Joe Timinde did not encourage that – but I heard about it in other parts of the region.

Leader of Evidence: Your commander did not do that but there were other commanders who were doing that.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So, was it a fact that women were also members of the Kamajor movement?

Bana Smith: Oh, that our wife! She was the wife of an Islamic teacher. She saw many things, including the coup, in her dreams. She advised us on certain matters and instructed us on the kinds of sacrifices to offer. We therefore shared our powers with her.

Leader of Evidence: So, was she the only woman – to your knowledge – who was a Kamajor?

Bana Smith: No, there was Mama Munda who was an initiator.

Leader of Evidence: But beyond these and as part of the general initiation in the communities, did they have young girls as part of the Kamajor?

Bana Smith: No, no, no.

Leader of Evidence: Now, you mentioned this “FM” rope – why is it call “FM” and what was the nature of it? You said if it had been tied on you for longer than twenty-five minutes, you possible would have died. What kind of culture rope was that?

Bana Smith: If it were tied on you for about fifteen minute, you would shit. If it were tied on you for one hour, your arms would paralyse.

Leader of Evidence: You should further explain this to the commission because the rope was an ordinary rope. If you tied somebody with a rope, the pressure created the problem. What was it that was different about that rope you called “FM” that would make you die in less than an hour?

Bana Smith: It was made of a piece of nylon rope that was tied to both ends of a piece of stick. If they held your arm between the rope and the stick, the rope tightened as the stick was turned either clockwise or anti-clockwise. If the stick was turned up to ten times, you were finished.

Leader of Evidence: Before O.C Kamara came and took you away, you said you were in a guardroom - whose guardroom was that?

Bana Smith: The CDF guardroom – 88 Mahei Boima Road.

Leader of Evidence: That was Pa Hindowa’s office.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: But Pa Hindowa was a district administrator, he was not a combatant, was he?

Bana Smith: Not at all – he was an administrator.

Leader of Evidence: How comes an individual had a guardroom?

Bana Smith: There was a guardroom at the CDF office – it is there even now. They locked up those they arrest in the guardroom.

Leader of Evidence: To your knowledge, when was the last time somebody was locked up in that room?

Bana Smith: I do not know about others – I know about when I was locked up in there. I am not resident in this town.

Leader of Evidence: Would that mean that most district administrators of the Kamajor movement had guardrooms in their offices?

Bana Smith: I saw one in Bo – I cannot tell what obtained in the other districts.

Leader of Evidence: And that was even when you had the army under the control of the government - before and after the AFRC coup.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And even when you had the police, for instance there was O. C Kamara - you had the police force that was in control - yet there were those other cells controlled by the movement.

Bana Smith: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You talked about two of your fellow detainees in that guardroom who died. How long after you were taken out of Chief Hindowa's cell that it happened – did it happen immediately?

Bana Smith: They did not die immediately. However, I am convinced that they died because of the torture by the Kamajors. They died in less than two months after our release.

Leader of Evidence: The boys who tortured you – have you seen them recently?

Bana Smith: They were all Kosseh's boys. Huggard Bockarie who led the troop is in this town.

Leader of Evidence: What is it like each time you see them? Do you feel threatened or what happens?

Bana Smith: They became afraid of us after the moves that we made to seek redress.

Leader of Evidence: If you see Chief Hindowa now, what would you tell him?

Bana Smith: What do you mean?

Leader of Evidence: For example, if the commission arranges a meeting between you and him, what would you tell him?

Bana Smith: I will tell him about all the wrong that he did to me.

Leader of Evidence: I know that. After that, what are you going to tell him?

Bana Smith: Except the government decides, but I will not easily forget what Kosseh did to me.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Bana Smith. That is all, commissioner.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, Leader of Evidence. Bana Smith, we are grateful for your cooperation. If we have a desire to go any further, we will only ask this one question as a follow up on what the Leader of Evidence asked. You have mentioned a few people here, and I am sure that you may not easily forget about what they have done to you. However, our primary purpose here is to continue to enquire from you whether you would like us to find a way of bringing you together. It is our desire to contact all the key personalities that you have mentioned – this is very vital to us.

Bana Smith: I am through with that. Most people here - in this hall – must have seen, heard or known about what happened to me. However, all good or bad things must come to an end. That is why I will not go against anything the government says.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Bana. I will hold on that one statement and I will ask my staff to follow up on the issue. We have asked you so many questions. We now give you this opportunity to ask us any question that pertains to our work or to recommend anything that we could include in our report. You are now free to do so.

Bana Smith: My question is this, when the military ousted the democratically elected government and wrecked so much havoc – they are in fact responsible for most of the destructions in the country – what does government intend to do?

Comm. Bishop Humper: That is a very important question, Bana. It borders around the government's operation. We do not know what government intends to do about them, but we know that you, as a citizen, have an idea of what to do to help this country move forward – it just that information that we want from you in the form of a recommendation. As an independent body, we have the mandate to carry out our investigations and make our recommendations at the end of the day.

Bana Smith: My other question is, if a democratically elected government was ousted and somebody made every move to reverse such coup, would that person be considered an enemy of the state?

Comm. Bishop Humper: That is another important question. I believe that anyone who does well is not a bad person, but I also believe that our constitution makes provisions for dos and don'ts. That particular question can be addressed from different angles. If you would coin that question into a recommendation, then I will tell you what the commission will do.

Bana Smith: The reason for asking this question is that the national coordinator of the CDF Sierra Leone, Chief Sam Hinga Norman – be he bad or good – tremendously supported the CDF to reverse the coup. My message to the government is that a warrior cannot stop short at violating some rights in his drive to defeat another warrior. However, a friend of the state would not wreck as much havoc as an enemy of the state. Whether Chief Hinga Norman was good or bad, he helped to bring peace to this nation by reversing the coup. That is my message.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Do you have any other recommendation?

Bana Smith: Like the Paramount Chief was saying, government should consider those who were affected during the war.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Please help us. You said, “Dem wan ya”, but we do not work with non-specifics – call them by their names.

Bana Smith: I am referring to us, the civilians, who were victims of the war – all over the country – we should be considered by government. We know that the ex-combatants should be dissuaded from fighting further, but government should consider the civilians afterwards.

Comm. Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, Bana. You have given us vital information and recommendations worth considering. We have an important task of making every individual feel important in this country. We are in pursuit of peace, unity and harmonious co-existence, and you have helped us to know what happened to our people in this country. We will take your recommendations, as well as the others, very seriously. On behalf of the commission, I want to thank you for this moment we have had together. I will now ask you to step down.

OPENING CEREMONY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN KAILAHUN ON MONDAY 12 MAY 2003

The ceremony started with Muslim and Christian prayers. The District Coordinator, Mr. Bockarie Boani, introduced the Chairman of the ceremony Mr. Sulaiman Koroma, District Officer, Kailahun. The Chairman of the Commission, Bishop J.C. Humper, made a statement on behalf of the Commission. Statements were also made by the resident Paramount Chief and representatives of the UNHCR, NaCSA, NCDDR.

Presiding Commissioner: Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

Chairman Bishop Humper: As I welcome you to this session, I guess the witnesses for the day are already called in. Every witness can speak in his or her own language. The public is asked to respect all witnesses.

1st Witness – Baidu Amara

My name is Baidu Amara. I am a Muslim.

The oath was administered by Chairman Bishop Humper.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We encourage you to be calm. You are not only helping the commission, but you are also helping to establish the truth of what happened. The Commission will give you time to give your testimony.

TESTIMONY

It was on a Saturday, we were sitting in the veranda when we heard a gun shot. At that time, I had just delivered a baby. When I heard the gun shot, the baby moved off my hand and fell on the floor. My husband picked up the baby and ran into the house. We were there till 2:00 p.m. and the children were crying. The firing ceased. We decided to go into the bush where we stayed for three weeks. We were there when somebody told us that our chief was asking us to return or pay a fine of Le10,000 each. We took our personal effects and came back to town. After three days, on a Sunday, I asked my children to go with me to fetch some water; I had two daughters. We hardly got to the well when we heard another gun shot from the direction of Liberia so we took cover in the nearest house. We were there till 2.00 o'clock. My breast became solid. A woman named Mary was in my house; she had a grown up child and he said I should go under the bed. We went under the bed. There were too many of us in the room.

We started hearing other languages that we did not understand. We were told that they were people from Liberia. They hit hard on the door and fired a shot into the house. The boy who had asked me to lie under the bed was shut on the chest. That same bullet hit me on my hand. Everybody started shouting. We were ordered to get out of the room by a Mende boy. The woman whose son was killed opened the door and we went outside and headed for the bush. I was eating grass as if I was a goat. I went to Pendembu and got admitted at the hospital for 14 days where some bullets were removed from my body. At that time the rebels had captured Bomaru. Everybody was trapped. We were seated when we saw our relatives with their luggages. When my husband arrived he was informed of my situation in the hospital; he cried for me. The baby was brought to me for breast feeding. The dispenser told us that we should try to leave as other people were leaving the area. I was given some medicines. We left and slept in the bush. That was the night the rebels captured Pendembu.

We walked on to Kwiva. On arrival at Kwiva, we were advised to leave again; so we continued and spent 2 days in the bush. We got to Dambara and stayed there for 2 weeks before the rebels arrived. We slept there and left in the morning. We intended to go to Kenema, but because of my pains, we were unable to travel and stayed in the bush instead. Also I was in so much pain that I could not carry my baby. I had little boys and they walked slowly. My husband took my head tie and strapped the children to his back. One Mende boy came and asked us where we came from. We told him. He asked if we had money in the bag. We said we were from Bomaru. He asked whether we had somebody to testify that it was true. Then a rebel from our village saw us and rushed at us and asked why we were coming from that end. By this time the houses were on fire.

He advised us not to go to Kenema and said that in fact he spoke to us only because we hailed from the same village. They had padlocks on their lips. He went to one of them. I did not know what they discussed. He asked us to go back to Bomaru. The rebels were too many in Kwiva and I was worried that they would kill us. We went into the bush again and we all went back to Bomaru. On arrival, my eldest girl was captured. They made her their wife and took every thing from us. I asked them to have mercy on me as I had wounds all over my body. One of them asked the rebels what I was saying. They explained to him. He pointed his gun at us. He then released my daughter but all our belongings were taken from us. I was advised not to sleep there and that I should go back to Bomaru. When we went to Bomaru, we were arrested. We were unable to go to Kenema or Liberia. We ate all our food and nothing was there to eat. We ate bush yams. We were there on to the time the wound healed up.

We were unable to move and the Kamajor came to our rescue. We were there and things were alright at the time when the Kamajors were with us. No body insulted us or took our food. They said nobody should insult a woman. We were sleeping at night when we heard gun shot. Then we asked ourselves, what we wished to do next. Those who were outside said we should not go. The firing was all over the town. We were inside the house shouting. My brother was a Kamajor. He came and called my name and I answered. He said we should come out of the house that the rebels had overpowered them. We left the house and went to Natco house. We crept on to the place, and we saw some dead people.

The soldiers ordered us not to leave the place as they were still protecting us. We told the soldiers that the place was not safe as our relatives were dying. At 2:00 p.m., I realized that my daughter had been killed. Then I said I was going there for them to kill me too; my daughter loved me. She always listened to me. We went and saw them lying on the road; seven of them. She was fired on the ribs. I went and grabbed her dead body. They took her from me. They were all collected and taken to the court barray. I was troubled and I am still discouraged. They were buried in a mass grave. There were about ten or eight of them buried in one grave. We were told to leave the town. I said why should I go; I wanted to die with Adama. I refused to go. So many people left. We sat down everyday and rebels met us at Bomaru. I was unable to tell who killed my daughter. Somebody pointed out the person who killed my daughter. At the time we left Bomaru, we were all sitting with the person, but he did not know me. He was telling the crowd how my daughter was killed. We asked for the names of those that were killed, and my

daughter's name was called. My mother's name is Yeabu Amara. My father's name is John, a black smith. Then the boy-confessor said please do not kill me but kindly take me along. The boy begged for mercy. He had expressed his wish to marry Adama but I disagreed. Then the war erupted. He explained how Adama was killed. As I was weeping all his colleagues told him that he was wrong. We all got up and moved. From that time I have never set eyes on that boy. We suffered a lot.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We have heard your story. It is difficult to see you going through this suffering and I would want to invite my colleagues to ask questions.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Baidu I want to thank you very much for coming to share your experiences with us. You will excuse me if I ask you a lot of questions on what you have given us. You said this attack took place in March as the first attack in Sierra Leone. Being in Bomaru I thought you were referring to 23rd March 1991.

Baidu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When you left Bomaru you went as far as Pendembu with bullet wounds on your hands

Baidu: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara: From Pendembu you went to a place called Dambara

Baidu: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you met by these rebels and did they persuade you to go back?

Baidu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You only took 14 days or a period of 14 days. How long did it take you from the time you left Bomaru to Pendembu? Can you recall?

Baidu: It was 14 days; I was a nursing mother at that time.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: This means you were back in Bomaru early in April.

Baidu: After I had had that injury from the bullet, my husband joined me and we went to Dambara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you say the two rebels persuaded you not to go.

Baidu: When we left the town we were told to go to our villages and we went back to Bomaru. When we went to the town, we took three weeks there. We wanted to go, but we had no way to go to Kenema.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was it in Bomaru that your daughter and other people were killed. Was it the second time?

Baidu: Yes, It was on our return; It was the last attack.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you know how many people were killed?

Baindu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How many?

Baindu: I only know of two: my brother, Bockarie KK and Alie. Bomaru is a big place.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said so many bodies were buried including your daughter, how many people were killed when your daughter was killed?

Baindu: I cannot tell the exact number, but those that were killed with my daughter were seven in number; we came across so many bodies on our way.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How is your hand now?

Baindu: It did not heal immediately and I do feel pain in the injured hand, the left hand and sometimes water oozes from my ear.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: We are all sorry about what happened to you. According to your story your ordeal lasted for some time. Was it six months, one or two years?

Bandu: That is hard to say; we were traumatized. There are people amongst us who can know

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from the injury you have on your hand did any of your relatives suffer any serious violations?

Baindu: I cannot explain theirs.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they injured?

Baindu: Those I saw were not wounded.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You also talked about the Kamajors; do you know who was the leader

Baindu: They said the leader was called Kenyeh. Women didn't go close to them so I was afraid. I don't know his name

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you have medical records for your treatment at Pendembu?

Baindu: I have lost it because we were in the bush, but the dispenser was called Morie

Bishop Humper: Thank you for your contribution. I heard you said the rebels spoke different languages.

Baindu: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you recall the name of the person who killed your daughter?

Bandu: No, I could not recognize him

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you recall the name of the boy who helped you out of Pendembu?

Baindu: He was called Lahai

Leader of Evidence: I have two questions in order to help the Commission to understand, before the war started, were there any relationship between the people of Bomaru and Liberia, any intermarriages?

Baindu: Yes, we had a relationship with people from Liberia and even had children for them. We saw people from Liberia as our brothers and there were intermarriages with people from Bomaru.

Leader of Evidence: Were you also aware that there was a war going on in Liberia?

Baindu: At that time, there was no war in Liberia

Leader of Evidence: Before the attack on Bomaru, did you normally see people with guns; people who could have come from Liberia?

Baindu: No, I did not see anybody with guns from Liberia.

Leader of Evidence: Before the war started, was there a garrison of soldiers in Bomaru?

Baindu: At that time there was none, I did not see them.

Leader of Evidence: Were there soldiers in Bomaru before the war started?

Baindu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the commission when you started seeing soldiers in Bomaru?

Baindu: I can't tell the time. We were sitting one day when we saw the policemen packing their luggages and we saw a truck of soldiers coming down.

Leader of Evidence: When the rebels were in Bomaru, could you tell us the nature of their relationship with the people coming from Liberia?

Baindu: No, I can't tell. Everyday, we left the town and went into the bush.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where the soldiers got their food from?

Baindu: Some mornings, they came around and begged from us.

Leader of Evidence: Was there any time your chief demanded food from you to give the rebels?

Baindu: No, I did not give them any food.

Leader of Evidence: To your knowledge, was there any time when the SLA was involved in violations?.

Baindu: No, I can't explain everybody's suffering

Leader of Evidence: The people whom you said were talking different languages; can you explain what they were wearing?

Baindu: There were certain times when they rubbed blue on their faces.

Leader of Evidence: Where is the child you were carrying?

Baindu: At home

Leader of Evidence: Where is your husband?

Baindu: We are staying together.

Leader of Evidence: Was your house affected or is it still there?

Baindu: All our houses were burnt down. We have built a hut which we now live in.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We have asked you a number of questions; do you have any questions or recommendations to make to the commission?

Baindu: I have a question. Why is it that after going through all these sufferings with all the pains in our heart, you still ask us to narrate it again?

Chairman Bishop Humper: What you are saying is the opening up of wounds. Some of you will not understand what we are doing now, but later you will. Nobody will tell you that you will ever forget about that. Many things have happened in this country. Until we know what has happened to people like you, we will continue to remain in misery in this country. It takes pain and agony and suffering when talking about it afresh. Do you have any other question?

Baindu: I am suffering here, so I am thanking you that you have answered. If I do not ask this question I will never know all what you have explained to me

Chairman Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Baindu, we shall take this into consideration

2nd Witness – Patrick Lamin

Presiding Commissioner: Bishop JC Humper

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Commissioner Aminata Jow

Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Patrick Lamin. I am a Christian. The witness took the oath using the Bible. The oath was administered by Chairman Bishop Humper.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Patrick I am sure you must have been abreast with our process here. I want you to feel free to give your testimony because we consider it important for our report.

TESTIMONY

I hail from Bomaru. In February 1991, my father called me to go to Bomaru. During that period, there was war in Liberia. I saw a lot of rebels crossing the Liberia border. Some were speaking Liberian languages. They were staying with us. A group of armed forces arrived from Liberia to Bomaru. During that time, they never knew the town was called Bomaru. When they arrived, they saw the flag around the border. During the period there were no arms in Bomaru, there was

only a barracks. They called on the section chief and put the case across with regard to the mission of their visit. The soldiers who arrived, the section chief and the policemen went along with the soldiers to Bomaru. We saw, at one time, a lot of armed men at Bomaru and they came with a purpose. The head of the team was Major Foday and he was with us. On a Saturday, we heard a gun shot. Even at that time we did not know what was going on. We heard the sound of heavy machine guns and we did not hear any other sound for five minutes. We thought there was a ceremony in Bomaru. Not too long we heard sporadic gun shots. I thought it was the armed men who were annoyed.

At one time, some groups of armed men came around and said we had to feed them or we would be put in prison. We used to cook for the armed men on the ground. They put all of us in prison one day for cooking their meal late. When we heard the gun shot, I thought it was the same thing. This time it was serious. We were in the house for sometime along the Helewa Road. We heard the noise of the people and were very happy because we thought the soldiers were going to assist us. When the people went towards the town, we heard gun shots again. The whole town was seized for a while.

When I came out of the house, I was frightened because I had never heard such loud and sporadic gun shots. They said Lt. Kargbo had been killed by the people. I saw him and he had been destroyed by the bullet. They told us that the Commander of the army Major Foday had also just fallen in the ensuing battle. On the same day and at the same time, my uncle arrived and told me that one of our children had been killed. So I moved away with my family. In the morning of the following day, people left Pendembu to go and look at what had happened. Then I came to know that fourteen other people had died. We used to bury people in twos or threes in one grave. I told my mother that I had to return. I was advised not to go as my dad was sick. At one time, they told us that we should not go anywhere. They told us that people were coming from Freetown to join us. I was personally feeling that on that day I was to leave the town. I heard another round of firing on Sunday, 31st March, at 7:00 p.m. Everybody went inside again and we stayed inside for a while. After the death of the two army officers, they sent a large reinforcement was sent by the government to protect the area. Johnny Paul was the leader for the group. There was rapid firing on that day. We were inside the house when we heard that another set of people had come to protect us. I told my family to go away. Our building was at the end of the town. We went into the bush. They used to tell us that when the people came the rebels never crossed a river.

We were at Gulama when they attacked us again. I did not know the area. I was with my family. We were there for some time and some people moved away. My mother told me that we should return to our village. When we crossed the river, we met another group of rebels. There were a lot of SLA rebels. They told us that the foreigners from Liberia would kill us. We slept in the village and the following day, we moved to another village called Yengema. We were there for a month. We asked the people we met there about Bomaru. We moved back to Bomaru; we all left Yengema. When we reached Bomaru, they had destroyed all the houses. Even the authorities in the town were not around. When we reached, we started seeing people from Liberia. There was no food for my people to eat. They used to visit us and ask us to take along their luggage. When we went to our village, it was another tedious work for us. After the war, no one went to Gulama. We heard that another group of soldiers came and drove the rebels. After they had gone, our brothers told us that a lot of people died. All the people went into one house. The armoured car destroyed the house and they arrested a lot of people. Up to date, those who were arrested have still not shown up. During that time, they used to rape people. When you found food the rebels would take it from you. My dad was confused and he started asking me where we should go again. Since the people of Liberia had come, he decided that we should go. At one time they told us that they had killed my younger brother at the war front. During that time, I was very thin with nothing to eat. Later, my father went to Bomaru. I did not go there again. We went to Liberia and were staying there.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you for coming to share your experience with us. We will now ask you questions for clarification.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Bomaru is a very important place for this war. Like all border areas, you have families on both sides of the borders. People visited themselves and there was cordial relationship and inter marriages. Were you surprised on that day, 23 March, 1991 when you heard the first gun shot?

Patrick: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Why were you surprised?

Patrick: Because for all my life in this country, I had never seen people so disturbed. I was not used to hearing gun shots.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You heard a gun shot then there was a second shooting. At that time you said some Sierra Leonean soldiers had come to protect you. On that point you did not tell us whether the Sierra Leoneans were those who killed the 14 people. Can you tell us whether the soldiers who attacked were Sierra Leonean soldiers or were they soldiers from Liberia?.

Patrick: At the time when we came out, when the shooting was going on we never knew who was shooting. We were told that they were Liberian rebels but that they had gone back, they came and killed all those people.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So your assumption was wrong that SLA were there to protect you?

Patrick: It was not true.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said on 31st March there was another shooting. Was it by Liberian rebels or SLA rebels?

Patrick: When I came outside, a man told me that it was Liberian soldiers who had come to protect us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said earlier that after the death of Major Koroma another set of soldiers came, headed by Lt. Koroma.

Patrick: It was not on the 31st March, it was after the death of Major Foday

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said on 31st March it was Liberian soldiers that killed Maj. Koroma.

Patrick: In my statement given before this time, I said it was the time they killed Lt. Koroma and Major Foday and that was the time 14 people were killed.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Lt Koroma was not killed, but he led the army.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Another group arrived, we were asked to go to the barracks and assemble

Patrick: At the time when Lt. Kamara was there, it was on a Sunday that the shooting started again after the ceasefire. When we were told to go outside one Pa

Momoh came and told us that the soldiers protecting us had left and that another set of Liberian soldiers had come to drive them away.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You refused to go and decided to go to Bomaru.

Patrick: No, I refused to go to the barray because I suspected that something would happen.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When you crossed the river, you met some soldiers who said they were SLA's?

Patrick: When they crossed the river at Bulabong we were resident there and they said another set of soldiers were coming for us. When we crossed the river, it was at that time we met rebels.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was it the time they told you that they were SLA?

Patrick: Yes, we knew some of them, they were speaking Mende.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Can you remember their names?

Patrick: No, I can't remember their names.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were in charge of where?

Patrick: When we crossed they told us that God had blessed us because we did not meet Liberian rebels.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did they treat you well?

Patrick: They did nothing to us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Who were these people asking and tormenting you for food?

Patrick: It was Liberian rebels mixed with some others.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You spoke about the atrocities caused by rebels. Did you say so?

Patrick: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I will like to know whether you saw it yourself.
You mentioned abduction. Was there any attempt by the rebels to abduct you.?

Patrick: My younger brother Vandy was taken away.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How long did he stay in the bush?

Patrick: Quite sometime

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you fight as a young man?

Patrick: At the time, I was too small and was unable to fight. Those who knew me can attest to that.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: In your statement, you said 14 people were killed.

Patrick: I said in the first attack, 14 people were killed.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Were they killed by gun fire?

Patrick: I explained earlier that some were killed.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You are saying that on that first day, 14 people died in Bomaru, do you know the spot where these people were killed?

Patrick: Yes

Chairman Bishop Humper: Was the armoured car from Liberia or Sierra Leone?.

Patrick: It was owned by the SLA. At the time they came, I was present. We were all inside and nobody was talking.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Perhaps those armoured cars had so many people killed.

Patrick: I was not present when the killing took place. When we returned people told us that that was the house.

Leader of Evidence: Among those killed on 23rd March were two soldiers.

Patrick: What I said is that at that time no soldier had entered Bomaru. At the time the rebels from Liberia left, they were held by the Sierra Leone Army. They were in Bomaru and were killed on 31st March.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned Paul Koroma;. which one of the Paul Koroma's?

Patrick: The same Paul Koroma, leader of AFRC.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know how long he stayed in Bomaru?

Patrick: He came in just after the death of Lt. Foday

Leader of Evidence: He was the one that told you that they were going to protect you?

Patrick: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Did you hear at any time that the rebels were fighting with SLA soldiers or fighting with Kamajors?

Patrick: As I understood, they were fighting among themselves

Leader of Evidence: These rebels you were referring to were they the same rebels or were they from another group.

Patrick: They were the same group.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever go to see the leader?

Patrick: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were any Violations of people's rights caused by this group?

Patrick: They would come and tell us that they had come to protect us, but they turned round and attacked us.

Leader of Evidence: Did you belong to any group?

Patrick: No, since I left in 1992, I only came back in 2000

Patrick: I have some few words to say to the commission

As the war started in Bomaru, all our houses were destroyed. We want the government to help us with medical centre, education, etc. We only have one well in Bomaru. Now that the war is over we want our people to be educated. If we are educated, we will be able to promote ourselves. Should the government provide, skills training centres, our people can learn skills to develop themselves. Now that the war is over, we are not talking about ourselves, but for our younger ones. They want to go to school. Even the road to Bomaru is very bad. The rebels destroyed one bridge. We need the government to help us build that bridge. This is the message I have for the government.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We want to thank you. I have been in Bomaru a couple of times. You have over 200 school children there. Some of your recommendations can be addressed in due course. Government policy is to provide education for girls and children and to provide skills training. This also includes national road network. The commission will take your recommendations very seriously and it will be incorporated in our report. We thank you for coming.

3rd – Witness - Ansumana Konneh

Presiding Commissioner: Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Ansumana Konneh. I am a Muslim. The witness took the oath using the Koran. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper. We welcome you to the Commission. Relax; feel free to give your testimony.

TESTIMONY

We were at Bomaru. Ever since I was born I had never seen a thing like the war that entered in Bomaru on Saturday. On that Saturday, we heard a big blast. The rebels entered our house. We were in the house for two hours. Whilst we were in our house they knocked on our door and asked us to open the door. When we came out, we saw a lot of dead bodies. I asked where those boys were coming from and they said they came from Liberia. On a Sunday, they came back and started firing. We went into the house. We were so filthy as we lay under our beds, trembling. We were in there when the rebels came with their guns and took us outside. We were all sitting and they fired in the air. We didn't understand their language. I then slipped away. They told us that Bomaru was empty so we went to one village. They moved us to Daru and we suffered there. We were there when they said that the situation was a little bit better and we came back. That was what I saw in the war.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You last mentioned a first attack on Saturday and then you also mentioned a second attack but during this attack you said your movement was restricted. How did they restrict your movement?

Ansumana: We were surrounded by the rebels for a long time. I am not educated and I cannot tell.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Is it a matter of hours or days?

Ansumana: It was a matter of hours.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was it during that period that you were also harassed?

Ansumana: Yes it was at that time that they burnt our houses and mosque

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are you saying that on the first attack on the 23rd they killed people, but on the second attack they only restricted your movement and burnt houses?

Ansumana: No, during the second attack I did not see them kill people.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You left the place and since then you stayed at Bomaru with all your family.

Ansumana: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you give us a reason why you said you were surprised?

Ansumana: A gun shot came from Liberia and ever since the Sierra Leone Army was there they did not fire at us.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Were they in uniform?

Ansumana: They were not in uniform; they had different colours of clothes with blue all over their faces?

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said you were subjected to harassment, can you tell the way you were harassed?

Ansumana: I had a barn of rice; it was completely burnt down on that day.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were you with your family on that day?

Ansumana: Yes, I was with my family.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us how many of you are in your family?

Ansumana: We are five in number.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We have been asking you questions, do you have any question or recommendations to make?

Ansumana: The first thing is that the war started in Bomaru, but no development had taken place there. As I stand here, I am putting on used clothing. We have made so many sacrifices for the road to be developed. We are really backward; we have no bed, we are lying on sticks.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Ansumana, we have heard what you said, in addition to what others said before or will say later. Everything will be considered when we write our report.

4th – Witness – Mr. Abu Turay

Presiding Commissioner: Bishop JC Humper

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Commissioner Aminata Jow

Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Abu Turay. I am a Muslim. The witness took the oath using the Koran. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Abu, we welcome you. Feel free and relax as you give your testimony.

TESTIMONY

We heard gun shots. They fired big guns. Then we heard that the rebels had fought the soldiers and had driven them away. We saw one Fullah man and his child on a motorbike running away. They told us that the war had entered Kenema. The Fullah left his child on his Honda and he went. After some time he came for the child again. At night we went to a place where we saw soldiers coming. The rebels had overpowered us and we couldn't fight them. We came back to Sandahun. We were sitting again and they told us that the rebels had captured Sandahun. I did not go anywhere. We were not seeing them. We saw that those people who were going to Guinea came across the rebels and they asked them where they were going. I was with one Themne man named Hassan. We lived opposite each other. All those who had wanted to go to Guinea were captured and brought back to Bomaru. Then my friend and I said we were not going anywhere, we must see the rebels. We waited for them. We heard a sharp gun shot and the firing continued. Then they came close to us and I came out. They called me to follow them. When we went, we met a lot of people. My friend told them that he was a chief. They asked him whether he was a chief. He said that he was. They told him to open his mouth and they placed the gun inside his mouth and fired him. They ordered me to throw away the body. Then I told them that I had a question for them. They had said that nobody should leave this town and our people were scared of them and had left. They told us to bring them back. I was calling them out of the bush. Then we all came back. For three days the body of the chief was still on the ground. It was on that same day that they captured Kailahun. We were afraid to touch the body. It was about seven o'clock when the burial took place. After sometime, Foday Sankoh came and told us that he was here to free us from slavery. Although Sankoh said this when we found food, the rebels would take it from us. Anything we had they would take from us. I had money in my pocket and his boys came and took my money away from me. Then Sankoh moved to Bonama. I told his boys that Sankoh would not succeed. Then they arrested me and detained me for three days. They did not give me water or food to eat. They took a statement from me. When Sankoh returned, they gave my statement to him. They said they were going to kill every body. I said if it was for the truth I was ready to die. Sankoh asked me to go over what I had said earlier. I told him that he was not going to succeed. He asked me whether I said that. I said yes. "Why did you say so?" Sankoh asked. I said because your boys took over all my belongings if I had talked, they would have killed me. He asked his boy whether he took anything from me. The boy said yes. Then Sankoh was annoyed with him. He said that what I had said was true and that if the boys did that they would not succeed. The amount of money the boys took from me, Sankoh took it out and added two thousand Leones to it and encouraged me to take it. I refused to take it. Ever since, when the boys passed my house, they did not come near my house.

At one time, one man came and his name was Hanjie, he was with us at Sambuya Road. He was staying in my brother's house. In my store, I had fifteen bags of coffee and palm-kernel. I was restricted from entering my own house. Hanjie had a wife who gave me orders not to enter my own house. They took all my coffee. We saw people tied up. They said those people wanted to go to Guinea that was why we tied them up. After the capture of those people, they cut off the ear of a man and gave it to him to chew. I counted up to 13 people whom they killed. After the killing of those people, Hanjie was still in the town for three days. We then got together and found a way to bury the people. We buried them at the place they were lying. All of my houses were turned upside down. I had sixty goats and they ate two every day. They finished all what we had and we only lived on snails. That is all what I can say. I was told that my son was killed. That particular son was my breadwinner. None of my sons belonged to any fighting group. I had a hunting dog and they sent him hunting. When the dog did not catch anything, they killed the dog. The commander that captured the town was the one who killed the chief.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Abu, we thank you for your testimony. The commissioners and Leader of Evidence would ask you questions for clarification.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You spoke of Foday Sankoh, in 1991 and 1994

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was it during that period that you suffered all these losses?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Foday Sankoh was there?

Abu: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did he know anything about it?

Abu: Sankoh was not stationed at Sandahun. If you told Sankoh what they did, they would kill you.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you say Hanjie stripped every body naked?

Abu: He did not do that to everybody, it was only to the Chief. When the Chief said "I am the chief: they took out a knife and tore his trousers.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were people not caught trying to escape to Guinea?

Abu: People were moving from Sandahun to Guinea. Anytime you asked them, they would say that they were coming from Byamau.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you witness or know of massacres?

Abu: The only one I saw was the people they killed. We buried one with his child and the others were buried separately.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Have you seen Foday Sankoh since 1994?

Abu: No

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Have you heard about him at all?

Abu: I heard people say, he has been captured?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did Sadihum make any attempt to defend the town?

Abu: We did not do that because we had no guns.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said you went to Guinea, how long were you there?

Abu: I spent five years during the war in Sandahun. All the five years was spent in Sandihun. After the five years I went to Guinea.

Commissioner Professor Kamara Kamara: You mentioned your son who was killed.

Abu: My son I mentioned came to look for food together with soldiers and he was killed. He was killed by a swamp at Balahun.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You mentioned one Col. Issa

Abu: Besides Foday Sankoh and Hanjie, I don't know col. Issa; I have never seen him. I only made mention of one Hassana

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Would you say Foday Sankoh was in control of these boys?

Abu: When he was around they behaved nicely. No sooner he left they started misbehaving and nobody dared to report them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Abu, We have been asking you questions, do you have questions to ask or recommendations to make?

Abu: The only thing is to give thanks to God. I did not have any grudge for anybody. I know it is God's wish. It is because you have called me to talk about it that is why I have said something.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Thank you for talking to the commission. We are particularly pleased to know that you are ready to forgive.

5th Witness - Katimu Momoh

Presiding Commissioner: Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Katimu Momoh. I am a Muslim. The witness took the oath using the Koran. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Katimu, this is your opportunity to talk to the Commission. We are ready to listen to you now.

TESTIMONY

It was on a Saturday and another attack took place on another Saturday. About 2.00 in the night and the whole of Danihum moved. We went into the bush and built a hut. As we built the hut our chief called Amara also built a hut. Very early in the morning, they brought thatch and the Gio people from Liberia came to attack them. Our mother whose hut they were building told us they had captured three people, my husband and two other people. They were taken to Pendembu and we moved from those huts and came to town. We were in town for a long time; we didn't know their whereabouts. We heard they were taken to Pendembu for about two months and two weeks. My children and I wept. After two months, he came back. I thank God. We were happy on that day. After that, we were suffering for food. The day we went to the bush, in the garden, he saw something in hiding. At the time the Gio people were attacking us they took our shoes off our feet. His uncle went to report him in the office that his nephew had stolen from him. The people in the office gave him a good beating and tortured him. We moved to Kailahun. My husband was seriously sick and then the soldiers entered this land. In Kailahun, in a house, the soldiers said my husband was causing noise for them. I was also sick. They said that the enemies were around and there should be decorum. The day our child gave him a nice bed, we found him dead. I did not cry because I was sick. Up to date I have no husband and the child is still with me. Everything is upside down with me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You spoke of Gio and Burkinabies who entered and started the war in Sierra Leone; how did you identify them?

Katimu: When they came, they said they were Liberians and we did not understand their language. It was from their language that we recognized them.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You also mentioned that your father was one of those captured with your husband?

Katimu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What happened to your father?

Katimu: My father was not taken away; It was the son of the father who was taken away. The man who made the report is my husband's uncle.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was this uncle a Kamajor?

Katimu: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was the uncle a rebel?

Katimu: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: But he reported to the rebel

Katimu: Yes

Prof Kamara: Thank you.

Katimu: I am just asking for assistance for everybody. We had all our places destroyed. We have our children, but there are no good schools. We are appealing to the government to help develop our place.

6th – Witness – Momoh K. Siaffa

Presiding Commissioner: Bishop JC Humper

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Commissioner Aminata Jow

Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Momoh K. Siaffa. I am a Christian. The witness took the oath using the bible. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper

Chairman Bishop Humper: On behalf of the Commission and the audience we want to thank you for coming

We will now give you this opportunity to present your statement.

TESTIMONY

It was in January 1991 my in-law was in Freetown. He wrote a letter to me asking me to go to him so that he could help me. On my way going, I went with my family. On arrival, he welcomed

us and we were there for some time. He then told us that he would assist me. It was towards the end of February that he would do some shopping for me the following day; he would buy some food items and kerosene for me. The following day, we went and bought them. On a Friday, when we wanted to leave, the baby had fever. His face was rough and he had developed blisters. In the morning, we went to the hospital where the baby was treated. We were there for three weeks. The day I said I was coming to check at Yawa it was within those days that we heard that the rebels had attacked Bomaru. Then my in law advised us not to leave. I told him that I was going to Kenema. At that time, my mother, father and children were all there. I insisted on going to Kenema. After two days I came to Daru. I was in Daru for one week and returned back to Kenema and I proceeded to Freetown. At the end of April, I came back to Kenema. I had no way, so I went back to Freetown.

In 1992, I was moving to and from Freetown. Finally, in 1993 I stopped going to Kenema. We were in Freetown when the AFRC took over. I was with my wife. We were together for three good months suffering when the AFRC took over. Because of this suffering my wife decided to go to her elder brother at Race Course Road. At the time, we had a baby girl. When she was there, the girl got sick. After that I used to go and visit them. Anytime I failed to go there, she would not go to see me, not knowing that she had a lover. Anytime I left, the lover will go to the house. That was going on, then she allowed her lover to moved into her residence permanently. Then house and then my child passed away. The funeral ceremony was arranged. Thereafter, she finally refused to continue with our relationship. The lover was a soldier and he took my wife from me. My father, brother and myself went there on two occasions to talk to her, but she refused. I came back in the year 2001. One of the children is with her and the other two are with me.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Momoh, we know what it means to have your wife taken away from you. However, we will ask you some questions for clarification.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We sympathize with you and we have heard your story. Have you ever talked to the AFRC soldier?

Momoh: Yes I did.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What did he say?

Momoh: He said she couldn't turn again. At that time, he had power. He was a driver. At the time it happened, I was really annoyed, but now thanks be to God.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: Did you suffer any harm by any person personally?

Momoh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the Commission how?

Momoh: During the time of the January 6 invasion, the time the rebels and soldiers captured Freetown, a lot of damage was done. Our house was burnt down and everything was burnt. Those wheel chairs the amputee used were put up in the ceiling of the house. They told us that these were government properties. They met only two of us at home. They left us and came back, about twenty-four of

them and they were firing. They took me to clay factory. The man said I should give him the wheel chair. Fortunately, the fellow who had the wheel chair came up and asked me for them. I told him that I was arrested for the wheel chair. He told them to release me.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know the AFRC person?

Momoh: Yes, I know him by one name, Sheriff.

Leader of Evidence: If you see any soldier come around you, what comes to your mind?

Momoh: I have forgotten about that.

Leader of Evidence: I am asking this question because the Commission has a say in this country. We thank God you did come in contact with Sheriff. Whenever you see that man it becomes fresh in your mind.

Chairman Bishop Humper: I want to thank you for coming.

Momoh: Our children that were supposed to be educated are now grown up. We are appealing to the government to assist us in arranging education for our children. The second thing is the bad road. Traveling from Kenema to Koidu is bad. Not too far from June to August we will get serious problems on the road because of the rain.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Your protection is assured and guaranteed.

PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD ON 13TH MAY 2003 IN KAILAHUN

1ST Witness – Maya Gaba

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Maya Gaba. The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Professor Kamara administered the oath.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: We thank you for coming to participate in this hearing. I want to remind you that this is not a court. It is only a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Please relax to tell us your experience.

TESTIMONY

We were in Pendembu in 1991. It was on a Saturday morning when we heard that Bomaru was attacked. On that Saturday on March 23, 1991, people were moving from Pendembu. I asked why they were moving and said that the war had reached us. We were told that the attackers were thieves and that they had a deal with the soldiers who refused to pay them. Another attack took place in one week's time. A large number of people were coming from the area. When they arrived, we asked them why and they told us that the war had finally reached Sierra Leone. We started moving from Pendembu. One day, we saw soldiers coming and at that time my father was a town chief. A soldier came and told my father that the war had entered Sierra Leone and that they could not confront these rebels they are from Liberia. They had therefore decided to go to Daru. Everybody was moving helter skelter. Some went to Daru and others went to other places. I had no chance to move because my parents were blind; I was unable to take them along. I took them to the village. After some days, we heard that they had attacked Kailahun. Those who braved the situation were there until the rebels reached Pendembu. We were in the village. They then came and told us that the rebels had finally entered and that their fight will last for three months. The rebels said that they had not come for poor people but for the government. We whom they met in the town were told to get out of the bush and get back to town. The number of rebels from Liberia increased. Some went to Bomaru and others to Pendembu. After a couple of days, they captured so many areas. They also captured Bunumbu. They then fortified all the areas they had captured. No soldiers were amongst them at that time. There were more rebels. They then proceeded to the barracks and there was heavy fighting. We stopped all our farm work. People told us to continue our farm work as the rebels did not come for us. We started farming again. Not too long, they started entering our village. When they entered there, they captured our cattle and took away our belongings. It was too much for us and we went into the bush. When we came back to town, the rebels talked to us to still continue to work. In 1991, we had a Commando called Charles, alias Rambo. His niece came to us and told us that they had killed Rambo. Among those people that brought the news to us were different tribes. There were Kissi, Pele and Gio people. Whilst the fighting was going on the fighters from Liberia were called the vanguards. The number of national fighters out numbered the vanguards. We again witnessed where they forcefully recruited our brothers into the group. When our parents asked them, they said they were going to recruit them. The vanguards said that they had plans to fight the war to some point and then leave it with the Sierra Leoneans. They started training some boys. Whilst we were in hiding, they followed the foot paths to where we were hiding. If they met you with food, they would take it and rape your wife in front of you. I was a victim. I was sleeping with my wife when four of them took me outside, under gun point, and took

my wife and had sex with her. At that time we did not know the leader of the war, but we were told that the leader was Sankoh and he was in Koindu. The complaint about the harassment reached him and he came to Kailahun.

Sankoh said that he was the leader of the war and he was not alone. "Even if I succeed, said Sankoh, I will not be the president. There is somebody who will be the President. That is why you need to be patient in spite of all the sufferings you go through. APC is not doing anything for you in this country. You are supposed to be car owners in this country. That is why I have come to overthrow the APC and bring back SLPP. But some of our people knew SLPP before and started telling us details about SLPP. Then some of us started to calm ourselves. Thereafter we stayed together for a long time. When we were staying together, any time Sankoh left for somewhere, they punished us. Some of our brothers who went for training came and told us that they had started eating our brothers in the camp. That was too much for the boys. After some time, we saw a number of boys coming from one village handing themselves in for training. Their number surpassed the number of Liberians. After the training they refused to give them guns and moved them from place to place without guns. It came to a time when they had a movement called tap 20. Any time they moved they would kill a lot of people. They always told the boys to carry their load. If you refused their orders, they would kill you. We were to take them to Foya Kama. If you went safely to Foya, on your way coming if you were not doing any work they would take you back to Foya. People were forced to carry heavy loads like freezers. Upon the return of Sankoh from Pujehun the number of complaints from the boys increased. Sankoh told us "Gentlemen let me ask you, are you not men in your country? If you are really men you will not be afraid of these kinds of things. After the discussion the Gio people started killing our people. After all those sufferings, in 1992 even Foday Sankoh himself felt the hitches of the war. The only person they respected was one man Pa Jim. He was also a rebel commando. They then didn't take orders from Sankoh; they took orders from Pa Jim. He started realizing that the complaints from his boys were true. He then told the boys that they had to join the movement and that he wanted them to fight for their country. Anytime they brought arms from Charles Taylor, he hid them. Any time the Gio people told him that they had run out of arms, he would tell them to go away that he had not received any arms from Charles Taylor. The Gio people finally ran out of arms. He then went to Charles Taylor and told him that the boys he sent had committed series of atrocities and that he didn't want them anymore. He told him that he had his own boys to fight the war. There were some boys who were given to him by Charles Taylor; They are called vanguards. They would just look at you and kill you. Sankoh told the boys to drive away all Liberians from Sierra Leone. The boys succeeded in driving them away. Those trained in Liberia were called the Vanguards. Sankoh was assisted by C.O. Mohamed who was then called C.O. Issa. There were many of them and they had various names. They carried on with the war for a long time; unto the point where the NPRC forces made an advance. We were happy for that kind of attack hoping that the soldiers would come to rescue us. All they did was to stop at Pendembu and they stayed there for a long time. The soldiers were at Pendembu and civilian presence would only be seen at Pendembu and onwards.

The Gio fighters harassed the people who were trying to bring salt to us; it was a false allegation. They captured up to 30 people in our village; 29 were killed and one saved. Our village was called Moyamu leading to Kailahun. They were killed at one bridge. Any resident of Ngiehun who came across to the town was killed. That made us to leave our town and some went to Koindu. The only man who was saved was a half man and he is still alive. Before killing them they put a drum of oil on fire and used it on them. One of my sister's son was asked to have sex with his mother. After that they killed them. The war ceased after sometime and we came back to the village. We were there for some time then the soldiers started their attacks. We were captured. There were three of us; me, Keni Salia and Musa. Then the Gio fighters had been driven away. On our way back, Keni Salia was captured and killed. I had nowhere to go because I had grand parents. It was in 1992 that they were finally laid to rest. After their death a massive advance, ordered by Tom Nyuma took place up to Koidu. Whilst we were moving towards Koindu, my wife and children were separated from me. They went towards the Liberia border and I went to the Guinea border. We did not see one another again. I had a sister called

Theresa with whom I decided to cross over into Guinea. There were a lot of people at that point. The rebels told us that that kind of advance the soldiers were making was not for civilians, so we should go ahead as they were listening to their commanders. We were all scattered. When we got to the crossing point, we demanded that the Guineans should go with us and they consented. We were at the riverside when the Guinean soldiers launched RPG on us; they opened fire on us. That was when they fired my sister. After which everybody scattered and I continued to drag her to a village where she survived. By 4:00 p.m., she regained consciousness and we started talking; we were alone. We passed the night there and I left her to go and search for food.

I came in contact with a boy called Lansana and I told him that they had fired my sister. Lansana assisted me and she was put on a stretcher. They told us that we had been saved. They started encouraging us. We began to realize that those who told us that the soldiers would kill us were telling lies. As we arrived, my sister was taken to the hospital. Then the rebels attacked again. One of the army Commanders told me that he wanted to assist me, but I would have to pay him. He said that he wanted to marry one of my sisters. I told him that the girl was mature enough to decide for herself; so if she so desired, they could go ahead. The help he would give to us was to put my sister in a car and take her to Daru; I would join the vehicle to Daru. We were in Daru when they brought my sister and her condition was critical. We were waiting for the red cross vehicle to go to Kenema. In Kenema we called Bishop to collect my sister.

I was in Daru between 1993 and 1997. President Kabba was elected in 1996 but was overthrown by soldiers in 1997. That caused a lot of trouble in Daru. We were interacting peacefully in Daru. What happened was that we shared experience with one another. At that time the soldiers and Kamajors were working together. After the overthrow of Pa Kabba, the Kamajors were driven away. They started killing. After that it came to a time when the intervention took place. The Kamajors started revenging. It happened at one time when people saw a vehicle coming towards Daru they told us that the Kamajors had dropped off in Kenema. Any time they came to Daru they would just pass straight away. We also started leaving Daru. I personally said to myself that I should return to the village. We were there when the Kamajors came and captured Daru. I moved from Daru to Kenema. I was staying in Kenema up to the time Pa Kabba was reinstated. Then I said I would not return until the war came to an end. We heard that everybody should return to his or her village after the President was reinstated. We again heard by hearsay that Mosquito had passed an order. The order was that all those who had moved from their places must go back to Kailahun. They collected all those who were from Kailahun. At that time I was not in Kailahun but we heard the news. On our return, all those captured were alleged to be Kamajors and they were killed. Most of us were not Kamajors but mere palm wine tappers. That is what I know about the war.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you for your testimony.
Did you join the boys who were rebels?

Maya: No I did not join. Nobody in Kailahun can testify against me. My mother and father were sick. At that time rebels who were brought in by Charles Taylor were harassing our people and killing them. They killed the boys. They said if we were afraid of them, they would kill us. So the best thing was to join them for us to leave as free men.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: The whole of 1991, you had a lot of information how did you get these information?

Maya: I was staying with them up to 1993 when I left them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you know the leader of the rebels?

Maya: No, it was only Foday Sankoh. We were made to understand that the leader was Charles Taylor. He was giving them logistical support.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What faction did you fight for?

Maya: I did not fight for any faction, but I was forced to work for RUF; we were forced to work for them and to cook for them.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We want to thank you very much for this presentation
I want to believe that according to your testimony, there were two sets of rebels;
Rebels coming from Liberia and rebels trained in Sierra Leone.

Maya: The Liberian rebels actually brought the war to Sierra Leone.

Chairman Bishop Humper: So Foday Sankoh had to get the Liberian rebels out of this
country; Am I right?

Maya: Charles ordered them to go but they refused. So he then told Sankoh not to
supply them with any ammunition. "Now that your boys are capable of fighting
the war hold on to the ammunitions and don't supply them" he said.

Chairman Bishop Humper: At the end of the day, Foday Sankoh sent them back to Liberia.

Maya: Yes

Chairman Bishop Humper: Those that were trained in this country?

Maya: Yes

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say that when Foday Sankoh went to Pendembu
he said "My people I have come to liberate you".

Maya: That was what I said.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you or your people hear anything different from what Foday
Sankoh said?

Maya: No, because we were in great suffering they brought us to zero.

Chairman Bishop Humper: During the rebel war it is our understanding that the Kamajors
and the ECOMOG were fighting against the rebels.

Maya: Yes

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say that after the coup on May 25, 1997 the
soldiers drove the Kamajors?

Maya: Yes

Chairman Bishop Humper: So the soldiers joined the rebels?

Maya: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: There were two attacks on Bomaru one on the 23rd and the other on 31st March. According to you it is only the second attack that launched the rebel war, the first one was an expedition, am I correct?

Maya: The first one was on Saturday, that was what we were told. They did not come to settle; after the fighting they went back. They finally came the second time and they settled.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So you are saying that the real launching of the rebel war was on the 31st?

Maya: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You and your family were separated from the war, what do you know about them?

Maya: When we were separated, they went towards the Liberia border and the rebels used the same route. We were not in Daru when I heard that she had been bitten by a snake whilst finding fruit. There was nobody to take care of the children. The second son died of hunger. I have married another wife and she has bore children.

Leader of evidence

Leader of Evidence: Can I take you back to the first attack at Bamaru, which in your understanding was a business transaction between Liberia and Sierra Leone soldiers?

Maya: That was what we were told. They said they ran a business between themselves and the Sierra Leone soldiers did not complete their transaction. We believed because they did not settle after the attack.

Ozonnia; Can you tell us the name of these soldiers?

Maya: We were only told that they were doing business with soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: Did they tell you that they came to overthrow the APC?

Maya: Yes that was what they said. They said that APC was not doing anything for the people. That was in-fact the reason why they were not paying the government workers.

Leader of Evidence: My question is did Sankoh tell you who will be the president because he said even if he won the war he would not be the president?

Maya: He told us that he would not be president. It is difficult for a man to open himself to another person. He was still the rebel leader. According to him, the war was an organized war and he was just chosen to be the leader.

Leader of Evidence: How long did this training about SLPP last or did you get details about SLPP?

Maya: All what they told us about SLPP was that Sankoh wanted to bring SLPP back to power and he had come to overthrow APC

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much for your presentation and you have answered all the questions. Now it is your turn to ask us any question about the TRC.

Maya: I have a word to say to the commissioner.
This war had entered this country and everything had been brought to a halt. As they are telling us to have mercy on each other, we pray that we will do that. If we all say we are going to revenge, we will never have peace in the country. If we have grudge in the Kailahun district we will not be able to organize men to brush the farm. That is why I am appealing to the commission to continue to reconcile the people and to talk to government to help us especially in making our roads and providing medical centres. Those people who are clever in this community are doing the same work as this commission is doing. We don't even have money again to brush our farms except we cry to government to loan us some money. This is what I have for the commission.

2nd Witness - Bockarie K. Vannah

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Bockarie Vannah. The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Professor Kamara administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

I heard about the war on March 23, from Bomaru. That was the time that the soldiers and rebels from Liberia were fighting. We were told that the fighting was for a Land Rover that the Liberian soldiers sold to the Sierra Leonean soldiers. After two days we heard that they had plans to enter

the village. We also heard that they entered a village and fought there. I also heard that they entered Koindu in 1991. We were in our own village. Messages were reaching us frequently. We went into the bush. At that time I had my father and my in law with me. (Both have passed away.) We went into the bush one day and I had planned to come and collect some of our properties. On my arrival a boy pointed the gun at me and said if I moved he would kill me. He ordered me to follow him. We got to a place where I saw some other people sitting down: they were ten in number. I was told to join them. Then one man stood up among them; he said his name was Edward Kenyeh. He said that they started the war and he was a Mende. He said once they had brought the war, they must win it also. "Now we would like to warn you. Don't move about. Sit where you are. Go and bring your relatives if they are in the bush," he ordered. Most of us did not comply. We stayed in the bush for two weeks.

The town was blessed; no gun was shot; nobody was killed. Edward then said that if we had daughters we should take them to the bush because they had been nice to them. But they had very wicked ones among them. "Go to your farm and stay there. Don't move about. Don't go to Liberia or Guinea," he advised. We were there for three weeks before they left. They came and asked for a shop where rice was sold. They said they wanted to see all the business men in the village. The people who were in the town hid their business men. One of my teachers told me he was shot close to his leg and was forced to show where they sold rice. All the rice was collected and brought outside and shared among the people. They asked for the headmaster in the town and they were told that he had left for Guinea. Where we were in hiding, somebody told me not to go to town because they had asked for me. At the start, things were a bit ok. The guy who came and distributed the rice left and for about three months, nobody came. Rebels were moving from Pendembu in large numbers saying that they could not fight the war, so they were leaving. People were rejoicing. Whilst they were rejoicing, there were rebels who were taking down names of those who were rejoicing. Their names were Santi and S.I. Kanu

After one week, the fellow who came to talk to us arrived with one man named C.O. Jiaffa who was from Sandaru. He had four guns. They told us that they had come to kill the people who were rejoicing. Nobody was caught on that day. On that day houses were burnt including the section chief's house. His assistant, Bockarie Johnny's house was also burnt. However, nobody was killed. It was on that day we were told that because we did not have any commander in the village that was why we did not have respect for the war. From that day onwards, they decided to leave a ground commander. We were to feed him. He was to be fed three times a day and he agreed. After the leaders had left, Saan was divided into three parts; I was in one group. The two names I mentioned have past away. Every Monday, we went hunting; all three groups. That went on for a long time. There was a group they formed which was called tap 20. Whenever members of this group passed by, they killed the people. It was in February 1992 that we all realised that they were not joking. It was at that time that Banahewa Tucker and two other men were killed. One of the two men was mad.

So many people went to Liberia. I went to a town called Puju. We went there, but we did not meet many people there. My in-law welcomed us. He told us that he was also moving out, but since we had just arrived, he would stay. The location of that particular sight was noticeable. I later heard that Sankoh stayed in Kenema for some time. We were there at one time when the town chief caught a boa constrictor. He was asked to bring the boa constrictor, but the chief said he did not have it. The commander in Puju at that time was called Peter. We had another Peter called Peter Congoli. Then Peter commanded the town chief to bring the boa constrictor. He was going through judgment for five days. One morning the chief was asked to go into the bush to hand over the boa constrictor. If anybody got near them he would lose his life. They went and were there for the whole day. We were afraid of them. It was on that same day that the chief passed away and he was buried in the town. We were asleep when we heard a noise. We did not come out. At daybreak we did not go there, but we could see the grave from our house. A big fire was lit on the grave. When Peter Congoli went to Freetown, he joined the rebels. I had wanted to go and testify against him, but my wife stopped me. I am just saying that if people did not know the Peter that killed the Chief, Peter Congoli killed the chief.

My in-law was unable to walk. We were there one day and they told us that the soldiers were advancing toward Pendembu. We, the few literate ones gathered and celebrated in the bush. I was the leading singer and others were dancing. We heard that they had reached Kailahun. They stayed in Kailahun for three weeks. Later on the fighting intensified. We were told that soldiers were at Sandaru junction. They left us and moved to Sandaru and then to Koindu. They told us not to follow them into the bush.

The elders of the town gathered us and asked me how we were going to live as there were no Kamajors or soldiers. We decided to collect our relatives and move with them to Pendembu. On arrival, only six of us survived. Two ran away and went back to the village. We came across soldiers. We did not run away. One soldier was among them he was called Momoh. He ordered them to take one of us to be killed; Nyuma Fayia was with them along with a civilian. Then we were asked to tell them where we were going. There were a lot of civilians but no presence of soldiers. "Are you not rebels yourselves?" they asked. We said we were not. No sooner we arrived in town than everybody started dancing. We were gathered outside and then I saw with my own eyes quick marriages being made.

They went back. When they went, they did not come back. The following day our elders came again. We went there and reached the town. On arrival everybody was stripped naked, except me. There was one soldier called Corporal Ten. Another boy called Tiger was in control. He told us that amongst us were his schoolmates Sidikie and Morie Jusu. Five people were locked up. "I have come to tell you that our people are in the bush," I said. "You are all rebels. We are going to start with you," one of them replied. We were ordered to go back as we had no command. I was taken to a Lt. A.O. Bangura. He asked me about my mission to the place. I told him that I had been sent to my people so that I could tell them that we were not in the bush. That was why they wanted to kill me. We were six in number. What were we to do? Then all of us were freed and we were each given a pass. No sooner had we arrived than the people came towards us, very early in the morning, it was on 16th November 1993. On arrival we took out the things we had, like machetes for our people to do some work in the bush. We were taken to the MIB. My name was the first to be written down. A.T. Kaneh, a colleague of mine had his name also written. "If you have taken down our names go and look for a house for us" he told them. A bullet came from nowhere and hit him on the chest. The person who shot the gun was not known and they brought him to us. They told us that they wanted to kill him for killing that man. Sensible people told us we should not agree. I and some others collected the dead body of that man to be buried.

On 21st November they came demanding to see the MIB and me. I was entering the office when I was asked to tell them whether I knew MIB. I said "yes". They asked me if I had ever joined the rebel group. They took off my shirt and put me in a cell. I met two others in the cell. Some were respectful people; dispenser Tombah was there. We were there when they came and collected us at night. He asked me if I knew A.M. Sidique.

The following day, one man came with a grenade and said that he was going to kill all of us. One woman grabbed the grenade and urged him not to kill us. She was Mariama. A soldier who was sitting on the veranda brought a gun and told us that he was going to kill all of us because we had stolen a tin of palm oil. Mariama came and pleaded for us. The man asked her to pay for the palm oil. We were called one day to make statements. I was asked to talk about my status during the war. I was the priest in the church at that time. They said Pastor Bangura and I should work in the Church. We should go to bed at 5:00 a.m. and wake up at 10:00 a.m. We were there when they asked us to go to court one day. Lt. Conteh, alias Banta, addressed us and told us that the government had granted a blanket amnesty. That was when NPRC was in power. We were told that we should tell all the rebels in the bush to come out. Anybody whose relatives were in the bush should come back to the village. I started seeing rebels coming to surrender. Some people were going to collect their own children. Things were getting better. One day Pastor Bangura told me that I was to prepare a sermon as we went to collect the people. He promised to assist me with his vehicle. They were going to kill the people they had captured.

He helped me to transport my family in two's. At 4:00 p.m. we heard gun shots. We were held up till 11:00 p.m. When we came out we heard that there were 75 boys who were captured and killed. Nobody went to investigate. We were permitted to move a little and pass around. Some were amputated. Nobody braved it to go and look there. All those boys who were detained were killed. I walked by a house. I saw all the clothes they used to cover the dead bodies. The soldiers were then passing around to see if we were crying. Pastor Bangura assisted me to send my wife to Freetown and my mother to Guinea.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow

We thank you for the submission.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You were a Head Teacher of the school during the war.

Bockarie: I was Headmaster before the war. I was also a Pastor.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: I will like you to tell me of the people in your village.

Bockarie: Some of the young people joined the rebels voluntarily; some of them were joining the rebels. The worse thing that happened was that a group of people went to us demanding that they wanted 100 rebels. We did not give them, but they went round and wrote about 20 names. The chief and I begged them not to take the people away. They said if we did not allow them to go, they would kill us.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Have they all returned?

Bockarie: A good number of them have not returned. We are all in peace: nobody has ever accused anybody of being a rebel.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: In your testimony, you made mention of three captains. You said they supervised the killing of about 75 people. Did you see these people?

Bockarie: I was not present when the order was passed, but they were in control. They were in the town at that time.

Bishop Humper

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you locate the mass grave where those people were buried?

Bockarie: They were not buried together: they buried them in four's. I did not witness the burial.

My voice was recorded on a tape. There are a lot of things I cannot explain here now. My daughter was attending school in Freetown. She was in form five. Upon completion, she decided to visit us. At the time my daughter came to Kenema, she had jerry curls and a pair of trousers on. As they came in contact with her, she was alleged to be the wife of a soldier and she was shot. I found the corpse of the girl ablaze. The following morning I came and saw the remains. People told me to leave because if they saw me, they would kill me. I was told at one point in time to join the Kamajors, but I told them that I am a Christian. The people then had different feelings about us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Commissioner Jow asked you about those 75 people and asked you who the people were after the NPRC gave Amnesty to the rebels.

Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence

Leader of Evidence: Capt. Masasqoi, Lt. Yoki and Conteh, do you know where they are now?

Bockarie: I don't know their whereabouts. I was told that Ct. Yoki is in the marine section of the army.

Leader of Evidence: The conclusion is that the NPRC sent soldiers to protect the people.

Bockarie: They were even worse than the rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Did you say your daughter was killed because they accused her of being the wife of a rebel.

Bockarie: The Kamajors had the opinion that any neatly dressed woman had dealings with soldiers.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Bockarie, we have been asking you questions, it is now your turn to ask questions or make recommendations.

Bockarie: I want to send a message. I want this commission to tell the government that before the war, we had a beautiful hospital: we had good schools in this town, but as we have come back, we have no houses, no school structures and the children in the school are up to 627. There is no schooling during the raining season. I want you to tell the government to provide us with those beautiful facilities so that we can live in peace. If these are provided for us, we will be happy. Our daughters are very backward here; not that they are not intelligent. I want the government to assist in establishing vocational institutions for our daughters. The perpetrators are now engaged in vocational skills.

3rd Witness – Messie Samba

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Messie Samba. Commissioner Professor Kamara administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

In 1991 I was staying at Ngiehun. It was a market day and we were told that people were running. We did not ask why they were running. We ran away and went far off. The people told us that the soldiers and rebels were fighting in Bomaru. We asked what they were fighting for and we were told that the rebels and soldiers had a dispute because the soldiers did not give the rebels their money. It was not too long we saw people running. On that day, we went to the farm and I saw people moving with their luggages. We then packed our loads and came to my father. I told my father that we should go to the bush. My father said that one should not go to the bush without knowing what the fighting was about. We were told again that there was another fight in Daru. My child was in Pendembu. The day on which I went for him, they told me that he had gone somewhere. On my way, I met some people at the gate. I was told that nobody should enter Daru. I was told that we could not pass through that way but people were passing there with their luggages. I was told that I had to sit where I was. In the evening, we were sitting down when we saw people passing. We sat for a while then I told my father to go into the bush and he agreed. The rebels were wearing combat fatigues. Some of them had boots and some had bowler hats. They went to the town chief. They told him that they had come but that they had nothing to eat. The chief was blind and could not afford food for them. The chief said he had no wife who would prepare food for them. People were running away. Later they asked the chief to give them some cassava. The chief asked whether the people were soldiers. Then my father replied "I don't know, you can identify them; if they were soldiers they should have been in full kits". That was what we heard and all of us ran away. We did not know whether they were soldiers or rebels. We did not hear any gun shot. After two months in the bush, sometimes, some people came and watched the town and went back. I decided to come and see for myself. I took the route to Guinea.

As I was about to enter the town, I saw somebody with a gun and a padlock on his mouth. As soon as he saw me, he shouted "My wife" and I could not run away. He pointed the gun at me. He asked me where I was coming from. I said that I was coming from the bush. He asked who was with me. I said my family. I wanted to ask for his name, but I was afraid. Then he told me to tell the people that they were there for the war which should last for three months. "We have not come for the poor, but for the government. You people who are going to the bush will stay there indefinitely. It is better for you to come back to town," he said. He pointed the gun at me. I could not move. He took out some biscuits from his pocket and gave them to me. He told me to go but I was afraid. "Do you know my name?" I asked what his name was and he told me that he was C.O. Foday. I then ran away and went back to the bush. I was in the bush for a week. All those who were captured were sent back to the bush. They started setting fire on our houses and we all went back to town. They did not want stealing and raping. If you and your wife were sleeping they would take your wife from you. They did that for a while and told us that we should come to Kailahun. During that time Foday Sankoh was there. There was a lot of firing; it was after three months. They called everybody to the court barray. We met several heads at the court barray; there were over twenty people. We didn't understand the language they spoke. I saw about three people, whom they said were from Charles Taylor. All the elders could not be identified because they were dressed differently. Foday Sankoh was there. He said we were the ones fighting the war; that he was not the leader, he was just the messenger. He said that he had come to remove APC and reinstate SLPP. People were hungry. Most of the people ran away. Everybody went back. His followers stayed and whenever we asked them, they would say

that they had come to fight for us. Sometimes they raped. At one time, he went to Ngiehun and called everybody together in order to talk to them. After a while, Sankoh came from Liberia and he was training the others. He started arresting people; all the young men were arrested. He was doing that every morning, killing people and he sometimes lined them up. Then people started complaining. The elders said we could not give our children to fight if they could not handle the war. After a while, he told them that he was going to inform Charles Taylor that his people had caused a lot of atrocities. Charles Taylor told him not to give his people any more arms. We were in the house when we saw the Gio people running away the following day. We did not see any one. It was the same thing they did at Serabu. When they entered some villages they killed everybody. The tap 20 was killing people and they did not see Foday Sankoh again but Sankoh told us that that would not stop the war. After all those atrocities, they went out. They granted Amnesty to those that were recruited. Those that were trained in Liberia were called "Special Forces". Those that were taken from Kailahun to Liberia were called Vanguard. Those that were trained here were Commandos. Anybody that they met on the way, they took away. After they had done that, Sankoh told them that they should have their own base. We were still in Kailahun, my younger sister and I. They said anyone who did not go to the base would be killed. We were instructed to go to the base, every one of us. Then we went to the base. We walked for the whole day and we were told that what we had was what we should eat. The people suggested that we should have a dance for the whole night. We played music until the following morning. It was a big place. We in our section had one latrine and one house. We were there for three days doing that work that was assigned to us. We did not finish the work, but they asked us to go back. After which, we heard that the soldiers were coming. We were sitting down when some people met us and asked my husband whether he was a native of Ngiehun. He was told that that was the reason why they wanted all of us to connive and overthrow Foday Sankoh. When they were taking them away, I followed them. They asked me to go back and told me that I should not follow them. My husband then told me to go back. He removed his purse and gave it to me. They tied him up. After three days they killed him. The other gentleman whom they took together with my husband came and told me that my husband was dead. He did not say the truth. After about two or three days, they came to arrest us. They tied all of us up. They stripped us naked and took all our belongings away. They put the guns on our head and fired. After a while, they told us that they had burnt some palm oil and they would pour it on our bodies. That was what they did to my husband. A man called Mr. Brima was arrested as soon as he got up. They took the oil and poured it on him. He lay on the floor as if he was dead. I gave them the key and show them where our properties were. After that they said they had killed my husband and they should take us to Kenema. I was still in Liberia. I told my family that we should go back to the soldiers. They were in the house when they said the rebels were to launch an attack. We were there for six months. We told them that they should take us to Daru. After one year I came back to Kailahun. That is all I know.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you for your submission, my colleagues will ask you some questions for clarifications.

Chairman Bishop Humber: We want to thank you for your courage to share your experience. When Sankoh called for those women, what else did he say?

Messie: The only thing he said was "this is the woman I want".

Chairman Bishop Humber: What was the attitude of the soldiers in Kailahun and subsequently in Daru?

Messie: The soldiers took good care of us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Am I right to say that **your description of the town** and that there was a time when the rebels were taking your belongings and using people's wives at Ngiehun?

Messie: Yes, they took everything away.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were these the rebels Sankoh recruited out of the country?

Messie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: No questions

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Messie, we have asked you a number of questions, it is now your turn to ask questions or make recommendations.

Messie: I don't have any questions; I just want to send a message to the government. I want to tell the government that now that we have decided to reconcile with our people we want the government to assist in rebuilding all the places that were damaged during the war. We also want our children to be educated.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: We thank you for your recommendations, we shall take them into consideration when writing our report.

4th Witness - Morie Feika

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara

Commissioner Bishop JC Humper

Commissioner Aminata Jow

Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Morie Feika. The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Professor Kamara administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

I was in college, Bo Teachers College, doing my HTC IN 1991. I was there when I heard that there was fighting in Bomaru. We did not know what caused the fighting; it was during Easter holidays. Later, my friend who was a CID officer told me that there was fighting in Koindu. They were taking care of me until I went to college. I left Freetown on April 4th and I slept in Kenema. On my way, I was arrested in Daru. The person in-charge was Marray Conteh who was OC in charge; he accused me of being a rebel. In those days, it was frightening to be accused of being a rebel. My passport pictures were shown to her with some other student identifications. They then asked me what I was going to do back at college. Even though they were killing people, he advised me to go together with the soldiers. There was reinforcement from Teko barracks. The gentleman handed me over to the commander. When I realised that my family were not there, I walked around and was fortunate to see people. They told me that my family were at Ngiehun. I told the man that I was going to the village to collect my family. I asked him to give me two people to follow me. He told me not to worry. I went to the village and collected my family. The war that entered this country was not good. We took a bag of rice with us. We were still in our village when they said that the war would last for three months and that the war was not for us. I returned to Kailahun on the 12th. On 13th April we saw soldiers running away; we did not know what was happening. I went to the man and he told me that I should go back. He said I should not go as something was wrong. I did not use the round-about. Everybody was confused. Before that, I saw people moving all about. All the soldiers ran away. The following day, I had to run away. I told my family that the rebels had entered Kailahun. My family told me that we should go to the bush. We were there for two weeks and we were afraid. Anybody who was neatly dressed would be termed as a Momoh soldier. In the evening we heard that the rebels were on their way to the village. When the rebels entered the village they asked for me. The man who was asking for me went back where I was hiding. They said he was fearful. I used to help him when we were going to school. He asked whether I knew him. He was so fearfully dressed that I could not recognize him. He started laughing. He told me that he was Jimmy. We went to school together. He told me that he knew me; and I knew him. There was a little boy who ran to help me as soon as he saw me. He asked if I was the Momoh soldier. At that time they were speaking Liberian pidgin. The boy asked me if I was a Momoh soldier. I said I was not a soldier. I asked him who brought the war. He said they had somebody supporting them and his name was Foday Sankoh. I asked whether he was a Sierra Leonean or a Liberian. He told me that he was a Sierra Leonean; he was a photographer. "We have just come to remove APC," he said. The other boy said that we should have a palm tree or a green cloth on our hand. Wherever we went we slept and continued the following day. I decided to go to Guinea; and I went through Parahun to enter Ngiehun. He asked whether I was spying on them so that I could report them. When we heard of rebels, we thought you had tails etc.

There was a gentleman named Isaac. He told me that I should not leave; they were going back to Kailahun. I did not argue with them because they had guns. There was a boss among them who was called Moses; he saw me. He asked me whether I was a student or whether I knew anything about APC. "What I am telling you is that APC did a lot of bad things to our people," he said. I was there for a while then they started assigning people as chief all over the place. I did not want to come back to Kailahun. In the morning, he called all of us. I was a secretary then. They told us that Sankoh was coming to Kailahun. On our way, we met him. We even asked him before we entered. We just heard about his name, but we didn't know him. Sankoh said even if he died somebody would replace me. On that day when we told them that we were chiefs they allowed us to go. In 1992, a lot of our brothers joined the organisation. They were either used as manpower or they ran away into the bush. We were here for a long time then we were told that all Liberians should return to Liberia.

After that, we survived and all of them went back. I told my family that I was returning to Kailahun. We started working at the G2 office. We were there when a lady told me that she wanted to work with me. We were there in 1993, when soldiers entered Pendembu. We were in the bush where I got news that my family was in the bush. I was in the bush in Koindu. I was

hoping to go to Ngiema and meet my family. We stayed there and were told that all the soldiers had returned to Daru. We were working with them when they arrested us. Even if you didn't know anything, they arrested you. All those who were working with guns, were free then. After the war, we went to the DDR Camp. Issa Sesay sent people here to tell us that RUF and APC were one.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You told us your story as somebody who joined the RUF; you did not commit any atrocities. Did you fight?

Morie: I was there as a liaison officer. When they arrested the civilians and brought them to us, we were the people who talked with them so that they would know that they had civilians with them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We have taken into consideration your written testimony and verbal testimony. You mentioned Col. Sandy; do you know him?

Morie: Yes, I know him.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Who was he?

Morie: I knew Tom Sandy; he was in town here as a trainer. He was at the base and he was removed there and sent to Kailahun and after a while, he left the village and came back to Kailahun.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did Tom Sandy train you?

Morie: He went for the basic training, but did not fight with them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you commit any atrocities?

Morie: I don't think I have done anything bad to anybody.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I am sure you saw something bad being done to people.

Morie: Yes, I had seen a lot of bad things. I never was there when those things happened.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you actually meet Foday Sankoh?

Morie: For 11 good years, I did not see him.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How did you see his movement?

Morie: I never sat down or worked with him. When he came to visit us that was when I saw him. When we reported the soldiers to him, he even demoted them and punished them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you witness the abduction and detention of those people?

Morie: Yes

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell the Commission how it happened?

Morie: I cannot tell you all what happened, but I heard that those people were arrested.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Against this background I will want to ask you a few questions about your organization. From your experience, did you join the RUF primarily for survival?

Morie: I joined the organisation because of my family. I told them a couple of times to leave, but they refused. I was there to protect them.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know anything about Zogoda?

Morie: I heard about it; that was Sankoh's base. When the war intensified around this area, he moved there. I did not go there but I was told that training was going on there.

Chairman Bishop Humper: As you look back at those 11 years, will you call them "wasted years"?

Morie: It was not my intention to join any organisation. I must say thanks to God because of my life.

Chairman Bishop Humper: If given the opportunity, will you like to continue your education?

Morie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Will you say sorry to the people of Sierra Leone for all what had happened?

Morie: I am about to apologise; now I am going to apologise to everybody.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You have apologized to everybody in Sierra Leone. Did you say you disarmed and went to the DDR camp?

Morie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you enjoy all the facilities of disarmament?

Morie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Which means you handed over a weapon?

Morie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So you had a weapon?

Morie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: If you are a non-fighting RUF what were you doing with a weapon?

Morie: There were guns in the store. When the disarmament process started, Issa sent a message that we should not disarm in Kailahun. We refused and said since they had disarmed in Makeni, we should disarm here in Kailahun. Then the store was opened for us to take guns in order to disarm. It was not that a gun was assigned to me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You worked for a lady in the RUF; What was her name and her position?

Morie: Satta Bernard, she was in charge of social welfare in 1993, but when the soldiers came they took her away.

Leader of Evidence: You said you have apologised to the people of Sierra Leone; do you know the meaning of apology?

Morie: Once I have taken an oath on this Koran all what I am saying here is the truth.

Leader of Evidence: Morie, tell me, look at your people and tell me if you want to reconcile with them.

Morie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Are you willing to first acknowledge what happened and apologise to them?

Morie: I am ready to reconcile.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know that Tom Sandy made a statement about you and himself?

Morie: No, I was the G5 in kailahun.

Ozonnia; You worked with Mustapha and Tom Sandy?

Morie; They met me here.

Leader of Evidence: Now your unit was responsible for atrocities; tell your people in their faces.

Morie: I have never handled a gun; I used to work with the civilians.

Leader of Evidence: Some of the captured women are still in Kailahun

Morie: Our own group never captured the civilians. When they were arrested, we defended them.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know Patrick Banda? He was the judge for the Kamajors.

Morie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Your unit was also responsible for the killing of the Kamajors.

Morie: No.

Leader of Evidence: would you like to come to the closed hearings?

Morie: If you say so, I will not refuse.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Feika do you have any questions to ask or recommendations to make to the Commission?

Morie: The question that I want to ask is I Feika; I want to know from the commission if they have received any statement from anybody that I have done wrong. If I

know the person I will like him to tell me what wrong I have done. I am not thinking about anything except my education. I want to go back to college.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The exchange you had with the Leader of Evidence is not anything to do with complaint. He has acted on your statement that you were part of the RUF. You have to accept that the RUF caused a lot of atrocities in this country. We have to meet you back on this.

5th Witness – Joe Fatorma

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara

Commissioner Bishop JC Humper

Commissioner Aminata Jow

Leader Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Joe Fatorma. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor Kamara

I say thank you to all Commissioners present here. I am of the opinion that I am not saying what I see or what happened. I sat to my O'levels at the National school in October 1990. Our results were out and I had the intension to continue my education. Nobody can do that if there is no support. As the eldest son in my family I decided that I look for a temporary job. As we entered 1991 we heard that fighting was going on at the two borders. We never took those messages seriously as people were saying that fighting was over the sale of a vehicle. We were now in kailahun and then saw a large number of soldiers moving towards Kailahun. We took it seriously by then. All our elderly parents were now resident in the village and we the younger ones slept in the town. It was one evening we heard a gun shut. Among the group of soldiers that emerged was my schoolmate. In the morning they warned us not to go back to town as they were going for reinforcement. In our own village it took about 2 weeks before the rebels enter there. After that we no longer sleep in town but went on hiding. The war broke out in April. This happened and we did not see any rebel until August. We were in our hideouts when we saw four rebels coming. Before we went we heard the news that they were taking people and forcing them to become rebels. I still remember the names of these four rebels.

Bad Blood Junior, Harleston, Dan and Jumu.

Bad Blood was the smallest but most wicked one. As they went I was the first person they captured. I was with them during the raining season. He asked me if I was a soldier. I said no. So Bad Blood accused me of having enjoyed favours from the government. That is why they wanted to take me along. I did not refuse. If I had done that my parents would have suffered. I followed them to town. When we reached the base we were asked several questions. They asked me what I was trained to do before. I explained to them that I was a student and that it was because of the war that I was in hiding. That was why they met me in my farm. Then he wrote my name under the third battalion D Company. That was to say that they had trained two

sets of battalion and I was among the 3rd batch. The commander was called Malis Gomkanda with a lot of Gehu people. I understand that they have Sierra Leoneans among them. We were trained for ten days. Then all those people that were manning checkpoint were taken to the war front. That was the time they issued passes to people to go in and out. When we completed our training based on the particulars given, we were made to man check points for two months. Some confusion occurred in Mende Buma and the confusion was among the Gehu people and the Sierra Leoneans. Those who ran away from Mende Buma explained to us about the confusion and we all ran away.

When we went to the bush we did not go to our usual hiding places, we went somewhere else. People told us that they have formed a squad called Tap 20. This group would kill anybody they met on the way. Those that were lucky were made to carry their booties. That was all the more reason why our brothers in the offices were killed, Mr. Swarray and others. After this encounter I finally called my parents and told them that I am looking for a way out of this. My colleague and I escape. Because of the problems between the Liberian rebels and us so many people fled. We were there until the opening of the G Community School. The time we were running the school the principal was A.K. Amara.

I was one of the teachers to educate the others. Then we heard over radio that the APC was overthrown. We heard that NPRC now took over and we were very happy because the same people that were harassing us were doing the same thing to us. We were now happy with the opinion that the war will soon end. That was the same time the ULIMO movement started moving towards the river base. They told us the war in Sierra Leone was over. This time all the Gehu fighters in Sierra Leone were driven back to Liberia. When we came back besides the junior commando we saw other people called the vanguards. They brought the war to Sierra Leone. When we came back I asked to know who were the people called vanguards and they said they were trained especially to fight the war in Sierra Leone. We were in peace. It was one time when Foday Sankoh visited Kailahun then they told us that there were too many rebels here in Kailahun. They told us that they were going to deploy us. We the boys who were trained together know each other. We were placed in the same group. We heard that the first batch was sent to the war front. We were now discouraged because we thought that they were going to harm us. That was the time they questioned us. "Have you attended school?" When they got to me I told them that I was a student. "Then you will be placed aside."

He dispatched me with one bodyguard to be taken to the office to work as clerk. The first commander I served was Gbassy Kundu. This continued on to the time the soldiers captured Pendembu. When they captured Pendembu we were asked to go to Balam, which is about seven miles from here. We went there and open our office again. If any rebel was to move to any place I had to give him a pass and the commander was made to sign. If any negative report was taken to the office I wrote a warrant of arrest and the person was taken to the office. We agreed on that kind of procedure up to the time we left Bayame. I was living in a village called Rickoh. We were there till the time the soldiers moved from these areas to Pendembu. When we came we were placed at Kangama. Finally, the rebels captured Kailahun. I still came and proceeded with my clerical work. This continued on to the time the AFRC took over. Some other people were moving from other towns. We were in Kailahun and heard that the Kamajors were fighting against soldiers and the commander was called Augustine Gbao. He was commanding the entire force. He sent a message calling all of us and we came. When everybody was gathered he told us that he wanted us to make peace with the Kamajors to work as a team, not knowing that he had another intension. Many people came out and told him that they were Kamajors. After they have gathered all of them everybody was ordered to go back to their villages. Patrick Banda was head of the investigation team. He gathered all the fighters and the chief. We told him that they were not our enemies. He then told us that if there was anybody who trusted the detainees he should sign for them, and the detainees were allowed to come out and stay with them the whole day. My wife's brother was there and I went to sign for him and some others. They were all with me during the day and in the evening they were locked up again. I started brushing my farm for about a week. One of them said to me that they would take permission from my boss to assist me in the farm. Then Gbao was curious to know whether they really wanted to assist me. While brushing the farm my wife cooked earlier that particular day. While eating the jailer at that time called Joseph Newjack went in the street and shouted my

name and asked me to bring the people. We did not continue eating. We covered the food and met him.

He told us that our master had come and he was so annoyed. I went to the place where we were eating to collect my tools and clothes. My wife collected the remaining food and went to town. As we got to the hill at Baimah we heard a gun shot. I saw Joseph running in the direction of the gun shot. I thought it was an attack on the town. He said our master was so angry that he was going to kill those people we arrested. "Don't go there," she said. So I did not go there. I did not even come to my house again. I entered one of the unfinished houses. I reached there and met people in the compound and ask if people visited my house. After the killing of those people I did not see Augustine Gbao for two days. We all went to the street where the bodies here to see them. I heard that the Kamajors had been making plans against us. That was the same plan they used in Tongo and that was what they wanted to do in Kailahun. The corpses were not buried. The place started smelling. I did not witness the burial of all of them. I witnessed with my own eyes where they buried up to 40 in one hole. The site where they were buried is still familiar to me. That continue until SLPP came to power up to the time they sign the peace accord. After that time Sankoh moved to Freetown. That was the day I visited Freetown after I left there from 1989. I never knew where to go when I reach Freetown. We were there when they were carrying out a survey called Multi Indication Mustar survey. We attended the workshop and many of us succeeded and eight of us were selected to carry out the same survey in the Provinces. We came and reside in Kenema town. We came and passed through Kailahun and its environs. We walked through Kono. We are hearing news that they had captured UN forces in Makeni and we became worried. In war very costly lies can be told sometimes. I became worried because I was here with the movement. We were there when a large number of Kamajors moved from Bo to Kenema. Based on the kind of information we had on the Kamajors I went into hiding. At night I entered my village. It was the same morning about 4:00 a.m. I saw the helicopter gun ship. Not too long we heard the gun shot. For the three days there were gun fires all over Kailahun. After it all they still asked us to open our offices and I returned to my former office. They told us that promotions were out. There was hierarchy of power in every unit. We were shown the overall Commanding Officer, Head Battalion, Deputy Brigade Commander and Battalion Commanders. Each town had a commander. Myself serving as a clerk and others were given senior positions. All the senior guys heard of my promotion. In the force they said I should be the NP Commander. I was the NP commander in Kailahun town. In the force where I was working Tom Sandy was the overall operations commander. He was responsible for this town. He used to patrol all places. He had a clerk initially. I do not now work with him as a clerk. This continued on to the time the disarmament came up. Disarmament came and all others disarmed but we were still with our guns. It came to the time when the elders wrote a letter to Septimus Kaikai. As soon as I heard that they have return I came straight. So I said to myself and realised that the order they have given us not to disarm was not good. The disarmament should take place first here in Kailahun. We came back to kailahun with the UN forces. Issa came to tell us that we should now disarm. He came and said to us "you were not told to disarm but you have started so disarm altogether". We boarded a vehicle to do our own and God helped us. The disarmament was peaceful. We finally got peace and we returned to our villages and stayed with our people.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow

We have heard your testimony and as the Presiding Commissioner said the Commission is trying to gather accurate information on all what happened during the ten years war so we can set the records straight as well as promote reconciliation. For this mandate having heard this testimony we go on to ask further questions. It is not a confrontation we just want to fill in the gaps.

Jow: Am I right to say you were in the movement from 1991 on to the end of the war.

Fatoma: Yes, if you are part of an organisation you left and went again and you joined them again then you are still part of them.

Jow: Are you telling us that you have no other option than to be part of them?

Fatoma: Because at that time when I was arrested if I refused to join them I was going to be killed. At that time I was captured and I decided to run away but they were going to kill my parents. As my father told me once they have captured you feel free to go with them God will help you.

Jow: Can you tell us how many children were abducted?

Fatoma: I can't tell the exact number. One battalion is almost to a thousand

Jow: Can you tell us the kind of training you went through?

Fatoma: The first day we arrived at the place they ordered us to lie flat on the ground. We had no idea and we lay as if we were in bed. They showed us how to lie down and if they see your foot up they will use their own feet to bring it down. Next they took the gun, placed it on your head and fired a shot. In that process if you are hit by the bullet you are killed. It you are not in line with the first person that is the end of your life. They were doing that so that we could get accustomed to the sound of a gun. They also taught us how to fire. They also taught us courtesy and discipline that will show us how to respect them. What they were now doing you will come across one that we should respect and they will order you to roll on the floor. Even though you respect them they will not respect you. It was no formal training where you go to a classroom. With that kind of training if you are sent to the war front only God will help you.

Jow: With this kind of training how many people survived?

Fatoma: It will be difficult to tell the number of trainees because we were just divided into groups.

Jow: Did you go to the war front to fight.

Fatoma: No, I did not do that. My first assignment was to man the check point. I did not fight any war at any time. When we were here our people called us Belleh Soldiers because we did not go to the war front.

Bishop Humper

We want to thank you because you have shared your experiences with us. I want to reiterate what the Commissioner has said a while ago.

Chairman Bishop Humper: I want to know if the mass grave is not far from town

Fatoma: No, it is in the centre town near the police station.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you join the DDR programme?

Fatoma: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you do skills training?

Fatoma: I am presently undergoing computer training.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What do you have to say to your people because whatever the case may be you were part of the rebel war?

Fatoma: I say thanks to you. The only thing I have to say to my people in Kailahun and Sierra Leone is let them accept us to be their children. Let them take us as the prodigal son. He went and destroyed everything and apologised to his father. His father took him back and told him I am not going to take you as a servant you are still my child. If I have ever done anybody wrong I personally know that be it voluntarily or as long as you joined the movement it is a big crime. I am really appealing to them not to push us away. We again the fighters if you are talking to somebody to forgive you, you have to humble yourself. We have to behave ourselves, as there is no bad bush to throw away bad children. This has brought us a lot of backwardness. There are people who took the O'levels and are today degree holders. I am appealing to you to forgive us. We are also feeling the pain and I leave you to have mercy on us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: In your testimony you told us about the massacre in Kailahun.

Fatoma: Some of us were not Kamajors but just carriers for Kamajors.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: During that period you said the commander of the armed force was Augustine Gbao. I want to know whether Augustine was here when that massacre was carried out.

Fatoma: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: One can assume that he did not authorise it but that he did nothing to stop it

Fatoma: He was present when the people were killed. Sam Bockarie passed the command. I was not there to witness whether he gave the command. It was his response he gave us after the three days. If he spoke to us in a sympathetic mood we would understand that he tried to talk for the people but he never did.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What was the relationship between the Kamajors and the rebels before the take over in 1997?

Fatoma: At that time they were working as a team and the rebels were on the other side. When they took over that was the time they learnt that they have some indifference among themselves.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: At a particular time the military and Kamajors were working together but later the military and the rebels saw the Kamajors as their enemy.

Fatoma: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Where was the base were you were trained?

Fatoma: The National School

Leader of Evidence: You also spoke about a command structure. Do you have it on paper?

Fatoma: No I don't have it on paper.

Leader of Evidence: Joe do you have any question?

Fatoma: I have a number of questions.

Fatoma: When you arrived earlier the first person that talked to us was simple and plain enough for us understand. I was of the opinion that somebody would have given information about me. A lot of people were saying we are the people lined up to attend the special court. Even the statement taker can testify that I responded to the invitation and made myself available to him the same night. I will like to know if somebody made any statement about me before you invited me to make my statement I have never done anything wrong to anybody. If the Commission says anybody did make a report about my negative activities I am prepared to take the necessary steps toward reconciliation with them.

Leader of Evidence: The commission has the resources and manpower to deal with every Sierra Leonean. Therefore you represent one of the very few lucky ones. If you have been named by somebody who gave us a statement the approach would have been very different. You would have been contacted and given the information for your response. The information will be alleged and you will be asked whether you are willing to meet the person to reconcile. Our response to the question you are asking as to whether somebody mentioned your name to us is "No". The fact that we did not direct that question at you means that nobody called your name.

Morie: I want to say thanks to the Commission and the government because of the kind of training facilities they have provided us. Those of our young brothers who went to other countries and those who have disarmed have not started any skills training. I want the government to appeal to the NGOs to provide skills training for the township. We are of the opinion that they will do more than they have done.

6th – Witness – Momoh Paye
Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara
Commissioner Bishop JC Humper
Commissioner Aminata Jow
Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

Three of us were in the house. One morning they found out that most of the soldiers disappeared. During the time I had a lot of rice in the store. All of us ran into the house. During that time gun shots were heard all over the place. I was so confused I did not know what to do. I was in a house I heard people running. A man told he didn't think it was true. I heard the vehicle moving on the main road to Pendembu. I told the man that there was a problem. My friend told me not to get worried. Around 5:00 a.m. we heard people singing all sorts of song. I said this type of song means something. They went to the door they said we should open the door and we were about to open the door then somebody said these people are rebels. I told my wife to go and I will open the door. The way I saw them their eyes looked so bad. Among five of them there was only one born in Fiya. They asked everybody to go out. Do you have any soldier here? I commanded my family to come out. They were shooting all over the place and I pleaded with them not to shoot at me. I was afraid. Then I said, "I want you to stop shooting". They interviewed me. I asked them questions too. I enquired of them why there was so much shooting all around the place. There was one Gbassay and another person. They said if I moved one step they would shoot me down. After a while they asked me for food. I had a goat at the back of the house. They asked me to give one of my stores, the one in the house by the bridge. I did.

I told them that my son couldn't give a bag of rice. There was a man called Vandi working with them. We went to the bush. All the soldiers that were running away met us there. We were there for a year and four months. I said if my children went to Guinea they would not go to school. We were there all these years and they told us to cease fire. Even Foday Sankoh himself said if anybody wished to go home they were free to do so. During that time I was doing business with my plantation. Everybody knows that I was a farmer. We went into the house. Where I have my plantations there was a man called David Lansana. On our way we went through the farm. Then I was discouraged. My family advised me not to ask the people any questions. I took one of my nephews along. Then I ask David if he was the one who wanted my farm. He said, "don't ask me!" I came back to Freetown. From Freetown I went back to my village. Then I saw the oranges which David had gathered from my farm. Why was David doing that to me. Then I reported that this guy had taken over my farm. I asked him, "David are you the one who used my farm to grow rice? My father was the one who gave me this place. He invested a lot of money in this farm. You are not part of us." That was what happened to me. I have no house to live in. You are saying that we should forgive. If I see that man I will be so angry. I am still thinking that he was the person who destroyed all my houses.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: From what you have told us you have raised a number of questions why Lansana did this to you.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Is David Lansana alive and do you know where he lives?

Momoh: He is alive in Gehun seven miles away.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We are glad that he is around. Did you have a court administration system in Gehun?

Momoh: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you have access to the process of the law?

Momoh: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You will have to talk to the Commission about this after the session.

Leader of Evidence: No questions?

Momoh: I have a question.

Leader of Evidence: You have said that if he wants to see you, you are ready to see him.

Momoh: A decision will be taken. What you have said is understandable.

7th – Witness – Nyandemore Jawara.

They told us that the soldiers have passed us. We were met in Gehun by some soldiers who visited the chief and bluntly told him that the war was beyond their capacity to. They, therefore, advised that everyone find their way to safety. We went up the mountain. We were in the bush now and they told us that the rebels had entered Kenema. In the bush we ate bush yams. They said they were not there for us. I saw one of my brothers named Jim John. He told us not to be afraid. I decided I was not going to join the organisation. It came to a time when I had a little bit of sense in my head. They told us civilians that they were not there for us but that they had an agreement with the fighters. They said they had already captured the Daru barracks and went on to give us all the arms they had seized. Sankoh insisted that all the big boys should be trained to help save all of us. When they went back Sankoh returned and said the same thing. He had no interest in us. When they entered the town they appointed one person from among by the name of Curtis. The town Commander was to escort us to town. I came back to my mother and started shouting that I was staying there because of her. We were in the bush the rebels started looking for a boy or girl. If we told them that there was no man they beat us mercilessly. Then I told my mother that given that situation then I preferred to stay in the bush. I was in the bush. It came to the time my mum told me to leave the bush and come to town. They saw me coming down the hills again. During that time they slapped my mother and she lost her teeth. My younger sister who had just had a baby was kicked on her stomach. My mum was laid outside. I was in the bush for a week. They went and met me in the bush and told me to leave the bush. I was arrested.

CLOSED SESSION 14TH MAY, 2003 – (Kailahun)

1ST WITNESS: Mamie Allieu

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs. Aminata Jow

Commissioner Mrs. Jow : Good morning, I would like, on behalf of the Commission, to welcome you to the closed session of the hearing. However, before we proceed I would like us to invoke the presence of God in our midst. (Interfaith prayers were said.) Once again on behalf of the Commission I wish to welcome you here again this morning. You are one of four witnesses who will tell the Commission what happened to you during the ten years conflict. This is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (Commissioner Mrs. Jow read out the mandate). Now you can give your testimony.

TESTIMONY

I was 9 years of age in 1991. On one occasion in Daru, my mother went to look for food and I was left behind with my dad. The rebels entered Daru; I ran into the bush with my father but my father was killed. I was caught and my clothes were torn as four men raped me. I became very sick and unable to walk. Then one old lady came and took my clothes which they had torn and wrapped it around me and carried me on her back to the bush again. So from there we stayed in the bush moving from one place to another until we arrived at Buedu. While in the bush the soldiers took us to Kailahun. I was taken to Daru and was admitted in the hospital. I was treated and I recovered. After that I stayed in the bush with that old lady. I was told that my mother had been taken to Pendembu. They also brought her to Daru. She went to that old lady who had taken care of me in order to show appreciation. She took me where she was staying. We went to Kenema. I told my mother that I wanted to go to school. She told me that there was no money. As my father was dead, there was no one else willing to pay my school fees.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Mamie, we have listened to the testimony you have given us and we appreciate your courage for coming to tell us your experience and to narrate it. Not everyone can do what you have done. This is a true story, but we thank God you are alive to tell the story and we hope that it will never happen to your children or your children's children. We also hope that God will give you the courage to carry on with life as there is a saying that "Since there is life, there is hope". As I have told you, I have listened very attentively but we want to ask you a few questions. We believe your story, but simply because we want to have some clarification on certain areas so that the Commission can better fulfill its mandate, we will ask you some questions. Can you tell the Commission what your family life was before they attacked in 1991; were you living with your father, mother, brothers and sisters?

Mamie: Yes, I was staying with my family.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How many brothers and sisters have you?

Mamie: I have one brother and three sisters.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Are you the eldest in your family?

Mamie: I am the last child.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were you in school at the time of the attack?

Mamie: Yes, I was in school.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us the name of your school and what class you attained?

Mamie: I was attending the DEC School, Daru and I was in Class 4 at the time of the attack.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: And were the other members of the family also in school, I mean your brothers?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: And you were living in Daru at the time?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How old are you now?

Mamie: I am fourteen years old.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: And the incident happened in 1991?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You remember vividly what happened in 1991?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us about the people who attacked in Daru? What did they look like?

Mamie: They looked fearful.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they having guns?

Mamie: They were carrying guns and they tied red pieces of cloth around their heads.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What language were they speaking?

Mamie: They were speaking the Gio language.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they speaking a Sierra Leonean language?

Mamie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did they give any instructions?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You said you ran into the bush, was it with the whole family?

Mamie: When they attacked, I ran into the bush, but I was caught and my father was killed; and I was raped.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you know why your father was killed?

Mamie: My father was killed in my presence because they asked him to join them, but he refused.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was there any opportunity to bury him?

Mamie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you remember exactly the rebels who raped you?

Mamie: I cannot remember them.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Were they young or elderly?

Mamie: 2 adults and 2 young boys.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said you stayed with them for three years, where did they take you to?

Mamie: They took me to Buedu.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: In this particular base, were there any young girls that were taken there?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How many girls were there?

Mamie: They were many.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they all from the same village?

Mamie: They took them from different villages.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was there any elderly person in charge of the camp?

Mamie: The rebel boys were put in charge of us.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: During these years were you assigned to one rebel or did you sleep with many of them.

Mamie: Yes, except those who raped me in the bush because after that I became ill. Because I was sick, they were not looking at me as a woman.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So they did not use you any more?

Mamie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So it was once after the attack.

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you tell us what sort of illness you had?

Mamie: I had pains around my hip and I was unable to walk.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did the rebels take care of you?

Mamie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were you forced to do any work?

Mamie: No it was only this lady who was taking care of me, I was not forced to work.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was the lady who took care of you a rebel?

Mamie: She was a rebel.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So for three years you were a rebel, you did not work, you stayed in bed?

Mamie: I did not work.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell me what sort of work the other girls were doing?

Mamie: Yes, they went out into the bush to fetch food, some were conscripted into the fighting force, some were made cooks for the rebels.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We want to know what life was like in the bush for the three years you were there. Did any of the girls die because of ill treatment?

Mamie: Sick persons were not looked after. Those that became very sick sick, were taken to a place of their own choice (the rebels' choice) and did whatever they wished to do with the person.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Like what?

Mamie: They would take you to the bush and kill you there.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We heard about a "dog box" and that some of the children that were abducted were locked up there.

Mamie: I did not see it.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: During these three years you did not hear any nicknames used among themselves.

Mamie: Yes, I did.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you give us some of them?

Mamie: Commandos, Killer, Buried whilst Alive, etc.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Most of them were men?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they Sierra Leoneans or mixed?

Mamie: They were mixed, Sierra Leoneans, Gio from Liberia and Vai from Liberia border.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You said in 1994 your base was attacked by Government soldiers who were able to free you.

Mamie: Yes Government troops freed me.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was there a lot of fighting before you were freed?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How did you escape, did the soldiers put you in their vehicle to Daru?

Mamie: The soldiers had to put us in their vehicle to Daru.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Who did they hand you over to?

Mamie: I came together with the woman who was taking care of me.
We stayed there until we got the information that my mother was in Pendembu.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We were told that you were taken to FAWE for medication and schooling.

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What year, do you remember?

Mamie: In 2002.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Between 1994 and 2000 what were you doing?

Mamie: I stayed with my mother and I used to help her to sell.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you join any integration programme?

Mamie: I only joined the literacy programme with World Vision in Daru.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I would like to end by asking about your present position. Are you back with your mother, brother and sisters?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You are living with your family now?

Mamie: Yes.

Comm. Jow: What about the community in which you live, do they know what happened to you?

Mamie: Well I did not get encouragement from people, it was my mother who embraced me on my returned.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do they know what happened to you?

Mamie: Yes they know.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: But why are they behaving like this to you?

Mamie: I do not know.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: According to your testimony, you were very ill during the three years you stayed in the bush.

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How do you feel now, are you ok?

Mamie: I am ok because FAWE treated me and World Vision also treated me.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Are you going for follow up treatment?

Mamie: No, I am not going for follow up treatment.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you have any vaginal discharge?

Mamie: My menstrual period is irregular.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I take it that at the time you were raped, you had not started your menstrual period.

Mamie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: When did you start?

Mamie: When I was released after I had taken treatment I started menstruating.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you have any relationship with men?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So you have got over your initial dislike as it were?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Cordial relationship, no force?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you intend to have family and children?

Mamie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Now and again, do you have flashbacks; how do you cope?

Mamie: Yes, whenever I get those thoughts I find my friends.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you have counselling from the elders in your village?

Mamie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What about FAWE; don't they have counselling services?

Mamie: Aunty Mary of FAWE sometimes talks to us.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: This lady who helped you in the bush, what is her name?

Mamie: Kula Vandy, but she is dead, she was from Jujuma in Daru.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did she die because of the incident?

Mamie: She had a natural death.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How do you support your family as your father is dead?

Mamie: Well, I depend on my mum and I want to learn skills so that I can do something.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I have asked a number of questions concerning what happened to you during the war. We wanted to have an insight into what happened in the bush, we had wanted to know what the young girls did in the bush. You have been helpful, I thank you for that. We would like you to ask questions or make any recommendations you will want the Commission to note. We encourage you to speak up.

Mamie: I would like the Government to help me do skills training, something that will benefit me in the future. Apart from the skills, I want to be exposed. I am not satisfied with my state.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you, we have noted your recommendations. We have received a number of recommendations like the one you have given us. People are concerned about education; about skills training, developing your communities. The recommendations will be considered along with those of many others. Once the recommendations are forwarded to the Government, Government will implement them so that people like you will benefit from the development. I know your concern is immediate and this is a concern for this Commission; that some of its concerns should be attended to as soon as possible. Some of our staff will refer you to those NGO's which might be able to take care of your immediate needs. But finally, I would like to encourage you to move on with your life. Find out where the facilities are and make the best use of them.

2nd Witness - Patricia L. Kallon

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs. Aminata Jow

Commissioner Jow read the mandate to the audience.

TESTIMONY

At the start of the war, I was a very small girl and my mother died. Before the start of the war, I was with my father. He was arrested by the rebels. He was made a commander. He ran away and when he was caught, he was killed. I was also abducted. I was caught by “Seven Spirit” of the battle group. He made me his wife. Then I was not mature for that type of life. So from that time he made me his wife, I was moving in their group. They used to attack people and bring the properties to us. When they removed us from where we were, we stayed in a place near Mayagorie in the Kailahun District. I was sick and had some discharges. When I came back I was staying with my aunt in the camp. My aunt also died a natural death. I was taken over by Save the Children. They sent me back to school and cared for me. This is all I have to say.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Thank you very much for your testimony. We have listened very attentively. This is a sad story and we sympathise with you for what happened. It was through no fault of yours that you were abducted and made a bush wife, but for God you would not have lived and from what you have told us you are trying to rebuild your life. I would like you to allow

the Commission to ask you a few questions so that we can have a better insight of what happened to you so that we can fill in some of the details. Please relax and speak up.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Patricia, the Commission would like to know something about your family before you were abducted.

Patricia: I was with my family; it was intact, but I cannot recollect what happened at that time.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you remember your age at that time ?

Patricia: I was 8 years old.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How old are you now?

Patricia: I am 18 years old.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you remind us what the name of the village is where the attack took place?

Patricia: The name of the village is Mayagorie.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: What year did this incident happen?

Patricia: It was in 1996.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said the rebels attacked the village, do you remember what they looked like and the language they were speaking?

Patricia: Some of them were speaking the Liberian Language and very little Mende.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: What do you remember them say when talking?

Patricia: I cannot remember.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said your father was appointed Town Commander, by who?

Patricia: Seven Spirit who was the leader of the group.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Your father accepted unwillingly?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: And he tried to escape?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: And he was later arrested and killed?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Do you remember how he was killed?

Patricia: I was told that he was put in a bag and they poured kerosene on him and lit him up.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: During the incident, what happened to your sisters and brothers?

Patricia: The others were still with their foster parents. I was the only one staying with my parents.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you tell us who abducted you?

Patricia: Seven Spirit abducted me.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you describe him to us?

Patricia: He was tall, slim and dark. He was recently in Daru but he has gone back to Pujehun.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: So he is a Sierra Leonean but he went with the rebels.

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: At the time he was abducting you, did he rape you there and then?

Patricia: He only made me his wife after my father's death.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said he abducted you when your father died?

Patricia: Yes, he abducted me and raped me there and then.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: In the presence of anybody?

Patricia: Yes, people were there, the rebels.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: What did he say after he had raped you?

Patricia: He told me he had wanted to have sex with me and I told him that I was underage; if that would make me die, let me die.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You pleaded with him?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: So you did not start your menstrual period?

Patricia: No.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How did you feel afterwards?

Patricia: From that time I am not ok; even now I am still experiencing discharges.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Were you angry for what happened to you?

Patricia: Initially I was annoyed and unhappy but when I realised there was no way out, I was moving with them.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you tell us where Seven Spirit took you to when he abducted you?

Patricia: The base was in Mayagorie in the Kailahun District. We stayed there for three years.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: As a bush wife, what did you do?

Patricia: At the time, it was just like a normal routine; they went and looted, items, handed over the properties to me to cook, and sometimes, I gave orders to others to cook. I used to give instructions to people to launder.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How many people did you control?

Patricia: Three girls.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How many girls were there in the camp,?

Patricia: Many.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: They were abducted from neighbouring villages?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: What were some of these girls asked to do?

Patricia: Some were combatants and as such they went down to the war front to fight. One of them was caught by, the bush husband with a boy; he put his ring inside her vagina and she died. I only know her for Aminata, we were not from the same town.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said a number of girls were punished, can you tell us how?

Patricia: Yes, one of my cousins was killed because the husband she was staying with was wicked. He had a number of girls as wives, she reported him to a commander who fired him, and it was like sabotage. When we initially joined them there were a good number of them who were raped but did not survive.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: So you said a number of them did not survive, how were they buried?

Patricia: People were only buried provided they were related to the commander or else you would be left where you were killed.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Your bush husband treated you nicely?

Patricia: No, later he left me for another woman.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: This continued until you were released?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Did you have children whilst you were in the bush?

Patricia: No.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: We have heard stories of young girls being locked up in a box, do you know about this in the camp?

Patricia: Well I did not see that Box, it was like a small hut that you can fit in but if you could not stand, you stayed there for some time. They tied you and laid you facing upwards to look at the sun.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How were you released?

Patricia: At that time, since I had no relationship with Seven spirit, I was in the care of a Commander. They asked us to go. The Commander put me in a vehicle. They were sending vehicles to collect people. I was brought to Daru and my aunt took care of me until Save the Children took over.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: When were you released?

Patricia: I was released in 1999.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: What Month?

Patricia: I cannot remember.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Do you have any problem with your health?

Patricia: Yes, the discharge.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Have you sought medical attention?

Patricia: No, there is nobody who can help me with that.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Where do you live?

Patricia: I live in Daru, but there is no hospital there; there used to be one but everything has been transferred to Kailahun.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Have you tried traditional treatment?

Patricia: At one time I did, it worked, but the lady who gave me the herbs had gone back to her home.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Have Save the Children an office in Daru?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do they know about your problem?

Patricia: I did not tell them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: If you tell them will they be in a position to help you?

Patricia: I do not believe so because even with my school fees they have not been able to assist due to lack of funds according to them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Would you like to be referred for medication?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: At the end of the session we can see if any staff can assist you. Do you have feelings of guilt, withdrawal or shame?

Patricia: I only think about that when I get the discharge. I am so much engaged in community sensitisation. I am fully engaged. It is only when I have the discharge that I think about it.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How often?

Patricia: It comes before my menstruation and heavily.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you talk about the incident to people?

Patricia: Except Save the Children and my bosom friends.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from the discharge, you are not sick?

Patricia: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from Save the Children is there any organisation that is assisting you?

Patricia: Before Save the Children took my responsibility, my school fees were paid by Christian Brothers.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Have they stopped?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What institution are you in?

Patricia: Ahmadiyya Secondary School, it is a co-educational school.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do they assist you in any way?

Patricia: No, they do not offer any assistance.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: In answering my question you spoke about Community sensitisation, tell us about it.

Patricia: The HIV group came to our school and sensitised us and formed a group called Muloma Kids Club; meaning "Let's Love Kids Club". They go around sensitising people in the farms through skits.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: It is very good, continue to help in the community. Who are you living with now and how do you support yourself?

Patricia: Right now I am staying with my uncle and he is responsible for my school fees and sometimes food. When it comes to feeding and sometimes, clothing, I am responsible for myself. At times I go to my friends who assist me with food and clothes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Since your release from the rebel camp, have you stayed single or do you have a relationship?

Patricia: I have a relationship.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Healthy relationship, not forcing you?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Eventually, you intend to complete your skills and get married?

Patricia: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You have to be brave and, courageous. You are not alone in this, there are many other people who had gone through similar problems, but with the help of God and through their own strength they have been able to surmount this problem. I want you to be like them. You may now ask questions and make recommendations.

Patricia: I do not have any questions but what I want to say is that I am appealing to you people to support us to be educated. I am appealing for support for everyone, we do not have proper places to stay. We do not depend on anything for our education.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you for your recommendation. I admire the emphasis you placed on education, we know education is the key to development. I am sure you have heard of the saying “when you educate a girl you educate a nation”. We know Government is making effort for every village to receive education for its people. Our recommendation will also be focussed in this direction.
We are a victim-centred Commission and with your help and the help of others like you; we will make the appropriate recommendations to Government so that those who have been affected by the war will have their conditions improved, not only for them, but for posterity. Patricia, we are very happy for your cooperation. By coming here you have come to help the nation and we hope better things will follow for you and people like you. You have mentioned some immediate concerns; and if you can wait by the end of the day, we can refer you to some institutions or NGOs that can assist you in this area. Once more Patricia, thank you very much.

3rd Witness: Watta Sheriff:

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs. Aminata Jow

Commissioner Mrs Jow read the mandate.

TESTIMONY

I was in Kenema when the war started. We were attacked by the rebels at 2:00 a.m. I was staying with my grand mother and I was asleep when they attacked. Everybody left the area. When I woke up, there was nobody. I tried to pack my luggage so that I could go with my people. I heard sporadic fires and I saw some people dressed in combat fatigue. As I was going, one of them caught me and asked me to show him where the money was. He asked me to undress. I refused and I asked him why I should do that. They told me that they wanted to rape me and I refused and they told me that they would kill me if I refused to have sex with them. They stripped me and I lay on the floor and three of them raped me. They then left me, I was hopeless and I took the things I had parked and went away. The following day, a man took me to the hospital and there was nobody there. Later on, a lady came and gave me some medicines. Since that time, I took ill. I have been suffering from serious abdominal pains. I had no menses

but itches and loss of weight. My mother and father are dead. I want to learn skills. Since that time I have not been given medication. I want the Government to help me. I want the Government to help all of us that went through this ordeal. I am staying with someone else, I have no proper place to stay and I sleep on the floor. That is all I have to say.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Watta, we thank you very much for your testimony. We have listened to it and we sympathise with you for what happened. Your statement is very clear and we do not have any reason to doubt any part of your story. All the same, we are going to ask you a few questions for clarification and to fill in some of the details we would want to know. We know you are not very well today, please feel relaxed. You told us in your testimony that you were in Kenema before the war started. Where were you in Kenema?

Watta: I was in Kenema Town with my grand mother.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you lose your mother and father before the start of the war?

Watta: They died during the war.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did they die because of the war or was it a natural death?

Watta: My mother died as a result of the war and my father died a natural death. I was not present when my mother died.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was she killed?

Watta: Yes she was killed.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was it in Kenema?

Watta: It was in Gorhun in the Kailahun District.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: At the time you were living with your grandmother were you going to school?

Watta: Yes, I was going to school.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us the name of the school?

Watta: I was attending the KDC school and I was in class 3.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You told us that the incident happened in 1999?

Watta: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: And you said you were attacked in Kenema by rebels. Where in Kenema were you attacked?

Watta: I was attacked in the Baima Section, 9 Abdulai Street.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Apart from your grandmother was anyone living with you?

Watta: There were many people there, I was staying with my grandmother.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I want to know why when the rebels came everyone ran away but you stayed behind in the house?

Watta: I was sleeping and they woke me up, I went out but I had to go in again as I was sleepy.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were the rebels carrying guns, you said they dressed in combats, were they many?

Watta: They were carrying guns on their backs.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they many?

Watta: A lot of them came to the area, but only three entered our house.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they young or elderly people?

Watta: They were youths.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So you have told us that all three of them raped you? We are sorry to ask, but how were they all standing around when one raped you?

Watta: The two held me whilst the one raped me, after that the other one took over. They took it in turns.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What were they saying whilst they were raping you?

Watta: They were telling me that if I did not lie down, they would kill me. I pleaded with them that I was a virgin but they said they would introduce me to it.

Comm. Joe: Are you ok?

Watta: I am not ok.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What pains do you have?

Watta: I have serious abdominal pains most of the time and, as I said, my menses are very scanty.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Have you sought medical attention?

Watta: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Why?

Watta: At one time, I was asked to do a test at the pharmacy, they said I should pay a lot of money and my aunt could not afford to pay for it.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us your age when you were raped?

Watta: I was thirteen years old.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: At the time had you started your menstruation?

Watta: No.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: When did you start?

Watta: I started in 2001.

Comm Jow: Apart from the physical pains, do you have discharges or related problems?

Watta: Sometimes I do have discharges, not all the time.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you have any relationship now?

Watta: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Would you like to carry on and have a family later on.

Watta: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Watta we have asked you a number of questions but the final word is from you. Can you ask a question or make recommendations? Do the people in the community you are living in now accept you or do they know your past history?

Watta: Yes they are encouraging me.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: I want to encourage you however, that this is not the end, you are still young and despite what happened to you you can still rebuild your life with the necessary support and strength. You need to have confidence in yourself and try to build for yourself a better future. For some of the immediate concerns you have mentioned we shall see what the Commission can do for you by way of referrals to NGO's and other institutions. You may now ask any questions.

Watta: I want the Government to assist me to learn skills and all other girls who had suffered the same way as I did.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you very much for that recommendation. I admire the way you think of yourself and other people. You have told us you wanted skills training not for yourself, but for the other girls who had this experience. The whole purpose of this exercise is to collect information and to receive recommendation from you so that we can incorporate it in our report. When these recommendations are implemented, there will be some improvement. We hope that the condition of people like you will improve. Watta, once again thank you very much, we appreciate your coming and we thank you for your full cooperation.

4TH WITNESS - NANCY VANDY

Commissioner welcomed the witness to the closed session and read the mandate.

TESTIMONY

When the war started, I crossed the river together with my mother and we went to a village called Njala. While in Njala, the rebels attacked the village and I was abducted and brought to Baima. Whilst we were sitting with them in Baima, my mother was killed. They took me with them to another village. After my mother's death, I stayed with the rebels for sometime and after that I went over to Liberia to stay with my sisters. From Liberia I went back to Kenema; from Kenema, I decided to go back to Daru. While in Daru I decided not to sit idly, I went to FAWE to learn skills. I am doing tailoring and weaving at FAWE. That is all.

Comm. Jow: We have listened to your testimony. It is a short but vital piece of information that you have given. What we would like to do now is to focus on some questions so that we can fill in the details. Can you give us the name of your village that was attacked?

Nancy: The village was Njala –Pejebongay in the Kailahun District.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us about your family before the attack?

Nancy: I was sitting with my mother, brothers and sisters.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How many brothers and sisters have you?

Nancy: I have two brothers and two sisters, I am the third girl.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were you alone with your mother at the time of the incident?

Nancy: I was not alone. I was staying with my brother in the same house.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Before the attack, was there any similar attack in your village or in any other village?

Nancy: No, there was no attack.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us how the rebels used to attack.

Nancy: They killed many people and burnt houses; we were abducted and they crossed the river with us.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Before they abducted you, you ran into the forest?

Nancy: At the time of the attack we were in the bush fetching fire wood. My mother sent someone to tell us that the rebels were crossing the river. I came back to the town together with other girls. On arrival, the rebels attacked the village.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How were they dressed?

Nancy: They were very wicked.

Commissioner Mrs Jow. Were they in uniform?

Nancy: They were fearfully dressed, not in uniform. They were Liberian rebels.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How did you know that they were Liberian rebels?

Nancy: We knew because they were speaking the Liberian language. Initially, we did not know that rebels were human beings. It was when we saw them that we got to know them as human beings. They tied nets around their heads.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: You said your mother was shot by the rebels?

Nancy: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: She died the very day they captured her?

Nancy: It was on the same day that they brought us to Baima. It was a belief that the rebels should not see palm kernel oil. When the rebels knew that she had some, she was killed.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were you present when your mother was being shot?

Nancy: Yes, I was present, they told me that if I cried they would kill me.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: When you say "they", how many rebels do you refer to?

Nancy: They were many in number, but it was only one that fired her.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Did you hear them calling names?

Nancy: Yes, I heard them calling C.O. Timber, he was the one that gave instructions to kill my mother, but he is now dead.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How did you know he is dead?

Nancy: I was informed by my brother, he was living in Daru at the time. C.O. Timber came to attack the village. I was told that he was killed by the bridge.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You said that the rebels took you away when your mother was killed?

Nancy: Yes, I was there for less than a month.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Where did they take you to?

Nancy: I was removed from the village to a house near the village where I met some girls.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us the number of the girls you met there?

Nancy: They were many, I did not count them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: This rebel that abducted you, was he in charge of the girls?

Nancy: I cannot tell.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Who was responsible for you?

Nancy: I was in the care of Zumanta, but I cannot tell whether he is dead or alive.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was Zumanta responsible for all the girls?

Nancy: I cannot tell because at that time I was afraid of the situation.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How did you sleep?

Nancy: We were all sleeping in the same place.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: And you stayed in that house for a month?

Nancy: Not a month, almost a month.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us your duties then?

Nancy: I was not working.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What about the other girls?

Nancy: They used to sweep the compound.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you see the rebels go back to your base everyday?

Nancy: Yes, I did.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were any of the girls assigned to any rebels as a wife?

Nancy: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us truthfully whether you were assigned to any rebel as a wife?

Nancy: No, then I was not old enough, I was twelve years old and I had been tampered with. I was not assigned to them because I did not stay there for a long time. I was raped.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you explain the circumstances when it happened, was it immediately after you were abducted?

Nancy: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: By one rebel?

Nancy: Yes, it was one rebel then I ran and went into hiding.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was it the person who abducted you; C.O. Timber, that did that?

Nancy: No

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you know his name?

Nancy: I have forgotten the name.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: He had wanted you to be his bush wife?

Nancy: No, I ran away.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Who took care of you when you were bleeding?

Nancy: There was a lady who gave me some native herbs, she boiled the herbs and asked me to sit in the water.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So you have not got any treatment after that?

Nancy: I used to get abdominal pain. I visited the hospital, but I still experience the same problem.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: How many years is it now since they raped you?

Nancy: I am still getting the problems.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us how you escaped?

Nancy: One day, I went outside and ran into the bush. I did not tell anyone and nobody saw me.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were the girls in the camp or in the house?

Nancy: It was not a camp. It was a house occupied by people. They used to take the girls there and they later took them to the base at Pendembu.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Have you seen any of the girls who were in the house?

Nancy: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: While you were in the house, did you see any girl being raped in your presence?

Nancy: I did not see that.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did any of the girls complain to you that they were raped?

Nancy: They did not tell me.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You said your mother was shot by a rebel, where do you live now?

Nancy: I am living with a man in Daru.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: What is the relationship?

Nancy: This man is my father's relative. Before this time, I was living with my aunt-in-law, there was a confusion between me and they asked me to find somewhere else to stay, then I had to find my father's relatives.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: So you lived a normal life after this incident?

Nancy: Yes, but presently, there is some confusion between me and my husband.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Do you have children?

Nancy. Yes, I have one child.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Is the child for your present husband?

Nancy: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you tell anybody that you were raped?

Nancy: I did not tell anyone.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What about your former husband?

Nancy: I did not tell him.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What about your uncle?

Nancy: I did not tell him.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Why have you not let it out all along?

Nancy: Is there a need to tell anybody that I was raped? I do not think anybody can do that.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You have to talk to people you trust, you should not bottle it up. I hope you will feel better now that you have told us which we will still keep confidential. There are other people who were not as lucky as you were, some died. Can you tell us what you are doing now at FAWE?

Nancy: I am doing weaving and tailoring.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Have you completed the course?

Nancy: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: When will you complete it?

Nancy: I cannot say; sometimes we are short of materials.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you pay any fees?

Nancy: We do not pay school fees. They give us materials when they have them, if not we improvise.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Nancy, can you give recommendations or ask questions to incorporate in our report.

Nancy: I am wishing that we no longer experience such a war in our country. We have to pray to God. I am asking the Government to assist those who are doing skills training.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I thank you very much for your active cooperation. I would like to assure you again that there is nothing to be afraid of. I have noted the recommendations. We have noted a number of the recommendations you just made. We are hoping that once the recommendations have been implemented, it will make life better for you; particularly for girls and women. As you did say, skills training are important for girls and women. We all believe in the adage; "When you educate a woman, you educate a nation". The issues you have mentioned will be put in our report. Thank you.

CLOSED HEARINGS HELD ON 14TH MAY 2003 IN KAILAHUN

1ST Witness- Mustapha Sam Koroma

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara

Bishop Joseph Humper

Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Mustapha Sam Koroma. The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor Kamara

TESTIMONY

At one time in Monrovia, my father called me and told me that the names Koroma and Kanneh were the names the Liberians didn't want to hear. If you were in Liberia and you carried any of those names, you would be killed. My father was a twin and Mustapha M. Koroma was his name. When we crossed the river they killed my father and took away all his belongings. We went in different directions. I went very close to the border. We could not go back to Liberia because of our name. We remained within that area until one Thursday morning when there was an attack and we were captured by one Tunkara. He was a Vai man, he spoke Vai. I cannot understand Vai, except Mende. The three of us were captured and we had to follow them anywhere they went. He took me to the south for two weeks and brought me back. I was with him and he gave me a single barrel gun. He left me and went to Yengema and I heard that he was dead. Another soldier took me. I was with him for five months. The bodyguards were given the looted items to take to his wife. The brothers of the boy mobilised themselves and went in search of Tunkara. Patrick Lamin was also arrested and he was heading the whole group. I came to Kailahun in 1994 and Rashid took me to Foday Sankoh and, according to Mike Lamin we were the people from Liberia. We were in Kailahun and I was sent to the police in Pendembu where I was with them for about 5 weeks. We were there until Foday Sankoh himself went to the jungle at Zogoda. He moved with Mosquito and others. Sankoh sent for me and I went as a commander. Zogoda was the central base of the RUF. A central command was passed there for all movements of sandline. From 1994 to 1995 December my assignment was to remain in Zogoda. I was there until Foday Sankoh went to the Peace Accord. By then they said "Peace before Election". We were dislodged from Zogoda, Koribundu, etc. and we all came to Kailahun. By then some people arrived safely but others did not. We managed to reach Kailahun; some of us came very late. We had a short stick with which we beat gun powder on dried leaves to produce gun sound; we had run out of arms. We ate bush yams and any other food in the bush for survival until we arrived in Kailahun. When we came, we spent two weeks. By then we were coming under serious attacks from Hinga Norman. My own assignment was a **jungler**. There was an infighting that took place between the CDF and SLA. There was an attack and the army overthrew the government. The following day we were called to Freetown. Later Foday Sankoh moved to Daru and then to Freetown. We all went to Freetown and fell in an ambush at Lungi where I was injured I was admitted for two weeks; twelve people died in that ambush. Other people were on the civil line to form the administration of AFRC. We were in Freetown until when I heard that

people had been arrested and killed. So we retreated from Freetown and moved to Kailahun. We came and by then everyone was to go to the front line. During my first attempt to go to the front line, I was injured by the Alpha jet and I was hospitalised for nine months; fourteen people died. They said that the land belonged to them and they had to establish a base there. The fighting continued until there was a cease fire. Foday Sankoh was released and he came through Monrovia; Johnny Paul Koroma went to him in Monrovia. Some people told Foday Sankoh that Mosquito was planning to overthrow him. He ordered Mosquito to leave and said he didn't want him any longer in his movement. Mosquito was stubborn and people advised him to leave as they did not want another blood shed.

When Foday Sankoh was in Freetown, I was in Tongo. We learnt that there was a riot in Freetown. The rest of our Ministers who were appointed were dismissed and Foday Sankoh was arrested and in the process he was shot in the leg. Another misunderstanding took place in Makeni where UN personnel were arrested. The whole place was destabilized. I heard that 20 people were arrested and these people were released and they went through Liberia.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

You will expect that there will be need to clarify some areas. I will ask the Chairman to ask his questions.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We want to thank you very much for giving us your experience on the rebel war. I want us to be honest, frank and open to one another. We don't want to leave any stone unturned. Even if it is the most serious crime, you are free to say it here. We want to know the truth. I want you to feel free to respond to our questions just for clarification. Did I hear you say that you belonged to a Special Forces group of the RUF?

Mustapha: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know of the different groups in the RUF?

Mustapha: Yes, Special Forces, Vanguard and Junior Commandos

Chairman Bishop Humper: Which of these did you belong to?

Mustapha: We who were captured and taken along with those people were later brought to work with them. They considered us to be next to them and so they called us Vanguard.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Were you involved in fighting, looting, killing or destroying properties in anyway?

Mustapha: I never went to the war front. I took up an assignment. 28 lives were killed among themselves.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Mustapha, did you ever go the war front?

Mustapha: My first time of going to the front line was when Zogoda was dissolved; I was injured and admitted for nine months

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you tell us some of the atrocities your people committed?

Mustapha: From the time I came here in 1994, even the information they gave you yesterday, I came here after that time.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Let me help you. Was your group involved in killing?

Mustapha: For as long as you fight in the front line, you will always kill.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Now, about destruction of houses. Would you say that your people participated in the destruction of houses?

Mustapha: Any civilian can tell you that Foday Sankoh never allowed anybody to destroy houses in Kailahun.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you hear about the arrest or detention of UNAMSIL personnel?

Mustapha: There was a commander named George. He belonged to the RUF.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Was it the right thing he did?

Mustapha: It was the wrong thing.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Assuming you were forced into it. Can you say your involvement was a good thing for yourself?

Mustapha: I am a little bit sceptical about the question you have asked. I am saying something to give you the right information. If you ask the people about me, they will explain to you that I have never done any evil thing in Kailahun.

Commissioner Professor Kamara John Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were in Liberia and my guess is that you are a Liberian; am I correct?

Mustapha: No sir.

Prof. Kamara: You said people with the names 'Koroma' and 'Konneh' would be killed in Liberia

Mustapha: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were coming when you were arrested, was it after crossing the border?

Mustapha: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: That was in 1994. You were arrested in 1991 and after going through the hands of two people who were all killed, you came to Kailahun in 1994. Were you there in 1994 when the government forces attacked?

Mustapha: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Who was the commando by then?

Mustapha: Mohamed was the second in command to Rashid. He was staying in Galon Nyawa and another man called Moris Kallon was staying very close to Daru.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were there arms or military people in Kailahun?

Mustapha: There was an attack, the South African came to Kailahun.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What was the process for promotion in the RUF because you said by 1994/95 you were promoted .

Mustapha: It was not a promotion: it was an appointment for me to move from place to place.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You didn't have to distinguish yourself in any way?

Mustapha: You had to do something to attract the authorities.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: That means you had to commit atrocities?

Mustapha: During that period, especially in 1996, when the "Peace before Election" failed, a lot of atrocities were committed by rebels and soldiers. By then the soldiers and RUF were not together. In 1996 Foday Sankoh went to Ivory Coast for the Peace talks. The RUF in Pujehun district then, crossed to Liberia and surrendered to the ULIMO.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: In your opinion, did you say that if the pressure was continued on the RUF the war would have ended?

Mustapha: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What period was this when you were pressured out of Sierra Leone?

Mustapha: At the end of 1996 as well as in 1997. It was the coup that caused the RUF to survive.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When did the misunderstanding of Mosquito and Foday Sankoh happen?

Mustapha: It was a movement we all belonged to. It started from gossip to the leader. When Sankoh was away, he told Mosquito that he should put his feet in his (Sankoh's) shoes. When Sankoh came back, the people complained to him that Mosquito harassed them a lot. Sankoh called Mosquito and told him that he was not coming to Kailahun again. He told Mosquito that he should go to Liberia to go and train, but Mosquito refused and alleged that Sankoh wanted to kill him. Sankoh said that if he did not take his advice, he would no longer be accepted in the movement. Two boys who were supposed to be giving Sankoh information were beaten by Mosquito. So Sankoh asked Mosquito to leave and attach himself to another group.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Where did that happen?

Mustapha: That happened in the Samingo area. Whenever anything happened, they would call all of us for discussion. He never judged you or decided or give information without consultation. We learnt that one of his body guards beat up somebody and he was judged by the court in front of men and women. The man was condemned and sent to a base for punishment training for 2 months. Whenever you committed a crime you were arrested, but a Captain could not arrest another captain. Every signaller was a secret informant for Foday Sankoh. Sankoh would ask the signaller if the person who committed an offence had moved. If he had, then he would make arrangements for an arrest to be executed.

Leader Of Evidence

Leader of Evidence: Is it true that the Paramount Chief has asked you to leave the town?

Mustapha: No sir. An incident took place among us. Moriba, a body guard to Sankoh, and I had problems during the war. I was sent here to come and disarm. That was the first assignment given me by the RUF from a higher level. By then the Ghanaian contingent was in Daru. There was fear for UN to deploy in Kailahun. I went to Issa Sesay to tell him that that was my first assignment. He said I would have to be in Kailahun and disarm. I met the townsmen who wanted to know if I had any idea about their missing window bars.

Leader of Evidence: I am asking you again, "Have you ever participated in looting and the harassing people?"

Mustapha: I told them that I wanted to express my own view. The present officer knew about this case in Kenema. When the DO wrote to Banyan in Tongo asking if he was aware that they were destroying Kailahun District and the person sent there might be involved, Issa called me and accused me of involvement there. I got information from Bendu junction that Rambo, a commander, said he had collected 60 windows from Kailahun to go and sell. I came to the body guard of Foday Sankoh and asked him if he had ever seen that done during Foday Sankoh's time. I arrested him and locked him up. It was a serious problem. If you were afraid of those boys, they just continued to misbehave. I dealt with him seriously. He sent a message to Issa and told him that I sold a diamond for \$68,000. For that reason Moriba was to receive 162 lashes but I begged for him. When Feika was here, he said he had evidence of the selling of the windows. I asked Moriba why he allowed his boys to sell those properties. I accused him of being the cause of those problems. He sent the windows to Kenema and did not bring them back. Moriba joined the SLPP to stand against me. They said I am a Liberian and my father was in Liberia therefore I should go back to Liberia. People started insulting me. I was in PAKBAT for one week. People who were around know the people who destroyed Kailahun. I gave assurance to the police in PAKBAT. I was not asked officially to leave this place.

Leader of Evidence: Do you think the commission can help you solve this problem?

Mustapha: Yes, I am begging the commission to help me solve the problem. I don't even know where my father is. I am attending a computer school. I attended a university in Liberia.

Leader of Evidence: For the kind of experience you have and the fact that people still think you are planning evil, is there any way the Commission can help with your story? You have told us your story but there are lots of gaps. Special Forces were those trained in Libya?

Mustapha: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: This includes.

Mustapha: Mike Lamin.

Leader of Evidence: Vanguards were trained in Liberia?

Mustapha: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were you part of their training and how many people were trained at that training camp?

Mustapha: There was no training camp at Borma hills; I was given an emergency training.

Leader of Evidence: How long did this emergency training last?

Mustapha: One week.

Leader of Evidence: Who else was trained during that period?

Mustapha: None.

Leader of Evidence: Those who were trained in Burkina Faso, what were they called?

Mustapha: They were Special Forces.

Leader of Evidence: Those who were trained in Sierra Leone?

Mustapha: They were called Junior Forces.

Leader of Evidence: While in Liberia, Sierra Leoneans were arrested by Charles Taylor. Sankoh convinced Charles Taylor to release those people. Do you know about that?

Mustapha: Other people gave us the message that those people were dead.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the first commander when you came here?

Mustapha: I met Mohamed Tarawally. He was staying on the road going to Koindu and he was next to Sankoh in Kailahun. There was the formation of the Top 20 when the Gio people were forced out, and the command structure was left in the hands of Sierra Leoneans.

Leader of Evidence: It was Rashid who introduced you to Sankoh?

Mustapha: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Who killed Rashid?

Mustapha: He was killed on the command of Sankoh.

When we talked about betrayal we referred to those persons who leaked what was discussed in confidence to the enemy. I cannot say I ever saw Rashid perform any action. According to information, Kanneh and Rashid had an earlier plan to come and launch their own revolution in this country. We received information from Kanneh that Sankoh could not control the programme. They had plans to set up their own programme. During the time of the arrest of Rashid, Kanneh said he was betrayed because Rashid said Foday Sankoh could not control the war, he was old and he joined the RUF late. So Sankoh went to Rashid and asked him to join him in a meeting and Rashid said somebody had betrayed him and that he would have to execute that person. When they came to Sandehun he arrested Rashid. Kanneh then said that Rashid had betrayed him. Kanneh told Sankoh that if Rashid wanted to overthrow him he would have to use another method. Kanneh then asked Rashid whether he was not the one who said Sankoh was not good enough to

lead the movement and we should get rid of him. Rashid had told the commander at Daru that by 8 O'clock he should make use of the light to talk to his men, but he should not use it too much. No sooner had the man left than they launched the attack and the body of Rashid was torn into pieces.

Leader of Evidence: Were you there when the trial of Rashid took place?

Mustapha: Yes sir.
I never saw the people who killed Rashid. Sankoh said they should carry the men to the front line.

Leader of Evidence: Which front line was Rashid sent to?

Mustapha: To Mano, Sierra Leone high way.

Leader of Evidence: Was he sent to a front line headed by Mosquito?

Mustapha: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: As convoy commander you were linking between camp Zogoda and the front line.

Mustapha: Yes
When those men went to the front line, their women had to be taken to Sankoh who fed them. If we had salt and Maggie we took them to Zogoda. We moved things to Zogoda, where Sankoh was.

Leader of Evidence: You took captured civilians and any food items to camp Zogoda?

Mustapha: We were not taking captured civilians to Zogoda. The wives went in a convoy to see their husbands.

Leader of Evidence: If Foday Sankoh had food items to be taken to Zogoda how would you send them?

Mustapha: He only spoke with the two front line commanders. He would drive anybody around him.

Leader of Evidence: Between 1991 and 1994, what were you doing?

Mustapha: I was in Pujehun; I was with Patrick Lamin. He was in-charge of the Pujehun area.

Leader of Evidence: Which area was under your command?

Mustapha: I was a commander for Faroh town.

Leader of Evidence: How many troops did you have there?

Mustapha: No troops. I was like an administrator.

Leader of Evidence: You were ground commander for three and half years?

Mustapha: Yes, they scattered all of us in the bush. All military police would move along with Mike Lamin. We used thatched roofs in the jungle. We spent seven months

there. I decided to come to Kailahun when they sent a message to Mike Lamin that he was not doing anything.

Leader of Evidence: You were then made commander for Kailahun. How long did you serve as commander?

Mustapha: In July 2001 I was an executing commander and my duty was to inform the leaders about what happened on the ground.

Leader of Evidence: You took decisions.

Mustapha: I did not take decisions. I waited for command from the head.

Leader of Evidence: What was your relationship with Tom sandy?

Mustapha: I was the security commander. Tom Sandy reported to his boss in Makeni.

Leader of Evidence: Why do people hate you in Kailahun?

Mustapha: I was not here during the UN time; I came here three months before the disarmament.

Leader of Evidence: How do you want the Commission to help you?

Mustapha: I am appealing to the commission, the war was not made by human beings: it was made by God. God knows those who caused the atrocities. I am appealing to the Commission to plead with the people of Kailahun for them to have mercy on me.

Leader of Evidence: On Friday the commission will have to move to the slaughter house and we will like you to apologise before the people at the ceremony. You will have to agree to certain things. You have to come out forthright with what happened. The commission needs to be sure that what you are saying is true. We have to get a formal ceremony.
Who can we contact in Pakbat with regard to your relationship in the community?

Mustapha: Major Agba. The present 2IC and also a Susan Magaba.
I want to assure you that if I had caused any atrocities, I will say so. I am ready to go to the ground and apologise to anybody I have done wrong to.

Leader of Evidence: Are you ready to take any step to beg them on Friday for forgiveness. Begging for forgiveness is the beginning. But don't expect people to forgive you on Friday when you refuse to accept what you have done. What can also help is if you yourself say you are willing to reconcile.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: If you say you were going to apologise. People will want to know what you are apologising for.

Mustapha: I am apologising for what the war did.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What kind of crime do you accept to have committed?

Mustapha: I apologise for what the war has caused and as a member of the RUF, I apologise for what the RUF did during the war. I am appealing to the government to assist us with education. As you can see there is no electricity in

Kailahun. There is no good road to Kailahun and there are no health centres. I am appealing to the government to assist us with all of these in Kailahun.

2nd – Witness – Morie Feika

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara

Bishop Joseph Humper

Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Morie Feika. The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Commissioner Professor Kamara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

You know why you are here and you know all what happened yesterday. We want you to tell us everything you know about the war.

Leader of Evidence: You are aware that you gave your testimony yesterday and we decided for you to appear at the closed hearings. You disagreed with many points raised in our questions yesterday and people were telling us that you told lies. The

Commission is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, so you have to tell the truth. You are expected to explain all that you know and all that you saw your colleagues do during the war so that people in Kailahun will forgive you.

Morie: I am saying thanks to you. We were here in Kailahun, for 11years and if I leave anything behind please forgive me. If there is anything left out you can bring it to my notice.

Leader of Evidence

Leader of Evidence: You were trained at the National Secondary School?

Morie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Where did they train you?

Morie: From the office we were taken to the Buyama base and the training was called "ideology"

Leader of Evidence: How long did it last?

Morie: One and a half weeks.

Leader of Evidence: Were you trained to use guns?

Morie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: After the training, where were you sent?

Morie: I was sent back to the office.

Leader of Evidence: In which year?

Morie: In 1996.

Leader of Evidence: You were not in the RUF between 1991 and 1995?

Morie: I was working with them but I went to the base in 1996.

Leader of Evidence: You joined the RUF in 1991?

Morie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You were working as a clerk in 1996?

Morie: I was first made the Adjutant in my village until 1993 before we were scattered. Then we went to Ngiehun where I came in contact with Siaffa. He asked me to work in the G5.

Leader of Evidence: How many men were under your control?

Morie: I was working with the village people. I was a kind of liaison officer between the people and the Liberians.

Leader of Evidence: As town commander, you took care of security?

Morie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You also organized food for the soldiers assigned to you?

Morie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: The soldiers who served under your command were looting and forcing people to go to the farm to work? People hate you in Kailahun and they hate you because of what you did during those times. The war is over and it is now time to reconcile. You have to say the truth. On Friday we have to call the whole town and you need to say the truth. With the Commission anything you say to us is confidential. If you tell us the truth we can help you.

Tell us what you actually did when you were a ground commander in Kailahun town that makes people in this place hate you so much.

Morie: All what you said about my people not loving me does not come out of the war, but local politics. We were supporting a candidate called Lamin. I was one of the strong men behind Lamin. All the other groups gathered against the man. After the elections we the supporters of Lamin were pushed aside. They refused to confer with us on all matters. I am telling you frankly, if there is any person who is to testify that I killed somebody and I had been found guilty of any allegation, let me be punished. Some people went on to tell my mother that the TRC had arrested me. We have been here for the past years and all the hatred stems from those elections. I have been supporting a candidate who did not win so people did not like me for that.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The two people who were candidates have now reconciled; the man you supported is speaker to the Paramount Chief. So why are you treated like this?

Morie: We have two Ngobebs who contested the elections. We supported Lamin Gobeh and he is now in Freetown. The two Ngobebs are from the same house. The contest was between houses. The two brothers are not on good terms at the moment.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When were you commander in Kailahun?

Morie: In 1997.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How long were you commander?

Morie: I was a commander for four years and I was in Kailahun right through.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you want to tell the Commission that your boys did not loot, kill or rape?

Morie: I was controlling eight people in the town. I also had agents.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were your boys part of the RUF?

Morie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When they met with the civilians, they were feared like any other rebels; did they commit any atrocities?

Morie: When they came with goods to Kailahun, we assisted in distributing the goods.

Bishop Humper

Chairman Bishop Humper: Were you following your boys when they went around? Did they ever tell you of the wrong things they did?

Morie: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: May we assume that you did not commit these wrongs yourself, but your boys did?

Morie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you realise that in the interest of reconciliation we can look into other areas including the chieftaincy? You have to come and admit what happened. Are you prepared to tell us what you did so that you will leave this place and have a sound sleep?

Morie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Apart from forcing people to carry loads, you and your boys also forced people to work on the farms?

Morie: No, please allow me to explain. We had an overall commander for the G5. The deputy overall commander was also here plus the District G5 commander and the G5 Adjutant. At the time I worked with the G5, Sankoh was not in Kailahun. Sam Bockarie was here with us and he called the overall G5 commander and told him that he wanted 50 farms in the area. Our own responsibility was to do the work. We had to provide palm oil and agricultural products for the people. The 'WE' in the context is not referring to me alone but everybody. We were mining diamonds and the diamonds were sent to the leaders. I am bound to share the blame for all that happened for the very fact that I attended school here and happened to be the commander of the G5 unit. I informed the people of what the rebels said. The people had no option but to do what I said. We were forcing people and taking them where we felt like. The last farm was made at Pendembu. People walked on foot to Pendembu and I took them to the farm the following morning.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Those who complained of being tired were beaten by your boys.

Morie: The beating was a punishment we used. If a piece of work was not completed, we were detained. We did beat people. Sam Koroma detained me for 15 days on one occasion. He said I dictated to him. We too went through molestations. He was the commander by then and he was in charge of the whole of Kailahun. I played a part in the detention of the UN Peace Keepers. One evening Augustine called us and said they had orders from Makeni to arrest the UN people. Augustine, Martin George and Jonathan Kposowa said we should disarm the foreign troops. They sent me to the UN Peace Keepers. If the UN knew that I was sent to disarm them, I would not have returned. I went to call the

UN, and they were happy. When they came, Kposowa passed orders that they should not move. Sankoh's securities, the Black Guard unit, were armed and nobody could disarm them other than Sankoh. About 62 armed men were in the queue. All the UN people were arrested. I went with the UN peace keepers to Ngiema. We locked their house and the key was handed over to me. Martin assigned fifteen people to take care of the house. After fifteen minutes, he sent his boys to tell me to open the door for them. The boys went to tell Martin that I refused to open the door. They beat me up and afterwards entered the house and started looting. The movement of the UN peace keepers was restricted. They were Indians. I was the only person who entered their camp to fetch water. I was ordered not to go to them again. The other day a helicopter gunship came, and we all went into the bush. So many people were killed. After that the UN Peace Keepers escaped.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Which part did Mustapha play in the Kamajor issue?

Morie: He was an M.P. commander. He was shut in the foot. Tom sandy and Augustine Bayoh were then Lt. Colonels.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We understand that you still have women in your custody.

Morie: I have two women and I have married them.

Chairman Bishop Humper: In which year did you marry them?

Morie: In 1995 I have another one who was born Kenema.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you marry her during the war?

Morie: We were in love during the war. I have nobody under my control, I did not capture anybody.

Chairman Bishop Humper: When did you release the last person you captured?

Morie: People were coming here to collect their children. The people were seeing me and my wives.

Chairman Bishop Humper: How many children were under your control before they were finally released?

Morie: When they captured the people we took them to the joint security office. A group called IBU carried out the investigation. There was another group that took care of the resettlement of the people. In the end we asked for the list. We used the list to know those who had earlier requested the release of their people. After the people had done their work they went back to their various places.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did fighters sign and take people away?

Morie: I did not allow any soldier to sign for anybody. What happened was that a soldier went into the jungle and another man came and took his people away. The soldiers then returned and started firing on the base saying that his people were missing. He accused G5 of giving his people away. I was held responsible and I was given 50 lashes.

Leader of Evidence

Leader of Evidence: On Friday, the Commission wants to do a reconciliation process at the "slaughter house". It is left to you to tell your people all the atrocities you caused so that they will forgive you. Forgiveness is not in one day. We want you to live in peace and we wish the same for the people in Kailahun. As a Commission, we want you to look at your people in their eyes on Friday and say you are willing to ask for forgiveness and you are prepared for reconciliation.

Bishop Humper

Chairman Bishop Humper: The Leader of Evidence has said it all. I believe in my mind that people don't know what you have said. We hope that you will cooperate with us on Friday. We will send a message to the Paramount Chief and other elders in the chiefdom and we want you to cooperate with us and you will see the difference.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: We have come to the end. All you have to do is to organize what you are going to say to your people on Friday. You can tell the people a summary of what happened to you and your responsibilities, and the result of failing to perform that responsibility. The question of enslavement and the humiliation that you also put people into including yourself. That was why I said you need to organise yourself. So when you say your apologies, they will accept you. Is there anything else you want to say?

Morie: I want the Commission to assist me with my education.

3rd Witness – James Morseray

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara

Bishop Joseph Humper

Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is James Morseray. The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Professor Kamara administered the oath.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You know what you are here for. This is not a court this is just a truth-finding Commission. Don't be afraid to tell us anything. Please tell us your experience.

TESTIMONY

In 1991 three of us were arrested. One of us was killed. They asked us whether we were willing to go with them. We went with them so that they would not kill us. They took us to Pedembu at the training base. We were at the training base for a month. After the training, those who were born in the District were sent to work elsewhere. They sent us to Zogoda. At Zogoda the Kamajors attacked us and we came to Segbwema. After the Peace Accord was signed, we used to meet the Kamajors at Mambolo. There was another village close to where we met the Kamajors but I can't remember the name of the village. During that time there was a misunderstanding between the RUF and the Kamajors. We stopped visiting each other. We went to fight the Kamajors. At a village called Burkina we arrested a pregnant woman and buried her alive. After the burial we left. We came to the Bunumbu Teacher's College. We were there when the Kamajors sent us a message that we should make peace. All roads were then opened within that area. They told us that they were the people who had visited first, so we were to visit them next. We were afraid. Whenever we paid those visits we usually took our guns along. We were not sure of what would happen that was why we took our guns. During that time, I saw my brother who was a Kamajor. He asked if I would have killed him when I saw him wearing the combat. After smiling to each other, he asked me to go and meet him, but I refused and I asked him to come and meet me. After that they sent us to Tongo. At Tongo our seniors asked us to go out in the mornings and search for food in the vicinity. We seized any food we saw and took it to them. They didn't allow us to eat the food we brought. In October 2001, the Indians came. When the Indians were with us, I told my friend that we should find a way to escape. When they realised that we were trying to escape, they used the bayonet on me. There is a sore on my foot. There was a commando called Manawah who arrested us. The one with whom I was working was called Mr. Ishmael. Ishmael asked me to move back to Segbema. I was in Segbema when my father was appointed a chief. During that time, the chief instructed everybody to clean the town.

While in Segbema, I always told my friend that we should try to escape. When we were leaving, I took my gun and ran away. We travelled through Benguima where we met some Indians at the check point who disarmed us. They searched us and took us to the check point. The Indians told

us that they were taking us to the DDR office. They interviewed us. They gave us some water to drink. The day I entered DDR I was so happy. I compared the two lives I had lived and I observed that being a rebel was not a good one. The Indians usually left us to walk around. I saw my uncle and I cried. I was so surprised to see him. I thought he was dead. I asked for my mother and he told me that my father and mother were dead. I asked him about my family members. Since we separated, I don't know where they had been. At the DDR camp they treated us like children who should not be dealt with like the elders. At Save the Children, they usually interviewed us. They asked us what we wanted to do. While with Save the Children I hated any encounter with a Kamajor, I was scared. It was during that time they said they wanted to talk to the townspeople. During the war, a lot of children left their parents. They talked to the camp people to accept us as their own children. The person who adopted me was a Mr. Amara. On our way, I asked him whether he was going to take care of me like his own child. He said yes. After three days, I started thinking that I was not safe. I decided that I should go back to the camp. When I was in the camp, Save the Children went there and asked us to go back. We were in the town and Save the Children sent me to learn tailoring. I have finished my course and now I am asking Save the Children and the government to assist me in getting my own tools to do my job. That was all I saw during the war.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: We thank you for coming and telling your story. I am sure from the statement you had given to our staff before, you have not told us anything that you saw or experienced during the time you were associated with the RUF. To get that information, we need to ask you a few questions.

Bishop Humper: You have the same name as my son. I take you as my son. We are sorry that you found yourself in that situation. We are asking you questions in order to create some conditions or atmosphere for you to feel free. The questions I am asking are for clarification and they have to do with the statement as the commissioner has said.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Before you were captured, were you attending school?

James: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What standard did you attain?

James: Class 5.

Chairman Bishop Humper: From all you have said and, as a child, I will treat you as a child. Let me establish that you were forced to join the rebels and they trained you and gave you drugs.

James: They used to inject us with cocaine.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What was your experience when they injected you?

James: After I was given the injection I didn't fear anything, any human being you saw looked funny in your eyes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You did a lot of killing which, under normal circumstances, you would not have done at all.

James: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You have explained that you buried a pregnant woman.

James: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you name some of the commanders you were moving with?

James: Ishmael, Manawah.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you remember Manawah?

James: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you remember Akim and Johnny Paul Koroma?

James: Yes. I also know Monkey Brown, these I can remember.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know Sam Bockarie?

James: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know Bayoh?

James: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know Mike Lamin?

James: I usually heard his name.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Which ones now can you remember?

James: I will try to remember his name: he was a commando in Kailahun

Chairman Bishop Humper: What kind of punishment did the rebels give to you?

James: There was a hole; they hung a stick over a hole and you were asked to hang on the stick. They used to punish us. They had a cassette that they played and they would beat you until the cassette finished.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you see other people abducted; children, women and men?

James: I saw them, they did the same thing to me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you personally kill anybody?

James: When our bosses arrested people, they came with them and asked us to kill them.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How many times did you do that?

James: Three times.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were they all men?

James: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You spoke of Kamajors meeting you the rebels.

James: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The Kamajors joined the rebels to fight the soldiers?

James: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What was the friendship?

James: It was during the time they wanted us to cease fire.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were the RUF meeting with the soldiers?

James: Most of the soldiers were with the rebels.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said you had a quarrel with the Kamajors. When you were friends of the Kamajors did you know Johnny Paul?

James: It was during the time when Johnny Paul was in town that we used to meet with the Kamajors.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I want to ask when were you in good terms with the Kamajors?

James: When we went to attack Daru barracks, we did not succeed and later we made peace with the Kamajors.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The pregnant woman that was buried alive, can you recall why it was done?

James: It was a ceremony my boss asked me to perform.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Can you tell us the name of the commando that gave you this instruction?

James: There were a lot of commandos by then, but Ishmael was there.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Does that result in killing the people you got the food from?

James: We usually abducted them.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did those include children?

James: We abducted men, women and children.

Leader of Evidence

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned that Johnny Paul was one of your commanders. Was it the Johnny Paul who was the head of the AFRC?

James: Yes, it was that Johnny Paul.

Leader of Evidence: When was Johnny Paul your commander?

James: If I can remember, there were two peace accords. When we came, we were all together. That was the time he served as commander.

Leader of Evidence: Were you with him in the bush?

James: They visited us in different locations.

Leader of Evidence: Did he join you to fight?

James: Actually he did not come to fight. He brought arms for our bosses and when he went to Freetown he joined our bosses to fight.

Leader of Evidence: What did he say to you in the bush?

James: He was telling us that we should fight for our land and we should fight to the end as Sankoh had said we would have a lot of benefit after the war.

Leader of Evidence: When did they usually inject you?

James: They injected us when we wanted to go to war.

Leader of Evidence: If you captured children like yourself, what did you do with them?

James: When we captured children, some were abducted and some we released.

Leader of Evidence: How long did your training last?

James: There were times when we spent less than a month.

Leader of Evidence: Where were you trained?

James: In Pendembu. During the training our heads were shaved. We did not spend much time. They gave us boiled banana for food and our bosses and their wives ate rice.

Leader of Evidence: Were girls trained as well?

James: Some of them were forcefully made wives and some were trained.

Leader of Evidence: How old were you when they captured you?

James: 14 years.

Leader of Evidence: Give us an idea of the age of the children they captured.

James: I cannot exactly say their ages, but there were smaller and bigger boys. When they gave birth to children and those children grew up they sent them to the training base.

Leader of Evidence: Were many of the girls who were captured raped?

James: Yes they were raped and, in-fact, there was a time my boss forced me to have sex with a girl. If I did not do it I would be killed. Some were raped in their houses and some others were locked up in their houses and those houses were set ablaze.

Leader of Evidence: Were you engaged in mining diamonds?

James: Those who were abducted were forced to mine diamonds and our bosses took the pieces from them.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where they took those diamonds?

James: They took the diamonds to the Sierra Leone and Guinea border in exchange for arms.

Leader of Evidence: Did you participate in the attack on Freetown on January 6, 1999?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: James, do you have questions to ask or recommendations to Make?

James: Now that you have interviewed me what is the proof that what we have said here will not be exposed?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: If you want a tangible proof, we can't give you, but I want to tell you that you are not the only person we have interviewed. You have to have faith in us. We've heard your story. We know what you have gone through and even what you did was not something you decided to do. So we will not like to make your life more difficult. Therefore, we will not go and tell anybody what you were forced to do. Our responsibility to you is to protect you and to help you overcome the trauma you have suffered. You lost your entire youth, your education was interrupted, you now have no parents. You must take the Commission as your parents and your friend. We will try and do all we can to help you. We will not add to your difficulties.

James: Where I am currently, I go to work and live on my own. I want to be under the care of somebody. I have completed my training.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So Save the Children is no longer responsible for you?

James: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: With whom are you staying?

James: The person who trained me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Is he kind to you?

James: Yes, he is in Daru, 16 Nayma Road; his name is Amara Koroma

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Is he a tailor himself?

James: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Has he employed you now?

James: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Does he provide a place for you to stay?

James: Since I was taken out of the camp, he has been the person responsible for me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Does he provide you with food?

James: When he is able, he does it but there are other times when he does not.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How many of you are with this man?

James: Four of us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are the others also ex-RUF?

James: They are relatives of Mr. Amara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How do they receive you; do they make comments?

James: Initially they used to make remarks but Mr. Amara usually gave them pieces of advice. However, I want to leave his place.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Why do you want to leave?

James: I want to go and stay in Kenema

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Is that your home town?

James: No, if I go to my village, they will not accept me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Where are you from?

James: I am from Zandahu. There was a time I was taken there by Save the Children who told the people that I was not my normal self when all this happened. I really do not want to go and settle there because my brother was a Kamajor.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Is your brother there?

James: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Why don't you want to go there?

James: He said we will never come to terms because I allowed myself to be captured and used as a rebel.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Don't make it known to Amara that you don't want to stay there. When you have somewhere to go, then you can leave. Whatever the Commission can do, we will try to do. The Commission has responsibility for all those like you.

4th – Witness – Fudie Swarray

Presiding Commissioner: Professor John Kamara
Bishop Joseph Humper
Leader of Evidence: Ozonia Ojielo

My name is Fudie Swarray. The witness swore on the Koran. I am a Muslim. Commissioner Professor Kamara administered the oath.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Fudie we want you to tell us the truth of all what happened during the war. I want you to remember that this is not a court, but it is just a fact- or truth-finding Commission. When you say the truth here, you will not be prosecuted for anything you have done. Don't be afraid to say anything about what you or other persons did. We are friends.

TESTIMONY

My family went into the woods: We were a large family. There were six boys, four wives, four men and six girls. We were there when the rebels met us. We moved and we met with the rebels at the same point. When we went to the other point, the rebels met us there again and those of us who were boys were abducted. The rebels took us away. Our relatives did not agree and they put up some resistance. When we arrived in a village, they asked us to carry their luggage. As we were going, the rebels killed two of us simply because they said they were unable to carry the luggage. We were in the town for four days and the rebels took us to the bush and shaved our heads. We were there for six days after which we were taken out of the bush and brought to Kailahun. They queued us up and they would send a gun to us and we were expected to catch it without allowing it to fall. As they sent the guns, we caught them. One of our colleagues allowed the gun to fall and immediately he was shot. We were there for three days. Having gone through the training we were assigned to man the check point. One morning, we were asked to go to Koindu. In the morning, we were attacked by Kamajors and our companions started shooting at them. We were engaged in active combat until we were able to

repel the Kamajors. On arrival in Kailahun, they abducted some other men and took them to the village. In the morning, there was no food and we went in search of food. We harvested bananas, plantains and rice and put everything in a bag and walked around the terrain. We realised that people were in bush camp and we captured them. Those people carried our food that we had seized. We went on another patrol towards Koindu. We did not know that the route we used was where the Kamajors laid their ambush. We exchanged firing. We were outnumbered by them and they threatened us. We dropped our guns and ran away. The rebels asked why we dropped our guns and each one of us was given 100 strokes with a rod. Having beaten us, they gave us rum. We went into a cassava farm and there was a big stream. When we crossed the stream, they asked us to go into an ambush in that area. We were finding hiding places when the Kamajors came and opened fire on us. We captured four Kamajors and brought them to Kailahun. We took their guns and killed them. I witnessed the chopping off of an enemy's head which was placed on a stick. I was given instructions to threaten people and remove their properties from them. The following day, we were in this town. Towards dusk, they attacked the town. There was intense firing. Three of us were very tight friends and did not betray one another. We went into hiding and decided that we were going to Liberia. We went towards Norman and crossed. We met Liberian soldiers who said we were rebels. We were beaten thoroughly. They took us to their boss. Their boss inspected our bodies for any rebel marks. They released us and we crossed the river.

When we went to the village, we spent some time looking for our relatives. We were in the town for 3 days and we decided to return to Pedembu. There also we were captured. It was the Kamajors that captured us. They took us into a house. They did not know that the door to the room in which they had kept us was not good. We spoiled the door and got out. We went to Baima and spent five days there. We learnt that Save the Children was there. We went to Daru and they showed us where their office was. Our names were written down and they gave us food. They took us to the camp and they fed us and gave us clothing. They asked us the kind of trade we wanted and I told them that I wanted to learn tailoring. The others decided that they wanted to go to school. We were there for some time and now I can do some work all by myself.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much.

It is a short story but it contains a lot of information. We are sorry for those bad experiences. We will want to ask you a few questions.

Chairman Bishop Humper: How old were you when you were captured?

Fudie: 9 years.

Chairman Bishop Humper: During your training, how many of your companions died in the process?

Fudie: Two of them.

Chairman Bishop Humper: During your movement from place to place, what did they give you?

Fudie: When we went to work, they gave us packets of cigarette and marijuana and we smoked very seriously before we left.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What happened to you after smoking the marijuana?

Fudie: When I smoked, I could not distinguish between grown ups and children; my eyes became very red.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Because of that you killed?

Fudie: There were times when you were retreating and shooting at the same time, and you would have killed without knowing.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you capture boys, girls and men?

Fudie: We used to capture civilians and bring them to town.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Were you going to school before you were captured?

Fudie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: As you think back, what do you think is missing in your life?

Fudie: When I sit back, I think of having my own materials and work tools and having my own house so that I will be independent.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You were attending school and now you have learnt tailoring; was this your original intention?

Fudie: This is not my intention. I had an intention to study further.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I want you to feel relaxed. Where are you living now?

Fudie: I live in the Paramount Chief's compound in Daru.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are you with your relatives.

Fudie: My relatives are no more. I am there, undergoing training.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You told us a number of unpleasant experiences. You said your group captured three Kamajors and killed all of them, is that correct?

Fudie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you see the killing yourself?

Fudie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Was that the first time you saw people being killed?

Fudie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were then just about nine years?

Fudie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What was your reaction, how did you feel?

Fudie: I was heavy laden and I was afraid that the same will be done to me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: On that day, had you marijuana to smoke or was drug given to you?

Fudie: On that day, I smoked marijuana.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you given any injections?

Fudie: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are you still taking marijuana?

Fudie: Yes, I still smoke it

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You can't do without it?

Fudie: I can do without it.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are you going to try to stop smoking?

Fudie: It is about four months now, I have not smoked marijuana. I will try to stop it.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said you witnessed somebody's head being cut off and put on a pole?

Fudie: It was like coming in an encounter with an enemy. So when the colleagues of the enemy came around, they would see the head on the pole.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you at any time kill somebody?

Fudie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How many times?

Fudie: Once.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Under what circumstances?

Fudie: The person was also an enemy.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you in a battle?

Fudie: We had exchange of firing when we went in search of food and we met the enemy on a tree. I did not say anything and I passed him, but when my senior saw him he ordered me to kill him.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So you killed him?

Fudie: I did.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What did you do to the body?

Fudie: There is a hole in the villages where they used to prepare palm oil. We dropped the body in the hole and left it there.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you assigned to people going out on expeditions?

Fudie: There were a lot of us in the town. We worked on a shift basis.

Leader of Evidence

Leader of Evidence: Did you go through DDR?

Fudie: They did not allow us to go through the process, we went into hiding.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to your eyes by the time?

Fudie: They took the guns from us, we sneaked.

Leader of Evidence: You sneaked away from save the children and where did you go?

Fudie: We were with the rebels when we sneaked. We heard about Save the Children and went to Daru.

Leader of Evidence: Who was your commander in the RUF?

Fudie: Mr. Banya.

Leader of Evidence: What was his nick name?

Fudie: That was the name he was called.

Leader of Evidence: Did the RUF also give you a wife?

Fudie: They did not give me a wife but when we went on raids we captured women and had sex with them.

Ozonnia; How many times?

Fudie: It happened once.

Leader of Evidence: Would the commander tell you to have sex with them or did you all know you must have sex with them?

Fudie: It was the commander that actually forced us to have sex with them; he advised that we should not negotiate.

Leader of Evidence: How many of you to one woman?

Fudie: One RUF to one woman. The one I had sex with was of my age.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to those young girls?

Fudie: Some of them got married to the rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Were they also trained as combatants?

Fudie: Some were trained as combatants.

Leader of Evidence: Were those female combatants respected?

Fudie: They were respected because some of them were hot tempered and if you dared with them, they would kill you.

Leader of Evidence: How long did your training last?

Fudie: It lasted for five days.

Leader of Evidence: I am sure some of you did not survive the training. What kind of training did you do?

Fudie: If you missed any point during the training, you were killed especially if the gun was sent to you and you did not catch it.

Leader of Evidence: Did you participate in the January 6 attack in 1999?

Fudie: I was not there. From here, I went straight to Liberia and then to Daru.

Leader of Evidence: From your statement, you said you saw rebels beating Kamajors at Pademba road. Which Pademba road were you talking about?

Fudie: I can't remember.

Leader of Evidence: Did they inject you with cocaine or they just gave you marijuana?

Fudie: I was given just marijuana.

Leader of Evidence: Did they also show you films to teach you how to fight?

Fudie: Once in a while we watched films.

Leader of Evidence: Did they bring you all together to watch these films?

Fudie: I did not witness a situation where all the combatants were brought together to watch movies. There were only fifteen of us.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of movies did you watch?

Fudie: We viewed war movies by Rambo and learnt manoeuvring techniques.

Leader of Evidence: How many times in a month did they show you these movies?

Fudie: I can not remember, but it was done once in a while.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you know James Moseray?

Fudie: Yes

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you in the same unit?

Fudie: No, there were several units and I was not in his unit.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Have you got any questions to ask or recommendations to make to the Commission?

Fudie: Now that you have asked us all these questions what is the reason for this? Is it that you want to give some benefits to us? Now our relatives can't do anything for us. We are fully dependent on Save the Children and we rely on them for tools to work with when we would have completed our training.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: As you would agree with me, part of your life has been shattered. You wouldn't like a repetition of that. You wouldn't like your children to do the same thing. The Commission was set up to find out about what

happened during the war and why it happened. We will be able to advise the government and anybody to stop anything that looks like those things that caused the war. For the victims, if we get to know how much they have suffered, we will be able to make recommendations on how they can be helped to make their lives better. For children like you, you are so important in the country and yet this war has made you lose part of your youth. Something has to be done to help you. Telling us your story helps us make recommendations to the government. That is the purpose of the commission.

Thank you very much. Do you have any recommendations for the attention the government to do for you?

Fudie: I am appealing to the government to ensure that we are helped with our training, especially with the tools to do our work.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did they give you anything to start the training?

Fudie: That was not given to us. It was given to our boss. I am still training and excelling.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Keep it up Fudie. We have heard your concerns and we shall include them in our report. Thank you.

PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN KAILAHUN ON 15TH MAY 2003

1st Witness- Alex Jusu Allieu

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs Aminata Jow
Chairman Bishop J Humper
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Alex Allieu. The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Thank you for coming here this morning; we appreciate your presence. We will like to assure you that the Commission is not a court. We hope you will help us to fulfil our mandate. I will like to urge you to feel relaxed and share your experience with us as clearly and accurately as possible. You may now begin.

TESTIMONY

I was in the village with my parents. When we heard that the rebels had entered Bomaru. We were in our village, Dodo. We later heard that they had gone away. We continued to stay in Bomaru. They told us they were thieves. After one week we heard that they had entered

Bomaru. We were frightened. We started packing our loads. We took some of our properties into hiding in the bush. In our absence, they entered the town. We were then surrounded. We had no way to go. We decided to wait during the weekend. We tuned to a radio station and we were informed that the war would last only for three months. This caused my father to tell me that we should wait after three months. We then waited. After about four days, we were sleeping in the morning at about 6:30 a.m. when we heard shouting in the town. We were told that the rebels had entered our town. We woke up and had no way to go. They attacked all the roads. We met them everywhere we went. We decided to use the route behind our house. As we approached them, they arrested us and took us to town. They told us that we were safe and that they had come for the soldiers because our country had been spoilt by the APC. In short, therefore, they came for the APC. My father told me that we should sit down. We were there for a week. At one time, many of them came from Koindu, about sixty of them. At night, we were sitting in our veranda when they ransacked the town. Some of them moved towards our house and took all of us outside. Then our house was set on fire. They then moved to another house. Whilst they were looting our properties, we ran away into the bush. Then I was separated from my parents. We went to different directions. The following day, I searched for my parents, but I did not see them. I headed for the town. Our house was situated by the bush. I had wanted to pass through in order to look at the house when a rebel arrested me. He captured me and asked me to tell him where I stayed. I told him that I was looking for my parents. He told me to follow him. I said I won't do that. He fired two shots in front of me and said if I did not join them he would kill me. He took me to the centre of the town. In the evening, we came to Kailahun and we were taken to the training base at the National school. Our trainer was Madison Kanu, a Liberian. After our training which lasted for three weeks, we were taken to Pendembu. In Pendembu we were deployed together with Madison. I was sent to the commander that I was supposed to be working with. The commander who I was working with was called Jaffa massaquoi. He was killed later.

After that, it came to the time when Moriss Kallon told us that they were to make us Commanders. Anybody who was detained in a cell received twenty-five lashes. He then told us that he was taking us to the war front. We were taken to Ronipele. It was our first visit there. On hearing gun shots, some of us started retreating. The commander moved to the back of the group and said if we retreated, that would be the end of us. When we arrived, the group which had the RPG man launched the fire. The sound frightened us. He was our own commander. He started firing at us to go there. Those you were fighting were in front of you. You must go and fight he told us. Whilst fighting, as it was my first time, I was injured. As the soldiers started their advance, they took to their heels. I was alone and I tried to get up. I knew death was near me. I fell down and started to crawl. The soldiers moved to where I was. Not knowing that they (Morris Kallon and his men) were around. After the soldiers retreated, I took my stick and started walking. I went to the bush and I met them there. I was taken to Pendembu. I was given medical attention. I still feel the pain. After that, I was made a commander. When people committed offence and they brought them before me, I was supposed to beat them and that was exactly what I did. When people were not around, I would take some of the abductees and set them free. Some of the guards saw me at one time and reported me. If they noticed that I released abductees they would give me worse punishment. You had no way to run away from them. I attempted on one or two occasions but I was caught. They told me that if I ran away they would kill me. At a time when I was still a commander, in 1993, the soldiers moved us from Pendembu. They took us to Koindu and we settled there in the bush, in small groups. Then Sankoh said the war was then jungle war and that he was going to join us; and the war should reach Freetown. We were abandoned in one village. The Head Quarters was towards Koindu. We heard that Sankoh was in Guinea whilst in Guinea we heard that he had moved ahead together with Mosquito. Later, after a long time, we were taken to Guinea and stayed there. We were at Gama when some of our brothers were taken across the river. We started the fight from Mano to Tongo. They asked us to go and man the check points. We were taken for that purpose to Sandehun.

If you sat down and allowed anybody to escape, all the MPs there would be killed. After that, the Kamajors attacked us. We were there until we ran short of salt and Maggie. We came together with Issa Sesay and planned to do something. We called all the civilians and told them that we

didn't have salt, maggie, cigarette and we needed these items. Every commander together with the civilians was told the number of bags they should produce. If they asked your group to bring the quantity they needed and it was not done, you would be arrested; they would ask you to go to the MPs. On arrival at our place the MPs, Issa's body guard and Mosquito's body guard would be around to flog the people who had failed to bring what they needed. They would wait and see; if they were beaten, they took the message to their bosses. If we failed they would flog us too. They would still send them.

In 1997, we were told that there was peace. We went to Freetown in 1997. They moved back and went to us. They said ECOMOG troops drove them out of Freetown. They started organising us. They would call you and assign you to a commander. The Commander should be the head, he should protect his people. In Pendembu, in 1998, the commander was called Big Daddy. At that time, if the civilians were asked to brush the town and they were not able, we the MPs would go and call the chiefs. They would ask them why they refused to join the townspeople. When they explained everything, we would flog them. We did this because they were our seniors. Any time we were instructed, we had to carry out our duties. We were doing this in Pendembu until we organised them to farm between Gaba and Ngiehun.

The farm we made was a very big one. Be you a soldier or civilian you would work on the farm. If you failed to work on the farm, you would be punished. The civilians were made to brush the farm and plough the land and if you failed to go there, you would be arrested. No sooner had the Lower Bambara chief been arrested than people started to work. We were doing this unto the time we heard of the signing of the Lome Peace Accord.

We were then in Pendembu when we heard that the UN forces and the commanders on the ground including Col. Tom Sandy decided that the UN people should travel through the land. We were at Pendembu when the UN officials were arrested. We then said to ourselves why did they capture the UN troops. Two to three days later at 6:30 we heard the sound of a plane in Kailahun. When it came for the last time, it opened fire. The firing lasted for some minutes and all of us went into the bush. We were told that the Indians had been held hostage and they had come to collect them. When the firing started on Sunday in the morning, it went on till 2:00 p.m. of the same day. The houses were ablaze. We reported that the UN had burnt the houses. We came and we were now in town. Even the house in which I was residing was burnt.

After that, what I personally did was to flog people who were to be put into the cell. If I refused, they would do the same to me. If I ever did any wrong to anybody, it was in my opinion the beating that I gave them. That is all I know.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: At the time you were captured. How old were you?

Alex: 12 years.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How old are you now?

Alex: I am now 22 years old.

Chairman Bishop Humper: I want to assure you that this commission is not a court. Whoever you call by name will not have anything to do with me. I am giving you this information so that you can feel free to tell us the truth. I want to tell you what you do not know. You were a victim and a perpetrator. That is very serious.

Prior to your abduction and arrest were you attending school?

Alex: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What class were you in?

Alex: I was in class 7.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You rose up to the rank of a Commander it was as a result of your performance in your movement that gave you that right. Tell us precisely what and what you did.

Alex: I used to beat people. Sometimes I detained them in cells. I was not supposed to do that. I did that because I was ordered to do so.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you feed them?

Alex: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: At all times?

Alex: Yes

Chairman Bishop Humper: You said that you had somebody who was given four dozen lashes. Is that true?

Alex: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: From 1991 to 2000 did you and others capture boys and girls and bring them to you commanders?

Alex: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you at any stage commit a rape?

Alex: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you know of any instance where some of your people had bush wives.

Alex: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you have one?

Alex: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Name some of the leaders (Key leaders)

Alex: Jaffia Massaquoi, Augustine Gbao, Tom Sandy, Big Daddy. Those were the key commanders I knew.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you ever see Mike Lamin?

Alex: Yes. He was introduced to us here.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you see Eldred Collins?

Alex: Yes.

Alex has said that civilians were involved in the war and that Sierra Leoneans were all involved in the war; those who survived the war have all played a part in the war.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were caught?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What kind of drugs were you given?

Alex: Hard liquor.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You took active part in the war. Can you remember killing anybody?

Alex: I went to the war front only once. That was the time I captured somebody.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: As a commander responsible for the prison, you used to cramp people mercilessly.

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did any of them die.

Alex: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said after the training when you came to Pendembu you had a special training before you were promoted to Commander.

Alex: Morris Kallon did not give us any special training.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You described to us a situation in which Morris Kallon asked you to manoeuvre in a shooting exercise.

Alex: That was the time he urged us to be between him and the soldiers and if anybody tried to retreat he would be killed.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When Sankoh told you that that was a jungle war, where did you go to near Koindu?

Alex: I went to Soloko Bendu.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You told us of your training at the National School. Were you trained to use a gun?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You stayed with the people?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you have cause to use a gun?

Alex: No.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: But you carried the gun wherever you went?

Alex: If I was called to move from place to place, I carried the gun.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Did some of the boys who were abducted die during the training?

Alex: By the time we received training at the National School a commander called Kongolie queued us up in a straight line and placed the gun on our shoulder. If the gun was fired and you were not in a straight line, the bullet would hit you. The bullet hit one boy on the head and he died.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: In your written testimony you said that those who committed rape were beaten, can you explain why it was so?

Alex: Many a time we did not witness them. We were only told that those people were involved in rape cases. If it was so, we were told to give them heavy punishment. We used to detain them for about a month. Everyday, we would take them out and give them twenty-five lashes in the morning and evening.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Did you take part in the DDR programme?

Alex: Yes, I have disarmed and surrendered the only gun I had.

Leader of Evidence: The MP unit you belonged to was responsible for security.

Alex: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You were also responsible for manning the check point from city to city

Alex: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You also said that you took away personal property from civilians while you manned the checkpoints?

Alex: Most of the time. That kind of report was brought before me. When civilians travelled and they crossed the checkpoint towards Pendembu, they used to take their properties from them. We did all we could to find out who did such things, but we could not.

Leader of Evidence: You were the one that was responsible for carrying produce from town to town.

Alex: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: In many cases, those who carried these produce fell down and died.

Alex: That used to happen when we had the Gio fighters among us. They used to take people from here in Kailahun to Koindu with loads on their heads.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the MP Commander here in kailahun?

Alex: Tom Sandy.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the town commander in Kailahun?

Alex: Joe Fatoma.

Leader of Evidence: Are you telling the Commission that people were not killed?

Alex: That did not happen during the reign of the Sierra Leonean rebels: it happened during the time when the Gio fighters were here.

Leader of Evidence: Did you smoke marijuana?

Alex: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How many brothers and sisters do you have by the same mother?

Alex: I am alone. My mother used to have nine children.

Leader of Evidence: Out of those nine what place were you?

Alex; I am the last one.

Leader of Evidence: How old was the eldest?

Alex: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Did you regret your membership of the RUF?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Alex do you have any questions to ask or recommendations to make?

Alex: As I sit here, I am saying to my people and the entire country that I was under pressure when I committed all those atrocities. Those who stayed here during the war witnessed that it was not of my own making. Those who joined us know it was not our fault. I am now saying to you all that you are my people. If I have ever forgotten to mention anything that I did, I am asking that you kindly forgive me as it was not our fault. Please forgive me for whatever wrong I have done and I have come today asking you to embrace me as there is no evil forest to throw away wicked children. I want our mothers to talk to our fathers. It is paining me right now as I sit here. My mother is too old now. I have no father. I have no brother or sister. Please forgive me and embrace me. Do this for the sake of God who created us. It was not my fault. It was the fault of those who came and joined us in the rebel war. If I was attending school up to this time, God must have answered my prayers. That is all I have to tell the people of Kailahun

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We thank you for your cooperation.

Alex: I am now asking the Commission and the government that they should embrace us and make skills training available to us in order to develop this country and our families. The other people who have been left out should be given a helping hand. I am saying that the commission should please provide us with that kind of help. Having gone through my testimony does the Commission have any thing in mind to do to me?

Chairman Bishop Humper: The Commission has responded to your questions positively. I want you to be rest assured that this Commission is not going to put you in jail. We have a final closing ceremony tomorrow and you, together with others, will have the opportunity to say exactly what you have said here to your people. That will make your people accept you. It is not going to happen overnight. You can

bring your young people together. You can be the spokesperson for the Commission. We will expect you to be around till tomorrow.

2nd Witness – Francis B. Tucker

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs Aminata Jow
Chairman Bishop J Humper
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Francis B. Tucker. The witness swore on oath. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

Before I start I want to pray for myself. I have not come to say much here. I am just saying what my actions were.

I held onto a gun and I deployed here. They told me that nobody could live in the area. Everybody went in the bush were I was collected and brought to town. We were doing that when I came in contact with people in the bush, at the Guinea border. We reached a point where some of them demanded that we should be set free since they wanted to go and meet their people. If they were allowed to go they would have returned to this country. We left them to go. I told a girl called Sarah that I was taking her to my base in order to marry her. We went to the base. At that time we had people who liaised between the fighters and civilians. Any civilian that wanted to marry, we were responsible to fill the forms. I never forced her into marriage. They asked her to sign and I was also asked to sign and the writer and the IDU man also signed. I did not know whether the girl was pregnant. After we had gone through this process, we had sex that night. Just after that, she miscarried. I was worried and I found a nurse to attend to her. Anywhere we deployed we had a medical team. I explained to the nurse and she was taken care of until she recovered. Her mother came from Guinea and took her away. This continued onto the time they were moving from Guinea to Kialahun. At that time, she met me with her problem. She explained herself to me. She never explained to me that she did not miscarry and she showed me the baby and we stayed there for about three weeks together with her sister and brother. She told me she was going to prepare a place for her family and that she would come back to me. I told her that I still had good intentions for her. She said she would not be able to settle with me because her mother was in Guinea. I waited till the end of the month then I said to myself that I was blind, I had to find another person. By the time she came, I had got married. She was annoyed. I tried, but I could not get her again. I talked to her, but it was in vain; she went back to her village. After that, I did not say anything until the TRC went to me. I narrated the story to Mr. Prince. He then asked me whether I could narrate the same thing at a public hearing and I said yes. He asked me series of questions. I told him I would go down on my knees and beg for what I have done wrong. I told him I would not allow anybody to tell the TRC about me. I will ask the people to forgive me. That is still what I have to do

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: We thank you very much for coming to testify. From your written statement, you told us you were abducted by the RUF in 1991.

Francis: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We thank you for coming here as the presiding Commissioner has said. You were taking the lead from the time you joined the army in 1991 to what date? From 1991 to 2000.

Francis: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: When did you have this accident?

Francis: In 1997.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Where did you come from before you came around here? Where is your home town?

Francis: I am from the Bonthe District.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Where was your area of operation?

Francis: Koindu.

Chairman Bishop Humper: From 1991 to 2000?

Francis: We were deployed in different places.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you name some of the key players from 1991 – 2000?

Francis: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Name them.

Francis: Foday Sankoh
Sam Bockarie
Issa Sesay
Morrison Kallon
Augustine Gbao
Big Daddy
They are many and most of them are not alive today.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You came across all of these? Where did you get your training from?

Francis: At Kissidugu

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you go to Zogoda for advanced training?

Francis: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You have prayed for God to forgive you. Could you tell us what you did from 1991 to the time you had that accident; Whether you killed, raped, looted or abducted?

Francis: I cannot tell you that I have ever killed somebody facially. However, I must accept that I killed; that was when I fought my first war. Even at that, we did not fight in town; we fought in an ambush. We ambushed the Guinean soldiers. At that time, if you were a good fighter the Liberian rebels would not release you. I was made an ambush commander. I used to take food to the arm bush scenes. I did it three times a day.

Chairman Bishop Humper: So the RPG you fired hit you back and that brought you to how you are today?

Francis: It made me to become discouraged.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: At the time of your abduction you were under age; you were not more than 18 years old.

Francis: I was fifteen years old.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were made to commit all those atrocities in the country.

Francis: We had different roles.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You took part in all these atrocities listed here?

Francis: I cannot be forced to say yes or no. There were series of atrocities and we did not commit all of them. In 1996 when I was deployed I did not abduct anybody. I will not answer to what I did not do. I will answer to what I did and I will apologise for it. If you accept it, fine; if you do not accept it it is up to you.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you also take part in looting people's property?

Francis: I can't deny that, yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you force people to carry loads and force them to work against their will?

Francis: I did not do that.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Not you personally, but you were in a group?

Francis: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What was your occupation before the war?

Francis: I was training as a mechanic.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: At what level did you leave school?

Francis: I stopped at class 7.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you join drugs taking groups?

Francis: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us what the RUF leadership said to you in order that you would continue staying with them?

Francis: They first asked if we were students and then interviewed us one after the other. We said we were not going to school then because of poverty, education at that time was a privilege. They told us that they had come to give us free education. They also asked us to tell them where, in any district we had seen a medical centre; they said that was why they had come. These are some of the encouraging words they told us. However, as we moved on, we were discouraged but we were unable to escape from them.

Leader of Evidence: At one point in the movement, you were a sergeant.

Francis: The promotion was called "Belleh Sergeant"

Leader of Evidence: Where were you getting the food from?

Francis: I used to collect it from our Head Quarters.

Leader of Evidence: Was it part of your strategy that you went to the community and started shooting to scare people away and then take their food?

Francis: No.

Ozonnia: In your statement you said that you scared people away and took their food.

Francis: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Civilians left their community because they were afraid.

Francis: Yes, that was the reason.

Leader of Evidence: This will mean that there was no reason for the civilians to leave but that the RUF scared them away.

Francis: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You were responsible for mobilising civilians to take the food to the war front?

Francis: No. They didn't go to the war front.

Leader of Evidence: Civilians were told that if they escaped they would be shot and killed.

Francis: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Does it mean that you were shooting in the air to scare civilians away?

Francis: I did not witness it, but it used to happen.

Leader of Evidence: In your statement, you told the Commission about two children who were captured.

Francis: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How old was the girl at that time?

Francis: 3 years.

Leader of Evidence: What's her name?

Francis: Sia

Leader of Evidence: In your statement, you said you were going to train her to become your wife.

Francis: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of work did she do while in your custody?

Francis: She was not doing any work. I used to even wash her. When she stayed with us till she was in class three, she fetched water with us.

Leader of Evidence: Do you also think that Sia would have followed you if you didn't have a gun?

Francis: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see your colleagues take women in other conditions?

Francis: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How long did those women normally stay with them?

Francis: Some are still with them.

Leader of Evidence: Why have you not gone home and you are still in Kailahun?

Francis: Nothing

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Francis, we have asked you questions, do you have any questions or recommendations to make to the Commission?

Francis: My first question is that I want to know if Sia is in this hall.

Leader of Evidence: She is not here.

Francis: So many times people say a lot of things that TRC has in mind for us. What exactly do you have for us?

Commissioner Mrs Jow: The main mandate of the TRC is to look into what happened during the 10 years war. The violations and human rights abuses caused during the war. The TRC will impartially record such happenings in order to prevent the outbreak of another war. Do you have any more questions to ask?

Francis: No.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Thank you very much Francis, you can step down

3rd – Witness –Susan Kolugbonda

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs Aminata Jow
Chairman Bishop J Humper
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Susan Kolugbonda. The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

I was not in kailahun when the war started. I was doing my practicals. I was in Mende Kamagu when the people attacked the town. I went under the bed so I didn't see most of the activities. I was under the bed when they removed others and killed them. There was a student in form 3. I was listening to all what they were saying. They asked others to cook for them. I was worried. I was in the village doing some work. The house I stayed in was by the bush. At night I walked to a village nearby. In the morning I thought of my family and I returned. As soon as I reached the town they started firing. The soldier that abducted me took me to Garuband. When I entered Kenema those who knew me before were happy to see me. I was there when the chief asked me to work with the Red Cross. I consented to work with the Red Cross. The soldiers accused us of being rebels anytime we went for meeting. I was staying with a woman but later on had to move out with the view of returning when sanity returns. Upon my return to this town, I was subjected to harassment and threats. As a result I went to another village where I started processing palm oil, harvesting groundnut, and selling salt and some other foodstuff. I went to a village and went into the bush processing palm oil. I used to harvest groundnut. I sold salt and other foodstuff. Whenever they needed palm oil they came to me. When I heard that the rebels had arrested the UN Peace Keepers I became unhappy. Throughout that day I heard the sound of firing. Later on we were told that some Kamajors were killed. All was just hearsay. The presence of Tom Sandy, Martin George, Joe Fatoma and Morie Feika was conspicuous that day. We heard that Mosquito had guns. I was in the village when I saw people coming down to Kailahun. Being a civilian I decided to stay to see what was going to happen. I am telling you about what happened during the time I was in the village. There was no chief, and this really troubled us. It was the

Grace of God that saved me. I was not afraid of any commander because if you are part of an organisation you will not be afraid of those in it.

I had a dispute with one of the commanders because of my farm. On that very day I went to see Mosquito. I told Mosquito that I was now home and if he chose to kill me he should go ahead. I am a farmer here. There is nowhere I can get food. I told Mosquito to talk to his children so that they could stop what they were doing. I was blamed for everything that happened in the village. Now there is peace and I have a house in Kailahun. I was in my house and I told everybody that I wanted peace. All the chiefs during that time were interested in peace. Everyone in Kailahun knew that I went to Daru to negotiate for peace. I was sitting down when I heard that the Kamajors wanted peace. All the young ladies decided that we should have our own organisation. I refused to be the chairman. So we had to vote but I still won. Whenever they summoned a meeting, I hid myself and went to Daru. We held a meeting with KARDIF. We were happy to accept the peace. They decided that I should be the chairman. I told them outright that once I had become the chairman of this town all guns must go silent, and along with that there should not be any destruction. When I returned from the meeting I was invited by Issa Sesay. He said that he made my husband to work in Daru and therefore he was going to order the destruction of our properties. After they had burnt all our houses they began to remove the steel windows. I informed the people concerned that they were removing our properties. I ordered that the things should be brought back to Kailahun. The person in charge of the windows was Moriba Koroma. Tom Sandy instructed that people to go. We started chasing the vehicle. We stopped the vehicle at a junction. Mustapha Koroma was in Makeni. When I came back I reported to the chief that that was what the people were doing. I said I was going to follow the last one till they killed me. Mustapha told Tom Sandy that he was wrong. Tom Sandy and Mustapha were not on speaking terms. I came back here. I was here when my mother got sick and I went to Freetown. As soon as I arrived I greeted everybody. Tom Sandy said, "You have settled down in Freetown". He said that over and over. I went to CPO Komba and the UNAMSIL officers and reported the matter to them. I am now saying this to inform the Commission that I brought the peace that was in this town. I also brought UNAMSIL into this town. I also brought KARDIF to this town. I had to work like a horse. I did a lot of work. I will prepare food. Moriba Koroma, James and Fatoma attacked me at my house. When they collected me they threw stones at the vehicle. When I went there Mustapha Koroma went to me and took all my property. That was what they did to me. A lot of people know about that. I am not going to say anything in camera.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We thank you for your testimony and also your role in the peace process. We need to ask you questions to get important information.

Bishop Humper: Your story is a bit complex. The Commission has categories of witnesses. We have victims, perpetrators and witnesses. As we moved along your story we found out that you are a victim, a perpetrator and a witness.

Chairman Bishop Humper: When did you return home?

Susan: I returned to Kailahun after NPRC took over power.

Chairman Bishop Humper: When did they appoint you women's leader?

Susan: When they told us that the organisation had become a political party. It was that time I was made the chairman. There was a Mammy queen.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you ever witness the rape of women?

Susan: I never saw those things.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know some other key soldiers of the RUF?

Susan: Like Tom Sandy I have a daughter going to school and Tom Sandy tampered with her and she became a dropout.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you have any experience of RUF appointing their own chiefs.

Susan: Yes. Like one Mr. Sellu and Papa Do. Mammy Massaquoi was a Mammy queen. There was another section chief. They were working together.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Who was the chief commander at that time?

Susan: Morie Feika was the chief commander. Any number of men they wanted at that time must be provided by the chief commander.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know any leader who was in charge?

Susan: Tom Sandy, Joe Fatoma and Morie Feika were in charge.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Why?

Susan: I told them that they were holding leadership positions before me. I could not just claim to be a chairman.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You took the appointment because you wanted to protect the town?

Susan: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Don't you not think it was a big risk? If you took that position it means that you supported the rebels.

Susan: Initially they thought that if I was the chairman I would be silent over what they did. That was the reason why I stood against whatever they did.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When you saw these people doing this did you go to the administration?

Susan: Yes. At that time I was moving to Daru making reports to the CPO and DO

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Can you tell us the names of the CPO and DO you reported to?

Susan: The DO was Sulaiman Koroma and the CPO was Kombah.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did they take any action?

Susan: They took action. They condemned their behaviour. They warned these men to heed my word as a child of the town.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did the police make any effort to recover these properties?

Susan: At the time the properties were taken away, the people concerned were not staying there. They were supposed to have taken the action by the time I left the town for the meeting. If you don't do so they will kill you. Anytime they see you moving they will accuse you of being on the other side.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What you are telling me is that although officials were here law and order had not been restored.

Susan: We were serving another government.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: In your effort to bring peace you never knew Foday Sankoh?

Susan: No.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Can you explain what you mean to us?

Susan: It was not with Issa Sesay. We were meeting all the time in Daru.

Leader of Evidence: Would it be right to describe you before you became a chairman that you were a member of the RUF?

Susan: I was not a collaborator. I was in Kenema. That was the time NPRC took over.

Leader of Evidence: How many years did you stay there?

Susan: I spent about one year six months in the village.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the commander then?

Susan: I can't remember his name.

Leader of Evidence: Who were these men who worked on your farm?

Susan: They were my children. They suffered a lot and they fled away. I said I was not going anywhere.

Leader of Evidence: In 1999 you became Mammy Queen of the RUF?

Susan: I met the Mammy Queen leader. I was only the chairman?

Leader of Evidence: Why did you decide to become a chairman of the RUF?

Susan: I knew all the atrocities they committed and I rejected the position initially. I accepted the position to protect the people of Kailahun. I saw a lot of things people did and I can explain some of them.

Leader of Evidence: As chairman from 1999 can you take responsibility for the atrocities they committed?

Susan: I can say all those crimes they were committing were bad. People knew that I was not supporting them. I accepted the position that if anything went wrong during the war I will tell my people.

Ozionna: With all the violations they committed you still believed in them as a group?

Susan: I had accepted the position before that time.

Leader of Evidence: What do you think is needed to bring real reconciliation among the people of Kailahun?

Susan: I was called upon to be their chairman. I am thinking that my people can testify that I did not do any atrocities here. If there is anything I need to say to appease my people, I shall be pleased to say them. People like Chief can testify that I did not commit any atrocities. There are people here that still do nurture malice against others.

Leader of Evidence: Some of the commanders you said caused the atrocities were here a couple of days ago and they apologised to the people. Do you think it is well meant?

Susan: Many of those commanders are not on speaking terms with me. Indeed many of them have apologised.

Leader of Evidence: The Commission is organising a reconciliation programme tomorrow.

Susan: I am willing to go there if I am invited. If today God has inspired you to bring peace here I will do whatever you say. All the time you have been asking me why I accepted the chairmanship. I am a sensible person. I am afraid of trouble. Nobody led me here. I came here by myself. That is why I did not go for a closed door hearing. I forgot to mention one incident I want to explain here. I witnessed shootings and killings in this town.

4th Witness – Alex M. Jusu

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs Aminata Jow

Chairman Bishop J Humper

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Leader of Evidence: Ozonia Ojielo

My name is Alex M. Jusu. The Witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

In 1991 when the war started I was small and 5 yrs old. The rebels captured us and I lived with them until 1999. Most of them dressed in rags. One of our grandfathers Pa James was captured and killed. Our mother was shielding our father. The rebels asked us to prepare food for them. They told us that they were doing us good. We prepared the food for them. The war turned against them and they formed Tap 20. We were sitting in our hut in the farm on a certain day when we heard their voices and people raised the alarm that the rebels were coming. We had one of our grandmas who was not able to run. She moved for a shot distance and kept quiet. They fired into the air for long. Most of us were around. Our grandma did not wait for long then she was arrested. We looked at them until they went away. In 1992 during the faming season they came to our village one afternoon and met our father and they captured him. They demanded that all young men should go into the bush. My father was made to look at the sun. A guy called Tapor was the leader of the group. They arrested my father and ordered some other people to assemble all the people in the village. They asked people to carry loads for them. They took them towards Koya for two or three days. We all decided to go through Liberia into Guinea. We went and stayed in the refugee camp in Guinea.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Where were you staying?

Alex: I was in a village called Patama.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What do you know about operation spare no soul?

Alex: That kind of operation is the kind of operation where no living thing is spared. They will kill whatever they see.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You were forced to carry heavy loads?

Alex: Yes. Nothing happened to me I only carried the load to Canyonama.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Tell us a little bit more about your parents. How they died as a result of mistreatment.

Alex: They killed Mama Nyema, Pa James, and my father himself Pa Jusu.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did the rebels do you any harm?

Alex: No, they did not do me any harm.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you say you were 5 or 9 years old?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So I believe you should be 17 now and not 21.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were taken from Foya and you moved your family into the bush?

Alex: It was my elder brother who was taken to Foya and when he returned he said the war had entered our town and he took us away.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You and your elder brother?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How many of your family members did you lose?

Alex: They killed two of my grandmas and my father was severely beaten.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The rebels were abducting young boys and girls, not so?

Alex: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Can you tell us why you and your brother were not abducted?

Alex: Anytime the rebels come around we always hid ourselves. That was how we quickly crossed into Liberia.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: But they took you to Liberia.

Alex: That happened in 1991 to 1992. I was captured and taken up to Kangama and they released me.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Apart from that single incident of your carrying load for the rebels your family did not encounter any rebel attack.

Alex: We were always in the bush and most often they told us that the rebels looted our properties and whenever we came we would see their handy works.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you know how many young boys or young men were abducted in your camp?

Alex: I am not in a position to know anybody who was abducted.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Where are your people now?

Alex: I was with them in Guinea but I have left some of them behind.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What year was that?

Alex: That was in March 2002

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How long?

Alex: The period between 1991 and 1992

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you receive any training?

Alex: They did not capture me and they moved along with me. We used to be in our town and they gathered everybody together. At that time we the smaller boys could just stand and look at them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did they take you anywhere when you moved with them?

Alex: They did not carry me anywhere so as to stay with them. Initially when we were caught they told us that they were taking us to Liberia and one junior Commando promised to make a way escape for us.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What was the name of the junior Commando?

Commissioner Mrs Jow: He was called Amara.

Leader of Evidence: For these rebel atrocities you witnessed have you received any counselling?

Alex: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you dream about them?

Alex: No, that has not happened in any way.

Leader of Evidence: You said you left Sierra Leone in 1992 and came back in 1999?

Alex: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you feel like a foreigner in your own country?

Alex: No.

Leader of Evidence: Are you going to school now?

Alex: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What class are you in now?

Alex: Form 2 at the National Secondary School. I am saying that those who brought the war committed all these atrocities but as we are living in this world, we always blame God even when we caused them ourselves. So those who committed these atrocities should be exposed to peace training facilities that will enable them to build what they have destroyed.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of Sierra Leone do you want to see for people like yourself?

Alex: I would love to see each and every young man in the country engaged in some useful activity. As I speak here now, my father still suffers from pains he got from the flogging. Even though he is working we still noticed that he is not ok. Even within these few days they have been asking us for school fees. That is one side effect of separation.

Leader of Evidence: Have you ever sat to discuss this incident with anybody?

Alex: I have done that with my friends, we sit and chat.

Leader of Evidence: What were your friends telling you?

Alex: It was a terrible act for some of them. Some will talk and laugh over it.

Leader of Evidence: Will you like the Commission to refer you to some NGO?

Alex: Yes. I want to ask the Commission to help provide assistance for our education. Most of our brothers are in the village and most of them are sick especially the girls. I want the Commission to assist with medial facilities.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: It is good to note that as a young man you are aware of the need for education for all. We will also ensure that there is education for girls. All the same for the Commission to make any recommendations to government and international bodies in their report, your recommendations among others will have to be incorporated in our report.

5th Witness – Sellu Ensah Gobeh

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs Aminata Jow

Chairman Bishop J Humper

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Sellu Ensah Ngobeh. The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

I was a chief in this country particularly in Luawa chiefdom and was made chief in 1996. Whilst I was in power the rebels used to tell us to look for food for them. They used me as a kind of intermediary on behalf of my people as I was supposed to get my people to gather their produce and give it to them. We gave them rice, coffee, cocoa and palm oil. That was what we used to do. Everybody in the chiefdom used to come together for a general cleaning of the town. The fighters did not participate in that kind of exercise. The time the Gio fighters left the country we took charge of our country again. Things got better for us when they left. They use to warn us that their work was a military matter and not our business. The Indians that stayed there were very kind to us. One morning I was surprised to learn that they had been arrested. But then I said to myself that it was a political matter and not my business. Personally I felt bad that they had been arrested. In my opinion, the Kenyans were the first offenders when they arrested the people.

I visited them and promised to take them back to Kailahun that very day. The commander CSO told me that before that could happen we must make some agreement committing me to bring the people back. I was concerned that if anything happened to them the RUF were to blame. I took them to Kailahun. By that time Issa was back from Monrovia. I was arrested and taken to Foya. I declared before Issa that I signed the document taking responsibility to bring those people back to Kailahun. He said a lot to me and said it was an international affair. I was a civilian and according to him I was not supposed to have any hand in that. We returned to town. There was a big problem in Kailahun at the time of disarmament. They disarmed everybody in Kono and Makeni but they told us that we should not disarm here. I heard it in a radio message. I went to the station and asked why. I told him that I will order the boys to disarm. He came and argued

with us a lot but he certainly understood what we were telling him. There is a lot to be said about this war but I want to stop here.

Chairman Bishop Humper: I want to thank you for coming here today. I want to know the role you played and the problems you encountered during the rebel war. When did you become paramount chief for these people?

Sellu: In 1996.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Was there a Paramount Chief before you?

Sellu: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Who was the Paramount Chief before you?

Sellu: Initially when the war entered here the Paramount Chief I knew was Senesie Makpa.

Chairman Bishop Humper: When was he elected Paramount Chief?

Sellu: In 1991.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Who elected him Paramount Chief?

Sellu: It was the Gio fighters.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Who was the Paramount Chief before Senesie?

Sellu: It was Chief Sama Banya Bala.

Chairman Bishop Humper: That was the Paramount Chief that was elected by the Chiefdom people?

Sellu: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: But Senesie was appointed by the RUF?

Sellu: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: And you were also appointed by the RUF in 1996?

Sellu: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you contest in an election?

Sellu: Five of us contested in that election.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Who were the chiefdom counsellors?

Sellu: There were no counsellors.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you say whether your election was legal or illegal?

Sellu: It was illegal.

Chairman Bishop Humber: Did you have your own chiefdom counsellors.

Sellu: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humber: Who appointed those counsellors?

Sellu: They organised themselves and selected one person who appointed the counsellors. When we to do field work in Koidu I was asked to take the labourers along. A message was sent asking if I had gathered the men for the work. I was arrested I was unable to do it. It took days before the men were gathered and then I was released.

Chairman Bishop Humber: As PC would your subjects go anywhere with out your consent?

Sellu: No, I had to give my consent.

Chairman Bishop Humber: It was by your consent that people worked for the RUF?

Sellu: Whether I consented or not they had to do it.

Chairman Bishop Humber: Do you know a place in this town called the "slaughter house"?

Sellu: No.

Chairman Bishop Humber: How many Kamajors were killed by the rebels in this town?

Sellu: I can't tell the number as I was not in this town.

Chairman Bishop Humber: How can you convince the people of this town and Kailahun that you were not only a collaborator but also a chief architect for the rebels?

Sellu: If ever I committed any crime in this chiefdom it was only because I was urging my people to come for work. They did not even take me seriously when I scolded them. They only feared those who carried guns.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you for the information
You said the Paramount Chief before Senesie was PC Sama Banya. You were fairly an old person. Can you tell your people if you were crowned the same way as the first Paramount Chief?

Sellu: No, mine was an illegal election.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you think you did a good thing for chieftaincy in this chiefdom?

Sellu: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you regret it now?

Sellu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said one of your responsibilities was to go out and let the people give up their produce.

Sellu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were asked to produce a quantity of food or a quantity of produce.

Sellu: Yes. They gave me a quota which I had to bring by force.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Can you tell us what happened to you when you failed to get the quantity.

Sellu: I was detained.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What do you tell your people to bring in order to free you from your detention?

Sellu: I used to tell my people to bring the things that were asked for in order to secure my freedom.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were asked to collect 200 people for work. When you failed to collect them you were punished.

Sellu: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you not resort to punishing people who refused to participate.

Sellu: I did not.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You have never touched anybody?

Sellu: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You seem to have a measure of authority or control over the RUF. Issa refused to disarm.

Sellu: Yes. I ordered the boys to break the stores open and take the guns to go and disarm. Where I had the strength they were just left by themselves. I often threatened to instigate my people to disobey them.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You want to tell everybody that people were happy to give away their produce?

Sellu: They were not happy to do that.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Why did you not stop it?

Sellu: I did.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You stopped it?

Sellu: Yes, I stopped it. The only thing ensured was the involvement of the people in the cleaning of the town. My force was to see that the town was clean.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us what work the people did?

Sellu: Farm work. We used to do farm work, clean the town and make the roads. From construction to agriculture to cleaning, every duty had its own team and team leaders. Alpha Musa was the team leader for Construction work.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Were they all rebels?

Sellu: No, they were civilians.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: As a member of a committee you got them to carry out their duties?

Sellu: I used to do it but some were not working. Sometimes they waited for me to travel elsewhere and they did what they liked.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you know that you are responsible for all these atrocities?

Sellu: I will not agree to all of them. I was a civilian without a gun.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you come in contact with any other rebel leader apart from Issa Sesay?

Sellu: Yes, they were here.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you name them?

Sellu: Augustine Bayoh
Vandy Kosia
Denis Lansana
Mosquito
Lawrence
Mike Lamin
Peter Vandy

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the Commission why you came forward to testify today?

Sellu: Yes. We who stayed behind during the war we did not stay for our property. We were trapped by the war at that time. If we had gone to Liberia they would have killed us and if we had gone to Guinea they were going to kill us too. After staying in the country and everything came to an end one had the opportunity to address his people. Some of us did not commit crimes. Those of us who committed atrocities, must ask for forgiveness.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell this Commission how Sala became your wife.

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Go on and tell us.

Sellu: Sala was in Sembehu, a small village and I proposed love to her and she agreed. It took me six months without seeing her. We went to Pendembu and there she met me. I asked her if she got my messages. That was where we started arranging our marriage.

Ozonnia: Sala was not abducted by you.

Sellu: I was a civilian and she was a fighter, so how could I have abducted her?

Leader of Evidence: She finally became a fighter after you betrayed her.

Sellu: She was in the movement when I met her.

Leader of Evidence: Do you also have a wife named Baindu?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Was she disarmed?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were you also disarmed in Kailahun?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Will you be honest to say to your people the wrongs you did to them so that they can listen to you?

Sellu: I want to tell my people to forgive me for the wrongs I committed against them.

Leader of Evidence: You forcibly let people do farm work.

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You worked very closely with the commanders here against your people.

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: The people were beaten and maltreated, is that correct?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the Commission about the “slaughter house”?

Sellu: The one I know about was the killing of the Kamajors. At the time they were arrested I was not in town. I met them on the ground when I returned. I asked and they told me everything. But all the people here now are citizens of this chiefdom. They pleaded with me, “Please don’t arm them, let us free them”. Then I left to go in search of food again. On my way to Gama I met people by the riverside and they told me that they had killed all those people. I asked who killed them and they said it was Mosquito. I was so discouraged because I had brothers among them. People used to ask if I was able to let them release those people. I said yes. But when I heard of this I was surprised. The next day they told me to remove the dead bodies and I told them I wasn’t going to. But they had guns.

Leader of Evidence: Apart from the Kamajors many people were killed?

Sellu: I don’t know the house you are talking about.

Leader of Evidence: Why do you think people of this town dislike you so much? You were a member of a court where Patrick Banda served as chairman.

Leader of Evidence: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You were a member of that court.

Sellu: No.

Leader of Evidence: In your statement you said you presided over several cases.

Sellu: I did not preside over any case. Patrick Banda was the head in Koindu and he was responsible for cases. I was just doing my work as a chief.

Leader of Evidence: The Commission will finish this work tomorrow. The Commission does not harass any person. We insist on promoting peace in this country. The Commission is your opportunity to come to your people and reconcile but people feel insulted when those who violated their rights do not speak the truth. I am now asking you to apologise and ask for forgiveness. The work of the Commission is to help facilitate that process. If you want the Commission to help you, now is your opportunity or otherwise it will take a long time to do so. Do you have anything to tell the people of Kailahun?

Sellu: In Kailahun here at this centre on this big day, I am now telling all my people men and women that it was not our fault Sankoh's. If it was not him it would not have happened this way. I am asking all my people to kindly forgive me for the things that happened in this country so that from now on we will be able to live like children from one mother to promote this country.

Leader of Evidence: You remember the court with Patrick Banda. So you then presided over your own court in Kailahun?

Sellu: Any time our brother committed any crime we will talk it over.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of punishment did you give to those found guilty?

Sellu: We fined some people a bag of rice or flogged them.

Leader of Evidence: It is a law that they should be flogged, is that correct?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Some will be locked in cells for days?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: There are several mass graves in the town?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know about some of those mass graves?

Sellu: Yes, behind the police station.

Leader of Evidence: Where you there when those people were killed?

Sellu: No, at that time I was not in power.

Leader of Evidence: When you were in power were you there when others were killed?

Sellu: No.

Leader of Evidence: Some people were sentenced to death for crimes. Is that correct?

Sellu: We don't have that kind of crime in our court.

Leader of Evidence: Some of those beaten died because of the beating they received?

Sellu: That never happened.

Leader of Evidence: Some were beaten in this town.

Sellu: It used to happen in Guama.

Leader of Evidence: What effort did you make to find out who killed those people?

Sellu: Isaac a Liberian soldier brought these people and the people complained that they were tired. The people died. I reported to the commander what his fighters were doing.

Leader of Evidence: Do you regret what you did in collaboration with the RUF?

Sellu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Are you prepared to participate in the reconciliation process tomorrow.

Sellu: Yes.

6th – Witness –Fomba Kanneh

Presiding Commissioner: Mrs Aminata Jow

Chairman Bishop J Humper

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Fomba Kanneh. I am a Muslim. Commissioner Jow administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

On the 28 day of fasting, during one season of Ramadan, on a Saturday, we were in our village when we heard gun shots. The rebels brought in by Foday Sankoh launched an attack. The following Monday, I moved from our village and came back to see the extent of the war brought to our country. I went to my house and the fighters went there with their guns. The police barracks had been closed and the police had run away. The rebels went in and looted all the properties. They also went to a woman's place where they stole rice. I started seeing loads on people's head moving all about. A boy told me that I should go and collect my own rice as a store had been opened. I refused. It was clear from the look of things that they had come to steal. The guy that brought the war, Foday Sankoh, held a meeting at the court barray. While addressing the people he said that he had no money to prosecute them and that natives of the land should fight and not expect to be paid. Anyone who fought in the war was to consider anything he got as a profit. That went on and the destruction continued onto Baima. Sankoh said that the war was a means of bringing changes. The change he was talking about was to destroy any sober person in this land. After the rebels had left our children were not part of the movement. Some of us had

thought that if the war was in the hands of our children it would speedily come to an end. However, when the country was in our own hands they were breaking houses and killing people. It came to a time when we didn't have anything to eat. There were five of us from the same mother. All of my brothers and sisters were killed. I built a concrete house in this town and people know about it. That house was destroyed. They were here and they did whatever they wanted. Last year, I left this place for Bo. My brother took my wife to Bo. I found he had died. He went to Freetown for medication at the Connaught hospital and there he was admitted though he died later. After his death a lot of things happened. He had two children overseas and we told them about his death. They came to Freetown and buried their father. Like I said, Sankoh had come to change us. I am not saying I was a rich man, but at first I was able to feed myself and my family. I lost everything. UNAMSIL is currently occupying my house and they are not making any improvement on it.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We thank you for coming here to testify. As I listen to your testimony, I feel sad because of your age. One would expect that at your age, you should have settled to enjoy the little you have. We hope you will continue to hold on to what you have at this point in time will you agree with me that if we were to give a title to this revolution of Sankoh we will say that it was a "Pay yourself Revolution"?

Fomba: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Will you say that the pay yourself strategy moved your children to join the rebels?

Fomba: Yes. Everybody paid themselves.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Why did one Alhaji put a grenade in your pocket?

Fomba: He asked me to go with him to Daru. I asked whether he was travelling with people and he said no. Then I told him that I would not be able to walk to Daru. I had my t-shirt. He took out the grenade and put it in my pocket. I still insisted that I was not going. He went into my house and started firing and bore holes in the ceiling. He did all he could but I refused to go.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Can you remember the names of some of the commanders around here?

Fomba: Yes, I remember Massaquoi he was the leader of all the soldiers.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You said Foday Sankoh was making promises to change things around?

Fomba: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What was your opinion about those changes?

Fomba: I thought about the changes as the war progressed and I realised that they were meant for those who were hopeful about the outcome of the war. I cannot say I was rich, but I had 15 family members that I took care of. Now I cannot take care of them.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: On the basis of those experiences what advice will you give to the people of this country both young and old about changes in government?

Fomba: I cannot give any piece of advice.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: At the point where Foday Sankoh spoke to you were you convinced?

Fomba: Whilst he was talking I entered the hall to ask him, then one of my children held me back and told me not to ask questions. I did not defy my child.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did any of your children join the RUF?

Fomba: My child joined the RUF out of his own wish but right now he is dead. I was in Guinea and he was flogged to death.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Was it by junior commandos or the RUF?

Fomba: I can't tell the kind of group he belonged to, but they referred to him as a commando.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you give him over to the RUF yourself?

Fomba: I did not.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did they abduct them?

Fomba: They did not abduct them, they opted for themselves. No sooner had Sankoh declared the pay yourself strategy than they opted to join the movement.

Leader of Evidence: Can you describe the size of the house in terms of the number of rooms?

Fomba: Seven bedrooms, one shop and two verandas

Leader of Evidence: Where is this house located?

Fomba: On the way to Koindu.

Leader of Evidence: Are they paying rent to you?

Fomba: I have not received a cent from them.

Leader of Evidence: When did they start occupying this house?

Fomba: Last year.

Leader of Evidence: Have you complained to the Paramount Chief?

Fomba: No.

Leader of Evidence: Why?

Fomba: At the time of my return, we had no resident Paramount Chief.

Leader of Evidence: The commission will try to help you. We will write a letter to the Representative of the UN Secretary General here to see what they can do. The Commission wants to know how to phrase the letter. Do you want the house or do you want them to pay you rent?

Fomba: I want to rent the house.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: We have asked you questions, do you have any questions to ask or recommendations to make?

Fomba: What I have to say to this commission is that if I were a woman I would have cried as I am going through hard times. I was not a rich man, but I was happy. As I am talking now, I can't afford to feed myself. I had so many wives, but they all fled because of the hardship.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We are very sorry for what you went through. We thank you very much for the support.

CLOSING SESSION HELD IN KAILAHUN ON FRIDAY 16TH MAY 2003

1st Witness – Peter Bagorie
Presiding Commissioner: Chairman Bishop J Humper
Mrs Aminata Jow
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonnia Ojielo

My name is Peter Bagorie. The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You are one of the important people in Sierra Leone. You will be helping us to know what went wrong in Sierra Leone. You will be contributing toward the building of Sierra Leone. I give you this opportunity to tell us your experience.

TESTIMONY

I am a worker at the Ministry of Health. I am the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer in Kailahun. We went to a series of meetings with the RUF in Kingtom so that they could allow us to enter the territory. Some of the people present at the meeting were Koto, Kaibanja and all their medical personnel. This meeting was organised by UNICEF, WHO and the Sierra Leone Government. We came to a conclusion that we should enter Kailahun. We were to conduct an NID programme in Kailahun. On 6th October, we packed all our logistics to enter Kailahun. We were intercepted at Sebuya and taken to Segbwema. On arrival in Segbwema, we came in contact with the following:

Colonel Momoh Rogers
Colonel. Amara (Ambush Commander)

and one M.P. Daboh.

They said we had no right to enter their territory.

The following day we were brought to their office to wait until they received orders from Sam Bockarie. We stayed there for days. On 10th October, at 6:30 p.m., we received a message that they were taking us to Buedu. I am grateful to Samedu because she cried when we were about to be taken away. She made the comment that we were going to a place we knew not, and if we came back alive, fine; but if we died also, fine. We were four in number and four gun men. They told us that there was one of us in the bush and that we should join them. That was when I thought that we were going to die. We met the man on the way. We arrived at Bunumbu by Midnight. Those rebels were so powerful; they had all kinds of communication sets. No sooner had they moved from one point than they communicated with their colleagues. At Bunumbu, we took a canoe and crossed the river to Gaima. We went to Gaima and slept there. The following day, we slept at Pendembu. The other day we went to Buedu, towards Pendembu. We went to Bulawa and we did not see any street because it was dark. We travelled in the jungle unto Dodo Kortuma. That was where we first saw light. On arrival in the town continued to a place called Oni Lusi where it was raining then. We waited for the rain to cease before continuing our journey. When we went to Buedu the first person we came in contact with was called Alhaji Kuyateh 2121, he was the step father of Maskita. We were not told that they had juju men who would know if people did not speak the truth and that such persons would die. He served us food. Mr. Vandy (commonly called Boss Boss) and I ate the food. He took us to the MP's office and took all our properties from us and signed for them. The following day, we were arraigned before the court at a place called "the Dungeon", a very deep place where they locked people up. From among the four of us they took the youngest man, Paul Baimba. His uncle asked him to say that Boss Boss was a Kamajor and that he was the brain behind the movement. I was a photographer and a journalist. Alhaji Kuyateh 2121 was a very powerful man. Our fate lay in his hands. After beating Baimba to their satisfaction, they called me outside with the hope of getting some kind of information from me. I said, "I want to tell you the composition of the NID. It is not meant for the health workers, but for the population and our children". I told them that our National Coordinator for NID was S.U. M. Jah and the Social Mobilisation Coordinator was A.O.D George. "If you say it was wrong for us to have followed Boss Boss, I would like you to know that we did so because we felt we needed an opinion leader like him for the programme to succeed". I told them that if they wished to have any information from us they should call us one by one to get the facts. Then Mosquito asked what I meant by the adducing of evidence. I said "if you want to investigate." To my greatest surprise, a soldier that was paid by the government, Lt. Batiloh said that everybody should go inside for Peter to talk to us. Then Mosquito said I should say that our coordinator was a Kamajor. I said I had not been trained to lie. If I lied my people would disown me and the government would also disown me. He asked which government. I said the government of the day. Then he said he was going to kill Pa Kabba and wash his hands in his blood. We went and he gave me cigarette to smoke and asked me to say the truth. I said the same thing. He said I was stubborn. He said once I did not say the truth, he gave command to people with rubbers to flog me. I was beaten. Then all of a sudden, he ordered them to stop. He said I was blessed and that I had covered all the others. He said that he received a message from Foday Sankoh to release us. I saw eight masks and soko bana devils; they cut their tongues and removed their eyes. They had their own empire and they had divided the country into two. When Sankoh came, we were not able to come outside. He came with two helicopters and some international people. I tried to force my way so that if anything happened I could find my way out there. When I thought of the dungeon, I thought he would put me there so that the international people would not know about me. That was the first time I met Fayia Musa, Palmer and Deen Jalloh. We were asked whether we were given food to eat. I said we were given rice and okra. We were given food at 7:00 p.m. and they said if we wanted to eat we could. It started to rain and I asked what had happened; Fayia Musa said I had been called by the Pa. They sat on the ground. At night, I was sleeping and heard Fayia Musa, Deen Jalloh and Dr. Barrie. It was not long after they went that one MP soldier came to us and said they had been freed. The Pa said we should forget about the organisation and that he was prepared to sponsor us to any

they want to go. They came and shouted, "Boss Boss the Pa wants to see you." I said we should all go but they said that Sankoh wanted to see only one person and that was Boss Boss. Then Boss Boss told me to wait for him and after a while he returned. Before he went there, he was shouting. I told them that Sankoh and I were in Segbwema. He said we had been freed. I said we could not move in the night. I told them that the rebels had tactics and Mosquito would order his boys to kill us. I said these boys have all types of tricks. In the morning, Sankoh came to do his rounds and stopped by the hospital and then visited the office where we were. He said henceforth whoever had committed rape or killing should be freed. He said, "My people, the people of Sierra Leone freed me when I was in prison. There I used to pump. Now I am going to free everybody. I want to show you what you should do". He ordered everybody to pump. After that everybody was asked to come out of the court. If you stayed there, he would be killed. He took out money and Tom Sandy went and grabbed it. We were given a letter of release which, unfortunately, I do not have here. I have forgotten it. The day Foday Sankoh arrived when they were changing shift he said he lost Le1 million. One Captain was arrested and stripped naked. They suspended him over fire while they beat him up. All the persons I am naming now molested me and I suffered greatly at their hands.

Major Gen. Sam Bockarie (Mosquito)

Mr. Coomber

Mr. Momoh Rogers

Mr. Tom Sandy

Lt. Batiloi; he is still in the army and he is now a Captain. I want the Commission to note that if we want to have sustainable peace these people should be brought to justice.

S.S Williams (Liaison Officer);

Alhaji Kuyateh;

Col. Amara.

People were afraid to mention their names. When talking of those who organised something, think of the Chief Security of the RUF, the people who used to tell us about security consciousness; he knows of all what I went through (Sam Koroma)

Chairman Bishop Humper: Thank you for being so clear and to the point, I would ask my colleagues if they have any questions for clarification.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: When you were proceeding to Buedu on your way to Dodo Kortuma you listed a number of persons you met, Dr. Barrie and who else?

Peter: Sam Bockarie, Mr. Coomber, Momoh Rogers, Tom Sandy, Lt. Batiloh (SLA), S. S Williams, Alhaji Kuyateh, Col. Amara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were working for the NID?

Peter: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were trying to tell us that you were unable to carry out your job?

Peter: It was not successful because of their interruption. It did not work.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Since those times do you know of any follow up to immunise the children?

Peter: We came back in November when we realised that nothing had been done and so we started moving in the District to do the jobs.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How did you get to know about the dungeon?

Peter: The dungeon was behind the cell and we saw how they manipulated their affairs.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You gave us a story which indicates that your opinion was respected.

Peter: He was trying to brainwash me but I was able to read between the lines.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What happened after he released you?

Peter: We were given a letter of release. Before that the four men who escorted us from Buedo the day Mosquito sent for us from the court sent word to us that within 12 hours we should return to Buedo at night. That was the time Foday Sankoh was to travel. Someone is here who is related to Paul Baimba who gave us 2 Liberian boys to take us on the road. We passed through Kailahun and went to Gaama where we slept. We went through Flawahun unto Pendembu. On arrival, Boss Boss asked us to go by canoe but then I refused. I said "over my dead body". I said if we entered the canoe, Mosquito would tell his boys to dump us. I told them that I had my passport which said anybody who molested us would face the consequences of the RUF. At that point we were free to go back to Segbwema if we so wished. I went through Pendembu to Beudo. We walked and passed through Kwiva. We had wanted to use another road, but we were afraid of the landmines. As we reached Daru, we presented ourselves to Ecomog. We were taken to Maj. Okwonko. He said he was going to Freetown. I said I wont go because our feet were swollen and if we were taken to Freetown they would televise us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You escaped the RUF?

Peter: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Were you travelling from Freetown to Kailahun for the NID exercise?

Peter: We were told that they had sent a message to the RUF.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did they give you a copy of the letter?

Peter: No. When we reached at Mano junction they asked us to continue.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Where do you stay?

Peter: I am staying in Kailahun.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know where the dungeon is in Buedu?

Peter: Very well.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know Lt. Batiloh?

Peter: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You had a pass when you were intercepted did you show the pass?

Peter: Yes Sir, we started showing it from Tombola.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know if the people whose names you mentioned are still alive?

Peter: I cannot delve into that. If they are alive I can identify them.

Chairman Bishop Humber: The Commission will pursue this. We will take it very seriously as these people are very important to us. For the four days you spent in Daru did they give you food to eat?

Peter: Yes, we were given food in every village. We started suffering when we met Maskita.

Chairman Bishop Humber: You said the war was divided into two, do you want to tell me that Foday Sankoh had his and the RUF had theirs? What do you mean by two divisions?

Peter: You heard me. I said it was the first time I saw 8 masked devils and "soko bana" cutting their tongues and removing their eyes.

Chairman Bishop Humber: Let us leave that. What are you trying to tell me and the audience after going through this experience?

Peter: It is difficult, the heart can easily forget, but the memory always remains. If you wronged me and you did not tell me openly that you have wronged me, honestly I will never forgive you. They have caused me some disability, my neck has some problems.

Leader of Evidence: I have one point for clarification. You said that when you saw the dungeon there was somebody near the hall of the dungeon, can you explain what the person was doing?

Peter: He was an RUF soldier and one of the architects. The person is Paul Baimba's uncle.

Leader of Evidence: Was he carrying a gun?

Peter: I did not see a gun with him.

Leader of Evidence: You saw the person interacting with the RUF?

Peter: He was a member of the RUF and he is here.

Leader of Evidence: Will you like to give the Commission the person's name?

Peter: Yes. His name is Senesie.

Leader of Evidence: For the benefit of the Commission, when last did you see these people? I am asking you to tell the people to come and give evidence to the people in Kailahun or Freetown.

Peter: C.O. Coomber.

Leader of Evidence: When last did you see him or hear about him?

Peter: Since I left that place, I have never enquired about him.

Momoh Rogers is in Pademba Road;

Tom Sandy used to live in this town;

S. S. Williams, I understand, is now in Kono;

Alhaji Kuyateh 2121, I was told, went to Freetown but he normally stays in Kono;

Col. Amara is in a village along the road leading to Buedu.

Leader of Evidence: Was it the duty of Ambush Commander to plan all the ambushes?

Peter: As I understand it, an ambush Commander plans ambushes.

Leader of Evidence: I am saying thank you and begging you to tell the people that had been named to give their evidence.

Chairman Bishop Humper: It is your turn to ask questions.

Peter: Before I start, I want to inform you that I had left one name out that is the Chief Security.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We have already got him at the closed hearing.

Peter: In as much as I had earlier defined the objectives and aims of this Commission, if I have the power I will support the Commission to stand strong. This country has turned into a place as one lady said "we are all cows in woreh". In the first place I am appealing for my health. The rebels destabilised me. In any country, when you talk about a government, you have organs that are responsible for the government. We have the legislative, the judiciary and so forth. The (Security) people that are going to guide us should be sober minded. I want the Commission to go all out to see that the stages of anarchy that we had gone through are wiped out of this country. Let the Commission ensure that nobody is above the law. Let the ex-combatants know that we swallowed bitter pills for peace in this country. Let them have this realisation. That is all I have to say.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We appreciate your coming and your contribution. You have helped the Commission to have some vital information. We hope that this recommendation will be taken seriously.

2nd Witness – Eric Koi Senesi (S.O. B)
Presiding Commissioner: Chairman Bishop J Humper
Mrs Aminata Jow
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonia Ojielo

Chairman Bishop Humper: We want to welcome you to this session today. I want you to know that you are one of the important persons we have here this morning.

My name is Emeric Koi Senesi. I am a Christian. The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

TESTIMONY

I am saying thank you to the Commission. It pleases me so much that I have been called to come and tell you what were my own activities and what I saw. Before the war, I was serving in my capacity as a Treasury Clerk. In 1991, on 23 March, we were in Mobai when we heard that the war had entered Bomaru. On that day, we were in a court proceeding. The court was adjourned. Chief Bunduka told us that he once heard that there was an organisation headed by Foday Sankoh which was coming to the country. We were in Mobai. After 2 days on the 3rd day the war was serious at Mobai. We saw government soldiers moving to Mobai. They said they were unable to withstand the rebels and they retreated. As they were repelled, they went to Mobai. On that particular day, some people were packing to move when the rebels attacked at Daru. Some people were telling us that they had started killing people at Daru. We saw people moving from Kailahun, they said the rebels had entered Kailahun. In the evening, I collected all

my children and wife and we went into the bush. My first son called Fred and I came back to collect our mattresses. We came across rebels moving in large numbers. My son was captured and taken to town. We were in the bush for one week. My son went to inform us about a ruling that had been passed by the Chief that if we did not go to town they would kill us. We went to town and they asked for the educated people among us. The man I was assisting stood up and raised his hand and he was appointed as the speaker. They took them away and we later heard gun shots. We were asked to go back to our houses. They went and arrested the Paramount Chief, J.B. Bunduka. We were all gathered again and he was asked to present the chieftom money. He said he did not have money. He was arrested. They continued beating him together with his policeman. We saw them lying. Jiffa Massaquoi, Rambo and C.O. Mohamed Tarawally were the commandos at that time. That evening, they met me in my veranda and had my beard shaved. I was beaten up as they accused me of being a Government soldier. My son who was conscripted came and pleaded for me that I was not a soldier, and told them that I was a good artist. He told them that I could design for them if they wanted me to do it. They asked me if I was a good artist, I said yes. They asked me to go home. We stayed in Mobai for three months. They started looting Government properties and taking them to Foya. Dr. Kobba's properties and many others were looted. One morning, Government troops attacked us. I went to Sakama and I was there with my family for six months. Three soldiers came and asked for me and they said Sankoh was at home. My son and my wife cried but I told them to stop as we were being trapped. I decided to go. They were so worried that if I did not go I would be dead. I was taken before Sankoh. Sankoh brought a logo which represented their symbol. He wanted to get his logo drawn, a lion. Those in the office tried to design the lion, but they were unable. He asked whether I could draw the lion and I said yes. I asked him if he wanted me to draw a lion. He said sometime ago, a white man called Pedro da Cintra came to Sierra Leone in 1462 and he said Sierra Leone was a Lion Mountain and that was why they were using lion as their symbol. I told him that I was hungry and they gave me food. He said, "Young man, go ahead and when you are through, draw the lion". I can show the Commission the lion which I drew. I asked him why the war was brought. He said the war was brought so as to take people out of poverty. I told him that the war was too much for us, they were just killing our people. I had been listening to the radio and they had been talking about Top 20. When the Gio fighters came, they were asking our people to make juju for them so that they would not be hit by a bullet. At the war front, they looted freezers, tapes, etc. When the Gios were here; they were raping and committing all kinds of atrocities. They ate everything and the food got finished. After transporting everything, an announcement was made one day, in the morning hours about all those working for us. Mohamed Sankoh was fired and we were all afraid. No sooner had we ran away than all our properties were looted. They killed all Muslims there. That disturbed our people and they went to Sankoh and told him that they did not want those people. Then Sankoh asked whether they were able to confront them in battle and they said yes. It took about a month for the rebels to fight against those people. The Mende people got together and fought at night with help from the Poro Devil; they used a password to identify themselves. The Gios were unable to say the password. Anybody who said the wrong word was shot. Those who said the right word were embraced. I was living in Sakamo when NPRC took power. They started fighting against our people very seriously. We were then seeing our brothers running away from the war front. I collected my children and we moved to Yandehun. The people who brought the war to the country, Issa and Mosquito, were not educated. The educated ones were Rashid, Mohamed and others. We heard that one man called Janka had made arrangements to overthrow Sankoh. They were all killed. There were two men and they killed all of them at Gahun. They killed people who were from Gahun. That was the time when NPRC announced a cease fire and called the rebels out of the bush. The chief, the soldiers and Mosquito were in the bush. They planned that if the fighting was serious, they would send some people there. The testimonies people gave from Gahun were not a lies. They called about 75 of them and they were killed. The civilians had their children killed and some were held hostages while some were killed. They came and explained to us and advised me not to go. After they had kill them, in 1993, we heard that Sankoh and his boys had moved to Garma along with Mosquito and Mohamed Tarawally. Sankoh ordered them to fight the soldiers so that they could find their way through. Sankoh was taken to Zogoda and people used to carry food for them. I used to see them, but I did not go there. In 1994 and 1995,

at the time they killed most of our brothers in Buedu, our brothers attacked the soldiers and repelled them to Buedu. After that, my people and I went to a town called Baama. Fayiah Musa, Basah, Din Jalloh and Philip Palmer were all national delegates. My family moved to Buedu. It was at that time that the movement was called to sign a peace treaty. Whilst in the bush, those of our brothers who represented us connived with the SLPP and Philip had announced that he was then the RUF leader, not Sankoh. There and then they sent a message for Philip to come and organise the movement in order to remove Sankoh. When they came back, they arrested them. My colleague mentioned a place called the dungeon. After those brothers came from Freetown that was the time Mosquito ordered me to dig a hole which was very deep. They put a long ladder in it. There was a cell in it. On top of it, was a house. That house which was built over the hole was referred to as Cell no. 1. If anyone was caught stealing he was sent to jail 1. If anyone committed any crime that demanded killing, they were sent down the hole. If they committed any serious offence, they were put in the jungle. They were charged first with the offence of sabotage. We were among them as we were educated. Those men were in the dungeon for a long time. We who were educated people got together and pleaded on their behalf and mosquito consented. They were not killed. By the time Sankoh was coming somebody mentioned that I was an architect but I was not. The person who was actually the architect was called Mohamed Tarawally. I am a very good artist. If you say look at this and draw this I will do it. I moved to Panguma that was the time AFRC took power, on Sunday, 25 May 1997. I was then in Panguma. At that time Sankoh ordered that the SLA and the RUF should live as one people then he was in Nigeria. We were all moving together with the SLA. I heard people saying that the Kamajors had arrived. They told us that me, the artist, and our judge who were not trained as fighters would be given an ideology training. They trained us and the training comprised pieces of advice. Now that everything had come to an end this document contains what we were trained on. (Submits document.) The tuition included the way we should interact with the soldiers. After that when the Kamajors were in Kailahun and those were arrested, I saw Mosquito together with Issa and their boys. We heard one morning that Mosquito had ordered the killing of the Kamajors. On 15th December, 1999, I heard that Sam Bockarie had left this country, but what actually prompted his trip? I will explain to the Commission. Before he left, that was the time when Sankoh was released and made Minister of **Natural** Resources in the country. At that time, when the RUF were driven, Sankoh ordered Mosquito to disarm to Ecomog. The attacked they launched to drive the Ecomog was led by Issa Sesay. At the time he went he had got a piece of land in Kono. Then Sankoh ordered Mosquito that we should disarm to Ecomog. Issa trained a lot of his people. When Sankoh ordered Mosquito to disarm, he refused and said the Ecomog are their enemies. Issa then wanting power, told Sankoh that he would go and get Mosquito's head. Since they had signed the peace if Issa said he was going to fight against us, it would not be possible. He said good bye to us and went to Liberia. When he was going he swore that he was going and that the person who had struggled most. If I stay here to fight among ourselves it will be like the war in Liberia. He said that after he would have gone, anybody who continued to fight would never benefit out of the war. We had a radio station called Radio Freedom. Mosquito took along that radio station. All those things we had at that time that we should benefit from, he took them away. At that time, the MSF people brought medicines and he took them away. I had it in mind that if you live in a country with war, your people will ask you what you went through. I was really a humble servant under them. Any time they bought T-shirts, I did the designs on them. I do not think that anybody in this district will ever say I held a gun to go to the war front. Let nobody deny that any adult living here was given a gun for enemies. We were not sent to the war front. Before the Indians came, Sankoh gathered everybody in Pendembu and said we should then have peace. Sankoh said the war was over and, for that reason we were to form political parties in the country. They said we should look amongst our children for an educated person to be the chairman. Two of my sisters and three chiefs said that I had observed this for a long time. "You have never punished anybody and so we want you to be our Chairman". One of them proposed George Mansaray who in turn spoke to me. "You are saying I should be the leader do you have money to pursue it", I asked. By then Mosquito had taken the money away and I did not think Issa would be able to disburse money. They said for the sake of peace, I should accept it. My daughter was in the bush and she was not educated. Those Gio fighters asked my eldest son to carry loads for them and he was drowned in a river. They said I should

be the party chairman and I consented. Three of us contested that position and the chiefs got together and talked to the others to step down for me. I am working in the party for the sake of peace. We and the UN officials (Indians) were best of friends. Anytime we played foot ball they gave us plenty of items. Then we heard that Morrison Kallon and Bayo had been attacked. The CSO at that time was called Martin George. Everybody, including the chiefs told us that we should arrest the Indians. We had two command structures; the political wing and the military wing. When they fought at the other end we in Kailahun did not fight. One morning, they just flared up in the town. All factions took up arms. I and others went to them to apologise and told them not to fight but they drove us away. At that time, all those beautiful items the Indians had, they wanted to loot them. I was standing and witnessing them as they took the Indians away. They took them to a house and said we had plans for peace in the country. They asked all their commanders to come forward and they did. As they arrived, Martin George stood up and said they were all under arrest. We went away and were very discouraged because the Indians had a lot of weapons and we thought they would fight back. Martin George arranged for them to be taken to Ngiema. They were drinking water and lying on the floor. Then I went to Martin George and said the organisation, UN, is not a national issue. They said I should move off the site. They were moving with their vehicles up and down, playing music. They also arrested a helicopter. We pleaded and they released the helicopter. They looted all their properties. They brought them to Kailahun again. Their commander thanked me for making efforts to bring them to Kailahun. They were staying at the barracks and were not allowed to move. I wrote a letter and signed it. When it was given to Martin George he refused to sign it. This was the letter I wrote at that time but it was not signed by Martin George. (Submits letter.) After that, a letter was written against me to Issa that I had told the fighters not to fight. Issa ordered us to report to him in Makeni. That night my brother told me that I was going to be killed because I refused to fight. That night I escaped and stayed in Makeni for two weeks. One morning, I heard that they had taken my brother to the war front and he had been killed. I moved with my chairman and went to Freetown. No money was there to campaign for the elections. We sold a cow and the money we had at that time was used to hire one vehicle. When we were coming from Freetown, I asked him for the manifesto and the constitution. He said "young man just go and arrange whatever you want to". I told the chairman that those people had just disturbed our people. We had been here and my people asked me to switch over to the SLPP. All of us are fully aware that we are SLPP. To end it all, if you do anything you must be able to explain it. There is no civilian in this District that can say I looted his goods from him or her. If there is any one let the person come and say it. The time I joined the war, I was a sober person. I do not drink or smoke. If there is anything that I did and did not explain, please ask me and I will explain.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You agree that you are a witness and perpetrator and victim?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You are the Chairman of the RUF. You give us the reason for doing that. Do you agree?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You did say that you were educated. I want to know your level of education.

Mr. Senesie: GCE, A Level and external examinations.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: During your studies, did you do History?

Mr. Senesie: Yes, I did history.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you read the Green book of Ghadafi.

Mr. Senesi: I used to hear about it. I read the book during the war.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: What was your rank in the army?

Mr. Senesie: If you are an elder and you were working for the Revolution, there were ranks they referred to as local Commission and we were given that and I was called captain.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from designing the logo, what else did you do for the RUF?

Mr Senesie: That was my only work. They were only calling me to draw or give advice.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You never stayed in a camp?

Mr. Senesie: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You explained a number of atrocities by the RUF; did you yourself commit any?

Mr. Senesie: No, I did not commit any.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: As an educated person, did you try to stop them.

Mr. Senesie: Yes, we used to say it at meetings, but they were not prepared to listen. They were drug addicts.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You said you were taken to a base for ideology training; how long were you there?

Mr. Senesie: We spent two weeks there and then they gave us a paper and we trained the others.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: This is my final question; you should pay for whatever you take. You did not destroy houses, but you had a gun?

Mr. Senesie: I had a gun, but did not fire the gun.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I join my colleagues to welcome you for coming and sharing your experiences with us and I really do not have many questions for you; only one or two. Looking back now on the whole period from the time you met Foday Sankoh and now, do you say that you were forced to stay with the RUF.

Mr. Senesie: Yes, I was forced.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: After the approval of your first drawing and the compliment given by Sankoh himself, did you not decide that this was an opportunity for making up your mind about working for Sankoh or RUF?

Mr. Senesie: I took it to be a kind of opportunity for me because we had nowhere to go.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are you trying to deceive us from your explanation?

Mr. Senesie: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The people will not forgive you if you do not say the truth. Do you look forward to a permanent relationship?

Mr. Senesie: Initially, it was by force but with conditions offered to me, I accepted it.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You were advised by your Paramount Chief and relatives to take up appointment with the RUF.

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What was the motive behind that?

Mr. Senesie: I accepted the offer for the sake of peace because I knew that if I was in power I would bring peace to my people.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you not term yourself as over ambitious?

Mr. Senesie: You said I should speak the truth, I was hoping to rob them off.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you mention that you got a certificate from Madam T-shop. Do you know the history?

Mr. Senesie: I have not been there. It was a correspondence course.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, you are along the path; I want us to go straight. Have you heard of the expression in Mende "Tongbo"? Where do you live?

Mr. Senesie: I live in Kailahun.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you want to be at peace in Kailahun?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you know that your people know you more than you know yourself?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You were forced to become a rebel, a perpetrator, now listen to me, do you know ashobi, you are RUF and part of the ashobi?

Mr. Senesie: Yes, thank you very much.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You know and want to tell us that you and your brothers did atrocities in this country?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Are you happy that you lost your educational opportunity.

Mr. Senesie: No.

Leader of Evidence: You were RUF Commander in Pandaru?

Mr. Senesie: Yes

Leader of Evidence: As MP Commander, you were responsible for military section?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You were also involved in the civilian community and you sent people to work in your farm?

Mr. Senessie: No, I did not send people to work in my farm. I have my sisters and children with me.

Leader of Evidence: As a Commander, you had a cell for detention?

Mr. Senessie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Pandaru is a small village, there was an MP there who takes them to Kailahun.

Mr. Senesie: I was not a Commander in charge of Pandaru, there was an MP in charge of the area.

Leader of Evidence: People were punished under your command. Is that correct?

Mr. Senesie: I did not witness that happening to anybody and did not allow that at all.

Leader of Evidence: How old is your daughter whom you introduced to the Commission?

Mr. Senesie: 1982 – 21 years.

Leader of Evidence: So she is 21 years.

Mr. Senessie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Tell the people of Kailahun where you got the roofing materials from.

Mr. Senessie: I got the materials when we were in the political party. I got them from Kenema.

Leader of Evidence: Did you not get the materials from the people?

Mr. Senessie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know Col. Peter Vandy?

Mr. Senessie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: He is your son-in-law?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: When did he marry your daughter?

Mr. Senesie: He married her in 1997.

Leader of Evidence: How old was your daughter when she got married?

Mr. Senesie: She was 15yrs old when she got married.

Leader of Evidence: What was Peter Vandy's position in 1997?

Mr. Senesie: He was a vanguard.

Leader of Evidence: Do you want to say that because of promotion you gave your daughter in marriage at an under age?

Mr. Senesie: That was not it. Those people we are referring to as vanguards were very powerful.

Leader of Evidence: If there were threats, did it not apply to you?

Mr. Senesie: Yes the dungeon was free for everybody to go. The marriage between Peter Vandy and my daughter emanated from love.

Leader of Evidence: Somebody accused you in public that you took materials from them to construct your home and I refer you to Conduct 2 of your Code of Conduct, are you ready to pay for these things? Tell your people.

Mr. Senesie: If anybody could come out to say I took their roofing materials, I am prepared to pay for it, but I did not take any roofing materials. I did not take any material from Panderu to build my house.

Leader of Evidence: Were they under your control?

Mr. Senesie: No.

Leader of Evidence: The chiefs who begged you to become the Chairman, were RUF Chiefs, not so?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You said there were arms given to people in Kailahun to defend themselves?

Mr. Senesie: Like the PC said, they did not give them guns.

Leader of Evidence: Only those who were prominent were given guns?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: These principles of leadership, are they in your hands now?

Mr. Senesie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: In which year did you draft them?

Mr. Senesie: In 1994.

Leader of Evidence: Because you had a prominent position that was why Sankoh trusted you to draft this?

Mr. Senesie: It was not Sankoh, it was Augustine Gbao who had those rules and I copied them from him.

Leader of Evidence: Tell your people of Kailahun the Commission has a meeting with the Paramount Chiefs and these chiefs will accept the people in the community. Those people were to be expelled from the community. The chiefs are saying that people should tell them the truth and they have assured the Commission that he who speaks the truth will be welcomed with open hands. For you and everybody else testifying today, this is a wonderful day to come with an open mind to say the truth. Your people know the truth so I cannot protect you. It is your choice. If you want to tell them anything this is your chance.

Mr. Senesie: They are our parents since the time when we were not rebels. It was nobody's intention to have war in Sierra Leone. If it has happened this way, and they escaped, we want them to have mercy on us. We have now stood firm to see that never again would we have war in this country. They are our people, let them have mercy on us. It was not our fault that we were captured by rebels. I am asking them to accept us as their own children and we will cooperate with them. They knew that some of us had never committed any crime against them. If any crime should come to this country because of war, let them forgive us.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What we are expecting from you is for you to name your atrocities one after the other in order to free your mind.

Mr. Senesie: I am telling my people that all the atrocities done in this town were caused by us; we have burnt down our peoples houses, we killed them and people were beaten.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What recommendations can you give us?

Mr. Senesie: All what had happen in the country is beyond expression. It has happened, let them help us as we have started. Let them think about the children, they are not educated. If they accept us again and we have employment facilities we will help support our people better. Please think of us.

3rd Witness – Saffa Kpulun Ngobeh

Presiding Commissioner: Chairman Bishop J Humper
Mrs Aminata Jow
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonia Ojielo

My name is Saffa Ngobeh. I am a Muslim. The witness swore on the Koran. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

TESTIMONY

I used to be a business man. In the first place, we saw soldiers from Freetown coming to the border. We asked them what had happened. I went to Batoma and cleared my store. I had 150 bags of rice in the store. I had 15 drums of palm oil and I gave 12 drums to my wife to take to Freetown. After she had left I came to Mogopa and told him that the price of coffee had dropped. We closed down the store. When I arrived, the soldiers in the Banya compound invited me and said they had sent to call me. We received a letter saying that we brought the rebels. I asked them what rebels were. They arrested me and tied me. They got a vehicle, moved to my store and looted my rice. This was the kind of thing the rebels did. I told them that I was a business man. Whilst I was tied up, they ask me for Mogopa and Iye Gbao. These soldiers boarded the vehicle and they had information that Iye was tied up for the rest of the day and night and was

released at four o'clock. They then freed me and had one soldier called Batoma who used to come to my store. They asked them why they had tied me up and the soldiers said we had been feeding the rebels. "Since we are here he has been feeding us" one of them said. I will show the mark to the Commission. When they loosed me, they ordered me to go home. All the soldiers withdrew and the town was in the hands of civilians. After they had looted all my rice and palm oil, at 5:30 we had gun shots in the town. My wife was not here. I had seven small children and they locked them up and fired through out the night. As soon as we opened the door I ran into a rebel and they arrested me and tied me. I was taken to the District Council and I stayed there for some time. They asked if I was employed by the government and I said no. They asked for the soldiers and I said I did not know their whereabouts. I saw my children moving towards the street and I called them and they told me that they had looted everything in the house. I took them to the village. One of my sons, Abu, went and untied me. He is dead now. I led them to Sembeyam. They told us that the person who brought the war had come and he had a message for us. I did not attend the meeting. After some time we saw people come to our village and surround us all. They said they had come to protect and defend us. "Our leader is Sankoh and is a citizen of the country", they said. They allayed our fears. That was what I suffered through out the war.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Your statement is very short and very rich. According to me, it seems as if you are coming from a ruling house.

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell the Commission whether you were active?

Mr. Ngobeh: In what way? Yes we were to work for them or serve them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: You were with them from 1991 to 2000?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us what you did for them?

Mr. Ngobeh: I was made the chief hunter in this town. We were hunting animals for them.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from hunting, did they give you loads to carry for them?

Mr. Ngobeh: We were not able to loot anything for them. They used to ask us for what they wanted. We got coffee and other items for them. We were here without medicines. Two of my children died because of lack of medication.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: We want to know how you acquired the produce.

Mr. Ngobeh: There are so many produce farms. We were going into peoples produce farms and harvesting. If you could not fulfill their request, it was problem. We had suffered once in their hands, we could not sit by and allow them to punish us again.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I want to know Peter Vandy and Augustine Gbao, were you in some committees?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us some of the committees?

Mr. Ngobeh: The Chiefdom Committee – collected palm oil. We got together to tell Mosquito that those things they requested were not easy to come by. I was the chairman of the committee. Any time we met we were tasked to collect palm oil. We usually sat and organised that among ourselves.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you ever meet Sankoh?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did he give you any position?

Mr. Ngobeh: No.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did you advise him on certain issues?

Mr. Ngobeh: I did not sit with him for any conversation.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us the kind of advice you gave the rebels?

Mr. Ngobeh: We were advising our children the junior commandoes and others. We used to tell them that they should try to escape. It reached a time when they observed that our children did not go to the war front and we were detained.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you stay in Kailahun here throughout the period?

Mr. Ngobeh: No.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you aware of the story of the Kamajors?

Mr. Ngobeh: The time Sankoh came here and said the war was over, we were on the other side, and we went to brush our farms. We used to meet one another and talk. They used to go and sleep with me in my village. In two days' time, we heard that all the people who had entered should go back to Kailahun. I met my brother and asked him why and he told me we had been called by the MP. He said they were interviewing people and we could not tell the reason for the interview. They were asking to know whether we were Kamajors. They detained all of them. I went to Mike Sellu and Sankoh told us that the war was over. I was equally a commander and had not been called. Pa Sellu went to his own village. A man called Bayo called us and Sellu asked him why. "Those of your people that are here are Kamajors. They have answered that they are Kamajors," he said. I told him that he was not a rebel. We went into bitter quarrel. After 2 o'clock, we heard news that Bayo had moved to Mosquito and told him that all the people were rebels.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Did you establish courts?

Mr. Ngobeh: They had one with the MPs we used to call it war court.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You admitted that you are coming from a ruling house?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: From your explanation, we sympathize with you that you were a victim and later you became a perpetrator. You used to go hunting?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Chairman Bishop Humper: If you did not catch any animal, what happened?

Mr. Ngobeh: We were punished.

Chairman Bishop Humper: It is obvious that you harassed people to produce their coffee, etc. If not you were beaten.

Mr. Ngobeh: Because they were giving us quotas that was why we came together to form a committee.

Chairman Bishop Humper: In order to defend your life you became a rebel?

Mr. Ngobeh : Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell your people and the Commission why you decided to give testimony here today?

Mr. Ngobeh: I have come to speak the truth.

Leader of Evidence: How old are you?

Mr. Ngobeh: I am 60 years old.

Leader of Evidence: Was the Second World War finished before you were born?

Mr. Ngobeh: I was a little child when my uncle was sent to the Burma war.

Leader of Evidence: When did your uncle return from Burma?

Mr. Ngobeh: By the time my uncle went to fight in the Burma war we had white people as District officers.

Leader of Evidence: I want you to look at the people of Kailahun what do you want them to remember?

Mr. Ngobeh: My goodness.

Leader of Evidence: Do you want them to attend your funeral?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes, that is why I am still doing well.

Leader of Evidence: You were abducted by the RUF, but you later became a member of the movement?

Mr. Ngobeh: No, we were not part of the movement we were on the civilian side because we were captured.

Leader of Evidence: Even though you were on the civilian side you were a member of the RUF.

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You said there was a chiefdom committee in the movement?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Which other committee was there?

Mr. Ngobeh: Besides the chieftom community, we had no other committee.

Leader of Evidence: You remember when the Indians were captured. The helicopter was there, did you enter the helicopter?

Mr. Ngobeh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you enter the helicopter?

Mr. Ngobeh: No, I did not enter the helicopter?

Leader of Evidence: This building we are using now what was it used for by the movement?

Mr. Ngobeh: We came here when Sankoh came to address us to tell us that the war was over.

Leader of Evidence: Where did he stay when he came here?

Mr. Ngobeh: I do not know.

Leader of Evidence: Do you in your innermost heart want to reconcile with your people?

Mr. Ngobeh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Now tell them the truth.

Mr. Ngobeh: I had no way of escape. We were asked to contribute coffee, etc. and we were not the owners of the plantation. If you refused to give them, you would be punished. I am appealing to the owners of the plantations if we are now alive today we used your plantation to save our lives. I am appealing to you, I am your brother. I am asking for forgiveness. I am telling the Commission that nobody here would say this or that is the kind of punishment I gave him or her.

Chairman Bishop Humper: I consider you as my father. I told you that you are a victim of the war. You suffered and because you wanted to save your life you had no option but to join the rebels. Nobody will come up here to say this is what Saffa did. You opted to talk in public and the Commission wants you to tell us the truth. I believe that you have something to tell all of us to help the Commission. Under normal circumstances, if such people were brought to you what would you do to them?

Mr. Ngobeh: We would tell the person who committed the crime to confess and we would forgive him.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Do you have any recommendations to make?

Mr. Ngobeh: I want to tell the commission that what has been done, cannot be undone. This has happened in Sierra Leone. I am talking for the hearing of the government, to help talk to the people for the kind of destruction that took place so that they can forgive us. We have children. Even my house was unroofed. I used to be a business man, but now I have nothing. The things that we went through some of our brothers did not live to tell the story. For the little children, we need education. Let government assist us.

Presiding Commissioner: Chairman Bishop J Humper
Mrs Aminata Jow
Commissioner Professor John Kamara
Leader of Evidence: Ozonia Ojielo

My name is Jemba Ngobeh. I am a Christian. The witness swore on the Bible. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We are glad that you have the courage to come and make a statement. So take your time to give your statement.

TESTIMONY

Before the war in 1991 I was working in the Ministry of Education with the PRO called M.S Kamara who is currently in Freetown. I was working with him up to the time I started work for ACF; they were working under the Ministry of Education. I was the centre supervisor. We were moving round going to places like Daru collecting children. The white man I worked with was called Bruno he was the supervisor. My friend and I decided to move to Freetown. I was still attached to the Ministry. We came in contact with Alfred Sandi, Dr. Tongu and Justine Bangura at NACSA. We became friends. We were then moving and NASMUSS came up. We were sent to Kenema to serve there. We were sent to SAPA and the people got together and asked us to write a project. This was because our area was affected by the war. Alfred Sandy wrote the project and SAPA approved it. I moved and settled in Bamayo where they used to have Chromites. I had 300 children whom I looked after. Rebels came and attacked the village. We moved to Kenema. I had those children with me. After SAPA had supported us and Dr Ganda had left Kenema, the kids were in my care. We were at No.8 Kombema Road. Dr Ganda's brother John, left the keys with me. I was working and SAPA gave us 40 million Leones to buy beds and furnish the house. CRS and IRC started coming to our aid. Everybody knew about us then. My position was Chief Major of the Benhirsh. I was one of the pioneers. I registered it with the Ministry of Local Government under Fomba in Freetown. This chief passed away. We were then working and one day my friend told me that we should get a chairman. I told her that Dr. Demby was there with us and he never assisted the children, when they realised that money was coming in, they wanted to take over the project. We had a lot of quarrels, and then the election came up. I told them that even though my people are supporters of SLPP, I was not. They started accusing me in the street. After they had won, I came to John Benjamin in Freetown. We had a quarrel with Demby on the grounds that the SLPP had won, and as such he should wash his hands off the orphanage. When they went, I was present when those people wrote their project. I became frustrated. I had two children. It was difficult for me to get a job because they said I had insulted the President. I then made up my mind and went back to Kailahun. I heard that one of my sisters was killed in the war. I told her I wanted to go to Kailahun because we had no other option; we were eating bulgur. When we came, I was arrested and they accused me of being a spy. I went to explain to Mosquito in Kenema and Mosquito sent a message that if anybody touched me, he/she would be in trouble. I said I was to meet Boss Boss in Kailahun. I left my family in Kailahun. Then everybody had retreated and came here. I was here and I opened schools. I brought a lot of materials and books in 1999. I was then working and Mosquito became impressed with my work and he decided to elevate me and gave me a paper promoting me to the rank of Coordinator of Schools. I was here with educated people. They had no respect for people. I told Mosquito that as the country was a bit quiet, I really wanted the school business to go on. I told him that I would like those who were interested in education to start and that they should be disarmed. Any time they wrote their applications, even if they had guns, I used to put it to them that they should learn. At the time the war intensified, we opened schools in the bush. Any child below the age of 16 should not be a gun bearer. If I set eyes on them I would bring them to school. I said to him that I would like my teachers to go anywhere and be respected. He went and asked Issa and Hassan to sit together and make laws so that if any teacher or student was abused the perpetrators were liable to punishment. I proceeded to Kono and opened schools there. I also went to Makeni and moved back to Kono. The first commanders Daniel Opande did the roofing for us. Those schools were working under the

community in Makeni. I started working with the UN. When the Bangladeshi troops entered there I received them in Kono. When the Pakistani troops entered Kono, I was working with them. I brought them to this town and they can attest to that. The two of us entered here with a UN flight to talk to the people so that what they did to the Indians would not be repeated. I was in Kono when the first disarmament started. On that day, I stood with some Paramount Chiefs and we were disarmed. Issa and I were staying together. One night, whilst we were in a meeting, he said the people should not disarm in Kailahun. I said that people had disarmed in all parts of Kono; he wanted Kailahun to have a war agenda. I went to the Pakistanis and told them, (Pakbat 2.); I ordered them to go and deploy in Kailahun. At that time, messages had been sent all over the place. My bothers sent messages to the meeting we held that night and I told them that we would never fight a war. When we entered there, things were ok. Many things happened that were good. I attended the Peace Accord in Nigeria. That statement made my brother to be confused. Obasanjo said that we should wait because we had refused to sign the Peace Accord. At his house, I told him that he did not know what had caused the war in the country. "As I have said here, we must sign the peace accord and we are going to sign it," I told Sankoh. We came and passed through Liberia. On arrival, we were not told to sign any cease fire. When we went to Gibril Massaquoi (we were seven in number) and we entered Monrovia. When the document was brought, he was cross with it but I had to talk to him because our people were suffering. There is one part in that document which says that Sankoh should stay outside the country until he was tired

Sam Bockarie
Issa Sesay
Morrison Kallon

Augustine Gbao. They killed a lot of people, they had the power.

The first thing I witnessed was the incident in which Kini K. Kallon was asked to go and call the SLA soldiers. When he went, they could only see him in Monrovia. He was brought here and I witnessed when they fired him.

I also witnessed when Kennie Kamal was killed.

A group of SLA soldiers came and they said we should fight together. They also said that people had spoken to the Kamajors; they were killed.

The orders were given by the four people. We had the vanguards and those people, we were told, brought the war. We had our radio station here and if you wanted anything to be done in Kailahun, they gave orders. If you failed to do it you will be punished. I use to tell them that all what they were doing was because they were not sensible and that a day would come when they would declare it. When they were doing those bad things, people were afraid of Mosquito. I used to tell them.

When the Indians came they said they wanted my house. I said I had my brother in Freetown, Mana Ngobeh, who was the owner and I would give them his address so that they could bring him here. I gave them the address the people went and brought my brother in a UN flight. The house was handed over to the Indians. The person in whose care the house was was Mana Ngobeh. Mana Ngobeh told them that he would give them the house. They started rehabilitating the house. The Indians came and were occupying the hospital and District Office. They actually came to disarm, but they had development programmes too. Issa Sesay had given instructions to arrest the Kenyans and Zambians in Makeni. Martin George called us at night and told us that he had received orders for these people to be arrested. I said that was not possible. He threw a challenge as to who had power. I used to stay with UN officials for the entire day, but I kept myself away from them on that day. They invited them to that IMC House. As they came, they arrested them. That annoyed me so much, they had guns. All their properties were looted. I used to quarrel with them, not knowing that they were going to be zealous. At 11:45, I was in my room and I heard them going upstairs, I was lying down looking at them. They arrested them all and tied up their hands. They were taken to Ngiehun. They came and looted all their properties. I told my people to move out as they were coming to fight. I told them that UN was not here to fight. At times I bought cigarettes which I sent to them. They had no beds, no clothes and they were just sitting there. The commander was called DWI. They sent one to go for a vehicle. In the

morning, a message came from Makeni that they should gather all the people arrested and take them to Charles Taylor. The Indians started building their own trenches. They were packed like cows in their vehicle and taken to Martin George. As we moved, they were loaded in the vehicle. Alhassan Sesay said the people said we should take those people from Kailahun. I alerted Eric Senesie, late Mayaneh, late Boneh and S.K. Ngobeh. I boarded the vehicle and Eric had a bike; he was afraid and chased them unto the border. I met Issa there. As we met them they asked to go and pack up our luggage. I told him that those commanders that had looted those properties had made a lot of money. I was transferred to Kono because they used to say that I usually gave them hard time there. They rented a house for me from one Mr. Jalloh. I stayed there until the election issue came up. We realised that everybody had changed. I went back to Makeni to pack my luggage to go back to Kailahun. My brother gave me diamonds about 32 pieces. They used to strip us and check us. It was Gbao who did this. I opened my father's grave and put the diamonds there. Sankoh and I went to Freetown. We moved round the schools. Joan Vangerpan brought them there. I later had to give the pieces of diamonds to them. My brother has still not forgiven me for that.

Chairman Bishop Humper: You said Sankoh took you to the Ministry and the Ministry helped you?

Ms. Ngobeh: The ministry tried, they trained the teachers in this town through UNICEF. I only said to the ministry that I wanted to open a project for children and they accepted. If the Commission would like to see the place I will show them there. I want to open a day care primary centre. UN also had given me project proposals. That is the kind of work I am doing now.

Chairman Bishop Humper: When did you get in contact with the RUF rebels?

Ms. Ngobeh: In 1998 in Kenema.

Chairman Bishop Humper: What you have said here is that out of frustration you joined the RUF.

Ms. Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I want to know whether you were aware of the sufferings inflicted on the people before 1998.

Ms Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us what you were doing before 1998?

Ms. Ngobeh: At the time I was moving the children to Daru, a lot of them were injured. They explained to us the kind of suffering they went through at the hands of the rebels?

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Did any of your relatives suffer any violations?

Ms. Ngobeh: We are too many in our family and most of them have died.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from your frustration, can you tell us why you joined the RUF?

Ms. Ngobeh: It was because of the atrocities committed, there was nowhere to go to.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Apart from school what other thing were you engaged in?

Ms. Ngobeh: Journalists used to come from abroad, strangers I used to cook food and entertain them. I was on the humanitarian side. Anything they wanted to do, they had regard for me. The civilians I met in this town were the people that had authority, especially Gbao he was a very wicked man. Anything they requested from the people, they made sure they were handed over.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Can you tell us how your school was financed?

Ms. Ngobeh: We were not paid salaries. Every child who went to school carried 1 cup of rice and 1 pint of palm oil and those were given to the teachers. If the teacher had a farm, the community would work for that teacher. We did not build any schools here. We used to build them in the middle of the bush. In Kono, the Pakistanis built the school for us.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Dedication and wealth took your profession?

Ms. Ngobeh: I dedicated myself to the children.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: From the document from the RUF, they were praising you for what you did.

Ms. Ngobeh

I was not dedicated to the RUF I was dedicated to the children.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Do you know about the operations of the RUF (diamonds in Kono)?

Ms. Ngobeh: They had a mining office in Kono. They had a mining commander. Nobody was allowed to set eyes on diamonds. If you tampered with diamonds they would kill you.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I am interested in the situation of women and girls during the war. Can you tell us about the atrocities caused by the RUF on women?

Ms. Ngobeh: It used to happen before we were here. When we came, we had political parties and they never did it again.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You accepted the RUF? Do you want to tell us that the former VP Demby was responsible for what you suffered?

Ms. Ngobeh: He has made my children not to be educated. I divorced my husband. We met at the Peace Accord and I was not afraid to tell him. I went to talk to him just for him to see me. I again told the President of Nigeria.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You have known Dr Demby and you objected for him to be Chairman. Before you objected was there not something between you and the former Vice President?

Ms. Ngobeh: I was in the same street with Demby. He saw me with those kids and he never gave help but when he noticed that money was coming in, he wanted to be Chairman.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Were you part of the RUF delegation to Nigeria?

Ms. Ngobeh: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: If you had not been fully admitted to the organisation, would they put you in the delegation?

Ms. Ngobeh: RUF noticed the way I worked and because of my popularity with the children recommended me. They said if the team did not comprise of any female representative it would not be complete. I knew where I was coming from and where I was going.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You accepted to be with them for some personal gain?

Ms. Ngobeh: No, this was my home and they said that the war was over. That was why I came here to do my project.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you want to tell me that you will enter into relationship with somebody who is dangerous to you?

Ms. Ngobeh: They used to arrest me and take me to prison. The war was a little bit civilised then and for them to grab somebody to say they would kill him/her would not have been easy.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: If you see thieves and you know that if you join them you will all be punished will you go there?

Ms. Ngobeh: No.

Chairman Bishop Humper: It is important that you have come to us. I will ask you a few questions. In 1996 when Dr Demby was VP, what were the issues raised between both of you?

Ms. Ngobeh: The issues between the VP and myself took place before he became VP.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Did you receive any personal protection from any of these key people in the RUF?

Ms. Ngobeh: When they realised that this area was my area all of them protected me and when they explained the good things I did, he grew to love me so much and developed interest in me. We had no other relationship. The commanders usually said that I was the papay's wife. He proposed love to me, but I refused because he had so many girl friends and I am very jealous.

Chairman Bishop Humper: Are you saying he loved you and the people welcomed you everywhere you went?

Ms. Ngobeh: My people love me so much. If they had not loved me, I would not have been here

Leader of Evidence: You said you opened schools in areas controlled by the RUF. Will it be right to say you believed in the RUF?

Ms. Ngobeh: This is not a matter of belief. I came to my town and I came along with a project.

Leader of Evidence: So all these projects were implemented in RUF controlled areas?

Ms. Ngobeh: I was driven from the place where I first started.

Leader of Evidence: Will it be right to say that you were saying that you are willing to die with the RUF in Mr. Combay's bar? I am talking about last night?

Ms. Ngobeh: RUF has disappointed me already, because the leaders that were left behind could not do anything. If they had not killed and the leaders were mature enough I would have supported them.

Leader of Evidence: What party did you campaign for in the last elections?

Ms. Ngobeh: I did not campaign. My brothers came and told me to leave the RUF party. When election day came my brothers refused to let me vote.

Leader of Evidence: Which of the prominent people in Kailahun joined the RUF and were not members?

Ms. Ngobeh: I have not been attending RUF meetings any more. If I was, I would have known.

Leader of Evidence: We understand that you say you were in RUF because you were a member of the RUF?

Ms. Ngobeh: You cannot say because I was a member of the RUF I am in the party.

Leader of Evidence: You told the Commission that you came to Kailahun because there was a cease fire?

Ms. Ngobeh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Which cease fire were you referring to here?

Ms. Ngobeh: The Lome Peace Accord.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the RUF commander in the North after the Lome Peace Accord?

Ms. Ngobeh: I cannot say much on that because I was in Kailahun.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the commander in the East?

Ms. Ngobeh: Sam Bockarie.

Leader of Evidence: Before the Lome Peace Accord, where were you staying?

Ms. Ngobeh: I was in Kenema.

Leader of Evidence: Can you look at the appointment letter and tell the Commission what date is on it?

Ms. Ngobeh: Yes, 2nd July 1999.

Leader of Evidence: Was the Lome Peace Accord signed by then?

Ms. Ngobeh: 7th July 1999.

Leader of Evidence: Before the Lome Accord, the RUF was rewarding you as Coordinator of Schools for services rendered?

Ms. Ngobeh: When they said everything was over, we went back. When I came to Kenema, I had no way, so I returned.

Leader of Evidence: The war has ended, but you need to say the truth to your people. What led to that? By the time they went to the war front civilian commanders were here and the soldiers molested them. What were civilians doing at the war front if they were not gaining from that?

Ms. Ngobeh: Everybody had his own problem. If you try to hide and you are caught you would be punished.

Leader of Evidence: Do you assume that you were collaborating with the RUF? Because of all what you did you were made a Colonel of the RUF. Is that right?

Ms. Ngobeh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know Patrick Banya?

Ms. Ngobeh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What was the role of Patrick Banya?

Ms. Ngobeh: When I came here I was told that he was the High Court Judge.

Leader of Evidence: Who sewed the robes that Patrick (the red gown and cap) used to wear in court?

Ms. Ngobeh: I did not see Patrick preside over any case here.

Leader of Evidence: Is it true that you took people from Kailahun to Kono to disarm?

Ms. Ngobeh: No, the UN carried me to witness the disarmament.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the Commission what happened to your brother in Kono? Who was responsible for his arrest?

Ms. Ngobeh: I found him in prison. Out here, I took care of him. They wanted to kill him, but they were afraid when they saw me. He was maltreated and he said he wanted to go to his mother. He went to the mother and he died there.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the Commission your relationship with S.N. Ngobeh?

Ms. Ngobeh: He is my brother

Leader of Evidence: Was he not an adviser to Sankoh?

Ms. Ngobeh: He was not an adviser, but he used to talk to them as chiefdom adviser.

Leader of Evidence: Did your brother get close to Sankoh because of your relationship with Sankoh?

Ms. Ngobeh: I met him here in a committee looking after civilians. He was born here. His relationship with the RUF was even more established than mine. They were protecting the civilians.

Leader of Evidence: Was he in the committee working with the Kamajors?

Ms. Ngobeh: I was not here at that time.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have any involvement in the seizure of the NID programme's T-shirts and caps?

Ms. Ngobeh: I was sleeping when they told me that they had brought vaccinators. I went there and asked them their mission and they told me they had been arrested in Segbwema. They gave me his clothes to keep. We went and told mosquito that the fellow was our brother, but he did not listen to us. The following day, we went to Sankoh. They told us that Sankoh had gone to Liberia. When he came, they went and told him that Yawo was in prison. He ordered his release and I was taking care of him until he came back.

Leader of Evidence: Looking at the people, do you think you are ready for reconciliation?

Ms. Ngobeh: I know within my heart that with all this wrong doing in this war, nobody will say I had done anything to him or her.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We do not want to leave this place without you saying what you should say and without doing what you should do. I have a message for you but I want you to give a message to your people for the sake of the children. You did wrongs like all others, but you must acknowledge or accept. We are not forcing you to do so. Your people are just waiting for you to confess and say "I am sorry". As chairman, if I see you miss this opportunity you will never get it again.

Ms. Ngobeh: One thing I want to say is that when the war entered here, you should have come here to see. I fought for my people because my people had no power to do anything. I did not commit any crime. I know that at the end of it all, all will come to light. That was why I kept quiet so that people will praise me and I know that I have not committed any crime.

Chairman Bishop Humper: We thank you for your statement. The Commission will be inviting people who did wrong to make a statement at the slaughter house, but you will not be invited. There will be a group of people who will continue the Commission's work.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KOINADUGU DISTRICT

DATE: 12th May 2003.

OPENING CEREMONY

Commissioners Present

- 1. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones (Presiding)**
- 2. Commissioner Sylvanus Commissioner Torto**

Leaders of Evidence

- 1. Martien Schotsmann**
- 2. Abdulai Charm**

Rev. Osman Fornah(Regional Coordinator, North): Good morning to you all. We want to start this very important ceremony now that the Commission is here in Koinadugu. We want to have an official opening ceremony so that we can launch the hearings in the District. We also want to start by asking the presence of God. We are calling on Elder Santos to lead us in Christian prayers and that will be followed by Sheik Munnir Sesay who will be leading us in Muslim prayers. (Prayers were offered) We will now go to the statements. We want to begin with the First Gentleman of the District, the District Officer or his Representative. If he is not here, we will now get a statement from Rev. Alie Kargbo, Co-Secretary for the Inter-Religious Council, Koinadugu branch.

Rev. Alie Kargbo: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners and all protocols observed, it is with great joy for me to make a statement on behalf of the Koinadugu Branch of the Inter Religious Council, Sierra Leone(IRCSL). The IRCSL right at the beginning of this eleven years war, have been serving as a safe bridge to restore peace in the country and also in the sub-region. The Council fully participated in all negotiations, in and out of the country. Religious leaders prayed, fasted, offered counselling and conducted trauma healing workshops for the restoration of peace and law and order. Today the IRCSL has enhanced the TRC to promote and sustain lasting peace in Sierra Leone. I therefore crave the indulgence of the International Community, traditional rulers, religious leaders and all other Sierra Leoneans to fully cooperate with the TRC and IRCSL maintain this lasting peace in our beloved country, Sierra Leone. I am also calling on the Koinadugu community to support and cooperate with the TRC and the IRCSL. Thank you and may God Bless you.

Rev. Osman Fornah: Thank you very much Rev. Kargbo and the IRCSL. we may now call on Madam Yeabu Mansaray, to make a statement on behalf of the women of Koinadugu.

Madam Yeabu Mansaray: Commissioners and staff of the Commission, Traditional Rulers, Religious Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen good morning. All of us know that when God created the universe, he created man and woman. And as women, we are the ones who are responsible for the multiplication of the human race. During the past ten or more years of conflict, we the women who gave birth to the good and bad children, suffered most. We saw during the war that most times when there was an attack, we the women are abandoned by the men to suffer with the children. Today, we the women of Koinadugu are happy and we heartily welcome and appreciate the coming of the TRC to this District. In order for the TRC to achieve its mandate, we are ready to fully cooperate and work with the TRC. We are going to do this by talking to our children, brothers and sisters, to come and testify to the Commission. We welcome you and we want thank you for the good work you are doing and we wish you success in your endeavours.

Rev. Osman Fornah: Thank you very much Madam Yeabu. I will now like to call on the Resident Paramount Chief, who is the Paramount Chief of Wara Wara Yagala Chieftom, to make a statement.

Paramount Chief: Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen. Koinadugu formally and firmly support the work of the TRC as it is in accordance with wishes and expectations of the majority of this nation. I thank the President, Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabba, Inter Religious Council, Britain, The United Nations and all those who helped in the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone. Koinadugu is one of the Districts most affected with over seventeen attacks on its Headquarter Town, resulting to a lot of atrocities. Sierra Leoneans therefore, deserve to know why and how the war came and how to deal with its consequences and move forward into a reconciled and peaceful nation. I am convinced and confident that the TRC will go a long way to setting the records straight. I thank you all for coming and welcome you all to Koinadugu District and Kabala in particular. I thank you all.

Rev. Osman Fornah: Thank you very much sir. I want to assure that the TRC will live up to expectation and we will not disappoint you and the people of Sierra Leone. We now call on representatives from the two leading political parties in the country. First, I will like to call on Mr.

Sheku Ibrahim Mansaray to make statement on behalf of the All Peoples Congress (APC).

Mr. Sheku Ibrahim Mansaray: Members of the high table and all other protocols observed; I say good morning to you all. The APC is one of the opposition parties and we are working in partnership with the ruling party the SLPP. As we are today to listen to the TRC, we have experienced a lot of sufferings and atrocities, particularly on our children. They country was destroyed and even Koinadugu District was not left untouched. As a responsible political party, we welcome the TRC and we pledge our support and cooperation with the TRC. We welcome you and we thank you for the good work you are doing to bring everlasting peace to Sierra Leone.

Rev. Osman Fornah: It is good to know that the opposition party is in support of the TRC and is working hand hand in hand with the Government to bring about lasting peace. Thank you very much Mr. Mansaray. I now call on the representative of the SLPP, Mr. Mustapha Sesay to make a statement.

Mr. Mustapha Sesay: Good morning everyone. I am happy to stand in front of you today. I say thanks to the APC, the Paramount Chief and to the TRC. I happy for this Commission and especially for coming to Koinadugu District to hold it hearings because they have come to let us understand more about what trnspire during the conflict. I want to wholeheartedly pledge the support of the SLPP in Koinadugu to ensure that the TRC achieve the goal it was created for. I thank you all.

Rev. Osman Fornah: Thank you for the support ou have pledged. The TRC have been working in close collaboration with the NGOs and they have been helping us in diverse ways. I therefore call on a representative from NaCSA to make a statement on behalf of the NGO community, Mr. Phillip Tondoneh.

Mr. Phillip Tondoneh: Good morning all. I take this singular honour to talk on the activities of the NGO community with respect to the TRC. The activities of the NGOs within this District is commendable towards the attainment of peace and reconciliation. Three months ago when the Commissioners came on the first sensitization visit, they met with NaCSA and other related agencies and we collaborated with them and today as I say this stage, it means they've been working very hard. One thing I want to bring to the notice of the Commission is that Koinadugu District is so unique in terms of everything. There are alot of risky groups and NGOs like the NCDDR, have held several workshops on peace promotion and reconciliation. We are happy that you are to see that justice is really step down in this District. The people are not oppertuned with safe drinking water and most of of those who suffered during the, nothing has been done for them. A lot of destruction was done to this District and also there a lot of youths here who participated in the war but they have not gone through the reintegration process. Now that you are here, we believe your presence will have a positive impact on the Distrct. I thank you.

Rev. Osman Fornah: For the those of you who don't know about the workings of the Commission, I will like to tell you that there seven Commissioners; three internationals and four nationals representing the four regions in the country; North, South, East and West. As a result of the contingency of time and taking into consideration the mandated life-span of the Commission, the Commission have been split into two teams so as to be able to cover all the twelve districts in time. As one team is here, the other team is in Kailahun and that is why we are having two Commissioners here at present but the other Commissioner will be joining us tomorrow or there about to make it three. I want to take this opportunity to present to you the two Commissioners that are present in this hall today; the first is the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcu-Jones. Next to her is the Commissioner that is responsible for the Eastern Region and he is Commissioner Sylvanus Torto. Having said this, it pleases me to hand over the microphone to the Deputy Chairperson, who is also the Chairman for this occasion.

Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones: Paramount Chiefs, Religious leaders, Colonel

and other UNAMSIL officers, CPO and other police officers, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen; I bring you all greetings from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As you've been told a while ago, with me here is Commissioner Torto and our Chairman of the Commission is Bishop J. C. Humper and I am his Deputy. We have here with us in this Commission, our staff comprising the secretaries, the Transcriber, the interpreters and we have working with us as well Red Cross and nurses; all together will form the Commission here in Koinadugu where we are going to spend the next five days. I will like to mention also the media, they media have been nice with us and they have been moving around with us. I am asking you to be a little bit patient as I try to explain a little about the TRC because we are quite aware that even though we did sensitization, there are quite a number of people who don't know about the TRC.

This Commission is a child of the Lome Peace Agreement; you will remember that it was after the Lome Peace Agreement that we had peace in Sierra Leone and it was said there that there was to be a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Act setting up the TRC was passed by our Parliament on the 22nd February 2000. The main purpose of the TRC is to bring about peace and reconciliation. Our mandate is to create an impartial, historical account of all the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law during the conflict, from 1991 when the war started to 1999. That means that we are to write down and record all the violations that took place during the conflict. Also we are to address impunity and that means we are to bring to the fore, before people all the atrocities done so that people who committed them cannot just go away without being asked anything at all about their wrongs. We are asked also to respond to needs of victims, to find out what can be done about them and I must make it very clear at the very beginning here that we are not going to give money to those victims; but there will be other recommendations made to help the situations of the victims, to help their communities, to help their children in the future. Also we are asked to bring about healing and reconciliation. After the war, our minds are disturbed through all the sufferings and hardship; and what to do is to bring people together. People who committed wrongdoings and people who suffered; we are to bring about this healing and reconciliation not only on our own but also with the help of religious and traditional leaders. Also we are to prevent the human right violations and abuses experienced by the people of Sierra Leone. We are to try to bring about the situation where the war that took place will never happen again, again in Sierra Leone. The TRC will bring witnesses to tell their stories and when they have recounted all what happened to them, people in Sierra Leone will start talking about all the suffering and the hardship and they will have dialogue amongst themselves and then we hope that as reasonable people, Sierra Leoneans will then decide that never again should we have such a war in Sierra Leone. That is what the TRC is set to do.

The Commissioners were sworn in on the 5th of July 2002 and as the Coordinator told you, there are seven Commissioners. The seven are comprised of four nationals and three internationals. The three internationals; you have one from South Africa because in South Africa, there had been before a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and she [Commissioner Yasmine Sooka] is coming to help us with her experience from the South African TRC. Also we have another Commissioner who is a Canadian and he [Commissioner William Schabas] is skilled in human rights and he will be helping us in that area. And then we have a lady from The Gambia and she [Commissioner Satang Jow] has been a Minister of Education before in her country and she is coming too with her own expertise.

I want to make it clear that this TRC is quite different from the Special Court which I am sure some of you have heard of. The Special Court is here to bring about justice and they will indict just the very important people who've responsible for all the trouble and suffering in the country. Those people they will try, will not be many at all. Those people may be because of their leadership roles in the conflict or they themselves committed atrocities and they will be tried and they will be punished; they may be about 20 or 30. But our Commission, has nothing to do with punishment, we are not going to imprison anyone and I want you to get that clear. All we want is to hear the story, your experiences during the war so that the country will be able to find a path out of all its problems and a path which will lead to lasting peace.

If you have not made a statement before to the TRC and you want to make a statement, you can still do so in this building. There will be statement takers here who will take your statements, even though what we are here for now is for the hearing phase.

There are two teams doing hearings. While we are here now, another team is in Kailahun. When

we finished this week here in Koinadugu, we're back to Freetown to do one week of Institutional and Thematic Hearings; i.e. institutions like the Army, Police or ministries or the SLPP or APC, they will come and make statement to the TRC. After our week in Freetown, we'll come back to the provinces. That is how we are going to operate; one week in the provinces and one week in Freetown. When we leave Koinadugu, we're going to Kenema and then to Moyamba, Kono and Bonthe, that is how we hope to cover all the provinces. Now I will tell about the procedure of the hearing when we shall have come to it proper. When come for the hearing, the hearings are going to be solemn occasions; that is, we do not want any clapping, laughing, booing, we just want you to listen. The witnesses who'll be coming to give their testimonies will be treated with respect; its a victim or a perpetrator. We're going to have public hearings in this same hall; later on today will start with the witnesses and this will go on for Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. But then there will be time when we'll have closed hearing and it will not be open to people. For the closed hearing, we'll be having women and children; people who suffered sexual abuses during the war. We'll listen to those people in private and we'll only do summaries of what the told us in a press briefing for the media because they may want to transmit what is going on for their various bodies. When the witness comes here to give testimony, the witness will take an oath to tell the truth and nothing but the truth and then will give testimony. After that Commissioners here will ask questions if they have any and the Leaders of Evidence, will ask questions too. After all those questions, if the witness has a question or questions for the TRC, the witness will allowed to ask and if the he/she has recommendations to make then he/she will make them. I must tell you that our closing ceremony will take place on Friday but will tell you the time depending on how close the hearings last. After our hearings on Friday, we'll have our closing ceremony and on Saturday, we'll be back on our way to Freetown. I want to thank all of you very much for coming and for being patient and for listening so quietly and I want to appeal to you to be as the hearings progress and help support the work of the TRC. The TRC belongs to all of you and what we all want is lasting peace in this country. We have now come to the end of this ceremony and we will go for one hour break and after that we'll start the hearings proper. Thank you.

WITNESS NO: 001

WITNESS NAME: Mamusu Mansaray

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY:

During the attack in 1999, I was in Forienaya Town. My father and brother were in the house whilst I was behind the house. My father asked me to get some rice for cooking. I was that when the rebels placed me under gun point. My father who was in front of the house, escaped. After I have been placed under gun point. I was raped, I was a virgin at that time, after the rape, they took all our belongings. They asked me to carry their luggage; others were captured alongside with me. They took all of us to Koinadugu. We were chained like slaves, we were taken to their base, upon our arrival, we saw lots of people, and some other girls were also raped.

The Commanders, who captured me were Super Man, Captain Bai Bureh, CO Kai, Capay and OK al right. OK al right took me as his bush wife. I was with them for six months. They looted people's properties and they raped the other girls who were captured. I was shot on my foot and they gave me some medication and I felt a little better. They traveled with us on to Freetown through Jui for the January 6 1999 invasion.

Luckily I met one of my aunts in Freetown, I told her that I wanted to see my parents. I asked her whether my parents were alive. I finally escaped with the help of my aunt. I was with my aunt for few days. After the situation had calmed a bit, I came back to my parents. I was pregnant; during the process of delivery I encountered a lot of problem. The child I gave birth to was a devil child. The child died. When I returned to Koinadugu I was suffered a lot, I then came in contact with a

man and who impregnated me and he abandoned me; living the child with me. I am at present in serious constraint. I was a student in Loma Secondary School, I was in form 2 but I was unable to continue my education. I don't know what to do now. I am staying with my parents in Kabala.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - I thank you for sharing your experience with us, and for coming to help the TRC, to bring lasting peace in Sierra Leone. You say you are a little bit confused about the future. You have a lovely baby sitting on that table. If you are able to stand on your feet, and be your self, you will be able to take care of your child in the future. I am asking the Commissioners if they have any question for you?

Commissioner Torto - Thank you for coming, I believe your ordeal was painful but don't give up. I just want to make a few clarifications. Do you know your attackers?

Mamusu Mansaray - They were Super Man, Captain Bai Bureh, Komba Gundamah, OK al right, CO Kai and Capay.

Commissioner Torto - Do you know where they are?

Mamusu Mansaray - No.

Commissioner Torto - On your way to Freetown were there any other attack? Were other people abducted?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes

Commissioner Torto - What language do they speak?

Mamusu Mansaray - They were speaking in Liberian Pidgin English.

Commissioner Torto - What group did they belong to?

Mamusu Mansaray - They were RUF rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What happened to your house?

Mamusu Mansaray - On our way to Bambukoroh, I found out that my house at Forienaya was burnt.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where there people in the house?

Mamusu Mansaray - I was not around.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Are you the owner of the house?

Mamusu Mansaray - My father owns the house.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where is he now?

Mamusu Mansaray - He is in Forienaya.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - You said that you were a bush wife, what happened to you when you were in the bush?

Mamusu Mansaray - We were there to satisfy their sexual desires.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How did you escape from the bush?

Mamusu Mansaray - I escaped in Freetown with the help of my aunt.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Was your bush husband with you in town?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where is he now?

Mamusu Mansaray - I don't know his whereabouts.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Why were you abandoned by the other man in Kabala?

Mamusu Mansaray - He said that he was not responsible for my pregnancy.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many of you were in the bush?

Mamusu Mansaray - We were about 20 in number.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where is your aunt now?

Mamusu Mansaray - She is in Kono.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Who are you staying with?

Mamusu Mansaray - I am staying with my mother and father here in Kabala.

Marcus Hones - Have you made any effort to enroll in any institution?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes I did attempt once at CES.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What was the result?

Mamusu Mansaray - I was trained in Gara Tie dyeing.

Marcush Jones - Why can't you pursue in that trade?

Mamusu Mansaray - I don't have the capital. We were given a loan after the training.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What did you do with the money?

Mamusu Mansaray - I was pregnant by then, after the process, I later credited the Gara, but people refused to pay the money.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you paid back the loan?

Mamusu Mansaray - I have paid some of the loan, and we were told to form a group to continue the Gara Dyeing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - That's good. I cannot understand why you said you were worried, having formed this group and you have your parents with you, you can continue with it to sustain your child. You can live without a man.

Leader of Evidence - I am very sorry for the sufferings. How long have you been with the rebels?

Mamusu Mansaray - I spent one year five months.

Leader of Evidence - I can understand that you were in Koinadugu camp, why then did you go to Freetown?

Mamusu Mansaray - I spent six months in Koinadugu and then I was taken to Freetown.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell us how it was like when you were in the bush as a bush wife?

Mamusu Mansaray - I was not comfortable. I was always worried about my life and that of my parents.

Leader of Evidence - Were you beaten when you were in the bush?

Mamusu Mansaray - We were always punished when we refused to have intercourse with them.

Leader of Evidence - How many of them did you marry to?

Mamusu Mansaray - Only by one man.

Leader of Evidence - You sustained injury, was it during the fight?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Which other group was your captors engaged in battle with?

Mamusu Mansaray - I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence - Was it a group of RUF, SLA, Kamajors, Donsos or ECOMOG.

Mamusu Mansaray - I cannot tell, it was a matter of survival.

Leader of Evidence - What happened to the other girls that were abducted with you?

Mamusu Mansaray - Some were killed. Others had their feet amputated.

Leader of Evidence - Where the other girls taken as bush wives?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - How big was the rebel group?

Mamusu Mansaray - It was a very large group.

Leader of Evidence - Were young boys and girls involved in the fighting?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Did you join the rebels when they go on attacks?

Mamusu Mansaray - We were always in the camp, when the rebels went on the offensive.

Leader of Evidence - Were children among the group?

Mamusu Mansaray - They were all adults.

Leader of Evidence - Were there women amongst the rebels?

Mamusu Mansaray - There were no women.

Leader of Evidence - Were they taking drugs?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes it was obvious as it gives them the zeal to commit atrocities.

Leader of Evidence - After taking drugs what did they do?

Mamusu Mansaray - They did harmful things like - killing, raping and looting.

Leader of Evidence - Did you witness all these?

Mamusu Mansaray - Yes, I witnessed these atrocities when we were in Freetown.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell us your present situation?

Mamusu Mansaray - I have pains all over my body and in my vagina.

Leader of Evidence - Did you seek medical attention?

Mamusu Mansaray - No I was taken care of by my parents at home.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What do you mean that your child was a devil child?

Mamusu Mansaray - The way the child was formed, she had lumps all over her head. I was afraid after giving birth to the child, and asked that they take her away from me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Did a Doctor examine the child?

Mamusu Mansaray - She died after birth.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - There was no one to tell you the reasons for the lumps all over her body.

Mamusu Mansaray - Somebody told me that it was because I was in the bush.

Commissioner Torto - You said that your bush husband, Gundama was a foreigner, what other languages were they speaking.

Mamusu Mansaray - They all spoke Liberian dialect.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Do you have any question for the commission?

Mamusu Mansaray - I am asking for help from the government or from any kind Sierra Leonean. I suffered during the war, I am appealing for help to further my education, and also for my house to be rehabilitated.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Mamusu Mansaray now that you've formed this group, you should try to pay back your loan, and if you wish, you may contact NacSA, and they could refer you to a group that may help you. We are going to include your questions in our record. Have you any recommendation to make to the government?

Mamusu Mansaray - I have said it all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you very much for coming, you are much brave to come out and tell your story, people are listening, and they have heard your story.

WITNESS NO: 002

WITNESS NAME: Foday Jawara

The witness was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

In 1994 when the rebels attacked Kabala. I was in bed sleeping, they knocked at the door and asked us to open the door. We were asked to come outside. They threatened to burn my house. My younger sister was there with me, the commando was a Kono. So they spoke in Kono. She was pleading to them that they must not burn our house; she told them that she has lost her husband and that she has so many children. Later one commander, by the name of Squirrel, took my valise; emptied the contents on the mattress and poured petrol and burnt them. At that time we were sitting at the verandah with my aunt and her husband.

Squirrel placed a gun on my sisters' shoulder and shot at her, she fell down half-naked. Now she is deaf. A woman gave her her wrapper to cover herself and the commander ordered us to leave but we should not use the Makeni Highway. He advised that we used the swamp road, as the main road was not safe. At about that time, the Commander saw a small girl standing and he asked "whose child she is?" The woman he was talking to, claimed ownership of the child. He said that the woman was going to be her wife. But the mother of the girl pleaded that she was the one taking care of the domestic work in the house and she is the only daughter to her mother, the rebel said if they refused to let go of the girl he would kill them. He then took Le6,000 and one torch light as a dowry for the girl. He is taking her with him, and promised that nothing will happen to her. He gave the money to the sister of the girl. When they left us, we went as far as Makakura and then to Kamayimbo. That was on the third day. My aunt had the sum of Le1,000,000 which she had wanted to take to her daughter in Freetown, the money was in the house

and everything was burnt down.

After my daughter had traveled for some distant, she realized that she had not seen her brother, so she came back to collect her younger brother. After that we all went to the Imam it was at night. By the time we came back home it was already daylight.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. We are sorry that you have suffered so much. We are going to ask you a few questions. You said the rebels burnt your house. Who owned the house?

Foday Jawara - I owned houses which were burnt.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Who owned the Le1, 000,000 that was missing?

Foday Jawara - My aunt, she is presently in the house. She is suffering from deafness. It was as a result of gunshots.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where are you living now?

Foday Jawara - I am in Kabala, I managed some burnt zinc to restructure my house.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Do you know Squirrel's real name?

Foday Jawara - I can't tell his real name. He is called Squirrel and he is a born of Kabala.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where is he now?

Foday Jawara - I heard that he is dead.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - So you've never seen him since after the war?

Foday Jawara - I don't know his whereabouts.

Commissioner Torto - Thank you for coming, I want you to clarify some issues both in your verbal and written statements. Do you actually know the names of your attackers although you were attacked at night?

Foday Jawara - I cannot tell their names, it was at night.

Commissioner Torto - Does the name Sgt. Musa means anything to you?

Foday Jawara - Not Sgt. Musa alone, they were many.

Commissioner Torto - Was Sgt. Musa the group leader?

Foday Jawara - I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto - Your sister was raped before you or did she report the matter to you?

Foday Jawara - I was informed.

Commissioner Torto - Did she receive any treatment?

Foday Jawara - There was no hospital at the time.

Commissioner Torto - I mean now.

Foday Jawara - After the war we took her to the hospital, and she is gradually responding to treatment.

Commissioner Torto - Can you identify the fighting group that attacked you, Kamajors, Donsu, ECOMOG, CDF, RUF etc.

Commissioner Torto - We have heard testimonies from people who were able to recognize their attackers.

Foday Jawara - It was in 1994. I don't know them, they spoke Kono.

Commissioner Torto - Thank you.

Leader of Evidence - When the rebels attacked Kabala, was there any Government force?

Foday Foday Jawara - The CDF was around.

Leader of Evidence - Which particular CDF group was around?

Foday Jawara - The Tamaborroh was around.

Leader of Evidence - You mentioned one man Dembaso who was the head of the group, where is he now?

Foday Jawara - He was killed.

Leader of Evidence - We heard that Kabala was attacked 17 times, was it during one of those attacks that he was killed?

Foday Jawara - He was killed in 1994.

Leader of Evidence - You said that Squirrel is from Kabala, have you known him before this incident?

Foday Jawara - I know the family of Squirrel very well but he had changed his name; everybody was calling him Squirrel in this Town.

Leader of Evidence - Has there been any quarrel between your family and Squirrel's family?

Foday Jawara - No, there was no quarrel between us.

Leader of Evidence - Have you met with his family after the war to explain this?

Foday Jawara - When I met them they said that Squirrel was a rebel, they don't have any business with him, they have disowned him.

Leader of Evidence - You said that they paid dowry of Le6,000 for your sister, how long was she with them?

Foday Jawara - She never went with them. She was with them for a short time, after which she was released. She came home crying.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We've been asking you a number of questions, do you have any question to ask the commission?

Foday Jawara - I am now an old man, my house had been burnt down, I have so many children, therefore I need some assistance from the government.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many children have you?

Foday Jawara - I have sixteen children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - I am talking about your own children.

Foday Jawara - I have sixteen children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Born by your wife or wives?

Foday Jawara - I have three wives.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many of them are grown ups?

Foday Jawara - I am an old man now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many of them are adults, who are now working and are not school going children?

Foday Jawara - Some of them are still going to school, some are married.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many are married and how many are going to school?

Foday Jawara - Five are married, Six of them are going to school.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What about the remaining five?

Foday Jawara - They are very small.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - As we have told you before, TRC does not give money to victims, but your recommendations will be included in our report, and victims will be able to benefit in the future. Do you have any recommendations to make to the Commission?

Foday Jawara - What I am saying is that I need help, I am an old man, my houses were all burnt down. I have no strength to rebuild my life.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We are very sorry for the elderly people and all those that have suffered in the war. By October we would have finished our report, and you will be able to benefit from whatever recommendations are made. I advised that you asked the older children to help with the burden of the younger ones. I thank you.

WITNESS NO: 003

WITNESS NAME: Hawa Marrah

The witness was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

I was attending School here in Kabala, when I was captured. When they attacked, my mother gave me all her money. We ran into the bush, where we all separated, it was raining. The rebels met us and put us under gun point. And they asked that someone amongst us follow them to

carry their loads, since there were so many old women, and I was the youngest, I was chosen. I got up and carried their load. They took us to Bilmaia and detained us in a room for two days. Later we were released and taken to Koinadugu and after which we went to their base in Kono through Kurubonla. Whilst we were in the camp they usually leave us behind when they go out on attacks. They normally brought food for us to eat which were mostly not good. They brought yam, raw banana etc.. We were there for sometime and my aunts who were also abducted told me that my people were anxious to see me. The rebel I was with, said that he is not going to release me and he is taking me to where he came from. My aunt pleaded on my behalf. One of them said that instead of arguing they should kill me. My aunt said that they should have patience with me. A boy was killed, after his death I eventually escaped to Kono. I was collected by my parents, and taken to Freetown feeling sick and I was admitted, after the admission, I finally returned to Kabala.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - I thank you very much for coming. The commissioners will ask you some questions.

Commissioner Torto - Who was your actual captor?

Hawa Marah - He was a Liberian, called CO Kai.

Commissioner Torto -Where you the only one captured?

Hawa Marah- We were in a group.

Commissioner Torto - During the time you were captured, did they kill or injure people?

Hawa Marah - I can't tell because I was small.

Commissioner Torto - Do you have a child for your bush husband?

Hawa Marah - Yes, look at him.

Commissioner Torto - Has he attempted to look out for you?

Hawa Marah - He is dead.

Commissioner Torto - How do you know?

Hawa Marah - I was around when they left for an attack but he was killed.

Commissioner Torto - Can you tell the fighting group that killed him?

Hawa Marah - No, I don't know the group. I was very small.

Commissioner Torto - Can you identify your attackers? Were they RUF,SLA, or Kamajors, which of them?

Hawa Marah - It was Superman's group.

Commissioner Torto - Did you really see Super Man.

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - I have few questions for you. How long did you spent with the rebels in the bush?

Hawa Marah - I was captured during the five days attack and I was with them for about four months.

Leader of Evidence - After the three months. What happened?

Hawa Marah - I was twelve years old.

Leader of Evidence - How old are you now?

Hawa Marah - I am twenty years old.

Leader of Evidence - In what year were you captured?

Hawa Marah - I cannot recall.

Leader of Evidence - How many people were abducted with you during the attack?

Hawa Marah - They were very large.

Leader of Evidence - Were there other girls of your age?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - What happened to the other girls who were captured?

Hawa Marah -We were in the same camp with their bush husbands.

Leader of Evidence - Where are they now?

Hawa Marah - They are now in Kono.

Leader of Evidence - Didn't they all come back from Kono?

Hawa Marah - I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence - What was your daily life like as a bush wife to the rebels?

Hawa Marah - I used to prepare their food.

Leader of Evidence - Did you join them when they went on attacks?

Hawa Marah - No.

Leader of Evidence - Were other abducted children trained to fight?

Hawa Marah - No, there were no training going on in the camp.

Leader of Evidence - Were there adults in the group?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence -Were there young boys and girls among the rebels?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Were they all involved in combat?

Hawa Marah - I cannot tell because we were left behind in the camp.

Leader of Evidence - Were there men and women in the group?

Hawa Marah - There was a mixture of men and women.

Leader of Evidence - How were you treated?

Hawa Marah - I was not treated badly.

Leader of Evidence - Were you beaten by other rebels apart from your bush husband?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Why did they beat you?

Hawa Marah - At times when we were sent for food and didn't come back early we were beaten.

Leader of Evidence - Did they use drugs?

Hawa Marah - I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence - You said you were a bush wife to one of the rebels, what was his name?

Hawa Marah - Kailondo.

Leader of Evidence - He got killed after the fight?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Who is Col Issa?

Hawa Marah - I don't know much about him.

Leader of Evidence - But you mentioned his name in your written statement.

Hawa Marah - I overheard his name, but I did not see him.

Leader of Evidence - Did you sustain injuries whilst you were in the bush. How is your health now?

Hawa Marah - Yes. I felt pain all over my side, I am suffering from cold.

Leader of Evidence - Have you seek medical attention when you came back?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Where are you staying, is it with your family?

Hawa Marah - Yes, I am staying with my family.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We have been asking you questions, do you have any questions for the commission.

Hawa Marah - I want the Commission to help me with capital because I wanted to start business so that I would be able to take care of my child.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - The Commission is referring you to NaCSA for assistance. Have you any recommendation for the Commission, that can be included in its report?

Hawa Marah - I would like the Commission to create job facilities, and to build schools for my community.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - When you said job facilities are you thinking particularly of women?

Hawa Marah - Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Do you have any other question?

Hawa Marah - No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - I thank you very much for coming and I hope you will be able to take care of your child.

WITNESS NO: OO4

WITNESS NAME: Jeremaiah Kamara

The witness was sworn on oath by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

At about 5 in the evening, we heard firing all over the town, at that time I have never heard about rebels. We got up; my mother, brother and I went into the house and shut the door. The firing was heavy and it continued until night. At about 12 to 1a.m we heard somebody knocking at our door. My mother started crying that we are going to be killed. I attempted to open but before I could open the door somebody kicked the door and we were ordered to come outside. My mother, nephew, my child and I came out and all our belongings were looted. One of them said that they are going to burn our house. They did set the house on fire. One of them tied and started flogging me with sticks, my mother was crying. He later untied me and I helped them to carry their luggage. On our way going I met a woman by the name of Adama, who was killed but I couldn't say anything because the rebel was pushing me. We went to Koinadugu and spent two days, after which they started to complain that they are hungry. I was sent to fetch water, and I took the opportunity to escape. On my way I met another set of rebels who ordered me to dig a grave. However, their attention was diverted when they heard that Government troops were around. So I escaped. I was worried of my mother and children. I went in search of them and I finally met them at Yataya.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How did you manage to escape?

Jeremaiah Kamara - After I have been given the shovel to dig, when they were informed of

the presence of government troops, I escaped.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you seen Captain Marah?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Since I escaped I haven't set eyes on him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones -What about Sergeant Musa, have you heard about him?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I understood he's dead.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What language did they spoke?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They spoke Mende, Temne and Limba.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What were the looted items you carried?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I carried tapes, rice and other items.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Do you know were they got those looted items from?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They collected some from my house before setting the house on fire and some from other houses.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where were these people killed and who were they?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I saw dead bodies, but I don't know who killed them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many of them, were there men or women?

Jeremaiah Kamara - One woman was among them but majority were men.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Did you dug the grave yourself?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Yes, but when they escaped, I fled.

Commissioner Torto - My questions are coming from both your statement and your verbal testimony. Marah was a very popular man. Did you happen to know him before?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I heard about him but I have not met him.

Commissioner Torto - Have you been in touch with him?

Jeremaiah Kamara - No.

Commissioner Torto - What part of Kono did you carry the items to?

Jeremaiah Kamara - We were heading for Kono. I have never been to Kono, so I cannot describe the names of the villages, but we met another group.

Commissioner Torto - Sgt. Musa and Captain Marah were the leaders of your attackers?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - Why didn't you escape when you were sent to fetch water?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I was always given an escort to guard me.

Commissioner Torto - If you see Marah and Musa would you be able to identify them?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I can identify Musa but I cannot identify Marah.

Commissioner Torto - Did you escape before they went to Kono?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I escaped after two days.

Commissioner Torto - Which means you did not go to Kono?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - According to your written statement you mentioned RUF, then you are now talking about Sgt Musa and Marah. Can you clarify that?

Jeremaiah Kamara - The reasons being that they had red cloth round their heads.

Commissioner Torto - So it was only Sgt. Musa's group that tied red cloth?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - You came across a group with white?

Jeremaiah Kamara - No.

Commissioner Torto - After the attack, what are you doing now?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I am a farmer.

Leader of Evidence - You mentioned one Mr Momoh Sesay, who is he? Did anything happened to him?

Jeremaiah Kamara - We came from the same village, we were captured together but he escaped.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell whether other people were killed in that attack?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I only saw the corpse of Adama, it was late in the night, and I was carrying heavy load.

Leader of Evidence - In reaction to the Deputy Chairman's question, you said you were digging graves, where was that?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I cannot tell the name of the village.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell the number of people captured.

Jeremaiah Kamara - We were over 15.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell whether the group was a composition of boys and girls?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Yes, it was a mixture of men and women but majority were men.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell what happened to girls that were captured?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They took them as bush wives.

Leader of Evidence - Did you witness such?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They deflowered a child in front of me.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell me the age of that child?

Jeremaiah Kamara - She was about 10 years old.

Leader of Evidence - What about the boys? Can you tell their ages?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They were about 10 to 15 years.

Leader of Evidence - Where other towns attacked?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They burnt down villages and towns as they moved along.

Leader of Evidence - Do you know whether they were under the influence of anything?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They were smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol.

Leader of Evidence - Were these drugs given to the captors?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Some of the girls did prepare these drugs for them.

Leader of Evidence - Were they willing to take the drugs?

Jeremaiah Kamara - They were forced to take the drugs.

Leader of Evidence - The boys who were abducted, did they give them drugs when they wanted to go on an attack?

Jeremaiah Kamara - Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We have asked you a number of questions, have you any questions for the Commission?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I want them to rebuild my house and to educate my children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Actually when we asked for questions we are not asking for what you want, we want to know about your view about the Commission's mandate may be when it comes to recommendations, you would tell what you would like for your community.

Jeremaiah Kamara - My only question is whether they would create job opportunity for our community.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - That is a good question. A number of people are just lying around practically doing nothing. We'll recommend that something should be done about your community to make it more vibrant, and the people more active with jobs. We will include that in our report. As a Commission I would not be able to say we can provide such. If people want jobs, we will look around for NGOs. Have you any recommendations?

Jeremaiah Kamara - I take what you said to start as one, e.g you have mentioned that you

would like Government to create job facilities, and build schools for our community.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - I thank you very much for coming, we hope that your testimony would create a lot of dialogue for people here present. I thank you.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KOINADUGU DISTRICT (DAY 2)

DATE: 13TH May 2003

**Commissioners Present
Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto**

**Leaders of Evidence
Martien Schotsmann
Abdulai Charm**

WITNESS NO: OO5

WITNESS NAME: Kadiatu Sawaneh

CHRISTIAN PRAYER: Rev. J. S. Fornah

MUSLIM PRAYER: The Al fatia was generally offered.

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Slyvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

I was with my grandmother, assisting her with her farm work when I was captured by the rebels. I tried to escape but I was recaptured and they shot my right hand and inscribed RUF on my chest. They traveled with us at night so that we could not identify the routes we passed through. Things were difficult and food was hard to get. We were taken to Makeni but I tried to escape to come to my mother who was almost mad because of me. They killed my uncle and my father's house and grandfather's houses and properties were destroyed.

My captor said that I could not sit without being married so he became my bush husband. He latter went to Kono and left me in Makeni. I entered into a relationship with a young man who left because I refused to have a child for him. Later, I met another man, whom I had this child for. I had wanted to come to my parent but I was afraid that people would accuse me of being a spy because of the RUF inscription. I was with them until when the disarmament started but they didn't give me a gun because I was not married to one of them. One day I met a man who took me to Magburaka to disarm but the Commander who trained me was dead. That is my story.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much are you Kadie Kadiatu Sawaneh.

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: This is a pathetic story you have explained, I don't know how far down the RUF marked you on your chest because we don't want to strip you.

Kadiatu Sawaneh : (Then shows mark on chest)

Commissioner Torto: Is it visible enough?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes it is.

Commissioner Torto: Can you identify the man who marked you on your chest?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: I don't know the man because they were plenty in number.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you come forward for the Commissioners to see the inscription on your chest? (Shows inscription to Commissioners)

Commissioner Torto: Who shot you?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : The rebels.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know the person who shot you?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : No

Commissioner Torto: What group did your captors belong to?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : RUF

Commissioner Torto: During your captivity were you engaged in any fighting?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : No

Commissioner Torto: Have you been disarmed? Did you benefit out of the Disarmament process?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : Yes, I was given Le150, 000.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What of your husband, where is he at present?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: He is here in Kabala with me.

Commissioner Torto: Are you staying together?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Is he RUF?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No, he is a civilian.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are sorry for what happened to you. You sound as someone with hope and ready to continue with life. How many men were you a bush wife to?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : Only one man. I was raped but I was not married to any of them in the bush.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where were you married?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : In Makeni

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: By one of the men who captured you?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : Yes

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where you raped a number of times?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many times were you raped?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Four times.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where you raped by different men?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Only one man.

Commissioner Torto: Kumba Gbudema, Mohamed. What do they remind you of?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: We were living together.

Commissioner Torto: What languages were they speaking?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Mende.

Leader of Evidence: I am sorry for what happened to you. Can you tell how long you stayed with your captors?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: I stayed with them for 4 years.

Leader of Evidence: Did you try to escape and what happened?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes, I tried to escape but I was recaptured.

Leader of Evidence: How old were you at the time the rebels captured you?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: I was small and my breast was not fully developed.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell the name of the rebel who took you as a bush wife?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: His name was Mohamed.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell where he is at present?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Where other girls captured and treated in the same way you were treated?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes, I met them there.

Leader of Evidence: Were they also bush wives?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Have you seen any of the girls since you left the bush?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned that your uncle was also killed, what was the name of your uncle?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Amadu Kamara.

Leader of Evidence: Where other people killed?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: My grandfather.

Leader of Evidence: What was his name?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Mohamed Kamara.

Leader of Evidence: Were there other people killed in your family?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes, my younger Sister Temeh Sesay.

Leader of Evidence: Who is Ibrahim Sesay?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: My uncle.

Leader of Evidence: So two of your uncles were killed?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did they kill other people apart from members of your family.

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No

Leader of Evidence: Did they abduct other people from your village?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Those who were abducted, did they come back?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Some of them came back.

Leader of Evidence: In the bush, where there also captured young boys and girls?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did the boys receive military training?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did the boys go out to attack villages.

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did the boys do it voluntarily or were they conscripted?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: They did not doing it voluntarily they were forced to join.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels use drugs?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Plenty.

Leader of Evidence: What type of drugs did they use?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Cigarette, marijuana palm wine, man pekin.

Leader of Evidence: Did they give it to the young boys and girls?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did they give it to all the boys and girls who were captured or only to those who go fighting with them.

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Only those who went to fight with them.

Leader of Evidence: Those who went to fight with them, did they use guns?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No.

Leader of Evidence: The rebel Commanders where they adults or young people?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: They were adults.

Leader of Evidence: Where they men and women?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: There were also women with them.

Commissioner Torto: During your four years of captivity did they ever tell you what they were fighting for?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No.

Commissioner Torto: Did they mention who sent them to fight?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: No

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any question for the Commission?

Kadiatu Sawaneh: Yes, did you bring me here for good or bad.

Commissioner Torto: The Commission cares about you and wants to know what happened to you and those who did it and why they did it. After the hearings, the Commission will make recommendations to government based on what you have suggested. So that is why you are here.

Kadiatu Sawaneh : My house was burnt, the house of my father was burnt they can not rehabilitate my house and give me back all that I have lost. I want them to assist me.

Commissioner Torto: What you went through is not strange. It happened all over the country. In any case, our leaders of evidence could talk to you and give you advice as to how you may be able to access the micro-credit loan. We are here to ensure that what happened to you is forestalled. Your appearance before this Commission is not a waste of time.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation to make to the government?

Kadiatu Sawaneh : I have learnt a job, soap making but there is no material to continue so I will want government to assist me with capital and materials.

Commissioner Torto: Our staff will help you with technical advice. Thank you very much for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Mohamed Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 006

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Slyvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY:

I was in the farm one day when one woman ran to tell me that the rebels had attacked. I decided to go to town. As I got closer to the town, they followed us. We ran deeper into the bush to hide. One day I was going to our hiding place in the bush from town, when I heard gun shot and I fell on the ground. A small boy called "Small Pepper", came to me and said that I should go to Tejan Kabah for treatment. At about that time, my wife was carrying our four weeks old child. As I lie on the ground, I heard the crying of a child but it was raining. After a while the crying stopped and my wife who had earlier been captured came to me and informed me that she met our child lying dead. She then left me to go to town, so that she would inform my relatives. In the evening she

came with my brother and they took me to another place. I was there for two weeks and my body has started to rot. The highway to Kabala and Freetown was not safe. So we used a bye pass and walked on foot to Kabala where I was treated. Later I was taken to my village and I built a hut for me and my family. However things are difficult with me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for coming. Your appearance here is not a waste of time. Do you know the group who attacked you?

Mohamed Mansaray : Actually when they attacked the village, we ran away and the rebels chased us. When they hit me with a gun, I fell down. I can 't tell.

Commissioner Torto: What was the name of the small boy?

Mohamed Mansaray : "Small Pepper."

Commissioner Torto: Do you know what fighting group they belonged to?

Mohamed Mansaray : They belonged to Superman's group.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know under what circumstances your baby was killed?

Mohamed Mansaray : No.

Commissioner Torto: So your wife just met the child dead.

Mohamed Mansaray : They threw the child away and then took the mother away.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: There are certain points I would like to rectify. Who was the person who saved you and took you away when you were lying on the ground wounded?

Mohamed Mansaray : At that time there was no body.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you get back to your house when you find out you child was dead.

Mohamed Mansaray : I was lying down on the ground when my wife told me that they have killed my son

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is your wife at present?

Mohamed Mansaray : She is at home

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did your wife tell you about her experience when she was captured.

Mohamed Mansaray : She was raped, that was what she told me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did she tell you how she managed to escape?

Mohamed Mansaray : According to her, she was able to escape at night.

Leader of Evidence : Before the attack, you mentioned that you were living in your farm house why were you living in your farm instead of the village?

Mohamed Mansaray : It was almost harvest time so I had to stay in the farm house to tend to the farm. By the time I got the news, it was difficult for me to go to the village.

Leader of Evidence : Was it the same time they attacked you in the farm that they attacked the village?

Mohamed Mansaray : Somebody ran to tell me in the farm that the village had been attacked.

Leader of Evidence : Did anything happen to your house in the village?

Mohamed Mansaray : The town was completely destroyed.

Commissioner Torto. Do you have any question for the Commission?

Mohamed Mansaray : I have nothing to say. I want to believe, I am in this condition because of the government if I had my way you would not believe in Kabala when you go to Freetown. I want to go to Freetown to talk to the government.

Commissioner Torto: We understand how you feel but the Commission do not have the mandate/resources to do as you wish. If we had, we would have perform wonders in order to assist you. I will recommend that you speak to the Government representatives in the persons of the District Officer, Police Personnel (CPO) through you can convey messages through that means. Yesterday the District Chairman of SLPP was here, I suggest you try to contact him. Technical advice would only be given by our personnel. Do you have any other question?

Mohamed Mansaray : Now that I am in Kabala, I did not know that the TRC was here, I have no house and I'm staying with friends. I want to go back to the village. What can the Commission do for me?

Commissioner Torto: Do not think that it is your fault that you are in this condition. It happened all over the country. If you need help there are NGOs that can help you. Don't think that you are finished on earth. Thank you very much for coming.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation to make that we can pass on to the Government?

Mohamed Mansaray : I would like our houses to be rehabilitated; I am at present a beggar.

Commissioner Torto: However your recommendation will be included in our report.

WITNESS NAME: Feremusu Janneh

WITNESS NO: 007

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Slyvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

The rebels met me in the bush and I was captured and raped. I was then taken to another village where I was tied up and striped naked and they raped me again. They took us to Kamadu Sokuralla. They had wanted to give us guns but we refused, since we've not used to it. They raped us frequently and we were threatened that if we attempted to escape, we'll be killed.

One day rebels from Koinadugu came and asked us about our captors. We were told that they've gone out to find food. One of the rebels called George Bucher, came to me and took me inside a room where he raped me. They went out and captured more people and looted properties from

our village and other villages. My father also was given serious beatings. We were able to escape under a heavy down pour of rain. When we came to our village, I was naked. As my father was coming for me, he was captured and beaten. However, we eventually came to Kabala.

Commissioner Torto: Who actually was your bush husband?

Feremusu Janneh: George Bucher.

Commissioner Torto: How old were you when you were captured by the rebels?

Feremusu Janneh: I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto: You said in your first statement that Tee boy raped you and another called Bucher?

Feremusu Janneh: No, it was only Bucher.

Commissioner Torto: When you were in the bush did the rebels made mention of who sent them?

Feremusu Janneh: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know the group that captured you?

Feremusu Janneh: They were RUF but they had no central command. They were on their own.

Commissioner Torto: In your statement, you said you were raped three times a day. Is that true?

Feremusu Janneh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: If you see them now can you remember them?

Feremusu Janneh: The man who captured me, if I see him I can remember him.

Commissioner Torto: After having done this to you and you heard that the man is dead what will you do?

Feremusu Janneh: I will dance.

Commissioner Torto: Did you dance when you heard that Bucher was killed.

Feremusu Janneh: I have not heard about his death.

Commissioner Torto: What happened to the other abductees?

Feremusu Janneh: I don't know.

Commissioner Torto: And you have not seen them since?

Feremusu Janneh: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for sharing your experience with us. Have you any child as the result of what happened to you?

Feremusu Janneh: No.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: What is the state of your health now?

Feremusu Janneh: I have pains in stomach.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you been able to see a doctor?

Feremusu Janneh: Yes but there is no money for proper treatment.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you reported to any NGO?

Feremusu Janneh: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well after your testimony you will talk to some of our staff and they will be able to direct you to people that will help you.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How are you living? Do you do any trade?

Feremusu Janneh: I go in search of firewood and sell.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: It is good you are doing something.

Commissioner Torto: Are you desirous to learn any trade?

Feremusu Janneh: I want to learn gara tie dyeing.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you for your experience I am very sorry for what happened to you. You mentioned that you were captured with your friend, what happened to her?

Feremusu Janneh: She was also raped.

Leader of Evidence: During the attack where there other people killed?

Feremusu Janneh: No.

Leader of Evidence: In your statement you said you were 12years at the time of the attack, do you know your age now?

Feremusu Janneh: I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: Are you married now?

Feremusu Janneh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any question to ask?

Feremusu Janneh: What you will do for me so that I will have peace of mind?

Commissioner Torto: The purpose of the Commission is for people like you. We want to know what they did to you and if you know the names of the people that did all that to you.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation for the government?

Feremusu Janneh: I want my house to be rehabilitated, and my husband is an old man he has nothing.

Commissioner Torto: what is the health of you father now.

Feremusu Janneh: He is sick.

Commissioner Torto: Any other recommendation.

Feremusu Janneh: No, that is all I have.

Commissioner Torto: I want to assure you that what you have said will form part of our recommendation to the government. Thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Fatmata Kamara

WITNESS NO: 008

The witness was sworn on oath the Bible by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Slyvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY:

One day at about 3-4p.m., we heard that the rebels were five miles away from the place we were. Little did I know that they were in town. We were parking our utensils and my sister left to ease her self, unfortunately she saw them and a shot was fired which was a signal calling the others. They were all over and I was captured. They asked who owned the house. They ask for the house owner I told them that they have gone to the farm. They captured us but I was carrying my child on my back. I pleaded with them since I was a suckling mother. My child was taken and sent in front. The commander took my clothes off and dragged me with only my pants on.

They took us to a junction and returned to the village where they looted and burnt houses. I didn't see my suckling child until after 3days. The rebels later took me to a farm where my child was, but the child was week and it collapsed.

I later became pregnant and I fell sick. They usually sent us out to search for food and if you refused, you will be beaten. One day whilst we were out searching for food, I told my sister who was with me to hold my child since my head was reeling. We decided to escape; when we noticed that our companions were not looking. We hid for three days in the bush. When they went to attack a nearby village, they didn't see us. My sister wanted to fetch water, so she gave me my child. However, a stray bullet caught her and she died. I left the area and traveled through the foot path to a village, where I met a man who applied some medicine on me and assured me that I was safe to go any where. When I eventually reached my house, I met everything destroyed and burnt. I later found my husband and my parents in the farm. My husband had erected a hut where we stayed, and we engaged in gardening.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Fatmata, thank God you survive to tell the story I am very sorry for the loss of your sister. The man who actually slept with you did you know him?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes.

Commissioner Torto: His name.

Fatmata Kamara : His name was blood.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know him before the incident?

Fatmata Kamara : No.

Commissioner Torto: What happened to the child after all the problem. Is she still alive?

Fatmata Kamara : She is still alive because she was taken to the hospital and she was given native medicine.

Commissioner Torto: Blood and savage are they the same people or they are two different people?

Fatmata Kamara : Blood was in savage's group.

Commissioner Torto: The group that arrested you, what fighting group did they belong to?

Fatmata Kamara : They were RUF.

Commissioner Torto: Where is your father now?

Fatmata Kamara : My father was killed by the rebel and my mother is also dead

Commissioner Torto: What are you doing now?

Fatmata Kamara : I am a gardener.

Commissioner Torto: Would you like to do any thing?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes if there is the opportunity.

Commissioner Torto: Where is your husband?

Fatmata Kamara : He is here with me.

Commissioner Torto: Are you staying together?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes.

Commissioner Torto: If you are to see Blood, can you recognize him?

Fatmata Kamara : He was killed.

Commissioner Torto: Who killed him?

Fatmata Kamara : He was killed by his colleagues.

Commissioner Torto: Why?

Fatmata Kamara : I don't know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for the courage you have to come and share you experience with us. Did you tell your husband you were raped?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What was his attitude?

Fatmata Kamara : He felt bad but took courage in the fact that I came back alive.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So he has been very cooperative with you?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell me the name of your sister?

Fatmata Kamara : Tenneh Kamara.

Leader of Evidence: You said your father was killed by the rebels?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Was he killed by the RUF or another group?

Fatmata Kamara : He was killed by the RUF.

Leader of Evidence: What is the name of your father?

Fatmata Kamara : Brima Kamara.

Leader of Evidence: What about your mother, was she killed by the rebels?

Fatmata Kamara : She died naturally.

Leader of Evidence: Were other members of your family killed?

Fatmata Kamara : No. Only my father and sister.

Commissioner Torto: We have asked you questions, do you have questions to ask the Commission?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes. I want to know what you have to give to me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. Do you have any other question?

Fatmata Kamara : Yes, I don't know the meaning of TRC.

Commissioner Torto: I will tell you the meaning of TRC. I was among the group that went to Kondebaia to tell you all about The Truth and Reconciliation Commission where you aware about that?

Fatmata Kamara : I was hearing about the TRC but I didn't pay attention to it.

Commissioner Torto: At Kondebaia did you remember this face talking to you?

Fatmata Kamara : No.

Commissioner Torto: In any case I was in your town, talking to you about the TRC. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission have aims and objectives and in short we don't have time to go all over all this again. As the name implies it is to find out the truth of what happened and to identify victims like you. We will listen to your recommendation and pass on the message to the Government to ensure that what happened will not happen again.

Commissioner Torto: Any recommendation?

Fatmata Kamara : My husband is not working and I have three children so I want they

government to help me educate my children.

Commissioner Torto: I am not the government but there is a programme that will help your children to be educated and the Ministry of education is talking about free education except for registration fee. It will be okay if you can start from there.

Thank you very much for coming and we encourage you to take care of your self and your children. There are thousands of people who went through this kind of situation.

WITNESS NAME: Sieh Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 009

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Slyvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

May God bless us all. I was in Kondebaia. We were running helter skelter as a result of the numerous attacks. We survived on yams. One day people were to go to the farm to work for me. I decided to come to town to buy some food stuffs because I felt the town was safe as ECOMOG was around. I met an ECOMOG check point in front of my house. I went into the house and took money to go out to buy these things. Not too long after, I heard firing and I felt it was ECOMOG that was shooting but it became persistence. I passed through the school and I came across the rebels who halted me. They said they are Foday Sankoh rebels and I was given a load to carry. The rebels put on uniforms which they had taken from the ECOMOG with some ammunition. They took out a mattress that was filled with air and they told me to deflate it. Another group came and asked that I should come down and one of them ordered me to come forward and he told his colleagues to give way so that a stray bullet would not meet them. He fired at me twice with a bullet but I was not hit. He ordered that they should tie me and cut my throat. They took me to the cotton tree where I met Nfagie. The person who seems to be the Commando was not talking. He had a T. Shirt and a cap on. One man called Abass whom they had chained was resisting, he was shot twice with a pistol. They told us to bow our heads so that we would not be able to identify them.

The commando took out a paper and called a man by the name of "Junta" and handed a paper to him. Reading from the paper, the man said the rights hand of men should be cut and the women, the left hand. A six years old girl was killed and then one man's hand was cut and put on top of the corpse. They cut Nfagie's hand and pushed him apart. They called me and persistently hit my hand with machetes until it fell out.

Four men and five women were amputated. They told us to go and tell Tejan Kabbah the war will not end until ECOMOG leave. They said we voted for Tejan Kabbah, so he should provide hands for us and that we are to inform the people of Kabala that they are coming. We went to the town but my house was on fire. We traveled for some distance and met Aminata but we were so thirsty and tired that I told Nfagie that I cannot go further but he said he is going to Kabala. I told him I wanted to go back so that our people would know that I am alive. Nfagie left and I came across a stream that was running I used my mouth to drink. I eventually met my relatives and they started weeping but I told them not to cry and that we must go along. My vein which was hanging out was hurting whenever it touches the grass. I told my wife and two sons to assist me find a place where I could be treated. We then left for Kabala. At Makakura, I met a Fullah who had a vehicle that traveled between Fadugu and Kabala. He brought me to my sister Tenneh who is a trader in the market.

When people saw me they were panicked. At the hospital there was no medicine only a cup of iodine. It was poured on my hand. At about 4-5, a man called "Peace maker" of CES came to me and consoled me and said that the road is not accessible but he told me that he has spoken to MSF and they are sending a helicopter for us to be taken to Freetown. On sat at 1p.m the helicopter arrived and they asked my relatives to sign an authorization for them to take me to Freetown. I was taken to Freetown and my hand was beginning to decay. It was operated on and after 2 months, I was taken to Waterloo. Two months later, my hand started swelling and a lady, Elias from ICRC took me to the Conaught hospital. She said there were bone particles in my hand and that the big vein was not properly fixed, thus I needed one more operation. I was sent to Netland Hospital where my hand was operated on again. There was problem in fixing the bone because it was cracked. I still feel pain in the hand and I can not use artificial limbs because it is more painful. From Netland I was sent back to Waterloo and after 11 days we heard of an attack at Sumbuya. I met a brother and he assisted me with transport to Freetown with my family. On the 4th of January we were registered at the Aberdeen camp for artificial limbs. On the 5th we were sent to Old wharf for bulgur wheat supply.

On the 6th January, the rebels attacked and the first house that was burnt in the city of Freetown was the CID building. I was broken hearted for 11 days, especially when we heard that they are looking for amputees. I hid my hand so that they could not see it. I covered my hand with a towel and I passed through Circular Road, Pademba Road through backyards unto my Uncle Sayoh Conteh's place in Congo town. Later we went to the National Stadium and we were later sent to the Murray Town Amputee Camp where they took care of us and gave us Physiotherapy. After sometime, Melissa from the Norwegian Refugee Council interviewed us to build houses for us. I am happy now, because a land was provided for me here and a house was built here. I am also happy because I am seeing my family.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much, on hearing your testimony we know that you went through difficulties. You have gone through an ordeal but as a man of courage you are able to survive to tell the story. Your testimony is straight forward, you are not a stranger to the TRC. We met you at the Aberdeen Camp and I believe you are very much aware of the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Do you know who the boss of the attackers were?

Sieh Mansaray: No I don't know the people, eyewitness and hearsay are two different things. I was not able to identify who was the leader but I can identify the person who gave the papers to the rebel to carry out the operations.

Commissioner Torto: What fighting group did your captors belong to?

Sieh Mansaray: They identify themselves as being Foday Sankoh's rebels.

Commissioner Torto: Did they also tell you why they were fighting?

Sieh Mansaray: I do not know why they were fighting. They did not tell me and I have no way of explaining that.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know the number of people killed; even names if possible?

Sieh Mansaray: I do not know all of them but I know some.

Commissioner Torto: Name them.

Sieh Mansaray: Abass, Salifu, Mohamed, John Bai a police officer, Makkah - a very fat man, Aminata who was married to Kemoh and the father called Sandi. The other person that was killed was an ECOMOG Officer i am not sure about his name and there was a police officer called Kai he was abducted I don't know whether they released him later.

Commissioner Torto: Who gave the order that the right hand of the men should be cut off ?

Sieh Mansaray: I do not know the person who gave the command except for the person who wrote on the paper he was a “Junta two”. He was the man who carried out the amputations. Indeed we later discovered that all those whose right hands were cut off were male and left hands were female.

Commissioner Torto: How many people have there limbs cut off?

Sieh Mansaray: There were four males and five females. One of them was Musu Sesay, she was eight month pregnant but she died in Freetown after giving birth.

Commissioner Torto: You said when they captured you, they gave you a bag to carry what was in that bag?

Sieh Mansaray: I can not tell the content of the bag.

Commissioner Torto: The pistol that was fired was it a threat or it did not hit you because there was no bullet inside the gun?

Sieh Mansaray: There is no way I can interpret the mind of somebody. I know those people were killers and if they had a gun in their hand, it is possible they had wanted to kill me. It is also possible that they ran out of ammunition. I am not sure whether it was a threat or they really meant to kill me.

Commissioner Torto: Have you been able to see any of the people who captured you although you said you were placed in a way that you could not see their faces. Were you able to identify any and even now, have you been able to see any one of them?

Sieh Mansaray: one day I was sitting somewhere here in Kabala and one of them was sitting opposite me. He was continuously looking at me. He eventually got up and approached me. After a hand shake, he asked if I knew the people who amputate my hand. I had wanted to tell him but when I looked around, I saw my relatives and knowing the strong feelings they had over my amputation, I answered him in parables. I told him that my hand was cut in broad day light and that I am not a kid. I told him that in any case, the person who did this to me has a conscience and if he is to see me, he would know me. I told him that I have left every thing in God’s hand and that what happened is now history. I also told him that I have faith in God and he will provide me with my daily needs. Upon saying that, he left me for his seat and shortly he disappeared. I’ve not seen him since then.

Commissioner Torto: Do you think that person was a born of Kabala?

Sieh Mansaray: No he was a stranger.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are grateful for the work you have done. Did the doctor tell you whether your hand is going to be less sensitive?

Sieh Mansaray: I did not have an opportunity to talk with the doctor because he intended to split my hand. I told him that if he did that, my family are going to be hard on him so he didn’t and he did not give me any additional information.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I want to encourage you to seek medical aid so that you will have chance to use the artificial hands your colleagues are using.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know when this happened?

Sieh Mansaray: This happened on a Thursday in May 1998 at about 3pm. But I am not sure about the exact date.

Leader of Evidence: These five women who were amputated do you know where they are now?

Sieh Mansaray: Yes. The one is dead. Damba has gone abroad. Finda Daboh has a house here in Kabala and she is here with us, Serah is here with us but Musu is dead. For the men; I am here, Nfagie is right there sitting. Lamin Jeremaiah Kamara is living at Masiaka. The old man is dead; he did not survive the pain. He died in the bush because he was stabbed with a bayonet before he was amputated.

Leader of Evidence: So can we get the name?

Sieh Mansaray: He was with the army before. He was commonly known as Sgt. Major Kalawa.

Leader of Evidence: You said there were ECOMOG in the village when the rebels attacked was there any exchange of firing?

Sieh Mansaray: There were only 15 Ecomog soldiers in the village. The others had left for Kabala to receive ammunition. The 15 soldiers who were in Kondebaia could not stand the rebels; they took off their uniforms and ran away.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any question to ask the Commission?

Sieh Mansaray: Yes. The question I have for the Commission, as you all know me, I don't know the work of the Commission; many organizations were making money out of us that was why when I first heard that there was another organization that is coming to take statement from us and that they are working in our interest, I did not believe. I was very happy when they send one of our sister's (Martien Schotsman) sitting there. She came to our camp and had series of meetings with us. We were convinced to come here to testify together with the help of Commissioner Torto who was with the team that went to talk to us. The question that I have for the Commission is, firstly I have lost my house and my property how can I be able to recover those things that I have lost?

Commissioner Torto: I must make an attempt to answer your question I have a lot of respect for your honesty when you started giving your testimony. You said that you have been given a house that you are living in now and you are very thankful for that. I don't know whether you want another house to add to that.

Sieh Mansaray: Yes. That is just the starting point and I will need more. Question number two, the work that I was doing, I am not able to do it again. Now I have been trained I am happy. I have my certificate, but I don't think the certificate is useful because there is no way I can implement what I've been taught. I trained under Cause Canada to bake bread and I was able to train other sixteen people on how to bake bread.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Mansaray, you are so far one of the most successful victims because you already have a place to rest and you have learnt a skill that will be with you till God take your life back. I will suggest to you if you don't have people to train, you can take a bag of flour and start baking bread on your own. If anybody can employ you now he will never pay you what you want. I think that is your best bet. Before you give a man a fish, teach him to fish. I will suggest you start a trade on your own even if it is through credit or by any means. Since you have already learnt the act of teaching, you can open a school to teach people how to bake bread. If you have somebody to write a project for you that will help you go on with life. We have NGOs that will be ready to help you with that.

Sieh Mansaray: I have a doubt in what you have said. Since I came to Kabala, I have been hearing about so many organizations in Kabala for the past eight months. I find it difficult to

understand what's happening. In fact, since I came it was only on the fifth month when NaCSA supplied us a bag of bulgur wheat. When I traveled to Makeni and Freetown I am seeing a lot of organizations working in close collaboration with the amputees. I am asking any NGOs representative sitting here to raise up his hand and challenge what I am saying.

Commissioner Torto: Let me begin with the supply system you are talking about. Most NGOs have working schedule and they have their time frame on how they make supply to various categories of victim. When the time is finished, it is difficult for them to restart. Now that the war has ended, some of them have scale down their activities. That is how they work, not that I am talking for them but that is how they work. About the availability of helping people, may be they are not here in Kabala but the only way you could find ways and means to locate them, is by going to Makeni and you even have NGOs like NaCSA. You can meet these people and talk to them, but they only thing you have to do is to make use of what you have learnt; it will pay you more than any other supply.

There are people around the community who have suffered like you but don't have skills you have. They want it but they don't have it so please make use of it. At the end of Commission we will be happy to know that you will be one of the richest man because we have heard that you are a very prosperous man.

Sieh Mansaray: I don't thing I would be a prosperous business man the reason is that I have a title. I am the Chairman of the Amputee Association; so when I see my colleagues suffering, I take care of them using my own money. There have been two cases that I have taken to Freetown for cure so I wonder whether I would be a prosperous business man. Also they have brought a small girl whose arms were amputated and the child is with me. What kind of organization that will assist me with this child and the father of this child is a blind man and there is no way I can educate this child.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation to tell the Government to do for you or your community.

Sieh Mansaray: You have come here and meet with my colleagues. They don't have the opportunity to go to Freetown, so I am appealing to government to help them learn skills and provide job opportunities for them. I want government to open a skill training school here in Kabala and its environs.

Secondly, I want the government to help with the education system in our community so that our children can be educated as we all know children are the future leaders and education is the back bone to every society.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for coming and continue to do what you have been doing as a Chairman of this community.

Sieh Mansaray: The Commissioner, "tortoise I will want to shake his body but it can not because of it hard skin." How can I start to be a prosperous man, when I don't have the means to start. I love the job but I can not start it now. There is an other proverb saying, "even if a knife is sharpen you just have to sharp it again before using it" so I want Government to assist us.

Commissioner Torto: I can not have the right answer to give you but I want to share with you one experience. I have an uncle who has a bakery and he too didn't have any thing and in fact don't know where to start. You know what he did, he went to a friend who was a baker, they work together in the friend's bakery until he was able to get money to build his own bakery. He is now supplying the whole village with bread. This is just to tell you that with effort you can succeed. Thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Moseray Koroma

WITNESS NO: 10

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Slyvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

I was in my village called Koroma town and I was a trader. We saw people coming from a direction to our town but at that time they have not started chopping out limbs. When the rebel entered any village, their target was business people because of the money. When we heard the news that they were coming, I was confused. I had a lot of items in my shop and I don't have the opportunity to escape with any of my property. I had plenty of rice, palm oil and groundnut in my store; I was very confused when we heard the news about the coming of the rebels in the town. I had 10 goats. They shot them one after the other. When that happened, I ordered my relative to go to the bush to hide. My uncle and I used to exchange in turns of three nights in sleeping with the family in the bush.

At a point in time, we ran short of salt and Maggie. So I told my uncle to stay with the family in the bush, whilst I go into town to look for the items. I told him to come to check on me in the morning as I was to travel to Sinkunia the following morning. I was to go there to a woman who owed me some money. Little did I know that the rebels had attacked there. The following morning, whilst I was waiting, a lady came from another village to buy caustic soda. I told her I have some but it will be difficult for me to sell to her because of the prevailing condition. After some pleas, I agreed to sell and I sold a packet of caustic soda to her. I was trying to close my store when I heard heavy footsteps from the backyard. Within a short time, the woman who bought the soda came running and behind her was a man dressed in military uniform. He asked for money. I told him I have no money but at about that time, I saw one of them hit this woman with a machete and she died.

I then resolved that whatever they do, I am prepared to die. In my presence, my pregnant sister's head was split into two with an axe. Upon seeing this, I became confused and I gave them the money. They eventually went in and looted my store and they took away the sum of Le 1,000,000 million in my store. They then gave me some of the loads to carry. One said that I would escape if they give me any breathing space but I told him, that I would never be afraid of my fellow man. They also looted properties in other houses, they asked me to join the other abductees but I refused so one took a machete to hit me but he was restrained by the other who hit me on the left and right shoulders. I was also stabbed on the back. I started to roll on the ground; I was also bayoneted on my face, between my eyes and nose and on my right hand. I fell on the ground unconscious and they covered me with grass to get fire but he was restrained by another who told him that I would die eventually. He said if I did not die, then I should go to Tejan Kabbah for treatment. When they started burning houses and knowing that petrol had been poured on me I decided to go toward the bush where my relatives were hiding. I met an old man whom I sent and later he came with them to where I was.

They took me to a hut in the bush but I had no treatment for five days; I told my uncle to look at my family since I was going to Kabala to sought treatment and it is possible I might die on the road. I showed him my debtors and I told him where all my properties and good where kept. In the event I die, it will enable him take care of my family. After some argument since my uncle was reluctant to allow me go alone, we eventually left for Kabala and we came across one Pastor Sayoh who was looking for his relatives. He brought me on his bike to Makakura and then we boarded the vehicle from there to Kabala. Later Pastor Sayoh explain to one man who was working for CES called Peace Maker and he arranged for me to be conveyed to Freetown. I was

admitted at the Connaught Hospital for three months and I was later taken to Waterloo. When the rebels attacked Four Mile, my brother was captured and his arms amputated. We were later taken to Old Warf on January 6th 1999 they rebel brought us out in the streets to dance for peace. However, I must state that nothing was done to me in Freetown. This is what I went through.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming to share your experiences with us; we are sorry for the agony you went through. Do you know your attackers?

Moseray Koroma: Those who captured me were dressed in military fatigues.

Commissioner Torto: So your attackers were SLA?

Moseray Koroma: Yes they were SLA.

Commissioner Torto: What happened to the other members of your family? Were you the only one attacked and who suffered in that house?

Moseray Koroma: They beat my father until he died.

Commissioner Torto: What was the name of your father?

Moseray Koroma: His name was Bockarie Koroma.

Commissioner Torto: Was he killed at the same time they did this to you?

Moseray Koroma: Yes it was in the same village and at the same time.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know of any other person who might have been killed?

Moseray Koroma: I have told you before that when they entered the town, they killed my sister who was pregnant. They used an axe to split her head.

Commissioner Torto: You said when they attacked your village they shot the goats. Did they do it the same day or they were doing it one after the other?

Moseray Koroma: They killed them at the same time.

Commissioner Torto: They asked you to show the whereabouts of the young boys did you show them?

Moseray Koroma: No I did not.

Commissioner Torto: Are you married?

Moseray Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Where was your wife and children at the time of the incident?

Moseray Koroma: I have told you before that my relatives were in the bush.

Commissioner Torto: During the time of the attack, you did not hear any name and you can not remember any or face?

Moseray Koroma: The people that captured me disguised their faces. They didn't call their names.

Commissioner Torto: What languages were they speaking?

Moseray Koroma: They were speaking Krio.

Commissioner Torto: You were 23 years old while making your statement, how old were you at the time of the attack?

Moseray Koroma: I can not tell you exactly because in our village, it is the elders who determine when people were born based upon their farming calendar.

Commissioner Torto: What happened to the woman who was buying the caustic soda from you?

Moseray Koroma: She was abandoned after being stabbed. She is in the village.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How is life like in the bush? Do people live the normal lives? Do they eat the usual food in the bush?

Moseray Koroma: No. Life in the bush is very miserable.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where do you get the food from?

Moseray Koroma: When we live in the villages, we do farming and when we harvest the farm we don't take the rice immediately to the town, my family were eating the rice stored in the farm. Also as a businessman, I was able to go with foodstuffs when my family went to the bush.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who is Issa Bangura?

Moseray Koroma: We were all captured; they put his hand on an orange tree and chopped it off.

Commissioner Torto: Where is he now?

Moseray Koroma: He is in Makeni fully recovered.

Leader of Evidence: When did this incident happen?

Moseray Koroma: I could not remember.

Leader of Evidence: Will you tell us how many times your village was attacked?

Moseray Koroma: Once.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any question to ask the commission?

Moseray Koroma: Yes. My question is in the form of an appeal. Now as I am talking to you, I am sick and frustrated and I am therefore appealing to you, not to forget us so that our children will go to school.

Commissioner Torto: We will take your appeal in good part and that is why we are here. I don't want you to be afraid. It is the work of the Commission to ensure that the ordeal you went through does not happen again.

Commissioner Torto: TRC does not have the needs to give micro credit. All we have to do is to listen to your recommendation and write it in our report. Thank you very much for coming.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

CLOSED HEARINGS FOR IN KOINADUGU DISTRICT (DAY 3)

DATE: 4th May 2003

Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones

Martien Schotsmann - Leader of Evidence

WITNESS NAME: Mariama Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 11

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY:

One Saturday night, I was sleeping, when the rebels attacked Bafodia about 6.30 am, they surrounded the village. They knocked on our door. Our uncle came out and asked them what they wanted. The rebels asked for the children and my uncle told them we were sleeping. They forced the door open and captured eight of us. We were taken to another house where we were raped. In the morning they took us to another house where they inscribed RUF on our bodies. They gave us their luggage to carry to Fadugu. On the way, they flogged us. Upon our arrival, we were distributed to different rebels as wives. When we refused, they flogged us. We were raped by two or three men daily. When we fought back, they threatened to kill us. We eventually got married to them. They gave us drugs like marijuana to smoke. When the roads were free, we pleaded for them to release us to go back to our relatives but they refused. Commander Sofila pleaded with them to release us but they threatened to kill us if we tried to escape. Commander CO Ray inscribed RUF on our bodies. They looted properties whilst we carried their ammunitions. My aunt came to the rebel base and pleaded with them to release us, but they refused. I escaped and went to Bafodia. During the disarmament we went to Kabala. We were given documents to sign, and we were asked to surrender our ammunitions. We told them that we do not have any ammunition but showed them the marks and a snap shot was taken. We were taken to Lungi to wipe out the scar. We spent five months in Lungi. On the six month, we were taken to Port Loko there we spent two months; then we eventually returned to Bafodia. We were supplied with non-food items (blanket). Some secretaries of TRC met us at Bafodia, where our statements were taken. That is all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Mariama, we are sorry for your terrible experience which you have shared with us. You mentioned 8 of you were captured that morning.

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where you all sisters/cousins?

Mariama Mansaray: We were all sisters.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were you all? Who was the oldest and how old was she?

Mariama Mansaray: I don't know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was the eldest sister married before she was captured?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about the youngest sister, was she going to school?

Mariama Mansaray: She was going to school.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What class was she in?

Mariama Mansaray: she was in class 5.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was your youngest sister also raped?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where was the base you were taken to?

Mariama Mansaray: In Fadugu.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Your youngest sister, was she also given to man ?

Mariama Mansaray: yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you all survive at that base and return back to your village?

Mariama Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many of you returned?

Mariama Mansaray: Five of us returned, still could not see the other three.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they ask all 8 of you to disarm?

Mariama Mansaray: No, we were not having ammunitions.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did the rebels allow you to go? Was it in twos, fours, or one by one?

Mariama Mansaray: We left one by one.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did it take the others to return?

Mariama Mansaray: It took a long time, I was the first to be released. It took about 2 weeks for the others to return.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You mentioned your aunt came to collect you from your base.

Mariama Mansaray: While she was at Bafodia, she learnt that her children were at Fadugu, that was why she came to collect us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When your aunt came to the base, did the rebels receive her well. Why didn't they capture her?

Mariama Mansaray: They told her that if she goes to the base again, they would kill her and that they wanted the children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you fair at the camp? Where you all well, especially your younger sister?

Mariama Mansaray: We were all sick.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: - What type of illness did you suffer?

Mariama Mansaray: Side pains, severe stomach ache and pains all over our body.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: How old are you now?

Mariama Mansaray: I am sixteen years.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you ever pregnant while you were with the rebels?

Mariama Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Did anyone of you get pregnant?

Mariama Mansaray: One was pregnant and gave birth.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Did she return with the child?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes, the child is at Bafodia.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: When you carried the rebels' ammunitions and they went to loot, what did you see?

Mariama Mansaray: I can't tell we were always behind.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Did you see them kill anybody.

Mariama Mansaray: No, we were not on the scene, but we met corpses on the way.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Since you left the Commanders, have you ever seen or heard about them?

Mariama Mansaray: I have not seen them.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: - What was your bush husband like? Was he old or young?

Mariama Mansaray: He was a young man.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was he a combatant?

Mariama Mansaray: He was RUF.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you approve of what they were doing to you whilst you were at their base?

Mariama Mansaray: No

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What was the name of your bush husband?

Mariama Mansaray: "Lean you loss".

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is he now?

Mariama Mansaray: I don't know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he beat you?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Whilst you were at their base, did you get proper food?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where did you get the material for cooking?

Mariama Mansaray: I don't know they always brought food to cook.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who are you presently staying with?

Mariama Mansaray: I am staying with my aunt.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you going to school, institution or doing any skill training?

Mariama Mansaray: . I am a student.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What form are you in?

Mariama Mansaray: I am in class five.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: That means you will be taking the NPSE exams next year.

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any health problem?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes, severe stomach ache.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you get any medical attention?

Mariama Mansaray: I was treated once at Bafodia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where you treated in the hospital or given native treatment?

Mariama Mansaray: I was treated in the hospital.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you receive regular treatment.

Mariama Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Your colleagues in school, do they know about your ordeal?

Mariama Mansaray: Some of them know, we were together.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many of you abducted were in school?

Mariama Mansaray: We are three.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How do they treat you in school?

Mariama Mansaray: I have no problem.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How do they treat you at home?

Mariama Mansaray: I have no problem.

Leader of Evidence: I would like you to make some clarifications, were you the youngest or have you younger sisters with you?

Mariama Mansaray: I was the youngest one.

Leader of Evidence: When abducted, had you started your menstrual cycle?

Mariama Mansaray: No.

Leader of Evidence: When did you start your menstrual cycle? Was it during your stay with the rebels or after your captivity?

Mariama Mansaray: It was after my captivity and after some medical treatment.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned all 8 sisters abducted, were you all from the same mother and father or where related?

Mariama Mansaray: We were related.

Leader of Evidence: Was any of your brothers abducted?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes, one of them was killed?

Leader of Evidence: What is his name?

Mariama Mansaray: His name is Bala.

Leader of Evidence: Where you present when your brother was killed?

Mariama Mansaray: No.

Leader of Evidence: How long did you stay with the rebels?

Mariama Mansaray: 2 years.

Leader of Evidence: Did they teach you to use guns?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes, but I was unable to learn.

Leader of Evidence: Did they teach you to fight?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes, but I did not pay attention.

Leader of Evidence: Did any of the abducted children join the rebels to attack villages?

Mariama Mansaray: No, but I don't know about others.

Leader of Evidence: Is your mother still alive?

Mariama Mansaray: No, she was killed.

Leader of Evidence: By whom?

Mariama Mansaray: The rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see her killed? Or were you told on your return to the village?

Mariama Mansaray: I was not around.

Leader of Evidence: You knew when you returned.

Mariama Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: I am sorry for what happened to you and thank you for coming.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We have been asking you lots of questions, have you any questions for the Commission about our work, or how we do our work.

Mariama Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: As you are quite young, do you have any opinion and views, any recommendations you would want the Government to do for your village, school or yourself?

Mariama Mansaray: Yes, I would want the government to assist in education.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any other recommendation?

Mariama Mansaray: I want the Government to assist me seek medical attention.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You don't have to wait for the government before you seek medical attention. Our staff will refer you to a doctor, who will be able to advise you. Your other recommendations would be included in our report.

Thank you very much for coming. We hope you will do well in your school work and wish you success when you take your NPSE next year.

Leader of Evidence: Commissioner, the witness have scar of RUF on chest, can you show to Commissioner. (Shows scar and Leader of Evidence takes photo of scar).

WITNESS NAME: Fatu Seh Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 12

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

In 1998, my husband left me at Bafodia and went to Pendembu. Upon his arrival in Pendembu he was killed. I received message of his death and that his corpse could not be located. The day I received the message, rebels (Col. Blood's Group) attacked Bafodia and I was captured. I was raped publicly on a veranda by one of his boys. That same night, another boy raped me. There was no food to eat, so I had to breast feed my child. I was a suckling mother then. The child became sick and died. The same day I lost my child; I was captured again by another group and was violently raped and wounded on my head and arm (shows scars). Until now I experience frequent discharges. Col. Steven from Waldama captured me and took me to a place called Kakolobi where I spent about a week. My mother who was blind was left behind. I was raped by six men. If I refused they will flog me. Since I lost my child, I am unable to bear children. I spent another week with them. After my release, I was captured by Col. Savage's group, he raped me and Col. Snake also raped me. My stepmother was around, she had swollen feet. She was killed by the rebels. The rebels took us to a village called Kalawa and I spent two terrible weeks with them. About 100 women were captured, the captured boys escaped. They dug a big pit for us and threatened to bury us alive accusing us that we sent for the RUF. They raped us violently, when we refused they flogged us. The UN enabled us to be released and we were taken to Kabala. Since then I had not been able to seek medical attention and no one to has taken care of me. When we came to Kabala, I was recaptured by the RUF. A rebel by the name of Upside Down captured me and raped me in the bush. At that time, a law had been passed "No Raping". Upside Down ordered me to fetch wood in the bush. He followed me in the bush and raped me violently. During the fight, he squeezes my mouth in order to prevent me from shouting. Until now I am still still experiencing the pain in my mouth. I am now suffering from serious mouth ache.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I sympathize with you for such terrible experiences; one after another. When your husband left for Pendembu, who else was with you in the house.

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I was with my mother, who is blind.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Had you known Col. Blood before?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No. I came across him during the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know where he came from?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Makeni.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: After one of his boys had raped you, did they go away?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No, they stayed in my house for a week.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When did they capture you?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: It was on a Friday at 2 pm.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was it after they had raped you that they wounded you?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No, it was when they wanted to rape me and I was fighting them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: With what did they wound you with?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: A knife.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they go away.

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did they stay?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: They stayed for one month.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where did the rebels come from?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: They came from Waldala.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You mentioned they took you to Kakolobi is that correct?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes, Kakolobi is five miles from Bafodia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you say you left your mother for a week?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old is your mother?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: 50 years and she was blind during the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Her blindness is it a natural course or was it as a result of some attack.

Fatu Seh Mansaray: It was a natural course.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is she now?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: At Bafodia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In your testimony, you mentioned you were raped very often is that so?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes. I was roughly raped.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was it when you returned to Bafodia that you were captured by , Col. Snake and Savage?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You did not know all these Cols. Before?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: After a week had passed when you had returned, why did you not leave this village as it seems you were vulnerable?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: The rebels were everywhere and I was the only one to take care of my mother.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: According to you, your stepmother was with you?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why did they kill her?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: She was seriously sick and unable to run.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why didn't they kill your mother as she was blind?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I don't know but they did not kill her.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You mentioned you were taken to Kalawa, what were your observations and the activities of the rebels?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: They dug a big hole and told us that was where they were going to bury us because we were the once who called the rebels to attack. They killed two men in the hole.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Cols. that you mentioned, what group do they belong to?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: They were SLA Junta.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When the UN came, they were able to take you to Kabala, were you then at the junta base?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did the UN repel the junta?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No, they pleaded with them to lay down their arms and Col. Savage was captured by the UN.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When you came to Kabala, did the rebels attack again?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes. the RUF captured us and took us to Bafodia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Upside Down was he the Commanding Officer?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No, it was Col. Ronso.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why was he called Upside Down?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I don't know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where you raped in the bush?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he return with you to the village?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did he stay?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: He stayed for a month in another house.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he come to rape you in your house.

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Only once.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is your present health condition?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Severe stomach ache and frequent discharges even now that I'm here testifying.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why didn't you seek medical attention?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I had no money.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In the general hospital, did they ask for a lot of money?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes, no money no medical attention.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How do you earn your living?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: At first I fetch firewood and sell, now I am selling fried cake.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Our staff will be able to direct you to seek medical attention. How old are you now.

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I am 29 years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I don't want you to be too depressed about not having children, even if it comes to the worst and you are unable to bear children, that is not the end of the world. You can adopt children and they can even do better than if you are having your own children. Do you sleep well?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is it because you are worried?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes, when I think of what happened to me in the past, I become very worried.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I hope that your coming here to testify and your talking to us will give you some relief. I advise you to share your problems with others and that will even make you feel better. Did your mother talk to you?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No, because after bathing and feeding her in the morning, I had to go out to fetch wood to sell to enable us eat food. I do not return till the evening hours.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have a husband?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No, I have a boyfriend.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence, do you have any question to ask the witness?

Leader of Evidence: Commissioner, I have no question to ask the witness.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Fatu Seh Mansaray, we've been asking you a lot of questions, do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes, now that I have come to testify, what can the Commission do to appease me?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Commission has to make a report on all that happened during the war and we are worried about women and children. So stories like yours will be put in our report and from our recommendations, government will know what to do to help women, particularly those who suffered during the war. We hope that after having spoken to the Commission and our staff, we hope you would be able to feel better. Your case is not peculiar, it happened all over the world where there is war. What you do now is to take care of your self, seek medical attention and continue with your life. Do you have any other question?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you got any recommendations to make to the Government?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: Yes, I want the Government to assist us with education or skill training (gara tye dying).

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any other recommendations?

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I would like the Government to also assist other girls captured together to further their education.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Our staff will be able to refer you to NaCSA or other agencies that will engage you in skill training. At the same time, the Commission will include your recommendations in our report for government to implement. Fatu Seh Mansaray, I thank you for coming.

Fatu Seh Mansaray: I thank you too.

WITNESS NAME: Fatu Conteh

WITNESS NO: 13

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

When the rebels attacked our village, I was asleep with my sister. The rebels knocked on our door. We refused to open but they forced the door open and captured us. On the way, a rebel by the name of "Born Trouble" raped me violently. My elder sister was heavily pregnant about 9 months and she was left behind as she was in labour. The rebels ordered her to walk in front of them saying that they did not impregnate her. I was locked in a room and I was watching secretly through the window to see what the rebels were doing to her. She was struggling to give birth, eventually she gave birth.

They ordered us to continue the journey. We were raped violently. My father was captured and tied, they hit him with a gun and broke his collar bone. We spent three months with the rebels in the bush. The child my sister gave birth to is partially blind as he could not see anything after 5pm. I was deflowered by them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. I'll ask you a few questions. Where you the only two people in the house when the rebels attacked?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where was your elder sister's husband?

Fatu Conteh: He was in the village.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is your elder sister back with you?

Fatu Conteh: She returned, but she died thereafter and we are now taking care of the child.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why did your sister died? Is it a natural course or as a result of what she suffered in the hands of the rebels or did the rebels kill her?

Fatu Conteh: She died as a result of what she suffered in the hands of the rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were you when you were captured?

Fatu Conteh: I was 10 years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What are you doing now?

Fatu Conteh: I am a student.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What class are you in?

Fatu Conteh: JSS1.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you passed your NPSE?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Sorry for your experience, I would like to ask you a few questions. You mentioned that your sister was almost 9 months pregnant, did the rebels raped her?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: When abducted, where there other boys and girls with you?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How many?

Fatu Conteh: 3, Mary, my elder sister and myself

Leader of Evidence: Your elder sister who was captured, was she left behind?

Fatu Conteh: She was left behind as she was in labour.

Leader of Evidence: What was the name of your elder sister?

Fatu Conteh: She is called Sasa.

Leader of Evidence: What was the name of the other girls abducted?

Fatu Conteh: Mary, we were captured together.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell what happened to the other girls that were captured with you?

Fatu Conteh: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether they were raped?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, they raped all of us.

Leader of Evidence: Had you started your menstrual cycle when you were a captive?

Fatu Conteh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Where other boys captured?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, they were captured on the way after we had been captured.

Leader of Evidence: Some of the boys and girls captured did they receive military training?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, some were trained.

Leader of Evidence : Did you receive any training?

Fatu Conteh - No, because I was confused and did not pay attention.

Leader of Evidence: Those who received training did they go with the rebels to attack villages?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did the girls go with the rebels to attack?

Fatu Conteh: No, we stayed behind to cook.

Leader of Evidence: - When the rebels attack the villages, did you go to the village after the attack?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, after they had attacked, we collect food and return to their base.

Leader of Evidence: What did you see in the village after the attack?

Fatu Conteh: Corpses.

Leader of Evidence: Where they men, women and children?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, my aunt and step mother was also killed.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see their bodies?

Fatu Conteh: No.

Leader of Evidence - You mentioned that your father was beaten, is he still alive ?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, he is unable to do farm work or any other work.

Leader of Evidence: How long did you stay with the rebels.

Fatu Conteh: Three months.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels take drugs?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, the smoked marijuana.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels give drugs to the children?

Fatu Conteh: Yes, but I did not smoke.

Leader of Evidence - How did you manage to escape?

Fatu Conteh: When we went to Fadugu, the rebels left us behind to cook, when we did not see them return, we used that opportunity to escape.

Leader of Evidence: Did you escape alone.

Fatu Conteh: No, I escaped with others.

Leader of Evidence: Did Mary escape with you.

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Where there any other children from your family who were abducted?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Who?

Fatu Conteh: My younger brother.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to him?

Fatu Conteh: We could not see him until now.

Leader of Evidence: Where there any other captives from your family?

Fatu Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to them?

Fatu Conteh: I cannot explain now, if I do I have a lot to say.

Leader of Evidence: All those who were abducted, did they all return?

Fatu Conteh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did some died or you don't know where they are?

Fatu Conteh: Some died.

Leader of Evidence: Those who died, did they die of natural causes.

Fatu Conteh: They were killed in attacks.

Leader of Evidence: In your village, a lot of children were captured is that so?

Fatu Conteh: Many killed and most were captured.

Leader of Evidence: Where you captured together with the other girls present here?

Fatu Conteh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Rebels, what group do they belong to?

Fatu Conteh: Water Bottle's Group (Junta).

Leader of Evidence: How did you escape?

Fatu Conteh: I stayed behind cooking and we escaped.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned you were captured with Mary and Sasa, what happened with Mary?

Fatu Conteh: We escaped together.

Leader of Evidence: How was your escape like?

Fatu Conteh: We were in Fadugu, cooking when we escaped?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much, you have seen the TRC at work. Do you have any question about our work or how we do things?

Fatu Conteh: I would like the Commission to assist my mother, assist me with education as my father cannot work as he is partially disable. My mother has no capital to start business. My sister is dead and we are now taking care of her child. I am the only child. After school I go to buy palm wine and fetch wood to sell in order to sustain my family. I would appreciate it if you could offer micro credit to my mother. After my release I have been suffering from heart burns, severe stomach ache and pains all over my body.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We realize that you have all these immediate needs, but the TRC do not give money to people. All what we are ask to do is to make a report so that in the end the Government would be able to know what to do. But our staff will refer you to some agencies who might be able to help until the Government can do something for communities suffered during the war. At the same time, you ought to seek medical attention in the hospital around or talk to your school authorities. They might be able to give you medical help in your school.

Have you any recommendation to make for onward transmission to the Government for improvement in the future?

Fatu Conteh: I would like to have the Government assist in education, rehabilitate houses in our village and to assist my sister's child with eye treatment.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for sharing your experience and recommendation to

put forward. I hope you feel better about things and you would be able to concentrate in your school work. You have the opportunity, others do not. I wish you well in your school work.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KOINADUGU DISTRICT (DAY 4)

DATE: 15TH May, 2003.

**Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones
Commissioner William Schabas (Presiding)
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto**

**Martien Schotsmann - Leader of Evidence
Abdulai Charm - Leader of Evidence**

WITNESS NAME: Coker Aiah Swarray

WITNESS NO: 14

**Prayers: Muslim - Abdulai Charm
Christian - Rev. J. S. Fornah**

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by Commissioner William Schabas, the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

I was born in Kailahun, when I first heard of the rebels, I fled to Gandorhun and then to Koidu. Later I met a woman from Bafodia and she took me there. In 1998, "Water Bottle" came with his group and he told us that they are juntas. We fled but my in-law was shot and killed with a single-barrel. They looted all our properties. We fled in to the bush to hide. They went to look out for us but they were unable to see us because they were not familiar with the terrain. Whilst in the bush, we ran out of food so I decided to go out to look for food. I was able to get a bag of rice. I was carrying the bag when somebody halted me, although I did not understand the meaning of 'halt'. In front of me, a man was killed and later "Blood" took me to a house where they held some girls. He accused me of being the person who wrote a letter to Freetown asking for help so that they will be driven from Bafodia. I denied; he gave me some slaps and then ordered me to lie down. He brought out a machete and gave me fifty lashes with it. Bobby then gave me a bag of rice to take to Katawia where Savage was. I told him it was heavy but he told me that he will put me to a long sleep. I eventually took it to Savage and later he told me and other abductees to dig a big hole where we will be buried after killing us. In the evening the rebels attacked and drove Savage from Katawia. I came to Kabala and then to Bafodia. I urinated blood for a month although I took some herbs which had helped, I still experience it sometimes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thanks you for coming and for sharing your experiences with us. Were you a member of any group?

Coker Aiah Swarray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know why you were suspected of having written to Freetown?

Coker Aiah Swarray: The woman with whom I stayed, was the Paramount Chief's daughter.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: - Is the Paramount Chief the same person in Freetown?

Coker Aiah Swarray: He was in Freetown at that time.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is the name of the Paramount Chief?

Coker Aiah Swarray: PC Alimamy Amidu the First.

Commissioner Torto: What group does your attackers belonged to?

Coker Aiah Swarray: They belonged to Savage's group.

Commissioner Torto: How do you categorize the group? Do they belong to RUF, Junta, SLA, Kamajor?

Coker Aiah Swarray: They were AFRC.

Leader of Evidence: You said, you started experiencing attacks while you were in Kono. Did anything happen to you when you were in Kono?

Coker Aiah Swarray: The man in charge of Kono was Islika. We ran to Bumpe. There were a

lot of soldiers in Bumpo. All the women were allowed to go but all the men were captured and tied. I still have the marks. My arms were tied behind my back and my legs were tied. I was stripped naked. Cigarettes stubs were put out on my penis. A woman by the name of Mariama Jabba helped me escape. I ran till I reached Bafodia.

Leader of Evidence: In 1998 you said the SLA were based in Bafodia, did the rebels attack the SLA? Was there actually a fight between the SLA and the rebels?

Coker Aiah Swarray: In Bafodia, there were Juntas not SLA. Rebels came from Makeni to attack the Juntas in Bafodia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I have one question for you. What happened to Islika? Did you hear that he was dead?

Coker Aiah Swarray: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know where Savage, S.S.Jah and Blood are now?

Coker Aiah Swarray: - I met Col. Jah in Freetown at Youyi Building, others I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know if Col. Jah is still in the army?

Coker Aiah Swarray: I can't tell because I saw him in civilian clothes.

Commissioner Schabas: Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Coker Aiah Swarray: No.

Commissioner Schabas: The Commission will be making recommendations to the Government, do you have any recommendation?

Coker Aiah Swarray: At present, I am not very healthy, I want the Commission to tell the Government to assist me get medical attention. Secondly, I want the government to help me educate my children and to resettle me so that I will be able to take care of my family.

Commissioner Schabas: Your recommendations sound reasonable and will be included in our report. I thank you for coming to share your testimony with the Commission.

WITNESS NAME : Sullay Conteh

WITNESS NO: 15

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by Presiding Commissioner Schabas.

TESTIMONY

I am a born at Wara Wara Bafodia. When I heard that SAJ Musa was coming, I took my family and when they came they looted all my properties, including my radio. My first son was captured but he escaped and returned to Bafodia. Later, Water Bottle and his group came to Bafodia. A woman advised that we went into hiding as one Lansana had been killed. After two weeks in the bush, Savage came and told us that he was there to help us and that we should provide lodging for him since he is a good stranger. We gave him a room in the house and we were staying together.

Morning I was giving four gallons of palm oil to take to Katawia. I was unable to carry it but they forced me to. They beat me with gun and threatened to kill me. I fell on the ground helpless. One said he would kill me but the others advised him not to and so they left me in the bush. I was in the bush for two days and my relatives where searching for me. I reached a village where I met Pa Sullay Conteh searching for me. I went to Bafodia and later my brother in Kabala went to collect me. We used a bye pass road onto Kabala and I was taken to a pharmacy for treatment. I am experiencing back ache. I was a farmer but due to the back ache I am unable to farm. My children are going to school but I can not support my family. This is my experience in Bafodia.

Commissioner Schabas: Thank you for coming to share your experience with us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. You were lucky to escape with your life and you should be thankful for that. How old was your son when he was captured?

Sullay Conteh: He was 15 years old.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming. During your captivity, were people killed?

Sullay Conteh: I did not see anybody killed, but Lansana was killed in Bafodia, he was killed by Water Bottle. We saw one corpse, Lansana.

Commissioner Torto: Lansana what?

Sullay Conteh: Lansana Kamara

Commissioner Torto: Did you see them commit atrocities like raping, amputation etc?

Sullay Conteh: No. As soon as we heard gun shots, we ran into the bush.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know which group attacked your village?

Sullay Conteh: It was Savage's group. I saw them in military uniforms but I could not identity the group.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned that your son was abducted. On his return, did he narrate his ordeal?

Sullay Conteh: Yes the rebels wanted him to join them but he refused. He was in form two (2) at the time and he managed to escape.

Leader of Evidence: Apart from your son, were other children abducted?

Sullay Conteh: I don't know about other children.

Commissioner Schabas: - At present what does your son do?

Sullay Conteh: He is going to school.

Commissioner Schabas: Have you any question for the Commission?

Sullay Conteh: I would like the Government to assist my children with education. As I have severe backache and cannot do any farm work to support my family, I would like the government to help educate my children so that in the future, they would be able to care for their parents.

Commissioner Schabas: Do you have any recommendation for the Commission for onward transmission to the Government?

Sullay Conteh: What the rebels did was very terrible. I would like the Government to take action against those perpetrators in order to prevent such things happening in the future.

Commissioner Schabas: - I thank you for coming and we sympathize with you for all that you suffered.

WITNESS NAME: Madam Yeliba Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 16

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by th Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner William Schabas.

TESTIMONY

Please forgive me. Fabala town was attacked, when you are under attack you will not look back. My properties and families were in Fabala. They told me that the rebels were coming. I said no, I want to stay to take care of my cattle. Whatever happens I will not know. They captured me and I stay with them for a long time. Everybody had his job. If I explained leaving behind something from my written statement, I had one of my relative who gave her daughter to my son to marry, that girl's limb was amputated. She came crying, that Falaba was destroyed. It was very difficult indeed because there were no grass, the cattle all went back to Falaba. I went back to Falaba, when the rebel group lead by Saj Musa came. I saw them with torch light it was late in the night. I woke all of my children that something was wrong. They took all our belongings, our cattles, and defecate in my house. They took my cow and returned it; they said the cow was a suckling mother. They said that I should give them Le 20,000; I credited from my neighbour. That same moment the colonel told me that they said I have a lot of valuable things. I told them that I am a farmer and I acquired all these things from the proceeds I got from farming. I asked them who told them all these things. I told them I had relative. They started to search my house. I was ordered out of my house. My son was not around, he is Lahai Samura, and they asked him for me, his hands were tied behind his back. He was very huge. I said that it is not worth living. He was stripped naked right in front of his wife. I was also stripped and my daughters. I told them that they should kill me. They said that they are going to marry my daughter. I told them she is a small girl. they said that they are going with me as well. I have contact with big people. I told them that if they like they must do anything there is no sin for that. They said that it is between me and Tejan Kabba. I told them that I have never known Tejan Kabba. I told them one of the children is not my biological child. The child was taken away from us. They took all our belongings untie the cattle, my hands were tied.

My father left a document with me, the time that he was getting old. The village plan; the document was brought by some white people. I took the document and placed it in my bag. I

told them that the paper was handed to us by our ancestors. I was in the hands of the CDF, I spent one month with them. They sent three to find me, but I was not there. The commander sent 10 more people to capture me; at that time I had just finished cooking. They said that they had been sent by Pa Demba who was the commander of the CDF. I told them that I did not know him. I informed my husband that they had sent some people to call me. I don't want to leave my children behind.

Upon my arrival, I was told by Pa Demba that he had sent for me, I heard that you have a war. That I am a Yalunka. I told them that I heard all that. I told them if there is somebody to help, it is with God. If you are the cause, there are people who want us to kill all your cattle. I told them that I am not a stranger. I was related to the chief in that he is my sisters' husband. "What I wanted you to do we have arrange for CDF, but there are other people are among us. If your cattle were killed they will blame me." He sent his men, to count the cattles, he told them not to take my properties because I am woman.

My husband said that it was fine. We had planted rice. We will take care of our selves. They told us they are there to help us. For the same of Pa Demba. There was no common understanding between them. My husband wanted to go back to his house, I told him that I want to escort him but he said no. I would not be able to pay the chief.

During the month of Ramadan, he bought a lot of things and said that I should carry it to my husband for the fasting to receive some blessings. He did not destroy anything. Col Bobby and his men went for me. He claimed that I am Pa Demba's wife. I told him that they had collected rice from everybody in Falaba. My husband took the rice, at that time we were attacked, the document I had at that time, I knew the quarrel between my father and Pa Demba was because of that document. I produced the photo of Pa Demba. They said I am a brave woman. I took the document and hid it under my bed. Unfortunately for me my house was burnt.

When we went to a village nearby, they raped my child Salamatu; the man who raped her told his colleagues that she was a virgin. I told her that we were helpless and whatever they wanted to do they must do it. They us to a place wherewe were tied and hung, at that time they had done so many bad thins top us.

At that time a man called G5 came and ask for the cattle, I greeted him for him to know that I have heard him. They took two of my cattle away, they were unable to get somebody to buy it so they took the cattle to Kailahun. They attacked our town, it was rapid firing. They left my eldest child behind, they said that she should not enter the town. There were a lot of them. They threatened to kill me. I told them that one of my children was left behind. They took me to their chief and I was detained there. My daughter was made wife, and said that I was lucky to have a beautiful child as my daughter. They ordered for two people to kill and bury me. I told them I had a tie and I wanted to tie my head. A lot of them came the two people who were appointed to bury me.

There was another man who was a rebel, he interrogated them and they said that they were going to kill me. He appealed to them to have mercy on me that he was going to sign for me. There was a man called CO and I saw him talking on the phone. He said that my children were very young. It will not be possible for them to walk on feet. He said that one day the war will definitely come to an end. I told them I was an ulcer patient , I was unable to walk for a long distance. He said he had become a rebel because of the war, he promised to save my life. Based on the prevailling circumstances, I will be totally free. Wherever we go one of my cattle was killed. They said if I deny the fact that Pa Demba was my husband, they will kill me. I denied. A lot of them came and they were asking me lots of questions. So I was silent, they asked the reasons why? I told them that I had to because if I said anything that will go against them they will deal because it was a soldier's world.

The man told them to release me, they must let go of me because they had killed all my cattles and my daughter had been raped. I had not made any false statement. It was at that time that they made up their mind to release me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: - Yeliba Mansaray, you've told us your story in such detail but we would want to ask you some questions, so that we can understand clearly what you have said. Was Demba Mansary one of the CDF?

Yeliba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he try to keep your cattle safe?

Yeliba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did you stay with him?

Yeliba: One month.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you become a bush wife to him?

Yeliba: He was a fighter.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: That is not quiet clear. My question is did you become a bush wife to him?

Yeliba: Initially, there was no relationship but I later become a bush wife to him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: As a true warrior he sent you back to you husband?

Yeliba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What happened to your son when the rebels captured him?

Yeliba: They tied him, beat him in the shoulders as he was very huge.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: But they did not kill him?

Yeliba: No, but he is unable to do carpentry work.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many daughters have you?

Yeliba: Six.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did the rebels share all six children amongst themselves.

Yeliba: Yes, but the seventh daughter is in Kabala.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they rape you?

Yeliba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did you stay with the rebels?

Yeliba: I would say five months.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you see what they were doing, how they were fighting?

Yeliba: Yes, I saw some.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us a bit about what you saw?

Yeliba: My house was burnt , one of my nephews was killed, 3 others killed.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell the names of the people who were killed?

Yeliba: I am not able to tell but it was the rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I want to know the names of the people killed not attackers.

Yeliba: Sheriff, Sheriff, Idrissa, Maneka.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When you were finally released were you able to find any of your cattle?

Yeliba: - They took all my cattle only one was left.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many cows had you initially.

Yeliba: 15.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: As a result of your suffering with the rebels and your sad experiences, what is your present health condition?

Yeliba: Heart trouble. My status then was different from my present status. If I continue to think about the past, I will die and leave my children to suffer.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about your daughters, are they all in good health.

Yeliba: Yes, but they sometimes complain of pains.

Commissioner Torto - We thank you very much for coming before the Commission. I just have very few questions to ask. Have you heard of the existence of any of your attackers?

Yeliba - I have not heard about them, I went back to the village after my release.

Commissioner Torto - If you see them can you identify them?

Yeliba - Yes.

Commissioner Schabas - Have you any question to ask the Commission?

Yeliba - No.

Commissioner Schabas - We will be making recommendations to the Government of Sierra Leone. Do you have any recommendations to make to the Government

Yeliba - What I want the Government to do for me, I am not the only person in Falaba everybody fell victim of what happened in our Town. All that we had and what we inherited from our fathers had been destroyed. I would not ask the Government to help me personally, we would be very happy if the Government will assist us in rebuilding our community. We you feed a hungry man today and tomorrow you have nothing for him it will be a problem.

Commissioner Schabas - We thank you, your recommendations would be included in our report. I thank you.

WITNESS NAME: Sanie Kamara

WITNESS NO: 17

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner William Schabas.

TESTIMONY

I was asleep on a Thursday night, when we heard gunshot; before I could get up my house was ablaze. My elder brother was killed, the other one was killed in his house, his house was set on fire, in the morning we took him to bush. He was receiving some medication when he died. We ran away to Guinea. My condition in Guinea was not favourable. I had many children. There was no food, I had to go around begging. We heard that the Guineans were in our village so we had to return. The rebels came and collected papers from us, they promised not to disturb us. Everyday, there were threats from rebels we were running up and down. The group of Col. Bobby came to us. Everyday we were asked to contribute two pounds of rice. We carry their luggage for them. We were there until the end of the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you for coming, and we are sorry about the loss of your brother, where you able to give him a fitting funeral?

Sanie Kamara - Two of them were buried in a single grave, mass burial.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where?

Sanie Kamara - In Falaba.

Commissioner Torto - Thank you for coming, your story is short and interesting. Who were your attackers?

Sanie Kamara - It was during the night, I was not at home.

Commissioner Torto - Can you say anything about Saj Musa and Sgt. Yayah?

Sanie Kamara - I don't know anything about them.

Commissioner Torto - Apart from your brother , can you tell if any body else was killed?

Sanie Kamara - Yes, Fatmata, Lansana he was a stranger, was burnt in his house. There was also Momodu Turay.

Commissioner Torto - When you ran away to Guinea, you heard that Guinean troops were in Falaba. You said that the rebels gave you papers; what did you do with those papers?

Sanie Kamara - That we should not be afraid to stay with them.

Commissioner Torto - If you see any of the rebels, can you identify them?

Sanie Kamara - I can recognize Col. Bobby.

Commissioner Torto - Do you know whether he is alive?

Sanie Kamara - I don't know.

Commissioner Torto - In your written statement you said they looted your cattle.

Sanie Kamara - When we ran away to the bush, that was the time they looted our cattle.

Commissioner Torto - Who was Sgt. Burn House?

Sanie Kamara - I heard about him, but I don't know him.

Commissioner Schabas - What are you doing for your living?

Sanie Kamara - I am a farmer.

Commissioner Schabas - Are you still a Farmer?

Sanie Kamara - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Do you know how long the rebels stayed in Falaba?

Sanie Kamara - For a long time.

Leader of Evidence - During their stay where you treated badly?

Sanie Kamara - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell us some of the things that they did to you?

Sanie Kamara - We did everything for them, we pound their rice.

Leader of Evidence - Did they beat you?

Sanie Kamara - No.

Leader of Evidence - If you refused to give them rice, what will they do to you?

Sanie Kamara - If they ask you to do something for them and you did not they will punish. You will contribute so that you will not be punished.

Leader of Evidence - Your two brothers were killed in the attack?

Sanie Kamara - Yes.

Commissioner Schabas - Have you any question to ask the Commission?

Sanie Kamara - No.

Commissioner Schabas - We will be making our recommendation to the Government. Have you any recommendations to make to the Commission for onward transmission to the Government?

Sanie Kamara: I would like the Government to assist in my children's education. My houses were all burnt down. This is the only help I want from the Government.

Commissioner Schabas - Thank you very much. This is a reasonable recommendation you have made. We extend our heart felt sympathy to you for the loss of your two brothers. We appreciate your courage to come and testify before this Commission.

WITNESS NAME: Yereh Samura

WITNESS NO: 18

The witness was sworn on oath on Koran by Commissioner Schabas, the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

I am happy to be with you all. I pray that it will never happen again. We are very happy for this Commission. On the 27th of March 1998 at about 11.30p.m. in Falaba, we heard sporadic firing; we have been told by ECOMOG that whenever we heard gun shots we must stay indoors. When I heard the firing, I was about to open the door, when somebody told me not to open. I said "why haven't you told me this before?" I told him that he would have the final sleep that day. I tried to open the back door and I called my entire family. We were 17 in number and I was behind. I was in the toilet, when an RPG was launched on my house and it went ablaze; I ran across the street. It was firing all over the town. They were calling Col. Foday, saying that they should advance in two directions and they should do so in hundred's, they were carrying torch. The firing lasted until 5 in the morning. After they had left, we came back to our town. We found out that our houses were all burnt down. My child was captured. I searched for my son for about 12 hours before I saw him coming, he is presently with me. We went to Guinea where we spent 1 month and fifteen days and we returned back to Falaba. What we were used to eating in our town, was not in Guinea. Seventeen of us returned from Guinea to our village. When we arrived, a document was given to us that we must all be one. We should be providing them food. They promised that they would not loot our properties again. We saw 48 of them who said that they have come to loot. We told them that we had nothing left. Our houses were burnt down, after that, in the year 2000 we were hungry and I sent my wife to Kabala. Upon her arrival - it was on a Saturday and she should have returned on the next Friday, she passed to her sister in nearby village. She met a man called Sheku Bah. He asked them were they were going. He asked what were they going to do at Falaba. My wife asked "don't you know me?" He said no and that he wanted to see blood. My wife was with his son. Sheku Bah returned back and took his gun, whilst he was very closed to my wife he cocked his gun. My son said that he was not joking. My son asked what have we done to you? He said that he is going to kill my son. My wife pleaded. He cocked his gun for the second time. My son was about to remove the magazine from his gun, when he fired my wife, she fell down and died. The soldiers who were at Kabala brought her corpse to Kabala, and she was buried.

I sent my other wife to Kabala, and at that time Kabala was attacked, they were climbing a hill when a bullet hit her and she died after. If I wanted to explain everything, it will be a long story. I had eight children with my wife. All the things that I had lost, beginning from the cattles, all my properties lost, I will not bring them back again. I had four houses, 2 in Falaba and two in

another village; they were all burnt. That is my story.

Commissioner Schabas - Thank you very much. I sympathise with you for your personal loss.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you for coming, I am sorry for the death of your wife and all your properties and houses, but I see you are a religious man because you started off with a prayer, you can still go on in faith. I have a few questions. What is your occupation now?

Yereh Samura - At present, I am embarking on gardening.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What were you doing before?

Yereh Samura - I was working at PWD, I started work in 1961.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Where you involved in mining?

Yereh Samura - No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - In your written statement, you mentioned about the loss of some gold.

Yereh Samura - Yes, it was my wife's property.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many houses were burnt?

Yereh Samura - Four.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - You were not able to gather some of those burnt zinc to put up a structure?

Yereh Samura - I was unable to gather them, because I ran to Guinea.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Can you give us the names of the seven people who were killed?

Yereh Samura - Sheriff Samura, Momodu Kamara II, Small Mummy, Big Mummy, Pa Sana who was burnt down, and Sarif, his head was chopped off and placed at a check point.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - You said that they were buried in a mass grave?

Yereh Samura - No, some were buried in a mass grave whilst others were buried individually.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - If we decide to go to the village, will we be able to see the mass grave?

Yereh Samura - Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - In Falaba?

Yereh Samura - Sorie and another were buried in the same cemetery, one was buried in his garden and the other behind the Chief's compound.

Commissioner Torto - Thank you for coming, where is Sheku Ba?

Yereh Samura - He was captured and taken to Mongo.

Commissioner Torto - So you have not heard about him?

Yereh Samura - The former speaker son, saw him at Kaliere.

Commissioner Torto - Who was he, was he a soldier or RUF?

Yereh Samura - We heard that he was a CDF.

Commissioner Torto - When you traveled to Guinea, on your return you said you were given a paper, who were they?

Yereh Samura - The rebels.

Commissioner Torto - But you left soldiers in Falaba?

Yereh Samura - They were rebels. We were afraid to come back, they rebels asked us to join them, they gave a week to join them. They looted all our properties. They gave us documents again. Till when it was peace. We were like slaves, our children did not belong to us. Our children did not belong to us. If I had wanted to explain everything we will be here till tomorrow morning.

Commissioner Torto - I understand your plight. Where is you son now?

Yereh Samura - Which one?

Commissioner Torto - The boy that wrestled with the rebels.

Yereh Samura - He is in Makeni.

Commissioner Torto - What is he doing in Makeni?

Yereh Samura - He is a soldier.

Commissioner Torto - When did he join the Army.

Yereh Samura - 2 years ago.

Commissioner Torto - What does the name Lt. Yayah means to you.

Yereh Samura - While the operations were on, the rebels were shouting Lt. Yayah's name.

Commissioner Torto - Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What did you mean by Pademba, is it the Prison?

Yereh Samura - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - I want to make some clarifications, can you tell us the name of your wife that had been killed?

Yereh Samura - Her name is Finda Turay.

Leader of Evidence - You also lost your child.

Yereh Samura - Yes, Salifu Samura.

Leader of Evidence - He was one year six month?

Yereh Samura - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - The time the rebels attacked Falaba, was there ECOMOG around.

Yereh Samura - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - I thank you.

Commissioner Schabas - Have you any questions for the Commission?

Yereh Samura - We are in line with all that you have said. If I think of the past, **I will** not be happy. I am listening to you after everything I have explained. The time of the war, what I have lost, will never be able regain. I recommend to the Government that there are no schools and houses in Falaba. I have six of my children that are going to school; three of them are in Arabic schools, there are no teachers to teach them. If you can help us to rehabilitate our houses, free education for our children; if you have rest of mind, you will have reward from God. Please help us. Thanks be to God.

Commissioner Schabas - We will prepare our report, what you have said will be included in our report. I thank you for coming here and sympathise with you for the loss of your wife and child.

WITNESS NAME: Saidu Turay

WITNESS NO: 19

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner William Schabas.

TESTIMONY

One day we were in Falaba and we were asleep; I have children and my parents who are very old with my two wives. We were leaving in continuous fear. One night we were asleep when information reached us that one of our uncle's sons was killed, his head was chopped off. It was on the 8th March. There was flames all over the town. We were confused; I took my children, wife and carried my mother on my back, I took them to a big cotton tree, one of my wife was selling palm wine, the other one was selling groundnut; all these goods were in the house. All we heard that night was "advance, advance." I went into the toilet to hide; one of my brothers Mohamed Turay was shot, he fell down and one of them stabbed him with a bayonet. One of my neighbours house was burnt down with her children in it. One also had a daughter who was matured was also sent into the fire. We were all confused, it was God who saved me. My house was set ablaze, they came from one direction and we were in the centre. I witnessed all these killings and all the houses were set ablaze, I hid myself and after they had passed, I met my people in the bush. I carried my mother; my children and wife continued the journey and we went

into the bush. While we were in the bush, one man by the name of the Col. Bobby asked us to come to town to collect papers so that we would not be disturbed by anyone. Because we were hunted in the bush, all our properties were taken from us. They asked us to carry their loads. After we received those passes, we were asked to take care of them. The little we had for our feeding was given to them. As for me I am totally finished. Some of the loads were so big that a motor cycle would not carry. Four people were asked to carry a whole engine for them. If you refused they will beat you. I sometimes find banana for my children. We were leaving in this situation until finally peace came.

Commissioner Torto - During the attack, Mr Turay, did anybody die?

Saidu Turay - yes.

Commissioner Torto - Where?

Saidu Turay - In Falaba.

Commissioner Torto - Can you tell me the name of the person who was killed?

Saidu Turay - Karamoko Sheku, Salifu, Mohamed, Amara, Mama Fudia, almost eighteen people were killed.

Commissioner Torto - So you cannot remember all their names?

Saidu Turay - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - Did they all die on the 27th of March?

Saidu Turay - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - Did you see them rape any woman apart from the forced labour they subjected you to?

Saidu Turay - All the women were raped?

Commissioner Torto - What do you mean that your wives were not your wives?

Saidu Turay - They would come and take your wife without your consent.

Commissioner Torto - Do you remember any of your attackers?

Saidu Turay - Col. Bobby was with us.

Commissioner Torto - Col. Bobby, which group did he belong to?

Saidu Turay - I cannot tell.

Commissioner Schabas - Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Saidu Turay - No.

Commissioner Schabas - Have you any recommendations for the Commission for onward transmission to the Government?

Saidu Turay - My wives were helping me to take care of my children. We had no houses, we are still in the bush. If there is any help that Government can give to help us educate our

children in the community. Because we all suffered the same loss.

Commissioner Schabas: Thanks very much for coming. We have now come to the end of today's hearing.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KOINADUGU DISTRICT (DAY 5)

DATE: 16TH May 2003

Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones (Presiding)
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto
Commissioner William Schabas

Martien Schotsmann - Leader of Evidence
Abdulai Charm - Leader of Evidence

WITNESS NAME: Fatmata Sillah

WITNESS NO: 20

General Christian and Muslim were offered.

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by the Presiding Copmmissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

I was in my house after coming from work on a Monday at about 5p.m. Initially the Rev. Sisters I was working with to go and check for my children as she had been informed by the Americans of the movement of a large group of people. On my way coming for my children, there was sporadic firing. I finally joined my children and my husband in the house. We all hid ourselves in the house. We have been told that no body should go out. A man knocked on our door, but we refused to open. He break the door and we were placed under gun point. All that we had in the house were looted. They gave us loads to carry. Various items were looted from different houses. My husband was given a bag of rice to carry to their base. The rice had been looted from a neighbor's house. He carried it for some distance but became tired and he was unable to continue. When I started to cry, they threatened to kill me and my eldest son was killed because he refused to continue after his Father was shot. We continued on to a Farming site around Farawah, where we spent two weeks. I later collected my children and left for Kabala, after the rebels had abandoned us. We later went to Freetown. As I am talking, I've still not seen my other son who was abducted.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We are sorry for the loss of your son and husband, we want to ask you some questions for clarifications.

Commissioner Schabas - Thank you for coming to the TRC to give your testimony. When did this happen?

Fatmata Sillah - It took place on November 27th, 1994.

Commissioner Schabas - What did your husband do?

Fatmata Sillah - He did nothing.

Commissioner Schabas - How old was your son who was killed by the rebels?

Fatmata Sillah - 15 years.

Commissioner Schabas - Do you know the people who attacked you?

Fatmata Sillah - No, I cannot identify them.

Commissioner Schabas - What language they spoke?

Fatmata Sillah - A language similar to Mende, and Liberian pidgin.

Commissioner Schabas - They were not from Kabala?

Fatmata Sillah - No.

Commissioner Schabas - How many people attacked your village?

Fatmata Sillah - Initially, it was a man and after that a lot of them came.

Commissioner Schabas - How was your son killed?

Fatmata Sillah - He was shot with a gun.

Commissioner Schabas - Thank you very much, I sympathise with you for your loss.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - When you hid in the farm house, was your son with you?

Fatmata Sillah - No, I was there with my daughters.

Leader of Evidence - Fatmata, was your family the only family abducted?

Fatmata Sillah - They abducted some of my neighbours.

Leader of Evidence - Did anything happen to them?

Fatmata Sillah - When we were going nothing happened, but when the jet came we were all scattered.

Leader of Evidence - Whilst they were going to Farawah, did they attack other towns and villages?

Fatmata Sillah - The villages were deserted.

Leader of Evidence - Did the rebels burnt down your house?

Fatmata Sillah - Yes, it was burnt down.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Who buried your husband and son?

Fatmata Sillah - I don't know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - So there was no sign of burial when you returned?

Fatmata Sillah - I don't know, it was a very long distance; we abandoned the corpse .

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you any question for the Commission?

Fatmata Sillah - I want to thank the Commission because they are teaching us to forgive and forget. I believe God is with us, we are gradually putting the past behind us. I want to know how best the Commission can help us rehabilitate our community and help with the education of our children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We've heard these questions repeatedly by witnesses. The Commission cannot give money for education but the Commission will include in its report recommendation to help different people in their communities. Emphasis would be put on numerous children who were unable to go to school and don't have enough resources. The Commission will finish its work by the end of this year. Within a short time people will be able to benefit. Have you any other question?

Fatmata Sillah - We as elders can manage, but my concern is for our children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you any recommendations for the Commission for inclusion in our report?

Fatmata Sillah - I want them to help us resuscitate our vocational training institute.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Your recommendations would be included in our report. Our staff will help with technical advice as to which NGOs that will help resuscitate your institute. You seem strong and very active, and you certainly would be able to carry on with your life. I hope you feel a little bit relieved now. Thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Musa Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 21

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

I do not understand much krio. The rebel chased us out of our village; we acted on advice to stay

away from town. We hid in caves, and constructed some farm houses. The rebels were coming in and out of the village, so we had to be going back and forth. We went to our village and found out that they had looted all our belongings. My sister's husband was old and couldn't run; we left him in the house at about 5p.m. We went to the bush; we were there when we had sporadic firing. I was confused because I did not see my in-law until 6p.m. After 6p.m I decided to check for him, I was advised not to go, I was still worried. I insisted and passed through the bush path to the main road, I used the back door, I saw blood and my sister's husband was lying down, he was groaning, I wept. He said that he is dying, and that I should take care of his children, and they were four in number. I went back to the bush and informed my sister that her husband was severely damaged, he couldn't survive the pain. In the morning five of us went to check for him, we found him dead. We cut off some sticks placed him on top and took him to the bush for burial. The next day I came back to the house and realized that all my properties and creatures were carted away.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Musa, We are sorry you've lost your brother-in-law in such a brutal way. We are going to ask you some questions.

Commissioner Schabas : When did this incident took place?

Musa Mansaray - I don't know but it was around August.

Commissioner Schabas - How many years now?

Musa Mansaray - About 7 years.

Commissioner Torto - Do you know the people who killed you brother in law?

Musa Mansaray - I don't know, I met him almost dead.

Commissioner Torto - Do you know the group they belonged to; CDF, Junta, Kamajor, Donsu etc?

Musa Mansaray - I heard they were rebels.

Commissioner Torto - So you cannot identify them?

Musa Mansaray - No.

Commissioner Torto - Was your brother-in-law the only victim?

Musa Mansaray - A woman Tida Mansary was killed, also her son Shekubah Mansaray.

Commissioner Torto - So they were the only victims in that attack?

Musa Mansaray - Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you any question for the Commission?

Musa Mansaray - Yes, I am in doubt as to how our children will continue their education.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - If you have not been able to earn a living to take care of your children, I suppose that primary education is free. Nevertheless, your recommendations will be included in our report. Government will assist in the rehabilitation in your community. Have you any other question for the commission?

Musa Mansaray - Yes, we would like government to rehabilitate our houses. My brother-in-law

who was killed left behind his four children and I want the government to help me rebuild my house

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - The Government in due course will help develop various communities. I don't think Government neither the Commission will be able to build individual houses for people. Any more.

Musa Mansaray - Let us all pray that it does not happen again.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - That is what we are praying for. That is the mandate of the Commission. So that it will never happen. Any more

Musa Mansaray - We want the government to ensure that we get lasting peace in Sierra Leone and bring about rapid development that will benefit all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Finnah Daboh

WITNESS NO: 22

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

I was in my village when we saw lots of people coming towards Kabala. My husband advised that we go to Kabala. Later he said that we should go back. Although I was reluctant, we eventually went. The following day, My husband took his other wife and they went to the farm to collect food. When the rebels attacked, we went into our house to hid but they broke the door and abducted us. We were taken to the town centre and made to sit under a large cotton tree. Whilst there, my husband's nephew was shot and killed with a pistol. His name was Abass. Also a Police Officer was shot. They threatened to kill all of us and they refused to listen to my plea that I have small children. There was a girl called Aminata who had been tied, her child Damba was shot and killed. One of them said that they should amputate us because they had killed so many people in the other villages.

We were lined up and the first one was called, Nfagie, then Lamin, Serah Sesay, Musu a pregnant woman, Finnah Kamara, Adamsay's mother then it was my turn, they chopped off our hands. When they left us, I carried my younger child and the one I held by the hand. We left the village. On our way going I met a man called, Makkah who was shot dead and was hanging on his window. I met one of them on the way who asked whether they have finished with me and he said that I should go to Tejan Kabba for hands. I decided to travel by the main road, having it in mind that if I was to fall dead somebody would see me and take care of my children. I met Mammy Sarah whose hands were amputated, and a man, he said we should follow him. As we were climbing the hill, I was bleeding profusely, the man decided to help me with my children. I spent four days with the man hoping to see my husband, but they have told him if he dares to come the rebels will kill him. There was no medication so I decided to come back to Kabala. I gave the man Le1, 000 to accompany me; he refused and said he cannot venture that risk even for his mother. I decided to go alone carrying my baby on my back. I came up to Makakura and

I saw a helicopter going to Freetown. I later saw a vehicle, initially I was afraid, but it was the vehicle that was sent to collect the Police Officer, who was killed. They told me to wait, and on their return they brought me to Kabala where I spent four days. I was collected and taken to Freetown. I met all the other amputees at the Connaught Hospital. My child was taken away from me because of the severe pain I was going through. I was later taken to Waterloo, where I saw other wounded people coming from a village. I left and decided to join my relatives in Wellington.

When the rebels attacked Freetown, I had wanted to take the children to Sackville Street to my other relatives because they were in Wellington. While we were finding our way, I was recaptured by the rebels and my husband got missing with the other children. The child I was carrying on my back, fell down as I was trying to enter a house. One of the rebels pleaded for my release because I had already sustained injuries. As soon as I was released, I went back to check for my child, I found his cloth and the wrapper I was carrying him with, but I could not find my child. We were taken to Stadium, where a statement was obtained from me. Eventually, we were taken to Aberdeen, where we spent two years. Later, I got the information from a woman in Wilberforce that she saw my child at Bamakonta. My husband by then had returned to our village to build a house. A Reverend father gave me the sum of Le50, 000 to search for my child, but the woman said that the money would not be enough. I sold all that I had, making it a total of Le100, 000. We went on the journey to Bamakonta and the woman she was with accepted that the child was with her, but she will not release the child until my husband is back.

I met a man who is currently helping me to get my child, each time they prepare a document I had to pay. The woman advised me to come back to Kabala; when I came back to Kabala I found out that my husband had nothing on him. When I came to Kabala, my husband visited once, he said he had no money, claiming that I dropped the child with me. I had no way of getting my child back because I have no money.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Your story is a sad one. I really feel sorry that you went through such trauma. When you went to this woman who has your child, did you see the child?

Finnah Daboh - Yes, I spent three days with them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - You saw the child and identify him?

Finnah Daboh - Yes, his name has been changed to Mohamed.

Commissioner Torto - Finnah Daboh your explanation is quite pathetic, since you have now recovered the child. Did the people refused to give you the child or is it because of transportation?

Finnah Daboh - My husband said he had nothing. I don't have any means to go for my child.

Commissioner Torto - If you have the means, will you be able to get the child.

Finnah Daboh - Yes, when I went in search of him, they said that the woman had gone to Kono.

Commissioner Torto - Where is the child now?

Finnah Daboh - We met the child in Bamakonta and the woman in charge of him is in Kono.

Commissioner Torto - Which area in Kono?

Finnah Daboh - I don't know.

Commissioner Torto - Is she threatening to take the child away from you?

Finnah Daboh - Maybe.

Commissioner Torto - Was it during peace time?

Finnah Daboh - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - Were there Police Officer's in that village?

Finnah Daboh - I don't know, it is a small village, however, her in-law told her to released the child but she refused.

Commissioner Torto - Why didn't you alerted the chief?

Finnah Daboh - I was a stranger, she told me that we should not go to the Police or the Chiefs as they had different customs. I should go to my husband.

Commissioner Torto - Your husband is refusing because the child was with you?

Finnah Daboh - Yes.

Commissioner Torto - Where is your husband now?

Finnah Daboh - He is in Kondebaia.

Commissioner Torto - What is he doing in Kondebaia.

Finah - He is undertaking some building projects.

Commissioner Torto - Who stopped you from breastfeeding your child?

Finnah Daboh - I was stopped by the doctors and nurses for medical reasons.

Leader of Evidence - I want you to go back to the first event. You said that at one time the rebels had not wanted to kill you because they had killed many people in one of the villages, is that correct?

Finnah Daboh - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - How many of you were amputated?

Finnah Daboh - 10 of us were amputated.

Leader of Evidence - Were you the only woman?

Finnah Daboh - No, four of us.

Leader of Evidence - Your left hand was chopped, was it a policy that they should cut off your left hand.

Finnah Daboh - They said they are cutting the right limbs of men because they are farmers.

Leader of Evidence - Did they give you reasons for that?

Finnah Daboh - After they had chopped off my hand, one of them said that I should go to Tejan Kabba.

Leader of Evidence - Those of you whose hands were chopped off, did all of you survive?

Finnah Daboh - No, My husband's Uncle died and one Samuel Farawah.

Leader of Evidence- Some people were also killed?

Finnah Daboh - Yes, Abass Sesay and Makkah Sesay

Leader of Evidence - Makkah, was he the Police Officer?

Finnah Daboh - No, he was a cook for the Police and ECOMOG, I don't know the name of the police officer who was killed.

Leader of Evidence - You said a child was killed?

Finnah Daboh - No, a suckling mother Aminata was killed.

Leader of Evidence - What happened to the child?

Finnah Daboh - The child is alive.

Leader of Evidence - Your first child is with your husband.

Finnah Daboh - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - You showed us a letter from a tracing agency were you able to see them?

Finnah Daboh - No.

Leader of Evidence - Were you able to meet with them yourself?

Finnah Daboh - No, Sieh Mansaray was helping me.

Leader of Evidence - What did they do?

Finnah Daboh - He wrote a letter and gave me a copy.

Leader of Evidence - You had never received any result?

Finnah Daboh - No, I distributed the letters to different agencies, but to no avail.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you Finnah Daboh for coming to share your experiences, we are sorry that you are distressed. We noticed that the Chairman of the Amputee Association is doing his best to help you. We hope that not long, you will be able to get your child. We have heard many stories, of how people have been reunited with their children. Continue to have hope and determination. After here our staff will talk to you. Have you questions for the Commission?

Finnah Daboh - No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you any recommendations for the Commission?

Finnah Daboh - No, I would like to get assistance from the Commission because I am on my own and my husband has left me.

Commissioner Marcus - Jones - How old is your eldest child?

Finnah Daboh - The eldest is 6, the one missing was 2 years six months by then and the one with me now is 3 years.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - We have been looking at your letter, and the Commissioner has a question for you.

Commissioner Torto - The letter is address to the Director of ICRC, when you took it to him, what did he say?

Finnah Daboh -I was prevented by his security to see him, all the attempts I made were unsuccessful.

Commissioner Torto -From that time, have you been able to see him?

Finnah Daboh - No.

Commissioner Torto - Did you report back to the Chairman of your Association? What did he say?

Finnah Daboh - Yes, he too has his problems, but he has been making moves.

Commissioner Torto - The letter was also copied to NaCSA, they have a representative here, have you made effort to contact NaCSA?

Finnah Daboh - No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Balla Koroma

WITNESS NO: 23

The witness was sworn on oath on the Koran by Commissioner Justice Commissioner Marcus-Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

TESTIMONY

Praise be to God. I was in my village, Luro. I went for food as there was no food. When I came back, I realized that rebels had occupied the village. All my relatives were captured by the rebels. I could not find them, there were four soldiers around, as I moved forward I was halted and the civilians arrested me and handed me over to the soldiers, they told me that nothing is wrong with my family, a man by the name of Pa Saio was ordered to tie me, one of the civilian said that they should not tie me but to kill me.

I told him to allow me take off my boot so that my relatives will see it and know that I have been

killed. He fired me on my chest. I cried, his colleague who was much closer to him fired, I ran and another shot hit me on my hand.

Whilst I was running, I tried to remove the bullet from my chest; there was one on top of my eye. There were bullets all over my body. I went into the bush and there was sporadic firing. Pa Seseykay and two others were killed. My two houses and all the other houses were burnt. A man was captured and asked to carry five gallons of palm oil. I spent the night in the bush.

My wife followed me to the ECOMOG base, but there were no drugs, we were advised to go to Alkalia and from there I returned to Kabala, we spent three nights and eventually we went to Freetown and I was admitted at the Government Hospital. At present, we have nothing, unless you help us to educate our children. What we were able to do before the war we can't do now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you. We sympathize with you for your injuries. What village did all this take place?

Balla Koroma - Luro.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How far is it from Kabala?

Balla Koroma - It is a very long distance.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - How many fingers have you on your right hand, did you lose one of your fingers completely?

Balla Koroma - There are four but two are not working properly.

Commissioner Torto - I sympathize with you for what happened, after all the strains you went through you are still alive. It is a lot of courage. What was the position of your hand before you were shot?

Balla Koroma - .When I was shot the first time, I was carrying my other hand on top of my head. There are fragments all over my body.

Commissioner Torto - Where were you the only one attacked?

Balla Koroma - There were three old men and one woman.

Commissioner Torto - What happened to them?

Balla Koroma - The men were killed and the woman was released.

Commissioner Torto - What were their names?

Balla Koroma - Pa Kabba, Pa Sesaykie and Pa Brima.

Commissioner Torto - You traveled from your village to Kabala. How were you able to accomplish that, what kind of assistance did you receive?

Balla Koroma - My wife accompanied me from the village to Kabala, the first person to assist me was one CES worker, Manso.

Commissioner Torto - Were you taken care of in Kabala Hospital?

Balla Koroma - No, I was treated at Connaught Hospital.

Commissioner Torto - What is your present situation?

Balla Koroma - I have pains all over my body.

Commissioner Torto - Did they advise you to go to the hospital?

Balla Koroma - Yes, an MSF Staff in Freetown was helping me to get medical treatment.

Commissioner Torto - I advise you to continue to seek medical treatment in the Government Hospital here in Kabala, or MSF Hospital in Kabala.

Balla Koroma - I have visited the hospital here in Kabala, but they are asking for money.

Commissioner Torto - Have you been able to continue your farming?

Balla Koroma - No.

Commissioner Torto -What are you doing now?

Balla Koroma - I am not doing anything, I have no money.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - You have hearing problem as a result of the firing?

Balla Koroma - Yes, I also have problem with my speech.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What about your sight?

Balla Koroma - Yes, I have eye sight problem also.

Leader of Evidence - I would like to know how many times you were shot?

Balla Koroma - One on my chest the other two on my hands.

Leader of Evidence - Was it on the same day?

Balla Koroma - Yes.

Leader of Evidence - How many people?

Balla Koroma - Three different people.

Leader of Evidence - Do you know the group the civilians belonged to?

Balla Koroma - I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence - Do you think they belonged to the same group?

Balla Koroma - I don't know.

Leader of Evidence - They were not fighting each other, but attacking the civilians in the village?

Balla Koroma - They did not abduct people in the village.

Leader of Evidence - Can you remember the time this happened?

Balla Koroma - May 15, I cannot tell the year, I spent five years in hospital in Freetown.

Leader of Evidence -Were other people abducted or amputated, or houses burnt or properties looted?

Balla Koroma - No, there purpose was just to kill.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Have you any question for the Commission?

Balla Koroma - We are appealing for your assistance, to educate our children, we sell fire wood to sustain ourselves.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - have you ever been in touch with any NGO?

Balla Koroma - Yes, series of letters written by the Chairman and was sent to them, only the NGOs in Freetown supplied us. I have a family of six, it is only a bag of corn mill that was supplied.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - You talk to our staff. They would be able to refer you so that you can get some medical attention. Unfortunately, TRC had no money. It is not the mandate of TRC to give assistance. At the same time your recommendation will be included in our report. Do you have any recommendation for the Government?

Balla Koroma - No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you, keep your courage, you are meant to live, if not with all those bullets you would have been dead by now. Thank you. We have now come to the end hearings here in Kabala and the Koinadugu District. I want to thank all of you who had been assisting us in various ways during our stay here. I thank you all.

OPENING CEREMONY OF PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN MAKENI BOMBALI DISTRICT ON 26TH MAY 2003

General Muslim and Christian prayers were offered.

The Resident Paramount Chief presented a welcome address. He welcomed all present and reminded us of what the TRC is all about and said that the TRC is for the people. He stressed the need for reconciliation for sustainable peace in the country.

Mr. Raymond Tholley, a representative of the Civil Society Movement, also made a statement. He welcomed all to the Hearing stage of the Commission. He said that the Civil Society movement is in support of the Commission's quest for lasting peace in this country. He said that the Public, the Northern Region and the Bombali District are very much appreciative of efforts of the TRC.

Bishop G. Bigguzi made a statement on behalf of the Inter-Religious Council. Bishop Bigguzi said that the Inter-Religious Council is one of the groups that have contributed greatly and has remained committed to the peace process in this country since 1996 when it was formed. He

said that healing is a spiritual process and, therefore, the religious people are needed. According to him: "The TRC will help us to deal with the past in a different way. The war must be prevented from happening again and it is necessary to find out the causes of the war so that it will not be repeated." He said that no one should be afraid to speak the truth and look for the truth.

Mr F.B. Kamara made a statement on behalf of the SLPP-Sierra Leone Peoples' Party. He said the lamentation during the APC(All Peoples' Congress) rule made youths to join the rebels to bring the war.

Mr. Koya Kamara made a statement on behalf of the APC party.

Sister Rugiatu Kanu made a statement on behalf of the Women. She said that women were terrorized because they have no strength to fight back. Women, she said, suffered a lot during the rebel war. They were used as sex slaves and so forth. She encouraged all women to come forward and give their testimonies; for so doing, will start to heal the wounds. She made an appeal for the TRC to pay special attention to the sexually abused.

Peter Abass Bundu made a statement on behalf of the NGO Committee. He commends the TRC as a commission that complements the work of the humanitarian agencies. He thanked the Commission for its work in the Bombali District and the Northern Region.

The Provincial Secretary of the Northern Region also made a statement.

The Chairman, Bishop J.C. Humper, made a statement on behalf of the commission. He stated the mandate of the TRC. He said: "Today the Bombali District will experience a change. The commission during the hearing will open the wounds and also heal the wounds." He encouraged people to come forward to give their testimonies. He said TRC is not a court but a family gathering where people come to say what they have done wrong or where they have been wronged. He thanked the people of Bombali and the NGO community.

The vote of thanks was given by Miss Charlris Browne.

1st Witness – Isatu Jalloh

My name is Isatu Jalloh. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Bishop J. C. Humper - The Commission is ready to give you any support when giving your testimony. The Commission only wants the truth. You are now given the chance to make your testimony.

TESTIMONY

I hail from Sanda. The rebels met me at Sanda. In the first place, I saw a woman coming without clothes on. I asked her what happened. The woman told me: "Don't sit down, the rebels are in our village and are chopping the hands of people." We ran away to hide. That night the rebels came upon us as they attacked Bendembu that night. It happened at 2:00a.m. We were not able to run. The gun shot woke us up. We locked ourselves in the house. They fired gun shots until we heard someone blowing a whistle. We thought they had gone. They started burning houses. We decided to come out instead of being burnt in the house. A woman called Mariatu ;a suckling mother, was the first person to come out. She did not go too far and she was shot down. We heard her child crying and her husband went to pick up the child. As soon as the husband wanted to pick up the child he was shot and killed. We stood there for 10 minutes and I opened the door. When I moved out, I saw a rebel coming with a gun. I retreated in to the room and the rebel came and pushed the door. As I continued to push the door, he fired at the door and the bullet entered into my vagina and passed out through my anus. He called me a bastard because I shouted that I have been killed. I have three children; the youngest of them is eleven years ,the other is twelve and, the eldest is thirteen years . My husband then escaped and I told the children to do the same. The one that is 13 years old took refuge in the mosque and later came back and asked me to go into the mosque. I told the child that I was not going anywhere. The child persuaded me to come out and took me to the mosque. We slept in the mosque. In the

morning ECOMOG came and they wanted to take me to their base. I told them to give me water to drink but they refused. The child who had taken me to the mosque, went to fetch some water for me. While waiting, I fainted. ECOMOG took me to their base and told me that I will die. I was not given any medical treatment. I was waiting for a vehicle to take me to Makeni. I was there till 6:00pm before I was eventually taken to Makeni. In Makeni I was taken to the government hospital but I was not treated for three days because they thought I would die. My younger brother came and told the people that since I was talking I would not die and he took me to Magbeseneh hospital at Lunsar. Dr Fernando did two operations on me. I was there and the rebels attacked again after my 9th day. I was brought back to the Makeni hospital. When they saw that it had taken nine days and I was still alive; they accepted to give me treatment. The rebels then attacked Makeni again. I spent eleven days there. There was no way I could be treated; I was taken back to the village because all the roads were blocked. There was no treatment in the village. My condition was deteriorating and maggots were coming out of my vagina. What I did was to boil water with salt in a bowl and sat on it; the maggots stopped coming out. I was there for two years and I came across a man called Ibrahim Kamara. He took me out of the village and brought me to Connaught hospital. I was taken to MSF and they refused to do the operation until they get a report from Dr. Fernando. When we went to Dr. Fernando, he told us that he has no report because all his reports were burnt down. We came back to Freetown. We went again to Dr. Fernando for him to write a report to take to Freetown to the MSF Doctor. Dr. Fernando advised that we should notify the doctor of the kind of operation that was done on me. If the doctor does not know how to do the operation, then, he should not do it. When the doctor saw the paper he said he could do the operation. He then performed the operation. After the operation, I was taken to Grafton Camp and was there when the problem started again. I went again to the hospital but they refused to do another operation but they referred me Mercy Ship. The Mercy Ship people could not do the operation. I went again to Connaught hospital and they charged me Le 500,000 for the operation. Up till now I have done the operation because I have no money. They built a camp for us in Makeni; but I have no furniture, water or cooking utensil for the house. These are the problems that are affecting me now.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: I want to thank you for sharing with us your bitter experience. The Commission will ask some questions for clarification.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara: I am sorry for your sad experience. From your story you are not only a victim of the war. The Commission should send a message to the medical profession in this country who on their graduation takes the oath of working to save lives. I am sure their colleagues in other countries will regret and condemn them severely when they hear such a story. They treated you like a piece of wood without any life. I don't think I have any questions for you because your testimony was clear. I can only say that the Commission itself will see what it can do to help you solve your problem. I am sorry.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: You mentioned that you still suffer from the medical problem. I want you to tell us the state of your health now. Are you getting any medical attention?

Isatu Jalloh: The problem I have now is I have no medicine and I need treatment. The problem is difficult to solve except an operation is done. The problem is urine passes through my Vagina uncontrollably.

Commissioner Sooka: What happened to your family?

Isatu Jalloh: My family is around and safe nothing happened to them. I am the only person affected

Commissioner Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: I join the Commissioners to sympathize with you. What happened to you gives an insight into what happened to women and children. It is a very moving testimony. I am happy to note that your family is still intact. You are trying to build your life again.
Can you tell me when did this incident happen to you?

Isatu Jalloh: In 1998

Commissioner Jow: Do you have any idea of the faction that did this?

Isatu Jalloh: I do not know.

Commissioner Jow: Where they in combat uniform ?

Isatu Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that ECOMOG was in the village at the time that this incident happened.

Isatu Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us if there was any fight between the group and ECOMOG?

Isatu Jalloh: No. There was no fighting between them.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that you have had no treatment. How then do you cope?

Isatu Jalloh: Whenever I feel the pain I go for some drugs for pain relief.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that your husband escaped during the attack

Isatu Jalloh: He came back but we have separated and I am alone now. I heard he is in Tongo.

Commissioner Jow: Why did he leave you?

Isatu Jalloh: Following this problem there developed these incessant quarrels between us.

Commissioner Jow: Your child was 13years then. What is he doing right now?

Isatu Jalloh: He is going to school.

Commissioner Jow: What sort of support do you have for your son's education?

Isatu Jalloh: I have no support, I try for myself.

Commissioner Jow: What do you do to support yourself?

Isatu Jalloh: I do petty trading like selling cigarettes at home?

Bishop Humper:

We just want to get the story straight that is why we are asking these questions.

Bishop Humper: When the rebels attacked what did ECOMOG do?

Isatu Jalloh: The rebels attacked them unexpectedly. The ECOMOG force retreated for about 30 minutes and then came back and drove the rebels out.

Bishop Humper: Whenever you hear about ECOMOG what comes to your mind?

Isatu Jalloh: I am scared and the fear is still in me?

Bishop Humper: Do you remember the doctor's name who said you should pay Le 500,000 before he did the operation

Isatu Jalloh: I cannot remember the name of the doctor but he was an MSF Doctor.

Bishop Humper: Do you know of any women organization in this country?

Isatu Jalloh: No.

Bishop Jalloh: Have you ever attempted to take this your problem to any government hospital and tell them your condition?

Isatu Jalloh: When I was in Makeni I did not do that. I tried in Freetown but there was no way

Leader of Evidence : Mr.Abdulai Charm

Mr. Charm : I am sorry about what happened to you. You mentioned that one Mariatu was killed together with her husband. Can you tell us their names?

Isatu Jalloh: Yes, Osman Sesay and Mariatu. I cannot tell the surname of the woman.

Mr. Charm: Apart from the two people that were killed, did they kill other people.

Isatu Jalloh: I know some and I do not know some. A lot of people were killed.

Mr. Charm: You said you had to run from your house was your house finally burnt down.

Isatu Jalloh: Yes.

Bishop Humper: We have been asking questions on clarifications.

It is now your turn to ask us questions

Isatu Jalloh: We the victims are suffering but the perpetrators are taken care of. Why is this happening?

Bishop Jalloh: You are not the only person asking that question. We have to look at the whole problem from different angles. There are two groups the victims and the perpetrators. I do not know the rationale but what I know is this: The international community and the government are working together to achieve peace. The implication here is that the government takes guns from the perpetrators by giving them incentives. I must say that if the government have not done this we will not be sitting here. The Commission knows that the Lome Peace Agreement in Article 29 says the government should set up the War Victims' Fund. The Commission is victim focused. What ever the Commission will come out with, the ultimate goal is that the victims' needs must be addressed.

Isatu Jalloh: We see different things happening in our camp. We see that they bring something for the amputees. We the war wounded suffered the same but we are not taken care of. Is this the peace?

Bishop Jalloh: The peace should not work that way. What is happening is that we see that the amputee and the war wounded are all victims. The Commission is working to bridge the gap between the amputees and war wounded. The Commission is trying to say whether you are an amputee or war wounded the Commission is looking at all those who suffered during the war. They should be addressed.

Isatu Jalloh: This problem that I have now is very difficult for me to solve. I want you to tell me how I can solve the problem.

Bishop Humper: That is a very good question. The Counsellor will talk to you at the end of this session.

Isatu Jalloh: Let me stop so far, so that I can give chance to other people.

2nd Witness – Ya Alimamy Kogba

My name is Ya Alimamy Kogba. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Bishop: We hope your contribution will give us an insight of what caused the war. I repeat that the Commission is not a court. Please relax and give your testimony

TESTIMONY

I am Ya Alimamy Kogba and I am a chief. I was married to Chief Kanada Borie II. We were resident Freetown. At the initial time that Freetown began to feel the wind of the crisis, I was

pregnant . In view of the panic in town and in respect of my pregnancy we ran for safety to our village Madina, in Tonko Limba chiefdom. While there I began to feel the labour pains . I am a native of Kambia. I went to my relations for delivery. After delivery, my husband came and collected me and we went to Freetown. Because of the high level of the general feeling of insecurity ,we went back to Madina.Now, seven days after my delivery my husband was telling me that he was not feeling well. He was observing his fast. He had asked me to light the lamp. My child needed some attention so I did not have the chance to light the lamp at once. Although by then we were using a generator but since the moon was shining we did not put it on. Now,two boys came to ask for my husband and I told them my husband had gone for prayers. My husband asked me, "I told you to go and call one Pa Alimamy, have you done that ?" I told him Pa Alimamy came but he was not around. Whenever he wanted to break a fast he used grape fruit first. So I gave it to him. My child was still crying. My mate was fasting too. My husband sat on the chair after returning from prayers. I was trying to dress my child when I heard gunshots. I ran and went behind the kitchen. The gunshots continued.I went and sought refuge in the shade of one banana tree. Then people started running in different directions. I asked the people were was my husband and they told me that my husband had fled. I left my child and went to the bush. In the bush I told my husband's friend to collect my child for me. By then I had sustained a foot injury.I said to myself "where should I go." One of my husband's brothers took me to my mother-in-law's village at Mabane. When the old woman saw me, she asked for her son. I said, "I don't know your child's whereabouts". One man told me that he was fired. I wanted to go and see for myself. I was locked into a room and they refused to let me go. They told me that the rebels are looking for me. I pretended that I wanted to ease myself. I then went into the bush. I met some people with bundles on their heads. I met my husband in a pool of blood. I said to him.... It was that from that moment they took me to my village in Kambia. By then my foot was swollen. My mate was screaming because she too was shot. They brought me to Kambia and I stayed there for a while. I told them that my man was not dead but had a broken leg. I was fooled until I was taken to Freetown. I was in Freetown when the ECOMOG intervention force came in.Later on I was at Calaba Town and the rebels entered again. One day the rebels told us that today we are "going to put our last decision". We saw people whose hands were chopped off. They started burning houses. Wherever we turned, we saw houses set ablaze.I took my children,put my luggage on my head and we continued. On our way, we saw them. We went to the National stadium. I was there until my husband's friend said I should go to Guinea. I said I should go back to Tonko to clarify something. My relations told me that I should not go to Tonko. After that, my brother-in-law took me to Tonko. There,my late husband's burial rite was done. My relations insisted that I shall not stay there. I went to Kambia because I lost my father a long ago. The man taking care of me was my uncle. The rebels came back and attacked at night. We ran and passed through a stream because there was nothing we could do for they had surrounded the town. I was with my younger sister. When we were going my child fell into the water and almost drowned. I was just screaming. One man took my child out of the stream. The old man helped me until we reached the safe shores. I had sustained much injury to my body and, whatever was as at then left of my property ,because it the first time that I had to run for dear life through a stream.The child was having difficulty breathing and he was taken to MSF. The child later died. They took us to Pamlap. We were there for six months. I was mourning for my late husband and the rebels attacked us again. The rebels held my younger sister's husband and told him to carry load for them. When he said resisted, he was tied and shot dead. After that time,I had an injury on my head which I sustained through a stray bullet. One Doctor Balla helped me and I did not pay him. MSF did a lot without any payment. We were there and the rebels promised to attack again. We went to Conakry and later they said all Sierra Leoneans should leave Conakry. We joined the boat and went back to Freetown. That is all I have.

Bishop Humper: We will want to ask you questions for clarifications.

Commissioner Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: We want to join the Chairman to thank you for coming here. We are sorry for what happened to you. Not that we have any doubt about your

testimony but we need to make some clarifications.Can you tell us where you lived at the time of the incident?

Ya A. Kogba: Yes. I was in my husband's village, in Madina in Tonko Limba Chiefdom.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember the full name of your husband?

Ya A. Kogba: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: In your testimony you said he was killed by two rebel boys.

Ya A.Kogba: No I did not see anybody because I was in the room with my child. I heard only the gun shots.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have any reason why they came straight to your house?

Ya A. Kogba: I do not know of any reason.And by then everybody was trying to escape.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: I say thanks to you for your testimony. Like other women you suffered a lot during the war. You also mentioned an old man who helped you with your child. Do you know the fate of that old man?

Ya A.Kogba: I used to see him. He is still alive.

Prof.Kamara: Where is he?

Ya A.Kogba: He is in Kambia

Prof.Kamara: You mentioned of your other children. What happened to them?

Ya A.Kogba: I lost the one that fell into the river because of the difficulties the child went through downing a lot of water when he fell into the stream. We went late to the village. The child could not make it and he died.

Prof.Kamara: You said your sister's husband was shot. Was he killed?

Ya A. Kogba: Her husband was killed?

Prof.Kamara: Where is your sister now?

Ya A. Kogba: She is with me; but she has gone to the village.

Prof.Kamara: Where do you stay now?

Ya A. Kogba: I am staying with my friend.

Prof.Kamara: Who supports your living?

Ya A.Kogba: There is no means of survival. I do it myself because that is the only way I support my children?

Prof.Kamara: You said you were shot on the leg what is the state of the leg?

Ya A. Kogba: I was not shot, but I sustained serious leg injuries.

Prof.Kamara: Do you still feel the pain ?

Ya A. Kogba: No. I used strong ointment to ease the pain.

Prof.Kamara: Have you seen anyone to treat you?

Ya A. Kogba: For now the only thing I do is that I take tetanus treatment every three months?

Prof.Kamara: I am really sorry for what happened to you.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: It is a pity and you have my sincere sympathy for what happened to you.You said your husband was a chief. It is our understanding that the chiefs were targeted for some reason or another. Can you tell us the relationship that existed between your late husband and the people prior to the war?

Ya A. Kogba: I was staying in Freetown. I was not staying there. I do not actually know about it.

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Can you please tell us the name of your sister's husband that was shot dead ?

Ya A. Kogba: Yes. He is O'Foday.

Bishop Humper: This is your opportunity to ask questions or make recommendations to the Commission.

Ya A. Kogba: I will want to know why they set up the TRC.

Bishop Humper: It will take me one hour to answer the question. The TRC was established on the negotiating table at the Lome Peace Talks. In Article 9 of that document it has a blanket amnesty for the war. The UN realized the implications of a blanket amnesty and suggested that a body be set up to look into the testimony of perpetrators and victims. It was decided that a body be formed to look into the causes and effects of the war as the war would not have occurred without causes. In Article 26 in the Lome Accord, it has the formation of the TRC. On February 2000 the Act was passed in Parliament.Its primary purpose is to ensure healing and reconciliation without which there could be a repeat of what happened. Because of what happened in South Africa, Yasmin Sooka

was sent to work with us. The TRC stands for the truth, bringing together victims and perpetrators to move the process ahead.

Ya A. Kogba: I want to appeal to government for the education of my children. Our people are home less and some live in the camps. I appeal to the government to build houses for them.

3rd Witness – Adama Koroma

My name is Adama Koroma. I am a Muslim. Bishop Humper administered the oath.

Bishop Humper: Adama we are glad you are here to talk to us. I believe that you have been wondering why this should happen to you. You have now the opportunity to come before the Commission. Please be calm and relax to tell us your experience.

TESTIMONY

We were sitting in the veranda. It was dawn at that time and we heard gunshots. We ran and went into the bush. We walked till morning and we reached a village called Babafora. We were there for two months and we ran again. We entered inside the bush. We took a week in the bush and my husband said we have to go back to town. We went to town. This time we went to Babafora ;as were unable to go to where we came from. We stayed there till 11:00pm. As we shut the door we heard the rebels. They were hitting the door. They used such as “bastards open.” My husband was afraid. I opened the door and they held me. They asked me for my husband. I told them that my husband was not around. By then my husband was under the bed. They went in and brought him out. They got a lot of us. They had twenty-six of us and I was the only the woman. They told me to put my hand forward and I did that. They chopped off the hand. They said I should put the other hand. I said, “can’t you leave the other hand with me as I am a woman.” They said “no.” They chopped the other hand. They hit me with the machete and they said “go you bastard.” They lined up the men and they chopped off there two hands. My husband’s two hands and ears were chopped off. I went into the bush. I was there until ECOMOG came. They took me and brought me to Freetown. I took one week in Freetown. I did not know that my husband’s two hands were chopped off. They chopped off the two hands and the two ears. We were there till we got better. He told me that he was not going to live longer. On January 6th I was at the Aberdeen Road Camp; after two months my husband died. Before his death he told me that he will not be able to bear the pain because nobody will assist each other. I stayed in that camp with my children. I was there and then they built a camp for us. They brought us to Matamatma Camp where houses were built for us. We are there but we are still struggling. When I was with my two hands I worked for myself;s but now that I have one hand I have nothing to do. If you ask me today this is what happened to me because as I explained I am feeling it. My husband who used to help me had been killed. I wouldn’t have explained if it were not for the Commission. As I am explaining it is all coming back to me. I still feel the pain. This is my story.

Bishop Humper: We want to thank you for your cooperation. This morning I said it is painful to recall these experiences. I want you to know that the whole world is listening to what we are doing here.

Commissioner Jow: I say thanks to you for coming here. We admire you for your courage and bravery. As the Chairman had said you speak for all the women. We sympathize with you and we hope that you continue to live in your written testimony you spoke about the group called AFRC.

Adama Koroma: I do not know the people because they attacked us at night. They were putting on combat uniform.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember the period

Adama Koroma: In 1998

Commissioner Jow: You said 25 men were captured. Were all the men captured at the same place?

Adama Koroma: There were some strangers amongst those that were captured.

Commissioner Jow: Did they also suffer amputations?

Adama Koroma: Some of them, their two hands were chopped off and some one hand.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember what they said to you when they did this horrible act?

Adama Koroma: They did not say anything.

Commissioner Jow: You made mention of somebody helping you when your husband died.

Adama Koroma: He is Alpha Kanu. He is also an amputee.

Commissioner Jow: What help did he render to you?

Adama Koroma: He was assisting me till he decided to marry me.

Commissioner Jow: Are you still together ?

Adama Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: You told me you have three children; where are they?

Adama Koroma: They are all alive. Mohamed Kanu, Fatmata and Adama

Commissioner Jow: Are they going to school?

Adama Koroma: Yes. The girl is five years. The Seven- Year old, I lost his father following the unfortunate incident and, the other is two and a half years.

Commissioner Jow: How do you support these children?

Adama Koroma: When I was at Aberdeen Camp, I begged for alms but now in Makeni they do not go to school because I have nothing.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have any instructional materials in the camp?

Adama Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Thank you for sharing with us your experience. I know it is painful to take you back to this horrible incident.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us what language the rebels spoke?

Adama Koroma: They were speaking krio.

Commissioner Sooka: They caught you and the 25 men; did they come with a specific intention to amputate you ?

Adama Koroma: They did not say it but they had machetes in their hands.

Commissioner Sooka: After your hand was amputated, you went into the bush , did you find out about the others through your husband or you saw the others amputated ?

Adama Koroma: When they brought us out we were counted first. Some of them died because they could not bear the pains. I can call their names: Musa Marah - my husband ;Alpha kargbo, Mohamed Turay ,and Seray Dankay. These are all I know. We used know each other.

Commissioner Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: In your statement you said you were given a message when your hand was chopped off?

Adama Koroma: Yes, it was a message. Even without saying anything when they see you they will know that the rebels chopped off your hand.

Commissioner Jow: Can you still remember those who did that to you?

Adama Koroma: I did not see them; because, we were attacked at night.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara:

Adama we sympathize with you but we are happy that you are here to tell us your experience. You have answered many questions.

Prof. Kamara: You said that they cut off your left hand first and later told you to stretch out your right hand ?

Adama Koroma: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: From what I see it was not completely chopped off. How did you manage to get medical help and how do you use the hand?

Adama Koroma: I am feeling the pain. With the two hands you still have constraints. Let alone one hand. This is not a hand. It is half hand. I cannot do my own work. When I ask for help, even my colleagues may not assist. That is

why I go to the room and talk to myself and I say: “what have I done in this world that they should chop my hand off. I have been in my village working for myself. I did nothing wrong to any one. I don’t know what I have done to deserve this. The work that you were doing for yourself you cannot do again”.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper:

I want you to use this opportunity again to share with this audience your experience. Our work is to get the fact, the truth and to record nothing but the truth.

Bishop Humper: The rebels that chopped off your left hand and told you to go and see Tejan Kabba and get another hand from him ?

Adama Koroma: Yes.

Bishop Humper: You said that a house has been built for you, but there are still complaints.

Adama Koroma: Yes. The house is not enough. We can’t go into the house with empty stomach. They give us bulgur¹.The perpetrators that did this to us are given bags of rice but, we are given only bulgur as if we are animals.

Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say you are the chair person of the camp. If it is true what kind of work are you doing?

Adama Koroma: The work I am doing there is this kind of work. I lead the women’s wing and anything that concerns the women in camp, I represent them.

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: I have no question

Bishop Humper: Adama it is your own turn to ask questions

Adama Koroma: We the amputees, how are we in this world now ? I am not speaking for myself here. The government should not leave our case behind. It is not for us, it is for our children. If my child grows up and asks me who chopped off my hand, I will say : These people did it to me. That will bring the war again. If you say peace should come, we the amputees should bring the peace. I can not be struggling and say that I am living in peace. That is why our case should be pushed forward. If our problem is left behind, the war will not end. We the amputees we all have children.

Bishop Humper: What kind of recommendation would you want to have so that we can incorporate it in our report.

¹ Bulgur is a very cheap sort of meal that is not really respected among the people of Sierra Leone.

Adama Koroma: This is all I have to say. We have no hands. We should be assisted. If we are assisted we will have peace of mind. All our children can think for themselves now. They ask us who chopped our hands and feet. We have to make our children reconcile their mind.

Bishop Humper: The Commission is not silent with the problems of amputees in this country. This Commission will make sure that things work straight for you in this country. The Commission will put modalities in place in addressing amputees. I say thanks to you for all you have said.

4th Witness – Kadiatu Koroma

My name is Kadiatu Koroma. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by Bishop J. C. Humper.

TESTIMONY

On January 6, I left my garden. I used to be a gardener. I left my husband who was partially blind; he was with the children. Initially, he used to be the one involved in this business; but times have changed. Old age and sickness have taken their toll on him. So, on Monday of the week leading to the week of the rebel attack, while about my business, I heard this rumour of impending rebel attack. But we did not take it seriously. We all went about our business. I bought garri for my family. At night the rebels attacked Kissy, Kassel Farm, Old Road. The rebels attacked at night. Then they spent the whole of the day there. There were rebels in military uniform all over. We were confused because people moved from one place to another. People were carrying machetes, guns, clubs etc. There were gunshots all over. People ran helter-skelter.

We went to the house of a woman named Bamba. We went there to seek refuge. We heard them shouting that they were going to set the house on fire. I said to my child, "if you have anywhere to go, please go." All my children were scattered. I could not see anybody because we were surrounded and confused. Where I went to hide, there was something like a stone that hit me under the tree. I felt something piercing me on my shoulder. I thought it was a mango fruit or may be a branch that got shattered and I started removing the mango or so I thought, not knowing it was my bone. Then I cried, "Lord what have I done? My husband what have I done?" I know nobody what have I done? I tried to walk but they started firing gunshots continuously. I managed to get into a toilet and there I lost consciousness. An old man met me in the toilet. I was with one pair of pants and one cloth. They said: go to Pa Kabba and he will give you a hand. In the morning they started chopping people's hands. When they reached to me they told me to close my eyes. After three days, ECOMOG told us that Calaba Town and Wellington people should leave the area.

They told us that they want to clear the areas. I fell down where I was sitting. A man coming from Wellington held my hand but I fell down again. I fell down again at Kissy Road. As we reached Fourah Bay Road, we were told that there were doctors at cottage. I wanted to drink water but they refused to give me because I will die. When I reached cottage, a woman called me and called Mohamed and told him to take me to her child at Will Street. He was a doctor. The doctor said he will not be able to do anything. He advised that I should be taken to Connaught. They brought me back. The woman who wanted to assist me put me on a push cart and I was taken to 34 Hospital. I was unconscious at 34 Hospital. I did not know what was going on. Later I was loaded in a Jeep and taken to Connaught hospital. I wanted to drink water but I was told that I will die if I drank water. I was given drip on the other hand. I removed the drip from my hand because I was thirsty. Then blood started oozing and maggots started coming out

of my hand. The other morning, my son came to Connaught hospital and told me that the house was completely burnt. He told me that his father was not at home and the place was surrounded by ECOMOG soldiers. I was at Connaught hospital and treated but they had to do skin grafting. I cannot use the other hand as it does not function well. You may ask :Is this all I have ? This is all I have. I do not have much.

Bishop Humper :

We have heard what you have said. I can only imagine the atrocities that you have gone through

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: We need to ask questions to get a clear idea of what transpired and who took part in the war. Did you say; you were told or that you were informed one week before the rebel attack?

Mrs. K. Koroma: It took one week after I had gone to the garden, when I was told that the rebels were going to attack the town.

Prof.Kamara: When you heard that the rebels are coming did anybody go and tell ECOMOG that rebels were coming?

Mrs. K.Koroma: ECOMOG had not yet come to our own area at that time. They came after the rebels had entered.

Prof.Kamara: Did anybody go and tell the police that rebels were coming?

Mrs. K. Koroma: No

Prof.Kamara: When you said that your hand was chopped off and it took three days before ECOMOG came, is that correct?

Mrs. K. Koroma: Yes, it is true.

Prof.kamara: When ECOMOG realized that you were wounded, did they assist you ?

Mrs. K. Koroma: When I reached cottage ECOMOG managed to take me to 34 Hospital.

Prof.Kamara: How did you get to cottage?

Mrs. K. Koroma: I walked, though with the support of certain individuals. There was no vehicle. I fell severally on my way. There were lots of people.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: You mentioned in your testimony that the rebels attacked at night but you also said you did not know the difference because they were all in combat uniforms. My question is, do you not know the difference between them?

Mrs. K. Koroma: I do not know anything. I know only rebels. I do not even know Freetown. I was only taken there by my husband.

Commissioner Sooka: What language did they speak?

Mrs. K. Koroma: I could not even look at them. I do not know the language they were speaking. In Limba country we do not know about this.

Commissioner Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: We have listened to what you have said. It is a moving testimony. When this thing happened to you, were other people there or were you alone?

Mrs. K. Koroma: We were many. There were many other people. It was at night and I can remember when my hand was chopped off and how I got to the Cottage Hospital

Commissioner Jow: What happened to your children?

Mrs. K. Koroma: Nothing happened to them but their father was killed.

Commissioner Jow: Did your children know of what happened to you.

Mrs. K. Koroma: They came to know about this when they got to Connaught. One of them said: "This is not my mother. My mother is not like that."

Commissioner Jow: Are you still staying at Grafton ?

Mrs. K. Koroma: I now stay at Teko Road where a camp has been built for us.

Commissioner Jow: How are you feeling now?

Mrs. K. Koroma: I feel the pain. Even for the whole of today I have continued to feel the pain.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: Is it true according to your records that your husband was burnt alive in the house.

Mrs. K. Koroma: He was burnt alive in the house with all our properties.

Bishop Humper: Where are you children now

Mrs. K. Koroma: They are in Freetown now since I do not have anything.

Bishop Humper: Who are they leaving with now?

Mrs. K. Koroma: They are with their uncle.

Bishop Humper: How many of them?
Mrs.K.Koroma: Three.
Bishop Humper: How old are they
Mrs. K.Koroma: I am not sure of their ages. All the documents were burnt.
Bishop Humper: Who is helping you to pay their fees?
Mrs. K. Koroma: Their uncle is paying their fees.

Leader of Evidence : Abdulai Charm

Mr.Charm: Can you tell us the name of your late husband?
Mrs. K. Koroma: Bockarie Sesay.
Bishop Humper: Kadiatu, do you have any questions ?
Mrs. K. Koroma: What I want you to do for me is that I want you to assist me and my children. The camp where I stay there is no water, no sufficient food. When I was in Freetown I usually begged for alms; but now I know nobody here.
Bishop Humper: Thank you for spending this afternoon with us. All your recommendations will be included in the document.

5th Witness – Alex Santigie Kamara

My name is Alex S. Kamara. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by Bishop J. C. Humper.

Bishop Humper: I wish to welcome you on behalf the commission.You will be the last witness for today. We believe you and other people who have given testimonies are helping this Commission in pushing its work forward. We know it is painful giving these statements but it is good in order to bring us together. In this vein we encourage you all to give your testimony.

TESTIMONY

On the 3rd march 1999, I was in Freetown when I received a serious message that my child has been killed at Port Loko. On the following day the 4th I passed through Lungi and went to Port Loko. By the time I got there, he had already been buried. I asked my brother who is working at the Port Loko Teachers' College how my child died. He said my child was trying to travel to Makeni .When he reached the lorry park some CDF called him. They built a hut outside Bai Bureh hall. They called the child and asked him where he was going. They said "we are not going to release you. You are one of the rebels from Makeni and you are trying to go back."

They undressed him, tied him and took him to the back of the hall at Port Loko. He was beaten with sticks until he died. At the back of the hall along barracks road, they dug the gutter and buried him there. When I asked my brother who sent the message to him that my child was killed? He told me: "people themselves came and told me that one rebel was killed." My brother went to look at the body. He then said that it was his brother's child that was killed.

When I reached Port Loko I was not able to identify anybody, all of them had left. In Makeni I investigated matters concerning my son's death. I understood that in Makeni my son and one of his school mates Kayimbo had a conflict. Kayimbo was at Port Loko heading the CDF squad. He and my son had a conflict because of a woman and it was this Kayimbo who ordered his men to call my child. When he came, he ordered his men to tie the boy and he was the first to hit my son. It is painful. My son was attending a secondary school and he was in form 2. Now, I have lost him.

Bishop Humper: This is a short but moving experience. As parents we know what that means.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara:

Prof.Kamara: Thank you very much for sharing that experience. This story is one that is different. It is not one that happened in the conflict itself. So it is one that needs to be examined.
Did you say the name of the man you suspected for the crime is Mohamed Kayimbo?

Alex.S. Kamara: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: You said you investigated for your self; why did you think it was Kayimbo?

Alex. S. Kamara: Kayimbo was the one who went and told my brother that my son was dead. He was the leader of the CDF group that killed my son.

Prof.Kamara: Was that the reason why you suspected him?

Alex. S. Kamara: Yes. The other thing is; he fought with my son over a woman.

Prof.Kamara: What was Kayimbo's position in the CDF?

Alex.S. Kamara: He was a commando of the CDF in Port Loko.

Prof.Kamara: Was your son going to school in Makeni here?

Alex. S. Kamara : Yes.

Prof.Kamara: What happened when they fought?

Alex. S. Kamara: My son was very healthy. During the fight he beat kayimbo.

Prof.Kamara: Because your son and Kayimbo fought he went to Port Loko and heads the CDF and when your son went to Port Loko, he pointed your son out as a rebel?

Alex.S.Kamara: Yes

Prof.Kamara: We are going to contact Kayimbo and tell him that you have called his name. Let him come and clarify issues.

Alex.S. Kamara: I do not know the actual address. But I know his area.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: How old was your son at the time.

Alex. S.Kamara: 27 years

Commissioner Sooka: To your knowledge was he before his death a member of any armed group ?

Alex. S. Kamara: He was also a CDF member at Makeni. When the rebels entered he came to Freetown to meet me.

Commissioner Sooka: When you found out that Kayimbo killed your son, did you approach your son's commander of the CDF unit here in Makeni?

Alex. S. Kamara: By that time my son was no longer a member of the CDF. He was in Freetown. I gave him some money to take to his mother who lived in Makeni. He passed through Port Loko and there he was killed by Kayimbo.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you ever meet Kayimbo and ask him questions about your son's death?

Alex. S. Kamara: When I reached Port Loko, Kayimbo heard about my arrival and he ran away with his group.

Commissioner Satang Ajaratou Jow:

Commissioner Jow: Did you say your son was a student?

Alex. S. Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: In your same testimony you said he was going to school and he was 27 years old.

Alex. S. Kamara: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us if he was in high school

Alex. S. Kamara: He was in form 2

Commissioner Jow: Was he going to school in Makeni

Alex. S. Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: What was he doing in Port Loko at that time?

Alex. S. Kamara: We were in Freetown I sent and him to bring money to his mother in Makeni . He passed through Port Loko

Commissioner Jow: Are you ready to reconcile with Kayimbo ?

Alex. S. Kamara: That is why I gave my testimony. Other than that I would have kept quiet.

Commissioner Jow: Were you able to give your son a befitting burial?

Alex. S. Kamara: I performed all the ceremony. I prayed for him to prepare a way for me.

Bishop Humper: We will ask our Regional Coordinator to try by all possible means to find Kayimbo. You have said your own version but we will try by all possible means for you to reconcile with Kayimbo. Do you want us to make the peace in public or behind closed door?

Alex S. Kamara: Which ever way you want it.

Bishop Humper : We know how you feel. We feel sorry for you. We hope that by the time you leave here you will have peace of mind. We want to thank you for cooperating with us. You will be contacted by us before we leave here. We want to thank you.

Alex. S. Kamara: I am asking this Commission to look into my condition. I am a poor teacher. I want the Commission to look into everything; so that those who have been left behind will be educated.

Bishop Humper: We thank you. It is one of the recommendations we have been getting from people. We assure you we will take it into consideration.

PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN MAKENI ON 27TH MAY 2003

1st – Witness – Pa Kapri N’jai

My name is Pa Kapri N’jai. I am a Muslim. Commissioner Prof. J. Kamara administered the oath.

Prof.Kamara: Pa Kapri you have come here voluntarily. We know that it was not an easy decision to make but having come we want to assure you that this is not a court. It is a peace

commission that is likely to bring about reconciliation. Therefore, we will like you to relax and tell us your experience. Go ahead and tell us your experience.

TESTIMONY

In the name of Allah. At the time when the rebels were in the bush they came and burnt our town. They came and burnt Bendembu and we were in Bendembu for three days. They left there and burnt Matebo. We were in the bush. We were there and they came out and stayed at Kabala. We were in the bush for four months. They sent for us that we should return. We were with the rebels and we did things in common. They punished us and took our property. I was crowned in 1964 along with other paramount chiefs. All we worked for from the time we were crowned was burnt and looted. We were tasked to feed them. If you did not do it, they would beat you or you would be killed. We were forced to feed them. One man, whose name was Tyson a native of Makeni, sent for me at round 9:00am one morning. He said I was close to the Paramount Chief. He said I should give him three hundred and forty thousand Leones. I said I do not have it and he said we were the ones killing the rebels. He ordered me to take off my shirt and to sit on the floor; he poured water on the floor. I sat there and he took a G3 gun and placed it into my mouth and passed it on to my throat. When I was shouting my elder daughter named Eba Sesay and my wife Iye Conteh, she is dead now, came and gave Tyson Le50,000. Tyson then released me. He asked me to show him my old name before I was crowned. Since it has been a long time and with so much happening in a man's life, I could not recollect. He took out a knife and pressed it on my chest. He said to me, "get up" and, he asked me to "lie down". In the morning he invited me. Tyson, War bus and his wife told me to forgive them as they have come to fight the rebel war.

As things are now, if I eat an orange, blood will stain the orange. If the beef is not well cooked, I will not be able to chew it. The poison of that gun has spread all over my body. If I am asked here today; this is what I have to say!

Prof. John Kamara:

You are courageous enough to reveal that area in telling us your story. You have given us your experience and we need to ask you some questions so that we can fully understand. We will ask you questions so that we can fully understand what happened.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: We want to thank you for coming here. We want to start off by putting your experience in a context. According to our record you said this happened in 1999.

Pa K. N'jai: I am not an educated man. I cannot recall exactly when it happened.

Bishop Humper: When did it happen to you?

Pa K. N'jai: It was before the "cease fire". That was why I said if after the "cease fire" am asked, I will explain what happened.

Bishop Humper: What group did this to you?

Pa K. N'jai: The rebels. The commander was called War Bus. Tyson was the second in command.

Bishop Humper: You said somebody told you that Sgt. Musa's group burnt your house. Who was that somebody?

Pa K. N'jai: My brother that was captured, Abdul N'jai, told me. His hand was chopped off.

Bishop Humper: You said you were crowned a ceremonial chief and you were asked to do so many things and if you did not perform they will come back to you. Is that correct?

Pa K. N'jai: Yes.

Bishop Humper: What were some of those things that you did?

Pa K. N'jai: They were asking us for food and I was tasking people.

Bishop Humper: Do you know that because they did bad things to you that is why you are here?

Pa K.N'jai: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Do you know that you are a perpetrator?

Pa K. Njai: I am not sure about that.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

CommissionerJow: We thank you for coming here today. You came of your own free will. This shows that you are ready to join hands with the Commission. The questions we ask are to make some clarification on your testimonyYou spoke about burning of houses and you were not around when your house was burnt. You also said Sgt. Musa's group burnt your house. Can you tell us about Sgt. Musa?

Pa K. N'jai: Now, I am of the Loko ethnic origin,and speaking in the Loko language would allow me more detail and expression. I do not know who Sgt. Musa was.

CommissionerJow: According to what you said you said the rebels stayed in your village and they tasked you to feed them. You also said you did not refuse because you will be punished. How long did the rebels stay in the village and what were the things they made you do as a Paramount Chief?

Pa K. N'jai: The first rebel that came was called Spider and he took three months and they removed him and War Bus came and he took two months. Then they were driven away. They said it was the cease fire.

Commissioner Jow: I want you to tell me the things they made you do as Paramount Chief?

Pa K. N'jai: The contribution they asked for was that I should be with them and if I refused they will beat me. They said I was not cooperating for their feeding. If I go underground the people will desert the village.I was the man that gave the people the courage to stay.

Commissioner Jow: Did you force the people to give you food and money?

Pa k. N'jai: I was asking them and there were other people working with me to go and collect food from the people. Those who refuse we send rebels there and asked them to pay.

CommissionerJow: Did they ask you to give your strong boys to join them?

Pa K. N'jai: No.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: We could gather from your testimony that you were asked to do many things that you would not like to do. My colleague has asked you whether you forced people to give you food. Were you compelled to join them in any of the operations?

Pa K. N'jai: They nearly killed me at one time. It means that if I refused I would be killed. That was why they gave me rebels to accompany me to force the people to comply. At times I did not go with them. They went themselves and forced the people. The rebels went into the houses of people and took their properties. If you refused you would be tied and beaten .It was their moment ;there was nowhere to seek redress.

Commissioner Sooka: "Did you see when they burnt down houses?"

Pa K. N'jai: I did not see them.The time they were coming, people told us that the rebels were coming and on our return;we met the houses all burnt down.

Commissioner Sooka: Did they kill or punish anybody in your presence?

Pa K. N'jai: We saw an old woman lying dead on the ground. Her name was Ya Fatu. As we were going we also saw an old man dead. His name was Pa Santigie. It is against custom for me to see corpses.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you know that the people in your village think that you were with the rebels?

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof. Kamara: We want to know about some of the people you have named. Do you know what happened to Tyson? Is he still alive?

Pa K. N'jai: I heard that he is in Freetown

Prof. Kamara: Will you be able to identify him?

Pa K. N'jai: If he is here now, I will identify him.

Prof. Kamara: What about Sgt. Musa?

Pa K. N'jai: I did not see him with my eyes. The ones I saw were Tyson and War Bus.

Prof. Kamara : What was the other name of War Bus?

Pa K. N'jai: He was Major War bus.

Prof. Kamara: Are your family members all with you?

Pa K. N'jai: Yes; but my wife is dead.

Prof. Kamara: Not in the hands of rebels.

Pa K. N'jai: No.

Prof. Kamara: In 1999 when CDF was established all over the country, did you have them to protect you?

Pa K. N'jai: Except when Kamajors were sent to Kalamba. I left Makeni for kalamba. The first people sent there were Pa Foday and Pa Johnson.

Prof. Kamara: Did they help to drive the rebels?

Pa K. N'jai : When they heard that the SLA had taken Makeni, they pulled out.

Prof. Kamara: The CDF did not engage the rebels at all in Kalamba?

Pa K. N'jai: No

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: You told us that Tyson is in Makeni now .Have you seen him?

Pa K. N'jai: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Where and when?

Pa K. N'jai: I saw Tyson about 4 months ago. He told me to buy him rum. I abused him. He said "a pa" and then he left. Since that time I have not seen him. At that time the cease fire was clearly in place ;so I had the chance to say anything I cared to him.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us why Tyson did not succeed when he tried to kill you?

Pa K. N'jai: Divine intervention!

Commissioner Jow: Is that why he left you?

Pa K. N'jai: He told me to go and lie down.

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: Now that you have told us that Tyson is around will you be willing to reconcile with him?

Pa K. N'jai: Since you have come with peace I will do it. We too want peace.

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: You have mentioned to us that your town was burnt down. Can you tell us the extent of damage done to your town?

Pa K. N'jai: 86 houses were burnt to the ground at Kalamba. All I know when Kalamba was burnt more houses were burnt at Bendembu. Bendembu was better than what they did at Mateboya. I cannot give you the precise number of houses burnt in the other villages.

Commissioner Jow:: What would you recommend to the Commission in order to foster peace in your village ?

Pa K. N'jai: What I want to say is that the gun that was put into my mouth the poison scattered within my body. They burnt down our town: school, barrie² and office were all burnt down. My appeal to the government is to assist in building these again for us. As I am presently sick I want to ask if you can help me. I want you to assist our chiefdom. I am pleading your help .

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: We can not say anything to say to you now unless you make your requests specific. Once we have that then we will know what to say.

Pa K. N'jai: I have said it all. As I sit here I am sick. But we are all here for peace. Otherwise, why should I be reconciled with a man like Tyson when every single orange that I eat and the blood stains on it rudely reminds me of him? So I want you to help rebuild my chiefdom; so that it can be what it was before. The Paramount Chief is sick and cannot walk. The speaker is also sick and I am the youngest.

Prof.Kamara: As you have said you are the Pa Kapri in the chiefdom. The recommendations that you have made are not different from what other people have said. We will do our best as a result of your present condition to have a counsellor to talk to you. Our staff will talk to you later on in the course of our duty. I want to say thanks and wish you the very best in your endeavour.

2nd – Witness – Zainab Kanu

My name is Zainab Kanu. I am a Muslim. Commissioner Prof. Kamara administered the oath.

What you have come to say here is done voluntarily, having considered all the circumstances. I want you to know that this is not a court and any thing you say here will not be taken to court. What we expect is to reconcile you with whoever you have any dispute with. Please relax and tell us what you have to say.

² Barry/barrie/baree: This is village or town square in local language.

TESTIMONY

My people, good afternoon. I am about to say what RUF did to me. I hail from Bendembu Nuwahun Chiefdom. When the RUF went to Bendembu, they were training men at that time. We went in search of food. We were not aware that rebels were in town. When returning in the afternoon, we fell into an ambush. We were held. They asked us to cook for them. We did as we were told. As we were serving the food, a helicopter gunship came and passed by and we all scattered. I tried, unfortunately, I was unable to run away and was captured again. One boy came and said he loves me. The other one said no. He said forcefully she is mine. He held me and I was with him. At night he took me to a room and asked me to go to bed with him. I refused. He forced me and put me on the ground. At that time my family were in the bush. There was no way my family could come to town. I was with them for a while until after the training. At that time I was pregnant. We moved to Kono and slept at YSS* compound. We were there till my pregnancy was 9 months and I was delivered. As I delivered, my father went to Kono to look for me. He went to another man called Fambulleh. He was the commander of the man who held me. He met Fambulleh about my affairs and said he wanted to see me. Fambulleh told him that he was not the owner of me. The owner is here. My father and his brother went to him. They went to Alhaji. As my father was talking to Alhaji they told him to lower his voice. He was asked if I was a captured. My father said yes. He said: "Praise God your daughter was not killed. The one she is staying with if he is willing to release your daughter she is yours". My father went to Fambulleh. As Fambulleh saw my dad he went away. My father was given food to eat. After eating he asked for me. He was asked to go and speak with them. My father told them that "this man captured my daughter at Bendembu and brought my daughter to Kono and he did not pay any bride price. What I want is my daughter and let this man stay with his own child." I told my father that we should sit together and talk. I asked the man what "you are going to give me if my father decides to leave me here for a month?" My father said that the man should not worry about the transportation costs as he would take care of it. My father said I was too young. My father said, "I don't want to know anything about your own child, I only want my daughter. They said my father should ask me what my opinion was.

Then my father asked me "Zainab I have come for you." I said: "This is my father, I am in support of whatever he says. My father should say thanks to you for all what you have done to me because we can not talk bad about you. Because the child is young we do not know what the future will bring." I stayed for a month and when I asked him, he did not give me anything. After they disarmed, I asked him for money but he did not give me anything. Besides that they paid them Le300,000. I asked him to give me Le50,000. He said he has no money. I got up and went to my uncle at 55 by the name of Alikali Kanu. He met me there and he gave me the Le50,000. At that time it was Le25,000 for transportation from Makeni to Kono. I paid Le15,000 to my village. I had a child with me 3 months old Fambulleh. I did not meet my mother she was taken to Freetown by my sisters. I did not meet my dad also. I lived on the Le15,000 and when the 15,000 finished I broke palm kernel; made nut oil out of it and sold it for my leaving. I continued the breaking of the palm kernel for a long time till my mother came. My mother helped to feed me and my child. We continued like that till the child was weaned. I said that Fambulleh has done a bad thing to me and I will go and look for him and take him to the police station. By this time normalcy had returned and with it the rule of law. The law can again take its course. Therefore, I boarded a bus and came to Makeni to look for him but I did not see him. I went to Kono; where I met my uncle. In the morning, I went to Yengema and I met his brother Momoh. I asked him the whereabouts of Umaru? He said he went to their home. I asked Momoh to show me where he lives and we took a vehicle to Gano. We went to Masayneh where we asked about him. They told us that he has left the village. I had Le50 with me. I walked till I reached Ganu. I got a free lift and reached koidu town. I cried to my uncle that I had nothing. My uncle found a vehicle for me to return home. Before I do anything harmful, I decided to report to TRC. Note: I was attending school. I was 15 years old and was in class 5. That is what is disturbs and makes me so sad about it all. And if he cannot think of me, let him think about his own child.

Prof.Kamara: Zainab you have done a wonderful thing. I believe your problem is one thecountry should solve. Some of the things that happened during the conflict still have consequences for the people. The nation has decided to do something concerning all what had happened. We have listened to your sad story. We need to ask you some questions.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you for sharing your testimony with us We need to ask you questions to know what happened to you because the Commission has a mandate to make recommendations for women and girls. They have destroyed your education and your life is in turmoil .How old were you at the time you were abducted?

Zainab Kanu: I was 16years plus when I was abducted.

Commissioner Sooka: How many other girls were abducted with you?

Zainab Kanu: Three of us.

Commissioner Sooka: What happened with you if you refused to have sex with them?

Zainab Kanu: Even if you refused they would go ahead and do it by force.

Commissioner Sooka: Were you raped by more than one person or just this one man?

Zainab Kanu: It was only the one man who abducted me.

Commissioner Sooka: How long did you stay with him?

Zainab Kanu: Two years plus.

Commissioner Sooka: Was he kind or cruel to you?

Zainab Kanu: At first he was nice to me and later he treated me badly.

Commissioner Sooka: What did he do to you?

Zainab Kanu: We fought virtually every time.

Commissioner Sooka: Did he force you to work for him?

Zainab Kanu: He did not force me to work for him. Sometimes he misbehaved and beat me.

Commissioner Sooka: During the time you stayed with him did he take any drug?

Zainab Kanu: No. I do not know.But he never took any in my presence.

Commissioner Sooka: He never tried to force you to take any drug?

Zainab Kanu: No

Commissioner: During the time you were with him did he force you to take part in any operations?

Zainab Kanu: No

Commissioner Sooka: You mentioned that you stayed in one place until the training was over. Can you tell us about the training?

Zainab Kanu: I was an ordinary civilian amongst them. The training was not done in town. I did not see where the training was going on. In the evening they returned to town.

Commissioner Sooka: You said your father visited you. How old was the baby at that time?

Zainab Kanu: The child was then a month old .

Commissioner Sooka: Did you want to stay with the man or wanted to return home with your father?

Zainab Kanu: I was ready to return home because all was not well.

Commissioner Sooka: During your delivery did you have a nurse to help you or were you alone?

Zainab Kanu: I had a nurse.

Commissioner Sooka: Where did the nurse come from?

Zainab Kanu: The nurse was a civilian. She was in town that particular time and she likes me.

Commissioner Sooka: Did he rape again you during the time that you stayed with him?

Zainab Kanu: I was with him and anytime he wanted, he did it.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you have any health problems?

Zainab Kanu: I have problem.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us a little bit about that

Zainab Kanu: I have problem with my foot. If I sit for a long time, it will go numb.I also have a problem with my right hand. At one time we fought and he beat me on my right hand.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

CommissionerJow: You have given us an insight of how girls suffered. We are happy to note that you have returned and you want to move on , to continue your life. You have your mother and father to assist you. You said you were abducted. How many of you were abducted?

Zainab Kanu: Three of us.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us if the other girls were equally abducted into wives?

Zainab Kanu: They ran away the next day.

Commissioner Jow: Were you from the same village?

Zainab Kanu: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell me where you stayed during the 2 years?

Zainab Kanu: YSS compound

Commissioner Jow: Where there other girls there?

Zainab Kanu: Yes. Some of them were wives and others work for them.

CommissionerJow: Can you tell us how the YSS was organized as a rebel base?

Zainab Kanu: I do not know . I was a civilian amongst them. They do not allow us to know their business.

Commissioner Jow: Did they train people at YSS?

Zainab Kanu: They did not train people there; but that was where we usully retired to at night

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us how many people were in YSS.

Zainab Kanu: I do not know.

Commissioner Jow: Were there young boys amongst them?

Zainab Kanu: Yes all of them were young boys.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us the age of your bush husband?

Zainab Kanu: He was 21. His name is Umaru Lahai.

Commissioner Jow: Did you see other girls being punished?

Zainab Kanu: Everybody faced his or her own business.

Commissioner Jow: We want to know what YSS looked like.

Zainab Kanu: Every master had his own wife and bodyguard.

Commissioner Jow: We have heard about Mammy Queen. Did you get one in your own base?

Zainab Kanu: There was no mammy Queen.

Commissioner Jow: How do you feel now?

Zainab Kanu: I feel my leg and my hand at the end of every month.

Commissioner Jow: Do you feel annoyed or sad?

Zainab Kanu: Just moody .I sit quiet whenever I feel some of these pains.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have nightmares?

Zainab Kanu: No.

Commissioner Jow: How old is your son now?

Zainab Kanu: He is 1year and 8 months

Commissioner Jow: If I got you right, he was given his father's name ?

Zainab Kanu: No.He was given his boss man's name.

Commissioner Jow: When you see him does he remind you of his father?

Zainab Kanu: Yes . That is why I am annoyed with him because he has refused to take his responsibility.Which is the reason why I am making this report .

Commissioner Jow: How do you support your boy?

Zainab Kanu: I make nut oil out of palm kernel and sell for our survival.

Commissioner Jow: Did your community accept you?

Bishop Humper: We are interested in your story and we are concerned about you just like all the others. I want you to know that this Commission unlike other commissions is particular about women and girls. This Commission is given a special mandate to look into the violation of women and girls. What is the name of your child?

Zainab Kanu: He is Ibrahim Fambulleh.

Bishop Humper: We are now talking about the condition and circumstances in which you were held captive and you have your child named after the commander. It is possible that you will never see the Commander or Umaru. Are you and your parents thinking of giving the child another name?

Zainab Kanu: Yes

Bishop Humper: What do you do presently?

Zainab Kanu: I do not do anything now

Bishop Humper: Are you thinking of getting involved in doing skills training?

Zainab Humper: Yes

Bishop Humper: Talking about your child you said he reminds you of Umaru Lahai? Are you still in love with him?

Zainab Kanu: No

Bishop Humper: You said that the only thing you have against him is because he did not support the child. Am I correct?

Zainab Kanu: Because he does not support my child that is why I do not love him. If I stay with him he will do the same thing. I am poor and I want you to assist me and my family.

Bishop Humper: What if Lahai supports your child, will you like to see him again?

Zainab Kanu: Let Lahai support his child. I do not want to stay with him any longer. Yesterday we ate porridge at home.

Bishop Humper: Do you know where Fambulleh is?

Zainab Kanu: I do not know where Fambulleh is at present.

Bishop Humper: Did Fambulleh know that your child was given that name?

Zainab Kanu: Yes. His wife gave the child that name.

Bishop Humper: Now you are thinking of changing the name of the child. Which name do you want to give him?

Zainab Kanu: I will name him Tejan.

Bishop Humper: Why?

Zainab Kanu: Because I was abducted and mishandled during Tejan Kabba's government.

Bishop Humper: What about the child's surname?

Zainab Kanu: I will name him Tejan Sesay.

Bishop Humper: Why do you want to name him Sesay?

Zainab Kanu: I am Kanu and my mother is Sesay. My mother is suffering with the child. That is why I want to give him her name.

Leader of Evidence :Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. You mentioned to us that you were in school before you were abducted. Do you still want to go to school?

Zainab Kanu: I still want to go to school. By next year I would like to learn a trade.

Ms. Apori -Nkansah: What kind of trade?

Zainab Kanu: Hair dressing.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: You have done well by answering all our questions. Now, we want you to ask us questions.

Zainab Kanu: If I see Umaru Lahai should I deal with him or should I bring him to you so that you can deal with him?

Prof. Kamara: This question is difficult to answer. We want to find a way to bring you together.

Zainab Kanu: I say so because Umaru has maltreated me all the way. He said that he was an RUF and a child of God, therefore, he believes nothing will happen to him or harm him. I am a Loko I want Umaru to remove his trousers and walk in the streets, naked; but because you have talked to me, when I get hold of him, I will bring him to you for you to deal with him.

Prof. Kamara: It seems you know where Umaru is. Can you tell us?

Zainab Kanu: Yes. I heard he is in Tongo mining diamond.

Prof. Kamara: Do you have any recommendations to make?

Zainab Kanu: I want the government to help me to go to school this year. If it is not possible I would like to be helped in skills training. For my child I left him suffering from diarrhoea and I want the Commission to help me with drugs for my child.

Prof. Kamara: You said you want to go to school.

Zainab Kanu: Yes

Prof. Kamara: You said you want to learn hairdressing.

Zainab Kanu: Yes

Prof. Kamara: For your child's health we will let our staff talk to you to see what can be done.

3rd – Witness – Mohamed Augustine Brima

My name is Mohamed A. Briama. I am a Christian. Commissioner Prof. kamara administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

I thank you very much. I am here to tell you of what I did and what I saw during the 10 years conflict. I come from a place among the Eastern provinces of Sierra Leone, which is Kailahun. The time we were still children, in the 1960's and the 1970's our relatives used to tell us about an old man that made a prediction about this war. His name was Salia Koroma. He was born in one village near Kenema called Botimu. I am not into tribalism; but I am a Mende. I am quite sure that whoever is a Mende can say that I am saying the truth. The Pa predicted that war will come to Sierra Leone and that the war will be gruesome.

Before I go further, I want the Commission to know that I was with the RUF and I was an Administrator within the security department from 1992 to 2001. I was working as Chief Clerk responsible for the maintenance of law and order among our men. To start with, the war came to Sierra Leone through the border in Bomaru in March 23 1991. After that, the war went to where I

was born in Pendembu, Kailahun District. The war met us in April the same year. From my village and where the war started it was just 25 miles.

When they captured my home Pendembu, we were all gathered in broad day light both young and old. They tried to educate us about the war. They tried to persuade us to join them. The most important thing why they were able to convince us was that after we have joined them we will get free education, electricity supply, good roads and water supply. During that time it happened that I have just completed my fifth form and my parents were poor and they were unable to support me further. After that they told us that we should cooperate with them, my first responsibility within the RUF was with the rebels from Liberia. They elected me as a town clerk. The village is Bana. I was working with the Lt. Commander and his deputy. My responsibility was to ensure that whenever they come into town, that they got the food, women, meat and whatever they wanted which we have. This was the responsibility of which I was made the coordinator. The town commander and the deputy were uneducated and were not able to control the rebels. I was working with them. After these rebels had eaten all the goats, sheep, fowls, and the livestock was exhausted for all practical purposes, they still continued to demand for more. I tried to talk to my people to raise some of these fowls and goats but the rebels had no time for that sort of talk. At that time, if you refused them something you would be dead. In one occasion, what we gathered and gave to them they rejected it. They took me to the road and nearly killed me, saying that I had disgraced them. At that time we heard that they have just killed a town commander because he did not find food for them. I was lucky that they did not kill me. After that, in August that same year, we saw another group of rebels and they gathered all of us in the village. They persuaded us to go to the base and train to fight for our country. They too highlighted free education etc.

Because of my poor background which made it impossible for my parents to support my education and the rebels made promises of good opportunities if I joined them, I had to do so. They took us to a base in Pendembu where we were trained for 3 months; both in intensive military and guerrilla warfare. We went to the base in August and graduated in November. My first responsibility from the base was as an adjutant to one ground commander. I was there for a while and I was withdrawn. I was then assigned to the office as deputy military police in January 1992. I worked within that capacity for sometime. After that there was a mass enemy advancement that caused us to retreat. In Kailahun I was given the responsibility to take care of a section at Wuwawh Chiefdom in 1992. I was later withdrawn there and assigned to the head office in Kailahun and given the responsibility of chief council. We retreated again because of enemy advancement. We went and found a new base at Balahun, which is ten miles from Kailahun in September 1992. Finally in November 1992, the enemies were able to overcome us and we fled into the jungle. We stayed in the jungle for a while and tried to make a living. We were trying to regroup. Within that time the Chief Clerk I was working with died. After his death, I succeeded him as Chief Clerk in December 1992. His name was Jonathan Mark Saidu. We transferred the headquarters to Jama town in 1993. Later we went to Gwadu. At Gama I went through something that was traumatic. It happened this way, during the advancement of the Kamajors at that time, one of my elder brothers who stayed back at home had joined the Kamajors. When the Kamajors advanced, in the heat of the battle, my brother was captured. He had single-barrel gun with him. He was taken to the Headquarters in Gaima. I told the boss man that he was my brother. At that time the situation was so tense. I tried to plead with my boss to release him; that I will take care of him. But the enemy advancement did not relent. Then my boss got my brother, tied him up and executed him right in my presence. Immediately after that the boss man gave me an assignment that I had to go to the border. I obeyed his command I had no choice as I was afraid to die. Later my boss man and I in January 1999 were sent to Segbwema to maintain law and order in Segbwema. After that we were called back to report at Gwadu. Finally in December 28, 2000, my boss and I were reassigned to Makeni to "maintain situation" following the conflict between the UN peace keepers and our brothers. By then things were out of control. But then the commander General Issa pressed for us to put things under control. In Makeni we went through hard times but by God's grace we succeeded.

Prof.Kamara: Thank you very much for your very important testimony. I am sure you will be able to answer questions from the Commissioners and Leaders of Evidence. I believe that the Commissioners have a lot of questions especially when we have just come from Kailahun.

Bishop Humper: I want for you to know that we are looking out for people like you to come before the Commission and tell us what you did, why you did it.From your presentation the Commission believes that you are one of the perpetrators and a witness. Are we right to think so?

M.A Briama: Yes.

Bishop Humper: How did you feel and what were you thinking when you watched your brother die before you even though you had pleaded?

M.A.Briama: I felt bad. But I reckoned that war is dangerous and that war is trouble.

Bishop Humper: You said you started from 1991 and up to this time God has helped you to go through it all. What went wrong during the revolution in such a way that the atrocities caused were as wicked as if you came from another world?

M. A. Briama: As the Pa said, the war came in Sierra Leone in March 23, 1991 and the war came with some promises and those promises made us to join them and, we were there to make it succeed. I am here in front of the Commission; from 1991 when the war started before our alliance with the AFRC, the revolution was a disciplined one. Offenders were strictly disciplined; but the moment we merged with the AFRC things went out of hand. There was no control. It was at that time that the cutting of limbs started. I am telling the Commission that that was not the ideology of the RUF. That was why the RUF fought with only guns. But the merger with the AFRC and the insurgence of the Kamajors brought the destruction.That was why those of us given the responsibility to take care of discipline had the real hell of a time. At that time Sankoh was in Nigeria.

Bishop Humper: Mohamed I thank you. The Commission has a great responsibility. We need people like you to come forward. People like you will help us to know what caused the war. We are not here to take you to court or jail. We only want to make reconciliation

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: I want to thank you for coming before the Commission. It takes a lot of courage for somebody to appear as a perpetrator and we appreciate your story. You spent most of your time with the RUF in Kailahun and according to what you told us,at present, you are only temporarily in Makeni. Can you tell us why you testify here and not in Kailahun?

M. A. Briama: I decided to testify here because I am not in my home.

Commissioner Jow: Do you want to tell us you stay here in Makeni?

M. A. Briama: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Is there any reason ?

M. A. Briama: Yes I am here to acquire more knowledge. During the DDR I choose to learn computer to sustain myself. I thank God we have gone through the programme. It is not enough for me. These facilities are not extended to my village that is why I am here.

Commissioner Jow: Is it true that you were town clerk in your village ?

M. A. Briama: The town commander was Swary Ensah , Deputy was Lamin Brima.Both are dead.

Commissioner Jow: Did they die during the war?

M. A. Briama: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Was it during battle?

M.A. Briama: One died because of hunger. The deputy was a member of the fighting force and was killed in a battle.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that you were responsible for finding food for the rebels.

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Were people willing to give food at the beginning?

M.A. Briama: As I said, people just had to do that. Initially ,we were doing this for our people ;but it came to a time when everything was, given the situation, out of control.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us some of the things you did to your people to give food to the rebels. Did you punish them?

M. A. Briama: They were doing it willingly.

Commissioner Jow: They never refused to give?

M. A. Briama: No.

Commissioner Jow: Can you give us an idea of what life was like in the base?

M.A. Briama: Life was very tense and tedious. They took us to the base and it was raining. We were wet and they took us out of there to learn how to survive in an ambush.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that the three months training was difficult.

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: You lived in Kailahun for quite a while. Do you know the slaughter house?

M. A..Briama: No.

Commissioner Jow: Have you ever heard of the slaughter house where the Kamajors were slaughtered?

M. A. Briama: No.

Commissioner Jow: Since you were part of the RUF. Did you ever kill or commit atrocities?

M. A. Briama: I never killed. According to my statement I have been an administrator. I will not deny that I did commit human rights violation. There were times we tried to enforce law and order and because we had a lot of them who were not disciplined we had to use difficult punishment. We dealt severe punishment to those burning houses.

Commissioner Jow: My question was referring to civilian rights.

M. A. Briama: Civilians were included because some of them too were doing wrong. For instance, there were a lot of civilians breaking into houses and we had to use these punishments.

Commissioner Jow: Did you kill as a sort of punishment?

M. A. Briama: No.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka:

Commissioner Sooka: I want to know how old you were when they first came into your village?

M. A. Briama: 27 years.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell me the people who came to your village where they came from ,were they Sierra Leoneans or Liberians?

M. A. Briama: Liberians.

Commissioner Sooka: It is probably true that the people accommodated them when the rebels first came.

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Commissioner: The situation probably changed as more and more demands were made on the people .

M. A. Briama: Yes. The community began to change after they had eaten all the food. The other time they came they forced people to meet their demands. They slept with people's wives in public.

Commissioner Sooka: It is clear from what you said that even at that early stage they were beginning to cause atrocities.

M. A. Briama: Those Liberians were not good. It was because of some of these behaviour that we drove them out of the country. They were killing our people and going after them in the bushes and our leader gave us an order to fight them and we drove them out of the country.

Commissioner Sooka: You had to obtain food for them? In a sense you were an agent.

M. A. Briama: Yes. I was collaborating with them.

Commissioner Sooka: When you were asked to find women for them what did you actually do?

M. A. Briama: If they wanted any woman, I would talk to her and try to link them.

Commissioner Sooka: What happened if the woman refused?

M. A. Briama: The woman would be forced to leave the village or forced to be their wife.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us the number of people that were abducted?

M. A. Briama: 12 of us were abducted.

Commissioner Sooka: First, you said you gave up yourself voluntarily; but now you said you were abducted.

M. A. Briama: I say abducted in this sense: After they had sensitized us about their focus I made up my mind to go with them. However, my mother told me that if I ventured to the base something would happen. So I stayed back. After that they came and captured 12 of us. My mother had no alternative but to let me go and she prayed for me.

Commissioner Sooka: How many of you were at the base?

M. A. Briama: About 500

Commissioner Sooka: You said that the military training was difficult. Can you tell us what was done in the training?

M. A. Briama: Our training commander is dead. He was third commander in the Revolution, a special force trained in Libya. He trained us in guerrilla warfare. We went through ambushing; they taught us about FFAB in all positions ;when you are attacked how to escape. We were also trained in terms of communication in the field.

Commissioner Sooka: You know these things very well.

M. A. Briama: I was fortunate because the book that Sankoh came with which had all the belief that we should go by was always in my file. It was my companion.

Commissioner Sooka: You told us that the bad things were done when AFRC and RUF got merged. But even before the merger, the RUF abducted men and women?

M. A. Briama: Yes; by then our own understanding was to get more personnel because the revolution was for every body.

Commissioner Sooka: The question I ask is was it a policy?

M. A. Briama: It was not a policy to take somebody by force.

Commissioner Sooka: Did the order come from the boss to abduct people to join the RUF?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: The order to rape women was it from the boss or was it done by the RUF themselves?

M. A. Briama: These were the sort of things that we tried to prevent .Even at that, it continued.

Commissioner Sooka: When they were chopping people's hands what did the elders say?

M. A. Briama: They gave us strict orders to identify those people involved, investigate them and where guilty, punish them.

Commissioner Sooka: Which kind of punishment was given to them?

M. A. Briama: Where found guilty you were put in prison for 3 months or you received 250 lashes.

Commissioner Sooka: Many people say to the Commission that some RUF-men burnt houses and some chopped hands and feet. Was there any order from the elders?

M. A. Briama: No

Commissioner Sooka: Do you remember that when people's hands were chopped off, they were given message to Tejan Kabba?

M. A. Briama : Such a thing was never reported to my office.

Commissioner Sooka: Were you ever involved in the forceful recruitment of anybody, or sexually- abused any woman, or have you ever killed anybody ?

M.A. Briama: I never forced anybody to join the RUF. The only small boy I had with me Abu; he was abducted. One morning our brothers were in patrol and he was abducted while in his farm. I identified him as my brother. I sent him to the base to train. He is still with me in my village . On the other hand ,I have never sexually harassed any woman. I have two wives and I met both of them during the war.I met the first woman in the course of duty.It happened that this woman lost her husband's twenty thousand Leones and we tried to solve the problem but the man refused. After that incident I fell in love with the woman and she is presently with me. The woman found another woman for me and; we have thus stayed together.For killing, I have been in the office all the time and I have never killed anybody.

Commissioner Prof.John Kamara:

Prof. Kamara: You were in the MP from about 1992 January. Am I correct?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Will you also agree that that branch is the most dreaded by the people ?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Will you also accept that you collected everything the RUF needed from the people?

M. A. Briama: Within the RUF we had a group called G5.

Prof.Kamara: When you were in Kailahun do you know the PC³ elected at Luawa Chiefdom? Were you the one who flogged the chief because he failed to collect items from the people?

M. A. Briama: No.

Prof.Kamara: But you are aware that the MP was responsible to see that the people do what the RUF says?

M. A. Briama: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Do you want reconciliation with the people of the North and Kailahun. If you are to succeed with us we want to encourage you to come out with the truth. Not only to come out with the truth in Bombali but also in Kailahun. How many times did you have to enforce the demands of the RUF when you were in the MP?

M.A. Briama: It happened several times.

Prof.Kamara: Can you give us some examples.

M. A. Briama: Yes. During the time the leadership was in Zogoda; they sent to us in Kailahun for food and other items. We sometimes bought 50 to 100 bags of rice and we call the civilians and tell them to carry the items to Zogoda.The civilians were tasked to provide food and oil. They were tasked to clean the roads .

Prof.Kamara: Did you also have to flog or kill people if they failed to comply?

M.A.Briama: We were not shooting but we were flogging people who failed to comply.

Prof.Kamara: You spent some times in Buedu. Are you aware of the dungeon where they were putting people for punishment?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Did you ever put people in this dungeon?

M.A. Briama: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Can you tell us how many people you put there?

M. A. Briama: Many people. One of the people that I put there was one Mohamed Sankoh. He crossed over to Liberia and this was against the policy. At that time Mosquito was the commando. We had orders from Mosquito

³ PC: An abbreviation for Paramount Chief

that when Mohamed returned he should be flogged and put in the dungeon. Later we found out that he was dead.

Prof.Kamara: Was he the only one that died in the dungeon?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: You were asked one time about the slaughter house.

M. A. Briama: They asked me earlier on about the slaughter house and what I know about some Kamajors that were arrested in Pendembu and taken to Kailahun. I understand that Mosquito came to Kailahun and executed those Kamajors and gave command that some should be put in jail. Later on, he gave command that they too should be killed.

Prof.Kamara: What other atrocities did you carry out or commit when you were in the MP. You told us some not all.

M. A. Briama: As far as I know, I do not think I have been involved in any other thing, except enforcing the law. In the office I rendered a lot of assistance to people. Even in Makeni I gave a lot of assistance to people.

Prof.Kamara: You were responsible for helping the RUF whenever they were short of anything; by making necessary contact with the chief in Kailahun?

M. A. Briama: Yes. And he knows me very well

Prof.Kamara: At one time you gave him a good beating.

M. A. Briama: No, Sir.

Prof.Kamara: Are you prepared to apologize in Makeni and Kailahun. Are you prepared to apologize publicly if we organized a programme?

M.A. Briama: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: You said you have documents that belonged to the RUF. Can you give that to us for copying?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: We would like to know what kinds of actions were considered as offences within the RUF and, therefore, punishable.

M. A. Briama: Rape,killing the innocent , excessive looting of property, etc.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: That means that some amount of looting was allowed.

M. A. Briama: At that time people had guns and were,therefore, allowed to use these guns to force people to meet with their basic needs.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you know a man called Mustapha Koroma in Kailahun Samcola?

M. A. Briama: Yes

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you know he is now in Kailahun?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you know he is learning computing?

M. A. Briama: Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: I am asking this question because you have not gone to Kailahun. Because you said you want to learn and that these are not available in Kailahun. We want to inform you that this Commission wants you to reconcile. We want to know.

M. A. Briama: I have just visited my home. I went there February 10th and returned March 18th. The man you asked me about told me he did this course. There were also some constraints that this facility was not extended there. I am pleased to tell the Commission that my colleagues are willing to learn computing but it was not extended there. I did my own computing in Makeni. I came here and pleaded with the Executive Officer here where I did my computing. I told the Executive Officer that some of my brothers would like to learn computing and I want them to open a branch there. The director accepted my plea. The director has made a project proposal to train 200 ex-combatants in computing. My second reason why I am here is I work with a local NGO called Local People Sierra Leone. They employed me immediately after the DDR programme. Even though I am not paid I am willing to work with them voluntarily. To be honest I did not do anything wrong to my people that is preventing me from going there.

Prof.Kamara: Do you have any regret why you joined the RUF?

M. A. Briama: No.

Bishop Humber : Mohamed we hope that on Friday you will be able to come publicly to meet your people in the community. Once you come publicly to your people and do the traditional way then; we believe that your people will accept you. You are coming from Kailahun and you know some of the names we called.

Prof.Kamara: We want you to ask us questions

M. A. Briama: I have recommendations. The recommendation I have for the government through the Commission is; I beg the Commission to pay attention to the youths of this country in terms of employment, education opportunities. It was because of the opportunity that the youths lack that they joined the RUF.I also want the government to look into the cause of the war which include corruption, lack of respect for the people etc. so that the war will not happen again? I also appeal to government for them to facilitate the reconciliation process so that people will forgive and forget. Let them turn to a new leaf and forget about the past ;so that Sierra Leone will prosper.I want to let the Commission pay attention to the amputees, war wounded and to address their problems.I cry to the Commission to support my desire for higher education.

Prof. Kamara: Those recommendations will be made to the government.

4th Witness – Abu Kamara

My name is Abu Kamara. I am a muslim. Commissioner Prof. John Kamara administered the oath

I am from Mafora Njala. We were at Mafora Njala one night, when we heard that rebels were coming. We all got up. I told my wife to take all the children and go ahead. I advised that she must follow the other people. We were there and all the women went ahead. After a while one of my friends told me, "Mr. Abu let us go down". But then we were not sure of the direction the rebels were coming from. It was about 2am and it was dark. For whatever it was worth, I took my cutlass along with me and we took off. Throughout that night and the morning, afternoon, and evening of the next day, no incidents, no encounter with the rebels. We got to a place and waited until about 2am, when we decided to find our way back home. We never knew that where we were the rebels were there, hidden in the gutters. We were about to begin our search for the way back home, when the rebels got us surrounded. I had my cutlass, so I got the first one that came with it. He cried, "if you don't come, this man will overpower me and he will go". The other one came and attacked me at my back. The first one was already lying on the ground unconscious. They took a container of palm oil and threw it all over me. We were then captured.

Six of us were placed in one room. Three young boys were also captured. After sometime I noticed an open window and I jumped through the window. But I was not familiar with the town and did not know where to go. I was grabbed again. I was securely bound and blindfolded in addition. They told me, "if we don't tie your face you will escape". My hands were tied. I was left in this state till the morning. In the afternoon or thereabout one of the captives suggested that we take a chance and make a bid for freedom. As we were still contemplating about this, things began to happen fast. The rebels began to inquire about the way to Lunsar. We claimed ignorance of such knowledge until they extracted the information by force. Then they started chopping off hands and ears. They chopped one hand and the ears of their captives, men and boys alike. I was the last to face the ordeal. Still blindfolded, they placed me on a bench and chopped my hand and my ears. Then they left us to our fate and went their way. Driven by the survival instinct, we continued in search of help and pathway. One of us had a drum which I had thought contained water, not knowing it was palm oil. I was thirsty and wanted water badly. Anyway, I told the man, "if we do not hurry we will die here. On the way, the man fell as he had lost much blood. I tried to help him but I could not. I met some relatives of the man on the way and told them to go and help the man or he would die. I came across a vehicle on the way. May God bless the driver. He discharged all his passengers and brought me to the government hospital. There I received first aid treatment and waited. Three days later a white lady met me at night. She asked me, "are you staying here and did they wash your hand?" I said, "no this is the third day and it has not been washed." I told her that I needed every help. She asked me to wait until morning. In the morning she came and called my name and took me where they stayed. They untied the hand and treated the hand and I felt better. We were there and were attended to for quite sometime before the rebels attacked again. They scattered us again. We were in the bush for a long time. And I continue to feel the pain. Sometimes I lose sleep for three days. I cannot do any work with this particular hand. I do not want to say much because there are a lot of people in Makeni who know the sufferings that I am undergoing.

Prof. Kamara: We say thanks to you for this testimony. We know that you feel the pain but we have to ask you some questions.

Bishop Joseph C Humper

Bishop Humper: We thank you for coming here. Can you recall some of the names of these rebels that attacked you?

Mr. Kamara: No. At that time I was blindfolded. I only heard the name of one person. I heard the name Victor and he chopped off our hands.

Bishop Humper: Where is your family now?

Mr. Kamara: They are at Mafora

Bishop Humper: What happened to the man that you asked his relatives to go and help?

Mr. Kamara: His hand was also eventually chopped off completely

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: How did you get news that the rebels were coming.

Mr. Kamara: One man came to town at night and he was shouting that the rebels were coming. But we did not know the right direction they entered from.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that when the rebels came, you went into the bush and when you were caught you fought with them. Were they with guns?

Mr. Kamara: He had a gun

Commissioner Jow: How did you fight him?

Mr. Kamara: The gun was slung over his shoulder when he grabbed me.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us the name of your friend that was killed?

Mr. Kamara: Mahmoud Kadie

Commissioner Jow: Was he of the same village?

Mr. Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Did they burn the houses in the village?

Mr. Kamara: No house was burnt.

Commissioner Jow: Do you know which group the rebels belonged to?

Mr. Kamara: The problem is once you have been captured and your attention focused on them you will not be able to know the group.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us what time the incident happened?

Mr. Kamara: I am a farmer. I am not used to checking the clock for time.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the young boys that were captured?

Mr. Kamara: Those young boys I have not been able to see them.

Commissioner Jow: I want to know about your medical problem.

Mr. Kamara: I have not been able to see a doctor because I have no money.

Commissioner Jow: Before this problem what were you doing?

Mr. Kamara: I was a farmer.

Commissioner Jow: Currently what are you doing?

Mr. Kamara: I am not doing anything

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: You spoke of a lady that helped you with medical treatment.

Mr. Kamara: She is a missionary sister.

Prof.Kamara: During 1997 did you have any civil defence force there?

Mr. Kamara: No, there was no CDF at that time because the village is small.

Prof.Kamara: Can you remember if it was the time of the AFRC, NPRC?

Mr. Kamara: All I can remember is that it was Tejan Kabba's government because when the hand was chopped ,they said, go to Tejan Kabba.

Prof.Kamara: At that time there were no government soldiers?

Mr. Kamara: We only had a police check point.

Prof. Kamara: What did the police do when they heard that rebels had entered?

Mr. Kamara: They all ran away.

Prof. Kamara: You said you sent your wife to a different direction; when did you re-establish contact?

Mr. Kamara: When I came to Makeni my wife met me at Makeni hospital.

Prof.Kamara: Did you know where your wife went when she reached Makeni.

Mr. Kamara: I knew she was going to Makeni

Prof.Kamara: Why did you tell your wife to follow the others?

Mr. Kamara: Because she was carrying a child on her back. I decided she should follow the others while I used the short cut.

Prof.Kamara: Now it is your turn to ask us questions.

Mr. Kamara: I do not have any questions. I want you to assist me so that I will stop suffering. My family is suffering. I have three children; they all are young, and three of them are attending schools. I want you to assist me

with their education. To continue with such a talk is to begin to shed tears. So, this is all I have to say.

Prof. Kamara: Mr. Kamara we have noted your request.

5th Witness – Ibrahim Dauda Sankoh

My name is Ibrahim D. Sankoh. I am a Muslim. Commissioner Prof. John Kamara administered the oath.

I came to Bendemba in 1980. I went there as an Arabic teacher. From my meagre salary, I made some savings and, therefore, to augment my income, I engaged myself in petty trading. Little by little, the petty trade grew. I opened two shops and bought a motor vehicle and a motorcycle. One day, I took a ride on my motorcycle to Sanda Terari Chiefdom. On my way back, I stopped in one village in the course of my business transactions. I was inside a room collecting money when I heard that the rebels were coming. Meanwhile, my motorcycle parked outside had some money which I had earlier on collected on it. Therefore, I tried to take off swiftly on my motorcycle, but it was no use. I came under gun fire, so I left the motorcycle and ran for cover. I hid in a nearby bush watching them. From where I was, I saw them they unload the motorcycle; they took petrol from the motorcycle and set it ablaze. This happened around 1995. After all that, I returned to my village and continued with my business; although with lots of difficulties. We continued to believe that the worst was over, and that in any case, Bendemba would not be overrun. However, in 1997 they entered Bendemba. We ran. We left everything behind and went into the bush. At first, they only grabbed what they needed and continued on their way. However, after two to three months, they came back. Now, after the first rebel strike, life still got back to some sort of normal. So, we were still in Bendemba doing our business. Then one day, we heard that the rebels were burning houses in Kalamba and that Bendemba would be the next. It all happened so quickly. Gun shots began to ring out in Bendemba. We ran to the bush for cover. Then, they started burning houses. For two days they burnt houses. They burnt my house and my two shops. The houses that were burnt in Bendemba were many. We were in the bush for a long time and then we decided to go to Makeni. Bendemba had become very inhospitable. In 1997 we heard that rebels were coming to Makeni. We saw people running from Makeni. I was so afraid. My experience in Bendemba and how I came to take settle in Makeni all flashed through my head. Accordingly, at midnight, I took my family and headed for Bendemba. After we had stayed one week in Bendemba, we heard that the rebels had entered Makeni. Then, without any warning whatsoever, the rebels suddenly entered Bendemba again. Now, it happened that there were talks about meetings; that normalcy was beginning to return to Makeni; that, generally, people have started coming out of the bush. So, they started asking us to come out of our hiding places in the bush. Now, I have three children and I did not know their whereabouts. So I set out to look for them. Then, I came across some civilians who were already with the rebels. I was asked to join them. After about two to three minutes, one girl came along the path and they grabbed her. She was asked, "where are the money and the properties." The girl said she did not have any money. They told the girl that if she did not produce the money she would be killed. The girl was got to sit on the floor and they started firing bullets close to the girl's feet. They said "if you don't produce the property you will be killed". The girl insisted that she

had no money. Trouble! We were all afraid. In the process, they also asked about who had any motor vehicle or motorcycle. The girl did not have anyone to point her finger at but me saying that I had a motorcycle. In any case, they were vehemently threatening to kill her. So, the rebels called me and asked about the motor vehicle and the motorcycle. I told them that I no longer had anything. One of them told me that if I failed to provide them with the vehicle or the motorcycle he would kill me. I pleaded with him, and tried to explain that I no longer had any motor vehicle or Honda motorcycle. All my plea fell on deaf ears. He asked to sit on the ground so that he would finish me! He had aimed at my chest and fired seven shots but, through divine intervention the bullets fell on my feet. He rolled me over and fired another shot at the back of my head. He told me to get up, that he will end me up. But it so happened that I was losing much blood and I fell down and lay unconscious. So, one of the rebels told him to forget about me, since I was obviously gone. Therefore, they left and went about the arrangements for their planned meeting. The meeting could not hold. Things were already scattered. By divine intervention, I was able to make it to the bush. There I found my relatives. I needed urgent medical attention. So, they took me to a doctor. There was not a single equipment, but we had to do something fast. I told the doctor that we can even use the needle that they use for sewing clothes to gather up the flesh. The sewing needle was thus used. For sterilization and effect, it was dipped in naked fire and used to stitch up my flesh. Things were that bad, but that was what I went through and how I survived. The problems I went through in the war I have just explained.

Prof Kamara: That was a bitter experience, you have to be patient with us to answer questions from the Commission.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: We thank you for coming today. According to you it seems that this happened in 1995. Am I right?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: That was the first incident when my motorcycle was burnt.

Bishop Humper: The other one was in 1997

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: Yes.

Bishop Humper: As a business man what was your relationship with the people in the community?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: I was a stranger.

Bishop Humper: Was there any special rebel activities. Did the rebels get a training ground?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: Yes.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara: Do you know a site in Bendemba where the rebels killed a lot of people and dumped them in a well?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: You should not count on what they told you, I was told that the rebels came and attacked the ECOMOG troops and killed many of them.

Prof. Kamara: You know they have a well there in Bendemba.

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: Yes

Prof.Kamara: You came down in Makeni and stayed there till 1995?

Mr.I.D. Sankoh: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Then you went back to Bendembu.

Mr.I.D. Sankoh: Yes

Prof.Kamara: You could not have missed the activities of the rebels from 1998 to 1999. Did you see anything happen in Makeni?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: During my stay there we were more often than not seeking for cover in the bush .

Prof. Kamara: In 1997 we had a group called AFRC. In 1998 they were driven out of Freetown and they came to Makeni.

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: I have problems with the dates. I do not know.

Prof.Kamara: You spoke about a surgery. Where they used a needle that they used to sew clothes. Who helped you?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: One of my brothers helped me.

Prof.Kamara: Is he still alive?

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: Yes

Prof.Kamara: With no medical paper.

Mr.I.D. Sankoh : It was in a desparate effort to save my life .

Prof. Kamara: He saved you ?

Mr.I.D. Sankoh: I was stitched up and we were using this ordinary salt as anti-septic. But now I feel the same pain.

Prof.Kamara: Can you identify the rebels who nearly killed you?

Mr. I.D.Sankoh: I can not .

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow:

Commissioner Jow: What was your relationship with people in your community because you said you were a stranger? Can you explain?

Mr.I.D. Sankoh: I went there as a teacher and they also took me as an Imam to pray with them.

Commissioner Jow: Was the relationship cordial?

Mr.I.D.Sankoh: Yes and up to this moment.

Commissioner Jow: As you said you were rich, did anybody meet you to support the rebels?

Mr.I.D.Sankoh: No.

Leader of Evidence:Ms.Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms.Apori-Nkansah : No question

Prof.Kamara: Ibrahim it is your turn to ask us questions.

Mr. I.D. Sankoh: I am happy for this opportunity because as a result of the gunshot wounds,I have been encountering a lot of problems. For now I am not a healthy man. As I sit here I have pains that people say have to do with tetanus. I do not have a house. At one time we saw people who said that we should prepare blocks to build houses and the government would build the houses. Those that had the chance did it. Now, we understand that the projects for the house will not materialize. I want the Commission to help us with accommodation. All the blocks that we prepared are getting wet under the rains. The whole of Bendembu are preparing blocks. I ask that this problem be addressed. We do not know what is going to happen to those blocks. We have asked for tarpaulin but we did not get any. On behalf of my people I ask the Commission what do we do with those blocks?

Prof.Kamara: I am surprised that you do not seem to know what is going on in your Chiefdom or even Bombali District. Within the chiefdoms you have sections. You know what sections you belong to in Bendembu. My advice is to talk with your section chief and he will inform the PC and the PC will inform the district. If you are ready to push forward your problem you will be assisted. Whatever the Commission will be able to do at the district level the Commission will do it. When we write the report what you have said here will be included in the report.

6th – Witness – Alpha N. Kargbo

My name is Alpha N. Kargbo. I am a muslim. The oath was administered by Prof. Kamara

In 1998, the ECOMOG forces drove the AFRC into the provinces .These rebel forces moved also to Makeni. When they reached Makeni, they took machetes from one office and went to Kono. When they entered Kono, we deserted our homes and ran into the bush where we spent about 3(three)months . Then ECOMOG chased them to Kono. When ECOMOG reached Kono they liberated Sewafe.

On a Friday, the ECOMOG reached where we were staying and moved to Sabuya. They came across a big tree that fell across the path near Bafodia. They left their vehicle there and walked on foot. They met the chief and told him that they wanted to go to Samuya. They told the chief that he should get people to remove the tree across the path. When we came the chief said :”ECOMOG is ready to fight for us. Please remove the tree”. We removed the tree and they moved on to Samuya. ECOMOG went ahead and we were behind them. On Saturday, ECOMOG came back and they told the chief that all the people that went into the bush should come out of the bush. They told the chief that the town was safe and they have liberated Samuya and Sewafe. So the chief sent the message around. At night on a Saturday we came to town. We sat outside for a long time. Unknown to us, the rebels had crossed the area called Konokambua. We were unaware of the reality that all the time ECOMOG was talking, they were in the village as spies. When they came they spoke as if they were Nigerians. They told us not to run. They said they were the ECOMOG who have come to Samuya. They told us to stop hiding;that they only came to ensure that there was no problem. They started gathering people. I

said to them, "ECOMOG came they did not gather us together; but now you claim to be ECOMOG and you gather the people together?" They said, "let us go". I entered into my house and I told my wife that there is problem. Before we could get out, they surrounded the house. They knocked on the door and then broke the lock. Seven of them entered and I was held at gun point. They asked me to give them money. I said, "why should I? I don't have money." I said, "we were in the bush for the past three months, where can I get money from." They said "do you think we don't know you." I said, "I don't know you." He said "we have worked together. The area we were working, we saw you supporting your boys. Sometimes you helped us." I said "I have nothing." I knew him actually but such an acceptance would mean something horrible. He took my tape and travelling bag. They broke the drawer of the bed but could not find money. The man insisted that I had money. He asked them to undress me. When I was undressed there was money with me. When they saw the money the man who had insisted told them that he was sure that I had money. I begged to now release my wife and I. The man refused to release me. He said he must take me to their commander. His companion told him that they should leave me because they have already taken my money. The man said if his companions stood by that, then he would shot them as well as have me shot too. He pulled off the cloth that my wife had on, tore it and used it to tie me up. He took me to the boss man. About 25 of us were taken captive. The other man accused me of being a Kamajor and I said I was not a kamajor. The man said if I argued with him, he would take the bayonet and stab me to death. The man said they felt like killing one person at the moment. I was taken as a sacrifice and they said they would kill me. However, a Limba woman was brought out at the same time. She was begging in Limba language. As he came nearer the commander said, "we are going to kill this mammy because she is making noise for ECOMOG to notice us". Immediately the commander said this, she was slaughtered. They asked about me and the commander said, "we are not going to make two sacrifices". They laid me down on the ground and started stepping on my stomach; because I was hefty. The other man came and cut off my ear with a bayonet. They called a small boy to bring a mortar. The other one asked, "what are we going to do with these people"? The other one said, "our own group is going to chop off their hands. We sacrifice only one person". They took the mortar. They brought out one woman, her hand was chopped off and the other was chopped half the way and left dangling. They gave her a message to take to Pa Tejan Kabba. They said, "because you have hands that is why you are involved in politics". Then, they pulled me up and asked me to stretch my hand I refused. The other took my hand and stretched my hand; as he aimed to chop my wrist, the machete chopped the elbow. They said I should put the other hand but I refused. I said, "I am ready to die". He rushed at me, as blood was still rushing out from the hand, I pointed the hand to his face and the blood went to his eyes. He started shouting. Then the boss man asked him what was wrong. The boss man said, "I have warned you, leave this man to go!". They called another old man to chop his hand. I told him not to do it. I helped the man and we went along. As we went along, he said he was thirsty. I said, "don't drink water, if you do drink you will die". I tried to help the old man, but he only grew weaker and weaker. He told me that he was tired and threw himself on the ground. I told him that if he continued to lie on the ground and the rebels met him there they would kill him. So, we took a path in the bush that the farmers use and I got to a particular point and asked him to lie low there; and wait and hope for help, since it is a path that people do use to the farm. He asked me where I was going. I said I was going to ECOMOG. I had no shoes on. On my way I saw a lot of rebels. Two of them noticed me. They pointed their guns at me. They asked me to raise my hand. I said, "they have already chopped off my hand". They said, "who did that?". And I said, "your companions". They asked me, "where are you going?". I said, "they sent me to tell you that they are at Bayouman". My explanation accepted, they in turn, gave me messages for the others. When they got out of their view, I took another route. The area I found myself I could see a lot of rebel checkpoints. I walk on along the bush path till I got to Bobboya. Exhausted I fell down and remained there for a long time. Then the Lord restored my strength and I was able to get up again. I went inside Bobboya. I met ECOMOG there. When they saw me one of them cocked his gun to shot me. I raised my hand. They said, raise up your two hands. I said, "I cannot. They have chopped off my hand". One of them said I was telling a lie and, the other said no. The other said to his companion, "what I want you to do is; I am ready to make a sacrifice, if he is holding a pistol. If he shoots me, kill him."

The ECOMOG soldier came and pointed the touch at me and found out that my hand was chopped off. He called his commander and told him that my hands were chopped at Bababfoya. They asked me to show them the place. They asked me if the rebels wanted to go further. I said that the rebels gave me the message that when they left Babafoyou they would attack Bobyboa. He asked me if it was far away. I told him it was five miles away. The commander came closer and asked some more questions. At that time I was exhausted and no longer able to see clearly. I sat there for a while and he came back. He asked me where do you want to go. I said I want to go to sewafe. I sat there but there was no car. He told his men to escort me. I met another ECOMOG chief at Efoma junction. After explaining the commander instructed his men to launch their gun and when they fired the gun I nearly fell down and almost passed away. They said," if we allow this man to lie there, he would die". They started pushing me until I regained consciousness. When I reached the bridge, I met another group of ECOMOG troops. One SLA soldier saw me and accused me of being a rebel. He said the kamajors has chopped off my hand. He told them that he was going to kill me. He took me to the rail of the bridge to shoot me. I stood there. The commander came near me. The SLA soldier was about to remove his gun to shoot me. The commander asked him why do you want to shoot him. He said I was a rebel. The commander asked me if I was a rebel. I said no. I told the commander," you passed us yesterday and we helped you remove the tree. If this man says I am a rebel, I have no power that is why I am standing here for him to kill me". The commander asked him," what proof do you have that this man is a rebel? This man has passed all other checkpoints, he was not killed why do you say he is a rebel? Now, you are going to be the escort of this man, if I hear any gun shot I will kill you and your family." As we went along, he continued to talk to me nicely. I did not listen to him. When I reached one village, I met some women and men that recognised me. They asked me what happened and I explained everything to them. They gave me a pair of trousers. When I reached a junction I met ECOMOG troops mobilizing to go to kono. The commander was backing me and the other officer that recognised me immediately, asked him to take a look. When he saw me and he cried. He asked me if I was the only one affected. I told there that were 25 of us. He asked why I came alone. I explained that things were so bad, but that I was determined to get to them. He told one of the soldiers to take me to the hospital. There was no medicine in the hospital. The doctor used spirit to stop the bleeding. About the half hand that remained, the doctor said that since the bones have all been broken and the veins all cut off, the only alternative was to amputate the hand. I tried to pinch the hand, I felt to pain; I told him to amputate it. When he amputated it, I fainted. I was given three bottles of drips. I spent the whole day there. On Sunday, my neighbours started coming. Some of the people started crying for me. They had thought I had been killed. When they saw me at sewafa they were surprised. A journalist met me at sewafa and I explained everything to him. An ECOMOG soldier told the journalist that they did not have enough communication equipment to communicate to Freetown. He pleaded with the journalist for assistance in communicating to Freetown for us to be taken to Freetown. The journalist said unless he got to the last place that ECOMOG had cleared, he would not do that. So, the journalist refused. Pressed further, he loaded his equipment in his car and asked for escort; they gave him two ECOMOG soldiers as escort. Unfortunately, when they reached the main highway, they came across the rebels. The journalist asked the driver to stop. As the vehicle stopped, the rebels surrounded the vehicle.

The rebels burnt down the car together with everybody inside it. When the ECOMOG soldiers saw the smoke, they approached the smoke. When they got there, they saw what had happened. They sent message to mantu check point

The ECOMOG soldier said," we told you earlier on to assist to communicate to Freetown to help your brother, but now see!" The ECOMOG soldiers took us to the Government Hospital at Makeni at 3:00am at night. When we arrived, there was no light. We slept there. We were taken to 34 hospital. Later on, we were taken to Connaught hospital; because ECOMOG had many wounded soldiers and they were at 34 hospital. We went to Connaught on a Saturday. On Sunday morning, they told us that hospital was not operating. The Norwegian refugee council decided to assist us. Later on, one woman sent forms to us. She told us that they want to build houses for us. We told her to build an amputee village for us. We told the woman to come to Makeni and build for us. As of now I am in Kailahun camp.

Bishop Humper: Can you tell me what happened to your wife?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: Yes. My wife and I were captured together. After amputating the hand of one woman in their midst, my wife and the others were taken to one house and were locked up and, the rebels said they were going to burn down the house. The commander now left and gave order to one rebel to set the house ablaze with everybody inside. One woman was in the house who knew the man. She called him by name, Abdul Sankoh, and she said: "Are you going to kill your brother's children and kill me too?" Abdul asked, "who are you to call my name?". The woman said, "I am Kadiatu. I am married to your brother in Bo". Abdul opened the door and saw Kadiatu. He told Kadiatu to come out. Kadiatu took one of her children and gave the child to my wife. She said, "this is my sister please help save my sister's life". He opened the door and allowed all of them to escape. He burnt the house and told his commander that he had burnt all of them in the house.

Bishop Humper: Can you tell us about the people in the room; how many of them survived and how many were amputated?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: I cannot tell you all those who survived. The ones I saw were : Hawa Korma ;Kadiatu Bangura ;Pa Mansary ;Mummy (died later) .The other three people are still alive.

Bishop Humper: You also mentioned that you did not want to identify yourself when you were asked for money. Do you know the names of the rebels that attacked you?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: I know the names of two. I know their family and we have lived together. Like, Abdul Sankoh, he comes from Bombali chiefdom. The time he passed out from the military we were in the same village and we know one another. He was the man that chopped off my ears. I told him that we were from the same village. But because he was under the influence of drugs, he said, he does not know me.

Sheku Marah is a Koronko and we used to live in the same neighbourhood. His brother was also captured. They did not do anything to him. They told his brother to show them the road to Bo. I spoke to him in the koronko language but he ignored all that and refused to help me. The other one's name is Papa, if I see him I can identify him. The others I cannot identify . The one who was a spy in the village was hired to chop off hands.

Bishop Humper: Would you say that you were targeted?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: Sheku targeted me. My money had already been taken from me. His companion told him to leave me but he refused

Bishop Humper: Has there ever been any quarrel between both of you prior to the war?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: No

Bishop Humper: Have you every seen any of them since then?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: Sheku passed us at Pamlamp and came to cabala. Abdul Sankoh is said to be staying at sewafa bridge. But I do not know if that is true.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: In your testimony you told us that when the rebels searched you, they got Le3.5m. Can you tell us what your occupation was?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: I was a business man

Commissioner Jow: What type of business

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: I sold rice in bags

Commissioner Jow: In your testimony you said when ECOMOG came and cleared the town of rebels, they left the town?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: ECOMOG forces thought that they had cleared the area and that we were safe. They thought that they had the whole place covered. But along the highway, the distance between Kono and Sandaya is considerably long.

Commissioner Jow: Were Kamajors there at that time?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: No

Commissioner Jow: Were there any CDF?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: None of these forces was there

Commissioner Jow: You said the rebels were speaking the Nigerian and Liberian languages?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: They were Sierra Leonean.

Commissioner Jow: What makes you so sure?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: When they entered the village; they spoke in Liberian and Nigerian languages. When they captured us they spoke in krio.

Commissioner Jow: You said the rebels took the woman to make sacrifice. Can you tell us why they used her as sacrifice?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: They said the woman was making a lot of noise; so they offered her as sacrifice.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: You have provided us with a vital information. Did I hear you say that Abdul Sankoh was a soldier?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: Yes

Bishop Humper: What about Sheku Marah

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: He is a soldier

Bishop Humber: Based on all you have gone through, what can you tell this commission about the role of some of our soldiers in the rebel war?.

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: They only helped in destroying the country

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: Your story was long but very clear. Are you together with your wife?

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Also can you recollect or remember the name of the ECOMOG soldier who saved you from the SLA who wanted to kill you?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: No

Commissioner Yasmin sooka

Commissioner Sooka: You mentioned that they also stripped the women naked. Beside that did they do any other thing to them?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: After I had left I could not have known what happened to them. While I was there they did nothing else to them?

Commissioner Sooka: You said one of the men was hired to chop people's hands. Did the man say that to you?

Mr.A.N. Kargbo: He was commanded to chop off people's hands. He was Sao.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Abdulai Charm

Mr.A.Charm: Is it possible for you to tell us the name of the women who was sacrificed

Mr.A.N.Kargbo: I do not know her name .

Prof.Kamara: It is your turn to ask us questions.

Mr. A.N. Kargbo: My first question is about the education of our children. Now that the rebels have chopped off our hands; what are we to do ?. Some of us have their two hands chopped off. Some of us have to be in wheel chairs?. We have to take care of our families. What is the commission doing in terms of education?.

Prof.Kamara: It is a repetition of a request that we have been receiving. We are very much aware and concerned especially about the young people. When we write our report your recommendations will be incorporated into our report. I hope the question has been satisfactorily answered?

- Mr.A.N. Kargbo: The next question is about medical facility. We are faced with regular infection such as the issues of tetanus and so on. We have cried to the government to assist us with medicine. People are under a lot of pain and need pain relief, but where is money for the medicine ?
- Prof.Kamara: It will be noted. For now we hope that some kind of help will be provided for the camp that will include medical facility. We will try to see that it is done.If you have any urgent attention our staff can assist you to recommend you for medical attention.
- Mr.A.N.Kargbo: During the peace accord the government promised us that if the rebels received their package, we the victims would have our own package. But I have not seen that package ; apart from an assistance by an NGO, is this the way we are going to continue to suffer ?
- Prof.Kamara: No.As you spoke of the Lome peace accord, the TRC talks about war victim funds. Your presence here is an illustration of what happened during the war. As you know the perpetrators are only a small fraction of the victims in the country. We have to understand your problem and how we make recommendations to government . We cannot rush into it haphazardly, otherwise, we will make mistakes. As we try to get all the information necessary, the government and international community are already making the effort to meet the needs of the victims. You already told us that the Norwegian council has provided houses for you and other people. Something more is likely to come.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

CLOSED HEARINGS HELD IN MAKENI ON 28TH MAY 2003

- Commissioner Yasmin Sooka: We welcome you to this hearing. We need to know what recommendations we need to make in order to make positive changes in people's lives. It is important that everything you remember; you should tell us. You should not be afraid. If you feel that you are not comfortable with any question ;please tell us. Feel free to tell us what your experiences are.

My name is Fatmata Jalloh. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Sooka.

I have been through a lot of suffering. I was born in Kono. At the age of 13, I had to leave Kono and was taken to Kabala. We were attacked in 1998. We ran into the bush together with my father and our family members as well as neighbours. In the bush we had no food to eat. This was in August and there was no food to eat at all. We were in this situation: no food, no shelter, no rest, no sleep. After 15 days my father went in search of food. On his way to town he met the rebels. He was held by the rebels. When they seized my dad, he was asked to show where the people were hiding. He said he did not know. He told them, "I am just coming to town to look for food because everybody is hungry." The rebels told him they were not going to release him. They gave him their luggage to carry. It was raining. When they arrived at one farm hut, the rebels decided to stay there for some time and from there they started maltreating my dad. After giving him some slaps they told my dad to continue to carry their loads. They were all placed in one room. They were taken out one after the other and killed. They killed three of them. The first person they killed was the chief of the village. He was shot dead. The next person was killed in the same way. My dad was also shot but was not killed at once. When he was shot, he fell down and the rebels thought my dad was dead. But as they turned to leave, one of them turned around again and noticed that my father was not dead. He then shot him again. He was shot and killed; he was killed mercilessly. I was still in the bush. The next night I had series of dreams, the sort of which I have never had. The next day I told my cousin about my dreams and I told her I was not sure whether my father was still alive. Later on, just when we decided to prepare something to eat, we saw somebody coming. We thought that it was the rebels and we ran into the bush. It later turned to be my brother. It was at that time that we came to know that my father was dead. My mother died when I was a child and I was staying with my stepmother. I did not even know my mother. When my brother came I asked him what happened but he could not look me in the face. He was uncomfortable. Then I said, 'my father is not alive again, my father is dead.' The boy refused to talk to me. They informed my stepmother of my father's death. My cousin had wanted to hide the news of his death from me, but a boy who was staying with us came running and shouting that my father was dead. On receiving the news of my dad's death, I was crying bitterly and this did not go down well with my stepmother and her children; they drove me away. Now, when I was crying, I was not even crying out loud; I was crying within my heart. But they drove me from their group. I had no other place to go but to look for my aunt, my father's sister. I went alone in the bush until finally I found my aunt. My aunt was very sad when she saw me and she started crying. I told my aunt that my father has been killed and my stepmother has driven me away. My aunt persuaded me to stay with her. After five days we received a letter that the rebels were coming to the farm house where we were hiding. We had to leave and, we went into the thick forest. Again there was no food and the place was very cold, because it was the during month of August. We became tired of living in the forest and we decided to go back to the farmhouse. It was there we realized that the rebels had come and we were surrounded. We were just about to eat when some people came running from the other parts of the hamlet to inform us that the rebels have finally come. We tried to run away but it was already too late. They told us to stop and if we run they will shoot us. All of us had to come back to the farm house. I was the last to get back. As soon as I arrived at the farm house, I was held by one of them. He asked me, "What are you doing here?" He said, "I will save your life." I told him to leave me since they have killed my father. He said, "No you are wrong it is not all of us that are wicked." He showed me his ID card and said he was an SLA. I asked him, "Do you know if it was an SLA who killed my father?" He said he did not know but he will save my life. My people pleaded, but he refused. He insisted that he will take me along. He asked me to go to the town with him. I pleaded with him not to take me along. The man told me that, "right now they are killing people in the bushes; if you stay here they will kill you. I have told you that I am going to save your life. By the power of God nothing will happen to you." We went to town. When we were going to town, the rebels told the people in the farmhouse that every body should go to town because rebels were killing people in the bush. They took two of us on that day, a suckling mother and I. On arrival in the town they began to loot animals like goats, cows, sheep and chicken.

Now, the air around was so foul, so I asked the man the reason for the foulness of the air. The man told me, 'these are the people that have been killed.' I went out to check whether I could

see my father's body among them but it was not there. Those bodies were already in various stages of decomposition. By that time my father's brother had come and taken the body and thrown it in some area where it was not even properly buried. We finally arrived where the rebels were staying. I had to stay with this man. I was still a virgin, but he took it away. As soon as he did that, I became pregnant. My friends were telling me to abort the pregnancy. I was afraid to do that because my father had been killed and I do not know my mother. We were just two of us my brother and I. Finally, I accepted to get rid of the pregnancy and, even then I had to pray to God to forgive me. I was directed by the lady to go and get the herbs for myself in the bush. After gathering the herbs, I still prayed to God to guide me. Fortunately, for some inexplicable reason, I forgot about the herbs and the lady forgot about it as well. So, the pregnancy continued to develop. As things turned out, there was conflict between SLA and the SAJ Musa and one commander whose name I have just forgotten.

This forced us to go to Freetown. At that time they had this practice of branding people, so that you would not run away even if you had the desire. This man I was staying with said they were not going to brand me. That time some people were branded on their foreheads and on their chests. They, therefore, decided to train me. I refused and also the man I was staying with rejected the idea of my undergoing training. Anyway, we had to start the trek to Freetown. We walked for days and nights without sleeping. That was the time they went to attack Freetown. We came across rivers. We crossed by the grace of God. By then my pregnancy was just five months. Normally, they used to instruct us to stand in and maintain a straight line. But because of the pregnancy, it happened that one day, I suddenly moved out of the line and '55'⁴ came and hit me on the back. I cried. I was forced to go back in the line. Whilst in that line they used to flog us and use abusive language(s) on us. Especially '55' he had a lot of abusive vocabulary. Sometimes we fell into ambush and one had to lie flat on my stomach with my pregnancy as long as the shooting lasted. Sometimes you come across dead bodies on your track and unless you remained very vigilant you would trip over them and court instant disaster. We arrived in one village where they said they will leave all the women. This time we were really in trouble; because the CDF was around, should they see or meet us, they would kill us. Unfortunately, we were not a fight force we were just held by these people. Sometimes there was no food, we used to cook in tomato tins as if we were just playing. At night they used to tell us to remove all our dresses. You should remain naked. They used to call these, "Operation Born Naked". Sometimes they will ask us to run naked even if you in a town like Makeni. They will tell you to run and go across this town, if you don't do it you will be beaten. If you fall down you will be beaten. I had to go through all this strain whilst pregnant. One time I fell on my stomach and I incurred injuries. Anyway, we were asked to move again from that village to enter Freetown. Finally we entered Freetown. We stayed in Freetown until the attack on January 6. Initially when we arrived, I had wanted to run away. But I was afraid because some civilians had seen me with these people. Because of that I could not run away. We came to Waterloo. We were forced to use the bush road with so many mountains and at that time the pregnancy was seven months. When we arrived at Waterloo I told my husband that I wanted to go to my people in Kabala to deliver. This man told me "how can you go at this time there is no Road. If you try to go they will kill you." I told him that I was not part of them as long as I have not done any wrong God will guide me on my way. I tried to find a way. But as things turned out my husband was hit and badly wounded in the leg. I was still here in Makeni because there was no road to Kabala. I got information about my husband's situation. I went to the hospital and I met him there. I was with him until he died. Two weeks after his death I had delivery, but I lost the baby. Later on, I came across my husband's brother who is a pastor and I told him: "Pastor your brother captured me, I want you to find a mother for me so that I can stay with her." Pastor took me to one Agnes Kamara. And really she took me as her own child. One time the lady had to go to Freetown and she left me in-charge of the home. I took care of everybody. Later, however, there was still a fight here and the chopper helicopter was around. I was afraid and I went to Mile 91. I was there for 11 months. When I heard that UNAMSIL had come to Makeni, I came back. Later on, I got the information from my friends that certain groups have come for the children who were abducted during the war and that people were coming around to train them in several skills. I

⁴ 55 happens to be the nickname or popular name of this sort of 'adjutant' for the rebel forces

decided to go and register at Caritas. They took us to Port Loko. In Port Loko we were sent to Lunsar, because they said,they could not trust us,that they were afraid of us. They asked us whether we ever carried arms. I said no. I told them that I do not even know the arms and cannot use them. We were taken back to Port Loko,where we spent ten days and they brought us again to Makeni. They told us that after the disarmament, they will take us through skills training. We were then registered for the different skills training. At present ,I have learnt cloth weaving, gara dying and batic making.

Commissioner Sooka

We want to ask you questions so that we will understand you more.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: We say thanks to you for coming to this hearing. As the Commissioner had said, we have a special mandate and this mandate is to focus on women and children during the war so that we can record it accurately, and make the appropriate recommendations to improve the lot of women and girls in this country ;particularly those who suffered during the war . We hope that the recommendations will ensure that what happened to girls will never happen again. You have given us a good insight of the war, but we need to ask you questions so that we can make some clarifications. Fatmata at the time of the incident you said you were 13years old ?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us the name of the village you were living?

Fatmata Jalloh: Makakura

Commissioner Jow: What were you doing at that time? Were you a student?

Fatmata Jalloh: No. I was helping my aunt to sell.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about your family circumstances?

Fatmata Jalloh: At that time I was living with my father, my step mother, brother and my cousins.

Commissioner Jow: You made mention of your brother. Was he your step mother's son?

Fatmata Jalloh: He was my step mother's son. I have my own brother who is staying with my uncle.

Commissioner Jow: What was the relationship with your step mother?

Fatmata Jalloh: She used to be nice to me but at a point in time her attitude changed and my father became concerned. Anyway, more often than not, when someone loses the mother, the step mothers more often than not begin to act in strange ways.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us why your step mother sent you out?

Fatmata Jalloh: She said that I should not give them away. Because I was crying, she said the rebels were very close and that I was endangering their lives . But I was not even crying loudly.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the rebels that approached you. Were they in uniform?

Fatmata Jalloh: Some were in full military combat uniform and some were not.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the other women who were caught. What happened to the suckling mother?

Fatmata Jalloh: Nothing happened to her she is still alive.

Commissioner Jow: Did she go along with the rebels?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: And she remained with them until they signed they peace?

Fatmata Jalloh: No. All of them left at the same time.

Commissioner Jow: Did her baby survive ?

Fatmata Jalloh: I do not know whether the child is still alive; but she also suffered the same ordeal.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that the rebels looted animals. Did you join them to loot?

Fatmata Jalloh: No

Commissioner Jow: Can you also tell us how they get these animals?

Fatmata Jalloh: They just run after them and seize them.

Commissioner Jow: You told us that you saw dead bodies on the way. Can you tell us how they were killed?

Fatmata Jalloh: I just saw dead bodies. I do not know.

Commissioner Jow: How long did it take you to move from the bush and get to the base where you settled?

Fatmata Jalloh: The distance is about five miles, so we took about five days. From the village where they settled to our own village is two miles and from the other village is three miles.

Commissioner Jow: I am now coming to the base were you settled. You did not tell us the name of this man.

Fatmata Jalloh: His name was Abdul Sinnah.

Commissioner Jow: Was it his actual name?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: At what stage did he rape you?

Fatmata Jalloh: He did it at the base.

Commissioner Jow: Were there people present?

Fatmata Jalloh: No

Commissioner Jow: Did he force you or did you consent?

Fatmata Jalloh: I was forced . That was my first time.

Commissioner Jow: Did you ever have ever any experience of menstruation before then?

Fatmata Jalloh: No.

Commissioner Jow: What did he say to you as he raped you?

Fatmata Jalloh: He told me that at the end of the war , he would marry me ;that he would not disappoint me.

Commissioner Jow: Were there other women in the base?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Can you give us an idea of how many?

Fatmata Jalloh: We were many.

Commissioner Jow: Were there other women who were not young girls?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: What was their role in the base?

Fatmata Jalloh: They used to send on us errands and, if we do not do them they would beat us.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember any of their names?

Fatmata Jalloh: No. It is a long time now since I left them in 1999. At that time we just called them 'Sissy'. We never knew their real names?

Commissioner Jow: What else were you asked to do at the camp? What else were you forced to do apart from being a wife?

Fatmata Jalloh: I was not doing anything. He did not allow me to do anything especially when I became pregnant.

Commissioner Jow: Was he kind to you?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes. He never maltreated me.

Commissioner Jow: Did you see other girls being maltreated by their husbands?

Fatmata Jalloh: We were not staying in the same house everyone was staying in his/her own place.

Commissioner Jow: Were some of the girls punished by their husbands?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes some of them were punished.

Commissioner Jow: Like how?

Fatmata Jalloh: Most of these men have their wives in Kono but when they came here they abducted girls here and when their wives came they treated them as slaves for their wives.

Commissioner Jow: How did you feel when you were raped for the first time?

Fatmata Jalloh: I did not feel good about it because it was painful .

Commissioner Jow: Did you get any attention from the elderly women?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes. I told them but then they could not do much; because as soon as I had that contact I became pregnant.

Commissioner Jow: Why do you call Andrew Sinnah your husband?

Fatmata Jalloh: He did not marry me. He abducted me.

Commissioner Jow: You seem to have some affection for him?

Fatmata Jalloh: No.

Commissioner Jow: When you heard he was in the hospital you went to visit him.

Fatmata Jalloh: I went there because of my child.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka:

Commissioner Sooka: How old was Andrew Sinnah?

Fatmata Jalloh: 33years of age.

Commissioner Sooka: And you were 13years.

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: After the first time he raped you, did he have sex with you every day or were you supposed to be the lady on demand for him?

Fatmata Jalloh: He used to ask but I always told him no because it was not pleasant.

Commissioner Sooka: What happened to you if you say no?

Fatmata Jalloh: He used to leave me alone because he knew he had done something bad to me.

Commissioner Sooka: What was your typical day with him?

Fatmata Jalloh: Most of the time we were not always together because they were always on patrol. And while on patrol they got us into the thick forest and gave us guards to ensure that we did not escape.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you remember how many women were there?

Fatmata Jalloh: We were more than fifty but really I cannot say.

Commissioner Sooka: When you became pregnant were you really upset?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: What really went through your mind?

Fatmata Jalloh: I was thinking:How can I be a child , so tender and still be pregnant ?

Commissioner Sooka: You were talking about taking herbs to abort the child, was it a difficult decision for you to make?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes, it was difficult because my mother died during delivery.

Commissioner Sooka: You also mentioned that you refused to go for training and the man who abducted you also supported your refusal.

Fatmata Jalloh: I realized that it was going to be a waste if I was to train because I never imagined myself killing other people.

Commissioner Sooka: What surprises me is that you were not forced to go to train and nobody forced you. Was Andrew protecting you?

Fatmata Jalloh: Andrew was never willing for me to go and train.

Commission Sooka: Did other men rape you or did Andrew protect you from that?

Fatmata Jalloh: I never experienced that.

Commissioner Sooka: When “Operation Born Naked” took place did you also take part in it?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes that was a matter of must for everybody on the ground. Even the soldiers did. We had on our pants but we were asked not to wear white so that the enemies will not notice us.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you witness other girls being raped?

Fatmata Jalloh: No.

Commissioner Sooka: You said you witnessed the fight between the RUF and SLA.

Fatmata Jalloh: We were not staying in the same village. There was a quarrel between the SLA and RUF. The RUF ordered the SLA to go away from the village. The quarrel was between SAJ Musa and Superman. They wanted to kill SAJ Musa at that point. I was only told the cause of the problem. Whilst they were staying together the SLA and the RUF, one of the boys of Superman killed a civilian and SAJ Musa was annoyed and

SAJ Musa in turn killed the boy that killed the civilian. So Superman said SAJ. Musa should not have killed the RUF because of a civilian.

Commissioner Sooka: You remained with the SLA?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes

Commissioner Sooka: Your statement also mentioned the abduction of UN peace keepers.

Fatmata Jalloh: No. I was here when the Kenyans arrived in Makeni. Earlier in my statement I said that I had to run away to Mile 91. It was during that time the Kenyans were captured.

Commissioner Sooka: How did you know about it?

Fatmata Jalloh: I heard that over the radio and also people around used to talk about it.

Commissioner Sooka: What did people say?

Fatmata Jalloh: I was only told that they had attacked the Kenyans in order to drive them out of this place.

Commissioner Sooka: How long did you spend with Sinnah?

Fatmata Jalloh: I was with him for nine months.

Commissioner Sooka: After the first time were you bleeding very badly?

Fatmata Jalloh: I bled but not too much.

Commissioner Sooka: Now do you have any long term problems?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: The doctors said you are fine?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes I had gone to the Magburaka Government Hospital and they said I have no problem. That time I was suffering from stomach ache but it was worms.

Commissioner Sooka: The reason why you lost the baby was it because of the hard life in the bush?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: Was it difficult when you had the baby.

Fatmata Jalloh: The pain started in the morning but I was able to deliver at 5:00pm.

Commissioner Jow: Did you deliver at the hospital?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes, at the Pentagon Hospital.

Commissioner Jow: Did they allow you to see the baby?

Fatmata Jalloh: No. The baby was a girl.

Commissioner Jow: Are you currently in a relationship?

Fatmata Jalloh: No. Because now I am on my skills training and I want to pay more attention on that and wait until God's time for me to have my own partner

Commissioner Jow: Do you have plans of getting married?

Fatmata Jalloh: yes

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: Are you happy with the training you have?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Are you afraid of men?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes, I am afraid because I still consider myself a child.

Leader of Evidence :Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Did you get medical attention when you were pregnant?

Fatmata Jalloh: In the early stages of the pregnancy I did not get any medical attention.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Can you also describe the accommodation of the base and where it was located?

Fatmata Jalloh: We were in Yemadogu in the Koinadugu District.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: You said some of the soldiers after abducting girls later went and brought their wives. Were their wives living with you in the same place?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes, we were living in the same house but what happened was that some of these girls because of the maltreatment from the wives, some the girls had to find other boyfriends.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Did you have casualties when crossing the rivers to go to Freetown?

Fatmata Jalloh: I cannot tell because we usually crossed at night.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you have any ceremony in your culture that you perform concerning returnee(s) from abduction?

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes. That is part of our culture. For instance when your child is taken away, you pray that the child comes back. If the child returns, they wash their feet and mouth. Those who have parents, they do it for them; but for me I have no parents.

Ms.Apori-Nkansah: That means you have not yet been welcomed back.

Fatmata Jalloh: Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you have any relative to perform this ceremony for you?

Fatmata Jalloh: No.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka :

Commissioner Sooka: We thank you for sharing your testimony with us. We have asked you so many questions. We want you to ask us questions now.

Fatmata Jalloh: I am begging the government to have mercy on us. We the children have suffered in the war. We have learnt the skills but have not got the capital to start to be self-reliant. We are appealing to the government to appreciate our predicament and come to our aid ; so that we do not continue to suffer. We have learnt the skills but if we are not going to practice we will not benefit from it at all.

Commissioner Sooka: How do you support yourself currently?

Fatmata Jalloh: I have learnt the skills and sometimes I get some jobs to do.

2nd Witness – Koya Fatmata Sanu

My name is Fatmata Sanu. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

TESTIMONY

I was in my village in Batkanu. Then, we heard that the rebels had attacked the neighbouring village. We ran into the bush. From the part of the bush where we had taken refuge, we could hear the firing of gun shots; so we went further and further into the bush. My brother came and informed us that the rebels have attacked our village. We headed for another village. My father decided to come to the village to see things for himself. He saw the rebels and retreated into the bush. We were all confused and afraid and we put our hope and trust in God. We went further into the bush , but even at that we still came across rebels .Therefore, we had to go further and further and further into the forest. We stayed there for two months. Feeling tired of the forest ,we decided to take a chance. We came back to the village.

Not long after we had arrived in our village there was a rebel attack. We were attacked at about 2:00am.Every one was asleep when the alarm came that the rebels had entered the village. Everybody ran in search of safety.In their hurry, the left me in the house as I was in a deep sleep. I was awoken by the sound of abusive languages of all sorts all over the place. As I woke up I tried to run away but unfortunately, I met a rebel at the door. I tried to make it but he held my

hand firmly. They had a girl next to me. She was wearing a piece of cloth and they removed the cloth from her and tore it and used it to bind us. They continued to capture other girls. They put us all in the same place. Then, they began to ask us questions. They asked us to show them where the kamajors and others were. We told them that we had no such knowledge. They threatened to kill all of us if we fail to show them. We pleaded with them and explained that we do not know about those people, but all to no effect. We began to hope only on divine intervention. They sent one boy who was just a little taller than me. They asked him to go and bring a mortar. So this boy did and put the mortar in the middle of the group. They called my uncle and asked him to lay his hand. He started pleading. He was beheaded. They said they did not want to hear any word. They called one of my friends who was pregnant. They asked her to lay her hand on the mortar and they amputated her two hands. I was the third person they called. I did not say a word. They said I should lay down my hand. I placed my right hand and they chopped my hand. They asked me to lay my left hand and they chopped it three times; the fourth time I had to remove it by force. The machete was dull otherwise the hand would have come off. They called my friend who was captured with me. She started crying because her mother was around. They told her to stop crying. They said they will kill her despite her mother's presence. She ran to her mother. She was killed immediately. They dragged her remains to the back of the house. When they finished working on my hand, they told me to sit in a corner. They called my aunt and asked her to lay her hand and they chopped off her two hands. The remaining people were killed, including some children. After they had killed some and chopped off the hands of those of us left alive, they went their way. The next day my brother came to town looking for us. As he came he met my aunty and uncle killed. He saw what had happened and took me along with him. We walked from Batkanu to Makeni. I was admitted in the hospital. The doctor suggested that my hand should be chopped off. My people pleaded with them and they asked for Le7, 000 before they could stitch my hand. My uncle hadn't money at that time, so he had to borrow. Then they stitched my hand. My uncle went again to get the prescribed drugs. I stayed in the hospital for three days. Later we went to Freetown. I was taken to the Connaught Hospital. I was treated and I stayed in the hospital for two months and I was discharged. I was taken to the Waterloo Camp. I stayed there until there was a rebel attack in Masiaka and I went to Freetown. Also Freetown was attacked and they nearly captured me. We were moved to Aberdeen camp. From that time they separated the war wounded from the amputees and the war wounded stayed at Grafton and the amputees at Aberdeen. Later on they decided to build a house for us. I am presently staying there at Makama.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

We thank you for coming to us this morning and for sharing your experiences with us. This is very important for the Commission and the whole of Sierra Leone. You have had a very harrowing experience. It is important for everybody to know so that something will be done for people like you and the recommendations we make in our final report will help to forestall the recurrence of what happened in this country.

Commissioner Jow: Tell us which district your village is in ?

Koya F. Sanu: Bombali district

Commissioner Jow: How old are you now?

Koya F. Sanu: I am seventeen years.

Commissioner Jow: Can you give us an idea as to when this thing happened?

Koya F. Sanu: This is the fifth year since this incident took place.

Commissioner Jow: How old do you think you were at that time?

Koya F. Sanu: 12 years.

Commissioner Jow: Were you in school?

Koya F. Sanu: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about your family circumstances at that time?

Koya F.Sanu: They were all alive.

Commissioner Jow: You told us when the rebels attacked you ran into the bush and then you came back. When you came back did they destroy the village?

Koya F.Sanu: No.

Commissioner Jow: There was no looting or burning of a house?

Koya F.Sanu: Houses were not burnt but there was looting.

Commissioner Jow: Do you know the group?

Koya F. Sanu: No. I only heard some of the names .The head of the group was Cyborg , the other was called 'Killer'. These are the two names I can remember.

Commissioner Jow: How many people were there in the group?

Koya F.Sanu : There were a lot of them in large number.

Commissioner Jow: Were they all men?

Koya F. Sanu: No, they were mixed. There were women.

Commissioner Jow: What did the women do?

Koya F. Sanu: They sit and watch the men.

Commissioner Jow: Were they amputated?

Koya F. Sanu: No.

Commissioner Jow: So, that means they were part of the rebels.

Koya F. Sanu: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: You made mention of a boy who was sent to bring the mortar. Can you tell us the age of the boy?

Koya F. Sanu: About 18years.

Commissioner Jow: Were there young boys in the group?

Koya F. Sanu: Yes. The number was large.

Commissioner Jow: Do you know the names of the others that were amputated?

Koya F.Sanu: Yes. They were my relations.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us their names?

Koya F.Sanu: Yanor Essay, Gbassy Kanu, Momoh Kamara. The other people died

Commissioner Jow: Did they die on the spot?

Koya F. Sanu: Yes, they died on the spot.

Commissioner Jow: When they chopped off your hand what did they say to you?

Koya F. Sanu: They told me to go to Tejan Kabba to give me a hand.

Commissioner Jow: Was there one particular rebel assigned for cutting people's hand?

Koya F. Sanu: Yes.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: Did you hear the name of the rebel who chopped off your hand?

Koya F. Sanu: They were calling him Borbor.

Commissioner Sooka: Did they dress in military fatigue?

Koya F. Sanu: Some were in civilian clothes and some were in military uniform. The one that chopped off my hand was in military uniform.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell if they were rebels or soldiers?

Koya F. Sanu: They were rebels.

Commissioner Sooka: What language did they speak?

Koya F. Sanu: They spoke Krio, some spoke Temne and other languages.

Commissioner Sooka: Since that incident have you again seen these rebels?

Koya F. Sanu: No. Even if we met I would not identify them.

Commissioner Sooka: Have you gone back to school?

Koya F. Sanu: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: What class are you in?

Koya F.Sanu: I sat for the NPSC⁵ this year.

Commissioner Sooka: Are you with your parents?

⁵ National Primary School Certificate

Koya F.Sanu: Yes, I am staying with my mother and sister. She is presently in Freetown.

Commissioner Sooka: How does your mother support you?

Koya F. Sanu: My father has been doing his best but presently he is sick. At the moment there is no money.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow: You have helped us a greatly.I will like to know whether the rebels did other things apart form the amputations. Did they rape any girl?

Koya F. Sanu: No.

Leader of Evidence :Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you know the name of the person who was beheaded and the girl who was killed?

Koya F. Sanu: Momoh Kamara, Isatu Kargbo.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you have any question?

Koya F.Sanu: Could you please tell me why we have been asked to come here?

Commissioner Sooka: This Commission is about recording the experiences of the war during the ten years so we can understand why it happened. So we can understand why people's limbs were amputated, why women were raped and why young people were abducted to participate in the war. We especially have to ask girls what they have suffered so that we can make recommendations to government. So that three things can happen; we make sure that the conflict does not begin again and the peace holds, we can reconcile people with their families and communities, we can make recommendations about how to help victims particularly women and children. That is why we need to hear all that you have to say .

Koya F. Sanu: I am saying this because I have been derided that my hand is not straight.

Commissioner Sooka: Often those who have not gone through suffering are always cruel. Part of what we have to do is to educate people that these things happened in the conflict and that in-fact you have survived with your limbs. It is a miracle that you are still able to move your hands. I think the Commission has a huge responsibility to educate the community. Thank you Koya.

3rd – Witness – Isatu Isha Bangura

My name is Isatu Isha Bangura. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Yasmin Sooka .

TESTIMONY

During the war when the rebels entered Madina, a man met me sleeping. This man woke me from my sleep and told me he was going to rape me. This man asked me to choose between rape and death. I had no answer. I was there speechless . He made the decision that he was going to rape me instead of killing me. Indeed he raped me. I went back to my house and then he went away. Then my mother asked me where I was coming from. I narrated everything to her. My mother wanted to chase them but then everything had been done and they had left. So we had to stay at home because the man had left.

Commissioner Sooka: I know it must have been a very traumatic experience. The Commission has a special responsibility and that is to listen to the experiences of women and girls during the war especially about rape. We need to know why there was so much of it. Often we ask you very difficult questions that make you feel uncomfortable. That is not because we want to hurt you again but because we need to make sure that we have all these details recorded.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: How old were you at the time of the incident?

Isatu Bangura: I was 13 years.

Commissioner Jow: Were you in school?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Which class were you in at that time?

Isatu Bangura: Class four.

Commissioner Jow: Were you doing well in school?

Isatu Bangura: Yes

Commissioner Jow: You said in 1999 your village was attacked by armed men. Did you actually see them?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Jow: But you knew they had come to attack your village?

Isatu Bangura: I heard the news but I did not see them.

Commissioner Jow: How many of them came to your house?

Isatu Bangura: I cannot tell. I only saw one person.

Commissioner Jow: You said he moved you from your house to another house ?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Where were your parents?

Isatu Bangura: Everybody ran away when the rebels struck .

Commissioner Jow: You told us that you shouted when you were being raped ?

Isatu Bangura: Yes, I shouted because that was the first time I ever had that experience.

Commissioner Jow: Did anyone come to your rescue?

Isatu Bangura: No. People were afraid to come out.

Commissioner Jow: Can you describe the man that moved you from your house. Was he carrying a gun?

Isatu Bangura: The trousers were in combat but the shirt was not. He had a knife in his hand. He said if I shout he will kill me.

Commissioner Jow: You said he took you to another house whose house was it?

Isatu Bangura: A neighbour's house.

Commissioner Jow: What did the woman say?

Isatu Bangura: The woman asked who was shouting then the rebel said, "just shut up or I will kill you."

Commissioner Jow: You said he raped you for a long time. Can you tell us how long?

Isatu Bangura: I cannot tell.

Commissioner Jow: You also told us you started bleeding.

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: What happened after the man had left?

Isatu Bangura: I was bleeding and I felt sick for one week.

Commissioner Jow: Your mother was angry with the rebels. What support did she give to you after?

Isatu Bangura: After the incident I told my mother that I was going to die. Because she did not want me to die she encouraged me and told me she will take care of me properly.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us the name of the man that raped you?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Jow: Were you the only girl that was raped?

Isatu Bangura: No. There were two of us but the other one is now married.

Commissioner Jow: Did they abduct any girl ?

Isatu Bangura: I do not know.

Commissioner Jow: How do you feel now?

Isatu Bangura: I am well and ok.

Commissioner Jow: Are you still living with your parents?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Do you feel angry at times about what happened to you?

Isatu Bangura: Sometimes I cry, but my mother has always been there to support me.

Commissioner Jow: Have you spoken to anybody about this apart from the TRC?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: Have you gone back to school?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: What class are you in?

Isatu Bangura: Form 1.

Commissioner Sooka: Are you afraid of men?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you dream about this incident?

Isatu Bangura : Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: What do you do when you wake up after the dream?

Isatu Bangura: I have always told my mother but she has never done anything about that .

Commissioner Sooka: Have you received any counselling?

Isatu Bangura: No, except from my mother.

Commissioner Sooka: Were you examined in a hospital after this incident?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you suffer from any problem, no soreness, and no discharge?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Sooka: Does your father know that you were raped?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: In your village did they do any kind of ritual ceremony to cleanse you up?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Sooka: What do you want to do with your life one day?

Isatu Bangura: I want to be a teacher.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you want to marry one day?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you have anybody now?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: Who is supporting your education?

Isatu Bangura: My mother.

Commissioner Jow: What does your mother do?

Isatu Bangura : She is a housewife and she also engages herself in subsistence farming.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have problems paying your fees?

Isatu Bangura: Sometimes I am driven out of school for one week before she is able to raise funds for my school fees.

Leader of Evidence :Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: May I know the name of your village?

Isatu Bangura: Madina.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do other people apart from your family know that you were raped?

Isatu Bangura: Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: How does it affect you? Do they treat you in a particular way because of the experience you had?

Isatu Bangura: No.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: Do you have any questions

Isatu Bangura: I have no questions

Isatu Bangura: I just want the government to help me with my education

Commissioner Sooka: I can see that you are still deeply affected so I will arrange for the Leader of Evidence to put you in touch with a professional counsellor for counselling. I know it is very difficult for you but it is very important for us to know and share your painful experience. I am very happy to see that what happened to you had not clearly disrupted your life. You are able to go back to school. We will take your recommendations to the Commission and will tell the government that most of the children want to be educated.

4th Witness – John Sesay

Commissioner Sooka :We welcome you to the hearings this afternoon. We have taken an oath of confidentiality. We will not disclose whatever you say; so please feel comfortable and relax and tell us what happened to you.

My name is John Sesay. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by Commissioner Yasmin Sooka.

TESTIMONY

The day the war came to Tongo we were in school. We went to school in the afternoon. We were in the classroom when gun shots began to ring out rapidly . As we heard that, we all began to run back to our respective homes . Before we got home, we saw people carrying guns at everywhere . When they got to our home, my father was held , told to undress and then was tied up. They got hold of me and locked me in a room. They said they were going to put the house on fire, we began to cry and plead for compassion and they released us. They took hold of my father dumped him in the gutter and shot him dead . We wanted to cry, they said if we dared that, they would kill us all. They gave us loads to carry and they took the whole family away.They turned us all into porters. We were forced into the bush travelling with the loads on our heads .We with them when they attacked Kono. After the attack we were there for a week. When the rebels were repelled they went back into the bush. We then went back to Tongo. Later, they attacked the kamajors at Tongo. We were in Tongo for a while and we heard that it was time for Disarmament. They took us in a helicopter and brought us to Makeni. We were camped at CARITAS. Then the UNAMSIL problem came. There was much tension and commotion. Then CARITAS accepted to protect us but, some bosses came and threatened they would kill all of us if we did not vanish at once . The CARITAS officers told them that we were not rebels but students. They said it was a lie. We walked until we got to Mile 91. They showed our documents to some Kenyans and then they released us. We went to Freetown. From Freetown we went to Lungi. From Lungi we were repatriated.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: We know that you have just summarized your statement. We just want to ask some questions for clarifications.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: Thank you for coming here this afternoon. How old were you when you were abducted?

John Sesay: I was very young. I cannot tell.

Bishop Humper: Do you know the year you were abducted?

John Sesay: Yes. 1992.

Bishop Humper: When were you released?

John Sesay: 2002

Bishop Humper: You were with them from 1992 to 2002.

John Sesay: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Did you take part in the fighting?

John Sesay: I was very young, I only moved with them.

Bishop Humper: Did they train you to fight?

John Sesay: I was very young. But I watched them train.

Bishop Humper: So ,it means you did not fight.

John Sesay: I only carried the ammunicions.

Bishop Humper: Did they give you drugs?

John Sesay: They prepared marijuana as coffee for us to drink.

Bishop Humper: Since you left them have you taken any drug?

John Sesay: I smoke cigarette.

Bishop Humper: What did you see happen in Koidu?

John Sesay: When we reached Koidu, they started burning the town. There was smoke every where.

Bishop Humper: What are you doing now?

John Sesay: I am a student.

Bishop Humper: What form are you in?

John Humper: JSS 3⁶.
Bishop Humper: Are you one of those taking the BECE⁷ this year?
John Sesay: Yes.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us how many people were abducted?
John Sesay: We were many because we were in school.
Commissioner Jow: Were you all boys or girls?
John Sesay: Both boys and girls.
Commissioner Jow: Those abducted that particular day. Were you all in the same group?
John Sesay: No, we were scattered. There was not only one group.
Commissioner Jow: You told us they abducted your family in your testimony what happened to them ?
John Sesay: I only know about my brother and my father.
Commissioner Jow: What happen to your father and brother?
John Sesay: My father was killed . My brother was sick ;he was treated but he was not responding to treatment and they decided to kill him.
Commissioner Jow: Do you know the whereabouts of your mother and sister?
John Sesay: My mother is in Robia village and my sister is in Lunsar.
Commissioner Jow: You told us that you were abducted twice. Can you tell us how you escaped and were recaptured?
John Sesay: When they attacked Kono; by then my uncle was still with us,we made a move but it was no use. There was no where you would go without encountering rebels and so I was captured again.
Commissioner Jow: This second time you were abducted to where did they take you?
John Sesay: To Tongo.
Commissioner Jow: Were you trained?
John Sesay: Being rather very young I was not trained .However,I was oppertuned to being regularly taken to the training camp.
Commissioner Jow: Were you with them from 1992 to 2001 ?

⁶ JSS 3:Junior Secondary School (Class Three)

⁷ BECE: Basic Education Certificate Examination

John Sesay: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: In which base did you spend most of your time?

John Sesay: Between Kono and Tongo

Commissioner Jow: Were you in any particular base?

John Sesay: In Jo Bush in Tongo.

Commissioner Jow: Which kind of work did you perform for the rebels?

John Sesay: Whenever we ran out of food we were given the responsibility to go and search for food. Some strong men were usually selected to go with us to find the food ,while we carried the food for them. When we came across any river we used banana tubes to go through the river.

Commissioner Jow: Where you assigned to any commander?

John Sesay: Yes. I was his security.

Commissioner Jow: You were his bodyguard ?

John Sesay: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Where you given a gun?

John Sesay: I was given a pistol.

Commissioner Jow: Were you trained?

John Sesay: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Where and when?

John Sesay: In Makeni at Bishop's house.

Commissioner Jow: As early as when?

John Sesay: In1999 by one colonel Titus.

Commissioner Jow: Do you know about the SBU?

John Sesay: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about it.

John Sesay: There was a leader he was also an SBU. At times when we want to launch certain kinds of attack, it is these small boys who are organized to lead the attack. Sometimes if you do not want to go, they grab you and put you in the vehicle. You may decide not to fight but whenever you are found doing that anywhere ; you will be shot dead.

Commissioner Jow: Were you part of the Unit?

John Sesay: I was so small at that time I was unable to go and fight.

Commissioner Jow: In your written testimony you told us you witnessed many atrocities. Is that right?

John Sesay: Yes; for the amputation.

Commissioner Jow: How many people were amputated?

John Sesay: I witnessed the scene where three children were amputated in Kono.

Commissioner Jow: Did they tell you why they did this?

John Sesay: They said they had to carry the message to Tejan Kabba.

Commissioner Jow: Were you close to any of the rebels?

John Sesay: I can identify only the commander I stayed with.

Commissioner Jow: What was the name of the commander?

John Sesay: Col. Titus

Commissioner Jow: Was that the only name you know?

John Sesay: I only know CO.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the attack in Koidu?

John Sesay: In my presence, immediately they entered the town, they started burning houses and amputating people.

Commissioner Jow: I know you were young at that time how did you feel?

John Sesay: I felt bad because I should have been in school and not watching such obscenities.

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof. Kamara : It is a pity about what happened to you during the war. We do not need to distress you, if anything we are thankful to you for having the courage to come to us and tell us your experience. And because we appreciate we also feel we must know everything you have gone through. That is why we ask these questions to complete the picture. Now I want to take you back from the period you were abducted to the time you were brought back to Makeni. The statement that we have does not clarify your movement and the time you spent with these people. You were first abducted in Tongo in 1992. Is that correct?

John Sesay: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Then they took you into the bush.

John Sesay: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: From the bush you went to Koidu.

John Sesay: Yes

Prof.Kamara: At Koidu you escaped and went to your uncle.

John Sesay: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Your uncle took you from Kabala and took you to Koinadugu District.

John Sesay: Yes

Prof.Kamara: It was there that the rebels attacked and abducted you?

John Sesay: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Was it in the village that you tried to escape with five others?

John Sesay: It was between Kabala and Kono.

Prof.Kamara: The rebels killed three of the five.

John Sesay: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know what happened to the other two?

John Sesay: After the killing of three, the other two and I went along with them.

Prof.Kamara: So you went right back to Tongo.

John Sesay: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: When did you come back to Bombali?

John Sesay: I can't remember the year.

Prof.Kamara: You made mention that two women were abducted.

John Sesay: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Where was that?

John Sesay: Between Sewafe to Kono on the bridge. We were trying to escape.

Prof.Kamara: What happened to the women?

John Sesay: One had her hand chopped off, the other the rebels took her away. I do not know what became of her .

Prof.Kamara: You were in Bombali when the rebels captured the UNAMSIL and you stayed with them until 2002 when Caritas took you.

John Sesay: I was in the Centre when the boss man said if they met us in the centre they would kill us. We all scattered. We had nowhere to go.

Prof.Kamara: Were you here when Foday Sankoh visited Makeni to talk to the people on disarmament?

John Sesay: It was at Wusum Field but I was not present.

Prof.Kamara: Where you here when Issa Sesay took over the control of the Northern Province?

John Sesay: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: And therefore you must be able to tell us some of the atrocities caused by some of the rebels in Makeni. Did you know about a station at Magburaka where the UNAMSIL people has established a disarmament camp?

John Sesay: I heard about it but I did not go there.

Prof.Kamara: Did you hear about the slaughter of some Kenyans when they tried to disarm rebels in that camp?

John Sesay: Yes. I heard about that. That was what caused the problem in the town.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know the details?

John Sesay: We were told the rebels went to disarm but their bosses stopped them. That brought the problem in the town.

Prof.Kamara: Did you also hear about one English man who was the observer at the camps who escaped from Bombali to Mile 91?

John Sesay: No

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: You spent a number of years with the rebels. You told us that you were under Commander Titus. Is it true?

John Sesay: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Was that from the beginning of your abduction?

John Sesay: No

Commissioner Sooka: The first time you were abducted to whom were you assigned?

John Sesay: I was assigned to Akim.

Commissioner Sooka: Was Akim looking after you or had he special work for you?

John Sesay: He was looking after me because I was young.

Commissioner Sooka: Did they ever at any time tell you where they go and what they do?

John Sesay: No. But on their return they usually fired gunshots indiscriminately which usually frightened me.

Commissioner Sooka: Amongst the small boys did you have any friend?

John Sesay: Yes. I do not know his real name. He was called poison.

Commissioner Sooka: Did they give him the name for any specific reasons?

John Sesay: No

Commissioner Sooka: How old was he.

John Sesay: He was older than me.

Commissioner Sooka: What sort of things did you discuss?

John Sesay: He told me not to be afraid. He said even if I am taken to the battlefield I should not be afraid. He was later shot in a battle against the kamajors.

Commissioner Sooka: When you were with Commander Titus was that the time you were trained?

John Sesay: He taught me how to use a pistol. He never took me to a training base because I was small.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you say you carried their ammunitions?

John Sesay: They threatened to kill me if I refused to carry it.

Commissioner Sooka: Were they sending you to the battlefield or were you with your commander?

John Sesay: They were always in front , while I maintained some safe distance behind them.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you remember how many battles you were involved in?

John Sesay: Only in Kono.

Commissioner Sooka: Were you frightened?

John Sesay : Yes, because that was my first time.

Commissioner Sooka: Did they take you along with them when they were going around burning houses and looting?

John Sesay: They left me at home because I was not able to walk. If I walk my foot got swollen.

Commissioner Sooka: How old should one be to join the SBU?

John Sesay: I do not know.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you get any other work to do for the commander?

John Sesay: His wife used to send me to go and fetch water.

Commissioner Sooka: Were they kind to you?

John Sesay: For me it was bad.

Commissioner Sooka: `Why did you think so?

John Sesay: Because the way we lived compared to life with my parents was so different. If you refused to do what they wanted they would kill you.

Commissioner Sooka: Did they ever kill any young boy in your presence?

John Sesay: Yes

Commissioner Sesay: Was it your twin brother?

John Sesay: Yes. He was sick. He was treated; but he was not responding to the treatment, so they killed him.

Commissioner Sooka: How did you feel?

John Sesay: I felt bad.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you often go hungry?

John Sesay: Yes. Because we were often on the move. Generally, there was no other food except cassava and banana. We ate them raw.

Commissioner Sooka: You must have seen them commit a lot of atrocities.

John Sesay: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: What else did you see?

John Sesay : The burning of houses ; even ours was not spared.

Commissioner: Did you see them do bad things to young girls?

John Sesay: At that time when they captured the girls they took them to other towns and later came back to us.

Commissioner: Were you ever asked to commit any atrocity?

John Sesay: No

Commissioner Sooka: Did they ever try to sexually violate you?

John Sesay: No. I was very young.

Commissioner Sooka: When you were placed in care of CARITAS did you receive any counselling?

John Sesay: Yes

Commissioner Sooka: Do you still receive counselling?

John Sesay: Yes. There are some times when I see my friends' parents and I remember mine.

Commissioner Sooka: Whom are you staying with now?

John Sesay: I am staying with my uncle.

Commissioner Sooka: Are you happy that the war is over.

John Sesay: Yes I am happy.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you still remember about what happened to your brother?

John Sesay: No; a lot of my colleagues come to me and we play together. So many things are helping me in coming to terms with that and getting over it.

Leader of Evidence : Mr. Abdulai Charm

Mr. Charm: In your testimony you said your brother and father were killed. Can we have their names?

John Sesay: Father - Sheku Sesay; brother – Alusine Sesay.

Mr. Charm: Since you returned have you had any cleansing ceremony?

John Sesay: Though there was no ceremony my mother was happy to see me.

Commissioner Sooka: Now is the time for you to ask us questions or make recommendations.

John Sesay: What is going to be our fate now that we are talking to the Commission?

Bishop Humper: We are very much concerned about women, girls and children. This commission unlike other commissions in the world, have special assignment to look at the needs of children, women and girls. Fortunately there are organizations and NGO who will help the Commission in implementing their mandate. The international community is expecting to see the report to know what happened to children so that they will be able to prepare a future for you.

John Sesay: What are the reasons for asking all these questions?

Bishop Humper: We have a job to do but we have to find out what are the problems you experienced during this war period. So that we can record it to say that this is what happened to the children in Sierra Leone and we also have to find out why some of these things happened and based on what you have experienced and the scars it has left on you we have to recommend on what we think better. We also have to make sure what we need to do so that another war will not break again. Our report will go to the government, the UN and other international agencies. That is why we intend to make sure that the government follows our recommendations. We need to know so that we can do something about it.

John Sesay: Why should the perpetrators be set free?

Bishop Humper: That is a difficult question. For you perhaps there may be no answer to satisfy you. I hope that in the end you will see the logic and accept it. You have been with these people you were so distressed and so afraid

that everyday of your life was miserable. So I am sure in your heart, you wanted that kind of situation to change immediately. Government was also thinking about people like you and others the rebels abducted. So they were finding ways of getting them to put down the arms. Finally through the support of the international community they were able to go to Lome and negotiate the cease fire. But as you know those rebels who were causing all these troubles, were themselves Sierra Leoneans. For them to accept the peace to come to Sierra Leone was to endanger them. So they decided that they are ready to accept to put down their arms' but you must let the people of Sierra Leone forgive us and accept us. If we can't get that security we can't put our guns down.' So this forgiveness is the price we all have to pay for the peace we are enjoying today. If you are happy for the peaceful Sierra Leone it is because the government did this for us the Sierra Leonean citizens .That is why we cannot go and task them for what they did to us.

Commissioner Sooka: It is a crime in terms of International law for those who recruited young boys and abduct them to fight in a way. Everybody can't be punished the heads have been charged by the Special Court and one of the crime which they have been charged for is the abduction of young children. I am sure many people like you want these people to be punished but because of the peace we cannot punish them all. That is why it is important to listen to your testimony.

John Sesay: I do not know when CARITAS will fold up as they are presently responsible for our education ? We need support and assistance in our schooling.

Commissioner Sooka: We thank you very much. You did not know which day you may have been killed so no child wants to come up in that condition. You are alive with your hands and feet in tact and you have gone back to school. You are a brave young man. We are happy that you have gone back to school. I am sorry that your brother died. I hope that this is being as useful for you as it is for us.

5th – Witness – Ferenkeh Jabbie

My name is Ferenkeh Jabbie. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Yasmin Sooka.

TESTIMONY

Since we all believe in God ,I ask everybody here present to call on Him in the manner of his or her own religious beliefs. I am happy to see you all around me. First of all I want to tell you that I have lost my mother and father and I believe that the IRC⁸ will be my mother and father. At present I am happy but my heart is in a lot of distress. I am telling IRC thanks for they have done great things for me. They have built a house for me. I am staying with my younger brother. They also furnished the house. I am suffering because we do not have anything to eat. I am in JSSI . When my younger brother returns from school he goes to the UNAMSIL to work .From there he gets some food. That is the food we share and it is over for the day. I tried to sell the things provided by IRC but they advised us not to sell them. While I should not be spoilt with food ,I do not think that it is right for me to die of hunger. I have undergone several operations with several synthetic materials in my system. My intestines are made of rubber. When I am hungry the intestines fold and stretch. My younger brother consoles me. At present he has gone to the UNAMSIL camp to find some food. The rainy season is fast approaching, therefore I am appealing to you to help, for we have no food to eat. I am staying there with other amputees; some of them will go to the street and their problems are external and visible. People sympathise with them. But I cannot go to the street because my problem is internal and not obvious.

In the first place when I was abducted, I was still very young . I was given human faeces to eat. After that one of them took a bayonet and ripped open my stomach. ECOMOG came and took me to Freetown. I was unconscious and so I just saw myself in the hospital. I later was discharged and sent to waterloo. The doctor there was Dr. Dunstan, working for ADRA. When I got there I was in much pain. What he did was to try to loosen the stitches. Then I was taken to the ward. I was taken again to the theatre because I was still feeling much pain. The Dr. was confused and performed the operation three times. He said I nearly lost my life in the theatre. And that they prayed until I came back to life. He came out and told the nurses that I had died but the Lord has brought me back to life. A lady working for Handicap International called Valerie, the doctor, told her about me; and she started bringing provisions for me. I ate eggs for a long time but I could not walk and I was ,for all practical purposes, a skeleton.I had to begin again to learn how to walk . The nurses had to hold my hand and walk with me inside the hospital. I stayed there for a while and the nurses were very sympathetic with me. Rubbers were fixed from my nose to my stomach. I spent one year in waterloo and I was not eating rice; I was drip-fed all through. After that as I regained my health, I was taken to my tarpaulin booth. I was there until the rebels attacked Waterloo and we went to Old Wharf. There some white people came and built tent for us. They used to cook rice for us and everybody would go with his/her own dish. Old Wharf was attacked again and we went to the National Stadium, we were there but unable to get supply of provisions. Our chairman called Muctar Jalloh who has now gone to America went and begged the people and they started supplying us. We were transferred to Aberdeen Road. The place at Aberdeen Road was not conducive so they took us to Grafton. The IRC people met us at Grafton and said they were going to build houses for us. They told us however, that they will not go to our individual villages , but that they will construct the houses in every district. When we came to Makeni, the WFP gave us three months supply. I could not eat the food supplied by the WFP, so I sold it and bought rice for my brother and myself. Since that time they have closed and we have not seen them.The way things are, it is difficult for me to continue to live. My younger brother who works for UNAMSIL helps me. I make this plea because I am sick. We want to attend school my brother and I. Even when we go to school we do not have lunch. We do not have food to eat let alone lunch.

Commissioner Jow: Can you give us an idea as to where this incident took place ?

Mr. F. Jabbie: It was in Kono.

Commissioner Jow: What part of Kono?

⁸ Inter-Religious Council

Mr.F. Jabbie: Bondamado.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember the year?

Mr. F. Jabbie: I was very young then . I cannot remember.

Commissioner Jow: Do you know the group which abducted you?

Mr. F. Jabbie: There were about three groups: Red Lion, Jungle Warrior, and Cyborg.

Commissioner Jow: Were you ever in contact with these groups?

Mr.F. Jabbie: When they attacked anywhere, Red Lion will be in front and then Jungle Warrior and Cyborg will be the last because they do no talk.

Commissioner Jow: How long did you stay with them?

Mr. F.Jabbie: I cannot remember. I was very young .But I remember they captured one man and cut his throat. He was offered as a sacrifice.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell me why they gave you faeces to eat?

Mr.F.Jabbie: A lot of young boys were captured .All of them were killed one by one.When it came to my own turn to be killed, they gave me human faeces to eat instead. But the other one said "let us kill him ,he will not survive". And the other one took the bayonet and stabbed me.

Commissioner Jow: Did you sustain any injury when you were stabbed?

Mr. F.Jabbie: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: What immediate help did you get?

Mr. F.Jabbie: It so happened that about two to three hours after I was stabbed ECOMOG came and flushed out the rebels and they took me to the Connaught Hospital.

Bishop Humper: These three groups of fighters were they all RUF?

Mr.F. Jabbie: I cannot tell. I only spent two days with them. I do not know the actual group. I do not know if they were mixed up.

Bishop Humper: Tell us how you feel now having gone through this traumatic experience. What can you tell the elders concerning what happened to you and your age group?

Mr.F. Jabbie: I want to appeal to the government to strengthen the security so that there will not be a repetition of the war. On the other hand, we, the children are the leaders of tomorrow and therefore, I would like , the children to be protected.

Prof. Kamara: At the time when these people stabbed you with the bayonet, was your stomach showing any signs of swelling?

Mr.F. Jabbe: After I had taken the faeces, my stomach began to swell and the others said, "let us bayonet him." At present even a navel, I do not have. It has equally been cut off.

Commissioner Sooka: You said you were young when they took you ?

Mr.F. Jabbe: Yes. At that time I was very a small boy; but I was able to see and discern certain things.

Commissioner Sooka: How long were you with them?

Mr.F. Jabbe: Two days. My companions were abducted first and, I was abducted later on. My companions were killed and they did this to me.

Commissioner Sooka: You said your mother and father are dead ?

Mr.F. Jabbe: I do not know the whereabouts of my father. My mother is dead. It was my mother who took care of me. My father never took care of us since birth.

Commissioner Sooka: When was the last time you saw him?

Mr.F. Jabbe: It has been a long time.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you have any other family?

Mr.F. Jabbe: Except my uncle, but he too was amputated?

Commissioner Sooka: So you have nobody to assist you.

Mr.F. Jabbe: None, except God.

Leader of Evidence : Mr. Abdulai Charm

Mr. Charm: You said you spent two days with the rebels do you know whether other villages were attacked?

Mr.F. Jabbe: No; I have no idea about it

Mr. Charm: The group that abducted you ;do you know if they were under the influence of drugs?

Mr.F. Jabbe: Yes .They took them. They smoked and drank.

Mr. Charm: Can you tell us the age of the commander?

Mr. F. Jabbe: I cannot remember.

Mr. Charm: Were there boys amongst them?

Mr.F. Jabbe: They had both men and women. And the women were cooking for them.

Commissioner Jow: Presently, do you have any medical attention?

Mr.F. Jabbe: That is the problem. I have no medical attention.

Commissioner Jow: So you do not go to the government hospital when you feel pain?

Mr. F. Jabbie: I do not have any idea about that.

Commissioner Jow: What about the camp. Do you have any medical facility there?

Mr. F. Jabbie: No, there is no medical facility there.

Commissioner Jow: Do the UNAMSIL people know about your condition?

Mr. F. Jabbie: Yes, I have two friends who are aware about this problem. The last time one of them gave me Le10, 000.

Mr. F. Jabbie: I want to thank you very much. Now I am staying with my younger brother. I am appealing to you and the government; if you cannot help me or assist me, please take care of my younger brother.

Commissioner Sooka: We ourselves do not take care of anybody. We will not be able to take care of your immediate needs. Our staff will take you to the government hospital in Makeni. We need to know the name of your younger brother.

Mr. F. Jabbie: I have two brothers, the one that is assisting me is Lansana Jabbie and the other is Foray.

Commissioner Sooka: We will find out about the NGO in Freetown that will help you with your problem. We want to ask your permission for a snapshot of your stomach to be taken so that we can know exactly what to do.

Mr. F. Jabbie: I am happy about that. I know it will be to the benefit of all of us. I am ready.

Commissioner Sooka: It is a pity that you do not know the whereabouts of your father; we could have found him and taken legal action against him for not discharging his responsibilities.

6th – Witness – Mohamed Kamara

My name is Mohamed Kamara. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

TESTIMONY

May the Lord help us. I hail from Kailahun District, Mahilah Chiefdom. I was born there but was brought up at Kono. I was working at a bakery in Tankoro. My residence was a bit far from my work place. We were there at the work place when the town was attacked. I was abducted in September. When I was abducted I was taken to Gandorhun. I was a small boy. The only person who was taking care of me was a Temne woman who was equally an apprentice in the bakery. We spent there 12 months as captives before we escaped. The woman said, "here there is a lot of problem", she said, "do you know the whereabouts of your people?" I said, "I don't know." She brought me to Makeni and I stayed at Campbell Street. I had no problem before this time, but when we came to Makeni I developed Hernia. I had experienced the hernia in Gandorhun, but by then it was no serious threat and I took no notice of it. The woman told me she had heard of an organisation called CARITAS. She said, "Since you do not know your mother, I want CARITAS to help you." We made contacts and I was taken to the Director of CARITAS. The Director saw my problem and he told me to wait awhile. Then he said to, "before CARITAS takes up your problem, do you remember the name of the commander that abducted you?" I said I did not know. The only person I know is the woman who has been taking care of me and her name is Wanjama. When Caritas wants to confine children as ex-combatants they take them to Magburaka for disarmament. So I was taken to Magburaka. At that particular time, I was not happy with my inclusion into a disarmament programme but because of my sickness I had to. He said: "The only way I can assist you is to go into the programme and disarm." He asked me "what skill were you learning?" I said I was a bakery apprentice. He told Mr. Andrew, "please try to teach this young man a job." The Dr. tried in helping me, Caritas tried too, but it was that woman who helped me the most. Had it not been for that woman I would have died. Caritas paid the Le 150,000 and the operation was performed. I am still under Caritas.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara: You have been displaced. But your perhaps tough and unpleasant experience is better than the others we have heard. Have you ever been in contact with your parents since you were abducted?

Mohamed Kamara: I have not been able to see my family. The only people I know are Andrew and the woman I told you about

Prof. Kamara: Have you ever tried to find out about them?

Mohamed Kamara: I cannot take that venture alone I want Andrew to help me.

Prof. Kamara: Have you asked CARITAS to reunite you with your family?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. They were only waiting for the operation to be done.

Prof Kamara: So ,you will remind them to help you trace your parents?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. Even if I find my family I will still continue to do my job.

Prof. Kamara: You were abducted by rebels, is that correct?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. I don't know their name. I was a small boy.

Prof. Kamara: Did they abduct you and hand you over to the woman?

Mohamed Kamara: I was abducted together with the woman .But when the rebels wanted my identity ,the woman claimed that I was her brother .

Prof. Kamara: Where were you taken to ?

Mohamed Kamara: To Gandorhun.

Prof. Kamara: From Gandorhun, where did they take you?

Mohamed Kamara: We escaped to Makeni.

Prof. Kamara: How long were you with the rebels before you escaped from them?

Mohamed Kamara: We spent 12 months with them. I was together with the woman.

Prof. Kamara: Is she old or young?

Mohamed Kamara: She is of middle age.

Prof. Kamara: Is she married?

Mohamed Kamara: She has grey hair .She is no longer a young woman

Prof. Kamara: Has she a home of her own where you were living?

Mohamed Kamara: The woman is dead now.

Prof. Kamara: You now rely on Caritas and Andrew.

Mohamed Kamara: Andrew is a worker of Caritas. They are the only people I know.

Prof. Kamara: Do you still want to be an apprentice at a bakery so that you will open your own bakery business?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: Have you discussed this with CARITAS?

Mohamed Kamara: They told me that the Director is in Freetown. When he comes back they will tell him.

Prof. Kamara: Are you happy with Andrew?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes, I am happy with him because since I met him he has treated me like a good brother; to the extent that even when I am out ,Andrew's wife cooks and keeps food for me. I have no problem with him.

CommissionerJow: You told us that you were born in Kailahun, but you were brought up in Kono.

Mohamed Kamara: I was staying there with my father but my mother was staying in Guinea.

Commissioner Jow: How many people were abducted with you?

Mohamed Kamara: We were many.

Commissioner Jow: Were there boys like you?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Where they all taken to Gandorhun?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes

Commissioner Jow: How long did you stay at Gandorhun?

Mohamed Kamara: 12 months

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us some of the things that happened to you when you were with the rebels?

Mohamed Kamara: The only thing I remember is that sometimes we cooked, laundered and fetched water for them. Sometimes they took us out in search of food .They would give you a bag of rice to carry not minding your capacity, they would force you to carry it.

Commissioner Jow: Were you ever punished during those 12 months.?

Mohamed Kamara: Atimes. I was beaten for my inability to continue to carry rather very heavy loads. The woman also usually received serious beating for such failure on her own side.

Commissioner Jow: Did you see anybody slightly bigger than you being trained.

Mohamed Kamara: The smaller boys and women were put in one place and the bigger boys in another place.

Commissioner Jow: Did you ever see them in training ?

Mohamed Kamara: No.

Commissioner Jow: Did they give you anything in particular to drink so that you will be strong to carry the loads?

Mohamed Kamara: No.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember the names of some of those people who were in the camp with you?

Mohamed Kamara: I never stayed with them for any reasonable length of time.I stayed with the women. Atimes for some reasons unknown to me, they would send me a safe distance away from themselves.

Commissioner Jow: Did you ever see anyone being killed or any atrocities committed?

Mohamed Kamara: No.

Commissioner Jow: Mohamed you told us that you escaped in 1993.

Mohamed Kamara: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: How long did you stay with this woman before you went to CARITAS?

Mohamed Kamara: When we came here I told the woman that I am grown up and I want to go and look for my mother in Guinea. I went there and I did not meet my mother but I met her brother, my uncle. I asked for my mother and my uncle said she is in Freetown. I left my uncle because I know he will not be able to take care of me.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us why you joined the DDR Programme ,since the DDR Programme is for the Ex-combatant?

Mohamed Kamara: I was never a combatant. I never carried any gun . But I was under CARITAS. Sometimes CARITAS would go to the streets and pick up street children and take them to DDR. I was sick and needed treatment and I want to be educated.

Bishop Humper: Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. Now that you have gone through all this trouble, what is your hope for the future?

Mohamed Kamara: I am presently engaged in two trades. In the morning I sell bread . Later I would go to my shop and learn tailoring skills.

Commissioner Sooka: Were there other people abducted at the time you were abducted?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes I have said it. Some boys were also abducted.

Commissioner Sooka: What happened to them?

Mohamed Kamara: I do not know.They were still there when the woman and I made our escape .

Commissioner Sooka: Was there any time you were punished in any way?

Mohamed Kamara: The only punishment I can tell you about was that we carried loads and sometimes we pounded rice.

Commissioner Sooka: At that time were you afraid of them?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. I was afraid of them because they were very cruel; even at one time the woman was beaten up because she told them I was a small boy and should not carry loads.

Commissioner Sooka: When you were abducted can you give me the name of the unit commander to which this woman belonged?

Mohamed Kamara: When we were there I never asked her. But when we came to Makeni I asked her and she said she did not know but that she heard a name called Komba Gundama.

Commissioner Sooka: Were there times when you went hungry?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes, sometimes we collected bananas and cassavas spread them out for sun-drying and from there scrapped out sustenance.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us the name of the woman you escaped with?

Mohamed Kamara: The woman was called Adama.

Commissioner Sooka: Did she die a natural death ?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. She had a fatal attack of epilepsy .

Mohamed Kamara: I do not know where my mother is. I want the government to assist CARITAS so that CARITAS would assist me by providing a workshop for me. At present I am practically alone and helpless in this world but for CARITAS and Andrew.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us Andrew's full name?

Mohamed Kamara: Andrew Sesay. My mother is Adama Mansaray and my Father is Sandy.

Commissioner Sooka: We have heard you and we will make our recommendations.

Mohamed Kamara: Andrew has been very helpful to me. At night I sleep in the bakery. I cannot blame Andrew for my sleeping in the bakery. After all he is married and stays in a single room. If the government can assist me by making a workshop for me, may be I will be there and make an extension for accommodation and I will be doing my job.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you receive any counselling?

Mohamed Kamara: No. I have not received any form of counselling. Sometimes Andrew serves as my counsellor. And even though I have had the hernia operation ,once in a while I still feel the pain .

Commissioner Sooka: You said your mother went to Guinea?

Mohamed Kamara: She was born in Guinea. She has no relative here in Sierra Leone.

PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN MAKENI ON 29TH MAY 2003

1ST Witness – Rev. Father Mario

In this country my name is Pa Alimamy Father. I am a Christian. Mrs. Jow administered the oath.

Commissioner Jow: We thank you for coming here. We appreciate your efforts in coming here this morning to share your experiences with us.

TESTIMONY

I came to this country in 1963. I have worked in many places in the north. I believe that I know the area very well and I know about the people. I know that a lot of people here do not like war. It comes from outside. After the ordeal, I went to my country Italy and then I was invited in big

towns to talk about education. I met a man from Senegal who was doing the same work as I do. He was talking about the problem in Africa. I told him "because we all do the same works let us come together and do something better." We worked together to sensitize people. After two three days he got used to what we were doing and he trusted me. He told me a story. He told me that he was a refugee. He said: 'I ran away from my country because we tried to overthrow the government. I was trained in Libya in a place called Tajura. There was a big camp where they train young boys to fight. I saw many boys from many African countries and also those who came from Sierra Leone. I was part of the armed escort. We know that the war was from Liberia to Sierra Leone. Helicopter was coming from Liberia to supply arms in Sierra Leone. I saw one of those helicopters. The helicopter was covered with the ICRC flag so that people will not know'. This is my opinion of the war. There were other things that caused the war. The Corruption caused by the senior people in the government. It was too much. It affected all facets of the society. I remember I talked to one Paramount Chief. He told me his experience: 'I did not receive my salary for five years. I am a school manager and I have to pay salaries. The funds came from government. It was a problem to get the money from government to pay the teachers. All the time it was not sufficient. It was already too much when the soldiers raised gun as they were not willing to accept it. The teachers have no guns and leave everything to God. The soldiers have guns.' When I was captured there were two soldiers there. One was working in the administration office in the Sierra Leone Army. He said "Father there is a lot of corruption. The senior officers eat our money and the junior ones are left to suffer. They will put a soldier's name in Freetown but the soldier will be working in Kailahun. When the soldier goes to Freetown for the money they will send him to Kailahun." And the soldier will leave everything to God. That was the time the country was getting warmed up. He said, "Father when the President came to talk to us the senior officers will talk as if everything is well in the army. This brought dissatisfaction and hatred in the army." This was the evidence of the war. The Chief 1st Accused Sgt. Gborie, he said the coup was not against the President. "Our plans were to collect all the senior officers because of corruption." The president took it that it was a coup against him. That was why the newspapers wrote that it was the junior officers' coup. They usual thing to hear is that the senior officers planned the coup. This was how corruption caused the war. We are talking about the causes of the war. I was present in the war. We moved from one point to another for us not to be captured. In 1995 seven of our sisters were captured in Kambia. The Bishop was able to negotiate with Sankoh until they were released. As the rebels moved in the bush Father was telling us to go into the bush. We were always ready. One time news spread that they were looking for foreigners. One time the rebels were organizing themselves to come to Koinadugu and the head was SAJ Musa. That group was called the group jungle army in the region. They started moving and controlling the villages. They came near Kamalo where I lived. When they reached there they stayed for some time. When they were there they prepared to go to Freetown but they did not move. Later I noticed they wanted to capture me. They went there two times but I was in Makeni. At one time, I heard they were coming down and they went to Maribo. In Maribo, they destroyed and killed people. After two days I went to see things for myself. I saw much destruction and the dead bodies. A ten years old girl and including two men and one woman were the only ones left in the village. Somebody came out from the bush and I told him to bury the bodies. He said father I am tired I have already buried seventeen bodies. I took some supply to Maribo for those who were unable to go into the bush. One small group of ECOMOG soldiers was around. Just to spite the small group, that was the good reason why the rebels attacked. One night in September they entered the village and burnt everything and abducted many people. Because they were on the other side facing where I was, I was able to go to the bush. The following morning I came back to the village and I saw houses burnt down and I saw many dead bodies. I tried to encourage the people to bury the bodies. We buried seventeen bodies. Boys, girls, women and men were amongst them. That very day I had to take many people to the hospital because many were injured. On the night of 15 November 1999, the rebels came back again and they surrounded the house and they captured me. They took me to their camp at Loko Hill in Namanya. When I went there I saw 2000 combatants fully armed. I was surprised because we always believed what the Minister of Information said. This Minister was telling us that the rebels were thieves with cutlasses and about two hundred and fifty in number. Those I met there were people from the army. They were angry because of the

corruption in the army. I remember one time they sent supply for the soldiers; when they reached Port Loko junction, the car moved to Guinea and sold all the goods which were meant for the soldiers. The soldiers complained that they did not receive their salaries and food. When they were with the junta group they were supplied all necessary goods. They were at the head and they fought many battles on their way to Freetown and they won all of them. Therefore, I will point finger on the Ministry of Information. Rebels were always listening to radio. All what I heard was that the government had repelled the rebels. I was held for forty-six days. I know what I am talking about. Any time when they get this kind of information from the government they were annoyed. They went forward to kill and destroy. When I was held I was taken to a big camp called Rosus. That was when we started to walk. We were four thousand in number. Women and children were in the group. As we reached Freetown we were eight thousand. The combatants were about two thousand. Every time they will say the people were about 15,000. We were moving always at night. Nobody got near them to know the fact. That was why the war caught some of us. The way we were treated it was as if we were animals. I was treated as a log. They took me and did all kinds of things to me. I had nothing to say. The rebels enjoyed punishing us. They enjoyed it when you scream and cry. That was a sad surprise to me. One day when we were walking in the forest, I saw a stone in front of me and almost everybody kicked the stone as they passed by. When I reached the stone, I took the stone and put it in a corner. The fighter cast a very sour look at me and put the stone in the same position. In Freetown one night we were in a house we heard that they flogged a man and the man was yelling "kill me! Kill me!" I don't know what they did to him but it was very painful. Another time around the road I saw an old man whom they gave a big pot to carry, he was ahead of me. He said I can't go further and placed the pot down and one soldier came and chopped the man's head. One time they caught a boy who they thought was a CDF. They flogged him. I tried to talk to them and one commander came and said he would be killed. He was left behind and was killed. I was sending people for water with a gallon. We fetched water from swamps and streams. I was sending other people because they never allowed me. Most of the time the boys I beg to do this for me will come with the gallon empty and tell me that the soldiers have drank the water. This was a satanic life, the way they live. What I see I will not say all. I will only say the small ones. All the seniors enjoyed the wickedness they did. Whatever they wanted they took by force. One man had a gold watch that cost \$3,000 and the man told me how he got hold of the watch. ' I saw one man with the watch and I said to myself: I want this watch and I shot the man dead and took the watch.' So many things the juniors did were ordered by the senior. The situation became very bad and there was a time they did wicked things to everybody. When the amputation of hands began, it was not because they did not have weapons; they just wanted people to be afraid of them. I don't know what else you will want to know.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: We say thanks for your testimony. It is very detailed. For those details you have not told us it will come out in questions. We appreciate the time you have taken to tell us what you know. The Commission will send somebody to you to get the more detailed submission.

Bishop Humper: We thank you for this opportunity for you who belong to those noble institutions to tell us what you went through. If we are going to ask detailed questions here we will spend not less than two hours. We will be asking you to give us a written submission. Did I hear you say the war did not begin in Sierra Leone?

Father Mario: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Rev. Father could you put us in an historical perspective from 1963 ? For you to be in the country from 1963 you are just like a citizen. We want to

know from your own perspective, how the war grew until it reached that level ?

Father Mario: When I came to this country, my first station was Magburaka. It was two years into independence. It was the time of transition from the foreign colonial staff to the nationals . Some skeletal presence of the colonial administrative structure were still maintained in such offices as the District Officer. In Magburaka there was a station that provided electricity. There was supply of water, with no problems; there was a train from Freetown, twice a week. There was a post office. In four years everything collapsed. Since independence there has been no improvement. This is not just a matter of any one regime; everybody is just grabbing. We started having problems with education. During that time when the whites were in charge, education was properly regarded and treated accordingly . We used to get money for repairs. We had funds from government to build new schools. In two to three years, they stopped everything.

Bishop Humper: Could we say that what you are talking about is what has been going on since independence ?

Father Mario: Exactly.

Bishop Humper: Did you say that this corruption in the government cuts across all cadre , beginning with the top ranks ?

Father Mario: It is true.

Bishop Humper: Did you say that a truck load of food brought for the fighters was diverted to Guinea to be sold?

Father Mario: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Did you say that it is possible that the people who supposedly brought arms for government fighters took the supplies to the rebels ?

Father Mario: I know that they gave the weapons to the rebels. I know we have many other groups that got their own reinforcement through battle field victory and surprise attacks and the resultant seizure and use of the weapons.

Bishop Humper: The SLA had weapons to fight the war ?

Father Mario: I was afraid when I saw them. They met no resistance from the regular army. Just once in a while. Only the civilian forces and such other vigilante forces fought them regularly. The government soldiers always gave way and the rebels moved along with us. As we reached one village, they met fifteen children and they slaughtered them.

Bishop Humper: Is it your view that the Minister of Information was responsible?

Father Mario: Yes. He was responsible for the kind of information he gave. I went with Bishop Ganda to see the President. We met him at State House; the President, Vice President and Minister of Information. We told them that what we heard was not true about the rebels. We told them the strength of the rebels. The Minister of Information said: "We have counted all of

them and we have killed 1400.” It was a lie. I think he knew. I believe he knows something.

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: We appreciate your coming here. We will start with your Senegalese friend. I want to know the name of the town the friend was trained?

Father Mario: Katura

Prof.Kamara: The town you where you were abducted, you went to see the town. What was the name of the town?

Father Mario: Makaribo, a small village at the Loko Hills.

Prof.Kamara: I want to know the year you were abducted.

Father Mario: 15th November 1993. I can still give you full details because I was with them until they entered Freetown.

Prof.Kamara: You said Gborie’s intention was not to oust the government but to arrest the senior officers in the army. Was it because of the corruption of the Superiors ? You were here in 1967. The anticorruption label was thrown up by the ring-leaders of the putsch . They arrested all their superiors.But after that what happened? Are there not lines that can be drawn between the 1967 case and Gborie’s coup ?

Father Mario: Yes. There may be an angle to the issue of gainfully employing or occupying the soldiers. Give them something worthwhile to keep them busy. For example, I am always surprised in Kamakwie that there are soldiers who day in day out only sweep and pick up the leaves.Ordinarily,they are of the age and in their number have the strength to do some thing else.

Bishop Humper: What will be your opinion of the government’s handling of the military? Is the government afraid to tell the military the truth or they do not handle them properly ?

Father Mario: In my opinion they do not tell them to do the right thing. Now that they know better. They have to tell them what they should do because they should push the country forward.

Bishop: Is it your opinion that what has happened to the army; with the corruption in it cannot be in truth divorced from the corruption of the politicians ?

Father Mario: Let me put it this way:There is a story going around that somebody once complained to Siaka Stevens about the issue of corruption and his answer was: ‘ Around where a cow is leashed , is also where it is expected to graze’. That was where the document of corruption was signed. Another: The Ministry of Education is responsible for free education but not the school, and the government had agreement about some statutory grant-in -aid . They gave the first one; but the second one they decided to give it to the head master. I am not happy about that.

Commissioner Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: You were specifically targeted by this particular group of rebels. They came for you two times and the third time they captured you. Why is it that they planned to capture you?

Father Mario: The rebels were annoyed because what they said in the world about them was that they were evil. They wanted the people to feel that that is not what they were like. In this respect, when we were near Newton they called the Bishop and they told him that if he wanted to see me they should tell ECOMOG to stop the fight and pull out of Sierra Leone. After that they asked for generator and medicine to be taken to some women in Pademba Road. The Bishop discussed the issue with the government but the government said no to that arrangement. Then they realized that my abduction was of no serious political consequence.

Commissioner Sooka: You said there were women and girls in the group as you were marched on to Freetown ?

Father Mario: They were treated as firewood. They did to them anything their imagination gave them . Some times the women ran from the soldiers to sleep near me because , near me they were afraid to harm them. The rebels were afraid of me. They counted on my importance. When the helicopter came bombing, the soldiers came around me with the hope that they would not be killed. They treated the women very badly. We were walking on a hill and there was a woman who was in labour and she was helped by two other women. They halted everybody and the woman was able to deliver. After 30 minutes she had to keep marching on.

Commissioner Sooka: Did the women suffer sexual violence?

Father Mario: Where I was, they did it at night. There was a camp called Red Eagle ,many girls were raped there. One time in Rosus a girl who was abducted moved from the camp to talk with me. She was 12 years old. She reported to me; she said "Father they have been raping us. They sometimes gang-rape us ."

Commissioner Sooka: You said that as many times as you witnessed these atrocities you shivered . How did the chopping of hands and burning of houses begin ?

Father Mario: It is an orgy. Suddenly, there was a command that everybody should be disturbed. That was the time they started beating people up and chopping of hands. They feel good doing these things. They were doing this for them to feel happy. They have pleasure in doing it. It makes them feel powerful . They have no control over themselves. They experienced certain burst of satisfaction. I am worried as they are still in the country.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: You have been in the country for 40 yrs. You have been through it all. You have worked with many people. We know that as the

war went on young men were forced to join and some voluntarily. I would like to know whether before the war ,the youths were telling you about their disenchantment with the way things were going on in the country; that made them willing to join the rebels ?

Father Mario: In the group there was all wickedness. The main thing was that they do not say the truth. The only thing I heard was when one of them asked me if I could help him to leave the country.

Commissioner Jow: The young people might have been disenchanted and broken-hearted ;but they never reckoned with the implications of wa; did you preach to the soldiers in the bush ?

Father Mario: I preached once and for that I was beaten up and so I stopped . The first to slap me was SAJ Musa and there were some senior officers with him. I would not remember all of them ;but one of them cautioned him. I once met him in Freetown. The other two are already back in the army. At one time they met me and they greeted me and they treated me as if we have been friends.But I made it clear to them that there is no such relationship between us.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: Part of the mandate stipulates to find out about the causes of the war. You mentioned that Sierra Leoneans were trained in Libya ?

Father Mario: They were taught guerrilla warfare and how to instil fear among the people by devious viciousness .

Bishop Humper: Who is the president of that country?

Father Mario: This is not a secret. All the newspapers are talking about it. Col.Mohamed Gadaffi wants to bring the Africans together. He wanted to oust the government and get in its place one that works with his international community. He wanted a government that he can control.

Bishop Humper: You said that from Libya they brought the mission to Burkina Faso ?

Father Mario: Yes

Bishop Humper: From Liberia to Sierra Leone ?

Father Mario: Yes

Bishop Humper: Some people that gave testimony to this Commission said that the ICRC was responsible for supplying arms to the rebels. According to your testimony that the Liberian government used helicopter with the ICRC flag attached to make it look as if it was ICRC relief craft with materials.

Father Mario: Yes. This helicopter which people told you about, the information is very true. This information I got it from the rebels. About 2000 rebels they were given 2000- rounds guns and all were the same. Somebody

infiltrated their ranks and investigated and confirmed the veracity of the information.

When I was going to Freetown I saw the helicopter. Special soldiers with red caps were with me and as I reached Waterloo this helicopter passed us with the stickers. As the helicopter saw us it rushed into hiding until it nearly crashed.

Bishop Humper : Are you aware that the ICRC had warned people about using their stickers ?

Father Mario: I have heard a lot of people talking about that and even the government. There was a time when the government stopped the work of the ICRC in Sierra Leone because of these manoeuvres. But the ICRC denied any such complicity in toto and said that it was only a case of giving the dog a bad name in order to kill it.

Prof; Kamara

Prof.Kamara: Do you know how the people supplying the arms were being paid.

Father Mario: I only know how they travelled, but I don't know how they were paid.

Leader of Evidence:Ms. Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: You mentioned that by the time you got to Freetown you were about 8000 captives. I want to know whether you were used to fight or used as shield.

Father Mario: I was in the main group of the prisoners. We were in the group to increase the number, as a camouflage. The group had very good fighters. Even during the training so many children lost their lives. The one that held us were Sierra Leoneans and they had great fighting skills. The way we walked was four battalions in front and the ones that carry ammunitions are by their side and we the prisoners are in the middle and the two battalions are at the back. I have heard that they used civilians as shield. They never put us in front. They used us as camouflage in terms of the number.

Commissioner Jow: We thank you for your testimony. You have been forthright in your testimony. It is now your turn to ask questions.

Father Mario: What I am saying is for the development of this country. The President was pointing accusing fingers at the rebels. But I still see bad things happening. But I pray that the President will be able to push the country forward.

2nd Witness – Bernadette Kamara

No Testimony

Prof. Kamara: Do you know whether these two groups were enemies or allies ?

Bernadette Kamara: I cannot tell because at anytime we heard about such groups we usually went into the bush.

Prof.Kamara: What happened to ECOMOG when SAJ Musa's group attacked ?

Bernadette Kamara: ECOMOG was stationed at Kamalo. They operated from Kamalo and moved to and fro.

Prof.Kamara: When SAJ Musa's group attacked, ECOMOG troop did not respond ?

Bernadette Kamara: They were not there .

Prof.kamara: Not even at kamalo ?

Bernadette Kamara: They were not there .

Prof.Kamara: Have these villages been resettled ?

Bernadette Kamara: Yes. Very few people are managing their lives there .

Prof.Kamara: You said that the time SAJ Musa's group attacked, they took away young people?

Bernadette Kamara: Most of the young girls were abducted. The boys were also abducted but most of them apparently escaped . The girls only returned after the invasion of Freetown.

Prof.Kamara: Has relative normalcy returned to Kamalo ?

Bernadette Kamara: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: Are you still there and doing the same work ?

Bernadette Kamara: I am still there but I am practicing in a small hut.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: How many children do you have?

Bernadette Kamara: I have four children. Two Biological children and 2 adopted children

Bishop Humper: Which body provides you with drugs ?

Bernadette Kamara: The government is responsible. The drugs are supplied to us. For other important things like beds we have none. For refrigerator I have none. I simply store the vaccine at kamalo.

Bishop Humper: So government will take care of the health of the people in the village ?

Bernadette Kamara: We are appealing to the Commission to inform the government that the hospital needs rehabilitation .

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: You said your village was used as base. Can you tell me how long they stayed there?

Bernadette Kamara: Nearly 3 months. Their aim was to capture Father Mario. They made two attempts and failed ; the third attempt, they caught him.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell me the number of rebels in the base?

Bernadette Kamara: I never saw them with my eyes. Sometimes they just appear and we leave everything and run away.

Commissioner Jow: You said that for the three months you were turned into a slave ?

Bernadette Kamara: I mean that because we never lived as human beings again.Like animals we only survived on raw banana.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the mass graves?

Bernadette Kamara: The first group of observers that came into the village after the war took some photographs of these graves.

Commissioner Jow: You said they threw some of the corpses into the well. Do you still use the well?

Bernadette Kamara: We are still using that well. The dead bodies were evacuated and the well was treated ?

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the other staff?

Bernadette Kamara: Everybody ran for cover the day we saw the rebel soldiers at the door.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka:

Commissioner Sooka: You said they abducted some girls from the village. That some of them only returned after the attack on Freetown or after the disarmament ?

Bernadette Kamara: They were the ones that told us about the raping. They were gang raped. Some came back with babies and some of them returned pregnant.

Commissioner Sooka: How do they take care of themselves ?

Bernadette Kamara: For the sake of survival ,most of them hire themselves out as farm hands.For example, if you are given one bag of inputs or seedlings on loan then at the specified period you have to return two bags and so forth. They have no tools since the village was razed to the ground.Therefore,they are at the mercy of the creditors .

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms.Apori-Nkansah : No questions

Commissioner Jow: Bernadette, it is now your turn to ask questions or make recommendations.

Bernadette Kamara: We are in dire need of health care.Our hospital needs rehabilitation ;there are no drugs ; there are no better schools ;no tools to farm . We are appealing to the government to assist us. Those young girls that were abducted returned back with babies and nobody is there to care of them.At least ,let the government take care of these necessities.

Commissioner Jow: Was there a school before the attack?

Bernadette Kamara: There was a school.

Commissioner Jow: What happened to the school?

Bernadette Kamara: The school building has collapsed. We have about five classes with only one teacher.

Commissioner Jow: We have listened to your recommendations and we are happy for the things you asked for. You asked for community facilities. A number of people have made similar recommendations and in our final report we will make recommendations and your recommendations along side the others will be included. We are happy that you have come to talk to this Commission.

3rd – Witness – Ibrahim Debe

My name is Ibrahim Debe. I am a muslim. Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow administered the oath.

Testimony

I was invited by the TRC. I was asked if I was ready to talk and I said, yes. I had wanted to talk long ago. I am a member of the RUF. Now we have peace. I say thanks to the Commission. Before I go further I want to clarify some statements made by my sister the last witness. During the time when the AFRC called us for an alliance, we took orders from them. They were unable to guide their own revolution because they were undisciplined. They used guns. We, of the RUF carry on instruction by law and order. We do not do things on our own,because we do not tolerate indiscipline . Our revolution was a well organized revolution and our leader Foday Sankoh used to control us and he told us what we are fighting for. He was against killing of innocent civilians. Our targets were the enemies targeting us. Even when we captured enemy soldiers we treated them well because we were told by our leader that no one was allowed to kill a captured soldier. When we were pushed out of Freetown we went back to Magburaka and Kono. There we called our soldiers to parade. During that time we had the AFRC with us but they failed to follow instructions. We told them: "You are afraid to follow the revolution and you do not take orders. Therefore, as from today you are under our full control. You should do whatever we tell you to do." But they refused to do what we asked them to do. Because of that they deserted our ranks, they left us at Kono and went to Koinadugu. At that time there was no RUF there.

Even for the attack on Freetown they told us that we should not join them. When they captured Freetown they put check point for RUF at Orogu Bridge. They said we are bush people. We should control from Waterloo to the Northern Province. Because of their indiscipline, they did mass destruction in Freetown . But at the end they were unable to control Freetown. They came back to Waterloo and we were able to put them under our control and disarm them. Furthermore, we had a quarrel amongst our ranks in the RUF, some of the AFRC came to Makeni and wanted to interfere, but we told them that the problem was between ourselves so they should stay aside. Later we settled the problem. The brothers behind the problem were based in Magburaka and Kono. We called them but they refused to come to us. The AFRC and RUF were in Makeni and we were called to a forum. We said now we all should follow law and order under the RUF. No one is allowed to harass citizens. But they refused and said that they want to have their own administration. We said: ' No. The time we were with you in Freetown we used to take orders from you. Now you have no right here in Makeni.' The AFRC went ahead and chose their own leader. He was called Brigadier Mani. His bodyguard was Col. T. The RUF said: "No .That will not be possible in Makeni." Later on, Brigadier Mani went to Kamabai and he said he was going to set up his own military headquarters. The AFRC took control of the financial area because we wanted to avoid confusion. Later on our leader Foday Sankoh called Superman and Col. Issa in Freetown. After one week he sent Superman to Makeni to brief all soldiers in Makeni that they went to Togo to sign the Peace Accord; that the war should be over and that we should be prepared to disarm. When superman came, he delivered the message. We said: "For us we have no problem. But what about the SLA , you should call them and inform them." When they called their commander, he did not show up. Later on we sent somebody to call him. When he came we asked him "what was the problem?" He said: "No problem I was only gathering my men". Superman said: "You should call all your commanders, but you have refused to do so." He said he was going to get morale booster. We sent somebody but we got no response. I went there myself. I asked him what was wrong and he said that I should leave him alone. I went and informed Superman. I said: "Those men are prepared to fight us". Before that they had said they would make sure that RUF went back to the bush. And we in turn had retorted , "we were not born for the bush, if you want to do anything you can do it." From that moment we informed all civilians and told them to go home because we were observing certain developments. After I went back. On my way, approaching the stadium; I saw a large number of SLA soldiers with lots of weapons coming down the petrol station. I went and informed Commander Superman that the SLA was out to fight us. The commander told us to go to our camp. On our way , fighting broke out. In the RUF we appreciate that no body should hurt the civilians because our leader said we should give civilians their own rights. We were ready to drive AFRC out of Makeni Town. Therefore, when the sister said the RUF was there I disagree. We were not together with the AFRC/SLA at that time

Our revolution at that time did not cause destruction. We did not kill people. Anyway, we had civilians who got stuck with us .It has been said by some people that we maltreated them and their children. It is not true. We are against rape. One man cannot keep two women. It is the law. It was because of all those false claims they used to make in the town; that we did our best to take good care of the people in our control. Whenever we came into town, people were happily surprised to see their children back without any problems. In appreciation of the way we took care of their children, some parents usually brought us money and provisions. Many families have got their otherwise displaced children from us, in healthy conditions. So, I want every body to know that the bad name we got was because of the alliance with the AFRC. Most of the stories you hear about RUF , was not our own action.

We, in the RUF were prepared to disarm because our leader came to Makeni and went to all our control areas. He said: "The war that was brought to Sierra Leone is over. Everybody should disarm." We all agreed. We said: " You are the leader. Anything you say we are prepared to go by your law and order". We were prepared for disarmament, but the confusion among the RUF was because of the problem of communication as well as trust regarding information and possible manipulation while the leader was in prison in Nigeria. The head, refused to take law and order from the leader. Now, we had many commanders in the RUF. We had the one that had the power. We, the commanders used to take instructions from the head. In the RUF we had thousands of commanders but it was only three people that would have the last say. These

were Sam Bockarie (Mosquito), Issa Sesay and, Moris Kallon; they were the key holders. The confusion in Makeni between the UN and us was not as a result an order from the leader. Now, before the confusion took place in Makeni between us and UNAMSIL, they had sent a report to the leader in Freetown. His response was: "No RUF is allowed to go to UNAMSIL compound. No UNAMSIL is allowed to go to RUF territory." We were trying to get things under proper arrangement. He called Issa Sesay to Freetown because he was in charge at that time since they had dismissed Mosquito. The leader called him in Freetown; he refused to go. He called him twice. Negative. Later on, the confusion became serious. By holding UNAMSIL the leaders were not responsible. That was wrong. The two heads were responsible for the confusion.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: We have a lot of questions to ask you. Ibrahim what is your nationality?

Ibrahim Debe: I am a Sierra Leonean / Liberian.

Commissioner Jow: Were you born in Sierra Leone?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Were you brought up in Sierra Leone?

Ibrahim Debe: I was brought up in Liberia.

Commissioner Jow: When did you first visit Sierra Leone?

Ibrahim Debe: I came here in 1991

Commissioner Jow: What did you come to do in 1991?

Ibrahim Debe: I was a soldier. I was a bodyguard to the late Samuel Doe and later I was captured and I was sent to prison by the former NPFL. From prison I was surprised to see my self in the boundary that was why I came to this country.

Commissioner Jow: You belong to the group called the vanguard?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about this group?

Ibrahim Debe: When you say a vanguard it means the head because when the war entered in Sierra Leone it was no child's play. After some time we were able to get some young men from Kailahun because the war took off from Kailahun.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: We thank you for coming here today. We say thanks that you have admitted that you are an RUF and that you want reconciliation. Is that right?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Bishop Humper: Tell us the three groups that constituted the movement. You said you belonged to the vanguard?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: We feel pity for you just like for the other perpetrators. We want to get some clarification. I want you to listen. You said you witnessed the atrocities of those who captured you.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: You became double victim-perpetrator?

Ibrahim Debe: No.

Bishop Humper: Then you became grand perpetrators

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: You were jailed.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: They mishandled you ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: That is a victim.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: As NPFL you became a victim perpetrator ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: As NPFL you were captured by the rebels.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Bishop Humper: You became double perpetrator ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: From there you became full RUF ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: You were there at the time of the alliance of the RUF and AFRC and participated in it ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: That makes you grand perpetrator.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: You want to be reconciled. Remember that the people of Makeni know about you; because if you have to reconcile you have to be honest. The other Commissioners will ask you questions.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: Let me remind you; you have have to tell us everything concerning this matter that is known to you . We want your fullest cooperation.

Commissioner Prof.John Kamara

Prof.Kamara: We welcome your presence here and appreciate your story. You said you are a Sierra Leonean as well as a Liberian ?

Ibrahim Debe: yes.

Prof.Kamara: For the fact that when the war started you were staying in Liberia as a guard does that mean that you were more a Liberian than Sierra Leonean?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: Does that mean that you served Liberia?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Prof. Kamara: You would rather be a Liberian than Sierra Leonean?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes, because my father was a Liberian.

Prof.Kamara: You were in the armed forces of Liberia and you were captured in Liberia by NPFL ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Then the NPFL handed you over to the RUF ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: And you were trained by the RUF in Liberia?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes, in the boundary.

Prof.Kamara: Otherwise you would not have come in as a vanguard?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: One of the things about the RUF is that if you were trained in Liberia you were a vanguard ?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know of the operation Tap 20?

Ibrahim Debe: I have no idea of tap 20.

Prof. Kamara: Do you know that the vanguards were attacked by SLA because of the atrocities caused by the vanguard in Kailahun.

Ibrahim Debe: The only thing they told us was that people used to come across to Sierra Leone to solve some problems.

Prof.Kamara: The initial force that was running the RUF was all Liberians.

Ibrahim Debe: That is not true.

Prof.Kamara: The only people that were with them were the few top people who were trained in Libya and the prisoners released by Charles Taylor. When the RUF entered Sierra Leone they were in full control and their atrocities were too much. Foday Sankoh then trained Sierra Leoneans to remove the vanguard and then during the war the operation was called Tap 20 and they were driven out of Sierra Leone.

Prof. Kamara: Will you be prepared to go to Kailahun?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Your first station was in Kailahun and they know you very much there and I want to warn you that the Kailahun audience is not like here in Makeni. If it was in Kailahun the people will write all they know about you and send it to us. We want to know the truth. That is why I am requesting that you go to Kailahun. Are you prepared to do that?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: You entered here and you were in the security section of the RUF.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: How long were you in Kailahun?

Ibrahim Debe: Two years.

Prof.Kamara: During that period you were sometimes asked to supervise whoever had to bring supply to the RUF ?

Ibrahim Debe: No, that was not my responsibility.

Prof.Kamara: You were also a trainer of instructors?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: In what camp were you training people?

Ibrahim Debe: In Kailahun.

Prof.Kamara: Did you go to Zogoda?

Ibrahim Debe: No. I never went there at all.

Prof.Kamara: So you got to the higher rank and you did not go to Zogoda?

Ibrahim Debe: I did not go there ;because I was not called to go there.

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sooka: I heard from you that your mother is a Sierra Leonean and your father a Liberian?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Which part is your mother from?

Ibrahim Debe: From Kroo Town Road.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us about the training you underwent and the commander who trained you?

Ibrahim Debe: Our former field commander who got missing in action later on at Zogoda.

Commissioner Sooka: What was his name?

Ibrahim Debe: Col. Mohamed Tarawally.

Commissioner Sooka: Tell us about your training.

Ibrahim Debe: As you entered that camp you were not allowed to go out until after the training. After the training you were still kept in the camp not knowing what to expect until you were taken in a vehicle to the front line.

Commissioner Sooka: How long did you take in the training?

Ibrahim Debe: Because I was a soldier; I did not need a long training. I took only six months.

Commissioner Sooka: What did they teach you to do?

Ibrahim Debe: The first thing was the rationale for the war; how to treat civilians;what to tell civilians and so forth .

Commissioner Sooka: I want you to tell me how you were promoted in the RUF; from the time you joined and to the time you were disarmed .

Ibrahim Debe: I was for law and order in administration. I used to talk to civilians. The training area was not my job but later on I was head of the task force.

Commissioner Sooka: During the time you were a task force commander it means you should make sure that everything went on well ?

Ibrahim Debe: I tried.

Commissioner Sooka: During the time you were task force commander, were you responsible for the killing of the people or beating of the people?

Ibrahim Debe: Within my own time it happened.

Commissioner Sooka: What happened?

Ibrahim Debe: A man was once arrested for a criminal act. Then I was informed about the matter. Later on, when I went to the office, they showed me the person. Then I told them that they should take good care of the man because we should investigate the matter. I went back to my house. The next day I was surprised to get the information that they took the man to identify what he stole and that the man tried to run away, but was re-arrested and kept at the office and that later on the man died .

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us what you did when you found out about the man's death?

Ibrahim Debe: First of all I asked the person in charge what caused the problem, what they did to the man ? Did they beat him? He said no. He said that the man had complained that he was sick. I asked, again did you take him to the hospital? Why you not inform me ? They said, they did not know that the man would die. Later on I informed the head office. They sent for a doctor. I called the family of the man. I told them that the doctor will carry out the autopsy and let us all know what happened . They said they were not going to wait for that .They wanted the body. The head office gave the go ahead. Then I was arrested. I asked why the arrest; they said I was the head. They investigated and the person who did the act was arrested.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you tell us what your work was?

Ibrahim Debe: I was the connection between the RUF and the civilians; explaining matters to the civilians

Commissioner Sooka: Did your duty also include logistics, food from the civilians?

Ibrahim Debe: It was not my responsibility

Commissioner Sooka: Who was responsible for that?

Ibrahim Debe: Within the movement we had so many branches.

Commissioner Sooka: The atrocities came as far back as 1992. I want to know from you if you were responsible for the killing, looting, amputation, raping etc.

Ibrahim Debe: We were not given to burning down houses, RUF never burnt a house. We were not in the bush we were in town. It does not make sense for us to put fire on houses.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: Were you ever a training commander at Pendembu?

Ibrahim Debe: I was there on instruction.

Commissioner Jow: Who were in training?

Ibrahim Debe: We did not train children. We had people from the age of 20 ,21 ,22 etc.

Commissioner Jow: We have been informed that many children were unable to go through the training and most of them lost their lives.

Ibrahim Debe: It is not true. We were not training children.

Commissioner Jow: Was any life ever lost during the training sessions ?

Ibrahim Debe: No

Commissioner Jow: Did any body ever fall sick because of the training?

Ibrahim Debe: Before the training we had medical check up. A medical doctor carried out the check up. Those with sickle cell or high blood pressure problems were not allowed to participate.

Commissioner Jow: In your testimony you said one Foday Kamara and Amadu Bangura lost their lives in the training.

Ibrahim Debe: No. It was not to my knowledge.

Commissioner Jow: Do you want to tell us that the training was comfortable?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes. We gave them food to eat three times a day. Even after the training , the men were not sent at once to the battle front.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have any regrets about your connection with the RUF?

Ibrahim Debe: For me , I fought the war because I know my rights .Concerning how I fought the war ,I know what is right and what is wrong and I tried to do the right things . Even in Kailahun you can go there and ask about me. They will tell you about me. Makeni, they will also tell you about me; even Jesus Christ not every body that loves him.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have any regret why you joined the RUF?

Ibrahim Debe: No. My circumstances determined the part that I played.

Bishop Humper: Do you have any problem with your eyes?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Bishop Humper: I understand that even if you are the head; if you do not do what you were ordered to do you would be punished?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes

Bishop Humper: As task force commander here you had tremendous power; could you recall of the name Abdulai Conteh who stole at no. 7 Mac Robert Street and was tortured to death?

Ibrahim Debe: It happened in my absence.

Bishop Humper: Did it happen?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Present or not present who should take the responsibility?

Ibrahim Debe: The commander.

Bishop Humper: You were the liaison officer and you were responsible for the RUF for food ?

Ibrahim Debe: It was not my area. It was the area of the G5.

Bishop Humper: Do you know the slaughterhouse in Kailahun?

Ibrahim Debe: No.

Bishop Humper: You have never heard about it?

Ibrahim Debe: It has been long since I left Kailahun .

Bishop Humper: I know it was not only a slaughter house but where they practiced cannibalism.

Ibrahim Debe: It is not true.

Bishop Humper: When did you leave Kailahun?

Ibrahim Debe: I left there in 1992. During the time when AFRC said they had driven the rebels to Liberia.

Bishop Humper: Did you know anything about the capture of Kamajors in Kailahun

Ibrahim Debe: I was not there but I got the information.

Bishop Humper: Did you know the number of Kamajors they slaughtered?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes. They did not slaughter them. They wanted to attack Kailahun and they were captured.

Bishop Humper: How many of those Kamajors did Sam Bockarie killed at that time?

Ibrahim Debe: I was not there at that time. They only passed on the message to the field commander. Whenever they sent any message, all the other radios received the message.

Bishop Humper: From Kailahun what was your last station before you came to Makeni?

Ibrahim Debe: I was in Tonkolili.

Commissioner Jow: We have statements that you were responsible for the death of Abdulai Conteh because you were the task force commander at that time. We are waiting for you to face the public and talk to them.

Ibrahim Debe: If you say so;you are correct, because I was the commander at that time. I was not the one that gave the orders. But since I was the commander, I am appealing to you to forgive me.

Commissioner Jow: If it is true what should you do?

Ibrahim Debe: I am telling the people of Makeni and the family of the deceased that I was not directly responsible;however,since the men were under me and

I was the commander,I accept all the responsibility that I killed the pa Abdulai Conteh.

Prof. Kamara: Where do you intend to live?

Ibrahim Debe: In Sierra Leone. I want to base in Makeni.

Prof.Kamara: That means you have to reconcile with people of Makeni.

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Before you can reconcile with the people you have to make sure that they accept you fully. You have to say the truth about what you did. You have to accept the responsibility of what happened or what the people under your command did. You have to say that to the people before they will accept you.

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: When you gave your testimony you mentioned that after the cease fire you came out with many children and their parent were happy because they had no problem. Who did you grow up with? When you were a child did you live with you mother and father?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Could you say that it was a good thing to abduct those children?

Ibrahim Debe: We did that because any attack and any civilian that came to our side we never turned them back since they will be afraid lest they meet the enemy. We used to rescue them and take good care of them.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Which one will you choose, to leave with your parents or to leave with people who had guns in the jungle?

Ibrahim Debe: Any one of the two.

Commissioner Jow: Do you think that the RUF group and rebel war was good for the country?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes. It was good.

Bishop Humper: As you are sitting here would you want to be where Issa Sesay is today?

Ibrahim Debe: I am not prepared for that.

Bishop Humper: Can you account for the eight persons in Binkolo who were accused of witchcraft?

Ibrahim Debe: This is my first time of ever hearing that.

Commissioner Jow: What will you want to tell the Commission?

Ibrahim Debe: Let the Commission carry on with its good job. I am asking for peace in the country. The suppression we have in the past will not happen again.

Commissioner Jow: The Commission is here to find out about the war and bring people to reconcile so that it will not happen again. That is why we said you should come out with the complete the story. I must tell you that we need more information from you. Are you willing to be in the reconciliation ceremony?

Ibrahim Debe: Yes.

4th Witness – Hindolo S. Butcher

My name is Hindolo S Butcher. I am a Christian. Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow administered the oath.

Commissioner Jow: We appreciate your coming to the commission. We want you to relax and to share your experiences with the Commission and the audience.

Testimony

I am the Regional Organizing Secretary for the SLPP in the North. We had won the election but rebel activities were getting intensified in the country. From the East and the South people sought for help and we did offer it. They were lodged in camps in the Northern Province. Makeni was a safe place for every body. On 25th May 1997, Mohamed B. Marah and I went to Kabala. He had told me that, it had taken a long time since he last visited Kabala. We went with some other people. However, before leaving for Kabala we noticed some strange activities going on. Based on our observations and intuition, we made a list of people and handed it over to S.B. Marah. We told him that there was a coup in the making. He told us that security was in place. Dalton Quee took over as Minister of Interior. We spent sometime in the lodge. I told him to leave this place. He went to town and we went to Kabala. We were in Kabala and at midnight we heard about the coup. F.B. Marah and I, his sister and other people, we told S.B. Marah by all possible means to leave. We returned to Kabala and spent two days there. We returned to Makeni and the tension was very high. They were pointing fingers at SLPP members. I took my wife and we went to a village called Kamatun after Kanikay junction. We spent about a month there. One morning I was going to Kabri and on the high way to Kabala, I came across a land rover. By then I had become heavily bearded. The people on board were soldiers and they knew me; but I had thought I had the perfect disguised. They came from Kabala en route Makeni. They stopped. They asked me: "Are you not Hindolo?" And I denied. I claimed I was his look alike. They said: "You are the one! You are the one that always moved around with Kabba." The game was up. They asked me where I was staying. I told them. They asked me to show them the place and I did. I hurried back to my wife and I told her that I was lucky that the people that recognised me on the way were soldiers and my wife advised me to lie low. I took my wife and returned to Makeni on 7th July. People warned me: "You are just roaming about with these little children, can't you stay somewhere?" Some came and told me that the AFRC "guys" said that, "Hindolo has returned and he sent messages to Kabba." I was staying at Koto junction. Ibrahim Sesay who is presently Minister of information and few others were all visiting me. On the 13th July, they nearly killed me but I escaped. They met Sheriff and Kenise. I escaped together with Ibrahim Sesay and Daniel Sesay. We went to the village of Adama Cut Hand. Immediately, word

went round . Alpha Toronoko the head man said he was not pleased to host us. We were there and we heard that people were hunting us. We went to Sandaloko. We stayed with one of my friends until the 27th July. I decided I should return to Makeni. Daniel Sesay tried to dissuade me;but I insisted . To be frank with you we returned to Makeni. Daniel went back to his village. My wife told me:” Have you come again ?” I asked her to leave me alone that the Lord is with me and that I am going nowhere. We were there until the 20th of August. From the 21st I noticed that our movement was being monitored. On 22nd I got up and went to Alhaji Sankoh. The man and his brother with Musa Koroma and his driver and one man called Tommy Saidu. Five of us went to Ibrahim and we were discussing about our problems. By then the AFRC junta was at Y.M. Koroma’s house. After a while I advised that we should change location and each to go his separate way . Some people were around and they saw and recognised us. They were there to identify people. He had a lot of boys with him. When he was informed that Butcher and others were around he came with his vehicle. We were inside the vehicle for us to be taken to our different homes. We saw Daniel Mabanta and his group cross in front of us. Alhaji Sankoh said: “What are we even doing ? We have been informed that you are the people who go around performing sacrifices but this time your government will not be able to perform any sacrifice.”That was a hard one;but it was the talk of the town . We were there from 10:00pm to 5:00am in the morning. Before dispersing we resolved that nobody should come together in the form of a meeting and that people should take care of themselves. So we stopped and did not visit anybody. Ordinarily, I had wanted to tell the people that they were monitoring me. I had wanted to tell everybody that cared to listen that the elders and Paramount Chief will note that I have never done anything to anybody. On 23rd Saturday morning at about 5:45am,being an early riser ,I went about my own business. Then I saw two Hilux vehicles.Meanwhile, I hasten to add here that I on a regular basis treat people because I am a qualify practitioner. I treated people without payment. I also help people. That Saturday morning the two pick up truck came to my house and it carried 100 people armed with guns and sticks etc.Then, I was staying at the house of Adama Sesay.But I had gone to Seventeen Junction. That morning I went to my brother J.B. Makaia. Abdul Karim saw me that morning when I went to my brother. He was the ringleader in plotting for my arrest. Felix came and asked my child about me. Memuna told him that I had gone out. The road I used to go to Makaia he did not see me. Abdul Karim knew I was in my brother’s room. They took a pistol and checked to see whether I was under the bed. As they came nearer where I was he spoke in our own language and told me that they were coming. I went into one house and went under the bed. I stayed under that bed till 6:00pm that night. At eight o’clock one boy came and told Mammy Yanka to help me disguise like a woman so that I can escape. We pretended as if we were going for prayers. I started working from the 23rd of August until I reached Guinea. It took me eleven days to reach to Guinea. I went to Guinea and got some money . I left Guinea and I walked by foot again to Makeni. I came across Daniel Sesay and I told him that,it was only divine intervention that has kept me alive; otherwise I should have been killed . We were there until they drove the AFRC out of Freetown. When they were kicked out , they went out to their usual places in the bush. We were staying in Makeni and we continued to do our work. This ti e it became the problem of the AFRC and the rebels. Initially, they were here in Makeni selling cigarettes.But what makes people believe that these guys were AFRC and RUF members was that they struck Binkolo and destroyed the village and they killed seven soldiers.Meanwhile, on December 21st ,Sylvester Rogers came and told us: “The rebels are 13 miles off the town of Makeni and immediately after giving this report I am leaving.” There was no single drop of fuel in my car . I told my daughter to go into the bush. All of us went into the bush. We went into the bush and there we spent our Christmas. They had occupied everywhere by then. We were at a village called Kamapaneh with my family. It was very cold and I told my wife that I heard that the rebels said we should come out. On the 9th of January my family came to town. I was only left with a boy and my in-law in the bush. The man that provided me refuge was informed ;that if I do not leave their place, they would kill me. I told my wife that I was going to Gbendembu.

They told me that they would take me to Demba Marah and tell him that I am their friend. How wonderful it is to witness the governance of men of integrity. They went and informed Demba Mara. On the 21st May they came for me. Pa Sampha the elder brother of Demba Marah came for me. He took me to the field and he spoke to all of them. He told them: “This man is my friend

and, he is an SLPP member". He threatened them. Then he concluded: "If you kill all the important people in the country who will be left." On the 25th May the field was jam packed waiting for the Peace Accord to be signed in Togo. I was at home that time then Pa Demba said let us go and listen. Demba Marah is now dead. Since I was brought out of the bush Demba Marah was the only one that took care of us. I want to say thanks to Rev. Usman Fornah for pleading for his people. He pleaded for all of us. He did not leave us. I was arrested and my arm was broken. They took bottles and stabbed me on my head. They used bottle on my head. I was stripped naked. My friend S.Y. Koroma followed me and the blood sprayed on my clothes. They brought me to Caritas office. I said I want to drink, 11 of them urinated and they gave me to drink but I refused. Memuna went to Pa Demba and she told him: "You asked my father to come out of the bush and now look at what has happened." In the morning they brought me to 55 and he said, "you are lucky to be alive." They took me to General Lewis. He spoke nicely to me. They said I was, "the carrier of Tejan Kabba". They looted all my property.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: Did I hear you say you are the Regional Organizing Secretary for SLPP.

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: Yes

Bishop Humper: Do you want to tell us that you were a target?

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: Yes

Bishop Humper: You suffered physical damage. What happened to you was a sort of harassment and violation of human rights.

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: Yes.

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof. Kamara: Like most of our witnesses you went through a very distressful experience. They did not kill any of your family members but you said they broke your hand.

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: They were so many that I could not identify any of them. But the one who ordered my arrest will take responsibility.

Prof. Kamara: How was it broken?

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: They hit me with an iron bar. Then they took this rope and wound tight around my penis and began to draw it. Blood was oozing out from my penis. It took one year and six months. Pa Demba sent for me and had asked that I come out from the bush. He told them that it is now time for peace. He took me to the field and informed everybody. That day Paul arrested me and claimed that I fed people in Makeni and I was sending messages to Freetown.

Prof. Kamara: Who was Paul Jety?

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: He was one of the AFRC members.

Prof. Kamara: Did you say that the AFRC or the rebels supported SLPP or APC?

Mr.Hindolo Butcher: To me it seems they were nowhere. They just got up and demanded war . They did what they wanted. So they were not supporting any group.But I want to conclude that they were the grandchildren of APC.

Prof.Kamara: You said the time they brought you to Makeni you met Brigadier 55.

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: He was a head of the task force business in CARITAS office in Flower Corner.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: You said the armed men were Felix Turay and Abdul Sankoh.

Mr.Hindolo Butcher: I had thought that they were civilians ,not knowing they were rebels .

Commissioner Jow: Do you know their whereabouts?

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: Abdul Turay is in Freetown.

Commissioner Jow: Have you tried to talk to them?

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: I think those who have wronged me should come in front of me and kneel down and apologize to me and then ask for forgiveness.

Commissioner Jow: Mr. Butcher do you want the Commission to help with regard to reconciliation with these people ?

Mr.Hindolo Butcher: It will be nice for it to be done. I came here for the sake of peace. Those that wronged us as I have the name Butcher, I should have butchered all of them. So it is nice that you call us together for reconciliation.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: We thank you for being here. We are happy that even though you suffered you want peace. You have answered all our questions. Now give us your last word.

Mr. Hindolo Butcher: I want to say thanks. The Lord has brought peace. The Lord said Peace I give you and Peace I leave with you. What I want every body to know is that I am 63 years of age.I had domestic animals of all sorts , even Dr. Demby had cows. I had a machine and other things that I laboured for. All that is gone. If government and the international community have helped the rebels, so that some have got projects; I need to be compensated for my labour. Here is a project the title is," Hindolo S. Butcher: The Coordinator for Mayanh Community Farmers' Association". I included ex- combatants for everyone to know that I mean peace. We need also to be financed so that we can forget about the past. It is no one man business. My submission with due respect to you,is for your assistance. If this happens we will forget about the past. If this does not happen there will be no peace.

Commissioner Jow: We are happy to note that you are happy and quite prepared to put your life back on track . You are coordinating this project that you have showed us. I will advise you to send your document to organisations like NaCSA but your recommendations will be incorporated in our report. We have noted all that you have said and we assure you that these recommendations will be incorporated in our recommendations for implementation.

5th Witness – Baba Dukuray

My name is Baba Dukuray. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow .

One day in September we were at Manjoro and we heard that the rebels had reached Kalangba. We were all in panic . Everybody was told to in their own interest go into the bush. We were there for two days and we came back. There were some people in a parade. They said rebels had been around. Anyway, we slept there for a day. Then, they came with two boys and brought them before the parade. We asked them whether the boys were thieves. Suddenly, ECOMOG truck came in. A lot of people were afraid. The people that brought the two young men showed them to ECOMOG. One of them produced a paper that he was an old soldier. The other one was asked for his paper. The soldiers came down the truck and we the civilians ran away. We heard two gun shots . The truck moved and headed for Kabala. We came back where the men in the parade still maintained their ground. We saw two bodies lying on the ground ,dead. After that incident we were there for two days. The chief said the body should be buried. After some days the rebels entered and we went into the bush for three days. Another day they captured four boys. This happened at night. I heard a boy screaming and they told him to stop or he would be killed. And the boy was killed for doing nothing wrong. We ,therefore ,stayed in the bush afraid to return. We were there for 3 days. From where we were we could see smoke rising up to the sky;even though we only continued to guess concerning the reason for the smoke.But ,no answer. The other day they killed one of the heads in their group. We were there and another group entered and we ran attempting to cross the river heading to Sanda. We saw another group right across the river. We had to remain where we were .At that time time ,we still had some little provision to keep us going.But then after a while ,the little we had got exhausted.Some people went to town for food.Thus were we exposed.They ordered us out of the bush. When two of us came out they asked us the whereabouts of the chief . We told them that the chief ran away.They said: “We will give you a paper for the chief to come back.” People began to return. After three days of relative quiet, on the fourth day they had all of us surrounded . Their next intention was to start bringing down the houses to make firewood. After two weeks went to them and said: “Now before you destroy our houses we will find people who will bring firewood for you.” We told them that the Muslims would fetch firewood on Friday and the Christians on Sunday. Then they asked about the food. They said we should provide people to lead them into the farms. We said we had nobody.Anyway, anytime they brought rice our wives cleaned it. Our wives fetched water for them. Whenever our wives filled the drum, they simply wasted the water and our wives would fill the drum again. Many of us wanted to escape but there was no way. If they had requests for food supplies from other sections of their group; to take food to their base our boys will have to do it. And they kept abducting people and bringing them here until our resources got stretched beyond their limits. All the food in the village was finished .I do not know what else to say ? While walking along the bush , the ordinary people in the village used to see cows around the bush and the cows never ran away; but when the cows saw the rebels they all ran away. People started leaving the houses. This was the reason why the houses collapsed. If I say they burnt down any house in the village, I would be telling a lie. They only burnt the house of their boss. This is all I know.

Prof. Kamara: You started your narrative to say soldiers and later ECOMOG am I correct.

Mr. Dukuray: I said they brought two boys from somewhere. I had thought they were thieves. They brought them before their parade and then ECOMOG came in.

Prof.Kamara: Are you saying that ECOMOG killed those two people?

Mr. Dukuray: The uniformed people identified them as ECOMOG.

Prof.Kamara: So they killed them and you buried them.

Mr. Dukuray: After two days the chief told us to bury them.

Prof.Kamara: ECOMOG then moved to where?

Mr. Dukuray: They moved to Kabala

Prof.Kamara: At that time you had no CDF?

Mr. Dukuray: No.

Prof.Kamara: The people who captured those two boys were they CDF?

Mr.Dukuray: No.

Prof.Kamara: They just captured them as thieves?

Mr.Dukuray: Yes

Prof.Kamara: Why did they not take them to the Paramount Chief?

Mr. Dukuray: On their way they came across ECOMOG and they turned and ran.

Prof.Kamara: ECOMOG did not advise them to go to the Paramount Chief?

Mr. Dukuray: I was not there.

Prof.Kamara: For how long did the rebels occupy Manjoro?

Mr. Dukuray: Since they entered Makeni they were assigned there and they spent three years.

Prof.Kamara: Do you have a school in your village?

Mr. Dukuray: Yes. The other school was supposed to have ten teachers but there is only five now.

Prof.Kamara: Did they not abduct women in the town?

Mr. Dukuray: Some young girls who were not going to school voluntarily joined them to be their women.

Prof.Kamara: After that they did not disturb the families.

Mr. Dukuray: Because we were insisting on their compliance.

Prof.Kamara: What made the rebels leave Manjoro?

Mr. Dukuray: Those who came from Makeni drove the ones that came from Manjoro.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: What group killed their head?

Mr. Dukuray: We do not know them. It was the first group that entered.

Bishop Humper: Why did the rebels choose Friday and Sunday as the days for fetching firewood for them ?

Mr. Dukuray: Those are the days that people do not go to the farm. That was why they chose Fridays and Sundays.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: I want you tell us who you are in Manjoro?

Mr. Dukuray: I am an indigene of Manjoro and a court member?

Commissioner Jow: Did you say the first group that went to Manjoro took three years.

Mr. Dukuray: The first group that came after accusing their boss of embezzlement killed the boss and burnt the house.

Commissioner Jow: Did you say you gave the rebels food?

Mr. Dukuray: Yes. We had no where to go.

Commissioner Jow: Did they explain to you why they did this?

Mr. Dukuray: We never engaged them in any dialogue. We were afraid of them.

Commissioner Jow: Can you remember any of their names?

Mr. Dukuray: One of them was always referred to as Johnny.

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: You did say that the young ladies in your village at a point joined the rebels and were bush wives. Was it under threat or they were afraid?

Mr. Dukuray: They did it underground without our knowledge as young people go about their affairs.

Commissioner Jow: Do you have any questions?

Mr. Dukuray: I want you to assist the town. You should assist the town with Education. Some of the children sit in the open air taking lessons. Now in the rainy

season some have to cease going to school. There is also no market building;we need assistance in this too .

Commissioner Jow: We have noted your concerns. You have a good mind. We want to assure you that we will incorporate these recommendations in our report.

6th – Witness – Mohamed Kamara

My name is Mohamed Kamara. I am a muslim. Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow administered the oath.

Testimony

One day while I was in Kambala Chieftdom, in Chief Kadabola's section , we saw a group of rebels from Kabala. We ran into the town called Yembrain.As we entered the town we saw a lot of people dead or wounded and houses set ablaze .The rebels had done their inglorious act in this town and from here turned to our village. With what we saw we decided to forget about Kamboy ; We went somewhere else to hide. One day they captured eighteen of us. After we had been captured one man was killed. He was the chief for the young men. Bangali Taylor was killed. A man by the name of SAJ Musa then commanded his followers and they started amputating hands. The hands of ten people were chopped off. They abducted four people. They went into the villages and left us in pain. We had a pastor and he took us to the hospital. I entered Kamakwie Hospital later. It was curfew time. I was taken to the hospital and I was treated. This is what happened.

Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper: Mohamed we sympathize with you. We know that it is not easy to tell the story.However ,we need certain clarifications.You said they surrounded you and captured eighteen of you. You said they amputated ten out of the eighteen they captured. Did they select the people?

Mohammed Kamara: The four were very small children.

Bishop Humper: Were they abducted?

Mohamed Kamara: Ten of them were amputated and four were abducted. Four of them were killed.

Bishop Humper: Were there girls amongst the abductees?

Mohamed Kamara: We were all men.

Commissioner Prof. John Kamara

Prof. Kamara: You said it was SAJ Musa who ordered his men to chop off hands?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Before SAJ Musa's arrival in your town or area have you heard about people being amputated?

Mohamed Kamara: We heard about them. It started in Karina.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know if it was SAJ Musa's group in Karina?

Mohamed Kamara: I do not know. No. I cannot tell the difference because they entered at night.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know the direction SAJ Musa's group came from?

Mohamed Kamara: They came from Kabala.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know when they left your area where they headed for ?

Mohamed Kamara: I do not know. They told us that after amputating us, they were going to Bolo and that there we were going to wash their face.

Prof.Kamara: Was it a small group?

Mohamed Kamara: They were many. They were more than one hundred they were in three groups, the first group carried guns. The other group carried loads...

Prof.Kamara: You came to Kamakwie and you were captured. Where are you now?

Mohamed Kamara: At Kabala Ferry

Prof.Kamara: How do you take care of yourself?

Mohamed Kamara: I am staying with my child and he assists me.

Prof.Kamara: Does this your child go to school?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. He is still a boy.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know about the association of amputees ?

Mohamed Kamara: I am not aware of that group. I am far away from Makeni.

Prof.Kamara: Are there people like you in your area at Kabala Ferry area?

Mohamed Kamara: They are all over there.

Prof.Kamara: Do you see them?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. I see them

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us the time this thing happened to you?

Mohamed Kamara: I cannot remember the year ,but the day was April 18.

Commissioner Jow: Was it during the AFRC period?

Mohamed Kamara: It was after AFRC.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us the language they spoke ?

Mohamed Kamara: They spoke Krio and Liberian English.

Commissioner Jow: Did they tell you why they cut your hands?

Mohamed Kamara: Yes. They gave us letter. SAJ called me and wrote a letter to go to ECOMOG at Kamakwie Government Hospital and go to Tejan Kabba he will give you a hand.

Commissioner Jow: You said the rebels came back and burnt your house ?

Mohamed Kamara: After I was amputated I left Kabba Ferry and later I heard my house was burnt. They had entered into two villages. It was during the second attack that they told us that our house was burnt.

Leader of Evidence: No question .

CommissionerJow: Do you know what happened to the remaining four people?

Mohamed Kamara: Four of them were abducted. Two of them were later confirmed killed and I do not know what became of the other two.

CommissionerJow: It your turn to ask questions.

Mohamed Kamara: I have four children. I have no house. I want you to assist me in terms of education for my children because I have nothing with me. I lost one of my wives during the war.

CommissionerJow: Have you ever lived in an amputee camp

Mohamed Kamara: No

CommissionerJow: Are you a member of the amputee camp?

Mohamed Kamara: No

CommissionerJow: This commission has had a series of encounter with amputees. Senior staff has moved around the country to have recommendations from amputees and one of the recommendations have been school for children of amputees. We have incorporated this recommendation in our report. One of the mandates of the commission is to help victims like you.

PUBLIC HEARINGS HELD IN MAKENI ON 30TH MAY 2003

1ST Witness – Adama Munu

My name is Adama Munu. I am a Muslim. Bishop Joseph C. Humper administered the oath.

Bishop Humper: We are happy that you are here today; we do hope that you give your testimony and help us to know of what happened to you and what you witnessed. We want you to take your time and give your testimony. We are now ready to listen to you.

TESTIMONY

When the war came we ran very far away into the forest for refuge. Then one day, one woman was captured by the rebels. They asked her; "What you are doing here? Please tell us where the other people are?" This woman took them where we were. We were taken unawares. We just heard the dogs barking. The next thing we were surrounded. I was caught. Then they held my father in law who was amputated. They gathered us in front of the hut and laid us down side ways. They ordered us to stretch our hands on a tree stump. They told the old man that "the first time we released you but now we are going to chop off your hand." They caught a child who was crawling and they chopped that child in the middle. They held an adult. The other man was wounded. They held one woman. I was still there watching. They told the woman to give them the money and the woman said "I have no money." They searched the woman and they found and took her money. They were counting the money and it fell. The woman ran. They amputated three fingers of one child. They asked me for money. I said I do not have. They said I should get up. There was a tree stump. They had two cutlasses and a gun. They said "get up and go to the tree stump." They asked me to lay my hand on the tree stump and I did. My hand was chopped off. Instead of doing this to me I asked to be killed. They said, "This is what we want you to be. Go to Tejan Kabba for a hand." This is my story.

Bishop Humper: We have heard again another soul piercing testimony. Your story may be short but it has far reaching consequences. The Commission will ask you a few questions for clarifications

Commissioner Mrs. Satang A. Jow

Commissioner Jow: It is a very moving testimony. We are happy that you are still alive. Can you tell us the name of the village where you were amputated?

Adama Munu: At Mateboyor.

Commissioner Jow: The incident took place in the bush.

Adama Munu: Yes.

Commissioner Jow: Can you tell us about the rebels who chopped off your hands, what language did they speak?

Adama Munu: I do not know the group they belonged to. In fact, the one that chopped my hand was wearing a disguise. I do not know the group they belonged to.

Commissioner Jow: What language did they speak?

Adama Munu: They said nothing to me.

Commissioner Jow: How were you rescued?

Adama Munu: After the amputation we were brought to Makeni for 15 days and they took us to Freetown. We were treated there. They promised to give us some artificial limbs. A lot of the amputees have been assisted in that area. But they have not done anything for us. As I sit here my son was involved in an accident. My son-in-law was captured and up till now I do not know their whereabouts.

CommissionerJow: After your treatment did you stay in a camp?

Adama Munu: Yes, at Netland.

CommissionerJow: Can you tell us how you support yourself?

Adama Munu: Nothing.Except whosoever feels like assisting me.

CommissionerJow: What do you do for your living?

Adama Munu: My neighbors are assisting me. Some of them are generous to me.

Prof. Kamara: Can you remember the period when this thing happened?

Adama Munu: No.

Prof.Kamara: You said after the amputation they brought you to Makeni. Who brought you?

Adama Munu: My husband.

Prof.Kamara: Is your husband still alive?

Adama Munu: Yes.

Prof.kamara: Is he still with you?

Adama Munu: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Is he assisting you?

Adama Munu: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: How is it now at Mateboyor? Do you have facilities there?

Adama Munu: Yes.There is one

Prof.Kamara: Is it a government facility or a private?

Adama Munu: It is Government owned .

Prof.Kamara: Have you ever contacted any organization for assistance?

Adama Munu: No, since it was recorded earlier on.

Prof.Kamara: Who took you to Netlands?

Adama Munu: Sister Coro.

Prof.Kamara: She took you from Makeni on to Netland?

Adama Munu: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: When you left Netland where did you go?

Adama Munu: They took us to Lakka.

Prof.kamara: In a camp or to a hospital?

Adama Munu: We were accommodated at Lakka and they give us some food items.

Bishop Humper: Was it the amputation that killed Wusu or the gun shut that killed her?

Adama Munu: I said Wusu's hands were not chopped of. They used the machete and cut her all over her body.

Bishop Humper: What about the woman and the baby?

Adama Munu: The mother fled and the child was grabbed.

Bishop Humper: What did they do with the child?

Adama Munu: The child was divided into two there and then .

Bishop Humper: When they chopped off peoples' hands they gave them the message to go to Tejan Kabba to give them another hand. I want to know if that was what they said to you.

Adama Munu: They told me to go to Tejan Kabba in Makeni.

Bishop Humper: Do you know about the Amputee and War Wounded Association?

Adama Munu: I have no knowledge about that.

Bishop Humper: We want the staff of the Commission to take you to that association. The Association is alive and active. .You have gone through a bitter experience of being a double amputee during your life time. If you hear about people plotting about bringing war what you will do ? Will you go and inform the chief or will you keep quiet about it?

Adama Munu: I do not want to hear those kinds of words.

Leader of Evidence : Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: We do not have any question. We just want a clarification of the name of the child.

Adama Munu: I neither know the name of the woman nor the child's name. She was a stranger.

Bishop Humper: Adama it is now your turn to ask questions.

Adama Munu: I want the government to assist me because today I am amputated. That is all I have.

Bishop Humper : Thank you. I want you to know that the very strong amputee association and war wounded in this country want government to assist them. The Commission and the Association are working out some modalities with the Government to see how the amputees and war wounded can be helped. We are asking the staff to take the address of the amputees whose existence the central body of amputees does not know about. We hope that through these recommendations government will pay much attention to you. We will constitute your request in to the recommendations.

2nd – Witness – Abdulai Sesay

My name is Abdulai Sesay. I am a muslim. Bishop Joseph C. Humper administered the oath

Bishop Humper: I welcome you on behalf of the Commission and the audience. This Commission was established to bring peace among people. To get those who did wrong to say the truth and apologize and be forgiven. The community as a whole will embrace you again. This Commission will take no one to court. Ours is not a court it is a truth finding commission. Whatever happened to you, whatever you did during the war, you are to share with us; then you will be able to reconcile. I hope you understand because you are sitting before us as one of those to tell your story as RUF who has fought in this country. Feel free to know that we are here to give you support.

TESTIMONY

I will talk about what I had to go through and what I did. In 1994 I went to koidu town at Kono. I went there on a Christmas holiday. I was then a young student. I was 13 years old. I went to kono on 22nd December. The day I arrived on the 23rd a letter was brought to the chief. According to the letter the RUF was to attack on 25th December. When the letter was sent nobody took it seriously. On the 25th at 1:00 pm, we went to a cinema hall. As we bought our tickets the RUF entered. When they entered two of my brothers were killed there and then and I was captured. Col. Mosquito captured me. The other one wanted to kill me and Mosquito said: 'Don't kill him'. He took me as his personal boy. I met the rebels holding my aunt and she was amputated. She

was about to be killed and I said: "This is my aunt. Kill me instead ." They commanded and she was not killed. I told them about the death of my two brothers. Mosquito travelled with me to Kailahun and crossed with me to Liberia at Yamdugo. When we got there, I was trained for three months. After that I was brought to Kenema. In Kenema the first operation they gave me was at Golahun but at that time the SLA was fighting the RUF. When I was given that mission, I had with me 1890 men and we advanced. I was a commander and at that time I had no position. We advanced and I succeeded in the mission. I captured 100 SLA and five were killed. We captured all their ammunitions and returned back to Kailahun. I told my boss Mosquito that I succeeded and I was promoted to Major and was named Jim Murderer. My second operation was at Mile 91. I was given 2800 man power. I went there and I succeeded. I was promoted to Col. and I went to Liberia. When I was taken to Liberia, it was my first time to see Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor. Where they held their conference I was not allowed to enter. I made an attempt to enter the conference room and they shot two of my boys. I had wanted to listen to their conversation . I tried to set them up, but I failed. They wanted to capture me. After three days I came back and apologized and they accepted me. They gave me \$400. They registered six of us. After that I was sent to Daru and was given the third operation. I captured one SLA Commander Sgt. Santos. He was with me like a second commander to me. After Daru we attacked the SLA and the mission failed. We came to Kenema and told our boss. He gave us another 1000 man power and we went again to Daru. The attack was not successful. We went to our boss and told him again that we failed. He gave us another 1000 man power. When we went ahead the mission was successful. We had weakened their strength. After we succeeded, I returned to my boss. In 1996 the war was at Mile 91. I was there again but the soldiers that we met were ULIMO soldiers and we fought them and we succeeded. Five of them joined us and the rest went away. We advanced to Tombo. Those we met I can't remember the Commander's name. I don't know whether he was ULIMO or SLA. We were there till 1997 when the government was overthrown. We were at Waterloo. I was there as a spy. I travelled to Freetown to know the situation. I returned and told my men and we advanced. We went to Freetown. I was in my own area at Wellington. At Wellington that was when ECOMOG entered the country. They were at Kossoh Town. The first meeting that RUF and ECOMOG had, we attacked the ECOMOG and the meeting did not go through. After that we attacked them again but we did not succeed. The last attack we made was during the intervention. Most of my boys were shot and I was discouraged. Most of my men asked me to advance but I refused. I had fought since 1994; so I was ready and not afraid to die. My elder brother who was a soldier was killed. Some of my companions had left and the Alpha Jet bombed our area. Our intention was to go ahead. I was captured but they did not know that I was one of the rebels. But the civilians I lived with knew me and I was not wicked to them. In 1997 when sanctions were raging, whenever I had goods I would make it available to the civilians. The day I was captured they defended me. When ECOMOG released me, they gave me food and asked me to go. I left and I met my friends at 7 Battalion around the Peninsular and we came back to Waterloo. At Waterloo I was armed again. We set an ambush at Banga Farm. At that time the kamajor advance and fell in the ambush. I captured eighty of them. After my colleagues took the kamajors away, the Guineans attacked us and pushed us to 6 miles. We came back and attacked them at 6 Miles and we succeeded. On the third day they attacked us again. They removed us and continued to push us back. We reached Masiaka and resisted. We disappeared and they entered. We attacked them again and they fled. When we reached Lunsar we met some other rebels. We joined them and the ECOMOG attacked us. We fought them and pushed them up to Bara junction. They asked us out of the place and we had reinforcement. We pushed them out of the place. The battle was at Rogbere Ferry. When we left there I was a spy. When I reached Rogbere Ferry, I was captured. They asked me my mission and I said they have killed my mother. I said she was killed at Masiaka. They asked me if I was able to go. At that time Maxwell Kobe gave me ride in his vehicle and dropped me at Masiaka. I spied their movement. I went into their camp. They refused to train me because they had enough armed men. I was afraid. The CDF moved when the RUF entered because they had no strong support. They were fighting to save their country. Our intension was not to sit at Rogbere junction. When I reached Kailahun, I sent a message to my boss and he invited me. In 1998 we started our advance. It was my second operation after the intervention. There was a break through at Galahun Bridge. My colleagues were at the other

side. When we met at night we thought they were our enemies. We fought till the morning. There were casualties. In Kenema we heard some Kaska lapa with us. I told my men to wait. As I advanced I gave my password and they gave me theirs. Komba Gundama gave orders for me to be arrested. I refused and I told them that if they touch me I will kill them. I advise them not to do that. We came again together. ECOMOG came and put a weapon there. Komba Gundama was afraid to make his advance. I told him to reinforce me and he gave me 4000 man power. We by passed them they started firing at us and the weapon had acid in it. I made an advance. You can fire me I will be killed but I was hard hearted. I went to their camp and captured the Major, Peter Adamu. They wanted to maltreat him but I stopped them. He told me that he was the only one in his family. He told me not to kill him. I felt sorry for him and shed tears. I asked him would you be ready to be with me. He said yes. But God saved him. He had no tribal marks. I said you have to behave like one of us. I told him to behave like a dumb man. He was a good driver and had the heart of a lion(the Lord entered him). He was not afraid. When we advanced he pushed the men to go in front. When we reached Makeni we passed silently. It was mid night. According to our plans we wanted to enter Freetown on 25th December but we did not succeed. We advanced and went to Makali and we met ECOMOG. We went ahead and reached Lunsar and we met them there and scattered them. We went bit by bit removing them. I went as a spy. I commanded my men and we went on "Operation Silent." When we captured them we advanced to Waterloo. At Waterloo we passed quietly. When we reached Waterloo in the morning we came down and disguised. People were confused. They were asking among themselves whether RUF was in town and I joined them in in expressing interest in the matter to know the truth . They said it looked as if the rebels were using some charms. The people I met on the way were going to Benguema. I said: "Speak the truth. Did you tell ECOMOG about them? If you tell ECOMOG you will be accepted."Meanwhile ,it was a serious and dangerous game. When we reached the market on 25th December we helped ourselves to some Christmas. We were able to grab some items to eat. That night we attacked Hastings but did not succeed. That time the bosses were with us. There has been this story to the effect that the SLA took 'burn house' to Freetown. It was not true. SLA left us at Gugol and told us they were going to their homes and no foreigner will be able to drive them. They said they would be going to Freetown. SLA did not burnt down houses in town. The SDU caused the trouble. The aim of SLA was to go to Freetown and after the death of SAJ there was no control. If anybody told you that on January 6 the RUF crossed Hastings to Freetown, it is a lie. We bypassed them. We met the men at Hastings and the way it was fortified nobody had the mind to pass there. The last troop that came passed through Hastings and went to town. The night we reached Freetown I heard that my mother had been killed. The ECOMOG commander that was with me I wanted to kill him but I remembered the Lord. If I so revenge that meant a revenge against God. I released him. He had a communication set with him. When he wanted to talk in his language I refused. They asked him his location and asked for the person who captured him. He told them. As we went to attack Cockerril there was no way and I released him and I told him : "If you are killed, it is left with you." I came back to my own area. People were suffering. Those amputated were suffering. At Wellington I saw the situation. I took my men and we went to Water Quay and took oil, rice etc. I called my people and gave it to them. I was doing that throughout that week. I encouraged people in that area. People will bear me witness. What I am saying here is the truth. There was no medical treatment. I captured some medical doctors and asked them to treat my people in my area. As they saw how I was with the people, they stopped being afraid. On Wednesday we were moved out of Freetown. I decided that I was not going again. When ECOMOG entered, my relative asked me if I wanted to surrender. They said I was nice to them. I was afraid. I used bypass and went to Brewery. As we went ahead I remembered about my late mother and I was distressed. I was crying as I advanced. I told my boys not to call me Col. any longer. I came back to Kailahun and to Kenema. When I heard that RUF were in kono I went there. When I came to Makeni, my commanders were Superman and Jonogobla. We were with Superman. We stayed in Makeni till the year 2000. Superman slapped one of the UN Commanders and told him that we would not disarm. When I heard that disarmament was going on in Port Loko my boss man disarmed me. I took another weapon and used another route. Because they knew me as Col. they allowed me to pass through the checkpoint. I was able to talk to other RUFs to disarm. This is no way to live one's life. If we decide to live like this,

Sierra Leone will not move forward. We went to Port Loko and disarmed. When Peter Adamu heard that I had disarmed, he congratulated me and took a picture of me. He took me to Cockerril. If I say that I did not kill then I am telling a lie. But if I have ever burnt anybody's house or chopped off anybody's hand let me never prosper in whatever I lay my hands on. If I have done anybody wrong here in Makeni I want that person to point his or her finger at me. The person will bring me before the people and tell them what I did to him or her.

I forgot to mention something. I do not want to lie. The time I was given the first operation, Mosquito gave me some money to give the men for two months. If people say that Foday Sankoh brought the war to Sierra Leone. Yes it is true. He was not a leader but a contractor. I said I want to continue with my education. So I went back to school. My father was a soldier, Major Sesay. He decided that I should join the army on January 8, 2000. This is all I know.

Bishop Humper: As I listened to you I found out that your testimony has been very consistent and coherent.

Prof. Kamara: You said in the first assignment you were given thousands of what?

Abdulai Sesay: I was given 1890 man power.

Prof. Kamara: That was the time you captured 100 SLAs and killed five. Is that correct?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: You came to another mission and you were given some number of troops. What was the number?

Abdulai Sesay: I was given 2600 man power.

Prof. Kamara: Your first promotion was to colonel. What was your second promotion?

Abdulai Sesay: My first was major and the second colonel.

Prof. Kamara: You said the time when you were abducted you were 14 years old. At fourteen you were in school. What class were you in?

Abdulai Sesay: Form 2.

Prof. Kamara: Was it in Kono?

Abdulai Sesay: No, it was in Freetown. I went on Christmas holiday.

Prof. Kamara: You wanted to enter a room where the elders were having a meeting in Liberia. They refused to let you in?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

Prof. Kamara: Was that what you did in the RUF?

Abdulai Sesay: When you talk of RUF, we lived like animals.

Prof. Kamara: Did you take that behavior normally or did you take that behavior using drugs?

Abdulai Sesay: When I was there I never smoked marijuana but I sniffed cocaine.

Prof.kamara: How regularly were you supplied with cocaine?

Abdulai Sesay: sometimes I was injected. Sometimes the body is cut and the cocaine is inserted but the injection is more powerful.

Prof.Kamara: When last did you take any of these?

Abdulai Sesay: From the day I left the jungle I have never taken drugs and I have sworn that it will never happen again.

Prof.Kamara: Are you still in communication with Major Adamu?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes; but at present there is no communication.

Prof.kamara: When last did you communicate?

Abdulai Sesay: I last had contact with him in year 2000.

Prof.Kamara: You called somebody who encouraged you to join the army?

Abdulai Sesay: My father encouraged me to join the army but he has retired.

Prof.Kamara: Was he in the army?

AbdulaiSesay: Yes.

Prof.kamara: When did he retire?

Abdulai Sesay: In 2002.

Prof.Kamara: Did he join the SLA?

Abdulai Sesay: He surrendered and was locked up at Pademba Road.

Prof.kamara: When you were with the RUF did you get in contact with your dad?

AbdulaiSesay: No.

Prof.Kamara: You are saying that the RUF was responsible for the invasion of Freetown not SLA?

Abdulai Sesay: I said that it was SLA that attacked. The burning of houses and chopping of hands was not the responsibility of the SLA.

Prof.kamara: You want to tell me that the chopping of hands and burning of houses were caused by the RUF?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

Mrs. Jow

CommissionerJow: At the time of abduction you were only 14 yrs?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

CommissionerJow: You were in form 2.

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

CommissionerJow: Did you ever know about RUF?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

CommissionerJow: Did you discuss about RUF in school?

Abdulai Sesay: When I was in school I heard about the RUF. But I had thought they were referring to wild animals.

CommissionerJow: When you were captured by the RUF, how did you feel?

Abdulai Sesay: I felt two ways. I thought I was dead and on the other hand I thought I was not in this world.

CommissionerJow: Did you make any attempt to escape?

Abdulai: I did not because they killed my two brothers in front of me and the jungle was tense.

CommissionerJow: Can you tell us about the training?

Abdulai Sesay: We were trained at Yamdugu. It is just at the boundary between here and Liberia.

CommissionerJow: How did the training go?

Abdulai Sesay: They trained us to cock and fire and how to crawl. It was not like a proper military training. It is different. They thought us how to dismantle weapons and how to couple it up again.

CommissionerJow: Were there boys there?

Abdulai Sesay: There were lots of young boys.

CommissionerJow: Did all of you survive the training?

Abdulai Sesay: Some sustained injuries. We had an exercise that was called jungle walk.

CommissionerJow: Did any die?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

CommissionerJow: How many died in your group?

Abdulai Sesay: Those that I saw were five.

CommissionerJow: Did you carry out activities like looting?

Abdulai Sesay: No; because when we trained they did not want people to know our location. Yamdogu is in the forest and it is a big field. We were having our supply from Charles Taylor.

CommissionerJow: Can you remember the other names of the Commanders in Liberia?

Abdulai Sesay: Mosquito, Sankoh.

CommissionerJow: How many men were under your command?

Abdulai Sesay: The first man power was about 1890.

CommissionerJow: Am I right to assume that most of them were older than you?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

CommissionerJow: Can you tell me why the elders allowed you to be their commander?

Abdulai Sesay: I was trusted. I took risks and I went to the hot part of the war.No fear.

CommissionerJow: Can you tell us why you say Sankoh was only a contractor?

Abdulai Sesay: The reason why I said so was the day I told you about when I went to Liberia to observe their meeting. Foday Sankoh was slapped, kicked and simply put, molested ; then I knew that he was only a contractor.

CommissionerJow: Who was Sankoh's boss?

Abdulai Sesay: Charles Taylor, of course .

Bishop Humper

Bishop Humper : We want you to rest assured that some of us these things are not new to us; so we just want to clarify some of what you said. You said there is a place in Kailahun called Killer Forest. What was done there?

Abdulai Sesay: It was a place in Yamadugu.

Bishop Humper: Did you say that initially SLA was fighting RUF. When did the SLA and RUF become allies ?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes. In 1997.

Bishop Humper: Before 1997 was there any connection between SLA and RUF?

Abdulai Sesay: I do not know.

Bishop Humper: Why did they give you the name Major Jogobl?

Abdulai Sesay: I was major Jim Murderer.

Bishop Humper: Which of the groups did you belong to: The Special Force, Junior Commander or Vanguard?

Abdulai Sesay: The Special Forces were Liberians. The Vanguardians were Liberians. I was a Special Force for myself because I had men under my control and I was a commander.

Bishop Humper: Do you know about prisoners in Liberia from Sierra Leone and Charles Taylor released them and trained them up as fighters for Sierra Leone?

Abdulai Sesay: I do not know about it because the time we advanced to Kenema we met and we joined them. Most of them spoke Sierra Leonean languages and some spoke Liberian languages.

Bishop Humper: What can you say about SAJ Musa? You said that after his death the movement lost control.

Abdulai Sesay: Yes. When he died everybody was disgruntled. The SLAs were not happy and the RUF were not happy. The aim was for the SLA to go and settle in Freetown.

Bishop Humper: During that period of Major and Col. did you engage in flogging, putting people in prison?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes. I never killed anybody. For the beating, if you receive a slap, a punch with a gun butt, a good kick, it was yours. It was a rule to us.

Bishop Humper: This country will be interested to know whether there were Christians or Muslims in the group.

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Why did you choose Friday or Sunday to launch your attacks?

Abdulai Sesay: In 1995 whenever we attacked we had three days that we seldom carried out attacks. We were weary of Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays. Anytime we fought on those days we never succeeded. This is what I know about my own group.

Bishop Humper: You entered January 6. It was Ramadan time.

Abdulai Sesay: The reason why it went that way was because of SAJ's death. Everybody was disgruntled. You cannot see the bosses moving and you do not move with them.

Bishop Sesay: I will be a witness for you that you gave your people food. I saw when you broke the World Food Programme store.

Abdulai Sesay: The first breaking of the store was at Water Quay and the second was World Food Programme at Shell Company. I will not say that the people who took food did not sell. If I testify that, I will tell a lie, but it never happened in front of me.

Bishop Humper: For the whole country you said the RUF behaved like animals. With your experience you are victim and perpetrator. What would you say to your companions in the country? And what would you say to your companions if they hear of similar things in the future that is likely to happen.

Abdulai Sesay: I will tell them if the people of this country are ready to forgive us; God will forgive us. I trust the government that this will never happen again. Let the government strengthen the forces and help the victims and if they are satisfied and they forgive us, God will forgive us .But if they do not forgive us, God will not forgive us.

Bishop Humper: The skills you have developed how will you use your skills to protect the people?

Abdulai: All I have to say is that I have learned a lot of skills ; but if the people forgive us and trust us we will serve them. If I ever hear of any problem in the army I will make it known and stick my neck out for it. It is not for me but it is for my children, my sister's children and the children of Sierra Leone.

Leader of Evidence : Ms.Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: When did you first think that this was not a life for you?

Abdulai Sesay: In 1995.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Looking at your testimony you had so many chances of escaping why did you not escape?

Abdulai Sesay: There were several intervening and attenuating variables.For one, we were known by everybody. At a time we tried to lay down our arms;those who moved initially fell victim; civilians killed our brothers with tires. The other time ECOMOG killed our brothers and if I had left at that time I would have died like the others and would not have achieved anything in this country.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Were your men committing atrocities like amputation of limbs and burning of houses?

Abdulai Sesay: The time we were in the provinces they were in my control. When we came to Freetown I was unable to control them. I had four women under my command and I was protecting them.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: You spoke about four women. Who are these women?

Abdulai Sesay: They are my wives.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you want me to believe that all four of them are your wives ?

Abdulai Sesay: My own boy under my control has six wives. Some have one and some do not have.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: What will you say about the abduction of girls?

Abdulai Sesay: I was very strict. It once happened that a boy under my command stabbed a pregnant woman; I gave orders for him to be killed. I do not allow those things to take place.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: You told us about 1080 men. Were they all armed with guns?

Abdulai Sesay: Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Can you tell us where you got the arms?

Abdulai Sesay: I had a boss and the time we were in training they gave us guns. When we attacked at Galahun, we succeeded and we took their arms.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Where are your wives?

Abdulai Sesay: They are all in school.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Are they with you?

Abdulai Sesay: They are with their parents.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Do you have children by these four wives?

Abdulai Sesay: None yet. At 14 yrs I had my first wife. In 1995 I had my second wife and 1996 I had my third woman and in 1997 came the fourth.

Ms Apori-Nkansah: Do you know Jonogopie, Sengepie and Mustapha Koroma?

Abdulai Sesay: As I was a commander I did not care about any other person except persons under my own command.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah: Are you supporting these girls now?

Abdulai Sesay: No.

Prof.Kamara: For the six years you were a commander; the way you explained it seems you were not under anybody's control.

Abdulai Sesay: Mosquito was my only boss. If they say all the RUF group should come together to go and attack we normally put it into vote and chose somebody as commander for that assignment.

Prof.Kamara: Do you take command from people?

Abdulai Sesay: Since I stopped seeing my boss I did not take command from anybody.

Prof.Kamara: How are you coping in a disciplined force?

Abdulai Sesay: I do whatever I am asked to do?

Prof.Kamara: Would you mind our going to your commander to have a report about you ?

Abdulai Sesay: I do not mind.Go ahead.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

CommissionerJow: You witnessed a lot of atrocities and married young girls. You also committed a lot of atrocities. I want to know whether you have been counselled or are receiving counselling ?

- Abdulai Sesay: The time we left Kailahun I stopped taking the drugs. Since I stopped taking these things I have realized that I am a human being.
- Bishop Humper: It is now your time to ask questions or make recommendations.
- Abdulai Sesay: I want to ask, if the people do not forgive us and God does not forgive us, what will you do with us?
- Bishop Humper: Abdulai is saying that he is not satisfied with the Amnesty granted to them. This Commission was put in place to take care of this kind of questions. The Commission has also been put in place to bring forward wrong doers like you. I hope that hundreds of other people will come forward and say what they have done wrong. As long as you have asked for forgiveness we are asking the whole populace and the whole Sierra Leone to forgive you. After lunch we will perform a ceremony to say what we did wrong and who did this and say to the nation please forgive me. You must be genuine about it. It is not superficial contention. As long as you have said the truth and you face the people to forgive you; they will forgive you. This Commission will not leave you here; we have to do our work for you to reconcile and we make sure we will contact you.
- Abdulai Sesay: What will you do for the victims so that they will talk to God and God will forgive us?
- Bishop Humper: Article 29 of the Lome Peace Agreement did say we have to create a War Victims Fund. That is the responsibility of the government and the international community. Government is not waiting; Government has started doing some thing already. What would you recommend that we include in our report ?
- Abdulai Sesay: I want you to assist the force, if soldiers are not in the country there is no peace. I am talking of the regimental soldiers taking orders from the Government. The Government should take care of us so that there will be sustainable peace. I want them to increase the salary of police, soldiers so that they will be loyal to the Government and the people . But I trust the Government to work to ensure that this does not happen again.

3rd Witness – Aminata Kamara

My name is Aminata Kamara. I am a Christain. Bishop Humper administered the oath.

Testimony

I was with my family at Kono in 1998 .The rebels had intensified their attacks on Kono sequel to the entry of ECOMOG . On 16th December 1998 at 5:00am in the morning they launched an attack at Kokama. A lot of civilians were killed at Lebanon. We were hemmed in at Yardu Road and there was no way to get out. For the rest of the day battle raged on between ECOMOG and the RUF. The Kamajors carved a way and moved us and kept us in a very big hall. There was much weeping and wailing in the hall. Many had lost their loved ones; many were missing or displaced. I only saw my three- year old child ;every other person was missing . There was much confusion and distress. At 7pm in the evening, the kamajors came and warned us and told us that if we did not stop making noise ;they would use our guts to make check point. We continued to weep and wail. Around 8pm ECOMOG launched a huge weapon, which instantly induced

premature labour and delivery among some pregnant women that were in that hall . The weapon that they launched was as if they wanted to leave the area. We the civilians did not know anything. We were in the hall when one SLA came to look for his relatives. We started leaving the hall. We saw ECOMOG and their luggage on trucks. They were going towards Sewefa junction. We the civilians were behind them and it was not easy for us to pass the RUF ambush. Many civilians were killed. We were lucky and we reached Sewafe. We were there and had no food to eat for three days. One SLA officer told his junior to make some food before they would advance to clear the ambush. We were at Sewafe junction and they made an attempt to clear the ambush but they did not succeed. Some received injury. Another attack was made up the hill and ECOMOG, civilians and SLA went in the direction of Kono. Then we saw some civilians rushing back and they said it was not easy to cross the ambush. The Kamajors said if any combatant went into those areas they would be used as cannon fodder . The ECOMOG asked the SLA what should be done. One of them said since he was born, he had never walked for one mile.The ECOMOG then said alive or dead ,they must clear the ambush.The tension from this conversation that was happening beside me,was compounded by my own personal predicament: I did not know the direction and fate of my husband and my two children. One lady came to me and told me that my two children and husband were lying on the ground. She said I should go and see for myself. But so many things were happening at the same time.We were crowded together and were moving that way,waiting and hoping for the ambush to be cleared . At that time my brother was carrying my 3-year old child . We the civilians went with the convoy. There was no way for the vehicle to go through. The rebels dug all the roads. We the civilians returned. The 1st group went through and the 2nd group returned. The boy who carried the child managed to cross to Sewafe town. From where I was taking cover I heard the voice of a woman who had asked the boy to put the child down and the boy did .There was much cross fire. I was watching and there was a lot of smoke. After the exchange of fire power,I rose up like the others around me. I was unable to see neither my child nor my brother . We joined the next group of soldiers that regrouped and we went through the ambush. We went to Masingbi. Since that day I had searched for my child until I came to Makeni. Within these three years I have been struggling to find my child because the others have died. One day on my way to Tongo, I met a lady whom I came to know in those perilous moments from Kardu Road through the hall to Sewafe through the ambush. She welcomed me and asked me if I had seen the child. She said they had information about my child. She called one RUF boy Kallon. I had a photograph of the child. She said: "Kallon is this not the child whose case is being heard in Kailahun right now". One other boy said: "Is this not the child that was found in Sewafe ? Presently the woman that abducted that child is at the court with her husband." I had nothing with me at that time to go to Kailahun. The boy had accepted to take me right there, if I was ready with the transport fare.I had to explain to them that I came to my aunt's and they said she was in Kenema. I had nothing with me. All the dresses I had with me I had sold them to get to Kenema.From Kenema, I boarded a vehicle to Makeni. I explained my predicament to the apprentice of the driver of the vehicle and he brought me home.I have tried without success to raise money in order to look for my child. I am determined to do whatever it takes to get help to get my child back. The problem is the one that abducted my child has no child of her own, so her husband said he will marry another woman. The woman said because of that she would take the child because she found the child. The man on the other hand, insists that he would not release the child because he has spent so much on the child. That is why I came to appeal to the Commission to assist me to get my child back. Sequel to the search for my child and all that I have been going through , my present husband has left me. He says I am barren. If you can help me to get this child it will be the happiest day in my life.

Bishop Humper:We share in your bitter experience. I know it is very difficult for a mother to go through what you went through are still going through. I want to ask my colleagues if they have questions to ask you.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A, Jow

CommissionerJow: I am a mother and a woman like you . I am moved by your testimony. The Commission is to focus on children and women who suffered during the war. How old was the child at the time?

Aminata Kamara: 3 years and 4 months

CommissionerJow: How old is he now?

Aminata Kamara: 2nd August will make him seven years.

CommissionerJow: Do you have pictures of him?

Aminata Kamara: Yes

CommissionerJow: What is the name of the child?

Aminata Kamara: Emmanuel.

CommissionerJow: You said your brother helped you carry your child. Where is your brother?

Aminata Kamara: I have never seen him since that time.

CommissionerJow: Have you ever discussed this with another person?

Aminata Kamara: There is no displaced camp I have not searched in this country.

CommissionerJow: You said you cannot go there because you have no money?

Aminata Kamara: Yes.

CommissionerJow: When did you get this information?

Aminata Kamara: Last week. According to the information they said the child is in court in Kailahun and chief Mohamed is presiding over the matter.

Prof. Kamara: Do you know that in this country the government and the governmental institutions have the responsibility for you?

Aminata Kamar: I do not know.

Prof.Kamara: There are institutions that take care of missing children during the war. Have you heard of the Red Cross?

Aminata Kamara: Yes.

Prof.Kamara: Do you know that they trace people who are missing?

Aminata Kamara: Yes. Why I did not go to them was because since the search began whenever I went to them they usually asked me the location of the child.

Prof.Kamara: When they gave you the information why did you not go to the Red Cross?

Aminata Kamara: I was so excited that I did not know what to do.

Bishop Humper

Bishop Humper: We have heard your story. After this session I will ask that you see our staff. They will direct you to a particular group that will help you to get to Kailahun. You already have the address. Is Kallon an ex-combatant?

Aminata Kamara: Yes.

Bishop Humper: Aminata do you have any questions?

Aminata Kamara: I only want you to assist me to find my child.

4th Witness – Bashir Kabia

My name is Bahsir Kabia. I am a Muslim. Bishop Humper administered the oath.

On Thursday 08 May 1997 ,I had to take the children for the NPSC examination at Gbendembu. We reached at 2:00pm . We were preparing food for the children when we heard that rebels were in Kalangba. I was confused: A stranger and with 35 children. In ten minutes we saw bicycles coming towards us and it was the rebels. We assembled the children and went into the bush. We went to the hill. We saw many things that happened in town. We saw the rebels perpetrating atrocities. At 6pm we saw smoke and they started burning the town. We were in the bush and the rebels moved into the bush; so I went with the children further and further into the forest for safety. We passed the night in the forest. It was unfortunate that we took a direction opposite to where we should have gone. On Friday morning we heard gun shots. It was as if it was exchange of gun fire. Then the firing of gun shots ceased. Eight of us tried to find out about the situation. We went to the secondary school. We were able to see the amount of damage that was done in the town, when we saw bicycles coming towards us. They were shouting:” Please come to town, the rebels have been repelled”. We were afraid to get close to them and; the first person that attempted to go near them was captured. We went and sought refuge in nearby areas to see what would happen to the boy that was captured. They bound him up with cloths. The three rebels all had guns with them. They were now arguing over who would shoot the boy. It was during that argument that the boy escaped. When he got to where we were, we set him free . I took the children and went through the bush to Mateboy town. We trekked for nine hours. We reached Mateboy at about 9:00 on Friday night. At Mateboy people were already so worried. As we finally got home, there was a great feeling of relief. I handed the children over to their parents and guardians and went to my own place. At about 9:30am the next morning, the rebels attacked Mateboy. Out of the 35 children that I had just handed over to their parents at night, four of them were abducted. Then they started burning houses and collecting money.They set about 15 houses ablaze that morning.We took cover around Mateboy until about 11.00am. We then went the direction of Makeni .Some of usretired well into the forest. We were there for three months .

In 1998 rebels again started attacking the area. We never knew they were finding a location to make a base. This time around the rebels were quite different from those that first came upon us.In order to confuse us ,they asked the whereabouts of the rebels. Then, they went to town. Then came the kamajors who told us that they were going to attack the rebels. When they

attacked the rebels on their return, they came back singing. The people thought that danger had been averted and that the rebels were finished;and so the left their places of cover in the bush and came back to town .On my own side ,I was apprehensive,aware of the resolute viciousness of the rebels;I could trust neither the rebels nor the assurance by the Kamajors.So, we stayed back in the bush .True to my fears , the rebels came calling. In the evening hours of the next day we went back and ; and sadly we were able to count twenty-seven dead bodies. They were piled from the beginning of the town to the end. At first, we never knew that there was a very little child still alive amongst the dead bodies. The child who was one year and six months old. His parents were all dead and the child was badly wound. He received a big cut in his face. People in Makeni can attest to what I am saying. The child is still alive. The child's great grand mother is the only one left in the family. Sequel to the obscene situation, we went to the bush and told them to move to Makeni. And so came we to Makeni. We stayed in Makeni for seven months. Around December 23rd rebels attacked Makeni again. We never wanted to go back to Mateboy but we were forced to. We had some respite in the area of atrociously killing people.But life was very difficult. We were just between where the rebels were controlling and the CDF. We only got relief when the last bomb was dropped in Makeni.

Bishop Humper: You said you do not need to talk about the rape issue

Bashir Kabia: I said this because it was very common within the rebel line.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang A. Jow

CommissionerJow: I want to know if those that were raped are still in Mateboy.

Bahsir Kabia: I know of one or two who are staying there. Some have died .

CommissionerJow: Did any of them have children and get pregnant for the rebels?

Bashir Kabia: The one that died had a child resulting therefrom

CommissionerJow: In your testimony you spoke about the leader of the group?

Bashir Kabia: In 1997 houses in Mateboy were set ablaze during two rebel attacks. In the first incident 135 houses were set ablaze;the second involved 35 houses.I know the leaders of the two acts.Both are of Mateboy birth. The first razing was led by Gibrilla and the second by Lansana.

Commissioner Jow: Do you know their whereabouts now ?

Bashir Kabia: I heard that one of them is mining diamond and one is a shoe maker.

CommissionerJow: What is the current state in the village?

Bashir Kabia: One NGO came there and they told us to make blocks. Every household tried to get a good number of blocks. Since then we are yet to see them again. Even the school is yet to be rebuilt, we only use a tent now. I am the head teacher of that school. In the area of medicines thanks to MSF. They give us some assistance. We also have MCH aid and also a dispenser who was born in Mateboy. The living condition is terrible because a lot of people live in one room.

Prof. Kamara: Are you still teaching and also the headmaster?

Bashir Kabia: Yes.

Prof.kamara: During the rebel war in 1997 you took the children to sit to the NPSE.

Bashir Kabia: I have already said that in the end ,I came back with the children and handed them over to their parents. Four of them were later on abducted and finally released at Maisiaka.

Prof.kamara: You were talking about the burning of the school. Have you made any attempt to talk to any organisation like NaCSA to rebuild the school?

Bashir Kabia: Our office is sharing the same building with NaCSA. Ramatu Kanu who is Inspector of School in Makeni had been informed.

Prof.Kamara: And the Inspector of School has not told you anything ?

Bashir Kabia: She told me to be on the standby.

Prof.kamara: Who is the proprietor of the school?

Bashir Kabia: It is government assisted.

Prof.Kamara: You mentioned the number of people killed during the attack.

Bashir Kabia: When we moved out of Mateboy, we reached Tomoboy there they buried the bodies. When we went back to Mateboy we saw some bones because they were not properly buried. We buried these bones in a mass grave.

Prof.Kamara: You said then there were two types of rebels.

Bashir Kabia: Yes, because the first ones burnt down a lot of houses and killed only two people but in 1997 when they came they amputated three people, killed 27 people and burnt down lot of houses.

Prof.Kamara: The 1997 attack was it before or after the coup that overthrew Tejan Kabba?

BashirKabia: It was before 1997.

Prof.Kamara: Those rebels were what?

Bashir Kabia: RUF rebels.

Bishop Humper: The same people can be different people different times. In February 1998 the first set of people were the same people in the February 1998 intervention. They were the same people of different purpose, different mind and different attitude.

Bashir Kabia: What can you do to facilitate reconciliation?

Bishop Humper: What you have told us here is between the people involved in these acts and the community. You remember the Commission was asking you

about these people. Do you want the Commission to bring forward Gibrilla and Lansa to reconcile with the people?

Bashir Kabia: I am willing to do whatever you say. It is the Commission's responsibility to reconcile people.

Bishop Humper: It is the duty of the Commission to go and find the perpetrators and listen to their own side ;then we will be able to make reconciliation.

Bahsir Kabia: I hereby to recommend to the Commission for the rebuilding of the school. The amputees should also be assisted and they are not registered. The town is trying for their livelihood. The housing problem is very serious at Mateboy. We want the Commission to assist in those areas.

Bishop Humper: The Commission will take this into consideration. The staff will take note of Mateboy for the amputees. The Commission is aware of the amputee and war wounded in this country. We are all moving together to see what can be done for these people. We have contacted the president of the association to visit the amputees all over the country.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION **PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KENEMA DISTRICT**

DAY ONE

1. COMMISSIONER LAURA MARCUS JONES (PRESIDING)
2. COMMISSIONER SYLVANUS TORTO
3. COMMISSIONER
4. LEADER OF EVIDENCE – MS. MARTIEN SCHOTSMANS

DATE: 26thMAY 2003

WITNESS NAME: Hawa Joseph

WITNESS NO: 001

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/354

OPENING CEREMONY: A sheik led the Muslim prayer. The Chairman, Inter Religious Council, led the Christian prayer.

Hawa Joseph: My name is Hawa Joseph. I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones, the presiding Commissioner welcomed the witness, introduced the procedures and administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

Hawa Joseph: We were at Konia Kpandi when the rebels attacked. When we came towards Kenema, my husband advised that we spend the night in the bush and leave in the morning. At about 2a.m we heard sporadic gunshots and all of us scattered in different directions. The children and I went together and my husband also went into hiding in another place. At about 6a.m, they came to where we were hiding using a bye pass road. They captured some people and told them to join them attack Kenema. On their way, they met my husband and asked him to show them they way to Kenema. When he told them that he didn't know the way, since he was a native of Konia kpindima, they said they were going to kill him. He asked them to allow him say his last prayer but they shot him on his wrist. He fell down pretending to be dead but one of the rebels told his colleagues that he was not actually dead. They came back and shot him on the head through his ear. He eventually died. That is my testimony.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming to the **Commission**. Also I want to tell you that we are sorry for the loss of your husband. Were you present when he was shot?

Hawa Joseph: I was not present.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you get to know the story?

Hawa Joseph: The brother of my husband told me what had happened.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you give us his name?

Hawa Joseph: Yes. Samuka Momoh

Commissioner Torto: We thank you very much for coming to the Commission I have few questions for you. Do you know the fighting group your husband's killers belonged to?

Hawa Joseph: The person did not tell me the fighting group they belonged to. However, from my hiding place we overheard them saying that they belonged to Akim's group.

Commissioner Torto: In your written statement you told us that your husband was buried at the spot where he was killed; who buried you husband?

Hawa Joseph: The **Kamajors** buried him.

Commissioner Torto: In your written statement you said these people spoke Liberian pidgin. Were they Liberians?

Hawa Joseph: I cannot tell because during the war, the rebels mostly spoke the Liberian pidgin.

Commissioner Torto: Have you been able to locate or identify the people who killed your husband?

Hawa Joseph: No.

Commissioner Torto: What are you doing now?

Hawa Joseph: I am doing gardening and small scale trading.

Leader of Evidence: You told us that the rebels killed your husband and he was not the only one abducted by the rebels, can you tell us what happened to the others?

Hawa Joseph: Yes. The person who told me about my husband had bayonet marks all over his body.

Leader of Evidence: How many people were abducted together with your husband?

Hawa Joseph: An old man and an old woman.

Leader of Evidence: The other people were able to escape and the rebels met the **Kamajor** is that correct?

Hawa Joseph: Yes. They met at one point.

Leader of Evidence: Was there any fight between them?

Hawa Joseph: No, because the rebels out numbered the **Kamajors**.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels run away?

Hawa Joseph: Yes, they came to Kenema.

Leader of Evidence: Do you remember the year this incident took place?

Hawa Joseph: I can't remember the year but it was the last attack.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us how many times Konia was attacked?

Hawa Joseph: Many times.

Leader of Evidence: Was it the last attack?

Hawa Joseph: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did other people get killed in your family?

Hawa Joseph: My husband was the only one killed.

Leader of Evidence: Were people in any other family killed?

Hawa Joseph: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How many do you know?

Hawa Joseph: They were many.

Leader of Evidence: Was any harm done to you?

Hawa Joseph: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to you? Can you explain?

Hawa Joseph: When we returned all our properties were burnt.

Leader of Evidence: Any thing else?

Hawa Joseph: I lost everything that I had.

Leader of Evidence: Was any physical harm done to you?

Hawa Joseph: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for answering our questions, have you any question to ask the **Commission**?

Hawa Joseph: I have no question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation?

Hawa Joseph: I want the government to assist me educate my children, and assisting with the provision of accommodation. Also my husband's mother is with me and she is very old, so I want you to help me financially.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The TRC has no money to give out to people but we will make recommendations in our report, but I ought to explain to you that the government will not build individual houses but they will be able to provide good education for the community and so in that way you will benefit. Thank you for coming to help the **Commission**.

WITNESS NAME: Sheku Jayah

WITNESS NO: 002

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3525

We were in Konia when the rebels attacked us. We were afraid of them so we fled to Segbwema and stayed there for two years but things were difficult. My father therefore decided to return to Konia to find food. At Bendu junction on his way to the village, he came across rebels together with his brother who was at the back. He was held under gunpoint and although he engaged them in a struggle, they were able to overpower him. He was shot but he didn't die. He was taken to Segbwema and admitted at the hospital for three months. He later died. I heard about his death and before I could reach Segbwema, I met his corpse in the mortuary and he was later buried.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. Was any other person of your family killed?

Sheku Jayah: Yes. Koi Momoh my elder brother.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are very sorry for the loss of your brother, **Commissioner** will ask you questions.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you; were you present or did somebody tell you of the incident?

Sheku Jayah: My father's elder brother who was with him explained to me.

Commissioner Torto: Which of the fighting group did they belong to?

Sheku Jayah: They were RUF rebels.

Commissioner Torto: Have you heard about AFRC?

Sheku Jayah: No.

Commissioner Torto: Have you heard of those that killed your father, where they are now?

Sheku Jayah: No.

Commissioner Torto: Who killed your uncle?

Sheku Jayah: People killed him although we could not tell whom exactly.

Commissioner Torto: Your father's house was burnt and your motorbike was stolen, have you been able to see it around as you move along?

Sheku Jayah: No.

Leader of Evidence: What is the name of your father?

Sheku Jayah: Joseph Jayah.

Leader of Evidence: What is the name of your uncle?

Sheku Jayah: Koi Momoh.

Leader of Evidence: In your statement you mentioned Lahai Difehun.

Sheku Jayah: He accompanied my father but he escaped.

Commissioner Torto: Was he the one that gave you the information?

Sheku Jayah: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Did he mention to you the group they belonged to?

Sheku Jayah: They were rebels.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know if they were in uniform?

Sheku Jayah: I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto: Do you remember the year?

Sheku Jayah: In 1996

Leader of Evidence: Was it before the election?

Sheku Jayah: Before the elections.

Leader of Evidence: Was that the only attack in your village or were there other attacks?

Sheku Jayah: They attacked several times.

Leader of Evidence: You fled after this attack?

Sheku Jayah: Those who stayed behind experienced several attacks.

Leader of Evidence: You are 44 so he could have been an old man?

Sheku Jayah: He was an old man.

Leader of Evidence: What was his position in the society?

Sheku Jayah: His elder brother was a chief and he was a farmer.

Leader of Evidence: Was he the one killed?

Sheku Jayah: The rebels did not kill him

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any question to ask the **Commission**?

Sheku Jayah: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any recommendation?

Sheku Jayah: I want the Government to help us with schools; and the road to our village is very bad so I want the **Commission** to help us with our road.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much. Your recommendation will be included in our report. The **Commission** finishes its work in October. So is not a distant future, you will be able to benefit from the recommendations that would be made.

WITNESS NAME: Watta Fodie

WITNESS NO: 003

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3521

Watta fodie: I was in Konia when we heard of an attack in a nearby village. As we prepared to go to bed at night, we saw people running towards our place with blood all over their body. We went to Bendu junction and then to Segbwema. One Monday I was told that the rebels in Konia killed my child as he tried to escape. I cried. The man, who told me about the death of my child, advised that I talk to the soldiers to help me bury my child. I spoke with the soldiers and they agreed for him to be buried. After that, we fled Segbwema because of the war to Kenema and we were here till the end of the war.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. We appreciate your coming. We are sorry about your son's death. How old was your son?

Watta Fodie: His friend is here he can stand up (The man stood up and he could be around 50)

Commissioner Torto: Thanks for coming. With reference to your statement, your son was a respected hunter in Lower Mabarara. What kind of a hunter was he?

Watta Fodie: When the war started, they organized youth groups to take care of the area; the chief depended on the youths to take care of the village.

Commissioner Torto: According to your statement, you said that he went to settle a dispute between a rebel and a civilian. It was during that time that he was killed?

Watta Fodie: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: They tied and beat him before he was shot?

Watta Fodie: He was beaten and not tied. According to the information, when he was shot, he did not die so he was killed with sticks.

Commissioner Torto: Were they Liberians?

Watta Fodie: I was not there.

Leader of Evidence: Your son was involved in youth activities to take care of the town can you tell more?

Watta Fodie: They were placed in strategic positions to look out for the rebels and take care of the town.

Leader of Evidence: Does that mean they organized roadblocks?

Watta Fodie: They had checkpoints.

Leader of Evidence: Does that mean they were **Kamajor**?

Watta Fodie: I only knew he was a youth.

Leader of Evidence: Do you remember the year?

Watta Fodie: I can't recall.

Leader of Evidence: Did he leave children behind?

Watta Fodie: Yes. Seven.

Leader of Evidence: Were they small or adult?

Watta Fodie: There were three adults and four small ones.

Leader of Evidence: The small ones are they still in school?

Watta Fodie: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Would I be correct to say your son was a vigilante?

Watta Fodie: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any question to ask the **Commission**?

Watta Fodie: Yes. My child was my benefactor and my house was destroyed. I want to ask what help can you offer me?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I have said before that we can't provide for people food, clothing and accommodation but however you can talk to our briefer who can refer you to NGOs that can help you.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation?

Watta Fodie: Yes: my village has never benefited from any thing. There is no proper drinking water no proper accommodation for people, no good road.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I understand what the people in your area are going through. Have you any body in Government who represents your village and be able to advocate for development in your area.

Watta Fodie: There is no chief in the village.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Mohamed Lansana. Muslim

WINESS NO: 004

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3532

I was in my village Konia Kpindima that is six miles from Tongo. One day, we saw people with wounds coming, towards us with loads on their heads. We ran to Bendu Junction and stayed there for a week. At about 6a.m. one morning, we heard firing all over the town. I ran to the bush. My brother was behind me and I heard him scream "oh my mother", I've been killed. I ran to Segbwema and the following morning, one of my brothers who were present at the scene, told me that my brother was killed. In the morning we reported to the chief from Konia and soldiers were provided to follow us to the scene. We saw six corpses, which were buried in a single grave. The soldiers guarded us because of the risk involved. We then returned to Segbwema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Mohamed Lansana. We are sorry for the death of your brother. Among the six bodies were you able to identify your brother and were they all buried in the same grave?

Mohamed Lansana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is there any mark on the grave to show that such a number of people were buried there.

Mohamed Lansana: That I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much; do you know who your attackers were?

Mohamed Lansana: They were dressed in civilian clothes.

Commissioner Torto: Who actually do you think they were?

Mohamed Lansana: They were rebels.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know the names of the victims?

Mohamed Lansana: Yes. Kini Moifullah, Gadiru **Amara Vandy**, Kini Bunubu, Koi Momoh, Brima Yaweh.

Torto: Who were these people?

Mohamed Lansana: We were all farmers.

Commissioner Torto: Do you suspect that the attackers have some reason maybe out of malice or because of money that made them to kill these people?

Mohamed Lansana: I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto: Was there any kind of quarrel between different people in your village like "Bush palaver"?

Mohamed Lansana: No.

Commissioner Torto: Since that time you have never heard of who did it, even by name?

Mohamed Lansana: No.

Leader of Evidence: When did this happen?

Mohamed Lansana: In February 1994.

Leader of Evidence: You also mentioned that whilst you were burying the dead, soldiers were around guarding, which soldiers were present?

Mohamed Lansana: The Sierra Leone Army. (SLA)

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much, have you any question to ask the Commission?

Mohamed Lansana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation you will like us to include in our report?

Mohamed Lansana: Our village is not motorable, we have no community centre, no hospital no pure water to drink. We have formed a group but there is no help from any NGO, fifty of us are in that group.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much we will include your recommendation in our report. I encourage you to go on with your group maybe you can help with the road and some NGOs would be able to help you with your agricultural project. When you do that, by the time the government would come in to help you would have gone far. You said you have no road was there a road before?

Mohamed Lansana: Yes. But it was destroyed because of the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is the name of the group?

Mohamed Lansana: Konia young Muslim organization.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have Christians in this village?

Mohamed Lansana: Yes. We have different groups. The Christians have and the women too have.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Don't you think that when the Muslims and the Christians come together you will be able to more than you are doing? Anyway think about that. I thank you for coming.

WITNESS NAME: Sama Koroma

WINESS NO: 005

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3537

When the rebels attacked us at Konia Kpindima we came to kenema and stayed there for two months. My husband left to collect our things. We heard that the rebels attacked for the second time and my brother told me that my husband was killed.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us in what year this happened?

Sama Koroma: Six years ago.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: It must have happened in 1997?

Sama Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What position did your husband hold?

Sama Koroma: He was a diamond miner.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What position had he?

Sama Koroma: He was the Kuranko chief.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you think he was attacked because he was a diamond miner or a Kuranku chief?

Sama Koroma: I can't tell.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Sama Koroma which of the fighting groups killed your husband?

Sama Koroma: Rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you married again?

Sama Koroma: No.

Leader of Evidence: When your husband was killed where other people killed?

Sama Koroma: No.

Leader of Evidence: His brother was present?

Sama Koroma: Yes. They all ran into the bush and they came later after the rebels had left.

Leader of Evidence: Were other people killed or injured?

Sama Koroma: No. He was the only one killed.

Leader of Evidence: Were you able to bury his body?

Sama Koroma: yes his brother buried him in his compound.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You made a statement that the body was not seen?

Sama Koroma: They found his body and he was buried.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any question to ask the **Commission**?

Sama Koroma: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many children have you?

Sama Koroma: Five.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Including this one?

Sama Koroma: No besides this one.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So that is six. I'm sorry but I can't help saying it. Is there any family planning programme in you area?

Sama Koroma: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Which is the nearest hospital from Konia?

Sama Koroma: Segbwema or Kenema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Am asking this question because I want you to look for help from the family planning programme. Now that you are not married and you are young, if you continue to have many children it will not be of any help to you. Apart from the above recommendation is there any help you want to send to the government?

Sama Koroma: I want the Government to help us with school and the road to our village is very bad so I want the **Commission** to help us with our road.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Sama for coming. All the recommendations for Konia will be included in our report because Konia seems to be deprived of so many facilities.

WITNESS NAME: Amara Vandy

WINESS NO: 006

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3523

One day we were in Konia when we saw people coming from a nearby village and they told us that they are running from the rebels at Yuwoma. My mother, the section chief, who was very old, was unable to run. As she was going towards the barray, she was caught and shot. We were hiding in a place where we could see the town. They took her moneybag tied around her waist from her. I then went and told my friends to go and help me bury her. As she was the chief, we buried her in another village because we did not want the rebels to come again and disturb her burial ceremony. I then decided to flee the area. I came with all my younger brothers and sisters to Kenema. We stayed here for a while and later returned to Konia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thanks for your testimony but we are sorry for the loss of your Mother. Your testimony is a sad one. Do you think she was targeted because of her position?

Amara Vandy: I want to believe that.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old was your son?

Amara Vandy: I think he was 15years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was she wealthy?

Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you considered reburying her in her own chiefdom?

Amara Vandy: We are thinking about that.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you lose any other member?

Amara Vandy: Yes my son was killed.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us the circumstances?

Amara Vandy: Whenever there is an attack in a town, you take various directions and if you later discover any member of your family dead, you can only think about the rebels. I am happy that I am alive. It was very stressful for me. If I had the opportunity I would have given her a fitting funereal.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you the section chief now?

Amara Vandy: No. I am taking care of the home.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We still want to know about the death of your son.

Amara Vandy: He was killed at the same time with his grandmother.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Apart from your son and mother do you know the names of any other person that was killed?

Amara Vandy: Yes. A lady named Adama, from another village.

Commissioner Torto: Was she killed the same day?

Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Buried the same day?

Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Hassan Foday, who was he?

Amara Vandy: He was staying with me

Commissioner Torto: Where is he now?

Amara Vandy: I don't know his whereabouts.

Commissioner Torto: What about Dauda Amara Vandy?

Amara Vandy: Since we ran away I have not heard anything about him.

Commissioner Torto: Can you confirm which of the fighting group they belonged to?

Amara Vandy: They were dressed in military uniform and their heads tied with piece of cloth.

Commissioner Torto: If you are to guess, which of the fighting groups do you think they belonged to?

Amara Vandy: I can identify them to be rebels.

Commissioner Torto: How much money do you think was taken from your mother?

Amara Vandy: If I say am going to answer then I will tell you lies I had no way of checking how much was in her possession.

Commissioner Torto: We are asking about the people who killed your mother and son .If you know where they are we can invite them to come and reconcile with you.

Amara Vandy: If I go back and set eyes on them I will come back and inform the Commission.

Commissioner Torto: In which year did this happen?

Amara Vandy: In 1998

Commissioner Torto: Before, or after the elections?

Amara Vandy: After the elections.

Commissioner Torto: Could you tell us how many times your village was attacked?

Amara Vandy: They attacked Konia on several occasions; the first one was in 1993.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any idea about how many people were killed?

Amara Vandy: Yes. Town Chief Amara Vandy, Stranger Yakumba, Limina and that hold woman Mama Fodie son was killed Momoh Berta our brother Koi Momoh, Dauda, son Gadiru Amara Vandy, my brother Moi Fullah, Joseph Jayah's brother.

Commissioner Torto: Apart form those, were other people were killed?

Amara Vandy: Yes. But I don't know their names.

Commissioner Torto: Were all these attacks by the rebels or was there another group involved in some of the attacks?

Amara Vandy: Only RUF.

Commissioner Torto: We had another witness talking about a vigilante group; can you tell us some thing about that?

Amara Vandy: The soldiers told us to work together so we mobilized the youth to help them, but we ask them how we can help. The asked us to be rece and that was how the vigilante group came about. We usually put up checkpoints.

Commissioner Torto: Did the vigilantes use guns?

Amara Vandy: They did not have guns at first they were using sticks, but later they were given guns.

Commissioner Torto: What year did this organization start?

Amara Vandy: In 1991 and 1993.

Commissioner Torto: Where they involved in any fighting with the rebels?

Amara Vandy: Yes, but the rebels overpowered the vigilantes.

Commissioner Torto: Did they kill?

Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Did the vigilantes kill any of the rebels?

Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Did you ever capture any of the rebels?

Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Did you question them?

Amara Vandy: Yes we usually asked where they are coming from.

Commissioner Torto: Did they tell you where they were coming from?

Amara Vandy: Since we were working with the soldiers, if they were captured we would take them to the soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: Who gave you the guns?

Amara Vandy: The soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: Did you receive training to use the guns?

Amara Vandy: No.

Leader of Evidence: How did you come to know how to use the guns?

Amara Vandy: I was having single barrel. When we got machine guns we would take them to the soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: Were there women and men among the rebels you captured?

Amara Vandy: They were mixed.

Leader of Evidence: How old was the youngest among them?

Amara Vandy: The youngest was 11 and the oldest was 18.

Leader of Evidence: Why did you stop being vigilantes?

Amara Vandy: Because they would have killed all of us.

Leader of Evidence: Where you dressed in uniform to show that you are a vigilante?

Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Torto: You captured rebels and send them to Segbwema did you follow up whether they were taken to court or what happened to them?

Amara Vandy: No. Whenever they are captured we send them to the base of the soldiers in Segbwema.

Leader of Evidence: All those you captured have you seen any one of them?

Amara Vandy: No.

Marcus-Jones: Thank you for answering our questions. We have been asking you questions have you any question for the Commission?

Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation?

Amara Vandy: I want the Government to help us with school and the road to our village is very bad so I want the Commission to help us with our road.

WITNESS NAME: Moiwo Moinina (Muslim).

WINESS NO: 007

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3045

We were in Konia when the rebels attacked us. We went to the bush; we used to come to the town around during the day to look around. We heard that a woman was killed and in the night the rebels attacked us in the bush. They said they would take us away. They caught my boy Sao, who was killed in my presence. He was then slaughtered. They said I should sing and dance but when I refused, I was hit on the head with a gun and they left. We then went to Segbwema and then to Pendembu. When peace came, I returned to Konia.

Marcus Jones: Thank you very much for your testimony; your testimony is a sad one. How old was your son?

Moiwo Moinina: I think he was 15 years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many children have you?

Moiwo Moinina: Five children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well hope they would be a consolation to you.

Commissioner Torto: You said you were taken to Segbwema and later to Pendembu. Who took you along?

Moiwo Moinina: The rebels.

Commissioner Torto: How did you finally get to Konia?

Moiwo Moinina: When they signed the peace, we requested that they leave so that we could return to our place.

Commissioner Torto: During the attack in your village were any other people taken along with you?

Moiwo Moinina: No.

Commissioner Torto: How long were you with them?

Moiwo Moinina: One year one month.

Commissioner Torto: What role did you play in captivity?

Moiwo Moinina: We were used as labourers. We took loads to Buedu and Kailahun. We also worked in the farms for them.

Commissioner Torto: Whom did you take the rice to?

Moiwo Moinina: We were ordered to take the rice to Maskita.

Commissioner Torto: Where?

Moiwo Moinina: In Kailahun or Boidu?

Commissioner Torto: Did you set eyes on Maskita?

Moiwo Moinina: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Can you identify him very well?

Moiwo Moinina: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: During the time of your captivity whom actually did the rebels say they were loyal to? Whose control were they under?

Moiwo Moinina: Foday Mansaray: Sankoh.

Commissioner Torto: Do you remember any body killed when you were captured?

Moiwo Moinina: Yes. Only my son, Sao Moinina.

Commissioner Torto: Were you living in the same town?

Moiwo Moinina: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were you captured before, or after the election?

Moiwo Moinina: Before the elections.

Leader of Evidence: A long time before the elections?

Moiwo Moinina: Not too long.

Commissioner Torto: Why was your son was killed?

Moiwo Moinina: I can't tell.

Torto: How many of you were captured?

Moiwo Moinina: We were 10 in number including my children.

Leader of Evidence: Did all of you return?

Moiwo Moinina: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to your daughter?

Moiwo Moinina: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: In your written statement, you said your daughter was beaten. Is that correct?

Moiwo Moinina: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any question for the Commission?

Commissioner Torto: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation?

Moiwo Moinina: I want the Government to help us with school and the road to our village is very bad so I want the Commission to help us with our road.

WITNESS NAME: Lahai Amara Vandy
(Muslim).

WITNESS NO: 008

REFERENCE NO: 3/20/3544

We were in Konia when we heard of an attack on Tongo. We fled to Segbwema. We ran out of food and my father told us to go in search of food at Konia. As we were going we heard gunshots from Yumbuma area; we hurried to the town and packed the rice we had in our house. When we saw our brother coming, we waited for him so that he too could collect his rice. We stood outside waiting when we heard a gunshot and my father were captured together with an old woman called Mammy Hawa. My father told them to take his palm oil for his release but they refused. Instead, they said they'd kill him. They ordered him to carry the palm oil for them Yumbuma. At Yumbuma, they stabbed and killed him. Mammy Hawa's ear was cut and she was sent to Segbwema to inform us of what happened. She met us on they way and explained everything to us. We went to Segbwema and after seven days, we went to Yumbuma and we buried him.

Marcus Jones: We have heard about a lot of atrocities committed against to the people of Konia. I would like to express my sympathy to you for the loss of your father. Why do you think they killed your father so brutally?

Lahai Amara Vandy: May be it was because he was the chief of the town.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was he a chief?

Lahai Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now, the woman whose ear was cut off, was she iany relation to you or a member of your family?

Lahai Amara Vandy: She was the wife of my father's guest.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why did they target Konia and why was it continuously attacked?

Lahai Amara Vandy: They were based in Peyima, which is a few miles to Konia.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What were they looking for in Konia?

Lahai Amara Vandy: They only went to destroy.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for your testimony, we have heard testimonies of people, who have claimed that some people in their villages or towns usually lead the rebels, pointing at people as targets. Do you know of such people in Konia?

Lahai Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Torto: Could you suspect anybody in particular who hailed from your place?

Lahai Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Torto: Who could you think carried out the killing of your father?

Lahai Amara Vandy: I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: Was your father the only member of you family killed?

Lahai Amara Vandy: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did anything happen to your sister?

Lahai Amara Vandy: No.

Leader of Evidence: Can you remember the year it took place?

Lahai Amara Vandy: In 1994

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We have asked you a lot of questions Lahai, have you any question to ask the Commission?

Lahai Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any recommendation different from what we've already heard this afternoon?

Moiwo Moinina: I want the Government to help us with school and the road to our village is very bad so I want the Commission to help us with our road.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you all and the people of Konia.

DAY TWO

DATE: 27th MAY 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Mustapha Kpengba (Muslim)

WITNESS NO: 009

REFERENCE:

Presiding Commissioner: Commissioner, Sylvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

Mustapha Kpenga:In 1993, when the rebels fled from Tongo, they burnt villages on the way to Diema. We then fled to the bush. Later, in 1994, on August 15th, the rebels attacked Diema. When the firing subsided, six of my children were killed; Ibrahim, Morie, Idrissa, Lahai, Aminata and Mustapha Kpenga. Over 70 people were killed and many drowned in the river as they tried to escape. I buried my children two to a grave. When the rebels attacked that morning, I lost Le3, 000,000, which was in my pocket, and all my properties were taken away. My father, whom I had earlier left behind, was carrying some money for me, which amounted to six million leones; the rebels took it away. He was also shot but he later died in hospital in Kenema. My house in Kenema, which was located at Memuna Street, was burnt when the soldiers and kamajors fought. The soldiers who were stationed at Diema demolished my other house in Diema. According to them, it posed a security risk as it was blocking their view, since my house was right in front of where they stayed. I am now in Diema.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you very much for this testimony and we sympathize with you for all you went through. You are courageous to come and share your experiences with us in spite of what happened. We are not subjecting you to too many questions at all. We just want to clarify some pertinent issues with you. Do you know who your attackers were?

Mustapha Kpenga Kpengba: They had guns and wore military uniforms.

Commissioner Torto: Did you know them facially?

Mustapha Kpenga Kpengba: Not at all.

Commissioner Torto: Which of the fighting group did they belong to?

Mustapha Kpenga Kpengba– It was the hay days of the RUF.

Commissioner Torto: In your written statement, you stated that on your return, you found your two sons in a pool of blood, were these in addition to the six you mentioned here this morning?

Mustapha Kpenga: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Can you name them?

Mustapha Kpenga: Yes, Abayomi Mustapha Kpenga, Ibrahim Morie, Lahai, Idrissa, and Aminata Mustapha Kpenga

Commissioner Torto: You said an unknown number of people drowned in a river, but you were unable to find their identity why?

Mustapha Kpenga: There are other people who I did not know, I cannot actually tell.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mustapha thank you for coming I am really sorry that you lost so many children. We are sorry for such a disastrous loss. You told us that you built a three-room apartment that the soldiers destroyed?

Mustapha Kpenga: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Who were they?

Mustapha Kpenga: The NPRC was in power.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What did they mean that the house was a threat to them?

Mustapha Kpenga: One of the soldiers was dwelling behind my house so he saw my house as a security threat.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know the name of the captain who ordered the demolition of the house?

Mustapha Kpenga: I don't know; when the soldiers came, they asked that as an Imam, I should pray for them but I refused.

Leader of Evidence: You told us that your other son who was killed was 25 and you lost other children; I would like to know how old was the youngest child?

Mustapha Kpenga: About 4 years 3 months old, Aminata Mustapha Kpenga.

Leader of Evidence: You said about 17 people were killed in the village?

Mustapha Kpenga: Not 17 but 70 people were killed.

Leader of Evidence: Are they children or adults?

Mustapha Kpenga: There were mixed, children and adults, and even those who drowned in the rivers.

Leader of Evidence – Those who drowned, were they being chased, or they drowned because they could not swim?

Mustapha Kpenga: the stream locates our village, so when the rebels attacked us from the bush, the only escape route was the stream.

Leader of Evidence – Do you have any idea of the number of people drowned?

Mustapha Kpenga: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you have any idea how deep the river was?

Mustapha Kpenga: No idea.

Leader of Evidence: After you lost so many children, did some of your children join the Kamajors?

Mustapha Kpenga: Two of them joined.

Leader of Evidence: How long were they part of the Kamajors?

Mustapha Kpenga: before the time of peace, others always threatened me, which was why my children opted to join, so that they would protect me.

Leader of Evidence – Were they based in the village?

Mustapha Kpenga: Yes. They were stationed in my village.

Leader of Evidence – Was there any fight at any time between them and the rebels in the village?

Mustapha Kpenga: Not at all.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. We have asked you so many questions and you have answered them all. Do you have any question for the Commission?

Mustapha Kpenga: We knew that we had different factions in our conflicts. All these people have been disarmed, trained and paid. Second rebels and then kamajors, we have been disarmed and they have been trained and paid. The victims, who have suffered a lot and lost properties, what can the government do to appease us? Even as I was giving my testimony, I was tormented.

Commissioner Torto: That's a very good question. We have been asked these questions very often. Somebody like you, who has lost about 31 people in the war, including a house and cash of Le3, 000,000.00. What do you think anybody can give you that will make you forget?

Mustapha Kpenga: There is nothing expensive to pay for those lives but I need something to help my children. You are telling me to forgive and forget but how can we when we have tears in our eyes?

Commissioner Torto: This is what the **Commission** is facing.

Mustapha Kpenga: You are still telling us that we should forgive and forget, how can we forgive when I still have tears running down my eyes?

Commissioner Torto: What we are doing, to actually encourage people to forgive and forget is to tell them to look up to God as He gives and takes and that is the only way we can have everlasting peace: so that what happened cannot repeat itself. I don't know of any instance in the world, wherein victims of war were compensated individually. The government does not have the resources to compensate all victims affected by the war. Countries that are richer than us were not able to do so. For example, in 1945 after the Second World War, the allied forces were not able to compensate every victim. What they did was actually initiate plans, the Marshall plan. Those plans were aimed at construction of certain communities and infrastructure. This is the process we are in. One of the ways we the TRC can encourage to the public is to listen to them and pass their recommendations Government for implementation.

That is why we have NaCSA, DDR and TRC, personally I don't know what to give you to forget. This is what we are on. Any other question?

Mustapha Kpenga: I have no more questions. I have a recommendation to make.

Where I am staying in Diema, the feeder road is cut off during the rains. To carry food is very difficult. I would like the government to help us rehabilitate the roads leading to Diema. I want the government to build a community centre for us, because we have over three thousand people in our village, we don't have a health centre, we want a mosque and a church to be constructed in our town. We need proper and hygienic water. I want government to assist with the education of the children. We would like our children to be like you in the future. We request that government looks into our case and see how best they can help us as religious leaders.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you for this community-based recommendation. It has been recorded and analysed and will be included in our report. It may not be immediately, but don't be surprised if you see a project like that in the future in your village. We thank you very much.

DATE: 27th MAY 2003.

WITNESS NAME: MAMIE KPAVAI

WITNESS NO: 010

REFERENCE:

The Presiding Commissioner, Mr Sylvanus Torto, administered the oath on the Koran.

TESTIMONY

MAMIE KPAVAI:When the rebels attacked my village, Mendekelema, they captured us and took us to the junction. Before that, they had killed five people and one beat me seriously and hit my head with his gun. He was however restrained by a lady rebel. They set fire on a hut nearby where they seated us. After that, they took us to the town and locked us up in different houses. At night whilst they locked us up, we heard them discussing amongst themselves, that they would kill some of us and the rest would be abducted. I convinced an old woman with whom I was locked to escape. As we tried to open the door, she was shot. Seven bullets hit me on my left arm and I fell unconscious. (She shows the scar) when I regained consciousness the following morning, soldiers surrounded me and they took me to Jerihun for treatment. I stayed there for two months and my brother later took me to Tongo where I was eventually healed. I heard from people that the following day after the attack on Mendekelema,that twenty people were killed.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us. We want you to clarify some issues. Where did all this happen?

Mamie Kpavai:In our village, Mende Kelema.

Commissioner Torto: Which of the fighting forces attacked your village?

Mamie Kpavai: The RUF.

Commissioner Torto: Did you happen to know anyone amongst them?

Mamie Kpavai: They were so fearful; I have never seen them since that time

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were there women amongst them?

Mamie Kpavai: There was only one lady amongst them.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And she was the person that stopped the rebel who was hitting you?

Mamie Kpavai: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to the corpse of the old woman who was shot?

Mamie Kpavai: Her corpse was deposited in a latrine.

Commissioner Torto: Could you tell where the rebels came from?

Mamie Kpavai: I could not tell.

Leader of Evidence: Which year did this happen?

Mamie Kpavai: In 1991.

Leader of Evidence: Did they at any point, explain their objectives?

Mamie Kpavai: No, they did not explain anything to us.

Leader of Evidence: Which language did they speak?

Mamie Kpavai: I can't remember.

Leader of Evidence: Just before you were shot, you said the rebels threatened to kill all of you and abducted the others. What happened to the others whilst you were unconscious?

Mamie Kpavai: I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: Those people from your village, do you remember if they were killed later or not?

Mamie Kpavai: When I recovered from my shock, I saw most of them alive.

Leader of Evidence: Which soldier took you for treatment?

Mamie Kpavai: SLA.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know if the rebels who attacked your village the first time are the same that attacked the village the second time?

Mamie Kpavai: After the first attack they stayed in the village.

Leader of Evidence: So they were there since the first attack?

Mamie Kpavai: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How did the soldiers take you for treatment?

Mamie Kpavai: After I was shot, I never knew what happened; I found myself in the hospital.

Leader of Evidence: Was there a fight between the soldiers and the rebels?

Mamie Kpavai: No.

Commissioner Torto: We have asked you so many questions and you have answered. Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Mamie Kpavai: Yes, I have a very short question for you. You have invited me, I obtained permission from my husband, and he allowed me. I told you I sustained injuries and pain all over my body. I have been brought here and answered your question what will you do after this?

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Irrespective of all the pains, you have answered us. By the end of this session our staff will talk to you about that. We have the Red Cross at hand. We also have a nurse attached here and if the matter is beyond them, we have doctors to assist. We wish

we could do more than that, but the mandate that created the TRC does not have the power to do more. Any other question? Any recommendation you would like to make so that we can pass it on to the government.

Mamie Kpavai: There has been no development after the war in our village, no drinking water. The whole village was burnt down; the medical centre was also burnt down. There is no school building, no mosque, church.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much, we will note all these and it would be included in our report. But before our report is realized I will encourage you that there are NGOs who provide well systems. There are others: between now and then I will encourage your community to contact those NGOs that will provide those facilities for that community. Do you have other recommendation?

Mamie Kpavai: No.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for coming.

DATE: 27th MAY 2003.

WITNESS NAME: TAMBA AMARA VANDY

WITNESS NO: 011

REFERENCE:

Tamba Amara Vandy took the oath on the Bible administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Sylvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

TAMBA AMARA VANDY: Nothing pains me more than the condition I am in now. Without your hands and fingers you are nobody. All have been chopped off. When the rebels attacked my village, Bo Ngeleya, they surrounded the town and they fired everywhere. When they started burning houses those of us who stayed in the middle of the town were trapped. They told us that since they've not killed many people, they were going to amputate our limbs. They held one of my hands and chopped it off. I pleaded with them in God's name for them not to chop of the other. They said I've angered them by calling God's name. They said if I had mentioned Foday Sankoh's name, they would have spared me. I did not beg them but I told them that there is only one God. Then they chopped off the other. I told them to kill me instead but they said that they've given me an everlasting punishment. They also said, I had used my hands to vote for Tejan Kabbah; I will never vote again in my life. They went away and I was left alone. One of my brothers heard my cry and he assisted me to get up and we managed to walk to the highway. On our way, we met many amputees on the way, lying down in bushes. A vehicle from Segbwema met us on the highway but the driver refused to carry us because of my condition. Fortunately, they informed the Red Cross in Kenema who later came and took me to Segbwema, since there were many patients in Kenema. I was admitted at the hospital and I stayed there for five months. Later, I was transferred to Kenema and then to Freetown. My hands were operated on and I can now use my hands to eat.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming; it was a painful experience you went through. The Commission is appreciative of the fact that you can come forward to testify. In your written statement you said that four other people were amputated where are they and what are their names?

Tamaba: They are in Koi. I only know Mammy Yatta, a very old woman.

Commissioner Torto: In your written statement, you spoke of a dumb man that was shot. What is his name?

Tamba Amara Vandy: He was shot in the head, but the bullet did not go through; he was taken to the hospital in Segbwema and he died on the fourth day. I don't know his name.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know why he was shot?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Nobody knows.

Commissioner Torto: In addition, they also amputated your hand because you voted for Tejan Kabbah with it?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Who did that to you, is it Kamajors, RUF, or SLA?

Tamba Amara Vandy: They were SLA's.

Commissioner Torto: Can you identify any of them by name or facially?

Tamba Amara Vandy: I know one who was based in Talia.

Commissioner Torto: Is there a garrison there now?

Tamba Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know where he is now?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Though they were many I will never forget his name. He is called Mohamed Lansana.

Commissioner Torto: You said he was in Talia but you are not sure?

Tamba Amara Vandy: At first I met him in this town, but for now I don't know where he stays.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming to the TRC. We are sorry that the rebels had left you in this situation, but I am sure you are happy to be alive. What do you mean you can eat now? Do you mean you can use one of the hands?

Leader of Evidence: You said apart from other people that were amputated with you, other people were killed as well is that correct?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Three lost their lives.

Leader of Evidence: You said the same group amputated other people apart from four of you?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Yes they did that as well.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know if they survived or all of them died?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Most of them survived.

Leader of Evidence: How did you know that these people were SLA?

Tamba Amara Vandy: They were stationed at Talia, a mile from us.

Leader of Evidence: Did you identify them because you knew them or because they wore uniform?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Since they were in military fatigue, one who does evil to you, you will never forget, especially when you knew him before.

Leader of Evidence: Have you ever been in touch with any organization that can provide artificial limbs for you?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Some of the limbs cannot function well.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any question to ask about the Commission?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Yes, my question is to help me as I have nowhere to sleep and I sleep in people's houses; they usually evict me if I don't pay. All the houses in my village were burnt down. I have no food and proper medical care.

Commissioner Torto: Is that all?

Tamba Amara Vandy: I have nothing; I have to beg for food.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you very much, Pa Tamba. When you were amputated you mentioned a daughter who helped you. Where is she now?

Tamba Amara Vandy: She is now in the village.

Commissioner Torto: What was the relationship between you and your daughter?

Tamba Amara Vandy: We were still there as a family.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have an Amputee Association in Kenema District?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Yes, we had one, but it's not functional.

Commissioner Torto: But there is one in Kenema, have you been able to contact them?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Yes, I have done that.

Commissioner Torto: What was their reaction?

Tamba Amara Vandy: They have never done anything for me.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know where they are in this town?

Tamba Amara Vandy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Can you give the address to our staff after the session? Our staff will give you a letter to them. I ask this question, because the Norwegian Refugee Council has built houses in Freetown and also in Kabala for Amputees. I don't know why they have not done the same so here. We even visited one of the building sites in Koinadugu District. Any other question?

Tamba Amara Vandy: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation that we can pass on to government?

Tamba Amara Vandy: I have said it all.

DATE: 27th MAY 2003.

WITNESS NAME: BALIA MANSARAY

WITNESS NO: 012

REFERENCE:

Balia Mansaray took the oath on a Muslim. The oath administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Sylvanus Torto.

Testimony:

BALIA MANSARAY: What happened was that, after being in the bush for sometime, we came to inspect our houses. They captured and took us to one place and told us not to worry, as we are safe. They also captured my other brothers. They asked whether they were from the same village and they told them that they were from a nearby village. They committed a lot of atrocities in Sembehun Nagboma. They said they'd kill my two brothers because of interference in the war. They said that we should inform our people that they've killed their people because they interfered in a war they had no business with. They said we should advise our people to drop their shot guns and that said they'll take the war up to Freetown. As I was moving I was thinking of my brothers, so I fell in a mining pit and I injured my leg, which affects me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. You said that they killed four people who had no business with the war, who were they?

Balia Mansaray: We met the four people already dead.

Commissioner Torto: You also said that your brother was killed. where?

Balia Mansaray: He was killed in Segbwema.

Commissioner Torto: Was he a hunter?

Balia Mansaray: He was a vigilante.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know who your attackers were?

Balia Mansaray: I do not know them. However, they said they were rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us the name of your brother?

Balia Mansaray: Moi Bakarr.

Leader of Evidence: Do you also know the name of the other person that was killed with your brother?

Balia Mansaray: His first name is Balla Sheku.

Leader of Evidence: Was he a vigilante?

Balia Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were they the only vigilantes in your village?

Balia Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So they were specifically targeted because they were vigilantes?

Balia Mansaray: They said they interfered with the war, because if you were captured no explanation was sought.

Leader of Evidence: Did they tell you which group they belonged to, RUF or SLA?

Balia Mansaray: They only said they were rebels?

Leader of Evidence: Did they tell you where they come from?

Balia Mansaray: They said they came from Kailahun.

Leader of Evidence: What language were they speaking?

Balia Mansaray: They spoke different languages.

Leader of Evidence: Was any other family member of yours injured?

Balia Mansaray: My brother was in captivity until Zogoda was captured. He died later due to the illness.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels abduct him?

Balia Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What was his name?

Balia Mansaray: Mansaray.

Leader of Evidence: How long was he with the rebels?

Balia Mansaray: A very long time.

Leader of Evidence: Eventually he died a natural death or was he killed?

Balia Mansaray: When he was freed from captivity he came back very sick and died later.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any question for the Commission?

Balia Mansaray: I have no questions, as long as they have asked us to accept what has happened to us and reconcile, I'm okay with that.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any recommendation to pass on to the government?

Balia Mansaray: My mother is in pain, even when I was invited, she was in fear that I will not return to the village; her husband had been killed, I am the only one taking care of my old mother. I'm also sick, I need help and I'm asking that you assist me.

Commissioner Torto: After your return, have you sought any medical treatment?

Balia Mansaray: I have been drinking herbs and, I usually go for an injection whenever I have some money.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming.

DATE: 27th MAY 2003.

WITNESS NAME: BOCKARIE SWARRAY

WITNESS NO: 013

REFERENCE:

Bockarie Swarray took the oath on the Koran, administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Sylvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

Bockarie Swarray: When the rebels attacked Panguma, a doctor was killed. After two days Tom Nyumah came to our place and some other places. My people told me that since I fought in the Second World War, I should help to mobilize the young men in the defence of the area. One day an unidentified soldier from Panguma dressed in civilian clothes, come to Gbado. I ordered him to be tied and I brought him, to Tom Nyumah in Kenema. Tom Nyumah said the man was his personal bodyguard who escaped and that he would be court martialed. As soon as we left, he released the man, who returned to Panguma. Sometime later, some men dressed in military uniform came to Gbado; they told us that they had come to protect us. Little did we know that they were there to help the rebels. However, the one who seemed to be their leader was not properly dressed. He had on amulets and this made him look frightening. He was drinking palm wine and as he drank, he was misbehaving, which made me conclude that he was not behaving like a military man. A while later, soldiers were scattered everywhere. People started fleeing from the town. Some of the people who came had masks on and some painted their faces. There were clapping and dancing. The Sergeant Clapped and gave a command. They started firing. A Limba man was killed and I fled with my children to the outskirts of the town. They burnt my house, that of my grandfather's and my timber stock. On that day, they killed one Jaward and I lost all my wives and children. This is my testimony.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you very much for this revealing testimony. If there were many people courageous like you the war would not have lasted longer. Some people don't want to say the truth. The moment you spoke the truth you become an antagonist of the people. I want to

commend you; if you had not done that you might have been dead. I want to clarify some issues with you. What permit did they request from you?

Bockarie Swarray: I don't know. In a Military Force during the colonial period, if you were asked for a permit, you would have to go through the right channel and it is sort of pass for a day or night. This was called Military Tattoo. Your leader will have to count you all. If anyone is absent and had been given a pass, upon your return there is no query but if you did not have a pass you would be put in a guardroom.

Commissioner Torto: What is not clear to me is, why were you asked to produce a permit?

Bockarie Swarray: It was for a reason. We don't know what they were doing. The government was only wasting resources on them.

Commissioner Torto: Where is Sergeant Gbateh?

Bockarie Swarray: He hails from Jerihun.

Commissioner Torto: When you brought this captive whom Tom Nyumah said was his bodyguard, did you set eyes on him again know where he was and what he would have been doing.

Bockarie Swarray: Since then I don't know where he is.

Commissioner Torto: You saw a truck of soldiers who told you that you should not move. He sited you and he looked his time and said 'time', and there was firing, do you think it was an arrangement between the soldiers and the rebels?

Bockarie Swarray: As I perceived it there was indeed an arrangement between them because they were happy. That why he clapped, saying 'time' and ran towards the area the firing was coming from. If they had gone there to secure us, they would have secured us. A Limba man was shot dead. It was out of their happiness that they did so.

Commissioner Torto: During their attack apart from the Palm Wine Tapper were there other people killed?

Bockarie Swarray: Many people were killed but not on the same day.

Commissioner Torto: Can you tell their names?

Bockarie Swarray: One of my uncle Jaward, his children in another village, many people were killed in that village.

Commissioner Torto: Are these the only names you are able to recall?

Bockarie Swarray: There was another one named Sallu Kamara Vandy, whose grave is still in Gandon Buaya. A Town Chief was wounded and he died later by the riverside.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you for the detailed account of what happened in Gbado. We are sorry that you had so many problems that you lost property as well. But it is a good thing that you were able to tell the rebels the truth and tried to convince them to stop the destruction. What happened to your elderly wife who went into the bush?

Bockarie Swarray: She was in the bush without food. She later fell sick and died.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I am so sorry. You also lost a brother am I correct?

Bockarie Swarray: The Jaward that died was my uncle. He was my mother's brother, and was staying with me.

Commissioner Marcus: Jones: I am sorry for all the loss and bereavement you suffered. Thank you for telling us your testimony so clearly. Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: I just want to know, which year did this incident take place?

Bockarie Swarray: I am not an educated person; this is the sorrowful part of my story. It was before the election in 1996, when NPRC was in power.

Leader of Evidence: Was the first group SLA?

Bockarie Swarray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And the second group that came to your village were they rebels?

Bockarie Swarray: All of them were SLA.

Leader of Evidence: So there was no RUF in your village?

Bockarie Swarray: They worked in collaboration.

Leader of Evidence: The second group were they RUF or SLA?

Bockarie Swarray: They were mixed, rebels and soldiers.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, do you have questions for the Commission?

Bockarie Swarray: I don't have any question; I pray that God blesses all those who are loyal to Tejan Kabbah.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation to pass on to government?

Bockarie Swarray: I have two recommendations but not for me alone but for all the citizens in Sierra Leone with special reference to my chieftdom. They created so many problems, no toilet facilities. I am an old man, with no strength to brush my farm. I would like the government to give us toilets and help us with our Agricultural work, but they should give the project to good patriotic citizens.

Commissioner Torto: The recommendations about agriculture and other infrastructure are noted, but let me make a brief statement about the sanitary situation. We do not need to wait for government for such. In every chieftdom, there is a health overseer who should be instructed to plan a waste disposal programme. These are issues that will not wait for government assistance. It is not something that we can put in our report. All the other recommendations will be included in our report. I can only assure you that everything you have mentioned will be included in our report; it may not be specifically for Gbado town but all the other communities.

Commissioner Torto: Any other recommendations?

Bockarie Swarray: No more recommendations, I just want to thank you. I spoke about the toilet because I have it on my mind. So I have to say it out. I thank the government who is helping us, although the help doesn't reach us. May God bless us all.

DATE: 27th MAY 2003.

WITNESS NAME: MIATTA FODAY

WITNESS NO: 014

REFERENCE:

Miatta Foday: took the oath on the Koran administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Sylvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

MIATTA FODAY : We were in my village Diema; I was there with my nieces and nephews, when our village was attacked early in the morning. We were in the big house and we all ran into the bush. Some of my children were with my mother in the other house. My mother and children were captured and one of my children was killed in front of my mother. They ordered them to carry loads, one of my child refused to carry the load, so one of the rebels threatened to kill him. My mother pleaded and they said they would take her along. They took her away with them. I hid the other children and came to the village to spy. On my return, I met my mother sitting by the dead child, weeping. The rebels were all gone. So I took the child with my mother into the bush. Whilst we were in Kenema, my husband heard about the incident, he eventually came to Kenema. He decided to go back in search of food and on his way he too was killed. I was confused and asked God why he had done this kind of thing to me. When we returned back to the village, my mother died and I was confused. The other children were with me; the rebels also captured my brother's child. He decided to go in search of his child and he too was killed. Up till now I haven't seen him. I continue to encourage myself to be strong so that I do not die and leave the other children behind. I rely on God for everything; I don't have a husband and in fact I do not need one. My concern is how to bring up my children. My brother was a farmer and a miner and he used to assist me, but he is no more. I brush the swamp myself and I have sent all my children to school. I engage in some gardening to maintain my children in order for them not to suffer. That is my story.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming to share your testimony with us. We know what it means to go through such pains. I must also congratulate you for the faith you have. We have a few questions for you. We just want to get the information straight. What was the name of your husband?

Miatta Foday: Bockarie Mansaray.

Commissioner Torto: What are you doing now?

Miatta Foday: I am engaged in backyard gardening, I want to do mining also but there is no support.

Commissioner Torto: You said in your written statement that your brother was killed; his throat was cut off while he was going to retrieve his brother why did that happen to him?

Miatta Foday: There were conflicting reports about my child some said he was in Freetown, whilst others said he was in Guinea and some in Pujehun.

Commissioner Torto: Was it your child or brother?

Miatta Foday: It was my child.

Commissioner Torto: The brother who was a kamajor was killed?

Miatta Foday: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Where did that happen?

Miatta Foday: I did not know.

Commissioner Torto: How did you know the story?

Miatta Foday: Somebody told it to me.

Commissioner Torto: What fighting group did that to you?

Miatta Foday: They were rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Miatta Foday: we thank you for coming. From your testimony you are a strong woman with faith in God. And we hope you stay that way to bring up your children. We sympathize with you for the loss of your husband and other members of your family. I have one or two questions. Do you know how many people were buried in the mass grave were your nephew was buried?

Miatta Foday: We were in the bush; I did not go there to see.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where were they buried? Was it in Diema Town?

Miatta Foday: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Since they were buried you never went to the spot to see?

Miatta Foday: I was so tormented I have never gone there to see.

Leader of Evidence: I am sorry for the loss of your family. Do you remember when this incident happened?

Miatta Foday:: August 15, I cannot remember the year.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us the name of your brother who was killed?

Miatta Foday: Moina Foday.

Leader of Evidence: And the name of your nephew?

Miatta Foday: Mohamed Moinina.

Leader of Evidence: Can you remember the name of the rebels?

Miatta Foday: I did not know them; it was very early in the morning.

Leader of Evidence: Who is Captain Manorwa?

Miatta Foday: While we were in the bush, we overheard them saying that Manorwa's group was coming.

Leader of Evidence: So they were called Manorwa?

Miatta Foday: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So they said they were rebels?

Miatta Foday: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether they were RUF, AFRC, Kamajors, or CDF?

Miatta Foday: They were neither Kamajors nor soldiers, but RUF.

Leader of Evidence: You said that the rebels abducted your son and children of your brother?

Miatta Foday: Yes three of them.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever hear anything about them?

Miatta Foday: Six months ago, I received a letter from them; they are in Guinea.

Leader of Evidence: All of them are alive?

Miatta Foday: Yes they are all alive.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: We have asked you a lot of questions and you have bravely answered them all. Do you have any question for the Commission?

Miatta Foday: Yes, now you have called us to testify before this Commission, can government help us to bring back our children and find a means to help us with those we are staying with?

Commissioner Torto: Do you know where the children are?

Miatta Foday: I do not know the town, I remember they told me they are in Guinea.

Commissioner Torto: You received a letter from Guinea; does the letter have no address?

Miatta Foday: They sent a picture but not a letter.

Commissioner Torto: What refugee camp or town do they stay?

Miatta Foday: The person did not tell me, I would contact him.

Commissioner Torto: Is it a difficult thing.

Miatta Foday: To me it is not difficult I will contact the person and he will tell us where they are.

Commissioner Torto: Immediately after the session you will talk to our staff, which will contact the NGOs that are responsible for repatriating people. I was asking the question because I sensitised people in a number of camps in Guinea. The Sierra Leoneans were very excited about coming back. I want to encourage you not to lose hope you will see them one day, provided they want to come back.

Commissioner Torto: How old were they?

Miatta Foday: My daughter is thirteen years old.

Commissioner Torto: Are you sure they are alive, it is a big consolation to know that they are; you will be expecting them, apart the effort you are making, the High Commissioner for UNHCR is also on repatriation. Any other question?

Miatta Foday: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation to make to the Commission?

Miatta Foday: We do not have any health centre, or proper drinking water; I have no one to depend on, I did the swamp work all by myself.

Commissioner Torto: I thank you. Manual Agriculture is a very tedious one; I will encourage you to continue in farming. We wish the Commission had a program for personal assistance to victims, but we don't. I wish you success and I believe that you will see your children again.

DATE: 27th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: SAM MUSA

WITNESS NO: 015

REFERENCE:

My name is Sam Musa took the oath on a Bible administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Sylvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

SAM MUSA:We were in our village, Waiama Tongbambu. My daughter died and as we returned from the burial, rebels attacked us. We fled into the bush and whilst there, we saw our town burning. As the whole town was burnt, we went back into a nearby town and as the fire died out we went back to our town. We met two corpses. One of them was Amara Bundu from Tongo. Our town was situated on top of a hill. As we were going up the hill, I met one of my uncles, Pa Musa, dead. It was not too long when we saw other rebels coming. They told us not to run and if we do, they would fire at us. They asked what was wrong with the people and we told them we didn't know. We went to Penyima. In the evening there was another attack and we fled. We fled to one of my brothers, an ex-soldier called Kekura. We had spent one month with him, when rebels also attacked us. The moment I saw them I fled. I met a pregnant woman who told me that when they killed her husband, they ordered her to laugh. When they finished, they stripped her naked; she had some money hidden in her private parts and it was taken from her. I went to Alhajie in Blama.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for sharing your experience with us. In your written statement you said a woman was raped several times and shot. Do you remember the name of that woman?

Sam Musa: Yes, she is Martha Ngombu.

Commissioner Torto: Do you remember their faces? The perpetrators?

Sam Musa: I was not there when she was raped, it took place in the bush;Kekura's wife told all these stories.

Commissioner Torto: What do you recall of the names of Martha John, John Bull and Ernest Buckna?

Sam Musa: Ernest Buckna is my brother and we went to stay in Peyima. Kekura had three wives one of his elderly wives was Mariama and the other, Sallay. Martha was a daughter.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know where Captain Manorwa of RUF is now?

Sam Musa: I don't know.

Commissioner Torto: No. You stated that he is in Pujehun District.

Sam Musa: I have not heard that, and I've not gone there.

Commissioner Torto: Which group attacked your village?

Sam Musa: They were rebels headed by Manorwa.

Leader of Evidence: In what year did this happen?

Sam Musa: It was during phase II of the war.

Leader of Evidence: Did anything happen to your son?

Sam Musa: One of my sons Allieu Sam Musa was captured and he died later.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: In your testimony you said that a woman saw four people killed, do you remember their names?

Sam Musa: Yes, Keikulrah Jombu, Keh Momoh, Mariama Bunyoh, Ernest Buckna, and Martha Jombu. Six of them were killed.

Commissioner Torto: Including Sallay?

Sam Musa: Sallay was a pregnant woman. She was not killed.

Commissioner Torto: Where is Sallay now?

Sam Musa: I don't know her whereabouts.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any question for the Commission?

Sam Musa: I don't have any question.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation that we can pass on to Government?

Sam Musa: Yes. I would like government to construct schools in our town; one root cause of the war was lack of education. If people were educated they would not think of such evil. There are lot of villages that are far away from schools. If there are no schools, then one will be forced to send his child to the bush. There are many children who are illiterate, they have nothing to do except go to the farm.

Commissioner Torto: We will include your recommendations in our report and pass it on accordingly; I have to congratulate you because you have been able to realize that illiteracy was

the cause of the war. But there is free education for primary school children. Now that you really know what illiteracy can lead to you will not relent to send your children to school, even though the distance may be far away from home. Send your children to school. It was officially announced that there is free education for primary school children. Do you have any other recommendations?

Sam Musa: I have no recommendation.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming.

DATE: 27th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: SHEKU MATTIA

WITNESS NO: 016

REFERENCE:

My name is **Sheku Mattia** took the oath on a Koran administered by the Presiding **Commissioner**, Sylvanus Torto.

TESTIMONY

Sheku Mattia: On the 9th of March 1993, late in the morning, we heard the sound of a gunshot. It was an RPG and the fragments fell in the centre of the town. People were shouting; we overheard somebody shouting 'Manorwa, I have brought war and nobody will sleep, go to Kenema, where Tom Nyumah is'. We all fled, some of us did not go far away, and from where we stayed we could get a view of the town. The town was set on fire. There were up to 72 houses in Waima Togbambu; the whole village, except for four houses and the mosque, was burnt down. When the firing died down we returned to the town in the evening. We saw four corpses. Up to this time we have not seen the bodies of other people, we do not know what happened to them. Eventually, we decided to go to Kenema and I later went to Bo because conditions were so difficult and I was ashamed to beg. I grew up in Bo, I had a lot of friends, so there was not much of a problem. Whilst we were in Bo, the issue of Kamajors sprung up. Those of us who moved from small Bo formed a kamajor group. We had a lot of confidence in the movement and we became members. All of us who left small Bo went to Bo where we were initiated into the society and we returned to our village. We came prepared, and we repelled the rebels from our village; we liberated our chiefdom. The rebels in our area were divided into 18 camps. At first we had no guns, we had knives, which helped us to drive away the rebels from all camps. After this, we felt very confident so we went to Zogoda and we drove the rebels from there. That was what we did.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. I want us to go back to the factors that led you to join the Kamajors that was the mission of Manorwa; during that invasion of Waiima how many people were killed?

Sheku Mattia: Four people.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know their names?

Sheku Mattia: Musa Bundu, Akim Amara from Tisor, Mammy Matu, and Bendu.

Commissioner Torto: During your offences, did you encounter civilians?

Sheku Mattia: Yes, we used to call civilian areas target camps.

Commissioner Torto: When you met them what did you do?

Sheku Mattia: We searched and removed them from the bush, then brought them to the town.

Commissioner Torto: Did you witness violations by Kamajors or civilians?

Sheku Mattia: No, we did not harm them.

Commissioner Torto: During your offensive against the rebels, how many were killed?

Sheku Mattia: We did not kill them. They fled from us but we had knives. They'll fire and we'll advance and they'll flee.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give us the names of your dead brothers?

Sheku Mattia: I have mentioned them.

Leader of Evidence: Repeat them for me?

Sheku Mattia: Amara, Musa, Bundu and Matu.

Leader of Evidence: I am very sorry that you lost members of your family. You joined the Kamajor to protect your village?

Sheku Mattia: Sierra Leone as a whole.

Leader of Evidence: Was this immediately after the attack on your village?

Sheku Mattia: I joined the Kamajor in 1995.

Leader of Evidence: When were your brothers killed?

Sheku Mattia: In 1993.

Leader of Evidence: Between 1993 and 1995 were you in your village?

Sheku Mattia: I was driven from my village, so I went to Bo.

Leader of Evidence: How many of you joined the Kamajors?

Sheku Mattia: Two of us.

Leader of Evidence: How many Kamajors did you meet in Bo?

Sheku Mattia: About 250.

Leader of Evidence: Were you one of the elders?

Sheku Mattia: We were the chiefs. We organized them.

Leader of Evidence: What does it mean to be a chief in the Kamajor?

Sheku Mattia: I am the chief of my village not in the CDF. I was still a chief however.

Leader of Evidence: What did you actually do as a Kamajor?

Sheku Mattia:We used to organize and advise the fighting forces.

Leader of Evidence: How were they organized?

Sheku Mattia: If we decided to clear any village we joined them and we used to settle disputes.

Leader of Evidence: You said you were initiated when you joined the Kamajor?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us what this initiation was about?

Sheku Mattia: To bring peace in our village.

Leader of Evidence: You later became an initiator?

Sheku Mattia: No, I did not initiate anybody.

Leader of Evidence: On your assignment you decided on the village you wanted to attack and you also said the rebels fled from you because of the knives?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You said that the rebels used to run away from you?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of weapons did the rebels use?

Sheku Mattia: They had all types of guns.

Leader of Evidence: Why did they run away from you?

Sheku Mattia: We had supernatural powers. When they shot at us nothing happened and we' kept on advancing.

Leader of Evidence: Were Kamajors killed during these attacks?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How many of you were killed?

Sheku Mattia: Up to the time we went to Zogoda two were killed.

Leader of Evidence: How young was the youngest in the Kamajor?

Sheku Mattia: The other was the same age group as the interpreter; the other was about 30 yrs old.

Leader of Evidence: You said you were about 250 I want to know how old was the youngest

Sheku Mattia: The youngest was 14 years old. At the battlefield they used to do some domestic work for us and not to fight.

Leader of Evidence: During the attacks of the rebels, only adults join in the offensives?

Sheku Mattia: We all went together, but we were very safe. We would all go to the farms.

Leader of Evidence: Did the 14-year-old boys go to the front?

Sheku Mattia: They carried loads and fetched water. Sometimes they ran errands for us.

Leader of Evidence: Did they join you to fight?

Sheku Mattia: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did any of you have guns.?

Sheku Mattia: Sometimes, we ran after the rebels and when they are tired, they'll drop their guns. We'll then pick them up and hand them over to the soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever use these guns?

Sheku Mattia: We were using knives not guns.

Leader of Evidence: During these attacks did any of the rebels get killed?

Sheku Mattia: I did not see any dead rebel, if they confronted us they were wounded.

Leader of Evidence: Did you capture any one of them?

Sheku Mattia: Yes so many of them.

Leader of Evidence: How old were they? Small boys and girls.?

Sheku Mattia: We captured a lady who said she was a cook and not a combatant. We turned her over to the military.

Leader of Evidence: What happened to the others?

Sheku Mattia: We handed them over to the military.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ask them questions?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of questions?

Sheku Mattia: We used to ask them how they joined the movement; some will say they were captured. They never said they joined willingly.

Leader of Evidence: Did you punish them?

Sheku Mattia: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did the soldiers give you training?

Sheku Mattia: No, we were not friends.

Leader of Evidence: But they asked you to work hand in hand with them?

Sheku Mattia: At first they were willing, after a while we discovered that they wanted to betray us, so we stayed away from them.

Leader of Evidence: When you decided to keep a distance, did you hand over the rebels to them?

Sheku Mattia: Yes, we still handed them to the soldiers

Leader of Evidence: Did you know what happened to the captives when they were with the soldiers?

Sheku Mattia: No, they always drove us from their base.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see the captives after that?

Sheku Mattia: Yes, sometimes we saw them.

Leader of Evidence: Of the 250 Kamajors, only two were killed?

Sheku Mattia: I only knew about two.

Leader of Evidence: How long you were with the Kamajors?

Sheku Mattia: Three years.

Leader of Evidence: During those three years, how many confrontations or fights did you have with the rebels?

Sheku Mattia: So many. I was attacked in my village, at that time Johnny Paul was in power, my village was attacked three times, and we repelled them.

Leader of Evidence: When Johnny Paul was in power who were the rebels?

Sheku Mattia: When he was in power they came to town, and they stayed with us and called themselves People's Army.

Leader of Evidence: But you said when he was in power the rebels attacked your village three times who were the rebels by then?

Sheku Mattia: They were RUF/AFRC/SLA.

Sheku Mattia: So at that time you were not fighting with the government?

Sheku Mattia: We fought for the government to come in to power.

Leader of Evidence: Which government?

Sheku Mattia: The democratically elected government.

Leader of Evidence: During those two years, did you chase the rebels?

Sheku Mattia: They attacked and we repelled them.

Leader of Evidence: Any time you had a confrontation, they used to run away, how many years did that take?

Sheku Mattia: For three consecutive months they attacked our village.

Leader of Evidence: You said you spent three years in the movement, how come it took a long time before the rebels were chased out of the country?

Sheku Mattia: I continued to stay there because it was an initiation. I will continue to stay there and even now I am a Kamajor.

Leader of Evidence: Since you stayed three years and always the rebels ran away, how come it took several years to overthrow the rebels?

Sheku Mattia: I continued to stay because I was initiated and it was for life. If you go against the initiation, you will be killed.

Leader of Evidence: What did they do to go against these laws?

Sheku Mattia: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: After the rebels had killed those two people, they then realized that the Kamajors had fake powers?

Sheku Mattia: I don't think so.

Leader of Evidence: We have heard rebels who testified that they knew the Kamajors had supernatural power but they relied on their guns?

Sheku Mattia: That's was their belief but we have ours.

Leader of Evidence: It still hard to believe that the rebels could flee from you when they had guns. Are you saying the truth since you are under oath?

Sheku Mattia: We were chiefs we did not go to the front.

Leader of Evidence: During this fighting none of them got killed?

Sheku Mattia: We were chiefs, we encouraged them to go ahead, I saw the wounded but I did not see corpses.

Leader of Evidence: Since you were chief I suppose they will come and report to you event in the front, what did they report?

Sheku Mattia: We used to go together.

Leader of Evidence: To the war front?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did anyone report of any rebels killed?

Sheku Mattia: No report of deaths, only of the wounded.

Leader of Evidence: Civilians spoke of Kamajor atrocities, did you hear of any one of these?

Sheku Mattia: Our group did not do that.

Leader of Evidence: If any of your member was to break the rules imposed on them would they be punished?

Sheku Mattia: Every society has its laws and we had many.

Leader of Evidence: If a Kamajor committed any atrocity to the civilians, will he be punished?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were there any sanctions imposed on them?

Sheku Mattia: Yes, we used to punish them.

Leader of Evidence: What kind of punishment?

Sheku Mattia: We investigate the allegation after which punishment will be meted according to the kind of atrocity committed.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give us some examples?

Sheku Mattia: One Kamajor captured and beat a civilian and they brought him to us, because he ran away. The matter was brought to me I also inflicted punishment to the Kamajor.

Leader of Evidence: Did that happen frequently?

Sheku Mattia: I am explaining to you now that the Kamajors didn't go close to the civilians, because of the laws. We came to protect the civilians. We had a good relationship. We looked a bit fearsome that's why they kept away from us. We came to save them from the soldiers.

Leader of Evidence: I thought you were working with the soldiers?

Sheku Mattia: Yes, they were our bosses, whatever we did we reported to them. Before we went to the front we obtained permission from them.

Leader of Evidence: You were there to protect the civilians from the soldiers and you handed over civilians to the soldiers but they were not afraid of you?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Then you said you took a distance from the SLA, was there any point when the SLA and the Kamajors fought?

Sheku Mattia: The Small Bo group did not fight with the SLA.

Leader of Evidence: The questions are not meant to embarrass you, but we think we have to ask you these questions, on how the kamajors were organized and what was their action during these years. Also during these years, several people accused the kamajors of human rights violations, and this is your opportunity to explain what happened and we need to get the truth. Do you have anything to add, do you have any information to give?

Sheku Mattia: The confusion you have is when I said we collaborated with the soldiers. When we returned from Bo we reported to the soldiers, because they were the government fighters. We joined that force because we wanted to help them. When we came we met them and they accepted us. They tested us and approved. The problem was that there were eighteen rebel

camps around small Bo and they did not engage the rebels because they did not understand the bush. When we came we attacked these bushes and destroyed them. When they saw this and the civilians praising us, they were annoyed. We told civilians not to go down to the soldiers and this did not go down well with them.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you for the explanation. It is necessary because there are so many allegations made against the Kamajors. We will continue to hear more testimonies throughout the hearings. I thank you for coming and hope that others will come out and do the same. I must congratulate you very much. I want you to pass on this information to the rank and file of the kamajors that it is to their advantage to appear before this Commission to testify. So the series of question were not meant to implicate or embarrass you, we are not in a court. I also wanted to add this peace of information that appearance in the TRC will not be referred to Special Court. We hope to see more of you ,since we are here up to Friday. One last thing, did you have women fighting with you?

Sheku Mattia: There were no women; some other groups had women like Kamo Lahai's group. They cooked for us at the front.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for this explanation, now that we have asked you a number of questions do you have any questions for the Commission?

Sheku Mattia: I don't have questions but to ask for help.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendations?

Sheku Mattia: I said in my statement that 72 houses were burnt down in my village except the mosque and four other houses. We cannot ask government to go and put up all those structures, the direst need is a water well.

Commissioner Torto: Where is that village?

Sheku Mattia: Seven miles from here.

Commissioner Torto: We cannot promise that those needs could be met immediately; our duty is to pass on our recommendations to government. Your recommendation will be taken in to good part along with the others for onward transmission to government.

Sheku Mattia: I will talk to my men.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much.

DAY THREE

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Iye Bockarie

WITNESS NO: New

REFERENCE:

Justice Laura Marcus-Jones, the presiding Commissioner, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

Iye Bockarie: Whilst we were in our village, the rebels captured my mother and me in a farm hut and brought us to the village. As soon as we arrived in town the rebels were instructed to take me along with them, then decided to release my mother. They took me into the forest. I was with them for a very long period. There were three of us, myself, my elder and my younger brother. On our way, my elder brother escaped. As soon as they realized that my brother had escaped, they got angry with me. They were scared about my brother's escape and thought that I would escape too so they threatened to kill me. They later inscribed RUF on my back and because I was carrying the inscription on my back, I decided to join them. Being the youngest, I was handed over to the leader of the rebels' wife and I became her maid. I stayed with them for a very long time.

She took care of me until I was a bit older and she handed me over to a man to be married. We had two children. On several occasions, when he went on trek, different men raped me. Whilst we were in Makeni, we had no food, my bush husband sometimes maltreated me, and due to this maltreatment I decided to escape, especially when I became pregnant for the second time. I wrote a letter to my sister who sent some money to pay my way home. In her reply, she indicated that I had lost my mother and father. I received the money and the letter and decided to come home. I said goodbye to my bush husband and he bid me farewell with a promise to visit me. On my arrival, I found out that my sister had also lost her husband; I am now staying with my two children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for telling us your story. We are sorry that all these unpleasant things happened to you and that you also lost your parents. How old were you when this incident took place?

Iye Bockarie: I was about 10 years old when I was captured.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you going to school at the time?

Iye Bockarie: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many children had your parents?

Iye Bockarie: Nine children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: At the time you were captured had you started your menstrual circle?

Iye Bockarie: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You told us that your elder brother escaped, did you see him escape, and how did he manage to escape?

Iye Bockarie: I don't know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – From which village were you captured?

Iye – I was at Boajibu

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – Was that the place you were captured?

Iye Bockarie: No., that was not the place, I was captured at Moindu.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How far is Moindu to Makeni, how far was the distance from the bush?

Iye Bockarie: I don't know the mileage; it is a far distance.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many days did it take you to walk to the bush?

Iye Bockarie: It took us two days.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did your Commando's wife treat you well?

Iye Bockarie: Sometimes she maltreated me. She beat and punished me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What would she punish you for?

Iye Bockarie: If I did not obey her instructions she will me beat me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You were separated from your younger brother, have you seen him since?

Iye Bockarie: Yes, we met in Makeni recently.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long have you been separated?

Iye Bockarie: It took about ten years before we actually met.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you able to recognize each other?

Iye Bockarie: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he share his experiences with you?

Iye Bockarie: – No, not yet.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You were given to a man when you were little older, how long was it from the time your were captured to the time you married?

Iye Bockarie: It took about two years before I got married to him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Had you started your menstrual circle when you got married?

Iye Bockarie: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You said they threatened to kill you if you attempted to escape and they inscribed RUF on your back, have you still got the mark?

Iye Bockarie: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you mind if we see the mark?

Iye Bockarie: I don't mind, (witness shows mark to Commissioner)

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did they inscribe marks? What did they use to inscribe this mark on your back?

Iye Bockarie: They used razor blade.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you have a sore on your back at that time?

Iye Bockarie: It did not take long to heal up.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What did they apply to heal the wound?

Iye Bockarie: – Nothing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You said when your bush husband was away, other people used to rape you, did you complain to him on his return.

Iye –Yes, I complained to him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he do anything about it?

Iye Bockarie: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So he did not mind?

Iye Bockarie: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You are not even sure who the father of your children is?

Iye Bockarie: I know him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who is he?

Iye Bockarie: Morie.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is he the bush husband?

Iye Bockarie: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I want you tell me what your life in the bush was like, you were able to write letter to your sister, and your sister was also able to reply, your husband bid you farewell and allowed you to go. It all sounds so easy to me. Can you say something about that?

Iye Bockarie: He agreed for me to leave. I told him about the letter, In fact at a point in time he even told me that if I had my fare I was free to go to my parents.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In what year were you captured and in what year did you leave the camp? How long did you stay in the bush?

Iye Bockarie: I was captured in 1992; I took ten years in captivity.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you left the bush in 2002?

Iye – Yes, we left the bush in 2002 and went to my sister in Makeni.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long were you with your bush husband?

Iye Bockarie: I spent nine years with him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: He was not interested in seeing your parents to marry you properly?

Iye Bockarie: No, he left us to come by ourselves.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Since then has he come to see his children?

Iye Bockarie: – No.

Leader of Evidence –Thank you very much for coming, I would like to ask you few questions. Did your bush husband have any other wife when you were in the bush?

Iye Bockarie: I was the only wife when we were in the bush. But when we got to Makeni, he married two other women.

Leader of Evidence – Did you think he let you go because he had other wives, or was the general disarmament; the reason why he decided to let you go?

Iye Bockarie: Maybe it was because of his other women.

Leader of Evidence: What was his rank in the movement, Colonel, Captain?

Iye Bockarie: He was a Sergeant.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the highest in command in the group and what was his name?

Iye Bockarie: – Mohamed.

Leader of Evidence – Did he have any other name apart from Mohamed?

Iye Bockarie: That is the name I know.

Leader of Evidence: What part of the country did the group come from?

Iye Bockarie: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: What language did they speak?

Iye Bockarie: It was a mixture of Mende and Kono.

Leader of Evidence – Were there other abducted girls with you?

Iye Bockarie: Yes, many young girls.

Leader of Evidence – Were they given as bush wives to the rebels?

Iye Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence – Were there young abducted boys?

Iye Bockarie: – Yes.

Leader of Evidence – What happened to them?

Iye Bockarie: – I cannot tell because we were not staying together.

Leader of Evidence – Were other children involved in military training?

Iye Bockarie: No.

Leader of Evidence – Did you witness the rebels attack villages, amputate or kill civilians during your stay?

Iye Bockarie:I cannot tell. I always stayed in the forest, I never left.

Leader of Evidence – After your release, did you find your elder brother who escaped?

Iye – Yes, he is at Bandu.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell how your parents and Sister's husband were killed?

Iye Bockarie: They all died by a natural cause.

Leader of Evidence: I am really sorry for you mishaps, how are your children doing?

Iye Bockarie: They are not keeping too well, the young child is sick, and I don't know the cause.

Commissioner Marcus –Jones: I am really sorry for what you went through. Is the other child a boy?

Iye Bockarie: Yes, he is a boy.

Commissioner Marcus –Jones: You seem to me to be angry about something or about the whole thing, which one are you particularly angry about?

Iye Bockarie: The thing that troubles me most is that they captured me and took me away from my parents; I have lost both my parents. On my arrival I found out that my eldest sister is dead and my stepsister's husband is also dead. The two children I had from the bush are suffering; there is no body to take care of them. What do I do now?

Commissioner Marcus–Jones: It is sad and unfortunate that all these things happened and there is nothing you can do to change them. Now that you have come to us and expressed yourself we do hope that you will be able to get some relief in your mind and you need to have courage and to find comfort in your children. When you are finished with us here you may talk with our briefer and she will be able to refer your child who is sick for treatment. How old are the two children?

Iye Bockarie: The older one is five and the younger one is two years old.

Commissioner Marcus –Jones: Is the older one going to school now?

Iye Bockarie: I registered him on our arrival but he hasn't started going to school because I cannot afford to pay his school fees and buy his uniform.

Commissioner Marcus–Jones: Primary education is supposed to be free.

Iye Bockarie: I was asked to buy uniform, they cannot allow him without uniform.

Commissioner Marcus –Jones: Again talk to our briefers to see if there is any way they can help you out.

Commissioner Marcus –Jones: Thank you very much Iye. We've been asking you questions; have you any question to ask the Commission?

Iye Bockarie: When I was in Makeni I was trained in hairdressing. I want to know if this Commission would assist me to undertake my career.

Commissioner Marcus –Jones: The Commission has not got money to give to people, but at the same time we would be able to recommend NGOs who would assist you set up something. We will also put in our report to the government that people like you in this position need assistance, now you've seen the worst side of life, and mercifully you've come back with your life. Do you have any recommendation to make so life may be smooth for you and your children in the future and that there will not be a recurrence of such again?

Iye Bockarie: I am on my own, my sister is helpless, and I want support for the education of my children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We would include this in our report. Your children are very young. They are now at the age when they can get free education. By the time they are ready for secondary education, government would have made provision for all Communities ravaged by war. Thank you very much for coming. I would say to you, try and be courageous and smile because of your children so that your they will be happy; if you continue to be sad your children would be worried about it, try to be happy. Thank you for coming.

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Baidu K.Amara

WITNESS NO: 08/27/0503

REFERENCE:

Baidu K.Amara took the oath on the Bible, administered by the Presiding Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

Baidu K. Amara: The rebels killed my parents and I was captured and taken into the bush. I suffered a lot. Ten of them raped me violently. I was their maid in the bush; I used to do their domestic work. They maltreated, beat and insulted me. After the raping spree, I escaped and went to the camp in Segbwema and from there I came to Kenema. In Kenema, we were registered last year with an NGO. I was then assigned to a foster parent to take care of me. Whenever there is aid from the government, they contact us. We have come so that the Commission would assist us.

I want somebody to help me, I felt bad on sometimes. I was very worried and lonely; roaming the streets of Segbwema hoping for somebody to pick me up. Fortunately for me a lady who brought me to Kenema rescued me.

Commissioner Marcus -Jones: Thank you, we are sorry that you lost your parents; can you tell us the year your parents were killed?

Baidu K. Amara: I can't tell.

Commissioner Marcus -Jones: Were they killed in your presence?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you told how they were killed?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who told you?

Baindu K. Amara: My late aunt told me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you see the Corpses?

Baindu – Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did your aunt tell you the people who killed them, were they RUF, AFRC?

Baindu – Yes, they were rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How soon, was it after you were abducted?

Baindu K. Amara: After the death of my parents.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you able to give them a fitting funeral?

Baindu K. Amara – No, their corpses were abandoned.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: where were you abducted?

Baindu K. Amara – In Segbwema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you living in Segbwema at the time?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes, I was born in Segbwema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – So your parents were killed in Segbwema?

Baindu – Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You said they took you to the bush. What did they do to you?

Baindu K. Amara: I was raped and maltreated.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you handed over to a woman?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were there women in the bush?

Baindu K. Amara – Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who was responsible for you?

Baindu K. Amara: A man called Amara.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were you when you were captured?

Baindu K. Amara: I was a little over ten years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you started your menstrual cycle by then?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When you went to the bush, were you taken by one of the rebels as a bush wife?

Baindu K. Amara – No, all of them.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What was your daily life like in the bush?

Baindu K. Amara: I did the laundry and prepared their food. In the morning when they went out on missions, I was left to do their domestic work.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they feed you well?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you have any friend amongst the people in the bush?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who were they?

Baindu K. Amara: Aminata and Amie.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were they also captured?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes, the rebels captured us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: At the same time?

Baindu K. Amara: – Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why did they beat you?

Baindu K. Amara: Because I refused to have sex with them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they give you drugs like Marijuana and Cocaine?

Baindu – Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How was it administered?

Baindu K. Amara: They used to mix it with coke or water and force it into our mouths.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How often?

Baindu K. Amara: – Several times.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: After you came back from the bush, have you been taking the drugs?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The camp you escaped to what kind of camp was it, refugee or displaced?

Baindu K. Amara: I was in a refugee camp.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you escape?

Baindu K. Amara: I was sent to fetch water, and I took the opportunity to escape.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did you stay in the bush?

Baindu K. Amara: I spent one year with them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When you ran away had peace come?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us the name of the NGO you registered with?

Baindu K. Amara: No, I can't tell.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you describe where they are situated, are they in Kenema?

Baindu K. Amara: They are in Bo.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you left Bo and came to Kenema?

Baindu K. Amara: I came with a friend.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you inform the NGO before coming?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What of your foster parent, where is she?

Baindu K. Amara: She is at No. 6 Nadeyama Site.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – Are you still with her?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How does she treat you?

Baindu K. Amara: She doesn't feed me well, she sometimes tells me that I am an orphan.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What does this woman do for a living?

Baindu K. Amara: She is a petty trader.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You said you feel bad sometimes, when does that normally happen?

Baindu K. Amara: When I am teased that I am an orphan.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any physical problems?

Baindu K. Amara: I normally experience a headache and pains all over my body.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you had a child before?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know the group of rebels that attacked you?

Baindu K. Amara: They were RUF fighters.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see Foday Mansaray: Sankoh when you were in the bush?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Leader of Evidence: But the rebels told you that they belonged to Foday Mansaray: Sankoh's group?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know the name of the Commander in Charge?

Baindu K. Amara: Musa.

Leader of Evidence: What was his rank?

Baindu K. Amara: They usually address him as Colonel Musa.

Leader of Evidence: Do you remember if he had other names?

Baindu K. Amara: Mustapha Kpenga.

Leader of Evidence: Were the rebels all men or there were women?

Baindu K. Amara: There was one woman, the majority were men.

Leader of Evidence: What was the name of the woman?

Baindu K. Amara: She was called Musu.

Leader of Evidence: Were there others girls your age?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were they also sexually abused?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: How many of them were your age?

Baindu K. Amara: Three of us were the same age.

Leader of Evidence: Do you remember their names?

Baindu K. Amara: Baindu and Aminata.

Leader of Evidence: Were they able to escape?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes, but I don't know their whereabouts.

Leader of Evidence: Since your escape, have you seen any of the rebels?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where the rebels came from?

Baindu K. Amara: They said they came from Camp Zogoda.

Leader of Evidence: Did the abducted children receive military training from the rebels?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever get pregnant during your stay with the rebels?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you receive medical attention when you came back?

Baindu K. Amara: No, my foster parent has no money.

Leader of Evidence: On your return, have you been involved in skill training?

Baindu K. Amara: My foster parent said she has no money, but her children do go to school.

Leader of Evidence: Were you going to school before you were abducted?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We have been asking you many questions. Have you any questions to ask the Commission?

Baindu K. Amara: – After inviting me what do you want me to do?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well you've come from your foster parent, after this session, our briefer will explore the possibility of your going to an NGO that will be able to assist you. If they are in a position to they would make another arrangement for you. Any other questions?

Baindu K. Amara: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any recommendation?

Baindu K. Amara: Yes, I would like to continue my education; I would like financial support for my foster parent so that she can continue her business.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Baindu. The briefer will talk you later on.

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Saidu Fofana

WITNESS NO: 11/27/4503

REFERENCE:

Saidu Fofana took the oath on the Koran, administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

Saidu Fofana: I was in my village with my father; he usually went to work on the farm and during his absence that the rebels attacked the village. On his way from the farm the rebels killed him. When the firing died down we decided to go back to the village. Four years later, there was another attack on the village and my mother was killed. I ran to the bush, but I was captured by the rebels and taken to their base. I did domestic work for their wives. After cooking, my food was left in the pot from which I ate. I later escaped and came to my aunt. My elder brother and sister were staying with her. The rebels attacked Kenema again and my brother and sister were killed. I am staying with my aunt here in Kenema. I registered with an NGO called KEDAR last year. They promised to contact us whenever they are ready. I was there when I was called to come to this Commission.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Saidu, you have given us the fullest account of what you went through. How old were you when you were captured?

Saidu Fofana: I was four years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were you when your mother was killed?

Saidu Fofana: I was eight years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When your mother was killed, was it the time you were attacked the second time?

Saidu Fofana: I was captured when I was four years old and later recaptured when I was eight.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So your mother was killed after the second attack?

Saidu Fofana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – How long were you with the rebels?

Saidu Fofana: I spent two years with them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who were the rebels?

Saidu Fofana: I don't know them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you hear them call their names?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were there women in the bush?

Saidu Fofana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who were they?

Saidu Fofana: They were wives of the rebels

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You were not given enough food except what was left in the pot, is that so?

Saidu Fofana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you receive military training?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they give you drugs?

Saidu Fofana: They did but I refused.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they beat you?

Saidu Fofana: Yes, if I refused to take the drugs, they beat me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you escape?

Saidu Fofana: One day, they went on an attack, I was left with their wives and I escaped.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where was this bush?

Saidu Fofana: In Lunsar.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When you escaped from the Lunsar, where did you go?

Saidu Fofana: I came to Kenema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you get to Kenema?

Saidu Fofana: I traveled through the bush on to Kenema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you travel alone?

Saidu Fofana: No, I traveled with some of my friends.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did all of you escape at the same time?

Saidu Fofana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were you by then?

Saidu Fofana: One was eleven and the other ten.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did it take you to get to Kenema?

Saidu Fofana: Ten days.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What were you feeding on?

Saidu Fofana: We used to get food from the bush.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What kind of food?

Saidu Fofana: Fruits like Malombo...

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did your brother and sister who were with your aunt get killed?

Saidu Fofana: They were in Kenema attending School. On their way home from School, the town was attacked and they were killed.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you able to give them a proper funeral?

Saidu Fofana: After the fighting subsided, we came and buried them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: This KEDAR organization where did they operate in Kenema?

Saidu Fofana: In Maxwell Khobe Street.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is life like with KEDAR?

Saidu Fofana: They only registered us for the attention of government, in case of availability of aid, but I am staying with my aunt.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they make arrangements for your schooling, or were you offered food and clothing?

Saidu Fofana: They never supplied us with clothes, but we got food from them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What type of food?

Saidu Fofana: They supplied us bulgur, beans and oil.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you give those foods to your aunt?

Saidu Fofana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is your aunt an old or young person?

Saidu Fofana:: She is a middle-aged woman.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How does she treat you?

Saidu Fofana: She takes care of me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why did she not send you to school?

Saidu Fofana: She has no money; I used to go to the forest, fetch wood and use the money for food.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell what group the rebels belonged to?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Leader of Evidence – Did they tell you who they were?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did they ever explain why they were fighting?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Leader of Evidence: Were there schools in the camp?

Saidu Fofana: There was no school.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Saidu Fofana you seem to be a bright boy; we've been asking you questions, do you have questions to ask the Commission?

Saidu Fofana: Can the Commission help us go to School?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you ever posed that question to Kedar, if they are an organization they could help with clothing, because we don't pay school fees for primary level?

Saidu Fofana: I did not ask them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about the other children registered with KEDAR, are they not going to school?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Commission has no money to give but our briefer will refer you to an NGO, which might be able to help you with clothing, so that you will be able to go to school. If you are at school would you be able to help with the wood after school?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are there no other children who could help?

Saidu Fofana: Except children in the neighbourhood.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any other question?

Saidu Fofana: If I am in school, how can you take care of me?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The **Commission** cannot take care of you as such, but we can refer you to some NGO who I think will give assistance. Any other question?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – You seem to be a bright boy, do you have any recommendations to government so that this country will be a bright place in the future?

Saidu Fofana: The government should allow peace to prevail. If there is peace one could move around to get food to eat.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: That is why we are asking you all these questions; so that you would be able to go to school your aunt will be able to make a living. Any other recommendation?

Saidu Fofana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Saidu

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Foday Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 09/27/0503

REFERENCE:

Foday Mansaray: Mansaray took an oath on the Koran administered by the Presiding Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

My father was a Farmer; we usually went to the farm and returned home in the evening. Whilst we were in bed one night, our village was attacked; we fled for our lives but my father was captured, shot and killed. I then fled with my mother to the bush, and slept there. The next day we came out in search of food. The rebels were under a tree sleeping. I was left in the hiding place by the banana tree whilst my mother entered the house. She was captured and killed. When I saw the incident I ran and started weeping. Whilst I was running, I met a man who took me to KEDAR and my name was registered. It has been a very long time; they promised to help those of us who were orphaned. That is my story.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Foday Mansaray, you said you had been registered at KEDAR for a long time. How long was that?

Foday Mansaray: It was a year ago.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: With whom are you staying?

Foday Mansaray: The man who rescued and brought me to Kenema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you are still with the man who brought you to Kenema?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What does he do for a living?

Foday Mansaray: Nothing, I had to work for people before we get our food.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What type of work do you do for people?

Foday Mansaray: I usually fetch water and pound pepper.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Before you met him what was he doing?

Foday Mansaray: He was a trader.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why is he not doing the business anymore?

Foday Mansaray: The rebels had destroyed his business place.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is he an old man?

Foday Mansaray: – No, he is not that old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did you stay in the bush?

Foday Mansaray: Four days.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So, it took you four days to get to Kenema?

Foday Mansaray: No, about 7 days.

Leader of Evidence: – Can you tell who killed your mother and father?

Foday Mansaray: The rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us which group they belonged to? RUF, AFRC.

Foday Mansaray: They were rebels in the bush.

Leader of Evidence: How old were you when your parents were killed?

Foday Mansaray: I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence: Do you have brothers and sisters?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Where are they now?

Foday Mansaray: Some were killed, but I cannot tell where the others are.

Leader of Evidence: – Do you know of any who is alive?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Is he a brother or sister?

Foday Mansaray: My brother.

Leader of Evidence: Is he older than you?

Foday Mansaray: Yes, he is my senior brother.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where he is?

Foday Mansaray: They told me he is in our hometown.

Leader of Evidence: Have you made effort to contact him?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did anybody ask him whether he would be able to take care of you?

Foday Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Foday Mansaray, Thank you for coming, I wonder whether you have any question for us?

Foday Mansaray:No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – Do you have any recommendations to make to the Commission for onward transmission to government?

Foday Mansaray: I would like the government to assist me continue my education.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any other recommendation?

Foday Mansaray: I would also like the government to assist my foster parents to take care of me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We would find some NGO's who would assist in those areas. I want to assure you that your recommendations will be included in our report. For now you are collecting food from KEDAR, Isn't that so?

Foday Mansaray: – Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for coming.

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Alieu Bockarie

WITNESS NO: New

REFERENCE:

Alieu Bockarie, he took an oath on the Bible, administered by the Presiding Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

Alieu Bockarie:I was staying with my uncle and attending school. The rebels attacked Serabu and we fled into the bush. Since then I stopped going to school. In the morning, we used to go in and search for food, and the rebels again attacked us in the bush. I ran away with my brother and sister. Unfortunately, for us, we were captured and taken to the town. As soon as we were taken to the town, we were interrogated. We replied that we abandoned the town because rebels

chased us out. While in captivity, we were separated from each other; we were taken to different locations. The following morning, one of the rebels came in to search for us but he did not see my brother and sister. They threatened to kill me because they thought I had incited them to escape. I understood later that my brother escaped. I was in the company of other boys and we were later taken to their base. I was singled out and asked to lie down under the sun. A lady came and pleaded on my behalf and I was released. After that, I was asked to join the others, after a while they asked us to go outside. Whilst standing outside, I was shot on my left foot; I sat down on the ground and was later taken to the hospital. After that incident I decided to stay with them. The woman who rescued me asked me to stay with her husband and I did. I was with them but there was no proper medication and food.

They took us to a nearby bush in Kono. I was in the bush and undergoing treatment until I was cured. At the end of the war we were told to come out and disarm. I had a wife whilst I was in the bush and he had a baby girl for me, after the disarmament, we had some confusion and she left, but the child was staying with me. After the disarmament we were engaged in some technical skills, I was trained in carpentry and we were given a start off kit.

At the time we were captured, I did not know the whereabouts of my sister; it was until after the disarmament that I met her in Makeni. We rejoiced and explained our ordeal. I advised her that we should locate our parents and she accepted my idea. We later went to her husband telling him that we heard that our parents and relatives were dead. The husband refused but I pleaded with him after convincing he accepted. We agreed on a date, but I suggested to him to allow me go and check because we have heard that our village was burnt down. Upon my arrival in the village I discovered that my mother and few of my relatives were dead, I went back and came with my sister and we returned to our home. I have been trained as a carpenter with my kits, but I am having problems with my feet. Since we came, our eldest sister's husband died. We had to struggle for our food. We are happy that we have come to testify. It is not our wish to join the movement. It was the will of God.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alieu, thank you for your testimony. We've heard part of it before. How long did you spend with the rebels in the bush?

Alieu Bockarie: I spent ten years with them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Which of the fighting group were you staying with? RUF, AFRC.

Alieu Bockarie: It was the RUF.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you given military training?

Alieu Bockarie: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Throughout the period you were with them, you were not involved in any fight?

Alieu Bockarie: Because of the injury I sustained by the gunshot, I used to stay with my commando's wife.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you want to show us the foot?

Alieu Bockarie: Yes, (Shows foot to Commissioner)

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you still undergoing medical treatment?

Alieu Bockarie :No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why haven't you gone to the hospital?

Alieu Bockarie: There are no proper medical facilities in the hospital.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In what area is the hospital located?

Alieu Bockarie: In Boajibu.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you are no longer staying in Moindu?

Alieu Bockarie: I was staying in Boajibu.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What are you doing to earn your living?

Alieu Bockarie : My foot prevents me from doing any hard work.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can't you even sit down and make small furniture so that you can sell?

Alieu Bockarie – I can't.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – How far is Boajibu from Kenema?

Alieu Bockarie: About 24 miles.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You should be coming for treatment in Kenema.

Alieu Bockarie: I have nobody to stay with to take care of my treatment, if there is such an arrangement I will be happy.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – After this session our briefer will assist in that issue.

Alieu Bockarie – Yes Ma.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you were not actually involved in any fight?

Alieu Bockarie : No. I was always staying at home with my commando's wife.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What happened to the woman and her husband?

Alieu Bockarie: Nothing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where are they now?

Alieu Bockarie: Since we separated, I have never set eyes on them.

Leader of Evidence: Do you the names of the people you were staying with in the bush?

Alieu Bockarie: I don't know their real names, the man was called 'Commando' the woman "Scare the Baby".

Leader of Evidence: How did the man call his wife?

Alieu Bockarie:"Scare the Baby".

Leader of Evidence: All the years you were in captivity, were you staying in the bush or town?

Alieu Bockarie: In the bush.

Leader of Evidence: Were you staying in the open?

Alieu Bockarie: There were huts.

Leader of Evidence: Were you stable?

Alieu Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What was your duty when you were with them?

Alieu Bockarie: I was in charge of cleaning my commando's room and also did domestic work.

Leader of Evidence: Were there small boys of your age in captivity?

Alieu Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What were they doing?

Alieu Bockarie: They did similar housework.

Leader of Evidence: What did the others do?

Alieu Bockarie – They moved about with their bosses.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know if any of those children received military training?

Alieu Bockarie: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether these abducted children were involved in attacks with their commanders?

Alieu Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did they explain how they went about it?

Alieu Bockarie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have friends?

Alieu Bockarie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see them come back with looted items?

Alieu Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see them come back with newly abducted children?

Alieu Bockarie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see children or the rebels come back with wounds after the attacks?

Alieu Bockarie: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you hear or witness abducted children killed.

Alieu Bockarie: I don't know and I have never heard about that.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels use drugs?

Alieu Bockarie: I did not see them, I was worried about my life and the pain I was going through.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Even though you stayed home, didn't the RUF initiate you as member?

Alieu Bockarie: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So you did not go through any ceremony with them?

Allieu – No.

Leader of Evidence: You said you had a baby with a lady in the bush, how did you come to know each other?

Allieu Bockarie: It was an arrangement with her mother and me, she went to Kono, where we met and I moved with her to Makeni.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels abduct her as well?

Alieu Bockarie: No.

Leader of Evidence: How did she get to Kono?

Alieu Bockarie: That was towards the end of the war, when civilians were moving in and out of Kono.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old is the child?

Alieu Bockarie: One year old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We've been asking you questions; have you any question for the Commission?

Alieu Bockarie: We have been brought here, what income have you for us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Commission does not give money to people. All we have to do is to recommend to the government and in some cases if there is need for you to seek medical attention we arrange for such facilities if you so desire. Any other questions?

Alieu Bockarie : No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendations to make to the **Commission** for onward transmission to the government?

Aliou Bockarie: I am recommending to the government to help our community; we have lost our parents, and we are appealing to government to rehabilitate our community. We are also appealing for food and medical assistance and zinc for houses.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. Your recommendation will be included in our report. The government has helped you to go through some skills training and you have your starting tools with you to help in your community. Thank you for coming to help us. Even with your disability, try to do something out of your knowledge to sustain you.

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Abu Mansaray

WITNESS NO: 10/27/0503

REFERENCE:

Abu Mansaray, took an oath on the Bible, administered by the Presiding Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

Abu Mansaray: I lost my mother before the war started in Kenema. I was staying with my father when the rebels attacked Kenema Town. The rebels knocked on our door and demanded for money from my father. At that time, he had no money; he was beaten and laid on the floor. They still insisted that he give them money; he was shot on his stomach. I ran with my grandmother to a nearby village. After a week my grandmother sent me to check for my father, I met him in severe pains; after two days he died. I went back to the village to inform my grandmother about his death. My grandmother then advised that I should report the matter to the Chief. I did that and I was given five strong men to help with the burial of my father. We came to the house and opened the door, there was no time to wash his corpse, no money to buy some cloth, and we then used a blanket and a country cloth to wrap him. We observed the funeral rite for only a day.

After the death of my father, I came to collect our property; unfortunately for me there was a fight between the Soldiers and Kamajors. The Kamajors alleging that I was a Soldier captured me. I pleaded with them that I was a Schoolboy and I took out my identity card. They tore it and threw it away. They insisted and tied me with a rope and beat me and they threatened to put a tyre around my body and set me ablaze. I thank God for the timely intervention of the ECOMOG. I then went to their camp and they took care of me until I recovered. Since my father died in the year 2000 I have not been able to go to school. After I left the ECOMOG base, I put up with some of my friends. My grandmother was a very old woman, since then I have not seen her. The friends I am staying with are all going to school. Their father only cares for my feeding. I was in Form 2 when the rebels struck. Now I am at home doing nothing.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you for coming and sharing your experiences with us. We are going to ask you few questions based on your verbal statement, just for some clarification.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for coming. I just want you to clarify some issues; the people who attacked your father what fighting group did they belong to?

Abu Mansaray: – They were RUF fighters.

Commissioner Torto: Can you identify the people who shot your father?

Abu Mansaray: I can still remember their faces.

Commissioner Torto: The kamajors who had wanted to kill you, can you identify them?

Abu Mansaray: Yes, if I see them I can identify them.

Commissioner Torto: Are they in town?

Abu Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Torto: You said your father was asked for money, how did they know that your father had money?

Abu Mansaray: My father was a popular tailor.

Commissioner Torto: Was he a member of any of the fighting force?

Abu Mansaray – No.

Commissioner Torto: What are you doing now?

Abu Mansaray: I am not doing anything.

Commissioner Torto: What do you intend to do now?

Abu Mansaray: I want to continue my education.

Leader of Evidence: You said that there was a fight between the soldiers and kamajors, is that so?

Abu Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What soldiers were they? SLA

Abu Mansaray: Soldiers and kamajors

Leader of Evidence: Was it the soldiers fighting the kamajors or kamajors fighting rebels?

Abu Mansaray: I mean soldiers and the kamajors.

Leader of Evidence: So the RUF were not in town?

Abu Mansaray: No.

Leader of Evidence: Where did the fight take place?

Abu Mansaray: In Kenema.

Leader of Evidence: When was that?

Abu Mansaray: Three weeks after the death of my father.

Leader of Evidence: Do you remember the month?

Abu Mansaray: Yes. It was in February.

Leader of Evidence: Why did you think they accused you of being a soldier?

Abu Mansaray: During the war, any young man was accused of being a soldier with the aim of destroying their life.

Leader of Evidence: Were they in a particular cloth?

Abu Mansaray: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you have brothers and sisters?

Abu Mansaray: I had no brother but a sister. I was told she is in Bo; she is living a life that is not favourable with me, that is why I have not bother to contact her.

Leader of Evidence: Do you have other relatives?

Abu Mansaray: I don't have any relative; I am staying with my friends whose father is taking care of me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why didn't you go to Wanjama, to find out whether anybody can give you news about your grandmother?

Abu Mansaray: – I have never gone there.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why then did you say you don't know her whereabouts?

Abu – The people we were staying with don't know anything about her.

Commissioner Marcus Jones – Did they not tell you about your grandmother?

Abu Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I am sorry for the loss of your grandmother. Have you been to your old School to ask for assistant?

Abu Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: But the school is in Kenema.

Abu Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much, do you have any questions for the Commission?

Abu Mansaray: I have explained my plight, I want to know if there is any way you can help so that I will continue my education or if there are other ways you can be of assistance to me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: TRC does not have money to give to individuals; our staff will refer you to an NGO that would be able to assist you. Are you in form 2?

Abu Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You can go back to your school and see if you can get any help from them. Were you a good student while in school?

Abu Mansaray: I used to do well.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation you want to make which we can include in our report to the government?

Abu Mansaray: I am still emphasizing on my education, I want to continue my education, I don't have parents; even if my grandmother is still alive, she can't be in a position to help me because she would be old by now.

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Sheku Mattia

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE:

Sheku Mattia took an oath on the Koran, administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

The witness testified yesterday, and he said he wants to give additional information and would be very happy to answer any questions.

TESTIMONY

Sheku Mattia: Yesterday, I informed you that I was a kamajor, what forced me to become a kamajor was that I was a chief in my village. My brothers who were with me were all in the movement fighting. I used to go to the war front and fight. I was an administrator; I used to organize the fighters, whenever there were disputes I used to make peace. In the Kenema district, we were the first people to be initiated in the movement. We were not in large number; we were about 250 men on the ground. We fought and the people of the district were impressed. Before we came the soldiers used to punish our people. A lot of people died in the struggle; any time they saw a young man they will interrogate him and within few hours he will be branded a rebel and killed. That was the punishment our people were going through. That was the reason why our people went into the bush. The soldiers used to collect possessions and food from us in the bush. When we started operating, we stopped them from doing all those things. At the initial stage, the soldiers did not accept us because they said we were not trained fighters. For two weeks we negotiated and at last they accepted us. Our fighting skills were put to test. We demonstrated for them, they shot some of our men. We stood before their machine guns and they released bullets on us, but the bullets did not kill any one of us. So they were satisfied with us. We went with them to the front, but at that time we only had knives. There were eighteen rebel camps in our chiefdom. Before we knew it, the soldiers had connived with the rebels. The civilian populace in Blama used to inform us that the soldiers and the rebels had formed collaboration. Those of us that came saw it clearly, at night we would see a lot of people in Blama Town. When we destroyed all the camps and finally reached Bandawo, they decided to join us and the soldiers accepted us. We decided to work hand in hand with them because the government recognized them. The day we went on the attack there were 50 soldiers, the arrangement was that we lead and they follow. Upon our arrival in Bandawo, the rebels were far from us, they saw us from a distance and they opened fire. As the firing continued, the soldiers who went with us returned but we still continued to advance. We captured some of them; their guns were taken and handed over to the soldiers. Since then would go to the war front with

them; in some cases they used to hold our clothes for protection; that was how we started working together.

When they saw our strength, they organized themselves quietly, and went to the initiator. They were initiated, a huge sum of money was paid to our initiator; because of poverty, our initiator performed the initiation ceremony. Akim, a senior member in the rank and file of the army was also initiated alongside over 500 soldiers. We never knew their intention. Some other rebels came and they were initiated, they then went and posed as kamajors and committed so many human right violations and the blame was on the Kamajors. Civilians who were not initiated also adopted the dress code of the kamajors. They also committed atrocities and blamed the kamajors. This was the additional information I had wanted to give. I should have said it all but there were soldiers around; I still fear their old tricks. If you can invite another senior member of the kamajor he may give you the same story. I am a Muslim and also a Chief, I will not misinform this Commission, and if I do I will be ashamed of my self. I am saying this because our intension was to protect our people.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for explaining to us. According to your story, many of the violations people blame your movement for were not true.

Sheku Jayah: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We have been told that the kamajors would just stop people, question them, insist that they were rebels and killed them just for the sake of killing. Is that true?

Sheku Jayah: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What did you do to the initiator, did you punish him or did you agree that he continue the initiation of other people?

Sheku Jayah: At first when the soldiers came, we were comfortable with them, being that they were fighting for the nation, and they had guns but no protection; each time we went to the bush they had to run, so we welcomed the idea.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: After the initiation did they turn their guns to kill you?

Sheku Jayah: Yes, they did.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Sheku, just a follow up on some of the questions we asked yesterday. What happened to Akim and the soldiers who were initiated, did they end up as Kamajors?

Sheku Mattia: He did not join us they broke away and fought against us.

Commissioner Torto: According to one testimony, there was a lady whose brother was killed and forced to dance in the process. What group of kamajors did that?

Sheku Mattia: There were a lot of initiations performed in different places. People were initiated here and there.

Commissioner Torto: How did you get your weapons?

Sheku Mattia: We got guns from the rebels, when we overpowered them, we collected their guns.

Commissioner Torto: What was the cost of the initiation?

Sheku Mattia: There were lot of things involved, we paid our fees in groups. The Le250,000.00 I spoke about in Small Bo was just a token to the initiator. The actual fee was about Le500, 000.00 .We bought all the materials that were needed for the initiation and other traditional practices.

Commissioner Torto: Is it true that cannibalism was practiced by the kamajors?

Sheku Mattia: I told you earlier on that there were so many initiators and they had their norms. Those of us who were on this side did not do such. There were so many things that we could not eat. The laws prevented us from eating so many things. We were advised not to eat outside food. Some of those foods would have been prepared with certain things that were taboo to our society. If one were to partake of such food, you would have gone against the law. Even at the war front the only thing we were allowed to eat, even if we were there for two days, was one palm nut. You cannot just eat any food.

Commissioner Torto: There were speculations that during the early part of the war the kamajors did very well to protect their people. Civilians were more comfortable with the kamajors than the soldiers. But there were times when the Kamajors went to Kono and started killing people who did not belong to their tribe; they started operating on tribal lines.

Sheku Mattia: I am under oath; I did not go to any other chiefdom even within the Kenema district after fighting in my chiefdom. After declaring our chiefdom safe we were there to do administrative work. We made arrangements for most of the chiefs who had left their villages to go back. I have never heard of such a violation.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know where the soldiers got those huge sums of money to pay for their initiation?

Sheku Mattia: They were miners and they used to collect money from us. They made a lot of roadblocks; each time you passed through their checkpoints you pay Le500 or Le1, 000 as a war effort. Every civilian paid that sum of money everyday.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What did you do with the money they paid for initiation?

Sheku Mattia: The money was paid to the initiator not the fighters.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was he not a member of the movement?

Sheku Mattia: He was our leader.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you allowed him to keep all the money?

Sheku Mattia:: The money he collected was for initiation, we were initiated ourselves.

Leader of Evidence: Maybe I have asked you some questions that might have sounded strange to you; it is because I am a foreigner. On the question of initiation, since the initiator was the leader of the kamajors, would you explain why he decided to initiate everyone that came to him? At one point you mentioned that rebels were initiated too. Are there no rules as to who should be initiated?

Sheku Mattia: There were laws guiding the initiation.

Leader of Evidence: But you said that the initiator started initiating people at random, is that so?

Sheku Mattia: The chiefs selected people from their Chiefdom and Community level and brought them over for initiation. The chiefs stood as a guarantors before they were initiated. I do not want you to get confused about the number of people the soldiers brought for initiation. Because

they wanted the initiation, they went through some authorities, and we organized a traditional performance; they brought a lot of food for us. We were all convinced that the soldiers were comfortable to work with us. But they had a hidden agenda. They were initiated like every one of us. If you are an initiate your colleagues will fire but it will not work, unless you put up a fight. The only time it works is when you go against the rules and regulations. If they urinate on our uniform then they will overcome us.

Leader of Evidence – Even if they violate the law, will they still be Kamajors? After putting up resistance against you, I mean the soldiers; did they continue to be kamajors? Were the Kamajors able to kill some of the soldiers?

Sheku Mattia: I can't deliberate on that; after clearing my chieftom I did not go to other chieftoms to fight.

Leader of Evidence: When was the fight between the kamajors and the soldiers?

Sheku Mattia: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Were you involved in the fight?

Sheku Mattia: No.

Leader of Evidence: Which groups of kamajors were fighting with the soldiers?

Sheku Mattia: I can't tell, at the initial stage we were about 250, within six months the number increased to about 10,000.

Leader of Evidence: Is this figure in your Chieftom alone?

Sheku Mattia: I mean the whole region.

Leader of Evidence: By the end of the war can you specify the number of kamajors that were in this country?

Sheku Mattia: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Since you were a Chief can you tell us the number of people you selected for initiation?

Sheku Mattia: I told you we were about 250 in number.

Leader of Evidence: Who then introduced the rebels for initiation?

Sheku Mattia: We were told that the Chiefs in that area where the rebels were, stood as guarantors for them.

Leader of Evidence: Why did the chiefs do that?

Sheku Mattia: Some of them who came from the bush, for instance, were related to the Chiefs. They would claim that they were captured by the rebels and have now escaped and so would like to be initiated in the movement to protect their chieftom. Based on that they were initiated in the movement. When the number increased, a lot of things went wrong.

Leader of Evidence: Was there a command structure in the movement?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you explain the command structure of the movement?

Sheku Mattia: When we first started to operate, control was under the Chiefs. When the number increased, they delegated powers to some executive members who were not even members of the movement and this did not go down well with the entire membership, especially the Chiefs. When our Chiefdom was declared safe I then decided to continue to perform my duties as a Chief and forget about the movement. I cannot tell who were responsible.

Leader of Evidence: Was the executive at the district level?

Sheku Mattia: I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence: In Blama, Small Bo who took over the control of the movement.

Sheku Mattia: Most of the people who were executive members were not initiated members at that time, we were frustrated, we queried them and opted to go back to our village and defend our territory.

Leader of Evidence: So did you inform your men (250) not to follow the executive?

Sheku Mattia: The 250 men were the number in the entire chiefdom. I advised my men from my own village to defend our own locality.

Leader of Evidence: You said that the number was increased within six months period?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Will you agree with me that as the number increased, strange things started to happen?

Sheku Mattia: I have already explained one such issue, the creation of an executive and the initiation of the soldiers, and we also understood that rebels were initiated from Kailahun, and this problem gave rise to the increase in human rights violations.

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that the initiation of several people in the movement created the blame for the Kamajors?

Sheku Mattia: One should say a lot of things happened.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us some of those atrocities committed?

Sheku Mattia: They used to take people's belongings from them and even rape at times.

Leader of Evidence: Did they kill people?

Sheku Mattia: There were people who put on the dressing of the kamajors and committed these atrocities.

Leader of Evidence: Were those people initiated?

Sheku Mattia: They were not initiated to do the work of kamajors; if they were genuine kamajors who underwent the initiation like I did, they would not go against the law. I am sitting under oath, everything I have said here is the truth especially issues relating to civilians.

Leader of Evidence: In other words you are not convinced that the real initiates do committed such crimes against humanity?

Sheku Mattia: If you don't abide by the rules and regulations that governed the movement ceased to be a Kamajor.

Leader of Evidence: Which year were you initiated?

Sheku Mattia: In 1995.

Leader of Evidence: From which year did you cease to be in command of the 250 members?

Sheku Mattia: It was around the latter days of 1999 when the executives were elected.

Leader of Evidence: So during those four years chiefs like you were in command of the kamajors in your different Chiefdoms?

Sheku Mattia: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much, I don't know whether you want to ask us some more questions or make additional recommendations?

Sheku Mattia: I have no more questions I rely on the ones I submitted yesterday. One thing I wanted to say is that all of us have to say the truth. The thing I have told you, at least I went to school and have some basic education and have worked for 27 years. I have retired and gone to my village; my training and activities in the society prompted the people in the Chiefdom to elect me as Chief. I want you to believe all that I have said. What I saw and did, is what I have said and beside that I am prepared to say it anywhere; I know it is the truth and God loves the truth. My fear yesterday was of the soldiers, I do fear their tricks. We did a lot for the Police; we saved them on many occasions. I want you to believe all that I have said.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We thank you very much for cooperating and coming here today. As for yesterday we quite understood; self-protection is a natural instinct. Thank you.

DATE: 28th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Mohamed Kallon

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE:

Mohamed Kallon took an oath on the Koran, administered by the Presiding Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones.

TESTIMONY

Mohamed Kallon:In 1997 when the rebels attacked Nomorfama, there was rumour of war; we never knew what it was and we were only interested in farming. I am the eldest in my family. My father used to advise me never to under-rate war. I used to go to Kenema, and I saw people coming; he advised us to be saving money. I continued to neglect him until the war came in our village and he asked me where we should go. I told him we should come to Kenema; he opted to go to the bush instead of coming to Kenema. We took some of our belongings and constructed a farmhouse; we only went to spy on our village. A village near us, Waimotocombur, was attacked. I left my people in the bush. I saw flames in the air and when I got closer to the village, people were running from the village. All of us ran into the bush. We were told somebody

was killed in that attack. I did not venture to reach to the village; the moment I got that information I returned to the bush.

Whilst we were in the bush, we only fed on bananas; there was no place for us to go. Three days later our own village fell under the rebels, the place where we were located was about three miles to our village; in the evening we saw flames in the air. A few of us went to spy. In the evening when we went to the village in the evening it was already burnt down. I ask my colleagues to escort me to my own house; my father's house and toilet were on fire, I returned to the bush and informed my father of the ugly incident. I told him that two houses were burnt down. He was confused because it was already night; in the morning he came to the site and was weeping. There were soldiers in Serabu Mansaray at that time; they were on patrol and went to that village, they met and they arrested him, he refused to go with them. He told them he had built his house out of proceeds he receives from the sale of Palm Kernel. He insisted that he was not going anywhere. He would gather the burnt zinc sheets for the rest of the day and return to bush in the evening. I told him that the zinc sheets were not useful anymore; if anything happened to him in the process it will be a shock to the family. He insisted that he is not going with them. I went in search of food for my family. There was nothing we could do nowhere to go. We were in that bush and looking for a way to come to Kenema but the distance was too long. There were a lot of things my people needed but they were not in the bush. I promised my father that I would come to Kenema to get those things for them. He advised me to be careful. In the morning I was in the company of some my colleagues and we traveled for the rest of day until we reached Kenema. I bought the items, 5 cups of salt and tobacco; we traveled all throughout the night, and finally went back to the bush and presented all the items I had bought in Kenema. I persuaded him to come to Kenema but he refused; he said I am a young man and I can stay in Kenema; if I happen to have food I should send it for the family. I bade farewell and came to Kenema the next day.

I spent four days in Kenema; there were soldiers in Serabu. I met soldiers in Kenema and called Peter's attention. I told him I could not stay in Kenema because my families were still in the bush. I asked him to allow me stay with him so that I can have something to assist my family. I went with him and he advised me to stay with my family, if they had palm oil I could easily bring it to Kenema. The soldiers accepted but they said that if they allowed me to stay in the bush each time I did business we would have to pay them a fee. I had a lot of friends who had confidence in me. I introduced them all to Mr. Peter. We used to get the palm oil and bring it to Kenema for sale; each time we made sales we would give them their fee and go back to the bush. We did that for a while, when we heard about the initiation in Bo. They said that people were initiated to defend their Chiefdom. I obtained permission from my mother to go to Blama and enquire about this movement; she gave me her blessing. By that time people used to travel in a convoy, by the time I arrived the convoy had already left, but one vehicle was about to take off. One of my friends and some other people boarded the vehicle and we left. Beyond Serabu, the last village to Blama was my own village, after that village we fell in an ambush. At that time I did not know what an ambush was. I saw people coming from the bush, half dressed in military uniform some holding guns. The vehicle was stopped and we all ran into the bush, the place was thick. The little money I had, about Le30, 000 was taken from me, I was severely beaten and stripped naked, and I only had my underpants on. I went through my village, into the bush and found my parents. I put on my shorts and went to Serabu and returned to Kenema. I met my people weeping. When they heard about the ambush they thought I was dead. We came out of the bush and met the soldiers at Serabu. They hired a vehicle for me to come back to this town. We used to work for people in this town. Then this kamajor initiation came into effect in this town and I decided to join the movement. I was initiated; even now I am an initiate member of the movement. I was initiated so as to secure my self and protect my people. I was an initiate when the peace agreement was signed. They asked us to go back to our village and I did return. I am now in my village residing in our burnt house. I took my brothers who were non-initiates back to the village. That was what happened to me during this war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Mohamed, for telling us about your experiences.

Commissioner Torto: I would limit my questions to just two. Why were you giving the fee to the soldiers?

Mohamed Kallon: He was protecting me in the bush.

Commissioner Torto: What type of protection?

Mohamed Kallon: He was a soldier and they were in power.

Commissioner Torto: So you were just giving it to him because he was a soldier and a Godfather as well?

Mohamed Kallon: At that time, soldiers were not Godfathers, but they had a lot of power.

Commissioner Torto: Did you engage in any fight when you were in the movement?

Mohamed Kallon: No.

Commissioner Torto: Did you normally go to the war front?

Mohamed Kallon –No.

Commissioner Torto: What were you doing in the movement then?

Mohamed Kallon: I was a young man, and I could not stay with my people in the bush, so I decided to join the movement. I was a student in Blama.

Commissioner Torto: What were you doing in the Kamajor movement?

Mohamed Kallon: We used to organize people in our community, each time they wanted to go to the war front we were asked to subscribe youth.

Leader of Evidence: In what year were you initiated?

Mohamed Kallon: In 1999.

Leader of Evidence: How long did you spend in the movement?

Mohamed Kallon: I have never broken the law, I am still a kamajor.

Leader of Evidence: Were you actually part of the group of kamajors initiated by Sheku Mattia?

Mohamed Kallon: They were initiated in Bo, they were our Commanders, and we took instructions from them. He was the general overseer for the two villages.

Leader of Evidence: Did you actually join in the fight?

Mohamed Kallon : I was not involved in the fight.

Leader of Evidence: What type of report did you receive, from the front?

Mohamed Kallon: If there is an attack on a village, they would report that they had repelled the attack.

Leader of Evidence: Did they report rebel causality?

Mohamed Kallon: They used to report on that, but I have never witnessed it.

Leader of Evidence: So they told you that they killed rebels?

Mohamed Kallon: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Which particular fighting group of rebels did they actually kill?

Mohamed Kallon: They killed rebels from different groups.

Leader of Evidence: How did they know that they were rebels?

Mohamed Kallon: They used to give us the information.

Leader of Evidence: But they reported to you, you were supposed to ask questions?

Mohamed Kallon: As they told us they had killed rebels I didn't bother to ask questions.

Leader of Evidence: In these attacks did they kill kamajors?

Mohamed Kallon : I was told that one of my brothers who was a Kamajor was killed in a battle.

Leader of Evidence: Did you find his corpse?

Mohamed Kallon: No.

Leader of Evidence: Was he your biological brother?

Mohamed Kallon: No, we were cousins.

Leader of Evidence: During these confrontations, did the kamajors capture rebels?

Mohamed Kallon: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have any report that rebels were captured?

Mohamed Kallon: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you have any idea about the age of the youngest rebel killed?

Mohamed Kallon: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: Earlier you told us that you subscribed Kamajors to go to the front, is that correct?

Mohamed Kallon :Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Why didn't you go yourself?

Mohamed Kallon – Only the strong ones went to the front.

Leader of Evidence: How old were they?

Mohamed Kallon: 25 years and above.

Leader of Evidence: How old are you?

Mohamed Kallon: I am 35 years old.

Leader of Evidence: So an adult like you never went to the front? Are there reasons for that?

Mohamed Kallon: There was a reason, I have bad eyesight, and if I had forced my way it would have been a problem.

Leader of Evidence: Before someone is initiated is there no stipulation that you must be in proper physical condition so as to enable you go to the front when called upon?

Mohamed Kallon :I got the problem after my initiation.

Leader of Evidence: How long was that?

Mohamed Kallon: After one year.

Leader of Evidence: You want to tell me that before that time you never went to the front?

Mohamed Kallon: Yes, I never did.

Leader of Evidence: As a Commander, Why didn't you go yourself?

Mohamed Kallon :If any thing went wrong whilst I was away what will I do?

Leader of Evidence: But some Commanders did go to the front?

Mohamed Kallon: We used to put things straight before they went on an attack.

Leader of Evidence: What about your cousin who was killed, how old was he?

Mohamed Kallon: I cannot tell his age.

Leader of Evidence: Are you older than him?

Mohamed Kallon: Maybe I am older than him.

Leader of Evidence: What particular weapon did the Kamajors use to fight?

Mohamed Kallon: We used Knives.

Leader of Evidence: How then did you kill rebels?

Mohamed Kallon: We used our knives to kill them.

Leader of Evidence: Didn't they have guns, how then did you kill them with your knives?

Mohamed Kallon: They had guns, but we used our charms to overpower them.

Leader of Evidence: After killing the rebels did you collect their guns?

Mohamed Kallon: I did not witness any of those incidents, the fighters who went to the front told me.

Leader of Evidence: When the kamajors came back did they normally bring guns?

Mohamed Kallon: It did not happen in my area.

Leader of Evidence: How many kamajors did you have in your area?

Mohamed Kallon: Sometimes I sent 5; there were times when I sent 10.

Leader of Evidence: How many of you were initiated members in your area?

Mohamed Kallon: We were in fifteen in number; it is a small village.

Leader of Evidence: Whom did you report to?

Mohamed Kallon – All reports were made to our Headquarter in Blama, Small Bo.

Leader of Evidence: Who was your Commander?

Mohamed Kallon: He was Kini Brima.

Leader of Evidence: What was his post?

Mohamed Kallon: He was the Section Commander.

Leader of Evidence: What was the Command structure of the movement?

Mohamed Kallon: I only made reports to him, I don't know whom he was answerable to.

Leader of Evidence: Did you hold meetings?

Mohamed Kallon: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Where did you hold meetings?

Mohamed Kallon :In Blama, Small Bo.

Leader of Evidence: Who usually attended the meetings?

Mohamed Kallon: All those who were under his command.

Leader of Evidence: How many of you were in that meeting?

Mohamed Kallon: More than 150.

Leader of Evidence: You said you were already fifteen in your village; I suppose that the number would increase as the struggles continued.

Mohamed Kallon: We were initiated for several reasons, mostly for protection.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Mohamed Kallon we want to thank you for your testimony, we've been asking you a number of questions and we want to know if you have any question for us.

Mohamed Kallon: Yes, I was in my village, when I got the invitation. I am supposed to be in my swamp now. Why did you invite me to come here?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: This Commission is set up by an act of Parliament, and we are to collect information to make a report, an unbiased report about what happened during the war

and we invite people to make statement to the Commission. We invite them to come and share their experiences in public, or if they are not comfortable to tell us their experiences in public we have a closed hearing like this one. Sometimes when people have very vital information for us and they refuse to come we could and we have the power to issue a subpoena to handle the individual. But in your case we are happy that you have come willingly to help us and you've come to a closed hearing, so that if you are feeling uncomfortable to talk in public, here, there is nothing to worry about. Any other question?

Mohamed Kallon: Is there any assistance you can give to me after this explanation?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: From what you told us, I gather that you were a successful farmer. You are an able bodied man and you seem to be carrying on fine. The TRC has no money to give to people; some people, who are handicapped, are referred to NGO's or medical centres where they can get help. If you have needs like that which you haven't told us, you can talk to our briefer at the end of the session and she will refer you, if possible, to an NGO but then you have benefited for coming here. Because in the long run the Government will have to act based on your recommendations. The improvement the government would be able to make will benefit you, your father and your children and your community as a whole. Do you have any recommendation you would like us to put in our report to pass on to government?

Mohamed Kallon : I told you my father's house was burnt down, I have no means to put up that structure now. I would like the government to help me rehabilitate my father's house.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any other recommendation?

Mohamed Kallon: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Possibly when government implements our recommendation, you might have a housing scheme or other means of help to develop your Community. Thank you for coming.

DAY FOUR

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003

WITNESS NAME: Jeneba Konneh (Christian)

WITNESS NO: 025

REFERENCE NO: 3/23/3486

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto, the presiding Commissioner administered the oath,

TESTIMONY

Jeneba Konneh: When the rebels attacked our village at about 2 a.m., they gathered all of us in our house; I then went out with my child to a banana tree. People were shouting and crying and I saw blazing fire. By then, my husband was not around. The fire was raging and we ran away into the bush. We passed the night in the bush. We later went to a town called Telu Bongor. In the morning two people went to the town and met people gathered in our burnt house. I told my mother that we should go to Bo. We then went to Taiama camp but we had not stayed there for long when another attack took place. We went to settle in another camp and later we returned to our village. My father was amongst those burnt in our house.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. We sympathize with you for the loss of your father. On the 14th of February 2003 you made a statement to the statement taker. This question is

based on your written statement that your father and seven students were burnt down in the same house. What kind of students were they.

Jeneba Konneh: My father had three children together with the other four children he was taking care of.

Commissioner Torto: Where they children attending school or was he teaching them?

Jeneba Konneh: His brother died leaving the children behind so he had to take care of them.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know the rebels who did that to you?

Jeneba Konneh: I can't identify them as they covered their faces with blue paint and some were in uniforms.

Commissioner Torto: If you were to make a wise guess what group do you think the rebels belonged to?

Jeneba Konneh: There were tall ones among them speaking Liberia pidgin, Mende and krio.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Jeneba Konneh for coming to the Commission. The Commission is sorry that you lost your father, children and other people in such a gruesome way. Can you tell us the names of your sisters and brothers who died in that fire?

Jeneba Konneh: Yes. Pa Konneh, Fatmata Konneh, Kadiatu Konneh, Ibrahim Konneh, Bockarie Konneh, Aminata Konneh and Natoma Mansaray.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Pa Konneh was your father?

Jeneba Konneh: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The names given including the students were they your brothers and sisters?

Jeneba Konneh: Yes they were my sisters and brothers including the students.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What happened to your mother?

Jeneba Konneh: My mother who was captured and fell sick on the way. She had an injury on her left leg. I met her in Sembehun

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who captured her before she fell down?

Jeneba Konneh: The rebels.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is she having treatment for the bad leg?

Jeneba Konneh: Yes. My uncle took her away and she is receiving medical attention.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In what year did all this happen?

Jeneba Konneh: In 1991

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: That is quite a long time now hasn't the bad leg healed yet?

Jeneba Konneh: Thanks to God, she can walk now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: where is the husband now? Did he suffer from rebel atrocities?

Jeneba Konneh: He is dead; he never suffered from rebel atrocities

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that your father was targeted?

Jeneba Konneh: I can't tell because the town was attacked and many people were killed.

Leader of Evidence: Can you remember how many people were killed?

Jeneba Konneh: Yes. I can remember some of them

Leader of Evidence: Can you name them?

Jeneba Konneh: Yes. Pa Momoh Sheriff he was old. Alhaji Mohamed Koroma was also old, his sister Mamie Koroma, those are the names I can recall.

Leader of Evidence: How many were killed in all since you cannot remember their names?

Jeneba Konneh: I was told that 23 people were killed, including strangers and displaced people.

Commissioner Torto: We have asked you a lot of questions have you any question to ask the Commission?

Jeneba Konneh: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendations to make to the government?

Jeneba Konneh: I am pleading to the government; we have lost our house so we need rehabilitation. We have no n health centre, no toilet, and no proper drinking water. We drink water from the drainage. We have organized ourselves in some agricultural work. So I want the government to assist me through TRC, with agricultural facilities. These are my recommendations.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. I want to congratulate you for forming the women's agricultural group. That was a very brilliant point for resettlement. The issue of medical facilities is taken into good part because we know after the war communities lose these facilities. The Commission does not have the mandate to build houses for people. There are NGOs that assist with some kind of help so I want to encourage you to remind us so that you can meet our staff. The provision of sanitary service is an area that should not wait for government intervention. You should start finding ways to help yourselves. So continue with the agricultural programme. All recommendations will be put in good part. Do you have another recommendation? If not, you may step down.

Jeneba Konneh: I don't have any other recommendation.

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003
WITNESS NAME: Mohamed Conteh (Muslim)
WITNESS NO: 026
REFERENCE NO: 3/23/3486

The presiding Commissioner, Mr Sylvanus Torto, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

Mohamed Conteh: The rebels attacked our village at about 1.30 a.m. and they gathered all of us that were captured in one place. They collected our possessions and put them in a commandeered vehicle. They killed my brother and took away our belongings. At about 8 a.m., they came again and assumed that we were safe and that some of us could join them but we refused. They left and came again early the following morning. Most of the young people fled to a nearby bush but the old and sick were unable to. They burnt a lot of houses and when we returned to the town some time later, I only saw the charred remains of my father and grand children. I took my sister to Gerehun and the Kamajor movement started; I was initiated as a Kamajor. At that time, we had a cordial working relationship with the soldiers. We went to the war fronts together. When chasing rebels, if they dropped their guns, we'll pass them on to the soldiers. After the war, they told us to disarm but since I hadn't a gun, I did not receive the disarmament benefits. However, I am grateful to Tejan Kabbah that we have been resettled in our villages. I fought to defend my village and to protect my people.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. We sympathize with you for the loss of your father and others. What was the name of your father?

Mohamed Conteh: Mustapha Conteh.

Commissioner Torto: What is the name of the town where this incident happened?

Mohamed: Kando Nyama.

Commissioner Torto: What about the other people who died can you name them?

Mohamed Conteh: Ibrahim Conteh, Umaru Conteh, Hawa Conteh, Abdulai Conteh, Mamie Conteh; they were my relatives.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know who killed them?

Mohamed Conteh: The rebels who set fire on the house.

Commissioner Torto: Can you identify them by face?

Mohamed Conteh: No because they looked very fearful.

Commissioner Torto: What does the following name mean to you Bangura and others?

Mohamed Conteh: Those were some of our leaders in the Kamajor movement. Bangura was our initiator.

Commissioner Torto: Did you kill any body?

Mohamed Conteh: No.

Commissioner Torto: Did you kill any rebel?

Mohamed Conteh: No.

Commissioner Torto: When did you join the Kamajor?

Mohamed Conteh: I joined the Kamajor in 1996.

Commissioner Torto: I want you to remember the oath and tell me that you didn't kill any rebel.

Mohamed Conteh: No I was using a knife so I did not kill any body.

Commissioner Torto: Don't you believe that a knife kills?

Mohamed Conteh: I believe that but sometime when my colleagues killed, we shouted and left the corpse there.

Commissioner Torto: What did you do with the body?

Mohamed Conteh: We abandoned it.

Commissioner Torto: During your encounter with the rebels did you meet civilians on attack?

Mohamed Conteh: In some villages, we saw civilians running during cross firing and stray bullets sometimes caught them.

Commissioner Torto: You joined the Kamajor out of frustration after your father's death?

Mohamed Conteh: I joined the movement to liberate my country and my self because we were under threat from the rebels and Soldiers.

Commissioner Torto: If you had encountered a rebel what would you have done to him?

Mohamed Conteh: If it had happened that way, I would have fought.

Commissioner Torto: So you did not kill any civilian or rebel even by accident ;you did not even inflict wounds on d them?

Mohamed Conteh: No.

Commissioner Torto: Did you help civilians?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Under what circumstances?

Mohamed Conteh: I was the discipline commander. Sometimes when we went to the front and my colleagues threatened people, I stopped them.

Commissioner Torto: If you were to turn back the hands of time and find your self in a similar position would you join the **Kamajor**?

Mohamed Conteh: As long as we get support from the government I will join again.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming and for the testimony you have given. You partly answered the question I am about to ask. We had evidence that the combatants indulged in drugs, did the Kamajors take drugs as well?

Mohamed Conteh: We were in groups. In the Bo area they took drugs but for us here in Kenema we were not allowed to take drugs because we were under oath.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: As a commander, what was your duty?

Mohamed Conteh: I was the discipline commander.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What was your duty; did you give instructions?

Mohamed Conteh: When anyone offends a civilian and is brought before me, I would put him in a guardroom.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What I am talking about is that if there was pending attack what instruction would you give to the subordinate?

Mohamed Conteh: When there is an attack I would go to the patrol commander immediately.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And you will do nothing more?

Mohamed Conteh: Sometimes when people are asked to and they refused I will force them to go.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So the Kamajors had guns?

Mohamed Conteh: Some did and some did not.

Leader of Evidence: I thank you very much for coming. Can you explain to me why the Kamajors didn't allow the government army to protect them?

Mohamed Conteh: They were causing many problems for the civilians. That forced us to take up the challenge and God sent the initiation to help the people of this country.

Leader of Evidence: Why did the army need help?

Mohamed Conteh: In my own thinking the soldiers were giving the civilians a lot of problems.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell me some of these problems?

Mohamed Conteh: They were behaving like rebels to the civilians. They were looting, killing innocent people. That's why God send the initiator and that was why many people joined the Kamajor.

Leader of Evidence: A lot of people joined the **Kamajor** to protect their villages and people?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What made the Kamajor and the SLA work as one since the soldiers were behaving like that?

Mohamed Conteh: The time we were working together, they were not doing bad things because of our presence.

Leader of Evidence: On one hand you were stopping them and at the same time working together?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did the Kamajors seek the support and recognition of the government?

Mohamed Conteh: Well the Kamajor were not fighting for the government to support us. We wanted peace in our land and we wanted to protect our people.

Leader of Evidence: Why did you say that you needed to work with the SLA and you had the power?

Mohamed Conteh: They were paid we were not paid that is why I said they had power.

Leader of Evidence: Why did you decide to work with them?

Mohamed Conteh: I think that when the **Kamajor** incident came it helped in bringing about the peace process because the civilian populace lost confidence in the SLA.

Leader of Evidence: You said you had support from Kabbah what kind of support?

Mohamed Conteh: During the disarmament, those with guns were given a package. Although those without guns didn't receive anything.

Leader of Evidence: You told us that if there is another war you will be a Kamajor and if Kabbah does what he was doing you will still be in the force what type of help were you talking about?

Mohamed Conteh: I was talking about the concern he had for the kamajor, if he has the same concern, I would become a Kamajor again at any time.

Leader of Evidence: Did you succeed in changing the attitude of the SLA?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes all the areas where there were checkpoints we were together.

Leader of Evidence: The conflict between the Kamajor and the SLA what was it about?

Mohamed Conteh: The time they fought I was not part of the movement.

Leader of Evidence: Did you leave the movement?

Mohamed Conteh: At that time I was not initiated.

Leader of Evidence: But you said you were initiated and you were working in collaboration with the soldiers are you still in the kamajor?

Mohamed Conteh: At that time we went together to Kailahun to chase the rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Then you stopped working with them?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us something about the group how many people were in your group?

Mohamed Conteh: There were 235 of us.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us something about the conditions to become a kamajor? Who selects the candidate?

Mohamed Conteh: The chief, the more you pay the more you are prepared. We paid for uniforms and other items.

Leader of Evidence: So anyone can become a Kamajor?

Mohamed Conteh: People from other tribes were not initiated. Only Mendes were.

Leader of Evidence: The Commission was told that soldiers were initiated; do you know any thing about that?

Mohamed Conteh: I heard about it.

Leader of Evidence: And some of the rebels were initiated?

Mohamed Conteh: I did not know about that.

Leader of Evidence: Your group of 235 going to Kailahun did you go to fight?

Mohamed Conteh: We went to Jorku.

Leader of Evidence: You went to Kailahun, Jorku, Nyama and Masigbe.

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Any other locations were you went?

Mohamed Conteh: After those fights I ended up in Bandama where I was based.

Leader of Evidence: How many confrontations did your group encounter with the rebels?

Mohamed Conteh: Three times after 1996.

Leader of Evidence: From 1996?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What did you do to all this places you went to and during those attacks how many rebels were killed?

Mohamed Conteh: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: You said some of the bodies were lying around how many did you see?

Leader of Evidence: Yes. It was about 10, 15 but I cannot tell the exact number.

Leader of Evidence: Those bodies were there men, women boys and girls?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes. The women were cooking for them.

Leader of Evidence: Were there any small women among them?

Mohamed Conteh: No girl child was among them.

Leader of Evidence: What about boys?

Mohamed Conteh: There were boys among them.

Leader of Evidence: How young were they?

Mohamed Conteh: The youngest could be around 8:9.

Leader of Evidence: Were they wearing uniforms?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes. At times

Leader of Evidence: Sometimes they were in civilian clothes?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes, jean trousers.

Leader of Evidence: Those that were not dressed in uniform how did you know that they were rebels?

Mohamed Conteh: They have RUF marks on their arms

Leader of Evidence: What is the age of the youngest among the kamajors?

Mohamed Conteh: 7 years.

Leader of Evidence: How many of them were around the age of 18?

Mohamed Conteh: I can't tell. But I believe they were about 7 or 8.

Leader of Evidence: Did you capture rebels live?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes. But on our way to kenema it started raining and we decided to wait for sometime and during that time he escaped.

Leader of Evidence: During this time you had three confrontations with the rebels; apart from that there was no fight between you again?

Mohamed Conteh: I witnessed three fights. I usually send people.

Leader of Evidence: So they were fighting?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Since you were a discipline commander can you give example of what you were doing to the civilians?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes. Sometimes when the kamajors come from the war front, they forced the civilians to assist them fetch water and do the laundry for them.

Leader of Evidence: Any case of beating of the civilians?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes once.

Leader of Evidence: Any case of a civilian killed by kamajor?

Mohamed Conteh: No, except through a stray bullet.

Leader of Evidence: When was that?

Mohamed Conteh: At a point in time the rebels attacked a town and when we went to repel the rebels, confrontation ensued. Stray bullets may have killed some civilians.

Leader of Evidence: That means that Kamajors had guns?

Mohamed Conteh: Some had guns.

Leader of Evidence: How many of you had guns in your group?

Mohamed Conteh: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: In a group of 235 just a little of you had guns?

Mohamed Conteh: Those of us with knives were in greater number?

Leader of Evidence: Where did the guns come from?

Mohamed Conteh: When there is a fighting between the rebels and **Kamajor** they usually dropped their guns and we collected them.

Leader of Evidence: So you don't take it to the SLA?

Mohamed Conteh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Journalists said that the Kamajors were more disciplined in their chiefdoms than when they moved out to other chiefdoms?

Mohamed Conteh: I cannot deny that.

Leader of Evidence: How did you know about that?

Mohamed Conteh: Sometimes you may train some body not to steal but when he moves out he may practice that.

Leader of Evidence: Where there violations of killing, raping or looting?

Mohamed Conteh: I did not see that.

Leader of Evidence: I understand that you did not see or hear of any crime like that?

Mohamed Conteh: I did not get such complaints.

Leader of Evidence: Do you think some of the allegations made on the Kamajors were false? Like people beaten by kamajor, house burning, eating people.

Mohamed Conteh: I had about cannibalism but it was hearsay.

Leader of Evidence: Did you hear of a village called Nyama were they were doing cannibalism in the Nogowa chiefdom?

Mohamed Conteh: I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: What about the other allegations?

Mohamed Conteh: I did not see any of them doing these things.

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that there is a kind law that you should not talk about?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Don't you think that you have to come and apologize for what they did?

Mohamed Conteh: I don't think so.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you very much. This thing you have said here should not be held against you so we need the facts because we want everlasting peace. So don't leave this place feeling guilty. Is the kamajor an organization or a society?

Mohamed Conteh: It a society.

Commissioner Torto: They Kamajors where killing people on accusation of being a rebel is that correct?

Mohamed Conteh: I heard about it but I did not see them doing it.

Commissioner Torto: You have been in the Kamajor for four years and didn't hear of or kill a suspect?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes. Because at that time I was in the village

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. We have asked you a lot of questions and you have answered. Do you have any question to ask the Commission?

Mohamed Conteh: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendation for consideration?

Mohamed Conteh: Yes. I am in the village at the moment; my recommendation is that our community needs a health centre because it is too far from Kenema. I was in school but at this moment I can't go back to school because I have my family but I am a trained carpenter so I can take care of the family so I want government to provide tools for me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. The health issue is taken into good part; I will comment on the skills training. There was a DDR programme wherein people were sent for skills training. You can check so that you can take a part in that. Some go to school and others to colleges and some train to be a carpenter like you. Meanwhile the other recommendations are taken into good part.

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003
WITNESS NAME: Jenneh Lansana (Muslim)
WITNESS NO: 027
REFERENCE NO: 3/23/48

The presiding Commissioner Mr Slyvanus Torto administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

Jenneh Lansana: They killed my husband and my child. They the burnt down the whole chiefdom and I am presently sick. At a point in time, they captured us and carried us to Gandohun for four good nights. One Saturday, they separated us according to places of origin. They said they were going to kill my husband. They tied and put him on a motorcycle. A mango was then forced into his mouth and they said they'd take him to Potoru. They wanted to kill him with a knife

but they didn't since he was reciting verses in the Koran. Despite his plea that he had 14 children, they killed him.

They ask us to go home, and we went, crying; after 3 days we saw people coming from the river end. A woman said they were coming and I told my mother that we should go into the house. We heard somebody saying that he had come with a vehicle to take us to Blama. I told my mother not to go out; those who went out, been killed.

Later, I fled to the bush, but fell on a rock and I'm still feeling sick. I was able to locate my mother and children later because we had earlier separated as we fled to the bush. We later went to Bo. This is my story

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Jenneh Lansana for this explanation we sympathize with you for the loss of your husband. Could you tell me the number of people taken away and killed?

Jenneh Lansana: I cannot name them all.

Commissioner Torto: Can you estimate the number?

Jenneh Lansana: No. I was in hiding, how can I tell their number?

Commissioner Torto: Who were the people who actually took those people and killed them?

Jenneh Lansana: The first one was in Gandorhun. They were rebels.

Commissioner Torto: What group of rebels?

Jenneh Lansana: They never spoke Mende language they came from Liberia.

Commissioner Torto: Under what circumstances was your mother killed?

Jenneh Lansana: They did not kill my mother; they only killed my husband.

Commissioner Torto: You also said a group of people were taken into a house and four of them were taken out and killed do you know their names?

Jenneh Lansana: Yes. Lansana Bockarie, Momoh Gibateh, Amadu Dabor, Momoh Bondu.

Commissioner Torto: A boy who was executed at the age of 15 do you know why he was killed?

Jenneh Lansana: I don't know why he was killed.

Commissioner Torto: Do you remember who actually killed him?

Jenneh Lansana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are sorry you lost your husband. Was it your husband who was reciting the Koran?

Jenneh Lansana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who was the person?

Jenneh Lansana: He is Amadu Abateh.

Leader of Evidence: You said that your husband and son were killed; was your son killed together with your husband?

Jenneh Lansana: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: What is the name of your son?

Jenneh Lansana: She was a daughter called Hawa Lansana.

Leader of Evidence: Was she killed in the same attack?

Jenneh Lansana: No. She went to Freetown to see her husband and she was killed.

Leader of Evidence: Was the baby killed as well?

Jenneh Lansana: No but a stray bullet cut its finger.

Leader of Evidence: And you said there was a second attack in your village, those who attacked the first time, were they the same rebels who attacked the second time?

Jenneh Lansana: I can't tell.

Leader of Evidence: I think, I heard you say that your village was attacked twice.

Jenneh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have questions for the Commission?

Jenneh Lansana: No.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any recommendations?

Jenneh Lansana: Yes. They have burnt our house. I am pleading with the government to rehabilitate our houses. We have no medical centre, no food; we have used sticks to build huts where we dwell. The road to our village is not motorable, there is no proper drinking water, no toilet facilities so I want you to assist us with the above facilities.

Commissioner Torto: Those are taken into good part there are Ngos that will provide those facilities for you. Your recommendation about the health situation will be included in our report. I advise that you talk to our staff so that you will be given a letter to take to MSF, if there is a branch here they can help you. Thank you very much for coming, do not forget to talk to the briefer to give you a referral letter to take to the hospital.

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003
WITNESS NAME: Emmanuel Jabati (Christian)
WITNESS NO: 028
REFERENCE NO: Ken/amputee/06

The presiding Commissioner, Mr Slyvanus Torto, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

Emmanuel Jabati: I was not a fighter. I came from Taima and I am a Kpa Mende. I came in search of money. I was in Hangha one morning, when I saw a lot of people running from Kenema to Hangha. I was in the company of a brother called Borbor. I sent him to enquire but when he returned he advised that we hide ourselves. We were there till late in the evening, when I advised that we should return to town and put our trust to God.

At about 4.30 in the morning, we heard firing all over and I asked my brother if it was an attack. He said yes and advised that we wait till the firing subsided. As we escaped people were running and shouting. We ran closer to a banana tree when someone descending a hill and saw us and started shooting; I was shot on my left leg and I rolled down the hill. I was there till the firing subsided. My brother advised that we move to kenema. A friend of my brother put me on a hammock and brought me to the Kenema hospital; there was no doctor but he came later and advised that my foot should be amputated. I was in the hospital till I recovered.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for your story. Do you know who actually shot you?

Emmanuel Jabati: They were rebels. They were speaking Liberian pidgin.

Commissioner Torto: What Language were they speaking?

Emmanuel Jabati: Mende, Liberia, and krio.

Leader of Evidence: In what year did this happen?

Emmanuel Jabati: After the overthrow of Tejan Kabbah.

Leader of Evidence: Were they in uniform?

Emmanuel Jabati: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you mean they were AFRC or SLA?

Emmanuel Jabati: That was the time they were together.

Commissioner Torto: What are you doing now?

Emmanuel Jabati: I thank God for Rev. Alimamy kargbo who registered me in one programme. This is the uniform I am wearing. We want to appeal to government through TRC; I have children and wife, I pay 30 thousand per month. We are really suffering, so am appealing to government to educate our children and provide houses and food for us the handicapped.

Commissioner Torto: That is a Recommendation, have you any question?

Emmanuel Jabati: No.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have a branch of the amputees programme?

Emmanuel Jabati: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: When you contacted them what have they done?

Emmanuel Jabati: The Reverend organized us but we pay for ourselves I have not been assisted by any group.

Commissioner Torto: You mean the association it self?

Emmanuel Jabati: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: They don't have skills training for people like you?

Emmanuel Jabati: No.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much; in Freetown the association is so strong that they have started building houses for them. We even visited one in Kabala. The Norwegian Refugee Council has done well for them. I want the head of this association to put more interest in this because they told us that they are all over the country.

Commissioner Torto: Is the Reverend in town?

Emmanuel Jabati: I don't know.

Commissioner Torto: Find out if he is here so that we can talk to him.

DATE: 29th MAY 2003
WITNESS NAME: Jebbeh Ansumana (Muslim)
WITNESS NO: 029
REFERENCE NO: 3/23/3486

The presiding Commissioner, Mr Slyvanus Torto, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

Jebbeh Ansumana:

My mother gave birth to two of us, my brother and I. When the rebels attacked Yebeima my brother was the first to be killed. I gave birth to a baby and after two weeks, I was raped. I later went to a camp in Bo. At present I am have pains all over my body.

Commissioner Torto: We sympathize with you on the death of your brother. During the attack how many people died?

Jebbeh Ansumana: I can't tell I was in the bush with my husband and the children.

Commissioner Torto: So your brother was killed in your absence?

Jebbeh Ansumana: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: You just came back and found the corpse?

Jebbeh Ansumana: Yes. Those who went to the town returned and explained it to me.

Commissioner Torto: Those who raped you, do you remember them?

Jebbeh Ansumana: No, because it was at night .

Commissioner Torto: Where is the baby now?

Jebbeh Ansumana: He is with me.

Commissioner Torto: How old is he?

Jebbeh Ansumana: He is seven years old.

Commissioner Torto: Could you remember or identify your attackers?

Jebbeh Ansumana: I could not tell.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Commission thanks you for coming and telling us about your experiences and the loss of your brother. In what place were you raped?

Jebbeh Ansumana: In Jerehun.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where you taken to a bush or a house?

Jebbeh Ansumana: To a house.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many of them?

Jebbeh Ansumana: Two of them raped me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us whether they were young men or people of your age?

Jebbeh Ansumana: The people that raped me were young men.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you been able to seek medical attention?

Jebbeh Ansumana: No, I usually buy tablets in the streets and drink herbs.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why have you not gone to the hospital?

Jebbeh Ansumana: I was going when the refugees were getting free treatment but that is a long time now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you been able to bear children?

Jebbeh Ansumana: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How many children apart from the boy?

Jebbeh Ansumana: I have given birth to two children but both of them died.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why?

Jebbeh Ansumana: I don' know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were they when they died?

Jebbeh Ansumana: The first one was 4 months and the second 3 and a half months old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you reported this to a doctor to know whether those deaths were as a result of the rape?

Jebbeh Ansumana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you expecting a baby now?

Jebbeh Ansumana: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What happened to your husband, where is he now?

Jebbeh Ansumana: He is dead.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did he die in the course of the war?

Jebbeh Ansumana: No it was a natural death.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you for sharing your experience with us, we have asked you a lot of questions and you have answered, have you any question to ask the Commission?

Jebbeh Ansumana: Yes. We have gone through these trials and humiliations, why did you call us here?

Commissioner Torto: This is a question a few people asked the Commission. The answer is there may not be any direct benefit now but it is a long term one. The most important thing is that the Commission cares about you; what happened to you, who did it, so that it won't happen again and to record all the human rights violations that happened during the war. Very shortly, we will be asking you for your recommendations, your recommendation will be analysed with others but more important, is the relief that you get after testifying to the Commission.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You spoke about pains; you could talk to the briefer in detail.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any recommendation?

Jebbeh Ansumana: Yes. The road to our village is not motorable, there is no proper drinking water, our school is not in good condition there is no health centre; all our houses have been vandalized, toilet facilities are very poor but the most important of all is the food problem.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for all these concerns. Your recommendation will be included in our report.

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003

WITNESS NAME: Philip Foday Tommy Foday Tommy(Christian)

WINESS NO: 030

REFERENCE NO: 3/23/3486

The presiding Commissioner, Mr Slyvanus Torto, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

Philip Foday Tommy Foday Tommy: The rebels killed my younger brother and took away my second wife, Hawa Fofanah. Since then, I have not seen her and my children are worried. Her parents blame me, saying that I ran away and left her behind. However, my parents are consoling me. I was in Tongo when my mother informed me that my brother was killed. Initially, my mother had advised that, since I was an educated man, I should leave the town. That was why I left. When the rebels came, the commando said that my wife was the most beautiful woman so he took her away. I was in UMC when I heard about the Commission. So that is why I am here to see how best you can help me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for coming. We know what you are going through as a man; you have been able to withstand it .We want you to explain a few things to us. According to your written statement, you said your brother was crossing the river from Tormabum to sell a few items and ECOMOG soldiers shot him and six other people.

Philip Foday Tommy: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Why was that?

Philip Foday Tommy: According to what I was told in my village, the ECOMOG thought that the rebels were giving them these items to sell for them; at that time any body connected to ECOMOG was killed.

Commissioner Torto: When you entered the village, were the ECOMOG in the town?

Philip Foday Tommy: My mother told me that they were Guinean soldiers.

Commissioner Torto: Was there any indication that somebody knew them?

Philip Foday Tommy: No.

Commissioner Torto: Have you heard about your wife that was taken to Liberia?

Philip Foday Tommy: Yes I heard that she was in Freetown but her relative said she is in Daru. When I got this information, I went to her parents and explained to them. The chief advised me not to go in search of the lady at the time; if she loves me she will come. I decided to wait and see.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have children?

Philip Foday Tommy: Yes I have two children Joseph Tommy and Mommy Tommy; they are here with me going to school.

Commissioner Torto: What are you doing now?

Philip Foday Tommy: I am a teacher. I use my salary to take care of my children.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We are sorry for the loss of your brother and wife. Do you think that you were a special target for the rebels?

Philip Foday Tommy: I don't want to believe that.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why didn't you take your wife and children with you?

Philip Foday Tommy: At that time I had no money and the children were small.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I would have thought that as an educated man you would have made your own decisions.

Philip Foday Tommy: Is it against the law to chase a woman that is taken from you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What kind of law?

Philip Foday Tommy: That was an advice from my people.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: It was an advice and not a law.

Philip Foday Tommy: People advised me not to look for her.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: At **that** particular time it was a good decision but I know of no law under civil society concerning chasing your wife. Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: You said an ECOMOG soldier killed your brother.

Philip Foday Tommy: That was what I was told.

Leader of Evidence: In which year?

Philip Foday Tommy: In 1993.

Leader of Evidence: ECOMOG was not here by then, to my knowledge ECOMOG arrived in 1997.

Philip Foday Tommy: I spoke about Guinean soldiers they came to this country before that time.

Leader of Evidence: So the Guineans were not ECOMOG?

Philip Foday Tommy: That was the information I got.

Leader of Evidence: After the abduction of your wife, you got angry and your wife was taken to a barray. They were attacked by the Kamajors with the hope of taking your wife from them.

Philip Foday Tommy: I was confused and there was nothing I could do.

Leader of Evidence: Did you join the Kamajor to get her back?

Philip Foday Tommy: It did not occur to me.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any questions to ask the Commission?

Philip Foday Tommy: Yes why have you brought us here? Is to remind us about the things we went through?

Commissioner Torto: We have called you here because we are concerned about you. We know that you have suffered a lot, we want to know what happened to you, who did it and why. We can only do that if we talk to you. Any other question?

Philip Foday Tommy: Yes, will the Commission help me to get my wife back?

Commissioner Torto: We'll analyse the situation and see how best we can help out. If possible, we can refer you to some NGOs that can help you trace your wife.

Commissioner Torto: Any recommendation?

Philip Foday Tommy: I will start with Tormabum. We had a rice mill that was destroyed. We have serious accommodation problems and we want government to rehabilitate the schools that were destroyed in our chiefdom. Also we need medical facilities.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for the recommendations.

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003
WITNESS NAME: Foday Mansaray (Christian)

WINESS NO: 031
REFERENCE NO: 3/23/3486

The presiding Commissioner, Mr Slyvanus Torto, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY:

Foday Mansaray: I was a security officer at the Panguma hospital. Before that, I was a Kamajor. I was going to work one day when I came across some men. One of them called me and said that they should arrest me because I am a Kamajor. They took the rice I was carrying on my head and after some struggle, I was overpowered. They tied and laid me on the ground. There was a small boy called Eco. He insisted that they should not set me free. There was Sergeant Kailondo who was from Kailahun. He tortured me. He had wanted to kill me with a knife, but his colleagues prevailed on him and took it from him. They however, stabbed me on my shoulder. They later stripped me naked. I later saw my boss Katuna who prevailed on them with the help of the chief. I was then released and Katuna advised that I go to Kenema. I refused because I did not want to leave my people unprotected. Gina, who tied me first, is now dead.

Commissioner Torto: On the 13 of the December 2002 you made a statement to TRC at Panguma. In your written statement, you said that one day people started looting and you were arrested for killing a soldier is that correct?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: How many?

Foday Mansaray: The time we fought they were eight in number they said they will kill me so I killed one of them in the end.

Commissioner Torto: Was he really a soldier?

Foday Mansaray: At that time he was wearing civilian clothes and military boots that was the reason why I say he was a soldier.

Commissioner Torto: In your written statement you said you killed two and now you say one.

Foday Mansaray: No, one.

Commissioner Torto: Later you joined the kamajor?

Foday Mansaray: Yes. After the threat.

Commissioner Torto: Who threatened you?

Foday Mansaray: The soldiers.

Commissioner Torto: Did you join them to revenge?

Foday Mansaray: No.

Commissioner Torto: What about the man that beat you up if you had seen him, as a Kamajor, what would you have done to him?

Foday Mansaray: I wouldn't have done anything to him, I came across him one day but I didn't do anything to him.

Commissioner Torto: What kind of assistance did you give to civilians?

Foday Mansaray: I rendered series of help. The hospital was not burnt down because of me. If Vega General of the catholic mission is present here he would testify that I am saying the truth. I took care of the hospital.

Commissioner Torto: During your campaign did you by accidentally kill a civilian?

Foday Mansaray: At that time no one died because I think and believe I was well protected.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Who was Eco?

Foday Mansaray: He was a soldier born of Panguma. He was one of those who destroyed Panguma; if he was alive he would have paid for that.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Is he dead?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How did the fighting end?

Foday Mansaray: The fight in Korkie? The rebels came from Kenema, kono, Kailahun; we were in a meeting at this same place when we heard that the rebels were coming. We fought them with knives and chased them out of Korkie. We fought for five hours and it was during that time that the Kamajors got guns because when chased, the rebels would drop the gun and run away but if you say Kamajors received guns from government is a lie. If it was not for the Kamajors you wouldn't be seating where you are today.

Commissioner Torto: If I want to be initiated in a Kamajor what is the requirement?

Foday Mansaray: If you want to be initiated in any society you have to pay for it so that you can respect it.

Commissioner Torto: How much?

Foday Mansaray: the type of protection you require would determine the fee. If you need more protection, you will have to pay more. I paid more than the actual price that is why I am not afraid of anyone.

Leader of Evidence: You said you were a security officer at the Panguma hospital were you in the army?

Foday Mansaray: No.

Leader of Evidence: How did you kill the thief?

Foday Mansaray: We were fighting and in the process, I killed him but he didn't die instantly.

Leader of Evidence: There was a serious fight at Korkie can you tell us who you were fighting?

Foday Mansaray: At the time the soldiers and rebels were working together. They attacked the Kamajors and we drove them out of the place. We were based at Korkie.

Leader of Evidence: Were people killed on the side of the rebels and soldiers?

Foday Mansaray: When we arrived in the town in the morning, we saw corpses in the town dressed in combat.

Leader of Evidence: How many were killed on the side of the Kamajor?

Foday Mansaray: On that day only one person was injured but he did not die.

Leader of Evidence: How many soldiers and kamajors were there?

Foday Mansaray: I can't tell the number of the soldiers nor rebels Kamajors because we were many.

Leader of Evidence: They took over Korkie for two days?

Foday Mansaray: We were stationed at Korkie.

Leader of Evidence: Did any of you have guns?

Foday Mansaray: I have said it earlier on that we were not fighting with guns initially. The guns we had were those captured from the enemy.

Leader of Evidence: During the fight were you with guns?

Foday Mansaray: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were those six people killed during the fight or after?

Foday Mansaray: After the fight we met them on the road.

Leader of Evidence: Other witnesses have told us that when rebels saw kamajors, they would run but in your own case it is different. Why?

Foday Mansaray: Rebels are stubborn. If they say they are going to fight, they will. If they say they are coming to attack this place at about 2p.m, they will, and not a second late.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have questions for us?

Foday Mansaray: This war that broke out this country came from the Temne line to Mende line; but we have heard that there is rehabilitation going on in the North but it is not happening in our own part of the country. I want to know why.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for this question. It is an interesting question but I don't think I have the answer for you; the TRC is not a government. It is not a ministry. We are here to consolidate peace; TRC does not deal with issues along tribal lines. I beg you to forgive me for not giving the answer to your question. Two weeks ago the President, His Excellency Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, was here I believe you should have asked the government. Maybe he would have been the best person to answer your question.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any recommendation?

Foday Mansaray: Panguma hospital was destroyed, so we are asking the government to assist us rebuild it. It is a long distance from Panguma to Bo and Kenema and if someone falls sick, it is difficult to convey him to hospital, particularly considering the cost of transportation.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you for these recommendations. These are the kinds of recommendations the government is interested in because you hear many witnesses talking

about personal houses, but in your own case you have made a recommendation concerning the road between kenema and the hospital what about the SLC Tongo field what do you want to be done about it?

Foday Mansaray: I want the government to rebuild it.

Commissioner Torto: It is taken into consideration.

DATE: 29TH MAY 2003
WITNESS NAME: Braima Koroma (Muslim)
WINESS NO: 032
REFERENCE NO: Ken/amputee/09

The presiding Commissioner, Mr Sylvanus Torto, administered the oath.

TESTIMONY

Braima Koroma: What pains me most is my amputation. I was in Bowa when we heard that rebels were approaching our place. I advised my people that we should move to Tanim. I took my possessions to Tanim. One day, we heard that the rebels were close to Tanim, so I moved my belongings to the bush. One day, I was taking food and clothing to my mother when I was arrested and my hand was chopped off with a cutlass. I pleaded with them not to cut the right hand but one of them hit my mouth and broke two of my teeth. We struggled and later they over powered me and chopped off the right hand. I was brazed and sat on the wall. They moved around the town shouting in Mende and Krio. Some were in military clothes while others were in ordinary combat. When they left, I ran to the bush and the people I met there took me to Gerehun. Later I was taken to Kenema Hospital where I spent one month and two weeks. I was later taken to Freetown through the help of ICRC. I later returned to Kenema and Reverend Alimamy Kargbo helped us. Nobody, not even an NGO has come forward to help us.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for your testimony. We very much sympathize with your situation. Thanks to God you survived the war. Do you remember the people who inflicted such punishment on you?

Briama: I can't recall.

Commissioner Torto: What fighting group did they belong to?

Briama: Rebels.

Commissioner Torto: In 1993 there were many factions AFRC, RUF, SLA which of them?

Braima Koroma: RUF rebels. One of them told me that they were Foday Sankoh's men.

Commissioner Torto: Were you they only one who suffered this punishment?

Braima Koroma: Yes because I returned and did not see any body.

Commissioner Torto: Have you received any kind of assistance from any NGO?

Briama: I was given a gadget but whenever I put it on, it created problems for me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for making the effort to come to the Commission to tell us your ordeal. Sorry for the mishap. Nothing can be given to compensate you for the loss of your hands. Who is taking care of you and attending to your needs?

Braima Koroma: My mother is alive but too old and I have my children who are staying with me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: That is good. You have your wife and children looking after you, you still have a mother; it's a blessing to have a mother at that age.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels give you any reason why they amputated your hand?

Braima Koroma: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did they give any command?

Briama: No.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any question to ask the Commission?

Braima Koroma: Yes. We have heard that assistance was given to amputees in Freetown and other areas, amputees here did not benefit at all, why have we been left out?

Commissioner Torto: Government does not build houses for amputees. There are other NGOs that provide structural facilities, Norwegian Refugee council built houses in Kabala and Kambia and they are doing it through the amputees association. I will encourage you to form an organization and that will do something. FNA groups are all over the country, they are presently in Kono but I don't understand your problem with your organization not affiliating with FNA, why you are lagging behind. Any other question?

Braima Koroma: No.

Commissioner Torto: Have you any recommendation?

Braima Koroma: Yes. The first is accommodation even in Kenema to pay rent is difficult. I have five children I want government to help me with their schooling. If I don't beg, my mother wife and myself we will all have nothing to eat. My landlord has reminded of my rent. I had to loan money to enable me be here. My problem now is that I have spent the whole day here, what should we eat this evening? I am appealing to the government to help me with accommodation. I used to have a lot of people around me, but because of the hardship I am going through they vanished. Even my little boy over there, while we were hiding in the bush, he had a problem with his eyes; my children are very small am asking government for assistance.

Commissioner Torto: Those are recommendations. Thank you, we have heard all what you you've said. You mentioned accommodation. That is a pathetic situation. You said five children. How old is your oldest son

Braima Koroma: He is fourteen years old.

Commissioner Torto: Is he going to school?

Braima Koroma: Yes.

DATE: 30TH May 2003

WITNESS NAME: Solomon Cooper (Christian) Representative of Amputee Association Kenema

WITNESS NO: New

REFERENCE NO:

The Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus Jones, administered an oath on the Bible.

TESTIMONY

Solomon Cooper: I want to thank the Commission for giving me the opportunity to make this statement. I want to talk about the Association and then myself. (Shows scar on hip). Whilst travelling from Jorum to Kenema, we fell into a rebel ambush and I sustained gunshot wounds on my hip. The bullet was extracted here in Kenema but I was not fully recovered. I had to travel to Freetown where I received proper medical treatment. On my return to kenema, Reverend Alimamy B. Koroma formed the Amputee Welfare Association on the 20th February 2000; I became a member of this Association. We were doing well. Some of us were in camp and others outside. We usually held our meetings on Saturdays, even up till now. A project was written by (SEDO) Social Economic Development Organization and funded by Cause Canada.

An official from Norwegian Refugee Council came to Kenema and they promised to construct some buildings for amputees; it was broadcast on the radio and workshops were organized. Although they started building new structures at the sites, the constructions were not properly done. They demolished the buildings and a proper one was reconstructed at the site. After the construction of those houses, the officials of the Norwegian Refugee Council told us that the houses were for the amputees in Freetown, who were registered members of the Sierra Leone Amputees Association. We stormed the office of NaCSA in Kenema. Upon hearing this I travelled down to Freetown and took the matter up with NaCSA boss Mr Kanja Sesay and Mr Sidi Bah. They told me that they had received a similar complaint about the issue, but nothing was done. We then wrote a letter of protest, which we copied to about twelve NGO's and organizations, including the Paramount Chief and the press. We also issued another press release that the government of Tejan Kabbah does not seek the interest of the amputees in Kenema.

We then decided to use another strategy to display placards during the handing over ceremony of the houses. We were not going to allow them entrance to the camp. What they did was to come overnight; before we knew it, they had already resided in the houses.

We thank Sierra Leone Red Cross and appreciate their efforts in helping us in several ways; by getting us involved in skills training and offering us micro-credit facilities. Red Cross did a good job, we say bravo to them. They had been advocating for us on the radio to employ amputees, even if it was to serve as security personnel. In Freetown Cold Storage, Cause Canada, NRC, TRC employ amputees, but here in Kenema nothing is being done. We don't know why they had neglected us. Above all, they concentrate on victims rather than Amputees. What I notice in Sierra Leone is that when you do evil you are compensated. All the perpetrators are offered privileges to undertake whatever they desire in education and technical skills.

Three officials of NaCSA came and they registered all the amputees in Kenema. After the registration, nothing was done. To me it seems as if Freetown is Sierra Leone because all assistance is centred in Freetown. The only thing NaCSA did for us is that they supplied us 4 bags of rice and six cartons of soap to share among 115 Amputees.

The other sad part of my story is that the Action Aid took a snapshot of my bullet scar and displayed it on SLBS/TV in Freetown against my wish. Some money, about eleven million leones, changed hands. They told me it was for peace, but I never received anything as compensation from this organization. I protested to Action Aid and copied Human Rights Organizations and then the advert was stopped. Later, Action Aid put out my photographs on the Internet, which a friend, Sam ,in the USA saw; he called to inform me.

I am appealing to us all not to neglect the amputees. I was amputated during the war due to lack of medical facilities. My hand was amputated. But I still use my knowledge even though I have only one hand; I use it to earn my living. As for the association, I want to tell this Commission that we are suffering. We are well organized, and anyone saying that we are not united is telling lies. They can prove me right, being that we held meetings at 1 Bayoh Street, every Saturday at 10 a.m. in the morning. Some of our members had given testimonies here. We had taken a unanimous decision that we were not going to participate. But when the Commission came they sensitised us and we decided to send our people to testify.

We heard on the radio that when the amputees went to the camp the people refused to obey, but they were sensitised. We too thought it will happen here and some members of the Commission came and we were willing to give our statement. One of our members who worked in the TRC advised and persuaded us to register. He was told that the Chairman of the amputees is a difficult man. When I spoke with him, I had to move with him to the areas where we held our meetings. He later confessed that they've told him many things about me. But he had proved that I am a simple man. I then told him that it is the way people portray my image. I told him that we should work in solidarity. I explained our plight to him. He told me that they are going to form a national body.

We the Kenema amputees again showed up in T-Shirts on the launching of the musical track called "Destiny" it was also televised on the SLBS/TV. The Nigerian Contingent in Kenema saw it and was moved. They phoned our Coordinator and promised to send us a gift, it was broadcast over the radio that they had donated \$500 and used clothing to the amputees but nothing was done.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We have been wondering why the amputees don't seem to have much help; what you have said throws some light over the position here. We are going to ask you few questions here just to elucidate some of the points. Is there an Amputee camp in Kenema?

Solomon Cooper: There was a camp for internally displaced people.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Does the camp still exist?

Solomon Cooper: No. NaCSA said we should be repatriated so we then abided by the government's regulation. Some of us are now dwelling with friends, and there are no more houses in our villages.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well the amputees are here not only in Freetown, but there are Amputee camps in Koinadugu, how many members are in your association?

Solomon Cooper: We were about 115 members, amputees and the war-wounded. The houses you spoke about are in areas that I had traveled to. They had one camp in Makeni, going towards Kabala; the number was about 45. There were others in Kambia, Port Loko, and Masiaka and of course Grafton, Bo and Moyamba. We had four that were built for amputees who were in Freetown and had decided to come to Kenema. In all the areas I have mentioned, there were amputees who were at Aberdeen camp. Not that they had camps specifically in the areas where the rebels had attacked and destroyed. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council the first phase was about 250.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you, I understand your plight, and I suppose something will be done in future.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you for your testimony; I have few clarifications to make. Are the Amputees in Kenema registered with the Sierra Leone Amputee Association?

Solomon Cooper: We were registered with the government through the Ministry of Social Welfare, we had never heard about the National Amputee Welfare Association.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know Jusu Jakka? He was the Chairman for the Aberdeen Camp. Is he not the Chairman for the Amputee Association? He is the Chairman for the Association. However, registering with the Ministry of Social Welfare's support programme is different from the Amputee Association. To register with NGO's, there are certain conditions in order to be eligible and that is where the Amputee Association came in and all aid went through this Association. Does your Organization contact the Norwegian Refugee Council?

Solomon Cooper: Yes they registered us in 2001?

Commissioner Torto: What is the current position?

Solomon Cooper : Nothing is done, the woman that came went to search for funding. I visited her but she was busy in the office and only took a day and returned. No further conversation was made. Our colleagues in Freetown told us that if we want houses we should go and stay in Freetown.

Commissioner Torto: I just want to know where the problem lies; maybe it was because you were not registered at that time with the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Solomon Cooper: The Association in Freetown, to be precise, are not fair with us. They are aware that amputees are in Kenema they should have informed us that they had formed an Association that they would like us to join. It is only today that I know about the existence of such an Association. Now we will do a follow-up with them in Freetown.

Commissioner Torto: In fact we have two of these Organizations; we have the War Wounded and the Amputees Association. Please make effort to find out. I know it is very disheartening to listening to your ordeals. Under what condition were you filmed?

Solomon Cooper: I don't even know, I got the information from friends.

Commissioner Torto: Have you contacted the Director of Action Aid?

Solomon Cooper: I went to there office in Lumley, the matter was reported to Sam Musa, who was the coordinator, I even told him that I have contacted my lawyer and it is still not late, I am going to pursue the case.

Commissioner Torto: I encourage you to pursue the case. It is your right; you need to stand up for your right. It is even worst to be shown on the Internet. The next issue is the five hundred dollars; after the launching of the track, whom did they give this money to pass on to you people?

Solomon Cooper: The money was not given to us directly; we heard that the Nigerian Contingent of UNAMSIL donated it to the Amputee Camp in Aberdeen. Before then, our coordinator told us the Nigerian had called him saying that they love the album "Good heart Kombra". We thought that some of that money should be given to us.

Commissioner Torto: Have you contacted the regional office to know whether the money was for you?

Solomon Cooper: They said the money was dedicated to Amputees, but, as you had rightly said that it was because we were not registered that was why we did not benefit from the gifts.

Commissioner Torto: Make sure you find out, 115 amputees have their dependants; make an effort to find out who actually received the money. You are not really sure who received the

money. I want you to make a follow up; the money may not be much, but you are entitled to a portion.

Commissioner Torto: Every other statement is taken in good part; it is being recorded. But those are the few areas you should be sensitive about. Especially concerning the film that they had shown over Internet; take it up even with the human rights section, explore everything within your knowledge. I will encourage you to register with the Association in Freetown; it is not too late. Follow up that as well. Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: Is your organization representing the amputees and war wounded in Kenema Town or Kenema District?

Solomon Cooper: Yes, it is an umbrella Association for the entire Eastern Region.

Leader of Evidence: We have met the Amputees Association in Bo and Makeni; I want to know whether your association is an independent one. I want to know whether in the places you have mentioned there are amputees that came from Freetown, which means that they had members all over the country. I want you to clarify that point.

Solomon Cooper: In those houses built in the various areas were internally displaced persons who went and settled in Freetown. What they did was when they were asked to go back; they said they had nowhere to go. For us in Kenema when we were asked to go out, we obeyed instructions. We could not have gone to Freetown since there was no access road; the rebels had occupied the route to Freetown. We had anticipated going to Liberia, which was why we were based in Kenema. There were Amputees out of Kenema, who registered with us whilst they were here. We catered not specifically for Kenema, but for the entire district. What we should do now is to register with the national body.

Leader of Evidence – So the most urgent need for the amputees in Kenema is shelter and food, is that so?

Solomon Cooper: When I was explaining I spoke about Red Cross. Our most urgent need is Shelter.

Commissioner Marcus -Jones: Now we have heard your testimony, do you have questions for the Commission?

Solomon Cooper: In the TRC before giving a testimony we are asked to take an oath and questions are raised as to whether witnesses would recognize the perpetrator, is TRC not the witness for the Special Court?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I must say I am disappointed at you. Commissioner Torto came to Kenema and did some Sensitisation; since we came we've been to the radio station for three nights sensitising people about the mandate of TRC. And we've been explaining the differences between TRC and Special Court. Even this morning I mentioned that witnesses had nothing to fear, we have nothing to do with Special Court we are different. The Special Court is a body with money, they do their own investigation, they have investigators they can find out what they want to know. They are not depending on TRC at all. Special Court has made statements that we have no business in common. The only link we have is that both TRC and Special Court are working for peace and justice in the country. The Special Court will indict people and at the end of the trial, they give their verdict, so that peace will prevail. Whereas TRC has nothing to do with that, what we want is to reconcile people to bring permanent peace in Sierra Leone. Those statements we took from people are with us and are confidential documents. All the staff took an oath of confidentiality and if they break it they will be sacked. Have you any other question?

Commissioner Torto: Let me add to what our Commissioner has said. We've heard that there was a doubt as to whether we have made points clear to people, or people don't want to understand. And if somebody as enlightened as you can still come out and make a statement like this, then we need to double our effort as to make it clear to people. In order for you to understand more, we will hand over a booklet to you so that you know the difference between the TRC and the Special Court. After the testimony you will receive the book and help us to propagate the difference between the TRC and Special Court.

Solomon Cooper: It is a deliberate question, because people were having different views about the role of the TRC. When you listened to the jingles you will understand better. The hearings in Freetown took the whole of the day but in Kenema before six in the evening the session ended. Maybe they had not been getting the meaning of TRC. Sensitisation had not gone down well, for people to come out and talk. People should have come out to talk in the open. We have gone to some workshops where people spoke about how they chopped off people's hand. If we have not heard that, then TRC has to do more in Kenema. For me Mama Bondu and the Leader of Evidence did convince me to come out. In Freetown, people watch TV and they are aware of the work of TRC. People in Kenema are not sensitised enough to know the difference between the TRC and Special Court. In this hearing nobody has come out to testify that he had killed the relative of somebody in the audience and the process of reconciliation done; it has never happened here. If this recommendation is forwarded to Government and then Government fails to implement it, what will the Commission do?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Sensitisation was done even before we started the hearings phase. I will answer your question. The recommendations will be handed to government; the civil society will have to do something so that the recommendations will be implemented. Somebody like you should be able to explain to your association and to other people as well. In Kenema we have a District and a Regional coordinator. If you have your questions you can put it to them. The Commission also received submissions from individuals and organizations; if you so desire to make one it is not too late. Now that I have reassured you that your recommendation will be considered, have you any recommendations to make to the Commission?

Solomon Cooper: Yes, I recommend the provision of shelter, education, medical facilities food and a Centre for skills training for all Amputees.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for your recommendations, it will be included in our report.

DATE: 30TH May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Frederick Lansana(Muslim)

WITNESS NO: 3/20/4088

REFERENCE NO:

The Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus Jones, administered an oath on the Koran.

TESTIMONY

Frederick Lansana:In 1997 when AFRC took over power from the legitimate Tejan Kabbah government, rebels came from the bush and joined the military. We were in Luwoma area and

whilst in the bush we ran short of food. People were moving from their location to search for food. One day, I left Luwoma for Tongo to collect food. When I arrived the soldiers and rebels had mounted checkpoints. One of the soldiers accused me of being a kamajor informant. I was stripped naked and beaten. They took me to the PRO, Dennis Mannah. Upon my arrival I was beaten and asked to enter the basement of a building where I spent the night. The next morning, they took me out and Dennis Mannah reported that, I used to give information to the Kamajors about the rebels; I was flogged and they stabbed me with a bayonet. I was locked in the guardroom where I spent three days. They told me that I was going to die in three days time. We were all lined up. Fortunately for me Captain Demor who was the Captain in Charge of the Secretariat in Kenema saw me and instructed that I should be taken to his office. Whilst in his office he advised them not to kill me.

He told them he had instructed the Kamajors to join them; if they started killing kamajors, then they will not come out. He advised me to go and take a bath. A soldier, Morie, was assigned to accompany me and he told me that if I returned to the office it will be dangerous; he assisted me to escape and I went to the Segbwema Hospital. That was during the time of the ECOMOG intervention.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you for your coming. We are sorry you suffered in that way. You said in your statement that you were given a cut on your palm have you got the mark. Do you mind to stand and show us the cut?

Frederick Lansana – (Shows scar to Commissioners).

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why do you think they did that to you?

Frederick Lansana : I believe they just wanted to be wicked.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why your palm?

Frederick Lansana: They hit me with the butt of the gun when I resisted they used the bayonet.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Mr Lansana, Thank God nothing more serious happened to you. Where is Dennis Mannah who gave you that cut?

Frederick Lansana : He is still in Tongo, even when the Statement Takers went to obtain statement I told them he is in Tongo. He is an RUF combatant.

Commissioner Torto: Is it possible to invite him here if we made the effort?

Frederick Lansana: He is still there.

Commissioner Torto: What about Captain Demoh who helped you escape?

Frederick Lansana – I've not seen him since then.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: You said you were accused of being an informant for the kamajors, is that correct?

Frederick Lansana: No.

Leader of Evidence: You were not a kamajor?

Frederick: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us something about Dennis Mannah, what is he doing in Tongo?

Frederick Lansana: He is a miner in Tongo.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: If we are able to invite him, will you at any stage be ready to meet with him?

Frederick Lansana: For the sake of peace I 'm ready.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well we will make the effort for the reconciliation process. Have you any question to ask the Commission?

Frederick Lansana: I have no question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendation for the **Commission**?

Frederick Lansana: Yes, the road from Tongo to Luwoma is not motorable, there is no good drinking water, infrastructure like community centres and the rebels destroyed schools.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Frederick Lansana, if we succeed in getting Denis Mannah we will let you know.

DATE: 30TH May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Musu Koroma(Muslim)

WITNESS NO: 1/25/138

REFERENCE NO:

An oath on Koran administered by the Presiding **Commissioner**, Justice Laura Marcus Jones.

TESTIMONY

Musu Koroma: We were in Mano Kotohun when we heard that rebels had attacked the town of Talia. We fled from there and spent a week in a nearby village. We later heard that the rebels had reached close to our village and left for Kenema. We were staying in Kenema when we ran out of food, so we separated, and some went into the bush whilst others went in search of food.

We were given supplies and I sold part of it and bought two gross cigarettes; I went with it to Talia and I was doing business, when the soldiers informed we that they had received a letter from the rebels of an imminent attack on our village. Their intention was to fight with the Kamajors. They told the kamajors about that and suggested an ambush at Banana Highland. However, the secret was leaked by one of the soldiers. Later, one of the soldiers, Mohamed, came with an RPG gun. He went to the Headquarter close to where we were staying. As he was about to enter, they stopped him from entering the office. He was dead drunk and he put the RPG on the ground with force and it exploded. Two of my sisters who were sitting in the veranda died. By that time, I was lying in the room. I then saw a blazing fire at the door; I thought that the rebels had entered the town. After the sound died down, I came out of my room and saw four dead bodies, including my sisters' on the veranda. I was shouting going towards the town, people heard me cry and they all came out; due to the explosion I was half deaf. He was matched to the headquarters for interrogation because the fragment also hit one of his colleagues. A soldier called Staff Yaja, had

two wives, one of whom said that her own child resembles the husband; the co-wife, upon hearing this took the child and wanted to kill the child. When the woman came back to breastfeed her baby she couldn't find the child. She reported the matter to her husband, all of us who were in the surrounding were asked to come out, and we were manhandled by Staff Yaja and his men. Staff Yaja was claiming that the Kamajors and civilians in the village did the act.

Pastor and a soldier, Iceman, told us to go in search of the child. We followed the bush path and luckily for us we saw the child lying on the grass crying. We brought the child back to the village, and she was all right. The lady was mercilessly beaten and she finally admitted to stealing the child. She said that her husband had said that her co-wife's child resembles him more than her own child. The child was taken to hospital in Segbwema. The lady and her husband were asked out of the village by the kamajors. Soldiers became inhuman to us, so I decided to come to Kenema. We were in Kenema when we saw Kamajors moving towards Mambu Street; we all abandoned the area fearing the battle between Brima and his group. They were many. There was no chance for us to go out, particularly those of us who stayed by the hotel. There was a great battle in that area.

One day they ordered us out and looted our possessions, and burnt down our houses. We who were in Mambu Street only survived by the grace of God. We eventually came to Jojoima and settled in the bush. We spent 12 days in the camp. The juntas went in the area and told us that they wanted peace and we should move out from the bush. They captured some of us, some were wounded and some were killed. Jojoima is not our hometown, those who were citizens decided to hide at night and we followed them. We suffered a lot in that village and eventually came to Kenema.

In Kenema a boy who claimed to be a kamajor, informed us that he had killed our brother who was a soldier. Since then we were separated from his wife and children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are sorry that you suffered all round. How far are these places to Kenema? Talia and Bojibu, just give us an idea.

Musu Koroma: Bojibu is about 16 miles from Kenema and Talia is half way from Kenema to Segbwema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about Jojoima?

Musu Koroma: Jojoima is in Kailahun District.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is it true that you have to roam all these places because the fighting forces made Kenema a hell for you?

Musu Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So you suffered from the Kamajor, SLA and Junta?

Musu Koroma : I didn't suffer in the hands of rebels, but in the hands of the kamajors and SLA. The only time I can recall suffering in the hands of the rebels was when there was a fight between the rebels/soldier and kamajors.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In your written statement, you mentioned that your uncle and father were killed by SLA but you did not mention it in your verbal statement, is that correct?

Musu Koroma: the juntas killed them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why was your brother who was a soldier, killed by a Kamajor?

Musu Koroma: It was due to the animosity between the soldiers and kamajors. If a soldier set eyes on kamajor he is dead and vice versa.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What happened to your husband, was he a soldier or a kamajor?

Musu Koroma: My husband was not a member of any fighting force that was why we suffered.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us how long the rivalry and fighting between the kamajors and soldiers went on?

Musu Koroma: They fought twice, the last one, we could not withstand so we moved out.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How long did they go on fighting, was it a period of two or six months?

Musu Koroma: It didn't last for a month.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Musu Koroma, can you just go over the facts of your story, as to why the child was stolen?

Musu Koroma: She took the child because her husband said the child resembles him more than her own children.

Commissioner Torto: So what did she want to do with the child?

Musu Koroma: She wanted to poison the child.

Commissioner Torto: With caustic soda?

Musu Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Was he a member of any of the fighting forces?

Musu Koroma: He was a soldier.

Commissioner Torto: What happened to the soldier who dropped the RPG, you said he did not die on the spot?

Musu Koroma: He died late in the night.

Commissioner Torto: Do you remember the kamajor who told you that he killed your brother?

Musu Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know where he is now?

Musu Koroma: I heard that he is in Zimmi.

Commissioner Torto: Are you certain, or did somebody tell you he is there?

Musu Koroma: Somebody told me he is in Zimmi; I have never been to Zimmi before.

Leader of Evidence: What does the name Sergeant Yaya remind you of, who is he?

Musu Koroma: He was the second in command in Talia.

Leader of Evidence: Second in command of which group?

Musu Koroma: He was a soldier.

Leader of Evidence: Who was Wanja?

Musu Koroma: Wanja was a Ground Commander.

Leader of Evidence: Who is Fatmata Samura?

Musu Koroma: A witness who can bear witness to my testimony.

Leader of Evidence: Who is Chief Sama?

Musu Koroma: He is another witness that can testify of how the RPG exploded and killed my sisters.

Leader of Evidence: Brima Koroma as well?

Musu Koroma: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Are Wanja and Sergeant Yayah responsible for the death of your sisters?

Musu Koroma: No.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know the names of those who were responsible for the death of your sister, brother and father?

Musu Koroma: Mohamed killed my sister; he is dead. Sao killed my brother.

Leader of Evidence: Is Sao still alive?

Musu Koroma: I heard he is still alive, but I have never set eyes on him.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know where he is?

Musu Koroma: I heard that he is in Zimmi.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Kamajors and SLA's, who made life more miserable for you in your town?

Musu Koroma :It was the SLA's.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you see any of the SLA's here in Kenema?

Musu Koroma: Wanja was here at one time but he is in Freetown now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you say you don't see any of them in Kenema?

Musu Koroma: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for coming, we see that life was so miserable for you and you had to be running all over the place. If these perpetrators are here they would have been ashamed of themselves; I know we are all yearning for peace to prevail. Have you any question you want to ask the Commission?

Musu Koroma: Yes. When the TRC staffs were passing around to take statements, we gave them statements in our houses, but I am explaining now in public. My concern is that the perpetrators, if they have relatives here, they've heard us; would they not repeat the same act to us? Most people tried to prevent me from giving this testimony. Because I am a Sierra Leonean and I love my country and love development for myself, I told them I must come forward to explain. Even if I happen to die as a result of that, I will not be a stranger in heaven; I have my father and relatives who are there already.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When you made your statement, you indicated that you wouldn't mind to participate in the hearings in public that was why you were invited. We wish we would have more people of your type with the courage and determination to come out. If the relatives of the perpetrators are here, they will be thinking to correct the wrongs of their children and try to amend them, not to insult you again. People cannot do wrong and expect not to be told about the wrong they have done. The mandate of the TRC is that people should hear about the evil they have done and decide to change so that peace would prevail in our country. People thought they had achieved something by wrong doing; they have destroyed the little we have acquired in the country and made life miserable for themselves, so sensible people will be thinking about better education and development in their different communities and to be happy to be alive. When you leave here you can talk to our briefer about witness protection.

Commissioner Torto: Let me explain about witness protection for the understanding of you and others who are afraid of testifying. We did not think your testimony would cause any problem at all. If you think your testimony is going to cause you problem, let us know, we have a witness protection mechanism. If you think that people in the audience or radio will disturb you, let us know, we have a mechanism to forestall such situations. We want you to be happy, rather than frustrated, for coming. It is no secret that the kamajors and the SLAs were fighting instead of protecting the civilians; we have heard testimonies about such atrocities caused by these two groups.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have questions to ask the Commission?

Musu Koroma:No question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have recommendations to make to the Commission for onward transmission to the Government?

Musu Koroma: Yes. In our village, Manokotohun, we have no school. Our children want to be educated, we conduct school session in a hut; during the rains there is no School. The road leading to our village is destroyed, we need Constructions of new roads; in upper Nongowa chieftdom we need a secondary school; this has led to a lot of school dropouts. I am appealing to the government of Tejan Kabbah, to assist lactating mothers to educate our children; if they were educated there would have been no war. All of us in Mambu street, our houses were destroyed; we are appealing to the government for the reconstruction of our houses; the women are appealing for micro credit facilities in our chieftdom.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. Our briefer will talk to you on the issues of micro-credit and training facilities. All your recommendations will be included in our report, thank you for coming; you are such a sensible and progressive woman.

DATE: 30TH May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Seibatu Kallon (Muslim)

WITNESS NO: 24/04/03

REFERENCE NO:

The Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus Jones, administered the oath on the Koran.

TESTIMONY

Seibatu Kallon: My village, Barsolia, is behind the Kambui Hills and was frequently attacked by soldiers. They killed our people and burnt down our houses. It was during the reign of the AFRC. At that time the issue of Kamajor movement was centred in Bo. At about 4 a.m soldiers and rebels attacked our village; the soldiers advised us to go into our houses and shut the doors because the fighting was fierce. They advised us not to go to the bush because of stray bullets. Four of us went under the bed, whilst other civilians who were familiar with rebel attacks ran into the bush. Since that was my first experience, I heeded the advice of the soldiers. We were in the house whilst my husband ran to the bush. When the Kamajors retreated and left the village to the AFRC soldiers, one of them knocked on our door and threatened to kill us if we didn't open the door. We opened the door and four of us came out. They released the three girls and the little kids and I was taken away. My captives told me that I was beautiful and they are taking me along with them; I should not fear, they would not kill me. The Commander told me that I was going to be his wife and he would take care of me. When they retreated there was only one of them who were left behind and he set the house on fire. The commander, Papa, who forced me to be his wife, was killed.

Another soldier and a female soldier ordered me to carry a bushel of rice for them. Before Papa was killed he had a G3 gun; after his death other soldiers took the gun from him and abandoned his body. It was during the heavy rains at that time and the female soldier, Musu, told me that I am no longer going to be part of them that they are going to kill me. I pleaded with them that I preferred going with them than to be killed. Because I mentioned God's name they were annoyed all the more and said they were not going to release me. In the evening they took me to the farm, behind the cemetery and Musu hit me with the gun butt. Mohamed pleaded on my behalf and they gave him an ultimatum that if he wanted to be alive, he should stay away from my issue. I fell unconscious when she hit me with the gun butt.

They put my hands on a stick and started chopping my hands from my fingers up to the point where it is now. And she threatened to slaughter me from the back fearing that I will identify them in the hereafter. Because of the wounds and cuts all over my body they abandoned me thinking that I was dead.

The other group that came wanted to rape me, but somebody told them not to rape a dead woman. I was bleeding profusely and there was blood all over my face, I couldn't walk properly but I staggered until I get to the town. It was exactly a mile. I want to believe that my mother's ghost and God led me. I heard somebody speaking to me saying that if I go to the hospital, I would not die that I should follow him; I followed him. Whilst they were cutting my hands they were calling names like Brima, Mohamed, they were over 200. I followed the ghost until I reached the town, she advised me to enter the compound and lie down and if people discovered me they will come to my aid.

My uncle also met them and he was severely beaten with a stick that had nails on it. He was accused of being a Juju man who prevented them from entering the village. I lay there drinking from a bucket of water that later turned to blood. Each time I put my mouth in the bucket, the blood on my face would spill into the bucket. I wasted a lot of blood that night. When my uncle met me in that condition he was terrified he ran way from me.

He called some people to help him carry me to the hospital. Because of my condition they told him that before reaching the hospital at Kenema I would die. He insisted and eventually I was taken to the hospital but I did not receive any medical treatment due to lack of money. My Uncle

who was in Bo finally came and he removed me from that hospital to Dr Banya's hospital, where I was admitted for nine months. My sister, Yata, was with me in the hospital. She was very helpful to me, she used to sell salt so that we would have food.

The doctor said except the fingers were removed from my hands it would not heal up, so he amputated the right hand and two fingers from my left hand. I have only three fingers now. I was not cured in those nine months, my sister who was assisting me was pregnant and her husband insisted that we must go back to the village. Rebels again attacked us, so we spent most of our time in the bush. My Mother, Mammy Kallon, took me to Tongo. My sister then gave birth but the baby died shortly after his birth. We were in Tongo throughout the reign of the AFRC Junta. Whilst in Tongo we were under constant rebel harassment and this made us to leave for Segbwema. Segbwema was also attacked.

One day, when I was in the hospital, one day one of the perpetrators met me in the hospital, with a bullet wound on his mouth. He was shocked when he saw me thinking that I will identify him. He pleaded with the doctor to treat him fast because he wanted to go somewhere. He couldn't look into my eyes. After receiving treatment he hurriedly left the hospital. After he left, I told my sister and she was annoyed with me, saying that she would have ordered his arrest. I told her I would not do anything to hurt anybody but I leave everything to God, as he is the best judge.

Another time we went to the Town Field in kenema. There again I met two of the other perpetrators, and one of them said, "look at the girl whom we thought was dead" I told them that I am created by God and he made it possible for me to be alive. Since then I have never set eyes on any of them. I am still suffering from the pains on my head and all over my body. Because I had wasted so much blood I now experience problems with my eyesight.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Your story is a very sad one; we sympathize with you. It is clear that you were not meant to die. So having recovered your life, now, try and make the full use of it. We believe you had a guardian angel, I suppose that angel will still continue to be with you. From the testimony we heard about people who were abducted and taken into the bush and were about to be killed and most times, women pleaded on their behalf, why do you think this female soldier was so wicked to you?

Seibatu Kallon: I don't know. Only God knows.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you still receiving medical attention?

Seibatu Kallon :No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I think you should still continue treatment, while taking your baby to the hospital you should also try to see the Doctor.

CommissionerTorto:Thank you for sharing your experience with us. I admire the fact that you have started the process of reconciliation even, though you were still suffering from pains, you refused to identify them at this age. I congratulate you. Under what circumstances was Papa killed?

Seibatu Kallon: He was killed by another group of Juntas.

Commissioner Torto: Under what circumstances was it by accident or fight?

Seibatu Kallon: He was trying to protect other people and he was killed.

Commissioner Torto: Was he protecting you?

Seibatu Kallon: Yes, he died protecting us.

Commissioner Torto: Which particular group of juntas?

Seibatu Kallon: He was killed by the kamajor.

Commissioner Torto: Were you the only victim or were others were involved?

Seibatu Kallon: I was the only one who sustained wounds but others were killed, including my Uncle.

Leader of Evidence: Could you tell us the name of your Uncle who was killed?

Seibatu Kallon: Mohamed Kabala

Leader of Evidence: Who actually told you to stay in your houses?

Seibatu Kallon: The kamajors advised us to stay in our houses.

Leader of Evidence: You said when you were unconscious the rebels attempted to rape you again, does that mean you were raped initially?

Seibatu Kallon: No.

Leader of Evidence: You said you met some of these perpetrators, do you know their names?

Seibatu Kallon: They are Amadu, Mohamed and Bockarie.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know their real names?

Seibatu Kallon: I heard their colleagues calling their first names.

Leader of Evidence: Have you come in contact with Musu?

Seibatu Kallon: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any question for the Commission?

Seibatu Kallon: I am an orphan; I don't have relatives, only my sister and the man I am staying with whom I had this child. We are living in a deplorable condition. We don't even have a room of our own, we sleep in the sitting room, we have to fetch firewood in the bush and sell. The person who went to collect me met me on a local mattress in the market. I am appealing for assistance, I don't have food and shelter and I have pains all over my body. I ask the Commission to assist me with my child. I would also need medical assistance for my eyes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: When we finish this session, our briefer will assist in that area. Any other question?

Seibatu Kallon: After my explanation, what would have happened if these perpetrators had been here?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – Nothing would have happened. They would have felt ashamed of themselves, and if you had named them, we would have invited them to say something for themselves, and if they had admitted their wrongdoing, we could have, arranged for them to ask for your forgiveness. Any more questions?

Seibatu Kallon: No more questions.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have recommendations to make to the Commission for onward transmission to the Government?

Seibatu Kallon: Food, shelter, medical assistance and the welfare of my child. I cannot do anything for myself, I don't have my hands to do hard work and cannot see clearly. I am no more beautiful, even if I am well dressed. If I lose my eyesight then I have no future.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Our briefer will refer you for medical help and other possible means. As for beauty, the outward appearance is not important, what is within you makes you what you are. You will surely come across people who will appreciate your worth, you don't have to put yourself down; raise your head high, you are meant to live if not, you wouldn't be here now. So make the best of out of it for the sake of your baby and yourself. Thank you for coming.

DATE: 30TH May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Coomber Kanneh (Muslim)

WITNESS NO: 3/20/4860

REFERENCE NO:

The Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus Jones, administered an oath on the Koran.

TESTIMONY

Coomber Kanneh: I was in my village, Lalehun, when RUF rebels overpowered the Kamajors, and took over town. I fled to Kenema with my family. We were in Kenema struggling; going into the bush to fetch firewood. On a Friday one of our brothers, a Kamajor from Lalehun, told us that Kamajors had captured Tongo. We were all happy and I told my wife to return to the village. We then decided to take some money and domestic tools along with us. We departed. As we approached Manogay, we met the Kamajor checkpoint and they asked us where we were going. We were four in number; my brother Mohamed, and his wife, my wife and I. As we went further we were apprehended again; we told them that we were informed that our brothers had captured Tongo so we wanted to go and check on our relatives. They ordered us to pack all the items aside, and took us, to a house, locked the door, and one of the kamajors spoke through the window and asked us to open the window. He pointed a gun through the window; we were very uncomfortable. They took us out one after the other, to a place between Kenema and lower Bambara at the bridge. As they took the first one we heard two gunshots, that was what they did for the three people and it came to my turn. I refused, but I was forced to go. On my arrival I found the others still alive. They took our belongings from us and asked us to go back to Kenema.

However, we left the village and on our way back to Kenema, we saw a group of Kamajors, one of them called my name and said if they had not known me they would have killed me I begged them to give me easy access to Lalehun. I managed to reach Lalehun. I told my wife that she must return to Kenema, and narrate our ordeals to our relatives.

My Uncle who was in Segbwema was a Town Chief. He was happy when he heard that Kamajors had taken over Lalehun and he attempted to go. On his way, he met some kamajors having a meeting; he was arrested and accused of feeding the AFRC soldiers at Lalehun. They told him that whatever they said, he must accept. He was frightened and he was stripped naked, with a block placed on his head. They were blowing a trumpet behind him in the village saying that chief had arrived. When they reached Lalehun, my Uncle told me that they had captured him. I wanted to go with him but he told me to stay behind, as they are terrible people and I should not under rate them. We went to the guardroom the following morning and met two other prisoners with my uncle making a total of three.

The kamajors, one with a knife, one with a gun and the other with an empty five-gallon container that was open at the top, led my uncle away to some area. We were watching them from at a distance and we saw them descending a hill and they chopped off my uncle's head. When they returned, the five-gallon container was full of my Uncle's head and other parts of his body. We were asked to dance and they placed my Uncle's head on the veranda. I told them I that I will not dance. One of my Uncle's friends Samuel was called to dance as well. They met him pounding coffee; he had about Le250, 000, which he gave to them, and he ran into the bush. Those who killed my uncle are Sheku, Sahr, Brima Jalloh, and Vandy Momoh. After two days, one of their colleagues, a Kamajors named Laggah with a band on his head, came and asked for his own portion of the meat. He was directed to the scene and he went to the spot and we saw him coming back with a plastic bag containing the body of my uncle. My uncle was a carpenter; he left his children with me. That is my story.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you, that was a very heart-rending story and we notice how distressed you are. Sorry about the way they killed your uncle, so heartless. You said the people who did these things were Kamajors, is that correct?

Coomber Kanneh: Yes, they were kamajors.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What reason did they give for killing your uncle?

Coomber Kanneh: They accused him of supporting the rebels by cooking for them. However, he was forced as the Town Chief, to cook for the rebels when they were at Lalehun.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: From what I gathered, is it that they were going to use your uncle's head for food?

Coomber Kanneh: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you actually see them cooking or you saw them preparing the food for cooking?

Coomber Kanneh: They killed him just to eat his body.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you give information about the process, how they cooked, where it was done?

Coomber Kanneh: It happened in Lalehun. I saw it happen. When they carried parts of the body in a five-gallon container. They were selling marijuana, alcohol and some other drugs at a spot. By then I used to smoke and drink so I went to the spot, and I met them cutting the body into small pieces. It was a very horrible sight.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you identify any of these people; are they around your area?

Coomber Kanneh: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where are they?

Coomber Kanneh: One of them is dead.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: which one is dead?

Coomber Kanneh: The one who asked for his own portion.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is his name?

Coomber Kanneh: Lagga.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What are the names of those who are still alive?

Coomber Kanneh: Sheku Sahr, Brima Jago, Vandy Womah; at that time I never knew his real name he was Vandy Kawa.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know where they are, do you know their addresses?

Coomber Kanneh: One is still in Lalehun.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Which one is in Lalehun?

Coomber Kanneh: Sheku Sahr.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you give a definite address?

Coomber Kanneh: He is around the market area close to the Court Barray, in a town called Tohun, going toward Tongo.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is Brima Jago.

Coomber Kanneh: I heard that he is staying in Semewahun.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know the area?

Coomber Kanneh can't tell.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about Vandy Woma?

Coomber Kanneh: He is in Panguma.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Which area in Panguma?

Coomber Kanneh: I don't know the area; if you want to get him I will try to locate him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: it is a pity that you are only coming today; will you be willing to meet with these people if we can get them?

Coomber Kanneh: Yes, I am willing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you willing to meet and reconcile with them?

Coomber Kanneh: I have forgiven them in my heart, I am not talking on behalf of my entire family, my sisters and brothers; I don't even want to recall the incident. When I told them that I want to reconcile they frowned at me. I told them that they don't even know what they did.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why did you say they don't know what they did?

Coomber Kanneh: Whatever happens is in the hands of God. I am not revengeful.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for this revealing testimony, I'll ask questions just to clarify some issues. When they led your uncle away you did not follow him, you later found out that he was killed, how do you think he was killed?

Coomber Kanneh: They brought his head.

Commissioner Torto: You did not hear gunshot?

Coomber Kanneh: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: So you went to the site and found bloodstains on a wooden plank, which meant his head was chopped off.

Coomber Kanneh: They did not kill him with a stick, but a knife.

Commissioner Torto: Which part of his body did you see in the five-gallon container?

Coomber Kanneh: His liver, heart and part of his flesh.

Commissioner Torto: Did you see his limbs?

Coomber Kanneh: No.

Commissioner Torto: How then, were you sure that they were human parts?

Coomber Kanneh: I was convinced when I saw his head with one of the boys and I identified it.

Commissioner Torto: Was that the only incidence of cannibalism you know of, that was done by the Kamajors?

Coomber Kanneh: There are many others, which are not important to me.

Commissioner Torto: So you want me to believe that it was the usual habit of the kamajors that your uncle was not the only victim? I want to know whether it is the constant practice of the Kamajors.

Coomber Kanneh: Even if it happened elsewhere it was not my concern.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned that your brother Mohamed was a Kamajor. Was he around when this incident took place?

Coomber Kanneh: He was not present.

Leader of Evidence: Did you inform him later?

Coomber Kanneh: I did not tell him, on his return he heard about it from other people.

Leader of Evidence: What was his reaction?

Coomber Kanneh: Mohamed is not my biological brother but a native of the same town, so he hadn't much to do.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you questions you want to ask about the Commission?

Coomber Kanneh: Yes, in a family there is a breadwinner, no matter what happens. He was my mother's elder brother, my mother died before him. What I am going through is really serious. I want to know if you will be of help to me, until my problem is settled down. I am a cow without a tail, no one to take care of my dependents and me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So that is the question you want to ask? What are your recommendations?

Coomber Kanneh: I am an asthma patient; I want you to help with my health and accommodation in our place; the construction of Schools and other infrastructure.

Coomber Kanneh: I am appealing with the president to offer help through my recommendations

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming and we are sorry about the death of your uncle.

DATE: 30th May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Borbor Orlando Brown (Christian)

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE NO:

The Presiding Commissioner, Justice Laura Marcus Jones, administered an oath on the Bible.

TESTIMONY

Borbor Orlando Brown: When the war struck in 1991, rebels entered Bunumbu. Our late Paramount Chief A.M. Farma, the late Pa Joki and the Chiefdom Speaker called a chiefdom meeting. They were concerned that there was a war and it was coming to our Chiefdom. Our chief and a few others left to speak to the Inspector General, Bambay Kamara. They brought the ULIMO fighters and SSD; I was instructed to work with them, because I am conversant with the terrain. They were replaced by the SLA. In 1992 the Military Coup of NPRC took place. The Resident Minister was Tom Nyuma, who set up a Security Network in our town. Dr Lavalie was the Chairman and I was an Executive member of the committee. I served in that capacity until the rebels took over Bunumbu. Lieutenant Kabia, Pa Abu Mansaray and I were separated from each other.

After we were repelled, I went to Panguma with the Chief and we later came to Kenema. I knew the rebels would enter Tongo so I came with the Chief. On 5th February 1994, I was at my place, 4 Sembabu Lane at 9.00a.m. when I saw two vehicles full of military men. The soldiers told me that Brigadier J.O.Y. Turay wanted to see me at Brigade Headquarters. I wanted to get dressed but they did not allow me; I was pushed out of the house and there was pandemonium in the area. At the headquarters, I met Brigadier Gottor, Brigadier Turay, Paul Thomas and Brigadier Andrew Koroma and an MIB Lieutenant. They told me that a captured rebel had testified that I was training them in Weima to use the AK 47; I told them that I was under the military and the SSD, if I was guilty of such an offence Kabia and Abu would have arrested me. I told them I am not guilty. A soldier slapped me and Idriss threatened to kill me; I told them if that is the will of God, so let it be. He said they are next to God; whatever they say will surely come to pass. They took me to another room where Paul Thomas, Major Andrew Koroma and other soldiers were. They said that this war is not a war for hunters; they took out a list and said that 25 of us will have to die. No. 1 on the list was Alpha Lavalie; I was the second on the list. I reminded them that if the rebels had implicated me I would have been arrested long ago.

Because of that, I was given several slaps and was taken to the guardroom and detained. Lieutenant Kabia told me not to bother myself as he had worked with me and I am faithful to him. They brought out my SLPP executive card. They asked if I knew anything about the card and I said yes. I told them I acquired it when the then President Momoh declared that the ban was lifted on political parties. When Lieutenant Kabia, in trying to defend me told them the accusation

was baseless, he was slapped. They commented that a Temne man is defending a Mende man. The boy who they said told them I trained rebels to use the AK 47 said that burning cigarette stubs were put on his body for him to answer that I trained them. My wife later informed me that all my possessions had been looted. The man told my wife to bring me food. Whilst I was eating J.O.Y. Turay came with Idriss. He asked who gave me food, kicked it and ordered that I should be taken out and stripped naked. They kicked me all over my body and I was tied up, with my hands and feet behind my back. (Shows the scar). I was brought outside and all the children around came watching me. They hung me on a stick naked. They then put a rock on my back. My Chiefs heard my cry. The NPRC Officers were standing outside. I asked Gottor how he could stand and see me being disgraced when he attended school with my brother. J.O.Y. brought out a Camera and a recorder. He said that if I don't admit he would not release me. I asked him if my face resembles a rebel. They started putting burning cigarette stubs on me. I told them that they invited us to fight with them. I placed a curse on them and one said it was because they hadn't killed me.

They sold the copies of my nude photograph in Bo, saying that I was a rebel. J.O.Y. Turay tortured me by pouring kerosene all over my body, ready to set fire on me. I prayed that somebody would save me. Shortly, I heard Tom Nyumah call Lieutenant Kabia and ask him whether the allegations were true. Lieutenant Kabia said the he had tried to defend me but J.O.Y. Turay had slapped him.

The SSD said that if they had suspected that before, they would have arrested me. He took out the card and said that SLPP brought war in this country. Tom Nyuma said that if they had brought politics in the war even if I am an SLPP supporter I have fought for APC and NPRC. Alpha Lavalie promised to take the matter to State House, saying that even if I had committed such an offence they should have met to discuss such issues. Then one of the soldiers asked if Dr Lavalie will be alive to go to State House. Nyumah ordered my release. I was then taken to the hospital. The next day Tom Nyumah removed me from the hospital to Banyas's hospital saying that he wanted me to be closer to him. The Bishop used to go to the hospital to pray for me until I recovered.

I want to say something about my son Borbor Orlando Brown Junior he was attending the Albert Academy, he came on holidays; he obtained permission from me to go and spend the holiday with some of our relatives in Panguma. I told him not to go because there was fighting between Kamajors and the Peoples Army. There was animosity; the People's Army would not come over to the Kamajor Area whereas the Kamajor would not go to the People's Army area.

One day I went to the chief and on my return, my son was nowhere to be found; in November my sister reported that my son was dead, that she saw his corpse amongst four others at Talama Junction. Upon investigation they said that four of them came from Tongo and the Kamajors killed them. That was what we were told. Then my wife said she wanted to know the real kamajors and who gave the information. The lady promised to give me the names of the kamajors. I told the Chief Hunter and P.K. Salieu Buckaroo that I had got the information about the death of my child and I would like to know if he knew anything about his death. I told him that when I was in the war front I had a committee set up to investigate matters concerning civilians. Then I asked him if there were such committees to deal with such issues, he said no and I told him that he is not a real leader.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. We feel and sympathize with you. Indeed you were close to death. Thank God you are alive. I am sorry for the loss of your son.

Commissioner Torto: How many people were killed in the list of 25 shown to you?

Borbor Orlando Brown: Only Dr. Lavalie's whose death was reported, alleging that he fell in a Land Mine.

Commissioner Torto: So he was the only one killed on the list?

Borbor Orlando Brown: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: They told you that you were accused of training rebels, what were the charges of the other people?

Borbor Orlando Brown: They said we were all executive members of the Eastern Region Defence Committee.

Commissioner Torto: Do you know what happened to the boy, who was forced to say you were training rebels?

Borbor Orlando Brown: He was severely tortured and I don't think he survived it.

Commissioner Torto: Did you do a follow up?

Borbor Orlando Brown: There was no follow up; I was taken to the hospital. A few days later, Dr Lavalie was killed.

Commissioner Torto: Why didn't you make a follow up yourself?

Borbor Orlando Brown: I reported to Dr Demby, who was Vice President; I believe people were afraid of the military.

Leader of Evidence: How old was your son who was killed?

Borbor Orlando Brown: He was sixteen years old.

Leader of Evidence: Your sister told you that if you need the names of the Kamajors she would get their names. Is that correct?

Borbor Orlando Brown: I had advised her to wait. I have still not got the names of the perpetrators.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We sympathize with you for all that had happened. Do you have any question for the **Commission**?

Borbor Orlando Brown: Is it possible to bring the people I have named before this **Commission** so that we can explain our grievances?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: If you can give the names and addresses of these people, then we can do a follow up. We already have your contact address. Are you willing to meet them and reconcile with them, because that is the mandate of TRC.

Borbor Orlando Brown: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We will try to do our best. Any other questions?

Borbor Orlando Brown: I experience pains all over my body, due to the torture by these soldiers. Is there any assistance you can render to me for my health?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: If you talk to the briefer you will be given addresses of some NGO's, who will assist, Looking at you, I thought you would be able to seek medical attention

yourself: but if you still need help we can help. Do you have recommendations to be included in our report for the attention of government?

Borbor Orlando Brown: The people who did wrong to me were trained soldiers and they had taken an oath to protect lives and property of people in this country and since they deviated I will recommend that the law take its course.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You know that some of these people have been trained and absorbed into the Army and we trust that they would have changed by now to keep to the oath they took and their commitment to serve the nation.

Commissioner Torto: We are actually here to reconcile, the Special Court will handle the other aspect of it, and you never know, some of them might be indicted.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I want you to make it clear that we have nothing to do with Special Court. I thank you.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KAMBIA DISTRICT – 9TH JUNE, 2003

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper called the hearings to a start with the singing of choruses. Interfaith opening prayers were said, Muslim prayers was done by the Chief Imam of the District and Christian prayers was done by Rev. Usman Fornah of the TRC. The Chairman of the Commission then outlined the rules and regulations of the hearings; he explained the goals and objectives of the Commission with due attention to the mandate of the TRC. The Chairman

introduced the Commissioners present and made mention of the other Commissioners in the other team working in other districts. He went on to give the pattern to be adopted in the hearings .He stressed on the expectations from the witnesses as well as the expectation of decorum from members of the public and therefore the non-acceptance of indecorum and /or disturbance during the hearings .

The Leader of Evidence, Ms.Lydia Apori-Nkansah, asked that the Interpreter for the hearings be sworn in. The oath to the Interpreter,Mr. Foday Sesay, a Muslim by religion, was administered by Bishop Joseph C. Humper.

1st Witness –Mr. David L. Boulah – A Christian by religion. Bishop Humper administered the oath .

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper- Presiding .

Bishop J.C. Humper – We thank you for coming. We appreciate your presence and efforts made to be here today. Your cooperation here to push the peace and reconciliation process forward is as a result of your willingness to say the truth. You have come here to give your testimony and we have not come to take you to jail. We have to make a record and we expect you to say the truth. The worst disservice you can do is not to tell the truth to the Commission, but the best you can do for the Commission is to tell the truth, so that we can know the truth about what happened to you during the war.

Mr.David L. Boulah - Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, members of the high table, leaders and local authorities of Magbema Chiefdom and all people of Kambia District, I thank the Commission for giving me this opportunity to come and tell all that happened to me during the war. I am so happy that when the statement takers came to Kambia; I willingly came forward to give my statement. I am prepared to give you the true picture of what happened to me during the war. I will introduce myself officially to this Commission, who I am and where I come from. I am Mr. David L. Boulah, a native of Liberia. I am here in Kambia but you do not know me and why I am here or how I became part of the war. I came into Sierra Leone as a refugee in 1991. Because of certain circumstances, I went to a training base to train so that I can be part of the war. The armed group I was part of was the Liberia United Defence Force which was later renamed ULIMO. One way or another, I became a leader in this group and certain armed men of Liberia signed an agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone .The Government of Sierra Leone at that time was under the APC as the ruling party. The Sierra Leone Government gave us arms and we were fighting with the armed forces of this country. It was because of certain allegations concerning practices made against this group that I had to fight from Tongo field area through Javahun, Kovo and Benguema as well as Kpetema on a mission to verify the facts and make for corrections. Upon the death of Major Freekala the rebels were able to take control of Pujehun and we had to withdraw from Tongo field to Bo and Pujehun. We later carried out a counterattack and recaptured Pujehun. Between Pujehun and Bo we were able to push the rebels far from Bo district. In 1994, allegation was was again levelled against us; because in the confrontations between the ULIMO, the RUF and the SLA, the latter were not able to do anything. The allegation was that the ULIMO had connived with the RUF and that was the reason why the SLA always fell into the RUF ambush . Therefore we were disarmed in 1994 and brought to a camp at Allen Town for 9 months . Because the RUF was pushing forward and had come up to Rokel area, the government went and pleaded with our authorities who then agreed and gave us arms again to fight but our name was changed from ULIMO to Special Task Force . This agreement was signed with the NPRC. We were told we would be treated in the same way as the SLA . We were given ID cards, uniforms and arms. We were sent to Kono, Bo and Bonthe Districts. I was sent to Bo because I had been there before . There we went back into battles . The arms supply they gave us was in 1995. In 1996 our ammunitions got badly depleted while the war was very on . And we were fighting alongside the kamajors against the RUF; but we

found out that the kamajors were against us. The kamajors attacked us in Matru Jong. In this circumstance we withdrew from all areas and came back to Freetown. In 1997 when the AFRC took over, as armed men we served the government of the day, during this time I was battalion QM for the Special Task Force. In 1997 when the intervention started in Freetown we were all in Freetown until when ECOMOG came to bring back the SLPP into power. The government disbanded the army and we all went back with the RUF into the jungle. During that time the AFRC regime had asked all RUF to come back from the bush to join them in town during the intervention; we were all driven back into the bush. Whilst back in the bush we still had to fend for our families. I had to get a bag of rice for my family, with that I added the salary I was paid in the field and gave them to my family. We took the Peninsular road and we crossed to Tombo; we walked by foot to Masiaka and from there we trekked to Makeni area. Those who were fortunate to get any vehicle went by vehicle, otherwise one had to trek. I walked with my wife and kids on foot. Then at last, my wife was lucky to get a ride. On the other hand, we, the fighting men went as far as Koinadugu area; some went as far as Kono and Kailahun area. I stopped at Koinadugu. It was at Koinadugu that we came up with the plan to go to Kono and Kailahun to remove ECOMOG from their base. We were still in Koinadugu, when the first Jet came, I was the first person who got injury from the fragments from the jet, I was also involved in an accident which affected my left hand and my left foot. In the jungle people had to fend for me and my family until God helped me and my foot got healed by the time we got to Kambia. The advance team was to capture Makeni. I was in the base group. When we were about to go back into battle, I was made a battalion adjutant in the rank of captain until Makeni was captured. I started my own battle at Jungle Area. We were at the Rogbere junction. We used to attack the Guineans who travelled on that route; I was using RPG. Later there was another plan that had us withdrawn from Rogbere junction to Kambia; and we were brought to Lunsar and there another plan was made. The leader of the team was Col. Komba Gbundema, we walked from Lunsar to Kamakwie; we joined some of our companions who gave us manpower and arms, we left for Kambia; we came as far as Madina and we were faced with no confrontation, until we left Madina for Kambia. I was made C company commander. As we advanced to Kambia, we came across a check point, it was during night fall. There was somebody about to use en-route Kambia, our commanders got the individual under duress to take us through the bye-pass and into Kambia. At Romaka, we organized ourselves to launch this attack on Kambia, because not all of us had the guts to come and launch the attack on Kambia, I came forward with a small number of men and I was in front with my RPG ready for action. We met the Guinean guard at the check point smoking, but because some of our men panicked; he saw us and escaped and called for support. We closed in on them using the road branching from the FAO. When we came to where the Guineans were lodged we saw one of them with a lamp pointing around the house, and as I was ready with the RPG, I launched it on the building and the building caught fire. There was gunfire everywhere. And because the counter fire and their reinforcement was much, we had to withdraw and reorganize. We had then created a launching point for the Guineans, they launched all night, so we left them launching and used the bye-pass and entered Kambia town. They were at the check point. Later on though, they tried to get us, but at that such times I would use my RPG and send the bomb so you will never come near me again. So, I was given the name "CO One Bomb". When we had settled, we tried to set up a brigade at Madina. Strangely enough, we had certain men amongst us whose duty it appeared was to set houses on fire. I never knew what their problems were as I had not been here before. But upon their entry into the place, you would see houses on fire; that means they know about that place. This was what happened and that is why in certain areas you see a lot of burnt down houses. To stop this atrocity, we divided ourselves into three officers who were doing the work in turns and if one person comes to Kambia he will serve for a week and would go to Madina and rest for a while. During this time the people of Kambia had generally deserted their, though once in a while they would come and check to see what was going on. We set up a brigade and appointments were given to people who were seen as competent, I was made a second battalion commander, the other man was third battalion commander at Rokupr he was Col. Emmanuel, the other was Mustapha Dawi who was the first commander in Kamakwie. Still after these battalions had been set up the Guineans were still launching at us from the check point and sometimes they even came out to attack us. During this time I tried to make peace with the Guineans so that we could live in peace. I also went out

looking for the inhabitants of Kambia to come back; those who had the guts to do so, came back. Later I was able to get a link with the Guinean commander Capt. Pepe and we came together as one. Once upon a time, it happened that one of my men, one Musa, went with one woman to the Guinean battalion and stole from them a radio set and a wrapper. The matter was reported to me. In order to prove that my command was not tolerant of bad behaviour, I sent for this man I interviewed him but he denied. However, later on he confessed and I ordered my men to give him 150 lashes and lock him in the guard room. After he was released, he ran away with his woman to Freetown. I still continued to encourage the people to come back as people were looting the zinc from their houses and indeed those who had the courage came back. I did not know that everything that I was doing; thinking that they were in line with good practice; were sending wrong signals to my commanders and I became a target. They would send their bodyguards to come and watch my activities. At some point we were able to open Kolenten Secondary School and some primary schools and some children started school. Whilst all this was going on I had another problem with my commander. It happened that the District Medical Officer came with a team for immunization. I led the team from here to Bramaya to sensitize the people about this programme. I even have documents to show. I met my commander holding meeting with the people. Therefore, I asked my boss that whilst they were on the meeting, he should give me time to go and sensitize people in the other villages. My boss misunderstood my language and my intentions, as he was illiterate. And there and then, he put me under "mess" arrest and I had to walk from Kukuna to Madina. I was under mess arrest for one month and one week. He even told me he could have me shot and nothing would come out of it. Later on however, I was freed and I came back to Kambia. Because of my relationship with the members of the community, he changed me and brought another person. One of my body guards went and shot an old man at Rogbere for fish. At the time of that incident, I was living here behind this house. And also at that time I had invited the MSF who were examining and immunizing the Under Fives. I went out to see what had happened. Meanwhile, I had just woken up and had not even washed my face; and I went and saw the Pa that was shot. His foot was badly hurt. I then went to see the culprit and by then the man in command was here. By then I held no office I was an ordinary officer. When I went to see the man who had committed the offence he was already bound up and put in a container. By then the man in command was right behind me in a vehicle. I took the man from the container, as he was my body guard and put him in the vehicle and came here. By then two thirds of the Kambia population had gathered to see what would be the punishment for this culprit. The Brigade Commander and the Officer in Charge put heads together to decide what should happen to the culprit. Then they asked that a report be sent to the brigade; but I reminded them that the man in question was my own bodyguard but, this notwithstanding, he should suffer in the same way as the man he had shot. We did not want the Kambia people to think otherwise of us; we shot him, right at the junction here as a deterrence to others that may be tempted to do wrong. I was transferred from Kambia to Rokupr, that very day I was taken to Mange Bureh and given another position, Brigade Task Force Commander, I followed orders; but before the end of the week it was changed to Finance Officer and brought back to Rokupr. This was another problem area between those selling petrol and the Boat Owners Association. All this happened in 2001, I was in the office as Finance Officer, the brigade commander would send and I would go and meet the people and measure petrol and send to the brigade commander. But I was put under all this pressure and therefore, targeted for two main reasons, one my nationality and secondly I was once an enemy and thirdly I was community-friendly. I had a problem, a very critical dilemma, whenever, as they often did, sent for fuel without money; I would always ask them, if we continue to take fuel from this people without money what will happen when they want to buy, and how do we continue? The petrol dealers met me and complained. The brigade commander and even those from Makeni would come to me for petrol and if they do not get it, that would be trouble. We accrued a debt of two million which we are still not able to pay up till today. The Brigade Commander had often retorted that countries do owe debts how much more us. I was the one signing for the petrol and this was a very serious problem because the people get their living from this selling fuel and to continue to take fuel without paying was a serious problem. This last time there was a bargain against me, they fought me in Mambolo. This happened about a week before the disarmament. The Brigade Commander set up a committee to look into the matter; we all made statements and they said they would call

the witnesses to testify, but nothing happened up till now that we have been disarmed and the DDR process has taken place. Of all the statements that I made, given maybe there are people I have wronged apart from what I have explained because as long as you are alive ,apart from commission of errors which man is liable to as a result of man's fallibility,you cannot please everyone,though this no license to do what we know is evil .Therefore, where I have wronged anyone I ask that person to forgive me. We fought the war and it some time and it is not everything one can remember. This is all I have to say . Thank you.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – We thank you for your testimony. This is our procedure. We listen to your testimony and the Commissioners will ask you questions to clarify certain issues raised. The Leader of Evidence will also ask you questions and we will also ask you for questions and recommendations. We are, therefore, asking you to be brief. We need to write our report, so we ask questions for clarification. Let me ask you the first question, you said this process started in 1991?

Mr. David L.Boulah – Yes.

Bishop Humper – You have any idea of the three categories called Vanguard, Special Force and Commando.

Mr.David L.Boulah – I have no idea about them.

Bishop Humper – You said you were trained with the Liberian Defence Force, then ULIMO, then the Special Task Force, did you say the Government of Liberia and the Sierra Leone Government signed this agreement for you to fight?

Mr. David L.Boulah – No, it was the senior officers from Liberia who signed the agreement.

Bishop Humper – We need this clarification because you named the APC party, you said it had knowledge, is that correct?

Mr. David L.Boulah – Yes.

Bishop Humper - Then we came unto 1994, ULIMO and SLA were fighting this war. It was during this time that the ULIMO and SLA were fighting together?

Mr.David L.Boulah – It was during this time the ULIMO and SLA and all fighting forces with the government joined together.

Bishop Humper – You said that in 1994 you were disarmed and sent to Allen Town?

Mr.David L.Boulah – We were disarmed in 1994 and taken to Allen Town but NPRC armed us again.

Bishop Humper – May 25 1997, AFRC/RUF came onboard you were part of them, where were you in 1996?

Mr.David L.Boulah – I was in the jungle.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – Thank you Mr. Chairman. Mr. Boulah, so you have given us a very simple and coherent story of your involvement during the war and you

capped it all by making a plea to all the people you have wronged consciously or unconsciously to forgive you. So , there is very little anyone can ask you in regard to your violations of human rights during the war . But I have interest in your story because we have a problem in the Commission to unravel why the SLA who were supposed to be protecting the people turned round and became enemies of the people. And your story might help us to unravel the puzzle. You have fought on all sides of this war, you have fought as ULIMO, you fought with the SLA, and you fought with the Kamajors and also your former adversaries the RUF. You were telling us about what happened in 1994 and 1996, why were the people trying to frame your group as fighting alongside the RUF?

Mr. David L.Boulah – It was because during that time the ULIMO bosses did not joke with the business of fighting the enemy. ULIMO was in the forefront in the battles with the enemy. It was through ULIMO, that the SLA was able to fight the enemy. Those who were around would confirm this even the Chief of Staff Tom Carew would testify to this.

Prof. Kamara- Are you trying to tell us that because you were forthright and trying to be positive in bringing the war to an end that was why the Sierra Leone army was against you?

Mr. David L.Boulah – The reason was best known to them.

Prof. Kamara – What is your own opinion?

Mr. David L.Boulah – We were helping them that was all.

Prof. Kamara – If you are trying to help someone and then he turns against you what will be your own conclusion?

Mr David L.Boulah – well, it would mean that the person does not want my help in his country to stop what was going on.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – I join the other Commissioners to thank you for your testimony. Please be patient and answer our questions for clarification. Can you tell us your age?

Mr. David L.Boulah – Presently I am 32 years plus.

Commissioner Jow – When did you start fighting with ULIMO?

Mr. David L.Boulah – In 1991.

Commissioner Jow – How old were you then?

Mr. David L.Boulah – I cannot be exact ;except I calculate.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us your educational background?

Mr. David L.Boulah – I just passed from 10th grade to 11th grade in Liberia.

Commissioner Jow – You told us you came as a refugee, how?

Mr. David L.Boulah – I came here as a refugee during the intense period of the war in Liberia.

Commissioner Jow – You told us that initially you fought on the side of the government and later you were accused of collaborating with the rebels was it true?

Mr. David L.Boulah – There was no truth in that allegation and because government proved that; that was why they sent for us again.

Commissioner Jow – You claimed you fought alongside the Kamajors and they turned against you can you explain that?

Mr.David L.Boulah – That was why when Prof. Kamara was explaining I had wanted to put my hand up and explain. The Kamajors were brought to fight alongside the government troops against the RUF and we had that same motive also. The ULIMO also had the same intention so these three groups were in the same stream but unfortunately on the side of the SLA the kamajors turned and started fighting against us.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much, we as a Commission have had plenty testimonies about the kamajors, since you have fought alongside the kamajors can you tell some of the atrocities they committed?

Mr. David L.Boulah – I cannot tell easily.

Commissioner Jow – Can you name some of the Kamajor leaders you fought alongside with?

Mr. David L.Boulah – No.

Commissioner Jow – From 1998 you were with the RUF, but in your testimony you have not told us about some of the atrocities committed by the RUF?

Mr. David L.Boulah – I did mention that in some areas people burnt down people's houses. This was what I saw during this time. I was only a stranger in some of the areas we went through and since we all came from different battalions we only joined forces to advance . I will not be able to say any other thing other than what I have said. In the area of the execution of the man who shot the Pa that is all I can say that I ordered the execution.

Commissioner Jow – So in a way will you hold yourself responsible for some of the bad things that happened to the people of Kambia as you were one of the commanders?

Mr.David L.Boulah – I cannot say so, why? During that time I was protecting my family and those around me, you can be working with somebody but his own idea or thinking will be quite different from yours.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – Are you trying to disclaim or refuse that you did some of the things you said you did, like giving command to give somebody 150 lashes? By the way can you tell the name of the man you ordered to be given 150 lashes?

Mr.David L.Boulah– Musa.

Prof. Kamara – The other one was the man who shot the civilian you ordered his execution, not so?

Mr.David L.Boulah – Yes sir.

Prof. Kamara – You have to accept what you did and ask the people to forgive you.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C.Humper

Bishop Humper – You have been forthright with us. We will ask our staff to meet you because we will want to have more talk with you, you are very important and we are looking forward to someone like you to help us find the way forward. You have been very honest with us. I will only ask you one question as we will have to meet you again. When did you come into Sierra Leone and from what point did you come in ? I want to know whether it was through Kailahun?

Mr.David L.Boulah – I came in through Zimmi Magbele, I have never been to Kailahun.

Bishop Humper – Will you be able to explain to us what happened in 2000 to the UNAMSIL at the Pamlap?

Mr.David L.Boulah – I went to Rogbere to have a meeting with them, on my return by Yilleh I was in the boat crossing the river when I saw a lot of people waiting for a boat with which to cross . When I got there I asked them what the problem was ? They said they heard gunshotS from the check point area. I asked them to come back with me, when we came back at the check point I met the Brigade Commander and he told me that the UNAMSIL had come to clear the check point.

Bishop Humper – Who are you referring to as them?

Mr.David L.Boulah – The Brigade Commander for the RUF, as I was with the RUF. I came back home a sad man as I had done everything to bring back the people and open the schools.

Bishop Humper – So indeed it happened?

Mr.David L.Boulah – Yes.

Bishop Humper – Now the Pamlap issue.

Mr.David L.Boulah – I was not there. I was Finance Officer in Rokupr at that time. What they put together and what they did I do not know I only learnt of it later.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah- In your narration you made it clear to us you ran away from your country because of the war. Sierra Leone, therefore, became a place of refuge for you. You made it clear to us that for the attack on Kambia you gave the first shot. You also told us that some people's duty was to burn houses. Having known the effects of war in your country, how do you feel when you see the carnage as you walk around Kambia, being the one who gave the first shot here in Kambia?

- Mr. David L.Boulah** – Many of us know and many of us do not know what war is all about. I come from a home. It makes me feel bad.
- Bishop Humber** – We have been asking you questions . Now, it is your own turn to ask questions and make recommendations.
- Mr.David L.Boulah** – TRC wants to know the causes of the war, is that not so? And the reasons why somebody like me decided to join the war. You have got statements from me. Now, the problem is this, we do not want a situation wherein we will be faced with another problem in the country, the ex-combatants have been through a reintegration process, the government had said they would give them a package and a certificate to show they have been through the process, what will be the next step if the government does not fulfill this promise to such people?
- Bishop Humber** – I believe the next plan should be to go to the DDR office and enquire and you will get an answer.
- Mr. David L.Boulah** – This has been put to the Regional Officer North whom I believe is the person to put this forward to but we have not had any reply. I can easily write an application to another area for a job but what about the next man who cannot read or write; how can that man take care of his family?
- Bishop Humber** – I understand some people have still not benefited from the DDR. I will advise that you see the TRC staff after this hearing and they will help you channel this issue.If you have any recommendation to give to this Commission as regard those who are victims and those perpetrators who committed the worst atrocities please give it now.
- Mr.David L.Boulah** – I will say that youths are the leaders of tomorrow. Unnecessary provocation towards youths should be curtailed. Therefore,youth unemployment should be addressed. There should be a corridor or any community area for youths to be gainfully employed. The government is talking about food security; there should be a farm in every district or community where youth should be gainfully employed to work .
- Bishop Humber** – On Friday there will be a reconciliation ceremony. After your testimony you asked for forgiveness. We want you to say that clearly on that day to show that you really mean what you have said today in a simple manner so that the people will forgive you.
- Mr.David L.Boulah** – Mr. Commissioner sir, please allow me to say this. There is a coincidence. We have a church programmme which will start in Freetown tomorrow to end on Saturday. That is the reason why I had to come today .That is why I plead that what I should say on Friday ,let me say it here today.
- Bishop Humber** – I am also a man of God, the ceremony is on Friday and we cannot cut it short for you. So you either wait for Friday or you find another time to talk to your people and we are not coming here again and if the traditional rulers and the religious leaders do not lay their hands on you to show that you have been forgiven you will have no complete forgiveness from your people. You can leave for your religious meeting in Freetown today and come back on Thursday.

Mr. David L. Boulah- No problem sir.

Bishop Humper – At one point you spoke like David and now you want to speak like Jonah. Please go and try to come back for Friday. You are a traditional man yourself and you understand what it means. The minds of your people are bleeding .So, please try to be here.

2nd Witness – Ya Alimamy Kafor – A Christian by religion. Oath was administered by Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper.

Bishop Humper – We thank you, you are one of the hundreds of people we are looking forward to help us find the way forward in this country. Your statement is very important. So, we ask you to be calm and give your statement.

TESTIMONY - I am a Sierra Leonean. Our mother gave birth to two of us. I am a business woman who sells cookery on the border. When the war broke out I ran away to Guinea . When I came back I was given 13 ULIMO soldiers. I fed them and at day break they left when they got to the border they were sent back by the Guinean soldiers who asked them whether they knew anyone around they said they knew the woman who sells cookery and Captain Kamara sent them back to me. In the evening Captain Kamara came and I asked him why he sent back the ULIMO soldiers to me. He said they were accused of fighting against the government and had been asked to go back to their country but they had run out of fuel and the Guineans had sent them back. According to him, arrangements were in place to send them back to where they came from. Meanwhile, one of their Majors named Sheriff, decided to get back to Freetown and left the twelve others with me. The next day CID came and accused me of harboring rebels . I asked them to ask Capt. Kamara about the true situation. The next day police came. And the next day the District Officer. I was agitated and I went and scolded the Captain and I asked him to come for his strangers. The next day he came for them in a vehicle and took them away. In 1995 when the rebels entered this town, I had just returned from Guinea. I arrived here on a Tuesday and the rebels entered in the early hours of the next day. We ran and after the rebels left the town around 2:00pm we came back. Around 4:00pm Tom Nyuma came and his driver's name was Nabieu. They came and packed in front of our compound and I told him we were looking out for helicopter as 17 people had been killed and their corpses were lying there in the town. He asked after the government troops and I told him they had all left for Kambia town; he then left. Another group came they asked for water I gave them two rubbers of water, they asked me for medication as some had wounds on their body. And for fear concerning my life, I gave them whatever they demanded which I could provide . When the group left, Tom Nyuma came again and asked me for a pot and other items. He said they were going to cook at the headquarters. I gave them and even went to neighbours, to get other materials for them which I did not have in my possession. They left and somebody came and advised me to move before they came back. I then escaped to Freetown to my uncle's place. At 11:00pm Freetown was attacked and we fled to Lungi. Not long after our arrival at Lungi, ECOMOG soldiers came. Unaware that people were being arrested and that already, a large number of people had been arrested, we were also arrested and detained as prisoners of war. Many suffered from malnutrition-related diseases. People got swollen bodies from the food they were eating and some even died. We were 77 in all. I went without rice for five days. There were two pastors amongst us. They asked me if I had relatives around and in the affirmative I gave them the name and relevant information regarding Komkanda. They took my ID card to him and he sent food and clothes for me, but the ECOMOG seized them and the items never got to me. When the Bishop in Makeni came, Komkanda was able to facilitate the release of all 77 of us. But at that time I was unable to walk. They sent for my children and Komkanda helped me with medical facilities. I then left for Freetown. Upon my arrival in Freetown, the rebels entered on 6th January and on the 11th they entered my house and one

rebel put a knife to my throat. I remembered what we had been told in the church to say when the rebels attack us. So, I said :”Are you going to kill everybody in this war?” Then another rebel came and pointed a torch light at me and asked for my identity, I told him I was there to seek refuge. He told his companion to put the knife down. There were some people who were hiding in the cellar of our house, there was one fair lady Theresa and a rebel called America came and they started raping young girls .When I saw this I told my sister that we should escape otherwise, having finished with those girls we will be their next victims. We ran into the bush. One Saturday morning we came out and went to the ECOMOG who saved our lives.

Bishop Humper – We want to thank you for the time you took to give us your testimony. I can only imagine what you went through during that time. I will ask my colleagues if they have any questions for you.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – It is quite unfortunate and a pity that all these things happened to you during the war which you have taken your time to tell us. There is not much to ask you as regards our mandate. You are just one of those who have gone through such experience .However, I would like to have some clarification concerning the beginning of your story . You said you were a cookery seller; do you mean in Kambia here?

Ya Kafor – It was No. 1 Guinea Road Check Point in Kambia.

Prof. Kamara – During that time was there SLA presence here?

Ya Kafor - Captain Kamara was here.

Prof. Kamara – But he was not alone, were there other soldiers?

Ya Kafor - There were no other soldiers. Captain Kamara brought the ULIMO soldiers.

Prof. Kamara – Did Captain Kamara come with the ULIMO soldiers on that day?

Ya Kafor - He did not come with them, they met him here.

Prof. Kamara – What was he doing here? Was he on official duties or on leave?

Ya Kafor - He was here with his companions working under the mandate of the government.

Prof. Kamara – And alone?

Ya Kafor – He was here with other government troops.

Prof. Kamara – So, he was here with his colleagues?

Ya Kafor - Yes, it was during NPRC time.

Prof. Kamara – While you were selling this cookery was it usual for soldiers to come and ask you for food?

Ya Kafor – Yes, they used to buy rice from my place.

Prof. Kamara – So it was an ordinary thing for Capt. Kamara to send the ULIMO soldiers to you?

Ya Kafor – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – So when they got to the border and were sent back; they sent them to you?

Ya Kafor – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – And they stayed with you, for how many days?

Ya Kafor - For four days, they did not have money.

Prof. Kamara – And you were feeding them for four days without them paying you?

Ya Kafor – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – Why did you not tell Captain Kamara who sent them to you to feed them?

Ya Kafor - When that security torment started , I could bear it no more. So, I asked Captain Kamara to come for them.

Prof. Kamara - Where did he take them to?

Ya Kafor - He took them to Freetown.

Prof. Kamara – Two days after the CID came to accuse you?

Ya Kafor – No, the ULIMO boys were there when the CID men came.

Prof. Kamara – After that they left?

Ya Kafor – Yes, they left.

Prof. Kamara – So there was no connection with those soldiers for what happened to you?

Ya Kafor - No.

Prof. Kamara – After they left Nyuma came?

Ya Kafor - It was after the attack that Nyuma came.

Prof. Kamara- So why did the ECOMOG people arrest you ? So, what happened in Kambia had nothing to do with your arrest in Lungi?

Ya Kafor – When we escaped to Freetown and the rebels entered on the 25th ,we crossed over to Lungi and; then whosoever was pointed out as from out of town was arrested.

Prof. Kamara – When you left here and went to Freetown did you continue with your cookery business?

Ya Kafor - No, I was engaged in fish business.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – Thank you for your testimony, it is clear and straight forward and I have only few questions. You said 77 people were arrested and detained in Lungi and some died because of the food they were eating, can you tell us what food they ate that led to their death?

Ya Kafor - They prepared food called Eba; but I refused eating it.

Commissioner Jow – Did you suspect that the food was tampered with?

Ya Kafor - I cannot tell. I only saw something black.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us what happened to the people who died?

Ya Kafor - One boy choked to death ,out of fear .The other was a policeman who came from Mende land he died because of the quality of the food.

Commissioner Jow – Were you tortured during your arrest?

Ya Kafor - I was not because I was always crying and shouting all day and night.

Commissioner Jow – who facilitated your release?

Ya Kafor - Chief Komkanda and the Bishop at Makeni facilitated my release.

Commissioner Jow – Were you the only one released or were you released with the others?

Ya Kafor - With the help of prayers and thanks to God, all of us were released; we had two pastors with us.

Commissioner Jow – So you had no connection with the AFRC?

Ya Kafor – No

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – You knew that ULIMO were fighters?

Ya Kafor – I never even knew their names.

Bishop Humper – When you reported to the District Officer and then to the CID , did you make it explicit that you were not responsible for this people but Captain Kamara was?

Ya Kafor – Yes

Bishop Humper – You were branded prisoner of war when you went over to Lungi, not so?

Ya Kafor – Yes

Bishop Humper – Did you understand that a prisoner of war is one who has been fighting and was captured?

Ya Kafor – No, that was what I did not understand.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah- Please in your statement you mentioned that your friends son was shot in the leg, can you give us his name?

Ya Kafor – Adikali

Bishop Humper – We have asked you a lot of questions. You experienced killings, rape and threat on your life. These are all violations of human right. Do you have any questions or recommendations for the Commission?

Ya Kafor – I do not have any questions to ask; but I have a recommendation to make so that there will not be a repetition of this war as women and children have suffered greatly during this war.

Bishop Humper – Thank you very much. Your testimony is good and your recommendation will be included in our report to help our children and children's children.

3rd Witness – Kemokoh Kargbo – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper.

TESTIMONY- A vote of thanks to you; you came safely and I pray God to take you back safely. I am a native of Kambia. I am married with two wives and fourteen children. One night, we had all gone to bed, when we were rudely awoken by bombardment apparently from the Guinean territory. We opened our doors and saw rebels fighters. We ran outside for shelter. I took all my children and my father. We could not take anything along. We crossed one river here in Kambia and settled in a village. We did not have anything to eat so, we used to come back to Kambia here to find something to eat. One day one of my brothers came to Kambia here to find something to eat. He did not know that rebels were around. They saw my brother up the tree and they asked him to come down the tree. He did. They asked him to show them where the people were taking refuge. He said, he did not know. They hit him with the gun and he took them along with him and they crossed the river to where the people were. As the people saw them they ran away. My step father had gone out to look for my brother. He also saw them and ran, They gave him a chase and caught him. One of them called out to his other fellow rebel saying: "this man wants to try me." He came up with a knife and stabbed him on his stomach and his bowels came out. My brother was still with them. They came and gathered all the pots and whatever they met, tied them together and put on the head of my step father. As my step father was groaning under the intense pain, they decided to end him up. There were three of them, Devil, Killer and Target. They told Target to go and cut off the rope. Target used the rope to tie the old man and my step father pleaded with them not to kill him but they hit him with a stick till he died. We were told all this two days later by one man. And we went and saw the corpse and buried him in that same area. The rebels came back to look for the corpse but we had buried it. They rained a lot of abuses and went away. It was within that same area that my brother was able to escape. Then he ran away. He said he could not withstand living in that area anymore. Meanwhile, the rebels came from Makeni and did barter system with the Guinean soldiers for rice and fuel. One day having sold their valuables to the Guineans, when they wanted to buy rice, the Guineans rejected them and insulted them. So the rebels came together and planned to launch an attack on Pamlap. By then we were in Kambia here as we had nowhere else to go. At first we heard the Guinean bombardment. We ran away for shelter. Then, one night we heard the RUF gun shots.

This went on all night but the Guineans were difficult to overrun. We could not put up with it so we had to run away again. My memories and emotions are getting a better part of me and I do not think that I can continue with this story.

Bishop Humper – We have heard your sad story. You really witnessed all this happen to your people. You will listen to the Commissioners as they will have questions to ask for clarification.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – We share in your sadness over the loss of your step father. I am just wondering, you told us the story in a way as if you were present in all the actions that took place.

Mr. Kargbo– Yes I was there.

Prof. Kamara – How could you have been there when they stabbed your step father and you people ran away, not so?

Mr. Kargbo – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – When they stabbed your step father, you were on the other side of the river, am I right?

Mr. Kargbo– I was in the verandah with my family and when they took him away we all ran away. When he was apprehended and stabbed I was hiding nearby. I heard him shout. When they left, we came out and saw blood.

Prof. Kamara – According to your story it was your brother that was held by the rebels not you. So, was it your brother who came and told you the story?

Mr. Kargbo – After my brother managed to escape it was somebody who narrated this story.

Prof. Kamara – So you agree now that you were not present ; you are reporting something your brother told you?

Mr. Kargbo – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – Where is your brother?

Mr. Kargbo – Since he ran away from that scene we have not seen him. We learnt he lives somewhere in Barbara.

Prof. Kamara – So you are alright now with your 14 children?

Mr. Kargbo– Yes, better.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – How long did your brother who was abducted spend with the rebels?

Mr. Kargbo – He did not spend up to a month with them.

Commissioner Jow – Did he tell you his ordeal with them, can you tell us what he told you?

Mr. Kargbo – He said that as he was captured and brought to town they told him if he ever tried to escape he will be killed. He was simply lucky; because whilst he was with them they captured people and dump them alive into the water wells . Some of this information people here can testify to. When you fetch water from these wells you will bring out human hair.

Commissioner Jow – How old was your brother when he was abducted?

Mr. Kargbo – He was 25years.

Commissioner Jow – And you say with all this your brother is okay now?

Mr. Kargbo – Yes, he is at Barbara and he is engaged in farming.

Commissioner Jow – You mentioned three names, Devil, Killer and Target do you know them?

Mr. Kargbo – Yes, very well.

Commissioner Jow – Can you identify them now if you see them?

Mr. Kargbo – Yes, very well.

Commissioner Jow – Where are they now?

Mr. Kargbo – They left for their villages after the disarmament.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – Thank you, do you have any questions or recommendations?

Mr. Kargbo – I have fourteen children and my brother who was killed was of great help to my family. Since his death I have not been able support my family. I am only managing, putting up mere appearance .

Bishop Humper – So this is a recommendation. We will put it into perspective, but in the mean time on Friday we will talk to some NGO'S who are responsible for such cases.

4th Witness – Pa Abu Laprah Kamara - A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper.

Bishop Humper – We are meeting publicly so that people will hear your story and know what people like you went through during the war. We now ask you to give your testimony.

TESTIMONY – What happened to me during the rebel incursion in this country is this. On the 11th of February at 11pm the rebels attacked our village and, we all went into hiding. Early in the morning we crossed over to Rogbere and then from there to Rokonta. At Rokonta my wife became very ill because we were sleeping in the bush. I asked my sister what should be done, we had two children and we decided to return to Kambia. Now, there was one lady in Rogbere named Koloneh who said she would heal my wife. Her condition was deteriorating and I had to bathe my wife and launder her clothes. I had no food for the family, so I went around doing menial jobs just to get food to eat. I am a driver by profession. Unknown to me after the Guineans had quelled the rebels, Koloneh went and reported me to the rebels. And they came to meet me at my place of work in the bush. I saw the rebels from where I was. Koloneh had told the rebels that I had protected as well as provided escape route for a group of Guinean soldiers. I was bound by the rebels and hung on a stick; they brought me that way to the town. I was left helpless. They contemplated on killing me and/or what manner of atrocity to inflict on me. My son was around. As this was going on, my wife passed away. The rebels kept me in that bound state till mid night. And Koloneh spoke to the corpse and said:” You lie here your husband is on his way he will soon join you”. Then I asked her where I had wronged her to deserve all this and reminded her that she had promised to heal my wife. There where I was bound and laid down, a boy named Soso came along and pleaded on my behalf. He told them that my wife had just died and that they should not kill me. I was kept that way up to 6:00pm the next day and I was brought to the bridge. Some of the rebels contemplated on throwing me into the bush; but in the end they took me to the customs office. There was one commander named Philo here. I was locked for 17 days. My son was crying and as he was crying someone gave him 100 Leones. The rebels uprooted cassava and gave to him. My son was with me. Ya Kanu was consoling my son. My son was with me right through and said he would die with me. I was released after 17 days. As I was released, Philo asked me whether I released the Guinean, I said I do not know about any Guinean. He said I should take a broom and sweep but I was so weak and my son came and assisted me. My son found 500 Leones and he asked what to do with the money and I told him we will buy rice. We had a paw paw tree he picked some and cooked it for me and gave to me. The day I was set free Koloneh who wanted me to be killed faced the law of retributive justice. It happened that a rebel had given her a gun and asked her to provide him place to sleep. She took the gun and magazine from the rebel and they went into the room with her husband. Then the rebel came along running and reported to Philo that the woman had snatched his gun from him and as the woman was at Rogbere, Philo went to the woman’s house and saw the gun. I hid myself because I did not want further trouble and since then all I do is cut wood sell to make a living and that is what I do now. As things turned out the woman was arrested and bound up. The people of Rogbere came to me and said: “Go to the bridge and see how the woman who made false allegation against you is being tortured”. But I had to keep to myself. I understand she went somewhere and I do not know whether she is still alive. I can show all the scars and wounds that I sustained from that torture. But I have a son; if I had my way, I will be home by now. But now I cannot. When I leave here, I am going to the bush to cut my wood.

Bishop Humper – We want to thank you for your testimony. I will now ask my colleagues if they have questions for you.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – I join the Chairman in thanking you for your testimony. I was just wondering how a lady who was helping you to heal your wife could turn

round and accuse you. I still can not understand you, I am sure you must have done something to her.

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – I am sure the only thing that must have happened between us was because I failed to meet her demands for money to heal my wife.

Prof. Kamara – There is not much to ask you, I feel sorry for your wife because she is a human being. But fate has cut your case.

Pa. Abu I. Kamara – It is said : In all things thank God.

Prof. Kamara – How do you feel now, you said your feet was burnt, can you now go to the bush and collect your wood?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – Now I thank the Almighty God. Now, I have no single piece of job as it used to be when I was in Freetown. That is the reason why I decided to go into the bush to avoid asking alms from people. If I cannot get anything today, my son will understand; because when I was a driver he was okay. So, now that I am a wood cutter we have to make do with what we have.

Commissioner Mrs.Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – We have listened very closely to your testimony and we are sorry for all the torture you had to go through. But we need to clarify the testimony you have just given us. You speak very highly of a child who stayed beside you all the time. The written testimony says it was a daughter but throughout your testimony you said a son.

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – Maybe it was a mistake. I am talking about my daughter named Mabinty Kamara.

Commissioner Jow – How old is she now?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – 9years 6months

Commissioner Jow – After all she witnessed do you think she is psychologically okay?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – Yes, she is. God will not allow anything bad to happen to her.

Commissioner Jow – The woman Koloneh, was she a traditional healer?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – She was pretending to be one.

Commissioner Jow – But was she not one?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – She was pretending to be a Bondo society initiator.

Commissioner Jow – You came close to these rebels can you tell us what they looked like?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – I was kept in a cell I could not see what they looked like.

Commissioner Jow – Were they in military fatigue?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – Some wore uniform, some wore vest, and some wore sleeveless vest or bared their chests just to show how useless they were.

Commissioner Jow – Was commando Philo one of them?

Pa. Abu L.Kamara – Yes

Commissioner Jow – What did he do to you?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – If I tell lies against him, God will punish me. He never raised a finger on me and never allowed anyone to do anything bad to me.

Commissioner Jow – Finally Pa Abu, its been years since this happened to you. Are you ready to forgive and reconcile with those who did this to you?

Pa. Abu L.Kamara – I have no option. I am looking up to you people who have come with peace. The only thing is that if I have a house I will never rent it out to any rebel;because they never wanted to live in houses. That was why they burnt down houses.

Bishop Humper – We thank you for venting out your feelings that is a healing process. One question that I want you to clarify for us; the Commissioner asked you about Philo and I heard you make a statement, who subjected you to forced labor when you were released?

Pa. Abu L.Kamara – My first captives came from Makeni that happened at the check point by then Philo was not around, after my wife had been buried I was in Philo's house.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah- Thank you for sharing your experiences with us. I would like to know whether Commando Philo or any of the other commanders who tortured you are still around.

Pa. Abu L.Kamara – Since my bitter experiences and the death of my wife I have not set eyes on any of those men.

Leader of Evidence – You also mentioned your wife who died can you tell us her name?

Pa. Abu L. Kamara – Saffie Sesay

Bishop Humper – We have asked you a lot of questions, do you have any questions?

Pa. Abu L.Kamara – All I want to ask is for you people to help me out with a job as I am a driver.

Bishop Humper – We refer you to our staff here: The Regional and District Coordinators. They can assume that responsibility.

5th Witness – Ibrahim Bangura – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper.

Bishop Humper – We thank you for coming here today. You are one of the people whose testimony will help us in writing our report. Please relax and tell us your story. We now await your testimony.

TESTIMONY – I am a native of Kamakwie. I joined the army in 1971. I was a friend of J.S Momoh. We once went for a firing exercise at Waterloo and there I met with Momoh and he said he wanted me to be his friend. Though I am a teetotaler, I always bought palm wine for Momoh. I was told by Momoh that since we had become friends, I should join the army. But I told him that I will not be able to run from Waterloo as I have seen the others doing. He insisted and I began to avoid him. One day I went to Dock Yard. It happened that Momoh had taken Umaru Sesay, the footballer to fisheries and offered him job. He said he wanted to go to Kenema on a short patrol and wanted me to go with him. He asked me to meet him at his office at Murray Town. As at then he was the head there. When I got there, he gave me a letter to take to one Kosia in Kenema. When I got there I was told Kosia was at Daru. And I headed for Daru, when I got to Daru I was given a warm welcome. I got to Daru on a Thursday, and on Friday I went to them. I met A.K Dumbuya and Kosia. Kosia said: "I have that letter you have been trapped." We then went into the training for a period of 8 to 9 months. Then hernia struck me. During this period late Dr. Sheriff paid us a visit. And whilst we were in the parade I fell down and started vomiting. I was taken to Magburaka and operated. Mr. Kosia took us to Solima for advanced training. We did not meet the Fante Ghanaians who were fishing there. Kosia said as my health was not proper I will facilitate the fishing process with the chiefs.

Mr. Kosia, Peter the driver and myself went to the chief and spoke to the people so that we could have fish to eat. We had about fifty men but there was no fish on the ground. One night we saw Captain Kellie he was a crew man to Sim Turay. Captain Kellie and Sim Turay finished the training. C.A. Kamara Taylor took the salute at the passing out in Daru. We returned to town with joy. As soon as I saw Kosia he burst into tears and said he had been accused of training foreigners. I wept with him. I never saw him at work again. I was in the job until Momoh called us together in 1991 and told us that trouble had broken out at Pujehun. During that time we did not know the true but harsh reality and challenge represented by the rebels. We did not know what we were faced with. So, they gave us semi automatic rifles that had ten rounds, and as we shoot the rebels counted the rounds and after the ten rounds they started firing at us. I am a Muslim and as I was going to pray an old woman advised me to maintain sexual abstinence in addition to other practices in regard to food. And as things turned up, we fought and returned home with no problem. I was sent to Kambia to work during the time when the mission people were arrested here in Kambia. We could not withstand the pressure so we went back to town. Then NPRC took over the reigns of government, we took command from them. I was sent to Kassiri under the navy, I was sent to Yeliboya, I served as a commander in the rank of a sergeant, I had nine boys and myself making ten we were working amicably. Then problem struck, my colleagues came in a boat and my boys took off. I had one boy with me and I loved him very much, his name was Abdul. I saw Col. Turay who was the third figure head in the naval wing he was in sympathy with me as all my boys had left. I asked him to help me with a boat to go to Kassiri and hand over. At that time with the jet bombing and strafing intermittently the risk was very high in moving ammunitions across some distance. Under the circumstances my son asked: "what are we going to do?" By and by, I made an arrangement with certain civilians that helped me carry the ammunition to the police at Kassiri. My wife was there at that time the Chief told the people to keep away from my wife and she was constantly threatened and reminded that whosoever houses a soldier will be severely dealt with. My kids advised me to go and surrender. I went to Lungi and surrendered. My other wife Kadiatu was helping me for my survival and we were there till June. During the stay at the camp at Lungi we were given a spoon of garri for the whole day. Soldiers were dying. Once my wife prepared food for me and took it to me at Lungi and she was thoroughly beaten by ECOMOG. We were severely dealt with for whatever little thing we did. Things changed when the British Soldiers came. They sent us 7 cows for Christmas. On the 27th by then I was fasting my wife prepared a delicious meal for us and also took the money for safe keeping. The ECOMOG came up with the idea that they will take us to different places for safe keeping. Then another trouble began. The ECOMOG soldier asked who the senior officers amongst us were, somebody pointed me out and I was asked to board a vehicle. And I kept

asking the ECOMOG driver where we were heading to. They said they were taking us to the hotel for safe keeping. They took us along until we got to Pademba Road and we were asked to disembark. The ECOMOG soldiers were all holding RPGs and other ammunitions. I had food with me which my wife had prepared and as it was close to the time to break my fast, I quickly ate it. I was now prepared, my mind was made up and I decided to face whatever would be like a man. It was clear to me that we were being taken to the Pademba Road Prisons. We were all lined up according to battalions. I was in the Second Battalion. We were asked to enter the prisons. We took two weeks in the prisons. We could not sleep. We were so worried. But Momoh and others gave us courageous words. Whilst there we began to hear gun shots from Up Gun and they started firing at the doors. We thought that ECOMOG was coming for us. That was around 3:15am. At 6:15am they asked us to move off the doors. Finally they were able to break in. They told us they had heard that we were all going to be killed. They asked us to go to state house. They told me not to go beyond Congo Cross as that was where they had drawn the red line. I used my military intelligence and crawled out of the prisons and made straight for the grave of the late Patricia Kabbah. I had some other military boys with me and they promised to die with me. As we got to Congo Town my son Kawuta saw me and said: "Papa you are finished! See your companions are all lying on the ground, dead!" Then one madam Aina, whose hand was amputated, asked whether they were taking me to be killed. And she told them not to do that. My son Kawuta tried to escape with me through the mosque. Then, they warned him saying: "Kawuta, you are going to die with your father." And in return he said: "If you want to kill my father, we will all die." Madam Aina advised me to put up my hands when I get to the check point. And as I got to them, I put up my hand. We met armed men from the ECOMOG, SSD and kamajors. I thought we were in with the men who had come to free us but to my dismay I saw one of the officers who were with us at Lungi. I told my military boys to follow me so that we all die together. My son was worried and said that I should look at the road and see the dead bodies of my colleagues. So, I told them to go back saying I would rather die alone. The soldiers with me strongly believed that my presence will save us all. They asked us to lie on the floor saying our comrades are burning the town, one of them wanted to shoot me but the ECOMOG soldier there pleaded on my behalf. They asked me what I had to say. I told them that as an army officer I was told that as soon as one lifts up a hand you have surrendered. I also told them that if I had ever wronged anyone since 1997; then I will go to hell if I die, but that I know I will go to heaven. The SSD, one Mr. Lavally said I was only talking too much sweet talk. I had on a Seiko watch and the SSD focused his attention on it, he took my bag from me and placed it under the fountain. We lay there on the floor. They had killed 18 people and the blood was rolling down towards us. The kamajors were desperate to see us dead but the ECOMOG soldier said: "You have heard from this old man". Another ECOMOG soldier came up and asked us to come out in threes as we normally do in parades. I had my Tasabia and they said it was juju and the ECOMOG soldier said we were free and we were called Fatigue Commander and I was made the Leader. Then a van came and said time was running out and we should clear the corpses and be moving. The SSD had then taken my watch; I had Le 160 thousand given me by my wife in my bag, that was also taken. We were given garri and cold water and later asked to load the corpses into the vehicles. I wanted to help but was stopped. Later another police vehicle came and we went to Murray town to collect ammunition, we collected 3 boxes. We went to Wilberforce, we collected 14 remains of soldiers. The corpses of the soldiers were set ablaze. We were then later taken to the rice store at Wilberforce, soldiers in the band section were there in their uniform. They opened and locked us in with our companions, but the door had two padlocks. And I told them to take courage because I believe the rebels who had freed us at Pademba Road will be able to set us free again. On Friday we were brought out and one Dr. Julius Spencer who was in complete military fatigue came with one John Langba, a Kamajor. Julius Spencer asked who we were and the ECOMOG answered that we were fatigue men, that we had no problems. On Saturday we heard no gun shots; instead an announcement was made to the effect that everybody should be set free. ECOMOG came and told us that. We were set free again and food was brought for us. But I could not eat. An ECOMOG soldier offered me a bottle of soft drink; but I was unable to drink it. They said we should all be taken to Collegiate but time and insufficiency of vehicle did not permit that so we slept again outside at Wilberforce. The next day we were taken to Collegiate and we stayed there till Pray Day and people came to see us. We were later taken to Mammy Yoko

where we were later freed and given a document and 50 thousand Leones. After 7 months at Mammy Yoko we were all set free to go to our different ways. Later we were told that the British soldiers had come to take over the army and whosoever wishes to return can do so. I did not want to go back, but my kids asked me to .They reasoned maybe there will be benefits for us; so I did. And I went through the training and was sent to Kabala. I was in Kabala for 1year 8months when another document was issued to me on the 9th of December 2002 that my services had been terminated. I was paid the sum of 172 thousand Leones in kabala when I was terminated. One Mr. Kamara gave this to me. I am now jobless with 10 children. This is my most important concern . Now I am in Kassiri. I am only here by chance; since the Commission is here that is why I came.

Bishop Humper – Thank you very much for sharing your experience with us. 1971 to 2001 is not a few days. What we are going to do is share some time with you .According to you, you received the sum of 172 thousand Leones with a letter terminating your appointment. I will read this letter for the benefit of all those here present. Your retirement letter is dated 9th July, 2001. The letter states that you should take no further action on receipt of this letter but to make further arrangement for your retirement, your retirement package should be there. The 172 thousand is not your retirement package. Now we will call on the Commissioners to ask questions.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – Thank you Mr. Chairman and Good evening Mr. Bangura. We thank you for the length of service in the Sierra Leone Army. You are one of the people who will help the Commission in its work. When the day started I asked the same question to somebody about the army. I will ask you this question and I want you to give me the true answer. Are you a dissatisfied man with all that has happened to you under the circumstances you left the army?

Mr. Bangura - I am happy and pleased with that.

Prof. Kamara – Therefore, nothing needs to be done about you since you are satisfied?

Mr. Bangura - I am dissatisfied with what I have gone through having given my services to the army for 31 years. That was why I came to the Commission.

Prof. Kamara – Do not be afraid that whatever you say here will bring you any problem. Even if somebody should come here now and say that as you were passing you saw somebody's throat being cut up. We are not here to hold you responsible. If you say what went wrong and tell us the plain truth, it does not matter how terrible; that information will lead us to make the right recommendation for the people of this country to avoid that kind of mistake so that what has happened will never happen again.

Mr. Bangura – That is actually what I want.

Prof. Kamara – So you joined the army in 1971 and that was a very crucial period in the history of this country. It was almost a turning point. I do not know whether you came in before or after the treason trial that involved Foday Sankoh.

Mr. Bangura- I was already in the army then.

Prof. Kamara – I want to take you far into the war 1991- 94/95 that was when you were 13-14 years old in the army; did you see any difference then in the behavior of the army vis-à-vis what it was when you joined in 1971?

Mr. Bangura- There was discipline in the army then when I joined in 1971 - 1991 and there was nothing like undisciplined brandishing and use of guns.

Prof. Kamara – So, when did indiscipline start in the army?

Mr. Bangura – When the war broke out; then one saw an era where commanders were no longer obeyed.

Prof. Kamara – What did you experience in 94/95 when the army joined the rebels? Why do you think the army became disloyal?

Mr. Bangura – In my opinion that all came about as a result of the rebel incursion.

Prof. Kamara – Why do you think the army turned against the people and the government?

Mr. Bangura – The soldiers did not want the civilians and the civilians did not want the soldiers.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – The question my colleagues asked you is because you have spent 31 years in the army. I will come back to that question. Did I hear you say ECOMOG soldiers were ill treating surrendered Sierra Leone soldiers at Lungi?

Mr. Bangura – Yes.

Bishop Humper – Did ECOMOG register all surrendered soldiers at Lungi?

Mr. Bangura – We had a roll call every morning.

Bishop Humper – Did you have a fore knowledge of the January 6 invasion before it happened?

Mr. Bangura – No.

Bishop Humper – You were a surrendered soldier, you were at Pademba Road and these boys who entered in January 6 released you until you finally re-entered the army?

Mr. Bangura – Yes I was called again.

Bishop Humper - You cannot remember but when you were at Mammy Yoko I went there on three occasions to talk to you. Now why did soldiers take up arms against its people? Now we come to the question. Why did the soldiers turn their guns on civilians? Some of you told me the government was not treating you fairly as soldiers, you said some of your bosses were not treating you rightly, am I right?

Mr. Bangura – Yes.

- Bishop Humper –** I am not saying you did it . But you and your brothers, what went wrong that you decided to take revenge and take up arms against the people of this country?
- Mr. Bangura-** I did not do anything. As a soldier we work on commands.
- Bishop Humper –** We are not accusing you or anybody but did you not at Mammy Yoko say that you were not treated nicely?
- Mr. Bangura-** Wherever you find a group of people you have different minds and attitude and that was what saved me.
- Prof. Kamara –** Mr. Bangura; we want people to help build a new army and I don't know whether you have children in the army or who intend to join the army and as I said before if we do not have the truth about what went wrong in the army we will not be able to protect this country from a repetition of such. You are not before a court of justice; it will only help us so that those who join the army later will be happy. I am not saying this for Mr. Bangura alone but for those in the army and ex- military people who will come to testify and tell us what went wrong in the army and how to straighten the army.
- Bishop Humper –** You are saying your gratuity is 172 thousand we will talk to you later from here because according to this letter there is much more in your retirement package. Do not sit down and say nothing. Please follow the correct channel.
- Leader of Evidence –** Ms. Apori-Nkansah
Ms. Apori-Nkansah - I just want a clarification of an issue from you. I want to know if people who served on the side of the rebel and are still in the army?
- Mr. Bangura-** Yes. They are there. They were retrained and recruited.
- Ms. Apori-Nkansah –** So according to your own opinion is the national army loyal and capable of giving security to this nation?
- Mr. Bangura-** Yes.
- Bishop Humper –** We have been asking you questions for clarification, now do you have questions or recommendations.
- Mr. Bangura –** If after having gone through all this training and I were still in the army I believe all these problems would not have come; now I am jobless.
- Bishop Humper –** You are a seasoned man and you are talking to seasoned people. You were not expecting this kind of letter and that makes you dissatisfied. I believe there is the possibility that you can be employed with some security agency. You can come to Freetown they are looking for trained men like you and I would like you to explore this possibility.
- Mr. Bangura-** This is the route now I think I can get from you. If I get a job all my problems will be solved.

Bishop Humper – I want you to know that getting a job will not solve all your problems, they will only be minimized. What recommendation can you give to the Commission with regards to all your experiences in the army?

Mr. Bangura – I say thank you to them.

Bishop Humper – One recommendation you have given here is that people should not retire but should continue working even when they get to retirement age.

KAMBIA DISTRICT HEARINGS – 10TH JUNE, 2003

The interpreter, Mr. Abdul Rahman Kamara, a Muslim was sworn in. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara. My name is Abdul Rahman Kamara .

1st Witness - Ya Alimamy M'mah Kamara – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Prof. Kamara.

Prof. Kamara – We appreciate your coming and we are grateful that you could come and tell us your experience during the war. We want you to know that whatever you will be telling us here will not resolve in your suffering anything. You have suffered much already. What you are doing, the whole country will be grateful. So we ask you to seat calm and tell us your story.

TESTIMONY – At about 10:00am one morning I was in the kitchen when suddenly I saw all my neighbours running helter skelter. I asked them what the problem was and they said the rebels were coming. Leaving behind everything, I took my children and ran for cover away . We were in our hiding place when we heard that the house of Pa Santigie had been burnt down. I still praise God that I was able to save my life and that of my children even though I lost every household property I had. I was in my hiding place for a while and then we left for another village. I stayed there for six months and later returned to my village. I was in Rokupr when I became pregnant. Initially , we had no problems. Problems began to evolve at that time I was already 8 months pregnant and about only a week away to the maturity of the pregnancy. It happened that I started seeing in a school a group of soldiers and I became worried. I saw them again when I went to the market; I became more worried and I was so afraid I that started bleeding. A friend of mine came to my aid and gave me a piece of cloth and took me to the hospital where we met one Mr. Paul who asked me what my problem was. I said I was afraid seeing the men in uniform and he advised me to leave the place and find a hiding place. I left the place and after a week on the 6th of January I delivered. At the time of delivery, I was attended to by a neighbour, but I later went to the hospital. My legs became swollen and paralyzed and I could not walk. I was very fortunate to have a sister who found some herbs for me in the bush which I was using as medicine. This was what I experienced during the war, the child I gave birth to is well and alive and is here.

Prof. Kamara – Thank you very much. I know it must be painful for you to recall all the memories of those difficult days. We have no intention of continuing to distress; you but you have to allow us to ask you some questions for clarification.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – I can sense your anxiety, your frustrations and your sufferings. I have two questions for clarification. You said you were paralyzed ; how did you manage to overcome that paralysis?

Ya M. Kamara – I forgot to enlighten you on one area. We were at the hiding place, when we heard that the disarmament had taken place. So, I came out with my husband in that paralyzed state. I was given an injection, then I was taken home. There was no question of hospital at that time. My sister went into the bush and got some herbs which she used to heal me. After some time I was able to walk again. Presently, whenever I feel the pain coursing through my legs, all I do is sit down.

Bishop Humper – Do you have children and how many?

Ya M. Kamara – Yes. Six children.

Bishop Humper – And they are all going to school?

Ya M. Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – Thank you for coming. We are sorry about what happened to you. We will ask a few questions to clarify your story. You told us when the rebels attacked you went into hiding, was it in the bush?

Ya M. Kamara – We crossed the river and went to a village called Makali. We stayed there for over 3 months.

Commissioner Jow – During those 3 months how did you support your family?

Ya M. Kamara – The villagers helped us and were very hospitable. We went to an abandoned farm and found rice and in that manner continued we to feed.

Commissioner Jow – During that time there was no rebel activity in that village?

Ya M. Kamara – No, at that time when we were there, there were no rebels.

Commissioner Jow – You said in your statement that one Pa Santigie's house was burnt down, who is Pa Santigie?

Ya M. Kamara – My husband

Commissioner Jow – So your house was burnt down?

Ya M. Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Did you witness any other violation?

Ya M. Kamara – I was afraid to be amongst them, I was even afraid to listen to those kinds of talk.

Commissioner Jow – Have you been able to rebuild your house?

Ya M. Kamara – No, I don't even have a bed. At present I sleep on the floor.

Commissioner Jow – What is the occupation of your husband?

Ya M. Kamara – He is an old man now and cannot do anything.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – Thank you .You said you have six children , the one that you had on 6th January is that the last one?

Ya M. Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – When you delivered was it a boy or girl?

Ya M. Kamara – A boy

Prof. Kamara – And it is the last child?

Ya M. Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – So how old is the eldest of your children?

Ya M. Kamara – I gave birth to my first child in 1981.

Prof. Kamara - So it is about 22 years, what is he doing now?

Ya M. Kamara – He is in school.

Prof. Kamara – Are all of them in school.

Ya M. Kamara – Only two including the last are not attending school.

Prof. Kamara – Why is that one not going to school?

Ya M. Kamara – Alimamy is learning skills as a carpenter.

Prof. Kamara – The eldest is about 22 and you said he goes to school?

Ya M. Kamara – He is in JSS 2; the other in JSS 1; the third is learning carpentry and the fourth is in class 2; the fifth is in class 2.

Prof. Kamara – Why is the last not attending school?

Ya M. Kamara – I will send him to school when he is old enough to go to school.

Prof. Kamara – Why is the fifth one not going to school?

Ya M. Kamara – He was there; but after several complaints from the school I had to withdraw him.

Leader of Evidence – Ms.Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah - Thank you very much for coming to share your experiences with us. Before the attack what were you doing for a living?

Ya M. Kamara – I was a petty trader.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Currently what work are you doing to support yourself and your family?

- Ms. M. Kamara –** I am still doing this petty trading, I got aid from ARC in the form of a loan which I am using to do petty trading to upkeep my family and I should pay back within a stipulated time.
- Prof. Kamara –** We have been asking you questions, now we want you to ask questions if you have any.
- Ya M.Kamara –** The only problem I have now concerns my children; if the government cannot help me in any other way, I want them to assist me with my children that is my greatest desire under the circumstances. However, if I can get reasonable financial loan, I will be grateful.
- Prof. Kamara –** As I said earlier I admire her ambition for her children. Fortunately for her and for the people of this country the government policy now is to provide free education at primary level and because you have made this request we have noted it and will remind those people who are responsible for this. We will do so diligently. We hope she too will continue with this same ambition.

2nd Witness – Nabie Musa Sesay - A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

Prof. Kamara – Welcome. You were seated here when I addressed the first witness. Be assured that nothing you say here will put you in trouble. We only want the truth about what happened during the war; because it is only that truth that will help us record the event. So seat calmly without fear and explain what happened to you during the war.

TESTIMONY- We have already prayed to the Almighty Allah to help us have a good day. I am coming to tell you what I encountered during the war. We had a great scholar at Rokupr his name was Sheik Abdul Rahman Mansaray, who was teaching us the Holy Koran. It was during one Fast Month and this man, our Imam, had preached to us during the fast month. One morning we were there trying to have some food after having been through the month of Ramadan. It was Pray Day and after eating, everybody went to his or her own place. Since we were in Rokupr my brother, Pa Alimamy asked me to strike the local drum called the Tabule. The Tabule was in the verandah of the Sheik. So, I went and struck the Tabule. As I raised up my head I saw a strange group of people coming and initially, I thought that they were part of the Imam's followers. I called out on other neighbours to come and see with me and as we entered the verandah we heard 3 gun shots. And there was chaos. Everybody started running helter skelter. No one had time to look for family. Before we got to our own place, our wives had taken to their heels with our children. Our house was along the street. We ran into an okra plantation for cover. Sheik Abdul Rahman Mansaray was in his house. He had two parlours and two rooms. He laid himself on the floor with the Koran in his hand. Meanwhile these rebels moved right down to the wharf area. They broke the stores. We saw them carrying heavy loads on their heads, husk rice, and headed the direction of Makati. They did not use the main roads. From where we were hiding we watched them as they moved about. When they entered Rokupr, they were in large numbers. If they had been here for killing, they would have killed a lot of people. However, after they had all virtually gone; four of them stayed behind. These four who stayed after the main group had gone kept us wondering what was happening. They entered the gate to the Sheik's house and entered into the rooms and met Sheik Abdul Rahman reading the holy Koran. We were now behind the fence and we heard violent movements. Then, we heard the Sheik testify and shout: "Oh! These people have killed me." It was now the time for the four to leave. When they left we got up and opened the fence. They had killed the Sheik, and taken his body into the parlour; where they laid him and placed his cap and his Koran on his chest. My brother cried out to report that the Sheik

has been killed. He cried out saying: “This man who has been killed they have killed us”. There was chaos everywhere; from Kulia to Limba corner . People came out in their numbers. However, the Sheik while he was teaching us there was at a point where he told us that if a person gets killed by gun shot(s) ,that the corpse should not be washed; and that no matter how high or low ,that the buried in that clothe that the person had on at the point of death. And since we are Muslims we cannot go against the teachings of Islam and he was our Sheik. Therefore, we took hoes and Shovels and dug his grave near our mosque. Without wasting any time , we prepared him as he had told us and laid him to rest. After covering his body we heard that another group of rebels were on their way, we all ran away. Some of us took the route to Mobembe that was the only place for us. As providence would have it ,they went another way and we stayed there for 2 days. On the 3rd day, my brother told me that my house had been burnt down. I had to find a way and see things for myself, hoping it may just be a bad dream. I went and saw the ashes of what used to be my house. I can remember there were seven beds in number, 18 chairs in my parlour .I said to myself ,at the age of 80 years and my house burnt down,what kind of life is that,what can I do ? My children tried to comfort and encourage me and said that we should not lose faith but instead wait and see what God will do for us. So,we walked through the land until we got to Mambolo and then Tombo and at Barbara we came across a vehicle and so we were taken to Freetown. I informed my children and I explained to them what had happened. I developed swollen feet thereafter and ever since then ,after every three months I experience this swelling. The last bout of this swollen feet, just happened a few days ago. If you are asking me what I saw and experienced during this war. It is there for all of us to see.

Prof. Kamara – Thank you very much. Certainly this is not a pleasant experience but you have the courage to come and say it here, you have done so well . I will ask the Commissioners to ask you questions and the Leader of Evidence will also ask you questions.

Commission chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – We thank you again for coming. The Commissioners are going to concentrate on two main areas according to your testimony. One which you explained intensively, you were a key witness and two you were a victim. I want you tell us again when the rebels attacked and you ran away, where did you go?

Mr. Musa Sesay – When they attacked the first time, we hid under an okra plantation. We were there lying down.

Bishop Humper – How far is the distance of that plantation to Sheik Abdul Rahman’s house?

Mr. Musa Sesay – Not far

Bishop Humper – How many Rebels do you think entered that day?

Mr. Musa Sesay – At Sheiks house?

Bishop Humper – No, the town.

Mr. Musa Sesay – They were many. I cannot tell the number.

Bishop Humper – Usually what happens when the rebels enter, do they concentrate on one area or move about?

Mr. Musa Sesay – They scatter all about.

Bishop Humper – Before 1996 when these rebels attacked, did you ever hear about rebel activities around the area?

Mr. Musa Sesay – Yes, at a place called Sanda.

Bishop Humper – Did you say on the morning of 1996 when the rebels attacked was Pray Day? Reports here to the Commission in many instances indicate that the rebels used to attack on festive days, on special religious days. I wonder why and what was going on in this country ?

Mr. Musa Sesay – That was our first experience of seeing the rebels, but we cannot tell why they attacked on that day.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – We thank you very much for your testimony; we know you are a fairly elderly and respectable man in your community. We would like to know your position during the time the rebels came to your town, were you the deputy to the Imam or one of the elders?

Mr. Musa Sesay – I was Deputy to the Town Chief; whenever he was not there I acted in his stead.

Commissioner Jow – Religiously, what position did you hold?

Mr. Musa Sesay – Sheik Abdul Rahman was our teacher. I was his student.

Commissioner Jow – You said you heard of the rebels before they attacked, did your Imam ever preach condemning the rebels in his teachings?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No.

Commissioner Jow – He never preached about them in his teachings?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No, not to my knowledge. If he did; I was not aware.

Commissioner Jow – Was he ever threatened?

Mr. Musa Sesay – I am unable to tell; God only knows the heart of men.

Commissioner Jow – But generally, was he popular in his community?

Mr. Musa Sesay – He was deeply loved by his people.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us what group the rebels belonged to?

Mr. Musa Sesay – They told us they came from Sanda in the Port Loko district.

Commissioner Jow – The four rebels who entered Sheik's house were they in uniform?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No, they were in civilian clothes.

Commissioner Jow – were they young men?

Mr. Musa Sesay – Yes

Commissioner Jow – You also told us they carried heavy loads. Were they looted from Rokupr or did they come with them.

Mr. Musa Sesay – Yes; they were stolen properties.

Commissioner Jow – Have you had a replacement of Sheik Mansaray; as he was a man of God?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No. We have some young men assisting; but they were also students of Sheik. But there were also some superior students who had been sent to Cairo who at present are helping us.

Commissioner Jow – You told us about your wives, what happened to them? Are they safe?

Mr. Musa Sesay – My two wives and three children, nothing happened to them except that we lost a brother.

Commissioner Jow – We have the mandate to promote reconciliation and healing. As a religious man what is your opinion about reconciliation and healing?

Mr. Musa Sesay – If you are offended and you want to reconcile with that somebody; if you know that person you will reconcile but if you do not know him how can you reconcile?

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – You spoke of not being able to reconcile with somebody you do not know. So, does that mean you cannot recognize the four people who killed Sheik Mansaray?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No. I cannot.

Prof. Kamara – You told the Chairman that the people you observed while calling prayers on that fateful day were from the group that came from Sanda?

Mr. Musa Sesay – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – The whole of yesterday people were telling us that the attack and settlement of the rebels started in 1995, and according to you they went to Rokupr a year later, so all the time they were in Kambia you did not hear about rebels at all?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No, that was the only time we saw them.

Prof. Kamara – Also the attack on that day, you said they came and went down to where the commercial houses were and then they left. Was that the end of that attack?

Mr. Musa Sesay – They used the main road while entering the town. After they had looted they took another route.

Prof. Kamara – So, they did not settle in Rokupr?

Mr. Musa Sesay – No, until after that attack they decided to come back.

- Prof. Kamara –** Concerning the killing of Sheik Mansaray, you said there were four rebels. Were they young boys ?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** Yes.
- Prof. Kamara –** In your opinion ,would you say they were the leaders of that gang of rebels ?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** I would say they were because after their departure; there was no other rebel left behind.
- Prof. Kamara –** Would you say that these people killed the Sheik because they found him with a Koran?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** Only God and the four know why they killed him.
- Prof. Kamara –** Finally, the turn out of the people when they heard of the death of the Sheik was a clear indication that they had all intention to fight for their Sheik?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** Yes, that was their intention but the rebels had gone.
- Prof. Kamara –** After this did the people organize any defence force to defend their town?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** No, I was not there again.But I did not hear of any defence force.
- Leader of Evidence –** Ms. Apori-Nkansah
- Ms. Apori-Nkansah - Thank you very much Mr. Commissioner; I am sorry Pa Nabieu to hear of the death of your great teacher. Was there any other person killed on the day the Sheik was killed?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** No.
- Ms. Apori-Nkansah –** Apart from looting were young boys and girls abducted?
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** No.
- Prof. Kamara –** You have told us your story. We have asked you questions, now it is your own turn to ask us questions and make recommendations.
- Mr. Musa Sesay –** How does one know more than his teacher ?You asked a question concerning reconciliation, but at my age ,I have no strength my strength is in your hands .It is you people that can decide my fate. That is why I told you my house was destroyed and if I am going to build that house the strength depends on you. You are the go between; whatever people say everything relies on you.
- Prof. Kamara –** As the Chairman has continued to remind every one involved,our mandate requires us to fulfill certain conditions and we cannot do that without people like you coming and telling us what they went through, what happened and how it happened in order to help us make recommendations in order to prevent it recurrence; and also help people who have suffered. We have recorded what you have said, it is not different from what other people have said and we will take it into

consideration when we write our report. We thank you very much for coming.

3rd Witness – Nabie Kamara - A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

Prof. Kamara – Feel comfortable and have no fear. Go on and give us your story.

TESTIMONY – My father was a station sergeant. He is dead now and his death was due to pressure during this war. He died in our village, Bokoi. At first, the war seemed so far away from Bokoi until it came close to a neighbouring village named Senthai. The village, Senthai suddenly became a place of refuge for many and then the rebels got to the place. Then from Senthai, people began to seek refuge in Bokoi and we had it. The rebels moved in tightening the noose around our village, pilling pressure upon pressure until it turned as desolate as the other areas under the rebel impact. The noose tightening began with the rebel demand for food supplies. For the avoidance of trouble, we collected goats, palm oil and other food items and sent to them. For three years we were under this sort of control of the RUF. We got fed up and stopped sending the usual items and they came to meet us. We in our village decided that this pressure from the rebels was too much for us. At one time some of the rebels came and said they were going therefore, to make our village their base. They moved in, beating, buffeting, harassing and maltreating us. We were under their command until they left for Lokoya. And whilst they were there they said we were responsible for their feeding. We did not ask them to protect us but when they came, they said that they had come to protect us. We were so confused our with our elders accusing us of encouraging the rebels; saying that whenever any group of rebels showed up we gave them our support. From another side, the Guineans were sending heavy artillery on the village in order to destroy the rebels, instead they were destroying the village. The village sustained much damage; the village school was destroyed. The rebels migrated and made Lokoya their base. As a result of all the pressure from the war coming from all the sides my father gave up the ghost. I was left with my elder brother alias PZ. So, I asked my brother what was to be done as our father has died, though our uncle was there? My brother told me we had to be patient and watch the way things unfolded. Even as at then my brother had had all his children. As at then I had two but one later died. It happened that I had taken my family to Lokoya and on this occasion I had collected some food items to take along with me to Lokoya. The distance was about three miles. My brother had come along with me, to keep me company. Unfortunately, we ran into some rebels who began to molest us. One of the rebels known as Bastard told me I was not going anywhere. For the avoidance of trouble I continued to follow the rebels' commands. However, at a stage my brother who had been there all along got very agitated. And he told them that we were only obeying their commands because they had guns. Because of this they removed the magazine from the gun and really set upon my brother, to the point that they had to put him in a torture box well sprinkled with very hot pepper. My brother cried out for compassion and made them all manner of promises, but they left him there till the next morning. It so happened that the Guineans again had commenced the bombardment of the rebel positions. And we were all under fire. So, they commanded us to provide them with bamboo canes, which when hit in a particular manner sounded like a gun. And when the Guineans heard this sound they responded. The Guinean shelling was such that the whole base was set ablaze. In that commotion we ran for cover and made good our escape. From the place where we had taken cover we could hear their threats directed at us. They had threatened that if we did not show ourselves up they would disgrace us. But we remained under cover until we were able to find a way to safety. My brother then showed me his body with sores all over.

Prof. Kamara – We thank you. Although you have not suffered much as your brother, you suffered too.

Mr. Kamara – Yes. Apart from the sores on his body, he was also made to carry heavy load.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – We thank you for coming. We will try as much as possible to know who are giving testimonies. We want to believe that you are a victim and you are also a witness. You are a victim because you suffered at the hands of the rebels and a witness because you saw all what happened to your brother. Did these people hit you at any time with their gun ?

Mr. Kamara – No.

Bishop Humper – They forced you to get food for them; how did you get them?

Mr. Kamara – In our village our people had a lot of sheep, goats, pigs etc. when they ran away they left them behind and we collected them.

Bishop Humper – Then we put you under another category, victim perpetrator because you took from other people for the rebels?

Mr. Kamara – That belonged to my parents that was why I took them.

Bishop Humper – How many goats did your people own?

Mr. Kamara – Two

Bishop Humper – And how many goats did you supply the rebels?

Mr. Kamara – Only two at other times we found fish and gave to them.

Bishop Humper – We do not hold you responsible. We know you did what you did to protect your life and your property so that is what we are trying to find out. We are not trying to hold you responsible for anything.

Mr. Kamara – We had two goats and we are fishermen we live close to the sea; at other times we gave them fish.

Bishop Humper – We are told your brother disappeared, have you heard from him since then?

Mr. Kamara – My brother Lamin PZ was a petty trader. He was staying in Freetown but when his guardian travelled he came to live with my father; but unfortunately my father died.

Bishop Humper – Your family was not happy with you because you were very close with these rebels and when you were warned you said you will follow whosoever comes to you.

Mr. Kamara – I have very good relationship with my family and we are very close I will only leave them to come and see what the situation was in the village and that was when I saw the rebels.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much. During the time of the incident you told us you served as a guide, is that correct?

Mr. Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – So, are you telling us you lead the rebels?

Mr. Kamara – No, I was not with them I was in town trying to guard my house. We only met when they came in search of food.

Commissioner Jow – In your village did other young men play similar role?

Mr. Kamara – Yes they were there.

Commissioner Jow – Did you collect them by force?

Mr. Kamara – Our people in the village gave us this money so that they will not burn our houses.

Commissioner Jow – So, the question I am asking did you force your people for this money.

Mr. Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Were there any violations against the villagers by the rebels?

Mr. Kamara – The time they were attacked by the Guinean troops they looted our houses.

Commissioner Jow – Did they burn any houses?

Mr. Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – Can you identify these people if you are to see them now?

Mr. Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – Do you know whether these people are still alive?

Mr. Kamara – We heard that some of them were killed when the Guineans attacked their base?

Prof. Kamara – So, how old are you now?

Mr. Kamara – I think I am 30.

Prof. Kamara – Have you got any questions to ask us?

Mr. Kamara – Yes. Now, we have seen all these atrocities done to us in our village, what plans have you got for us?

Prof. Kamara – What is the purpose of this Commission, why are we here. Well we are here to find out the truth, why this war, what happened during the war, to what extent people suffered and what should be done for people and the

community. There are other aspects of the mandate but we will deal with what I have just highlighted but the Commission will give some recommendations to help people affected during the war. If individuals are not assisted directly their communities will benefit and in a way you will be included.

Mr. Kamara – Following your explanation; we need help in our village. We need mosque, we have tried, but it was really destroyed. Now we are using mats to pray. It is shameful how we suffer when there is heavy storm. There are no toilet facilities, we have water wells. We want you to assist us in our village. We are only looking up to you.

Prof. Kamara – We are here acting on behalf of the Government. When we complete our work, we shall send whatever report we prepare to the Government and will make it available to everybody in the country who can read; so that things can be improved and in that way, your children will not be in your present position.

4th Witness – Abu Kamara - A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

Prof. Kamara – I want you to feel comfortable; take your time so that you can remember everything that you have come here to tell us and tell it as clearly as you can.

TESTIMONY – I am a trader. At one time I went to Solima in search of Diamond. I was there when the rebels attacked; so I crossed the river to the other side. I was there for two days with my work men and then I came back. I was called by the town chief and told that the commander of the kamajors did not like strangers so we left and went to another village in Pujehun District. We were there searching for diamond. Then one day, there was an alarm in the town. The message was clear and stern. In this respect, the leader of the Kamajors, one Eddie, had given us three days notice to vacate that area. He informed the grand commander of the kamajors in that area and said that if he should meet anyone in that area after the deadline, he will be killed. Our host insisted that we leave. The situation was very grave, so we had to go and plead with Mr. Eddie to give us a pass. He gave us and decided to head to Solima. The first check point we met was at Blama Massaquoi. Then, we met another check point at Masanga. There we were asked to pronounce John, as a shibboleth for Temnes. Then, we went to another check point we were also allowed to proceed. Then we came to a particular check point and problems started. First, they stripped us naked and accused us of being rebels. I was the leader and together with my companions we were stripped naked and seriously beaten. They were using guns and whatever other things within their reach to beat us. At a point in their orgy, one small Kamajor pointed his gun at me to shoot me but by the help of God the gun did not respond to his wicked intention. Borbor asked us to give our statement. We were in that process and he had to leave for town. Therefore, we were handed over to Kemoh. After we had given our statements, they now came out with white cloths tied round their heads. The commander ordered us to get out of the house for us to be killed. It was at that point that Kemoh called him inside the hut and told him that we should be transferred to the Headquarters. So, there was this bitter argument between Kemoh and the commander and; finally he agreed to transfer us to the headquarters but we were still left naked. The vehicle came and we embarked on it. When we wanted to seat on the benches of the vehicle, the Kamajor escorts refused and they said we should seat on the floor. Some of them hit us with guns and some kicked us on the chest. They beat us incessantly until we got to our destination. When we got there they called the people and told them we were rebels. After we were removed from the vehicle, Mr. Eddie who was in a meeting, had to be called out to see the

group of rebels that had been brought. When he came I greeted him and then surprised , he asked:” What happened?” I told him that his people did not pay any heed to the documents he gave to me. Mr. Eddie was very annoyed that though he was the second in command to Hinga Norman , people fail to respect the documents that he had authorized. Then he gave me another document with a lot of stamps and asked them to give us our clothes. When we got to this check point where they had wanted to kill us ; they again beat us until I could hardly move my feet. In fact, due to the beating that I received I manifested several complications and had to undergo hernia operation. Be that as it may, Thursday morning we entered Bo, I was unable to use my two legs I had to get support with a stick, a young man gave me trousers to cover my nakedness. And so I went to my house . That particular night the Kamajors visited my house and asked me to surrender the house to the kamajors as they did not have a house . We asked them to wait till morning. 6am at dawn they came back.They refused to allow us to remove anything from the house. And when I told them that some of the beds are not mine, the Kamajor hit me with the gun on my head. I took two days in Bo helpless and bemoaning my bad fortune. Fortunately, I saw one of my brothers who gave me 20 thousand Leones; that was what I used as transport to come back. When I came my mother found some treatment for me. Then , I became very ill ;suffering one bout of illness after another. I was taunted and provoked by my people that I had come from the diamond area with nothing. I was here till a group of rebels came. The Guineans were launching their shell fire, so I ran to Lungi. And there I went to the hospital for operation. It was only when I heard of disarmament that I came back. I had a house of two bed rooms in Bo which has been burnt down. My wife asked me to go back but I refused; she went and she came back on Saturday. This is all I have to say.

Prof. Kamara – We thank you, it is not an easy thing for one to be scared by death we will however ask you a few question to clarify some of the incidents you have described.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C.Humper

Commissioner Humper – We thank you for coming and telling us this bitter experience of yours. Again you are one for the victims of the war, part of the work of the Commission is to look into the activities of the fighting forces and what role they played in this country. Your experience is with a specific force and that is the Kamajors. For the Commission to put your story in a better perspective apart from asking question we need to revisit history. We have something here that is the date but we want it to come from you, what year did you suffer this?

Mr. Abu Kamara – 1998.

Bishop Humper – What year did you go to Pujehun District to mine?

Mr. Abu Kamara – It was early 1998 and in April this incident took place.

Bishop Humper – How long did you take in Bo before this incident?

Mr. Abu Kamara – I went to Bo in January 1976 and I went to Pujehun in 1998.

Bishop Humper – How did you relate to people of other ethnic groups before 1998?

Mr.Abu Kamara – While I was in Bo, the Mendes were people who liked to exhibit tribalism and in every little thing they would say that the Temnes should leave their area.

Bishop Humper – In 1998, how many of you were mining?

Mr. Abu Kamara – We were six in number.

Bishop Humper Did you say you had already piled up the gravel?

Mr. Abu Kamara – Yes, we had even started washing and we got one piece called under six.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – And that area is the area of ethnicity or tribalism in this country? We want to be able to find out whether tribalism actually exists as a natural flow or is used for people to satisfy personal feelings or needs and I think that was what the Chairman was leading to when he was asking this question. You went to the south 20years before this incident , can you tell us whether tribalism is such a strong force that it prevents people from other tribes to live in the south?

Mr. Abu Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – In that case what do you think is the population of Northerners in Bo.

Mr. Abu Kamara – Presently most of them are in Freetown.

Prof. Kamara – 1977 was also a special period you will agree with me. You are referring to the Jagboima incident, you know what I am talking about. That time it was politics and at that time too it was the North that launched the attack in the South. The point I am trying to make is you were mining, you had collected gravel, you were washing the gravel and they showed promise of returns, in your opinion was it not a way of getting you out so that somebody could get your gravel?

Mr. Abu Kamara – Yes, that was the pretext.

Prof. Kamara – In life we are always in competition with people and there are some people who do not compete fairly; they take advantage of situations. We see it in politics, we see it in business. Some what, we as Commissioners have to be careful to see that even business brought before us be interpreted correctly. So, you have lost the chance of being a wealthy man in Sierra Leone today. You are as poor as anyone of us sitting here as a result of someone kicking you out and even trying to kill you and you believe it is a sad result of tribalism; I want you to know that gravel was not in northern territory. So it must have been southerners who gave you land and gave you all the support. What I am asking is do you think that tribalism is so strong that no Northerner can succeed in the Southern Province?

Abu Kamara – When this war broke out in the Southern Province, in most of the villages around no strangers were allowed to settle. There readily and easily told us it was their territory and that we should go to the big towns.

Prof. Kamara – So, that was an abnormal situation?

Bishop Humper – I just want to use this opportunity to make this general statement. If we want to achieve sustainable peace in this country and we want to delve into what happened in this country I am of the opinion that all tribes in this country contributed to the war in this country. Sooner or later we will

find out whether this war was a tribal war or not; or we will soon find out if it is a porridge pot war. So, we have to open our eyes , our ears and our minds . For most of us in Kambia district from 1991 – 93 we never knew what was rebel until we were attacked in 1995. Therefore, regardless of where we are coming from we should hope that the Commission comes out with an in depth report of what happened concerning the war in this country.

- Prof. Kamara – Eddie and Kemoh, do you know whether they are still alive?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – No, I do not know.
- Prof. Kamara – What about Kemoh?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – He was the secretary in that check point.
- Prof. Kamara – What about Borbor?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – He was the commander in that check point.
- Prof. Kamara – If we are able to locate Eddie he should be able to tell us were Borbor and Kemoh are?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – I cannot tell because I do not know whether the other people are still alive.
- Prof. Kamara – At one point; so you must have feelings against Borbor?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – Yes, I have. He wanted to destroy my life.
- Prof. Kamara – If Borbor was located would you want a reconciliation?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – For Kemoh he was the one who saved us; the only one is Borbor .But then, if he is around I will reconcile with him, for lasting peace in this country.
- Prof. Kamara – We have been asking you all these questions do you have any questions to ask us now?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – Yes, the Commissioner was talking about the South and the Northern Province, is there any difference between the North and the South in this country?
- Prof. Kamara – I will, therefore, rephrase my question, do you see any difference between the South and the North?
- Mr. Abu Kamara – Yes, if there is any problem, the people of the North will not ask those from the South to go or refuse them a place; but it is different with those from the South. They will ask a Northerner to leave if there is any problem.
- Prof. Kamara – The difference between the North and the South: First, there are physical differences and then, for administrative purposes they have to divide the country into North, South and Western area. Now, that peace has come it should be possible for you to go back. I am sure you have a lot of

friends and that is why we are here and for people like you who have moved you have to help us and guide us; not every body in the South is bad. Now that we have asked you a lot of questions, what do you think should be done so that every Sierra Leonean could move to any part of this country and live as if it were her/his home?

Mr.Abu Kamara – The entire country is headed by one President and we are all under his control. I want you to inform our brothers in the Southern Province that they should embrace people from other ethnic groups. When the Southerners come here we give them our sisters to marry and we live happily, but the problem is the Northerners are business people and when they see us prosper they become jealous. During the war if you speak Temne you are killed instantly.

Prof. Kamara – I will advise you to remove this Temne line and Mende line from your thoughts and take it as Sierra Leone divided into parts.

5th Witness – Sulaiman Sankoh - A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

Prof. Kamara – We welcome you to come and share your past experiences with us. I want you to feel quite comfortable and free to say whatever you want to say; because you are not going to be persecuted for whatever you say here. It is just to have a full picture of what transpired during the war so feel free and say what you have to say.

TESTIMONY – I am a native of Sanda Mokolokoh Chiefdom in the Port Loko District. My father was born in this Kambia district .Coming to my experiences during the war, my elder sister was killed by the rebel; my aunts son, Momoh Bangura was also killed at a place called Rogbolo, in that village my uncle Foday was also killed and all their responsibilities now rest on me. My sister left behind six children; two of them are attending schools and one of my children is also attending school. During the attack on Freetown, their school was destroyed and now they cannot go to school as the school was totally destroyed. Then our properties were vandalized with nothing left. All these are the burdens of the war upon me.

Prof. Kamara – Thank you very much. You have given us what you know and I hope you will allow us to ask you a few questions.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – Thank you for coming. What you have just said here appears to be different from what you gave to the statement takers. So, I will ask questions from the statement. Did you at any time say that the rebels captured your sister?

Mr. Sanko – Yes, I said so.

Bishop Humper – Did you also have a cousin who was stabbed?

Mr. Sanko – Yes.

Bishop Humper – Was your brother also forced to carry load?

Mr. Sanko – Yes Sir.

Bishop Humper – And because he was tired; they said well you need rest and they shot him dead ?

Mr. Sanko – Yes Sir

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – You told us your brother, sister and uncle were killed did you witness the killings?

Mr. Sanko – No. I learnt about them later on

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us who told you all this?

Mr. Sanko - My mother told me.

Commissioner Jow – And she was eye witness?

Mr. Sanko – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Were you badly affected by some of the atrocities that took place during the war?

Mr. Sanko – I did not suffer directly from the hands of the rebels except for the death of my sister.

Commissioner Jow – You said your sister left behind six children, where are they now, are you taking care of them?

Mr. Sanko – They are with their uncle.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah - You mentioned the death of your sister and brother; can you please give us their names?

Mr. Sanko – They are Memuna Sankoh, Momoh Bangura and Foday Dumbuya.

Prof. Kamara – Now that you have given that story and we have asked questions, we are now giving you the opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Sanko – Now I have this problem with me; some people were assisting me, now they are no longer alive . My child and two other children of my relatives are with me . So,my means will not be able to sustain their upbringing . It is my intention to call on all extended family members to join hands with me as their school is no longer there.

Prof. Kamara – You said the children of your cousin and brother and sister and your own, what are their ages?

Mr. Sanko – I cannot tell the ages of the other children because I was not there when they were born, my own child is 10 years.

Prof. Kamara – Do you realize that there are organizations in this country that educate orphans.

Mr. Sanko – I have heard of them but I do not know how they operate.

Prof. Kamara – The policy now is that all children must get primary education. I advice you to take the matter to your village heads and authorities so that they can help you get this area sorted out.

6th Witness – Ousman Kamara – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

Prof. Kamara – you are welcome here we are grateful that you chose to come and share your story with us. We want you to feel free and comfortable as you tell us that story. We are ready to listen to you.

TESTIMONY – I am a native of a village called Mankia, For quite some time after the beginning of the war, it remained a far cry to my native land and the rebels did not have any ground in the village. But that was before we began to hear that the Guineans were coming into our country. So, the rebels said they were coming to protect us. The rebels settled in a place called Lokoya. The leader for the rebel group was called Abass. The rebels told us that their responsibility was to protect us and ours was to feed them. They would come for money unannounced and if you so much as failed to give money to them let alone refused, you would be

dealt with severely. Finally, we were here when we heard that the Guineans were on their way. At one time we heard gun shots, the people who said they had come to protect us, some of us came in the front part of the village to see if what was said was true, we saw them coming from Lokoya area. So we went and took cover to protect ourselves from being the casualties of the expected confrontation. We were in the bush and we saw smoke coming up and then we were told that our houses had been burnt down. When we came out we did not see the Guineans but all our properties had been destroyed and our houses burnt. So, we went into hiding. We took about two months where we had run for safety, before we were told that it was safe to return. Today, whether it shines or rains, we have no roof over our hapless heads.

Prof. Kamara – We have heard your sad story of how you lost your village and then your house. The Commissioners will ask you a few questions.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – This incident took place in 1991, did I hear you say your village was burnt down not by rebels but by Guineans.

Mr. Kamara– So we were told.

Bishop Humper – How did you manage to get this money every time to give to the rebels who were protecting you?

Mr. Kamara – We were involved in palm oil business and from the proceeds we were able to get whatever we had to give to them.

Bishop Humper – You said that anyone that failed to meet up with the demands of the rebels got dealt with seriously, how?

Mr. Kamara– By that time, there was no killing but many people got lashed properly .

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – I would like to know whether your village was attacked twice.

Mr. Kamara – Our village was only attacked once.

Commissioner Jow – The written testimony tells of a first and second attack.

Mr. Kamara – The first attack which I referred to was when the rebels entered the village they were not causing any havoc; while the second attack is the alleged attack of the Guinean soldiers.

Commissioner Jow – But the villagers helped the rebels with food?

Mr. Kamara – When the rebels entered into our village they told the town chief what they wanted and he went about from house to house collecting these items.

Commissioner Jow – Did the Town Chief at any time use force?

Mr. Kamara - No, they will not force us but when the rebels came they demanded.

Commissioner Jow – Did they not force you to give these items?

Mr. Kamara – No.

Commissioner Jow – Did they at any time get your young people to follow them?

Mr. Kamara – No.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us why the Guineans burnt your village?

Mr. Kamara – No, I cannot tell why.

Commissioner Jow – Did they suspect you of being collaborators?

Mr. Kamara – The rebels said they were coming to protect us and as we were unarmed we agreed.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – These rebels settled in your village until allegedly they were driven away by the Guineans; when the Guineans did they ever come back?

Mr. Kamara – After the destruction of the village the rebels left and never came back.

Prof. Kamara – And about the Guineans, did you ever hear the word ECOMOG?

Mr. Kamara – Yes, we heard of it but I do not know.

Prof. Kamara – And the Guineans, they burnt the village and then left?

Mr. Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – How far is your village to the Guinean border?

Mr. Kamara – About five miles.

Prof. Kamara – What is the relationship between your people and the people in Guinea?

Mr. Kamara – No connection.

Prof. Kamara – So, apart from burning the town you say nobody was killed in your village.

Mr. Kamara – No sir.

Prof. Kamara - And nobody was abducted?

Mr. Kamara – No sir.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Can you tell us the extent of damage done by the Guineans in your village?

Mr. Kamara – The whole village was burnt down, except for those in the out skirts of the village.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah- Has your village been rebuilt?

- Mr. Kamara – It is difficult to rebuild.
- Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Have your people approached any donor organizations for help?
- Mr. Kamara – I have no knowledge of my authorities having approached any one.
- Prof. Kamara – We have asked you now, we want you to ask us anything you want to know from us.
- Mr. Kamara – Our village has been destroyed and we have nothing. We need assistance. Personally, if I do not get assistance, then I do not know where to get the ability to get another house. That is why I ask you of the way forward. You know what to do.
- Prof. Kamara – We have heard your question but as a Commission we cannot offer any direct assistance to you or those who suffered during the war but we have the ability to direct you to areas where you could get assistance, we could also include them in our recommendation. I will start by asking you, have you ever heard of any organization helping people to restore or get back what they have lost?
- Mr. Kamara – I have not heard about that.
- Prof. Kamara – You have not heard about that? Well in every chieftdom they have a development committee which forms part of a bigger committee for the district. So, the district committee will take responsibility for the development of the district through those. I would like to ask you when you go back, to contact your section or your town chief about the development of your village; and so through your section or town chief your village will be able to get some support. It will be easier to seek assistance as a village rather than as individual then you will be able to get some support. In addition to what I have told you we have noted what happened to your village and like all other villages which suffered like yours we shall consider them in our recommendation.

7th Witness – Foday Abass Sillah – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Professor John Kamara.

- Prof. Kamara – You have come to give us testimony and I want to assure you that you will not be prosecuted for whatever you tell us here. Instead, you will only help us in writing our report about what happened during the war. So, feel free to give us everything that you know.

TESTIMONY – I still clearly recall the year 1995, when we were hearing rumors about these rebels. But during that time we had two ECOMOG troops the Nigerian and Guinean troops who were here to protect us. Then we began to notice a suspicious movement of people up and down; then, we began to get these rumours; that the SLA too was here to protect us. So, in the morning hours many people used to go into the bush to stay because of the rumours we were getting. At one time we saw one SLA called Taluva, he too was passing up and down the town and people were worried about his movement. He too had his own men at the check point to protect Kambia. One day he called a meeting at the court barray. In view of the rather uncanny

situation in which we found ourselves we went, hoping to at least begin to unravel the confusing state of affairs. At the meeting after various issues had been raised, Taluva responded and recommended that when ever the rebels struck we should enter our rooms and lie down. I was wondering what type of recommendation that was and I said okay a stupid man is as easy to talk to as a sensible man. But it made it clear to my mind that there was problem. Not so long after the meeting, specifically on the morning of Wednesday, the 25th January 1995, all hell broke loose. To compound matters there was much mist that morning and therefore, visibility was rather very low. So, one could not see the other properly, not to mention seeing into the distance. I was with a very best friend who was like a brother to me. He had come two days earlier to visit his mother, with the intention to travel back that morning to his village Port Loko. He had already packed his baggage, but he had asked us to wait as his mother was preparing food. So, we were at the gate conversing, when suddenly we saw a group of people coming in full military fatigue. You could not imagine they were evil people. They had already laid hold of a man named Samuel Fullah, who was having a paste and brush in his hands. Then, as soon as they came across us, they laid hold of my friend. And as I turned and pleaded for his release, I received such a sharp slap that I fell down. Up till now I still have problems with my ears. I wanted to get up and retaliate but when I raised up my eyes I saw they had a red piece of cloth tied round their neck and I had earlier learnt that a red cloth signifies danger. The man said the slap was due to my interference and they took him away. I informed his mother and advised her that we escape from the area. The mother asked where I was heading for and I made it clear to her that even if it meant dying on the way I was leaving the area. The mother was trying to hide under the bed but she could not get her whole body under, as the children too were under the bed and they were over crowded. I moved behind the house and I saw another group of rebels moving in the opposite direction. My mind was made up, so I kept moving. I met my friends and Tuwala told us rebels had come and we should run away. I entered my house. I had a handicapped person who was completely deaf. I heard gun shots and heavy bombardments, this started at exactly 7:45am. But I was at the behind my house and, from that area whatever happens in the front one will be able to see, on the contrary, it is difficult to see anyone well hidden in that area. So, I saw these people coming with the nuns and Abdul Rahman Sesay another student who was shot. At a closer look, at them I saw a boy with an RPG on his back. He was raining abuses and daring everybody to a challenge. From my vantage position, I was able to see most of my family in the big house. Then I heard the dog barking. I raised up my eyes to see what was happening and I saw one of my neighbors Amadu Sinneh running away with a small child. Then I heard one for the rebels say they should go to the police station to light the candles of Joseph Saidu Momoh. Immediately I saw a clearing and a little rest period from the hurly-burly, I went into our house and told me family members including the deaf one to follow me. My father had 7 boxes, two full of gold and trinkets, my parents and siblings joined me outside the house and we took the road which we normally used to get water for domestic purposes. On the way I met my friend's mother and she wanted to know where we were heading to and I told her that I had nowhere in particular in mind; except to leave the place. She walked on with us for sometime; but after a while she turned back. We walked to another village called Mayafa where we were provided with cassava then we continued our journey. We were lucky when one man took us to another village. I did not have money in my possession but through the help of this man we were able to cross the river. We asked the man to help us with a place to rest awhile, we stayed with him for two days. I was weary of returning, but a friend of mine from the Ministry of Health said we could return and we cautiously began our journey back. After crossing the river, there was another man called Foday who also supported our return. And so, after lunch we began our return. In the first instance, I asked the help of my friend to convey my wife and kids, and then I followed later. When we arrived, we met our house completely burnt down. And my father, my uncle and I wept bitterly. My father said he was not worried about the house but what was in his boxes which he could have used to build three or four houses. What were we to do? We put up a make-shift structure with corrugated iron sheets as a temporary survival measure. In order to survive, all the sort of work that I never contemplated ever doing, I began to embark on all of them. I would help my wife to load cassava and do all sorts of odd jobs. Before the war, I had established a small business from my savings; but after the attack I lost everything. I had 30 thousand Leones, which I gave to my wife to include in her petty trading activity. Once on a while I would go and assist my friends in the

rice mill to support my family. It also happened that there was another man called Pa Sawyer who was also assisting me. He performed circumcision according to the local practice and I also doubled as his assistant. In the evenings we used to go out for relaxation; chatting and drinking Palm wine. That was how I got acquainted with a palm wine tapper called Chimota. At a time Chimota asked me to help him get chairs and I told him I was not a carpenter. However, after much persuasion, during the course of which he told me that he was not meeting me for the first time; and that he had known me very well as far as at Kambia, I consented to his request. Everything went well and I delivered his furniture to him. The next request and task was to make a cigarette box . I gave him a measurement which he said was okay. He gave me a deposit of 7 thousand Leones, which I gave to the carpenter. But when the carpenter failed to make the box ,he called the rebels for me . I had gone to Freetown to visit my wife when I came back he asked me for the box and when I could not produce it he reported me to the rebels. They took me to the bridge and told me to remove my watch. Then, the watch was forcefully removed from my hand. He pointed a gun at my feet and then went ahead and shot me. Then, he asked me to walk on, but when I could not move after several attempts, he then handed me over to one child and they gave the child the gun with the instruction that should I disturb them; the child should take care of me. I later on wrenched away the gun from the child and after cocking the gun we moved towards the palm tree and struck the gun and the bullets came off . One Pa Saidu and another man in the village had investigated the matter . Furthermore, upon my arrest the rebel had questioned me concerning 20 thousand leones and I said that what is between us is only 7 thousand leones . In spite of all my plea, I was bound and detained; and when she tried to find out about what the matter was, my pregnant wife was given such a slap that she fell flat on the ground.

Bishop Humber – Foday Abass Sillah, we want to thank you for coming. Some of your presentation are so relevant here; but some must be handled elsewhere. So, the rest of your story we ask you to take to the town chief, if your wife is molested take this matter to the Town Chief.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – The rest of the testimony is of a civil case between your wife and others in the community; the final decision was taken by the court barray and a decision was taken in your favor.

Mr. Sillah – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – So the case is settled?

Mr. Sillah – The case is there but I have still not received my property even though I have paid the money.

Commissioner Jow – Pursue your case in that same way that is not why the Commission is here.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – We are not a court; we do not sit here to decide civil matters.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah - Thank you very much Mr. Commissioner; I just want to make an observation, we want to know whether you suffered any violation when your town was attacked?

Mr. Sillah – I was slapped.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – What the Commission is trying to put to you is that since 1999 the violation you are reporting is not war related; all what happened to you and your wife did not happen because of the conflict?

Prof. Kamara – So, you went to the chief and the chairman had taken a decision.

Mr. Sillah – We were not taken to the chief we were taken to the rebels.

Mr. Sillah- And then it has been settled in your favor?

Prof. Kamara – We are advising you to go the local court. This matter falls outside the period of our mandate. If you are not satisfied with the verdict. In connection with what happened to you in 1995, do you have any questions to ask or statement to make?

Mr. Sillah- No. I do not have any question.

Prof. Kamara – We have noted the violations you suffered in 1995 ; we hope that you and your children will not suffer such violations again. We thank you for coming.

KAMBIA DISTRICT CLOSED HEARINGS – 11TH JUNE, 2003

1st Witness – Isatu Turay – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow.

Commissioner Jow – I would like to welcome you to the closed hearings this morning. But, before we start I would like you to give me your full name. I would like to reassure you that this is a family gathering; we are your mothers, your aunts and sisters. So, be calm with an open mind . I am one of the seven Commissioners. I am Commissioner Mrs. Satang Jow from the Gambia. I am one of the three International Commissioners who have come to bring peace to this country. The other woman international Commissioner is Commissioner Sooka from South Africa. We also have Commissioner Schabas. The other four Commissioners are nationals; the Chairman is the person of Bishop Joseph Humper. Seating opposite you is the Leader of Evidence, she is one of the senior staff and she is called Lydia; on the other side you have the secretaries and the transcribers as you can see they are all women. Seating next to you is the counsellor and her job is to look after the witnesses. So, this is the panel for today. You know Sierra Leone suffered a war for ten years and it was a long and difficult war and many Sierra Leoneans suffered as victims and perpetrators and at the end of the Lome Peace Agreement of July 1999, it was agreed that this Commission be set up. So, in February 2000, Parliament passed an Act that this Commission should come into being and the Act spells out the mandate of the Commission. One of the functions of the Commission is to create an historical record, another part of the mandate is to respond to the needs of victims, promote reconciliation and healing and to prevent a repetition of what happened during the war, but we have another function as TRC and that is to look into what happened to women and children during the war because we all know they suffered during the war and that is why the Commission has taken statements from women and girls and that is why we also organize public hearings for women older than you and closed hearings for children like you. This will enable us to get first hand information about what happened during the war and we are really happy you have decided to come forward today to talk to us. We want to assure you that all you will tell us today is just for the TRC it will help us fulfill our mandate, so that when the recommendations are implemented that will make women's and children's condition be better . I tell you all this so that you will understand what TRC is all about. Once again I assure you we will not disclose your identity, again I tell you that whatever you say here today is very important to our work, I want to tell you, this is not a court. No one is here to prosecute you. So, feel free and tell us exactly what happened to you during the war.

TESTIMONY – I was at Lungi Airport for two years. I was removed from that place because of the January 6th invasion of Freetown. I escaped to my village and stayed there till the rebels attacked. They used to ask for money and rice and we obliged them. I found myself in love with one of the rebels his name was Bashiru Daramy. He had an affair with me and I became pregnant for him. My father was annoyed, but as Bashiru was a rebel he could not do anything. Bashiru left for the attack in Guinea and I do not know whether he was killed there because I have never seen him since then. Be that as it may, I gave birth to a girl . My parents took care of me and; my father said I should go back to school. The rebels stayed in our village for a long time still tormenting us for money and food. When the Guineans noticed the presence of the rebels, they said they were going to launch an attack. The Guineans asked the rebels to move. The rebels refused; they said they too will put up a fight if the Guineans wanted to fight them. The rebels left saying they were going to organize themselves to come and fight the Guineans. One evening we saw a canoe coming we did not know they were rebels they came and fired one shot and rained abuses saying we were supporting the Guineans ;so we had to run away. The people were hiding around while on the contrary, the rebels roamed the village harrassing those unfortunate enough to come across them;extorting food , money and whateverthey saw within their reach. One day the Guineans decided to come and attack the village. I had five of my uncles staying in the village. the Guineans captured them saying they were rebels. They bound them up and pierced their fore heads before taking them away. This is all I have to say.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much. We know it is not an easy thing to come back and tell us your story. We want you to know this happened because of the war. Under normal circumstance this would not have happened to you. We are all happy peace has returned; we are all working with the government so that war will never come again to this country. But we still have to ask you some questions so that we will clarify certain things. We want you to know that it is not that we do not believe what you have told us but we need to clarify things. I will ask questions and the Leader of Evidence will also ask you questions. You said you were at Lungi Airport before the start of the war?

Miss Turay – I was there with my people.

Commissioner Jow – When you say the Airport you mean Lungi?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Who were you staying with?

Miss Turay – My father.

Commissioner Jow – You said you moved to Freetown because of the intervention, why?

MissTuray – The January 6th invasion was so fearful we were afraid that was why we moved.

Commissioner Jow – So Rosinor is your own village?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – What was your father doing in Lungi?

Miss Turay – He was a teacher.

Commissioner Jow – Before you moved to Rosinor were you going to school?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – What class were you in?

Miss Turay – Class 3.

Commissioner Jow – When you came back to Rosinor did your father continue with teaching?

Miss Turay – No. He took to farming.

Commissioner Jow – You said that when you came back to your village rebels attacked. Can you tell us how many?

Miss Turay – There were many of them. I cannot tell.

Commissioner Jow – You said when the rebels came first they only asked for food and money?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – How long did the rebels stay during the first attack?

Miss Turay – From the time they entered I was staying with this rebel Bashiru; they stayed there for three months.

Commissioner Jow – Do you know the rebel group Bashiru Daramy belonged to?

Miss Turay – Yes, RUF.

Commissioner Jow – Why are you so sure?

Miss Turay – Because RUF was around at that time.

Commissioner Jow – This rebel you were in love with; did he force you to love him?

Miss Turay – Yes, he had his gun with him when he asked me to sleep with him.

Commissioner Jow – Was that the first time for you?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Immediately after that what happened?

Miss Turay – I cried out for him to leave me; but he refused. When he was finished with me I ran to my house.

Commissioner Jow – Were there other people around when he did this to you?

Miss Turay – We were alone.

Commissioner Jow – Did you report this to your parents?

Miss Turay – Yes; I told my father he was annoyed, but there was nothing he could do.

Commissioner Jow – Where was your mother and what did she do?

Miss Turay – She helped me and I am living with my father and my mother.

Commissioner Jow – What did she do as a mother to help you?

Miss Turay – She prepared hot water for me to seat on and clean myself up.

Commissioner Jow – Before this incident have you started your menstrual periods?

Miss Turay – Yes; but before then I had it for 2 days but after I had it for 4 days.

Commissioner Jow – After the forced sex did you feel any pain?

Miss Turay – Yes; that was why they gave me warm water to sit on.

Commissioner Jow – After that first incident did you have sex with him again?

Miss Turay – No, in fact he never saw me again.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us whether other girls in the village suffered this same problem as you?

Miss Turay – Yes. A lot of them had similar problems; but a lot of them accepted the relationship; some even went with them into the bush. But my father never accepted that.

Commissioner Jow – Did these girls come back?

Miss Turay – Some came back; some even had children with these rebels; but some have still not shown up.

Commissioner Jow – When did you discover after the forced sex that you were pregnant?

Miss Turay – I was able to notice it from the fact that my menses stopped. Before I had it for 2 days; but after that incident it did not come at all.

Commissioner Jow – Did you know what exactly was happening to you, did you feel sick, dizzy, how did you feel?

Miss Turay – Yes, I was feeling like malaria and I did not even want to smell burn oil and I told my mother during the preparation of food, I ate only sour food stuff.

Commissioner Jow – Did you have any medical attention at the early stage of the pregnancy?

Miss Turay – No. In fact I was trying to terminate the pregnancy.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell me how you did that?

Miss Turay – Certain herbs were given to me by a lady.

Commissioner Jow – Was your mother aware of this?

Miss Turay – She knew about it; but she never went with me.

Commissioner Jow – So you are telling us your mother did not approve of this?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Why?

Miss Turay – Because it was against the family reputation for one to be pregnant without getting married and the man was not taking care of me.

Commissioner Jow – Was Bashiru in the village at this time?

Miss Turay – He was not, that was why I was trying to abort the pregnancy.

Commissioner Jow – why did the herbs not work to abort the pregnancy?

Miss Turay – I had never taken them before. So maybe I was not taking the right herbs or dosage.

Commissioner Jow – For how long did you take this herb?

Miss Turay – When the pregnancy was one month I was taking it but I stopped.

Commissioner Jow – Who introduced you to this lady?

Miss Turay – My friends did. They said my father will not be happy with me; but later I stopped saying since it is war time my father won't be too hard on me.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us what form of medical care you had in the remaining 7 months?

Miss Turay – I never had any medical attention before the delivery. In fact my breast became swollen and people thought I was sick, I could not eat, I lived only on sour food.

Commissioner Jow – Did you have a difficult delivery?

Miss Turay – It was not difficult for me at all.

Commissioner Jow – You had the delivery in the hospital?

Miss Turay – No, at home.

Commissioner Jow – And the baby too had no problems?

Miss Turay – No, the baby was okay at birth but died after a year.

Commissioner Jow – Do you know why?

Miss Turay – My father said I should go back to school and I left the child with my parents and she became ill and died in my absence.

Commissioner Jow – So you are telling us you left her in your village and went to school in another village?

Miss Turay – Yes, I left her in Rosinor and went to Rokupr to go to school.

Commissioner Jow – I hope you are trying to be what you should be in school. Are you still in school?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – After your relationship with Bashiru, have you had relationship with any other man?

Miss Turay – After the end of the war, now that I am in school I have a relationship.

Commissioner Jow – But it is not a forced relationship?

Miss Turay – No.

Commissioner Jow – You hope to get married?

Miss Turay – When I shall have finished schooling, I intend doing so.

Commissioner Jow - Are you reconciled with your father now?

Miss Turay – Yes

Commissioner Jow – What about the people in your village?

Miss Turay – We are fine.

Commissioner Jow- You said Bashiru went to Guinea, was he a Guinean?

Miss Turay – He said he was a Mandingo from Makeni.

Commissioner Jow – Do you have any problems now?

Miss Turay – Yes, it comes on monthly. Now, just before the commencement of my menses, I get a lot of itching in my vagina.

Commissioner Jow – Have you been to see the doctor?

Miss Turay – No, I take fulcin as I do not have money to go and see the doctor.

Commissioner Jow – Does the fulcin help you?

Miss Turay – Yes, it makes the itching subside.

Commissioner Jow – How do you feel emotionally?

Miss Turay – Sometimes it makes me feel sad .At times even while studying, whenever it comes across my mind,I simply close my books.

Commissioner Jow – Does your school authority know about this?

Miss Turay – I have not told them ;unless someone else did.

Commissioner Jow – Do you have anyone you talk to that you confide in?

Miss Turay – My people do not talk to me. I have a friend but when she is not around I go into my room and sleep.

Commissioner Jow – Have you ever spoken to a counsellor?

Miss Turay – No, except TRC staff.

Commissioner Jow – You said you had constant pressure from the rebels for food and other items and you gave them, how did you normally collect these items for them?

Miss Turay – They made use of the chief.

Commissioner Jow – After the collection of these items, were they used in the village or taken away ?

Miss Turay – They usually took these items to their base outside the village.

Commissioner Jow – Did they have young boys amongst them?

Miss Turay– Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Can you give us and idea of the age of these young boys.

Miss Turay – They were between the ages of 14 and 20.

Commissioner Jow – Were their young girls with them?

Miss Turay – They had girls of my age and they used them as their “wives.”

Commissioner Jow – Apart from asking for these items, did they burn your village?

Miss Turay – No; they didn’t burn any house in our village. They only asked one chief to move from his house and they occupied it. It was the Guineans who burnt down houses.

Commissioner Jow – Why did the Guineans burn houses? They were supposed to be protecting you people?

Miss Turay – They did not tell us they were there to protect us; they only came in and burnt down our houses.

Commissioner Jow – You told us of your relatives who were taken away? What did the villagers do about it, did they try to look for their bodies?

Miss Turay – Yes they did. They got information from one village called Darabay. They told us they had been killed and that they had discovered the bodies.

Commissioner Jow – Are you the only girl in your family or do you have brothers and sisters?

Miss Turay – I have one sister and four brothers.

Commissioner Jow – Did anything happen to your brothers during the war, were they abducted?

Miss Turay – They were staying with my aunt in Madina; nothing happened to them.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you, I will now hand you over to the Leader of Evidence.

Leader of Evidence – Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah - Can you tell us how old you were when Bashiru had sex with you?

Miss Turay - I was 14 yrs old.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – When the news of your baby’s death got to you how did you feel?

Miss Turay – I felt very sad, I cried, but I was encouraged to forget about it.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Did you love your baby?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – What was the name of your baby?

Miss Turay – Fatmata.

Miss Turay– Who gave the name to your baby?

Miss Turay – My father gave her the name of his younger sister; I had wanted the name of my elder sister, but my father refused.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – You said you are in school; what do you intend to become when you leave school ?

Miss Turay – A nurse

Ms. Apori-Nkansah- May God help you; you are on the right path. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Jow – You made mention of one Commander Kamara as one of the perpetrators, who was he?

Miss Turay – He was one of the commandos for the rebels in this area.

Commissioner Jow – Did he know about the business between you and Bashiru?

Miss Turay – No, he never knew about it. It was only Commander Amadu and others who came later who knew about it

Commissioner Jow – You have said maybe, Bashiru has been killed. But the other rebels if you see them now will you recognize them?

Miss Turay – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Do you see them around?

Miss Turay – I am talking about the men who used to go around collecting the money and items. They are our relatives in the village. But now that the war is over they have no power over us.

- Commissioner Jow – Do you forgive them?
- Miss Turay – Yes, there is no problem.
- Commissioner Jow – What is your performance in school right now?
- Miss Turay – I am doing well because in the promotional exams from form One to form Two I came Second.
- Commissioner Jow – Hope your love relationship will not distract you from doing your school work.
- Miss Turay– No.
- Commissioner Jow – We have asked you a lot of questions and we know you realise why; so now we give you time to ask questions and make recommendations.
- Miss Turay – I want to know, having gone through all what we went through during the war; what help is going to be given to us?
- Commissioner Jow – I will say what I have said before, the international community and the government has asked us to focus our attention on the problems of women and children during the war. We are typing and writing and recording all what we are being told and at the end of our mandate we are going to write a report which will be given to the Government and the UN through the Security Council and it will be made public and all international bodies will get this report and all what we recommend as TRC will be implemented not by government alone but by all stakeholders. And upon the implementation of this report we know that the lives of women and children will be improved and what has happened to people like you will not happen again. But if you have anything urgent concerning your education, health-physically and emotionally, you can tell us and we can refer you to the bodies responsible for that.
- Miss Turay - About my education, my father is poor and finds it very difficult to maintain me in school. Even in the area of lunch my friends help out; some times I donot even have books.
- Commissioner Jow – Who is paying your fees?
- Miss Turay – The last time my uncle paid for me.
- Commissioner Jow – Have you ever been driven out of school for fees?
- Miss Turay – Yes.
- Commissioner Jow – You can talk to some of our staff and they will direct you as TRC does not have the money to assist. Do you have any recommendations for young girls like you?
- Miss Turay - Except to help us in the area of education because most of us are not going to school. Some stopped at classes 3 and 4. Most of them are at skills training centers doing gara and tie dying. So, we need education.
- Commissioner Jow - Do you want to tell me that they cannot go to school?

Miss Turay – Some want to go to school but are forced by circumstances to become shy and therefore escape into whatever comes.

Commissioner Jow – We have written it down; this is very important because all governments are committed to education. You have expressed concern about a number of girls who are not going to school, and when we say education for all we include of course the girls and I have no doubt at all that your government is also concerned . We will in our report express your concern. For now I encourage you to continue with your education. I wish you well in your dream to become a nurse and I hope that you will become a role model for other girls in your village. I want to urge you to continue despite all the experiences you have gone through during the war; many of these experiences will help you forge ahead in your journey through life.

2nd Witness –Master Patrick Bangura –

Commissioner Jow – We want to welcome you to this closed hearings, I will like to introduce to you the panel. You have given us your written statement but we would like to hear from you.

TESTIMONY –Before the war I was in Masingbi. One morning we went to school as usual and everything appeared normal. We were in the morning assembly and devotions when we heard gunshots behind us. We got scattered in everywhere running for cover. As we were running, they shot two of my class mates and got the rest of us surrounded under gun point and then took us away. On the way , we met a young suckling woman; they asked her whether she wanted to die or to be raped. She pleaded with them for consideration ;but they fell upon her and raped her. But as she could not bear the pain, she died. Her baby was put into the house and the house set on fire. We were taken to Yomanu rubber town for training. We were trained there for two weeks and then taken back to Zimmi. There we set an ambush with regard to abductees. Some people who were running for where to hide met us there; and they were abducted. They were with us until the jet came along and two of them escaped and the four remained with us. In one of our battles, we encountered the Kamajors and overcame them. At another time, it happened that certain women abductees said they were hungry. One of them was a young suckling mother. By then they had raped the women. So, they took her baby and chopped off the head and gave to the woman to eat, the rest of the baby's body was pounded and made into balls and later they said it should be fried and eaten. The woman could not bear the trauma and she died. The other women were asked to eat faeces, but they all could not bear the thought of it and they died. We then entered Kenema where we drove out the Kamajors and SLAs. We spent only a day in Kenema. When we started to sense much tension we pulled out and went to Levuma. I was with my boss Morris Kallon. We came across an old man with his three children and; they ordered me to cut off the old man's hand and I did; as I had been drugged. Later they gave another command to cut off the woman's leg as they were said to be collaborating with the kamajors. We were asked to go and defend the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone. One of Charles Taylor's bodyguards came and said he needed escort and we were picked out. On the way,we came to one village around Daru;where we encountered the Kamajors who killed two of our colleagues. We then decided to pack the vehicles and carry out a reconnaissance walk. We saw that that the kamajors had killed and cooked human beings and were eating them. One of the kamajors had human liver which he was eating. Be that as it may, we had to proceed on our assignment, we crossed over the Mano River and there we were left behind as escort. My comrades entered Liberia to give some pieces of diamonds. During our return, we saw Morris Kallon and he asked us to join him as the kamajors were really all around the place looking for us. As we passed along Daru area, two Jets and one Chopper came bombing and strafing; two of our own fighters were killed and

our car was burnt down . It was there that I sustained this injury on my left side. We went to Daru and then advanced to Bo. I tried to hide myself away from them and then may be seek medical help;but they picked me out of my hiding place and gave me an injection .Then , we moved on to another battle. We advanced but we could not stand the fighting;many of our fighters were killed . We had to beat a retreat and reorganize. We were asked again to advance towards Masiaka area. Akim countered that order and said that we should instead advance to Kono. And so we did. And after a long battle we captured Kono. We then advanced further to Koinadugu. As we were moving along we came across a whole family and Komba Gbundema commanded them to enter the house and ordered the house to be set on fire; the whole family died like that. We succeeded in capturing Koinadugu. As we were going along we came across some Kamajors and they had just killed and opened up the stomach of a pregnant woman and the baby was crying. We left there and we met two RUF fighters arguing about the type of child in the stomach of a pregnant woman. One said it was a girl and the other said it was a male child. We wanted to stop them but by then they had already started opening the woman's stomach. Morris Kallon shouted on them thinking they were enemies; but by then they had got to the woman's liver and she died. At another time, we were sent again to Makeni. We met them playing football. So, about three of us removed the combat from our body. We took grenades and put them in our pockets as that was what we had been instructed to do:That whenever we proceed to launch an attack we should always be prepared to die. We entered the field and we watched the match until it came to an end. We entered the town and enjoyed ourselves drinking. During that time some NGO vehicles had entered with food aid. And Morris Kallon suggested that it was high time the we launched an attack. So, we scattered all over the town. Some of us were commanded to enter into the heart of the town and launch an attack. And we launched a serious attack, not knowing that at that time the ECOMOG contingent in that area had got the information and they too launched at us. One of our fighters, a small boy was killed. We fought but they returned fire and finally we entered Teko Barracks. We started killing and a command was passed that no killing should take place. We used the captured ECOMOG soldiers as shield and we had things our way. We were there for 3 days but by then we had captured the town. We had another instruction to come to Kambia; we went to Kamakwie and we used a by-pass route and came to Kasiri. We climbed up and we came down to Kaipaye; we crossed the line and came to the communication area, we left three of our men there. We were then commanded to enter Kambia town at 11:00pm and we launched our attack; we fought all night till day break and we were able to repel the government forces and we captured Kambia. We stayed there for two days and decided to go to the check point but we were not able to as the place was hilly, they would see you as soon as you advanced. So,we were asked again to go to Rokupr. We were dropped off and asked to walk on foot and we went to Kambia and passed the night here. We did not fire any shot again until we got to Rokupr. The people wanted to run but we stopped them and called them to a meeting saying: "We don't want to fight anymore, we want peace now." What caused the fight at Kambia was that we came under fire from some Guinean troops heading for Port Loko. It happened that as soon as they spotted us they launched at us not knowing that some of our colleagues were coming from the back. They did not stand any chance. We killed the AA supporter and the operation driver. We launched at an armored car from the back but it was able to escape. As we were cooking they opened fire at us from the back. We fought with them as they were trying to steal our property. We waited until they had entered the store where we had all our looted property and we decided that we would rather lose the property than be killed so we launched at the store and whosoever was trying to escape was given one shot and in that way all of them were killed. After that Komba Gbundema said we should go and launch an attack. It was not an easy battle. Unknown to us , there was an ambush, and our operation driver, a fine boy named Momoh was driving and a sniper shot in the head and his brain came out. We took him and dumped him in the gutter not knowing by then they were close to us. They launched again and two women and a small boy were killed; if we had taken the little boy along;may be , he would not have died. Anyway, we beat a hurried retreat after sustaining much loss. Boulah again came up with this peace talk and wrote a letter to the Guineans; but Komba Gbundema said he will not confront the army instead he selected four of us to launch an attack on the SSD base. Our commanders followed us up to the hill and left us there. Unknown to us, the SSD were also on the attack track, one boy amongst us launched the RPG the SSD returned fire and two of our fighters were killed. We again retreated to

reorganize. But Boulah never relented in his pursuit of peace. He said he wanted peace. Boulah said he was a foreigner who was hired to come and fight in this country and he needed the support of our commanders. One of the Guinean soldiers who was a major agreed with Boulah and consented to making peace. The Guineans said they would not come but if we go to meet them, no problem. Boulah agreed because he believed he was okay with his charms. We then left to meet the Guineans and as they saw us they engaged themselves. We entered and declared ourselves as strangers and they welcomed us and brought out alcohol. Komba Gbundema was a very bad man, with an evil mind, he asked the Guineans to drink first they did and we drank after they had taken of the drink. We then walked round to Pamlap interacting everywhere with the Guinean soldiers. Morris Kallon took us again to Makeni. It happened that colonel reported to the CO, that the UNAMSIL had started some bad habits; they were disarming our men. Then Issa together with Morris Kallon told the CO, I have my boys and yours and we are going to disarm the UNAMSIL. In the evening, the whistle was blown and they said our mission was to disarm the UNAMSIL Major. When we met him, we gave him a serious slap and we took his walkie-talkie from him and we asked him to remove his uniform. Our commanders then commanded us to enter the UNAMSIL camp and take whatever we wanted. We then arrested all of them over five hundred and locked them up. We took all of their guns and vehicles. Issa said we should give the UNAMSIL some of their vehicle we had commandeered but Morris Kallon said no. At that time, Superman was not around; he had gone to Liberia for medical treatment. Issa Sesay said we had done something wrong by tampering with the UNAMSIL, Morris Kallon said he would kill Issa and, so, there was a split. Then we heard that the UNAMSIL also in Kailahun had been disarmed by some of our men. On the other hand, it was in Kambia here that rebels took diamonds and asked Guinean soldiers to buy rice for them. They took the diamonds and refused to give us the rice and, they denied that we gave them diamonds. So we wrote a letter and sent it to Pamlap notifying them we were visiting them at night. They did not believe us. We went to Makeni and the surrounding and took reinforcement and vehicles. We packed at Gbalamuya and walked on foot to Pamlap. As we got to the gate where the Father was, we divided into groups and launched the attack but the Guineans said that nobody should run away. We fought all night till the following day and ceased fire. We pushed them from Pamlap on to where there was a big hill and there they regrouped. After some time we received a message from our refugees camping in the Guinean territory saying the Guineans were planning to come and kill us. 25 of us were sent to Faramoya. We saw our Sierra Leonean brothers and sisters locked up in a store and whosoever tried to escape was killed by the Guinean soldiers. God directed us to this store. We met the Major on guard relaxing. A pregnant woman came out to urinate and the Major said she should not enter again but she should be killed. If we had not launched an attack at that time all of our people locked up in the store would have been killed. So, we shot the Major and all the prisoners scattered everywhere. That attack saved the pregnant woman and, she was not killed. We then captured Sheta. A lot of vehicles were taken from the Guineans and the refugees were put into these vehicles and sent back to Freetown. One of our operations drivers, Rasta, was killed. We brought some of the refugees back and asked them to find somewhere to stay. At another time, Morris Kallon said we should be sent back to the brigade but Komba Gbundema said we should attack. We advanced to Kamakwie and most of us were killed: the place was open and the grass short and the Chopper raided us. We decided that as the place was very close to the city we should go and use the route leading to Kono. We were given a major and two colonels. They gave us an escort up to the river. When we crossed the border, we walked on foot for about two days until we finally entered Gekedou in the interior part of Guinea; we finally succeeded in capturing it. We captured two radio stations and, we stayed there for a week. Rada said as we could not speak the Guinean languages and therefore, we should find an inhabitant of Guinea. We had with us one Guinean fellow. We called some people to help us operate the two radio stations we had captured. These people who had come to help us with the radio stations disclosed the information to the Guinean people that we were around. But we never knew. It, however, happened that I was using the toilet one day, when I heard the sound of Jets flying overhead. There were 6 of them. They did nothing as they flew by; but Col. Rada came out and assaulted them. Then convinced, they sent in their paratroopers who cut off the road we were to use to come back to Freetown. It was a combined operation between Lansana Conteh and our President. At Gekedou we met some SLA who appealed to us to stop saying: "We have fought in

our country and now we have crossed to another man's country." Over 126 of us went into Guinea but only about 30 of us came back. As we were on the way coming with Rada one colonel asked us to kill Rada but he overheard him and he killed him. And not long after that, on our way coming Rada escaped from among us. We met four men on the way who were kamajors and we were few in number and unarmed so they killed some of us and some of us managed to escape. We met the son of Sekou Toure on the way and he told us he wanted some people to enter Guinea and he discussed this with some of our bosses. Mohamed Turay gave out money and food to us and we were asked to line up, three hundred RUF boys were picked out and they asked him how he was going to escape with those troops and get them into Guinea. Mandereh after he had taken some RUF fighters to Guinea came to get 300 more RUF fighters, they left and to date we know nothing about them. I was sent to Yeliboya The civilians said they wanted all the colonels to a meeting at Kasiri and they were on this meeting when the Guineans opened fire and captured the Colonel alive. I was in Yeliboya when the natives asked me to join them at sea. We got into one boat and we were running out of fuel. Then one RUF named Danger said we should shoot them; as the white man in the boat tried to use his communication set he was shot. We took fish and money from the boat and I got 200 dollars and I used it as transportation to come to Freetown. When my people saw me they were happy and they told me to go and disarm. On my way going, I saw two rebels and they said I should not disarm. I shot at the first one and then the second one also and left them lying dead and I then went to disarm.

Commissioner Jow – We thank you very much. We have no reason to doubt what you have told us but we will like to ask a few questions based on what you have told us. So, we will like you to answer the questions as briefly as you can. I ask the other Commissioners if they have any questions.

Commissioner Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – Thank you. I have lined up a series of questions which I will want you to answer; but I will not do so. I will ask only two questions to clarify certain things and then the Commissioners will come in. The general population especially Kambia District are still saying it was the Guineans who launched a serious attack and destroyed Kambia.

Master Patrick Bangura - We never burnt houses; all of the destruction was done by the Guineans.

Bishop Humper – You will agree with me that your going to Pamlap, your peace which never hold and your attack at Gekedou, were all reasons for the Guineans to launch an attack on Kambia?

Master Patrick Bangura – No.

Bishop Humper – Now, that you are here and trying to rebuild your life and all of us are trying to help you rebuild your life; you have lost some of your adolescent age. If somebody should come to you and ask you to name those who did this to you, who caused you to do all the awful things you did, who are some of the people you will name?

Master Patrick Bangura – Yes Sir, first Morris Kallon, second Superman, third Gbao, fourth Komba Gbundema, Hada, Wako, Lansana Nyale, Dubi, Boulah, Adjutant Francis, Commando one, Emmanuel, many of them.

Bishop Humper – I would not have been here had it not been for people like you. We are not here to give you problems if we are here to get the truth from you.

The country, the world wants to know why our children of your age are in this kind of situation.

Master Patrick Bangura –Because we the little children were only with them to obey commands and we were under the influence of drugs.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – You mentioned Freetown; so that means you entered Freetown on the 6th of January.

Master Patrick Bangura – Yes. I entered Freetown, I spent 6years with the RUF.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – Patrick, where are your people?

Master Patrick Bangura – The brother I am staying with we have a problem but CARITAS is going to reconcile our differences today.

Prof. Kamara – Are you happy being away from him?

Master Patrick Bangura – Yes I am happy as long as I am doing my education.

Prof. Kamara – So, you now have a new experience living an independent life?

Master Patrick Bangura- I am as long as live with my brother of the same parents, except for these days that we have a small problem.

Prof. Kamara – How do you now feel about the time you spent with the RUF?

Master Patrick Bangura – There are times when I reflect back.

Prof. Kamara – What about all the action you took during those times?

Master Patrick Bangura – That is why I go to church and ask for prayers.

Prof. Kamara – Do you regret the life you spent with them?

Master Patrick Bangura - Yes. I regret Sir.

Prof. Kamara – How did the Guineans provoke you for you to make that invasion?

Master Patrick Bangura – Because they took away our diamonds; they were trying to mock us. They took seven pieces I saw them myself as I was with the general who had abducted me. I was privileged to have the information ,because I was with the boss as his own boy.

Prof. Kamara – I only hope that with CARITAS you will be able to reshape your life and character again and; try to forget about all you have been through.

Commissioner Jow – I thank the Commissioners, are you back in school?

Master Patrick Bangura – Yes Ma.

Commissioner Jow – What is your performance like in school now?

Master Patrick Bangura – I am doing well in school now.

Commissioner Jow – Do they counsel you and give you the necessary support?

Master Patrick Bangura – No ma; it was only my classmates who are trying to provoke me, but I reported them to the school authorities

Commissioner Jow – At one time during the war you were in Kono. Were you involved in diamond mining?

Master Patrick Bangura – I was only an escort. These diamonds were mined here and sent to Liberia.

Commissioner Jow – Who were those involved in sending these diamonds to Liberia?

Master Patrick Bangura – Mosquito had not gone to Liberia then;so, he was not involved, Akim and my former boss Morris Kallon were.

Commissioner Jow – We have a lot of questions for you but time is not on our side so I now hand you over to the Leader of Evidence ?

Leader of Evidence - Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah- How were you treated? Did your boss treat you nicely?

Master Patrick Bangura – No. I was not.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Were you sexually assaulted?

Master Patrick Bangura – No.

Commissioner Jow – We have heard a lot of girls who were abducted and made bush wives did you ever have one?

Master Patrick Bangura – No.

Commissioner Jow – Did your boss have one?

Master Patrick Bangura – Morris Kallon had three and Superman had a white woman.

Commissioner Jow – You have one right and that is to ask any question and make any recommendation.

Master Patrick Bangura – You people are preaching about the end of the war. Just the day before yesterday Mosquito's CSO came here and told us that Charles Taylor has said if we do not lay hands off his business, he will launch another attack in this country. I wanted to tell Mr. Sesay but as I have this problem with my brother I could not reach Mr. Sesay. Because I had wanted this man to come and testify at TRC.I overheard the CSO telling those dangerous rebels at the SLA camp here that he had gone with Charles Taylor to his daughter's house when he overheard him say he will again launch an attack on this country.

Bishop Humper – We want to thank you very much for this piece of information you have given us.It is not for your sake alone but for the children who are coming

up. As we are speaking to you, we will get this information to the President. The government and the people of this country will take appropriate action.

Master Patrick Bangura – I am going to ask to know the actual name of the man.

Prof. Kamara – Now, this information you have can be very dangerous. You say this man was talking to SLA and RUF ex- combatants. You know you have been in a situation where dangerous information should be dealt with very carefully. You have told us here and we are going to keep it to our selves. So, please keep it to yourself.

3rd Witness – Hassan Ibrahim Kamara

TESTIMONY – I was abducted by the RUF in the year 2000. I was sent by my father on a Friday to go and sell rice and I came across the rebels. They asked me to put down the rice and carry their loads. They walked with me from Bond Street. We got to Kambia at night and by then Pamlap had already been attacked. They told us to go to Pamlap and not to sleep here .They then gave me a gun to fight but I had no knowledge of how to operate a gun. We were driven back by the Guinean troops and we came back to Kambia. Again we were sent to Guinea to fight. We fought there and some people looted and brought it here to Kambia. At one time a man wanted to kill me but by then I could operate a gun so I turned my gun on him and killed him. We moved to a village called Kindia, we stayed there for some days, the Guineans attacked us again and most of our companions were killed. I was very fortunate. At the peak of the battle, with the Guineans ceaselessly bombarding our position, all our bosses took cover and I did not know where to go. So, I climbed into a truck and hid myself and one boy was killed on the top of the truck. It was then that I saw my boss who informed me that we were going to attack the Guineans. During that attack we lost one of our fighters and we retreated to Kindia. At intervals my commander used to take boys from our group to go and loot. Every time there was a command for looting I would be asked to stay behind with the women to help them in the cooking. My boss would always give me spoils from the looting. My commander was instructed to go to a town called Kasiri to fight. Most of our men died only few of us returned from that battle. When we returned our commander instructed us to go and surrender. And we went to Port Loko and disarmed. And I was handed over to the CARITAS and I am still with them up till today.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much. At this stage, my fellow Commissioners will ask you questions.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – As the Presiding Commissioner said earlier; we have a special duty to look into the needs of children like you. We know what happened was not of your making. What type of training did they give you?

Master Hassan Kamara - I was only trained on how to operate a gun.

Bishop Humper – Did they give you marijuana to smoke?

Master Hassan Kamara -The first day I was captured they asked me whether I know how to smoke and I told them no. Then they decided to teach me. They gave me and I smoked but after that they never gave me again.

Bishop Humper – Whilst you were fighting did your commanders abduct young girls and boys?

Master Hassan Kamara -It was only once when we were asked to go and find food that I saw a man raping a girl but after that the girls came willingly to join.

Bishop Humper – What was the name of your boss?

Master Hassan Kamara - Ibrahim Kamara.

Bishop Humper – When you were with your boss, what duties did you perform?

Master Hassan Kamara - I fetched wood or water.

Bishop Humper – Did they at any time ill treat you?

Master Hassan Kamara - When I tried to escape to go back to my parents, they beat me.

Bishop Humper – Do you have your parents here?

Master Hassan Kamara – Yes.

Bishop Humper – Are you staying with them?

Master Hassan Kamara - I am staying with my father; my mother is somewhere else.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – How is the school business, is it difficult?

Master Hassan Kamara - No sir.

Prof. Kamara – You said you killed your first person in self defense, not so?

Master Hassan Kamara - Yes sir.

Prof. Kamara – How did you feel after that killing?

Master Hassan Kamara - I dreamt of him in my sleep and I was afraid.

Prof. Kamara – Do you still dream of him?

Master Hassan Kamara - No sir.

Prof. Kamara – From your story they did not take you from your home?

Master Hassan Kamara – No sir.

Prof. Kamara – They moved you around and sometimes you had to walk at night, when travelling like that did any of your friends get tired and complain of being tired of carrying the load?

Master Hassan Kamara -The place where I was captured was a different place from my place and the load was heavy.

Prof. Kamara – What did they do to people who were tired?

Master Hassan Kamara - The load I was carrying was heavy and I dropped it and they hit me on my back and told me if I did not carry it they would kill me.

Prof. Kamara – How long were you with them?

Master Hassan Kamara - I cannot remember.

Prof. Kamara – When were you abducted?

Master Hassan Kamara – 2001

Prof. Kamara – When were you disarmed?

Master Hassan Kamara - I do not know.

Prof. Kamara – And you said you only used drugs once?

Master Hassan Kamara - Yes sir.

Prof. Kamara – And you did not smoke again?

Master Hassan Kamara - No sir

Prof. Kamara - They did not inject you.

Master Hassan Kamara – No.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – So you never lived with your mother?

Master Hassan Kamara - My mother and father got separated since I was a little boy.

Commissioner Jow – How is the condition at home?

Master Hassan Kamara – Ok.

Commissioner Jow – So, you have not seen him since you disarmed.

Master Hassan Kamara – No.

Commissioner Jow – You told me you were his personal body guard.

Master Hassan Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Did you ever use your gun to protect him?

Master Hassan Kamara – No.

Commissioner Jow – What about the wife what was her name?

Master Hassan Kamara - Aminata Bangura.

Commissioner Jow – Was she kind to you?

Master Hassan Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Are you back in your old school?

Master Hassan Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – When your friends tell you that do you report them?

Master Hassan Kamara – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – After disarmament did you have any counseling?

Master Hassan Kamara – No.

Commissioner Jow – Do you still have bad dreams?

Master Hassan Kamara – No.

Commissioner Jow – We have asked you a number of questions and again I say you have done very well, so now we ask you to ask questions or make any recommendations.

Master Hassan Kamara - I am appealing to the government to help us in our education because the teachers are asking for fees and they drive us away everyday; and our parents are poor.

Commissioner Jow – Are you in primary or secondary, because we understand that primary education is free except for uniform and books ?

Master Hassan Kamara - I am not referring to fees, sometimes they will say PTA and other charges. These things require money.

Commissioner Jow – Who is responsible for your education?

Master Hassan Kamara – I alone have tried to sustain myself. My father is a farmer. I hawk cigarette and other items.

Commissioner Jow - Does your father pay?

Master Hassan Kamara - No

Commissioner Jow – What does he do for a living?

Master Hassan Kamara - He is a farmer.

Commissioner Jow – Hassan Primary is free, who assists you in paying other charges in school?

Master Hassan Kamara - When we are asked to pay small amounts I pay for myself.

4th Witness – Foday Bangura - Affirms to tell the truth.

TESTIMONY – I was in Kambia then we saw this helicopter and we were advised to leave the area. We then went to Pamlap and we were there until it was attacked and I was abducted. We were there for two days and came back to Kambia, whilst the Guineans were disturbing us we were asked to stay in that border area. The Guineans would come and take corrugated iron sheets from the houses of villagers and residents who in view of insecurity and fear had to run away. We were in this area for a time when disarmament took place. I came to disarm and we were taken to Port Loko. I was in Port Loko for one week and then taken to Makeni .And then brought to Kambia, from where we were taken again to Port Loko and then to our parents. I was taken to school, and later the CARITAS visited our school and started giving us support. TRC came to our school and they said we should give statement on what we had seen and done during the war.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much for this short but useful testimony. You said you stayed in the border area to defend what was the name of the village you defended?

Master Foday Bangura – Mafaray.

Commissioner Jow – Do you remember the date you were abducted?

Master Foday Bangura – No.

Commissioner Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – You are one of the many children. Part of the time you spent as an abductee became a wasteful period in your life; do you say you are attending school what class are you in now?

Master Foday Bangura – Class four.

Bishop Humper – What School?

Master Foday Bangura – Roman Catholic Primary School, Rokupr

Bishop Humper – With whom are you staying?

Master Foday Bangura – I am staying with my uncle in the village called Bammi Lumeh.

Bishop Humper – Are your parents alive?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Bishop Humper – You said you moved from Kambia to Pamlap in search of refuge and then you were abducted?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Bishop Humper – Can you remember the name of the rebel who captured you?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes, his name was “Around the world”.

Bishop Humper – Have you ever heard the name, Osman Tolo?

Master Foday Bangura – When my commander was transferred I was handed over to Osman Tolo

Bishop Humper – Did you ever kill anyone?

Master Foday Bangura – No, Sir

Bishop Humper – What can you tell your brothers and sisters who are listening to you of your running around, being made to smoke; by the way were you given marijuana?

Master Foday Bangura – I was given marijuana and rum.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – I take it that you are happy now living with your uncle. You were abducted, and then moved around with a gun for a short while, do you know what year you were abducted?

Master Foday Bangura – I do not know.

Prof. Kamara – Do you remember your age at the time you were abducted?

Master Foday Bangura – No Sir

Prof. Kamara – You told us that you were abducted at Pamlap and moved to Kambia ; you were then sent with other people to go and loot things in Guinea.

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – In your estimation do you think you took a month or two at Mafaya?

Master Foday Bangura – It was more than a month.

Prof. Kamara – When you came back from Makeni, were you sent directly to your family?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – How did CARITAS discover you?

Master Foday Bangura – We were handed over to CARITAS after the disarmament;that is all I remember.

Prof. Kamara – They handed you over before you were taken to your father?

Master Foday Bangura – I was handed over to Caritas before being taken to my father.

Prof. Kamara – You are now in Class Four you say, and your age is now 12. So, it means you have lost 2 years already , because at your age you should be taking the NPSE?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – So, when do they say you will be taking the NPSE?

Master Foday Bangura – I do not know. I have not been told.

Prof. Kamara – How are your teachers; are they kind to you?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – I hope they have not destroyed your soul?

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – You said you were at Pamlap at the time of your abduction, can you tell us how?

Master Foday Bangura – The RUF attacked the Guinean position at night and we all fled in different directions and it was then that I was captured.

Commissioner Jow – How many of them?

Master Foday Bangura – 3 of them.

Commissioner Jow – You told us the Guinean soldiers attacked and removed roofs from houses and you said you were at the border to defend, did you use guns?

Master Foday Bangura – We were using AK 47 and RPG.

Commissioner Jow – Did you kill anybody?

Master Foday Bangura – No.

Commissioner Jow – In your written testimony, you mentioned Col. Vandi and Col. Komba can you tell us what they were?

Master Foday Bangura – They were RUF commanders.

Commissioner Jow – You know them personally?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Have you seen your mother since your release?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Did your family embark on any ceremony to welcome you back home?

Master Foday Bangura – No.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Do you feel loved and accepted in your family?

Master Foday Bangura – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – We have been asking you questions now it's your turn to ask us.

Master Foday Bangura – I am only pleading for help in the area of my schooling; because the area where I am residing presently is a long way off from my school. So, if I am provided with a bicycle that will be good for me.

Prof. Kamara – You say you want a bicycle and you say you are not alone you normally walk with your friends to school, so you now want to leave all your friends with whom you normally walk to school?

Commissioner Jow – I will just like to add by saying that it is good to have a bicycle for the fun of it. I know many young boys like you who have bicycles but as my colleague Commissioner has just said, do not let the issue of bicycle upset you. At the right time you will have one, for now pay attention to your school.

5th Witness – Melvin Morlai Josiah – I was abducted during the war but I was not used in the fighting . I was loved by my commander and he told me I must never visit the war front . He said I should stay behind and help the women with the cooking. I was there till the disarmament came and I was given a gun and asked to go and disarm. CARITAS came in and we were handed over and they started taking care of us in terms of schooling until today.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – Can you remember the year you were abducted?

Master Melvin Josiah – No.

Bishop Humper – How old are you now?

Master Melvin Josiah – I was born in 1988.

Bishop Humper – Did they teach you how to use the guns?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes.

Bishop Humper – Did they give you marijuana?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes, but I discovered it was not good for me so I stopped.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – You said you were abducted, where?

Master Melvin Josiah – At Royanka

Prof. Kamara – Where are your people?

Master Melvin Josiah- At Royanka

Prof. Kamara – You were born there?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes

Prof. Kamara – Did your people tell you where they come from?

Master Melvin Josiah – No.

Prof. Kamara – What language do they speak at Royanka?

Master Melvin Josiah – Temne, Mende, Limba and Krio

Prof. Kamara – So, you are Krio-Mende?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes.

Prof. Kamara – Can you remember how long you were with these people?

Master Melvin Josiah – The last attack on Rokupr was when I was captured.

Prof. Kamara – So, you did not carry any load?

Master Melvin Josiah – I did from Royanka to Rokupr.

Prof. Kamara – So, you were not taken to Pamlap?

Master Melvin Josiah – No Sir.

Prof. Kamara – When you disarmed what did they give you?

Master Melvin Josiah – I was not given money. But when we were taken to Freetown they gave us cups, plates, mats; which I handed over to my relatives.

Prof. Kamara – Who is providing you with clothing?

Master Melvin Josiah – My mother

Prof. Kamara – What is your mother doing for a living presently?

Master Melvin Josiah – She is a trader.

Prof. Kamara – What about your father?

Master Melvin Josiah – He is in the civil service.

Prof. Kamara – Do you plan to go and see your father in Freetown?

Master Melvin Josiah – No

Prof. Kamara – So, you are happy. Your mother loves you?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – Who was your commander?

Master Melvin Josiah – Sara.

Commissioner Jow – What did he say to you?

Master Melvin Josiah – He said nothing to me.

Commissioner Jow – Is he in Kambia here?

Master Melvin Josiah – No.

Commissioner Jow – Was he a young man or an old man?

Master Melvin Josiah – He was a young man.

Commissioner Jow – Do you remember ever being at a check point at Romaka, what were you doing there?

Master Melvin Josiah – We were there manning the check point as spies to send signals to our commanders if we sense any danger and to keep the enemy from entering.

Commissioner Jow – So you never fired shots at any vehicle?

Master Melvin Josiah – No.

Commissioner Jow – Did you see any atrocities committed by the rebels?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes.

Commissioner Jow - What did you see?

Master Melvin Josiah – I saw them kill and rape.

Commissioner Jow – How did you feel?

Master Melvin Josiah – I felt bad.

Leader of Evidence - Ms. Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – When you were abducted were you given food?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Are you loved by your people and your community?

Master Melvin Josiah – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – We have asked you questions now we want you to ask us questions.

Master Melvin Josiah – I want you to help me with my schooling as I understand CARITAS will be closing down in our area.

Commissioner Jow – Any other recommendation. We will discuss with CARITAS; if they are closing down they will not leave you unattended to; they will hand you over to another NGO.

KAMBIA DISTRICT HEARINGS – 12TH JUNE 2003

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow - Called the Hearings to a start with interfaith prayers. She welcomed the Paramount Chief, all traditional and district leaders and all present. And reminded every one about the rules and regulations of the Hearings.

1st Witness – Pa Bai Conteh - A Muslim by religion. The oath was administered by Commissioner Jow.

Commissioner Jow – The Commission would like to welcome you. You are one of the very special people. We want to inform you that this gathering is not a court and coming before us does not mean you are going to be in trouble. This commission has a mandate.

TESTIMONY - We are asking the Almighty Allah for this programme to be successful; to the end that there will never be a repetition of all that has happened in this country in the last ten years. This war came to us from an area called Check Point at about 11:00pm. At that time we had the Guinean contingent in our midst, there was heavy exchange of firing at that Check Point. I escaped with my family to a village called Sempe. After sometime, I came back to collect some items from our house. As I entered my area I saw from a safe distance, a group of men causing much commotion in the area and raining abuses on everybody and daring anyone to challenge them. We decided to return to the place we had hidden our family and move with them to another village called Rolambe. After destroying the town ship they visited our hiding places and asked us to return. They said that if we refused they would destroy the entire village. We obliged them; not knowing that their intention was to make us their slaves. We had to provide the rebels with palm oil and rice and if we refused we were in trouble. They were asking our children to dig the bunkers and trenches in the area where the Guineans intermitently launching attacks. It got to a time we could not see our children as they took them to dangerous places. They took them away from us sometimes for a whole month. The rebels entered Pamlap and fought there. One night we were in the verandah with my children when one colonel of the RUF counted five of my children and said they should board his vehicle saying if they refused to go they would kill all of them. They took them away and shot and killed two of them; the remaining three returned and told us that their brothers had been shot. The grief was much and, even much more, as we had to continue to go and plead with these rebels to give us their corpses. But they refused saying we were too strong headed and, that they had killed only two of our children and we had the audacity of asking them questions. I told them that they abducted my children in my house and that is why I have come for the corpses. They retorted that they had carried out what they told us they would, that they have killed them. About two or three days later they came with a bag of rice to perform a ceremony for the dead. Some of my neighbours wanted to refuse it but I told them to accept the rice; as it will be used as evidence against them; if and when the case should ever come up. So, we accepted the rice. Now, I am alone I have no food; my wife is an aged person and I am too. Col. Vandí has killed the one who was taking care of us. I thank you very much for coming to give us some courage. Because if there are people who share in your distress then you will have some courage and you can go on. If you do not have anyone to talk on your behalf in situations like these; then what do you do. What they did to me is what I have narrated.

Commissioner Jow – We have listened very attentively to your story. It is indeed a sad story and as a Commission we sympathize with you. It is indeed good that you have the courage to come and tell us your story. Your testimony is consistent with what you have in the written statement, but the Commission will ask some questions for clarifications and also fill in some details where there are gaps.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – We want again to thank you very much for your cooperation for coming to share with us your testimony. But before I ask questions for clarification, I want to make this clear to you. All who come here to testify are put under the same umbrella: Witnesses. It is a pregnant concept. Our study of the 11 year war has made us to put people under different categories. As you sit I want to put you under category; we have those we call Perpetrators, be you a Rebel, Kamajor or Guinean. Two, we have victims. And I am sure if I am to ask you here to put up your hand,

you are in no doubt that every excepts that you suffered . Those who suffered during this war are those we refer to as Victims. Number three are Victim Perpetrators,where the rebels or other fighting forces abducted you and trained you and gave you a gun;and so from Victim you became a Perpetrator. Hence, the one person is Victim and also Perpetrator. Number 4 is Witness :Here, you saw what happened or somebody told you what happened,that is a Second Hand Witness .The Witness saw what happened, you saw the clearing of people's houses and some of the looting operations or even may be that the destructions caused here and there, were not caused by rebels but by certain civilians themselves. Number 5 category is a combination of all these; you the same person can be a victim, a perpetrator, anything. Pa Conteh is one of our very important witnesses here today .The testimony tells he is both a Victim and a Witness. As a victim he lost his son, he suffered displacement. We place him and it is in that context we ask him questions to clarify. When you ran to secure your life, did you say you went to a town in Guinea?

- Mr. Conteh – That is the boundary between Sierra Leone and Guinea.
- Bishop Humper – Do you still have the bag of rice Col. Vandi gave you, you said you were going to keep it as evidence?
- Mr. Conteh – No
- Bishop Humper – You said you were subjected to taxation by the rebels, what kind of taxation?
- Mr. Conteh – Palm oil, chicken, rice our children were even taken away to dig trenches and bunkers.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

- Prof. Kamara – I greet you and express sympathy for what you went through. As you have been told we will ask a few questions for clarification. You said the attack started at the check point, are you referring to the check point manned by the Guinean contingent?
- Mr. Conteh- Yes; that was the base of the Guinean contingent.
- Prof. Kamara – What did the Guineans do?
- Mr. Conteh - They left their position.
- Prof. Kamara – You want to tell us the Guineans fled ?
- Mr. Conteh – They did not flee but after serious fighting the RUF took the town and the Guineans remained at the check point.
- Prof. Kamara – So, the Guineans remained at the check point and the rebels occupied the town and the people were not protected by the Guineans?
- Mr. Conteh – Yes Sir
- Prof. Kamara – So, you left because there was no protection and went to Dixon.

Mr. Conteh - Yes Sir.

Prof. Kamara - You have given us a story wherein your sons and others were abducted and your son and another were killed; what happened to your wife and the other children?

Mr. Conteh – My wife is still with me nothing happened to her.

Prof. Kamara - Have you other children?

Mr. Conteh - I have three other children but two are very young.

Prof. Kamara - Of the five men abducted, three you said were your children, can you give us their names, who were the other two?

Mr. Conteh - Mohamed Conteh, Alikali Kamara

Prof. Kamara - The other three that returned what were their names?

Mr. Conteh - Daddy, Lamina and Momoh

Prof. Kamara - I cannot connect these people who took your children, do you know where Col. Vandi is now?

Mr. Conteh - I do not know

Prof. Kamara - What happened to the Guinean soldiers; did they remain here up to the time of the disarmament?

Mr. Conteh – No; they were not here they returned to Guinea.

Prof. Kamara - Were you here when the town was bombarded?

Mr. Conteh - I was living in Kafairor.

Prof. Kamara - Did you witness the rebels going across and attacking the Guineans?

Mr. Conteh - Yes I saw them going to Pamlap.

Prof. Kamara - How many times did you observe that happen?

Mr. Conteh - I cannot tell.

Prof. Kamara - Did you observe the Guineans causing any atrocities, burning properties and looting?

Mr. Conteh – No. I did not.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you so far. I have a few more questions. You mentioned one Pa Adikali; can you tell us who he was?

Mr. Conteh – He was the Sub Chief.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow - What was your own position in the community?

Mr. Conteh - I was only a farmer.

Commissioner Jow - You told us that the rebels stayed in your community for four months?

Mr. Conteh - Yes; inside Kafairor.

Commissioner Jow - I take it you did not interact with them.

Mr. Conteh - They were not treating us nicely but there was no way out we had to stay in their midst.

Commissioner Jow - Can you tell us some of the things they told you for their action?

Mr. Conteh - The four months they stayed in Kafairor we were not with them when we came back they stayed for only a month before they left.

Commissioner Jow - One month is quite a length of time, what did they tell you?

Commissioner Jow - Apart from Col. Vandi can you remember the names of other rebel commanders in your village?

Mr. Conteh - The commanders Col. Vandi and Boulah, the other one was called Kpondowa, the junior one was nicknamed Devil, the other one was Suck Blood.

Commissioner Jow - Would you say they were all Sierra Leoneans?

Mr. Conteh - Most of them were Sierra Leoneans; like Vandi, he is a Mende.

Commissioner Jow - Do you remember Boulah?

Mr. Conteh - He is not a Sierra Leonean.

Commissioner Jow - Do you see him around?

Mr. Conteh - Yes

Commissioner Jow - Was he one of those who forced you to provide them with food?

Mr. Conteh - At the initial stage when they entered we could not tell who was who; but later we realized Boulah was on the side of the civilians.

Commissioner Jow - Can you tell us whether these rebels took away some of your young girls?

Mr. Conteh - Rebels attacked this town twice. The first ones were the real rebels. And after they had gone the next set of rebels who came they took our belongings. Whilst we were fetching water for them they asked us if we know the type of people those first set of rebels who came into our midst were; and then went ahead to tell us that they were the men of Foday Sankoh. They asked us not to come out of our hiding places because if we were seen and we try to run we will be shot to death. The real rebels were not from this country. When they were going they abducted one lady and she stayed with them until she had a baby then she ran away from them and came back.

Leader of Evidence –Ms. Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – You have indicated to us that you have seen around some of the RUF people who attacked your village ?

Mr. Conteh - Yes, Boulah.

Ms. Apori-Nkansah - What we would like to know from you is this, should the Commission arrange a meeting between you and such a person would you agree?

Mr. Conteh - We have to reconcile because what has been done cannot be done.

Commissioner Jow – You told us in your evidence that there was a lot of looting in your village and a lot of your own property was looted. Apart from that was there any burning done to your village?

Mr. Conteh - My village was not burnt down.

Commissioner Jow – We have asked you a lot of questions and now it is your own turn to ask questions and make recommendations.

Mr. Conteh – We rely on you people to advocate on our behalf for all the atrocities wrought upon us and the several losses suffered in the course of this war;we count on you to make recommendations to the government on our behalf .

Commissioner Jow – We also rely on you, if you can recommend anything what you think needs to be done.

Mr. Conteh – We did not have the belief that what happened to us would have been addressed by people like you who will come and ask us again. So we rely on you.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much. As a Commission at the end of our proceedings we will write our report and all the recommendations will be included. And we hope they will be implemented. In order that our children and children's children will enjoy a war free Sierra Leone where there will be no more blood shed.

2ND WITNESS = PA Soriba Bangura – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow.

TESTIMONY – We thank the government .May God continue to empower the government. We have been asked to narrate what happened to us during the war.Because I was ill and bed-ridden I never had a direct personal encounter with the war. However, I have had much indirect impact of the war by how it deleteriously impacted upon my family.I was ill and practically confined to the bed. In my condition , which was accentuated by the stories of the war,whenever there was a gun shot it appeared to me as if it was inside the village. I was lying helpless and hopeless there and, my wives were crying asking what would happen. I told them to run for their lives as I was an ill man and in that condition and that if it is the will of God that I should die there; no problem ,all is well. The women were confused and did not know what to do. We had young children and I told them to take care of them and leave me to my fate. Finally,in desperation and as a last ditch effort,my sister asked and got help from man who used a bicycle to take me to

Guinea. Where we were, my wife and children spent the day in the bush and at night they came and slept in the house. My leg was very swollen and prospects of healing seemed very dim , looking at the condition of the leg. I was on that sick bed for a period of 3 years. During that time I occasionally asked about the whereabouts of my elder son but my wife would inform me that my son was at Lokoya. Then at one time I my brother came around; I was much better then. He then told me that my son was around and was seriously sick. I discussed with my friend,my host ,about what to do and we resolved to take the risk and go and see my son. I improvised a walking stick and we walked from morning up till 2.00pm.And I saw that my son was ill.So ill at that point, that if you were not very close to him,you would not hear whatever he was saying. I asked him what the problem was and he said he was beaten up. I asked him: “who beat you the soldiers or the rebels.”Then I said: “I had in mind that you will be my next of kin and now you are dying.” Not long afterwards he died and I said: Allah is great. I was there for a period of two days and because of the distance that I had covered, my leg started paining me again. People were asked to take me to my village. My brothers and my wife stayed behind for the funeral rites. We were there when we heard the war was over and that people should return to their home town. Since I was in better health I returned and started rebuilding my house. We came back and the fight started again and we were in a village called Morla in a camp. We were there for some time and we heard that the town has been burnt down. How would we get the true story concerning whether it was the act of rebels or soldiers? Be that as it may, I was finally able to confirm that all my house had been burnt down. My son has died, and my house burnt down. If the government should ask I will say this is no hear say, it is the reality with which I am confronted :My son is dead, I have no house, nothing, no food. We rely on the government .So ,if you are ask me this morning? Then,this is what I experienced during the war.

Commissioner Jow – The Commission would like to sympathize with you over the loss of your son. We know you have great faith in Allah; he will continue to strengthen you. Your testimony is very straight forward; but it is the practice of this Commission to ask questions for clarification. I now invite my fellow Commissioners to ask you questions.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – You fall in the category of a victim, your statement is straight forward so there is not much to ask. It seems you are talking of two different periods what year was that?

Mr. Bangura – I cannot tell the year. When war broke out in this country it took four years before I went to the camp.

Bishop Humper – Apart from the pains of the illness which was natural, you lost your son, your wife suffered paralysis , you lost all your property you have ever owned in your life, my last question which is very crucial which you will tell us , you said he spoke in a way you could not hear what he was saying?

Mr. Bangura – Yes

Bishop Humper – We want to establish whether the nod meant soldiers or rebels? We want to be fair to you and to ourselves because during this period 1995-1999 we had soldiers, rebels so we have to be clear and sure of what we say.

Bishop Humper – My final question when you heard of the illness of your son did it take a week, year or a month before you went there?

Mr. Bangura – I was informed in the morning hour and immediately I left with my friend to see him as I was in Guinea and he was in Sierra Leone.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – If I understand your testimony, does it mean you had fear of the two groups of people rebels and soldiers?

Mr. Bangura – Yes

Prof. Kamara – So, that means the soldiers who were sent here, were as much a threat to the people as the rebels?

Mr. Bangura – Yes

Prof. Kamara – There were Sierra Leonean Soldiers and Guinean soldiers here at the time.

Mr. Bangura – That was what we heard.

Prof. Kamara – Your son was he beaten?

Mr. Bangura – At Lokoya because that was where he was staying I wasn't there.

Prof. Kamara – He was not beaten in the village or town that you met him?

Mr. Bangura - No

Prof. Kamara – How far was this village in which he was beaten to any area where there was soldier presence?

Mr. Bangura – I was not there but we believe there were soldiers in Kambia town.

Prof. Kamara – And we all know that the soldiers and rebels were not staying in the same place.

Mr. Bangura – I am unable to tell because I was in a refugee camp in Guinea

Prof. Kamara – Your village Foraya was occupied by rebels?

Mr. Bangura – That was what we heard.

Prof. Kamara – The rebels were occupying your village; how were they administering the people, were they doing any harm to them?

Mr. Bangura – I have no knowledge of what they were doing.

Commissioner Jow – It is not our intention to cause you any pain or open any old wound. I did tell you in the beginning that the Commission has a mandate and to fulfill this we have taken statement from all over the country and that is why we have to ask some of this rather difficult and sometimes painful questions. We understand your loss but understand also that we too have a mandate to fulfill. So, we are going to continue these questions. You said your village was burnt down at that time you were in Guinea but

you were informed that it was the Guinean soldiers who did it; why do you think they did it ?

Mr. Bangura – They said they were protecting the town.

Commissioner Jow – Was that a way of protecting a town?

Mr. Bangura – Well that is what was our worry.

Commissioner Jow – Has the village been rebuilt? Have people come back ?

Mr. Bangura – Yes

Commissioner Jow – And life is returning back

Mr. Bangura – Yes

Commissioner Jow - Can you describe for us life in the camp ?

Mr. Bangura – We only eat after the person sharing the ration has taken his own portion.

Leader of Evidence - Ms. Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – I am sorry to hear about the death of your son in your testimony you indicated to us that your wife experienced paralysis hearing the death of your son

Mr. Bangura – Not my wife but my daughter. She was on the back of her mother while they were running for their lives and she fell off.

Leader of Evidence – You also mentioned that the house in your village was burnt down have you received any assistance in rebuilding ?

Mr. Bangura – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you very much for answering our questions according to the proceedings of this commission we have to give you the opportunity to ask questions or make recommendation in line with the conflict in this country

Mr. Bangura – I do not have any question. In order to begin to solve the problems then there should be greater government intervention. For instance, in my village we have 160 houses involved, but you are only given support for 20 houses; we have no medical facility and if you are or your child is sick then you are in trouble. The houses that have been built for us have only 3 rooms in each; if you are 20 in your family how can you live there ?

Commissioner Jow – You are talking about houses who built those houses ?

Mr. Bangura – It is only the government that I know. I do not know about any other organisation

Commissioner Jow – Do you have any chiefdom development ?

Mr. Bangura – Yes.

Commissioner Jow - Have you referred this issue to them ?

Mr. Bangura - Yes

Commissioner Jow - What did he say ?

Mr. Bangura - He too has promised to come to Kambia.

Commissioner Jow – That is good . We have noted your recommendations and your concerns; and we hope that after the implementation of some of these recommendations conditions will improve.

3rd Witness – Anthony Andrew Tollo – A Christian by religion. Oath was administered by Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow .

Commissioner Jow – Thank you for coming to share your experience. Your written testimony is here with us but you have summoned up courage to come openly and talk to us so that we have a clear story of what happened to you during the war . You represent the many many people who would have loved to come but are not here because of circumstances. So, just relax and tell us your story. This is not a court, whether as Victim or Perpetrator or Witness or as a combination of these three.

Andrew – I am here to talk about what I experienced during the war. From 1991 we were hearing of the war around the Kailahun area. At that time we were in Moyamba district. We were receiving a lot of refugees from Kailahun who told us they had been attacked by the rebels . We continued to wonder whether these rebels were human beings. Some told us that they were human beings while others said they did not see them. I was attending school at Taiama from 1991-95. My father was responsible for my schooling. But at the later part of 1995 my father became seriously ill and could not pay for my Selective Entrance fees. He told me he could not pay for the examinations and does not even have money to pay his hospital bills. I told him that I would be left with nothing should I not take the examinations; as all my mates and friends were sure about taking the examinations . So, he asked me to go to Bomaru and meet my brother who was a soldier and explain things to him; may be he might be willing to assist. Therefore, I went to my brother and explained my problems to him. And he told me that I was lucky as I had come at the right time as his colleagues at Daru had just received their salaries the previous day and if he receives his he will help me. He took me and introduced me to his bosses as his younger brother . We returned to his house at night and he gave me place to sleep. But I told him that I was unable to sleep alone and ;that I would like to sleep with him even if it meant sleeping on the floor. At about 4.00am in the morning we heard gun shots. So, he asked me to stay in the room and if it was any bad thing he will come and collect me. I stayed there until 6.00am and I was not able to see him. I peeped through the window and saw lights from torches. I heard people shouting and crying and running all over the place. I did not come out as I was told to wait for my brother and I did not know the area. I was in the room when two men entered. They did not see me as I lay hidden under the bed . They took all his belongings and went out. After five seconds another group came, two entered and they searched . Then they said:” Our comrades have been here”. Then another group came, they met the place scattered. As things turned out, one of them saw me; and ordered me to come out. He demanded my identity . I identified myself and told him that I was a student. He asked if my father was a soldier I said no but that my brother was. Then, he was happy as he said they needed information about soldiers he took me to his companions

and told them I was the brother of a soldier and that he had taken me from the room of a soldier. He ordered that I be stripped naked and they said I would have some information about the soldiers. They asked me a lot of questions but I told them I was visiting the area for the first time. So, they took me to their commander one Pa Chako. He was Happy and said may be I was the son of a soldier . He held my throat and shouted out and asked me where the ammunitions were kept. I told him that all I know about the soldier was their kitchen; because that was where I was taken to when I came. I told them that I do not know if that was where they kept ammunitions. So, they took me with them to show them the place. There nothing was found. They had abducted a lot of people including very young children. They were asking after the soldiers and the Paramount Chief in the area . If you failed to answer you were either flogged or killed. They were in the town for two days and then they changed their mind; they said they had collected a lot of civilians. So, they took some outside and started killing them. So, some of us who were little children started crying as we had never in our lives witnessed such horror and atrocity. Then Pa Chako ordered that all children be taken to the barray. But even from that point we saw them through the window. They then decided to fence the barray. So, those who were not yet killed were taken to the mosques to get mats to fence the barray. They gave us four men as guards, but two of them did not have guns. They would come and give us biscuits and all that. They said they liked small unit groups. They would come and lecture us that they had come for the country to change the rotten system. They said they did not want to see Momoh Soldiers. After two days, they decided to take us along. They decided to use the human parts of those that had been killed to “decorate” the town. So, they started to cut off parts from these corpses and used it to “decorate” the town. We the small boys were so scared. Having seen what had happened to the adults, what will be our fate? But some of the rebels told that those whose parents were not under a curse should not worry. They packed the looted properties and gave them to those adults who had not been killed to carry. Some of them took a liking for some of us and they gave us their plastic bags. On the way they were telling us that we were not enjoying good education under this government ;and that we should have free education and those of us who were already with them were going to enjoy free education. So, we were not worried any more. We were happy. We discussed amongst ourselves;and I told them that even at that point my father was not in the position to help with my schooling. So, if what they were saying came true,I then reasoned that it would be of immense help to my father. We went on until we came to a village where we stopped .There, they prepared and had their meal. They made use us to catch fowls and goats. They kept the adults securely locked and closely observed. For us the children, they watched us through the windows and and even when some of cried, they sympathized with us as we were kids. We were still in that town when they got information from their headquartes that they did not want the large number of civilians which they had abducted. They only wanted 35 persons: 10 big ones and 25 small ones. So, Pa Chako lined up all the adults and said that he had received orders that they only needed 35 persons. So , there was much commotion among the adults as some of them had 8 and 6 members of same family, although there were some that got abducted alone. The other rebels asked Pa Chako what was to happen to all the property that they had looted; since the decision was that they will kill the rest after taking out the number they wanted. They counted out 10 adults and 25 children and the rest were locked up in a house. The other rebels also asked Pa Chako :If the 35 people are for the “government” what about them who have carried out the opearation ? So, Pa Chako said they should all take one small boy to help carry their own loads. I was expecting this government load to come from elsewhere but then Pa Chako told them that they should divide whatever spoils they had into two. One for the government and the other one for the individual rebel. This was done. And that which was put aside for the government was given to the adults and we the little children we were given little bundles so that we could move about freely. The adults were chained together with a rope; and they had to move along like that. Anyone that for any reason complained of being tired was told to prepare to die.And they did kill them as they went along.And they continued like this adjusting the rope each time one person is removed from the chain. They told us that they killed them so that when you see your partner killed before your eyes; you will not be tired but you will carry the load no matter how heavy it is. They alone had the power to say when to rest and even to answer to the call of nature and so on .Then, we were in one village and they said that all rebels should come forward with their boys. Couple Warrior was my boss. When that command was passed, he told me to hide. So, he hid

me under the box that was nearby. My other companions were taken to Pa Chako. But when I was abducted I was clearly recognized as the brother of a soldier. So, they called out for me and they said that Couple Warrior wanted to take me as if I was the child of his grandmother. He lied saying that he had sent me to fetch water. But the other man who saw Couple Warrior hiding me gave him away and Couple Warrior was given 100 lashes. So, they went for me where I was hiding and they asked me why I did not come with the others. And I told them that Couple Warrior asked me to hide. So, they asked him and he said he was not going to say anything. So, they said they were going to punish him. They said he should always be in front and he should never come near me. I was now handed over to Pa Chako. On our way, we met 8 people who had on military fatigues of different types. They were moving about the town and, they were with some women. So, I asked the women why are these people here and they told me that they were waiting for the missionaries, when we got there they welcomed us warmly. It was in that area that Couple Warrior was released. But there was a command that if you were in possession of a civilian, you should report to the headquarters. We crossed a stream and met some women laundering and others taking their bath. At that time we had been separated into groups and I was with Couple Warrior and he showed me my mates playing in the stream; and he told me that they were happy and I will soon join them. He called out a woman who was the wife of his brother and introduced me to her and told her he had brought me to help his wife Sapphire. The woman told me not to worry. She said they were human beings like myself and I should not be afraid. She had two children and she called them out to meet me, They came and invited me into the water and; they told me they were very happy and they do not do any work except eat and that they had tapes in their rooms. They said they will take me to their place which was two miles away from the stream. We went through a very high hill until we got to Couple Warrior's house. I met his wife and we discussed. She had known me for a long time and she even knew where I was born. She asked me how I got into the hold of these people and I asked her the same question. She told me she too was an abductee. She said I should have tried to hide myself but I told her the security was tight. I asked her why she did not try to escape also she said the security was tighter than mine. I asked her what we were to do in the unknown and very dangerous environment. She told me that there was no good in that place for us. She said that all the lectures were lies. And I started praying; but she said with her I need not worry. But as for my other companions that they had ended up in the hands of women who will punish them. She reassured me that with her I will be happy. She gave me water to wash but I told her I had already taken my bath. She asked me if I saw children playing in the stream I said yes. She advised me to go and sit down quietly as I was new. They took all the abducted children to the commander, Superman. All the boys were there but Couple Warrior's boy was absent. So, they asked for me and Couple Warrior said he has asked me to go and take bath and after that they should take me to Superman. They said he was telling a lie and they commanded that he be given 500 lashes. They flogged him and his body was badly lacerated and then they threw him under the sun. They then took 3 boys for Superman. They asked us with whom we would wish to stay and I pointed to Couple Warrior and; they removed him from the sun and I was handed over to him. He took me to his house and handed me over to his wife. But where his house was located, there was a thick forest and I told him that the place was cold. He said it was because we were outside; so I asked him where I was going to sleep and he said he would clear his wood store. He cleared it and gave me a foam and I slept in this store. For a whole week I did nothing. In the morning they would call them out for training. I would stay behind and read my Book 5. But the others who were older went for the training each day. I was not allowed to train early as I was clearly a child. When we were going to Moyamba, they asked me to lead them, I told them that I did not know the route because all along I was staying in Taiama. They still advanced to Moyamba to attack; but the move was a failure. Be that as it may, they said they would continue to abduct people. They got many people including my uncle so. During that time I had been with them for a reasonable length of time. So, they left us to take care of the abducted civilians, that night there was a kamajor who was moving round the town he was able to kill 3 and wound 15 rebels. In the morning a command was passed that the kamajor should be captured. They captured him and brought him, and, he was the son of my uncle. They cut off his hand and gave him a letter and sent him to Moyamba. The other captured people including my uncle they concluded that they were kamajors and should be killed. They were saying this among themselves. So, Couple Warrior came and told me that if I had any

relatives among the abductees I should let them go . My uncle's wife and children were there and I helped them escape. I went with them to the junction. That evening they killed all those people and my uncle was killed in my presence . I told Couple Warrior that I was fed up because my uncle had just been killed in my presence;and he was the one I had expected would help me. He said we were in the jungle and I should avenge the death of my uncle. Couple Warrior loved me very much and he said he did not want me to go to the training grounds. At one time, on the way to Rotifunk, he was able to get a gun which he gave me .When we went to Blackford, he showed me how to use a gun . We came across the government soldiers having their lunch . We were at once given a signal : Two Flanks .And some of us went to the right and some to the left .Then, we stood ground for 30 minutes and then the commander informed us that the situation was tense and we should use a bye pass. He said he did not want everybody ;but only 35 armed men. And I was amongst that number. We left them on the road,and came up behind them on the road by Mabang. We told them at the Commander at Mabang would like to see all government soldiers. They believed us and came down towards us and the man with the RPG fired at them and we gave them weapon support. After that mission, they said they had all gone to the base. So, they said I am a special junior commando. There was one small boy who was the Commander and they made me his Assistant for the small boys. When they passed out they were surprised to see me giving orders and instructing them even though I never went to the training base. At one particular week, they decided to come to Kambia. Gibril Massaquio was to lead us. They said he should come with us within 72 hours. They assembled us, 250 armed men and 150 unarmed men and we took off. We passed by Rogbere junction and,we were not using the main routes because of lack of ammunition; we were using other routes . On the way we fell into an ambush around Rogbere junction; as we were not planning to pass through Port Loko. Many of us were killed .So, the commander changed his command saying; since he had lost a lot of men it should be Operation Spare No Living Thing . We were all bloody now. We now killed without any questions. We came in through Rokoya, we came across the kids in school. But Gibril Massaquoui said we should not enter into any school until all strategic positions had been taken. At that moment, we all answered, Yes Sir, as that was the military rule.But some of our men still entered the school. Meanwhile, the Guineans were at the junction. So, we attacked them and there was this intense fighting which went on for three days. It was only at a lull that Gibril Massaquoui learnt that all the school children had been abducted and, he ordered that they bring them all back. They used us as tools because,no matter where we went or approached, we were not easy targets as we were always seen as little children and there would always be this momentof indecision about us. And during those moments we did whatever we felt like doing .And so it happened that during these moments having in mind the command of Operation No Living Thing we killed all living things we met on the way.We gave them no chance. We did grim things .The white man calls it Gun, it means it has gone off and can never be recalled. We made a mistake and we are apologizing to this whole country and asking them to forgive us for what we did.

Commissioner Jow – We thank you very much. For the record can I just ask a few questions before passing you on to the other commissioners.

Commissioner Jow – How old were you when you were abducted ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh- I was 13 years old.

Commissioner Jow - How old are you now ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh – I am now 23 years old.

Commissioner Jow - Have you been through the DDR process ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh - Yes

Commissioner Jow - You come from Moyamba; why are you still here, why have you not gone back ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh - After my disarmament I chose to stay here in order to participate in skills training and I intend going back home after finishing my training.

Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper

Bishop Humper – We thank you. It is our wish, hope and prayer that many of your type will come forward. The senior people whom you were once with and who were telling you not to come forward to testify were not doing you any good. The more people like you we get as a commission, the better it will be for this country and the international community. So many people felt that people like you will not come forward, and we are here today and tomorrow we are still encouraging you to come forward. I do not need to ask him many questions. He has told it all and we will spend the next 4 hours here. He was abducted at 13 and told about free education. He and others were looking for free education and social life instead they gave him guns to kill his own people. The simple and short message in all this is why he had been to Bomaru and how he moved all around again until he got to Moyamba where he was born. The only time he decided to take the gun was when he witnessed his uncle killed and he went for vengeance. Were you involved in the fight in Rotifunk Moyamba before coming to Kambia ?

Bishop Humper - Do you know Camp Charlie ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh- Yes Sir

Bishop Humper - Do you know Boulah

Mr. Andrew Tolloh - Yes Sir

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – We thank you for giving us this story. It is very clear we did not have to coax you to acknowledge the wrong you have done, therefore we do not have to ask you any questions to bring this out. But I am interested in two aspects of your experiences. One is the question of the relationship of ethnicity and tribalism, and the question which you have already partially solved is concerning what you did and what the others did. We start with the question of ethnicity, you have been here as an enemy of a people of this Kambia district and as you have accepted you and your companions killed a lot of people; my question is how do you find living in this area, a far distance from Moyamba district ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh - Presently things are much better because I get my daily bread here even though I am not a native of this village. At times when I find it difficult to get food to eat, I still find people here who help me out. And I am ever grateful to them for helping me; even if it with just good counsel . So, I always remember people like Mr. Yaya for the lessons I obtained from him .

- Prof. Kamara – I am talking in terms of your social life, how do you live with the people do they love you or hate you ?
- Mr. Andrew Tolloh - In every community you have the good people and the bad. And here it appears the good people are more; I am a Mende but now that I am fluent in Temne , they are not treating me badly.
- Prof. Kamara – I am told you are a tutor in the institute, how come you are complaining?Am I sure they are paying you ?
- Mr. Andrew Tolloh - I have just written an application which has just been approved and they promised me I will start receiving salary at the end of the month.
- Prof. Kamara – You have admitted the responsibility for what you did and an aspect of our mandate is reconciliation .As you have said they love you in Kambia but we do not know what your status will be in Moyamba.Have you been in touch with them ?
- Mr. Andrew Tolloh - I have not been there, but I have sent a message to them ;and they have sent people here to come and see if I am alive.
- Prof. Kamara – Would you like somebody either through this Commission or through any of the NGO'S or may be through contact with the DDR, to work effectively ,for you to be repatriated and reintegrated into your society ?
- Mr. Andrew Tolloh - For a long time various interest groups came in through the DDR office and they said we should all register to be repatriated. But I was skeptical as the waiting period I had suspected would be too long and up till now nothing has been done.
- Commissioner Jow – You have already told us that you are ready to reconcile with the people with whom you live .And you used the analogy of a gun to underscore your actions and mistakes and asked for forgiveness. Yet with all this, we want to get one last word from you. Do you have any questions you would wish to ask or recommendations to make ?
- Mr. Andrew Tolloh - I want to tell my fellow ex-combatants that we should stop listening to rumours.I say this because we have been made to be afraid of coming before this commission. I should have been the first man to give my testimony this morning but because of I fear I did not come forward at that time.
- Commissioner Jow – There is nothing to fear, we are not a court. You are not the only ex-combatant who has come to give testimony. If there is any problem or security problem please feel free to meet our District Coordinator because part fo our work is to look into what children went through so what happens to you will never happen again. Your commanders and those who bear the greatest responsibility are at the final court .So, what advice would you give to all your colleagues out there; it is still not late to come forward to give statements ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh - I want to tell my fellow ex-combatants that the rumours were not correct but wrong. Please come forward and give your statement .As the books put it : Seeing is Believeing. Some people of this town were not even here when this war was on. So, please come forward and testify. Otherwise, when you pass along people will be pointing fingers at you without even knowing who you are. So, please come forward and say what you have to say.

Commissioner Jow – Is that you final word ?

Mr. Andrew Tolloh - No , I have question for the commission. This statement taking and testimony giving; what for and why are we doing it ? We have left our jobs and everything we are doing to come here. Why are we here?

Commissioner Jow – According to the government the war is over, the TRC is one of those peace mechanisms established and part of our mandate is to find out exactly what happened during the war;and, it has to be accurate. The TRC is also mandated to respond to the victims.In order that there will never be a repetition, the reports will include a number of recommendations. And once government gets this report they will look closely at the recommendations and implement them very promptly. Our commission is Victim- centered and it is our hope that as result of the work of this commission ,that conditions will improve.We do not have money to dish out to victims .The recommendations we make will respond to victims like yourself and if there are immediate needs we refer you to NGOs who will help you.

Bishop Humper – We have disarmed you of your guns but what is left is to disarm your mind. What we have to give you is to ask you what you have to give us and you have given us something already. You have left your working place, and even provided answers to several questions such as: Why did you took up arms; what about the problems which happened before the war who and who are responsible; what happened to our paramount chiefs, district officers, the governments of the day; with the resorcues of this nation, why is it that we cannot have free medical care, skills training; we are a rich country and we have mineral resources.But why only just a hand ful. These are all questions you have helped us to answer. Its more than millions that we could have given you physically can pay for; you should know that you are a great man today.

Commissioner Jow – You and I and the children. We are having a closing ceremony. We want you to come along .

KAMBIA DISTRICT HEARINGS – 13TH JUNE 2003

The Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper called the Hearings to a start with interfaith prayers. He welcomed everybody,in particular the witnesses for the day;the number of which he said is 3 .Then, he asked them to narrate their experiences.

1st Witness – Gibrilla Kamara – A Muslim by religion. Oath was administered by Bishop Humper.

Bishop Humper – We welcome you to this session. What we are now doing here; the country and the international community will know that you contributed to

bringing about changes in Sierra Leone. We therefore ask you to remain calm and composed as you share with us your experiences.

TESTIMONY – The difficulties that I encountered during the war I am now going to narrate. I am a native-born of this District in a village called Salato. From there however, I went to Masiaka. There is one small village there called Mafanta which was where I was trapped by the war. I ran into the bush and the rebels burnt down the whole village. As if that was not enough, the rebels decided to hunt us down ;and wherever we went the rebels followed us. We were in that condition of running from one place to another for a month. One day in our place of refuge; when only four of us with one child had stayed behind,we were attacked and abducted. They continued to beat us mercilessly and ceaselessly from the place they got us until we got to the place that they were taking us to. There we met one Fatmata whose hand had been amputated. During that time we had newly harvested rice, which was still in its bundle stage. One abductee woman was asked to thresh the rice. Whilst she was doing this, we were being beaten. After she had finished threshing and winnowing the rice; they told that her she was going to be the first person amongst us to be killed ;and they killed her at once. They continued to beat the three of us who were still alive until one fell unconscious and he was killed. The rebels said he was no longer useful to them. Now, two of us remained. They questioned the other man about the rice and he said that it was in the bush. But he said the rice did not belong to him but that he knew where it was. Then it was my turn and they said they had killed three people in my group but that my own death would be different. They said I would be put in a farm hut and burnt down. I was taken to the farm hut . But then, one rebel said he had a dispute with me and I should be released so that we can settle our dispute. I was released and the rebel said:” I have no dispute with this man I only want you to release him without killing him”. They agreed with him not to kill me but then said that they were to amputate my left hand and my left foot. The same rebel said:” Since we started this mission I have seen amputation of hands and feet but I have not seen amputation of both the hands and feet of an individual at the same time”. They agreed with him concerning the correctness of his observation but they still insisted on cutting off both my left hand and foot. This rebel continued to plead on my behalf and told them that I had already received much beating. Then , they turned on him and wanted to cut off his hands. But I said I would prefer they cut off my own hands because I knew if they were to kill that man; they will definitely kill me. So, I told them to leave the man and cut off my own hands. They asked me to bring forth my hand to be cut off, I placed it in a way which they claimed was not proper and my wrist was then cut off. They then went to my other colleague and asked him to lead them to where the rice was. But they decided to torture him before going for the rice and they lit a polythene bag and the hot droplets coming from the bag were directed to continue to drop into the man’s anus .Then, the commander ordered him to take them to where the rice was and that pronounced immediate death sentence on him ,should they not find the rice. I was then released. A week later I saw some of my friends and they took me to the ECOMOG base at Masiaka. I was taken along with a child whose hands had been amputated to see the ECOMOG doctor. They radioed Freetown for the helicopter gun ship to come for us but it was on another operation and could not come. ECOMOG asked us to wait till after the rehabilitation of the road. After the rehabilitation of the road a white lady named Martha came and took us to Connaught hospital .From there we were taken to Aberdeen Amputee Camp and later we were brought to Kambia here. This is my experience.

Bishop Humper – Thank you. The commission has the responsibility to look into what happened during the war and in doing so we also ask some questions for clarification. In doing so we usually put into perspective, who this witness before us is.This enables us to put the witness in a category and, thus proceed in some order.In your case, we see you are victim and witness. The experiences you share with us are abduction, torture and killing. You are one of those who suffered amputation and we have the responsibility of looking into the problems of amputees as well. In this context I will ask the other Commissioners for their questions.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – I am very sorry for what you went through and I hope that in your circumstances you are thankful to God. Now, you said there was a man amongst the rebels who abducted you who was pleading on your behalf?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Yes sir.

Prof. Kamara – Have you known that man before?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Never.

Prof. Kamara – What about the other rebels did you know them before that incident?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - No.

Prof. Kamara – If you were to see anyone of them would you identify them?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara – Yes, if I should see any of them I would identify him.

Prof. Kamara – What about the other man who was tortured and asked to go and show where the rice was; have you ever heard of him?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara– Yes, he died last dry season.

Prof. Kamara – So he died a natural death?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara - Where are you living now?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - I am staying in the Kambia Amputee Camp.

Prof. Kamara – Is it a temporary place or is it one of those built for you which has been given to you as your personal property?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - We were informed by the government that the house is now ours.

Prof. Kamara – So, you now have your own house?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara – Yes.

Prof. Kamara - With whom do you live there?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - I live with my wife and kids.

Prof. Kamara – Who is assisting you now?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - We receive assistance from the NGOs; we receive wheat, salt, beans etc.

Prof. Kamara – Is your wife doing anything?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara – No.

Prof. Kamara – Does she do minor farming?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Since we arrived we only have groundnut farm.

Prof. Kamara – Once again I am sorry for you and on behalf of the Commission I thank you again for coming.

Commissioner Mrs. Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – We do not want to bother you but we need to ask these questions for clarification, you told us at the time of the incident you were living in Mafuk near Masiaka but you are a native of Kambia could you tell us whether you came there to settle or to visit?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - I came there to settle.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us how many rebels attacked you?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - They were seven of them

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us what they looked like and what faction they belonged to?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - They were in military fatigue and I was told they were Issa's boys.

Commissioner Jow – What language(s) did they speak to you?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Krio and other languages

Commissioner Jow – In your statement you told us you were beaten mercilessly what were they using?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Machetes.

Commissioner Jow - When they were amputating you did they give you any message?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - They told us to go to Tejan Kabbah.

Commissioner Jow – Since the incident have you gone back to the village?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara – Yes, the day before yesterday I was there.

Commissioner Jow – Do you know when this happened precisely around what period?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Since my hand was cut off it has taken five years.

Commissioner Jow - Was it during the AFRC period?

Mr. Gibrilla Kamara- Yes

Bishop Humper – We have been asking you questions throughout this period we want to see if the Leader of Evidence has any questions.

Leader of Evidence - Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – Can you please tell us the names of the people who died?

- Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - Marie Sesay and Pa Momoh
- Bishop Humper – We want to ask if you have any questions or recommendations that could be included in our final report.
- Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - I don't have any questions. I want to tell you one thing. I have children and I do not have a hand now to work and educate them. What plans have you got for my children?
- Bishop Humper – This is a recommendation as far as we are concerned. There is an amputee association in Sierra Leone based in Freetown; we have had series of your kind of case. I will ask the staff here to make a note of you as those who are in areas where they do not get the help from the appropriate organizations. Our Commission is victim focused .At the end we will make recommendations and some other recommendations particularly dealing with amputees. I am sure education will be top priority for us as a Commission. I must end up by saying that as a Commission we do not at this point in time deal with individuals. But at the end of this session we will make reference to NGO's around here .We will recommend to you where to seek help. Any other questions or recommendation?
- Mr. Gibrilla Kamara - What you are doing; we are praying to God to increase your help not for me but for our children. The step you are taking now, so that we will have lasting peace in this country I greatly appreciate. It is better for a man to die knowing fully well that the children who are left behind will not have any problems.
- Bishop Humper – That is what we are doing as a Commission; so that this country will no more experience what it experienced in the last ten years.
- 2nd Witness – Vandi Brima – A Christian by religion. Oath was administered by Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. HumperHumper.
- Bishop Humper – We want to welcome you to this session. You are not only important to this session but to Sierra Leone as well; to present yourself as a soldier in this nation is a very important position. If the Commission is able to get even 20 or 30 of your kind who took up arms, stating the rationale behind it; then this country will be a fine country. You are given the opportunity to speak for yourself but in speaking for yourself tell what you saw other people do. We have a word now that we use instead of Perpetrator. You have the opportunity to tell this nation why you did what you did and do not be afraid; nothing will happen to you. So, many of your companions were poisoning your mind not to come and testify here saying you will be taken to Special Court; but you have come and you find yourself in a family. All we want is what you experienced, what you saw and what you did, So, feel relaxed and calm and share with us your experience.

TESTIMONY – I was trained as a vigilante and later became a soldier. I was in Pujehun in 1992 fighting the rebels. I was later transferred to the 6th battalion from there we were under the NPRC fighting the rebels. We were in the bush fighting the rebels when we heard that the AFRC had overthrown the government. By then we were in the Bunumbu Manowa area. There was a brigade advance we stopped at Manowa. We were then fighting against the Kamajors. Then we got a call to leave that area. But just before we left the rebels told us that the government they

wanted was now in power. They tied their weapons and gave it to some small boys to bring to us, and we received them. They said they were no longer going to fight and we were happy to hear that. We then sent to our commanders in Daru informing them that the rebels had said they were not fighting any more. Maj. Momoh sent a truck and some of the rebels were sent to Daru and some to Freetown. I was in charge of trucks but even then some of the rebels were on that road disturbing people. Though some of them were fortunate; we had heard that a counter coup had taken place. We heard that Dr. Banya and some others had been arrested. AFRC sent some of their honorable to Kenema.

We went to Dr. Banya's place to loot and we were apprehended. One of my men was killed and I was shot on the foot. They wanted to kill me but someone pleaded on my behalf. I was taken to 34 Military Hospital and when my foot got better I was deployed at Pademba Road Prisons as guard. When the intervention took place, I went into the bush and then to Makeni. Johnny Paul advised us to hand over our weapons, some of us went into the bush again and we went to Kabala. Some soldiers were unable to go to the bush as they had not joined forces with the rebels. Whenever we sent out men to spy what was happening, the Kamajors and ECOMOG soldiers would kill them. We were afraid at that time to come out as the situation was such that even parents were denying their children. Two officers Lt. Serry and Lt. Tumai said they were going to surrender when they came to Freetown they were killed. Those who were caught were put into Pademba Road Prisons and some of our brothers who were able to run away from Freetown to join us told us that things were not good. We then decided to go into the bush, we said we were International soldiers and we were not going to allow the government treat us as if we were outcasts. I was in the northern area of Kabala, in Kurubonla when we started our movement. There were several factions and we had no control. It came to a point where the Junior ranks amongst us were now beating the Commanders. We were then fighting the ECOMOG who were in Freetown. Some of us decided we were International fighters, therefore, we should not allow ECOMOG to come and fight us in our country. We said we had fought for the government to be reinstated and we needed recognition. We were now in the bush committing atrocities. We went about taking food from civilians forcefully and we raped women forcefully if they had no food to give us. We did all this till we came to Makeni. We were in Makeni until we heard of the Lome Peace Accord. Pa Sankoh sent a message saying that every body should stay in his own camp. After the Peace Accord we were told that we had not been disbanded we were still an army. We were then with our boss Pa Mani. The Makeni people had come back to their town. Pa Mani told Pa Sankoh that if that was the plan he will leave them there and move on to Binkolo. We did not know that the rebels were sending for reinforcement from Kailahun. But before Pa Mani left us he warned us that no SLA should walk around armed. The rebels attacked us and we were driven from Makeni. By then Johnny Paul was in Freetown and we asked him to send us ammunition. He wanted to know whether we will be able to bring the war to an end if he sent us arms. We said we will be able to finish the war in an hour. We went to Kabala and met Maj. Kassim. We refused to surrender to our colleague SLA as they had betrayed us. Before coming we hid our weapons and informed Maj. Kassim that we had abductees with us and we would like to know what we were going to do in terms of feeding them. We normally moved from Kabala to the surrounding villages to find food. He was worried with the complaints about our activities and sent a message to Freetown. Bishop Biguzzi was sent to talk to us and we agreed to merge with the other soldiers. When we heard of the disarmament we learnt that soldiers will be disarmed without payment as they were SLA and we were entitled to salary and other benefits, only civilians will be given a package. Some of us wanted to revolt but Maj. Kassim and Bishop Biguzzi explained to us and we agreed. We were there and they took us to Lungi and we were screened and accepted into the army again.

Bishop Humper – We thank you very much for coming forward to tell us what you saw and what you did. One of the things we do as a Commission after you have given your presentation is to ask you questions. I will start the pace, and my fellow colleagues will also ask you, according to how you answer your questions put to you will make us stay here for 15 mins. or two hours, firstly you were in the SLA.

Pte.Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Bishop Humper – And then later you betrayed the trust of the nation and instead of protecting us, you took up arms against us?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Bishop Humper - At the moment in the army what is your rank?

Pte Vandi Brima – Private, Sir.

Bishop Humper - As a commander of G5 in Makeni, you were involved in killings?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir, my enemy Sir.

Bishop Humper - You were involved in torture?

Pte. Vandi Brima - No Sir

Bishop Humper - You were involved in looting?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Bishop Humper - You were involved in raping?

Pte. Vandi Brima - No Sir

Bishop Humper – So you agree with me that you committed very serious violations of human rights?

Pte.Vandi Brima - Yes Sir, as long as you are in the bush.

Bishop Humper – Now, I will ask my colleague Commissioners to ask you questions.

Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Prof. Kamara – We are happy as the Chairman has said to see you come here to testify. Nothing you say here or no questions asked here will lead you to prosecution. All we need to know is the truth about why you betrayed the people of this country. You have given us a narrative, you did make a statement and I want to ask your opinion. As you sit here you said you did not want to disarm to the Sierra Leone army because they betrayed you?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Prof. Kamara – I want to ask you whether it was the soldiers who were loyal to the country who betrayed you or it was you who betrayed the people of this country?

Pte. Vandi Brima - We betrayed the people.

Prof. Kamara – So, your decision not to disarm was it right?

Pte. Vandi Brima - No Sir

Prof. Kamara - You said you were in Kurubonla that is Koinadugu what were you doing there?

Pte. Vandi Brima – No, I was not there.

Prof. Kamara – You were a vigilante, why did you join the army?

Pte. VandiBrima – When the war came as I was a vigilante I was then conscripted into the army.

Prof. Kamara – When you were in Kenema you earned the name of Sgt. Killer?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Prof. Kamara – So, that means you were killing people ruthlessly?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir, I alone had the guts to face the rebels.

Prof. Kamara – We had information that the SLA had almost defeated the rebel in Kenema why did you withdraw?

Pte. Vandi Brima - A cease fire was announced.

Prof. Kamara – So, there was cease fire between the rebels and the SLA?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Prof. Kamara – It was during the NPRC time when you people were in the field when this word 'sobel' emerged?

Pte. VandiBrima - No Sir. I cannot remember that name.

Prof. Kamara – It was also during the time when the rebels and soldiers became friends; then you had problems with the Kamajors. You told us that at that time the Kamajors turned on the soldiers. Can you tell us what happened at that time?

Pte. Vandi Brima - We were working hand in hand; then I was sent to the brigade. What brought the fight between SLA and Kamajors I do not know. I was only told that an SLA received a message that he was to go home and see his father who was a Kamajor. When he got to Kenema the Kamajors got hold of him and he explained to them that he had been sent for by his father who was also a Kamajor. They took him to his father and they told his father they were going to kill him and they killed him. The father reported the matter to the police station and the matter was reported to the brigade. The soldiers took the corpse of their colleague and buried it. Soldiers were then warned not to move around. Our commander Fallah Sewa was informed about this development. He sent a report to Freetown but no action was taken. Another officer at 18th battalion Lt. Sesay was sent to see what was happening and he was also killed. Hinga Norman had at that time instructed the Kamajors to kill any soldier seen walking around after 6pm. The Chief of Staff and all commanders and the Town Chief pleaded with us and told us they would handle the situation. We danced with the Kamajors that night as a sign of reconciliation not knowing that the Kenema people and the elders of Kenema had paid the Kamajors ten thousand Leones to ambush us.

That night the Chief of Staff slept at the Brigade. Early in the morning the Kamajors launched an attack on us; they crossed the church called Cathedral and entered our territory. We retaliated, we fought and since then we became enemies; we killed Kamajors and they killed us also.

Prof. Kamara – I am particularly happy to hear this other version. I and the other Commissioners have another version but we will find out the truth. You have already been very cooperative in answering the questions; you said you were in Koinadugu after the intervention did you meet SAJ Musa?

Pte Vandí Brima - We were all at Morgbor.

Prof. Kamara – So, you were amongst those causing the atrocities in that area?

Pte.Vandi - Yes Sir.

Commissioner Satang Ajaratou Jow

Commissioner Jow – You said in 1996 your commander demanded escort?

Pte. Vandí Brima - Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Was this immediately after the elections?

Pte. Vandí Brima - It was during the time when the route to Kenema was blocked.

Commissioner Jow – Can you tell us your role as an escort?

Pte. Vandí Brima - When there is no security on the highway especially when food was being transported, vehicles were ambushed and burnt down; so, our commanders decided a stipulated time for vehicles to move around and we were on the escort team.

Commissioner Jow – Did you repel them?

Pte. Vandí Brima – Yes.

Commissioner Jow – Did you at any time confiscate stolen goods from the rebel?

Pte. Vandí Brima – No, because by the time we got to them they would have made away with whatever they had stolen.

Commissioner Jow – You told us at one time you were security at Pademba Road Prisons did you witness any violation done to prisoners?

Pte. Vandí Brima - Well I did not witness anything I was outside the gates of the prison and not allowed to enter, I was there to prevent prisoners from escaping.

Commissioner Jow – I understand there was a lot of damage done during the war who was responsible SLA or RUF?

Pte. Vandí Brima - Foday Sankoh

Commissioner Jow – Where you actually involved in the fighting in Makeni?

Pte, Vandi Brima - We were not able to fight them because by then we had laid down our weapons.

Commissioner Jow – In your testimony you accepted responsibility of looting Dr. Banya's house can you tell us why?

Pte. Vandi Brima - We received a command to loot his house.

Commissioner Jow – So, you had no reason to loot that house?

Pte. Vandi Brima - I was only a junior obeying commands.

Commissioner Jow – You said you were shot, can you tell us why and where?

Pte. Vandi Brima- At Dr. Banya's house, when we went to loot.

Prof. Kamara – Dr. Banya and Dr. Koba were accused by Mosquito they were arrested and locked up. I am sure it was during that time that information got up to Kenema and you people decided to use that opportunity to loot his house. They were later released from Pademba Road Prisons upon the intervention of human rights agencies.

Bishop Humper – Thank you very much you have done well for us here. I want to talk about your foot. If not for someone who showed sympathy for you, you would have been a dead man now. So, tell us the truth. Tell us a little bit more about what you know about RUF and UNAMSIL in Makeni.

Pte. VandiBrima – I was not around at the time the incident took place, I was in Lungi at that time.

Bishop Humper – Can you recall a time in Kenema when SLA wore Kamajor uniform and attacked and killed people can you explain?

Pte. Vandi Brima – Yes Sir I saw it happen. When our enemies kill us they take our uniforms from the corpses and when these uniforms are worn say by the Kamajors to go on their missions whatever atrocities they commit will be blamed on the SLA.

Bishop Humper – Did you hear or see SLA putting on Kamajor uniform going to kill civilians?

Pte. Vandi Brimah - I never saw that.

Bishop Humper – One Paramount Chief told us in one area that the war was a chameleon war; even Brima here has said so, many people have said so too. Do not look at the war and conclude that this person is the cause of the war or this tribe brought the war; tomorrow it might be at your door step .We want to know some of the big guns in the RUF, can you tell us some of them?

Pte. Vandi Brima - I do not know much about them.

Bishop Humper – Do you know Mosquito?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes, I know Superman, Komba Gbundema, Bai Bureh, Rambo and many others; these were the top bras.

Bishop Humper – We want to set the correct records straight in this country. This is for you and for all of us. You said in the jungle you rose to the rank of major, now you said you are what? How are you coping with the question of discipline from Major to Private?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Due to the Lome Peace Accord we were asked to disarm so no matter what position you held in the jungle you were expected to disarm.

Bishop Humper – Do you now obey orders from your senior ranks in the army?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Bishop Humper – Do you want us to ask your bosses?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Sir.

Leader of Evidence - Ms. Lydia Apori-Nkansah

Ms. Apori-Nkansah – I just want to have a clarification and an opinion on certain issues. You stated that after the disarmament you went through training and you were again taken into the army. How do your companions see you, do they trust you?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Yes Ma.

Bishop Humper – This is your opportunity and for those you represent here, if you have any questions or recommendations ask it now; so that there will never be a repetition of such awful performance in the history of the military or the nation as a whole.

Pte. Vandi Brima - I am asking for forgiveness for all the wrong we have done. We are asking the government for help especially in the area of shelter. Now that the war is over all we have done we are asking the government to forgive us. TRC we were told is like the Special Court if we come here they will persecute us. I have a lot of my friends out there who are afraid to come forward but I am here and I have seen with my own eyes that at TRC you come only to say what you have done. The government should not be afraid of us anymore.

Bishop Humper - Thank you very much for what you have said to us. I do not have the military uniform on but I know that all the forces in this country have been through hectic times and as a Commission we have this in mind. We do not want to make recommendations in the air. We will talk of reconciliation here but we have to set the pace where the government and the army will be as they were before. When you joined the army in 1992 there were certain critical elements of discipline you met there which had been there from 1960. What kind of recommendations do you have for the military which you believe will help in the area of discipline so that there will never be an recurrence of what we have just been through?

Pte.Vandi Brima - My problem now is because I do not have lodging; if that is solved I will be okay.

Bishop Humper – So, if you are given lodging you will be the most obedient soldier is that what you are saying?

Pte. VandiBrima - Yes, because my children are not even staying with me at the moment. I am here and they are in Freetown and this is so because I do not have accommodation.

Bishop Humper – How many children do you have?

Pte. Vandi Brima - Four Sir

Bishop Humper – Do they go to school?

Pte.Vandi Brima- Yes Sir.

Bishop Humper – If nobody has ever commended you for anything I commend you for what you have just told us. We will compile all what you have given us and what we have heard from other people and appropriately incorporate them in our report. This country does not have the means to provide prisons for 79,000 ex-combatants. Beyond that ,this country is unique. Today you wrong your people and today they are ready to accept you back and we will be happy if this reconciliation process yields dividend even after we have finished our work. We do not want you who come from Rokupr to be living here because you are afraid to go back to your people. We have disarmed physically; but what is in the minds is what is yet to be disarmed. This is a small country we have no where to send our brothers and sisters; but they have to come forward and repent. We do not want them to go about boasting; we want them to apologize as we will be doing with some of you this morning. You and I should make this TRC job a success story, our traditional and religious leaders should help make this succeed. Let us pray that we do not have a repetition of this kind of war in this country again.

**THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION HEARINGS HELD AT THE
HARFORD SECONDARY SCHOOL CHAPEL IN MOYAMBA FROM
JUNE 9 TO JUNE 13 2003**

DAY ONE: 9 June 2003.

The session started with a Muslim prayer that was said by a Sheik and a Christian prayer that was said by a staff of the Commission. The Deputy Chairperson of the commission, Commissioner Laura Marcus-Jones, opened the session by welcoming the witnesses and the audience and explaining the rules governing the hearings. The Leadr of Evidence, Abdulai Charm, called on the first witness for the day.

FIRST WITNESS: Madam Amie Dauda

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

MADAM AMIE DAUDA'S TESTIMONY

We were at Yoweima village when we saw people come from Magbenta and took over the town. They arrested me and took me out of my house. They arrested and killed my brother. When those people captured me, they took me to the piazza where I met others that they had arrested. They ordered us to carry a large quantity of groundnut and remove the shells. They took us to a sitting room of another house along the street where they lined us up. One of the rebels - a very tall man - hit me several times on my head with a gun; I sustained a cut on my head. I currently have a scar on my head (shows scar). They asked me whether I had children. I told them that I did not have children because the children that were with me were not my biological children. I was also afraid that they could take the children away from me if I said that they were were my children. When they entered into my house, they carted away my belongings. I ran into the bush and followed the bush path until I came to Moyamba. When I arrived in Moyamba, I was half naked. This is my testimony.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you, Madam Amie. We are sorry for the way you were treated. Has the wound on your head healed now?

Amie Dauda - The wound has not properly healed up because I still experience pains every month.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Have you been able to seek medical attention

Amie Dauda – No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - You have to go to the hospital and they will be able to help you. You told us about the people that went to your village - what group did those people belong to?

Amie Dauda – They were not Mende.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Were they RUF, SLA, or Kamajors?

Amie Dauda - They were rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you.

Comm. Torto - Thank you very much Madam Amie Dauda. I am asking you questions from both your written and verbal statements. On 7 April, you made a written statement to the Commission in which you said that your village was very close to the rebel camp and that the rebels attacked your village daily. Can you remember how many times your village was attacked?

Amie Dauda – I can only remember the first incident, which I have already explained.

Comm. Torto - How far was the rebel camp to Magbenta?

Amie Dauda - I cannot tell.

Comm. Torto - Where were they actually settled?

Amie Dauda - I cannot tell.

Comm. Torto - What was the name of your brother that was killed?

Amie Dauda – James Alpha.

Comm. Torto - You said that you could not remember the group of attackers; can you tell us what language they spoke?

Amie Dauda - They spoke Temne.

Comm. Torto - Were there women among them?

Amie Dauda – No.

Comm. Torto - Do you remember the number of people that were killed in the course of the attack?

Amie Dauda – No.

Comm. Torto - Was your brother the only one killed?

Amie Dauda - A blind man in our house was killed. They also killed another man, Father. After the killing of those two people, we fled the village.

Comm. Torto – In your written statement, you said that you were in hiding and you watched the village set ablaze - is that true?

Amie Dauda - Yes, so many houses were burnt down; I cannot recall the number of houses that they burnt down.

Leader of Evidence - Apart from the burning and killing, did they capture other children in your village?

Amie Dauda - They moved around with children.

Leader of Evidence - Were they all captured from Yoweima?

Amie Dauda - The one that they captured from Yoweima has still not returned to our village.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell us the composition of the children that they captured in other villages? Were all of them boys or were there girls as well?

Amie Dauda - We heard that they captured children, but I cannot tell because I fled for my life.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell whether the child that they captured from your village was a boy or a girl?

Amie Dauda – The child was a girl.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - How old was the girl that they captured?

Amie Dauda - She was approaching maturity and we were all staying in the same house.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Was this child at school or married?

Amie Dauda - She was going to school by the time she was captured.

Comm. Torto - Do you remember those who actually captured you?

Amie Dauda - No.

Comm. Torto - Can you identify them if you saw them?

Amie Dauda - No, I cannot identify them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Thank you for your testimony. We have been asking you questions; do you have any question for the Commission?

Amie Dauda - Yes, I have something to say. I am now an old woman and my husband is also very old, I am pleading that the government renders assistance to me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - During your testimony, you said that when they asked whether you had children, you said you had none. However, from what you said it seems as if you have foster children at home - is that so?

Amie Dauda - I had children, but they are dead - I only have foster children.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - I am sorry that you lost your children, but sometimes the children you bring up could be of more help to you than your biological children could - I believe

that they would assist you. What has happened to them - now that they should be helping you and your husband?

Amie Dauda - They are on their own - they are not staying with me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - What you have said is a recommendation, and it will be included in our report. In Europe, the young people take care of the old by sending them to some family homes for old people, but in Africa, we have a reputation of taking care of the old people. I will recommend to the government to create such facilities for the old people in the different districts.

Amie Dauda – We do not have shelter; the rebel burnt down our village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Do you have any other recommendation?

Amie Dauda - No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you very much for coming and helping the TRC. Your story has been heard by everyone present here and will be heard by people when it is broadcast on the radio. I am sure they will begin to think of ways to help people like you who are victims, and will find out the root causes of the war that made people like you suffer. Once again, I thank you for coming.

SECOND WITNESS: Madam Iye Kanu

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

MADAM IYE KANU'S TESTIMONY

We were at Magbenka when the rebels struck the village; we fled into the bush. The rebels persuaded us to return to the village since, according to them, the war was over and there was no reason why we should run away from them. Eventually, when we came to the village, they captured my two children and I was left alone. After some time, they came again and told us that we had a meeting that every one in the village should attend. We were at the meeting for a long time. We were worried and confused and we asked ourselves questions as to what would be our fate. They told us to be patient and to wait for their overall commander. When the overall commander finally arrived, he ordered us out of the house because it was not spacious –they took us to an old railway store. They asked the men to form a queue. I did not join the line because I could not comprehend Krio. One of them, with a gun, ordered me to join the queue. I took off my slippers and ran towards the stream where I met a man with a gun. I asked him whether he was the commander - it was dark so I hurried through another bush path and came to the swamp. While I was lying on my stomach, I saw flames and I concluded that our houses were on fire. I stayed there until the place was calm and I fled the village. I did not return to the village until my two grandchildren were taken to Godehun. The one that met me in the farm was stabbed and the other, Mohamed Kargbo was killed. I could not identify the perpetrators. I overheard them speaking Krio and Mende. This is my story.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you, Iye. You told us about your village, which village was it?

Iye Kanu – Magbenka.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - You said that two of your grandchildren were taken away - Mohamed Kargbo was killed and the other stabbed - what was the name of the one that was stabbed?

Iye Kanu - Foday Kamara.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Did they tell you who the Town Commander was? Did you hear them call his name?

Iye Kanu - I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones -To which store did they take you?

Iye Kanu - The store in the village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you.

Comm. Torto - Thank you Madam Iye Kanu, I just want you to make some clarifications based on your verbal and written statements. You said that you escaped from your captors - do you know what happened to the people you left behind?

Iye Kanu - I cannot tell, but I heard gunshots. I ran away and I cannot tell what happened in my absence.

Comm. Torto – So you do not know how many people were killed.

Iye Kanu – No.

Comm. Torto - You said that you were unable to identify the perpetrators; can you remember their group affiliation?

Iye Kanu - I cannot tell. I do not know where they came from. We only saw them and we did not interact with them because they were very dreadful.

Comm. Torto - Were you the only one who was lucky to escape from them?

Iye Kanu - Some other people escaped from them, but I cannot tell now. I only knew of myself. Owing to the gunshots, I did not stop to look back, but fled for my life.

Comm. Torto - In your written statement, you told us that the ones that were captured were all killed by the rebels - is that correct?

Iye Kanu - Is that what you saw on the paper?

Comm. Torto – Yes.

Iye Kanu – All right.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Have you any questions you want to ask the Commission about our work or the processes?

Iye Kanu - Is that what you are writing down now?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - You have not asked the questions yet; when you do, I will take it down.

Iye Kanu - I do not have questions.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - We will be making our report based on witnesses' recommendations. Do you have any recommendations that you would like to make to the government? Something you want to be done in your community.

Iye Kanu - There is no medical facility in our village; no market place; no shelter – the rebels had burnt down our houses.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Do you have more questions?

Iye Kanu – No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you for coming to share your experiences with us. We shall include your recommendations in our report. Do not feel that your recommendations will not be looked at - a committee will be set up to monitor the implementations of the report by government.

THIRD WITNESS: Francis Gbonda

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

FRANCIS GBONDA'S TESTIMONY

I am happy that the war is over through the help of God Almighty. If the war were not over by now, I would have done something else.

On June 16, 1995, we were at Magbenka when the rebels struck the village. During the first attack, we fled from the village. I was a staff at the Moyamba Hospital. People here can attest to the fact that the NPRC Junta removed me from office. I later embarked on small-scale business. The rebels attacked our village by 2p.m – after the afternoon Muslim prayers - and we fled to the bush and spent the night there. At daybreak, the brave ones went to the town to observe the situation, but there was no movement of vehicles as everybody had fled the town. We spent about three to four nights in the bush. By then I had eighteen of my relatives, including my children, with me. I sent some of them to Moyamba and others to Freetown. There was an old woman, Memuna, who could not walk, but insisted that she would follow me. It was raining, so she advised that we wait. We walked on foot until we came to Yoni and, finally, boarded a vehicle to Freetown. We say thanks to our Honorable Paramount Chief, PC Banya, who was a source of help to us while we were in Freetown. We were at a camp, MB Chanrai, in Freetown where things were very difficult for us - government was unable to take care of us. We were sleeping on the floor and we were without food. People from our village went and informed us that normalcy had returned to our village. At that time, I had two wives, three children and other dependants. I then decided to return to the village with my family. We returned to our village in December 1995.

On January 1, 1996, we heard explosions - it was another attack - we fled into the bush. They searched for us in the bush and eventually captured Pa Brima Taylor and Pa Pangay. About one mile to my village, They met me at Mafuteh, which is about a mile to my village, and captured me. They tied my hands behind my back. Owing to the fact that I had a bushy hair then, they accused me of being up to something, but I denied the allegation. A small boy called Maotu Bio, who had an RPG, asked me for marijuana. I told him that we did not have such drugs in the village. They also requested for goats and rice, but I told them that I was a stranger in the village. Among them were some Easterners that thought I was a Northerner because of my name. They took a machete from the blacksmith and used it to hit me on my side. The one who did that was called

Masasay. They started to beat me and, later, tied a rope to our waist. The rope was tied to our waist until we reached a town where we spent the night. They were in large numbers, but eight of them met us in the bush. They captured about one hundred and fifty of us, civilians. They gave us about two bushels of groundnut and asked us to remove the shells. We were on that assignment until daybreak; my fingers were swollen because of that.

The following morning a bushel of rice was given to us to pound - it was imperative on us to do it. If anyone of them were in this auditorium, they would recognize me. I was pounding the rice while they were beating me with a cutlass. I was the only young man that they captured - all our relatives had fled by the time they captured me. We were taken to Magbenka and we were there for seven days. They grouped us according to our religions - the Christians were separated from the Muslims - and they asked us to pray. The Commander, who was called RPG, asked us whether we knew them, but we said no, we only saw them in military attire. We thought they were soldiers from Moyamba. The Commando told us that they were RUF. They said that they came from a village called Kant Kant. They asked us to forgive them if they had hurt any one of us. We were there for seven days. Everybody in the surrounding villages had fled. We accompanied them to Kania - it was a bushy area. We carried their loads for them. When we arrived at Kania, we found no houses there. We met another group of people who wanted to shoot at us, but their colleagues restrained them because of the civilians present. We went there at night and they bade us farewell. They told us to inform our people that if they refused to come out of the bush, they would kill them. However, when we came back to the village, it was deserted. The rebels assured us of our security and asked us not to be afraid. When we started sleeping in the burnt houses, the others were encouraged to come out of the bush.

In the second month of our stay in the village, they would forcefully enter into our houses at night, take our wives, slept with them and forced them to prepare food for them. There was one of them - Guinea Rebel - that began to burn houses and the FM Station. He usually went to our houses and threatened us. One day, he went to every house and ordered us to come out of our houses and assemble by 4p.m, as Foday Sankoh would be coming to address us. I told you earlier that I had two wives; the first one hailed from Gobehun. While the rebels were in town, my wife left me and married to one of the rebels. I heard that she is in Kenema with the rebel. When we were ordered out of the village, I went to collect my children at Gobehun village. One of my daughters, Mammy Iye, was given to me - she was eight years - but there was no vehicle plying the route. I wanted to take her with me to the village. Tasso, my brother-in-Law, and one Pa Hassana met us at Magbenka with an armed man. They told me that they had come to collect the child from me, but I refused to let go of the child. My Uncle, Thaim Sesay, advised that I let go the child because I had not married their daughter. I then left her and went to settle in Makoya.

In 1997, I was informed that Magbenka had been burnt down. I tried to get to Mile 91, but it was difficult. I was informed that no one should enter Magbenka. In the process, I met a man who hailed from our village and he confirmed that to me. My sister told me that she saw my wife, but that she was without the children. She told me that she had no idea of the whereabouts of my children. I decided to return to Mile 91 with the resolve that I was going in search of my children even if it meant that I had to lose my life in the process. I made a second desperate attempt to go to Magbenka, but I was told that the Kamajors were there and I would be manhandled if I went there. In 1999, the war was declared over. I then decided to return to Koya. I met some of the perpetrators at Waterloo Camp - Ibrahim, Commando Massasay "RPG", "Muslim" and Guinea Rebel. They enquired about me in the camp.

I went to Magbenka and settled with my two children. My Uncle and his wife were killed. I then met my brother and told him that I wanted to be initiated into the Kamajor movement. I had reasons to be initiated into the movement - I wanted to revenge what had happened to me. He, however, told me that the initiation period was over. I have a burning issue: how to take care of my children.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you, Francis Gbonda. We are sorry that you had so many problems. Did you say that you lost one of your wives?

Francis Gbonda - None of them was killed, only my uncle's wife.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - How many children had you?

Francis Gbonda - I have four children.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - How many children had you during the attack?

Francis Gbonda – Two - Iye and Maada Gbonda.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Were they taken away?

Francis Gbonda – No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Who were the children that they abducted?

Francis Gbonda - I left Magbenka to collect my children, but my wife's relatives refused to let me have the children because I had not married their sister.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – The one you did not marry, was she the one who went with the rebel?

Francis Gbonda – Augusta, who is presently in Kenema, was married to a rebel and his relatives came to collect the children from me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Do you know where these Commanders - RPG and others - are now?

Francis Gbonda - I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - What about Massasay?

Francis Gbonda - Massasay was later deployed in Kabala.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Have you ever seen him since that incident?

Francis Gbonda – No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - What was life like when you were in Kania?

Francis Gbonda - I was sick, because of the beatings that I received from the perpetrators and, they gave me a bag of smoked chicken to carry.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - How long were you at Kania?

Francis Gbonda - We did not spend up to one month there.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - We have heard, in your statement, that the rebels ordered everyone in the village to attend a meeting in one railway store - is that correct?

Francis Gbonda - At the time they summoned the meeting, I was not there.

Comm. Torto - I join Commissioner Marcus-Jones to thank you for coming to testify before this Commission. I want you to help me clarify few issues in your testimony. To start with, when you actually started your statement you said that if the war had not ended, you would have done something else. Is that so?

Francis Gbonda – Yes.

Comm. Torto - Can you share with us what you would have done?

Francis Gbonda - At that time when I came and found my children dead, I would have joined the Kamajor society in order to revenge.

Comm. Torto – On whom would you have revenged?

Francis Gbonda - I would have revenged on the rebels.

Comm. Torto – How would you have done that?

Francis Gbonda - After they captured me and I became familiar with them, I would have found a way of getting at them.

Comm. Torto - Now that TRC has come, we encourage you not to revenge. What has happened to you is disheartening, but thank God, the war is over. You said that Augusta is in Kenema - she will be listening to what you are saying.

Francis Gbonda – Yes.

Comm. Torto -Did these rebels forcefully capture her or was she willing to marry one of them?

Francis Gbonda - I cannot tell because I am under oath and I do not want to tell lies.

Comm. Torto - Have you made any effort to get her back? What I mean is whether you have informed the Police and Chiefs that these rebels captured your wife. Now that the war is over, do you mind taking her back?

Francis Gbonda – After the separation, she married to this rebel and had three children with him, so it is not possible to get her back.

Comm. Torto - Do you know whether she is still willing to come back to you?

Francis Gbonda - She came at one time, I asked her whether she would want to come back, she said no, she was married.

Comm. Torto - When your captors met you at Waterloo and asked you what you were doing there, was it after the war or during the war?

Francis Gbonda - It was during the disarmament process.

Comm. Torto – I know it is very painful that the rebels had taken your wife and at the same time, your children were killed. If you met with your wife's new husband, what would be your reaction?

Francis Gbonda - I will not do anything, because it is late. If she loved me, she would not have abandoned me.

Comm. Torto – Earlier, you told my colleague that one of the perpetrators was sent to Kabala. If you met him now, what would you do to him?

Francis Gbonda - I would not do anything - our Paramount Chief has sensitized us to reconcile with those who have done evil to us. We must forgive.

Comm. Torto - I want to thank you very much for this consideration.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Was he the same Paramount Chief who took care of you while you were in Freetown.

Francis Gbonda –Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Do you want to tell us his name?

Francis Gbonda – He is Pa Alfred Banya, he is here, in this hall.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - You did say that you joined the society, even though you were not initiated - is that so?

Francis Gbonda - When I came from Koya, I met my brother and I asked him if he would initiate me, but he told me that initiation was over.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - So you did not join the movement.

Francis Gbonda – Yes.

Leader of Evidence - You said there was a time when the rebels captured about one hundred and fifty [152] civilians and you were the only man among them - is that correct?

Francis Gbonda – I was the only man captured from Magbenka.

Leader of Evidence – How many of you did they capture from Magbenka?

Francis Gbonda – I cannot say exactly; I know of ten.

Leader of Evidence - Were there small girls within between ages of 14 and 15?

Francis Gbonda – Yes.

Leader of Evidence - Can you tell how long you spent with the rebels before your escape or release?

Francis Gbonda - We were there for seven days.

Leader of Evidence - Do you know if anything was done to the girls or women that they captured?

Francis Gbonda - I am under oath, I am saying the truth. Even if the rebels captured your wife, you would not go close to them.

Leader of Evidence - Were you not able to talk to any of the captives?

Francis Gbonda - No.

Leader of Evidence -You said your Uncle and his wife were killed; can you supply us with the names of people killed?

Francis Gbonda – My uncle was Pa Allie Sesay and his wife was Flora. His first son was John Sesay and a suckling baby ABK or KDK – I cannot recall.

Leader of Evidence – When you were released, how many people were released along with you?

Francis Gbonda – All 152 of us were released and we came to Magbenka where they told us that Foday Sankoh had warned them not to kill civilians.

Leader of Evidence - Did you actually come with these people to Magbenka?

Francis Gbonda –Yes.

Leader of Evidence – On your return, did you share your experiences?

Francis Gbonda - When we were released, you would not talk to anyone because you could not tell who was who.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – We have been asking you questions - do you have any question for the Commission?

Francis Gbonda - Why is it that the government has considered perpetrators and not victims?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - victims have asked us these questions. We all wanted peace, and in order to get peace, we had to get the rebels reintegrated again into society. in a bid to do that, you have to get them to be constructive instead of destructive. To teach them to be constructive, you have to teach them certain skills, so they had to pay for the skills and they had to be given small amounts for them to keep themselves while they are learning. It does not mean that they will care for them for their lifetime. It is only for a short while. Therefore, if they are taught something and they came back to society, they will engage skillfully and they will have no reasons to fight. This is the price we have to pay for peace so that your children will go about their education quietly - without running out of the country or running all over the place. When we do have lasting peace, you are going to benefit as well, but we need peace for the country to progress. All you have to do is to be patient, and to make recommendations for what you hope to see in your community for the development of your people. Have you any other question?

Francis Gbonda - Yes, the perpetrators have been considered. Have you been able to ask them what brought the war?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - That is why you are here - to give your testimony - and people are listening and we have to put together the opinions of all those who had suffered and the reasons for what went wrong. One mandate of the TRC is to find out the antecedents of the war, it is a long word but all it means 'what went on before the war and what caused the war'. Do you have any other questions? What are your recommendations that you want us to include in our report?

Francis Gbonda – Firstly, please when you get back, let the President be informed that the youths are suffering - they lack employment. The longer we remain idle, the greater the tendencies that something will happen. Some of us can think well because we are responsible – we have wives and children. We are appealing to the government to bring development in the Moyamba District since they are aware of the role we played in the district to achieve peace in this country. We have no health centres - if somebody is sick, we have to travel ten miles to our headquarter town for medication. I have to take care of my two children. I am unemployed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Did you say you are unemployed?

Francis Gbonda - I am the Town Chief, but that is not a paid up job. Can the government help with incentives?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - You start engaging yourself in doing something. As a Town Chief, you seek assistance for your chieftom. I am sure they can find something to do with the NGO's and rebuild what has been destroyed. We will include your recommendations in our report. I must say that the government will not be able to do everything at the same time. As the saying goes in the Western World, "Rome was not built in a day". It is not easy to bring normalcy in Sierra Leone - it will take sometime. To rebuild after 11 years of destruction will not be easy. Therefore, we all must try to do the little we can and see how best the government can help. When the decentralization is done, efforts are made to bring all the structures in place. You say, as a Town Chief, you are not compensated, but when the decentralization process is finished, something good might come. Thank your for coming.

FOURTH WITNESS: Amie Sesay

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

AMIE SESAY'S TESTIMONY

Good afternoon all, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to give my testimony. Rebels were chasing us at Magbenka. We were tired of running so we went and stayed in the bush so that we did not come in contact with them again. At a point in time, they took us out of the bush and told us not to run away from them. They said it was not healthy to be in the bush. They told us to come to the town since, according to them, the war was over, and therefore we should have nothing to fear. They told us "the cat can not be tired of chasing the rat." They warned us to keep the town very clean. After a week, they told us that they would be holding a meeting and the nature of the meeting was to inform us that the war was over and that we should all live as one. They gathered all of us regardless of age. Even if one was cooking, it was compulsory for all of us to be at the meeting.

While we were at the meeting, which lasted for a very long time, they went searching from door to door for those who had refused to attend the meeting. They took us to the store and lined us up according to sex. They were taking people in fives to enter the store and when it was my uncle's turn, he resisted. He tried to escape and they shot at him. The people that were already in the store forced the store open and the rebels fired indiscriminately into the crowd. A bullet hit my side and my daughter I were carrying – a bullet hit my daughter as well. Owing to the fact that she was severely wounded - her body was split into two - I dropped her and fled. I fled into the bush and I was there for four days. Few days later, we went to a village where we met a group of Kamajors dancing. They threatened that if any one of us had affiliation with the soldiers, they would severely deal with us. They arrested me and they tied my hands behind my back and began to punish me. This treatment continued through out the night. I told them that I was looking for my sister, Moray Koroma's Mother, and I asked why they were inflicting so much punishment on me when the rebels had already killed my baby. I told them that they should rather kill me than have me undergo such punishment. The following morning, they gave four men to escort me and ordered them to do whatever they wanted to do with me. I looked back and saw them carrying machete and sticks. We were going too fast, so an old woman said that we should wait for her. They told us to wait for them and they asked why we were leaving them behind. We were ordered to dress up and wait for them, but the Kamajor that I was with, refused and said that he was going ahead of them. I came across others and I joined them. When I arrived in Moyamba, a woman took me to the hospital. I was there for the whole night and, at daybreak, she asked me to go back to my village. The following day, Moray Koroma took me home and I continued to receive medical attention.

Comm. Marcus-Jones – Thank you for telling us your experiences. It must have been really terrible for you. I want to ask you a few questions. We sympathize with you, but I just want you to make some clarifications of what you told us in your verbal presentation. The baby who was killed, was it a boy or a girl?

Amie Sesay - A male child.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Did they tell you why they were beating you, were they Kamajors?

Amie Sesay - They told us that they were Kamajors and that, as long as we were coming from Magbenka, we were rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - In the first instance, who ordered you to go into the stores? What group did they belong to?

Amie Sesay – Rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - We have so many stories about rebels asking many people to go into the stores and setting fire to the stores. From your experience, which group mostly sent people into stores to burn them?

Amie Sesay -The number was large because during the war, we were afraid of them - we ran away from them. I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Did you succeed to get the fragment removed from your body?

Amie Sesay - The fragment did not get into my body, but I had a wound on my side.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Has the wound completely healed up?

Amie Sesay - Moray Koroma paid for the treatment.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - In your written statement, this incident took place in 1997, is that correct?

Amie Sesay – Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Since then, have you had any other baby?

Amie Sesay – Yes, I have had two babies.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - So you have some comfort now after your bereavement.

Amie Sesay – Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - I am sure you thank God for that.

Amie Sesay – Yes.

Comm. Torto - Thank you very much. I just want you to make a few clarifications. What happened to your Uncle who ran away?

Amie Sesay - He did not enter the store, he escaped.

Comm. Torto - The big man who was supposed to address you, did they state who he was?

Amie Sesay - It was night - the place was dark - and they did not mention his name. They did not tell us who he was.

Comm. Torto - Do you remember your perpetrators, were they rebels, Kamajor or SLA's.

Amie Sesay - The rebels shot my baby on the back.

Comm. Torto – I mean can you remember them if you saw them.

Amie Sesay - It was at night and it was dark.

Comm. Torto - What about the two armed Kamajors who escorted you to Moyamba?

Amie Sesay - I am not conversant with the village, I do not know them.

Comm. Torto - According to your verbal explanation, after the escape you met a group of Kamajors dancing and, instead of helping you, they started maltreating you. Afterwards, you were escorted by two Kamajors. Who were they?

Amie Sesay – There were four of them, and not two. I cannot identify them.

Comm. Torto - I am asking you about those people, can you recall their names?

Amie Sesay - I am not familiar with the Moyamba environs - I was searching for my sister.

Comm. Torto - Do you remember the names of people who were killed by the rebels apart from your baby?

Amie Sesay - when my baby was killed while I was trying to escape, I came across two people on the road; one was dead and the other was almost dead and was shouting "God help me".

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – We sympathize with you on your loss. Have you questions you want to ask?

Amie Sesay - I have no questions.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Have you recommendations to make to the government?

Amie Sesay - My husband is a farmer, we have no health centre, no medical facilities. I am asking for whatever assistance you can render to me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - I appreciate your cooperation. As we have said before, the TRC does not have money to give to people. What the TRC does is to make recommendations so that your community will benefit from efforts that will be made to improve the lives of all Sierra Leoneans.

Amie Sesay - After the war, all my belongings had been destroyed, we are now left with nothing and our houses were all burnt down - what will you do for me?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - After this session, I ask that you have a word with our counselor, who will refer you to some agency around that might be able to help you. You said that your husband is a farmer and from the way you said it you spoke as though your husband is a poor man. A farmer is not necessarily a poor man; people say in Creole "gron nor de lay" and what that means is that you eventually reap benefit from what you plant. Therefore, since there is

peace, you should have hope that your husband will realize something from his farm. Do you have any other Recommendations?

Amie Sesay – No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - I thank you once again.

FIFTH WITNESS: Gibrilla Dumbuya

The witness swore on the Koran. Commission Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

GIBRILLA DUMBUYA'S TESTIMONY

On June 16, 1996, the rebels attacked Magbenka and some of us fled to Mile 91 while others went to Moyamba. I was with fourteen of my family members until the war ended in 1996. Some of our relatives, who went to the village in order to harvest their cassava for sales in Moyamba, informed us that the place was peaceful. Things were difficult for us in Mile 91 so we decided to return to our village in order to check on our plantations and get some items. When we were in the village, we spent the day in town and went to our bush camps at night. One day, the rebels captured one of our colleagues and they sent him to inform us that all was well as they had signed a Peace Accord. We were reluctant to go and, later, three others were captured and the same message was sent to us. The rebels told them that they were members of the RUF and their leader was Foday Sankoh. They told the captives that Foday Sankoh and Tejan Kabba had signed the peace accord. In addition to message of normalcy, the rebels sent the second batch of captives to tell us that that was the last time they were sending to tell us that normalcy had returned to the village and that if we failed to come out, they would go in search of us. Later, eleven of us went to the village and spent the night there - we went back to the bush in the morning. That night, they reassured us that nothing would happen to us. Unfortunately, they assembled the following morning and promised to tell us about the causes of the war. One of the rebels told us that Dennis Mingo was supposed to address us. When he finally came, I was afraid to look at his face, but I was able to realize that one of his fingers was missing. He told us that there was no more war and that we must stop going to the bush since their leader and the government had signed the Peace Accord. They said that we should live as one. Then, they were in large numbers. When they were about to return, they took away every good thing they found; all of our valuable items were carted away. One of them was talking to his colleagues and, when one of my colleagues enquired about his name, he told him that his name was "One day friend". My colleague then asked him, "what about the next day?". He did not answer.

When they gathered us together, they asked for our names, wrote them down and returned to their base. I then called my friend and told him that we should leave the place because it was not safe for us. When they returned to the village, some of us were in the bush. They concluded that since most of us were not around, we would have gone to inform authorities so that they would send troops to mount an offensive against them. At that time, I had only one child with me - the others were with my wife. They called us to a meeting and ordered that everyone must attend. There was no respect for the old people. No matter what you were doing, you were bound to attend the meeting. They did not allow us to move away from them. Most of the people that came from the surrounding villages and people in our village assembled for the meeting. They ordered us to assemble according to our age and sex - young men and women formed one line and old men and suckling mothers formed a different lines. After we had done that, the men had ten lines,

the old people had three lines, suckling mothers and young women were gathered and put in a house. Then, the rebels had surrounded the village – they manned the roads leading to the bush. Even if you wanted to ease yourself, you were to do it where you were - it was daytime. We were waiting for there commando to address us. When it started getting dark, people became apprehensive. They ordered us to form a single line towards the store.

On our way to the store, I told a friend, Dauda Kargbo, that I did not want to enter into the store and that we should try to escape. I told him to stay behind - we did, but one of the rebels forced us to join the line. Before then the people who were in front had broken the line and people started running helter-skelter. The rebels in turn started firing in the air. They told us that were at the back to keep calm as everything was under control. As we tried to enter, a man, Mustapha, said that they wanted to kill us so all those who were behind started running. A rebel came with a boy towards us and they ordered the old people to sit on the floor. They started counting in fives and taking them into the store. While the counting was going on, I beckoned to my friend that we should run. We ran away, but we did not go too far away from the scene - we hid behind a grass – so that we could see what was happening. Some people followed us to where we were hiding. The rebels went to call the women in order to put them into the store and as they were trying to remove the stick that was used to block the entrance, those that were inside ran outside and the rebels opened fire towards the main road. We then ran for fear of being killed. The rebels chased those who ran on main road, but those who went towards us were saved. While we were in the bush, the flames of the burning houses brightened the path that we used. We spent the night in the bush. In the morning, we went to the main road and I met my wife on the way - she told me that my child was thrown into the flame. I wept when I heard the story. We then left that area and did not return to it until we heard that there was perfect peace.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you, Gibrilla. It is a very sad testimony. I just want to ask you a few questions. Did you find out why they would want to wipe out civilians in that way and to burn down all the houses?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – When they were called out of the bush, they thought, according to what we understood that most of us were members of the CDF.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Was that so?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – Yes.

Comm. Torto - Thank you, Mr. Dumbuya. It is a very sad experience. You said that others met you lying down - watching what was happening - was it that sixty people died as a result of the indiscriminate firing?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – From where we laid, we saw those that were at the back of the store flee. When it was all over, we found fifty-two skulls in the store, but I cannot tell the actual number of people that they killed.

Comm. Torto – You said that one of Superman’s fingers was missing. What did he tell you about the missing finger?

Gibrilla Dumbuya –I met with Dennis Mingo only when he went to inform us that the war was over. I found out that one of his fingers was missing when he was gesticulating while delivering his speech.

Comm. Torto - Do you know whether the people that were involved in the fight hailed from your village?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – None of them was with them.

Comm. Torto – How many of you escaped after the others met you lying down?

Gibrilla Dumbuya - We were six in number, although some fled into the bush.

Comm. Torto – If you saw them, would you identify them?

Gibrilla Dumbuya - I cannot because we were gripped by fear.

Comm. Torto - How many skulls did you count?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – We counted fifty-two, apart from the bones.

Comm. Torto - What did you do with the skulls?

Gibrilla Dumbuya - We buried the skulls in a mass grave - in a banana plantation behind the store in Magbenka.

Comm. Torto - How far is Magbenka from here?

Gibrilla Dumbuya - I cannot tell exactly; it could be about 14 miles.

Comm. Torto - Is there any sign at the spot to identify the mass grave?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – Yes.

Comm. Marcus-Jones - We have asked you all these questions. I want to thank you for your testimony and to sympathize with you for the loss of your child. Have you any question that you want to ask?

Gibrilla Dumbuya - Yes, I have something to say. What puzzles me is that the perpetrators are cared for while those of us who are victims are left out. What will happen to us in the future?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - It is not quite accurate that victims are not cared for - some have been cared for. Some victims were helped to acquire skills training. Therefore, that is not quite clear. You may feel that the perpetrators are being trained in greater number and that they are given allowances. Nevertheless, as I say, we have to bring them back into society and, by doing so, you must do something for them so that they will earn their living. Whatever is being done for them is not for eternity - it is just for a while - so that they will not have any grudge for society and that all of us can enjoy lasting peace in Sierra Leone. That was the rationale behind it. Do you have any other questions?

Gibrilla Dumbuya – No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Do you have recommendations to make that we could pass on to government?

Gibrilla Dumbuya - I am asking that the government help me with job opportunity so that I can earn a living for the well-being of my family and me. I will also like the government to provide medical facilities for us; we have no hospitals. I recommend further that roads be constructed so that we can transport our products. We have our old women and girls, and we are appealing for micro-credit loans.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you. We will include all what you have said in the recommendations. Our briefer can direct you to some NGO's around. I thank you very much for coming and giving a detailed account of how the rebels operated in your village.

SIXTH WITNESS NAME: Jonathan Brima {a.k.a Jay One}

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

JONATHAN BRIMA'S TESTIMONY

I was born at Senehun on 12 January 1969. My cousin, Bobor, and some friends - Hassan Adamu and Mohamed Conteh - were at Plantain Island. They traveled from Plantain Island and came to Sembahun on a business trip. They were my business partners and we did business together. They brought plantain, made sales, and used the proceeds to buy garri. On January 12, 1999 they came, but I had gone to buy garri. They went to Kombomani and by 5 p.m that day, we heard that they had caught rebels at the checkpoint. When I arrived at the checkpoint, a group of Kamajors had arrested Mohamed Conteh and Hassan. They were accused of being rebel collaborators, who bought food for the rebels. I told Mohamed Massaquoi, one of the Kamajors, that those men were not rebels. I told him they usually came to our village to buy goods and that that was not the first time. Sannoh and Sorba, Kamajors, asked me to get away from the checkpoint, but I refused. My uncle, Mohamed, who was a photographer, had his camera taken from him. In his possession was one million leones. The other men – Mohamed Conteh and Hassan - had eight hundred thousand each in their possession. They Kamajors took that as well. We pleaded for their release and we even promised to give them some money, but they refused. We were there until 6.30p.m when they decided to take them to the Moyamba highway. I attempted to follow them, but I met a Kamajor by the bridge at Halcanas - he stopped me, interrogated me and brought me back to town. I went home. By 11p.m, my cousin, Bobor, came – he was almost naked - and said that he would not sleep in the house because he had seen them kill Mohamed. He wanted to leave that night, but I encourage him to wait until 6a.m. I gave him food, but he refused to eat. I wanted to accompany him halfway, but he also refused. I insisted on following him to Yakaje, which is very close to the main road. We used the road that leads to the Shenge Road - we passed through Limba Town and we arrived at a junction in Kagbom Chiefdom. He then asked me to return. I used the same bye-pass route back to the village - it was 4a.m.

In the morning, on a Friday, we went to the wharf to buy some garri. As the tide was drifting, we saw a corpse floating. The corpse stocked to a boat. We took a canoe and rode to identify the corpse - we found that that was the remain of the photographer. He was almost naked – he had only his briefs on. We were not able to buy anything that day - we returned to the village and informed the people that they had killed the boys who were arrested the day before. As the corpse was taken to the highway, people onboard a vehicle identified the corpse. They knew his mother - she lived at Plantain.

We were at the spot when I saw a palm wine tapper, Lord Mo, who told me that while he was passing by a bush path, he heard my friend shouting his name. He said that the man was tied and he had gunshots and bayonet marks all over his body. When I heard the message, I attempted to go in search of my friend. I saw Tommy Sannoh, Abu and Sorba - “Jah Jah Man” went towards the area. I went towards the direction and I met a man, Jibao Soluku. I asked Jibao whether he knew the route that the men, who were running, took. He told me that the men were ferried across a bridge. I saw Abu Tawi with a cutlass and he held a man that was smeared with blood by his waist. Jah Jah said that I was stubborn - he told me to stay away from that place and threatened that, if I insisted, they would break my other leg. I left them - I was discouraged. The following morning, Saturday, I boarded a boat and went to the village where we used to buy products. As I was going, I turned around and looked towards where they were standing. When I went into the bush, I met the man dead. I identified the corpse and, when I went to the checkpoint, Sorba said that I had been stubborn – he threatened that I would be the next to die.

Since then I stopped going to that village - I gave my money to people that helped me do my shopping.

I went to Tejan, the brother of the deceased, and informed him about what had happened. Since the police was dysfunctional and the Kamajors were strongly in charge, Tejan and I went and informed a Sheku Bomborwai who promised to find a way of arresting them. On the day of the arrest, they were having a party. He went there with his boys and arrested Jah Jah Man, Dobokeh, Sorba, Abu Taliwe and Tommy Sannoh. The following morning, they brought them to Moyamba. Since then, their movements were closely monitored. Later, we heard that they were in Police custody in Bo. After two months, we saw them back in Sembahun and they started making threatening remarks. I then left Sembahun together with my cousins.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you for coming and telling us about the death of your business partners. We sympathize with you and we think you are very brave to come and tell us what happened to you. Have you any idea where these Kamajors are now?

Jonathan Brima - I know where to find the three of them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Can you give us their names and addresses?

Jonathan Brima - Abu Tawi is a local Police in Shenghe; Jah Jah Man is presently in Freetown and Dobokeh is in his village - Musoko in Bangura Chiefdom.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Has any one of them shown any remorse at all?

Jonathan Brima - No, when they heard that TRC would be coming to Moyamba, they all fled the area.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – Do you think they would not come if we invite them?

Jonathan Brima – I do not know what is in their minds.

Comm. Torto - I want to thank you for coming and giving this revealing testimony. It is very bold of you. These are the kind of testimonies we would want hear. I just want to clarify some issues with you. What happened with the Le1.6 million taken away from your friends by the Kamajors?

Jonathan Brima -They threw a party and they spend the rest.

Comm. Torto – What happened to the two corpses - the one that was floating and the one in the bush?

Jonathan Brima -They were abandoned - the one that was floating drifted with the tide until the body decomposed - the one in the bush also decomposed.

Comm. Torto - Were their relatives informed about their death?

Jonathan Brima - The relatives were afraid because there was no police presence.

Comm. Torto – They arrested the culprits and took them to Bo - did you find out why they were released from Police custody?

Jonathan Brima - No, I had problems with my foot so I could not follow up.

Comm. Torto -Thank you.

Leader of Evidence - In your response to the Deputy Chair's question, you said you would like to reconcile with these people. You also said that you have some of their addresses in Freetown. Will you give us their addresses now?

Jonathan Brima – He stays in a place that I know, but I do not know the address.

Leader of Evidence - You said that Mohamed Conteh and Hassan Sesay came to the town when you were not there, and they decided to go to the town chief. Did they know the town chief before?

Jonathan Brima - Yes, they were often in the village.

Leader of Evidence - So this town chief took them to the Kamajors.

Jonathan Brima - Yes, he did it when they spoke to him.

Leader of Evidence - Do you know why these people were handed to the Kamajors? Before then, the town chief knew them or was it because you were not around that the town chief had to take these people to the Kamajors?

Jonathan Brima - It was a laid down rule for all strangers to be taken to the Kamajors for proper identification.

Leader of Evidence - We are only asking these questions to make your testimony quite clear. Do you know whether the town chief was a Kamajor?

Jonathan Brima – No, he was a civilian.

Leader of Evidence - Thank you.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - Thank you very much Jonathan. Do you have question for the Commission?

Jonathan Brima - I do not have any question for the Commission.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have recommendations that we would include in our report?

Jonathan Brima: We are appealing to government to consider Moyamba town - and Moyamba district as a whole - for the construction of roads and development of the health sector. I am also appealing that government provides job opportunities for the youths of Moyamba district.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones – What skills training do you have?

Jonathan Brima: I was selling rice and garri.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do people not eat rice and garri anymore - why have you not started on a small scale so that your business will grow?

Jonathan Brima: Owing to the inaccessibility of the roads, we cannot enter into the villages where I used to buy my items.

Comm. Torto - Jay One, I just want to contribute on the question of job opportunity in Moyamba town. Definitely, it will be included in our report. I also want to remind you that Moyamba is one of the luckiest districts in the provinces, because there are mining companies like in my own district - Kono. Employment is given to youths - you can find out from those organizations. What we will

embark on now is skills training - I think Sierra Rutile will start operations very soon. As soon as they start operations, seek employment with them. I am not saying that your recommendations will not be included in our report. Before you are employed, you must engage in skills training because you secure a job based on your qualification. We are encouraging all of you to engage in skills training.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones - I thank you Jonathan for coming. If the Kamajors will listen to the recording of the hearings in Moyamba, and have a feeling of remorse, they can contact the TRC - if we have their addresses, we will be able to locate them to come. At a time like this, all we want is reconciliation so that the past remains the past, and everyone is able to work towards progress and development. Thank you for coming.

DAY TWO: 10 JUNE 2003

The session began with Muslim and Christian prayers. The presiding commissioner, Commissioner Torto, welcomed the audience, especially the witnesses. The commissioner read out the rules governing the hearings. The presiding commissioner asked the Leader of Evidence to invite the first witness.

FIRST WITNESS: Kallaytu Kamara

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Torto administered the oath.

KALLAYTU KAMARA'S TESTIMONY:

We were at Bradford village, where I was born, when the rebels attacked on Friday, March 17th 1995. The rebels captured me and asked me to tell them where the others were hiding. I told them that I did not know the whereabouts of the others, and they threatened to kill me. I pleaded with them, but they asked me to sit on the ground. They found the sum Le500, 000 in my purse and they took it. They seated me on a bench and threatened that they were going to kill me. They carted away my properties - four bushels of benni, six bushels of rice, four drums of palm oil and some other things. I asked them to take away my property and spare my life, but they told me that that was not for me to decide because they were going to take away my property even if I did not say it. As they smoked their cigarettes, they puffed the smoke on my face so that I would get intoxicated before they killed me. They sat before me and defecated. They then took my wax cotton and covered their excreta. They told me that the time to kill me was approaching. They held my hand and wanted to kill me, but I pleaded with them - I told them that they had taken all I had and that they should spare my life. They took me to a junction and told me to lie down. I pleaded with them, but they said that they did not want to waste their bullet. As I lied down, they started hitting me - I was given a cut in my head and one of them broke my arm. My blood was pouring out profusely. One said, "We've killed her because they've told us she's the richest woman in the village. We've killed her." They kicked me and said that they had killed me. I laid still, pretending that I was dead. They then left for Mabang in order to meet their enemies. However, they promised to come back. I laid down and blood was oozing from my head to my face and, since I could not use both hands, I only used one hand to wipe the blood. I attempted to get up after they had left, but I fell down again - I gave up all hopes since I was helpless. I managed to sit up, but blood was still oozing out and I dragged myself to a bondo bush where I leaned on a big stick. I was there until nightfall when they came back, firing. They used my foodstuff to cook. They were there for three days and I neither had access to medical treatment nor did I have food to eat. My only food was green leaves which I chew to wet my throat. On the fourth day, I went to the town and when my relatives and children saw me, they gave me up.

However, one of them suggested that it would be best if I was taken to the hospital. This is the end of my testimony.

Comm. Torto: We are very much sorry for your testimony. It is God's blessing that you are here. We do not want to subject you to many questions after all what you have gone through. Where did all this happen?

Kallaytu Kamara: It all happened in Bradford, a village called Maposseh.

Comm. Torto: I saw the scar on your head - what happened to your head afterward?

Kallaytu Kamara: After spending two days in the bush, I was feeling cold and my head was filled with maggots. People decided to help me get the maggots from my head. They lit firewood to warm me up and they left me alone since they were afraid that the rebels would come back. The fire caught my lapper and, since no one was around, it burnt my skin.

Comm. Torto: Was there any case of sexual abuse - like rape?

Kallaytu Kamara: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you the remember faces of those rebels?

Kallaytu Kamara: I can not. All I can say is that they wore military fatigues and they were in large numbers.

Comm. Torto: What fighting group did they belong to?

Kallaytu Kamara: They were rebels.

Comm. Torto: What does Hassan Sesay mean to you?

Kallaytu Kamara: Nothing.

Comm. Torto: In your written statement, you said that he was one of the perpetrators?

Kallaytu Kamara: I cannot remember.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you Kallaytu for coming to tell us what happened to you. We are really touched and I am sure you are grateful to God for saving your life. Apart from burning your property, do you think they had any other reason for wanting to kill you?

Kallaytu Kamara: Except for the fact that I was hard working, I do not know any other reason. I did agriculture and trading so that I could take care of my children. When people took your goods on credit, they were reluctant to pay. However, if one took the matter to the local chiefs, one became their enemy. Most of those to whom I gave money by way of helping them solve their problems did not pay back, and when I summoned them to the local chiefs, they held it against me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Is it actually true that you did not recognize any one of them?

Kallaytu Kamara: I was not brave to look at their faces. I even urinated on myself out of nervousness.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where were your other relatives?

Kallaytu Kamara: Some had fled to Freetown and some others had fled into the bush.

Comm. Torto: What happened to your foodstuff and money?

Kallaytu Kamara: They said it was theirs. They burnt down my two houses as well.

Leader of Evidence: Where you an influential person in Bradford before the time of the attack?

Kallaytu Kamara: I was very popular - I was even the chair-lady for Emma Claye-Simbo, one time minister.

Comm. Torto: Have you any questions for the Commission?

Kallaytu Kamara: Yes. Would you be able to help me after all that has been done to me?

Comm. Torto: Which specific help do you need?

Kallaytu Kamara: My houses were destroyed; my children can no longer go to school because of my predicament. I was a trader, but I no longer have the money to engage in trade.

Comm. Torto: This is one of the most difficult aspects of the Commission - the area of honoring personal requests. The mandate of the commission does not empower us to compensate people and the Commission does not even have the resources to make compensations to victims, individually. We are not able to do much other than to offer some advice. If we have the resources, you would have been a sure candidate for help.

Comm. Torto: Any other question?

Kallaytu Kamara: I have no more questions.

Comm. Torto: Have you any recommendations to make to the government?

Kallaytu Kamara: Yes, government should provide accommodation for victims of the war.

Comm. Torto: We would pass it on to the government.

Kallaytu Kamara: I want government to help me with a small amount of money so that I can start my business again?

Comm. Torto: I have explained to you about it before, but I will go over it again. There is a chieftom speaker and other elderly people - they will tell you about the micro-credit programme.

Kallaytu Kamara: Some of our colleagues have benefited from micro-credit, but I did not benefit from it because the money was not enough. The chief told me to wait until after nine months.

Comm. Torto: I think that was the right thing the chief told you. We thank you for coming.

SECOND WITNESS: Adama Salfu Conteh

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

ADAMA SALFU CONTEH'S TESTIMONY:

I was at Baoya village where they burnt my house, killed my grandchild and my brother. I fled to the bush and I had nothing to live on. I left the bush for the river so that I could get salt. I later met a Moses Sam at Mamboma. When I greeted him, he failed to reply – he accused me and my son of being rebels. He ordered me to sit on the ground - I did – and they tied me. They kicked me and I fell. They said that I must pay the sum of Le300, 000 before they could untie me. When I enquired why they were treating me like that, they replied that my son was an SLA. They brought a piece of zinc which they said they would use to slaughter me. They asked who my closest relative in the chiefdom was and I said Pa Brima Bangura - they sent for him. The Paramount Chief told them not to do anything to me lest they brought a curse on the village. His reason was that I had been there for a very long time. When the rebels heard this, they were restrained. They released me and I went down the river – my hands and feet were swollen. I did not have any money on me. I met a boat owner that said he knew my son and would take me for treatment. He took me to Tombo and a driver took me to a house although I had no money. I was then taken to the hospital where I was admitted. My son, who is a Prison Officer in Kabala, gave me some money which he said was meant to buy my shroud since, according to him, I would not leave the Mende Land. I went to get salt and Abu Bawotay and his men took away all my sheep. I had Palm Oil which I sold. Moses and his men took away everything. Moses shaved the head of my son who was with me because he had dreadlocks. His hair was shaved with machete and when he resisted he was hit. I asked Moses why he was so cruel to me even though I had treated him like a son. He took away everything I had. My husband was very old. My son was the only one who assisted me. My eldest daughter is seated in the audience as I talk. They took away everything from me. When my son heard of this, he came and reminded me of what he had earlier said – that I liked to live in the Mende Land. I later took a loan of Le100, 000 which I am supposed to pay back within two years. I went to the river and used the money to buy salt. PA Brima, who rescued me earlier, advised that I should have faith in God. I told him that I had done nothing bad, but he insisted and I stayed put. People came from Tamin-Mboka and Gunduma to buy my salt at cheaper rates. The Paramount Chief was seeking my interest. One day I went to the Paramount Chief and he asked whether anything was wrong with me, but I said that I was alright. He advised that if I did not take my time, I would have an early death.

Comm. Torto: We thank you for giving your testimony. I want you to make a few clarifications. Why did they accuse you of being a rebel?

Adama Conteh: Because my son was a Soldier.

Comm. Torto: Did you have a son who was a Soldier?

Adama Conteh: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Where is he now?

Adama Conteh: He is in Freetown, but he is no longer in the army - he went through the DDR.

Comm. Torto: Is he still in the military?

Adama Conteh: No.

Comm. Torto: What is he doing now?

Adama Conteh: He is now a trader.

Comm. Torto: You were asked to give Le100, 000 - did you give the money that they asked for?

Adama Conteh: Yes – I gave the money before I was released.

Comm. Torto: To whom did you give the money?

Adama Conteh: Moses Sam.

Comm. Torto: Who was Moses Sam?

Adama Conteh: A Kamajor.

Comm. Torto: Where is Moses Sam now?

Adama Conteh: He is in Baoma

Comm. Torto: How far is Baoma from here?

Adama Conteh: Baoma is eight miles from Baoya.

Comm. Torto: Who was Sam Ngebeh?

Adama Conteh: He was only sent to call me.

Comm. Torto: What about Momodu Salia?

Adama Conteh: He took away my salt - he was in Senehun.

Comm. Torto: Where is he now?

Adama Conteh: He is in Sawiya.

Comm. Torto: When all this happened, did you complain or report to anybody in authority in your area?

Adama Conteh: Yes, I reported to Pa Brima who pursued the matter.

Comm. Torto: What did he do?

Adama Conteh: He tried to mediate.

Comm. Torto: Were you satisfied?

Adama Conteh: They had disgrace me so I had nothing to do. Now, I have pain in my back.

Comm. Torto: Were you bayoneted on your back?

Adama Conteh: Yes, and that gave me bump.

Comm. Torto: Thank you.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Adama, we thank you for coming and we are sorry for what you went through. Your son that had the dreadlocks - was he the same son that was in the army?

Adama Conteh: He is a trader.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: After shaving his dreadlocks, what did they do to him?

Adama Conteh: They took his money from him.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where is he now?

Adama Conteh: He is in Freetown.

Leader of Evidence: This entire exercise is about reconciliation. Owing to the distance, we can not bring him here and since the Paramount Chief knows you and Sam, we want to know if you will be ready to reconcile with Moses Sam?

Adama Conteh: I will not deny the Paramount Chief because I respect him.

Comm. Torto: We have asked you many questions. Have you any question to ask?

Adama Conteh: Yes, I have something to say. I go to the bush in order find my living. My husband is old and my house was burnt down. That house was built by my son. My daughter, who used to take care of my every need, currently has nothing. We want help.

Comm. Torto: That could be taken for your recommendation. What question do you have for the Commission?

Adama Conteh: What will you do for me?

Comm. Torto: You mean personally?

Adama Conteh: Yes, you are the one sitting in front of me now.

Comm. Torto: The question of personal compensation is not possible. The Act that creates us does not give us the mandate to do so - we wish we had the resources to do it on our own, but there is no way we can do that. We thank the daughter for taking care of you. All we can do is to pass on the recommendation to the government and they would know what to do. Your recommendations have been recorded. After talking to us here, you will feel relief because you have spoken out your mind. Thank you for coming.

THIRD WITNESS: Samuel J. George

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

SAMUEL J. GEORGE'S TESTIMONY:

I was a teacher at the RC School Baoya. I started teaching at Baoya in 1986. In 1995, at the beginning of August, the war struck us at Baoya from the western area through Rabbi. In mid August, I took five of my dependants to Freetown. We stayed at Kissy Brook. I went to the Ministry and registered as a teacher. I was posted to St. Peter's the Rock, Calaba town. We stayed in Freetown for some time - we exhausted the money I had. My wife and I decided to come to Baoya for food - the rice we had planted. We heard that government troops were there. Indeed we found the troops; they reassured us that everything was alright; people could repair there houses.

We were in camps, in the bush. We prepared food and took it to Baoya. On 28th August, we decided that my wife should return to Freetown. My brother-in-law's wife accompanied us close to Sembehun. At that point, I saw people in military uniforms; they were moving toward us. I alerted my wife and my brother-in-law's wife. I thought they were government troops. The first group – all

of whom were dressed like civilians - passed us. Next was a group in military outfit – some of them approached me and demanded that I gave them my shoes - they said that they were rebels and that we were to follow them. We went to Sembehun and we were put in a house together with many others - they wanted to set the house on fire. After a while, a man came and took one of us - my brother-in-law – out. The same man later came for me. They gave me and many other people loads to carry. We passed through Kombona, Kambaya and we entered through Kobotu. The rebels guarded us closely. Even if one wanted to ease oneself, one was accompanied by a rebel who carried a gun. We went to as far as a village called Sembehun. It was dark and they ordered us to loot - a Commander ordered us to capture creatures. We took goats, fowls and other creatures - we were divided by houses. They asked to cook rice and to use the creatures we had caught to cook the sauce. After we had eaten, the rebels put us in one house and locked up. They accompanied us - under gunpoint - to attend to calls of nature. The following morning, we continued the journey - we returned to Mosewa. We crossed the river by boat. Since all of us could not cross the river that day, some people slept on the bank of the river and we continued the journey the following day. The rebels tied a man in the boat and the boat capsized while they were getting across; one of our Commanders drowned. We were under threat because the controller of the boat was a civilian – the rebels said that civilians were not good therefore, they gave us nothing to eat. They wanted to tie us and throw us into the river. Fortunately this did not happen – we chased and forced the others to cooperate. CO Mohamed was leader of the group. We passed through Gbangbatoke. We arrived at a village where we lit and slept by a fire. We then moved on to Sierra Rutile. We were divided into houses. There were many people there. We stayed there for a week during which we ate rice, meat - good food. We were lined up as we chased the group at the river and entered Mattru Jong. Soldiers were soldiers there too. We continued the journey. We harvested cassava and banana to eat when needed. When we arrived at Kobotu in Bo District, we followed the Sewa River and we got to a village called Komende, where we stayed for a week. At Komende, we were given properties to take to Sankoh in Kenema district. While we were going to Kenema district, we met another set of RUF rebels on the way - they took the things we were carrying Foday Sankoh. We went back to Sewa and passed through the main base where we were trained and brainwashed. During the training at the main base, they told us that they had come to liberate us. Included in their argument was the point that education – during the reign of the APC – was a privilege and not right. We were also given physical training. We stayed on for six months during which we were sent to search for food - banana and garri - from civilians. We did all those under duress. We were trained as bodyguards. We worked by night in shifts – when we went in search of food. We would open fire and the civilians would flee - we would take food to our base: we had food in abundance. When food was prepared, they made it as though it were a ball and placed it in our hands – that was what we ate. When we learnt that government troops were going to attack Komende, we left and went to another village in Bo district. CO Rashid Sandy took us to a base in Kenema. We were bodyguards - we could open fire on civilians in camps and take their food to our base. We would do the same in towns. Kangari Hills! We passed through Bandawa, across Kenema, through Bo Highway and across the Sewa River. We were in groups and we stopped in a village to pass the night. We continued our journey to Kangari Hills and to Tonkolili district. We carried out the same operations I Tonkolili district - they gave us drugs so that we would be able to move on. They forced us to drink alcohol so that we would do things out of the way - they gave us drinks to make us agile. Then the Kamajors, Tamaboros, Gbethis organized themselves and started attacking us. We would climb and descend hills. We stayed at Masingbi for sometime, but I was tired and I regretted being a part of the rebels. Before then, I only knew Taiama and Freetown - all those places we went through were strange. In May 1997 – after the coup - we heard the war was over. AFRC soldiers went to collect us. We went through the Kono highway, near Masingbi. Troops went to Kailahun, Kenema and Bo. My group went to Freetown and we were happy. We arrived in Freetown at night. We were at Hastings for two days and on the third day we were attacked by ECOMOG forces - they pushed us towards the Peninsular. They AFRC soldiers guided us and we went to Benguema barracks where we stayed for a week. Our group was forced to loot - we were made guards in the day as well as in the night. Next, we went to Jui. After police had been taken there, ECOMOG attacked and pushed us into the creeks - we had bruises and cuts all over our bodies. We later went to Yams Farm. When I was healed, I put down everything and I went to

my daughter at Wellington. I did not leave the movement earlier because if one was caught, one would be stripped. I waited until the combatants were less vigilant before I went to my daughter. She heartily welcomed me. She was staying with a Krio. I was at Wellington after some time and I left when RUF rebels were searching. I however returned to my daughter later. I had a wound on my right shoulder – I sustained it from shot by a Kamajor. I gave an x-ray film to the statement taker that interrogated me. I later went to Howe Street where I introduced myself to the Education Secretary. I was taken to the Ministry and, subsequently, posted to a displaced school at Model. I later returned to my old school, St. Peter's the Rock. When president Kabba made a statement that everyone should return to his/her place of origin, I wrote a letter to the Paramount Chief asking him for mercy. The chief granted my plea and my wife collected me and we returned to Baoya. All what I did was not of my making 0- it was the will of God. I ask that the Paramount Chief forgives me and accept me again in the community. I was not a bad man when I taught for twenty years. I ask that the Commission forgives me.

Comm. Torto: Thank you very much for coming. Before asking you any question, are you ready to beg for forgiveness before the audience?

Samuel George: Yes.

Comm. Torto: I just want you to clarify two things for me. You said that you have taught for twenty years and that you are a teacher that went to the university.

Samuel George: Yes.

Comm. Torto: which College did you attend?

Samuel George: Makeni Teachers' College.

Comm. Torto: You said that you were traveling with your family, including your brother-in-law's wife - what happened to them?

Samuel George: When they took me out of the house in order to put me into the fire, I left my wife and my brother-in-law's wife locked in the house. The soldiers and all the captives left for Sembehun. The people in the house were afraid and they stayed in the house. Later, an old man that was sitting in a veranda told them that the rebels had gone. They all went out of the house. My wife was perturbed because I had been taken away. She wept and fell into the river; she almost drowned.

Comm. Torto: Is she with you now?

Samuel George: Yes.

Comm. Torto: You said that when you were going, they ordered you to loot - did they also order you to kill?

Samuel George: No.

Comm. Torto: Where did you take those looted items from?

Samuel George: We took them from civilians.

Comm. Torto: You said that they gave you loads to take to Foday Sankoh - what were the items?

Samuel George: Solar Panel, vehicle batteries and food stuffs were they things that they gave us to take to Foday Sankoh.

Comm. Torto: You said that you were a bodyguard. Who did you guard?

Samuel George: I guarded CO Rashid Sandy.

Comm. Torto: You said that you would fire when you entered a village and the civilians would flee into the bush. How many civilians did you kill?

Samuel George: When we entered a village or camp, we fired in the air so that the civilians could run away. However, I did not kill.

Comm. Torto: How many years were you on this?

Samuel George: I was in training for a year and for about one or two years I carried out raids.

Comm. Torto: We congratulate you for coming. We are a Commission that speaks the truth and I am asking you again - did you ever kill anybody?

Samuel George: I killed.

Comm. Torto: What were you doing in Kangari Hills?

Samuel George: When we were in Kangari Hills, I had no promotion - we were night guards.

Comm. Torto: Were you one of the people that attacked the villages on the hillside?

Samuel George: Yes, we were commanded to go to highways and lay ambushes for people traveling with food. During such ambushes, people were killed.

Comm. Torto: Where exactly was your area of operation?

Samuel George: At first we were at Tongbeh Goloma and, later, we settled at Masingbi.

Comm. Torto: What happened to CO Monica?

Samuel George: As I said earlier, that was a long time ago - CO Monica was a commander at the River Sewa. I cannot tell where she is now.

Comm. Torto: Thank you.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming and giving your testimony. We are here for reconciliation and we are pleased to have someone like you who has come out and spoken about the past. We are also pleased about your resolve to come and be accepted in the community. In the base where you were residing, were there women?

Samuel George: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What about children?

Samuel George: They were there too.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: As a trained teacher, were you only doing bodyguard work?

Samuel George: No, I was also the clerk at the base. I was in charge of a Church. I also acted as adjutant since there were many bases.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you describe for us what the church was doing at the base?

Samuel George: We prayed and made use of the bible. We knew that was the only way we could be saved.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did the commanders pray in the church?

Samuel George: The commanders did not pray; only we who were captured prayed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us what happened to the women at the base?

Samuel George: They were all married to the combatants.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: what about you – did you not have a wife in the bush?

Samuel George: No, my primary concern was my life.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did the women do at the base?

Samuel George: They cooked and laundered; some were fighters.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did they go out to attack?

Samuel George: Yes.

Comm. Torto: What happened to the children in the bush?

Samuel George: They had bad habits - they did not respect elders; they did not go to school - they were free.

Comm. Torto: That brings me back to my first question. As a teacher, did you not have any urge to teach them?

Samuel George: I had intentions to teach them, but if one wanted to teach, one needed to have a syllabus, stationery, accommodation, an environment that was conducive and a clear mind. We were always on the edge, expecting attacks.

Comm. Torto: Why were they so disrespectful?

Samuel George: Some of them had handled guns so they were uncontrollable. The others copied from their peers. If you said, "A", they would laugh.

Comm. Torto: Were they given drugs too?

Samuel George: Yes, that was why they were disrespectful and they were fearless to carry guns.

Comm. Torto: How old was the youngest?

Samuel George: We had babies as young as two months. The one that took my shoes was a secondary school pupil and there were others that were eight, twelve years and above.

Comm. Torto: At what age did they start training them to carry guns?

Samuel George: From eight years, and some excelled in the training.

Comm. Torto: Were they promoted?

Samuel George: Promotion was strictly for adults.

Comm. Torto: Did you, at anytime, come in contact with Foday Sankoh?

Samuel George: No, I never met him. In fact, I only saw photographs of him.

Comm. Torto: With reference to your daughter, how did you get the wealth and how wealthy were you when you were there?

Samuel George: My daughter thought of having free musical instruments, clothes, food and other things.

Comm. Torto: When you were there, was it possible for you to have money?

Samuel George: I was fortunate to set eyes on money because we attacked remote areas. I set eyes on new notes when I escaped at Hasting.

Comm. Torto: Were you ever wounded during an attack apart from the wound on your shoulder?

Samuel George: Yes, I have a bullet scar on my hand. (Witness showed the scar).

Comm. Torto: Are you bothered now by any physical problems because of the lifestyle you followed?

Samuel George: Certain things do happen. I want the Commission to help detraumatise me. There are times when I get sleepless nights because of the drugs and heavy drinks I took when I was with the rebels; it has become part of me. I sometimes try to restrain myself, but it is difficult. However, I am still trying.

Comm. Torto: I hope that now that you have come here and testified, you will feel relieved and try to get some sleep. With regards to the physical aspect of your problem, talk to our briefer - she would give you some pieces of advice. If you can recall, how many people did you kill? Did you know them?

Samuel George: I cannot recall because we did not record the statistics of them.

Comm. Torto: Why did you kill them?

Samuel George: When we attacked for food....

Comm. Torto: How many did you rape – can you remember?

Samuel George: I did not rape.

Leader of Evidence: You said that you were an adjutant and you had men under your control and you had power; was that not so?

Samuel George: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Apart from the attack for food, the rebels also attacked major towns; was that not so?

Samuel George: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You took part in those attacks, didn't you?

Samuel George: I did not take part in all of them.

Leader of Evidence: Prior to those attacks, you were under the influence of drugs.

Samuel George: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: So that you would not know the people you kill.

Samuel George: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: The position of adjutant was a promotion and you must have proved yourself in some way, isn't it?

Samuel George: I was there to take records of things in the camp because I am educated.

Leader of Evidence: You said that they forced you to attack in order to get food. If you refused, what would they do?

Samuel George: They would insult and punish you seriously.

Leader of Evidence: Did you witness the attack of January 6th?

Samuel George: By then I was with my child – I was not with them.

Leader of Evidence: When did you join them - was it after or before January 6th?

Samuel George: I joined them before January 6th.

Leader of Evidence: Can you share your experience during January 6th with the Commission. What did you do?

Samuel George: I did not take part in combat. I was always in-doors with my daughter and guardians because of security risk. I saw people shooting.

Leader of Evidence: Did you join them when they retreated?

Samuel George: No, I did not; I was new teaching.

Comm. Torto: Thank you Leader of Evidence. Since we have the paramount chief, CPO and other dignitaries here, he can ask for forgiveness. Samuel George, are you ready to apologize to the people of Sierra Leone? We have the Paramount Chief, D.O and CPO here. I hope there are also religious leaders who would relate this to everyone. Samuel J. George was abducted by the RUF. He later joined the movement and they attacked some towns and made ambushes on the highways. He willingly testified - he wants to apologize. We have one of your children, an ex-combatant of the RUF, who has confessed is asking that you forgive him for the atrocities he committed. He wants to ask for forgiveness and asks that we do it publicly.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: He is an educated man, a teacher. He tried to be reintegrated. He is traumatised and he needs people to accept him back so that he would be useful in the community. We appreciate it that you have been here. Let us accept him again in the society.

Comm. Torto: This is your son and he is here to beg.

Reverend: Your sins were agonizing to God - do you know that?
Samuel George: Yes.

Reverend: And if you failed to repent you would perish. Do you know Jesus?

Samuel George: Yes.

Reverend: However, your heart does not know him. Christ died on the cross. If you sincerely turn away from your past and go to God, you will not murder, rape or commit arson any more. You will be the one that will remind others that God is good. Pray!

Paramount Chief: Thank you for what you have done. This is a big thing. We have heard you. This is my first experience. It has come to light and we will tell our people about it. Nobody in his right senses would commit such atrocities. It was a matter of life and death - he went through many things. God says that we should forgive one another. For peace to reign, we need things like this. People wanted to fight, but this is a great initiative.

Chief Police Officer: You have been blessed and we empathise with you. Owing to the nature of our job, this is not strange to us. It would be nice if you stood by your repentance. Henceforth, your conscience is free. I advise that you continue to be clean and if we accept you and you repeat what you did, we would not tolerate it. The law will take its course. Henceforth, I ask that you do not repeat what you did.

Principal of Harford Girls School: I thank you for this opportunity. I will talk to you as a teacher and as a woman. We suffered a lot. Some of you gang raped our sisters and daughters. We, women, give birth to you, but, when you did that, you did not think of it. The day of reckoning has come. I am happy that you confessed of rape and that you do not know the number of women you raped. I hope that you will not do it again. You are man and you have children. I pray that you do not do it again. This is a noble profession, but, because of the war, teachers are not coming to teach in the provinces. I pray that with what has happened, the Sierra Leone community will know that the war is over. On behalf of the teachers of Moyamba, I accept you again into this community and we pray that you will join us.

Samuel George: Paramount Chief, Religious leaders, my people, School children, I did the wrong things against my wish - I burnt houses, I killed people, I did so many bad things to this country under duress. I did not want to do what I did - I raped, unwillingly. I am begging you for forgiveness; accept me in the community as your son.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Samuel George: I have no questions. Today, my conscience is free. I am overwhelmed because I have been accepted again into the community. I have no questions - I am satisfied.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations to make?

Samuel George: Yes, I have a recommendation – it pertains to education. I have lagged behind and deteriorated; I want to upgrade myself so that I can be fit again in the society. Prior I was capture I had plans to study further. As a result of the war, my first daughter is a dropout. I need micro-credit facility for my wife – this would enable her to engage in some trade. I am asking for assistance. We lack roads in this community – education is also a problem. I ask for assistance in these areas. My chieftdom needs these facilities – a district headquarter and micro-credit for everyone. The government needs to assist us in these areas. At the same time, I want my chieftdom headquarters to benefit from free education. The conditions of service of the teachers and police should be improved. I am also asking that farmers be considered. These and all other unmentioned recommendations are to be looked into.

Comm. Torto: People who have come here to give testimonies all ask for the same assistance - we shall consider them when we write our report - shelter, roads etc. When you burnt the houses of others, they also burnt your house. We shall include them recommendations in our report and your recommendations have been noted.

FOURTH WITNESS: Albert Brima Charlie

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

ALBERT BRIMA CHARLIE'S TESTIMONY:

I am a born of Ribbi, Maburah Section. On the 1st of January 1998, I went to my elder brother, Charles Rufus Charlie who had invited me from Freetown. There is a village called Mafakoi where we slept. On the 1st day of January, I saw Papa Kamara who met us drinking palm wine and he passed us holding a gun. He was from Mabureh. I could not understand why he was passing up and down. We left Sunmeh for Moyamba at 4p.m. My brother's wife brought food for us – she had her husband's radio in her hand. We later saw a cousin's wife who reported that she saw many people with guns. She said, "They're all here and I want to inform you." When I turned around, I saw them. I immediately identified Papa Kamara - Obai Kamara was the leader of the CDF group. They greeted us. I told Adama to turn the food so that we could eat. Obai then abused my brother; he called him a bastard. He even ordered that they should kill him. I beckoned to indicate that we should go to the back. We stood by the pig pen where Papa shot at my brother. A guy, Bobor Kanu (a.k.a Bob Marley), also shot at my brother; an officer shot at him again and he shook his body. He asked what had happened. If they shot at him three times, he would not die. He stood up and said, "This is rubbish". I want to advise that people do not take alcohol in excess. He was really drunk; otherwise, he would have been alive still. He stood up; he wanted to go inside a house because he was in a different mood. Obai said, "If you allow that bastard to enter the house he'll disappear". As he attempted to enter into the house, they grabbed him and stripped him. They hit him on his head with a gun. When I regained consciousness, BM asked whether I was also there - they tied him. They were from Bumpeh and they went to Bomtomboh. A brother met them and when he asked what was amiss, they threatened to kill him. They took him to Gbenkeh; Gbenkeh was known for the fact that when people were taken there they did not return. I left for Freetown. In addition to taking him to Gbenkeh, they burnt down our three houses together with nineteen other houses. After I had spent five days in Freetown, I saw Sorie Kamara (a.k.a. Digba) from Rotifunk. He informed that a group had come from the village and they were resident at 5 Fetter Lane. I had some money which I used to buy alcohol for them so that I could get information from them. I asked them about my brother and one of them asked, "Charles who said his skin was a bullet proof?" Bawotay said, "I have a chain and it has two fingers - the second is to loot". He told me that my brother was butchered. Then, the Kamajors were very powerful. I ran to tell my cousin, Eke Halloway, the Attorney General, about this. He told me that he gave him the fare to pay his way. He asked if the matter had been reported to the CID; we went there, but nothing was done. This is my testimony.

Comm. Torto: Mr. Charlie, we are very sorry to hear your testimony. We know that what you went through was not easy. Which fighting group killed your brother?

Albert Brima Charlie: They were a combined force of Kamajors, Gbethis and people called volunteers – the CDF.

Comm. Torto: What was the reason that they gave for killing your brother?

Albert Brima Charlie: If I say I know why they killed him, I would be telling a lie. I only heard Obai call him "a bastard."

Comm. Torto: After they shot him three times and the bullet did not pierce through his body, what did he do?

Albert Brima Charlie: Obai, one of the fighters, said, "If you allow him to get in, it will be problem for us."

Comm. Torto: You said that you reported the matter to Eke Halloway - what did he do?

Albert Brima Charlie: He said that we should report the matter to the CID.

Comm. Torto: What happened when you reported the matter to the CID?

Albert Brima Charlie: Nothing was done – and nothing had been done since we made the report.

Comm. Torto: Where are these people?

Albert Brima Charlie: Papa is in Mabureh; Obai is in Sembehun; Bobor is in Makimba; Bawotay was in Guinea. We see them everyday.

Comm. Torto: Was your brother a Kamajor?

Albert Brima Charlie: No, my brother was not a Kamajor.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We are sorry, Albert, for what happened to your brother. I want to ask what power your brother had that made his body a bullet proof.

Albert Brima Charlie: He told us that he was, at one time, a fighter; he was a military man that climbed to the rank of Captain. In 1978, he retired and started working at the Bank of Sierra Leone. He always told us that he was from Banjul. I sometime saw him bring something out of his stomach which he would clean and swallow. There were times when he would just disappear into the air.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Charlie, you said Papa was a cousin of yours - was your relationship matrimonial?

Albert Brima Charlie: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether there was any dispute between the two of them that caused that thing to happen?

Albert Brima Charlie: No.

Leader of Evidence: I thank you.

Comm. Torto: If we are able to get them, will you be ready to reconcile with them?

Albert Brima Charlie: I thought I was going to meet them here. If you get them, I am ready to meet and reconcile with them.

Comm. Torto: Is the Paramount Chief here?

Albert Brima Charlie: He is here.

Comm. Torto: Does he know about this?

Albert Brima Charlie: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Our staff will talk to you and the Paramount Chief afterward.

Albert Brima Charlie: No, I want to meet with these people.

Comm. Torto: We will try to bring you together. Do you want to meet them in a bid to revenge the death of your brother or to reconcile?

Albert Brima Charlie: I want them to come forward and plead for forgiveness as the man did earlier today.

Comm. Torto: Do have any recommendations to make?

Albert Brima Charlie: Camp Fall-Fall was in our chiefdom. Our Chiefdom, Ribbi, suffered the worst destruction in March. The rebels burnt down the entire section - they burnt well over one hundred and thirty houses in Sunmeh. They destroyed the road linking Sunmeh and Bradford. We lack medical facilities. We ask that the Commission makes recommendations along these lines.

Comm. Torto: Thank you very much. Whenever we ask for recommendations, people come up with such recommendations. We will add your recommendations to our list of recommendations. Thank you for coming and sharing your testimony with us.

FIFTH WITNESS: Gbassay Orgbah Koroma

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

GBASSAY ORGBAH KOROMA'S TESTIMONY

We left the farm when it was almost time for harvest. However, we later returned to harvest. When the rebels asked us to get out of the bush, they told us that if we heard gun shots, we should run into our houses. When we did what they had told us, they fired at our houses and they caught fire. I ran out and left my daughter and grandchildren in the house; both of them were killed. I went into the bush and continued to use by-pass routes until I got to Waterloo. I was in the camp from where my husband took me to the hospital at Lumpa. We then stayed at the camp until we were told to return to our village. When Kamajors got to our village, they asked us to return home. I still have wounds that I sustained from bullets. This is what I went through.

Comm. Torto: We are sorry for what happened to you. Was it when you returned that you sustained the wounds?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: When the house was fired, some children's heads were chopped off and I passed through the window.

Comm. Torto: Did they shoot at the house?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: They shot the window in the house.

Comm. Torto: You showed us where the bullet wounded you - would you just do that again for us to film you?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: Yes.

Comm. Torto: You said your grandchild and child were killed - when did this happen?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: It happened when the house was set on fire.

Comm. Torto: Have you sought medical treatment?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: Yes, but I refused to allow the doctor to remove the bullet from my body.

Comm. Torto: Why did you refuse?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: It was painful and I could not withstand it.

Comm. Torto: Do you know your attackers?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: I do not know them because I was always in the bush.

Comm. Torto: Do you know whether they were RUF, SLA, or Kamajors?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: There were no Kamajors by then; it was the group that was at Camp Fall-Fall.

Comm. Torto: I want to encourage you to allow the removal of that bullet from your body because there is a serious problem behind that. Our staff will talk to you after here so that you could see a doctor to remove the bullet from your body.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give me the names of those who were killed?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: Sento Kargbo - my mate, Marie Koroma - my daughter and Fatu Kamara - grandchild.

Comm. Torto: Have you any questions to ask the commission?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: Everything is left with you - I have no home and my only daughter had been killed.

Comm. Torto: We wish we had the opportunity, at this moment, but the only thing we can do now is for you to go and see the doctor to remove the bullet from your body. Do you have any recommendations that we could pass on to the government?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: I ask that the government helps to up-keep me since I am now an old woman. I am asking the government to render some kind of assistance to me.

Comm. Torto: I thank you and we would put it in our report. Does she have any other recommendations?

Gbassay Orgbah Koroma: I have no more recommendation.

Comm. Torto: I want you to be assured that your recommendation will be in our report. I thank you very much

SIXTH WITNESS: Chernor Jalloh {a.k.a. Maeiyata}

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

CHERNOR JALLOH'S TESTIMONY:

On the 9th of February, 1995, we saw people moving up and down and when we asked what had happened, they told us that rebels had entered into the town. I told my wife and sister, Isatu Jalloh, to pack their belongings and move to Magbemoh in the Yoni Section. One day, we saw a large number of Soldiers who said they were personnel of the Sierra Leone Army {SLA}. On a Saturday, March 16, we saw soldiers in a white pick-up van. They told us that Tom Nyuma had come with his group. I told my people that those who referred to themselves as soldiers of SLA had taken our two sheep. Those people walked up and down. My father and I were in the house and he closed his room while I sat in the sitting room. An ex-soldier, a neighbour, who was looking out for her sister's place, was sitting with me in the veranda and the soldiers went, broke a house and took out a big pot that they took to another house. I told Ngegbah that he should not accompany me; I asked him to take care of my wife's house. When I returned, I met Emma Sally whom I asked to give me a coconut that he had. As I was coming, I heard gunshots everywhere and I fled into the bush; leaving my father in the house. I was worried about my father's security. The following day, Sorie Bumpeh said that he was going to check in the village to see what had happened. When he returned, he told me that the town was quiet. I then used a by-pass route into our compound. I first met Charles Charlie's mother who had carried a stick on her head. I then saw the remains of Amadu Malayka. I did not know that the rebels were hiding under a mango tree at the back of the house. Zincs were all over the floor. As I was approaching the bathroom, I saw a gun pointed at me – I presently went toward the rebel that was carrying the gun; he laughed. I explained to him that I was a resident of that village. He held my trousers and took me to a veranda where they stripped me naked and gave me a sound beating. They accused me of being a soldier. My face was swollen because of the beating; I was beaten with a gun. A group of seventeen men tied me with my hands behind my back. They beat me and asked me to confess. In about five minutes, they asked me to get up - it was not easy for me to get up. They took me to their colleagues and said that I was a spy. A bulky man that had Liberian accent asked them not to beat me. About 7 p.m., I started pleading with them to have the ropes off me; they had wounded my arms. They untied my hands and tied my feet. The following morning, we were sent to fetch water. There were lots of Tobacco leaves and one of them asked whether I smoked - he gave me the leaves. We returned with the water; it was on a Sunday. I heard gun shots - that was a signal for food. We left for the village where we met many of them lying down with bandages on their heads. The big, bulky man took a big bag that they had given to me and asked eight of us to carry rebels. I had problems with my arms. A man called Bonkeh and I were chased to Koya Chiefdom. We took the wounded rebels into the bush. They gave us little food so that we would not have enough energy to run away. They brought other captives including our Imam in Bradford. I later saw the Section Chief among the captives. We then continued to carry the loads, but the three of us carried a rebel. We were taken to a house where we gave our names. We were taken to remove foodstuffs from the houses in Makali; others were getting goats. We had to pound rice. After I was released I had to be treated for a long time; I had lumps in my hands. One evening, Kallon called us to eat. Thirty of us were asked to sit and we were served in groups of seven. I had put on my shoes in readiness to go mining when I heard rapid gun shots. Rebels ran to the right and we ran too; no attempt was made to recapture us. Six of

us were left in our group – four were Mendes and two of us were Themnes. We slept in the bush. We walked until we found cassava, which we ate. We went to Mobonkeh where we were captured by civilians. We were taken to Masiaka police station. When I called my name, a man from the cell called out to me – he is the last witness here, today. We were released, but the last witness, Charlie, was called back. I went to Bradford. We were told that Kamajors were preparing to attack and remove the rebels. A little later, I saw twenty Kamajors in the veranda; they arrested all of us. One Marie Sankoh was killed. Junior was also shot in the arm. Kamajors then went away. Junior and I went to the hospital. Junior advised that we went to Pa Mahoi, his uncle. My sister told me that there was continuous shooting that began since dawn. While we were going with Junior, I learnt that my father was burnt in the house when we arrived at Clay Factory. This is my testimony.

Comm. Torto: Thank you. The question I want to ask is based on the statement that you gave at Bradford. When the Kamajor came to Bradford, they also looted - would you explain about those items that were looted?

Chernor Jalloh: When the Kamajors came and resided at Bradford, they had a leader called Abdulai Kakpata - they did many bad things.

Comm. Torto: Was your father killed in the house?

Chernor Jalloh: Yes, together with Alpha, Alusine Kargbo and mammy Boi. – they rebels killed them.

Comm. Torto: Do you know any of them – facially? Were they Kamajors or RUF?

Chernor Jalloh: I do not know who specifically did.

Comm. Torto: Who buried your father?

Chernor Jalloh: Some boys in the village buried my father.

Leader of Evidence: What was the name of your father?

Chernor Jalloh: Momodu Alpha Jalloh.

Comm. Torto: Do you have questions to ask the Commission?

Chernor Jalloh: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations?

Chernor Jalloh: I am appealing to government to help us with shelter and health facilities.

Comm. Torto: There are NGO's that assist with shelter and they have done so for some people in the Masiaka area; the briefer will talk to you after here and she will mention some names of those NGO's that can give those kinds of help. All we can do as a Commission is to take down your recommendations and pass them on to the government. For the road net work, we would know how to put it in our report.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any more recommendations?

Chernor Jalloh: My next recommendation pertains to the fact that when the sea dries, some people survive on palm trees, but not all of us have the opportunity to do so.

Comm. Torto: While you are waiting for the government to give assistance in these areas, if you would link up with World Vision, you may receive assistance – they are also helping people.

SEVENTH WITNESS: Junior Bampia Mahoi

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

JUNIOR BAMPPIA MAHOI'S TESTIMONY:

I have two burning issues – the first one was in 1995, when rebels attacked Bradford. My wife went to her relatives and, since that time, I have learnt how to harvest palm kernel to sell. I bought goods like rice and kerosene to sell to my people. I boarded a boat to Freetown. In the course of the journey, an officer asked whether I was Junior, but I told him that Pa Saidu – who lived at Mataho village – was the owner of boat and he knew me. The soldiers said that they would not allow me to proceed further because I had a problem. When I made an attempt to sit on a bench, I was kicked. They accused me of buying goods for rebels. One of the soldiers brought a lady who claimed that I bought and sold goods for rebels. I was advised not to be angry. A soldier wanted to cut off my ear, but I resisted and he stabbed me on my left arm. The soldiers came with one Captain Daram and they told him that I was a rebel. He asked me whether there were other rebels around. I was taken to Foday, the headman at Tombo. I was then tied up by a Guinean soldier. The Sierra Leonean soldiers joined the Guineans to beat me. They threatened to kill me if I refused to speak. Sullay, a driver of one doctor, saw me. Sullay had contact with Captain Daram. He asked whether it was I that, according to what Captain Daram said, they had threatened to kill. Sullay then offered to take them to Benguema, and promised speak to the Chief of Defense Staff, Major Gottor. Guineans locked me up in a guard room where Tom Nyuma later came and asked for suspected rebels. When I wanted to enter into the vehicle, Daram said that I should stay and that they would handle the matter. After seventeen days, when they could not prove that I was a rebel - Daram had gone to look for my goods and he had found nothing; journalist had taken note of what happened - I was then given a paper to go away. I tried to tidy up, but I could not use my hand. After a year, when I came to Bradford, Captain Kolajor was in charge. One Obai told ECOMOG soldiers that I was a rebel suspect and that Captain Kolajor should not accommodate me. The Captain kept an eye on me. I used to sell goods to them. Captain Kolajor later went to Tombo and found that the allegation against me was false. I became his friend. Obai, the man who had accused me of being a rebel suspect was the one that informed Spencer that Kamajors were preparing to remove rebels from Mabang Bridge. Kelly advised me to wait - I was living with my aunt, Marie Sankoh {a.k.a. Yarie Bumbuna}. I did not know that they had assembled at the market place. When I was going across the road, I saw groups of Kamajors and I went to inform Charlie. The previous witness at today's hearings knows what I am talking about. Kamajors ordered us queue up and a small Kamajor boy cocked his gun. Obai and other Mende Kamajors gave us there back so that they could not be identified. I showed them my mother's house and told them that Marie Sankoh was my aunt. The young boy said that if Marie moved, he would gun her down. One of them that knew my aunt, Marie Sankoh, said "Tayaji" {meaning "this is not she"} - she was immediately shot down. I shivered and realised that I was shouting. I heard Charlie, the boss, order them to stop shooting, but the firing went on. A man, who told them to stop shooting, advised us to move backward. I heard a voice called out to me so that I could go and have bullet removed from my body – that voice was Obai's. I traveled by Makite and went to Freetown. Soldiers accused me of being a rebel, but I explained to them that I was sent to go for treatment at the hospital. I left to see my uncle, Dr. Mahoi, and I later returned to Bradford. My house was burnt down. Kabata was living in the next town. There were piles of bones of those that were killed by Kabata, Obai and the CDF.

Comm. Torto: Thank you very much. In your written statement, you said that the Kamajors burnt down the whole village - were you there? And it was on the 19th March 1999 - were you there?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: They were there and they attacked the village.

Comm. Torto: You said your aunt was fired - do you know why they shot her?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: A Kamajor called Kuwagoi stole my aunt's properties. Another Kamajor, Minkailu, got the complaint – he was friendly. He directed us to the Kamajor base at Rogbenke where their leaders were. When my aunt arrived at the Kamajor headquarters at Rogbenke, she saw her lapper on the wife of a Kamajor.

Comm. Torto: Is camp Fall-Fall still in existence?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: I do not think so.

Comm. Torto: Was it a town?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: They set it up.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We are sorry for all the problems you suffered. Was there any reason why Obai wanted you to be destroyed?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: I did not do anything to him, excepting that I was hard working.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where is Obai now?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: He is at Seikuma.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How far is it from here?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: It is about twenty-four miles from here.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where are the bones you are talking about?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: They are at the back of my house at Bradford.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any questions to ask the Commission?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations to make to the commission?

Junior Bampia Mahoi: Yes, I have something to say. We have no job facilities. Things are difficult. I can operate a power saw, but there is no job – the rebels took away all my work tools during the war. I want the government to help me.

Comm. Torto: We would take your recommendations into consideration. In case you do not have any more recommendations, you may stand down. We thank you for coming.

DAY THREE

11th June 2003

FIRST WITNESS: Mamie Nallo

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

MAMIE NALLO'S TESTIMONY

When the rebels attacked us, I had a daughter who was seven months pregnant. A friend asked us to go to Bo. On our way to Bo, the rebels captured my daughter and I left her – she was calling out to me, “My mother! My mother! I’m dead”. Since that day, I have neither heard about nor seen her. On my way back, we arrived here and left for Yoweima. It was in this place that I was captured and raped. We later left Yoweima and went to Rotifunk. I had my sister’s children with me - one of them was a suckling mother. Her baby was taken from her and thrown away; she was slashed all over her body with a machete. The other child was killed. We then went and entered into the bush. It was in that bush that we left the wounded woman. Since then, we have not seen her - we cannot tell what happened to her thereafter. There was another five month’s old baby whose whereabouts we also know nothing about. When we arrived at Boweya, we decided to go to a farm hut for shelter. Late that evening, we heard voices and I thought it was some villagers that were returning to the village – little did we know that the voices were those of the rebels. When I began to move towards them, I realised that they were rebels - I had a baby on my back - and one of them pointed a gun at my throat, but another rebel told him to stop. The rebels that stopped his colleague told them not to kill me – he suggested that they should abduct me. After the other rebels had given in to the suggestion that i should abducted, the rebel that had made the suggestion told me that the baby would not survive, therefore I should throw it away. I threw the baby away. I followed the rebel to his colleagues. After I was introduced to the group, the commando asked me to tell him where we had kept our belongings. I told that I was a stranger in that place and that I did not know where the people’s properties were kept. Having said that, the commando hit me with his gun on my head and I bled heavily through my nose. Since I had told them that I was a stranger and that I knew nobody in that village, they asked me to cook for them. I then put water in a pan and placed on the fire. As the water in the pan was boiling, it spilled on my hand and feet. There were many of us and they raped us all night. In the morning, they took us to a deserted village and abandoned us there. It was in that village that I started experiencing lower abdominal pains which gradually came down to my vagina. Since I could not walk, they others left me in that village – I had nothing. From time to time, I went to the farms in search of cassava and palm kernel. Whenever I heard a gunshot, I would go into hiding for fear that the rebels would take me away again.

Later, the Kamajors came and started shooting - the soldiers returned fire. I was terrified and I left the village. I traveled to Moyamba using bush paths. All of my children got scattered during the attack. When I came to Moyamba, I found out that some of my children were with my friend. Not too long after I arrived in Moyamba, the friend told me that she was traveling by sea to Freetown - I was left with the children. The abdominal pain became severe - the color of the fluid was black. I then started bleeding through my nose and water was coming out of my vagina. Whenever I have sex, I feel severe pains. My house and properties were burnt down and everything was taken away from me. We have nothing - my surviving children and I find it difficult to sustain ourselves. I can not tell the location of my father’s children. The two main things that continue to affect me are the way I was raped and the killing of my daughter. Even as I sit here, I feel pain in the head – I experience severe headache everyday. I can not walk a long distance or carry heavy loads on my head.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you, Mamie. You have given a long narration of hardship and pain. We realise how you feel and we feel for you, but we think you should still look to the future for a better life. The fact that you should be courageous to accept is that what has

happened could not change, and do not blame yourself for what happened - realise that God has a purpose for you and that is why you did not die. Now I am asking you questions so that we can understand what you have told us. Where were you coming from when you left Bo?

Mamie Nallo: I was coming from Baoya to Bo.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you the only one captured on the way to Yoweima?

Mamie Nallo: I was with my children – we were separated.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you the only female?

Mamie Nallo: There were other women.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were they captured at the same time?

Mamie Nallo: I found the others with the rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You had so many encounters - you met the rebels when you were on your way from Bo; you left for Yoweima, you met them again; you arrived in Baoya, rebels went and met you again. So those were three separate occasions.

Mamie Nallo: Yes

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: can you tell us what group did they belong to?

Mamie Nallo: I cannot tell because they were many and they disguised themselves.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you say whether those who captured you on any of the occasions were rebels, Kamajors or SLA?

Mamie Nallo: I can not tell because they were all dressed in military fatigue?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: They asked you for your properties and then they were going to kill you and you spoke to them - what language were they speaking?

Mamie Nallo: They were speaking Mende, but they spoke the eastern Mende dialect.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did you get to spill the boil water on your feet and hand?

Mamie Nallo: I was cooking - then I was nervous.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: what type of food were you cooking and where did they get it?

Mamie Nallo: we were about to prepare chicken, but I cannot say where they got it.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who had the baby that was thrown away?

Mamie Nallo: It was my baby.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old was the baby?

Mamie Nallo: It was a year and five months old.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: For how long did all these sufferings last?

Mamie Nallo: I cannot tell, but we stayed there for sometime - we spent years there.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You were taken to a deserted village - can you tell the name of the village?

Mamie Nallo: I do not know the name of that village. I did not usually stay in the village - I spent the rest of my lime in the farm hut.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did you know they that the Kamajord and the soldiers were the ones that were fighting?

Mamie Nallo: when I was in my hiding place and heard the gunshots, I had to leave the place and go further into hiding. That was when I met the Kamajor. I was terrified by the way he was dressed. I wanted to run away, but he said that if I attempted to run, he would kill me. I then told him that I was going to Moyamba and he asked, "Are you a rebel?" I replied that I was not a rebel and he said, "Let's go". He walked closely behind me - he accompanied me to village called Mokowo. Before he released me, he told me that the soldiers and Kamajors were fighting. "If you are lucky", he said, "You will survive."

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now that you say you are bothered by the death and disappearance of your daughter, have you had counseling?

Mamie Nallo: No, this is the first time I have explained my ordeal.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now, about your physical pains, have you seen a doctor?

Mamie Nallo: Yes, I went to a hospital at Baoya and the dispenser told me that the pain in my head was a sore and he was treating me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What about the vaginal discharge?

Mamie Nallo: I use native herbs and it is much better now - the flow has subsided, but my menstrual flow has not yet changed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have many children that you currently care for?

Mamie Nallo: I have seven children: Mummy, Madie, Brima, Memunatu, Mohamed, Musa and Rebecca.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are they all your children?

Mamie Nallo: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I mean your natural children.

Mamie Nallo: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When you leave here, our Briefer will give you some referees so that you can see a doctor to see how you can get help for children - food and education for the children. Do you currently have a man?

Mamie Nallo: Owing to the abdominal pains, I am reluctant I to have lovers on and off.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We are sorry to have heard all these from you. We sympathize with you and we hope that you seek medical attention and try to forget all that has happened. We want you to give us the names of all those who died - the ones you lost personally.

Mamie Nallo: Isata Nallo, Lucy Nallo, Magbindi Nallo and Nyagbwah Nallo,

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now, you have been talking to us and we have been asking you - have you any questions for the Commission?

Mamie Nallo: The only question I have is that now that all these things have happened to us and we can not divert anything, can you help with the welfare of my children? I have no husband; nobody to help me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: The TRC does not have money to give to people, but, when we make recommendations, your community will benefit and you will also benefit. Now, we refer witnesses for medical attention and other help and something good may come out of this. Do you have any other question?

Mamie Nallo: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have recommendations to make to the Commission?

Mamie Nallo: Yes, shelter and food are our main problems. All the children I have are school going children.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What do you do for a living?

Mamie Nallo: Since I have this pain, I can no longer do hard work or carry heavy loads; all I do is petty trading.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We thank you for coming and now that you have spoken out, we hope you feel better. The place to which we refer you will be of help to you. Thank you once again for coming.

SECOND WITNESS: Assanatu Koroma

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old are you?

Assanatu: I am sixteen years.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: In what year were you born?

Assanatu: I was born on 9th October 1988.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you go to school?

Assanatu: Yes, I attend MDEC School, Rotifunk.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What class are you?

Assanatu: I am in class five.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you will be sitting for the NPSE next year.

Assanatu: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now that you are sixteen, you have to work very hard so that you will have a double promotion to take your exams next year.

ASSANATU KOROMA'S TESTIMONY

My foot was amputated. We were in Freetown when we heard that the rebels were coming. I ran into the house and then I heard gunshots all over the place. Suddenly, I felt something piercing me on my foot. When the situation calmed down, I was taken to the hospital for medical treatment.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Since you do not want to talk, I am going to ask you questions. What were you doing in Freetown?

Assanatu Koroma: I was taken to Freetown in order to assist my aunt who was pregnant.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where were your parents at that time?

Assanatu Koroma: They were in Kono.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where are you staying now?

Assanatu Koroma: I am staying at Rotifunk.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you are not with your parent.

Assanatu Koroma: I am not with my parents.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So they leave without you.

Assanatu Koroma: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What do they do for a living?

Assanatu Koroma: They are farmers.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many of you do your parents have as children ?

Assanatu Koroma: There are nine of us.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old is the eldest?

Assanatu Koroma: I can not tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you the eldest or what order are you?

Assanatu Koroma: I am the fifth.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you must have some brothers or sisters who are older than you.

Assanatu Koroma: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: For how long were you at Wellington?

Assanatu Koroma: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you tell the date when this firing took place at Wellington?

Assanatu Koroma: Yes, it was on January 6th 1999.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now, when did you go to the hospital for treatment?

Assanatu Koroma: I was taken to the hospital on 7th January 1999.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Nonetheless, your wound went so bad that your leg had to be amputated?

Assanatu Koroma: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were there doctors in the hospital?

Assanatu Koroma: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why have you not been given artificial limbs?

Assanatu Koroma: My foot had not healed up properly.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Has it healed up now?

Assanatu Koroma: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Since it has healed up now, have you tried to get one?

Assanatu Koroma: A white man bought the limb for me, but there was an attack on Makeni on the day it was to be fixed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: And you later heard nothing about it.

Assanatu Koroma: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I will ask our Briefer to see if she can make any referral so that you can be considered again. Apart from the foot, are you in good health?

Assanatu Koroma: I feel pain in my elbow.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Is that as a result of the attack?

Assanatu Koroma: No, it is the strain of handling the crutch.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you told them in the hospital about it so that they can teach you how to use the crutch.

Assanatu Koroma: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I have been asking you a lot of questions; have you any questions for the Commission.

Assanatu Koroma: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now you are fifteen years, you are quite a big girl and you go to school; have you any recommendations that we could include in our report about all what has happened?

Assanatu Koroma: Yes, I am asking the government to help me with my education. We all live in a single room. I am recommending that government helps us with shelter.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. We are sorry about your accident and we hope that you will do well in school and your public exams. We wish you well.

THIRD WITNESS: Jenneh Beahaie

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

JENNEH BEAHAIE'S TESTIMONY

When the rebels attacked Gbalahun, they captured me. They gave us the task of preparing their food; if you refused, you would be dealt with severely. We laundered their clothes, cooked their food and did so many other hard works for them. When they attacked Kailahun, they stayed there. We were told that whatever we needed, we should go to Kailahun and get it. People made took the risk and went to Kailahun. When everything got finished in Kailahun, the rebels began to attack people who went to Kailahun – the rebels attacked people for food. When they went to the houses, if they found a woman in a house, they would rape her. If they found a man in a house, they would tie him. They did this for a long time and they later launched what they referred to as “Top 20” which meant that the captives were to be killed - they killed so many people. They later launched “Top 40”; they then added rape and sexual violence to the list of atrocities - they would insert a pestle in a woman’s virgina. This happened for a long time. Afterwards, Foday Sankoh passed an order that the junior commandos should go to Liberia. They stayed there for quite a long time and then Foday Sankoh came from Pendembu and told them that they should come and fight in Sierra Leone. They also launched “Top Final”. When the junior commandos came from Liberia, they drove away the Special Forces that came from Liberia. They later got another order from Foday Sankoh to attack Kono, which they did. They stayed there for two days. We later learnt that they had left Kono. However, not too long after that, they tried to return to Kono, but it was difficult. They returned to Pendembu. Later, the forces loyal to the government drove them from Pendembu and they were pushed to Kailahun. The soldiers were based in Kailahun. One day, we heard gunshots and we left for Buedu. We passed the night at Buedu and we were again driven during another attack. The soldiers continued to attack the positions of the rebels until Foday Sankoh decided that they should begin jungle warfare. When the soldiers finally drove us into the bush, we were there for a long time without medicines and food. Many people went with the rebels into the jungle. We were in a village called Magbah until my husband sent for me – that was after the death of our child. We then went into a bush at Tadu. We were in that bush when the ULIMO soldiers attacked us. We went further into the bush and they left. When we later returned to the village, we learnt that Colonel Issa Sesay had ordered his men to go and fight in Liberia. They captured many civilians and brought them to Sierra Leone. Those captives had children among them - one of them was my child. A good number of the adult captives ran

away to Liberia. The ones that did not return to Liberia were, on the orders of Issa Sesay, taken to RUF held territories. People were sent from the camps in order to go and collect those captives. The RUF killed all of the ones that were taken away to the camps – including the children that were with them. At one time there was an attack on Buedu and it was during that attack that I lost my husband. After his death, his relatives came to take me along with them to Moyamba - then I was four months pregnant and we stayed in the village until I delivered a baby boy. The baby was three months old when we heard that men with the single-barrel had come. Those men who carried single-barrel guns captured Ngama - a rebel base. However, the rebels recaptured the base after two days. We were there until we heard that there was peace and people were moving to and from Daru. We were there when the Kamajors went there. The Kamajors were there for a long time. One day, there was a meeting for all those who had went there from Daru. It was during that meeting that they took down names - they had a list of all the captives. While the Kamajors were imprisoned, all the civilians were released. Later, the Kamajors were killed. Owing to the killing of the Kamajors, another set of Kamajors attacked the rebels and engaged them in combat. The battle continued until the United Nations Peacekeepers went to Kailahun. From time to time the UN brought out the rebels to clean the roads and sent them to the farm. Time there was when we heard that one of the UN personnel had died and that they had taken body away - I can not tell where the body was taken to. The UN Peacekeepers that were based in Kailahun were evacuated at night. When the last batch of UN Peacekeepers was about to move, the rebels followed them and fought with them. I was on my way to Mendegebuma when I came across two commandos who raped me. Then, I had just delivered my baby. The rebels raped me on a number of occasions. At the time they raped me on my way to Mendegebuma, it had been announced that the war was over and that whoever wanted to go to his or her home town was free to do so. In the year 2001, I came to my aunt in Bo and 2002 I finally came back to my place of birth at Banta Mokele where I am currently staying.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you Jenneh. We are sorry that you fell among those people and spent so long a time with them. We sympathize with you. Now I am going to ask you a few questions because I want you to explain to me further. When you were captured, you said you used to prepare food, launder, etc - how many of you were there?

Jenneh Beahaie: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were there men and women?

Jenneh Beahaie: Both men and women were there.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who captured them?

Jenneh Beahaie: The people who captured us were many.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What group did they belong to?

Jenneh Beahaie: I only knew one of them – Rambo; they were rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I want to know if they were RUF, SLA, Kamajors, etc?

Jenneh Beahaie: They were RUF.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When you were in Kailahun, the rebels used to attack people - did you join them in any of the attacks?

Jenneh Beahaie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did you do whilst they attacked?

Jenneh Beahaie: I was not with them by then; I was pregnant.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you stayed behind in the bush.

Jenneh Beahaie: We were in the village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You had already been given a husband.

Jenneh Beahaie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was the man one of the rebels?

Jenneh Beahaie: When he was initially captured, he did not join them; nine months later, he decided to join them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: However, you were pregnant for this man who was with the rebels.

Jenneh Beahaie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What happened to him?

Jenneh Beahaie: He was killed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When and at what point?

Jenneh Beahaie: Buedu.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did they mean by "Top 20", "Top 40" and "Top Final"? How did the figures come in?

Jenneh Beahaie: "Top 20" meant that when Special Forces came, they captured junior commandos and killed them - whoever was found in the bush was killed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What was the rank of the rebel husband?

Jenneh Beahaie: He was later promoted to Lieutenant.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was he among those who went to Liberia?

Jenneh Beahaie: They ordered them to go, but he did not go with them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who were the people in his own group?

Jenneh Beahaie: One C. O. Bazooka.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was he a Sierra Leonean?

Jenneh Beahaie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you remember any other names?

Jenneh Beahaie: There were many of them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did C. O. Bazooka come back to fight in Sierra Leone.

Jenneh Beahaie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you initiated into the RUF?

Jenneh Beahaie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You said you were pregnant for the RUF - did you give birth? Where is the child?

Jenneh Beahaie: I delivered, but the baby died in the bush.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You told us that your bush husband died at Buedu – did he die during a fight? How did he die?

Jenneh Beahaie: He was killed when they went to attack.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you ever see Foday Sankoh?

Jenneh Beahaie: It was very difficult for civilianS to see Foday Sankoh.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How was the jungle prepared?

Jenneh Beahaie: I cannot tell exactly because we stayed in the village; I heard the names of several jungles.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you stay in the village with civilians?

Jenneh Beahaie: I was living with the civilians together with the rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did all the people know that you were living with rebels?

Jenneh Beahaie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where was your original husband?

Jenneh Beahaie: He was with me in the village, but he later went to Dodo.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many husbands had you?

Jenneh Beahaie: I had my first husband who sent for me after I had delivered and I lost the baby after the death of that husband; I got another and he was the one that was killed at Buedu.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you ever meet Colonel Issa Sesay?

Jenneh Beahaie: Yes, but we were never acquaintances.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you all live together?

Jenneh Beahaie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What was your opinion with regards to the life of the rebels?

Jenneh Beahaie: It was a very difficult life – I did all types of odd jobs, yet I was raped.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many times were you raped?

Jenneh Beahaie: Several times.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: At this meeting, they took down the names of people - were you present at the meeting?

Jenneh Beahaie: I was not at the meeting because it was for rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you present when Kamajors were killed?

Jenneh Beahaie: This happened in Kailahun, while we were at Gbalahun.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you know how many of them were killed.

Jenneh Beahaie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did they kill the Kamajors?

Jenneh Beahaie: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did the UN move from Kailahun?

Jenneh Beahaie: The UN troops moved due to the way they were treated.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: By whom?

Jenneh Beahaie: By the rebels

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did the rebels kill the UN who lost his life?

Jenneh Beahaie: No, they were working in a swamp. Later, we heard that one of them had died as a result of cold.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You said they were working in the farm - what were they doing?

Jenneh Beahaie: They ploughed the swamp and brushed the roads.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you never saw any fighting?

Jenneh Beahaie: No, I always ran away when I heard gunshots.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You told us that you were raped often - what is your health condition now?

Jenneh Beahaie: Previously, I had lower abdominal pains, but it has subsided. However, I still suffer from body pains and loss of weight.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you sought medical attention?

Jenneh Beahaie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What are you doing now? Do you have a husband?

Jenneh Beahaie: I have no body that is ready to marry me, but I have a lover.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many children have you?

Jenneh Beahaie: I have three children and one adopted child.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How do you have your earning?

Jenneh Beahaie: Things are very difficult for me. It is my brother who assists me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What work does he do?

Jenneh Beahaie: He is a nurse.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you been trained in any skills?

Jenneh Beahaie: I am undergoing skills training.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where?

Jenneh Beahaie: At Banta Mokele.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What type of training?

Jenneh Beahaie: Tailoring.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions for the Commission?

Jenneh Beahaie: No, but I am appealing to you to help us. There is no road network; the river in our village needs a bridge so that the route would be shorter. Secondly I want you to help my children and I to continue my course in tailoring. There is nobody that I depend on for assistance.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: These are not questions, but recommendations. The recommendations for bridge and roads to be maintained and help for the children and yourself will be put in our report. We are sorry that you fell into there crutches. Do you have any other recommendation?

Jenneh Beahaie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you once more for coming and helping the Commission.

FOURTH WITNESS: Ramatu Kallah

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

RAMATU KALLAH'S TESTIMONY

We were in the bush when two Kamajors went and met us there. The Kamajors took away all my belongings and money, and they killed my niece, brothers and sisters. They accused my parents of being rebels and added that the all the members of our family were rebels. We were brought to the village. The little boy who brought food for my father was killed by a small rebel. Another woman was stabbed on the nose and she died.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now that you have said very little, we will ask you questions so that you can explain. What were you doing in the bush?

Ramatu Kallah: We were in hiding.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many of you were in the bush?

Ramatu Kallah: There were twenty of us in the bush.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who were the other people?

Ramatu Kallah: My father, mother, ten girls and ten boys.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many sisters and brothers were there?

Ramatu Kallah: Ten sisters and ten brothers.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: For how long were you in the bush before the Kamajors went there?

Ramatu Kallah: They went there the same day we went there.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did the Kamajors know that you were in the bush?

Ramatu Kallah: A neighbour of ours told them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you rebels, as they alleged?

Ramatu Kallah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did the Kamajors do when they met you in the bush?

Ramatu Kallah: They killed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Tell me the people they killed.

Ramatu Kallah: Iye Bangura.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who was Iye Bangura to you?

Ramatu Kallah: She was my neighbour. She also killed Alusine Dauda, my nephew; Alusine Kamara, my neighbour; Memuna Sesay of Koya - she was pregnant and was about to deliver when she was killed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did the Kamajors kill these particular people?

Ramatu Kallah: They were accused of being rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So they selected them and killed them.

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: The others, what happened to them?

Ramatu Kallah: They begged for mercy.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: After pleading, did the Kamajors take them away or release them?

Ramatu Kallah: They left them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So they remained in the bush.

Ramatu Kallah: They went to town.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So they did not harass you.

Ramatu Kallah: Yes, they did not.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: In what year did this happen?

Ramatu Kallah: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where did this happen?

Ramatu Kallah: At Bradford.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old were you then?

Ramatu Kallah: I was eighteen years.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old are you now?

Ramatu Kallah: I am nineteen.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So this happened last year.

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: At the time they attacked, were you married?

Ramatu Kallah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you married now?

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How long have you been married?

Ramatu Kallah: I have been married for five years now.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: This baby, is she yours?

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old is the baby?

Ramatu Kallah: One year.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Is she your first child?

Ramatu Kallah: No, the first child is dead.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So this is your second child.

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Is there anything more you want to tell us? Did they do anything to your father?

Ramatu Kallah: Yes, he was captured.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was he captured when he was in the town?

Ramatu Kallah: He came out of the bush and he was captured in the village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did they do to him?

Ramatu Kallah: He spent a night with them and, later, he was released.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What about your mother?

Ramatu Kallah: She was also captured.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did they do any thing to her?

Ramatu Kallah: She came out of the bush and she was about to go back to Malamu when they captured her; she was released later.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You told us that your brothers and sisters were killed, but you did not mention their names. Were they your brothers and sisters, when did they kill them?

Ramatu Kallah: I cannot remember.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was it the time when the Kamajors met you in the bush.

Ramatu Kallah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was it before or after the Kamajors met you in the bush?

Ramatu Kallah: Iye Bangura was killed on a Saturday.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was she your sister?

Ramatu Kallah: No, she was my mother's friend.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Any other?

Ramatu Kallah: Alusine Kamara was killed and eaten in the bush.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How do you know that - were you told?

Ramatu Kallah: My dad and others told me that.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was any other person killed?

Ramatu Kallah: My younger brother was shot by a Kamajor.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where did they shoot him?

Ramatu Kallah: In his head.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was it the same time the two Kamajors met you in the bush?

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you already given their names?

Ramatu Kallah: Ibrahim Kallah, my brother and the son of Alpha Jalloh.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What about your sister, have you given us her name?

Ramatu Kallah: She was Fatmata Sesay.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you always been so slow in responding.

Ramatu Kallah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you particularly worried about something?

Ramatu Kallah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What does your husband do?

Ramatu Kallah: He works with GTZ.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you work yourself?

Ramatu Kallah: No, I am a gardner.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: For how long did the Kamajors stay around with you?

Ramatu Kallah: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: However, they did not hail from your area.

Ramatu Kallah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions to ask the Commission?

Ramatu Kallah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you nay recommendations?

Ramatu Kallah: (No response.)

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Even if you do nOt have any recommendation, is there anything that you want to tell us?

Ramatu Kallah: No

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Alright, thank you for coming. We wish you luck in your gardening.

Ramatu Kallah: I want medical facilities, schools, hospital, court barray, market place, Mosque, Church.

FIFTH WITNESS: Abie Lasayo

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

ABIE LASAYO'S TESTIMONY

We were in the bush and the rebels met us in the bush camp. I was captured by one of them who raped me and left me. Since he raped me, I have been experiencing abdominal pains. My husband bought medicines which he administered to me. On the day I was captured, I was stripped naked and all my properties were taken from me. We then went to Bo where we stayed until the war ended. When the war ended, we returned to the village. This was the problem I encountered during the war and this is the testimony that I gave to the statement takers.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming and sharing your experience with us. Why were you in the bush?

Abie Lasayo: We were driven by the rebels who kept attacking our village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Which village was that?

Abie Lasayo: Jayahun.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What year was that?

Abie Lasayo: I cannot remember.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What group did they belong to?

Abie Lasayo: The one that captured me was dressed as a civilian.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you are not able to tell the group that attacked you.

Abie Lasayo: I cannot tell which group attacked us.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What language were they speaking?

Abie Lasayo: They one that captured me spoke Mende.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where was your husband when you were captured?

Abie Lasayo: We were in the bush while he went to the town to collect our belongings.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did the rebels take from you.

Abie Lasayo: My clothes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So the rebels left you naked and took your clothes away.

Abie Lasayo: They took the ones in the bag and left the one I was wearing.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: After they had gone, did any one come to your rescue?

Abie Lasayo: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did you get back to where you were?

Abie Lasayo: When he left me, I got up and ran away to my previous hiding place.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How soon after did your husband return?

Abie Lasayo: It was a day after the incident that my husband went to our hideout.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you report to him what happened?

Abie Lasayo: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was he supportive?

Abie Lasayo: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did he say?

Abie Lasayo: He did not say anything; he bought medicines, gave them to me and asked me to go to Bo.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did he sympathize with you?

Abie Lasayo: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What year did this happen?

Abie Lasayo: I clearly said earlier on that I could not remember.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you children?

Abie Lasayo: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many?

Abie Lasayo: Two.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were they born after this incident or before?

Abie Lasayo: One was born before the incident and one was born after the incident.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you in good health now?

Abie Lasayo: I say thanks to God.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you continuing to take medical treatment?

Abie Lasayo: I do not go to the hospital; my husband buys medicines for me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did you not go to the hospital – yourself - so that the doctor would diagnose and give you prescriptions that you could use to buy medicines? I know your husband may be helpful to you.

Abie Lasayo: The abdominal pains come at intervals.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You have to go to the hospital. Have you been bothered by these experiences?

Abie Lasayo: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you had any counseling?

Abie Lasayo: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did the Briefer here speak to you?

Abie Lasayo: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: The Briefer will talk to you when you leave here so that you can get it off your mind. It happened to you because of the war and you are lucky to have good health and an understanding husband that is helping you. I have been talking to you; have you any questions to ask?

Abie Lasayo: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendations to make?

Abie Lasayo: The only help I need is for you to make a way for us to have money in order to keep my children and me going.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: unfortunately, the TRC does not have money to give to witnesses. However, your recommendation will be included in our report. Thank you very much for coming. Do you have anything more to say?

Abie Lasayo: No

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you once again.

SIXTH WITNESS: Mohamed Momoh

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

MOHAMED MOMOH'S TESTIMONY

I was a student of the St. Francis Primary School in Bo and I was dependent on my uncle for support in education. I was there until 1995 when I heard that my uncle had been killed. I decided to go and confirm whether the story was correct. I went there and found out that it was true - my other uncle was amputated.

Not too long after my arrival, I was captured by the rebels who took me to Mokbanji. In Mokbanji, they shot me in left thumb – that was intended to serve as a mark that would prevent me from escaping. When we left Mokbanji, we went to Jendema. When we left Jendema, they took me to Bagbo where I fell sick. They decided to kill me because I was sick, but the commando told them not to kill me. His argument was that I may recover from my illness. When I recovered from my illness, they began to give me drugs which made me abnormal. They started training me and they told me that in a long run, I will benefit from it. At first, I refused - I told them that I was a small boy and I could not undertake that venture. However, they continued to give me the drugs that made me abnormal.

When they took us to Gerehun, the loyal forces attacked us; they killed people and burnt down houses. Thereafter, they asked us to travel to Yamandu and, later, to Tongo. During a battle in

Tongo, I fell into a pit and I sustained bullet wounds. I was there for three days without food and water. One morning, they came and removed me from the pit and they gave me medicines. They asked me to continue the fight and they told me that Tongo was under our control. We were there and we later went to Jembeh. At Jembeh, I decided that the war was not good for me and I escaped from them. I said to myself, "I am going back to my home." I came back to my village and the news went round the village that I had been with the rebels and that I was back in town. I went back to meet my colleagues so that I could not be killed. Later, they went to Bo and they met me there. They attacked Bo, but they did not succeed. I then joined them again and we moved to Koyeima where we stayed for some time before they told us to proceed to Yele. I took up arms in the year 200, but it was not my wish to take up arms. When I returned to my home at Dambala Kaikobia, the Kamajors arrested me – they tied me and placed me in the sun for the rest of the day. I did not say anything until the battalion commander told them to release me. I was released and I stayed in the town for a week before I went to my village. When I went home, my people said that since I had been a rebel, they were going to kill me. I pleaded for mercy and told them that I did not join the rebels advertently. I was in the village until the war was declared ended.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for telling us about your experiences. It is a good thing that you are back home and I hope you will stay there and be of help. We have some questions to ask you so that everything would be clear to us. How old were you at the time you were captured

Mohamed Momoh: I was fifteen years old.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did your uncle get killed.

Mohamed Momoh: He was stabbed all over his body.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: By whom?

Mohamed Momoh: By the RUF.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did the RUF also amputate your uncle?

Mohamed Momoh: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When you were taken away, what was your training like?

Mohamed Momoh: I was taught how to use gun, how to shoot, crawl and run in the bush and how to roll.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who were the people that taught you all these things?

Mohamed Momoh: The RUF.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you going to give us the names?

Mohamed Momoh: Manawa, Subuhanalai and Junior Sam.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What was the position of Manawa?

Mohamed Momoh: He was the battalion commander.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What was the rank of Junior Sam?

Mohamed Momoh: He was a Sergeant.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What types of drugs were given you?

Mohamed Momoh: They gave me cocaine, gun powder, 9 9, etc.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When you took the drugs, how did you feel?

Mohamed Momoh: At first I got drunk and it seemed as though there was a pit before me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You said you returned to your village, Jembeh, and you moved to Koyeima - how did this happen?

Mohamed Momoh: When I was told that they were going to kill me in my village, I left the village and, on my way, I met them at Towama. They captured me and tied up. They said, "This is our colleague and he had left us". They asked, "Where have you been?"

Comm. Torto: During your captivity with the rebels, did you take part in cannibalism?

Mohamed Momoh: No.

Comm. Torto: Did you see people being killed and eaten by others?

Mohamed Momoh: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Where was that?

Mohamed Momoh: That was when we were at Gbagow.

Comm. Torto: Then, that time you were forced to eat.

Mohamed Momoh: When they were preparing the food, I moved out of the area.

Comm. Torto: You were captured at Dambala Kaikobia - did you fight with the Kamajors?

Mohamed Momoh: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did you escape?

Mohamed Momoh: I was braced for the rest of the day and I stayed with them. They later discovered that I was not a rebel. I was released and, after one week, I escaped from them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You ran again and joined the rebels?

Mohamed Momoh: Since then, I did not join the rebels again; I went home and asked for forgiveness from my parents.

Comm. Torto: When they were cooking the human flesh, did you see them kill anybody.

Mohamed Momoh: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now you said you are twenty, how old were you when you were first captured?

Mohamed Momoh: I was fifteen years.

Leader of Evidence: Most of the attacks took place in the night - how many times did you attack towns or villages while you were with the rebels?

Mohamed Momoh: I cannot tell precisely, but it happened many times. There were times when they woke us up to fight.

Leader of Evidence: Can you now tell us how many people you killed?

Mohamed Momoh: I cannot tell the number.

Leader of Evidence: Did you not also abduct children?

Mohamed Momoh: I did not capture children, but I saw my colleagues abduct children.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us about the rape of children and women?

Mohamed Momoh: The number of rape cases were many; I cannot tell exactly how many.

Leader of Evidence: Did you take part?

Mohamed Momoh: No.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have a bush wife?

Mohamed Momoh: No.

Leader of Evidence: In your statement, you talked about pistols and L M G - did you use these weapons?

Mohamed Momoh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were did they eat the human flesh as you told the commissioner?

Mohamed Momoh: It was in the camp; we used to cook it as our daily meal.

Leader of Evidence: Which camp was that?

Mohamed Momoh: Camp Charlie, Mogow and Camp Zogoda.

Leader of Evidence: So it was a continuous event.

Mohamed Momoh: We were at Jendema when it happened.

Leader of Evidence: Did you have Liberians with you by then?

Mohamed Momoh: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: You talked about arms, where were you getting those arms from?

Mohamed Momoh: At times the arms were brought by helicopters and from Liberia to our camp.

Leader of Evidence: Did you see any inscription on those helicopters?

Mohamed Momoh: Yes, they had Red Cross logo and they supplied us with medicines.

Leader of Evidence: You were a pupil when you were captured; what are you doing now?

Mohamed Momoh: As at now, I am not doing anything. I was a school going child when I was captured and the one that was paying my fees is no more.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did you not go back to your village of origin?

Mohamed Momoh: Our house was burnt down.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: But they have accepted you.

Mohamed Momoh: They have accepted me, but they said that if any other war breaks out, we would be the first people to be killed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you asked your religious leader to help you?

Mohamed Momoh: That is why I go to church.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: But you are not a Christian.

Mohamed Momoh: I am a Christian

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions to ask the Commission?

Mohamed Momoh: Yes, I have something to say. When I was coming here to testify, my people thought that I would not return. I came here to let you know that it was not our wish to join the rebels. I want to know if you have anything to do to me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did they think will happen to you when you come here?

Mohamed Momoh: They said they have a special court that is coming up in this country and that the statement takers had taken statements from. They said that once one was taken to the TRC, one would not come back.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Tell them that TRC has nothing to do with the Special Court. You will talk to our briefer so that she can direct you to an NGO where they will help you.

SEVENTH WITNESS: Mohamed Mansaray

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

MOHAMED MANSARAY'S TESTIMONY

The rebels were running after us in the bush until the time when we left for Four Mile. They chased us in the bush and I was captured and taken to Benguema from where we came to look for food at Four Mile. Wherever we meet food, clothes and creatures, we took them. We were at Benguema for two weeks. We later went to Mile 38 and we also went in search of food and clothes to wear. At Mile 38, a man was captured and killed. We were there until ECOMOG drove us from Mile 38 and, in the process, another woman was killed. We then went to a village called Mogbeni where we slept. Then, many people had been killed in the village and some were thrown into the river and some into the toilet. They gave me a gun to use, but Mr. Idrissa did not permit me to go to the front. We went out on patrol one day when we met so many cows that had been killed; we then brought them to our base. From that point, they did not allow me to go any- where; I was kept me alone in the house. Not too long, Brigadier Papay called the UN on the phone in

order to come and collect the children - they went and collected us; they took us to Freetown, Lungi and Lunsar. They later interrogated us in order to know the whereabouts of our parents. After a while, we were taken to our villages.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How old were you when you were captured?

Mohamed Mansaray: Eight years.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: In what year were you released?

Mohamed Mansaray: In 2000.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many years did you spend with the rebels?

Mohamed Mansaray: I cannot tell because I was with them for a long time.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What group did you belong to?

Mohamed Mansaray: The West Side Boys group.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: And you stayed with them at Okra Hills.

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where did the UN take you?

Mohamed Mansaray: They took me to Robonka.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Where is Robonka?

Mohamed Mansaray: Between Rotifunk and Bradford.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you go to school?

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What class have you attained?

Mohamed Mansaray: Class four.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You have wasted all these years with the rebels and you have to work hard. Are you doing well?

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You should try hard and have double promotions so that you will take your NPSE in the next academic year. Why was the man killed at Mile 38?

Mohamed Mansaray: He was killed at the time that ECOMOG wanted to drive us from Mile 38.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was he an ECOMOG soldier?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why was he killed then?

Mohamed Mansaray: He was killed just because they wanted to kill him.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you see him killed?

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How was he killed?

Mohamed Mansaray: He was butchered with an axe.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What was he doing when he was killed?

Mohamed Mansaray: He was captured and killed.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did they kill all the people at Mogbeni?

Mohamed Mansaray: When they met them in the town, they just opened fire on them and killed them.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did you feel when you were with them?

Mohamed Mansaray: I felt good.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you enjoy staying with them?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Torto: During you captivity, did you kill?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you know how to use a gun.

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did they give you drugs?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Mr. Leader of Evidence: When you were sent to go in search of food at that time, did you take a gun along with you?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How were you going in search for food?

Mohamed Mansaray: While we were moving, we would threaten people with the gun and they would run away - then we would take their food.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did they go with you or did they go all by themselves?

Mohamed Mansaray: I was moving along with them?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now is time for you to ask us questions. However, before you ask your question, let me ask you how you are doing in the community - did your parents welcome you?

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What about your school - do the other children know what happened to you?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you not told them about it?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So they treat you well.

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions to ask the Commission?

Mohamed Mansaray: Yes, I have a question. What do you have to give to me so that you can help with my education?

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You are at the stage now when you have free education and your parents will pay the other charges. By the time you are ready to go to secondary school, free education will be on, and we will put that in our report. Do you have any other questions?

Mohamed Mansaray: Our village had been burnt down; I want the government to help in rehabilitating our village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: That is recommendation. You want government to help rebuild your village. We are going to include that in our report so that government would help in rehabilitating those devastated places. Do you have any other recommendation?

Mohamed Mansaray: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming.

EIGHTH WITNESS: Alie Kamara

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

ALIE KAMARA'S TESTIMONY

I was at Mordavies with my father and we left for another village called Mogoba. We went to collect rice from where we kept our belongings. After that, we came back. I was sitting on the veranda of our house and my father was inside the house, when I saw many people coming towards our house. The group was led by my father's brother, Mr. Usman Kamara. When they came, I notified my father that his brother was the leader of the group. They arrested me and my father. We were forced to sit on the ground. When I asked them what we had done, they said that if I asked them again, they would shoot me. We were then ordered to move into the ferry. They tied me and my father together - they chopped off the fingers of my father one after the other. Some took of the fingers and used them as neck laces. They took a stone and hit the face of my father. They killed him, removed his blood, put it in a cup and they asked me to drink the blood otherwise they would kill me. I drank the blood. Afterwards, they released me. They killed my

father on a Tuesday. That night, they told me that I was going to be killed the following morning – Wednesday. They braced me until night fell. When I woke later that night and realised that the rope had slackened, I got up, passed through the back of the house and ran into the bush. I laid there till dawn when I went to a big river and crossed over to the other side. I went to my relatives.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much, Alie. Your account is gruesome. Did you say that the group was led by your brother?

Alie Kamara: He was my uncle.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did your uncle want to kill your father?

Alie Kamara: I do not know.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What group did they belong to?

Alie Kamara: Kamajors.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did your father belong to any group?

Alie Kamara: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did the rope get slackened?

Alie Kamara: It was the work of God.

Comm. Torto: Do you know the people who killed your father?

Alie Kamara: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Who were they?

Alie Kamara: Usman Kamara, Foday Sankoh, Usman Sesay, Ibrahim Sesay and Sallu Mondeh,

Comm. Torto: Were are they now?

Alie Kamara: Two of them are at Mogoba.

Comm. Torto: When they killed your father, did you report the matter to any chief or those in authority?

Alie Kamara: No.

Comm. Torto: Why did you not report the matter?

Alie Kamara: I was small boy by then.

Comm. Torto: Did you discuss it with you mother?

Alie Kamara: Yes, but she did not take any action.

Comm. Torto: Did you discuss it with any other relative?

Alie Kamara: Yes, they only said we should cope and bury the past.

Leader of Evidence: The one who led the group was your uncle; do you know if there was any dispute between them?

Alie Kamara: No.

Leader of Evidence: You said that your dad had much acreage of land; do you know whether he was killed because of that?

Alie Kamara: He was killed because of his land.

Leader of Evidence: Who is controlling those acres of land now?

Alie Kamara: They pieces of land are controlled by my uncle that killed my father.

Leader of Evidence: Is he of the same father and mother as your father or were they cousins?

Alie Kamara: They are of the same mother, but not of the same father.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We have asked you questions, have you any questions that you want to ask the Commission?

Alie Kamara: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendations to make?

Alie Kamara: Yes, I want the government to help me rebuild the house that was burnt down. I have my brothers and sisters and there is nobody to support us - even to have food to eat is a problem.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What do you do now?

Alie Kamara: I am a farmer.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Are you farming on your own?

Alie Kamara: I am farming for my mother.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Is she a young, middle aged or an old woman?

Alie Kamara: She is a young woman.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Does she work?

Alie Kamara: Yes, she is also a farmer.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We will include your recommendations on employment and opportunities for the youths in our report. The TRC does not have money to give to people; we only hope and pray that government implements the recommendations we shall make and consider the needs of people who suffered during the war. Do you have any other recommendation?

Alie Kamara: No

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you once more for coming.

NINTH WITNESS: Isatu Sesay

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

ISATU SESAY'S TESTIMONY

I was in Gbangbatoke when the rebels attacked us. We fled into the bush. They chased us in the bush and they captured me. They took me to Moyamba where we spent a week and then proceeded to Kailahun. When we were in Kailahun, we captured people and killed them; this was what we were doing. While that was happening, I was raped before we went to another town. I was given a knife, a gun and military fatigue. The knife and the gun were the instruments that I used to kill people. When we killed them, we took the food that they had. They raped me persistently - morning, afternoon and evening. We always went to other towns in order to kill people; after that, we returned to Kailahun where we were based and did similar things. We burnt down the houses of people. One day, my uncle, who was a Kamajor, came and collected me and we had to return to Gbangbatoke.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you. How old were you when you were captured?

Isatu Sesay: I cannot tell because my mother has my birth certificate.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you remember the year you were captured?

Isatu Sesay: I cannot remember. I had told Hajarah when I was captured.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Had you started seeing your menses at the time you were captured?

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When did you see your Period?

Isatu Sesay: I have never seen my menses. The only thing is that my urine is red and I experience discharges.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: For how long were you with the rebels?

Isatu Sesay: I was with them for over ten years.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: For how long were you with them before they started raping you?

Isatu Sesay: It was when we went to Kailahun that they started raping me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: At that time, were you much older than the time you were captured?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you given any bush husband?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you have a special man or were you raped by different men?

Isatu Sesay: Whenever my husband went to the battle front, the others would come in and rape me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many of them?

Isatu Sesay: At times five, ten; as the case may be.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were you ever ill when you were with them?

Isatu Sesay: No, they were giving me cocaine.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you tell us what life was like at camp Zogoda?

Isatu Sesay: We had to fight and kill people before we could have anything to eat.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did they train you?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you know how to use gun?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did you use to kill; the gun or the knife?

Isatu Sesay: I used the knife to kill.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You are small in stature - how were you able to kill them with the knife?

Isatu Sesay: My colleagues helped me with that.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Since you came back, have you seen any of the people you were with in any of the camps?

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you have anybody in the camp to care for you when you were first captured?

Isatu Sesay: Yes, but that was after we came out of the bush.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What was the name of the person that took care of you?

Isatu Sesay: She was Sallay, but she died.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did she die?

Isatu Sesay: She fell sick and died.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who were the top people in the camp?

Isatu Sesay: There were two of them - Morie and Amara.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: They were all commanders.

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you fight everyday in the week?

Isatu Sesay: No, we did not fight on Thursdays and Fridays.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why did you not fight on those days?

Isatu Sesay: We went for prayers.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When you went to fight, what was your position at the front – were you in the middle or at the back?

Isatu Sesay: I was in the middle because I was small.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you ever get hurt?

Isatu Sesay: Nothing ever happened to me because I laid down flat on the ground when we were engaged in combat.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What did you eat when you were in the camp?

Isatu Sesay: We lived on animals such as cows, goats, etc.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who did the cooking?

Isatu Sesay: Sallay.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you cook.

Isatu Sesay: No, but I was sent to fetch water and to do other work.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was there any time you were ready to cook and you did not have anything to cook.

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: So you always had food.

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: If there was no food, what did you eat?

Isatu Sesay: I ate mud.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You ate mud.

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What else did you eat apart from mud?

Isatu Sesay: Cocaine; I either drank it or, sometimes, they injected me with it.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you eat human flesh at any time?

Isatu Sesay: We drank blood.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did that affect your stomach?

Isatu Sesay: Yes, after some time I had a swollen stomach and I felt pain in my bones.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now that you have come back, what is your health like?

Isatu Sesay: I still feel the pains in my bones.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Has your face always been like this?

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you been able to see a doctor?

Isatu Sesay: I have never gone for medical treatment, but I have been using native herbs.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you not think that you should see a doctor in the hospital?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Why have you not been to the hospital?

Isatu Sesay: I do not have money to pay the bills.

Isatu Sesay: Who came with you today to this hearing - your father?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What work does he do?

Isatu Sesay: He is a farmer, but he does not sell his products; they are meant for consumption – he is a subsistence farmer.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you been taking drugs since you came back?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Would like to be referred to a hospital?

Isatu Sesay: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you a boy friend now?

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have any questions to ask the Commission?

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendations that you want to make?

Isatu Sesay: Yes, I have recommendations to make. There are no stand pipes and we walk long distance to fetch water. We do not have electricity; the streets are not good - the roads leading to

Gbangbatoke are not good; we have no proper shelter. We usually go down to the jetty to help people sell their goods – we have nothing to do.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: TRC does not have money to give to people or to compensate people. However, we can make recommendations to the government for electricity, pipe borne water, good roads and shelter. Do you not think that your father could sell some of the things that he harvests - rather than eating all - so that you can have money?

Isatu Sesay: He usually sells the pepper from the farm, but he does not sell the rice because that is what we eat.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How do you feel about the time you spent with them and about all the things you did?

Isatu Sesay: I think of those things, but there is nothing I can do about it.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Does it worry your mind?

Isatu Sesay: No, I talk to my mother about it.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Now that you have come to share your testimony with us at the TRC, do you feel relieved?

Isatu Sesay: Yes, I feel relieved.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you not think that you should tell your Imam about it so that you can pray together over it?

Isatu Sesay: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: When you leave here, we will give you referees so that you can be well taken care of. Thank you once more for coming.

DAY FOUR
12th June, 2003.

FIRST WITNESS: Mamie Ngaujah

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

MAMIE NGAUJAH'S TESTIMONY

I was at Yoweima when it was attacked. I was at Yoweima together with my relatives. Kamajors guarded the village while we were there. On a Sunday, we saw a group of people come to the village. They held my brother. I, together with my brother, was asked to stand out. The attackers killed my brother and another person in my presence. They asked me to stand still. They cut off my brother's penis. They took all my belongings. After all these, they left. I fled into the bush as soon as they left. We suffered a lot in the bush. This is my testimony.

Comm. Torto: Thank you, Mamie. We are sorry for what happened to you. We thank God that you are alive to tell the story. Who actually attacked the village at that time?

Mamie Ngaujah: They were soldiers.

Comm. Torto: Where they soldiers or RUF?

Mamie Ngaujah: I cannot distinguish them, but they wore military fatigue.

Comm. Torto: Did some of them wear other clothes other than military fatigues?

Mamie Ngaujah: They all wore military fatigues.

Comm. Torto: What language were they speaking?

Mamie Ngaujah: When they ordered us to stand out, they did not say anything.

Comm. Torto: Do you know any of the people that attacked the village?

Mamie Ngaujah: They were strange people.

Comm. Torto: If you saw any of the attackers, would you identify them?

Mamie Ngaujah: No.

Comm. Torto: When did all these happen to you?

Mamie Ngaujah: It was at sunrise.

Comm. Torto: What I mean is whether it happened at Yoweima?

Mamie Ngaujah: Yes, it all happened at Yoweima.

Comm. Torto: Can you tell us the names of the people that they killed?

Mamie Ngaujah: I know the name of my brother - Gogba Musa; Yamba Golema was also killed. Other people were killed as well.

Comm. Torto: Is that all?

Mamie Ngaujah: Those were my relatives. However, many people were killed during that attack.

Comm. Torto: Does Yamba Songu remind you of anything?

Mamie Ngaujah: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. We sympathize with you for the loss of your brother and for Yamba as well. I have a few questions to ask you. The soldiers you saw on that Sunday - were they fighting amongst themselves?

Mamie Ngaujah: As far as I could tell, there was no fighting. They merely attacked and killed people.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you think of any reason why they killed your brother?

Mamie Ngaujah: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Looking at your statement here, it is not clear which body was mutilated – whether it was your brother's or the other man's?

Mamie Ngaujah: I clearly stated it in my testimony.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Whose body was mutilated - your brother's or the soldier's?

Mamie Ngaujah: I clearly stated it.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How did you manage to escape from the soldiers and go into the bush?

Mamie Ngaujah: After they had killed my brother and the other people, I went into the bush.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Did they not go after you?

Mamie Ngaujah: So many people were running; I did not look back to see if I was pursued.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know what was done to the body of Yamba Golema?

Mamie Ngaujah: After he was mutilated, I left.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know whether the people that the attackers killed were buried?

Mamie Ngaujah: I was in the bush; I cannot tell.

Comm. Torto: Mamie we have been asking you questions and you have answered. Do you have any questions to ask the Commission?

Mamie Ngaujah: I do not have any question.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations?

Mamie Ngaujah: Yes. My main concern is shelter and the drive to upgrade my village.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any more recommendations?

Mamie Ngaujah: That is all.

Comm. Torto: We thank you for all what you have said. We must be frank with you as you have been truthful to us. The Commission does not have the mandate to provide personal assistance for people. What we can do is to refer you to NGO's that are responsible for war victims. We encourage you to go to World Vision. Our Briefer might be able to tell the few NGO'S that operate in Moyamba District to render assistance to you. As regards the construction of roads that you mentioned, the Roads Authority has a programme to address issues concerning the roads that were damaged during the war. I believe that Rotifunk is among the places that have benefited from the roads construction drive. Thank you very much. You may step down.

WITNESS NAME: Marie Kamara

The witness swore n the Koran. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto r administered the oath.

MARIE KAMARA'S TESTIMONY

All I have to say is that my brother was killed in my absence. We were in the bush when I heard the sound of a gun. Upon hearing that sound, I, together with other people, fled to another village. On our way, our mother died in one of the villages that we passed through. I still cannot identify our mother's grave. I have no body to help me. This is my testimony. I had made a statement to the statement taker in the village.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for this short testimony. Do you know the fighting group that attacked your village?

Marie Kamara: When we were in the bush, we heard that they were rebels.

Comm. Torto: Where did the incident happen?

Marie Kamara: It happened at Robonka.

Comm. Torto: You said you were there when your brother was killed - did you not see the person that shot him?

Marie Kamara: I was not present.

Comm. Torto: We know that you ran away. However, did you later learn how many people were killed in the attack?

Marie Kamara: Two people were abducted - according to what I heard.

Comm. Torto: We thank you again for coming to the Commission. Have you any questions for the Commission/

Marie Kamara: No, I have no question.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations?

Marie Kamara: I need help – shelter - help in general.

Comm. Torto: What kind of help do you need?

Marie Kamara: I do not have shelter - I have nothing.

Comm. Torto: We thank you very much. I know that you were here when I was talking to the first witness. We are really sorry that the TRC does not have the mandate to build shelters for people. What we can do is to refer you to NGO'S like World Vision and IOM, which will assist you in these areas. I will encourage you to ask your Chief to tell you where these NGO'S are; do not be afraid to meet them - they will help. Do you have any more recommendations?

Marie Kamara: No, I do have any more recommendation.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for coming. You may step down.

THIRD WITNESS: Salifu Kanu

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

SALIFU KANU'S TESTIMONY

I was in my house one day when I saw a lot of people who – according to them - were soldiers of the Sierra Leone Army. Some wore T-Shirts and the Sierra Leone national colours on their shoulders. They entered into our houses and took everything away. They were there for a week. They told us that those who were going after them were wicked. On the day following their departure, they returned to the village - we heard gunshots. I heard knocking on my door and one of them asked, “Junior, why are you firing and causing the civilians to panic?” I went out and they ordered me to sit on the ground - they accused me of hosting soldiers. I told them that the soldiers had left for Moyamba. They threatened to kill me. They went into my room and took my radio. They eventually left the village; they did not burn houses. However, they burnt down four houses in the other village. Those who could make it fled and left us – the disabled - in the village. The attackers patrolled day in and day out. In 1996, I saw a group that identified themselves as Kamajors. They arrested George Mende and asked him to show them the road that led to Levuma. They captured Augustine Thomas and Samuel who accompanied them. One night – by 22 hours - Augustine started shouting that the Kamajors had dislodged the initial attackers that were trying to make a comeback. He advised me to go into hiding in the house and advised those that were not deformed to flee the village. Everybody, excepting those of us who were cripples, fled the village. On a Sunday, they attacked Mokele and abducted those that were trying to flee to Moyamba. On the Tuesday following the attack, they set fire to our houses; I saw flames in the other houses when I woke up. I crept out of the house and went into hiding under a palm tree by the Secondary School. They later – that same night – broke the school door and burnt down the school; everyone fled to Baoya. Three of us - Mama Joufue, Pa Kamara and I – remained in the village. On Monday, November 11, I saw many Kamajors. They wanted to enter into the house where we were, but their leader advised against that. He ordered them to check for people at Moyamba Road; they went half way. Three of them had guns and one had a cutlass – they told us to line up. They accused us of informing an enemy group on them. They chopped off the arm of an old woman. They stabbed Pa Kamara and me all over our bodies and on they stabbed me on the head. They chopped off my fingers and I lied down for five minutes. I had wanted to creep into hiding, but I could not go - I crawled on my stomach to the back of the house. When I managed to get into the house, I bound my wounds with a piece of cloth. By the grace of God, I managed to stand up and, when the sun was up, I went into the bush. By 19 hours, I arrived at Mokele. On the day following my arrival at Mokele, I arrived in Moyamba. When I arrived at a checkpoint, on my way to Moyamba, the soldiers asked me to explain my ordeal - I did. They then told me to go to the hospital. As I was approaching the former Railway Station, I fagged out and my child brought a wheelbarrow in which I was ridden to Moyamba. I was in Moyamba for twenty-three days. I was taken to Bo government hospital where I spent two months. I was later brought to Moyamba. This is the end of my testimony.

Comm. Torto: Salifu, we are sorry for what happened to you. You went through an agonizing experience. It is pathetic to hear that you were tortured. Which part of your hand did they chop?

Salifu Kanu: They chopped off the first two fingers on the right hand.

Comm. Torto: Do you remember the people that did that to you?

Salifu Kanu: If I saw them, I would identify them.

Comm. Torto: Do you know where they are?

Salifu Kanu: No.

Comm. Torto: What are their names?

Salifu Kanu: They were Kamajors.

Comm. Torto: Do you know their names?

Salifu Kanu: No.

Comm. Torto: When you explained your ordeal to the soldiers, what did they do?

Salifu Kanu: Nothing.

Comm. Torto: what happened to the two corpses?

Salifu Kanu: I think they were buried – I cannot really tell because I did not wait to see what happened afterward.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I sympathize with you for the inhuman treatment you suffered. You were disabled and they cut off your fingers. You were courageous as you crawled to safety. We thank you for coming to share your experience with the TRC.

Comm. Torto: Do you have questions for us?

Salifu Kanu: No.

Comm. Torto: Have you any recommendations for the Commission?

Salifu Kanu: Yes, Sir.

Comm. Torto: May we hear them?

Salifu Kanu: I am happy to be here today. I have nothing and my father left me in a burnt house. I am sick and I cannot work. I ask that the government helps in order to alleviate my sufferings. I went through so many things during the war.

Comm. Torto: What kind of help do you need?

Salifu Kanu: I need assistance in the area of shelter. I am currently without a permanent abode – I am always being thrown out by people.

Comm. Torto: At Baoya?

Salifu Kanu: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Every witness that has testified this day has asked for shelter. It is unfortunate - as I said earlier – that we have to repeat this point again and again. The TRC does not have the power to give anything to people individually and it does not even have money on its own to undertake such venture. If we had money for that, we would have assisted you because you are qualified for it. We will only recommend you to NGO'S which will render such assistance to you. Our staff will talk to you on that note and our Leader of Evidence will give you a letter that you will take to the relevant NGO'S and they would determine how they could help you.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any other recommendation?

Salifu Kanu: No, Sir.

Comm. Torto: Thank you. Everything you have been saying has been taken down.

SECOND WITNESS: John P. Bullie

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

JOHN P. BULLIE'S TESTIMONY

In January 1995, we were in Moyamba when we saw a big man - Tom Nyuma. He came along with four or five vehicles and they were going to Mokañji. Some of the men that were with him had combats. Some of the vehicles were tinted. After a while, we heard of an attack on Mokañji; the residents of Moyamba were panic stricken. When we saw people that came from Mokañji and the surrounding towns and villages, we escaped. There were soldiers of the Sierra Leone Army in Moyamba. After a while, on 13 March, we saw rebels in large numbers – they were coming to Moyamba. They said that they were going to Freetown. They captured people along Sembahun road. Some of us were in hiding. Whether they went to Freetown or not, I do not know. All that we heard of were attacks on surrounding villages. We opened a school for displaced persons in the township. After a while, Captain Musa came - he had a cordial relationship with the civilians. When we were attacked on August 10, Captain Musa and his group fought hard to defend the township. There is a bridge called "Hold the Bridge." Captain was later transferred and Gottor was sent as head of the military contingent in Moyamba - his group was unruly. There were times when the soldiers, under the leadership of Gottor, would leave the town in groups and we would later hear of an attack and looting in a village. Indeed, when such group returned, we saw them carry loads of looted items. Owing to the fact that the soldiers harassed traders that plied the routes to Moyamba, residents were annoyed and we asked that the soldiers be transferred. They were transferred to Camp Charlie. Whilst they were here, they had established some cordiality with certain people and these most times leaked our plans to them so the soldiers decided to revenge. They began sending threats and Moyamba people were not free to travel through Camp Charlie. The people then resolved to defend their township. In 1997, the rebels and the soldiers formed a coalition. We later learnt that they made a base at Camp Fall-Fall which they used as a spring board to harm people. On June 21, 1997, we had a meeting on how to defend the town when we heard that rebels were at a school called FMSS. I was on the vanguard in the defending the town. We divided ourselves into two groups and we attempted to attack them. When they took note of our movement, they shot at us. Although some people fled the scene, some others thought that the situation was not serious. Although the fired live bullets and launched RPG, none of us was hurt. However, some of our colleagues had been frightened and had fled the scene. Only six of us did not flee – we engaged the rebels and soldiers in battle. That it was a combat, I killed some rebel soldiers. They took away any of their colleagues that was killed. We then decided to retreat so that we could not be caught by surprise from the back. A bullet hit and killed Mr. Sheku Kabbah, an elder. Shortly after that, I was hit by a bullet on my foot and my bones scattered; I gathered the bones (Witness showed the bones to the Commission). Although I can walk, yet my foot bones are not properly fixed. Shortly after I had jumped over, the rebel soldiers entered in their numbers. I saw some of them in combat and I saw a woman - she is not here, but her mother is here. A CARE vehicle was commandeered and they used it to come to the town. They went around Mr. Kabbah's corpse and pierced it. Owing to that incident, I am not in good terms with that lady's relatives. I was fortunate to see a Sheik who called other people and ensured that I was taken out of my hiding place to the town. The following day, my friends took me to the bush and my brother took me for treatment. On 4th July, the lady came with the rebels and she was with them for eight days. They threatened to kill me because I was a Kamajor. When they came they burnt down the house in which I was living. I am a teacher and I

have decided to engage in further studies. Recently, I was able to engage in a teacher training programme. Even now, I cannot stand for a long time before a class. This is what I have to say.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for sharing your experience with us. For how long did they stay and which part did they occupy?

John Bullie: The battle lasted for forty-five minutes and some went back to Camp Charlie.

Comm. Torto: How many people died or were wounded during the attack?

John Bullie: I know of Kabbah and me. I heard that a Gbonda was killed in the river.

Comm. Torto: This lady you mentioned - whom you said you saw with the rebels - If we should talk to her family, will you be willing to reconcile with them?

John Bullie: Yes, I am willing to do so.

Comm. Torto: I will get in touch with you later and the Regional Coordinator will help to locate them. During the fight, do you know how many people were killed on the other side?

John Bullie: I cannot tell, but I dropped a good number of them.

Comm. Torto: Did you ever abduct civilians?

John Bullie: No, people can attest to that here.

Comm. Torto: Do you have a wife?

John Bullie: Yes, she is in Moyamba.

Comm. Torto: During this fight, did you have any wife with you?

John Bullie: No, I did not need women; they were not on my agenda.

Comm. Torto: How is your health condition now?

John Bullie: I am always sick. I always feel pain in my foot.

Comm. Torto: Did you receive any other medical treatment apart from the herbs?

John Bullie: Yes, I went to Brookfield's Hotel. I was X-rayed and given some medicines, but the bones were not properly fixed.

Comm. Torto: What did the doctor say about that?

John Bullie: He said the bones were not properly placed. Now, I treat myself from the little I get.

Comm. Torto: Which of the fighting group did you fight against – AFRC or RUF?

John Bullie: They were AFRC/RUF.

Comm. Torto: The rebel woman that you saw - is she in town?

John Bullie: She is not here, but her relatives are here.

Comm. Torto: Is there anyway we can contact her?

John Bullie: Her relatives are here.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for coming to tell us of your experiences. How many of you joined the Kamajors at the same time?

John Bullie: Within the township, we were over fifty.

Comm. Torto: Can you say whether all of them were like you - not abducting, attacking or committing rape?

John Bullie: That I cannot tell - what I can say is that I did not do it. I cannot say that Kamajors did not do it.

Comm. Torto: Are you still a member of the Kamajors?

John Bullie: I am an ex-combatant.

Comm. Torto: when the boss was killed, who took over his position?

John Bullie: The remaining fled.

Comm. Torto: Were you the only one left?

John Bullie: I was the only one left, but I went into hiding.

Comm. Torto: What happened to the other group since you had two groups?

John Bullie: The other group was overwhelmed.

Comm. Torto: Did you ever regroup after that attack?

John Bullie: Not at all.

Comm. Torto: After that attack you carried out, did you not work again as a Kamajor?

John Bullie: After I had been healed, I was no longer active in combat.

Comm. Torto: Did you know whether there were still Kamajors moving as a force?

John Bullie: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Who was the leader then?

John Bullie: The Battalion Commander was Kenny Toma.

Comm. Torto: Have they all been disarmed?

John Bullie: In our district, all of us have disarmed.

Comm. Torto: How are you regarded in your district?

John Bullie: Some people speak well of me, while some others speak badly of me.

Comm. Torto: Do you mean that people say more good than bad things about you?

John Bullie: Yes, the majority of people say good things about me because we defended the town.

Comm. Torto: what grade do you teach?

John Bullie: I am a Primary School teacher – I teach at the D.E.C.

Comm. Torto: Do they know the part you played?

John Bullie: Yes.

Comm. Torto: Do they regard you as a hero?

John Bullie: Some are in sympathy with me and the others have respect for me.

Mr. Leader of Evidence: How many attacks were women involved in as a Kamajor?

John Bullie: Only one.

Leader of Evidence: You had a position in the society, didn't you?

John Bullie: Yes, I was an intelligent officer and I investigated and recommended punishment for crimes committed by Kamajors.

Leader of Evidence: Did the Kamajors only defend or did they – some times – go on the offensive in order to forestall attacks?

John Bullie: We were here to defend the town, but then our men went on attacks especially at Camp Fall-Fall.

Comm. Torto: Was there any beating or any punishment for disobedient Kamajors?

John Bullie: Yes.

Comm. Torto: There are testimonies that there were situations when Kamajors dug holes with thorns and kamajors were put in it as a form of punishment?

John Bullie: We were really disciplined.

Comm. Torto: Did the disciplinary measures involve leopard?

John Bullie: Yes, the wicked ones.

Comm. Torto: Do you know of a site in this town where this leopard was?

John Bullie: It was even at Gendema.

Comm. Torto: Have you any question for the Commission?

John Bullie: No.

Comm. Torto: Would we be allowed to go to the site?

John Bullie: If you can take me out of the town, I will go.

Comm. Torto: Is it out of the town or within the township? Think very well.

John Bullie: I remember well, it is out of the town.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations to make?

John Bullie: My recommendation is what I have already said. Since I am partially disabled, I do not have shelter and medical assistance. Even if the TRC does not assist, I would appreciate assistance from other organizations. I want to study further and I want to educate my children as well.

Comm. Torto: How long have you been teaching?

John Bullie: I have been teaching for fifteen years.

Comm. Torto: Have you ever undergone teacher training?

John Bullie: I am now on it at the Freetown Teachers' College.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any other recommendation?

John Bullie: I recommend general assistance to the community; an improved road network. DDR still owes us money that was not given to us and I want the Commission to report this matter to the Anti-Corruption so that we can have our monies.

Comm. Torto: Thank you very much. All your recommendations will be put down in our report. We would not say your recommendation will be the only one to put in the report - we will, together with others, include them in the report. I thank you. You may step down.

THIRD WITNESS: Mary Kainessie

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

MARY KAINESSIE'S TESTIMONY

We were from Church on a Sunday when we saw soldiers in Moyolo. They gathered us in the barray and kept us there until it was dark. They took us one after the other in a round hut, naked. They introduced themselves as rebels and they took people away in order to kill them - my twin brothers were taken away as well. The rebels placed a rubber in the flame and, when the rubber was hot, used it on them. They killed my grandfather, Blango, and my uncle. My mother, Lucy, and Foday Musa's uncle were also killed. The rebels killed many other people.

Comm. Torto: Thank you. We are sorry to hear all that you suffered. We thank God that you are still alive to tell the story. When they gathered you in the barray, you said that they stripped people naked. Who were those people?

Mary Kainessie: They were all adults.

Comm. Torto: What happened to them?

Mary Kainessie: Some were killed and some were amputated.

Comm. Torto: Did you say that more than hundred people were killed in that village?

Mary Kainessie: Yes, they were slaughtered at different spots.

Comm. Torto: How many ladies were sexually abused?

Mary Kainessie: I cannot tell.

Comm. Torto: Can you remember the number of ladies into whose virgins the rebels inserted sticks?

Mary Kainessie: I cannot tell.

Comm. Torto: Thank you very much.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. We are sorry that you had such great loss. How did you manage to escape that slaughter?

Mary Kainessie: We were with them for the whole night. In the morning, they woke us up and told us that they were satisfied and that they would not do anything any more.

Comm. Marcus you: Are you bothered by that terrible experience?

Mary Kainessie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you find it difficult to sleep at night?

Mary Kainessie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you had any counseling?

Mary Kainessie: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: May be, now that you have come here to talk and people all over have heard of your experience and we have all recognized your suffering, we sympathize with you. I hope you will feel better now after here. Are you married now?

Mary Kainessie: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: How many children do you have?

Mary Kainessie: I had three children, but two died – I am left with only one.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Sum up courage. I thank you very much.

Leader of Evidence: How many of the women who had sticks inserted in them survived?

Mary Kainessie: Only one died - the rest survived.

Comm. Torto: Do you have you questions for the Commission.

Mary Kainessie: Yes. Why is it that so many people made statements and others have far more revealing testimonies than I, but I am the only one who has come to testify?

Comm. Torto: You are here because the Commission cares for you and wants to hear your recommendations on the things that you want to see happen.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I just want to add that we had a lot of statements, but we cannot listen to everyone. Therefore, we had to select from different places and select statements representative of different violations. Thank you.

Comm. Torto: Do not be surprised if you see anybody come to you and say something to you concerning the Commission.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any other question.

Mary Kainessie: I recommend that a bridge be constructed in our area and good roads be constructed between Levuma and Moyamba. Accommodation and health facilities should also be improved.

Comm. Torto: What about shelter?

Mary Kainessie: They are much better.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any other recommendation?

Mary Kainessie: No.

Comm. Torto: Thank you. I like your recommendations; especially what you have said about shelter. That does not, however, mean that assistance cannot be rendered to your village in the area of shelter. We thank you very much for coming.

FOURTH WITNESS: Daniel Kowa

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Sylvanus Torto administered the oath.

DANIEL KOWA'S TESTIMONY

In the year 1994, I was the Town Chief of Levuma Nyamewe when I saw strangers come to our village with news of a rebel attack. I left for Baoya. While I was at Baoya, I attempted to get out of the house by 6 a.m in order to ease myself, but someone ordered me to return into the house. That morning, I was told that we had a meeting with the soldiers on the boundary. That was the first time I saw Tom Nyuma. He told us that they had come to check for the rebels because they had learnt that rebels were approaching our place. They asked that people lead them to the boundary of Tonkolili District - I asked men to take them there. In the evening, I returned to Baoya. On my way back to Baoya, I met Tom Nyuma who told me that there were two groups and that they would come and sleep in Baoya. I talked with the troops that I saw. There were people who directed us in every village that we arrived. The other group told us that they came from Rotifunk. I was told by those that were with that the war started in the East. One of them said, "If you see a soldier walking on foot to any place, the result is war." After three months, we heard that they had attacked Moyamba in broad daylight. People were running helter-skelter - we fled into the bush. We saw people partly dressed in military fatigue. On Easter Sunday in April 1995, the rebels attacked my town - they broke doors and looted properties. I advised my relatives that we should take care of the children. By 4 a.m. we fled to the bush. While we were in the bush, we heard gunshots. The rebels captured some people. I then left for Baoya, but I was worried about my family. That evening, I heard gunshots - I later learnt that Pa Mattia was shot. I met people who told me that the rebels were demanding my head. I said that if they wanted all that I owned, they could take it. The person who hosted me, Foday, was killed. A little boy

advised that I should leave the area. I later left for Yelisa, boarded a boat to Tombo and then went to Freetown. While I was in Freetown, I reported to a man that had taken a project to Levuma. He led me to Cockeril. We were taken to a room where they interrogated us. I told them about the frequency of attacks on Levuma. They asked whether we had reported the matter to the police and soldiers. I told them that we had. I was then taken to a big hall where I also made the report. They told me that soldiers would be sent there. After few days, I heard that the whole of Levuma was burnt down because somebody intimidated me that the rebels crossed them at Levuma. I then went to Levuma to see for myself. I was in Freetown for sometime; I went through a lot of struggles. I returned in 1997; I went to a village where I started farming. I then went to collect my wife and since I had no money, I took a tape recorder with me. A small boy, Abu Kargbo, asked where I came from and accused me of playing the recorder for the rebels and that I had supported them. He then ordered me to stand apart so that he would shoot at me. He further said that if the bullet did not pierce through me, then I was innocent – otherwise, I was guilty of supporting the rebels. I left the tape recorder with him and went to Freetown. I later sold our belongings in order to pay our way to our village. When I met Abu, he told me that his bosses had taken the tape recorder from him. I came home. As a result of my depression due to the things that I lost, I cannot stay in Levuma. My son was also killed in Tongo.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for what your testimony. Who do you think your perpetrators were?

Daniel Kowa: They were uniformed men.

Comm. Torto: You kept mentioning Tom Nyuma of NPRC and you went to Cockeril – why did you go to Cockeril?

Daniel Kowa: I went to Cockeril in order to report about the activities of rebels.

Comm. Torto: Would I be right to say you underwent these harassments in the hands of the NPRC?

Daniel Kowa: Yes.

Comm. Torto: what can you say about the air raids of the chopper?

Daniel Kowa: I heard that the kamajors brought the Chopper.

Comm. Torto: We shall continue to pray for you and we are thankful that nobody died except your son. Have you any questions for the Commission?

Daniel Kowa: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations that you would want us to pass on to the government?

Daniel Kowa: I want to tell the government that they need to improve on medical facilities. The road networks are very poor. Since teachers are not paid by the government, we – the parents - have to pay extra charges. We need a community centre, proper drinking water and accommodation facilities.

Comm. Torto: Thank you very much for coming. We have taken down all what you said. We would include it in our report very shortly - the roads authority will look in to it. I thank you.

FIFTH WITNESS: Claude Bangalie

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Torto administered the oath.

CLAUDE BANGALIE'S TESTIMONY

We were at Njala, Mokonde - I was a civilian and I had no idea about the war. When the rebels attacked, we fled. We also fled during the second attack. Our houses were burnt down – somebody was in my house when it was set ablaze. We were then selected to be initiated into the Kamajor society. We were 14 who were youths but only two of us volunteered. After the initiation, we went to Taiama and, later, to Mokonde. We were there together with some soldiers. At first, all was well. However, we later caught a youth who was with the soldiers when they robbed a house. After that incident, we took the youth to the barray, but since our leaders were not in town, we collected our colleagues in the other towns. The Chief, John Borne, advised that the people should be taken to the soldiers. In reply, we said that we would take them to our leader. When the soldiers heard of it, they surrounded us. Our chief spoke and advised them to go back. We - the CDF and the thief - returned to the soldiers. At the base of the soldiers, we - the Kamajors - were put in a container and our weapons - machetes, swords and single barrel guns - were taken from us. When the chief left, the soldiers beat us and stabbed us. Later, the chief pleaded on our behalf and we were released. Our colleagues heard of this and they went and asked us to explain. They suggested that we went to the soldiers, but we told them that we should wait for the chiefs' decision. When we were going to the soldiers to get our guns, the Kamajors started singing and as we turned our backs and one of us - out of excitement - fired into the air, the soldiers responded by shooting at us – the civilians fled. The soldiers killed a Kamajor and wounded some others. When we turned over the body of our colleague to a Kamajor who confirmed that he was dead, we were angry. We asked our commander to allow us engage the soldiers in a fight, but he said that he would rather report the matter. We took them to the hospital. The brothers of the deceased Kamajor - who were also Kamajors – went to us and said that they wanted revenge the death of their brother by engaging the soldiers in combat. We had only four guns. Early one morning, we divided ourselves into two groups and attacked them from different directions. As we approached their base, their women went out, removed their wrappers, turned their backsides toward us and bowed. We took cover behind a vehicle and those that had guns shot at the women; we saw them in gutters. We were the first group that arrived at their base and the clouds were clearing. They launched an RPG bomb and the shrapnel caught MP Blood. I was also hit by a bullet on my foot. They overpowered. I ran and, when I got exhausted, I crawled into the bush - my colleagues went to their village. My two colleagues from Njala joined the others and went to the latter's village. I was in the bush for two days and my colleagues went in search of me. The soldiers moved all around in search of Kamajors, but all of us went into hiding. I was taken to a town in order to be treated by a dispenser. MP Blood was with the soldiers. The Kamajors, who were in Taiama, got wind of MP Blood's death. The wounded Kamajors were taken to Taiama for treated. Our dispenser searched for bullets in my body. I was hospitalised and the doctor suggested that I be amputated - I refused. I met Nallo and Daramy Rogers who took me to the hospital. I then returned, but they did a surgical operation. They tried to do the operation, but it was difficult.

Comm. Torto: Thank you. Where were those soldiers? Did the incident happen in Mokonde?

Claude Bangalie: It happened on Njala University Campus.

Comm. Torto: You said you had an exchange - was that during the NPRC or AFRC days?

Claude Bangalie: It was when NPRC was in power.

Comm. Torto: How many soldiers died?

Claude Bangalie: I cannot tell.

Comm. Torto: How was everything settled?

Claude Bangalie: It was never settled.

Comm. Torto: Did you volunteer or you were forced to join the Kamajor society?

Claude Bangalie: The inhabitants of the town subscribed for our initiation, but I volunteered.

Comm. Torto: were you paid?

Claude Bangalie: No.

Comm. Torto: Were you given any DSA?

Claude Bangalie: No.

Comm. Torto: How then did you survive?

Claude Bangalie: All of our houses were burnt down - we volunteered to forestall further destruction.

Comm. Torto: Were promises made to you?

Claude Bangalie: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Claude Bangalie: No.

Comm. Torto: Do you have any recommendations for the Commission?

Claude Bangalie: I ask that you help me with medical treatment. I need shelter because I am staying with my relatives. I was advised by the doctor not to bath with cold water.

Comm. Torto: Let me start with the medical request - what did the doctor say when you went to the hospital?

Claude Bangalie: He wanted to amputate my foot.

Comm. Torto: Is that all?

Claude Bangalie: He told me that if I refused to have my foot amputated, he would discharge me from the hospital.

Comm. Torto: We are very sorry that we cannot offer you anything now. I thank you very much for coming. We shall give you letters that you would take to MSF. They will help you. Thank you for coming.

DAY FIVE 13TH JUNE, 2003.

FIRST WITNESS: Pa Babah Kelfala

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

PA BABAH KELFALA'S TESTIMONY

We were at Senehun when the rebels attack us. We left the town and went into the bush where we built huts. We made farms while we were in the bush camp. One day, we were in the farm when people that were dressed in military fatigues went there. We ran helter-skelter and were in hiding for the rest of that day – we remained in hiding until their number decreased.

I was in the village when I got news that my brother, Sanpha, had been severely beaten at Mogoma. Then, the rebels had left and we went to take Sanpha at Mogoma. He was severely beaten and he was taken to Freetown in a canoe. One day, I told Foday to buy some pepper and, on his way, he was captured and taken to the same village where my brother was beaten. He was also beaten and stabbed. People that were in hiding heard him screaming, but they could not do anything - he died and his corpse remained there until it decomposed. We then left and went to another place where we stayed until the war ended. We then returned to our village. This is my story.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. We have listened to your testimony and we are sorry that you lost your relative during the war. You told us about soldiers who went to your village - can you tell us who the soldiers were? What group did they belong to?

Baba Kelfala: They had red pieces of cloth on their shoulders and they tied red bands on their heads.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you know whether they were RUF, Kamajors or SLA?

Baba Kelfala: I concluded that they were rebels because of their manner of attack on the villages.

Leader of Evidence: I want some clarifications on your testimony. Can you tell me the names of those who were killed?

Baba Kelfala: Sanpha Kelfala, Foday Sillah - my nephew, Hinga Ndoenje: those were the people I knew. The destruction was too much - they burnt down so many houses including the houses of Pagema and Hinga Ndoenje.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you. Do you have questions that you want to ask us; the Commission?

Baba Kelfala: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendations?

Baba Kelfala: Yes. I want the government to help us with Medical facilities, Schools - because the children are not going to school - shelter and roads.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: We have heard so many requests about shelter. When writing our report, we shall recommend to government that this should be the first priority. They should help with low-cost housing in the areas that were destroyed during the war. Once more, I want to thank you for coming.

SECOND WITNESS: Joseph Smart

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

JOSEPH SMART'S TESTIMONY

The pain that is persistent in my heart is that the rebels hurt my hand in which I still feel pain. I can not work with this hand unless I got help from my brothers. When the rebels attacked, we went into the bush and constructed huts in which we lived for over six months. Prior to the attack, I was with my Grand Mother. One day, while I was going to purchase rice, I saw two people walking behind me. One of them said to me, "if you run we will kill you". When I enquired about what I had done to deserve death, they did not respond. I left my grand mother, who could not run, and began to run. I was shot in my arm and I bled profusely. Later, I fell into a deep sleep and, in the evening, I heard somebody calling my name. I was unable to move my hands the man helped me to move along. However, he shortly disappeared and I was left alone. My brother later took me to the place where we stayed. I was given food and native herbs – I remained unconscious for quite sometime. The next morning, I was taken to Moya in a canoe. They assisted in healing my arm. We were in that when a group of armed men arrived there and said that they were there to "clear" the village. They gave my father stone to chew – they said that he had not eaten rice for quite a while. In the process, he lost four of his teeth and they asked him to wash his mouth. My uncle was there and they asked him to chew a stick. They did not beat them. I also learnt that my brothers were amputated and a stick was inserted in my sister's vagina. I was there until I recovered. After the war, I went to Baoya. However, I cannot do anything with my injured arm.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you, Joe. As we come here, everyday we hear new types of atrocities that were committed. It is difficult to understand and it is difficult for the human mind to comprehend. We thought that we have heard about all the types of atrocities that were committed, but we hear more and more everyday. Where did all these take place - in what village?

Joseph Smart: All these took place in the hiding place.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: They happened in the bush - near which village?

Joseph Smart: Close to Baoya old town.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who were those perpetrators?

Joseph Smart: I cannot tell.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Were they the RUF, CDF or SLA?

Joseph Smart: I saw them in military fatigues and they had red bands tied on their heads.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was it after you had been shot that you saw your father and uncle treated the way you told us.

Joseph Smart: Yes, I was at Moya.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for coming to talk to the Commission. In your written statement, you spoke of babies being kicked - could you explain further?

Joseph Smart: I left out that part of the story. When the rebels overran the village, we fled to the other side of the village and we heard babies crying - we saw them throwing the babies around. When we went back, we met the corpses of the babies.

Comm. Torto: You also said that the town chief was forced to put bomb in his mouth which could have been grenade. Did he chew it? What happen?

Joseph Smart: He did not chew it because they told him that if he did, his brain would blow off - spittle was running down his mouth.

Comm. Torto: Did the bomb explode?

Joseph Smart: No.

Comm. Torto: Did he live?

Joseph Smart: Yes.

Comm. Torto: You also said that women were abused - how many of them died and how many survived?

Joseph Smart: I was at Moya when we got message from people that they were doing such things to women.

Comm. Torto: Do you remember the group that committed those atrocities? Which of the fighting groups did you suspect? Who were those fighters?

Joseph Smart: I could not identify them; they were in large numbers.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us the number of people that were killed in your village, if any?

Joseph Smart: I only know of my grand mother.

Leader of Evidence: What was her name?

Joseph Smart: Fatu.

Leader of Evidence: The people whom you said were amputated -did some of them survive?

Joseph Smart: I cannot tell; I was at Moya.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Apart from using native herbs, have you seen any medical doctor or have you been to the hospital?

Joseph Smart: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions you would like to ask the Commission?

Joseph Smart: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Well, I think you should continue to seek medical attention. Do you have any recommendations you would like us to include in our report?

Joseph Smart: Yes. I cannot help myself and I am asking that you give me whatever help you have for me.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: The TRC has no resources to give out money for medical treatments or compensations, but we will make recommendations for disabled people. We want to thank you for coming. You are fortunate to have survived the war.

THIRD WITNESS: Foday Patrick Kanimeh

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

FODAY PATRICK KANIMEH'S TESTIMONY

We had been hearing about the rebel war and rebel attacks in villages, districts and headquarters, but I experienced it when Jawa was attacked. The elders in our village met and, together, we agreed that since there was trouble around us – in neighbouring territories – the youths should form a group that would keep watch on the town. Not too long, we heard that Jawa had been attacked. However, it was not initially clear whether the attackers were rebels or soldiers. The commander of the attackers, Lieutenant Sorie, asked all of us to assemble at the chief's place. While we were at the chief's place, we saw two truck-loads of men in military fatigues. Then, SIEROMCO had not stopped operations. After a while, we heard gun shots. The gun shots later subsided and we did not see or hear about the combatants for quite sometime. The people of Mano decided to move all their properties to Madina. After one day, we heard that Njala had been attacked. The rebels passed through Mokbanji and went to Sierra Rutile. We were in our village when we heard that the rebels had attacked Magbemoh. They captured Senessi and laid him on the floor. They cooked and ate the quantity of food they wanted – they threw away the remaining food. After sometime, we decided to go to the town. We cannot, however, say what happened there afterwards because the rebels attacked at intervals. We decided to go to the camp at the Teya River. While we were at the camp, we saw men in uniform crossing the river and coming towards the camp. At that sight, everybody fled. My nephew was by the riverside and he fell into the river and drowned when he saw the men in uniform. Junior Bundu, Karimu Amara and Tommy Harding were trying to get across the river when two of them drowned. I was told that Pa Karimu's corpse and my nephew's were not seen. Thereafter, we saw men in uniform come to our village. That was why we left the village. We suffered a lot of molestations and humiliations during the war. After all, I went to a village called Mokuba. On my way to the village, I saw six men in uniform coming toward me and I entered into the bush. Before I reached Mokuba, I saw smoke coming in a village called Moyahun. I managed to get to the place where we were hiding. They burnt down eight houses in our village.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much for coming. We sympathise with you for the loss of your nephew and the other man.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for that very short testimony. I want you to make brief comments about "Sobels", RUF and CDF. What do you know about them?

Foday Kanimeh: We identified them as rebels.

Comm. Torto: Which ones?

Foday Kanimeh: Those we came across with – those that wore boots and uniforms.

Comm. Torto: What about the others who did not have uniforms.

Foday Kanimeh: Kamajors and soldiers dressed differently.

Comm. Torto: What do you know about “Operation no living thing”.

Foday Kanimeh: We heard that if there was any attack, nothing was to be spared.

Comm. Torto: Amputation - what do you know about that?

Foday Kanimeh: When they went to Mano, there was a battle during which people were injured.

Comm. Torto: So they went with amputated arms and showed them to you.

Foday Kanimeh: No.

Comm. Torto: What was the relationship between you and Alias Kailondo?

Foday Kanimeh: He was a Kamajor leader.

Comm. Torto: So you were one of Kamajors.

Foday Kanimeh: I later joined the Kamajors. Then, we had the Civil Defence Unit (CDU).

Comm. Torto: In 1996, you became Kamajor. Can you tell us about your exploits?

Foday Kanimeh: When I joined the Kamajors, I was adviser and organizer. There are witnesses to attest that I did not go to war.

Comm. Torto: So you organized operations.

Foday Kanimeh: We had people responsible for organizing operations. I was there to take care of logistics.

Comm. Torto: Did you have rules in the Kamajor society – did you tell them what to do and what not to do?

Foday Kanimeh: No, the only advice I gave was that if you were a warrior, you should be alert.

Comm. Torto: What was the need or purpose of “Kulie”?

Foday Kanimeh: It was used to punish Kamajors and Violators.

Comm. Torto: What about rebel suspects - were civilians put there and did you punish your opponents?

Foday Kanimeh: It was meant for those who violated the rules. I was called Jesus because I joined in saving people. Thus, I did not do anything wrong. “Kulie” was merely meant for wrong doers.

Comm. Torto: I am not accusing you; I just want to put things in perspective and to get the truth since we are a Truth Commission. I want to know whether “Kulie” was for prisoners or civilians and whether it was also used to punish opponents. I can ask a soldier of the SLA or any fighter – no matter his/her factional association. Just briefly describe to me how the “Kulie” was – how it was built.

Foday Kanimeh: It was very bad. A stick was built in it and when you were placed into it, you neither sat nor stood.

Comm. Torto: But you could lie down.

Foday Kanimeh: It was not spacious for any human being to lie in it.

Comm. Torto: What was inside it that one could sit on?

Foday Kanimeh: Thorns and sticks.

Comm. Torto: Was that meant to torture people?

Foday Kanimeh: The thorns were put in it so that one would not be comfortable - that is what I understand.

Comm. Torto: When you were working as the head of the Kamajors were you paid or it was a voluntary service?

Foday Kanimeh: No.

Comm. Torto: Were you getting any DSA?

Foday Kanimeh: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Apart from organizing, did you not lead any attack on Taiama?

Foday Kanimeh: I have never been to the war front.

Leader of Evidence: During the attack on Taiama, when Kamajors killed soldiers, they cut off their arms and brought the arms to show them to you. Was it a policy of the Kamajors that whoever they killed, they brought a part of of the body to show that they had killed him/her?

Foday Kanimeh: It was not a rule.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for your testimony. Do you have any questions that you would like to ask the Commission?

Foday Kanimeh: No.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendations to make?

Foday Kanimeh: I am pleading with the government to help improve educational and medical facilities. There are no proper road net works; there is no maintenance of bridges.

FOURTH WITNESS: Alpha Mohamed

The witness swore on the Koran. Commissioner Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

ALPHA MOHAMED'S TESTIMONY

The war that we experienced in Moyamba was serious. However, the most burning issue on my mind is that my son, who was leading the Kamajors, was killed – here. He was shot, but he did

not die - he crawled to a nearby house and was waiting for his colleagues. If you were a participant in such fight, the stakeholders would have regard for you. My son knew that they were searching for people like them. He never knew that a woman called Mamie M'balu would team up with them. When my son had been shot, he was in the room and he saw Mamie M'balu – she was coming from Salina. She promised him that she would inform his colleagues about his predicament. She did not do what she had promised, but, in stead, came to Harford School, where the rebels where camped, and told them that Kamajors had laid an ambush for them. She then led them to my son's hideout and the rebels took him out in the street and killed him. For about seven days - later – my other son looked out for his brother, but could not see him. They came to the river area and M'balu's son, Thomas, came across to them and, after explaining their mission, he told them that their brother was killed as a result of what he said. He showed them the corpse of my son. They nearly fought with the people there; he was buried at the spot. I walked from my hiding place and, when I came, I went up to Salina; I met them on the veranda. I then went to Kebbie Town and returned to my hiding place. Mamie M'balu went to another Kamajor, Nat, and asked him to call me. Nat came to stop me from shouting and asked that I should sit in the veranda. I sat there and Nat sent for Mamie M'balu, her husband, Pa Sawaneh and other people. I then asked why she had sent to call to me and I stated that I was not well. Mamie M'balu said she was called to Njavahun where she was beaten – she showed us the scar. In the veranda, I told them that I would not call any Kamajor to do anything to anybody. I told M'balu that the burning issue was the death of my son and I put it to her that my other son had informed me that she – M'balu - led the rebels to kill my son. She attempted to deny, but her husband told her not to. They wanted to bring money to beg me. I told them I did not want money and that I was not the only parent of the deceased. From there, I went to my hiding place. Meanwhile, the Kamajors had heard of Mamie M'balu's presence in town. When they went, they met her at Gendema and they brought her to Moyamba. Bombowai took her to Gojema and then she left for Bo. After a long time, I was informed that she had returned and I reported the matter to the Kamajor boss who told me to go home. When I did not get a second call from him, I came back. I met Kini Torma at the Paramount Chief's place where I also met M'balu. I then lodged a complaint with the Paramount Chief who said that she was not there to settle Kamajor cases – she advised that the matter be taken to the Kamajor office. This is my testimony.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Is this Mamie M'balu our next witness? I want you to call her for identification (She was brought in and identified). We may not ask you questions, but what we want to know is whether you are willing to reconcile - all of you who have this unpleasant experience.

Alpha Mohamed: Yes.

Comm. Torto: How much money was offered to you as kola?

Alpha Mohamed: One hundred and forty thousand leones {Le 140,000}.

Comm. Torto: Did you accept it?

Alpha Mohamed: No.

Comm. Torto: When the matter was taken to the Paramount Chief, she referred the matter to the Kamajor office - what happen when you went there?

Alpha Mohamed: We went to the Kamajor office and witnesses were called to testify. They gave evidence of what happened, but the matter was never revisited.

Leader of Evidence: I want to ask if you are willing to reconcile with the witness that is about to come up and give her testimony.

Alpha Mohamed: I cannot say I will not agree because the Lord said that if you do not forgive, He - the Lord - will not forgive your deeds. If she gives me money, it would not be equivalent to my son's live. Therefore, I have no alternative but to accept reconciliation.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: During the war, so many unforeseen things happened; people took up different courses and they believed in what they were doing. The Kamajors had one opinion and the other parties had different opinions. That is war. In the course of all these, innocent people, like you, suffered. However, I am happy that you believe in God and, for the progress of the country, you are ready to reconcile. We will not say much now until we come to the reconciliation and peace ceremony. We want you to wait; we would like to hear from M'balu.

FIFTH WITNESS: M'balu Boryawah

The witness swore on the Bible. Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones administered the oath.

M'BALU BORYAWAH'S TESTIMONY

I have heard that there are two cases - which one do I treat first? We were here in Moyamba when the rebels came. Then, I was the section chief. When they came, they burnt down so many houses. I had to flee into hiding – I went to the village. The house that was built for me was also burnt down. The house of my mother-in-law was burnt down as well. I was chased in the village where I went into hiding, and I went to another village from where I finally left for Freetown; I went to the Paramount Chief, my sister. By then, I had nothing - all my properties had been looted. A lady gave me some clothes which I used. My mother was shot in the leg. I was in Freetown until the elections were concluded. The war had subsided by then. The Kamajor gave assistance then, but they were not as popular as they were before that period. I decided to come back to Moyamba. My sister advised that whenever she sent food for the Kamajors, I should collect it. We provided food for the Kamajors and when their number multiplied, the war started again. We stayed here with John Bullie who proposed love to me, but I told him that I was older than his wife and reminded him that I was married. At one time, he threatened to hurt me some day. I told him he could hurt me only because he was a Kamajor and that he would make an allegation against me. When the rebels came, I fled to my hiding place together with my mother and children. My husband was a clerk. I learnt that John Bullie had circulated letters about me to the Kamajors. I was in the bush, but I sometimes came to town to purchase food. He was the A.G and his word carried weight. I did not know that Kamajors were planning to capture me. One night, I was awake while my mother and children were sleeping; I did not know that the Kamajors had surrounded the place. My mother asked why I was not sleeping and I told her that I was restless. As I went to lie down, all the Kamajors entered and they were talking. Their dialect resembled that of Easterners. They were disguised and I did not see their faces. However, I recognised some of them. They took me to a village. Their numbers were large, but only two of them escorted me at Jagbahun, while the others looted my properties. When we arrived at Faluba, they ordered me to sit on the ground. The grand commander was surprised to see me because he was my son-in-law. He, however, said that since he did not order my arrest, he could not do anything. The other Kamajor said that they were trying to save my life, but requested that I gave them ten thousand leones {Le 10,000}. I told them that I did not have money, but I reminded them that whenever they passed through my place, I gave them water to drink. One of the Kamajors who was going to the village took us along. One of them gave me a torch as we walked that night. I was hurt by sticks and I still have the scars. A man told me that another group was coming and he advised that I fled from them. I entered into the bush where I slept and stayed until the next evening when my younger brother met me there. He said that we should trust God and return to town. I had some ground nut which I had harvested. I was then informed about the reinforcement of the Kamajors. I locked my house and escaped through the window early one morning. They

went to the town for me, but I was in my hiding place. Somebody was beaten and my relatives were captured and taken to Kebbie town. They tied my brothers with an F.M rope. The village, from where John Bullie married his wife, is my village. Somebody brought food for me and she saw a Kamajor who asked whether the food was for me; she denied. They told my relatives that my life was under threat. I was taken to a village in rain. When he saw me, he wrote a letter to the Kamajors so that they would go to the village; he did not allow me to pass the night in the village. My relatives hid me. In the morning, the others were sent to town. The next day, he came and I was introduced to them. I was with him until one day when he asked me to accompany him to Moyamba, here, because he was afraid to leave me with the others. They gave me five gallons of palm wine to drink. They asked whether I was the Paramount Chief of Moyamba, and I told them that I had never said so. They said that if I would not drink the palm wine, then I should dance. I told them to me the palm wine in stead. I said that if it was the wish of God, I would die after drinking the palm, otherwise I would live. Their leader, Bombowai, took me to the Market and gave me fish to eat. They beat me with the branches of a flower tree that had thorns. They beat until I defecated. They also beat me with a hammer and blood settled in my eye. Bombowai had me screening and then he went to the scene and asked me why I was crying. I then explained to him what had happened. He then asked them why they did not have love for one another. He told them that there were some of their relatives who had done worst things than I, and yet they went unpunished. He told them that he was there to fight and not to find money and, therefore, he was not going to order my killing – that, according to him, was not why he was there. He then took me home and gave me soap so that I could wash up. After sometime, Bullie wrote a letter asking why they had not done anything to me after so long a time with them. I was taken to Bombowai's father at Bo # 2 - he asked whether I knew where my relatives were so that he could trace them. I was given a Kamajor to accompany me. Bullie then followed me and wrote a letter in which he alleged that I was a rebel and that I should not be released. They took me to the office and, whenever Bullie went there, they tied me and humiliated me. I then demanded his presence and I was asked whether I had witnesses. I gave the names of three witnesses. They sent for him through a radio, but he did not come. They sent a Kamajor to call him; he did not come. I then decided that if he did not come, I was going to my village. However, I was advised not to go, but I insisted that I was going. They then decided to give me a letter. I told them that in spite of all their guns, I was going back to Moyamba. I was there and I had no reply. I used to go to my sister in the mornings. I was there one morning when I saw Alpha approaching. Toma and other Kamajors came and when Kini Moiwo saw me, he took off his cap and began to cry. When the Paramount Chief asked why he was crying, he explained that he killed her son. She then asked him why he was revealing that only then. I was invited to the office of the Kamajors. Both of them went and reported me to the other Kamajors. Kini Toma, the chief, was asked to preside over the matter. She said that she had been having many reports, so she had to send for elderly people to preside over the matter. When they were asked whether they had copies of the letter, they said they had. When they admitted that they had copies of the letter, nothing more was said.

My husband was at Temide; he came when he heard the news. I was with the Kamajors for three years. I learnt from someone that they had killed my husband, shove his head, placed it on a stick and danced with it. When my brother was coming from Koligbutami, they arrested him, killed him and put a cigarette in his mouth. if anyone saw him and attempted to cry, they would kill that person. A lady went to the scene and wanted to cry, but when they asked what she was doing, she feigned laughter. I went to the District Officer and explained about the death of my husband with the request that his benefit be worked out and given to me. I did not come here to testify – initially – because I would have been asked if I was present at the death of my husband.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you, Mamie Boryawah. The commission regrets that you went through such suffering; your testimony is one of continuous suffering and hardship. We have few questions to ask you. Why did they blame you for their problem and want you to be punished? Why did they subsequently kill your husband?

M'balu Boryawah: I do not know; God alone knows.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Have you been told about the affiliation of your daughter; sometimes one has children that have different opinions. Did you have any daughter who had a different affiliation?

M'balu Boryawah: I have children and I have a daughter.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What were their affiliations at that time? I am not saying I am accusing of being responsible for the sufferings that you went through; I just want the fact.

M'balu Boryawah: That is what I have said; there is nothing more I can say.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: I am asking if any of your children belonged to any of those groups.

M'balu Boryawah: She was in Freetown; I stayed here with the younger children.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Who are you referring to - that was in Freetown?

M'balu Boryawah: Baby and Mamu.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Baby is your daughter.

M'balu Boryawah: Yes.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: And who is Mamu?

M'balu Boryawah: She is also my daughter.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What were they doing in Freetown?

M'balu Boryawah: One was in school – Baby - and Mamu was married.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Was Baby in sympathy with the rebels? This is a Commission of truth. If there is going to be any recommendation, there must be the truth.

M'balu Boryawah: I did not see her even though she is my daughter. If I had seen her supporting them, I would have said it.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You did not see her, but you heard the rumour around - from the Kamajors or any other group that Baby supported?

M'balu Boryawah: John Bullie was the one who said that he saw my daughter with the rebels.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: You talked about three good years - what do you mean – were they moving around with them?

M'balu Boryawah: When I was arrested, I could not return to my home town.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: What is A. G. and who is A.G?

M'balu Boryawah: It is one of the positions in the hierarchy of the Kamajor.

Comm. Torto: Thank you for your testimony; it is very informative. I want you to clarify a few issues for me - you would have to be as truthful as possible because this is a Truth Commission. John Bullie said that you met his son and he asked that you help him, but, instead, you went and called the rebels - is that true?

M'balu Boryawah: I know nothing about that; I was in hiding. This is the first time I am hearing about this.

Comm. Torto: Why did you offer one hundred and forty thousand leones {Le 70,000} as an apology?

M'balu Boryawah: I do not know about it.

Comm. Torto: Were you taken to the paramount chief for any reason?

M'Balu: No I went there to say hello to her.

Comm. Torto: Why were you referred to the Kamajors?

M'balu Boryawah: It was when Pa Alpha made a report and the matter was referred to the Kamajor office.

Comm. Torto: Why did they kill your husband?

M'balu Boryawah: I do not know why he was killed. All I know is that he came he came because he was told that I had been arrested by the Kamajors - that was why he came.

Leader of Evidence: I thank you for coming to the Commission. As you can see, the audience wants to hear you - would you like to reconcile with the people and the community at large/ We are listening top you.

M'balu Boryawah: Since we have now come before the Commission, we are here to adhere to what you say.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: Each of you suffered during the war. There must have been some misunderstanding somewhere. The two witnesses that testified immediately before you are blaming you for their misfortunes. We have heard all your stories and one thing that is clear is that you all suffered. You lost close relatives; you are carrying scars on your body because of what you went through. The Commission is not ordering or commanding you, but having heard your testimonies, the Commission is saying that you - for the good of the country - reconcile and put the past behind you. The two other witnesses we listened to - Mohamed and Bullie - are ready to reconcile. We have to go through time and years. We want to know whether you are ready to reconcile

M'balu Boryawah: I agree that the Commission facilitates reconciliation between and among us.

Comm. Justice Marcus-Jones: The Commission will want to thank you once more for coming. We are going to organize the ceremony now and other officer of the Commission will talk to you if you wish to come to the ceremony. You can stand down.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

PUBLIC HEARINGS IN KONO

23RD TO 27TH JUNE 2004

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: On behalf of the Commission and staff, I will seize this opportunity to welcome you to this first hearing session. You are most welcome here today, together with our guests who will be testifying at the Commission. But before we proceed, we would want to share with you some basic principles and procedures governing our hearings so that as you all participate together, we know exactly what we are expected to do. Commissioners, staff and audience, I am expecting the observers to follow the procedure closely. Let them just listen because that will enable them to share what they get here with the rest of the public in an orderly way. This hearing session would not be possible without your presence and for you to participate actively as listeners, by and large, yes as listeners and as press men and women; we need to be aware of what the expectations are. But let us first explain the goals of the TRC and the objectives of the hearing. The act establishing the TRC states that its mandate is to create an impartial historical record of the violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law that occurred in the conflict, to address impunity, to respond to the needs of victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the abuses and violations suffered by our people. By organising hearings, the Commission wants to fulfil this mandate in different ways. Some of these I will now want to share with you. First of all, we want to give all our people involved in the war of Sierra Leone an occasion to come to tell their stories to the Commission and to the public. We hope that those who are willing to tell us what happened to them will find some kind of relief for their grief and suffering. We also hope

that those who wronged others during the war will come and talk about it so that their victims and they themselves can get even with the past. We think that you the public and everyone who is listening to us may get a better understanding of what happened during the war in terms of human suffering and of the responsibility of different actors both local and international for the war. We hope that this better understanding will encourage our people in Sierra Leone to engage in a dialogue about what went wrong and what needs to change. And lastly, we pray that this process will contribute to reconciliation, not only between individual victims and perpetrators but also between communities and at the national level. The Commission hopes that these hearings will help us to achieve sustainable peace and development, positive development in Sierra Leone. We will want to know how the witnesses have been selected. The witnesses who will give testimony today and during the rest of the week have been selected by the Commission from among those who gave their statements during the statement taking phase of the Commission. The Commission has selected witnesses of all ages; men and women, people of all religious backgrounds, who can talk about the different kinds of acts that happened during the war in Sierra Leone at different times and places, which were committed by different perpetrators. The Commission has encouraged witnesses to give testimony on a voluntary basis and we want to express our appreciation to those who will do so in the next few days. However, the Commission has the right to use subpoena in order to have someone come to the hearing and give their testimony. The Commission will only use this power as a last resort.

The hearings procedure is as follows: every hearing will begin with a prayer or with religious songs. Witnesses will be heard by the Commission one by one and each witness is entitled to have a relative or a friend sitting next to him or her. He can also sit with a counsellor of the Commission. Every witness can speak in his or her own language. The Commission will provide an interpreter who will translate the testimony in English. All witnesses will be treated equally and with respect by the Commission. Every witness has the right to give his or her account of the event in his or her own way and to give his or her own view. The public is asked to respect all witnesses, everyone in the public has to remain silent during the testimonies. No one in the public is allowed to speak, to shout, to laugh, to boo, or to clap. Any person who will do so might be ordered out of the hall. No picture taking will be allowed during the testimony, except before or after the testimony of the witness. No member of the public is allowed to take any pictures, only accredited journalists can. I repeat no member of the public is allowed to take any pictures, only accredited journalists can do so. A counsellor and a medical nurse as well as first aid providers will be available for any of the public who is in need of such intervention.

If a witness names a person who has allegedly committed a violation or abuse, the Commission will do everything possible to invite this person to come and give his or her own view of the event. At no time will a victim be confronted with the alleged

perpetrator during the hearing. If both victim and perpetrator wish to meet with each other, the Commission will create a separate occasion for them to do so after the hearing either in public or behind closed doors as they wish.

Most of these hearings will be public, but some of them will be behind closed doors. Closed hearings are necessary to protect vulnerable witnesses such as children or victims of sexual violence.

We made it a responsibility, a prime one at that, to ensure that persons appointed to assist the Commission were very much familiar with the locality; who would not be looked upon as strangers in the exercise of their duties. That is why you are going to find out that all the people we had selected as statement takers for Kono District belong to this District. One is Mr. Joseph T. Gandhi, our District Coordinator for Kono District for the TRC. He was responsible for the statement takers and still continues to be responsible for them. The next person we have is Mr. Sahr Kondeh, one of our statement takers. So those of you who made statements may have come across those names.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Once again I welcome you to the TRC. Before we start I will like to explain to you a little about our hearings. We looked through the statement and selected some of the statements to be used in our Public Hearings. Some of the statement givers did not want to come to the public, so we have not selected their statements. But in our selection we have seen to it that the statements selected are representative of the whole, which means we have statements from men, women and children as well as statements from different villages around. Our commission is divided into two kinds for these hearings. We spent one week in Freetown and the other week we spent in the provinces. Right now team B is here in Kono while Team A which is headed by the chairman is in Pujehun and that is how we have been working. Team B my team has been in Port Loko and Koinadugu, Kenema, Moyamba and now we are in Kono. From here we shall move on to Bonthe.

What is our procedure? We generally start our hearings with prayers but we have already had prayers for our opening today, and so we shall skip the prayers and go straight for the hearings. The Leader of Evidence shall call each witness and bring them up for the taking of the oath to say that the testimony will be the truth and nothing but the truth. Then the witness will give the testimony. After that the Commissioners here will ask questions if necessary just to enlighten us and to throw light on what has been said. Then the Leader of Evidence too will ask questions if he has any and those will be followed by questions from the witness. The witness will then be asked to give recommendations, which may be included in our report. That is the procedure. The Commission is reminding you that this is a solemn occasion; it is not an occasion for clapping or laughing. We don't want any clapping or laughing. If you don't like a particular statement it will be better for you to keep quiet and listen rather than boo at the witness. We would not like to ask anyone to leave the Hall and please turn off all your mobile phones. Thank you very much.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Yes chairperson, the witnesses are all here.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: Could we have the first witness please?

Chairman our First witness for today is Hawa.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: Would the witness give her name in full please?

Hawa: I am Called Hawa Momoh.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: Are you a Muslim?

Hawa: Yes I am a Muslim.

OATH

Hawa: We were sitting together as a family one night when we heard a gun shot. We all fled and were scattered about in the bush. I did not see my sister but later got to learn that she had been captured by the rebels and taken away. With her in the hands of the rebels I was with two men who got killed. They raped my sister in their number. After raping her they left her. She followed us and was able to locate us but she bled profusely. I was having no medicine on me. I treated her with herbs but eventually she died from the bleeding right there in the bush. We buried her there. I witnessed the killing of my brothers and sisters and that stayed with me and became my trauma. We lost all our properties but for me that did not bother me so much the loss of my relatives. The loss of my relatives still troubles me. I have nothing to do now. So that is all.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: Thank you Hawa for coming to us and giving your testimony. We are sorry that you were so distressed as a result of the loss of your close relatives. I only have a few questions for you. The Commissioner here will ask you questions if he has any and then the Leader of Evidence will ask you questions as well. How old was your sister?

Hawa: She was fifteen years old.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: And did she tell you how many men raped her? How many men raped her?

Hawa: Yes.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: How many men?

Hawa: Twelve men. The first one was called Musa and the second one was called Yayah.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: Were they of any relationship to her?

Hawa: Yes they are my relatives they use to feed me.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: And did you actually see them killed?

Hawa: I saw them and I even saw their bodies.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: They were running when the rebels shot them down. But who were these rebels? Can you tell us more about the rebels? What group did they belong to?

Hawa: They were rebels it was during the night. They were all from the bush and I could not tell one person from the other.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES: Thank you.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much Hawa for coming before the Commission. We don't want to subject you to intensive questioning because of what happened to you. We just want you to clarify issues. Where did this thing happen to you?

Hawa: Masambendi.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Masabendu town?

Hawa: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: It just coincides that you did not get to see the faces of the people your perpetrators. By chance while you were in hiding did you see the face of any of them?

Hawa: I can't tell.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When your sister returned what did she say the people who raped her wore?

Hawa: She said that they were so many but they were all youths, child combatants.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What languages were they speaking?

Hawa: Some were speaking Kono, Mende, and Fulla and so on.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: There were a lot of armed groups during the war years. I don't know whether your sister said to you which of the fighting groups raped her. Was it ECOMOG CDF, RUF, AFRC or any other fighting group by chance?

Hawa: I don't know the difference.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What does the name Bai Bureh remind you of?

Hawa: I do hear the name Bai Bureh all the time but I don't know what it means.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Was Bai Bureh not a leader, the leader of the attackers? This is from your written statements.

Hawa: Yes, Bai Bureh was the leader.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So that gives the indication that they belonged to the RUF group.

Hawa: I don't know the difference.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Okay thank you very much. The last question on investigation is this; you said that those who attacked the people were speaking Mende, Kono and Themne, the attackers of your sister. As a Kono by your statement here you did not seem to remember anybody's face or otherwise.

Hawa: I cannot remember anyone because they killed my family and I was in hiding.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: We are actually trying to find out the information you might have got from your sister. We know you were not present but we need to have on record what could actually be done to trace the perpetrators.

Hawa: They raped my sister, which caused her to die.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We are asking you all these questions because we want to know exactly what happened so that we can gather help out of your own words. Leader of Evidence, have you any question?

Charm: I don't have any questions for the witness.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: You have been answering questions from us, have you any questions you want to ask us?

Hawa: I have no questions.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Please tell her that the recommendations we are going to make may be based on the recommendations we have from witnesses about what they would like want they the government to do for their communities and so on.

Hawa: I want you to help me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: In what way?

Hawa: They killed all my relatives and I have no shelter or food to eat. Those who used to help me were also killed so I am crying to the government for help. In my town we have a hospital but it lacks in medical supply. The road network has been developed tremendously. We are happy about it but as an individual my condition is really bad.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I explained in my welcome address that the TRC unfortunately has no resources to give out money to victims who come here to tell their stories. The Commission will make referrals to NGOs who may in turn render assistance to you with Micro-credit or skills training or something else to empower you. The other recommendations about housing and roads shall be included in our report. I am sure that NGOs that operate around Kono or NGO officials listening to the radio would have heard what you are asking for and might even help before we send our report to the government so that our community would be able to benefit from what you have done today. Has you any other recommendations.

Hawa: We want you people to help us by training us or giving us micro credit assistance.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I have said that you will be referred to the NGOs around Kono for assistance. We normally give letters of reference to the relevant NGOs that are nearby and if you qualify they will help you. You may stand down.

WITNESS – SAHR NYAKAH

Sahr: At one time we were in Njama Sowafe with ECOMOG and the Kamajors. My village is called Manja and it got to a time when I decided to pay my people there a visit. But then I heard that our Paramount Chief PC M Torto II had been taken from there to a village. So I said I was going to Yomanja instead. At that time all our people were in the bush. When I reached Yomanja people heard that I was around there so they started coming to me. The chief was also taken to me. We slept in the morning, I sent a message to my wife to come and she came and met me. Immediately she went to sleep and we were sleeping not knowing that the rebels were around. They crossed the river and came to us at Fonba Forbi and at that time ECOMOG were at Sandeyah. They did not fire any gun. They came quietly and knocked on people's doors and started amputating hands. So they went to us at Yamanja. They just break into people's homes and took them outside. I was in my house when I heard people wailing. At that time my mother-in-law was staying in the veranda room but I was inside the house. So I stood up. I opened the door went to the parlour and the cry of people got louder. So I tried to peep outside to understand what was happening. I then saw my mother-in-law in the hands of people who were beating her seriously. So I closed the door quietly for them not to see me. Then I went inside and woke up my wife who was pregnant at the time. I told her that the rebels were around and then took my gun and went outside. She also wanted to run outside so I pushed her inside again. I tried to open the main door carefully and pointed my gun at them but then if I had shot at them my mother-in-law would have been killed. So I fired the gun in the air as a warning shot. They went in all directions. I also went outside. When I got outside I met one of them who hit me on my foot. I pushed him off. He fell down and I ran away and they started chasing me. I fell in an old pit that was covered with banana leaves. It was not too deep and there were lots of leaves in the pit. So I fell in side the pit there lot of leaves in there. I was covered by the leaves. I lay in down there under the leaves. They started flashing their torch lights in search of me. They called to one another. When they returned I stood up and went by the edge of the town to sneak out. I saw a lot of people assembled there but they could not see me. I did not know that my wife, my grandmother and my mother-in-law were all with them as captives and they were about to split the belly of my wife. So I pointed the gun outside in the air. I fired again and they ran in all directions thereby leaving my relations unharmed. On our way I was able to locate the chief with his son called Borbo Torto. So we took the chief into the bush, in the coffee farm. We were there for four days. My wife and others went their different ways. There was nobody around. So I left them there and went in search of my wife. I met a boy who told me that my wife was around. I found her and informed her that the chief was in the bush. I told her that I was trying to get people to help me take him out. I went back to the chief. Later I found four people who helped me take the chief out. I met some people in a village called Komborundu who further assisted us to carry the chief away. They took the chief to Sandeyah where the ECOMOG were stationed. I then went back to my wife to take them away. In the village I was met by the Tamaboro. They told me that they saw people who stole rice. We trailed them but we could not catch up with them. We only caught one person who said, "You are the one that sent us to steal the rice". So I asked them where the person was that had authorised them

to steal the rice. I did not finish my question when someone snatched my gun off me and I was tied up. I lay there and saw the rebels stab my younger sister on her back. She was crying together with my wife and mother-in-law. They pleaded with them to free me but Sanna Turay, Alpha Brima and some others but they said they were going to kill me. I cried aloud and my people were also crying. Then a man came and said to them, "You should not kill that man who saved us. He succeeded in letting them loose me. He talked to them and later on I was released. But then it took me a long time to even do anything with my hand. I managed to take my people to Sowafeh. As it was the tradition I reported myself to the elders. They allowed me to stay there but for a long time I could not use my hand because of the way they braced me with the ropes. So at that time I came to Sowafeh with my family and stayed there. That is all I have to say.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much for coming and telling us your experiences and how you suffered during the war. I would like to get some more information from you that is why I now ask you these questions. When did you join the Kamajors? Why did you join the Kamajors?

Sahr: When the ECOMOG came I was with them. They did not know our bush so we were around them to show them our pathways. That was how I joined the Kamajors.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So you joined to help the ECOMOG to guide them as they moved about in the bush?

Sahr: That is correct. They came here as strangers and they needed an indigene of the place to help him.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did you take part in any fighting at all?

Sahr: I said I was with the ECOMOG?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: That was not my question! Let me repeat myself, did you or did you not fight against any of the fighting groups? Did you take part in any fighting at all?

Sahr: Yes I did fight.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Against whom did you fight?

Sahr: Against the RUF.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Where did this engagement take place? Where did this fighting take place?

Sahr: They met us at Sowafeh

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What did you use to fight? What were the weapons you used?

Sahr: Guns.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Gun! How did you get the guns?

Sahr: I was having a single barrel gun.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And how did you get that one? What were you using it for before fighting with the RUF?

Sahr: I used to own it before the war. Everybody knows that before the war it was legal to own those single barrels guns.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And now you said that you were able to rescue a Paramount chief. What is the name of the Paramount chief?

Sahr: PC M. Torto II of Sewafeh.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And you said you took him to the ECOMOG. Where were ECOMOG then?

Sahr: They were at Sandeyah. They then took him to Sewafeh.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now he was captured according to your statement here by the Tamaboros who accused you of stealing rice is that so?

Sahr: They met me and said I told people to steal the rice.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And the group was the Kamajors, the Tamaboros?

Sahr: The Tamaboros.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: But were the Tamaboros and the Kamajors the same people? Were they not the same in different parts of the country?

Sahr: Well the name changed according to the locality because they were traditional hunters/fighters. The Korankos call them Tamaboros. The Mendes call them Kamajors and the Kono's call them Donsos.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well it is not strange that Tamaboros should be capturing Kamajors

Sahr: They were Themnes. Even up to date they are there I know them all.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Can you give us the names of those people who captured you.

Sahr; Yes I can. The two leaders are all here.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Will you be quiet please?

Sahr: I am sorry about that please but I am saying that the two leaders are all there now.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: The two leaders are all there and I am asking for their names.

Sahr: The one is called Sonna Turay and the other is Alpha Amadu.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Anymore?

Sahr: They were the leaders of the group.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Where are those leaders now?

Sahr: The one is at Yonwaja and the other is at Domakah.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Have you made up with them?

Sahr: On every Sunday we used to meet at Gold town.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And when you meet there are you friendly again?

Sahr: Not when we had become enemies that fought to kill. No we cannot be friends again. We just do not trust one another.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How far away are Yomanta and Komaka?

Sahr: They are after Gold town.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I am thinking about the mileage, how many miles from there?

Sahr: I cannot tell because one has to go beyond Sewafeh before arriving there.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: To Romanja or to Domaka?

Sahr: There are two miles between the two towns and they are nearer.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Would you like to meet those two?

Sahr: Well that was what I said earlier that if they are prepared to show some sign of remorse it would be good for all of us. The matter would not have come this far.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Say that again I don't understand.

Sahr: That is what I was thinking about: if the people had met me before I would not have come here to testify.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So what is he saying, is he afraid of them?

Sahr: No what I am saying is that if the people had met him before I would not have given this testimony incriminating them.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: My question is, is he ready to reconcile with them if it is possible for us to get them to come here? Is he ready to reconcile with them?

Sahr: I am ready to reconcile with them if it is possible.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We will try, the Leader of Evidence will try and we will let you know. Thank you. The Commission will ask you some more questions.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Mr. Nyakah I have to thank you for your courage to come to this Commission with this story. Again I want you to remember that questions are not meant to implicate you. We are not in court. I am not a lawyer. So my question will be just investigative to clear certain points for our report. I sympathise with the fact that you were tortured, you were harassed by rebels which is really something that anybody will think about. So let us come to the area where you had to join the Kamajors.

In fact did you have to join the Kamajors or did you volunteer yourself to be with them?

Sahr: I joined the Kamajors willingly for the sake of my people.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Are the Kamajors a fighting force or a secret society?

Sahr: It is a secret society and that is why all the time I have lived nearer to my people.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: It is a secret society?

Sahr: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: How did you get initiated? Forget about that. You can forget about that.

I am not going to tell you when to join the Soko. I am not going to tell you that. So it is interesting that you found yourself in the Kamajor society. Did you harm any person that was not really an enemy during your campaign with the Kamajor society?

Sahr: I did not harm anybody because I was all the time with my people. You may even ask my people.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Because you are now a member of the fighting force of the Kamajor group in that area did you have to settle scores with anybody over civilian matters?

Sahr: I did that many times.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Why did you have to actually treat people with military treatment knowing them to be civilians?

Sahr: I was always with the civilians.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I don't know if my question was passed over correctly. I am saying, why did he have to actually use military punishment on civilians? I mean people who were not members of the fighting forces, people whom you were supposed to be protecting.

Sahr: To my own knowledge I don't think I did it personally.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: You only use force against people. Let's come to one area that the Commission is interested in and that is torture.

Sahr: Let me tell you this that the civilians never did anything to the Kamajors. In fact there were many times when I used to talk on behalf of the civilians. Even people among us here can testify to that.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: There have been testimonies before this Commission that the Kamajors were using a chamber called kpuli to punish or torture rebel suspects or civilians over civil matters. Did you at any time use the kpuli to punish anybody?

Sahr: No, never! The civilians were under our protection. I know of cases where my friends wanted us to hold up civilians and punish them but I

have never done that before. As I used to talk in favour of civilians my companions grew to hate me. So that made me to run away from them.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Alright you said they were chasing or running after PC M. Torto II. Who were chasing him?

Sahr: The RUF group.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: The RUF group were chasing him and when you actually rescued him and sent him to Sandeyah what happened to him later from Sandeyah onwards.

Sahr: The ECOMOG took him to Sewafeh and I came back to Fonba Forbi.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I am going to have to come back to one question that Commissioner Jones asked which we are very interested in. If we should make it possible for you and those perpetrators of yours to meet, would you be happy to meet and reconcile with them?

Sahr: Yes I will be happy if that happened. This is why at times I am afraid to go to the place where they are but if that can happen I will be happy.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Are they still terrorising the place and torturing people?

Sahr: No, they are not but personally I am afraid.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where are Sonna Turay and Alpha Brima now?

Sahr: They are at Yamanjah. Yamanjah is part of Kono but the Themnes are there in a greater number than the Konos and that is why I am afraid to go there.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: The place is a section under Niemiayama chiefdom, in Niemiayama. Have you reported this matter to either the Paramount chief or the chiefdom speaker or the chiefdom authorities that this group of people are still terrorising civilians and in fact personally terrorising you that is why you are not going there. Did you do that?

Sahr: I never did.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did you report the matter to the police?

Sahr: No, I didn't.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much I have no question for this witness.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: If you think of any other points for sharing with us you should try to keep in touch with the Leader of Evidence and if possible I will have all of you here. We hear the story of the people you named. We will give them an opportunity to tell their own story and then if both parties want to come together we will bring you together so that you no longer blame yourself. You should be able to meet in the future. Now do you have questions for us?

Sahr: I have no questions. All I want is a settlement of the scores between those people and me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Good, and what about recommendations?

Sahr: Our place is not in any good condition for now. Even our barray is not in good order. We need training facilities as well as then micro credit facilities for our area.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Anymore?

Sahr: Also our market is not in good order.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Anymore?

Sahr: Our roads are not good either.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright these are all things we would include in our report for the government to look into. Now are you still receiving medical attention for your hands?

Sahr: No, I am not. In fact my younger sister too is suffering badly from the stab she received on her back.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why did you not go to a nearby hospital?

Sahr: I took her to the hospital and had some operations but now the shoulder is patched up.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I was talking about you because she has not come before the Commission yet.

Sahr: I am talking of my hand.

Marcus Jones: My question is why did you not go to the hospital nearby?

Sahr: I used to go there and they advised me to be rubbing some ointment.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you for coming. I have said before that you please keep in touch with the Leader of Evidence. You may step down now.

WITNESS – SIA MATTIA

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We got here from the summary. You had quite unpleasant experiences during the war and I will like you to share those with us now. You can now begin.

Sia: It was during this war when the South Africans were here. We were in Njiama Nimikoro because I was born there and I got married there. We were there when the rebels cut us off from the rest of the country. We were in the bush when we heard that the South Africans had arrived in Koidu town. So we came out of the bush. We were in Nimikoro with the Sierra Leone soldiers. We were in Njiama Nimikoro when we heard that N'jala Nimikoro was attacked. We were told by the soldiers that the people would not reach Njiama Nimikoro. We slept but very early in the morning they attacked Njiama Nimikoro. There were some gun shots in

the air till daybreak. In the morning they knocked at our door and broke into the house and took us out of our houses. They took us to a place where the Muslims used to pray. There was a hut there. They told us that they were going to kill all of us. All of us were crying and lamenting. They told us that they were waiting for their commando, who was at Herema Kono. If he passed the order that they should not kill us they would not kill us. We were sitting there waiting for the commando. The commando came with a lot of other rebels. Right there the commando gave us the shocker. He asked his colleague, "Why did you keep all these animals here?" Here in Nimikoro I will not save any soul. If I see anyone I will kill them. I came here purposely to kill. When they came they started firing. We were lying in the veranda in threes on the veranda. I was in the back line. When they started firing those who were in front of me heard a gun shot. I lay there flat on the ground. The shooting was so much but I was fortunate I was not shot. The commando told the people that all the people are now dead. They were shot at. The other rebel remarked to the commando that the people were so numerous that most of them had not yet died. They took their guns and started beating us. Those who were on top of me were beaten well before they were shifted and I was hit with a gun on my back and head. I was stabbed in my side. The scar is there. After that they told the people that we were dead. They just stood there waiting. I was having my younger sister staying with me and my husband. We were all together. They asked those of us who were half dead to get up so that they would save us. By then I was so weak but I heard them. I assisted my sister to get up, she was shot in her head. He then said to the commando that these people are not dead. They started firing again but I was so fortunate that I was saved. I was not caught in the fire. It was only the beat that they gave me that made me weak. They went away and left me behind. They went away. I lay there for sometime. I was then touched by my instinct that I should get up. With the help of God I got up and stood somewhere. I went some distance but I was very dizzy and I fell down. My ears started palpitating. I wanted to get up but I was unable I crawled on my belly and went to a nearby swamp. There were some potato leaves and some dirty water there. I took some of the dirty water and drank. I started bleeding the dirty water started oozing from my side. It was then that I took notice of the wound. I started crying because I was alone. I was in the bush for twelve days. It was on the thirteenth day that I went and met some people. I stay with those people and we were told to leave the place for safety. I walked on foot through the bush to Bumpeh. I later travel to Masembendu where my mother was staying. That was my experience during this war.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: The Commissioners sympathise with you for your experiences. What you told us is very sad indeed. You should be grateful to God in your life for the fact that you stayed wounded in the bush for twelve days and you did not die was a real miracle. So God must have made you survive and to make something of life and still contribute to your community. Have you still any other effects from those wounds you sustained?

Sia: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How are you feeling now?

Sia: I sometimes feel pain from my womb. At times because of the death of my younger sister I feel so lonely.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you attending hospital and receiving treatments.

Sia: When it first started I usually went to the hospital.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How old was your sister who stood up and was shot.

Sia: She was twelve years old.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. I have heard your stories with a lot of tribulation, a lot of sad feelings. But there is an area in your written statement where you said you were forced to dance to a piece of music which sounded like "how you came into the world so you will go". What kind of music was that? Was it played on a cassette or were they just singing on their own?

Sia: It was just sung by them.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Was it a Christian song? A Church song?

Sia: It was a Christian song.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. I have many questions for you. In your statement you said that it was about 500 (five hundred) people who were killed in that massacre and how did you know that they were five hundred?

Sia: We were so many, I didn't say it is the number but we were so many because I could not count them all.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now all those people killed were they buried together or were they buried singly?

Sia: I was not there but I was told by people that all those who were buried were all buried together in a garage.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Do you know whether there is any sign there, where one can go and see that mass grave?

Sia: I know the place, but I was only told. I was not present.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And where is that place?

Sia: Njiama Nimikoro.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Have you ever seen the spot?

Sia: I don't even attempt to go there because at anytime I go there; I just remember the whole thing.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright, thank you.

Leader of Evidence: Madam Mattia, you said your sister was killed. Will you please tell us the name of your sister that was killed?

Sia: she is called sugar Lahai, her Kono name was Dundu Lahai. She is my paternal Aunt's daughter.

Leader of Evidence: Those people that were killed, about five-hundred (500) or so, they were buried in a mass grave. Was your sister buried among them?

Sia: I was told that my sister was buried with them because those who came told me so.

Leader of Evidence: You said when the rebels came to the town, just as Commissioner Torto asked, they asked you to dance and sing. Do you know whether during that time they captured any people from the town?

Sia: No, in fact they told us that they came to kill all of us and not to spare anyone.

Leader of Evidence: Were you the only one who survived of those who were there when the shooting started? Or did others survive as well?

Sia: My mate and I were saved from the atrocity, but recently I heard that she is now dead.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: If you still need medical attention then the briefer will give you a reference letter. Now Sia, have you any questions you want to ask us about our work or process?

Sia: I have no questions.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any recommendations for us to include in our report?

Sia: I want them to help our people in Sasabendu where I am presently residing. We have a very poor market; our court barray is not good. We want skills training and we want micro credit facilities because presently I am unable to work.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And you said presently you are unable to work. Is there anything to do now?

Sia: I used to be involved in agriculture but presently I am sick so I don't do anything at the moment.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Maybe after your medical treatment, you will be able to carryout with your agricultural work. We would include your recommendations. Thank you for coming and you may step down. This witness brings us to the end of our morning session; we will be here again at 3:15 p.m. to continue. Thank you and we hope to see you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, we are here to see all of you again and we are ready to start. Leader of Evidence?

Charm: Madam Commissioner, our first witness for the afternoon session is Kumba Sandi.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Kumba, you are welcome. You are most welcome and we are all waiting to hear you. Carry on.

Kumba: We were attacked and we ran to Makambo village. When we were there, they attacked us there again. A lot of people were captured and I was among them. They brought us to Tombodu and asked us to line-up. They said if there are many men, they will kill the men first before the women. If the women are so many, they will kill the women first. After lining us up they saw that there were more men than women. The men were twelve in number and my younger brother was among them. They were all killed. They lined up us the women again. A certain man among them told the group that the women were few and that the rest had been killed. They resolved not to kill any more women. again. Their commander called Savage told them that they should free the women. They took us to Njagbema. Since then, I didn't see anything. Afterwards my husband came and took me away. That was all.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: When you say that is all, it means there is more. Kumba, there is no need to be worried. You know the experiences women had during the war here in Sierra Leone. In war torn areas around the world, we know that people don't like to say their experiences, especially women. So you don't have to feel ashamed or worried.

Kumba: But that was all I saw.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I asked you other questions about your particulars here, probably you want to go for a closed door hearing. If that is so, I ask her to stand down and wait until Wednesday. Because I cant ask her questions on what we have here.

Kumba: There is no secret about it, all that happened is what I have told you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So I take it, that it is not true that you were raped?

Kumba: I was with a man that was not my husband.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: There was a man who was not your husband?

Kumba: He was staying with me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Where?

Kumba: In Njagbema.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Was that when you were captured?

Kumba: Yes, it was the time.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What was the name of the man?

Kumba: He was called Amara

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Amara what was he?

Kumba: That was the only name I knew.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How long did you stay with Amara?

Kumba: Nearly two years.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Where did you stay with him, in the bush?

Kumba: Yes, I was staying with Amara in the bush.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now, how did you manage to escape or how did you manage to leave Amara?

Kumba: My husband came for me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I want you to help us, it sounds a bit easy, too easy, and you were with this man who abducted you, took you away, captured you and your husband just came and took you away, and let you go willingly?

Kumba: No it was not easy.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Then tell us how you managed to go away.

Kumba: It was after the general announcement that whosoever had someone else's child or wife was to be released that my husband came for me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How were you treated when you were with Amara?

Kumba: He treated me badly.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How, what did he do?

Kumba: He told me that if I refused to go with him to his home, he would beat me. And whatever mistake I made, he just beat me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did he rape you or you went away with him willingly?

Kumba: I was not happy to go with him.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: To what group did this Amara belong?

Kumba: He was an RUF member.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did they have a leader with them while you stayed with him?

Kumba: Yes, they had a leader.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Do you know the name of the particular leader of the group?

Kumba: I know two.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now can you give us the names of the two that you know?

Kumba: One was called DD and the other Gasama.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Among the RUF who attacked you, were there women?

Kumba: There was only one woman.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Was she too in any position of command?

Kumba: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Kumba Sandi, you are a Kono I believe?

Kumba: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Please come forward and tell us what happened to you? We don't have any hold on you, it is in your own interest. You had forgotten that you had made a statement to us; and what you are saying now and what we are reading do not seem to correlate. It is to save you, it is to help you that we are here. I am going to ask you, there were twelve (12) people killed one night when you were arrested. Twelve (12) people killed at Makambo. Who killed those people?

Kumba: It was at Tombodu that they were killed and not Makambo. They were killed by Savage.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Then Savage killed 12 people at Tombodu? Was it on the night of your arrival in Tombodu or days after? Or the killings were done one after the other, subsequently?

Kumba: It was the day we arrived.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Kumba, who was C.O. Mosquito?

Kumba: I heard about him but I don't know him.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But you know Amara Kamara?

Kumba: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Were they not in the same company with C.O Mosquito? Col. Brigadier C.O. Mosquito, something like that?

Kumba: They were not staying in the same town; you can hear someone's name knowing them.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When you were arrested, and taken because you were young, one of the rebel commanders or senior people asked you to become his wife?

Kumba: It was only Amara.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did you agree or were you forced?

Kumba: I didn't agree.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where is Amara now?

Kumba: Right now, I don't know his whereabouts.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When did you separate from him?

Kumba: It has taken a long time.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Kumba, you see you are refusing to tell us what actually happened to you that is why commissioner was asking you if you wanted to come for a closed door hearing? What you told the statement takers and what you explained here do not agree. Possibly for some reason you are scared of the crowd or something. But what we are saying is that what you are telling us is in your own interest. Don't be scared at anybody to come after you just for telling us the truth.

Kumba: I have taken oath from the Koran. I will not tell a lie to you people.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: They wrote the statement for you?

Kumba: I was saying it and they were writing.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you; I don't have any further questions.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Kumba, what happened to your brothers and sisters after they were all captured and taken to Makombo? What happened to them?

Kumba: It was only my brother that was killed.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: The other brother and sisters, what happened to them, were they able to escape?

Kumba: The other sister was with me, they did nothing to her.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright, thank you. Leader of Evidence?

Charm: Madam Kumba, you said after you were asked to queue up, it was discovered that the females were very few and because of that, they spared your life. How many women were there?

Kumba: We were two in number with two female children.

Charm: Were these people captured in the same village? Were they living in the same village before this attack?

Kumba: No, they were captured from different points.

Charm: Do you know you talked about this other lady who was older than the other two ladies; do you know what happened to this lady?

Kumba: Nothing happened to her.

Charm: While you were with this rebel group, do you know whether they attacked other villages?

Kumba: They attacked Ngiema and Yamandu.

Charm: And did they abduct people like they did to women like you?

Kumba: Yes.

Charm: And do you know what happened to these women and children in particular?

Kumba: I didn't see anything happen to them.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I have a few more questions for you Kumba. You said you stayed with Amara for two years; did you have any child for him?

Kumba: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: When your husband went to take you, was he glad to see you? What has been his treatment of you?

Kumba: My husband was happy to receive me and he said that it was an accident.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well that is a very sensible husband and I hope there are more like him ready to accept their women back who were captured and to make them comfortable. Now have you any questions for us Kumba?

Kumba: I have no questions for you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now have you any recommendations you will like to make?

Kumba: Yes, we want better things in our communities. We want you to assist us with Micro credit facilities and train us with our younger sisters. I want you to build a house for me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now you show us groups of NGOs and I will refer you to those who can help with micro credit. And with skills training. For accommodation, I don't think you will have accommodation built particularly for you but then I will see whether there is any NGO around building houses and you may benefit then when they will build houses for your community. Thank you very much for coming. You may step down.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mind you audience, it is our policy to treat all our witnesses with dignity and we're not supposed to laugh or boo at them.

Charm: Madam Commissioner, our next witness is Tamba Ngegba.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mr. Tamba Ngegba. You must see how it is difficult to come but we thank you for coming. And are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Tamba: I am a Muslim.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Please take the Koran and repeat after me.

The oath is taken on the Koran.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now Tamba we are waiting to hear you to tell us your experiences.

Tamba: At one time in 1991, very early in the morning on a Friday Koidu was attacked. All of us ran away into the bush. In the afternoon at about 3:00 p.m., we heard shooting from the Njaiama Sewafe end and somebody asked us to come out of the bush as it was the government

troops that had arrived. We came back from the bush and were in town for three days. On the fourth day this place was attacked again. By then the soldiers told us that everybody should go because they were unable to fight back. Everybody ran in different directions. I was the only person who stayed behind. There I met with Mosquito and Kposowa who subsequently captured me. I was with them together with Jonathan Kposowa. They took us to Njaiama Nimikoro. I was there with them for up to a month, up to the time they took over the whole of Kono. There was my friend called Sahr Gbona of Njaiama Nimikoro whom they killed. One Brima killed him. We were there when the then Speaker came with government troops. But then many extra people were captured in fact I was slapped with a knife on my cheek. Then Borbor Ishaka took us from the bush and carried us to Goal town. So he searched for the people and asked them to come out of the bush. He took them to Goal town and some to Njaiama Sewafe. It was the running away of everybody from this place that prompted the coming of the South Africans. The South Africans were here for quite a long time, after which we suffered another attack. Then it was time for the presidential elections. After the elections we were here again. I heard of the overthrow of President Tejan Kabba in a coup. So we were all here because there was no way to go. As long as you are caught moving out you should expect to be killed. That was during Paul Koroma's time. The rebels used to come. But when Paul Koroma's soldiers came, they started burning our houses. The man that was actually in charge of doing that was Paul Keleto. At one time, our children were arrested and charged with stealing a diamond. From that time on there was no way for me to go. After that other elections were held and Tejan Kabba continued in power. Then the Kamajors came and drove them from this land. That is all I have to say.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: You told us a number of things and we will try to address them one at a time. What group captured you to start with?

Tamba: They used to call them Freedom fighters.

Comm. Jones: Was that the group headed by Maskita?

Tamba: Yes. He was within that group.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So they were called Freedom fighters. What were they called later on? Did they change their names or were they always Freedom Fighters?

Tamba: yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: They changed their names to what?

Tamba: To RUF.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So later they became the RUF?

Tamba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were you blind when they captured you?

Tamba: It was when captured me that I became blind.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How long did you spend with them before you became blind?

Tamba: Only a month then Bobor Yusu came to my aid, I was in the bush when I became blind.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why do you think you became blind?

Tamba: In the bush, something passed over my face then I became blind.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now before you became blind, what did you do for this RUF? Did they give you any work to do?

Tamba: No, they didn't give me any work to do because I was an old man.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did they give you any help; medical help when they found out that you were blind?

Tamba: There was no medicine. They didn't have drugs.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now this Mohamed Turay, who was he?

Tamba: Mohamed Turay was from Guinea but Colonel Issa Kagbusu recruited people to fight.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Where is this Mohamed Turay now?

Tamba: I heard he went to Guinea.....

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Was he a Guinean or a Sierra Leonean?

Tamba: He was a Guinean.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well, he came from Guinea but now you said he was a Guinean as well. Yes he could have been a Sierra Leonean from Guinea. Now where is Issa?

Tamba: When the war came here, I heard he went to Makeni. I don't know where he is now. I heard the government arrested him for what he did.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now can you tell us about the Kamajors? You said that you went to Kangama Golahun and at that time there were many Kamajors.

Tamba: I was there when the place was attacked by one Samuel and others.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you a Kamajor then?

Tamba: They were not Kamajors.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Listen to my question and put it to him. My question is, is he the witness, a Kamajor? Or was he at that time a Kamajor, himself the witness there?

Tamba: I was just an ordinary civilian.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now does the name Tamba Sandi mean anything to you? Or Foray Momoh?

Tamba: Yes, Foray yes, the RUF Chief of Staff.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Can you tell us anything about his exploits?

Tamba: He was there calling meetings.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What were the meetings about?

Tamba: About the RUF.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What about the RUF?

Tamba: I heard they were trying to launch the RUF Party, so they were calling meetings to sensitise people about that.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Do you know anything about mining in connection with any of the fighting groups?

Tamba: Yes

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Can you tell us?

Tamba: Issa was in fact engaged in diamond mining. Well at one time, he captured 4 men and killed them because they were alleged to have stolen diamonds.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What about the Children. Were children killed too because they were alleged to have stolen diamonds?

Tamba: I didn't see them kill children.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Was there any occasion where people were spread in front of vehicles to be run over?

Tamba: Yes, Issa himself did that.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why?

Tamba: It was alleged that they stole diamonds.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So they lined them up on the ground and the vehicle ran over them?

Tamba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How many people, as far as you know, were involved?

Tamba: I didn't see, I cannot see but we were standing and I heard people say it.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Tamba Ngegba, thank you very much for this testimony, which is very revealing and informative. I am going to ask questions more or less

as a follow-up to what has been asked already by Commissioner Jones. Who do you think mined in Koidu town?

Tamba: Well all the rebels.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Which? At that time there were fighting forces but after some time all of them became known as rebels. AFRC, SLA, which group do you think was really involved in the mining of Koidu town?

Tamba: Non but RUF.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. Which diamond dealers did you hear of that were here mining diamonds, whether they were national or internationals? Which names?

Tamba: I know of the Marakas.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: They were the agents buying diamonds. Did you know of other nationalities that were involved in the buying of these diamonds?

Tamba: Some other people used to come. At one time, one white man came; he was with Mr. Issa here for quite a long time and went back.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I know you would not be able to tell who was white or black but from what you heard can you tell us the nationalities of those who came here to buy diamonds during the war? You do recall that during the war this place was vacated and everybody was away and people were coming here to buy diamonds. Some of them may have been black or white or from elsewhere, just help us either with the names or nationalities of those persons.

Tamba: While people used to come, some of them used to come from the Liberia end.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Would you actually be able to remember the names of the people who came?

Tamba: Well at that time, they didn't mention names only that during their meetings they used to say, these are the people. At one time there were white people we were told at a meeting that these people were here to buy diamonds. They were white people.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: We have to come to reality again. Mohamed Turay came here to recruit people. What were they recruited for, what were they to do? Was it for fighting who or where?

Tamba: He came inside to assist, to recruit people, train them so that they can go to Guinea to fight. The people were meant to go to Guinea to fight.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So the exercise was really aiming at recruiting people to cross over the borders to Guinea and fight. Was there any kind of payment involved? Was there any form of remuneration and what the purpose of the fighting for which they were trained?

Tamba: I cannot say because the boys I used to hear went to their boss to have things done.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I am very much like Tamba Ngegba to know that I know his problems. He is handicapped, not able to see, but I know he has a sharp sense of hearing, and we want to have needs from those perceptions. That is why we ask all these questions.

Tamba: Well I heard the man brought much money. In fact they told us that he came with plenty of dollars to recruit people to go and fight in Guinea.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Okay, Tamba L. Sani and S. Foray Momoh were very prominent during the exercise, what positions did they actually occupy?

Tamba: Well I learnt that they were the party chairmen for this country.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: We need to make things clear, there was an RUF party and there was an RUF movement. Were they party chairmen or 100 percent for the fighting force of RUF as a movement?

Tamba: They were RUF party chairmen.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Party chairmen not movement chairmen?

Tamba: He was an RUF man; he was responsible to arrange everything for the RUF.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Including the movement of troops?

Tamba: I cannot say that, but he was the middleman for the civilians and the RUF officers.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Here in your written statement there is a very strong mention of some men, Mohamed Turay and Maskita. Where do you think Maskita is right now?

Tamba: I heard he was killed.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When he was living here, what did they tell you? Where did he tell you that he was going?

Tamba: I heard they said he went to Liberia.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did you know him personally or did you ever chat with him?

Tamba: Well Maskita, even before the war, he was here going to school while he was a schoolboy. And he was here with us working as a security.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Was that the time when you knew him and got used to one another?

Tamba: It was the time I came to know him.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So since that time the friendship had grown?

Tamba: He went away for a very long time except when he came here as a member the RUF movement.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Okay, thank you very much for these answers. I want you to know that we are not trying to subject or harass you. Rather we are after the truth. Until the truth comes out, we would not be able to do anything for you and your people. Any person who has done any wrong or has been wronged in any way whatsoever has to come up and answer for it. So my final statement to you is, I want you to say yes or no that:

1. Mohamed Turay came here and recruited people to go and fight across the borders and they were succeeded in that exercise by Issa Sesay. True or False?

Tamba: True.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Leader of Evidence, have you any questions?

Charm: I have one or two questions for the witness. Mr. Ngegba, during your testimony, you mentioned one (correct me if I'm wrong) Keleto or Kaneto who was responsible for burning houses in Koidu town, not so?

Tamba: Even now, that is why I said yes.

Charm: Is Keleto still alive, and if he is alive, do you know where he is at the moment?

Tamba: Well, I cannot tell, I heard that he went to Kailahun; I don't know now whether he is dead or alive.

Charm: Is Keleto a native of Kono District or is from any other District in the country?

Tamba: He was a Mende.

Charm: Do you know for how long he stayed in Kono?

Tamba: I cannot tell because he came here as a Commando.

Charm: So his troops were responsible for burning the houses in Koidu town?

Tamba: Yes.

Charm: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Tamba, we asked you a lot of questions. Thank you so much for answering our questions. It is your turn now to ask the Commission any questions you may have.

Tamba: I have no question.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Have you any recommendations for the attention of the commission?

Tamba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Yes, go ahead.

Tamba: I'm appealing to the Commission to make the recommendation that my home needs roads, there is no road leading to my home. The road is so rough that, there is no way to go there, at Kaisay. It was under the town chief but the town chief seems to ignore the place. I'm also making an appeal for housing facilities there is no good house in our area. I want to add again that I am sick; I am blind and in need of people to help me recover my sight.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Have you ever made any attempt to get medical examination for your eye?

Tamba: Yes, I came to UNAMSIL.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And did you get any help at all?

Tamba: They gave me some help, they gave me some medicines and a pair of glasses but I use to forget it at home. Even today when I was coming I forgot it because it is too heavy to carry.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are the glasses useful?

Tamba: They are useful except that when they went for me very early this morning I forgot to bring them along.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well, it is good you are with UNAMSIL. Please continue with them for the time being. The other recommendations we will include in our report but isn't there a town chief?

Tamba: There is.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well maybe you could urge your town chief to do something about your roads, to make representation for your roads to be repaired and to look for NGOs as well who are offering housing facilities but at the same time, we will note it in our report. Thank you. And you may step down now.

We have come to the end of our first day seating and we will be back here tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. to continue, and I hope we will see as many of you as we have today.

Shall we stand up for the Commissioners?

DAY 2

Adekeru: Good morning. Yes ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you on behalf of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to the second day of public hearings here in the Kono District. We want to start and we ask all those who are outside who want to be a part of this hearing to please come in so that we can start. Today's meeting is going to be presided over by Commissioner Sylvanus Torto so I hand you over to him.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Good morning all of you especially our chiefs. We also greet those who are listening to us on the radio. I must actually introduce myself as Sylvanus Torto one of the national commissioners chairing today's hearings here at the Fatima Hall in Koidu Town, Kono District. I must actually remind those in the audience of the usual rules and regulations of listening and attendance of these hearings that, well I don't know whether I am supposed to mention mobiles because the facilities are not yet here but those who may have the international tie please switch them off and we do not actually clap, we do not hiss we do not boo, we do not laugh at any witness or testimony no matter how strongly you may feel about a particular witness. The rationale behind this is plain, simple and straight forward that if such a thing should occur, the entire exercise will be reduced to a laughing matter. So we don't take kindly to that, we don't feel happy at all when people begin to laugh at people's testimonies because of how funny it may appear to them and at times even want to show signs of insinuation. So I want to encourage my brothers and sisters to please remember not to do any of those violations. May we please rise for the usual protocols of Muslim and Christian prayers?

..... Mr. Commissioner, our first witness this morning is Sia Lebbie.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Can the witness identify herself by name please? Are you a Muslim or Christian?

Sia: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Please hold on to the Bible. The oath is taken by Sia Lebbie.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Sia, we know that during the 9 years of war you may have gone through a whole lot of harassments and all forms of torture and sufferings but we want you to relate your experience to us; on one particular incident where you suffered most. So please go ahead.

Sia: good morning everyone. I am your daughter and sister Sia Lebbie. I am sitting before the TRC. All those 10 years of war, what I have gone through is what I am going to explain to you people. We suffered a lot but the greatest suffering was in 1988. It was when the SLA arrived from Freetown that we fled into the bush. We were in the bush when we heard that the ECOMOG were based in Motema. We went to Motema for protection. It was during that time that the rebels attacked us at night 3 O'clock Thursday early in the morning on Friday June 12, they brought us out. The boy that brought me out I don't know him but I knew he was an SLA soldier. They were around the bush of Koidu Town and we were heard firings and it was that very night that they came to Motema. That night they attacked us we were unable to come out, and the house where we were there was no place to run to at MP. When they killed so many people behind us, early in the morning they took us out, me and my children. Early in the morning they took us out, me and my children, my husband ran away from us. My husband was hidden in the room with one of my sons. When they took us outside with my 5 children the boy told us that you said that you didn't like us you say it is Tejan Kabba that you like, so we are going to kill you like a fowl. I was stood there looking at him. He told us to go down. While we were going down, they started shooting at us. My son who was 17 years old was killed. The second child was there who was a girl child and she too was killed. By then I had my little children twins. The one was strapped to my

back while I carried the other in my hands. I was shot in my left leg and it was amputated. Among all my children it was only one that was free from gunshots. All the 4 children were shot. The other child was shot and his intestines came out. The other girl child was shot in her mouth and as she was struggling for her life, they shot her again and she died. We were many in the house including old and young people and children, and most of them died but those of us who were wounded were taken by the ECOMOG to Freetown. There we were hospitalised. Now I have children, my husband too is frustrated. I was once a petty trader and my husband was a farmer. Now we are doing nothing. The two elder children who used to help us are now dead. Now we have nothing to do and we are getting help from nowhere. Now I see my children who were war wounded crying and saying to me mum, we want to learn but we have no means. Dad is not helping us. What are we going to do now? When I asked the Dad, he says Sia I am weak, I have nothing and I am jobless. What am I to do? Our brothers have brought distress to our lives in this country. Even my children had to be helped by people but they have no house to sleep in. They are staying in the camp. What are we to do in this country now? I have nobody to assist me in this country with my children. I know my children will be my future helper now they have no means to learn. That is what our brothers did to us in this country but we are praying for peace and we are praying to forgive them but still they are discouraging us. The government is helping them but for them to show a sign of remorse they are not showing it. They are always boasting of what they have done to us and now we don't know what to do next. Those of us who suffered in this war are still suffering and our children are also suffering with us. That is all I came to share with you today.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Sia Lebbia, thank you very much for this testimony. We are very sorry to hear what happened to you. Anybody going through that kind of ordeal must have undergone a very painful experience but we want you to clarify a few issues to us from your explanation and your written statement. It is not intended to harass you or to subject you to intensive questioning after all that happened to you. What are the names of the 4 children who died?

Sia: Two Children.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: two of them okay, names?

Sia: Sahr Lebbie, and Kadiatu Lebbie

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Ages?

Sia: Sahr Lebbie was 17 years and Kadiatu was 12 years old.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where did this incident take place?

Sia: It was in Motema MP

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: You mentioned in your written or verbal explanation that it was the SLA. There in your written statement you say RUF, AFRC, SLA, people's army. So which one do we really go by?

Sia: They were all in the bush.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Which particular faction did you suspect that really did the havoc to you?

Sia: I don't know the difference; they were all in one group.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I know that during times like these, one would not be so careful as to take a closer look at the perpetrators but do you remember the name, or the face of the person who actually cut off your leg?

Sia: No.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But do you know his name?

Sia: No.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Sia, we want to thank you for coming to the Commission, we are sorry that you lost your children and that you had such severe injury. From the way you have given your testimony we can tell that you are a courageous woman and a strong woman. It is a pity that some of the people who wrong are still not remorseful and they can afford to laugh at you. We hope that after this week and after all the experiences here they will be more considerate and sensitive to the injuries that they caused the people of this nation. Is your leg still giving you trouble?

Sia: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: are you able to use it or are you able to use artificial limb?

Sia: The one that was given to me in Freetown, I am unable to talk with it.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Is there any hope that after sometime when the leg is properly healed you will be able to use it?

Sia: It is only through the help of God that I will walk with it but I am having pains

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We will give you a letter of reference and you may be able to have some advice, to help ease your pain. In connection with the help for your family I will ask you to talk to the briefer at the end of this session and she will be able to give you letters of reference to enable you to get help in acquiring skills training so that you can earn some money. Is your husband very old man?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What is wrong with him?

Sia: He suffers from hypertension and has pain all over his body.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Is he receiving medical treatment?

Sia: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well I will advise him to go to the doctor and get some treatment and if he has proper medical attention, he should be able to do some work. There are a number of hypertensive patients around who manage to earn their living. Thank you for your testimony.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Leader of evidence you have questions for the witness?

Leader of Evidence: Yes, Mr. Commissioner. Sia I join the Commissioners to thank you for coming to the Commission. I have very few questions for you. First besides your two children Sahr and Kadiatu who were killed, do you know whether other people were killed in the village during that attack?

Sia: Yes I know they killed a lot of people.

Leader of Evidence: Can you say how many people were killed??

Sia: I don't know the number. After the incident, they took us away, but I know of one lady whose husband and children were killed.

Leader of Evidence: These armed men who attacked the village, did they stay after the attack or they leave immediately after the attack?

Sia: They ran away.

Leader of Evidence: Were you able to burry your children or give them proper burial?

Sia: We left their bodies behind but we heard that they were all buried in one grave.

Leader of Evidence: When you came later on were you able to see the mass grave?

Sia: I didn't ask because asking always made me cry.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Commissioner.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much, Sia, we have asked you questions for the Commission?

Sia: Yes, after all what happened to me and my children, what help are you are going to offer us?

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Sia, it is unfortunate. That is one handicap we have as a Commission. We do not have the mandate or resources to make individual compensation to witnesses or victims. This is the sad thing for us that we don't even have the mandate to do so. The law does not allow us to do it, nor does the Commission have any resources on its own to do it out of its own volition. So all we can do is to incorporate whatever recommendations you may be giving us eventually in our report. It is those recommendations that we are going to analyse and pass on to government along with our own recommendations with respect to what ought to be done for people like you. The act also says that government should pass the report onto the Security Council. They will look at it and only God knows what will come of it. So I don't want you to think that your appearance before the Commission is a waste of time at all. So let me talk a little bit about the children. I don't want you to deprive the children of school because there is now a government programme in place. There are teachers here who will prove me right that education up to a certain class is free now. I know that there are things they call school charges but nobody is supposed to drive any child out of school only because they have not paid their school charges. So I will encourage you to please send those children to school because you are not going to pay for them in terms of fees. Do you have another question?

Sia: I have no question but I have a talk for the government.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much. That was what I was going to come up to. Do you have any recommendations for us to pass on to the government?

Sia: I am making an appeal to the government on behalf of all of us who are handicapped that government kindly helps our children. We are unable to revenge the things that were done to us. We are unable to do anything and we are appealing to those who wronged us to show some sign of remorse so that we would be able to forgive them and live with them as one family in the future.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Yes any other recommendation?

Sia: We are still crying for our children because they are our future leaders. I am crying to the government to assist us because the pain is so much. We are unable to undergo the pain. So let the government assist us with medical care.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Okay, all your recommendations have been taken down already. They have been taken down word for word and I am assuring you that we will incorporate them into our report and pass them on to the government. Like I said earlier we will pass on the appropriate recommendations but I am enquiring further, are you a member of the Amputee Association, the Sierra Leone Amputees Association? There was a housing project in place for amputees and the War wounded. Did you benefit from that?

Sia: Yes we got it.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So you now have a house?

Sia: I have got a house of my own but we are still suffering because we are unable to work even to find food for ourselves.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: This is a very sad situation Sia, very very sad indeed. The problem you have is the same problem all of us in this world have, all of us. The only consolation for me is that that you have been provided with a house for which I thank God for. The other areas as we said earlier, are God will provide but please make an effort to send those children to school. Do you have any other recommendation?

Sia: I have also planned that and I am doing it but in the morning when the children are going to school sometimes the teachers ask for money and I haven't got money and also the children ask for breakfast in the morning and that too I haven't got. It is something very discouraging to me.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I agree with you perfectly Sia. This is always the problem but I want to follow up on Commissioner Jones' advice to you. At this point in time at the stage you are I will suggest our briefer to talk to you about skills training of some sort such as tailoring, gara tie dying or something you can do while sitting down and making some money out of it. So I definitely want to encourage you to please explore that possibility. There is a training school in town called PROWA I think they also offer skills of that nature. If you meet and talk to them believe you me there will be some form of assistance. If they cannot, they will help direct you somewhere. If you don't have other recommendations or questions, we thank you very much for your appearance. You may stand down.

WITNESS – ABDUL MBAWA

LEO Our next witness is Abdul Mbawa
OATH

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Abdulai again we have to remind you that you are not in a court so please feel free to share your testimony with the Commission. We want you to share your experience of a particular event or situation during this war from which you suffered most.

Abdulai: Throughout the war I was in Guinea. We were in Guinea as refugees but we were not getting supplies in 1998. I was there with my two children and my wife. We used to go and work on contract without getting anything so I decided to come over to get some food for my children as we suffered a great deal from lack of food. So I crossed the river back into Sierra Leone to this place. That was on 22nd November 1998. I was guiding the people I came with. Throughout the night I did not sleep. In the morning we were preparing to leave because, usually it is during the evening they use to cross over. So I decided to have some rest by sleeping a bit. So when I was sleeping the boys I took along with me were up in a mango tree. As some strange people were coming they jumped down from the mango tree and ran away without even waking me up. I felt like I was in a dream with somebody telling me not to run. I was captured and a question was posed: do you know the rebels? I said no, so they said they were the rebels. I was captured and the rebels asked me to show them where the people had gone and where food was kept. I told them that I was a stranger around and that I didn't know anything about people and food around here. I had an only garden in Sowa at Gbongbo, a village in Kono at the border. So they went around and found a shell, a shell of a single barrel gun. So the commander asked if I was a Kamajor. The name of the commander was Eagle so he asked if I was a Kamajor. I said no. I told him that I had never been a Kamajor. He said I was lying so he took a wire and tied my hand behind me. He asked if I had any food around there to eat. By then we had some food around so I said yes. I went and took the food, brought it to him before he released me. They cooked, and we ate together. We were there together with the rest of the civilians they had captured. We were all packed in one place. They told us to move with the loads they had asked us to carry. We went along and at one point they cut a banana and gave me to carry. They said as long as I said there was no food in the area I should carry the banana. We were taken to Bama Tanyamiu. That was my first time in Gandorhun. The commander then was Akim. He said they should not keep any civilian around the border area but that they should all be brought here. We reported there in the morning. By then I was stripped naked they took all my things: my watch, my clothes they gave me a pair of torn trousers. When we arrived at Gandorhun, the battalion commander said that the civilians had some work for us to do. We met a man called paymaster. He said he did not want to see any civilian and gave the order that they should kill all of us. He said the Kono people were deceitful. He said they used to deceive people all the time and that was why they were not going to be spared. But then Akim said no. They said in the morning we should go for screening. When we went for that screening they asked for my name. We were called one after the other. They said, "as you see us, you should know that we have been the rebels fighting since 1991 up to this date". So they took my clothes and printed RUF on my chest. They

said if I run away and got to the Kamajor zone I would be killed there. Again I was not sure of what lay ahead in Guinea so I decided against going to Guinea. So I stayed with them. We were there when they said they needed some civilians to go for ammunition in Burkina Faso. I was one of the people chosen to go. They gave us some other things like tyres, etc. to carry. We took those loads and went away. When we arrived at a point I had wanted to hide but I did not know the place. It was within Sandahun. We went as far as Senyema. They don't allow you to even eat an orange. We crossed river and entered Baoma. There we got the ammunition. There was a vehicle there that was spoilt. They said we should take the ammunition from there and return. Each person was made to carry a box. Then we took them and started coming. There was sick person among us who complained of being tired. So he said, "I am now tired, I can no longer carry this load." But by then if anyone complained that they were tired they were asked to sit down and have a rest. A little further down the road so we were ahead when we heard a loud report. By then Issa was the commander charged to come with the ammunition and clear this place of the enemy. He was then the leader of the troops. He was then from Liberia. We came and arrived at Gandorhun. I did not know anything about what was going on so some of those that they chose to come with the loads discarded their loads and ran away. We arrived at Meiyor, in the Guinea highway. There we stopped with our loads. The following day we were told to go back, we went back. When I went all my feet were aching. They said I should consider leaving this civilian life. One of my sisters called Kumba and her mother (a nurse by profession) from Kuwadu were also captured. I told her sister I wished to be her husband. Sister said no, she said that is what I used to do. But then when I did that people used to run away then that brought trouble to my husband. A certain case occurred there when a man was put in a place called "the dungeon". The man that I had wanted to be with was the one that they put there. So he was taken out of it. So he said he was never going to agree. I said look I am not going to run please they have marked me already and I have no place to run to with the mark on my body. So he agreed. I started cutting some palm kernels for him. We became friends. So he asked me if I could write. I said yes I can read a bit. I started writing for him as an adjutant to him as G5. When ECOMOG was driven out of Kono that battalion was to go to Gandorhun. It was then the battalion to go to Tongo as well. For us now, they said all the civilians that want to go to Kono should stay. I was asked to take down the names of those that were going. We came with them. We were now working all the time; we used to register those civilians we met. One day they asked if I am ready to work as G5 in another assignment area. I said yes. So they said I should go to Nimikoro to serve my people. There the brigade G5 was Captain Amidu. He gave me an assignment paper as civilian. I was staff sergeant. They were using us. I went there and was giving passes. I was given resettlement paper. Even when I used to talk on behalf of the civilians they used to molest me. There we had our Commander, one Sylvester Ken.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Please excuse me, I want ladies and gentlemen in the hall and chiefs to acknowledge the presence of one of us commissioners who has just arrived. He was to join us this morning but he is just coming now. He is Commissioner Professor William Schabas. He is the international Commissioner on the team so please acknowledge his presence.

Abdulai:

So when I reported he said I should sum up courage. He said we should pray to God for the end of the war. We were at Bumpah when they said that all the G5 candidates were to go for training. I have never witnessed such training in my life. So they collected us and brought us to the base. A woman called Monica was then the training commander. We met some people there, some G5 that had already completed their training. We entered into the society bush. No person can ever mistake an ordinary bush for a society one. From then on I knew that we were for something. So everything was started. We met some three (3) people there that escaped from the training but they were later caught and brought back. They put them in a wire. When we were taken for the training in the bush with some rigorous exercises, we lost a man. Even for me going through the ordeals meant real suffering. I survived the exercises with much pain. Even now I am feeling the pain I sustained at that time. The people we met there lost all hope of survival. They said whosoever got there should not attempt to hide. Night and morning there was no sleep. We lived on one banana per day, a banana to a person per day. There was no salt to go with it. The day I was punished before the G5 all the G5 trainers were told to lie down on the ground and crawl. They said if those people are there, they plead on behalf of the civilians so we should remove them from there. So we moved from there. We had our passing out so I went to my assignment area. They told us that we were running a revolution. So whosoever worked with us (as cook, messenger, etc.) was considered a fighter and should therefore go for the disarmament programme when the time came. Even we the G5 were seen as fighting the war. So we were asked to help in the building of the party RUF. They said it was the right party for this country and as such we should promote it. So the time for disarmament came. Before the time, I went to my village to visit my father that I did good to at one time at Kamagbonkorya. On my way back I met Rambo at Ganehday junction. He caught me, he said look right now we are on Guinea Mission. He said C.O. Issa had given us an operation to run. I told him I had no gun why should I go on such a mission. He said that as G5 we were supposed to go along with them so that wherever civilians were caught we would be there to write their names and take care of them. There I asked God saying God, please save me I am just a Guinean boy, son of Guinea because my parents are all coming from Guinea. If my parents saw me in such a movement with or without a gun I would be implicated as a rebel, one of those who took the war there. So as soon as I finished praying I got up and made good my escape. When I escaped I go back to Sagbeh instead I went to the bush at Kandaya. I was there doing farm work until I heard about the disarmament. So somebody was sent to me. So they said all the G5 should go for disarmament for them to have some benefit. But all this was a sort of trick to increase the number of RUF Party members. We were given some weapons. So we went for disarmament at Njaiama NimiKoro. This is the end of my story to the Commission.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: We thank you very much Abdul Mbawa for your explanation. Anybody listening to you will know that you went through a very painful ordeal. You will have to clarify a few areas me and the other Commissioners. In your explanation you spoke of all the problems, pains and hassles that you went through, but you left out your own exploits you made in the process of discharging your duties one as a G5, and second as a member of the RUF. So I want you to recount this including one time when you reported a soldier for five hundred dollars

(\$500) when some transaction happened between you and a soldier for \$500 explain the circumstances surrounding that kind of involvement.

Abdulai: There was a man passing by with \$500 on him. When he arrived at the Bumpah checkpoint I was there. I was supposed to be there because I was for giving passes in the morning. No civilian was allowed to go out if they were not issued a pass. So I was in my office when a vehicle was stopped and the passengers searched. A boy was found to have money on him. So I told them to give the money back to the man. The mining commander was Junior including the other RUF members; they told me to get out of there that was why they slapped me on my ears. They said I spoke too much on behalf of civilians.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Who was Colonel Monica?

Abdulai: She was the camp lion training commander in Yengema

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: During your stay with the RUF either as G5 or as a fighter how many battles did you engage in?

Abdulai: I never went to fight, I was just writing.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What were your functions basically as G5

Abdulai: I functioned as a mediator between the soldiers and the civilians. I was in charge of resolving any matter that arose between the civilians and the RUF. There were cases of rape and harassment and I was supposed to record the names of those concerned and pass them on to the operational G5. I was in charge of issuing passes as well as issuing resettlement papers. Those were my functions.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Was raping an offence in the RUF government?

Abdulai: During my own time of operation it was a crime.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: That was the latter part of the movement?

Abdulai: Yes that was between 1998 and 1999.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What about killing?

Abdulai: Within that time those who killed innocent persons were to be killed as well.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So killing was not a serious offence at all but raping was, was that the situation?

Abdulai: Both of them were crimes. Persons were killed for either of the two offences.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But you just used the expression innocent killing. It means murder was punishable but ordered killings were not.

Abdulai: During my own time it was then the time when people started to come back to resettle so when you killed somebody you were killed in return.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Commissioners, do you have questions for Abdulai?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you Abdulai for your testimony. You told us about somebody being punished. In fact you actually gave us information about two incidents of punishment, in one I think the offender was put in a dungeon and on another occasion you said the offender was put in a wire. I want you to describe for us what the dungeon was and what you mean by the wire, putting someone in a wire.

Abdulai: It was like a pot, they put him there and poured water on him. When a person was in he had no way to lie down and no way to sit down either.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How far did the water go, the water that was poured in the hole, how far did the water go?

Abdulai: It got one's feet wet so that he felt cold extremely.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What was the wire? (Naked)

Abdulai: It was a like a cage. They put the person in a cage.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: It was like a cage?

Abdulai: The culprit was stripped naked and put in the cage.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When you say stripped naked what were those, the cage and the dungeon what were they meant for, what type of offences? Was it just for RUF members or civilians?

Abdulai: The cage was at the training base. It was meant for those that attempted to escape the training and the dungeon was meant for the RUF themselves. Whosoever committed any crime was put in there.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: There were testimonies before this Commission that the dungeon was used for the RUF rebels which you have rightly described to be a small hole, and inside that hole you had snakes and other reptiles and people were put in there. Did it happen here under you whilst you were a G5? Did your dungeon contain snakes and other reptiles?

Abdulai: I was not there when it was prepared. I was just there when people were being drawn out of the hole and I did not in fact look into it to see what was there.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: It's sad you did not but you should have as G5 since no one can sentence somebody to be punished by some means when they are not aware of what the form of punishment is. The dungeon was really a punishment chamber, a kind of torture chamber used by the RUF at that time according to the testimony. In it you had snakes poisonous snakes; you had cobra as well as puff adder, you had all types of snakes and people were placed in there. Say yes that was what happened.

Abdulai: I just saw it in Kailahun and I was a civilian by then, we were not expected to go near the place.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much. Leader of Evidence do you have any questions for Mr. Abdul Mbawa.

Leader of Evidence: Yes just some clarification. Mr. Mbawa, where do you stay presently?

Abdulai: I am staying at Sagbeh.

Leader of Evidence: Is that your home?

Abdulai: I am coming from Kamayandor chiefdom.

Leader of Evidence: I am made to understand that you are afraid to go back to your village because of the RUF mark on your chest.

Abdulai: Exactly so. I am afraid to go there because when we go there our means of finding money is to cross over to Guinea and if I go and if the Guineans discover that I have such a mark on my chest they would not investigate properly.

Leader of Evidence: We have asked this question because the Commission is interested in moving those marks from you so that you can feel a free Sierra Leonean and go anywhere you want to, without being harassed or molested. So that is why I have asked that question. Thank you Mr. Commissioner.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. We have asked you questions, you have answered them. Do you have questions for the Commission?

Abdulai: Yes I do. I am asking the Commission because I went to school but I did not go far enough. So I am now asking the Commission if they will make arrangements for us to have schools here.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Is that all?

Abdulai: I am asking in addition that you kindly give me a document to cover me in my travels so that I will be safe whenever I go to my people in Guinea or elsewhere.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much. Let me attempt to answer some of your questions. With respect to educational facilities, did you demobilise, did you go through the demobilisation programme as a G5?

Abdulai: I made an attempt and even went as far as Freetown. I went to FTC they said I should spend some money so I did not have the chance. I went to meet one uncle of mine. He was sent to Jayru as that was his assignment area. As there was no other person to help me I had to come back. I decided to go to the village so that I can engage in farming.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I am sorry if I did not make myself clear. I am saying, did you go through the demobilisation programme as an ex-combatant.

Abdulai: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did you ask them for facilities of this nature, educational facilities.

Abdulai: I did.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What did they say?

Abdulai: They ask me where I am intending to do it, I said Freetown.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Go ahead.

Abdulai: When I went to Freetown they told me that my name could be taken down unless I saw them.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What do you mean, see them?

Abdulai: Except I give them something.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Who? Who said you needed to see them before they did what. DDR programme officers told you, you needed to see them and the word 'see them' here meaning bribe them before they helped you? Is that the question?

Abdulai: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Are you sure?

Abdulai: I am sure sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where did that happen?

Abdulai: At the Freetown Teachers College.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Freetown Teachers College?

Abdulai: Technical Freetown Technical Institute.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Freetown Technical institute and the demobilisation programme are separate they are different bodies.

Abdulai: But I went there with my document.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Now you were seeking admission not so in FTC the Freetown Technical college or what not.

Abdulai: Freetown Technical institute.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: You want Admission and was it they who told you they needed money from you or the DDR officers. That is the clarification I want.

Abdulai: It is the institute.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: The institute. The institute were asking you to bribe them. Do you have the requisite qualification? What is your level?

Abdulai: yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: And what are they? You wanted to go to technical but you don't have the required papers. You did not have the requirement to be

admitted. That is clear. When you went through the DDR programme about your educational system what was the reaction? You know the DDR office is even here. There is a branch of it here. What was their reaction to your request that you wanted to further yourself? Alright thank you let me come to the next question. Meanwhile after here there is a DDR office here maybe we will make enquiries. The briefer here will talk to you. We will give you a letter to go there to talk to them about facilities. They do have facilities of this type. Most ex-combatants were asked what they wanted to do. Those who wanted to go to institutions went. I know of a few in college and a few in other training institutions. Now I don't understand, it's not clear to me why you were rejected by DDR like you said. And what is clear to me is that you did not have or do not have the qualifications to enter that Technical Institute. That is why they rejected you not money. This is what this Commission is for. We are not interested in things; we don't want to hear of things like bribery. That is why I was asking if it was really true that they asked you for money before admission. But what I seem to gather from you now is that you do not have the required qualification for admission that is the truth. Now that does not still make you an odd person in society you still have a chance. I will suggest to you to please contact the DDR programme again through there branch office here. There is a programme actually for people like you. We will give you a letter to the DDR. Your request for permit to travel to Guinea and back, about that request the second question you made the commission is not in a position to give anybody any specific letter of recommendation to travel abroad. The standard procedure for travelling is to go through immigration and obtain your permit, your travelling certificate, you are free. For everybody it is open. Your conscience is clear with yourself if you know that you are, you are now at peace, and nobody will hunt you. You are free. So the only thing I can suggest to you is that you try to get your travel document, either the travelling certificate or a passport that should enable you to travel freely. Yes we will come to that very soon but the Commission does not have the permission to issue travel documents. About the mark on the chest our briefer will talk to you and give you the directives for organisations that are really taking care of these kinds of scars that have been forcibly put on people. There is an NGO that is doing that. They remove tattoos and scars of that nature. Our briefer will talk to you about that very shortly after you leave here. Do you have any other questions?

Abdulai: No questions thank you sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Do you have any recommendations you can tell us about the war or what you went through that we can pass on to the government.

Abdulai: I am appealing to the Commission to tell the government to assist our people concerning housing facilities. Our place has been totally destroyed.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Yes go ahead.

Abdulai: That is all.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Your request will be taken into good parts. We will analyse it and include it in our recommendations. I thank you very much. If you don't have other questions or recommendations you may step down now. May we have one more witness before we go for lunch?

Leader of Evidence: Madam Commissioner our next witness is Sahr Bindi.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What's his full name?

Sahr: My name is Sahr Bindi.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Sahr Bindi, are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Sahr: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Please take the Bible or repeat after me.
The oath taken by Sahr Bindi.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Sahr Bindi, we welcome you.

Sahr: Thanks to all of you may the Lord God bless all of you for giving me the opportunity to come and talk to you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So we are waiting to hear your testimony.

Sahr: In 1998, I was resident in Koidu Town. I was a business man when Pa Kabba was overthrown. While we were here, renegade soldiers who had overthrown the President came here to Kono. They were killing and harassing people so we went straight into the bush. We first ran to Tombudu. There too we stayed in the bush because they were visiting that town. We built a hut in the bush. I had few things with me that I was doing business with. I had a friend called Komba who came from that area. He took us to that bush. One morning, while we were in the hut, we saw a few people dressed in combat fatigue. They went and arrested us. And they demanded money and diamonds from us. We told them we didn't have diamonds. They started beating us. They asked us who was a business man among the group. There was a fellow among us who could not withstand the beating anymore so he pointed me out. So they took me to the main road. They continued to beat me demanding that I produce my wares. They beat me so mercilessly that I started bleeding. By then I was having one cartoon and half of the cigarette that I was selling so I told them where the cigarette was hidden. They went and retrieved it. When they came back because they found one and half cartoons of cigarette, they told me that I had already sold the other half and therefore I should produce the money for the half cartoon. Well, I really wanted to keep that money back for future use and it was with my wife. But because of the heavy beating, I had to call for the money. I told them to go to my wife to get the money from her. They went and brought my wife as well. She too was beaten and kicked. Then the woman pointed out where she had hidden the money. They went and recovered the money. I had a bicycle which they took away as well. They took everything from me. Even this friend that I was living in that bush with who came from that area knew one of them. An SLA boy called Musa led the group. He was living at Myrna at the Checkpoint there. From there, since we had nothing there anymore, we moved here to Sandia where we were living in the bush. While in the bush we heard an announcement on the radio (as somebody among us had a radio) that ECOMOG had arrived in the town. Well, there was an old man among us who advised us because we were there with no dress, no medical facilities, so many people were ill. I was not feeling well either because

of the heavy beating I had received and blood was oozing out of my ears, so we decided to come. We came as far as Baima just close to Tombudu. We arrived there at night. We slept there, and in the morning people told us that if we wanted to come over, we should come first and look at the road. So a young man called Safieya accompanied him, both of us went to watch the road. Little did we know that the rebels were already resident in Tombodu. They had already formed an ambush along the road, we didn't know that. So we were captured by them. They took us to a guy called Staff Alhaji at the Myma Checkpoint. When we were taken to them, we were ordered that we should be bound. We were bound to a mango tree that was there. And they started flogging us. Soon after that, they brought a woman too, a nursing mother. I knew the lady before, she was called Sia Gbakoya. Where we were tied to the tree, they told the woman to place her child there. When the child was placed there, they ordered the woman to stripped herself naked. Having stripped herself naked, they raped her. And they continued to beat us. Well, by then a jet was flying over. So they were there when the jet arrived. There was a guy there who wore combat trousers and a civilian shirt. He saluted staff Alhaji, so he pleaded their course, he said these happen to be children of other people and I'm appealing that you don't bind them, please release them. When the jet came, fortunately it didn't reach there. Staff Alhaji ordered that we should be taken to the Tombudu part and be killed. When we went there, we met a man there by a burnt house with zinc leaning on an orange tree. They had piles of ammunition there and they had a public address system too. So they told the man that staff Alhaji had ordered that they should be killed. So the man said no. We are not going to kill them immediately; we will kill them tomorrow, so we will just lock them in a cell. So we were locked up in a cell. There were seven (7) people there already. While we were there we heard a strange sound like a dropping object in water. And people were shouting in agony. After that, we didn't hear any more sounds, no sounds anymore. While we were there, well naturally, we were praying to God. In the evening, they came and collected 6 (six) of us we thought that we were going to be killed and when we went to the park, we found three (3) corpses on the ground. They told us, to take the corpses and throw them into the river. We took the corpses and dumped them in the river, very close to the park. And we were taken back to the cell. And they told us that the following day we too would follow suit. We were there till night, and at about 1 O'clock in the night they started burning Tombodu town. We continued to pray. When we touched the door of the cell it opened so we took advantage of that and escaped. My friend and I agreed to return to where my wife and family were. We didn't arrive that evening; we slept in the bush just when we came close to the town. Well, because they had discovered our escape, they came and attacked this place. After they had attacked the place we entered the town, and found that they had killed two (2) people. A man was there called Samuel Komba, whose hand was amputated but was not totally detached. He asked me for water. I was afraid because having seen two corpses and this man with amputated hand, I told my wife to bring a piece of cloth and I bandaged the man's hand. So he departed away. He said, he was going to meet his own people. We headed for another area. When we went out, we were scared. We decided to return here to Koidu believing that ECOMOG were resident in Koidu. When it was dark, all of us who had come initially from Koronko land decided to travel in that road, but because I had been bound before, my hands were swollen. When we came back, there is a place here called Koiduwoi

where we arrived in the morning. We found another group of rebels there who arrested us and asked us to tell them where we are heading for. They asked if we were heading for the ECOMOG camp. So there was an old man among us, he said that by saying what he said he would save us. He said, "No! We are going to staff Alhaji at Tombudu". They said you are lying, and so we are going to kill all of you. Then the old man started naming people who initially were together with staff Alhaji. So the people seemed to believe and they took a few people from among us. So they asked for seven people from among us to carry loads. And they said we should go to Yadu because they said Yadu was where their commander stayed. So we went there, when we went there, there is a part of Yadu where the Europeans resided before, and that is where their commander was. So they went and called him, they told him that they had brought certain people. They said that, these people told us that they were going to Staff Alhaji. The man said, "Good, but you know that our men came from Sandor yesterday and Staff Alhaji killed them not so? So you have caught people who claim to be Staff Alhaji's friends. We too are going to retaliate, we are going to kill them because he is there, and his main occupation is to kill". So we started begging, so he gave the order that we should be killed. They made us sit on the ground and they told us that, those among us who are going to live for long would only be amputated. Those, whose lives were short, would die. So they said they were going to do some balloting. They went and took some stones, seven stones. The man who was actually doing the amputation had the stones. He stood far off and flicked the stones off his fingers like this. So if the stone hits you, you would be amputated. So he started throwing the stones, I was the last person in the queue; the stone hit me, so they all shouted and the man with the cutlass told me to stand up. So they said they are going to repeat the ballot, again the stone hit me. They ordered me to get up and go and be amputated, well when I got up they told me to stretch my hands. I begged for mercy, but they refused. I said please forgive me for God's sake! So he asked me where God lived. He refused, when I placed my hand and he was about to strike me with the cutlass when I removed it. He looked angrily at me and said, "Look! I will count one and if you remove your hand again when I get to number 2, I will just kill you". So I placed my hand again, then while he tried to cut it off, I removed my hand again. He turned to the others and said, "that this man has been stubborn because we have not killed the others so let us go ahead and kill them! That will convince him that I mean business". So they shot my colleagues. So where we were, people were pounding rice so there were lots of pestles lying about. They took the sticks and started beating people on their heads. So I was scared and stretched my hand out and the man cut it off. So the hand was hacked just at the knuckles, it was not totally removed. So he told me to go. The others said to him, "look man; this man's hand is not properly amputated call him back and do it again". So he said no! Let him just go. They said if that man goes, we would kill you in this place. So I came back and stretched my hand and he cut it off completely. So I was ordered to go. They wrote a little note, which they ordered me to give to Pa Kabba. They said Pa Kabba has brought many hands so I should go there and he will give me hands. So they put the letter in my pocket. I went along the very road where I was brought along. When I arrived at the cross-roads, the rebels that were manning the check-point had bodies lying around them that had just been killed. When I went and passed them, they chased and said that if ECOMOG soldiers saw me with my amputated hand; it would be a bad name for them. So they said

I should be killed. I took to my heels. On my way, I came across two men that were carrying guns. When they saw me coming, they gave way. Those that were chasing me were still after me. So they asked them saying man, why did you do this? This man is a young man, he could have been recruited rather than been amputated. So they gave me a way to go. My pursuers also came and they stopped there. When I knew that I went far away from them but fell on the ground because I was bleeding. I fainted. I was there for quite sometime and in the evening, I gained consciousness. Then I took off again. I crept through the bush until I arrived at Koikuima where the ECOMOG soldiers were. I went straight to them. In fact I was happy to find my wife there. I was asked to narrate my story and I did. So they told us to wait a while. Fortunately, there was a young man who was a dispenser. Because the ECOMOG soldiers didn't have many amputee victims to conveyed to Freetown for treatment I was given a sort of first aid treatment by that young man and asked to wait. He is called Elijah, he is a Kono. From there transportation was sent for us and we travelled to Freetown after three days. We were taken to the Connaught Hospital. That was where we were treated before we were sent to Waterloo. There again we were attacked so we returned to Freetown only for Freetown to come under another attacked. From Freetown, we were repatriated back to Kono. Well we are grateful to the people of Freetown, praise be to the government and the NGOs and to religious organisations that took care of us. The Muslims and the Christians were all very generous to us. They gave us rice while the WFP supplied us with bulgur. MSF gave us medical treatment. Indeed we do have assistant from many NGOs. The Norwegian Refugee Council too has been helpful to us. They actually built shelter for us here. So I'm happy because I'm one of the beneficiaries to their shelter project here. I'm grateful that at least I have a place to live with my family. And to all those who have been very much helpful, may the Lord bless them. And to our people here, and those people who offered their lands for this Norwegian Refugee Council to build these houses, I want to thank them too. May the Lord bless them all. That is my story.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Sahr, even to listen to the narration of your experiences has been very painful. We understand all what you went through. But I suppose that in a miraculous way, your life was saved. You actually got near death so many times. And we are very heartened to hear you give thanks to parties who helped you. Sometimes it is encouraging to others who want to give help when the recipients are grateful. And we only have a few questions for you. Have you any idea what happened to Alhaji and to Musa?

Sahr: Since I went through this ordeal I have not seen Musa. As for Alhaji we were made to understand while in Freetown that Alhaji was conscripted into the Army.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Among the people who attacked you were there any women?

Sahr: Yes, there were women at the location where I was actually amputated.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And what did those women say?

Sahr: The woman didn't say anything. However, among them, a certain woman gave us water to drink when we said we were thirsty.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank your Mr. Sahr Bindi for your testimony. I have very few questions for you. What happened to Samuel, the severely wounded man whom you met?

Sahr: I believe Samuel Komba is here he did meet me in Freetown.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Is he in this hall?

Sahr: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Can you just stand up and point to the man?

Sahr: That is Samuel Komba.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: That is the man?

Sahr: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. Do you know under what circumstances they wounded him?

Sahr: Actually, what I know is that, I found him where I came looking for my wife. And there I found two corpses and Samuel Komba with his hand already amputated.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What happened to the woman who was raped? What happened to her after that?

Sahr: I hear the lady still exists somewhere. I've never seen her after that but I hear she is still alive.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: To which of the fighting forces did staff Alhaji and your perpetrators belong?

Sahr: Staff Alhaji in actual fact was a soldier a serving soldier.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Sahr Bindi have you any questions you would like to ask the Commission?

Sahr: No, I have no questions for the Commission.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any recommendations?

Sahr: Yes indeed. Well first and foremost, since we have been handicapped by this amputation, we are appealing to government to do something to make some provision for our children's education. Secondly, I am appealing to Government on behalf of my colleagues and myself to kindly provide medical facilities for us. Thirdly, we need some form of employment or otherwise micro credit that will facilitate us to go into some business. Fourthly, I would like to advice the government to be security conscious as we believe it was the lapse in the security set up

that brought about this terrible experience. Like in Kono here, the real reason for our demise is because there was little or no security arrangement in place. That's my message to the government.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much and thank you for coming here to share your experiences. We'll include all of your recommendations including the security concern in our Report. You may step down now.

End of Sahr Bindi's Testimony.

Ladies and gentlemen thank you for listening so carefully and patiently. We are going to adjourn for five minutes then we come in again and listen to our last witness.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Ladies and gentlemen, this is going to be our last witness. I'm sorry we have to disappoint some people. Now we can't take all the people who want to give testimonies here. We can only take a sample which we have done. The last witness will not speak to us in person. We are not going to see the person at all; rather we will hear the voice give the testimony. We are doing this for security reasons and I would ask you to listen carefully and quietly.

END OF SIDE A

No mention of personal details like name etc.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you a Christian or Muslim

Sia: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Don't call your name just say I swear before this Commission that the testimony I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God. Thank you. You can start.

Sia: We were living at Tombodu when one day news reached us that the soldiers had come and they were in Koidu town and that made us all to panic. Their presence just reminded us that we were in a war situation. Whilst we were there we heard news that the youths and the soldiers had clashed and that the youths had burnt two soldiers alive. Well naturally, we were all frightened. But we stayed at Tombodu till after two days. Then one day we saw a red vehicle that entered Tombodu town itself. As the vehicle entered the town and right at the entrance they shot a Maraka (Gambian) man and then they drove along the mosque and killed a woman. Then they went to my own area of the town and shot another woman and so you can imagine there was panic in the whole town and everybody took to the bush. We left all our properties and took to the bush. I was in the bush with my family for three days. We had no food to eat. So I decided to come to visit my house and collect a few things; food and any other essentials I could lay hands on just to let us survive in the bush. As soon as I came out of the bush I was captured by one Savage. I immediately started weeping and pleading with him to release me. Well he assured me he was not going to hurt me, he didn't mean any harm for me. They the soldiers, according to him, had come into the town and they needed some women to do the cooking for them. I still continued pleading and weeping but he didn't release me at all. He brought me to Tombodu town. I was taken to the Paramount Chief's

house and we were ordered to cook for the soldiers and we started the cooking. One day they informed us that the RUF and the soldiers that had taken over Koidu town had a dispute. So they said that the senior soldiers that were resident at Tombodu should come to Koidu and try to settle the matter and so they came to Koidu. When they went back, they took with them a mercenary and he introduced himself to us as Papay Jango. He said he had come from Liberia sent here by Charles Taylor to come and help the RUF, the AFRC and the soldiers to fight and so they were supposed to be united. He was going to be the 2nd in command at Tombodu, according to him. So one day, I attempted to escape. There were three of us by the time I was ready to take off my colleagues had already left. One person was killed immediately and brought to us. That was going to be a warning to all of us that anyone who attempted to escape would be killed. So we were there all the time cooking for them, pounding husk rice and all of that. So one day, one of the ladies approached us and told us that whilst they were there, they needed to have a leader among them and so a meeting was called among them. They went to the meeting and when they came back we were informed that Savage was the Force Commander. Staff Alhaji Bayoh was the 2nd in command. The overall bosses were 'Superman' and the others who would come around from time to time to visit the area. I want to be brief because I do not want to prolong my testimony. Whilst we were doing this they informed us that three civilians had escaped. So anyone they caught escaping would be brought and killed in town. They started going to the bush in search of food according to them. They said that where the civilians were living in the bush that's where all the food had been taken. So they went in search of this food. Indeed some people were caught and brought back with food on their heads. It was Victor Tieh who led the group that went for the civilians with food on their heads from the bush. When these people were brought to town, it coincided with the visit of 'Superman' and his own men who had gone to Tombodu to visit the area. Superman then told them that he had warned them not to allow too many civilians into the town. Superman then told the people to put their load down and ordered them to enter a house that was just next to the mosque. When they all entered the house I counted them and they were sixty-four in number. Superman order that the sixty-four people who had been locked into the house should be burnt by placing mattresses against the door of the house and putting fire to the mattresses and the soldiers were posted as securities against the doors to prevent anyone from escaping from the house and they set fire to the house whilst the people were in there. They were all burnt to ashes. This actually scared us to our wits. At night many of us attempted to escape. Those who were bold enough to make the venture, many of them were killed and they were all women. Now these dead women we were told would be dragged to a pit, I believe this was a diamond pit that was somewhere in Tombodu there. Since that day, Staff Alhaji passed orders that we the women who used to sleep together in the house should no longer be allowed to sleep on our own but soldiers were supposed to take each one of us every evening to their houses and rape us. So we became sex machines for them everyday. After a while, Johnny Paul Koroma arrived. On the day Johnny Paul was brought to Tombodu they hid all of us from him and they said no civilians should set eyes on Johnny Paul Koroma. It was the wife of one of the soldiers that actually informed us that it was Johnny Paul Koroma, that had come and they were arranging lodging for him. They tried to provide a convenient lodging for him but unfortunately they couldn't get one. On that day, so

many civilians were killed then Johnny Paul Koroma was brought back to Koidu. One day they went out to Peyima and soldiers were sent to Peyima to go and search the bushes because they said civilians were hiding there who didn't want to give them any assistance. When they went, they brought back nine civilians. My own cousin was among them. When they were brought, I went to staff Alhaji and said please; among these people who have been brought is a teacher who happens to be my cousin. Then Staff Alhaji retorted that there was no brother in the army. He said if I was going to plead for my cousin then I should sign that I should be killed. So Savage was called and at that time Savage was the executioner. They had a mortar, which they brought outside. Whenever they brought people they tied their hands together and their hands were placed on that mortar and that's where they were chopped off. My cousin was the first person they killed. He was decapitated and was dragged to a pit where his body was thrown. They killed all the others with the exception of one Limba man who came from Bondu who was amputated and told to take a message back to the civilians and tell them that if they caught any civilian, they will bring the civilian to Tombodu and kill him or her. That day, they passed a law that every Thursday was going to be a day of sacrifice. So every other day the soldiers went out on patrol when they caught civilians and brought them. When they brought these civilians, they kept them. One particular Thursday morning Papay Jango's wife was there she was the one who did the pointing of fingers to who should be amputated. So if fifty people had been captured, for that Thursday morning twenty-five would be picked from among the fifty for amputation. After the amputation they would be released to go. Some people would cry and say they were not leaving, that they should kill them because the world was meaningless to them. Some of them had their wishes granted: they were killed but others were left to go with their amputated arms. The remaining twenty-five would have their hands tied behind their backs and their heads would be placed on that mortar and decapitated. When they were decapitated, the heads were all kept in a bag. Even the amputated hands were all kept in a bag. Their explanation was that their bosses visited them every Thursday. So when they came around, they were shown these dismembered parts as a sign of the fact that they were doing their job effectively. When these hands and heads were presented to the bosses on their visits the headless bodies were then collected and thrown into a pit. Savage who was the Executioner had a sword, which he called 'kasablanka'. So whenever people were brought for execution he would sing and praise the sword and say oh 'kasablanka' has got food for today. The bodies of the people who were killed were thrown into a pit called Savage pit. It was Savage who named the pit as Savage pit. After all these events, one day we heard that ECOMOG was about to enter Koidu. The soldiers and the rebels were all panicking and so they ordered all of us to move to Kayimah. Fortunately it was during that time that I escaped. When I escaped, I went behind Yadu Sandor where I had built a jut and left my children. Fortunately I still found them there. Fortunately too some hunters (Kamajors) came down from Guinea and by then ECOMOG had succeeded in expelling the rebels out of Koidu and the Kamajors were looking for bush paths; by-pass roads to escape with civilians who could be brought over to the ECOMOG soldiers so they could be helped. The hunters formed two troops, which joined the ECOMOG. We were among the third troop that was brought to ECOMOG. When we were brought, it was just after a week that the rebels made a counter attack and drove ECOMOG troops out of Koidu. The rebels that dislodged the ECOMOG

soldiers stayed at Lebanon and the house in which these rebels lodged was the same house in which we were kept. Again we were captives. I was captured and they shot my right leg. The man who shot me, I really didn't know his name but if I should see him today I can identify him and that soldiers' boss; his commander was called Major Amara. So it was this Major Amara who came later and captured us in the house after his boys had shot my right leg. When he came, he found me in tears, weeping and bleeding together with the children that I had with me. There was also a woman that I had found in the bush and brought along with me. She was a polio victim so I used to carry her on my back whenever we were escaping. When this major came in, the woman kept shouting and saying if you kill this man, kill me too because he is the one that is taking care of me. if you kill her and leave me I would just suffer. So Major Amara started consoling us saying that we shouldn't lose hope, as it was a war situation. He however offered to take care of us and assured us that no harm will befall those of us who had remained. He brought a bench and sat in front of the house where we were. But then around Lebanon over one thousand people were killed. Major Amara then had a call and so he left this house where we were and went to answer the call. In that same house there was a lady who was not really a blood relation but who had come along with me from Small Sefadu – a breed from Small Sefadu as I was. She was called Kumba Kai. A rebel that happened to enter the house where we saw this lady who was fair in complexion and, therefore, invited her and said she was an ECOMOG woman. That woman was laid on the ground in front of that house and her throat was slit and we all started weeping inside the house. This fellow came in and introduced himself to us as 'kill man no blood'. He came in to collect somebody else to go and slaughter. Fortunately Major Amara came in and drove him out, claiming that we were his captives. After two days, he took me and my family over to Jagbwema. We were there for a while when he told us that he had been transferred and another commander was going to come called Alpha to take over from him. Papay Jango who was at Tombodu was again transferred to Jagbwema. He had some of his boys who were experts in slaughtering women they went on tour to a place around the Guinea border called Bandafili where they captured a lot of people that they brought over to us. There was a soldier among Papay Jango's group who was called 'Takitaki'. He said that he was an expert in killing women. So they gave him five old women to be killed saying they were useless. He took those five old women and tied their legs to a tree and then put two sticks and tied the hands to the sticks. He then took a mortar pestle, which he plunged into their virgins and pulled back. Whenever a pestle was pulled out the intestines followed and blood also oozed out. Then that person was untied and dumped somewhere. While she is there, struggling to give up life they would bring another one to go through the same ordeal. That was his method of killing those five old women. When Papay Jango came and saw him, his deeds were enough to promote him to the rank of captain. Whilst we were at Jagbwema, a lot of killing took place there too. After a little while we heard that a peace treaty was about to be signed. By then the January 6 invasion of Freetown had already taken place. So most of the rebels abandoned Jagbwema and went down to Freetown and that gave us some breathing space. Alpha was then transferred to Gandorhun because they said the Kamajors were causing problems there. Then Alpha before he left brought my family and I to Kokuema. At Kokuema,

we were finally freed. That, my dear Commissioners and people, is my story.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you witness for that detailed testimony about the horrors of the war. We're sorry about your injury. We're now going to ask a few questions

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Witness I thank you very much for this revealing testimony. I don't know whether I am to make this announcement because we are visiting Tombodu this afternoon. The Commission is going to Tombodu to take a look at those sites as well as take the pictures of those sites especially the houses being referred to. But I just want you to clarify one or two issues for our record purposes. Where do you think Alhaji Bayoh, Savage Bayoh, is that the name?

Interpreter: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where do you think Alhaji Savage Bayoh would be now?

Sia: Staff Alhaji I hear is back in the army and is in Freetown.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Back in the army did you say? You mean he has been reinstated in the army?

Sia: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What about Savage?

Sia: I do not know about Savage's whereabouts

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But do you think he is alive?

Sia: I had never heard of his death so I believe he is alive.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Who was he? Was he a civilian or also a soldier?

Sia: He was always in military attire so I assumed him to be a soldier.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Yes at that time a lot of people, all of them were wearing soldier uniform at times assorted but which of the fighting forces would you think he belonged to?

Sia: I really didn't have time to find out about Savage because as a civilian we were not allowed to have a keen look at them; we were immediately scolded for doing the wrong thing. We were not allowed to observe them.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So there could have been no way whereby anybody could even suspect as to the actual fighting group each of them or anyone of them belonged to.

Sia: Actually our status was that of slaves. The only thing I knew about Savage was that he was called by some people as Sahr Gbonda. Some people said that was his real name. Some people said he was a Kono man called Sahr Gbonda, while others said he was a Mende man that's why he had the Gbonda name.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What about Savage Bayoh, Alhaji Bayoh where do you think his identity could be?

Sia: Alhaji Bayoh is a Mende and an SLA. Soldier.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Was it the same Alhaji Bayoh who was living at Maima?

Sia: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: You also made mention of Superman in your written statement. Can you briefly tell me the part superman played, very briefly?

Sia: Superman was the one who gave the final orders. Whenever they brought civilians he was the one that ordered their death; their execution and whenever he gave that, it was done.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did you hear Superman actually order the killing of the sixty-four people you counted?

Sia: Yes of course I heard him. He gave the order to Savage and it was right in our presence that they were dragged into the house. It was in our presence that they were taken into this house and locked up and fire was put to it and we could hear their cries and wailing when they were being burnt.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What about this Mr. 'Takitaki' who was so notorious in killing women, do you know anything about him?

Sia: He was an SLA soldier and he told us that he hailed from Kailahun. He also told us that before involving himself in the war, he started off by killing his own father and mother. He said because he had been posted to Kailahun where he was when the war broke out. So when the rebels came, he was so impressed by their performance that in admiration he volunteered to join them and that was during Foday Sankoh's hay day. That's how he introduced himself to us.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When Johnny Paul arrived at Tombodu how long did he stay there?

Sia: When Johnny Paul arrived in Tombodu, he didn't stay there for long; not even up to an hour, he was riding a tinted car. They drove him over to Yikuma and from there he was brought back to Koidu because they couldn't find a suitable place to lodge him. That's what I know about him.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did they tell you where they were taking him to or did he say or did you hear where he was heading for?

Sia: No, we were informed that they were looking for a safer place where he could be lodged.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where is Victor Tieh now?

Sia: He is dead.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: How do you feel about that?

Sia: Well he is a human being and I am a Christian so it doesn't give me any special pleasure.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Or otherwise did he die naturally or he was killed?

Sia: We were informed that they were on an attacking speed when they were confronted; attacked by a gunship and they were killed. We were also informed that the rebels went to the scene and recovered his body and brought it back to Makeni where he was buried.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Sex slavery is one of the human right violations so the Commission is interested in it for that purpose. As I want you to briefly explain how the process went on at Tombodu during that period.

Sia: We the women were camped at a place they named G5. I do not know what G5 really means but that's where we were camped. There they made love to us. We were raped and used as often as they wanted. Soon many of us were sick with no medicine to cure us. We were forced to become their wives.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Any more questions Madam Commissioner?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: No.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: We want to thank you for coming and do sympathise with you for the agony you suffered. Do you have any questions or recommendations for the attention of Government?

Sia: I'm still in pains receiving no proper medical treatment. Let the government assist us to have good medical attention and assist us financially as well as organise skills training, etc. for us and for our dependants.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Your recommendation has been noted and we thank you. You may step down now. We have come to our final session for today. We hope to see you all tomorrow at 9:30 a.m.

DAY 3

CHILDREN

Leader of Evidence: Commissioner our first witness this morning is Abu Gbana.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Welcome, you know this is the TRC, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and we just want to find out what happened to young people like you during the war. Now, you don't have to worry about anything. We're all interested and listening to you and we are friendly. So you will just relax, and have you talk to us. What is your name in full?

Abu: Abu Gbana:

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now you are sixteen, a very big boy so we're going to ask you to take the oath and what are you? Are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Abu: Christian.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Christian. So take the Bible and say after me.

I Abu Gbana hereby swear before the Commission that the testimony I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God.

Now Abu you may begin.

Abu:

We were in Yengema Sondoh when we heard that the rebels had attacked Koidu town. We ran away and went into the bush. We were in the bush when they attacked the town where we were. They followed us into the bush. We were in the bush when they captured my dad. He was locked in a house and the house burnt. They also captured my mother and raped here. They captured me too and said we should go to Kabala. It was Saj Musa's troop. But when we went, I didn't know how to shoot. We were not trained but taught how to fire a gun. We were there and during the night we attacked a town. I can't deny whether I killed or not because it was during the night. We attacked the town. And they asked us to retreat to Kono. On our way, we were with them doing child labour because we were children by then. On our way back to Kono, they were telling people to come out of the bush. When we came, we were with them and they were forcing us to work. We came to Bagbema where I am staying now. We were there working for them and they were threatening us and they gave us food that was not good for us to eat. We were smoking Marijuana by force. They were also forcing us to do manual work. I then escaped from them and went into the bush. I was in the bush whilst they were in the town. I stayed in the bush till sanity started coming back into the country. I was in the bush till they started disarmament in Kono here and then we came out of the bush. We were now free to walk about in the town but we were still being forced to do manual labour. While we were with them they engaged in the digging of diamonds for them. We were not given food and so were always very hungry. We were there when the disarmament started in Kono and the situation calmed down as we have it now.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you Abu, we've heard your testimony and we're going to ask you questions just to be able to understand better. We are the Commissioners and we will ask you questions and the Leader of Evidence too will ask you questions. How old are you now?

Abu: I am sixteen years old.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How old were you when you were captured?

Abu: I was so small that I could not remember my age.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How many years ago?

Abu: I can't remember the exact time, or years.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How many years did you spend with the rebels?

Abu: It is about two years six months.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were you the only child of your parents?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were you going to school when you were captured?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Can you remember the class you were in?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What class?

Abu: Class one.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you going to school now?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: In what class are you now?

Abu: In class two.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: With whom are you staying in this town?

Abu: I'm staying with my grandmother?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Your father's mother or your mother's mother?

Abu: My mother's mother.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How many children are there in that house?

Abu: I'm the eldest and I have two younger ones.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: In the school you attend do the children know what happened to you, that you were captured during the war?

Abu: They don't know because we were not staying together.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did you tell them that they seduced you, or they raped you?

Abu: Yes, I did tell them.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So they know that you were captured, you told them.

Abu: Whilst we are playing I tell them

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What has been their reaction?

Abu: They normally say that I'm a rebel.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Do they say that jokingly or do they go out to make you feel uncomfortable?

Abu: They do offend me at times but sometimes as friends they are only joking with me. However, I do get angry with them sometimes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now how do you feel with yourself? Do you worry sometimes say at night when you think about all what happened, do you worry at all?

Abu: Yes I become worried.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Have you ever had any counselling?

Abu: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you being well taken care of, you are looking well?

Abu: No, she is not treating me nicely.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Your grandmother?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What does she do?

Abu: Well, all what I want she does not do for me that is all.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well maybe she is not in the position financially to do all that you want.

Abu: No, because she does not have enough money.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well so you should be able to understand her position.

Abu: Yes, I do.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright, now the other Commissioners will ask you questions.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Abu, what did you say were your names? All of your names, please?

Abu: Abu Gbana and Abu Kamara

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So which one is the right name? How do we really address you? Is it Abu Kamara Gbana? Is that your full name, Abu Kamara Gbana?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Okay. You said you were captured. Do you know the people who killed your father and then raped the woman? Was she your mother or...?

Abu: I know the person but I heard that the person is now dead.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So he was killed?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: You said they were giving you types of food that you did not want to eat at all. What kinds of food were they forcing you to eat?

Abu: Marijuana, lizards.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: They were roasting lizards for you to eat?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: When you were captured and held in captivity and forcibly taken to Koinadugu Kabala, did you engage in any fights?

Abu: It was the only place we went so I didn't know about fighting.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But you said they taught you to fire guns.

Abu: Yes they taught me.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: How many people did you remember killing?

Abu: It was during the night, I cannot tell the number of people.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What types of people were you asked to shoot at?

Abu: There were ECOMOG soldiers there because the ECOMOG were their enemies.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But you were not exchanging fires with ECOMOG soldiers in your journey from here to Kabala in the Northern parts. ECOMOG hadn't actually reached those areas and you said you were actually forced to be attacking villages, firing gun shots. I just want to know the type of people you killed whether they were civilians, women, and children?

Abu: It was during the night so I could not tell the types of people I killed.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So you attacked at night and fired shots at civilians under duress?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So you say you won't remember how many people you killed?

Abu: No, I don't remember how many people I killed.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: How do you feel about the whole exercise right now, the people that were killed, etc?

Abu: I know that I killed people but I do not know their number.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: How did you know that you killed, did you see the dead bodies?

Abu: Yes, we did know because they told us that we killed people in that particular town.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: You killed them with guns?

Abu: Yes, it was with guns.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: So you fired the guns at people and then you were told people were killed?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Did you like being with the rebels?

Abu: No.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Did you try to escape?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: And what happened?

Abu: I escaped from them.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Did the rebels tell you why they were fighting?

Abu: No.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Why do you think that ECOMOG were your enemies?

Abu: They told us that the ECOMOG were their enemies.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: What do you want to do in your life, when you get bigger?

Abu: I want to go to school; I want to go "over sea".

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Where?

Abu: America.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: And what would you do there?

Abu: I want to go and be a lawyer there.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Okay, very well, I myself I'm a lawyer. You like going to school?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: What's your favourite class, what's your favourite subject?

Abu: I love English.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Is the English teacher nice?

Abu: We only have one teacher.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Abu, tell us a little bit about the mining you did. How did you do it?

Abu: We did the diamond work with shovels.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did you succeed in finding lots of diamonds?

Abu: When the diamond process is going on they don't allow the children to go nearer.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I see, so you were only doing the digging?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. Leader of Evidence?

Leader of Evidence: Commissioner I have no question.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright thank you Abu. Now we've been asking you questions. Have you questions you want to ask the Commission about our work, how we do the work, any questions?

Abu: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now you're sixteen so you are a fairly big boy and you've had a lot of experience with the rebels and then you've come back to town, into the community after peace. Have you any recommendations that you would like to make to the government? Anything you would like done to improve life, now that you've come back into the community so that we can write it, put it down in our report. Have you any recommendations?

Abu: Where we are staying, there is a big river there and there is no bridge on top of the river so we are begging the government to assist us.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And what's the name of that place?

Abu: Bagbema.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Yes, any other?

Abu: We don't have proper school there if the government can help us. We only have one teacher in the town.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now how big is this school, how many of you?

Abu: Up to fifteen in number.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: and the one teacher teaches all of you?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any other recommendation?

Abu: We have so many sick people there and we have no clinic, no hospital.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any more?

Abu: I don't have any other one.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright, thank you very much Abu. Try and be helpful to your grandmother and try and do well in school and you can never tell your dreams may come true, you will go to America and be a lawyer. Alright thank you.

END OF ABU'S TESTIMONY.

CLOSED

Kumba: My name is Kumba Kakpindi.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Kumba Kakpindi. Why did she give me a different name? Kumba are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Kumba: I am a Christian.

THE COMMISSIONER ADMINISTERED THE OATH TAKEN ON THE BIBLE.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Kumba, you don't have to worry about anything. We want you to tell us what happened to you during the war. Don't feel ashamed about anything, you just tell us, because we've been hearing all these stories from women. Okay, you can start now.

Kumba: When the war started, they attacked Nimikoro (interrupted by Com. Jones) in the morning at six O'clock and held the secretariat where the soldiers were. Then my dad said we should run to the bush but some soldiers came and told us not to go. The firing then continued and the house where we were staying was attacked. They knocked at the door. My dad then said we were civilians. The man who was knocking at the door said whether we were civilians or not, we should go out. He said I am ready to kill you all today. My dad begged saying please don't kill us. My dad was shot dead and we were all called out of the room. They also shot my mum dead. My grand dad was also killed. My grand ma also killed and my elder sister. I went back into the room. The rebels moved from our place and went up to Konda another area of Njaiama Nimikoro. I went and lay between the bodies of my mum and dad with my younger sister who was a suckling child.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Is your younger sister here too?

Kumba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Is she your only sister?

Kumba: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So the mother had a younger but this one is the youngest?

Kumba: Yes. The rebels returned to the place where my mother and father were killed. They fired a bayonet at them, stabbing the people to know whether they were dead or not. They saw my dad's younger brother who had been shot but was not dead. He pleaded with the rebels not to kill him. The rebels then said we are going to kill everyone, not leaving even a single fowl. He was shot a second time and he died. The house next to the one where I was staying was burnt down. I then ran with my younger sister into the bush, and we met the rebels there again. We moved from the bush and the next morning, South Africans entered Njaiama Nimikoro. The South Africans then called all of us out of the

bush. They brought us all to Koidu town. I then took my sister to the government hospital for medical care. After taking treatment, we went back to the village – Nyandeyama. The rebels went back to the village and met us there. We ran into the bush, I was chased by them and I was captured. Three of the rebels raped me. They left me there and went away. My father's relatives then came and took me to the Mende land. I was then treated with herbs. We were there suffering because there was no food to eat. That is all.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you Kumba. At the time when all this happened to your parents how old were you?

Kumba: I was eight years old.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were you going to school?

Kumba: Yes I was going to school.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: In what class were you?

Kumba: I was in class two.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How is it that you escaped that first time, you were able to see all those people killed but nothing happened to you then? Where were you, where were you watching from, how did you see all of that?

Kumba: I was just close by.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And they did nothing to you then?

Kumba: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: But didn't you say they were going to leave nothing alive, even chickens, why didn't they kill you?

Kumba: I was standing but dropped down during the firing so they thought I was a dead person.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: They did not prick you with the bayonet?

Kumba: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: As a result of all this raping were you pregnant?

Kumba: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What did you suffer as a result; what was your critical condition, you said you were treated with herbs?

Kumba: By then I was a virgin, I was bleeding.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were you properly healed after the herbs?

Kumba: I was better off.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you married now?

Kumba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Is that your first child?

Kumba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How is your husband treating you?

Kumba: He is treating me fine because he is now my dad and my mum.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Did you tell him what happened to you during the war?

Kumba: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Kumba, thank you for telling us your experiences. We are sorry that that happened to you and that you suffered so much. Is that a baby boy?

Kumba: No, she is a girl.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Oh that's a girl, well you see now God has provided a husband for you who is your father and your mother as you say and you've got a lovely baby girl so you should try and put the past behind you. Can you recognise any of the people who raped you?

Kumba: No, I can't remember any of them because I was a child.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you, have you any questions you want to ask?

Kumba: No, I don't have any questions for you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any recommendations, anything you want done by the government?

Kumba: I want the government to assist me. I was doing tailoring but to buy the material and sewing machine has been very difficult for me. So I'm begging the government to assist me and my younger sister because my husband has nothing presently.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What does she want for her sister?

Kumba: I want my sister to be going to school.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We will ask our briefer to refer you to any NGO to help you now that you've learnt a skill and any other NGO can help with education for your sister. How old is your sister now?

Kumba: She is now ten years old.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well if she is ten years, she is still at the stage when she can get free primary education but we'll refer you to an NGO who may be able to help with say Uniform, books and the other extra things. What does IRC do? So Kumba, the IRC will be able to help. Thank you very much for coming.

END OF KUMBA'S TESTIMONY

CLOSED HEARINGS

Mary: My name is Mary Kabba.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Mary: I'm a Christian.

THE COMMISSIONER ADMINISTERED THE OATH TAKEN ON THE BIBLE.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mary we want you to tell us all that happened to you, and please talk slowly because I have to write and you don't have to worry because this is a closed hearing. What you tell us will be on our records and even when we talk to the press later we're not going to mention your name or to say anything that will make people know you told us the story. Is that clear? Nobody will know you came here and told us this story. So carry on.

Kumba: During this war when we ran into the bush, the rebels chased us out of the bush and brought us back to the town. They captured us and brought us to Kayima. The man that captured us was Col. Jumu and he brought us to Kayima. From Kayima they took us to Kailahun. We were in Kailahun for quite a long time and ran back into the bush. Whiles we were in the bush, the rebels raped us. We also used to attack people. They killed people in our presence, raped people and we were not eating sufficient food. There was no salt and I became ill. In the bush they also captured people and took their properties from them by force. I was in the bush with them for quite a long time. When we came out of the bush, I was told that we should go to Magburaka because my dad was there. I was too young when my mum died and my dad was shot in the bush. Whiles we were in Magburaka, during the night the rebels came with a vehicle and transported us all to Mile 91. Mohamed was the one who took us to Mile 91 and was raping us all the time. While we were in Mile 91 the "Alpha Jet" came and bombarded the area. It was during that time when everyone had left that I escaped from them and went to look out for my uncle because my mum was already dead at child birth. I came to Masimgbi where we heard that civilians were in Kayima and my uncle decided to take us there. While returning to Kayima, the rebels chased us and I fell into a pit and had a wound on my left leg. They took us again and brought us back to Masimgbi. Col. Chikero's group captured us. I was with them and they were still raping me because I was with them for quite a long time. When they raped me, I became ill and was taken to Magburaka hospital. They later gave me a document and Col. Chikero said we were spoiling their image (giving them a bad name). After taking the document, I was with Col. Chikero's group for quite a long time till the Kamajors attacked us again. When the Kamajors repelled them (the rebels) everybody was scattered and that was the time I escaped from them. Since then I didn't go to the hospital and I sometimes experienced stomach ache. I was a school going child but since I was captured and freed from them, I've not been going to school because my mum and dad are dead and my uncle is now staying in Freetown and there is no one to take care of me. That is all.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Okay thank you Mary for telling us about your experiences. We are sorry that you had such a bitter experience with the rebels. You are unfortunate to be captured several times. How old were you when you were first captured?

Mary: I was thirteen years old when I was captured.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: In what class were you?

Mary: I don't even know my age because I was a small girl by then.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How long do you think you spent on the whole in captivity?

Mary: Three years.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Now when you were with the rebels, apart from being raped what did you do?

Mary: I didn't do any other thing. It was the time when I was attempting to escape from them; I was captured and thoroughly beaten.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: So were you put in anyone's charge, were you given to any older woman to take care of you?

Mary: No, we were so many but each one of us was with our group.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: For how long did any of those rebels attached himself to you?

Mary: The time I was captured by Col. Jumu he was my only husband. I was then taken to Kailahun and I was still with Col. Chikero from Burkina Faso. I was with Col. Jumu and from there we came to Magburaka and I was there with Mohamed Jalloh.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Hold on. When were you with Mohamed Jalloh?

Mary: When we were in Magburaka.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What has happened to all of them; Col. Jumu and Mohamed Jalloh?

Mary: After the Kamajor attack I don't know where they went.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What happened to your parents?

Mary: My mum died immediately I was given birth to and my dad was shot in the bush.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why didn't you travel with your uncle?

Mary: I was in the bush by at the time my uncle was going down town.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: With whom do you live now?

Mary: I'm now staying with my mother's younger sister.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Were you still resident in the bush?

Mary: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you experiencing any health problems now?

Mary: It is only that I'm having stomach problems.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Have you been to the hospital with respect to that?

Mary: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Why not?

Mary: Nothing. We were in Kayima and no one volunteered to help us.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright, you don't have to cry we will give you a letter of referral to an NGO who will be able to help you. Have you a boy friend now?

Mary: I'm going to school, I have no boyfriend

Commissioner Marcus Jones: In what class are you?

Mary: I'm in class three.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: What is bothering you so much now that you are just crying?

Mary: Because my mother and father are dead and I have no one to assist me and I want to go to school.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well, but you tell us you are in school now and primary education is free. Now when you have medical attention you will feel better and your stomach pain will go.

Mary: And even as I have to pay fees, I have no one to assist me.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: But please you don't pay fees in primary school now, primary education is free.

Mary: We do pay school fees here.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: That should not be. You should a little bit thankful that you have your limbs, the rebels did not shoot you down so you just have to be hopeful that things will turn out well for you. We'll give you letters of referrals and sharp NGO might be able to help you. Were you the only child, you have no brother, no sister?

Mary: I'm the only child to my mum but my father had other children.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Where are those children now?

Mary: They are in Kayima but they have their mother.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We thank you for coming Mary. The Briefer will talk to you. Try and be hopeful and no more crying. It is better for you. Alright you may step down. Do you have questions for me or for the Commission?

Mary: No.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any recommendation you want to make to the government?

Mary: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Yes what are the commendations?

Mary: Well I'm saying we don't have a better road network, we have no bridge and there is a big river there. We want the government to assist us. We also don't have a better school, we only have one teacher in the whole town and I need my education.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mary thank you for your recommendations, which we will put down and we hope some NGO will be able to help you. You may step down now.

FINAL HEARING FOR THE DAY

DAY FOUR

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Good morning everybody. Welcome to the fourth day of hearings here in Kono District. Yesterday as you know The Truth and Reconciliation Commission met in a closed session. We did that because we had to hear from child witnesses and from victims of sexual assault and from victims that require a more private setting for their testimony. Today we resume with our public hearings as we have a full day of hearings ahead of us. I will ask at the outset that as it is the custom of the Truth Commission we pray. I would ask that people pray silently according to their own faith for half a minute. Before calling upon the Leader of Evidence to indicate the first witness for the morning, let me just announce that we will wait at the close of this morning's session for the press briefing and members of the process are invited to remain when we adjourn at the end of the morning session for the press briefing. I would now ask the Leader of Evidence if he would please call the first witness for the morning.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Commissioner our first witness this morning is Abdul Razak Kamara. Razak Kamara.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Witness would you please identify yourself? Please give us your name?

Witness: I am Abdul Razak Kamara.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Would you please take the Koran in your hands. The oath taking is administered.

Thank you Mr. Kamara, you may have witnessed a previous hearing of the TRC or know how we proceed but let me just remind you how we will take your testimony this morning. First we will ask you if you will make a statement and tell the Truth Commission and tell the public who are here to hear your testimony, what do you have to say about the things that happened to you during the conflict? Then, the commissioners would ask you some questions and we would ask also the Leader of Evidence Mr. Charm if he has questions for you and at the conclusion we would invite you to ask questions of the Commission and to make any suggestions with respect to recommendations that the Commission might make. Would you like to proceed? Please tell us what you will have to say about the conflict and your involvement in it?

RazaK I want to take this opportunity to stand up and ask the paramount chief to allow me to testify before this Commission?

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: I think you may proceed.

Razak: I would like to sit down and testify before this Commission. Thank you. The war that started in Sierra Leone in 1991 was championed by Saybana Foday Sankoh who was a victim of Brigadier Bangura's coup in 1971. During the war of the last decade, there was a deliberate effort on the part of the RUF to make sure that the youths were used as instruments of destruction through the means of wing drugs like cocaine, maffin, metagon, brown brown and cannabis sativa. Some of those youths according to our affiliation with the RUF when we did our research, were killed in the presence of their parents. Some of the girls were raped and they were supposed to be in schools by then, regrettably some of those children are now in the dilemma of being dropouts, drug addicts, commercial sex workers and pregnant teenagers or child mothers. I came in contact with the RUF when they attacked my home. When the AFRC coup took place in Freetown I left Freetown for Yoni. By then the ECOMOG, the SLA, the CDF were based there. When the RUF attacked, I was the chairman of the Yoni youth council which was engaged in many development activities. When the RUF attacked they drove the ECOMOG troops but Yoni was surrounded by the Kamajors and other forces. At that time, as a young man anywhere we went, we were either branded as part of the RUF or as a supporter of the government. Four days after the town was taken by the RUF, we hadn't anywhere to go there was a lot of harassment within the community, so Colonel Bai Bureh decided to call a meeting of everybody in Yoni. The authorities in the town met me and explained the situation to me. I told them that I'm with them because I had no where to go. And if we had refused to attend this meeting they would have taken us to be against them so the people decided to go and listen to what was going to be said at the meeting. When we went to the meeting, Colonel Bai Bureh told us that it was time for peace. He said he was ready for us to establish a peaceful settlement in mile 91. We listened to his stories and we then told him that we had no alternative since to have peace is what we have been praying for. But then I told him that there is one thing I'll want to ask for and that is for them to establish an immediate cease fire, in order to bring an end to the harassment of our people and the entire community. And the child combatants who were captured in Yoni should be given to them so that they could be returned to their parents. Now you are telling us to form a peace council so we will, therefore, go to hang heads with our people. We called the chief, the religious council and the youths. I was then made chairman of that committee. By then I was 21/2 miles away from mile 91 where they were. I came one morning and my people complained of some people raping, even though they have decided on peace so I met Colonel Bai Bureh and asked him on what principles the RUF were operating? And he told me that in the RUF the punishment for raping is death. If you harass any liberated civilian you would also be killed. If you loot or burn a house you will be killed too so I told him that my people have been grumbling about such activities of the RUF so he said that from hence forth, anybody identified of committing any of the above crimes should be brought to him. I then went and told my people. When I returned to Yoni in the evening I went back in the afternoon hours of the next day, only to be told of a boy by the name of "I like it" who was shot. His father's name was Moses, and he was a member of the mile 91 drivers union. They said that he was fired by Major Milton so I went back to the elders in mile 91. I ask them for the reason why "I like it" was killed and why did they also refuse to have his body buried. They said "I like it" was their child and he was shot only because he broke the law by raping a suckling woman. I then ask them if they investigated the matter and they told me that it was the woman herself who went and reported the matter before they caught "I like it". And the men said he should not be buried so that it could be an example for others to stop. I said no, I said the men killed "I like it" because he raped but they should not refuse him the right of burial. I said the act had already be done so I pleaded with them to kindly allow me to hand the body over to the parents for burial. They said they were not going to bury him. They said the people were complaining of rape but now it was our brother who committed the act. So he became annoyed and his boys started to push me and they ordered me to leave the scene. So I returned to Yoni to sleep. In that morning I went back and met Major Milton who did the execution. I told him that the peace process was that of give and take. I asked him to give me the corpse so that the people can do the burial. He then granted me the

permission so I called the boy's parents together with the youths who took his body away and buried him. I also told him that in our culture, when somebody dies, we perform some funeral rites for him. I wanted him to allow me to perform the ceremony. The permission was granted and I did it. That made the harassment to stop for a while but there was one Major Foday who was also known as Major Property in the area where the Kamajors were in our chiefdom which was known as a liberated area. There he usually went to find food. The Kamajors sent a representative to come and report the matter to me. It was their commander who was called Orshay. I then asked Bai Bureh to warn his boys to stop offending the Kamajors who were also gun men. And you have told them not to fight you so you should not go in their area to find food. One day he went there again with his boys and the Kamajors took revenge and attacked them. After he was attacked, he came to mile 91. He said it was Abdul Razak who incited the Kamajors to attack and remove them from mile 91 so I came in the morning and Colonel Bai Bureh ordered us and the elders to be arrested. He said we should be stripped naked. So I beg him and told him that I was a prince from a ruling house in this area and that was why I was loved and respected by the people. He asked them to strip me naked and do whatever they wanted to do with me instead of stripping the elders naked. So I was stripped naked of my clothes but they did not do it to the elders. I was beaten because they said our brothers have attacked them. I was locked up for three days and one day I was taken out of the cell and an investigation was conducted and they found that Major Foday was still harassing the Kamajors. So they called all of us together with the youths. They said they were going to give us ideologies. They took so many sticks, whips and other things they lined us up and we were made to pass between their lines with every one of them beating us as we crawled on the ground. They told me from, henceforth, to start sleeping in mile 91 and that my movements should be monitored. My people pleaded with them they said if I leave them they will be afraid so I was in Yonibana and I used to leave by 6:00 a.m. every morning to report to them. One day they brought one Captain Bakarr whom they said was to head the Peace Committee. We were working with the Peace Committee when the ECOMOG troops removed us from mile 91. We came to Magbass. We travelled with so many civilians who were over 5,000 in number. When we arrived in Magbass I asked them to allow me to conduct a census. We did that and registered our people. I met with the chiefs in Magbass and I asked them to host my people since they were from the same Tonkolili District. They were then at Magbass for up to a month. In Magbass, we were attacked by the Kamajors. We were removing from there and were already three miles off when Colonel Bai Bureh gave orders that I should be fired at on sight. I also met one Major Milton who warned me not to go to Magburuka. He said I should stay where I was and make sure that my Kamajor brothers left the place before attempting to go anywhere. Otherwise I would be playing into the hands of Bai Bureh who had planned to kill me. We had to sleep there. In the morning, they sent one lieutenant Jango to go with us on a mission to see whether the Kamajors were still at Magbass. When we went there, we found no Kamajor. So we returned and reported the on situation on the ground accordingly. Before our arrival an order had already been passed that I should be arrested and taken to Magburuka. I was taken to Magburuka and before we even got there I had already been tripped naked and my people saw me being brought by them so the township gathered and went to Colonel Bai Bureh's house. On arrival there I was locked up in the house where the goats slept. They told me that I was going to be executed publicly the following morning. So I prayed to God asking that he helps me to walk out of jail free since I was fighting a genuine course in the interest of peace in this country. After two days, I was taken out of jail and a court martial was set up to investigate my case. At the conclusion of the investigation I was proven to be innocent so they decided to start monitoring my movements in order for me not to run away. So I went and settled in Lamina Street in Margburaka. One evening they sent for me and asked me to join the administration in Margburaka town but I refused. Then one "Captain self beating" told me that in the RUF people do not turn down the positions that are offered them. The punishment for refusing to take the offer was death; I was to be put to death, as my refusal showed that I had a bad motive for them. I was taken to him that morning by Brigadier Moris Kallon. But then one woman went and cried to him on my behalf. She told them that I in particular should not be killed or else they would lose everything to the civilians. He asked me for my name, I told him I was Abdul Razak. He told me that from that day onward I should start working in the Margburaka administration in order to make sure that peace is maintained in

Margburaka. I told him that the first thing they should do was to call a general meeting for me to address my people. I went and addressed my people I telling them that I wanted them to stay and be courageous. And I said, "For you the soldiers you are to ensure that from today onward nobody carries a gun on him in this town. Also you should allow the market to open without any harassment and that the Mosques and Churches should be opened". They agreed. I called the trade union movement and spoke with them. They too agreed to open the market again. I called the Imam and ask him to open the Mosque because religion was one thing that could change the minds of people. I called a Pastor and I also spoke with him and they all agreed to do what I proposed. But at that time the business people were harassed greatly each time they attempted to travel between Magburaka and mile 91. One day the traders met me and said Mr. Razak you will have to open the route for us from Magburuka to mile 91. I wrote a letter to the ECOMOG commander that was there Lt. Colonel Peter Omua. He saw my letter and my name so he said he was happy to receive me. So one morning I bade them farewell I told them I was going to mile 91. Some of the traders joined me. The ECOMOG and civilians went two miles after mile 91 to receive me. We went and I spoke with the commander and he agreed to open the road. The ECOMOG commander decided to visit mile 91. He came with food when he returned. General Issa sent a message saying I had a different motive. He queried my relationship with the ECOMOG commander. He did not understand why ECOMOG should listen to me instead of them. So I was arrested and locked up. They pleaded for my release and later they changed my assignment to leave Magburaka for mile 91. I then went to Makeni. When I arrived in Makeni, they asked me to be with the administration in Makeni, Brigadier Kallon was in charge. Three days later I was accused of saying that I didn't have any respect for authority and these authorities were the Liberians and the senior people that started the war. I was called and I answered that I said it; I said it was because they were not Sierra Leoneans. I told them that they were responsible for all that was happening because they were not Sierra Leoneans they should return to their country and leave us alone. They became annoyed and removed me from their administration. I ask Brigadier Kallon for permission to go and meet my people so that we would start gold mining and agriculture. I went there and later UNAMSIL too went to deploy their troops there. One day after the deployment of the UNAMSIL troops a conflict arose among them. By then I was in Moroba. Then Colonel Jungle went and met me. He told me there was a problem in Magburuka and that UNAMSIL had been arrested by Pa Gboro, Kailondo and Kallon. So I told them that since Pa Sankoh was in Freetown he could give an order for their arrest but when he went, he said in Magburuka that I said it was Pa Sankoh who was responsible for their arrest. He said I told him that Pa Sankoh was responsible for the arrest of UNAMSIL because he did not give an order for the arrest of Gbow, Kailondo and Moris Kallon. So they sent people to go and arrest. On my arrest, the people that arrested me went and fought in Malangba for properties and one of them was shot in his foot. I was taken to Magburaka and Colonel Bia Bureh gave orders for my execution. He pointed the pistol at me twice but I was not shot so I ran away. I hid myself and I went to Makeni and stayed there for three days. I was there when Issa sent for me to go to Kono Moris Kallon also sent for me so I went to meet him and I asked him how I was going to travel to Kono since I didn't know the way. I didn't even have the means for getting there. So they gave me a vehicle to take me to Kono. Issa also arrived in Kono at night following my arrival. The following morning they said they had a meeting that was scheduled to take place in Liberia. Our own meeting in Kono preceded the one in Liberia where they decided to change Pa Sankoh as leader of the RUF because they said he was no longer trusted by the people of Sierra Leone and the ECOWAS Heads of State since he was a liar. So they chose Issa as the interim leader. They were now to select people to go as foreign delegates to Liberia. Gibril Massaquoi, Kenneth Macauley and I were also chosen to be part of the delegation supposed to leave for Monrovia the following day. They said the Heads of State were to come in the morning but they did not come so President Taylor then facilitated a trip to Alpha Kunare in Mali. We then went to meet President Alpha Kunare and we tendered our letter of the suggesting the change in the leadership of the RUF and he promised to pass it over to the other Presidents. We left him and returned to Monrovia. In Monrovia, I was introduced to General Ibrahim Bah. General Ibrahim said he never knew me as part of the RUF so he did not see how I got to be part of the delegation. When he finished talking, I asked him who he was. I asked whether he was a Sierra Leonean and he said no. So I told him it was not his business, I said he was one of the causes of

instability in Sierra Leone. I said as I'm here, I will make sure that peace returns to Sierra Leone, I told him that I was not going to die in Liberia but that I would return to Sierra Leone. The Heads of State went to Liberia two days after. They said they had met with Pa Sankoh in prison. They said they had spoken to him about the change and he agreed, so they too accepted. When Issa went, General Ibrahim told him that he was not satisfied with me because I was passing on information to the American Embassy. By then we had signed the cease fire document. I was molested and was asked to return. I stayed for some time and they asked me to return to Sierra Leone so they said I should travel together with Issa. I refused to travel with them because I was afraid. I travelled with a Liberian boy by the name of Lahai Koroma to Sierra Leone. When I came back to Sierra Leone the UN asked the RUF to give them some people to work with them as a contact group. They gave that position to Pa Baidina but he did not work properly. He was changed and the position was given to me. When I occupied the position, I observed that there was provision in the agreement for the installation of all government machineries and a free flow of persons and vehicles. I told them that all these things should happen and Issa said that he had given me the power to do whatever I thought to be good. Doctor Kai kai and others went to Lunsar and invited us to a meeting for the disarmament so I spoke with my Lunsar brothers to disarm. They ask for the deployment of the police and I said they should deploy because it was in the agreement. So it was done and after the deployment of the police, I went back to Makeni and was told that there was a problem with the Kamajors. They were attacking the border so I met General Alie Hassan suggested to him that we should ensure that the UNAMSIL troops were deployed in Kono. He promised to try. I went with General Martin Algoi to a meeting in which they were annoyed with me. They alleged that I had wanted to disturb the mining in Kono that was why I asked that the UN be invited to deploy. As I returned in the morning I went with 75 trucks of the Bangladesh battalion. They came and deployed and Issa accepted the deployment because there was a problem with the Kamajors. They went and held a meeting and they decided to change me from that position. When they changed me they made the comment that the dangerous leader had left. I was now in Makeni with my movement being monitored. One day Pa Gbow called me and said I had accused him of arresting the UN. I said but I was not here. He also accused me of taking bribe from Pa Kabba in order to let the UN deploy after a week. They held another meeting at which a fund raising committee was appointed and I made the chairman. They said I should report in Kono. I came and reported myself in Kono. They said Lion was the chairman of that meeting i.e. the committee so I called him up, I told them that as I am the chairman of the fund raising committee and he was the chairman prior to that time, I wanted him to give me a report on the amount of money and diamonds he had collected. He warned the others immediately that trouble was on the way since they had involved an educated person in that committee. I called Osman Bangura who was working with him. I asked him to tell me how they were operating. He said the traders were asked to pay for any goods they brought into Kono. I asked them if they had any debt to pay and they said yes. I asked whether they had saved some of the money. They said no. I told them that from that day onward all the debts owed to the civilians should be first of all paid and that he should not take instruction from anybody to collect money from civilians until they had finished paying their debts. The civilians started coming and there are still some in Kono as I'm talking who have to pay me five million, six million, three million, etc. So they started paying these debts. Lion always came to ask me for a loan of fuel to the miners. I told him that I was not in position to do that since I did not find any money but debts. The vanguards met again and said I had my eyes on them so they went against me. At one time I was in Kono when the Bangladeshi went and took the Kamajors so I decided to go and welcome them. I shopped for them. I bought clothes, shoes and other things and because of that my people went against me again. That same night, I saw two trucks loaded with steel windows I halted the vehicle and asked where they were going with the windows. I went and met the MP Commander and told him that they had burnt the town and if they were now taking the steel windows from Kono to Freetown to sell them what would the people of Kono who lived in Freetown say. And Eddie was one of the people that were involved in the stealing. They decided to ambush me on my way home. They started firing at my vehicle but I was able to survive their ambush I then ran away and told Issa. When I told Issa, he came with me so they were called and asked about the steel windows but they could not produce them. Issa then told them that they depended on me for any political activity because of the love the people had for

me. But then he was just playing the hypocrite. After three days, I was travelling through Massingbi to go to Makeni not knowing that a radio message had been sent ordering my arrest. I was arrested in Massingbi and taken to Makallie. Issa then sent 50 people headed by Colonel Lion to meet me in the jail. They came and met me in the jail. They then removed me from the jail and I was stripped naked and beaten. They said I was thinking that I was in an educated world but now I have been handled. I was stabbed on my hand and Lion kicked me in my penis. He did this together with Yellow Man and I pretended to be dead. So they said they should leave me because I was now dead. They broke my hands and my feet and they again took me to the jail. There was a boy named Kissi Boy who gave me peak milk and water to drink. I drank it and I was able to survive. There was a commander at Makallie known as Colonel Izick who told them not to give me medical treatment. But he was a Liberian who accused me of inciting the men to disarm and he also said that I was condemning the Liberians who started the war. I was abandoned there for a week and he told them not to give treatment to me because I was telling people to disarm and condemning the Liberians who started the war and that I was saying that they were not good people. I was in the jail when my people came to ask Issa what I had done. Before I was beaten, the people were told that I had two bags of dollars and diamonds and that I was also going to surrender to Pa Kabba in Freetown. When my people asked Issa, he said he ordered me to be beaten because I had married his girl friend. He also said that I had incited too many people to disarm and refuse to take orders. I was in Makallie again when Issa instructed people to go and beat me. But when he came and saw my condition, one Talik pleaded for him to be allowed to treat me. Issa agreed for him to treat me on the condition that no UN personnel should see me. They said I should not be taken to Makeni or Kono but that I should stay in Makallie. So Lt. Colonel Oladepo got informed about the way I had been treated. But Issa denied and he told them that I was doing some job in Kono. The UN troops that I worked with when I was in the contact group were eager to see me because the process was getting slower. When they came to Kono, they were told that I was in Makeni and when they went to Makeni they told them I was in Kono. Tarik then took me away and by then I was impotent. Lion and others used to pour petrol into my eyes so I was not seeing any more. Talik sent for a dispenser in Masingbi and by then my wife was with Talik and she also sent some crutches for me but they told Talik that on no account should I go out and I was unable to see or walk. He treated me for up to a year when I then started learning to walk. They also called a medicine man called Pa Lamin to treat my impotency but he was unable to cure me so my brothers came. They said I should leave my wife Haja because it was for her sake that I was treated that way by Issa. I ask them how they expected me to leave her when I had been stripped of all I had and was now impotent. I said to them that there was no other woman in the world that could readily accept me in that condition. So I called her and told her what people were saying about our relationship. PA Lamin tried to cure me again. At 2:00 a.m. one morning, Issa and Brigadier Mike Lamin and Brigadier Kallon arrived in some vehicles with armed men and they asked for me. They were discussing for an hour before Talik handed me over to them. By then I had started walking and I was seeing a bit it was only my manhood that I had problem with. I was loaded in a vehicle and taken to Kono. I was handed over to Brigadier Kallon for him to ensure that I didn't escape. At night I was loaded in a vehicle but before going I told Tarik that he had treated me but then I was being taken away and I was not sure of my return. I told him not to forget my mother and my wife and if I returned I would never forget him. So they took me to Liberia to a place called Gbow. There I saw many Sierra Leonean boys who were with the RUF. Brigadier Kallon and others started to take a drink called Bitter Root. I then ask them the reason why they had brought me there when they knew that I was not in good health. They told me to just follow them and that they were going to see President Taylor. But by then there was fighting going on, the rebels had attacked the government forces of Liberia. They started taking me to the battle field anytime they went. One day a conflict ensued between Benjamin 18 and Brigadier Moris Kallon. They said President Taylor was supposed to give them some money and that they had come for it. I told them that if we were to continue to stay there Benjamin 18 was telling us to use the chopper for me not to be killed. So I started inciting the boys that were there to run away from Liberia to Sierra Leone. I told them that those boys that had disarmed had been paid and had now started schooling again. During one night, I was again loaded in a vehicle to return to Sierra Leone because President Taylor was not happy with them. We argued in Kono on 17th December,

2001 and there I heard them saying that the Kono chief had come. In the morning the Kono chief went to greet Issa. As soon as the chief came Kailondo went there and started telling them that this time they were going to split their stomachs (in the Liberian accent) so I said look Kailondo as the people of Kono have now returned we will not allow any Liberian to molest our people this time round. Why didn't you molest your own Liberian chief? I told him that it was their duty to respect the people who governed the land. By then they had agreed to stop the town digging. On 18th December, a fighting ensued in the town dubbed the "cutlass fight" and Issa ran away. Kailondo remained in the town and sent for some of the boys in Tongor who had not yet disarmed to re-enforce their ranks. He told them that they were going to spoil the town and start afresh. So I called Sylvester and told him that we were not going to allow any foreigner to disturb the peace we were now having in Sierra Leone. I told them that we should see the chief in order for us to stop the fighting but Kailondo refused. So I told them if they could not listen to us we would find a way to get rid of them. We went and we met with chief Kongorba and chief Nyandebu and other chiefs. I fell on my knees and begged them to explain their grievances to me since I was not in Kono. For the time that I was there I was going to stand firm to see that their wishes were met. They said RUF were liars and unserious. We had told them to stop digging the town but they called Alhaji Kamara who told them that Issa Kamara was the only person who had the right to stop them. So we had to involve the Pakistani contingent and Commissioner Val Bangura came over to get the people to move from Kono to Massingbi and he tried to turn it into a tribal war. They stated that the Kono's were killing the Themnæs and Mendes in Kono. We met with the chief together with the youths. The NGO's told us they were leaving because their properties had been taken away including motor cycles, etc. They arrested a police truck and a land rover of one chief and these things were taken away. There I promised the chief that I was going to Massingbi where the Themnæs had regrouped for the tribal war to stop them. I was going to bring them to Kono in order to bring stability. So they gave me Fomba and some Pakistanis to go with me to Makeni. When we arrived, we saw so many cutlasses, machetes, single barrel guns, knives and sticks. I was with some policemen who they had wanted to attack so I came down and stopped everybody and asked them what was wrong. They told me that the Konos had killed so many Themnæs and Mendes and that they were not going to accept it, so I showed them a Kono guy whom I had travelled with who was called Fomba. I told Fomba there and then to disarm all the Themnæs and to put all the single barrels and knives together for we were going to open the route to Makeni. I told Fomba that I was a son of the Themnæs and Mendes and he was a Kono but he should disarm them all of their guns and knives. I told them all to lay down their sticks. I asked them to call the Kono's for me. We went to Makeni and I called all the chiefs. I told them that if anybody informed them that there was a tribal war they should not believe it. I said it was only a disagreement since some people had not wanted to respect the owners of the land. I then invited them to go to Kono and meet with the chiefs. The chiefs agreed and the UN sent a helicopter for them. We got to Kono and signed a communiqué to open the road. I opened the road and they were told to return the properties of the NGO's that they had stolen. As they were to leave the town I signed for the return of the properties and I left for Makeni with the help of the police. I was able to retrieve the trucks from them. I handed them over to Pa Val Bangura. We arrived in Makeni town. I told them to arrest any new Honda Bike they saw. They then arrested three new bikes and I took them to Kono. I called the World Vision staff to come and identify the bikes as theirs. They identified the bikes as theirs so I turned the bikes over to them. But during this crisis, that was one thing that I wanted to do that I was unable to do that is to get back chief Saffias vehicle that was taken from him and dismantled by Lion, Issa's brother and taken to Makeni. When I got back to Kono there was a rumour that I had joined the Kono Paramount Chief and that I had been converted to the SLPP and that was why I behaved thus. But I was respected by the Kono people because of what was happening so I stayed in Kono. Any RUF member who came to Kono reported to me and Sylvester and I told the chief about them. I was not to go to Makeni, but when it was time for politics I sent a message to Issa. I told him that I was going to damage the reputation of the RUF party and ensure that they did not have a single seat in parliament. So I started sending messages to the elders who respected me. I told the elders that the RUF had dug a lot of diamond which they could not account for so if they voted for such a party they should expect the worst to happen. I sent a warning to Issa telling him that he should only do his campaigning in Makeni, and he should never attempt to go to Kono

where I was with my Kono people. My brothers supported me and we were in Kono up to a time when they decided to call up a meeting at the park. I then met with the Kono people and fell on my knees. I begged them and told them that even though I was not in Kono when all the crises took place I was begging them to forgive us in order for us to maintain the peace. I said as I had regained my sight I was saying thanks to the Kono chiefs and the people of Kono for their regards and for helping me maintain the peace. I am now asking the Commissioner to allow me to bow to the Kono chiefs to beg for forgiveness, that they kindly forgive me for all that had happened. If there is anybody that I offended during the conflict, I am asking that person to please come forward before the Commission so that I apologise to such a person. I beg the Commissioner to please allow me to bow before the people of Kono to ask for forgiveness for anything I could have done to hurt them.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Thank you Mr. Kamara. I think while you were testifying the photographer and the camera man wanted to take a picture of your wounds and I asked them to stop and wait for you to finish your testimony but I'll let them do that now. Can you finish now please so that we can resume the testimony? Mr. you made a public plea for forgiveness and I just want to assure you that tomorrow the Truth Commission will be holding a special public ceremony where witnesses like yourself will have an opportunity to do it in a formal setting and you can speak to the briefer after your testimony about the terms that would be appropriate for you participate in that activity. When you began your testimony you asked the chiefs present here for permission but I want to make it clear that nobody needs permission to speak before the Truth Commission. People speak before the Truth Commission as part of their duty as Sierra Leoneans, they require nobody's permission to speak to the Truth Commission.

Razak: Well as a tradition I asked the chiefs to sit down and I thank them for that.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: I understand the tradition but I'm saying that the Truth Commission is created by the parliament of Sierra Leone and all Sierra Leoneans have a duty to speak before the Commission and they require the permission of nobody to do so. I understand the courtesy and the gesture of course. Mr. Kamara could you tell the Commission what you do now, what is your job now what do you do in your life?

Razak: Well as I said earlier that the young men who were fighting were given drugs to do most of the things they did, I started an organization called Global Youths Foundation Against Drug Abuse. We have an expert from England who is giving us his service voluntarily to rehabilitate youths and their associates who are taking drugs and I am the executive director of that programme. We have a centre at Korkoima with some young men taken from the Kissy Mental Home who are now being rehabilitated. I am at present the executive director of Global Youths Foundation Against Drug Abuse situated at Korkoima.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: You said in your testimony if I heard you correctly, you said you were detained and imprisoned for three days. Did I understand you properly? You said in your testimony you had been held in a cell for three days?

Razak: No, not so.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: I understood you. Were you detained there at one point?

Razak: Yes, but more than once.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Is it clear to understand from your testimony that you were part of the RUF for a considerable period of time?

Razak: Well, it was not for a very long time. It was probably about four years when I was with them at the time Mile 91 was under attack.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: You mentioned that you were taken to Liberia to meet President Charles Taylor. Did you actually meet him?

Razak: Yes, we met him with the other Presidents from Nigeria and Mali i.e. President Omar Kunare and President Obasanjo.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Would it be actually correct to describe you as part of the leadership of the RUF?

Razak: No, I was just part of the delegation that was appointed to assist in the peace process and to work with UNAMSIL.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: How long was the delegation? How big was the delegation? How many people were in the delegation?

Razak: Well, I had the contact group's secretary general and the members who were working with the UN.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: When you went to Liberia and you met Charles Taylor and the other leaders how many people were there from the RUF?

Razak: Only three went but Gbow and Issa joined us later in Liberia because the Presidents said they wanted to see them in person.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: So you were part of the delegation a relatively small group of leaders from the RUF who met with the Presidents?

Razak: I was part of the delegation that went to establish the peace process which we are now enjoying.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: What was the relationship between Charles Taylor and the RUF?

Razak: The relationship that existed between Charles Taylor and the RUF by then is very difficult for somebody to say because there were some people known as the Vanguarders who used to talk in secret to him. But I actually knew that there was a relationship between Charles Taylor and the RUF since the RUF members were travelling to Liberia and I even met some of the boys that were here and who were subsequently taken to Liberia and they are still there.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: The person you were naming frequently in your testimony as Issa is Issa Sesay, is that right?

Razak: Yes, I mentioned his name.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Is it the man who is currently detained and has been indicted by the Special Court for war crimes?

Razak: Yes.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Do you think he committed war crimes?

Razak: Well in my own view, most of the instructions that were given were given under his command and he loved the leadership. He was the commander and the interim leader so if he is accused of war crimes against humanity then it's up to the Special Court to investigate and if there are evidences to prove it then he committed them.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Well you were working with him so closely for a period of time. To your knowledge, did he ever give orders to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity?

Razak: Well in my own case, I was not a front line commander who was giving orders to go and attack or to kill somebody. I was not a commander so it's only the special court that can investigate with evidence to find him guilty.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: So the answer is, you don't know whether he committed crimes against humanity or war crimes?

Razak: Well it is only the court that has the justification to find somebody guilty for any crime because I have never witnessed or given any order to commit any crime other than my participation in the peace process.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Do you believe he did?

Razak: Issa, if I believe that he committed war crimes?

Schabas: Yes do you believe if he did. Do you believe that Issa committed crimes against humanity and war crimes?

Razak: Well the court is investigating when they bring out their findings then I will actually believe but I don't want to do it as an individual.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: You've not answered my question would you answer my question please?

Razak: Yes sir.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: You are required by law to answer my question. Do you believe he committed war crimes and crimes against humanity?

Razak: Well the order he gave for me to be beaten and I became impotent is a crime against humanity. I was also wounded.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: He is also accused of being responsible for raping women do you believe that?

Razak: Well, when the rape case was coming, they said he executed people but by then he was in Makeni while I was in Mile 91. The only person that I heard executed for raping was Major Milton and that was what I said earlier on. And yesterday, somebody testified that Issa killed somebody in the mining area. So automatically he has killed through the testimony I heard yesterday because I was not in Makeni when these killings were happening. I did not go to Makeni.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Was Issa responsible for people having their hands being chopped off?

Razak: I only saw amputees when I was moving after the peace process then I saw Gibril whose hands were chopped off but I was not there when Issa gave orders for them to cut hands. So I don't know.

Commissioner Prof. Schabas: Thank you may step down.

Leader of Evidence: Mr Commissioner our next witness is Mustapha Bangura.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Name Please.

Mustapha: My name is Mustapha Bangura.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Muslim or Christian?

Mustapha: I am ready to give you the information.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Go ahead.

Mustapha: I am Mustapha Bangura I came from my home; I joined the army and was then taken to Koribondo. I was taken again to Newton where we stayed until the NPRC government came to power. We were then taken from there to Kailahun and from Kailahun I was transferred to the Lungi garrison. I continued at Lungi for the rest of my life. I was there when the NPRC and AFRC governments took power. We were the first batch to surrender ourselves to the police in Port Loko. After overthrowing the AFRC government from power, my friends and colleagues returned to their stations. The ECOMOG troops moved from Lungi to Kono. We were the second batch to come and enforce the ECOMOG in Kono. By then I was in Njabema. The RUF troops attacked us in Njabeme. We went back to Freetown and then from Freetown I was taken to Kabala. I was in Kabala when the Kamajors visited our home. Because I was a soldier they started harassing our relatives. One of my uncles was killed by one of my brothers because he was a Kamajor in our village.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: The last thing he mentioned was about was uncle.

Mustapha: The CO in our village was one of my uncles. My brother was one of the Commanders in the Kamajor ranks in our village but because they knew that we were from there and we were from the army, Sierra Leone army one of my uncles was there supposed to look after us. But his affiliation to us cost him his life. He was killed by a soldier. From that they arrested one of my uncles whose name is Sahr Momoh Foray. He was beaten by them. Even my mother and father were harassed by them to the extent that my parents ran into the bush. From the bush they went to Bo. By then we were under the British soldiers. After the training I was given a five-day pass. I went to my village. My people explained everything to me. I told them that I have no power to do anything to that man, but I will find a way for bringing us together at least for the sake of my uncle who was killed by them. I did not really mind much the beating of the others but it was most painful for me to hear of the way my uncle died. He looked after me when there was no one else to do so. He was called Muniru Moi Foray. That is all that brought me to TRC today.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you Mr. Bangura for coming to the Commission and sharing your experience with the nation.

Mustapha: Okay.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So essentially you are before the Commission because they killed your uncle?

Mustapha: Yes sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Do you know who killed him?

Mustapha: Yes sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Do you know where they are now?

Mustapha: Yes sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where is that?

Mustapha: They are all staying in our village, Bagbor in the Bo district.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: That is around Jimmy Bagbor?

Mustapha: Seven miles to Jimmy Bagbor sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: We are very much sorry to hear that. It is a pity that it happened. Looking closely at the situation one takes pity on you given the fact that you were in the force probably fighting for and defending innocent lives of this country. It is heart rending for people to take revenge on you for doing that. It is indeed quite a sorrowful situation. When did you join the army?

Mustapha: 1991.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: At the beginning of the war?

Mustapha: Yes sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Did you take part in any fighting?

Mustapha: I was a nurse by then. I was working in the medical field.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Where?

Mustapha: I was first sent to Koribondo after my pass out.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: You never took part in any of the fights against the enemy?

Mustapha: No I did not take part because I was station at the headquarter to take care of the causalities or the wounded.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: What about during the NPRC and the AFRC times?

Mustapha: Still I was a medical man.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Even during the AFRC?

Mustapha: Yes when they came to power I only served them for a week and my brother told me to go and surrender and we went and surrendered.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: During your campaigns as a medical man what types of victims, what types of patients were you really treating?

Mustapha: those with gun shot wounds were sent to us. If the cases were beyond our capacity to treat then we referred them to the headquarter or to Thirty Four.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Why did you abandon the AFRC?

Mustapha: Because we were hearing announcements on the radio from Pa Kabba saying that the AFRC were an illegal government, they were not a genuine government.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Since they existed illegally, how were you not able to think through their actions and react against them?

Mustapha: That is why we surrendered ourselves and joined the ECOMOG to fight against them.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. Commissioner do you have any questions for Mustapha?

Commissioner Marcus Jones: thank you Mustapha for giving your testimony. We are sorry you lost your uncle and that your other close relatives were harassed because of you. Now were you able to give your uncle a fitting funeral?

Mustapha: It was only after the burial of my uncle that I got to know of his death. It is only now.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How recently did you do it?

Mustapha: It was in December.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Can you give us the names of those people who killed your uncle and happen to be alive maybe in Bagbor.

Mustapha: I can give you the commander's name.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Yes?

Mustapha: His name is Mohamed Coker. His nick name was Mejo.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: That is the only name you can give?

Mustapha: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: How far is Bagbor from here?

Mustapha: It is about 100 miles.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: That is quite a distance. Are you still in the army?

Mustapha: Yes Madam.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And you are now a loyal soldier?

Mustapha: Yes Madam.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you for coming.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Just one last question from me. When did you actually start being a loyal soldier?

Mustapha: After the AFRC overthrew the government.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Ok Leader of Evidence do you have any questions for Mr. Mohamed Bangura?

Leader of Evidence: No Mr. Commissioner I don't have any questions for him.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Mr Mohamed Bangura we thank you for your testimony. It is unfortunate that we cannot get Miagbohun Bagbor. But Team One of this Commission was in the Bo District while we were at Koinadugu. It may be they did not know but it would have been the most appropriate thing for them to do. I know they would have done something about that. But now look at where we are some one or two hundred miles away. It will not be easy for us to effect reconciliation from here. However, we encourage you; we are going to have programmes set in motion that will follow up some of these cases. I am sure you would be contacted later by the follow-up committee and that is going to be set up for reconciliation purposes of this nature. Do you have questions for the Commission?

Mustapha: Yes sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Go ahead.

Mustapha: My concern here is not so much for me again but for my relatives at home. My uncle was a chief and some of my brothers are chiefs too. I want you people to call them together and reconcile with them together so that they can come together because in case of anything they will fall short, they will harass them again.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: That is a very reasonable concern. I appreciate that concern of yours and we would have loved to do that very much but as you would know now we are not sitting in Bo. In fact the sittings have been completed in Bo District by another team. That is why I am encouraging you that there would be a committee after us. It is through that Committee that we hope to follow up on long distant cases. Meanwhile what I will suggest to you, now that law and order are in place you should take time off your duty and pay us visits and try to see that that is arranged in a traditional way. I know you will be doing this service to this nation if you really want to reconcile yourself with the perpetrator that you say killed your uncle. So I will really encourage you to follow up and see what happens. If you are unable we still have you on our records here. There are plans to have a Commission in place to handle situations like yours. Do you have other recommendations?

Mustapha: No, as long as you have said it, I am so happy over that.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So we thank you. Try it and you will see that it works. You may step down.

W-ITNESS

Isata: My name is Isata Kumba Ngaujah.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Isata, are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Isata: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now take the Bible and repeat after me.

The oath is taken by Isata Kumba Ngaujah.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now, Isata, I'm sure you are an intelligent pupil; I want you to tell us what happened to the girls during the war. So many young people have told us their experiences so you don't have to feel embarrassed about telling anything at all, we just want to know your experiences during the war. So relax and tell us your story.

Isata: When I was captured, they first took us to Yandi Sandor first.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So who captured you?

Isata: The rebels. They took us to Yandi Sandor where they left us. We were there with them until two weeks.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And who are the 'WE'? Were you the only one or there were other people?

Isata: There were other people with us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: For how many weeks?

Isata: For two weeks. We were then taken from Yandi Sandor to Tombodu using bush paths. In Tombodu the other troops joined us. They asked us where we were coming from. We told them that we had been captured in the bush, so they released us but asked us to go back to Yandi Sandor.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: They released you but then you went back with the rebels to Yandi Sandor?

Isata: Yes. After that, we were captured again by some other troops.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So when you went to Yandi Sandor, you were released?

Isata: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And who were those people who captured you?

Isata: The rebels. We were given rice to cook. We cooked the rice. During the night, they told the boys that they should sleep in the parlour while two of us girls were taken into the room. So not too long, a certain boy came in but I pretended to be sleeping. The boy started beating us. After bearing me, he left me but started beating my sister. He was requesting to have sex with us. I said that the man that told us to sleep in the room said that if anyone attempted to rape us we should shout. The boy said that if you shout, I will kill you people. He raped my sister and after that he came back to me and raped me. In the morning we told him

that we are going to tell his boss. He said that if we ever explained what to his boss that he raped us he was going to kill us. In the morning, we were released by them. On our way, we saw another group of rebels. When we met with them we ran into the bush, but they caught an old man and killed him. We saw them but they didn't see us. When we reach to my mum, I was told that my father had been captured and tied up by the rebels. I asked my mother to tell me where my Dad was captured. She said it was in Sandor chiefdom. My father's money, his tape recorder and everything he had was taken away from him by the rebels. As they were about to kill him, my brother ran to the town and explains to their boss that they were about to kill my father. Their boss intervened before they could release him. After releasing my father, we decided to go to Guinea. While we were travelling to Guinea another man by the name of Pa Mattia was captured in our presence and killed. When we arrived at Foray Koniya, we were told that they had burnt all our houses. So my mother decided to go to Guinea instead. In Guinea, we stayed at a camp. We were repatriated by UNHCR. That is the end of my story.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I am sorry for all that happened to you. You seem to have recovered physically from the injuries inflicted on your body. Physically, I said. I would like to ask you a few questions just to help us understand properly what you told us. Was your father holding any prominent position?

Isata: He was the Supervisor of schools.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And where is he now? His home, where? Where do you live now?

Isata: Number 2 Bar Street here in Koidu town.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The other girl you shared the room with, was she your real sister? Or were you just captured together?

Isata: She is my mothers elder brother's daughter.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So she is your cousin. Where is she now?

Isata: She is at Tadu Road.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In Koidu?

Isata: Koidu Town.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now have you any problem at school the with regard to what happens to you?

Isata: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: But they know that you were captured?

Isata: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any problems when you think about what happened?

Isata: Sometimes when I remember all that happened to me I just begin to cry.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you been consoled?

Isata: Only my mum.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: But she is the best person to console you. Have you any physical problems as a result of the raping?

Isata: Sometimes I become weak and my temperature is high.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Still go and listen to your mother and try to be practical about things. Things have happened and there is nothing you can do now to reverse them. The only thing you can do is to try to put them behind your back and get on with your school work. You stand a good chance for the future. You should remember that it was not your fault. Get yourself totally involved in your studies in order to forget those evil days. Alright now, I have asked you questions. Have you any questions to ask the Commission?

Isata: I only want the government to help me with my education.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well the government will not be able to just give money to you alone, to you Isata for your education but when we finish our report and hand it, the government will be able to do something about education. More will be done about education generally so that you can benefit. From what you had said, you are in a better position than quite a number of the other young people who had come to us. Your father is an energetic man and in fact he has been a supervisor of schools before. So you only need to work hard and be patient for a couple of years so that educational facilities can improve in the whole country and you will share in the benefit. Do you have any other question?

Isata: Now my dad is not working.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I guessed that. I was not talking about his position. I was talking about his enlightenment and his education to be able to direct you and to lead and guide you until the government does its own bit for you young people. Do you have any other question?

Isata: No!

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation to make? What class are you?

Isata: I am in form one (1).

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendations which we should put in our report for the government? I am referring to things which you will like the government to implement?

Isata: We want the government to assist us in Kono here because all our houses have been burnt down.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any other?

Isata: We want better educational facilities in Kono. That is all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I am sorry but I have to ask this question. Why are you only in form one (1)? Did you miss school?

Isata: I was not attending school throughout the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You must try and wakeup. We thank you very much. Isata, you can step down now.

WITNESS

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is your name in full?

Rebecca: My name is Rebecca Finnoh.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Your name in full?

Rebecca: Yes, Rebecca Finnoh.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Rebecca: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Take the Bible and say after me. The oath was taken by Rebecca Finnoh.

Comm: Marcus-Jones: Rebecca, you seem to have had some terrible experiences during the war?

Rebecca: Yes Madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I want you to tell us about those things and you have to talk a bit slowly because I have to write as well. You have nothing here to worry about. Alright now carry out.

Rebecca: In 1998, early in the morning when we woke up, we heard firing. We were told that the rebels had attacked the town.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Attacked where?

Rebecca: In the old town Koidu town. When they attacked, we ran into the bush to one village called Yadu Gbassy. By then I was with my grandfather by the name of Rev. Paul Domba, the SLPP chairman. So we were in the town for two days. They attacked us there again. We escaped again into the bush. By then there was no way to go to Guinea neither to Freetown. I was in the bush with my grandfather and his wife our food got finished. We were there for more than a week when his children came and saw us. Pa Paul Domba's children were there too struggling with us. They told us that, they are going to find ways and means to go to Freetown. After they left, two days the rebels attacked us again in the bush. By then Pa Paul Domba was sitting on a rock. The rebels told my grand dad to surrender to them as they searched his pocket. After searching my grand dad's pocket, they found a document in the name of SLPP where our names were written. They told my grand dad, that they were going to kill him. They said that he was chairman for the SLPP and for that he was going to die. They got closer to us as there were so many people around us. They stripped him naked and tied his hands behind him. So I was captured by them and they ordered me to go and show them where we kept our rice. I told the man that, we didn't have rice, we bare survived on bush yams. I was walking away from the man while he walked close to me from behind. We went until we saw a rock and the man told me to lie down on it. The man told me to take off my clothes including my knickers. I obeyed. The man forced me to have sex with him. He attempted so many times but failed to penetrate me and so he got up and asked me what the problem was. I told him that I was a virgin. He fired a shot in the air. He forced me and raped me. After raping me, I was bled profusely, and he too had blood all over his body. He told me that I should wipe the blood from his body. I was then taken back where my family were. By then my grand-father was tied and he lay on the ground. They were stabbing him and beating him. There was a suckling mother among us whose properties were all scattered about. I picked up one of her child's nappies and cleaned up my body and wore my clothes again. They said that, my grandfather and I should follow them. Everything was taken from my grand-father including his shoes, clothes, etc. My grandfather was walking slowly because of the thorns but one of the rebels told the others to kill my grandfather because he was wasting their time. They fired him on his side. After the first shot, he cried and said, oh! My children don't kill me! They gave him another shot on his chest, he died. I was then taken by them. Following the death of my grandfather I walked with them for

over 20 (twenty) miles with serious bleeding. We came as far as Kamadu where we met Superman. We were then brought to Superman and Superman was keen to know who took me there. He was asking us the civilians. We were then pointing to those who captured us. They made an attempt to kill us but I went and pleaded with their big man not to kill me. The towel that I was tying, was drenched with blood. I showed myself to Superman and said, 'Please, don't kill me'. They were still threatening to kill all of us but since I pleaded with them, I was taken from among my colleagues. They wanted to know who raped me. I pointed the man who raped me and also I told them he killed my grandfather and right there they killed him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: He was the same men who killed your grandfather?

Rebecca: Yes Madam. Then superman took me to his wife. His wife cleaned me up and gave me food to eat but because I was worried, I could not eat. I was then with Superman's wife doing her domestic work such as washing dishes, laundering, etc. but all the time I was in sick bed, all the time sick. The ECOMOG came and attacked us repelling us from here. When I heard that in an announcement on the radio my grandfather's name was mentioned with mine I started crying. They asked me why I was crying over and over. They asked me if I was unhappy staying with them, they asked if I wanted to go to the ECOMOG? There was a boy who was brought up by my grandfather. After hearing the announcement, the boy started looking for me. When he saw me with Superman's wife he went and told Superman that I was his sister. He asked their permission to bring me to Kono and he was allowed. We then came to Kono and stayed together till the year 2000 when I went to meet my family in Freetown. They accepted me. Since then I have remained on the sick bed.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Rebecca. I am going to ask you some a few questions. Do you know the man who raped you?

Rebecca: Even though, it was only once I saw him, he had dreadlocks on his head. He was called Kakay, but I have not been seeing him any more.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The man who killed your grandfather?

Rebecca: Yes Madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And that Kakay was killed too?

Rebecca: Yes Madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who killed him?

Rebecca: Superman.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is your brother who saved you and brought you to Kono?

Rebecca: I don't know his whereabouts now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about the papers they took from your grandfather's pocket? The documents they took from your grandfather's pocket?

Rebecca: They carried them in their pockets.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is wrong with you now?

Rebecca: My stomach got swollen.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Apart from your swollen stomach, have any other problem?

Rebecca: Whenever I get to the time for my menstruation, I don't usually have my menstruation.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You started menstruating before you were raped?

Rebecca: No Madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What else?

Rebecca: My stomach only.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What about the bleeding, the bleeding has stop?

Rebecca: Yes madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Has the colour of your eyes always been like that?

Rebecca: No! I was not like this before. I believe if is due to the sickness.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright thank you very much. Now I had asked you questions, have you any questions you would like to ask me?

Rebecca: Yes madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now let me ask you one more question, were they able to buried your grandfather?

Rebecca: Yes, I heard that those who were around buried him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any question for me?

Rebecca: I only want you to help me because I am really suffering from this sickness.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you taking treatment now?

Rebecca: When I came from the bush, we went to Connaught hospital. I was only given a letter and that letter was given to my brother. He took the letter to my mother but they were just crying. When I urinate, I don't do it much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Just try now to see that you get well and take care of your health. Don't worry about bearing children right now. Have you any recommendation?

Rebecca: Like what?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What you want the government to do for your community, anything that you want the government to do.

Rebecca: Yes madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes, alright, we will give you a letter. We will send you to a clinic and hopefully they will be able to help you, do you understand?

Rebecca: Yes madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright, what else?

Rebecca: I want them to help me for my education.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright, thank you Rebecca for coming. Try to keep trampling in spite of everything and to be hopeful. If you think you are going to be well, it will help, it will help

in addition to whatever treatment you take. Just think that you are going to get better. You may step down now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Let the witness give her name in full.

Fatmata: My name is Fatmata Bockarie.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Fatmata: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Take the bible and say after me. The oath is taken by Fatmata Bockarie.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now Fatmata, I want you to relax then I want you to tell us clearly and then briefly and you talk the main points of what happened.

Fatmata: During the time the rebels attacked in Kono we went to a village called Tomboro. We were there for two days. The rebels attacked us 2 O'clock in the afternoon. When they attacked us, my son ran into the bush. I was in a room with a woman. The commander said that we should go and meet him. We went there and found that the rebels were all gathered with guns in their hands. We also saw lots of people whom they had captured. They said they were going to kill all of us. In our presence they killed two men. By then I was having my child who was one year and (3) three months old. And I had a four-month pregnancy. They called the woman and said that they were going to kill her. She told the rebels that she preferred to be rape rather than killed. The woman was taken behind the house where they raped her. After that they killed her. The husband was there with two children with whom he had run into the bush. After killing the woman they started burning houses and went away. From Songolo, we went to Tweyor Fairmu. In Tweyor, we were attacked and they captured me and then I was raped by the rebels. We were there with the rebels everyday. We were there when they killed a boy, but the boy was half dead when they buried him. We were in the Joe bush in Tweyor when they allocated the posting. We were in the mining section. They normally took some civilians to do manual labour, usually to find food for them. When they returned from finding food, they killed all civilians that were captured on the way. In the jungle I gave bath to a child. My child was having a foot problem. I was there with my three children. So I was with my three children but one of my children usually went with the rebels to find food. From there, we were taken back we were brought to Koidu town where they attacked and repelled ECOMOG out of Koidu. They collected or captured civilians from Makeni and Sandor to come and train them in their base. Those trainees were not given any food. While we were in Koidu town, General Issa executed few SLA soldiers because; according to him, the SLA had betrayed them. On visiting Kono on one occasion he arrested some people with diamonds and killed them. While we were in the mining unit, General Maskita used to send cigarette, marijuana, rice and diesel for the miners. They usually beat people with electric cables until such persons died. That is all I know.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Fatmata Bockarie. How did you manage to get back into your community?

Fatmata: When we came back to Koidu town, and the cease-fire had already started, we heard that the helicopter gun-ship was coming again so I decided to go to Kenema to meet my people there.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Wouldn't you have left if you did not hear of the coming of the gun-ship?

Fatmata: By then I was not having money I was finding money to travel to Kenema.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now who is the father of the child you have?

Fatmata: I have been abandoned by the man.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was he one of the rebels?

Fatmata: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: But you had a child when you were with the rebels?

Fatmata: I had two children and a four-month old pregnancy.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Oh! I see so it was the last child that got deformed?

Fatmata: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is the child now?

Fatmata: She is in Freetown.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: They raped you when you were with them?

Fatmata: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You wanted to stay with the rebels then?

Fatmata: No!

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why didn't you leave them before?

Fatmata: We were surrounded by them and if any one attempted to escape from their camp, they would be shot. By then I was having three children with me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why was that boy buried even when he was not dead?

Fatmata: I don't know because it was their normal way of behaving.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Okay thank you very much. I have asked you questions have you question for the Commission?

Fatmata: I am just saying thank you, and thanks to the government. I am only pleading with you to solicit support for us the women because the women suffered more than any other category of persons by this war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Actually this is your recommendation and not question as such. So I take it, you have no question? This is your recommendation any other recommendation?

Fatmata: We want the government to assist us with housing and good hospitals; we don't have husbands, we are just living like that, we have nothing with us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes, any more.

Fatmata: I want them to assist us with micro loans.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright, we can see whether we can refer you to any NGOs for help. We will put your suggestion in our report. And it is not a calamity that you don't have a husband, and you can work and maintain yourself. So thank you very much for coming.

CLOSING CEREMONY

Kono District Hearings

Closing Ceremony

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Now I can keep my head up, I thank you very much and we do hope that the apologies that are being rendered by the perpetrators would be accepted. I like the statement in the Deputy Chairman's speech "that the music has changed and we have to change our mode of dancing as well". I was going to be the only one bearing the shame. I was going to take it along with Mrs. Bundu Manyeh. Again we thank you very much for coming out and appreciate all you did. Once more we thank you.

The chief who shared the Kola also prayed but I think his prayer was not complete. I expected him to pray that this group which came from Freetown would pick some diamonds on their way back. Thank you very much Commissioner Torto we also have not been disappointed by the people of Kono District. No doubt this is the District where we have recorded the highest attendance and I believe that goes to the credit of your own son and our Commissioner Sylvanus Torto and the District and Regional Co-ordinators. I don't want to talk more than that because you would say I am competing with the Commissioners. I will now call on one of our international Commissioners who is no less a great personality to give the final vote of thanks to this session.

Commissioner Schabas: This is the easiest job of the afternoon because my colleague Sylvanus Torto has thanked every single person in this room. At one point he thanked the others even the people who put us up the first time. So there is nobody left to thank. Let me repeat the thanks for emphases. The resident Paramount Chief and the Paramount Chiefs, the Chief Police Officer for providing security, the Commanding Officer of the officers and soldiers of the Pakbat for providing security and logistics. We also say thanks to the station manager of the SLBS and above all the people of Kono District. By your attendance, participation and enthusiasm you have made these five days of hearings in Kono District notable in measuring the successful work of the TRC. The TRC victims and perpetrators have spoken often with great difficulty and great pain but this is as it should be and it is part of the process. We now leave this town but the process must continue. The process must go on and it's up to the people of Kono District to see to it that it goes on. I've just been handed a note. We did forget a few people and I want to mention them: the IRC and the chairman and staff of the town council. Good luck to all of you. Thank you.

Professor, thank you for your co-operation. We have actually come to the end of this ceremony. This is the end of our five day sittings here in Kono. Commissioners and staff have expressed their thanks and now they have to go to Tombodu to see the places that the witnesses mentioned in their statements. Places like savage pit, houses that they buried the people that were killed. After that those here that we would not meet again well by God's grace maybe we will meet again someday in Freetown. I will once again say thank you for your patience and God bless. We will stand now so that the Commissioners would move out to their chambers.

COMMISSIONER MARCUS JONES : All protocols observed, ladies and gentlemen, today the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has come to the end of its public hearings here in KONO. Our stay here has been very short but not uneventful. The Commission has been able to give voice to victims to relate to the nation and the international community bitter experiences of the gross human right violations they suffered during the decade old war in the hands of the different fighting groups.

The Commission also provided perpetrators a golden opportunity to confess their roles and involvement in the atrocities carried out during the same period in the civil war.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is quite aware of the extent of human rights violations committed in this District. The Commission is also aware that there are many perpetrators even in this hall who have deliberately refused to take advantage of the Commission's presence here to come forward and owned up to the roles they played during the war and be fully accepted back into the community. Let me say that it is a mark of strength not weakness to say sorry when you have done wrong. Modern civilisation does not consider it a mark of heroism to be arrogant even in the face of wrong, the real heroes of the ten year war therefore are those who have confessed their roles during the war and begged for forgiveness. I therefore urge those perpetrators still in hiding to come out and do the same, so that Sierra Leone will be a safe place for us and our children.

As a Truth Commission, our role is to create an enabling environment for true hearing and reconciliation to take place. We cannot forced anyone to confess his wrong doings neither can we force anyone to forgive but we must realise that development which we all yearn for cannot take place in the place of hate, revenge and bitterness, we must therefore cultivate the culture of brotherliness and peaceful resolution of conflict in the spirit of development and co-existence.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must say that it is lamentable that the Commission is not mandated to address individual needs nevertheless all the needs expressed here and even those not expressed have all been captured in all the testimonies we have

listened to during the course of our hearings in other districts. The Commission shall address all these needs collectively.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are leaving today permit me to say that we have started a process of reconciliation, which we are sure the traditional leaders, religious leaders and the civil society will continue. Reconciliation is an ongoing process, it is a collective responsibility, we must not see it as an exclusive preserve of the TRC.

Finally, I wish to thank you all for making our stay in Kono and our work here successful, I wish to thank all those who supported our work here.

Once again I thank you all on behalf of the TRC for your continuous attendance here and which is no doubt indicative of your confidence and trust in the TRC and its activities.

Thank you and God bless you all.

THE END

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARINGS IN BONTHE DISTRICT

July 7, 2003

BEFORE:

Commissioner Laura Marcu-Jones (Presiding)

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto

Commissioner William Schabas

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

LAEDER OF EVEDENCE: Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

WITNESS No.:1

WITNESS NAME: Alpha Joe Bai

Adeker: Good morning everybody. We are now going to start the ceremony. Shall we all rise for the Commissioners please?

Please be seated. The Deputy Chair, distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen. We will start the ceremony right away with inter-faith prayers. May I ask Reverend Martin to come forward and lead us in christian prayers? Reverend Martin, please.

Reverend Martin: Offered christian prayer.

Adekera: Thank you very much Reverend. We also call on Alhaji Wahab to lead us in Muslim Prayers.

Alhaji Wahab: Muslim prayer was offered.

Adekera: In continuation, we invite the District Officer to make a statement. Mr B. M. Turay could you please come forward.

B.M. Turay: Madam Mayor, Commissioners, of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Honourable Members of Parliament, heads of departments, members of the NGOs community, religious leaders, community elders, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, good morning. I would like to take this opportunity to heartily welcome the Commissioners of the TRC and all those that have come to contribute to make this hearing a success. Truth and Reconciliation are concepts that are ordained by God for perfect peace and harmony between an offender and the offended. This also applies to our relationship with God. If a sinner makes a sincere confession to God for a sin committed and completely desists from his evil ways, the bible and the Koran tell us that, that sinner will be forgiven by God and both will reconcile. On behalf of government ladies and gentlemen, I would like to encourage all those that have come to contribute to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearing to do that with sincerity for perfect peace and reconciliation which is the hall mark of peace, unity and development in any society. On behalf of Government, I say welcome and "seneho" (welcome). I wish all of you a successful hearing exercise. May the Almighty God grant you travelling mercies to enable you return to your respective homes safely. I thank you all and declare this TRC hearing opened.

Adekera: Thank you Mr Turay. Recognising the role played by Inter Religious Council in the peace process in this country, we also invite a representative of the organization to make a statement at this occasion.

Inter-Religious Council

Representative: Since we do not have an interpreter right here I would like to talk in the Krio language, if the Commissioners and the staff could permit me to do so. We have people here who have no formal education. My statement on behalf of the Inter-Religious Council is going to be brief. I first of all want to express our happiness and joy that the Commissioners and the staff of the TRC have come here to make peace among us. We are very much happy that this thing is happening today. I even want like to dance, with the permission of the Commissioners and the staff to express my happiness. The Inter-Religious Council here has already been preparing the minds of our people about what you were coming to do here. And I want to assure you today that the people are prepared to open up their hearts to confess to you what had been bordering them. We want to confess what has been keeping us in continuous fear of each other. There can never be reconciliation where there has never been some form of broken relationships. We are happy that you have come to mend that broken relationship among us. We are happy that the Chairman of the TRC Bishop J. C. Humper hails from this town that is hosting the first hearing in the district. We believe that what you have come to do will bring us together. Our people are prepared to confess the truth, forgive, and reconcile with one to another. I am not going to talk too much but just to say that we are all happy. My dear people of

Bonthe, let us show our happiness by just giving them a big, big applause. Great! Thank you very much and God bless you.

Adeker: Thank you very much for those words of encouragement and words of assurance. We recognise traditional authorities. We know that we deserve the blessings of the traditional leaders. In this regards I want to call on the Mayor of this place to also give us a statement or welcome address.

Mayor: Good morning everybody. TRC Commissioners, dignitaries, parliamentarians, the Inter Religious Council, the District Officer, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the Bonthe Town Community, I want to take this opportunity to heartily welcome all of you. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the financiers and donors of this Commission. I also thank the ruling government for the brave steps taken to enhance and ensure lasting peace in our war torn country. I also reassure the Commission of our total devotion to this course of permanent and lasting peace through this TRC. I want to appeal to the entire people of Bonthe district to come out with their grievances. The TRC is here to address these grievances. We pray that justice will be sought for the betterment of our nation. I once more thank you all and welcome you to this Island. Thank you all.

Adeker: Thank you very much the Mayor of this community. We know that with these assuring words from you and from the rest of the speakers that have come up before, our stay in Bonthe is going to be very, fruitful. Thank you very much once again. We also recognise the presence of the political parties and the contributions they have made so far. We also want to take statements from them. May I now call on the leader of SLPP Party in this district to give a statement at this occasion?

SLPP Leader: Madam Deputy Chairperson, the leader of the SLPP Party has welcomed the Commission to this district. He has promised us the cooperation of the SLPP as a party and he has called on his people to forgive and forget.

Adeker: Thank you very much Sir. We also call on the leader of the APC Party if he is here to make a brief statement at this occasion. The APC party leader is not here. Any other political party or a representative here? As a Commission we recognise all political parties. We have at least made provision for them to make statement. I understand that the representative of NACSA is here. We recognise the role NGOs- both local and international have played in the peace process and if the representative of NACSA is here let him speak on behalf of all the NGOs – anybody?

NACSA Representative: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Sorry for coming late. Good morning distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen. Today is a history making day in Bonthe district. Today we are starting a new journey that brings people together for development. Today, the nation will give you truth for genuine reconciliation. We must say the truth about violations and abuses of human rights that have taken place in this country during the eleven years of civil strife, destruction and displacement. During the conflict, thousands of people died as a result of summary executions, mutilations, and torture. Many more suffered from sexual abuses,

recruitment of children into fighting forces, and displacement. The challenge we now face include addressing violations that took place during the conflict and preventing such abuses from re-occurring. The TRC has been set up to deal with issues of impunity, responding to the needs of victims and preventing a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered. We in the sister Commission, NACSA (The National Commission for Social Action) was also established by an Act of Parliament as a successor institution to the National Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR). NACSA therefore is a social front with the core responsibility of taking the resettlement and reintegration processes forward. NACSA in supporting the overall reconstruction and rehabilitation services, is helping communities rebuild their lives and livelihood systems. NACSA has three programme windows- the community driven programme, the public works programme and the micro finance programme.

This morning, I am here representing NACSA and all the other key NGOs that are all helping Bonthe district. We have the World Vision, NCDDR, Sierra Leone Red Cross Society and other supporting partners. At this time, we pledge our firm support to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a sister Commission. I don't have much to say as we have other speakers to come. I thank you all gathered here this morning as we all help to heal the wounds that the eleven-year civil war has created in our society. As the last speaker rightly said we must not just reconcile but we must also forget. I thank you.

Adeker:

Thank you very much the representative of NACSA for that very brief speech on behalf of the NGO partners. The TRC was created for the purpose of national healing and reconciliation and we are here in continuation of the hearing process which has taken us round the country. At this point, I want to have the privilege of introducing the Commissioners that are here to conduct the public hearings. For the next three days we shall be listening to them and narrating our stories before them. For the purpose of convenience, the Commission is split into two teams Team 1 and Team 2. It does not have to do anything to do with superiority. It is just a matter of convenience. Right now as we are here, team 1 is in another place headed by the Chairman of the Commission who I understand is your son Bishop Joseph Humper.

Team 2 is here headed by the Deputy Chairperson of the Commission in the person of Justice Laura Marcus-Jones. Deputy Chair could you please rise for recognition? Another Commissioner that is here to see that the district hearing goes on well in this district is Commissioner Sylvanus Torto. We also have her one of our international commissioners Professor William Schabas. The three of them are here to conduct the district hearings. May I at this juncture invite the Deputy Chairperson of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Justice Mrs Laura Marcus-Jones to present her address to this gathering? The Deputy Chair.

**Commissioner
Marcus-Jones:**

All other protocols observed. Ladies and gentlemen, today the train has arrived at the famous Bonthe Island. The Truth and reconciliation Commission is at last here today in continuation of its public hearings which was first launched in Freetown early April 2003 by his Excellency the President Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah as part of the effort at

sustainable peace and development in Sierra Leone. Ladies and Gentlemen, you will recall that on 7th July 1999, the Lome Peace Agreement was signed between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) Sierra Leone to end the ten year war that had left the entire nation almost completely destroyed. The Lome Peace Agreement made provision for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission as one of the instruments that will help sustain and consolidate the negotiated peace and promote reconciliation. The Commission was ratified later by an Act of Parliament in February 2000. Thus the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established with the following mandate:

1. To create an impartial historical record of the human rights violations and of violations of international humanitarian law relating to the conflict from the beginning of the war in 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement on 7th July 1999.
2. To address impunity.
3. To respond to the needs of victims.
4. To prevent a repetition of the human right violations and abuses experienced by the people of Sierra Leone
5. To promote national healing and reconciliation as one of the strategies.

To achieve its mandate, the Commission has organised public hearings to listen and vividly capture the experiences of the people of Sierra Leone during the period of the war. Today it is your turn in Bonthe to be part of this effort at national healing and reconciliation. I hope you will take advantage of this opportunity and come forward and tell the Commission what happened to you or what you did so that there can be genuine healing and reconciliation. Ladies and gentlemen, may I use this forum to explain in unmistakable words that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is not a court. The Commission does not have judicial powers to try or sentence anybody nor handover anybody to the police. Whatever information we collect therefore is to help compile our report of what happened during the ten years of senseless fighting. Nobody should entertain any fears or be deceived by anyone that the testimony you give at the Commission will be given to the Special Court. That should convince you that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is purely to promote national healing and reconciliation. Permit me to say also that the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission does not include payment of compensation to victims as many people have been expecting. We do not even have a budget for that. The Commission, however will make very strong recommendations that will adequately address the needs of victims. Ladies and gentlemen, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be sitting here for three days and in Matru for the rest of the week during which you will have the opportunity to listen to your brothers and sisters, relating their bitter experiences during the decade old war. You will also have the opportunity to listen to your brothers and sisters openly confess their involvement in the human right violations during the war.

All these experiences should help us as Sierra Leoneans to say together never again. May I therefore call on all the people of Bonthe district especially perpetrators to seize this opportunity and come out and confess their involvement so that they can be fully integrated into the community. To the rest of Sierra Leoneans, I wish to say that the music has changed. So we also must change our

dancing steps. The war is over! We are talking of peace without which there cannot be any form of development. We must all join hands to make Sierra Leone a safe place for our children.

We want to see this hall filled up everyday. Once again I thank you and God bless you all.

Adekera:

Thank you very much for that interpretation. I hope the message from the Deputy Chairperson has gone down well with everybody. We believe everybody has heard us and everybody is going to cooperate with us. I will invite our National Commissioner, Commissioner Sylvanus Torto to just briefly introduce some of the supporting staff that are here with the Commissioners.

**Commissioner
Torto:**

Thank you very much Mr Adekera. District Officer, Mayor of Bonthe, Inter Religious Council, Commander of NIBATT here in Bonthe, the Chief Policw Officer, local authorities and all other protocols observed. My responsibility this morning is to briefly introduce to you the supporting staff that are accompanying the Commissioners in the exercise of their duties. I intend to be as brief as possible. Let me start with your own very people, your sons and daughters of Bonthe District. The Commission made it a responsibility to actually appoint indigenes of the district to do the work here in the district. Nobody should therefore be hesitant to meet them. I will start with the Statement Takers in Bonthe district. I start with the District Coordinator of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission - Bonthe District, in the person of Mr Oswald Hanciles. Mr Hanciles has been the standard bearer for the TRC in Bonthe. I have Alice Sandy the statement taker responsible for the Island. These were the people from whom you first heard the word TRC. We have Martin Scottman from Freetown. Scottman is the administrative head of the team. She is head of the Legal and Reconciliation Department of the Commission. Next to her is a public man, who is actually a very senior officer- Mr Daniel Adekera. Mr Daniel Adekera heads the Public Education and Sensitisation division of the TRC in Freetown.

We have also people who do technical. Mrs Bondu Mange, please.

There is the Transcriber, Mr Samura. The man seated over there will be taking the testimonies verbatim. Whatever you say here is taken down both in writing and on tape. We have a whole gamut of press people with us; both print and electronics. I want them to please stand up for them to be seen.

These are the people who are going to make us or make our presence known outside here. We are very thankful to them. We have also the sound technicians and video-graphers. As you see, whatever is being done here is going to be shown on television. We have still the cameramen and other supporting staff. These are the people that are going to be with us. Please forgive me if I omit anyone. I thank you very much.

Adekera:

Thank you very much Commissioner Sylvanus Torto for this brief introduction. With that, we are virtually coming to a close to this morning session. As soon as we finish up the ceremonies, we will go on a short break. But before we finally close this session, we want to invite Commissioner Professor Schabas to give us a vote of thanks. William

Schabas is from Canada and is one of the International Commissioners. He is an expert in Human Rights Law. Professor Schabas will give a vote of thanks and the Deputy Chair will brief us on how the next session is going to be conducted. Professor Schabas.

**Commissioner
Schabas:**

Thank you Daniel. Well, I am a national but not a national in Sierra Leone. I have been here since the work of the TRC began and I am beginning to feel that I belong in Sierra Leone. Thank you. I want to thank the people of Bonthe for welcoming us here. We are very grateful for the warm welcome. I want to thank particularly the Mayor, the District Officer, Religious Leaders and the members of civil society who are here from the Bonthe town and Bonthe District. I want to thank the musicians who welcomed us gracefully this morning as we were arriving. We thank the UNAMSIL Commander, and the police who are looking after security. We thank the interpreters, the Red Cross, and the Journalists. Our thanks go to the staff of the TRC who have already been mentioned by Commissioner Torto. I hope all of you will stay for this very important meeting that we will be having over the next 3 days here in Bonthe. Thank you.

**Commissioner
Marcus-Jones:**

Ladies and gentlemen, we are now going to have a short break. We are going to offer very light refreshment. After the refreshment we will reconvene here again at 10:50 when we will start our hearings. We have selected witnesses of all ages, men and women, people of all religions and backgrounds who are going to talk about the different kinds of wrong things that happened during the war in Sierra Leone. The Commission has encouraged witnesses to give testimonies on a voluntary basis and we want to express our appreciation to those who will do so in the next few days. However, the Commission has the right to use sub-poena in order to have someone come to the hearing and give a testimony. The Commission will only use this power as a last resort.

Our procedure is this. Everyday's hearing will begin with a prayer or with religious songs. We have already had prayers this morning. So we are not going to have anymore before we start the hearings. The witness is entitled to have a relative or a friend sitting next to him or her. The witness will also sit with a counsellor of the Commission. Every witness can speak in his or her own language. The Commission will provide an interpreter. Now this is very important! The public is asked to respect all witnesses. Everyone in the public has to remain silent during the testimonies. Those who have mobile phones are asked to turn them off now. No one in the public is allowed to speak, to shout, to laugh, to boo, or to clap. Any person who does so might be ordered out of the hall. Media persons who are in the hall are requested to respect the dignity of every witness. No member of the public is allowed to take any pictures. Only accredited journalists can do so. If a witness names a person, who has allegedly committed a violation or abuse, the Commission will do everything possible to invite this person to come and give his own view of the fact. At no time will a victim be confronted with the alleged perpetrator during the hearing. If both the victim and the perpetrator want to meet with each other, the Commission will create a separate occasion for them to do so after the hearings.

The Commission will have public hearings here today and on Tuesday. On Wednesday we are hoping to have closed hearings for women who have been sexually assaulted and for children. We will not disclose the venue for the closed hearings on Wednesday. At the end of our sittings here, we will have a closing ceremony just as we had an opening ceremony this morning. As I told you, we have already selected the people that we are going to hear this morning and on the other days. We still however, have a statement taker here. If there are people who wish to make statements, they can do so while we are here. The statement taker will take your statement. Thank you. We will now start today's hearings, Leader of Evidence, are your witnesses ready?

Leader of Evidence: Yes chairperson, the witnesses are all here.

Commissioner

Marcus- Jones: Could we have the first witness please?

Commissioner Sooka : Chairperson our First witness for today is Mr. Alpha Joe Bai

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Could the witness give his name in full?

Joe Bai: I am called Alpha Joe Bai

Jones: Are you a Muslim?

Joe Bai: Yes, I am a Muslim.

(The oath was administered)

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Alpha Joe Bai, I understand from your summary that you have experiences which would be very important to the TRC. We want you to as clearly as possible share those experiences with us. You have nothing to be afraid of. We are not the Special Court. And the Special Court doesn't require any information from us. The Special Court has said it loud and clear. So please feel free to share your experiences.

Joe Bai: At one time, we were at our farm when the rebels came to Nyadehun. They passed through Nyadehun and went to Foya. On their return from Foya they set our houses ablaze. Twenty house were burnt down. After that we went to Dukor, a camp. While we were at Dukor, the Kamajors came to Talia. While I was at Talia, I had that my son was killed at Ngulama Tonge. That was the ordeals I went through.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: I beg you Pardon?

Joe Bai: That was the end. While we were at Talia, I heard that one of my children was killed at Ngulama Tonge. From Talia, I went to Bo. That's the end.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: I am looking at your statement. What information did get in Bo?

Joe Bai: When I was also in Bo, it was confirmed that they had killed my child at Ngulama Tonge.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Yes, from there you also got certain information about the CDF didn't you? Its here in the statement.

Joe Bai: Yes, I heard that.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Yes, and what did you do about that?

Joe Bai: I was told that he was killed by one of his friends but I don't know who the friend was.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Now, you've told us about your son and we're very sorry about his death. We will ask you questions about that later. I'm asking you questions about yourself for now. What did you do when you learnt about the headquarters of the CDF.

Joe Bai: When I heard about the CDF headquarters I did not do anything. I only got the message.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Didn't you join the CDF?

Joe Bai: Yes, I became a Kamajor myself.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones Now, why did you join?

Joe Bai: I only became a Kamajor for self-defence.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Self-defence? Defending yourself only?

Joe Bai: I joined the CDF for self-defence only. Just for myself as an individual

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Do you want to tell me that you went to join a group just to defend yourself? Could not you have defended yourself without joining a group?

Joe Bai: I would have been able to defend myself even if I had not joined the Kamajor.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Well, why did you join? You were in a community. Were you only going to defend yourself?

Joe Bai: Well, it was for myself and the community were I was living.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Yes, and you joined the Kamajor to defend yourself and your community. That is not a bad thing. You are reluctant now to tell us about that.

Joe Bai: It was not actually difficult for me to answer that question. I only forgot some points.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Well, nobody is quarrelling with any group that wanted to defend communities. Where were you based?

Joe Bai: I was at Nyandewu at that time.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Did you go to the general base for the CDF?

Joe Bai: Well, it was not possible for everybody to just go there at will. You have to be appointed and asked to go there.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Were you ever appointed to go to the base?

Joe Bai: No.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Have ever heard of a place called Base Zero?

Joe Bai: Yes, I heard the name of that base.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Did you not at anytime go to Base Zero.

Joe Bai: I used to go to the town where Base zero was located.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Yes, what was Base Zero really, what did they do there?

Joe Bai: It was a council and only members were aware of that council

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: What was the council doing?

Joe Bai: They were doing arrangements.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: They were doing what?

Joe Bai: Arrangements

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Arrangements?

Joe Bai: Yes.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: What were the arrangements about? Where they arranging religion, administration, education - what were they arranging?

Joe Bai: It was in connection with the war, to bring the war to an end.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Arrangements to bring the war to an end?

Joe Bai Joe Bai: Yes.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Did instructions filtered to you from Base Zero?

Joe Bai: Well, I did not go as far as the council. Because I was not appointment I could not go to the council.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: But then the council gave instructions to you?

Joe Bai: No.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: You were a member, so what was the use of making arrangements to end the war if they did not give instructions to somebody like you to complete the war.

Joe Bai: It was only the leaders who were decisions makers.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: They didn't make the decisions and carry out the decisions themselves. They made the decisions for people to carry out?

Joe Bai: I did not get any instructions to carry out any decision that were taken

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Are you telling us that you were you just a useless Kamajor?

Joe Bai: Yes.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner

Torto: Alpha Joe bai, thank you very much. I will start with a simple question which is a continuation of Commissioner Marcus- Jones question. You were a Kamajor receiving logistics and being paid. You were given everything that Kamajors were receiving in terms of incentives.

Joe Bai: No.

Commissioner Torto Were you not receiving supplies?

Joe Bai: No.

Commissioner Torto: What then was your responsibility as a Kamajor?

Joe Bai: I was an ordinary Kamajor. I did not got to war front.

Commissioner Torto : Okay, I will not dwell on that. I have haerd of people who were Kamajors just to terrorize civilians. They avoided the enemy. Now, let me come to your own circumstance. It was very pathetic story that you son was killed at Guramaturkia. I know Ngorama Tunkia very well. It is in the Eastern province of

this country. What was your son coming all the way from Mattru Jong doing at Ngorama?

Joe Bai: They went to the war front.. They went to fight.

Commissioner Torto : You don't know the person who killed your son.

Joe Bai: They sometimes killed one another for properties.

Commissioner Torto: Looted properties?

Joe Bai: Yes, they used to kill their companions for looted properties.

Commissioner Torto: In your testimony you seem to have suffered in the hands of both the RUF and the CDF. Which one of those groups actually aggrieved and terrorized you most?

Joe Bai: I was more aggrieved with the Kamajor.

Commissioner Torto: But you were one of them? Why were you actually with a group that was causing you so much havoc?. You continued to take orders from them and yet they were causing you so much grief? Sorry, I have no more questions for this witness I thank you very much.

Commissioner

Marcus- Jones: Before we go on I just want to remind you that you had been told at the very beginning that here has to be no laughing. This is a solemn occasion. People come here and tell us of how their children, their parents or their friends were killed. Those are no laughing matters. So could we please listen with the seriousness the occasion demands.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Leader of evidence, have you questions?

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Chairperson. Mr. Alpha Joe Bai, I'm sorry that you lost your son under such circumstances. How old was your son when he was killed?

Joe Bai: I cannot tell his age but he was a full grown adult.He had a child.

Commissioner Sooka: What was his name please?

Joe Bai: His native name was Aiah Musa. He was also called Patrick
Joebai

Commissioner Sooka Did you and your son joined the Kamajors together or was he already a kamjor when you became a Kamajor?

Joe Bai: He was the first to join the Kamajor group.

Commissioner Sooka: Do. you remember the year in which he joined the Kamajor?

Joe Bai: I cannot remember the year

Commissioner Sooka: Do you remember the government that was in power at the time? Was it the government of the NPRC or Tejan Kabbah?

Joe Bai: It was at the time of Strasser.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you join the Kamajor after the death of your son or before?

Joe Bai: Before my son was killed.

Commissioner Sooka: When your son joined the Kamajor did he seek your advice?

Joe Bai: He did not. We were not living together at that time.

Commissioner Sooka: When you joined the Kamajors, were there any explanation, any rules on how to behave toward civilians?

Joe Bai: Yes, we had rules for the protection of civilian. We were not to harm civilians.

Commissioner Sooka: And what would happen if someone harmed civilians?

Joe Bai: I don't know. Only few people harmed civilians.

Commissioner Sooka: You said that you joined the Kamajors to defend yourself and your community. I think that was the reason why a lot of people joined the Kamajors?

Joe Bai: Yes

Commissioner Sooka: But the Commission had testimonies on Bonthe Island, and also this morning of civilians who were killed, harassed and even amputated by the Kamajors. What went wrong? Why didn't they go on protecting civilians?

Joe Bai: In most cases I was not there. I cannot tell.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you say house was burnt by the RUF rebels in 1994?

Joe Bai: Yes, that is right.

Commissioner Sooka: And you also said that you went to Bo. Did you also say that you lived in a town near Base Zero.

Joe Bai: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Which town is that?

Joe Bai: Nyandehun.

Commissioner Sooka: Nyandehun, your own village was the village were Base Zero was?

Joe Bai: It was my own village, but is was not the location of Base Zero.

Commissioner Sooka: But you said before that you went to live in the town next to Base Zero,so which town was it.

Joe Bai: It was Nyandehun, which was very closed to Base Zero.

Joe Bai: Base Zero was in Talia not in Nyadehun.

Commissioner Sooka: And you said that there was a council that took place in Base Zero, can you tell us who the members were?

Joe Bai: I cannot tell you any thing about the council.

Commissioner Sooka: But in that base were there people?

Joe Bai: There were people there.

Commissioner Commissioner Sooka: And all those people were Kamajors?

Joe Bai: Almost all of them were Kamajors.

Commissioner Sooka: So, what were they doing there? Were they receiving training or was it just like a village?

Joe Bai: They were making lots of arrangement towards bringing the war to an end.

Commissioner Sooka: How do you know that?

Joe Bai: Well, they used to talk about it.

Commissioner Sooka: Okay, what did they say about the arrangements?

Joe Bai: They said they were going to fight the rebels to bring the war to an end so that we can have peace in the country.

Commissioner Sooka: Is that what happened?

Joe Bai: Yes.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you contribute to that?

Joe Bai: I did not contribute because they did not consult me and I was not a party

Commissioner Sooka: I don't understand that?

Joe Bai: Pardon?

Commissioner Sooka: Can you repeat what you said?

Joe Bai: I did not contribute any because I was not a party to the council.

Commissioner Sooka: Where you even involved in any chasing of the rebels?

Joe Bai: In the first instance, we were hiding from the rebels.

Commissioner Sooka: You were hiding from the rebels?

Joe Bai: In the first instance I was hiding from the rebels.

Commissioner Sooka: Yes, but when you were a Kamajor or you were fighting them did you hide from the rebels?

Joe Bai: No, when I became a Kamajor I was no longer hiding from rebels.

Commissioner Sooka: So what were you doing then?

Joe Bai: Well, if they confronted me fought.

Commissioner Sooka: Excuse me I didn't understand/

Joe Bai: Pardon?

Commissioner Sooka: Can you repeat that?

Joe Bai: If the rebels confronted me when I became a Kamajor we went and fought them. I have to defend myself.

Commissioner Sooka: In how many fights were you involved?

Joe Bai: When I became a Kamajor they did not come to me any longer.

Commissioner Sooka: You were never involved in any fight?

Joe Bai: I did not go to any war front to confront the rebels.

Commissioner Sooka: Who was your commander?

Joe Bai: We were very many when we joined the Kamajor so I cannot remember the name of our commander at that time. We were very many.

Commissioner Sooka: From who did you take instructions? Who was your direct superior?

Joe Bai: Kondowai.

Commissioner Sooka: Kondowai. And what was the role of Kondowai in the Kamajor movement?

Joe Bai: He was only the chief celebrant in the Kamajor society.

Commissioner Sooka: Was he a member of this council you talked about earlier?

Joe Bai: Yes, he was a member.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you ever meet him?

Joe Bai: I did not ever go to that council.

Commissioner Sooka: No, that's not my question. Did you ever meet Kondowai?

Joe Bai: Yes, I saw Kondowai

Commissioner Sooka: What did he do at the time that you saw him? Or what did he say?

Joe Bai: When I came across him, he did not tell me anything about their council. I only came across him as a member of the Kamajor society.

Commissioner Sooka: So, what did he say apart from saying something about the council in general.

Joe Bai: He was so superior that he hardly talked to ordinary members. So I did not have any conversation with him.

Commissioner Sooka: Do you think that what happened to you happened to most of the Kamajors- that after the initiation they were sent home and stayed there never involving in any fight?

Joe Bai: Well, that was what was happening to most of the Kamajors.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much I have no other question.

Joe Bai: Have you any questions for the commission?

Joe Bai: I have no question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any recommendation?

Joe Bai: Yes, I have some recommendations

Commissioner Marcus-Jones : Yes, what are they?

Joe Bai: Now that most of our homes have been destroyed, and all of our properties looted, how is the Commission going to assist us?

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: The Commission can do nothing. We have no resources. I have said that over and over again. We have no money. The Commission can make recommendations to the Government to about people's concerns.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Any other recommendation?

Joe Bai: We only want the Commission to recommend to the Government that some consideration be given to our welfare.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : What do you mean by that?

Joe Bai: I have about 15 children. I want them to grow up as responsible citizens. How am I going to cater for their education and other facilities?

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. You may step down now.

Commissioner Sooka: Madam Chairperson, our next witness for today is Mr. Momoh Sandi.

WITNESS NO.: 2

WITNESS NAME: Momoh Sandi

The Oath is administered.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones : Now, Momoh Sandy, the conflict lasted for long time. As a matter of fact it lasted for over ten years. And so many things happened to people in this country. If we therefore want every detail about what happened we may never come to the end. We would therefore like you to tell us the most important things that happened to you, or to people very close to you.

Sandi: I am very happy to stand before this Commission today to say the truth. In 1991 war broke out in this country. The war at the time did not reach here, but stopped at Talia. All of us escaped from the towns and went to the bushes. While in the bush we were told that soldiers have come to the town. We were told to leave the bushes and go back to the towns. We went back to our towns. We had no food with us. I have a son in Bo called Francis. He sent a message to me to go to Bo for food. I travelled to Bo on a bicycle. On my way to Bo, I met some soldiers at Senbehum Junction. The soldiers captured me and beat me up because I didn't have an identity card. They asked me to pay twenty thousand Leones. I asked them: "if I pay the twenty thousand leones would you provide the identity card for me. When I asked them that question they threw me into the guardroom. They wanted to take away my bicycle from me. A corporal talked to them to leave my bicycle. They took away five thousand leones form me. They let me continue my journey.

So that was one of my experiences during this war. After that, in 1995, the real rebels came into our area. They came and attacked here. They left here and went to Talia Yobeko on the April 1. They looted properties. The Paramount Chief was flogged and striped naked. The rebels flogged the town chief and laid him under the sun. some of us went into the bush and hid there. They went to my village- Kotimao and destroyed it. That same day the rebels reached

Nyandehum Yobeko and burnt down three houses. They reached Foya–Yobeko and burnt five houses there. I told some people to follow me back to the town to find out whether the rebels had left or were still staying. When we were in the town that evening the rebels came, shooting in the air. We went into hiding around the town.

A rebel that was very prominent in those attacks was called Baba Ngoma. Later we came to know that his real name was Hassan. The other one was called Isaac. He was an easterner. The other one was called Makanaki. His native name was Lansana Wright. He now lives in Boidu. The rebels told us that if we didn't leave the bushes and come into the town they would kill all of us. So, we came back to the town. After that they went to Talia. I had a child called Matu. She was staying with my elder sister in another village. At one time the rebels went to that village and took away Matu. She was not yet a grown-up. She was never seen again. One day the girl's mother went to the rebels to ask for her child. The rebels attempted to kill her. We heard that the soldiers have taken over this town from the rebels. After burning several villages and killing scores of people the rebels went away.

After that, the Kamajors came to Talia. When the Kamajors came we embraced them as our own people. We were forced to feed them.

At some point they began to threaten us. They would do all sort of humiliating things to us. One day the Kamajors went and attacked Anhu. Let me talk a little about what brought the attack by the Kamajors. When the Kamajors went to do initiations at Talia they asked the chieftom people for some contribution. They said one person should contribute five thousand Leones. The people that were heading the initiation ate all the money. We made complaints to the Paramount Chief against these people. And the chief decided to call a meeting. Kondowai was invited to that meeting. The Chief who was not well, was represented by Demba Joebai. The Chief Kamajor by then was Momoh Kalia. On the day of the meeting the Kamajors headed by Kondowa, mobilized and attacked the town. The Kamajors were shooting and cussing. The meeting was not allowed to take place. Some people drowned as they tried to escape.

Kamajors were undergoing training at Tialia. They took away people's chickens. I had twelve chickens. They took all away. My sister's child was amputated. The child is here right now. Those were some of the things I experienced during this war.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you for telling us about all those important incidents. Did you say the child whose foot was amputated is?

Sandi: She is in town.

Commissioner Sooka: She is not in the hall but she is in town.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Mr. Sandi. You said on your way to Bo to collect food from your son you were arrested by soldiers at a check point for failing to produce an identify card. How did you finally escape from their arrest?

Sandi: I paid five thousand Leones and they left me.

Commissioner Torto: What happened to your bicycle.

Sandi: They gave it back to me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Leader of evidence- any questions?

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Chairperson. I wanted some explanation about the abduction of your daughter because I did not quite get the story. Can you tell us again.

Sandi: The child was staying with my sister when the rebels captured her. She was staying with a rebel called Jonathan. We tried to get the child back but they didn't give her to us. After the war I heard that she was in Makeni. So I went there. I have brought her back..

Commissioner C Sooka: Can you tell us how old she was at that time.

Sandi: About fifteen years.

Commissioner Sooka: And she was not the only girl that was abducted at that time.

Sandi: No.

Commissioner Sooka: So what happened to the others, did they all come back?

Sandi: Another girl was carried away. She has been brought back..

Commissioner Sooka: Some people who have testified before the Commission have said that they became Kamajors because they were first victims of the rebels. You were a victim of the rebels, so why did you decide not to become a Kamajor?

Sandi: I did not want to join.

Commissioner Sooka: Excuse me, I was?

Sandi: I was not interested.

Commissioner Sooka: Why not?

Sandi: I was not interested.

Commissioner: But people joined the Kamajor to protect their communitiws and their families. So was that not something that you had wanted to do?

Sandi: I will talk a bit about that. When the Kamajors first came to us we embraced them. Later they turned against us. That was why I decided not to be part of them.

Commissioner Sooka: Why did they turn against you and why did they attack your village as you said?

Sandi: They know the answer. I don't know the answer.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Have you any questions you may want to ask the Commission.

Sandi: Yes.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: What is your question.

Sandi: What is the Commission going to do for us after all the the sufferings we've undergone?

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: What the Commission is going to do is to make a record of all your sufferings. We are analyzing the various abuses and violations according. And it will be part of history. People will come to realize that the ten years conflict caused a lot of suffering to people. And people will take precautions to avoid a repeat of what happened. They will also be able to tell from our report what might have cause the war so that those things can be avoided and the war never happened again. And we would be able to have development in the country lasting peace. And other question.

Sandi: No other question

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Any recommendation?

Sandi: Yes

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Carry on.

Sandi: I am making an appeal to the Commission to assist us in our area to develop in the areas of education, medicine, and food.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: We will include your recommendation in our report. We thank you for coming. You can step down.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence -I thing we can break for this morning's session. We will have witness Mustapha Musa when we resume. Is he around ?

Commissioner Commissioner Sooka Yes, chair person he is present.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: I welcome you all again to this afternoon session.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Could we have Mustapha Musa

WITNESS NO.: 3

WITNESS NAME: Mustapha Musa

The oath is administered

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Mustapha, you have the benefit of experience of listening to the other witness this morning. So you should be quite confident now,. Go ahead and tell us your testimony.

Musa: I want to thank the Commissioner very much for giving me the privilege to sit down here and narrate to my story. I was not living in Jong Chiefdom when the war started. I was in the Gbangbatok chiefdom Mokanji. When they attacked Mokanji the very first time I was not in the town. We were in the bush making gari. By then I was learning Arabic. I managed to get to my actual place of birth. Father gave me news about my brother who has the bread winner of the family at the time. At one time while I was in my village, one member of the Kamajors came. He was called Sondo. He asked for my brother. Father told him that my brother had gone out. He told my father to sit on the floor. Father was sick at the time. My father sat on the ground. He threatened to kill him if my brother's whereabouts were not disclosed. My brother entered the house. He told my brother that they should go together to a place called to Bole. Bole is just a resting place during the dry season. We later that the Kamajor cut off his ear at Bole. My brother was tied, put on a boat in the Sewa river. They dropped my brother in the Sewa river. He died there.

After that my father escaped and managed get to Talia. At that time one Moalim Sesay and Kondowa were at Talia. They presided over the cases. They tried to preside over my brother's case. After they had presided over that case it discovered that the Kamajor had wronged my brother. But actually what led to the killing of my brother? I was told later that the deceased and the Kamajor were at one time in a town when the rebels attacked. They took my brother and other people as carriers. The carriers came back later. It was after this that this Sondo, when he became a Kamajor accused my brother of collaborating with the rebels. He threatened to kill my brother. If I could remember well I think it was in 1997 that my brother was killed. When it was decided that he had wronged my brother the Kamajor was to be killed. The Kamajor pleaded with my father that he should talk to Kondowa to spare his life. My father refused. He said: "you too must be killed. That is the only thing that will give me consolation. It was decided that he too was to be killed. Kondowai and Moalim Sesay later said that my brother and the Kamajor were rivals over a girlfriend. They therefore decided to set him free. One of my step-mothers was pregnant when she was killed by the rebels. In another village close to ours village called Waima the rebels chased one of my elder sisters who was a nursing mother. The baby fell from her back and they killed that it. They also killed my father's brother. When we started hearing that TRC was coming to take statements from people I left here and went to my village to confer with my parents. All of them told me to come and give you this information.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you Musa. We thank you parents for letting you come to give your testimony. Now what was the name of you brother killed?

Mustapha: He is called Moiwo Musa.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you know anything about his girlfriend?

Mustapha: At that time I was not at home.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What was the name of the Kamajor who killed him?

Mustapha: He is called Sombo Juana.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Sombo Juana? Were you there when your brother was was killed?

Mustapha: I was not there at that time.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now, who reported the matter to Kondowai?

Mustapha: My father- Mr. Musa Moiwo.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And who was the other person who sat on the matter?

Mustapha: Well, according to information from my father, the people who sat on the matter were Kondowai and Moalem Sesay.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know what has happened to Kondowai?

Mustapha: Now?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes.

Mustapha: Well, I heard rumors that he has been arrested.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And what about Moalem Sesay?

Mustapha: No, I have not heard anything about Moalem Sesay.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What did they actually say to your father after they sat on the matter?

Mustapha: Well, I was not there at that time but according to reports from my father, when they sat on the matter they decided that they were going to kill the Kamajor. But they did not go along with that decision. They said my brother and the Kamajor were rivals over a girlfriend and therefore the Kamajor was right to kill my brother.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did your father make any effort to find out about this girlfriend?

Mustapha: I did not ask him about that.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was your brother's body recovered?

Mustapha: He was tied and thrown into the river Sewa so we did not see the corpse at all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you any idea of the definite place where Juana is now?

Mustapha: I don't know the town but my parents told me where he is leaving.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is it anywhere near here?

Mustapha: No. It is not close to here. I can only tell you the name of the town.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And what is the name of the town?

Mustapha: The town where he is at the moment is called Kamboye. It's in Bum chiefdom, Madina, Shegbureh. That is in Bonthe district.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of evidence?

Commissioner Sooka: Chairperson, I just want to ask the witness about the other people in his family that were killed by rebels. He mentioned a step-mother, a sister's child, and an uncle. Where they all killed when the rebels attacked your village?

Mustapha: It was not at the same time.

Commissioner Sooka: I want to know if all the people were killed during this same attack by the same rebels.

Mustapha: No. They were killed on two different occasions.

Commissioner Sooka: So. Was it later or earlier?

Mustapha: Well, when the war started initially people did not leave for Bonthe. They were almost preparing to get away from the war to go to other places. It was during that period that my sister lost her child.

Commissioner Sooka: Can you give us the names of the other members of your family that were caught, killed and that you mentioned? First of all you mentioned that your step-mother was shot by one of the rebels.

Mustapha: She was called Lucia Musa. I made some small mistake if you can permit me to say something more. The rebels also burnt our houses and not only our own premises but all other towns within our town, our village. I forgot to tell you that one.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you for this clarification. You also said that your father's brother was killed, can we have his name as well?

Mustapha: He was called Soriba Bangura.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you say your sister's child was killed too? D you have the name?

Mustapha: Well, I forgot to ask the name of the child. And I cannot tell whether it was a boy or girl.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you. Was any of your sisters abducted?

Mustapha: They abducted one of my sisters, yes.

Commissioner Sooka: And did she come back?

Mustapha: She is back. She is now a married woman.

Commissioner Sooka: A Kamajor killed your brother. Rebels killed the other people. Do you know the rebel group that did those killings?

Mustapha: I was not there. I cannot tell the group of rebels that did the killings.

Commissioner Sooka: So you don't know if it was the RUF or AFRC?

Mustapha: I don't know. I was not there and I did not ask.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much. No more question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Mustapha, did you say you are a school boy?

Mustapha: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And in what form are you?

Mustapha: I am in JSS 1.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I believe you should be able to understand what I am going to tell you now. You know that according to the Lome Peace Agreement, of 7th July 1999, people like Juana have been granted amnesty. The Special Court, which is trying leaders of the warring groups, will not bother with a person like Juana. We are a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We do not punish. That brings me to my question. If Juana were to turn up would your father and yourself be ready to reconcile with him?

Mustapha: You mean Juana the Kamajor? Well if Juana appears now before me I would shake hands with him. He did not kill me. He killed my brother. I don't know what my brother had in mind for him. But if he comes here now, I will personally reconcile with him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The chances are slim that we would be able to get in touch with him. We'll see what we can do. Do you have any questions to ask the Commission?

Mustapha: I don't have any other question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any recommendation?

Mustapha: Yes, I have a recommendation.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Go ahead.

Mustapha: Our village used to have a school. During the war the school collapsed. I am appealing to Government to rehabilitate our school. Secondly, our village was totally burnt down by the rebels. I am appealing for assistance in rehabilitating our village. Those are the only two appeals I am making to Government.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We've made a note of your recommendations. Now, I am not quite sure we have the correct spelling of your village. Can you spell it for us?

Mustapha: Batahoi

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: One word?

Interpreter: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. You may step down.

Martein: Chairperson, our final witness for this afternoon is Mr. Joseph Yankuba

Yankuba: My name is Joseph Yankuba

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Muslim or a Christian?

Yankuba: I am a Muslim.

WITNESS NO.: 4

WITNESS NAME: Joseph Yankuba

(The oath was administered).

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Joseph, we thank you for coming. We would now like to hear your testimony. But please we want you to give us just the very important things that happened to you or to people very close to you. We do not want to hear about everything that happened during the war. Carry on.

Yankuba: I greet you and I want to say thanks for giving me this opportunity to come before you. One day when we were in Sogbeni, people came and told us that the war had reached Sierra Rutile. Our people came from Rutile on foot to Tiihun. They said all operations had ceased at Rutile, and everybody had run away. My brother told me that we should go into the bush and build a hut there to live. So

we made the hut. Then we heard that the rebels had captured Mattru. They abducted some of our relatives who were in Mattru. One of our children escaped from the rebels and went to us in Tiihun. He followed us in the camp. He said he had a message that the rebels were going to be in Tiihun on Friday without fail. We did not take it seriously at first but he insisted that it was something very serious. That same Friday the rebels were in Tiihun. When they went there, they captured the town chief and a lot of other people and burnt down few houses. Two people were killed that same day. They also captured some people from there and carried them towards Senjehun. The rebels crossed over to Boleh and slept there. They left the people to return to their villages. The rebels told the people that they should not allow soldiers by any means to come and stay in Tiihun. The rebels threatened that if that happened they will burn the village. That message was given to the town chief for his subjects. The chief came and relayed the message but by then many people had gone into the bushes to hide. After that we saw some soldiers come to Tiihun. They were sent by Maada Bio. , The rebels started attacking the town on a frequent basis as soon as the soldiers arrived there. The first attack was during daytime; and it was a serious one. Early the following morning the town was attacked again. After a day, the rebels again attacked the town for the third time. We were now seeing scores of soldiers coming into the town telling us that they have been sent by Maada Bio. They were approximately about five hundred of them. The rebels seemed to have realized that that was the number of soldiers in that town. The time the rebels went to take over the town, they went in their thousands. There were about two thousand, five hundred rebels. They fought over three hours until the soldiers were repelled. All the people in the town were gathered at the Court Barray. That day they killed over five hundred people. I was called by one of the rebels. I was carrying one of my children. The rebel told me to give the child to my wife. We had to leave the child behind us. I walked two steps then he told me to come and meet him. He said he was not going to kill me. He took me from the Barray to the town. When we went to the town chief's house, they lined me up together with the ones that they were going to be killed. Two people in front of me were killed. Then they asked us to bring the rebels that had been wounded during the attack to Mattru for treatment. Then they took us right round the town and told us that they were going to burn down the whole town. And indeed they burnt down the whole town. People were being killed in groups of ten, twenty, thirty or forty. One of the rebels pleaded for the few of us that were left because they needed some people to carry luggage. We left for Mattru. When we arrived they told us that they were going to kill all of us the following day. The following day, two airoplanes came in the vicinity. We scattered, hid and went back to our village. We stayed in hiding. The rebels went from village to village burning houses. We were in the bush in hiding, when I heard that the child that we left behind was in Bo. The night that we were moved to Mattru, soldiers entered the town. They met the town chief and greeted him. They asked the chief whether the rebels had gone back. He said yes. Then they told the chief that they were going to carry him along. The chief said he was unable to go because the rebels had looted all his property and had killed his people. He said he was going to stay in his village and die there. They took about eight children and seven wounded people and carried them to Bo. They went and gave my son to one Themne woman and up till now I haven't got my child back. While in the bush we heard that soldiers had captured the town of Mattru. The soldiers went into the bush and told us to leave the bush and go to Mattru. I refused to go. I remained in the bush while some people packed their things and went to Baoya. There was an attack at that time in about thirty people were killed. We went into the bush again. The Kamajors came. We heard about them from the end of Talia. We went and met the Kamajors and they brought us to Tiihun. This is the testimony I have to give.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you Joseph. We would ask you some questions. Were you captured by the rebels?

Yankuba: They captured me after the battle had taken place and many people had been killed. I was captured to carry their luggage over to Mattru.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Now, how long were you with the rebels?

Yankuba: I stayed with them for one night. When I went back they told me that they had killed nine of my relatives.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: But you said in your statement that you stayed with the rebels for three weeks.

Yankuba: When the rebels left me I was in hiding for three weeks.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Where did you hide?

Yankuba: At Gelehun.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Now, What were the things they gave you to carry?

Yankuba: They gave me a tape to carry.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: But didn't they mean to recruit you? Did they not lose a number of men and therefore wanted new recruits?

Yankuba: No. I wouldn't have joined in fact.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Where did you leave the tape recorder?

Yankuba: I brought it to Mattru.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Whereabout in Mattru. Was it a house, where in Mattru?

Yankuba: We left the rebels at the river-side and they crossed over to go back to Sierra Rutile.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now how many members of your family did they kill?

Yankuba: They killed eight of my relatives and one of my friends. They killed my mother, my brother's wife and child, my aunt, my uncle and his wife and their child, and my friend called Sylvester. Those were the people I lost.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Did you see the corpses?

Yankuba: I saw my mother's corpse and my aunt's too. I also saw the corpses of my sister, her child and my friend.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Were you able to burry your mother?

Yankuba: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why ?

Yankuba: They threatened that anybody who went around to collect any of the corpses will be killed.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: What did they do with the corpses?

Yankuba: They didn't do anything with them. They were just lying there. Every morning, they came and watched the corpses and went back. The corpses were eventually dried by the sun. When it rained, the corpses rot.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: And after the rain what happened to the corpses?

Yankuba: They all got rotten and the flesh fell off. When the soldiers went to Mattru, we went and gathered the bones and buried them.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Where did they bury the bones?

Yankuba: We buried them at our town cemetery in Tiihun. We first gathered all the bones at the Barray.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In which town is the cemetery?

Yankuba: Tiihun. The cemetery is at Tiihun.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And how far is Tiihun from here?

Yankuba: If you use the motor road from here to Tiihun it is eight miles.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Now, if one were to go to the cemetery in Tiihun would one see any particular sign or mark to be able to identify the grave of all those people?

Yankuba: Yes, we would be able to identify the place where they buried those bones.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: How many people would you say were buried in that particular spot?

Yankuba: I cannot tell the figure.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thirty, below thirty, above thirty?

Yankuba: The bones were carried in wheelbarrows I cannot really show a particular figure.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you Commissioners, Leader of Evidence?

Martein: I would like to ask this witness how the people were killed- were they shot?

Yankuba: They were killed by guns.

Martein: I think that we had another witness today who testified about this massacre. Mr. Ansumana Sandi. I think he said that the Court Barray was burnt down. Is that correct?

Yankuba: That is the same place.

Martein: I think he said that the Court Barrie had been burnt down. Is that correct?

Yankuba: When they killed the people, they spilled petrol and lit fire on them. They were burnt. The Court Barray was burnt down too.

Martein: So it was burnt when the people were already dead?

Yankuba: Yes. The Barrie was burnt down and fell on the people, and all of them were burnt to ashes.

Martein: Now Joseph Yankuba, did you say that you had one child who was abducted?

Yankuba: Yes, one of my children was abducted.

Martein: And this child never came back.

Yankuba: He has not come yet. I hear about him but he has not returned yet.

Martein: Are you in touch with any NGO or with the Ministry of Social Welfare to trace this child?

Yankuba: I don't know about NGOs and the ministry.

Martein: What was the name of this child and how old was it?

Yankuba: He was five years by then.

Martein: What was the name?

Yankuba: The child's biological name was Maada but when they abducted the child they gave him the name Amara.

Martein: Was there any particular reason for the rebels to kill so many people in your village?

Yankuba: In the first place they said Maada Bio was in power and the place was his home.

Martein: He is from your village?

Yankuba: Yes.

Martein: Now, in your statement you said that those rebels were RUF. Do you know any of them?

Yankuba: I know two of them.

Martein: Do you know their names?

Yankuba: Yes.

Martein: Can you give them to us?

Yankuba: The first one was called Brima Fabasalat.

Martein: Brima and...

Yankuba: Fabasalat.

Martein: And the second one.

Yankuba: Momodu Gbatalovai.

Martein: Can you repeat.

Yankuba: Momodu Gbatalovai. I don't know there whereabouts.

Leader of Evidence: In your written statement you say they are in Freetown now.

Yankuba: That was what I heard at that time. But right now I cannot locate them.

Leader of Evidence: And were those two the commanders of those rebels who attacked your village.

Yankuba: I want to know whether you are asking if they were commanders of the rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Were they the commanders of this attack.

Yankuba: I can't tell. I just use to see all of them in combats

Leader of Evidence: Yes, but how did you know them? You knew them before the attack? How did you know their names?

Yankuba: Because they were with us fighting and they used to call their names.

Leader of Evidence: I have one more question Mr Yankuba. Some people who would have survived this kind of an attack would have decided to join the Kamajors in order to defend their community. Did you join the Kamajors?

Yankuba: No, I didn't join.

Martein: Why not?

Yankuba: By then they had killed all my relatives so I just decided to stay away from everything.

Martein: I'm really sorry about the loss of all the members of your family. Thank you very much.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Joseph, had your abducted son another name apart from Maada and Amara. Is that the same person as Augustine?

Yankuba: No, Augustine is a different person.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Who was Augustine?

Yankuba: The Augustine you are talking about?

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Yes.

Yankuba: That Augustine was the person who left Mattru and took the message to Tiihun that the rebels were going to the town that day.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: I see, thank you. Now, have you questions for the TRC?

Yankuba: Yes.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Carry on.

Yankuba: I am appealing to the Commission to help us because the rebels burnt down our village. The houses we are now putting up are covered with thatch and we often experience fire accidents.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Well, we'll put that in our recommendation. That is not really a question but a recommendation for better housing facilities in your village. I was asking whether you had any questions on the Commission's work.

Yankuba: Yes, I have a question.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes, go ahead.

Yankuba: What assistance can be given to us by the Commission so that our children can have a better education?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We cannot give assistance now. We will put that in our recommendations to the government so that your children will be able to get a better future. We've had the same concern expressed in many of the districts that we've been to. It will definitely go down in our report. Any other recommendation?

Yankuba: Yes. I have told you all the atrocities committed by the rebels but right now some of the rebels are staying with us in the communities. What will be our protection against them?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Against the rebels? Will you repeat his question again?

Yankuba: I want to know what protection will be granted us now that we have come and said the truth about the rebels. Most of the rebels are staying with us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, you haven't named anyone in the community. But if you have any special concern tell our briefer and we'll see what protection can be given. If it is a general fear about rebels the normal courts and the police force are still very active. They could take care of any rebel who still has evil intentions. If the witness has no other statement to make then we thank him for coming. Please step down.

We have successfully come to the end of our first day session. I want to thank you all for coming and making this day's programme a success We hope to meet again tomorrow .

DAY 2

BEFORE:

Commissioner Laura Marcu-Jones (Presiding)

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto

Commissioner William Schabas

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Joseph C. Humper

**LAEDER OF EVEDENCE: Marteijn Schortsman
Lydia**

**WITNESS No.:1
WITNESS NAME: Ansu Koroma**

Leader of Evidence, may we have your first witness?

Marteijn: Yes, Chairperson we have our witness- Mr. Ansu Koroma.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can the witness please give his name in full?

Ansu: Yes, my name is Ansu Koroma.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim?

Ansu: I am a Christian.

(The oath is administered)

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Please sit up a bit forward so we can hear you clearly. And talk a little slowly so that we'll be able to make a record of what you are saying. Now, you don't have to worry about anything. We don't punish anyone. All we want to do is to get the truth for the records and where possible bring about peace and reconciliation. So you can start now.

Ansu: I was at Bandajuma in the year 1995. One afternoon we saw a large crowd coming towards us. They all had guns. They did not talk to anybody. They just passed through the village. We were scared. We had not seen these kind of people before. So we took to our hills and went into the bush. We were there for about a week. While in the bush we had to come to the town if we wanted drinking water. At one time my brothers and I decided to come for water. When we came we found these rebels in the town. We were abducted. They asked us where we were coming from. We told them we were hiding in the bush. One of them asked whether I was a soldier. I said no. I told him I was a civilian. They then asked me for my parents. I told them they were all in the bush. They asked us to go with them to the bush. We went together with them back to our hiding place. They saw my parents and then gathered all of them. They told us to leave the bush as they had come to liberate us. They then asked us to go to the town.

Before we went to the town, we did not know that they were divided into four different groups and that the others were also bringing people out of the bush. All of us came to the town. They said if they found anybody in the bush, that person will be termed a "bad person". They then elected a town chief, appointed a women's leader, a town commander and town mother. They said if any thing went wrong the people appointed would inform them. One morning the rebels abducted seven of us. We were brought to Mattru. At the Mattru hospital the rebels had bags of rice. They asked us to transport the bags of rice. The commander who was leading us at that time was called Kalankay. He pleaded with the rebel to leave me alone. The rebel told my father: "if you don't want your son to take this bag along, then you can carry it for us". I told my father that I cannot see him carrying a bag of rice. I told my father to stay. I left my father weeping. Three of us from the same father were abducted at that time. I, my younger brother called Amara and my younger sister called Mariama were taken along. They told us that we were taking the luggage to Jimmy Bargbor. We spent a night on our way and arrived the following day at Jimmy. We were all thinking that we were going to stay at Jimmy. But we were told that they were expecting some other group to come and collect the luggage from us. But the other group did not come. We continued the journey and reached Bathust junction. We saw another group approaching us. We thought they were coming

to help us. But they were coming to reinforce the rebels who were resident in Matru.

The on-coming group crossed us and went to Matru. We continued the journey and reached a village that I cannot recall the name now. The rebels asked us to stay and prepare some food. We prepared 'garrie' and ate. Four of the carriers escaped and were recaptured. They were put in the front so they could not escape a second time. The rebels told us that they were going to set an example for all of you to see. The four people who had attempted to escape were all killed in our presenc. The rebels told us that anyone who attempted to hide again will meet the same fate. We got to Gandorhun Kpaneh and found a good number of other rebels there. There was a church building in that town in which all of us were packed and were locked. There was empty kerosene tin inside the church building which was used as chamber. We stayed there for two nights and were taken to Dukuya. Dukuya was where they had their training base. That was where Mr. Sankoh was. This was the place they called Zogoda, Civilians do not go there. We got to a village very close to Zogoda called Salolo ground. That was where all of us were packed. They asked us to wait for them there. The rebels came back with another group of people. The luggage we had brought along were carried by the people they brought from Zogoda. All of us were lined up again and asked whether we were interested in joining the 'movement.' Anyone who was not interested in the movement was asked to indicate so by putting up his/her right hand. Two people put up their hands. Their throats were cut off. Our leader took the remainder of us to the training base.

We found Gio people there. The rebels said that we were now members of the "movement". For three consecutive months we were at the training base. We were sent to various locations the day we passed-out. I was sent down to Koribondo jungle. I was there for quite some time, before my location was changed. I was then sent to Gandorhun Nyawa. I was there again for quite some time until the Lome Peace Accord came into force. Mr. Sankoh had an audience with all of his top officials. He said we had fought for too long and time to go to the negotiation table. Sankoh said he was conferring with them because he had been invited to a peace talk.. He said: "one cannot put out a flame of fire with a flame of fire so I want to move from this place". He called C.O. Mohamed who was in the Western Area close to Freetown. This C.O. Mohamed's birth name is Mohamed Tarawally. He was the only person very close to Mr. Sankoh. He called him and he came to us at Zogoda. He then asked Mohamed Tarawally to deputise him as he was leaving for the negotiations. He divided the whole company into three groups. One group was to go to Libya, one to Burkina, and the third to the Western Area. Sankoh was afraid that once he left we were going to abandon Zogoda. C.O. Mohamed did not divide us into groups as per Sankoh's instructions. When Sankoh was ready to go a helicopter came to collect him. The helicopter landed at Sondumi. The helicopter that came had a Red Cross emblem on it. Some time after his departure, we heard that he was arrested in Nigeria.

Our enemies started attacks against us. We were then removed from Zogoda. Mohamed then divided us into groups in haste. We were now only divided into two groups. One group went to Libya and another to Burkina. We went to Libya. Don't have any doubt when I talk of Libya. Pujehun was the area we called Libya. Kailahun was Burkina. We found out that pressure was mounting on our brothers. Our enemies pressured us for some time and my own assignment was changed. I was transferred to Gendema close to Bo-Waterside. When I got to Bo-Waterside, I decided to stay there because it was not far off from the boundary. We were at Bo-Waterside when enemies (the Kamajors) came from Jimmy Makpay and drove us from Gendema. We went to our brothers at Gorhun. When we got to Gorhun, we were asked by our brothers to get back to

Gendema and repel the Kamajors. We were however short of ammunition. Our commander at that time asked for more ammunition but there was none. We were asked to go and use the little we had in our guns. Sometimes we had some guns without cartridges. When you reported it to the commander, he would say: "my friend, don't say that". "You can even create a "morale" with that as the people will fear the empty gun in your hand. The commander then moved with us. The sooner we left the high command, we rebelled against him saying our lives had been betrayed. We scattered and went to a village the name of which I cannot recall. All of us went to that village. By then, we were almost surrounded by our enemies. Our highest commander at that time who was called Brigadier Mike Lamin crossed over to Liberia where he was given ammunition. He was given fifty R.P.G. bombs with "A.K. rounds". We were asked to use those ammunitions to defend ourselves until we crossed the river boundary. Those of us who had guns were left stranded behind the river. We were told not to cross. Abductees who were with us were crossed. We were there at the waterside for three days. Every morning when our enemies our enemies we fought. Our enemies attacked in the morning and in the evening. The little ammunition we had also finished. Our pursuers came one very early morning and pushed us unto the river bank. Some people tried to escape by swimming across the river. Many drowned.

I had to swim across the river. I took my clothes off and threw my gun away before jumping into the river. When I got to the other side of the river, I started tracing our brothers who had previously crossed over. I was there for four days. We were told that they were taking us to "headquarter". All of us were disarmed and taken to Teni. We were at Teni for two nights before moving on to Lofa Bridge. From Lofa Bridge we were taken to Bopolo where we camped. Then they had to contact Charles Taylor. Gangai gave us a proverb that a "Cutting grass" (Squirrel) cannot be a stranger in any farm. We were all dispatched after a week. We were asked to go wherever Taylor had his own soldiers.

I was sent to a place seven miles to the city. The name of our Commander at there was Jobojaba. We fought so heavily on Taylor's side that Alhaji Koroma became afraid. So they made peace. When disarmament started in Liberia, the guns that had been given to us by Taylor when we crossed over were asked for.

The guns they took from us were however never presented for disarmament. They were hidden. We were supposed to cross over to Sierra Leone again but the Nigerians went and occupied the crossing point. We stayed in Bopolo until the Red Cross decided to assist. The Red Cross gathered all of us. They were giving us supplies. We were in Bopolo when elections time came. We did not know that there were two places where guns were hidden in Bopolo. One day a lunatic man in the town, while walking around in the bush discovered a pile of guns.

He took one out. He placed it on his shoulder and came to town. When we saw him with the gun, we thought he was an enemy. We all ran. When I left Bopolo I came down to Lofa. At Lofa I was involved in mining. Then Mike Lamin went to call all of us again together with our Commander.. Our commander was treating us very badly in Liberia. The commander decided to cross ahead of us. Unfortunately he crossed at the point where the enemy was. The commander, his wife, and his bodyguard were all killed. Only one of his bodyguards was able to escape to go back to meet us. He told us how his master was killed. sent for us to come. When we were ready to answer Mike Lamin's call, we came down to Timba Village. We were there for three days. We moved from Timba Village and came to Keyafa Junction. Mike Lamin sent two spies to Keyafa to find out if

ECOMOG was there. ECOMOG soldiers were spotted there. Arrangements were made as to which route to take to escape the ECOMOG. Some of us were taken off from the convoy. Five of us escaped from that group. We walked a distance of twenty miles for a whole night.

At a village that we arrived we heard children. I called the children. I asked one of them if he had seen any of our brothers who used to come with gun to the village? The children told me it is a long time they saw such people. "They only come to check and go back; but it is a long time they have not come", they said. We knew straight away that there were army officers in that town. We moved ahead. After a few steps, I saw the town. There was a big crowd on the street. They were all men. Some had sticks, and others had machetes. I was frightened. Cakes were being sold along the road which I bought. I sat on there observing the crowd on the street. I came to realise that they were actually set for us. I got into the town to by-pass the crowd. I got into another side of the town where people were selling junk. I pretended I wanted to buy junk just to have a route to escape. While I was talking to the junk seller, one ULIMO member came and told me that they wanted to see me. "Who was calling me", I asked him. He said the Town Chief. I told him that the chief did not know about me. But I still went to the Barray. One Mandingo man came and pointed me as a rebel. I said I was not a rebel. We had an argument. One of my colleagues was soon after brought. They were able to round up all of five of us. We gave different excuses. They believed that we were not bad people. They however said they will keep us till 9'0clock the following day. "If we don't see any other group behind you people, we will release you to go", they said. So we were jailed. So it was 3a.m. in the morning when we saw a very large crowd coming. They had captured more of our brothers. They kept packing more of us into the cell. Seventy five of us were put in one cell.

The following morning the "Commissioner" came. The sooner they opened the door, one ULIMO boy spotted us and away went out to say he knew me. It meant that we were prosecuted already. There was one RUF Member, from 1991 he had come to Liberia. He was still with Gangay for quite sometime until he became a very big authority within the Gangay's territory. He was called General Foday Howard. The Commissioner gave command that all of us be locked up. They were only cooking fifteen cups of rice for seventy-five prisoners. They will make seventy-five balls of cooked rice. Five balls will be put into a basin. They will open the door and then five people will come out to take one ball each. When they give you one ball, they give you a glass of water. We were there for twenty-two days. We were there until the election was over in Liberia. The sooner Charles Taylor won, we were set free. Some of us did not sleep in the town that night. We moved from there and then came down to Boidu. At Buedu we met Mosquito. We were again divided into groups. Some of us were asked to go to "Angola". Some went to Makeni, some to Freetown. and others to Bo. I stayed in "Angola". It was at that time the Nigerians came to this country. Fighting was going on seriously. At the height of the fighting, Mosquito became the Leader.

Mohammed Tarawalli and his body guards had taken to the jungle. They were caught and killed. That was how Mosquito became a leader. He was second in command after C.O. Mohammed Tarawalli. I Foday Sankoh was released in Nigeria. He came down to Boidu. When he got to Boidu, he spoke to us then and came to Freetown. He went back to Kailahun after two weeks. Sankoh was telling civilians that he was captured but had come back. Sankoh told us how he brought the war to so that there could be free education in this country. He said he was fighting for the civilians.

Mr Snakoh went back to Freetown and sent orders to Kailahun through Mosquito for us to disarm. Mosquito refused to disarm us. Mosquito said he said he could not take orders from Sankoh while he was in Freetown. He said Sankoh himself had to come down to Kailahun. Mosquito asked us to defy Sankoh. He said if Sankoh was in Freetown then it meant he was under captivity. Mr. Sankoh talked to Mosquito many times from Freetown. Mosquito kept defying him. Sankoh talked to him so many times through radio messages that Mosquito too became annoyed. Mosquito said people would laugh at us if we disarmed.

He threatened to pull out of the movement. General Issa at the time was still at Makeni. General Issa said Mosquito has betraying them. General Issa threatened to move with troops from Makeni to arrest Mosquito if he attempted to leave the movement. Mosquito told us to go and lay in ambush for General Issa. We were however not ready to fight against our own brothers. We did not say this in Mosquito's presence. We only had it in minds. When they sent us to lay in ambush we did not deploy. I was caught and beaten. My stomach was cut with a knife. I ended up in a cell.

I was released after one week and sent me to Sandaru. At that time some Kamajors had come over from Guinea. At that time, my first child died. I left the corpse and went to Sandaru. I had five children and it was the eldest that died at that time. It was with sadness that I went to Sandaru. As soon as we Sandaru I again tried to escape. I came back to where I left the corpse of my daughter. I was caught by my colleagues and again dumped into the cell for the second time. but somebody pleaded on my behalf. Upon consideration of my situation I was re;leased. General Issa came with his group. Mosquito left for Liberia with a whole truck of men and ammuniton before General Issa came. We had an FM radio station in Kailahun called it A.K. 47. Mosquito took all that along. He took away whatever property that belonged to the movement. It was at that time that disarmament started in the country. We were disarmed. I stop so far.

**Commissioner
Marcus- Jones:**

Thank you very much Ansu. We have been listening to you for quiet sometime now. It is now time to ask you questions on what you have said.

Commissioner-Torto:

Thank you very much Ansu for your very revealing testimony. Some people here may be amazed but we are now used to it. You are not really the first to give those kinds of testimonies to this Commission. In fact you are among the last. Our questions are going to be very, very simple. And please, I want you to be very brief and staright forward in your answers.

Did you attempt to escape when you were first captured? you knew you were going to be part of an exercise that was unpopular. Did you attempt to escape from your captors?

Ansu: Yes, I attempted to escape.

Commissioner-Torto: What happened?

Ansu: At our base they used to appoint people to go in search of food. With intentions to escape, one day I lobbied the Commander who was in charge to appoint me to go with the group in search of food. They wrote down my name and we went. We were taken across the Moi River. Three of us escaped. We were captured. We were mercilessly beaten. We were actually beaten like beasts. There is somebody amongst us here who is aware of that beating. He too was at that Base. If an escapee was caught his or her forehead was branded with the RUF symbol. Red-hot iron was used for such branding. If the red hot iron was not available, they use new razors to write RUF on your forehead. That was I decided to stay.

Commissioner-Torto: Alright. You mentioned instances of fighting in Kailahun and Pujehun Districts. Who were you fighting with?

Ansu: First, we were fighting against Government soldiers. Later we fought the kamajors and ECOMOG. When they knew that we had decided to disarm, and no longer willing to fight they enticed us with money. Charles Taylor used to send money to the Commanders. They were giving us money to go across to Liberia or to Guinea. The Commanders were Manawa, Kalankay, Mike Lamin, Morris Kallon, and Rambo. It was only God that saved us from that movement but our lives were betrayed

Commissioner-Torto: Thank you very much. You were also sent to Freetown to protect Johnny Paul after the May 25 coup. Where were you particularly selected to go and protect Johnny Paul?

Ansu: Well, all of us were assigned to different units. We were appointed from different Units. I was in Star Unit and fifteen of us were appointed. I was the fifteenth Member. When ECOMOG attacked Freetown our commanders asked Johnny Paul to hand over the ammunition store to us. Johnny and his men however doubted us. They thought we were going to turn against them. That was why we were driven out of Freetown. We took Johnny Paul away from Freetown to Kailahun. We were carrying him in a hammock. At one point he gave some amount of diamonds to his wife and asked her to go ahead. The wife was captured at Bomaru on the border with Liberia. She was brought back to Buedu. The diamonds were taken from Johnny Paul and his wife.

Commissioner-Torto: Thank you. You must be a very brave person. What was your rank in the RUF?

Ansu: I was a Military Police Commander

Commissioner-Torto: What Rank? Field Marshal or some Major or what rank?

Ansu: I stopped at Staff Sergeant

Commissioner-Torto: What was your name in the RUF?

Ansu: You mean the war name or my real name?

Commissioner-Torto:
War name because I believe this Ansu Koroma is your real name.

Ansu: Around the world.

Commissioner-Torto:

Around the world? How long did you fight in Kono district?

Ansu: I was there for three months and transferred to Tongo. Amara Peneto was our commander in Tongo.

Commissioner-Torto: Peneto?

Ansu: Amara Peneto.

Commissioner-Torto:

Thank you. I am impressed that you are so brave to sit here today and recount your story. You must be a very brave man. During all the attacks do you remember how many people you killed? I want you to be kind to me

Ansu: I cannot tell. I don't know if I killed anybody. Where there is an exchange of bullets, you cannot tell which one is going to hit somebody. Beyond that I never actually fired a gun at anybody directly.

Commissioner-Torto: But I want to believe that during your stay with the RUF you certainly killed people, even if unknowingly?

Ansu: It is possible. But I don't think I killed anybody wilfully.

Commissioner-Torto: And those included women and children?

Ansu: Yes

Commissioner-Torto: And there were boys under your command who occasionally raped women?

Ansu: They were small boys. I cannot remember any of them doing that.

Commissioner-Torto: Thank you. In Kono district what was your relationship with Alhaji Baryoh and Colonel Savage?

Ansu: Well, I don't want to tell you lies. I do not know much about them.

Commissioner-Torto: One thing I want to tell you Ansu is that I am very impressed with your testimony and your courage to come forward and recount your stories. Would you be ready to apologise to the people of this country for all the deaths, rapes, and loss of property caused by you and your men?

Ansu: Yes.

Commander Torto:

I thank you very much. I do not want to waste further time for the fact that you are ready to own up to your responsibilities.

Commissioner-Jones:

Leader of Evidence, have you any questions?

Commissioner Sooka:

Yes Chairperson. I would like to ask some questions. You have mentioned several people that were Commanders in the RUF- Issa Sesay, Sam Bockarie,

Mike Lamin, Mohammed Tarawalie. Could you explain what the hierarchy was below these people?

Ansu: There was firstly Mohammed Tarawalie called C.O. Mohammed Tarawalie. Mosquito only came after Mohamed Tarawalie. CO Mohammed was the highest in authority among them.

Commissioner Sooka:
What about rank?

Ansu: Both Mosquito and Issa were Majors. Mosquito had a higher rank. It was when Mosquito left that they gave the rank of General to Issa.

Commissioner Sooka:
And what about Mike Lamin?

Ansu: Mike was a Brigadier

Commissioner Sooka:
You mentioned that weapons were brought in from Liberia. Would you say that those weapons were exchanged for diamonds?

Ansu: I cannot remember that. They did not give us guns from Liberia in exchange for diamonds.

Commissioner Sooka:
But you saw the weapons coming in?

Ansu: I did not see ammunition coming from Liberia to Sierra Leone with my own naked eyes. All the guns we had were taken from our enemies. We took many guns from the Nigerians soldiers for instance. Even the 40 barrel gun which they brought was taken away from them.

Commissioner Sooka:
And when you say Nigerians, you mean ECOMOG?

Ansu: Yes, ECOMOG.

Commissioner Sooka:
Where you mining for the RUF?

Ansu: There were people mining for the Government, that is the RUF. Some of us mining individually.

Commissioner Sooka:
And were you allowed to keep all the diamonds or did you have to give some to the RUF?

Ansu: If they see big diamonds in your hand they will take it from you. They will say it belongs to the movement. They don't take diamonds that are not up to one carat.

Commissioner Sooka:

You also said that there were a number of rules in the RUF against rape, killing of civilians, etc. Were there any system of punishment if someone broke those rules?

Ansu: Sometimes when you commit these crimes, they would kill you. Sometimes are not shot. They will cut off your throat with machete.

Commissioner Sooka:
Did rebels use drugs?

Ansu: We were given us cocaine

Commissioner Sooka:
What kind of drugs?

Ansu: Cocaine

Commissioner Sooka:
Cocaine

Commissioner Sooka:

And did they give it to you before a battle, before a fight or before an attack or all the time?

Commissioner Sooka:

The RUF had rules against these things. The Commission had heard so many testimonies of civilians killed wilfully. Civilians were amputated or raped. If every RUF Commander who committed these crimes had been punished there would have been no rebel left.

Ansu: Mosquito was responsible for that. When Mosquito says this is operation no living thing, you should not spare any human life.

Commissioner Sooka:
Did Mosquito or someone else give the order to amputate people's hands and limbs?

Ansu: Yes, he was saying that.

Commissioner Sooka:

Did this order come only from Mosquito or also from others within the RUF?

Ansu: The orders were actually coming from Mosquito. Foday Sankoh was not here at the time.

Commissioner Sooka:
Where did the idea to amputate civilians come from? Why were hands and feet amputated?

Ansu: It was during the leadership of Mosquito.

Commissioner Sooka:

Yes, but why?

Ansu: I cannot give any reason for that because all the instructions were from him.

Commissioner Sooka:

And did any one ever question these instructions?

Ansu: Nobody would have attempted to question Mosquito at that time.

Commissioner Sooka:

Do you feel bad today when you see these amputees?

Ansu: I feel sorry for them at this moment.

Commissioner Sooka:

Chairperson, I have no further questions. I admire the courage of the witness to come here to explain .

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

Ansu, what happened to Amara and Mariama?

Ansu: Mariama was killed by a jet bomber in Makeni. Amara was killed by Kamajors.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

I am sorry about that. When did you marry- before being abducted or when you were with the rebels?

Ansu: I was married before I was abducted. After the training, I sent for my wife. Then she went and met me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

How long were you with the rebels?

Ansu: For eight years

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

Now, when Maskita was collecting all the ammunitions and diamonds and properties and getting about to leave for Liberia, did he kill any of his leaders?

Ansu: Yes, he did kill some leaders. And included SLA personnel. He killed one Colonel "Devuyama," a Commander.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

I am disturbed by one thing that has come up in your narration. whilst You kept saying 'our cause'. At what time did you start feeling sorry that you had been waging war against your own people?

Ansu: I am not too sure whether I waged war on my people because I was with them when I was abducted. And when I was abducted, they themselves did not know whether I was alive or not. It was only when they saw me come back that they realized that I was still alive.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

My question is when did you start feeling sorry? That is, if you are sorry about all what happened?

Ansu: Well, I was only thinking of my parents, whether they were alive or not. .

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

Why have you come to tell us all this today?

Ansu: It is because of all the atrocities, the evils and all other bad things we were doing to people. We want them to forgive us because some of us did not join on our own free will. We were abducted. If I had wronged anybody, I want to say please forgive us. I have not hidden anything because I want all of you to think that I have clear conscience now. If we have it in mind, we would hide some. I am pleading that they forgive some of us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

What is your own name?

Ansu: Ansu

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:

All of us have heard what Ansu Koroma has confessed. Today, Ansu has confessed publicly before all of us that in those days when the rebels came to this place, they abducted him forcefully. When they took him along, he had to join their course. They did a lot of destruction in the country but, he has come before us this evening and confessed all what he did. I want to join him to plead to all of us my brothers and sisters to show mercy and show forgiveness to Ansu. Let us accept him back into our community. What is passed is passed. Let us unite and fight the way forward

Reverend: How are you Mr Koroma?

Who would not want forgiveness from God if you commit sin here amongst all of us here? All of us need forgiveness from God is that not so? That was why God said we too should forgive our brothers and sisters when wrong us. In asking for forgiveness when somebody confesses I feel very pleased. It is incumbent on all of us here to forgive Ansu Koroma. Let us become his advisers as from today. Ansu, I want you to accept Christ as your Saviour. If you do that, I know you will receive the Kingdom of God. Are you prepared for that?

Ansu: Yes

Some Prayers were recited by the Reverend which Ansu repeated.

Imam: Ansu Koroma, I am happy for you today. When ever someone does something that is bad and that individual stands publicly and talks about all the bad things that he/she did I feel happy. I hope you have actually decided to do away with all bad things. God also said it in the Holy Koran, that if anybody commits a crime, and asks for forgiveness that person must be prepared never to repeat such a deed again. The Lord said he is ready to accept you. I am pleading to everybody in this town to forgive and accept Ansu Koroma.

Some prayers were said for Ansu Koroma.

Iman: And to Ansu, I am asking you please to remain where you are today. We don't want you to go back where you came from. We want peace in this country now. We also have accepted you. So please you too accept us.

Member of the public: Ansu Koroma, this evening you have confessed all the bad things you and your group did. It is difficult for somebody to stand publicly and talk about what he or she did. I am talking on behalf of the women in the town to say we have forgiven you. We ask you to stay here and make your own contribution to the development of Sierra Leone.

Member of the public. Ansu Koroma, you have apologised today. We are prepared to forgive you. We advice you that you obey the laws of this country. Living in the bush is different from living in town. Here, we have law and order. So as you have ask for forgiveness, you need to respect the customs, and laws within the Community you find yourself. On behalf of the Officers, we the Police at Mattru and elsewhere, we embrace you. You must be law abiding. I thank you all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Ansu koroma, what you have done has impressed us so much. Evberybody knows that you did wrong. But now that you have asked the Lord for forgiveness, all the elders and other people in this town have prayed for you, and accepted you. repeat it self any longer. This is the time you need to advice You have peace of mind now and feel more comfortable. Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Ansu: Apart from the apology I have made to my parents and all the confessions I have made here, what protection am I going to get from TRC? I have a reason for asking this.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:Well, you will talk to an official of the Commission at the end of this ceremony and we will see what we can do.

Ansu: I am a traveller. Even though we have done the ceremonies here, I know everybody in the whole country is going to be aware of it. I will therefore need some amount of protection from you people. Because I wouldn't want people to say it was this man that revealed our secret..

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:We will see to that and of course it won't be here. Now, have you any recommendations for the Commission to include in its report? Go ahead and tell us.

Ansu: Since I disarmed, I have not been engaged in any trade or work. I want the Commission to assist me so that I can go to a vocational institution to learn a trade. Most of my companions are in institutions. And we are hearing that this December will be the end of the DDR Programme. So I want this Commission to please find ways and means to assist me to get into any institution to learn a trade.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones:We have heard your plea. We will give a letter of referrence to see what help you can get now. Any other recommendation?

Ansu: That is all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, I want to thank you very much for coming to the TRC. I want to thank you for coming here and to make such a confession and on behalf of the TRC, I wish you a healthier and brighter future. You will talk to our Counsellor later. You may step down now.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone has today heard testimony about the tragic loss of many human lives in the conflict that ravaged our country. As a mark of respect to the deceased and their families and as a symbol of our compassion and our solidarity, we ask that after I have read the names you please stand up in observance of a minute silence for the following victims: - Joe Kai, Joe Boizy and nine other men in Banigor vilage, Ya Musa Jobai, Maada Demby Sandy, Tommy Sandy, Pa Yoki, a man called Government, 600 people killed in Tiihun town, Mahaye, Mabi, Tiyange, Unisa, Ammie, Muina, Muka, Mori, Yokugbe, Maria, Fatu, Yokugbe, 700 people killed at Bahoya junction, Philip Musa and his wife and son, Pa Salu, Mariama Sata Momoh, Maudi, Lucia Musa, Shumba Bangura, a baby, many people in Senehun village, Tommy Brewah, Momoh Lugbu, Abu Memo the father of Alusine Foday, Abu Musa, Tommy Konneh, Moiwo Musa, Abu Kutu, Moiyata, Mamie Sylvester.

All stand. May the Souls of the departed rest in Peace.

WITNESS No.: 2

WITNESS NAME: Kadiatu Sillah

Lydia: Our next witness for today is Kadiatu sillah

Commissioner Humper: Name please?

Kadiatu: Kadiatu Sillah.

Commissioner Humper: Muslim or christian?

Kadiatu: I am a christian

(The oath was administered)

Commissioner Humper: We want you to share your experiences of the war with us.

Kadiatu: We were at Kotumahun village one evening when the Kamajors attacked us. People were getting ready to go for prayers when we heard gun shots. Everybody went into the bush. After I took my bath, I went into my house. My father asked me about the shots he heard. I said I don't know. I took my child went into the other house to my mother. My mother told me to eat but couldn't. My mother encouraged me to eat because I was pregnant at the time. After the Kamajors had looted property, they jumped into the vehicle they came with and drove away. Some Kamajors stayed behind and hid in the town. They hid themselves behind the houses. We didn't know they were in hiding because we heard their vehicle moving away. People came back from the bush and went into their houses. I left my mother's place to go to my own place to

sleep. One of the Kamajors surfaced and asked me my name. I told him my name was Kadiatu Sillah. It was a man called Sidia who asked me my name. There was another Kamajor called Brima Baimba. The other one was called Maada. And there was Borbor Sandy.

Their leader was called Morlai Kamara. He led the Kamajors into Leeyobeko. It was Brima Baimba who fired me. As I was about to go up the steps of my house he asked me my name. He asked if I knew him. I said yes. He asked me where I knew him. I called the name of the village. He asked me where I grew up. I told him that I was given in marriage in Guinea. He asked me whether I was here during the war. I said no. He asked me if I knew the rules in that place. I said no. I asked him to tell me the rules. 'Kamajor rules'? he asked. I said no. He did not tell me the rules. I began to walk away. He fired me. I was eight months pregnant at that time. I started bleeding. My mother went and reported the matter to my father's brother at Malema. My uncle told them to go to the Paramount Chief to get a vehicle to take me to hospital. The vehicle came for me and they brought me to this town. Medicin San Frontier was at the hospital. The doctor who examined me said he did not see any baby in my belly. Then my mother ran away. The doctor advised them to take me to Bo. When we came to Bo, they handed me over to Dr. Rogers. He examined me and also concluded that there was no baby in my belly. He said that if I took some treatments the baby would go back to its normal place. After some treatments the child went back to its normal position. The doctor declared that my foot was no longer in any good condition. After I delivered the child, they amputated my foot. The child died. The Police went to Leeyobeko and obtained statements from the people. We left Bo and went back to Leeyobeko. The Police again went to Talia and obtained some statements from us. After that my people advised me to come to Mattru to get some skills training. And the Kamajor who shot me went to Leeyobeko and felt very proud of what he did. And right now I am amputated. I have a child. My father is old and there is no one to take proper care of him. I live today on charity. That is my experience.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Kadiatu. We are very much sorry to hear about your ordeal. But we are gratified by the fact that you lived to tell the story. God has said that this was the path you are going to take. We just want you to clarify a few issues in your explanation. Where is your husband now?

Kadiatu: My husband is in Guinea

Commissioner Torto: Does he know of your ordeal?

Kadiatu: I don't know

Commissioner Torto: You have not written to him since?

Kadiatu: No.

Commissioner Torto: Why not?

Kadiatu: My husband's relatives are here. They didn't write to him, that is why I did not write him also.

Commissioner Torto: But you are the wife. And you had a son and who passed away. What happened to you was not of your own making. In the war many people suffered like you. Why didn't you at least inform your husband for you to know what his position was on the whole matter?

Kadiatu: I understand that my husband got married.

Commissioner Torto: Is it for that reason that you don't want to get in touch with him anymore?

Kadiatu: Yes

Commissioner Torto: You said that Brima Baimba who shot you is still at the village.

Kadiatu: He has hidden and gone to Bo

Commissioner Torto: So you don't know his whereabouts now?

Kadiatu: I don't know the house he is staying in Bo.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I am sorry Kadiatu that you lost your baby and a leg. What happened to the first child that you had

Kadiatu: He is still there.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old is the child now?

Kadiatu: He is five years old.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is the father the husband in Guinea?

Kadiatu: Yes

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And yet you don't contact him so that he can take care of his child?

Kadiatu: His relatives sent a message to him but he refused to come.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, you should try and send a message to him. It is his responsibility to take care of his child. What type of marriage did you enter into, a Muslim marriage?

Kadiatu: A Muslim Marriage

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, if you enter into a Muslim marriage, why are you so annoyed that he has taken another wife?

Kadiatu: I am annoyed because when I underwent all those atrocities, his relatives sent somebody to go and tell him the problem. He refused to come.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where is your mother?

Kadiatu: She is in the village.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Is she working?

Kadiatu: She is a farmer.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What skills did you have or being trained in?

Kadiatu: I am doing needlework and gara tie dyeing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you finished your training?

Kadiatu: I have not finished yet.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: In what institution are you?

Kadiatu: OIC- Mattru.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You are getting some support for now but what about your child? You should try and contact the father. Are there plans for you to have an artificial limb?

Kadiatu: I have one but it gives me pain when I use it.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright, thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Leader of Evidence.

Lydia: I am really sorry for all the suffering you have undergone. I do not really understand why they shot at you. Did you break any of the rules?

Kadiatu: My child went against the rule

Lydia: What did your child do?

Kadiatu: She threw a broom at them. They wounded her.

Lydia: But when did this happen. What year did this happened?

Kadiatu: After they had fired me.

Lydia: No. I mean when did they fire you and in which year did this incident take place?

Kadiatu: Two years ago.

Lydia: Two years ago. So your child was three years old then?

Kadiatu: She is five years now

Lydia: The Kamajors shot at you because your child took a broom and hit one of the Kamajors with it.

Kadiatu: No. I was fired before my child rubbed the broom on the Kamajors

Lydia: Then, why did they shoot at you?

Kadiatu: For one bag of rice

Lydia: What bag of rice? Explain to us a bit.

Kadiatu: One of the Kamajors ate a bag of rice. The other Kamajors became annoyed with him and they went as a group to meet the Paramount Chief. People ran away from the town when they saw the Kamajors. I was made to understand that the Kamajors were looking for two men- John Sandy and Unisa Sam. These two people however hid from the Kamajors. I was going into my father's house when they shot me. I was just an unfortunate victim.

Lydia: Were you the only one that was fired at by the Kamajors at that time?

Kadiatu: They attempted to kill a Kamajor called Borbor Kamara. but the cartridge missed him. No other person was killed at that time.

Lydia: Thank you very much. I have no further questions.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did the Kamajors hurt the baby who rubbed the broom against them?

Kadiatu: That was what they told me if was one of their rules

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: But did they hurt the baby?

Kadiatu: They gave it a small cut on the hand and the kamajor licked the blood, the child's blood. It was not a large cut it was a small one.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for your testimony, Kadiatu. We feel a lot of sympathy for you. I am yet to know why they really shot you. You didn't offend anybody, and you had nothing to do with the stolen bag of rice. Can you suggest any reason why that person shot you?

Kadiatu: I didn't do anything to them.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, thank you very much for this. It is now your turn to ask us questions. Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Kadiatu: Yes. I want to know what assistance the Commission is going to give given my disability. My father who used to help me is sick and I have a son that has now reached school going-age.

Commissioner Torto: That's a very legitimate question. It is understandable that people ask those kinds of questions. But the unfortunate side of our work is that we were not given powers to compensate victims. At the end of our work we will make recommendations to Government as to how people like you could be taken care of. At this point we cannot raise your hope that you will be compensated nor can we tell you that you will not be compensated.

Kadiatu: I thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, do you have recommendations or questions?

Kadiatu: No.

Commissioner Torto: We thank you very much and we encourage you to continue doing your skills training. It will help you a lot. You may step down now.

WITNESS No.: 3

WITNESS NAME– Bassie Katta

Commissioner Torto: Do we have another witness?

Lydia: Yes, Chairperson, our next witness for this morning is Mr. Bassie Katta

Commissioner Torto: Bassie Katta, you may have had a lot of experiences during the ten-year war; but time is however not on our side to allow you to recount everything today. We are therefore asking you to talk about any one experience.

Katta: It is true Commissioner that I cannot tell all my stories here today. I will tell you what I suffered during the war. I had earlier on given you statements. Do I have to start from the statements I had given you previously?

Commissioner Torto: Exactly.

Katta: I thank you. Sometime ago while we were here in Mattru, we heard rumours that rebels had entered Sierra Leone. They told us that they were at Jimmy Makpay. We thought that it was far off from here. We went about our daily business not knowing that the rebels were coming down to us. After a while we heard rumour that the rebels had come down to Kwame Bai Krim and killed the Paramount Chief. The chief by then was Mr. Bonifine. That was a big threat to us. Our own Paramount Chief was a friend of my brother, Mr. Kemoh. Our Paramount Chief sent to call Mr. Kemoh. Mr. Kemoh took me along to answer the Paramount Chief's call. When we got to the Paramount Chief he told us about the rumour of Chief Bonifine's death. The Chief said that he had heard that Mr. Kemoh had piassava at Baoma–Pengeh which he (Kemoh) wanted to transfer to Mattru. Would you please enquire the truth of the death of Chief Binifine when you get Baoma – Pengeh? Mr. Kemoh went for the Piassava and found out that the story of Chief Bonifine's death was true. The Paramount Chief called a gathering to discuss the issue. Section chiefs and other elders after hanging heads on the matter advised the Paramount Chief that the chiefdom be on alert always. They said they are going to form a committee. The committee was called Civil Defence. It was just to defend the township. We had at every junction within the township a group of civilians on guard every night. We did that for quite sometime and abandoned it when the situation seemed like easing.

After sometime we saw people coming from some other areas, like Sumbuya. They came and told us that the rebels were at Sumbuya. They had attacked Sumbuya and killed one Lebanese man. Our Chief called another meeting of the chiefdom elders. At that meeting he recognised the work the elders had been doing to defend the town. "But the people you are talking about are rebels- they have guns" he said. The Chief said he could not defend the chiefdom on his own and was therefore going to send to Bonthe for some soldiers. He sent to Bonthe. After sometime some soldiers were came. Their leader was called Massaquoi. He and his men assured the civilians that they could now

rest as the situation will be taken care of. He said there was only one big job for us. The job was to inform the soldiers about whatever we see or heard. Our Paramount Chief died. After his burial ceremonies, we heard that the rebels had attacked Bompeh. Massaquoi and his men told us that the rebels only hit the town and had gone back.

Things remained quiet for sometime. With all what was happening we had hopes that Sierra Rutile mines was better secured. We thought nothing was going to happen here. The Whites at Sierra Rutile were even giving us continuous assurance that nothing was going to happen around this end. One day we heard that rebels had attacked Mokañji and captured it. We started giving up hope. The situation was going out of hand. We started to hear that the soldiers deployed in our area were dumping some of their belongings in the river. They were doing it gradually. The number of soldiers within the township started reducing. But the soldiers were still giving us the assurances of safety. After sometime we heard that Sierra Rutile itself had been attacked and captured. From that point people started leaving this town. Some people were fortunate to have boats to take them to Bonthe. There came to a time when boats were not coming to Mattru. Some others went to Freetown. The town cut-off. We had no means of transportation to leave the town. People even took away our small boats at night. I had two boats myself. They were taken away by unknown people at night.

I couldn't move out of the town. It was in January. It was the season for brushing of farms. The rebels entered here one evening. The rebels captured the town that same day. They started burning houses at night. From our hiding place in the bush we heard cries from the township. We could not come to town. It was a bad situation for us. There were lots of young boys in the town when they captured it. We had one of our brothers in town. He was sending messages calling us to come back to town. He said that the rebels were warning that they will be very drastic with people when they decide to get them out of the bush.

One evening the rebels went to a place in the bush close to where I was hiding. We heard gunshots. They found one woman there. She shouted, ran into the swamp, and came towards me. The rebels burnt the hut in which the lady was living. We took to our heels and left our hiding place. After darkness fell, all of us converged at a waterfall. It became a very big camp. We were there for quite sometime. We started hearing that the rebels were also planning to pursue us at the camp. Messages were reaching us that if we didn't come out from the bush rebels were going to kill all of us. Rebels went to one of the camps and wounded the residents with the bayonets. They did not kill anybody. One of the wounded persons did not follow them to town here but ran off and went to our hiding place, he gave us the news.

We were thinking that the rebels would never get to our hiding place. They eventually got there. There was one civilian amongst us who was actually a giant- he was very strong. His name was Amadu Kanu. The rebels flogged him with knives, and cutlasses. Amadu was the man on whom we relied. After seeing the treatment given to him we obeyed the

rebels and went to town. The rebels warned us that who ever attempted to escape will be shot. We were not told to gather any of our properties at the camp. They set the camp ablaze.

We stayed in Goba town with the rebels. Every morning they would check our numbers by roll-call. After sometime they started telling us pray everyday. More people were being brought from the various camps around the town. One morning, when we went for prayers a helicopter came around. It headed for where we were gathered. It was the rebels who were with us that first suspected that it was the helicopter that was coming. They placed all the guns on the ground and then lay down on top of them. They told all of us to sit down and make no movement. They told us that anyone who moved will be chased by the helicopter and fired at. Meanwhile the helicopter was hovering above and coming down very low. There were so many babies amongst us. The babies were making noise. The helicopter later went away. The rebels told us to disperse and we went to our various places. More rebels came to the town. They were bringing more people. The rebels were us that they directed by their boss- "payay"- to establish a training centre here. The first training centre was started at Base Centinial field. They did that for just a short time. On evening, while they were there training a jet bomber came around. The jet dropped a bomb. Unfortunately the bomb did not get the rebels. It was dropped on the road. The rebels changed the location of their training base. They took their training base to the oil palm plantation. They gave us permission to go to places during the day and come back at night.

One day a man who the rebels said was of high rank in the movement was introduced to us. The man was called Mr. Baimda. They told us that Mr. Baimda was the liaison between the civilians and the rebels. They told us to direct all questions to Mr. Baimda. Mr. Baimda told us that he was going to set up a court. Rebels who terrorised civilians could also face that court, Mr Baimda told us. Although we were encouraged by those statements things turned out differently. One morning they brought one of our sisters- Jebbeh Massaquoi. They told us that she was going to be killed. They said she was going to be killed after prayers. After prayers, they killed that lady.

"You have only been hearing their name rebel, but you do not know our character", they said after they killed the lady. They said the lady was killed because they found salt and tobacco in her possession. "As from today any person in whose possession we find these two items will be killed", they said. The rebels said we can only obtain salt and tobacco from them. We could bring fish, meat, and other things in exchange for salt or tobacco, they told us. But sometimes you don't even get the salt when you took those items to them in exchange.

The rebels told us one day that they had discovered civilians operating in a group called "single barrel papay". The rumour went around for quite sometime. At one time the rebels sent a lot of people to one seaside village to fetch salt. The rebels did not know that this group callint itself "Single Bar papay" had taken notice of them in this area. The "Single Barrel Papays" came down and attacked the rebels at their salt mining areas. It was serious battle a because some seriously wounded rebels were brought back to town. The rebels never went down the river again.

And after sometime we heard that government soldiers were coming to capture this place and clear the road. The rebels also called up a meeting to discuss this. They moved to attack the soldiers at Bumpeh. The rebels however did not go as far as Bumpeh. They stopped at Kaniyah. Afterwards the rebels started transporting the properties they had here.

I had a niece who was married to a rebel at that time. She was called Fudia. She came to me one evening and asked me if I could keep a secret that may save the lives of the two of us. She told me that their husbands were tired with the war, and that Government soldiers were very close. She said that some of the leaders of the rebels were pulling out. She told me these things on a Thursday. The following morning we took some of our properties to our hiding places again. We were approaching the Water Works area when we heard the sound of two jet planes. There was shouting all over the town. It was the rebels themselves who were telling civilians to get out of the town as they have been dislodged by the soldiers. They told us to go down to Senehun waterside and cross over. The two jets fired at the rebels for quite sometime. As the jets were firing and we heard the sound of an RPG at Bandajuma. We realised later that the soldiers had liberated the town. We were in the surrounding bushes. On Saturday, a man came to town, and spoke with the soldiers. He was given instruction to go round and tell everybody hiding in the bush to come back to town.

The news got to us on Sunday. My brother- Gibrilla Coker, and I went to town. We did not find any who had the guts to come to town at that time. We were arrested. We were threatened and flogged. The soldiers even threatened to kill us. They said that we were spies. I told them that it was not true. While they were punishing us another civilian- a foreigner by the name of Lahai Maraka came and joined us. There were many Guineans amongst the soldiers. Lahai Maraka started speaking in Mandingo with the Guinean soldiers. They asked if he knew me. He said yes. He told them that I was Section Chief in the town. And he told them that I was a good man. We were released and asked to sweep and clean the area. Towards dawn, they asked me if my family was far off from me. I said yes. They gave me a pass, two cups of salts, a packet of cigarette and a box of matches and soap. They asked me to come the next day with my people. They told me that the rebels were still in the town's surroundings. It was therefore risky to stay in the bushes. I brought my family to town that same Sunday. People eventually started coming in groups until there was a very large number in town.

The man who led the soldiers to liberate this town was ABK. He left after sometime. When he was going he introduced three people to us that had newly come to town. Lieutenant Kaimapoh, Lieutenant Brewah, and Lieutenant Kabia. Those were the people that were going to remain here. Mr. Mansaray, who first came to town after its liberation was made chief in the town. It was from him that we could get news about the soldiers.

Mr. Abu Kainessie, an old section chief in this town called us to a meeting. Our two chieftain speakers, many chiefs, and most of the elders had not yet come to town. We discussed the administration of the chieftain and I was appointed as leader. The man the soldiers had introduced as our chief was dethroned. I don't know what happened between them. The soldiers accepted my election.

Commissioner Torto: Mr. Katta, you have actually done about forty-five minutes- almost going to an hour. I told you earlier that it will not be possible for anyone to actually explain the ten years ordeal at a sitting. We simply do not have time. We just thought you would hit on one or two areas where you suffered human rights violations, or where you played a part instead. Could you please? You have about five minutes more to round up.

Katta: When the time for elections came Kamajor called us. Lieutenant Kaimapo told us to try and get the Kamajors to come to the town. He told us that the military officers were divided and there were speculations that there might be trouble if only soldiers stayed in the town. He told us that some of the Task Force soldiers were rebels and Government knew that too. We agreed on calling the Kamajors. It was during the month of Ramadan. The leader of the Kamajors was Mr. Gobeh. There were two hundred and forty kamajors, Lieutenant. Kaimapoh gave us one bag of rice for the Kamajors and told us to provide condiments. Elections were very close by then. What Lieutenant Kamapoh told us came to pass. Had it not been for the Kamajors who were here, the elections would not take place in this area. The soldiers opened fire on us. We were however able to vote. This is all I have to say.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. It was a long explanation. We know that you went through a whole lot of hassles. We will now ask you a few questions to clarify issues in both your written statement and your verbal testimony. Thank you.

Commissioner Kamara: I want you to tell me who killed Chief Goba? Is it Goba? Bonafiine?

Katta: I don't know- we were here. I was only told that he was killed by the rebels.

Commissioner Kamara: At the beginning of the occupation of this place according to your explanation and also what is in your written statement, you underwent training under one Mr. Marcus, what fighting group were you being trained by?

Katta: I did not talk about training

Commissioner Kamara: But it is here in the written statement you made

Commissioner Torto: And you mentioned training in the Centennial Secondary School field in your verbal explanation a while ago.

Katta: It was the rebels that were training at the Centennial field.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, what happened to the man that was flogged with the side of the machete- that strong man that you all depended on?

Katta: Well, he was not wounded he only had the pains

Commissioner Torto: So is he still alive?

Katta: Yes, he is still alive

Commissioner Torto: The woman that was killed because of salt and tobacco- where did she say she obtained those items from?

Katta: The lady had relatives in Bonthe and Freetown. They sent those items for her. It was a woman friend of hers that told the rebels about it.

Commissioner Torto: Nobody pleaded for her to explain this.

Katta: She explained this to the rebels. Other people said it. The rebels did not accept. When rebels wanted any items for themselves they would not take any plea.

Commissioner Torto: There was a group down the river that you said the rebels went and met. The group called itself "Single Barrel Papay". What group was it? Were they a different fighting group or part of the rebel group?

Katta: It was Kamajors. They started with that "Single Barrel Papay" name and have ended up as Kamajors

Commissioner Torto: You were you yourself a Kamajor?

Katta: Yes, I am a Kamajor

Commissioner Torto: What was your role in the Kamajor movement.

Katta: I not spoken about my being a Kamajor.

Commissioner Torto: Okay.

Katta: When the kamajor movement was actually being established I was first afraid to join it. One day we got a call for a meeting of all elderly people and chiefs from this chiefdom and the surrounding chiefdoms. When we got to the meeting place we found a lot of people. We were told that the war was between civilians and rebels; and there was realisation that even the soldiers were now against civilians. It was decided that it is better we took the prosecution of this war at chiefdom level. We were not released again. We were initiated into the society straight away before being released. Later, I was appointed as Chief of the Kamajors at chiefdom level. As Chief Kamajor I was called every two days.

Commissioner Torto: You were called every two days to where and by who?

Katta: Mr. M.T. Collier

Commissioner Torto: For what?

Katta: To make arrangements for the war.

Commissioner Torto: During the war did you have women and children fighting along side the kamajor

Katta: It did not happen early days of the Kamajors.

Commissioner Torto: But later it happened?

Katta: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Leader of Evidence do you have questions?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you chairperson. When you talk about the rebels who occupied Goba town which rebels do you mean?

Katta: It was the RUF. They inscribed RUF on every house they occupied.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned in your statement that a number of young boys were abducted by rebels what happened to them?

Katta: Some came back.

Leader of Evidence: And what happened to the others? What happened to those who didn't come back?

Katta: I cannot tell what happened to those who did not come back. Even my grand daughter who was taken did not return. But I cannot say whether she is dead or alive.

Leader of Evidence: Was your granddaughter abducted?

Katta: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And did you try to trace her after the war.

Katta: I have tried to trace her but to no avail.

Leader of Evidence: And what about your daughter or your sister Fudia who became a rebel's wife? Did she choose to become a rebel's wife by choice?

Katta: She was abducted. I have not seen her too?

Leader of Evidence: But she was with you in Goba Town. She was with you when you ran away from Goba Town before the soldiers attacked.

Katta: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Was she taken away but the rebels when they fled?

Katta: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And what about the man who was the commander of the rebels- do you know where he is now?

Katta: He went with the rebels. But he was born here. He has children here.

Leader of Evidence: But where is he now?

Katta: I understand he died in Freetown.

Leader of Evidence: You said you became chief of the kamajors in your area.

Katta: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever go to base zero?

Katta: Yes I went there.

Leader of Evidence: Where is base zero?

Katta: Base Zero was an area for arrangement. There was a special place called Base Zero where people met to make arrangements.

Leader of Evidence: Yesterday we had a witness here who said that Base Zero was a council that made arrangements for the war to stop the war. Is that what you are also saying?

Katta: Yes, that's correct.

Leader of Evidence: Were you a member of this council.

Katta: I was not a member of the council.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know who were the members?

Bassy: Yes, I know some of them.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give us the names please?

Katta: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Go ahead.

Katta: Base Zero actually was a name given to a place they brushed around town where they meet in council. It was within Kalia township itself. The Paramount Chief of Gbapie Nongowa is a member of the council.

Leader of Evidence: Paramount Chief?

Katta: Paramunt Chief Tucker of Gbapie. Paramunt Chief of Nongoba Bullom, Chief Vandy Soka, Moinina Fofanah a member and Alhaji Daramy Rogers of Bo were also members of that council.

Leader of Evidence: And what about Hinga Norman- was he a member?

Katta: At the initial stage he was not a member. When he later started coming to the base he became a member. But the people I have named were initially the inner core of that council.

Leader of Evidence: And what about Kondowai.

Katta: He was a member.

Leader of Evidence: How many people were members of this council?

Katta: Even the Paramount Chief at Tihun- Chief Bio, was also a member of that council. There were some other people came from afar. I cannot remember all their names. But these are just the immediate people I can remember.

Leader of Evidence: Okay. And this council took the decision on where the kamajors had to go?

Katta: Well the main function of the council was to plan as to how get food for the kamajors. The council also catered for the medical needs of the Kamajors. The council also handled issues of crime.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know of any case were a Kamajor committed crime? Did you investigate or took a decision?

Katta: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know of any instance where a Kamajor committed a violation against a civilian and this council took care of the case?

Katta: There was a time when we went to Talia and found one Kamajor seriously tied.

Leader of Evidence: Tied?

Katta: Yes, tied up.

Leader of Evidence: I was talking about crimes been committed by Kamajors

Katta: Yes. This Kamajor was being punished for a crime.

Leader of Evidence: And why was he punished?

Katta: He took a single-barrel gun from a civilian. When the matter was reported he denied it. Upon investigations it was discovered that the Kamajor was in possession of that single-barrel gun. That was why he was punished.

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that this council was aware of everything the Kamajors did in the field?

Katta: I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence: Where you as a chief of the Kamajors aware of what your men did in the field?

Katta: Not at all. It was not my area of work to sendg them to the war front. There were people in charge of that.

Leader of Evidence: As the Chief did you receive any report?

Katta: Yes, I use to get some reports.

Leader of Evidence: And were those reports complete?

Katta: Sometimes civilians came to report kamajors

Leader of Evidence: And what did you do?

Katta: Mr. Goba was in the position at the initial stage.

Leader of Evidence: When were you given the position or post?

Katta: I can't remember the date. I was initiated in 1995. I was not given any position at that time because Mr. Goba was in charge.

Leader of Evidence: How many years were you chief of the Kamajors?

Katta: About 4 to 5 years

Leader of Evidence: Do you think that any of the Kamajors under your command committed any violations against civilians?

Katta: Yes, I am aware.

Leader of Evidence: Like what for instance?

Katta: They were insulting civilians.

Leader of Evidence: The commission received this morning a statement given by Joseph O. Musa in which it is said that you ordered your Kamajors to beat him because he refused to give rice to you. What do you have to say to that allegation?

Katta: Who gave the evidence?

Leader of Evidence: Joseph O. Musa.

Commissioner Torto: Excuse me just a minute, is Joseph Musa in the hall?

Leader of Evidence: Yes

Commissioner Torto: Can you bring him forward to be identified. Is this the man?

Musa: Yes, I am Joseph Musa.

Commissioner Torto: Okay you can go and sit down please

Leader of Evidence: Let me read the statement. He says I met Mr. Katta who was elected Chief after the rebels had left Mattru. He became a Chief Kamajor. At that time Mariam Luseni gave me a swamp. Maada Sam told Katta to ask us for swamp rice. I told them that Madam Mariama Luseni had given me the swamp. Katta said that he had been insulted. He told the Kamajors to look for me and catch me. They got me and took me to the Kamajor office at the District Council. Katta ordered his Kamajors to beat me. I was fined the sum of 10,000 Leones. I think that is the most important part of the story.

Katta: He is lying. What I did when he was taken to me at the CDF office is not what he had said. I know him.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us what happened?

Commissioner Torto: Please we don't want to encourage confrontation in this matter.

Katta: I never did what he has said.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Katta Kata we are not in court. We just want to know your own version of this story. We will like to know the truth about what happened.

Katta: I can apologise to them. It is unfortunate that you did not know the relationship between that man and I. We have been too close. If you had known the relationship you should have known that he is telling lies on me. Well, this is not the very first time. He had started in Bonthe. Musa and and one other man were writing letters to soldiers there telling them that we were rebels. They even went to the extent of taking a list of names to the soldier. But this is not the first time he has made allegations against me.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Mr. Katta for your testimony.

Commissioner Jones: Does he want to tell the real story?

Commissioner Torto: Do you?

Katta: I don't know anything about rice transaction with that man.

Commissioner Torto: Alright, Pa Katta, we thank you very much. Do you have any question for the commission?

Katta: Yes. We have gone through a lot of suffering. Our houses have been burnt down. We have lost almost all of our properties. You have come to get statements from us. At the end what is the Commission going to do for us or ask the government to do for us?

Commissioner Torto: The Commission is not in a position to do anything in that regard. If you however have suggestions to make as to how to address the problems you've faced, it is the Commission's responsibility to include them in its report to Government. Do you have further questions?

Katta: I have no other question, commissioner.

Commissioner Torto: Now, what recommendation would you want us to pass on to government?

Katta: This is an area well-known for agriculture. We have started receiving rice seedlings from Government. We want the government to continue to do that until during the dries. We want the government to send tractors so that we can begin our agricultural projects. We can have enough food to eat and excess to sell. Money earn from sale of agricultural products would be used to pay school fees and and attend to other things. So we are asking for more agricultural tools, especially tractors. Secondly we have a hospital here but still it is not enough. We are pleading for more medical assistance.

Commissioner Torto: We thank him very much for coming.

Katta: Well we have got the rice seedling what we are dearly in need of are tractors.

Commissioner Torto: The Ministry of agriculture would certainly have programmes in that direction. Your recommendations will be part of report. Thank you very much. As mark of respect to the deceased and their family and as a

symbol of our compassion, please stand up in observance of a minute silence after I have read the names of the following people: Jebbeh Massaquoi, and unknown woman stabbed to death at Mattru Jong. May their souls rest in perfect peace. We are now going to start hearings for children and women. Leader of Evidence may we have the witness' please?

Leader of Evidence: Abu Brima.

WITNESS No. 4

WITNESS NAME: Abu Brima

(The oath is administered)

Commissioner Torto: Abu Brima, we want you to reflect on what you went through during the war and share your experiences with us. Explain how you got involved into the whole thing and what happened? Be assure that the Commission understands that it was not by your own fault. Anyway Abu what do you want to do now, now that you have been set free? What are you doing at the moment?

Abu: I am attending school?

Commissioner Torto: what class?

Abu: Class 3.

Commissioner Torto: With whom are you staying?

Abu: I am now staying with my father.

Commissioner Torto: Thank God. Commissioners do you have question for the witness?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes. Abu, tell me all the things you did when you were with the rebels. Four years is a long time. Describe a day with the rebels what would an ordinary day be like with the rebels?

Abu: Sometimes we went to sell vegetables.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where would you go to sell vegetables when you were with the rebels.

Abu: Buedu.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You will leave the camp and go to sell vegetables.

Abu: We had left the camp. We were in the town.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So the rebels were living in town?

Abu: Yes

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And you were living with them.

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Why didn't you run away then?

Abu: They were flogging us at that time seriously.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Apart from selling vegetables what else did you do?

Abu: We were making farms. We were helping them to make farms.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Planting what?

Abu: We use to plant rice and pepper.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you able to harvest the rice?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you do any schooling at all?

Abu: Yes. I was going to school when we were at Buedu.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What were you taught?

Abu: He used to put some work in the blackboard for us.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can you remember anything you learnt there?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Tell me one thing

Abu: He taught us to read.

Commissioner Marcus -Jones: What did you learn.

Abu: Here is the key. Bintu is buying balloon.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Were you taught any songs?

Abu: Yes, but I cannot remember them down.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Now that you've started schooling again have you told your school friends what happened to you?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And what do they say to you?

Abu: Nothing..

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did you loot?

Abu: Yes, we were looting.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How did you go about it?

Abu: They gave the looted items to us to carry.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You did not loot yourself.

Abu: Well, our boss or leader does not allow us to leave him we are always on his side.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Who was your boss?

Abu: Desmond John

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did know Desmond John before? If you see him now can you recognise him?

Abu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know where he is?

Abu: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What was he- this Desmond John? What did he speak, Krio, Mende. What language did he speak?

Abu: He use to speak Mende and Krio.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What would you like to be when you grow up?

Abu: I want to be educated.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: After education what would you like to do? What work would you like to do- teacher, pilot, engineer?

Abu: I would like to become a Mason.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: A what?

Abu: A mason.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you worried now about the time you spent with the rebels.

Abu: I have forgotten about them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: That's good. Alright thank you. Who takes care of you at home?

Abu: My mothers' mate

Commissioner Torto: Alright. I am interested in the way you travelled. Those distances that rebels covered were really very long. How did you travel- by vehicle or on foot?

Abu: On foot. Once on a while we used vehicles.

Commissioner Torto: Where did you escape from them?

Abu: At Bendu Junction.

Commissioner Torto: It's amazing. Leader of Evidence, do you have questions for the witness?

Leader of Evidence: Yes. Abu, I want to ask you a few questions. How many children were abducted at that time in your village?

Abu: I think we were four.

Leader of Evidence: Four. Did the others come back as well?

Abu: The others have not returned.

Leader of Evidence: And you don't know where they are now.

Abu: I don't know their whereabouts.

Leader of Evidence: How many other children were staying with the rebels?

Abu: Many.

Leader of Evidence: Boys and girls.

Abu: Yes, both.

Leader of Evidence: Do you remember how old you were when you were abducted?

Abu: No.

Leader of Evidence: How long ago did you come back?

Abu: I came back in 2001.

Leader of Evidence: So you were 8 yrs old.

Abu: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Did the rebels give you any military training?

Abu: Yes, they did that.

Leader of Evidence: What did you learn during the training?

Abu: They were teaching us so many things.

Leader of Evidence: Tell us some of them.

Abu: They taught us how to jog, crawl on the ground, and how to dismantle a gun.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever go with the rebels to attack villages?

Abu: Yes, sometimes I used to go with them. Sometimes we went in search of food.

Leader of Evidence: What was your role?

Abu: Well, sometimes we uprooted cassava.

Leader of Evidence: I mean when the rebels went to attack villages. I suppose they didn't have time to uproot cassava.

Abu: We don't go.

Leader of Evidence: Some children have told the Commission that they went along with the rebels and threw stones at people's houses. Was that something you did?

Abu: Well, during our own period we were not doing that.

Leader of Evidence: Were there women who were rebels?

Abu: There were women rebels.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know some of their names? Who is the most important of the women?

Abu: I can only remember one person.

Leader of Evidence: What's the name?

Abu: Cololonel Monica.

Leader of Evidence: And what did she do?

Abu: She was the secretary.

Leader of Evidence: Who was the biggest boss amongst the rebels?

Abu: Morris Kallon

Leader of Evidence: And did you ever see mosquito?

Abu: Yes, I saw him.

Leader of Evidence: Where did you see him?

Abu: I saw him at Kailahun/

Leader of Evidence: What did he do?

Abu: His wife was in Kailahun.

Leader of Evidence: Did you ever see Foday Sankoh?

Abu: Yes, I saw Foday Sankoh as well.

Leader of Evidence: Where did you see him?

Abu: Buedu, when he went there with a helicopter.

Leader of Evidence: What did he do?

Abu: He addressed people.

Leader of Evidence: What did he say?

Abu: I cannot remember what he was saying.

Leader of Evidence: Did they ever explain to you why they were fighting?

Abu: Yes, they used to tell us.

Leader of Evidence: What did they say?

Abu: They said they were fighting for freedom?

Leader of Evidence: Did they ever gave any drugs to the children.

Abu: No

Leader of Evidence: Okay, thank you very much. I don't have any more questions.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have questions for the Commission?

Abu: Yes. What assistance are you people going to give us now that we have given all these evidences and information?

Commissioner Torto: Well, Abu, this is a sad part of our job that we as commissioners and staff have not been very comfortable with. This question is been asked everywhere we go. It is sad when people asked us to do things for them and we are unable to do. All we can do to mention people like you and your condition in our recommendations to government. Do you have any other question?

Abu: No. I have no more questions.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendations that you think should be passed on to government?

Abu: I have no recommendation.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for coming. You may step down now.

Leader of Evidence: Our next witness is Abibatu Harding. Are you muslim or Christian?

Abibatu: Christian.

WITNESS No.: 5

WITNESS NAME: Abibatu Harding

(The oath was administered).

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Abibatu, you have nothing to worry about. We are ready to listen to you. Therefore feel relaxed and just tell us what happened to you during the war. Carry on. We were in our town one day then we heard that the rebels had come as far as Semabu. We ran away into the bush. We stayed in the bush for two weeks. Then rebels told us to leave the bush and come to the town. They us to Matru where stayed for three days. We left there to go to another location. On our way they told us to sing for

them. As we were singing they started killing people. They reached at us and they killed my mother. I was wounded on my back. In the morning I left the town and went into the bush. I stayed in the bush with nothing to drink and eat. On the fourth day my father found me in the bush and he carried me to a hiding place where he started treating my wounds with native herbs. On our way to Mattru we met the rebels and the soldiers fighting. We could not enter the town. So we went to another village.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Abibatu. I see you made an additional statement telling of life in the bush. Is it a description of life in the bush with you father before you were abducted?

Abibatu: I was not abducted.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Oh, you just captured for a short. You were not carried away. You were lined up and the rebels shot people. How long did it last?

Abibatu: Everything took place the same day.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Did they just leave you to walk away after wounding you on the back and on the ear?

Abibatu: They didn't leave me to walk away. They killed so many people. They thought all of us had died. It was when they forgot about us that I walked away slowly into the bush.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And your mother's corpse was left there.

Abibatu: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What happened to it?

Abibatu: There were so many corpses lying there. Nobody was able to take any corpse because the rebels were checking all the time.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: So what happened to those corpses eventually?

Abibatu: They rot.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was the village not able to collect all of them and bury them?

Abibatu: Later they dug a hole and gathered all the bones and buried them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: How old were you at that time when this happened to you?

Abibatu: I cannot remember my age at that time.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendations to make to the Commission?

Abibatu: No, madam.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. you can step down.

DAY 3
BEFORE:
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto (Presiding)
Commissioner Marcus-Jones

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Lydia

Adeker: Ladies and gentlemen, we welcome you to the third day of our hearings here in Matru. We are ready to start and I will ask that we stand and remain standing as the Commissioners come in. Shall we stand please for the Commissioners? I have the pleasure to hand you over to Commissioner Sylvanus Torto.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. Good morning all of you and welcome to today's hearings. I just want to remind you that the rules remain the same as stated yesterday by Commissioner Marcus-Jones. Let us stand up for Muslim and Christian Prayers respectively.

(Muslim and christian prayers were offered)

Commissioner Torto: Leader of Evidence, may we start with our first witness please.

Leader of Evidence: Chairperson, our first Witness for this morning is Sheku Kpasiwai.

WITNESS No.: 1
WITNESS NAME: Sheku Kpasiwai

Commissioner Torto: May the witness identify himself please?

KPASIWAI: My name is Sheku Kpasiwai of Gbanda Kemoh Chiefdom.

Commissioner Torto: Christian or Muslim?

KPASIWAI: I am a Christian.

(The oath was administered)

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Sheku. You may have suffered harrassment and various kinds of human rights violations during the ten years of war. As you may agree with us there is not sufficient time to allow you to explain everything. So we want you to share your experiences with us on one or two of the incidents. So please go ahead.

KPASIWAI: We were in our village the rebels attacked us. They started matcheting and killing people. We ran into the bush. In the bush we had a camp. When the rebels also started chasing us in our various camps we left. The rebels made a law that if anybody did not leave the camps and come back into the town, that person will be killed when caught. We left the camps and came back to the town. We were all gathered in one place called Ngeyebu. Then they read another law that nothing belonged to any individual. Everything belonged to everybody in the community.

We heard that soldiers were coming to liberate this area, more especially the road. After hearing that news, the rebels came back to the village and told us that they were going to kill all of us because they were made to understand that we were no longer giving them support that we were expecting the soldiers to come. We told them not to do that. We said they had our full support. They went back into the bush. The rebels came back to the town after a few days threatening to kill everybody. We had to hide. We were initiated into the Kamajor Society. After our initiation, we got a letter from Chief Hinga Norman requesting us all to travel to Bo because elections was at hand..

So we went to Bo. While we were in Bo we sometimes saw some people coming with amputated hands. They would tell us that they had been amputated by rebels. We got another message from Chief Hinga Norman again asking us to go back to our various villages and into the bush to bring our brothers and sisters back to town. So we went back to our various villages. In my group we only had two guns. All of us had machetes. We came across 800 rebels. They killed two of our colleagues. The others ran away. So only two of us were left in the town. They were firing at me. I shouted at the gun and it ceased firing. I was able to handle one of their guns. We started exchanging fire. I had a bullet wound on my leg. One of my companions who was with me in the town was killed. He was called Shaw Simbo. We retreated and went into the bush. The following morning I crossed the stream and went away.

The man who took me across the stream left me in the bush for three consecutive nights. It was the miners that saw me. They took me away. They carried me to a village called Kuranko and later taken to Leguma Kandou. Pa Norman sent a vehicle to take me to Bo. I was in the hospital there for three days. Later I was sent to the camp where the amputees were resident. Throughout that period, my leg did not heal. During my stay in the camp, an old lady came at one time very close to me and whispered in my ears that she was made to understand that rebels were coming to attack Bo and that they might be looking out for Kamajors. She said it would be proper for me to leave that area and go back to wherever I came from. When I got this news, I left that area and went to Sugar Ball Hotel. At Sugar Ball Hotel I saw Mr. Moinina Fofanah and gave him the news. But Moinina Fofanah said I was not to worry over that. He promised to provide a vehicle that evening to take me back to Mattru Jong. The vehicle arrived. So I was brought back to base. That was my own experience.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Sheku Kpasiwai. The Commissioners will ask you questions, followed by questions from the Leader of Evidence. How long have you been a Kamajor?

KPASIWAI: I was initiated in the year 1995.

Commissioner Torto: How many battles did you take part in?

KPASIWAI: I fought three times. It was on the third time that I got that bullet wound.

Commissioner Torto: The third time?

KPASIWAI: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: During those battles do you remember killing people intentionally or unintentionally?

KPASIWAI: I did not slaughter anybody with machetes. When attacked by a group of rebels we exchanged fire.

Commissioner Torto: Were there rules about the protection of civilians during those attacks?

KPASIWAI: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: And what were some of them?

KPASIWAI: Well, if you are going to war and had an ordinary civilian with you who was not a member of the Kamajor Society, you rubbed charms on him or her.

Commissioner Torto: What about the civilians who were not members of the fighting force?

KPASIWAI: If rebels open fire on us when civilians are around. We don't fire back immediately.

Commissioner Torto: Who was Chuck Norris?

KPASIWAI: He was our battle Commander.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Commissioners do you have any questions?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for your testimony. Did you ever meet Hinga Norman?

KPASIWAI: Yes, I met him.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Where was this?

KPASIWAI: When he invited us to Bo before the elections. All of us were lodged at Sugar Ball.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And what happened?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Was that the only occasion you met him?

KPASIWAI: After that I did not meet him again.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright, thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Leader of Evidence, do you have questions for Mr. Sheku?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Chairperson, Mr. Kpasiwai, were you ever at Base Zero.

KPASIWAI: I did not go to Base Zero.

Leader of Evidence: And during your initiation in Bo were you given Military training?

KPASIWAI: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were you taught how to handle a gun?

KPASIWAI: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And you were also told not to mistreat civilians?

KPASIWAI: We were told not to be harsh with civilians.

Leader of Evidence: Do you know of any Kamajor who mistreated civilians and was punished for it?

KPASIWAI: Well, I do not know of any other Kamajor. I only know about myself and what I did.

Leader of Evidence: And you yourself did you harm any civilians?

KPAIWAI: I don't think I did. In those days there were very great restrictions.

Leader of Evidence: Why do you say at that time? Did it change later?

KPASIWAI: Well, I cannot tell.

Leader of Evidence: You mentioned that you met Hinga Norman. You also mentioned that you met Moinina Fofanah at one time. Could you explain what his role was?

KPASIWAI: Those were the people that gave us instructions to go to the war front. Those two people. Hinga Norman and Moinina Fofanah. Moinina Fofanah was the War Director.

Leader of Evidence: Who was of the highest in rank- Hinga Norman or Moinina Fofanah?

KPASIWAI: Hinga Norman.

Leader of Evidence: And did you ever meet Kondowai?

KPASIWAI: Yes, he initiated me into the Society.

Leader of Evidence: What was his rank compared to Moinina Fofanah and Hinga Norman?

KPASIWAI: Norman was the highest in rank.

Leader of Evidence: And then came Moinina Fofanah and then Kondowai? What was the rank?

KPASIWAI: Kondowai was only an initiator.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Kpasiwai, the Commission has a lot of testimonies of civilians who said that they were bitter with the Kamajors. Some even had their relatives killed by Kamajors. What do you think about that?

KPASIWAI: After that bullet wound I did not participate in any other thing whatsoever. So I cannot comment.

Leader of Evidence: Yes, but you did participate in three fights and you were a Kamajor for a long time.

KPASIWAI: The things you are talking about were not common in our own days. We were under strict regulations.

Leader of Evidence: You yourself was initiated in 1995. So when did you have this bullet wound?

KPASIWAI: It was during the 1996 elections.

Leader of Evidence: Now, I just want to go back to the beginning of your testimony when you said that the rebels attacked your village. Can you tell us what rebels those were?

KPASIWAI: Yes, I will tell you who the rebels were. One of them was called Sokay, another was called Kaywoh, another called Gbassay, and another one called Freedom. Those were the people that came and set our village ablaze.

Leader of Evidence: Which group did those rebels belong to?

KPASIWAI: Well, I cannot tell because all of them had combat fatigue.

Leader of Evidence: Were they AFRC, RUF, or were they Kamajors?

KPASIWAI: They did not tell me their group. I don't know their group. They only had guns and combat fatigues.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us how many people were killed during that attack?

KPASIWAI: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Were there any relatives of yours?

KPASIWAI: Yes, a good number of my relatives were among the dead.

Leader of Evidence: Can you give us some names?

KPASIWAI: Yes, I can give you some names.

Leader of Evidence: Please go ahead.

KPASIWAI: One is Pa Ali Yemgbe. They tied his hands and legs and he was beaten to death. Another one was Beni Joe. He was tied and burnt to death. Another one was Lahai Bordameh

Leader of Evidence: Lahia?

KPASIWAI: Lahai Bordameh. Another one was Mr. Sam King. Those are the corpses I saw with my own naked eyes.

Leader of Evidence: You say Sam King?

KPASIWAI: Sam King

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Sheku for your testimony and we are very much sorry for the relatives you lost during the war. We have asked you questions after your testimony and you have answered them. Do you have questions for the Commission?

KPASIWAI: Yes, Commissioner

Commissioner Torto: Go ahead.

KPASIWAI: Well, I was wounded during the war. Today I cannot walk. I am not able to work and I don't have anything. I am only requesting that you assist me. I have children. I cannot tell what type of assistance I need, but I need it. I am poor, I have no money.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you for this request. The Commission is really sorry that it does not have the mandate to actually provide assistance to individual victims. If the Commission had it, you would have definitely qualified for that type of assistance. There are however NGOs around that are rendering various assistance. I want to encourage you to find out what they can do for you.. If you were given some form of transitional safety allowance as an ex-combatants, I want to encourage encourage you to make very good use of that. I know the answer that I have given is not going to be enough but there is nothing enough in the whole world. Any other question?

KPASIWAI: I have no more questions, Commissioner.

Commissioner Torto: Does you have recommendations you think we could pass on to the Government?

KPASIWAI: Yes, Commissioner.

Commissioner Torto: Let's hear you please?

KPASIWAI: Please pass on to Government the request that I made to you.

Commissioner Torto: I can assure you that it will be included in our report. Any other recommendations?

KPASIWAI: I thank you very much Commissioner.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. If you don't have any further recommendations, you may stand down.

Commissioner Torto: Leader of Evidence, the next witness please?

Leader of Evidence: Chairperson, our next witness for this morning is Mrs Jeneba Vandy.

WITNESS No.: 2

WITNESS NAME: Jeneba Vandi

(The oath was administered)

Commissioner Torto: Jeneba, as it has just been done with the first witness you will have to make a verbal statement after which Commissioners here will ask you questions. The commissioners questions will be followed by questions from the Leader of Evidence. At the end, you too will have the opportunity to ask us questions and also profer recommendations. So we want you to explain to us particular incidents that affected you most during the ten year war.

TESTIMONY BY JENEBA VANDY

The rebels came to Kagbonda Kemoh and attacked us. I was entering into my house when one of the rebels took a cutlass and stopped me. 'What have you come to do here' he asked? I told the rebel that this was my house. The rebel told me that as from that day the house was no longer mine. He went away with my sister-in-law. All our properties were looted and they didn't allow us to re-enter the town. We left Kagbonda Kemoh chieftdom altogether and went to Bumpe Chieftdom. We went one village called Gendema. That was were I was wounded. When the rebels attacked us, one of them was chased me with a cutlass and wounded me on my hand and face. Then one of the small rebels came to me and asked whether I had been killed. The rebel that wounded me said "no she did not die but she will not survive the wound that I have given her".

I stayed in the bush until the evening. I struggled to go to a house. I was taken from there and carried to somewhere else. They tried to treat my cut with native herbs. Early in the morning my husband spread word that I had been killed and wanted to and bury me. When people came they did not meet me dead. So my husband ordered people to lay me on a hammock and carry me. They continued to treat me with herbs. After sometime the pain started to heal up and they told me to go with them to Bo. On our way to Bo rebels attacked us again. The rebels carried away everything we had. We were left with nothing. So we decided not to go any further to Bo Town because we didn't have anything to wear. We went back into the bush.

Kamajors were looking for us. We were found taken to the town. We were now staying in the town. The rebels abducted my daughter who had three children. I heard later that my daughter and all her children died. And she was the one that was taking care of me because I suffer from epilepsy. Today I don't have anyone to look after me. I have so many other children but that was the only one that took care of me. One day I had an attack of epilepsy and fell on firern. I was in that fire until the following morning. I became parpalysed and stayed at home for two years. In the third year I started walking. The child that I had at the time I fell into the fire was not breastfed because my breast was dried up. So the child got sick and got tetanus. But I thank God the child survived. I have said everything.

Leader of Evidence:

Commissioner I think the witness wants to show you her burnt legs.

Commissioner Torto: We thank Madam Jeneba Vandy very much for this sorrowful testimony. The Commission sympathises with her on the loss of her relatives and all

that she went through. We just want her to answer some questions for some clarifications of issues from both the verbal and written testimonies. Do you remember the group of rebels that attacked?

Jeneba: I cannot tell the group.

Commissioner Torto: Did you happen to see the faces of any of the attackers? Do you know them today?

Jeneba: No

Commissioner Torto: Do you remember who wounded you?

Jeneba: There were a lot of them in the group. I cannot remember the particular person.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, how is your health condition now after all the severe wounding and the fire accident?

Jeneba: I am sick. I feel pain all over my body.

Commissioner Torto: At the end of the testimony you will talk to the briefers. They will give you a letter of recommendation for some medical treatment. How many children do you have?

Jeneba: I have five children

Commissioner Torto: The husband too?

Jeneba: The husband is with me.

Commissioner Torto: What about the son?

Jeneba: The boy is also with us.

Commissioner Torto: I am happy to know because according to the written statement here you were not able to trace them. I'm happy to hear that the husband and son are alive. Commissioner Marcus-Jones will ask you questions.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Jeneba, we are sorry that you had all those injuries during the war. And in addition to that you seem to have a very small worrying illness. I just don't understand how you could fall in the fire and stayed there till morning. Could you explain? Where was the husband?

Jeneba: I was living with my sister-in-law at the time. My husband was staying in another house. I will give a lot of praise to my husband because he is really cares for me. That was just an unfortunate situation. He has taken a lot of care I can say that to even my parents.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I am very happy to hear that you have a supportive husband. Have you been able to get any counselling from people given what you suffered during the war? I think you need counseling?

Jeneba: Except you provide for me a counsellor.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Our counsellor will talk to you after here. Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Leader of Evidence, do you have questions for Jeneba?

Leader of Evedence: Thank you chairperson. I am sorry for all your suffering and for the loss of your daughter and her children. Can you give us the name of your daughter?

Jeneba: Her name was Sato Vandy.

Leader of Evedence: And do you also have the name of her children that wre abducted with her?

Jeneba: I can't remember their names.

Leader of Evedence: It's okay, it's okay. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Jeneba, we have asked you questions. Do you have questions for the Commission?

Jeneba: Yes, I have a question.

Commissioner Torto:Okay.

JENEBA: Am I going to get any medical assistance from the Commissioner?

Commissioner Torto: We have just taken care of that.

Jeneba: The rebels also burnt down my house and right now I am displaced.

Commissioner Torto: What form of assistance?

Jeneba: I want a house.

Commissioner Torto: And what else?

Jeneba: That is all.

Commissioner Torto: We are sorry that it is not the mandate of the Commission to build houses. It is the sorrowful part of our work. We do not have the mandate or the resources to build individual houses for people. We will however encourage you to talk to e NGOs that provide assistance in that regard. Do you have recommendations that we can pass on to the Government?

Jeneba: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Yes, let us hear them.

Jeneba: I am telling the Government that I have a small child. I need assistance for that child because the child is very sickly. I am not able to take care of that child. We need food and clothing. That is the recommendation I have.

Commissioner Torto: I thank you very much for coming to the Commissson. You may step down now. Leader of Evidence, may we have the next witness?

Leader of Evidence: Chairperson, our next witness for this afternoon is Allieu Ndimawa.

(The oath was administered)

WITNESS No.: 3

WITNESS NAME: Allieu Ndimawa

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Allieu, please briefly tell us about any incidence that happened during the last war in which you were involved. I know you may have gone through a lot of struggles but we want you to share with the Commission just one or two particular incidences that actually grieved you most.

Allieu: I say thanks to the Commission. We were in our village called Bolum. One morning we heard gunshots coming from Gbap end. We saw a young man running towards us. "What has happened' we asked? "The rebels have set us in disarray" he replied. "It is the rebels that are shooting at the moment." All of us went into the bush that morning. One hour later we saw a large contingent of rebels approaching us. They entered the village shooting at random and insulting people. They entire village was completely burnt down. There was a Mosque and a school in the village. They were all burnt down. Six people were killed.

We stayed in Bonthe for three months. We suffered hunger in Bonth. When we heard that Kamajors had cleared our area we decided to go back. The Kamajors attacked our village and looted properties. We walked down to Bonthe and reported to the District Officer. The District Officer at the time was D.O. Kanneh. Before reporting to D.O. Kanneh we first told our traditional head – the Paramount Chief. The D.O. wrote a letter to Bo to one Mr Monina Fofanah and the Provincial Secretary reporting what the Kamajors did. We went back to our village.

Two weeks later, a lady called Wuyatta Kandja came to us to ask that we return her things that Kamajors sold to us. We refused. She then went and reported us to one Kamajor Chief in a near-by village. Two Kamajors were sent to collect us all of us who were heading of the tradefare. We were asked to give ten thousand Leones to the Kamajors who went for us. They said it was their transport fare. We paid. We were also asked to pay seven thousand Leones for the complaint lodged against us. That was also paid. We were asked to pay for the lady's things. We were given two weeks to pay.

We were preparing to go to Bonthe again to make a report when the District Officer, came to our village. We reported the matter to him. We explained to him exactly what happened to us. He instructed us not to pay anything. He told us to report any Kamajor who threatened us. On that same day, the lady who wanted us to pay for her things reappeared with another Kamajor. She said the Kamajor was sent by Kondowai. The Kamajor said we were to pay by force for the lady's missing property. We told them that the District Officer had instructed us not to pay for anything. The Kamajor started shooting at random in the village. Some Kamajors who were around seized the gun from him. The woman and the Kamajor went back and reported to Kondowai. He sent a number of Kamajors who came and looted more of our things.

We again came to Bonthe and reported to the District Officer that the same thing that happened to us had reoccurred. He promised to take action. He told us to go back and exercise patience. We continued to run our

tradefare. As the situation was normalizing the Paramount Chief told us that he was going to remove the trade fare from us. We went and pleaded with him but he refused to accept our plea. We came again and reported to the District Officer. The District Officer summoned him twice. Twice he did not respond to the District Officer's call. The District Officer told us that since it was a Kamajor zone it was not safe for him to go there. He gave us a letter however to take to the Provincial Secretary in Bo. The Provincial Secretary reported the matter to the Residence Minister.

Commissioner Torto: Mr Allieu, please, we want things that actually border on human rights violations. We are not concerned with civil cases, trade fare, and that kind of thing. We want to hear about physical torture, killings and things like that. Can you round up so that we please?

Allieu: I want to conclude my testimony because a lot of money was taken from us at that time. We went back to Monina Fofanah. He told us in Bo to pay back the sum of two million Leones if we wanted the trade fare to continue. We said we were not able to give that kind of money. We pleaded to pay one million Leones. Monina Fofanah gave a condition that unless we paid the money he was not going to accept us to head the trade fare. The money was paid to him and he never allowed us to continue with the tradefare. He said that the tradefare was locked for good and the keys had been sent to the monkeys. He took my brother to Bo and locked him up in jail for thirty days. He never refunded our money. Those are some of the things that I suffered during the war.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr Allieu Ndimawa. Did anybody die during all these ordeals? Was anybody killed?

Allieu: That was the first thing I said in my testimony. Six people we were killed.

Commissioner Torto: What village is that?

Allieu: Bolum.

Commissioner Torto: Under what circumstances did the people die?

Allieu: They were killed by the rebels.

Commissioner Torto: Did the rebels find Kamajors or soldiers in the village?

Allieu: There were no Kamajors or soldiers.

Commissioner Torto: They just attacked the town?

Allieu: They just entered the villages and started burning down houses and killing people.

Commissioner Torto: Six people died in the process?

Allieu: Six people died in all.

Commissioner Torto: You said in your verbal statement and your written statement that you were not getting along with the Paramount Chief. For some reasons the Paramount Chief took the tradefare business from your hands.

Allieu: Yes

Commissioner Torto: You were a contractor for the fare. The chiefdom had given you the contract.

Allieu: Yes

Commissioner Torto: So what was the nature of disagreement between you and the chief?

Allieu: I did not do any wrong. He simply removed it from us. We were paying monthly dues to him. He gave us receipts.

Commissioner Torto: What is the name of the chief and the chiefdom?

Allieu: Paramount Chief C. W. Tucker of Nongoba Bullum Chiefdom.

Commissioner Torto: Who was Monina Fofanah?

Allieu: He was called Director of War.

Commissioner Torto: Dis you say you gave him Le1,000,000 what for? Why did you give him Le1,000,000?

Allieu: He went to the tradefare and threatened to stop if we didn't give him Le2,000,000.

Commissioner Torto: So you gave the money and he didn't stop the trade fare?

Allieu: We ended up paying Le1,000,000.

Commissioner Torto: On the orders of who?

Allieu: He ordered us to pay.

Commissioner Torto: Was the money collected on the orders of the Paramount Chief or Kondowai the head of the Kamajors?

Allieu: I don't think so. It was for Monina Fofanah himself. His voice was more powerful at than the two people. When the Provincial Secretary instructed that the Trade fare be restarted, Fofanah threatened to deal drastically anybody who attempted to do so.

Commissioner Torto: And he was not taking orders from his boss who happens to be Konowai?

Allieu : Not at all. Even Konowai was afraid of him.

Commissioner Torto: What is he now in the chiefdom?

Allieu : I hear rumour that he is in this town.

Commissioner Torto: Here in Bonthe?

Allieu : That is what I hear people say.

COMM TORTO: Have you seen him here.

Allieu : I have not set eyes on him since I came.

Commissioner Torto: You also said that Moinina Fofanah killed your uncle called Vandi Ndimawa. Under what circumstances?

Allieu : I did not say he killed him. He arrested my uncle and took him to Bo where he was locked for thirty days. We had to pay Le76,000 before he was released.

Commissioner Torto: Who do you think was responsible for human rights violations in the chiefdom- the rebels, the Kamajors, or the Paramount Chief

Allieu: All of them inflicted punishments on me.

Commissioner Torto: How

Allieu: The rebels destroyed our villages, killed our relatives, and burnt down our plantations. The Paramount Chief was in league with Moinina Fofanah. They seized everything from us. Kondowa sent Kamajors to harass us. That's the reason why I say all of them inflicted punishment on us.

Commissioner Torto: Who is running the fare now?

Allieu: It is now permanently with the Paramount Chief. It is not with us.

Commissioner Torto: What is the current position of Moinina Fofanah?

Allieu: There was a time when the paramount Chief took him to us and told us that he was going to be the chiefdom speaker. The chiefdom people rejected him. It almost became a crisis in our chiefdom. The report was made to the District Officer. The chiefdom people insisted that they did not want him. That was what refused his leadership. After sometime Fofanah disappeared. We've now started hearing that he is here in Bonthe. That is all I know about him.

Commissioner Torto: Who is now chiefdom speaker?

Allieu: The office is vacant.

Commissioner Torto: If Moinina Fofanah goes back?

Allieu: We have decided that he should not become our speaker.

Commissioner Torto: Let me make a point on the appointment of chiefdom speakers. It does not mean that I am backing Moinina Fofanah. I'm just explaining a Government policy. The policy is that once a chief is elected; if the position of a speaker is vacant the chief has the right to appoint one. But let's go back to our issue at hand. Are you still interested in this type of trade?

Allieu: Precisely. I like it because that is where I get my livelihood. It was out of the trade fare that we used to pay the teachers at our school. The school is no longer existing but source of money has been taken away.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. It is really sad that you lost six people during an attack on your village. Commissioner, do you have any questions for Mr Allieu?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes. Thank you very much mr Allieu. Can you give us the names of the six people who died?

Allieu: Joe Kekuda, Senessie Abu, Madam Adama, and Kemoh Gibrilla and his son.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And what's the name of the son?

Allieu: Moray Gibrilla.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. When did the attack take place?

Allieu: 1996.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Which group attacked the villages? Was it the RUF or CDF, or something else?

Allieu: RUF.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: During this war were any of your relatives killed. Were any of your relatives among those people killed in the villages?

Allieu: Yes. I am related to all of them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Close relations?

Allieu: Some were very close relation.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Mr Ndimawa. Do you have questions for the Commission?

Allieu: I don't have any question for the Commission.

Commissioner Torto: Do you have any recommendations to make?

Allieu: Precisely.

Commissioner Torto: Let us hear them.

Allieu: We want Government to help us rebuild our school. We are also appealing to government to help us rebuild our Mosque in the village. And the most important thing we want Government to do is to re-instituted the trade fare. And it should be put in our care.

Commissioner Torto: In whose care?

Allieu: In our care.

Commissioner Torto: Let me briefly comment on the recommendations: the project to rebuild your school cannot be a problem. The Ministry of Education is rebuilding of many school. It may be that they have not yet reached in your area. We will stake your recommendations into consideration. I've not seen government building Mosques or Churches. I advise that you rebuild your mosque through communal efforts.

The issue of re-instating the trade fare and putting it in your care is a question for the chiefdom council. It is really a matter for the chiefdom. I will encourage you to really lobby and talk with the chiefdom authorities. Do you have other suggestions or recommendations?

Allieu: No.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much for coming. You may stand down. Next witness. Do we have another witness for today?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Mr Commissioner we have heard all the witnesses for today except for one who has arrived. I suggest that we hear him tomorrow.

Commissioner Torto: We have come to the end of today's hearings here. We thank you very much for coming. As you may know tomorrow is our last day here in Bonthe. But we will sit up to two O'clock in the afternoon. We will have a very short ceremony to say goodbye. We are asking you to please come tomorrow. We will be moving to Matru Jong late in the afternoon tomorrow. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone has today had testimonies as to the tragic loss of many human lives in the conflict that ravaged our country. As a mark of respect to the deceased and their families and as a symbol of our compassion and solidarity, we ask that you please stand up in observance of a minute silence after I have read the names of the following:

- Victor B Koh
- Kona Pujeh
- P. C. Brandon
- Kontoh
- Konema Nao

Many people killed in Gbap, Kangama chiefdom including the following:

- Joe Kekuda
- Senessie,
- Madam Adama
- Kamoh Gibrilla and
- Moray of Kangama

May we stand please? May the souls of those departed rest in perfect peace. With this brief closing ceremony, the hearings for today are adjourned to tomorrow morning at 9:30 a.m. So we thank you for coming again and hope to see you then. Thank you.

DAY 4.

BEFORE:

Commissioner Marcus-Jones (Presiding)

**Commissioner Satang Jow
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto
Commissioner John Kamara**

**LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Lydia
Commissioner Satang Jow**

**WITNESS No.: 1
WITNESS NAME: Sei Manni**

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen.

Leader of Evidence, may we have your first witness please.

Commissioner Jow: Madam Chairperson, our first witness is Mr Sei Manni. .

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Witness, could you give us your name in full. You might have other names that we don't know.

MANNI: Sei Manni.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim?

MANNI: I'm a Muslim.

(The oath was administered)

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming. Mr. Sei Manni, your name has been called quite often in this Commission. We want to hear what you have to say. We are not here to fight. And we are not here for confrontation. We just want the truth. And were possible, people should express regret for what they have done and be ready to reconcile with others.

Lahai Koroma Ndokoi has appeared before this Commission to say that you were responsible for spreading rumours that he had business with the soldiers. He said you wanted him killed because you were interested in having somebody else as Chiefdom Speaker. You have also been accused of ordering Kamajors to beat up Paramount Chief Brandon. The chief subsequently died as a result of the beating. What do you have to say? Please try to make your testimony as brief as possible and to the point. How old are you?

Manni: I don't know my age.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, from your look, you are as matured as Ndokoi. So, you are two mature, elderly people who should be able to tell us what happened. Carry on.

Manni: The allegation that I ordered the beating of the Paramount Chief is not true. The then District Officer, Mr Kanneh, the late Paramount Chief Brandon, Rev, Sandi and our late Secretary General, Victor Caulker stayed with me when they escaped from Bonthe. I walked them through the bush, and helped to build huts for them to live in. I fought to save their lives. The Late Paramount Chief was my brother. It makes no

sense to order his killing. People have made this allegation because they hate me. I suffered a lot of troubles in during the war. I had two houses in Bonthe. They were burnt down. The left Bonthe distressed and went to my village. The village was also destroyed. I was not a Kamajor at the time. Throughout the war, I didn't become a Kamajor.

Pa Lahai Ndokoi was the actual Paramount Chief. His had more powers than the Paramount Chief himself. When I went to Mosande, he ordered rebels to leave Bonthe to go to Mosande and burn down the village. He was thje one responsible for the destruction of this entire area. Duuring the last Paramount chieftancy elections he asked us to vote for him. How can we vote for somebody who has distressed us? All his allegations against us at this Commission is a revenge. All what is testified before you is not correct. That is what I have for the Commission at this moment.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. Why should Ndokoi hate you?

Manni: Because we did not vote for him. Even his testimony that he was responsible for my being Section Chief it was not true. Chieftancy is not conferred by one person. It comes from the Section. The Section Heads came together and made me Section Chief. He therefore has no right to say that he was responsible for the position I hold today.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. The other Commissioners and the Leader of Evidence will ask questions.

Commissioner Torto: Mr. Sei Manni, I welcome you to this Commission. I just want you to make a few clarifications based on the testimonies received about you and your activities. I want to start with a very simple one. Since you've suffered so much in this war, why didn't you make a statement to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission before?

Manni: I gave a statement.

Commissioner Torto: You gave a statement to the TRC?

Manni: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: Today? When was that?

Manni: A long time ago.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. More than three people have accused you. One of the people who accused you is of course you friend and brother. Mr Ndokoi, Mr. Allieu Massaquoi, and Mr. Squire, have all said that you gave orders to them to committ certain atrocities. Are all these people lying? Why would a Kamajor take orders from a non-Kamajor?

Manni: Power belonged to the Kamajors. I didn't have any power to order them to do anything. Lahai is a Chief. He left the Chieftom and came down to Bonthe together with the rebels. He was moving with them. I don't know anything about the Kamajor society because I am not a Member. I am not denying that Kamajors went to my place. When war first reached Mende land, Kamajors came down to my area and the surrounding

villages. When the rebel war subsided they went back. I can't drive them away because they went to protect my life. That is all I know.

Commissioner Torto: So you encouraged them and worked with them?

Manni: You can never deny them anything otherwise you'd be killed.

Commissioner Torto: Could it be that you gave orders at that time out of fear?

Manni: I did not do anything like that.

Commissioner Torto: Pa Sei Manni, I want you to understand that we are not witch hunting Kamajors. We are not looking out for Kamajors to be implicated or that kind of thing. It's not an offence to be a Kamajor. It is the activities we are interested in. So I want you to admit that you were part of the kamajor Movement.

Manni: I was not with them.

Commissioner Torto: Allieu Massaquoi said you gave him orders. He said they were arresting people and taking them to you. Why?

Manni: I don't know about that.

Commissioner Torto: We are not a Court. We want the truth before God and man so that reconciliation can take place. Until you say the truth, the people and God will not forgive you. You will make our work very difficult by not saying the truth. Please answer the questions in a very truthful way. We have evidences, and testimonies that actually point you as being behind all the atrocities committed in Sitiya Chiefdom and Bonthe Town. Who burnt down your village?

Manni: The rebels from Bonthe.

Commissioner Torto: Rebels from Bonthe?

Manni: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: What village is that?

Manni: All the seven Villages were burnt down. I want to name some of the villages.

Commissioner Torto: You can name them. Go ahead.

Manni: Pelewahun, Sembehun, Pujehun, and Momotok.

Commissioner Torto: Did people die in these incidences?

Manni: I cannot remember that.

Commissioner Torto: Did you remember the names or faces of the people involved in the burning of these Villages?

Manni: No.

Commissioner Torto: A Kamajor called Rambo said you gave him orders to do a few things. Where is he now?

Manni: I don't know his whereabouts. We don't live in the same place.

Commissioner Torto: Where is he now? You may not live in the same place but it is here in the written statement.

Manni: I was told that he was in the Imperi Chiefdom. But I don't know the exact village.

Commissioner Torto: You gave orders to Rombo to spearhead the beating of Chief Brando. You remember the date you did that?

Manni: I don't know about that.

Commissioner Torto: Pa Sei Manni, you should remember that you are under oath. The books before you there are God's words. They should not be taken lightly. He is mightier than all of us. Please say the truth to us. You seem to have denied every testimony adduced before us that implicates you. It is clear to me from the countenance of people in the audience and the murmurings that you were responsible for many human rights violations. The best way we can get over this is to say the truth. These people and God will forgive you. Was there any animosity between you and Chief Brandon?

Manni: There was no animosity between us.

Commissioner Torto: What about Koroma Ndokoi?

Manni: We used to be friends. There was no animosity between us. In the first chieftancy contest, I canvassed for him. I did not vote for the late Chief Brando but he held me with two hands.

Commissioner Torto: And you ordered his beating?

Manni: I did not do it.

Commissioner Torto: There are testimonies. Were you not the Section Chief?

Manni: I am still a Section Chief.

Commissioner Torto: The Commission has a lot of respect for chieftancy. Did you order beating of Concern?

Manni: No.

Commissioner Torto: You don't know him? You don't know Concern?

Manni: I don't know him.

Commissioner Torto: Chairman, I have no more questions for this man. He is not telling the truth.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence, have you any questions?

Commissioner Jow: Chairperson, I would like to ask the Witness if he knows anybody by the name of Kondowai?

Manni: I don't know him. . One time Pa Nabie Koroma took me to his Village to collect charms. That was the only time I met Chief Kondowa. He brought me to Bonthe in a canoe. He gave me a bottle of rum. The bottle was the size of my toe. It was a charm. It contained several things, including human body parts. That was the only time I saw Kondowai. We have nothing in common. We are not related. I don't think he can even recognise m today.

Commissioner Torto: Chief Sei Manni, your association with this man bother on charms, Are you telling us that he cannot recognise you today if you see each other? You expect us to believe that?

Manni: You ought to believe it. We met for a very short moment. I may or may not be able to recognise him.

Commissioner Torto: You said there were human parts involved in the charms provided. How were those human parts collected?

MAanni: They were taken from Chief Lahai Ndokoi.

Commissioner Torto: The human parts?

Manni: They were collected from inside the house of Chief Lahai Ndokoi. When these things were collected, I was ordered to take them to Chief Kondewai. I could not deny because I wanted to protect river myown life. If I denied, I would have been killed.

Commissioner Torto: Is the person from whom you collected those parts still alive?

Manni: He must be alive.

Commissioner Torto: Where is he?

Manni: I think he is in Timide. In the Moyamba District.

Commissioner Torto: Chief, we don't want to spend too much time here. You are not helping the Commission. Our mandate is to seek the truth and reconcile people. We will find it difficult to reconcile people if the truth is not coming out. You are denying all the issues raised against you. Who killed Mr Koroma, Lahai Ndokoi's nephew?

Manni: I cannot tell. I didn't go there.

Commissioner Torto: But you sent people?

Manni: I did not send anybody.

Commissioner Torto: But you know of it?

Manni: I did not send anybody. I know the people.

Commissioner Torto: Why didn't you stop them?

Manni: They were very aggressive. They had no intention to listen to me.

Commissioner Torto: I know chieftancy very well. As a Section Chief you must be a very powerful person. You've denied that you were a Kamajor. But you cannot deny that you had power. You knew that somebody was being killed. What did you do?

Manni: When they first started, I stopped them from going. I told them not to leave my place to go to any other place. The Kamajors were people who never listened to anybody. They were all aggressive in the Kamajor Movement.

Commissioner Torto: So you silently presided over their aggression?

Manni: I spoke but they never listened to me.

Commissioner Torto: So you were part of them?

Manni: I did not move along with them. I was an ordinary civilian. How could I have been a Kamajor?

Commissioner Torto: You keep emphasising that you were not a Kamajor. We are not witch-hunting Kamajors. Nobody is saying that to be a Kamajor is an offence. It's their activities that we want to investigate. We just want you to confirm what the kamajors or any other fighting group did regarding human rights violations. You keep on saying "I'm not a Kamajor, I'm not a Kamajor" as if that's the end of it all. As Chief, could you tell me of instances where you protected civilians during the war and how you protected them?

Manni: Yes. I protected Reverend Sandi, the District Officer, and Victor Caulker in order.

Commissioner Torto: You have not answered my question. What part did you play? Tell me of a specific incident?

Manni: I protected the people in the Village. We were moving together in the bushes. When all the Villages were burnt down many people went and stayed with me permanently.

Commissioner Torto: No further questions for this Witness.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Thank you. Pa Sei Manni, confrontation is not part of the way the Commission works. People have made statements calling your name. We are not here for any confrontation. If you come here on your own wish, we must get the truth. Confess what you have done, so that you can have a free conscience. Once again you can look at your people without bowing your head down. But if you think there's no need for that we can't force you. Have you any last statement you want to make?

Manni: You have come to reconcile us as a people. You have been given the Mandate to come and talk to people to reconcile but I cannot answer to what I did not do.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. Have you any questions for the Commission?

Manni: I have no questions for the Commission.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Any recommendations to put in our report?

Manni: Yes.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Carry on.

Manni: You come here to reconcile us in this part of Sierra Leone, so that we can live in peace. It is peace I want you to make. That is my recommendation.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Right. Thank you, we'll endeavour to make peace where people are ready to reconcile. Thank you very much. You may step down.

Commissioner Jow: Chairperson, our next witness for today is Lamin Sidiki who has been called by the Commission to answer to the allegations made against him by Alhaji Noah Abdul Wahab on Monday.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Witness give your name in full.

Lamin: I'm Sidiki Lamin.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Are you a Christian or Muslim?

Lamin: I am a Muslim.

(The oath ws administered)

WITNESS No.: 2

WITNESS NAME: Sidiki Lamin

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Now Sidiki, you are here because one witness gave evidence before the Commission that you were responsible for an attack on him. He said that you had part of his ear cut off. The witness was Alhaji Noah Abdul Wahab. I would like to hear your own side of the story. After you've spoken to us, we'll ask you questions. The Leader of Evidence will also ask you questions. We are not a Court of Law, we are not going to send you to prison. What we want from you is the truth and if necessary, to make reconciliation between you and the other parties. We have nothing to do with the Special Court. We don't give information to the Special Court and the Special Court does not require information from us. We are ready to listen.

Sidiki: At one time, my sister sent me to Bonthe buy somethings. On my way back to the Village, I met a group of soldiers. They took bundles of tobacco from me. When I pleaded with them to return the tobacco they grabbed me and put me on the ground. I left and went to report the matter to Pastor. The Pastor asked me whether I could identify the

soldiers. I said no. I left them and went to a Clinic where I had four injections. When I felt better, I returned to the village. After a couple of days, Tommy sent to call me. Tommy told me that he had received a letter from Bonthe saying that Chief Lahai Ndokoi was threatening to send soldiers to our Village and that he was demanding his (Tommy's) head.

We didn't know what to do. The soldiers were constantly threatening us. The threats became unbearable. We started hearing news that Chief Lahai Ndokoi was threatening to send soldiers to look for Kamajors. A meeting was called to organise ourselves to launch an attack on the soldiers in Bonthe. When the Kamajors came to Bonthe, the soldiers Gunboat returned fire and many of them were killed. Some of them escaped. Two days after the Kamajors returned, Tommy sent a message again to our village, asking me to go to the place where he was. So I went.

While I was there Alhaji Noah came. Some charges were levied against him. Alhaji Noah denied them. They started flogging him. While he was being flogged, I cut part of his ear with a knife. He prayed briefly. I felt very bad and I left. I couldn't go back to Mosande for two days. My people wept because what I did to the old man. That was what happened. I want beg for forgiveness. I regret it. I am begging that Pa Abdul Noah forgives me.

One night, soldiers came and attacked Mosande. I had already left the village after inflicting wound on Abdul Noah. When the soldiers attacked Mosande they killed Tommy Nyande. They cut his mother too. When they were returning to Bonthe they took my brother's son with them. They nicknamed him Reverend. They kidnapped seven people and brought them to Bonthe. My brother's son has not been seen to this day. When we heard the news that Chief Lahai Ndokoi had hands in what the soldiers did, we could not believe it. What made us to believe however was that Chief Lahai's son was seen among the soldiers when they went to those villages. When our brother Tommy was killed, Chief Lahai's son took a knife and cut his private. He put it on a string, hung it around his neck, and came back to Bonthe. According to Mama Adama, while the soldiers were moving back to Bonthe, Chief Lahai went to receive them in jubilation. That was what happened. I left the area.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Thank you. We would like some clarifications. Who was the Pastor that you reported the soldiers to? The soldiers who took your tobacco.

SIDIKI: I reported to Pastor Sandi himself.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Is Pastor Sandi here?

SIDIKI: Yes, madam.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Who is Tommy?

SIDIKI: He was my brother.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: And who is Ibrahim Ndokai?

SIDIKI: I did not mention Ibrahim Ndokai.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Now who was the Ndokai you mentioned?

SIDIKI: I called Lahai Ndokoi.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Lahai Koroma Ndokoi?

SIDIKI: Yes, madam

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: The brother killed, was it Tommy?

SIDIKI: Yes Madam, Tommy Nyande.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: And it was Tommy's private parts which they cut off?

SIDIKI: After killing him, they cut off his private part and brought it to Bonthe and the person who did that was Chief Lahai Ndokoi's son.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: Can you tell us why Tommy was hated so much?

SIDIKI: He was a Kamajor and he was the Commander protecting the area at that time.

Commissioner Marcus- Jones: The Commissioners will ask you more questions.

Commissioner Torto: Sidiki Lamin, thank you for responding to the Commission's invitation. You said you were beating a man when accidentally the man's knife in his pocket pierced his ear. Was that what you said?

SIDIKI: I didn't say so.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, please tell me something about that.

SIDIKI: While the other Kamajors were beating the man, I went with a knife in my hand and pierced the back of his ear.

Commissioner Torto: Who? Mr Wahab?

SIDIKI: Alhaji Wahab. That is why I am asking for forgiveness.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, we will come to that later. But did you also steal money and a radio from him?

SIDIKI: I didn't do that. After committing that act I was now afraid to take anything from him.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, you did not but members of your group did?

SIDIKI: I had left the scene.

Commissioner Torto: Why was a fine of Le50,000 imposed on Alhaji Wahab?

SIDIKI: I was not there.

Commissioner Torto: So, you are not denying that it happened? Another Kamajor burned Alhaji Wahab's body with cigarette.

SIDIKI: I was not there when all that was happening.

Commissioner Torto: What about Momodu Kondor and Kuku Sillah?

SIDIKI: I don't know anything about them.

Commissioner Torto: My last question. I am very impressed by the fact that you are willing to apologise for your deeds. I can see from your countenance that you regret whatever you may have done. It is people like you that the Commission respects- people who accept their faults and apologise. So, I thank you for your testimony.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence, have you any questions?

Commissioner Jow: Chairperson, it is not really clear to me why the decision was taken to beat up Mr. Alhaji Noah.

SIDIKI: We had information that Alhaji Wahab wanted to imitate a charm the Kamajors had so that soldiers can attack us. That was the allegation that was made against him.

Commissioner Jow: You said that Tommy Nyande was your Commander. Was there any other Commander that you know in the group of Kamajors that you were part of? You said that Tommy Nyande was the Commander of the group you belonged to. Who was the Commander above Tommy Nyande?

SIDIKI: There was one Patrol Commander.

Commissioner Jow: What was his name?

SIDIKI: He was called Momodu.

Commissioner Jow: And do you know one Julius Squire?

SIDIKI: The Julius Squire who was here in Bonthe?

Commissioner Jow: Yes.

SIDIKI: Julius Squire who was in Bonthe. Yes, I know him.

Commissioner Jow: But do you know him as a Commander of the Kamajors?

SIDIKI: I do not know of any other Commander apart from those I have mentioned.

Commissioner Jow: And do you know Sei Manni?

SIDIKI: Yes, I know Pa Sei Manni. He's my grandfather.

Commissioner Jow: He's your grandfather. Is he a Kamajor?

SIDIKI: No.

Commissioner Jow: Okay, no further questions. Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you. It is good to see a young man with some sense. Leader of Evidence, may I hand over to you Mr Sidiki who is ready to apologise.

Commissioner Jow: Madam Chairperson, I would suggest that we call the witness and Alhaji Noah Wahab to the floor together. Alhaji Noah Wahab?

Alhaji Wahab: I'm going to touch him according to tradition but I have something to say. Whatever I say here people will carry it far and wide. What this young man has said preparing charms for the soldiers is a black lie. Somebody wears a charm for protection against bullets but he's still killed. How could I take the same charm and expect it to work for other people? I am not stupid to do a thing like that. Let me explain what happened. Kamajors were killed by soldiers. I saw it from my verandah. Later, a dead Kkamajor was seen around our area. Three of them were sitting on my verandah. One boy called Junior came with a paper in his hand. Something was written in Arabic on the paper. He said to me, "Kamor, this is what we have got from this dead Kamajor". I looked at the paper. It was not anything to save anybody from bullets. I am saying this on oath. It was something to cause confusion between people. I burnt it. I believe that it was the woman who was sitting by me that went and fabricated that lies that I was making charms for soldiers.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you for the explanation. Can we carry on with the reconciliation ceremony?

Alhaji Wahab: I have agreed to forgive him.

SIDIKI: Thank you very much 'Kamor' for forgiving me.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any word from traditional leader?

Traditional Leader: This is what we have been looking out for. This is what we have come for. We are assembled here from different parts of the district. When you wrong anybody don't go to a Juju man. Go to the person you have wronged. This is what God requires of us. If you have wronged God, you go to God. God will accept you but if you wrong your fellow human being and you leave him and go to God, God will not accept you. I believe God is going to set this young man free. I thank the commissioners very much. The commissioners know how to investigate matters. May God help you.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much. Has the Witness any questions for the Commission?

SIDIKI: Yes, please.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Carry on.

SIDIKI: I have apologised to the Pa. I have been accepted and forgiven. Am I expected to make any monetary compensation?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: As far as the TRC is concerned, no monetary compensation is involved. And I guess that Alhaji Wahab himself is not thinking about monetary compensation.

SIDIKI: I thank you and I am thanking Alhaji very much.

Leader of Evidence: Our next witness for today is Reverend Father John Emmanuel Garrick.

WITNESS No.: 3

WITNESS NAME: Reverend Father John Emmanuel Garrick

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Can the Witness please give his name in full?

Reverend Father: Reverend Father John Emmanuel Garrick.

(The oath was administered).

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are delighted to have you here especially on this last day of our hearings on the Island. From all the testimonies we have heard, it is our conclusion that the poor people in Bonthe were between the devil and the deep blue sea. Under duress they had to help the soldiers. And the Kamajors made them to pay for that. We are sorry that due to constraints of time and we may not be able to listen to Father Garrick for as long as he would want to talk to us. But I'm sure that the Reverend Father will tell us the most important things in the short time that he has. You have the floor Father Garrick.

Rev. Father Garrick: I was not here when the 1997 coup took happened. I was in Freetown with some people from Bonthe to attend the funeral rites of my aunt. I wanted to return to Bonthe but there were no passenger vehicles on the road. I had people to bring back to Bonthe. Among them were two Nigerian Sisters from Fourah Bay College. We tried to hide their identity because the soldiers were searching for Nigerians. We went down to Tombo and I hired a boat to take all of us to Bonthe. Later, I was told that my car had been commandeered. When news of the coup reached Bonthe gun fire erupted all over town. The gun-boat went up and down the river firing, until it hit a sand bank. With world-wide condemnation of the coup, there was some amount of peace in the Island.

Many people were moving from other parts of the country to seek refuge in Bonthe Town. We later started seeing Police and Prison Officers carrying rifles given to them by the Navy. In June, some villagers were coming with news that soldiers were attacking and looting their villages around Bonthe. As this continued, we began hearing news of Kamajor attacks in the Northern positions in Bonthe. The soldiers' reaction to this news was very negative for the civilians. Each time there was a strong Kamajor attack in Bonthe, the soldiers will go all around the town firing guns. They were not only firing small rifles like the AK 47. The gun-boat was also involved in the firing. The soldiers threatened and accused civilians that they were supporting and harbouring Kamajors.

News of a pending Kamajor attack came one day. Panic and fear gripped everyone. Many prominent people left this land. Does who left included the District Officer Mr Kanneh, Rev. Sandi who was by then the

Chairman of the Shebro Urban District Council, the Officer in-Charge of the Police, Mr. Moinama, Mr. Winston Bondo, Manager of Fisheries and Marine Resources Department, the Paramount Chief of Sintia Chiefdom, and Mr Victor Caulker, the SLPP party Secretary in Bonthe. With the absence of these authorities, the situation became worse in Bonthe. The Soldiers took the law into their own hands. Simple cases were transferred from the Police Station to the Military Base. The soldiers played the role of the Police Officers.

The soldiers were always right in any palaver between them and civilians. Civilians were subjected to forced labour. Some civilians were even flogged. Some were thrown into the Military Guard room. The Elders of this town decided to form a Committee called the Bonthe Working Committee. This Committee was supposed to liaise between the soldiers and the civilians to prevent soldier-civilian clashes. These are the names of those who were in the Committee: Mr. Nelson Williams, Mr. Oswald Hanciles, Mr. Gilbert Caulker, Mr. Alieu Kpaka, Mr. Saspo Bangura, Mr. Tommy Palmer, Mr. Joe Greywoode, Mr. Raymond Squire, Mr. Okelo Margai, Mr. Rashid Mansaray, Mr. Benjamin Cole, Mr. A.J. Samie, Mr. Paul Kpana, Mr. J.M. Bundu, Mr. B. Dimoh, Mr. Nat Kommeh, Mr. Albert, and Pa Jusu.

These were the Members of the Working Committee. Their function was to prevent soldier/civilian conflict. Quite often, members of this committee were harassed by soldiers and blamed when civilians failed to honour their requests. There was a time when some members of the committee were forcefully invited to the military base. During the meeting, the commanders apologised for the wrong manner in which the members of the committee were brought before them. The soldiers explained why they brought members of the committee to the base. It was to talk about matters affecting the town, they said. During that meeting, somebody suggested the resuscitation of the defunct Civil Defence Unit. None of the elders was in support of that idea. The District Officer convened an open meeting of all religious heads, Sectional Heads, and Department Heads. Military and police authorities had presence. During this meeting, the following were discussed:-

1. The too much gunfire in Bonthe
2. Stopping Launches from plying the sea
3. Security on the Island

Major Mansaray represented the Navy had this to say about the issue of gunfire in the township: "the firing is to send a message to the enemies, the Kamajors that we are on alert and have supreme gun power." He promised to talk to his men to stop the gun fire. The gun-boat was to however ill continue to fire. Major Mansaray agreed to allow resumption of launch travel. The issue of security was discussed under three headings:-

1. Depending on ECOMOG attack
2. The threat of the Kamajors
3. Soldiers threats against civilians

Major Mansaray told us not to worry about the ECOMOG attacks. He assured us that ECOMOG was concerned with Military Targets. He said that soldiers would continue to defend Bonthe against the Kamajors.

On the third issue of soldiers' threats against the civilians, Major Mansaray promised to talk to their men. Major Mansaray assured us that the soldiers' threats were meant for the Kamajors and civilians. There was relative calm on the island for a while. We began to hear gun firing again. The soldiers started patrolling the Sherbro River. Villagers were coming to Bonthe with reports of soldiers attacking them and looting properties. Some of us saw the soldiers' patrol boat offloading looted properties. Launches were again stopped from running. No civilian was allowed to go near the military base. People were even manhandled. Many elders like Alhaji Dauda Minah, Pastor Sandy, Chief Lahai Koroma, and Pastor Nicol were threatened.

One morning a contingent of soldiers entered Pastor Nicol's apartment threatening him that he was a Kamajor. They said he was a Creole. The man told them that he was a Creole, and if there were any secret society to be associated with, it would be the Hunting Society in Freetown and not the Kamajors. There was serious gun firing in Bonthe. The situation became worse in Bonthe. There was not even food to eat.

The District Officer called up another meeting in his office. In that meeting, officers who were supposed to be there representing the Navy were not around. A Commander of a Military boat, one Commander Martin, came. We explained to him our situation. He promised to carry our message to the authorities. When things continued to be bad, the Late Pa Isaac Wilaims, Dr. Samba and Dr. Turay went to the Military Base to report about the threatening and dangerous behaviours of the soldiers. The Commanders promised to talk to their men. The District Officer called another urgent meeting at the house of Pa Isaac Williams. He was afraid to call up the meeting at his office. The purpose of the meeting was to arrange to stop Kamajors from entering Bonthe. We believed that would end the harassment of civilians by soldiers. A delegation headed by Reverend Sandy was sent to go and meet the kamajors of Sitiya and convince them not to come to Bonthe. Alhaji Wahab was in the delegation.

Encouraged by the initial success of this initiative, it was agreed that we prepared for a peace mission to Kondowai- the supreme Kamajor head in Tiihun. With much pressure from the town's people, the soldiers agreed to allow the boats to begin moving again. The boat that moved was called "Good sababu"(favour). "Good Sababu" left for Mattru one day and was supposed to come back the other day. It did not come back. After several days, the owner of the boat J. Dao appeared with a story to tell that Kamajor had seized the boat. He said he was serious beaten and given this message:

"When people move from Bonthe to go and talk to them, they would listen; but when they talk to the soldiers, they won't listen"

With this news, the District Officer summoned another emergency meeting. In this meeting almost everybody expressed concern about soldiers attacking villages. We decided to go to the naval base to talk with the soldiers. At the base, we met the soldiers preparing to on the attack. We told them our intention. They welcomed the idea and even helped us with fuel. At Pa Isaac Williams' house a ten man delegation was formed. It comprised of the District Officer Mr. Kanneh as head of the

Delegation, Rev. Josie Musa, Rev. Nabieu, myself, representatives of the Christian Council of Churches, Alhaji Fallor, Imam Shaka, Imam Unisa representing the Islamic community, Dr. Samba, Mr. Rogers, and Mr. P.J.D. Tucker representing the elders. This venture was to be financed by the community and the heads of the Departments. We arranged for the fastest and strongest boat, Neptune. We sent messengers ahead of us to inform the Kamajors to expect the delegation.

We asked the soldiers to give us five days. We cautioned them not to go anywhere otherwise our lives will be endangered. On Thursday 21st August, we all assembled to start a mission that was very dangerous. After prayers we took off. When we approached the village, it appeared empty. But we knew there were Kamajors there. We asked the captain of the boat to anchor. As soon we stepped out of the boat, Kamajors came out firing everywhere around us. The District Officer was ordered to roll over on the ground. I am sure one of those Kamajors, Julius Squire, is with us today. We were forced to sit down. They were shouting and insulting us. They had no time to listen to us. It was a young man called Sheku Kellie, alias Bomb Bomb, who saved us. He called for quietness. He said he was not disputing the fact that we were all dead men but wanted to listen to us first. Somebody suggested that all of us be allowed to leave except the District Officer. He was to be killed. We performed traditional greetings, and gave our story. The first to speak was the District Officer himself. He told them our mission was peace. We promised to talk to the soldiers not to attack their villages. When I spoke, my emphasis was on my new appointment as head of the Catholic Mission. I spoke about my development plans for farming, fishing, schools, and clinics. There were many other speakers. Many of the Kamajors responded favourably. The majority of them however, were hostile to us.

Sheku Kelli stood up to address us. He claimed to be the son of the Kondowai, the man we wanted to see. He promised to take us to his father Kondowai. He barely managed to get approval from the other Kamajors. We left. Before leaving Dr Samba gave some medicines to them. I gave some money. Others made some gestures to appease them and to encourage them not to come to Bonthe. At Mattru, we were taken to the Kamajor headquarter and highly welcomed by the Ground Commander. The District Officer introduced us and acquainted them with our mission.

On Friday 22, we had a meeting in the morning in Mattru. The people in Mattru were very happy with our venture. The Kamajor Ground Commander of the district Mr Gobeh arrived in a blue Toyota pick up to lead us to King Dr Kondowai. When we arrived at Tylia, we went to the house of Kodowai. The man himself appeared simple. He lived in a simple mud house. He spoke briefly to us and instructed his men to prepare the barrack for the meeting. He had a Praise Singer. The Praise Singer was about 14yrs. – 16yrs. He was very good with his local made guitar. His music was very powerful, centering on the greatness of King Dr. Kondowai, and the bravery and powers of the Kamajors.

There was a slack fence around this house with Kamajors at every point. The whole town looked like a military State with Kondowai himself as a War Lord. At this point, we also came across Chief Muranna Koroma,

also a kamajor. We started the meeting with the traditional greetings. The Kamajors expressed angry with the District Officer. They said that the District Officer neglected them and stayed in Bonthe with the Soldiers. When we all spoke they were highly impressed. Many of the Kamajors spoke about Kondowai and they praised him for what he had done for their area. The talk ended with King Dr. Kondowai agreeing on the following points:-

- A. Ceasation of hostilities between them and the Soldiers in Bonthe,
- B. No Kamajor attack on Bonthe
- C. Free movement of boats
- D. An end to passenger and civilian harassment
- E. Peaceful co-existence between Kamajors and Soldiers
- F. Soldiers free to visit Kamajor areas but with prior meetings to prevent misunderstanding
- G. Kamajors too should be allowed to do likewise.

King Dr. Kondowai emphasised the point that there was no need to fight against each other. 'Why should we destroy our home lands and farm Lands', he asked? He recalled that a few months back soldiers were providing arms and ammunition for Kamajors to fight against rebels. Those who caused the problems were in Freetown, he stressed. He emphasised that he would not hand over territory under his authority to any military Government. The meeting ended with King Dr. Kondowai ordering his Secretary to write a letter to all Commanders around Bonthe ordering them to abandon their intention of attacking Bonthe. Dr. Samba gave some medicine to the community. We gave some money. We ate and late in the evening, were on our way to Mattru.

On our way we met a large group of kamajors who stopped us. They were quite hostile to us. They asked all of us to climb down the vehicle. They said that they wanted to see Ngobeh the District Ground Commander. They said they had received a letter from Gambia concerning us. We would only be heard in the presence of King Dr. Kondowai, they told us. We went to the house of Chief Ngobeh. We asked to know the contents of the letter from Gambia. The letter said in summary:-

"The letter is from the Commander at Gambia. He has spied two soldiers. It is the District Officer who has brought the Soldiers. The Ground Commander, Ngobeh, the District Officer and some people passed through Gambia. And we were not aware of the Mission".

The chief told told us to have no fear to return to King Kondowai since he firmly believed in our innocence. We had a second meeting with king Kondowai. The letter was read and the man himself said that there was malice behind it. He said he had been put to shame. If the matter was investigated and we were found guilty, all of us will be killed. If it was however find out that it was a plot against us, all those concerned will meet death. That was King Dr Kondowai decided. We were handed over to one Pa Collier to take care of us until the next day. The next morning, Kondowai himself led us to Gambia. On our way we came across Bumbumbwhy and his troops. We explained the matter to him and he decided to join us at Gambia.

A Court sitting was called to order. King Kondowai appointed Pa Collier and two other people, Ngobeh and Pa Lewis (Caretaker Chief of Gambia) to investigate this matter. We retired into one of the rooms in the house. Upon investigation, we were found innocent. The Commanders in Gambia were found guilty and King Dr. was invited to listen to the verdict. He was familiar with the proceedings. He explained to them how they had put him to shame He ordered their immediate death. Again we had to beg for their lives. He listened to us. After that we were allowed to return go.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Father, your account is very interesting and you have been holding us spell bound but time is against us. Do you think you can summarise and give us the violations committed by the Soldiers, and Kamajors; and if possible names of people who were responsible for most of these violations? We want to have time to ask you questions?

Reverend Father Garrick: On our way, we arrived at Moremayah. I asked the Kamajor Head there to hand over the boat to us. He told us to fetch our own boat at a near-by village. I went to take the boat. After paying the money, the boat was handed over to me. When I came back I met my colleagues lying on the ground with the Kamajors over them again. Some weeping. I asked what the problem was. They told me that the gunboat had just fired at some of their villages along the sea. We came back to Bonthe and reported to the people. They were very happy for us.

There was peace in this land for sometime. On on 2nd September we heard heavy gunfire down the river in the evening. There were rumours around that the soldiers were creating a situation that a battle has taken place around Bonthe. The next morning I went to Church. At the church I communicated on the Radio. I had just finished when a band of Soldiers entered my compound with RPGs, and AK 47s. Many of them were firing around the compound, they demanded my presence at the Military base. One of them said I should not leave the radio behind. On the way, one of the soldiers smeared me with mud. When we arrived at the Base, I was taken straight to the Guardroom. The late Pa Isaac Williams, in his morning gown, lay down on the floor of the Guardroom. They asked me to declare whatever thing I had on me. I only had a watch and a ring. I gave them to one of the soldiers who appeared sympathetic. In the Guardroom there were many Pastors, Imams, and town elders. Some were crying. Some had wounds. Many of them were naked. One soldier came and pointed his gun through the spy hole of the Guardroom and fired shots into the room. After some time one soldier came and demanded Pa Isaac Williams. Pa Issac Williams went out. After some time, they came for us all. We were taken to the Head quarter. We were pushed and flogged.

There was nobody to talk to us. Later on, some Commanders came and told us that they knew nothing about our ordeal. We asked them to let us go. They said they were not the ones who called us. We later moved from the place and went to our homes.

After that, the Commanders came and apologised for the actions of their men. On 6th September, a group of soldiers arrived at Alhaji Wahab's house and arrested his children, and one Mike Lebbie. They were taken to the Military Base. Later in the evening, the children of Pa Wahab were released but Mike Lebbie was not. I went with some people to enquire

but we were not allowed to pass the checkpoint. Up to this day, we have not heard any thing about Mike Lebbie.

On 15th September, Kamajors attacked Bonthe. In that fight, many kamajors were killed. The next day we were all forced out of our homes to go to the Military Base so that the soldiers can really search the town for any remnant Kamajor. We had news of retreating Kamajors dying on the way. Some were even committing atrocities on the way. News came for instance, that one Momoh Sitah killed a pregnant woman called Ghebeh. I want to believe that her people are here with us. Bonthe became an unsafe place. Many people began to leave Bonthe. I tried hard to send the Nigerian Sisters back to Freetown. There was no other means to leave Bonthe except the gun-boat. Because of the number of people who were fighting to leave, the gun-boat was moved off the jetty. They were using the smaller boats to ferry people into the gun-boat. On 3rd October, there was a very serious sea accident. Many people died. Victor Caulker was discovered in dead in their family house. The Caulker's house was burnt down. The soldiers also burnt down Reverend Sandy's family house on 15th October.

Thereafter the soldiers began to pursue Kamajors anywhere their activities were reported. After that, there was some amount of peace in Bonthe. War was however raging in the rest of the country against the junta. The situation was becoming very bad for the soldiers. On 5th February 1998, an ECOMOG plane flew over Bonthe fired shots. The gun-boats and soldiers in town returned fire. On 13th February, at 11.30p.m., I heard a knock on my door. Many people had come to seek refuge in the Mission house with me. I was also informed that some soldiers had gone to the house of Chief Lahai Koroma. Chief Lahai Koroma escaped. After this, the whole family of Chief Koroma and some panic-stricken civilians came to seek refuge with me in the Parish House.

We heard news of soldiers trying to leave Bonthe and they were encouraging people to leave with them. The soldiers told civilians that the kamajors were going to destroy Bonthe and kill everybody. I tried to convince people to stay. Many stayed. On 15th February about 1a.m., the gun-boat Naimbana-102, roared into action. Shots were fired but not in the town. The soldiers left for an unknown destination. In the morning, some elders and I went to secure the Military base to prevent people from tampering with whatever gadgets that were left behind. There are some Police Officers and Prison Officers with us. I drove the Hospital Ambulance to my compound. It was on a Sunday morning. I went to prepare myself for Mass. Mass was almost about to begin when we heard gunshots coming form the Playing field area. I saw people dressed in Kamajor attire running up and down the town firing guns. Many people rushed into the Mission House. The Kamajors went round the town and told people to assemble at the Military Base.

There was a Kamajor by the name of Lamina Gbokandama. He was looted the District Office. He took the Paramount Chief's staff and went up and down Bonthe announcing himself as chief of Bonthe. I managed to cajole him after giving with money to hand over all the materials he looted.

Another group of Kamajors went to the police station and siezed caps, helmets, uniforms, and other things. The Public Works Department, Government House, the prisons, Fisheries, and

many other government places were all looted. I have photographs of some of these incidents. I went to the Fisheries Department as it was been looted. I met Rambo there. Rambo and his group took a fridge out and load it into a boat. I collected the fridge and carried it back to the building. They took it back. I was not able to control the whole situation. Some people were killed in the town. Abu Samuka Kamara was killed on Monday 16th. Condeh Batiama was killed that same day.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Father, I am afraid this will have to be the end so that we can ask you questions. We thank you very much. We can see that you have been through a lot of ordeal. We thank you for the submission you have made to the TRC. We'll now ask you a few questions. The title King Dr Kondowai perplexes me. Can you explain them? Where did the "king" come from? Was he a medical doctor or a doctor of philosophy?

Reverend Father Garrick: I can't tell. I have some letters from him that carry the title King Doctor Allieu Kondowai.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you know where he is now?

Reverend Father Garrick: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you very much Reverend Father. I must also congratulate you for your courage and fortitude to withstand all the punishments, and hassles you went through both in the hands of the soldiers and the Kamajors. We have a written submission from you. We want to assure you that it will be read thoroughly and reacted to accordingly. We see that you have not said all that you wanted to say. We however, have to leave at three O'clock. We wish you had come earlier in the week. I want you to help us clarify a few issues. Which Government was in power when all these things happened?

Reverend Father Garrick: AFRC.

Commissioner Kamara: And who was the Head of State at that time or Head of Government?

Reverend Father Garrick: Major Johnny Paul Koroma.

Commissioner Kamara: Did you make an attempt to report to him what was happening in Bonthe?

Reverend Father Garrick: The District Officer was here. We were meeting and reports were sent.

Commissioner Kamara: But there was no such report. Did you later disappear from the scene?

Reverend Father Garrick: Yes.

Commissioner Kamara: What happened to the other elders that were working with you? What happened to Oswald Hanciles and the other people?

Reverend Father Garrick: The whole situation was fearful. Many people decided to stay out of it because it was dangerous at some point.

Commissioner Kamara: But you don't know what happened to people like Oswald Hanciles?

Reverend Father Garrick: He was in this town. He was a member of the Bonthe Committee. When the Kamajors came they looked for members of that Bonthe Working Committee. He was one of those arrested. Kamajors were demanding their death. I ended up paying money for all those members in the Bonthe Working Committee.

Commissioner Kamara: The members of the committee disappeared after that without telling you goodbye or let you know?

Reverend Father Garrick: Some of them disappeared when the soldiers were still in Bonthe. Others disappeared when the Kamajors came.

Commissioner Kamara: You were taken down to the military base with your radio set. What happened to the set later?

Reverend Father Garrick: Every communication set in the town, including mine, were confiscated. We were able to recover all the radios were when ECOMOG came.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you. Did you find among the Kamajors people who appreciated God?

Reverend Father Garrick: Yes.

Commissioner Kamara: What happened to Nicol? Was he killed or saved?

Reverend Father Garrick: No. He was not killed.

Commissioner Kamara: You mentioned Julius Squire, a very popular name at this Commission. Was he among those who were hostile to your delegation? Did he offer any form of assistance to the delegation?

Reverend Father Garrick: I couldn't initially tell who was commander or who was not. All of the Kamajors were hostile. He was firing all around the place. But it was he who opted to move with us to Base Zero. There is something I want to mention here. When the soldiers left and the Kamajors came in I received a message from one Thomas Nelson-Williams, one morning. The message was that Kamajors, including Julius Squire, were looting Nelson-Williams and Saspo-Bangura's apartments.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you. Yesterday we listened to one of the most gruelling testimonies. It was from a lady called Cecilia Coker. Why do you think her son was killed that way?

Reverend Father Garrick: The thing is that the soldiers saw the Kamajors as their enemies and the Kamajors saw soldiers as their enemies. I want to believe that was the reason.

Commissioner Kamara: But could it have been a revenge killing?

Reverend Father Garrick: There was an attacked on Bonthe. The soldiers felt that he was one of those in those who attacked Bonthe.

Commissioner Kamara: Where is Lamin Gbokandoma?

Reverend Father Garrick: I can't tell.

Commissioner Kamara: Is he still alive?

Reverend Father Garrick: I can't tell.

Commissioner Kamara: Why was Lebbie taken away?

Reverend Father Garrick: His relatives may know. I don't know.

Commissioner Kamara: Did you remember who took him away?

Reverend Father Garrick: Yes.

Commissioner Kamara: Who?

Reverend Father Garrick: Sengbeh Pieh.

Commissioner Kamara: Who do you think committed the most atrocities on this Island- the Kamajors or the soldiers?

Reverend Father Garrick: Both groups committed atrocities.

Commissioner Kamara: I thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Father. I wonder why Mrs Cecilia Coker has not been able to get aid from some of the prominent people here. I believe she is one of the oldest of your members here in Bonthe. I consider it strange that she should not have had any help at all but from the French.

Reverend Father Garrick: Well I can't really speak for people. I use to help a lot of people when I was here.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you, Leader of Evidence?

LYDIA: Thank you. I have a few questions. Did you know anything about the death of Paramount Chief Brandon?

Reverend Father Garrick: I know something about him. I mentioned that he was brought to me on the night the soldiers were leaving. The soldiers threatened him. That is what he told me. When the Kamajors came, they too were looking for him. He left the house and went back to his village. He was hiding in the bush from the Kamajors. I sent message to him to come out of the bush. He

came and I hid him. One day, the Kamajors came into my compound and dancing. A Kamajor boy saw him and he shouted: "here is Brandon". The Kamajor called out his compatrots. Brother Martin, my assistant, took Chief Brandon out and ran with him. He hid somewhere behind the mission. At night Chief Brandon found his way to Pa Lamboi. I went and met him there. I called on the Kamajors' Battalion Commander, Murray Jusu kamara. I told him that Chief Brandon was with me. I carried him to where Chief Brandon was. He promised to protect him but was afraid of the other Kamajors.

It was this same Murray Jusu who told me to go to Freetown, and get some documents from the Government to prevent the other Kamajors from carrying out Kangaroo court. I went to Freetown to the Task Force that was headed by Mr Berewa. He gave me a document to hand over to the Officer Commanding Bonthe. I rushed back to Bonthe. Upon arriving at the jetty, the Kamajor Battalion Commander, Jusu Kamara ran to me and said: "they have just caught that man and they are beating him up, please run there, I can't go there, I can't go there." So I went to Pa Koroma's house. They were flogging chief Brandon. I told them stop. I told them that the law of the land was still in force. I told them about the letters from Mr Berewa, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. They demanded to see them. I gave them the letters. I asked them to hand over Chief Brandon to me. I took Chief Brandon to the mission. When the situation calmed, I arranged for him to go to Freetown. Chief Brandon wrote me a letter of thanks. I heard later that had died in Freetown. This is the letter from the Attorney General.

LYDIA: Who would you say is responsible for his death?

Reverend Father Garrick: I can't tell. He was flogged in Bonthe. He however spent sometime with me after that beating. He seemed all right when was going to Freetown. The doctors may be able to tell us.

LYDIA: Who gave the orders to beat Chief Brandon?

Reverend Father Garrick: I was not here. I had just arrived from Freetown when Murray Jusu Kamara told me that Kamajors were beating Chief Brandon. I am sure the people of Bonthe knew those who were beating him up.

LYDIA: It is generally said that the Kamajor movement came out of the need for civilians to protect themselves. Civilians therefore supported the Kamajors. In Bonthe however, we have heard of many unhealthy incidents between Kamajors and civilians.

Reverend Father Garrick: This question should be directed at the Kamajors. The soldiers were suppressing us because of the Kamajors. They were saying that we were there brothers. But at the same time they were seeing us as people collaborating with with the junta. As somebody said the civilians were between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Father. Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Reverend Father Garrick: Yes, many.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We can only take a few.

Reverend Father Garrick: I am not really seeing the perpetrators of human rights abuses here. I am not seeing the heads of the groups that were involved in harassing and molesting civilians. I thought that amongst us here there would be people like Murray Jusu Kamara, Major Mansaray, Major Medo, and many more. Why?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, Father I'll attempt to answer your question. When a witness comes here and names a perpetrator, we'll try to get the person named. We could even issue subpoenas to get a witness to appear. A perpetrator has to be named first.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any recommendations that could be included in our reports?

Reverend Father Garrick: A lot needs to be done in these villages to reconcile people. You have already seen that there was a lot of animosity between people during the war. A lot of what you are seeing now is superficial. There is a lot more. Government need to get involved and bringing people together. People are divided in this society. Don't make any mistake about that. Things like shelter assistance, and vocational skills training for former fighters should also be given attention by the Government.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much. We will include your recommendations in our report to Government. Regarding reconciliation, we want to appeal to people like you, the traditional leaders, and religious leaders to play their part in reconciling communities. The TRC can only initiate the process. The TRC cannot go the whole way. The Government too cannot be expected to do it. It is left with the people themselves. Reconciliation is not a day's job. It takes a long time. Thank you very much Father. You may step down now. Can we have our last witness?

WITNESS No.: 4

WITNESS NAME: Agnes Banya

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence, are your witnesses here?

Commissioner Sooka: May we have the first witness please. Would the witness give her name in full please?

Witness: My name is Agnes Banya

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Muslim or Christian?

Agnes Banya: I am a Christian

(The oath was administered)

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Agnes Banya, we are pleased to have you here. If you had been attending the hearings, you would know by now that you have nothing to worry about. I would like to repeat that you have nothing to fear or worry

about. The information you give to us remains with us. We do not pass it on to any other organization. Our job is to bring about reconciliation. We are not going to punish you or any other person. We do not expect to hear everything that happened to you during the ten years. Tell us about the most distress things that happened to you. You may begin.

Agnes Banya:

I want to thank you very much. We heard about the rebel war when it was been fought in the Pujehun area. We started seeing displaced people coming to our area with bundles on their heads. We were afraid and went into the bush to seek refuge. We were there when the rebels entered. They came to Mattru and destroyed villages. The rebels started going in search of us in the bush. An order was passed asking everybody to come to town. We left the bush and moved into the town. Our town was called Motowo. They used to seize our food and properties from us.

We left the town and went to our farmhouses. My farm was very close to the main road. One day I heard very loud noises. I saw a lot of civilians and rebels. One of the fleeing civilians said that it was the Sierra Leone Military that had come. The civilian told me that the soldiers had driven the rebels from Kaniya. I was told that the rebels asked civilians in the area to move to Jang. I collected my daughter and the other dependants from the next farm and left for Jang. We were in Jang for four days. We almost ran out of food. We decided to come back to our place in Motowo where we had some food. The following day we had to leave again for Mattru when panic broke out. On our way to Mattru, we fell into an ambush. Many people, including my son-in-law were killed. Only seven out of twenty five relatives that were with me were saved. My grandson had a bullet wound on the right foot. The rebels also wounded him on the head with a bayonet. My daughter was severely beaten. Her child could not survive. We managed to reach Mattru. Commissioners those are my own ordeals during the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Agnes Banya, we sympathise with you on the loss of many relatives. We have had a number of testimonies about this massacre. I will ask you a few questions. How is the son getting on?

Agnes Banya: He is alive.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is his physical condition?

Agnes Banya: He gets periodical pains in the head and the foot where he was shot.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: And have you been seeking medical attention for him?

Agnes Banya: An NGO by the name of HANCI has been helping with medicines, school uniform, and learning materials.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Have you noticed any strange behaviour by him?

Agnes Banya: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Can you tell us which groups of rebels attacked your area?

Agnes Banya: It was the RUF.

Commissioner Torto: What e languages did you hear them speak?

Agnes Banya: They spoke different languages. They spoke Mende, Fula, Temnes and many others.

Commissioner Torto: Liberian languages? Did you hear any Liberian language been spoken?

Agnes Banya: Yes. There were Liberians among them.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Mrs. Banya. I am really sorry for all the members of your family that you have lost in the war. Did you have any idea why the rebels killed all those people at Mbawuyah Junction?

Agnes Banya: I have no idea.

Commissioner Sooka: Did you have soldiers amongst you at Mbawuyah Junction?

Agnes Banya: It was the Sierra Leone Army that was bringing us to Mattru. We were civilians. The army was only escorting us when we fell into the ambush.

Commissioner Sooka: And was there was a fight between the rebels and the soldiers.

Agnes Banya: The rebels lay in ambush. They opened fire on us, and the soldiers returned fire. Fighting broke out.

Commissioner Sooka: But who were larger in number, the soldiers or the civilians?

Agnes Banya: There were more civilians than e soldiers.

Commissioner Sooka: Okay, Thank you very much. Do you have questions for the Commission?

Agnes Banya: No.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any recommendations?

Agnes Banya: I want to request assistance in the areas of housing, food, and educational for the children.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We will include all your recommendations in the report to Government. We want to thank you again Agnes for coming. You may step down. May we have the next witness please.

WITNESS No.: 5

WITNESS NAME: Maseray Amara

Commissioner Sooka: Madam Chairperson, our next witness for today is Mrs Nancy Maseray Amara.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Maseray, you have nothing to worry about in sharing your experience with us. Could you give us your name in full?

Maseray: I am Maseray Amara.

(The oath was administered)

Maseray: What I experienced during the war was painful. People came from Jang to tell us that the rebels were coming. We left for the bush. My husband and I had some good amount of money and food. We left without taking them. When the rebels came, they set fire on all the houses in our town. We lost everything. We stayed in the bush for quite some time. Later we heard news that the Kamajors were coming. If they find anybody in the bush, that person will be killed. We left the bush. We couldn't go to Motowo again because it was burnt down. We went to another village nearby us called Godama. We settled there.

Whilst we were at Godama, we heard that soldiers had come and wanted to see everybody at Mattru. We left Godama and came to Motowo with the intention of going to Mattru. We got to Motowo late in the night. People met us in Motowo to tell us that a lot of people had been killed at Mbawuyah Junction. We left Motowo and went back to Godama. My husband's father who was with us, was sick. We were not able to take him back with us to Godama. We left him and my husband's brother in the house. When the rebels came they killed both of them in the house. We left Godama as well and went to another village. That was what I came across.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We are sorry that you lost all your properties, and money. And we are sorry that the old man was killed. We are going to ask you a few questions to clarify some issues.

Commissioner Sooka: Can the witness recall the year in which this happened? Was it before the elections or after?

MASERAY: Before the elections.

Commissioner Sooka: In your written statement, you mentioned one Pa Nabieu.

MASERAY: My father-in-law who was killed was called Gabai.

Commissioner Sooka: Who was Brima Sellu?

MASERAY: Brima Sellu was killed in the bush. We were in Mattru when they killed Brima Sellu in the bush.

Commissioner Sooka: Who killed him?

MASERAY: The rebels.

Commissioner Sooka: And who was Gassumu?

MASERAY: That is the son of my father-in-law.

Commissioner Sooka: And was killed as well?

MASERAY: He too was killed.

Commissioner Sooka: In the village or in the bush?

MASERAY: They were killed in town.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Maseray, have you any questions you would like to ask the Commission?

MASERAY: Yes. What can the Commission do for me now that I have lost all the money and property? I am now an old woman.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We have said it here often that TRC has no money. We were not given any money to give to victims. We can only make recommendations to the Government as to how victims like you could be helped. Have you any other questions?

MASERAY: I have no more questions.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any recommendations?

MASERAY: I'm recommending that Government brings development to our community. That is all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Maseray. You have the distinction of being our last witness. Thank you very much for coming. You may step down.

The Truth and Reconciliation for Sierra Leone has today heard testimonies as to the tragic loss of human lives during the conflict that ravaged our country. As a mark of respect to the deceased and their families and as a symbol of our compassion and our solidarity, we asked after I have read the names that you please stand up in observance of a minutes silence for the following victims:- Marie Bundu, Mohammed Lebbie, Foday Sherriff, Pa Sellu. Pa Bai and many other people killed at Mbawuyah Junction, Gasumu and Pessima. May the souls of the departed rest in perfect peace.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank all of you for your attendance here. Paramount Chief, Chiefdom Speaker, all traditional and religious leaders, we thank you all for your support. This is the end of the Public Hearing. During the testimonies, we heard so much about a particular massacre. After here, we are going to move on to Tiihuun, Sogbeni Chiefdom to see the mass grave there and to perform traditional rites. After our ceremony at Tiihuun, we will depart for Freetown to continue work there. We still have to do what we call Thematic and Institutional Hearings. We would also be thinking about the programme for reconciliation. We want to appeal to the religious and traditional leaders here to continue whatever reconciliation we have initiated. It is incumbent on every one of the members of your community to make a special effort to bring peace and reconciliation among people here. We want to welcome again your women and children who were abducted by the rebels. Give them an opportunity to make a new life for themselves so that you will be able to develop into a strong community. I am sure Commissioner Torto will have something to say to you as well.

Commissioner Torto: I will try to be as brief as possible because the Chairperson has already said everything pertaining to our hearing. We are satisfied with the Hearings in Bonthe District. We are very happy with the attendance. Let me now show you the people who assisted the Commission in performing its duties in all the Districts we have gone to. They will stand up please to be identified when I call their names. We have a very powerful and industrious Regional Co-ordinator for the Southern Province, Mr. Alex Nalo. Alex Nalo has been the Regional Co-ordinator for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the Southern Province. We are very thankful to him and his team for a job well done. Next we have a son of the island, Mr. Osmond Hanciles. He was the District Co-ordinator for the TRC for Bonthe District. Then you have also very, very, important workers who have been assisting Nalo and Hanciles. They are the statement Bonthe District statement takers. The two here on the main land are Sarah Rogers, and Alice Sandy. I will briefly run over the staff from Freetown. We have ofcourse myself, and Justice Laura Marcus-Jones. Honourable Justice Laura Marcus-Jones is the Deputy Chair of the Commission and head of this team. We also have Professor William Schabas. He was one of the International Commissioners on the team but he has to return to Freetown. You have Leader of Evidence Martien Schotsman. She is Head of Legal and Reconciliation Department. We have Daniel Adekera, Head of Public Information and Sensitization. You have Mrs. Bondu Manye, who is the Briefer. She talks to the witnesses before and after the testimony. You have Mr. Mohammed Samura, Head of the Transcribing Section. We have Mr. Edwin Koi a videographer. You have Mr. Augustine Gundu a sound Technician. You have Mr. Abdul Akim Sesay, electrician, he is at the back there. We have Cecilia During, who is with the SLBS/TV. From SLBS/TA we also have Mr. Henry Maurel. You have Mr. Abubakaar Sesay a reporter for Radio Democracy. You have Mr. John Koroma a print Journalist for Salone Times Newspaper. You have Mr. John Ngayah from Taking Drums Studio. You have a very Senior Staff member at the Secretariat in the person of Mr. Olu Alghali. He is Assistant to the Executive Secretary and handles logistics for the team. You Mr. Abayomi Tejan, reporter for Democrat Newspaper. And there are the drivers. They are responsible for getting us here. Please drivers stand up if you are at the back. Let us clap for them all. We are very thankful to everybody in the team.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is quite aware of the extent of human rights violations committed in this district. We are also aware that there are many perpetrators even in this hall who have deliberately refused to take advantage of the Commission's presence here to come forward and own up to their roles in the war and be fully accepted back into the community. Let me say that it is a mark of strength not weakness to say sorry when you have done wrong. Modern civilisation does not consider it a mark of heroism to be arrogant even in the face of wrong. The real heroes of the ten-year war therefore are those who have confessed their roles during the war and begged for forgiveness. I therefore urge those perpetrators still in hiding to come out and do the same, so that Sierra Leone will be a safe place for us and our children.

As a Truth Commission, our role is to create an enabling environment for true hearing and reconciliation to take place. We cannot force anyone to confess his wrong doings, neither can we force any one to forgive but we must realise that development which we all yearn for cannot take place in an environment of hate, revenge and bitterness. We must therefore cultivate the culture of brotherliness and peaceful resolution of conflict in the spirit of development and co-existence.

Ladies and gentlemen, I must say that it is lamentable that the Commission is not mandated to address individual needs. Nevertheless all the needs expressed here and even those not expressed have all been captured in all the testimonies we have listened to during the course of our hearings in other districts. The Commission shall address all these needs collectively.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are leaving this quiet and beautiful Island today after only three days, but permit me to say that we have started a process of reconciliation, which we are sure the traditional leaders, religious leaders and civil society will continue. Reconciliation is an on-going process. It is a collective responsibility. We must not see it as an exclusive preserve of the TRC.

Finally, I wish to thank you all for making our three days stay in Bonthe Island and our work here successful. I wish to thank the Nepalese Battalion, the Police, Boys Scouts, the Red Cross, the Inter-Religious Council and those who supported our work here especially our Interpreters, our Statement-Takers and our indefatigable District Coordinator, Oswald Hanciles.

Once again I thank you all on behalf of the TRC for your continuous attendance here and which is no doubt indicative of your confidence and trust in the TRC and its activities.

Thank you for your hospitality and God bless you all.

APPENDIX 3 – PART THREE
THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (TRC)
TRANSCRIPTS OF
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

GOVERNANCE

DATE: May 7, 2003.

BEFORE:

Commissioner William Schabas (Presiding)
Commissioner John Kamara
Commissioner Laura Marcus-Jones
Commissioner Satang Jow
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Ozonnia Ojielo

WITNESS NO: 1

WITNESS NAME: MR Victor Foh – representing All Peoples Congress (APC)

(The oath was administered).

SUBMISSION

I am the APC Regional Chairman for the Southern province. I am here to represent the party. I am here to talk about Governance. I am happy to say that my party takes this Commission seriously. Our party has already made submissions to the Commission.

In our submission we talked about Sierra Leone under the SLPP from 1961 to 1967, Siaka Stevens' leadership from 1968 – 1985, and Sierra Leone under President Joseph Saidu Momoh. We ended the submission with a focus on how the SLPP is governing the state today. Yesterday, people spoke of human rights abuses. They attributed the war to the unpopularity of APC. The war however, continued even after the removal of APC.

I have come to talk about the things that brought the war. We are not only going to talk about our party APC, but also about the SLPP. I have taken an oath. I assure the Commission that I am going to say truth. As I look at the wall here I am delighted to read a poster that says: "Truth hurts but war hurts more". People say we must forget about the past and forge ahead. The slogan that strikes me most is the one in Krio that says "Tru at for talk."

We must do everything in our capacity to make sure that peace is sustained in our country. It is the people of Sierra Leone that achieved victory in the war. We do hope that we give them good governance. I believe that there are people in the SLPP who have come to listen. I thank the SLPP government for establishing the TRC in accordance with the Lome Peace Accord.

The APC came into being on 17 October, 1960 because of SLPP's misrule. In 1967, we went to the polls with the SLPP and won. The SLPP refused to handover power. A soldier by the name of Hinga Norman arrested our leader Siaka Steven and the Governor. That soldier ignited the first military coup in Sierra Leone.

The Prime Minister at the time, Albert Margai, instigated the head of the army David Lansana to take power by force. APC will never forget what the SLPP did to them. The military became politicized. We would like the audience and the Commission to know that if the military became involved in politics it was because of the SLPP.

On the eve of independence the SLPP accused the leadership of the APC of attempts to stage a coup. Our leaders were arrested. They were only released long after the independence celebrations had past. It will be relevant to note that Paramount Chief did not belong to any party. But in all the elections the SLPP conducted before 1967 Paramount Chiefs were involved on its side. The APC believes that Paramount Chiefs should not be involved in elections.

People have accused the APC of corruption. I have to say that the first Commission of inquiry set up in this country found the SLPP to be corrupt. Up till now the papers are still writing about corruption.

Siaka Stevens was the founder of the APC. People always say that all the problems in this country started under the regime of Siaka Stevens. We in the APC said no to that. I come from the Mende Line, the strongest base of the SLPP. I knew all the leaders of the SLPP- from Sir Milton to Sir Albert. The politics of "unopposed" started in the SLPP. Dictatorship started in SLPP. Cannibalism started by the SLPP.

Siaka Stevens built the stadium. Siaka Stevens built Youyi Building. The Congo Cross Bridge was erected by the APC. We in the APC want to say that our leaders had vision. Under Steven security in this country was stable. One would go around without fear of being attacked. There were however, SLPP players inside the APC. The current Chairman of the SLPP Dr Banya, and S.B Marah are from the APC. If accusing finger is pointed at us today I will say it was Dr Banya and S.B. Marah. They are now in the SLPP. These were the people responsible for the dictatorship. Our testimony is not to engender tribalism and endanger people. But we have come to say the truth.

The introduction of a one-party system was a mistake by the APC. Albert Margai however, planned the one-party system. He took it to parliament but did not succeed. One of the key issues in the election in 1967 was the one-party system. When Siaka Stevens won the 1967 elections people forget about the one-party issue. It was with pressure from people like S.B Marah that Stevens was forced to introduce the one party. If the APC was blamed for that we should say that the APC by then was SLPP.

Siaka Stevens handed over power to Momoh in 1985. Momoh was a military man and a Member of Parliament by then. Because the military was always staging coups we thought it was a good idea to hand power to a military man to avoid bloodshed. Momoh had good intentions but he did not get the total support of the populace. Momoh came with the Green Revolution idea. When the project failed in its first year he openly said it. Strangely, people say that Momoh said that he had failed the country. Momoh was only referring to the Green Revolution.

As an honest man he was brave to say the truth. When Momoh saw that the economy was not growing, he accepted IMF conditionalities for aid. At the time he was overthrown rice and fuel were on the way to the country. IMF officials were also in town. The soldiers who left their duties at the war-front to come and overthrow the Government spoke about nepotism and tribalism in their speeches. By the time the soldiers were leaving office those junior officers had promoted themselves to Generals. Those that were living in zinc houses built mansions before handing over power. They later asked for amnesty. Whilst they were stealing properties from APC politicians, they were building houses and keeping money for themselves.

Let's go back to Momoh. In 1991 J. S. Momoh signed a new constitution. The constitution was drawn by the APC. The constitution came into operation in 1992. Momoh like Gorbachev saw

that one-party rule was no longer fashionable. Without anybody putting pressure on him Momoh bowed down to democracy. We as a party welcome the constitution made by Momoh. We appeal to our brothers in the SLPP to hold this constitution. Momoh urged for elections. Many political parties registered including the SLPP, PDP, and of course APC. If credit is to be given to anybody for democracy that credit should go to Momoh.

I want to say if we have two main bridges in the country for the flow of goods it is the work of the APC. The road from Kenema to Bo was constructed by the APC. We started the Bumbuna hydroelectric project.. We have a School of Hygiene. The APC brought development to the country.

Why did the rebel war start? Perhaps our brothers in the SLPP will answer that question. At the outbreak of the war most of the fighters were children of the SLPP. People say that the rebel war came about because of APC's mismanagement. I want to ask a question- SLPP is in power with mismanagement and misrule. Can we say that the APC should go to the bush and start a rebel war? The constitution is been violated by the SLPP. I can cite so many examples of this.

As a party we describe the RUF war as a national tragedy. We hope and pray that it never happens again. How do we ensure that there will be no more war in the country? We need good governance. We should expose ourselves. We should guide the press. We should not interfere with the judiciary. We should ensure that parliament does it work without interference by the executive.

All the arms of government, we submit as a party, must enjoy independence. No particular arm of government should overrule the other. It was our view that tribalism is the root cause of the war. The NPRC staged a coup, which is treasonable. Unfortunately, so many of our brothers were the key players in the illegal and notorious junta. And more unfortunately, most of the NPRC functionaries are today in the SLPP government. Governance under the NPRC was a disaster. Civilians in very high places gave advice to the junta to seize properties from other citizens.

The SLPP Government pitched the Kamajor militia against the Sierra Leone Army. Through that unfortunate decision we lost our democracy. The AFRC staged a coup. Not surprisingly the AFRC was removed by foreign troops. We hold as a party that a military junta should be removed by peaceful means. The military intervention caused serious problems for the poor civilians. On the 2nd of June 1997 no less than 80 people lost their lives in the fight between foreign forces and the junta.

After the AFRC was overthrown the present President was reinstated. As a political party we are all under the Government although we were been strangled. The last elections were run in a very poor way. Democracy was not practiced. Local government has still not been put in place. This Government is trying to bring another rebel war by delaying democracy. Everything is bungled up. America even spoke about it.

In conclusion, because of time, I want to ask few questions. President Momoh was accused of loving his tribe. He promoted Ekutay his tribal group. Is it wrong then for Sir Abert to promote his mendé group, I would say yes. In 1967 The head of the Civil Service was a Mendé. The head of the army was a Mendé. Is it not wrong? We want to give equal opportunity to all. I want to say that all the bad things were caused by the SLPP. I want to say politics in Sierra Leone is SLPP/ APC. May be we should ask: "the egg and chicken which is older".

At the formal opening of this hearing a statement read by our honourable leader said that the APC was ready to forgive everybody who ganged to fight the party. Our brothers in the SLPP, we

have a new aim under the leadership of Ernest Bai Kororma. We are against military intervention, and we beg our brothers to respect the constitution.

Commissioner Schabas – I thank you very much for coming to testify at this Commission. We appreciate your coming. I want to ask my colleagues to ask you questions. But before that I would like to ask you a question. Do you have anything to say about the laws that guided the TRC. Do you have any proposals to make to the TRC?

Victor Foh – I want to thank the Commission for asking me that question. (**He presents the recommendation**).

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones – I thank you for coming and honoring our invitation. I just have one question for you. You know the TRC is mandated to consider the antecedents of the war, what happened before and what went wrong. Looking at the submission I am rightly to conclude that you want us women and men to be assured that your coat had been changed, and the current APC party is a new party. Am I wrong to conclude that APC could not have been all that democratic, that there were things done which could not have been all that good to Sierra Leone? That is my question.

Victor Foh – I thank Madam Commissioner for this fine question. You have rightly quoted from what our new leader Ernest Kororma said. He did say that the APC is here to forgive and forget. We do accept that within the APC Government so many things went wrong between 1968 to 1978 and 1978 – 1991. A whole lot of issues were mentioned that was wrong. This is why our leader has said that we are willing to forget and forgive.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones – I thank you

Commissioner Jow. Thank you for the submission. As Commissioner Marcus Jones said, the TRC, mandated to investigate the rebel war, will look back into the things of the past government, may be as far back as during independence. You spoke about the good things that the APC did i.e. building good houses- the National Stadium, Youyi Building, and the construction of Congo Cross Bridge. What was fundamental freedom like in Sierra Leone the under Siaka Stevens? For instance, it was alleged, that the APC mishandled students during the 1977 strikes. Can you say something about the expulsion of students and lecturers, and the ban on Students Union Government? Some people believe that all these things contributed to the formation of the RUF. I would like you to clarify this area.

Victor Foh – It is a fine question. Under the APC a lot of things went wrong. I have not only spoken about the good side but also about the bad side. Reflecting on the 1977 students strike, I would say that the party did wrong. Many people who came into the party acted over-zealously. When government is in the hands of the APC, and things go wrong they will say it was a party. We will not deny it. As I have said in our submission, we are sorry. We have now changed our attitude. On the question of expulsion of students, government established a Commission of inquiry. When government entrusts power into the hands of people and at the end of the day there is a problem the government will be blamed. Fourah Bay College has a government of its own. The institution is independent. A letter was sent to us to expel those students. We are sorry. We did not see the rationale why these students went to Libya and form a group to kill their own people. I know that the students who were expelled from college are the strong backbone of the RUF. We are sorry and ask the people of Sierra Leone to forgive us. We are asking the present government to learn a lesson from the APC. The thing that annoys me most is that those that were in the APC Government making decisions are now in the SLPP government.

Commissioner Jow - You spoke about the four arms of government, you described the media as the watchdog of the country. Can you tell us what the relationship was like between the media and the executive of the APC?

Victor Foh – This is another good question. I want to thank you in brief. The relationship was not cordial. I will tell you what happened. The SLPP did not allow the APC to enjoy the fruits of the elections. We won the election, but at the time the APC was underprivileged. They were uneducated. The press was against the APC. Most of the editors were strong SLPP supporters. We had the mandate of the people to rule for 5 years, but the SLPP did not want us to govern. Whilst the leader of the SLPP was a lawyer, the leader of the APC was a unionist. The APC's relationship with the press was not cordial. We tried to mend relations with the press but I think it was a bit late.

Commissioner Kamara - Thank you for giving us a lot of information that will help us in our report. I will like to go to the statement you have made. You mentioned the 1967 election. Am I correct in the recording that the results were APC 32 SLPP 28 and the Independent 4?

Victor Foh - Yes

Commissioner Kamara – You said that the Paramount Chiefs should not be involved in politics?

Victor Foh - Yes

Commissioner Kamara – What did your party do in the 24 years that it ruled to address that issue. You said the Paramount Chiefs were not supposed to take party in politics.

Victor Foh – Our attempt to do that went through heavy storm. Sierra Leone shares boundary with Guinea and Liberia. In Guinea they have no Paramount Chiefs. In Liberia government appoints Paramount Chiefs not like Sierra Leone where the people elect their Paramount Chiefs. What we did was to form a group to address that issue, because we were trying to gain support from the populace. We feel that everybody in the country should have one vote.

The constitution in section 72: 1-5, makes the position of the Paramount Chief an entrenched law. This institution is a political landmine. 95% of the populace in the provinces is illiterate. Those people are answerable to the Paramount Chief. They take orders from him. Anything the Chief tells them is final. That was why we found it very difficult to delve into that issue.

Commissioner Kamara – So you are saying that it was because you wanted to gain favor from Paramount Chiefs that was why you left them to take powers into their own hands.

Victor Foh - We started sensing that the Paramount Chiefs being in politics was wrong. But we did not have the necessary support of the people to do anything.

Commissioner Kamara– Another issue is development. Why did the APC in the early years of its rule abandon all the plantations that were established in the country by the SLPP?

Victor Foh – I thank the commissioner for this question. While I was preparing to read my submission I saw the posters on the wall. The posters talk about truth. I will speak the truth and nothing but the truth. I will say it truthfully how the APC abandoned the plantation. My father was a Plantation Manager. Therefore, when the SLPMB was dissolved I suffered. The staff of the SLPMB was busy selling cocoa and putting the money was into SLPP coffers. The Beoku Betts Commission can answer most of these questions for you. The leader of the SLPP was involved. SLPMB was created for SLPP sympathizers. During those days APC workers were sacked. Supporters of the SLPP were given promotions even when they were not educated. The SLPP secured a large space of land from my maternal part. They did that because of politics. The Beoku Betts commission can give an answer to the question of SLPMB. If democracy should prevail, politics should not continue to infiltrate commissions like these. It will result to the same thing.

Commissioner Kamara – I will limit myself to only one question. You said that the APC had done a lot and you have apologized. If the leader the APC was accused of being a dictator, what options other than taking up arms do you think these organizations had?

Victor Foh – The mandate of the TRC is to seek the truth and grant forgiveness. We all have made mistakes. We have also made strides for the country. We have apologized for our mistakes. What will civil societies do to remove a dictatorship? Our understanding of civil society is that political parties form the bulk of it. Many of the politicians come onboard when election is on the verge. politics in Sierra Leone is APC, SLPP but during the time of the election we have 15 to 18 parties all fighting to be opposition. All these groups have politicians in them. All these social groups are not truthful they concentrate on power and politics.

Everybody in civil society in this country is a politicians. We have about 1,000 NGOs registered in a small country like this. All of them belong to the SLPP. The government funded most of their projects. When civil society stands for the truth it will be respected.

Commissioner Torto – Thank you for coming. In addition to the submission you made, you have defended some of these issues. My question is limited to the verbal presentation. You will forgive me if I ask you questions from your submissions. In your verbal presentation you mentioned some sensitive issues. You said for instance, that cannibalism started in the SLPP government. Do you know of any case where the SLPP was tried for cannibalism?

Victor Foh – I will give you a host of instances of cannibalism. I have said earlier that I am the Chairrman of the APC for the Southern Region. I was born in Jimmy Bargbo and I have worked in eight districts in the country. There were times in Kenema when people went to bed before 10: 00' clock. They would otherwise be captured for human sacrifice. It is unfortunate that I don't have a right to call people to come and testify. If you go to Congabay, ask for one human Baboon. There is evidence before this Commission that the Kamajors were involved in cannibalism. I will not say that they are not my people. The country means a lot to me. But I will say that they were eating people. I do not want to go further.

Commissioner Torto – But there is no particular case to show that anyone was held.

Victor Foh – If we are talking about court cases, in the interest of truth and reconciliation many people will not be here. I have made an honest statement and I stand by it.

Break

Commissioner Schabas – Welcome to the afternoon session. You are still under oath and we are going to continue. Let me ask my colleagues if they have any questions for you.

Commissioner Torto –The next question is about handing power from late Siaka Stevens to his successor, Momoh. You stated in your paper that the army should not be involved in politics. Why then was power handed to a military man Momoh, who was commander of the military force?

Victor Foh –What I am going to say is the truth because I am under oath. Some of the statements I made here are personal. The APC has answered that question in our submission. We were under constant threat by the soldiers. I have said that mistakes were made. And I must add that those mistakes were more pronounced during the one party reign. And I have also said that most of the dictators who were in the APC are today in the SLPP government. The mistakes were joint mistakes of the APC and the SLPP.

Let me now come to the question of why power was handed to Momoh. Since I cannot read the mind of the late Siaka Stevens I will give my personal views. I am making this submission on behalf of the APC. President Momoh was commanding officer of the armed forces and he was in parliament. After the first ten years when the multi-party started Siaka Stevens' rule had problems with the military that had wanted to take power. Between the years 1968 – 1978 the soldiers were constantly trying to overthrow the Government. There was so much violence in the country at the time.

It was perhaps against this background that Siaka Stevens thought it fit that power should be handed over to Momoh. President Momoh was quiet and never took part in coup. He was a content man in my opinion. That was why power was handed over to him. It was a God sent power. I don't really think that power was given to Momoh because of tribal reasons. It was because of the military threats.

Commissioner Torto – You talked about political prostitutes in your submission, Dr. Sama Banya, S.B. Marah etc. You said they are the root causes of some of the problems we have in this country. They were all members of the APC. I should say that they all contributed to destroy this country.

Victor Foh – there is a Krio adage that says: there is no bad bush to throw away a naughty child". (bush nor dae for truway bad pikin). We brought one party and called people to come and develop the party. Salia Jusu Sheriff became the first Vice President. M.S. Mustapha, an SLPP man also came on board. SLPP brought in its people to spoil the country. If we had dismissed them, what would have happened? We thought that if they were with us we could change them.

Commissioner Torto – If those people come back to the APC will you accept them?

Victor Foh – if I were an autocrat not a democrat, and if as a leader of the APC, I am asked to clean this country and to let democracy prevail, the people listed in Page 30 who are chameleons will have nothing to do with politics in this country for the interest of development and peace.

Commissioner

Humper – We thank you for spending this time with us. I have a lot of questions to ask but due to limited time, I will not say much. I need short answers please. It is part of the mandate of the TRC to uncover past human rights violations. Based on what you've said, there were serious violations of human rights during the reigns of APC. Would you affirm that to err is human?

Victor Foh – Time is not in our favour, I want to answer this question but not in two words- a Yes or No answer. When our brothers took over power from the British they were committed human violations. Our country's first leader committed the worst violations. They banished Paramount Chiefs who were not in favour of them. Siaka Stevens was arrested. Mafantha prison was built for APC supporters. The Public Order Act of 1965 silenced the press. We did not know about human rights. The APC committed human rights violations when it came to power. This is my answer.

Commissioner

Humper – I just want to ask you one question. Which year in the history of Sierra Leone would you describe as the darkest chapter?

Victor Foh – I believe it is the period from 21st of March 1991 when the rebels struck at Bomaru in Kailahun District to 1st January 2002, when the war was officially ended.

Commissioner

Humper – I thank you very much

Leader of Evidence: - I am not going to ask you any question. Would you like to send us some information on issues that are not covered in the written submission? One of them is the issue of violence, the issue of regionalization and how it needs to change, and suggestions on how to improve on democracy. There are also the issue of how to improve parliament, the abuse and misuse of the office of the ombudsman, and the Justice Cross Commission. There have also been allegations that the SLPP gave support to the rebels to remove the APC. It has also been alleged that the SLPP were behind the NPRC to remove the APC from power.

Victor Foh – We respect the Commission. We will do our best to give you answers to these issues.

Commissioner Schabas - Have you any questions to ask?

Victor Foh – I have circulated our recommendations. To conclude I want to repeat what our leader said in his statement at the opening ceremony of the hearings. The APC as a political party in the country was the first to suffer in the hands of the rebel. We are ready to forgive all those who took up arms against the APC. We pray that there is no reoccurrence of the past. We also pray for everlasting peace in the country. I thank you sirs.

Commissioner Schabas – I want to thank you too.

The other witness should be the RUF representative. We have sent a letter and a reminder, but nobody has turned-up. It is an obligation on any citizen of this country to take part in this hearing.

Leader of Evidence: - - Eke Holloway – for the Government of Sierra Leone? We have also sent a letter and a reminder but nobody has turned-up. I suggest that we issue subpoena on them.

WITNESS NO.: 2

WITNESS NAME: Sylvia Fletcher- representing the UNDP

Mr. Chairman and members of the commission I would like to make a statement on behalf the United Nations. Your job is to get the truth about what happened in the country during the 11-year war. We hope that the truth will help to bring reconciliation. The UNDP will give its own help to the process of unraveling the past for reconciliation. We are not here to tell you about everything that happened during the war.

If we want to lament, on the causes of the war, we need a special paper to lament on that. The problems that led to war in Sierra Leone have been brewing since the 1970s. But nobody can fail to recognize that poverty in the country was a contributing factor to the war. Bad governance and disrespect for human rights were also key issues that contributed to war in this country. Another root cause of the war was that Government was not in control the security groups. There was no discipline among the rank and files of the army and Police.

Sierra Leone has emerged from the war badly damaged. Hundreds of thousands of houses were destroyed. Schools, businesses, and farms have been destroyed. In the last few years Sierra Leone has continuously ranked as the poorest country in the world. Women and youth remain seriously disadvantaged. Government institutions are very weak. These are critical challenges to address if we are to prevent a recurrence of the turmoil the country went through.

The United Nations recognizes these challenges and has poised support for the Government and people of Sierra Leone. Many of the developmental challenges Sierra Leone faces have been

captured the UN's Millennium Development Goal. In its specific support to Sierra Leone however, the UN is paying attention to country specific-challenges- namely addressing basic needs of the people like food, security and shelter; addressing the problem of youth marginalization, mainstreaming women in economic, social and political, and access to justice. The UNDP is partnering with NGOs, and the private sector in tackling these challenges.

Sierra Leone now has peace. Concretizing and sustaining the peace is the underpin of the UNDP's support to Sierra Leone.

Commissioner Schabas - We are happy that you have presented this paper. I will now ask my colleagues if they have any questions for you.

Commissioner

Marcus Jones - We are very grateful for your presence here. Don't you think that if the conditions of the Magistrates were improved, there will be more Magistrates that will serve in Freetown and the provinces?

Fletcher - It is one of the plans of the UNDP. We are working on it. Even the Civil Servants are not well paid. That needs to be addressed too.

Commissioner Kamara – I want to stay with this question of salaries. What is the UNDP, or IMF doing concerning the increase of salaries? There are lots of qualified people but performance is poor because of low salary and lack of tools.

Fletcher – It is a complex issue. I am not representing the IMF.

Commissioner Kamara – What makes the international community take certain decisions in aid of a country like Sierra Leone? Let us take the Americans for instance. They just came and repatriated their nationals, instead of helping as the British did. When UNAMSIL was humiliated the British came to their aid. Why is it that the Americans did not come to help remove the AFRC from power?

Fletcher –These questions are beyond my position. The International community had agreed to spend money to develop this country. When Government took power in 1996 the international community pledged support to help the country. But the AFRC staged a coup. The international community was thinking of doing one thing and the country was busy with war.

Commissioner Torto – Thank you for coming. I just have one question for you. Most people think that civil servants were not doing their work effectively because of low salaries. We should also not forget that even the laws that govern public service institutions are very old. The financial orders are still old principles. Some of them still talk about Pence and Shillings. Is the UNDP doing anything to improve on such issues?

Fletcher – Thank you very much for your question. One year ago the Government asked us to look into these laws. We have done some work on revising these laws. .

Commissioner Torto –Do you have any plans at the UNDP to assist the University of Sierra Leone? Do have plans for instance to help Njala University College relocate to its original campus?

Fletcher – We currently have a short-term plan for the university. This is an emergency plan. We do not have a specific time to do Njala. We have done a computer section at FBC.

Commissioner Humper - Thank you so much for this presentation, I don't have much to say because there is so much in this document.

Leader of Evidence: – – I have one question. Can you give the Commission a copy of the corruption document and the Ombudsman report?

Fletcher – Yes.

Leader of Evidence: – – We all know that Government is not financially strong. How do we hope to finance all that you have planned to do? What are the constraints? How does the withdrawal of UNAMSIL affect the recovery plan? I invite your recommendations as to what the commission should do?

Fletcher – I don't actually have information on the amount that is to be spent. The money is not going to be sufficient to undertake all the projects. But there are some monies that had been set aside. I do not have the documents here with me. We should however not look at short-term solutions. We should look at long-term solutions.

I thank you very much for this opportunity. We do not have our recommendations and suggestion here. They will be submitted later.

Commissioner Schabas – We thank you.

WITNESS NO.: 3

WITNESS NAME: Representative of UNAMSIL

The first comment is to thank you for allowing us to make a statement at this Commission. The first part of our written submission deals with human right situation abuses and violations, past and present in Sierra Leone. We have paid special attention to the issue of amputation, women and children. Let me remind the Commission that at least four thousand civilians were amputated during the war. It is estimated that three out of every four persons amputated died. Concerning children, the fact that a total number of 7,000 children were disarmed speaks volumes. It is disturbing to note that 500 of the child combatants were girls. In laying emphasis on the right of women we want to inform the Commission that investigations have shown that there were 50,000 to 64,000 rape cases during the war.

Linking human rights issue with justice in the country has been a critical element in our work. It is on this score that UNAMSIL has been supporting the work of the TRC, the Special Court, and even the local court in Sierra Leone. Relatedly, UNAMSIL has been pushing for a strong human rights culture in Sierra Leone. Towards this, UNAMSIL has been undertaking community sensitization on human rights, and supporting the work of local activists. The scope of our work has certainly not covered every impediment to human rights protection in Sierra Leone. The imperative of reforming laws must not be lost on the Government and civil society. There must also be an effective parliament system. The issue of lack of access to justice must be urgently addressed. Civil society should also put premium of monitoring human rights violations, especially in the police and courts. We end with a reminder that there is an integrated relationship between human rights, good governance and sustainable peace. I thank you.

Commissioner Schabas – We are happy because you have presented a good material within a short time. You suggested that Sierra Leone gets a Human Rights Commission. Do you see the TRC promoting an institution like that?

UNAMSIL – The recommendations of the TRC are a very important part of the institution's report. I believe that it would be good if the TRC takes the establishment of a human rights commission into consideration. And let me add that there is a need for the Commission to follow-up on its recommendations. The Commission must make sure that all the recommendations are implemented.

Commissioner Schabas - Thank you. UNAMSIL has been here for some time and has done a lot of work on human rights. It would be great if UNAMSIL could help us with any human rights materials it has.

UNAMSIL -We have quite a lot of material at UNAMSIL. We only need a systematic methodology to use it. We have a report from a conference which makes mention of the TRC over 10 times. That shows the importance UNAMSIL attaches to the Commission. We are ready to help.

Commissioner Schabas - Thank you. I'll now turn over to my colleagues.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – Thank you very much. I'll like to talk about amputees. I wonder how these victims survive. This problem came to the fore when we went to the provinces. Some amputees have been moved into newly built houses. Some amputees have extended families that expect financial help from them. I note that in your presentation, you mentioned that there is need for government to develop a scheme for the amputees. Do you have any suggestions as somebody who deals with human?

UNAMSIL - It was difficult to determine the number of amputees. 2,040 were interviewed. There were 1,055 victims of direct amputation. We established files for each victim. We tried to sensitize people about what is going on. We lobbied the government, international community to help. As you may know it is not within the mandate of the Human Right section to raise funds. These preliminary investigations were conducted in both rural and urban areas. We contacted the government to help amputees. The first step was to contact the international communities and to share this information with them.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank you

Commissioner Jow - In your written submission, you made mention of the things the RUF did, and how the human rights violations occurred. You said some organizations came into the country to verify human rights violations. We as a Commission have had the opportunity to visit these places too, especially during our sensitization exercise. Has UNAMSIL carried out any follow-up in some of these sites?

UNAMSIL – We carry out follow-ups through our regional offices. Allow me to stress that we cannot do follow up in every cases. The Human Rights Commission that is to be established could up the issue of follow-up. Manpower in the Human Rights section is minimal. We make great use of the manpower of local NGOs.

Commissioner Kamara – Welcome back to Sierra Leone, I will ask a few questions. The first one has to do with Human Rights violations in the country; past and present. As the Human Right Section of UNAMSIL, what was the Human Rights violation before 1991 and from 1961?

UNAMSIL - UNAMSIL was established in 1999, so we have no records of human rights of those periods.

Commissioner Kamara – Do you have anything to say about. It may have happened within the period of UNAMSIL's stay in Sierra Leone.

UNAMSIL –We did not receive systematic information on disappearances. We are aware of cases of disappearances, but we didn't include them in our submission. As you may know also, in the case of Sierra Leone it is difficult to attest the number of cases of summary execution. In Human Rights disappearance means one that cannot be seen.

Commissioner Kamara - Am I right to say that you support the establishment of a Human Right Commission in Sierra Leone?

UNAMSIL – No, I said that this vacancy exists. I said that in the Lome Accord there is a provision for a Human Right Commission. I said that this Human Rights Commission can also play a role in following up on the recommendations made by the TRC.

Commissioner Torto – I have no question for you. But there are some clarifications I want you to make. When we met the amputees, they complained that they have been neglected by society. Can UNAMSIL's Human Rights Section provide facilities for these amputees?

UNAMSIL – The office in Geneva has small funds for victims. These funds go to many countries including Sierra Leone. We can't help people as individuals. If it's necessary to help individuals it should be a policy of the institution.

Commissioner Torto – Thank you.

UNAMSIL - We are glad about the TRC operations. UNAMSIL's Human Rights Sections supports the TRC. I'll submit the document in which "TRC" appears over ten times.

Leader of evidence - No question

Commissioner Schabas – Thanks to all of you. We appreciate your participation.

WITNESS NO.: 3

WITNESS NAME: Dr Prince Harding representing the SLPP

Commissioner Humper: - We want to thank you very much for representing the SLPP; I have a question for you on what you've spoken about. Can you please share with us what you perceive to have been the problems of the SLPP?

Harding: In analyzing the problems, I will not talk on behalf of the party. I will give my opinion. One of the problems that SLPP has is that it wants to practice democracy more than people practice in Africa. We are trying to convince other political parties in the country to that democracy is the only way forward. I would also point that the young and old generation in the party are not complimenting each other's efforts in the development of the party.

We bring in organizations to help the country. However, many times we fail to give these organizations political direction. Take the Anti-Corruption Commission, for instance. Anti-Corruption Commissions are established in many parts of the world. In Sierra Leone it seems that the ACC is dying. In addition, people do not know how the legal system works. People do not know that when someone has not been found guilty, he or she is a suspect. I am referring to the Momoh Pujeh case. He has been arrested and the matter is still in court. Yet people talk about it as if the man is a convict. The legal system does not allow a person to be tried by the people and the Government. It will be against somebody's right.

I am not annoyed that the people are confused about issues like this and cast aspersions on the SLPP. People need to be educated. Every Government that has been in power sensitizes people about what it does. SLPP does not want to spend money to do that. If we are able to do that, people will understand what the Government is doing.

Commissioner Humper: One of our political party representatives brought out an issue it is a major area of investigation. It has been said that the SLPP party practiced cannibalism. I would like you to comment on that.

Harding - Opinion is free. In African politics rituals are normal. I am not in possession of any legal document that the SLPP was engaged in that. On the contrary an APC Minister was convicted of sacrificial mutilation. He had to go to jail. No SLPP minister has ever been accused and brought before court for cannibalism.

Commissioner Humper – Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - What can you say of criticism that the party sometimes offer positions because of party affiliations and not on merit.

Harding - As I said, opinions are free. It is natural that in political appointments tendency consideration is given first to people who have gone through the rough and terrible times of elections campaign. The SLPP has always resisted tendency. In giving positions, especially sensitive positions, you have to look secondly at performance and suitability. I can give you few e.g. of certain appointments that have been given to people that are not supporters of the SLPP In appointing the Inspector General of Police for example, we did not look at Mr. Archa political background. Many appointments that have been made have not been based on party support. There are people in the cabinet who are not SLPP members. I am not going to name names here

Commissioner Torto – Why is it that a person standing trials and is still in Parliament? Is it not the law in the country that an accused person should not hold public position?

Harding: I have already said that it is only when someone is proved guilty that action can be taken against him or her. I do not know whether the 1991 constitution manufactured by the APC says that a person accused of criminal or civil offence should not public positions in the country.

During elections a party sends names to the Electoral Commission to check the backgrounds of candidates.

Commissioner Kamara – The results of the 1967 elections were APC 32, SLPP 28 and Independent 4. Can you enlighten us?

Harding - Mr. Commissioner, I will not challenge the veracity of your figures. I said SLPP and APC had 32-32. I still maintain that. If APC had 32 and SLPP 28, APC would have taken over power.

Commissioner Kamara – It is said that when the results were out the SLPP used the soldiers to overthrow the newly elected Government.

Harding - We all know what happened. There was clearly a problem in the country. It was then that the military took power. The military however did not hand over power to the SLPP. In fact at that time the APC had already started training rebels. Bangura overthrew the Government and handed over to the APC.

Commissioner Kamara – I want to make an appeal to you. Can you lead us to any place where we can straighten this record? The APC and SLPP are saying different things.

Harding - The facts could be found through the research. Mr. Ndolleh, one time history lecturer at Fourah Bay College would give you details of that.

Leader of Evidence - No question.

Commissioner

Humper - Do you have any question to ask the commission?

Harding - I have a question to ask the Commission.

Somebody mentioned the “regionalization’ of politics. I think SLPP fought it out and promised to bring an end to that politics. The last election was free from fair. The SLPP made significant gains. Out of 112 seats, SLPP get 86, APC 27 and PLP 2. In the Northern province APC had 18, SLPP had 22 and PLP had no seat.

This tells us something. SLPP was the only party that got seats all over the country each district in the country. It was because our policies are not based on tribalism. We hope to improve on that result by handling our duties well.

Mr. Chairman, Commissioners of TRC, I know you are going to suffer torture by what people talk here. I would ask that you find some counseling.

Commissioner Kamara – We are happy for the concern you have for us.

Commissioner Kamara - I thank you.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION THEMATIC HEARINGS: GOVERNANCE

5TH MAY 2003

BEFORE

Commissioner J.C. Humper - Presiding Commissioner

Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus Jones

Commissioner Madam Satang Jow

Commissioner Mr. Sylvanus Torto
Commissioner John Kamara

Leaders of Evidence

Mr Ozzonia Ojielo
Mr Abdulai Charm

WITNESS NO: 1

WITNESS NAME: Olayinka Creighton Randall - Campaign For Good Governance

SUBMISSION

The institution has submitted a comprehensive report to the commission. I am a representative of Campaign for Good Governance, which is an unpleasant task placed on me.

Introduction

Sierra Leone's attempt at commissioning the past should be understood in the light of the country's elusive search for peace and justice over the years. The case of Sierra Leone is not only a sad story of a lost paradise but an example of a state that had collapsed under the weight of bad governance and conflict over the years. At independence in 1961, Sierra Leone was one of the brightest states in the galaxy of new African states. After nearly two decades of bad governance and a decade of a devastating civil war, the country's future as a stable let alone democratic state had become increasingly doubtful. The political and military crisis in Sierra Leone can be traced to the highly centralized president-dominated political order and its accompanying institutionalized corruption during the All People's Congress (APC) regime.

Over the past two years a number of measures have been put in place, in an attempt to improve the governance of the State of Sierra Leone. These include:

- Security Sector Reform
- Legal Reform
- The Anti-Corruption Commission
- The Ombudsman's Office
- Transitional Justice Institutions i.e. the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Independent Media Commission

However, time will tell just how effect all these measures have been, and if there were maybe ways of tackling the problems of Sierra Leone differently.

Pre and immediate post-conflict Sierra Leone

Since Independence in 1961 until the start of the armed conflict in 1991, Sierra Leone had never experienced a truly democratic, participatory, transparent and accountable government. Independence was preceded by governance structures that were centered on the traditional rulers. The roles of traditional rulers were upheld even during the colonial era. Abuse of power under chieftdom governance was one of the underlying causes of the war.

In nearly three decades of one-party and military dictatorship, a deliberate policy of systematic dismantling and destruction of all democratic institutions was undertaken personally by President Steven, President Momoh and the military regime. Institutions that constituted a system of checks and balances were crippled. Parliament became a rubber-stamp institution. The press was stifled. Student Union politics was banned. Local government was abolished. The Army became a political institution. Institutions like the Judiciary, deprived of funding were first to lose their relevance. The Civil Service lost its neutrality and professionalism.

By the end of the 1970's, power became highly centralized in the hands of the President. All decisions were taken in Freetown and state resources distributed from there. Sierra Leone became two countries- Freetown and the rest of the country.

The over-centralization of political authority had the consequence of stifling local initiatives and alienating state from society. It left the majority of the citizens marginalized. It also had the further consequence of making the Presidency the target of all struggles for power. By the time the civil war broke out in 1991 therefore, the Sierra Leonean state had collapsed. Although it was the declared intention of the RUF to unseat the APC the movement degenerated into one of the most barbaric and brutal worldwide. The RUF was responsible for unimaginable atrocities, including brutal slayings, rapes and abductions.

The RUF was unable to oust the APC from power. The APC was however, ousted by a fallout of the RUF's war. In 1992 some young soldiers seized power. Although the people of Sierra Leone welcomed them, barely two years in power the military regime was accused of corruption and repression. However, in 1996 we had our first multi-party general elections. The RUF and elements in the army were against elections before peace. It therefore stepped up its attacks until the Abidjan Peace Accord was signed on November 30, 1996. In May 1997, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Ruling Council (AFRC) took power from the SLPP government. As we all know the AFRC regime was unpopular. It committed atrocities. Political opponents were killed, or tortured. Civil disobedience and ECOWAS forcefully removed the junta from power. We also know that in May 2000 the RUF wanted to take power from the Government. Finally, after the peace talk in Abuja, Nigeria, a ceasefire was agreed upon, on the 18th January 2001 the rebel war finally declared over in Sierra Leone.

How Campaign for Good Governance was formed

Campaign for Good Governance was established on the 1st of July 1996, by some of the leaders involved in the pro-democracy movement at the time. Our vision is to facilitate and encourage the full and genuine participation of Sierra Leoneans in the political and social, and economic processes of development in the country. As an advocacy organization, the main aims and objectives are:

- To promote democratic participation of civil society
- To promote gender empowerment for gender equality
- To promote human right and the rule of law

The Campaign for Good Governance is divided in to three departments: The human rights department, the gender empowerment department, and the governance department. I will not be able to explain the duties of these departments in greater details.

As stated earlier, bad governance for over decades was primarily the cause of the conflict in Sierra Leone. There is need for Good Governance to prevail. The following factors should be taken into consideration: The power of the state should derive from the constitution, the Executive, judiciary and the Legislature, should all act as checks and balances to each other. Security, protection of life and property, good leadership, transparency and accountability should also be given premium. We should have regular free and fair election. As stated in the introduction a number of measures and reforms should be adopted. I will highlight some of these and the possible challenges to face them.

Military

It is a well-known fact that the military contributed significantly to the tragedy in Sierra Leone. However, when the new army was reconstituted there was no screening done of extreme human violators. In addition elements from both the RUF and CDF were absorbed into the Army. These are factions that had committed human rights abuses against the citizens of Sierra Leone. The Special Court has been established to try those who bear the greatest responsibilities. If you go now to the villages and ask a woman about who was responsible for her rape and the burning of

her house, she will invariably point to a newly trained member of the Republic of Sierra Military Forces. Thus, there is no accountability mechanism that has been put in place to tackle this problem. The military still has a high rate of illiteracy. The problem of indiscipline and corruption must also not be overlooked.

Police

The reform within the police force has most significantly been seen in the supply of new equipment, logistics, etc. The bulk of the force is still, like in the Military, highly illiterate. The attitude of the majority of Police officers has still not changed.

Legal Reform

Much of the support to the judiciary so far has focused on rebuilding courts. In general, not much had been done towards reforming the people who work in the legal system. Although some work had been done in the area of customary law, the whole arena of existing laws has not yet been looked at. There is also the issue of the three types of laws recognized under the constitution: Statutory, customary and Islamic law.

Anti-Corruption

The most significant problems with these bodies are that it lacks powers to prosecute. After investigations of a matter all findings must be passed on to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice for a decision to be made on whether there should be prosecution or not. We also think that more attention should be placed on instituting mechanisms to control and prevent corruption from source.

Our governmental system is still closed. The Anti-Corruption Commission should put measures in place to open up the system and make it more accountable and transparent. For example a Right to Information bill should be passed in parliament, giving the average Sierra Leonean the right and authority to have access to public information.

Democracy

It must be realized that the young ones are not politically represented, it should be noted that the majority of the youth that took part in the war do not necessarily have any allegiance, and they switched between being a CDF, and RUF or a member/supporter of this army. A huge number of these armed youths were not eligible to go through the disarmament process; they still remain largely untrained, unemployed and idle. The option of youth's organizations all over the country is therefore not surprising if the energies of these youths are not appropriately harnessed then we have a potentially dangerous situation.

Women and the Law

In this country we are all constitutionally equal before the law. We find out that in practical terms women found themselves disadvantaged in many areas. In divorce and inheritance matters, they were treated differently on the basis of ethnic or religious backgrounds. Among the Temnes for example when a husband dies, the woman is regarded as part of his property. This is not so among Mendes. Similarly, if a husband of a Muslim woman dies, she is entitled to only one-eighth of her husband's property. This is not so for a Christian woman.

I would now go on to recommendations, reforms and solutions to the problems.

For us to have good governance in Sierra Leone we have to look at the three main role players in the Sierra Leone: the state, private sector, and civil society. Power and influence can be separated between these three parties.

State – in order for good governance to prevail, the state must have segregation of powers. It means that the Executive, Legislature, and the Judiciary play out their institutional roles without fear or favor of the other.

Securities agency –Professionalism should be instilled in all security institutions. And all security institutions must be accountable to the civilian populace.

Civil Society – In order for Good Governance to prevail, civil society must be independent, strong, diverse, and well resourced. On a more practical level, the following recommendation should be put forward. The youth issue must also be looked into.

As a nation we have been given a unique opportunity to move forward not just to the position we were in when the war started, but to moved forward and join the globalization trend. Finally, I am proud to reveal to this Commission that the Campaign for Good Governance is engaging with these issues in a number of different ways. Campaign for Good Governance for example, is currently working with Parliament by offering its research papers and providing materials to enhance members' debate. We are also doing work with the security agencies.

Commissioner Humper: Thanks to the representative. If we allow her to say all that she wants to say there would be no other witness here this afternoon.

She has painted a picture of Sierra Leone, as a country was about to die. But there is still hope. I will ask other Commissioners for comments.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – Thank you for a very good presentation. We thank you for delivering your submission within the stipulated time. The TRC has interest in women and children. I just want to know what progress Campaign for Good Governance has made in protecting women and children.

Creighton-Randall: – I was unable to elaborate on that. We have what we call the Gender Empowerment Department. Women are empowered politically and economically. Economically, we have micro credit loans for market women in 48 markets in the Western Area, Matru Jong in Bonthe District, and in Moyamba District. Politically, we have done a number of training sessions for women, especially during the last elections. We did voter and campaign education for them. We also trained women in Gender Orbit and Gender System. This Gender Orbit had 20 women in the 12 districts in Sierra Leone. Under our Human Rights Department we organized workshops for women and children across the country. We also provide legal and medical help to women and children who suffered domestic and sexual violence in the war.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones –What is our hope for the future?

Creighton-Randall: - As mentioned in my statement, Sierra Leone is in a unique situation to advocate for legal reforms for women and children. It does not matter how many rapists the police arrest. If the laws are not strong the work of the Police will become fruitless.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones – I thank you.

Commissioner Jow – Thank you for your presentation. We know the roles civil society is playing to bring about democracy and good governance. What are you doing in the area of raising the awareness of the majority of people? What are some of the challenges you face as an organization?

Creighton-Randall: – We have undertaken a huge number of human rights workshops primarily in the Western Area. We have brought men and women from every chiefdom to educate them about their rights and responsibilities. A lot however, still needs to be done in this area. I believe the average Sierra Leonean knows his or right and responsibilities at the basic levels. At CGG, our current challenge is to formulate public policies that the average Sierra Leonean would benefit. We have carried research into public issues. Without assuming that we know it all, we are calling other civil societies and other organizations to let us know what they want us to pass on to the government that will benefit everybody.

Commissioner Kamara - I want to join my colleagues to thank you. I think you have done a good work, especially when you spoke of the reasons for the war in Sierra Leone. We know that there are other factors responsible for the war. We understand that the university became a revolving door to recruit corrupt ministers, what is your opinion and what do you expect from the University of Sierra Leone.

Creighton-Randall: – The University, like other institutions at the time was not getting enough money to be able to perform well. Students had no hope for the future. They were therefore easily corrupted. If the University receives adequate funding and support they can be able to get good lecturers. The students will therefore benefit from good education. There should be a conducive atmosphere for learning. The students should have confidence that they will be employed in future.

Commissioner Kamara – You did say that the interference of politicians in the work of Paramount Chief. I just want to ask whether the powers of the Paramount Chiefs were greater than those of the Members of Parliament?

Creighton-Randall: - I believe so. Paramount Chiefs deals directly with the people in the province whilst members of parliament reside in the Western area. Parliamentarians only go to their constituencies when they want something from the people. The Paramount Chiefs are closer to the people.

Commissioner Kamara –On the military you said they contributed positively or negatively on the war based on information we had received. Do you have hope that on-going reforms in the military would make the institution serve the country better than before?

Creighton-Randall: –The military was doing well at the start of the war. But it began to perform negatively as the war prolonged. The reforms that are now taking place should be done looking towards the future and not short-term solutions. It would have been a good thing to find out who in the army were involved human rights violations. Soldiers who committed human rights violations should have been removed from the army. It will also be necessary to have institutional reconciliation. There would be, for example, a sort of TRC amongst military officers. It would be an opportunity for them to tell us what they did and what they had suffered. Such a process will help the army to reconcile with the public generally. We must also put emphasis on the military being accountable to civilians.

Commissioner Kamara –I want to ask a final question to help us on what should have been done in the 1960s and 1970s; and what should have been done to prevent the emergence the RUF.

Creighton-Randall: – First of all we must realize that civil societies in the country in the 1960s and 1970s was not in any way structured. I think the challenge now is to keep civil society as intact as possible especially when dealing with specific issues. It is easy for civil society to mobilize against the nation. The challenge now is to look inwards and to critically analyze the past, which will guide in the right path.

Commissioner Torto - I thank you for the concise statement you have made. I am interested in social justice. I would like you to enlighten me on - first the police, their attitude, equipment and logistics. You also talked about tribal lines in the SSD. Is it a problem in the higher cadre?

Creighton-Randall: - There are ethnic problems in that force.

Commissioner Torto –Let's talk about legal practitioners- the behaviors of lawyers in Court. They hold a lot of blame. Is something being done in towards lawyers behavior?

Creighton-Randall: –No. Our legal practitioners definitely had a lot of blame. It is my humble opinion, (and Mrs. Marcus Jones can correct me) which the judges are in charge of their court. And if a lawyer for no reason decides to delay a case, the judge has the power to take corrective action.

Commissioner Torto – Are customary laws in force?

Creighton-Randall: – They are in force. I made reference to that earlier. Government must try to put certain mechanism in place so that all laws in the country have the same effect.

Commissioner Humper - Thank you for answering the Commissioners. Your organization did a survey on the Special Court and the TRC. When was that?

Creighton-Randall: – November and December 2002.

Commissioner Humper – Do you have any intention of conducting another survey now that the TRC has started its operations or are your findings going to remain the same?

Creighton-Randall: – We would have loved to but there are no funds.

Commissioner Humper –According to your submission we have a powerful Executive and Legislative but the Judiciary is weak. Can you comment on that?

Creighton-Randall: - That is what we believe as an organization.

Commissioner Humper – Yesterday over the BBC, President Obasanjo said that too many political parties were not good for Nigeria. He said the number of parties should be cut down to three. I am asking whether CGG will make a recommendation to the Commission as to how to help our country reduce its political parties.

Creighton-Randall:– If the Commission wants us to submit that recommendation, we will think about it. In Sierra Leone we have a number of political parties. These parties are based on people. When parties start operating along the lines of ideology they will be reduced because we do not have many ideologies to entertain.

Commissioner Humper – Thank you.

Leader of Evidence – I refer to page 8 of the submission on the war victims funds. I want to ask you to make recommendations as to that are war victims, and what measures to put in place for their welfare?

Creighton-Randall: - As we all know most Sierra Leoneans had suffered. We however, have to streamline the victims for the purposes of the war victim's funds. When we talk about war victims for the purpose of the funds we may have in mind people who suffered physical violence, those who were raped and the amputees. There are other means to help war victims outside the war victims funds.

Leader of Evidence– What recommendation do you want to make to the Commission?

Creighton-Randall: - Money was in the minds of most victims as means of compensation. I however suggest that the perpetrators help to build communities that they destroyed.

Leader of Evidence– Thank you very much.

Commissioner Humper - Do you have any comments, issues or point to raise in relation to the mandate of the Commission for us to discuss?

Creighton-Randall: – For now I have no questions or issues to raise. I promised that before the end of the Commission I would have my recommendations made.

Commissioner Humper –We will appreciate your recommendations. I thank you for coming.

WITNESS NO: 2

WITNESS NAME – Sheku B .S Lahai – National Forum for Human Rights

SUBMISSION

Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, the National Forum for Human Rights (NFHR) is a federation of local human rights organizations. NFHR coordinates collaboration and networking among local human rights groups. It was represented at the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement and has since being involved in activities around the TRC. NFHR has played a leading role in educating the populace on the role and activities of the TRC. NFHR closely monitored and documented gruesome human rights violation/abuses during the armed conflict. Our experience has revealed to us accusations and counter accusations by individuals and groups as to who was responsible for the enormous damages caused to the people of Sierra Leone. Who is saying the truth? The TRC hopes to answer this question. The National Forum attaches great importance to the work of the Commission.

Roots causes about the war in Sierra Leone

One of the reasons for was the emergence of undemocratic rule in Sierra Leone. The SLPP was the party that formed the government just after independence and The APC was the opposition. Elections in 1967, six years after independence, proved very controversial with each party claiming 32 seats. Six seats however went to the independent candidates. There was serious political upheaval, which provided leeway for the armed forces to seizure power. A counter coup took place hours the initial attempt to seize power. The soldiers established the National Reformation Council (NRC) with Juxon Smith as its leader.

After thirteen months in power the NRC was toppled by non-commissioned officers. A regime called the Anti-Corruption Reformation Movement (ACRM) was formed. The ACRM reinstated Siaka Stevens and his APC party. The APC feeling threatened started working towards a one-party state. The APC had previously opposed the idea when the then ruling party, SLPP tried to introduce it. This was an indicator that the country will be plunged into violent and complex conflict.

Electoral fraud or rigging is another cause of the ten-year war. From 1967, elections in the political history of Sierra Leone have always been about controversies, violence, and such other negative tendencies. The perpetration of electoral fraud and election rigging by politicians in power even after the expiration of their mandate, engendered distrust and dissatisfaction among the Sierra Leonean populace.

The stage-management of coups to get rid of political opponents was a corollary to the above. Political opponents who were roped in these alleged coups were executed. This bred disgruntlement and revenge in some sections of Sierra Leonean society.

Over centralization of state machinery led to isolation of rural communities. This resulted in severe inequalities in the distribution of state structures and functions to the dissatisfaction of greater majority of the population. Its contribution to the war cannot be overemphasized. In the period of one-party and military dictatorships the rights of people were grossly violated with

impunity. The rights to freedom of association and assembly, freedom of the press and expression, political participation were egregiously violated by the state administration. This environment serves as a fertile ground for breeding the malcontents who started the war.

Political Intrusions into the State Security Agencies

Immediately after independence, Sierra Leone acquired a taste for military coups, and open military intervention in political life. The military presence in politics had such attendance consequences as dissolution of political parties and heavy restrictions on democratic activity. The involvement of senior military and police officers into the day-to-day political activities during the one party era (1978-1992) also added to the factors leading to the military to become unprofessional. Head of the police and military were members of parliament.

There were serious lapses in the security institutions due to political interference. Since independent, there were deliberate and calculated move to politicize the law enforcement institutions by politicians. The recruitment into the police, army and the Special Security Division (SSD) was purely on the basis of nepotism and not on qualification. A system was introduced whereby only persons in possession of a card from a politician or party stalwart could be recruited into the security forces. The recruitment into the forces therefore gradually became skewed in favour of a particular set of people the majority of whom were close relatives of the politicians. Attempts by pressure groups to force the APC to introduce multi-party democracy was therefore met with the stiffest resistance from the law enforcement agencies not based on principles but on personal interest.

Weakening of the Judiciary

The judiciary has not been independent for the past two decades. The executive arm of government was directly involved in judicial processes. This invariably inhibited people's access to justice. Backlog of cases became the order of the day as the courts became overcrowded with cases. "Justice delayed is justice denied". People were held in custody for long periods without trial. Most Magistrates and judges were accused of taking bribes taking to adjudicated matters.

The instruments and structures used by the judiciary were obsolete. Most of the laws were not in consonance with international standards. Many laws only protected the political aspiration of the ruling party. The customary judicial system levied fines that were not commensurate with the crimes committed. This led to migration of disaffected youths to big towns where opportunities for them were almost none-existence. During the war there were instances where some youths returned to their rural communities as rebels to wrecked mayhem and destruction in return for the ill treatment meted out to them in the past.

Breakdown in the Socio-Economic Structures

Widespread and endemic corruption and mismanagement in both the private and the public sectors incapacitated the state machinery. It was a general belief that officials of government had to be bribed to undertake jobs for which they were fully employed and paid. There was no care for government property as people used them as personal properties. In short, corruption was institutionalized.

Education was seen as a privilege and not a right. Many children were left without access to education. School calendar was erratic due to Government's inability to pay salaries. People had to queue to buy essential items like rice, and petrol. Jobs were not given on merit. People who appointed not on the basis of merit were not only inefficient but also corrupt. The short cut to economic emancipation for the youth in particular was to flood the mines where illicit mining and smuggling was the way of life. It was in these circumstances that the war was conceived and executed as the only means to effect change.

Roles of Actors during the war

The actors in the conflict included the RUF, AFRC, Government forces, ECOMOG, UNAMSIL and the Civil Militia.

The RUF and AFRC

These two organizations were responsible for the following:

- Amputations
- Arson
- Killings
- Rape
- Torture
- Ambushing commercial transportation
- Recruitment of child soldiers
- Widespread looting
- Child labour and enslavement
- Extermination
- Abduction of civilians and UNAMSIL peacekeepers
- Revenge killing

Civil Militia

- Killings
- Torture
- Looting
- Recruitment of child soldiers
- Ambushes
- Extermination
- Revenge killing

Government Forces

- Revenge killings
- Rape
- Torture
- Looting
- Use of child soldiers
- Collaboration with RUF (Sobel)

ECOMOG – 1997 to 2000

- Extra-judicial killings

UNAMSIL

- Minor instances of misdemeanors like rape

COUNTRIES

- **Liberia**
 - Involved in diamond trade in exchange for arms
 - Provided mercenaries for the RUF and AFRC

- Fuelled the war
 - Exploited the country during the war years
 - Harbored the rebels
 - Served as arms transit point
- **Ivory Coast**
 - Sale of arms to the RUF
 - Conducted academic training for the RUF fighters
 - Serve as the political base for the RUF especially in 1996.
- **Burkina Faso**
 - Provided military training facilities for the RUF
 - Provided mercenary fighters
 - Provided arms and ammunition
- **Nigeria**
 - Contributed greatly to the attainment of peace in Sierra Leone
 - Contributed the highest number of troops to the ECOMOG forces which interventionist capacity helped to keep the rebels at bay.
- **Britain**
 - Provided logistical and technical support to the democratic government
 - Conducted training and actually became engaged in combat
 - Engaged in rebuilding of the Sierra Leone Army
 - The training Head of IMATT acted as adviser to the Government of Sierra Leone
 - Eliminated the Westside boys and made it a spent force
 - Initially serve as the coordinating point of the RUF
- **Guinea**
 - Contributed the second highest number troops to the ECOMOG forces
 - Guinea served as corridor for both the democratic government and the opposing forces.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF HOW THE CONFLICT COULD BE AVOIDED

- Early warning signs of conflict should be responded to.
- Some provisions of the 1991 constitution and other undemocratic laws/policies should be reviewed. In the light of this the constitutional. review committee should be reinstated and made accessible by the public.
- Security must be tightened and trained to promptly respond to situations.
- The borders must be properly manned.
- Conditions of service must be improved upon.
- Job facilities need to be created to engage youths.
- Fundamental human rights should be respected.
- There should be a yearly review of the human right situation in the country that can highlight the extent to which the government has gone in implementing international human rights instruments that it has signed and ratified. In facilitating this, the government should work towards establishing a National Human Right Commission that is autonomous and independent.
- A war museum should be erected that can have important information about the war including its causes and effects.

HOW VICTIMS MUST BE ASSISTED TO OVERCOME THEIR SUFFERING

- Non-formal reconciliation and counseling processes should be undertaken at community level. Traditional leaders, the government and civil society organizations should facilitate such processes.
- The 'Victims fund' as spelt out in the Lome Peace Agreement should be established. A certain percentage (as will be determine by the government) of proceeds from the sale of minerals should be deposited into this account. Reparation of both individual victims and communities should be undertaken from this fund.
- Resettlement facilities

Reintegration of perpetrators

- Skills training
- Public acceptance and remorseful at community level
- Job opportunities for ex-combatants
- Communities need sensitization to effect the reintegration of ex-combatants
- Training cleansing ceremony should be undertaken.

Commissioner Humper – We are happy that you have come here at this particular time. I want to ask my colleagues if there are questions they want to ask or issues to raise.

Commissioner Marcus Jones – Thank you for your presentation – I would like to know which name to attach to the submission. Is it your name?

Lahai – Yes, my name.

Commissioner Marcus Jones – I want to know whether the National Forum for Human Rights had undertaken any study to attest the period that the highest number of human rights violations took place in the country.

Lahai – It was between 1998 – 2000; after the Abidjan Peace Accord, and after the removal of the AFRC.

Commissioner Jow –Can you tell us if any attempts were made under the SLPP regime to secure human rights violation after independence in 1961?

Lahai – Certainly not. When Sir Albert Margai became Prime Minister on the death of first Prime Minister he made laws to stifle the opposition or the political parties that were not in agreement with him. He had wanted to make Sierra Leone a one-party.

Commissioner Jow - In your presentation you mentioned that students were involved in the war in Sierra Leone. You did not mention the 1977 students riot in Sierra Leone.

Lahai – I was unable to include all that in my submission because it would have been bulky. In 1977 students demonstrated against Government. The government banned Student union activities. Some students were expelled. Some went out of the country, but stayed in touch with people who were in touch with the rebels. It was during the time that Mohamed Gadaffi's Green Book was introduced. I believe that certain people who were students will throw light on this. The Commission has invited some of them.

Commissioner Kamara – You said that during this period the Police and Army officers were politicians. Did you also say that a card system for recruitment into the Army was introduced in 1977?

Lahai – It was during the APC era that they introduced this card system.

Commissioner Kamara – Were all recruits therefore from APC politicians? Where these early warning signs?

Lahai – Yes, they were early warning signs.

Commissioner Kamara - Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto – Thank you very much for this presentation. I want you to verify two things. Can you identify one or two people who were sent in exile? As mentioned in the very first part of your submission?

Lahai – I don't want to do it here.

Commissioner Torto – You said Britain served as a coordinating point for the RUF.

Lahai - Omrie Golley was in Britain.

Commissioner Torto – Was he speaking on behalf of the British?

Lahai – No. He is a Sierra Leonean but I am made to understand that he was born in Britain.

Commissioner Torto – Was there any agreement between Sierra Leone and Britain?

Lahai - Not to my knowledge

Commissioner Humper – Thank you very much. Did you say that the CDF had the blessing of the Government

Lahai – Yes, in a way.

Commissioner Humper –In Bo one witness asked this question: If my area is being attacked and I opt to defend it, is that a crime?

Lahai – No, it is not a crime.

Commissioner Humper – When did the burning of houses and killing of people for political reasons start? Was it before March 23, 1991?

Lahai -It was from the onset of the war.

Commissioner Humper –My colleague mentioned the year 1997.

Lahai – From 1997 -1998 when the AFRC were in power. The AFRC was responsible for a lot of human rights violations because they had wanted to stay in power.

Commissioner Humper – Can we say that what happened in 1977 had human rights implications?

Lahai – Of course, because a lot of students were expelled.

Commissioner Humper - There was no mention of the SSD in 1977.

Lahai – I did not mention the SSD specifically.

Commissioner Humper – You have made recommendations that some provisions of the Constitution of 1991 be reviewed. Can you state one such provision?

Lahai – The provision dealing with the appointment of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, for instance.

Leader of Evidence – As you say Freetown is not Sierra Leone, are NGOs effective in the rural areas?

Lahai – We have limitations. We are however in constant touch with the rural areas.

Commissioner Humper – It is now your turn to ask us question or raise issues regarding the work of the Commission.

Lahai – Are you satisfied with the cooperation you are receiving from the Government?

Commissioner Humper – The immediate answer is yes. We are however asking for more.

Lahai - Are you convinced that the statement takers succeeded?

Commissioner Humper – Yes, it was a huge success.

Lahai - Do you envisage extending the stipulated time for the end of the Commission?

Commissioner Humper - The Commission is not envisaging that. We want to present our recommendations by the end of October. We are not thinking of an extension at this time. We want to thank you very much.

WITNESS NO: 3

WITNESS NAME: Mr Sundia Cleo Hanciles

SUBMISSION

Introduction

The challenge of all human societies is to create and institute a system of governance that promotes, supports and sustains human development-especially for the poorest and most marginal. Governance refers to the process by which ‘diverse elements in a society wield power and authority and, thereby, influence and enact polices and decisions concerning public life and economic and social development”

Among it’s attributes are: the rights of citizens and groups to articulate their interests, exercise their rights, meet their obligations and mediate their differences. Good governance is a government based on consensus between the government and the governed. It also includes participation, transparency, and accountability.

The concept and ideal of good governance is relatively new in Sierra Leone, as in the rest of Africa. The increasing recognition and emphasis on governance as the necessary prerequisite

for lasting peace and sustainable development in Africa is born out of our recent tragic post-independence experience with bad governance. The history of pre-war Sierra Leone from the 1970s to early 1990s can be aptly described as the imposition and perpetuation of bad governance par excellence. Conversely, the recent history of post-conflict Sierra Leone is the relentless search and struggles to rid the country and society of the vicious cycle of bad governance and replace it with the virtuous cycle of good governance. It is a unique and exciting experience that has seen the emergence of civil society as a potentially potent force for change.

METHODOLOGY

This presentation, with certain limitations, is made within the TRC methodological framework and will focus on the following:

1. The genesis of the struggle for good governance in pre-war Sierra Leone 1970s-80s.
2. Shortcomings of and roadblocks to the institutionalization of good governance in post-conflict Sierra Leone.
3. The dilemma of social change.
4. The manifestation of the divergence syndrome in pre and post-conflict Sierra Leone.
5. Recommendations and Conclusion.

2.1 Genesis

Bad governance, characterized by extreme centralization and personalization of power, flagrant violation of human rights, social and political exclusion, social injustice, economic mismanagement and rampant corruption, was the root cause of the ten years of civil war in Sierra Leone. However, this trampling of democratic rights and values did not go unchallenged. The mid 1970s to mid 1980s witnessed the emergence of a nascent anti-one-party dictatorship resistance and pro-democratic movement.

Undeniably, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone was the hotbed of resistance to bad governance in Sierra Leone. It was spear-headed by students, young intellectuals and progressive minded youths under the guise of students social and political groups such as, the Gardeners Club, Movement for Progress in Africa (MOPA), Pan African Union (PANAFU), Friendship Societies (Juche Club) or Study Groups (Green Book Study Club). Their visions, stance and programs were articulated and propagated nation wide through the medium of newspapers such as the Tablet and Awareness Magazine founded by ex students.

Student resistance against and confrontation with state and university authorities was in direct response and reaction to the ramifications of bad governance felt throughout the country. "In the contracting political space, students became the leading opposition to APC dictatorship and the main advocate for social and political change. The confrontation between students and the university administration continued throughout the 1980s and it had the effect of both radicalizing campus politics and linking radical college and urban youth together (Rashid 1997, Abdallah 1997). Between 1970s and 1980s, the cultural, sociological and political nexus between radical college and urban youth had produced both a culture of confrontation and a language of revolutionary change of the 'system'. The termination of three lecturers, expulsion of sixteen students and suspension of twenty-six others produced a chain of events that spawned the Revolutionary United Front, National Provisional Revolutionary Council (1992), the Pro-Democracy Movements, the Resistance against the AFRC and the restoration of the democratically elected Government of President Kabba.

From the foregone, one can plausibly argue, that despite its unintended and disastrous outcome in some cases, the generation of students and youths of the 70s and 80s, despite merciless

suppression and oppression, created the conditions for the overthrow of bad governance and the restitution of democratic governments in the 1990s.

What I want to emphasize here is that, the affected lecturers and students in particular and the nation in general still want to know from the College authorities why they were summarily dismissed, expelled and suspended. We demand a public hearing. This must and should be an integral aspect of the reconciliation process.

2.2 Shortcomings

Perhaps one of the didactic lessons most enlightened Sierra Leoneans learnt from the horrendous civil war was that our pre-war system of governance was fundamentally flawed. Therefore, in post-conflict Sierra Leone, the emergent national resolve is that, never again must the vast majority sit passively and allow few people, motivated by nothing other than insatiable greed and naked lust for power to misrule and abuse us, and in the process drag the nation down the abyss of destruction. Sierra Leone belongs to all of us. Therefore, we have the natural right to actively participate in making and taking all the major political, economic and social decisions affecting our lives. The most practical manifestation of this new social awakening is the emphasis on the institutionalization of good governance. But even so, this vision is not nationally shared. There are glaring contradictions.

One hand, the country is today awashed with laboratory concepts, ideas and movements such as: good governance, democracy, accountability, transparency, civil society, poverty alleviation, anti-corruption, reform of the judiciary, civil service, police, military, food security, reintegration, reconciliation, respect for human right, military, and gender equality, to name a few. For the well informed, even before the formal end of the war, Government in partnership with international donors and civil society organizations, are doing everything within their powers to institutionalize these laudable ideals throughout the length and breadth of the country.

On the other hand, there are the old legacies of bad governance namely: corruption, endemic poverty, mismanagement, weak institutions, and social injustice, excruciating poverty, economic hardship, mass unemployment and poor social service. In other words, the nation is still faced with the dilemma of how to replace the vicious cycle of bad governance with the virtuous circle of good governance.

Meanwhile, the interplay of these contradictory-organizing principles of society augurs ill for our national quest for rapid post-war recovery efforts, peace building and consolidation, and sustainable development. It has given rise to two contrasting images of the present and future direction of the country. One pessimistic, and the other optimistic.

2.3 Dilemma of change

The pervasive hold of the bad governance culture in post-conflict Sierra Leone confronts us with the chicken and egg dilemma of social change i.e. 'Change is eternal', and 'Nothing ever changes'. For the majority of Sierra Leoneans the war had brought no changes in its wake. The old pre-war attitude and mentality are still intact. With the end of the war, it's back to business as usual. The privileged few continue to prey on the under-privileged majority. Anti-people institutions are still in place.

But for far seeing and thinking Sierra Leoneans, the war has brought in its wake far-reaching changes, some positive, some negative. Among these are the changes in the governance environment. We have moved from dictatorship to democracy. The rule of law as enshrined in the Constitution is gradually being enforced. The culture of impunity is being tackled and confronted. New societal values or organizing principles as highlighted above are not only being aggressively propagated but are gradually applied by government in partnership with civil society

organizations and the international donor community at all levels. The ultimate goal is to uproot, stock and branch the obsolete structures, institutions and mentality implanted in the body politic by decades of bad governance, and replace them with new values based on good governance, transparency and accountability.

- But much of what is changing before our eyes is not discernible to the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans. The pertinent question here is why is this so? There are many reasons for this. The main reason is the way we look at, think about, and interpret society. In the face of earth shaking changes that are suffocating and engulfing us, we doggedly cling to outmoded tools of analysis to understand a qualitatively different social environment. Consequently, lacking a systematic framework for understanding the clash of forces and societal values in post-conflict Sierra Leone, we are like a ship's crew trapped in a storm. To find our way, let us try to understand the concept and dynamics of the manifestation of the social divergence syndrome in our social system.

2.4 *The divergence syndrome*

"The divergence syndrome in social systems manifests itself in the social complexity of human life not only as an extreme sensitivity to any change or fluctuation in political, economic conditions, but also as an acceleration of social change beyond the ability of society to control their direction and intensity." Applied within our context the challenge facing post-conflict societies like ours is; how instead of serving as a cause for social crisis can the divergence syndrome be the "bearer" of positive transitions in society.

- Firstly, we witnessed the sensitivity of society to major fluctuations.

There are many who would have preferred to maintain the obsolete one-party system because of the stability it offered to the series of military and civilian implosions called revolutions that destabilized and destroyed their lives and properties.

- Secondly, we all witnessed and experienced our inability to stop change.

The divergence syndrome demonstrated through acceleration of change and growth can be understood as serving both as a cause and requirement of transformation. For example, despite our understandable revulsion and vexation with the rebel uprising, after this nightmarish experience we all agree that we must address its root causes and transform society accordingly.

- Thirdly, there is the existence of a punctuated social equilibrium, particularly in a post-conflict society like ours. This means the occurrence of countervailing tendencies or forces that get easily amplified by social, economic and political conditions into a crisis. For example, because of their roles in the rebel uprising, the importance of finding tangible solutions to our youth problem has been realized; poverty alleviation is now an obsession with government because we realized the danger its existence posed to national stability and security; and Sierra Leoneans still feel insecure because of the ongoing rebel war in Liberia.

The inescapable conclusions we can infer from all this is that the inevitability of the divergence syndrome in the social complexity of human life requires the use of new methods of thought capable of dealing with its vibrant vitality. We seek to answer the pertinent question: what do we need to do as a nation to ensure that the divergence syndrome currently prevailing in our country becomes the bearer of positive transformation? Within the context of the discourse, how can we institutionalize the ideals and praxis of good governance as outlined above in post-conflict Sierra Leone?

2.5 *Recommendations*

Being aware of its unavoidable occurrence in the dynamics of social processes, what we need to do is to be guided by two key principles in our search for solid and practical recommendations to achieve good governance in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

Firstly, the process of social transformation from a dictatorship to democracy is one of the most difficult of human undertakings. Those of us espousing new societal values of good governance, participatory democracy, human rights, gender equality, decentralization of power, social justice in harmony with the yearnings and aspirations of the vast majority of our people are actually planting the seeds, the vision of a new system of governance in Sierra Leone. We need to muster patience and perseverance to sustain the process until it becomes the new social values.

Secondly, we must accept that the old societal values rooted in bad governance are still entrenched. It will not give way to the new easily. There are entrenched social classes, 'powerful faceless actors' (political, economic, social), the product and beneficiaries of yesterday's dictatorship who are hostile to these new social values, because their realization threatens their wealth, privileges and status. Therefore they will pay lip service to these ideals and practically ensure that nothing changes.

The challenge is how to cross this barrier of resistance to change that is so prevalent in every quarter in post-conflict Sierra Leone?

2.6 *New political culture*

Commitment to the ideals of good governance (as defined above) demand the seedling of a new political culture based on active popular participation of the populace in the process of decision making at all levels. Currently, what prevails in Sierra Leone is the old political culture based on passive participation of the people in decision-making, which in most cases is limited to voting once every five years for political representatives and after which the voting machine is switched off. This is a far cry from participatory democracy.

2.7 *Participatory democracy*

Participatory democracy in essence means empowerment of the people to effectively involve themselves in creating the structures and in designing policies and programs that serve the interest of all. To achieve this ideal requires considerable input by all stakeholders namely; the awakened people themselves, but more importantly the actions and policies of the State and international community to create the enabling environment.

The good signs are these ideal of people empowerment is being gradually applied in Sierra Leone by the Government, civil society and international community by way of participatory consultative meetings, workshops and sensitization campaigns. But this process is still in its nascent phase and is often limited to few participants. There is still the dire need for mass public civic education to teach our people new democratic values in order to win them away from the decadent social values of bad governance. Experts have forcefully argued on Governance that in moving from authoritarian rule to democracy, there is a risk that societies could become too divided and partisan. The building of capacity for different groups as a collaborative exercise can help build consensus about the new national values and provide a basis for equitable social and economic development. We need to heed and apply this in post-conflict Sierra Leone.

2.8 *Development of civil society and non-governmental organisations*

There is increasing recognition of the importance of civil society and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in good governance. Civil society NGOs are important in propagating and implementing the new societal values of good governance. They hold government accountable and make sure the people get the government they deserve. In their daily operations, civil society organizations provide experience of governance and democratic practices on a small scale with widespread participation. This is providing a cultural environment that fosters and protects good governance at the local and national levels. Civil society is important as the main initiator and engine of development.

Strengthening civil society thus, is not only a means to development but also a goal of development.

Over the last couple of years we have witnessed an exponential growth of civil society. The pertinent question here is how effective are these organizations? Do they meet the criteria outlined above? What must Government and international NGOs do to develop their capacities?

Civil Society in Sierra Leone requires capacity building to develop skills and attributes that will promote a healthy society. Simple skills such as book-keeping and literacy are important for governance. Many of them lack the capacity to participate effectively in the policy formulation process. They lacked the capacity for policy analysis, and access to up-to-date information. Government and international NGOs must help to develop capacity building for such organizations without destroying their autonomy. For this to happen at the governmental level there is the need for a new relationship between the state and officials on the one hand and members of the civil society on the other. Until the 1990s, the relationship between the two was adversarial. The challenge in the present time is to transform this adversarial relationship into an advisory one.

A new vision of society, it is argued calls for new forms of organizations and methods of operations. Civil Society in Sierra Leone as elsewhere is the gadflies of good governance. They have to practice what they preach. However, this is not the case. Many NGOs exhibit the same characteristics for which they rightly criticize the government. They lack transparency and accountability. Some of them are the personal properties of one or few people who practice extreme centralization of power.

In Sierra Leone, we have too many NGOs championing the same causes such as human rights, youth problems, or gender equality. They all seek financial and material support from the same international NGOs. The resulting competition ensuing from this is that we are beginning to notice that rather than working together NGO are working against each other. However, of central importance in the search and quest for good governance in Sierra Leone is what needs to be done to build effective pro-people organizations on the ground. How can civil society organizations become the effective link between the people, the government and international community to lay the solid foundation of good governance in Sierra Leone?

2.9 Campaign against national indiscipline

There are a number of disturbing facets in the life of post-conflict Sierra Leone, which any keen social observer cannot help but notice. Many of this touch on our very existence as a nation, and the path its development will take and follow. Therefore, it is proper that this malaise with far reaching implications for our social existence be identified, diagnosed and cured. One such malaise that is eating deep into the body politic of our nation is indiscipline.

The current mentality, attitudes and values of most Sierra Leoneans are antithetical to the realization of good governance or the rapid transformation of the country. If we are serious about moving forward, we perforce have to find a way to address this attitudinal.

In the era of participatory democracy the way to eradicate national indiscipline is not just by passing harsher legislation in Parliament nor putting more police in the streets or building more prisons. We have to explore new ways and means. This may include things like self-organization of the people at the micro and macro level to identify and solve the problem. The thrust of the public policy against national indiscipline must and should be to use participatory methods to encourage active involvement in identifying, diagnosing, and implementing solutions to the problem.

2.10 Institutional reform

In post-conflict Sierra Leone good governance and maintenance of international standards are the operational principles of government. Good governance program is enshrined in the national

recovery plan, which is itself a product of a participatory consultative process involving over two thousand Sierra Leoneans. It has seven key elements amongst which are: institutional restructuring, combating corruption, and strengthening the judiciary and legal system to safeguard human rights. In all these areas reforms are on going and with time they will positively impact on all aspects of our national life.

However, from the public perception nothing is going on. The so-called revolution of heightened expectation makes government an arduous and challenging task. According to public perception only the faces in the seat of power have changed but the system remains. High-sounding words like good governance, participatory democracy, transparency and accountability are derisively dismissed as political sloganeering. In daily encounters with the state or public institutions people come into contact with public servants who still operate on the old dictatorial ethos of masters rather than servants of the people.

Also still remain critical about the age-old disjuncture between public policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. In their candid view laws are made today, only to be forgotten tomorrow. This atmosphere of cynicism and suspicion is certainly inimical to the growth and development of a new democratic culture in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Great nations are not built by crybabies; but by bold and creative people who having learnt and discovered the pitfalls in their society take decisive steps and actions to correct it and move ahead.

What all this points to is that there seems to be breakdown of communication between the government and the governed in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Good governance among other things is consensus building between the government and the governed, to agree or disagree as to what new direction the country should take, and the sacrifice all and sundry need to make in the national interest. What is really essential is education.

Commissioner Humper: On behalf of the Commission and staff of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and on my personal behalf, I want to welcome you. We believe it is our responsibility to invite people like you to the Commission. I want you to realize that you constitute an important part in the community. After ten years of civil conflict we are about to turn to a new page in the country. It is in this spirit that we have invited you to share your experience with us.

Hanciles: Thank you Mr. Commissioner, I did my best inside the time allocated to me to set light on some aspects of the upheaval in Sierra Leone, my personal role in it and also what I will do to make the country go ahead. I had done an interview during my submission. Last week, I was presented with another brochure from the TRC and I spent the whole week working with it. I have not finished it, but I think I have enough material to give you.

Commissioner Humper: I thank you. This is considered to be a very good afternoon.

Commissioner Kamara:— We welcome you are here to share your thoughts with us. If I got you rightly, I am sad that you ended your story in this way. We have worked together, and I know what you are capable of doing. I want you to elaborate on some of the issues you made. You were talking about change, and how people are not experiencing it. Changes are slow. I want you to tell us why these changes are slow?

Hanciles – First and foremost Mr. Commissioner, I don't think I ended my submission on a pessimistic note. I ended on an optimistic point. The Sierra Leonean believes that the government should do everything. I have traveled all over the country. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. The majority of the people are not aware of what is going on in the country. What is needed today is partnership between the Government and the people.

Commissioner Kamara – You spoke of passive participation instead of active participation. You talked about the development of political structures. How are these things going to have effect on the people?

Hanciles - Mr. Commissioner, the principles of Governance are universal.

Commissioner Kamara – Is it true or false democracy that we have here?

Hanciles –No. Democracy cannot be limited. We must realize that poverty alleviation has to be addressed. Poverty is one of the key reasons why democracy has not been maximized.

Commissioner Kamara – Let's talk about civil society. A number of NGOs are not performing their duties. What advice would you give as to regulating them?

Hanciles - Some people have hijacked the concept of civil society. They are not deeply committed to their duties.

Commissioner Kamara –You spoke about institutionalized reform. We want to know more about these reforms?

Hanciles – For example, we have a good governance program but there is no public participation. Good Governance is about consensus building. We have to find ways and means to communicate for effective change.

Commissioner Kamara – The old police are a stumbling block. They do not want any change to be done.

Hanciles – We are talking about a management of change. We cannot allow the same mentality of yesterday to continue to drag us down the drain. It is not right.

Commissioner Torto – I found out that you were training RUF in Libya.

Hanciles – when I left here I went to teach in Ghana in 1988-89. Libya was opened to everybody.

Commissioner Torto – I see again that Charles Taylor invited you to head the RUF.

Hanciles – We did not have time to do what we wanted to do. In Ghana we formed a democratic party. Charles Taylor and Foday Sankoh wanted me. Charles Taylor and myself were not in agreement as he likes power.

Commissioner Torto – The way you presented your paper this afternoon was very good. You should have used other means to stop the problems in the country. Were you organizing political parties?

Hanciles – After the student struggles and demonstrations in 1977 we established a newspaper called Tablet. Everyday the paper came out we were arrested. We were not sleeping in our houses. We eventually had to go into exile in 1986. Power was not our motivation. I was against the idea of taking up arms. I did not participate in any of those plans; that was why my name was not called.

Commissioner Torto – In the verbal presentation you talked about senior academic staff protecting students those days. During the RUF invasion however, a lot of intellectuals were attacked. Can you comment?

Hanciles – I was talking about 1977 – 1980. Lecturers like C.P Foray and Professor Dumbuya protected students. Anytime Government targeted us we would go into hiding at the college.

Commissioner Humper – You have a comprehensive documents that you will finish and present to us. It contains a lot of description, and suggestions of solutions to some problems in this

country. We want you to elaborate on the book "Bush path to Democracy". And how this rebel war came about?

Hanciles – When I returned to Sierra Leone in 2001, I had an interview with Sorious Samura. He asked me a very pertinent question- "you were there in the beginning, do you regret how it all came about". I said yes, because we made a lot of sacrifice. I even lost my job. Somehow the process was hijacked. Was it due to my own fault? We still have to answer that question. I will take this question as a challenge. I promised that I would have an answer to it.

Commissioner Humper – I think people will be interested to have that question answered.

Hanciles – It came as a surprise, when Prof Foray's car was burnt down and at the end they terminated my service at the college. I will not be happy with them until they come face to face with me at this commission to say what crimes I committed.

Commissioner Humper – This is very crucial. We are happy that you are prepared to furnish us with some more information. We will try as best as possible to bring to this Commission the people you have mind.

Leader of Evidence – You said that the drivers had changed but the car remains the same. Would you like to suggest to the Commission solutions to the problems we have in the country?

Hanciles –There is what is called magic. People believe that after the election change will suddenly come. I don't want to counteract that. But I think it is very dangerous.

Leader of Evidence: – Some old players, who are occupying seat of government, think the country belongs to them. To effect change how do we deal with such people and mentality? What recommendations do you have for the Commission?

Hanciles – People expect that government will solve all the problems overnight. It will lead to a crisis. We have to organize. Government does not even have the resources. We should be also thinking of what kind of sacrifices to make.

Leader of Evidence:- Have you seen any effort on the part of government to develop the economic? If not, what would be your recommendation?

Hanciles – A lot of things are going on at the moment but they had not yet impacted on the people. What I would recommend to the Commission is that in our case government has to do everything for the people; other countries like Nigeria, Ghana, and people are not dependant on government. Sierra Leoneans should all come onboard to develop our country. We should learn to think big, we should be creative, and we should take risk.

Leader of Evidence:- What do you see as the challenges between them?

Hanciles – With the support of our international partners, there are serious plans going on, the problems is that they made policies and when it comes to implementation nothing is done.

Leader of Evidence:- – Some of the testimony we heard today were about dictatorship, what would you suggest to the commission as possible recommendation as regards to these issues?

Hanciles - We are now in democracy, in democracy it is new thinking. Powers must be separated, when we talk about democracy we do not talk about the different parties, we should leave tribalism behind. Government is to work on them through parliament.

Leader of Evidence:- – When you talk about democracy, you must not forget about the economic trend. What would you recommend to the commission how business would be a solution to organize these resources so that democracy can prevail?

Hanciles – It is a very difficult question, but I will try. Foreign people controlled our economy. The commission has to recommend to government ways and means as to how they can generate our sale of mineral. We want to create a situation where we have our own indigenous businessmen so that at the end of the day the money you make will be invested in our country, rather than the foreigner who will take his proceeds back to his country.

Leader of Evidence:– – What do you see as the structural issues that even some Sierra Leoneans took their money out of the country for safekeeping. What will you think should be done to address these issues?

Hanciles - Most of us do not love our country, we do not have any answer because this is psychological, and it is a serious problem that should be investigated. In a country like Nigeria, an individual owns a jet, a big plantation, but it doesn't happen here in Sierra Leone. They deposit their money outside instead of the developing their country.

Leader of Evidence:– – We are just from election process, can you tell us what you saw from nomination to election, what are the signs you got out of this election process to develop our political institutions?

Hanciles – I think I saw some good signs here, I saw democracy within the period. Most of the selections in various constituencies are within the party level. It was gone through consultative process; they organize mini convention and have their candidate selected. I am happy with this system that operate in the SLPP, the young generation stand up against the old ones, in the APC the young generation stood up and elected Ernest Koroma to be their leader, this is the first time to see women going to parliament.

Leader of Evidence:– - How should we connect the violence in the war and the indiscipline within the society?

Hanciles – With the restoration of democracy we find a state that nobody respects authority, Sierra Leone used to be the most disciplined country within the region. Before the war the problem of indiscipline was in the society, when NPRC came they tried to solve it but they were unable. We want to look at it in the point of view that the collapse of the country is related to indiscipline. It is a serious problem to restore discipline in our country and it should be addressed.

Leader of Evidence:– – What did you see as the strength and weaknesses of central plan to develop this country looking at your submission?

Hanciles – Two months from now we have vision 2025. It is a question of what we do to move to a sustainable development. This is a very good document; this deals with what we should and what we ought not to do. These are some of the plans that government wants to put in place.

Leader of Evidence:– - Thank you

Commissioner Humper –Thank you Mr Hanciles it is now your turn to ask question or to raise issues as they relate to the commission.

Hanciles – I do understand and appreciate your work. I am happy. I really do not have any question to ask. I know what TRC stands for. We all have collective responsibility to say the truth for the development of the country. The most important thing I want to know is: Why were we terminated from Fourah Bay College.

Commissioner Humper – Thank you very much Mr. Hanciles. Your very pertinent issues are taken into consideration. The Commission will do its best to address these issues. The hearing this afternoon has taught us many things. We are happy that people of your caliber are here to

testify; I think you have more stories to tell. "Never give up" is a saying that we have in this country. We are craving your indulgence to come onboard to build a better Sierra Leone. On behalf of my commissioners, I want to thank you.

A.D.C.: I am Allieu Deen Conteh, Assistant Secretary of the Sierra Leone Teachers Union

Male Inter.:Let us hear your testimony

A.D.C.: I Allieu Dean Conteh is here to talk on behalf of the teachers.
This presentation, highlights the SLTU perspective of the role of Civil Society, and immigrant communities in the drive towards quality education for all the challenges and prospects posed by this; especially after the decade old rebel war of unprecedented carnage and mayhem in our country – Sierra Leone.

Mr. Chairman, commissioners' ladies and gentlemen. My focus here is having been advised by the Commissioners, I will move a little way from presenting, issues already presented by other colleague NGOs because we work as partners even in the preparation of our presentations. That area we want to have as our focus has to do with our belief that one of the main causes of the rebel in our country, was the lack of education, or the high level of illiteracy in our population. And its our conviction that governments over the years have not been able to address this issue of the importance of education; as an instrument of peace and progress, very adequately. We will avoid condemning people because what is either negative or positive could be regarded as relative. It depends on your interpretation but we will like, on behalf of all the teachers, to take this opportunity to apologise. Using this forum, for any wrong that was done, by any teacher, during the course the war, either as an individual or collectively as a union, we want to use this opportunity to apologise and to ask for forgiveness, and in the same manner, we would also want to offer unreservedly our forgiveness to all those who during this war, may have wronged us either as individual teacher or collectively as a union. We would forgive, but we shall never forget; because if we forget, there is the likelihood that these things will happen again. We are happy that this opportunity has been provided, particularly so when the SLTU was very instrumental during the series of peace talks in having an instrument like the TRC after the war. The civil war in our country seriously devastated the union both materially and in human terms. The union has always emphasised on its clarion call. That education is the key to development because we believe for example, that if our children receive the right kind of education, they will not be engaged in such destruction that this country experienced. So, we would expect that after all the experience we have been through, government will continue to focus attention, on emphasizing the importance of education, and to turn their attention so that we would benefit from education for all; and we must not only look up to government, we should also concentrate on the need for us to work collectively as civil society organisation. We would remember in this country, that was a saying and I quote 'den se Bailor Barrie, u se Davidson Nicol'. Statements of these kind brothers and sisters are all part of what may have led to the war were we have been through. So we should all see it as our responsibility to collectively, engage ourselves in perhaps the new war, after the rebel war. There is a new war. The new war will constitute a war against poverty, a war against ignorance, a war against disease. And as we talk about this new war, as a union, we want to just briefly mention some of the current problems that do not make for peace among our membership. Inadequate teaching and learning materials in the school system.

We do not have enough trained and qualified teachers in the system that is dangerous. Inadequate salaries and so many other problems afflict teachers. The late payment, the non-payment, teachers working for twelve months without salaries and all such things. These continue to happen, even as I speak now. And we want to let the TRC know that currently, these problems confront us as a union and we have been in very close touch with government, to discuss them. We would not want to see a situation where, teachers, because of their deprived situation caused by the lack of salaries would be tempted to go into things. We will never imagine teachers belonging to such a noble profession would engage themselves in,

Another problem currently, has to do with discipline in schools and we want the parents to take up their own responsibility to help us the teachers, in helping their children. Civil society organisations, must see themselves as informed critics and advocates. This is where we see the civil society movement of Sierra Leone to be more proactive than never before. Not to wait for a crisis before we respond to it. According to Martin Luther King (Jnr.) and I quote: "We begin to die, the very moment we decide to stay silent on the things that matter" We would expect that those who are supposed to talk would talk this time when they see things happening in the wrong way, so that we can prevent what we have been through in this country. The religious leaders, the tribal authorities and so many others. As informed critics and advocates, we must not be only seen as government's masquerades. Of course if the government does right, we must commend them.

Civil societies must challenge national issues of the day such as the filth in the city, the mere total absence of basic amenities such as electricity and clean water, mass hunger and deprivation among people and the many other social problems, facing our society. Now we must say, prevention is better than cure; because the rebel war, we should all hold ourselves responsible for – all of us. Before the war, and even some period during the war, they would say, if you want to identify a teacher amongst other people, just watch the shoes of the teacher, and we think this is not good enough for such a noble profession as ours. Landlords and landladies do not give their houses out to teachers; and considering the fact that teachers are regarded as role models and change agents, this is very, very, serious. Like I was saying a while ago, the new teachers who have left college, for this academic year; a good number of them have not received salaries and they continue to walk around the streets, aimlessly. We as an organisation would want to use this opportunity to assure the TRC of our support in the rebuilding process at all times. To move Sierra Leone from the last position in the Human Development Index, a focus on education is required to ensure resources intended for investment and expenditure in that sector are used efficiently for the target beneficiaries. Government must ensure, the prompt payment of fees subsidies needed by the school administrators to make the school operational for example, the subsidy for first term – for the first term of this academic year – now we are in the third term. The subsidy which should replace the school fees that are not being paid, are only being paid now for the first term, this weak. And we think this is not encouraging enough because the teachers will not teach well and the children will be left just roaming about. This also brings about the need for head teachers and other school administrators to ask for extra charges; and because of extract and illegitimate charges, children are being deprived of education.

The SLTU would want to see for example, the incorporation of peace education into our curricula at school and college levels. Education personnel especially teachers must be well catered for, with improved conditions of service, befitting their so-called nobility of their profession. We also suggest, based on the fact, like I started the focus of this paper, is the stressing on education; because we think, with the proper kind of education we will achieve peace, stability, and

progress. For example, the youths – we believe there must be special programmes skills training which will empower the youths, to make them more useful in society. We also believe that, one attempt that we need to help solve a lot of the problems affecting education service commission. The education service commission, has succeeded in several developing countries in West Africa. It brings together all key education stakeholders; employers' civil society organisations; the government officials; the community involvement; so that they can all sit on an equal platform and discuss issues about education. It helps to reduce the usual tension between government and the community stakeholders. We are optimistic because, the seeds for the growth of a new culture, of policy dialogue do exist in Sierra Leone. Government has introduced some laudable ideas and strategies in education. But we only hope they will be implemented and be put into reality.

The free basic education policy – starting with the primary schools, the emphasis on the girl child's education; the payment for National and External public exams. However, there is much more to be done by the government; and we as civil society organisations, have pledged to work in collaboration with government and all other parties interested; and we expect to see greater collaboration, not only in policy formulation, but in implementation and monitoring so that the workers on the ground like the teachers, will feel very much encouraged, and they will work to push Sierra Leone forward. As I have already presented the paper before the commission, I would only want to end up in this manner.

I refer to the teacher message; which is a post-war lamentation. It is a cry. Remember we suffered because many ignored our message. And many more had no opportunity to listen to us. We must all support free quality education. Our contributions in promoting education peace and democracy, makes us proud to declare this millennium, an era of quality education, peace and democracy. And we believe what has happened in this country over the past ten or more years, would surely not be repeated. As teachers of this nation, we assure the TRC and the nation at large that we remain committed to our motto: "Service to the Nation". So help us God!. Long live teachers' solidarity long live Sierra Leone.

Male Inter. Thank you very much for this brief presentation. We know you could have spent more time if you had the time and then were given the opportunity to read. But as a teacher – I think almost all the Commissioners here have been teachers. So the appeal and cry you are making here is on behalf of us. So before I do anything, I think my colleagues would want to ask you a few questions.

Male Inter 2. Thank you Mr. Chairman and then thank you Mr. Conteh for representing your union, to come and present these document. I think the plight of teachers is fairly well known in this country; but equally so, there are people or parents in particular, who disapprove of some of the actions of teachers in this country. I refer particularly to the issue of salaries in relation to the cost of education. And proceeding from there to the quality of education n the country. One of the question I would like to ask you is – have you ever produced as a union a comprehensive document that gives government a guide on to the basic or minimum salaries that will be accepted by teachers so that they can be fair to parents and students alike?

ADC: Yes. Very much so several times like I mentioned, we have had the opportunity of meeting government – particularly the Ministry of Education officials and we discussed these things; but there is always this cry by government of inadequate funds as a result of the war. That has been our problem when we negotiate with government.

- Male Inte.2. Alright. The other issue I'll like to take up with you is the issue of the honour of the profession – teaching profession it is an honourable profession. When it comes to honour, we have a saying here that: 'respect pass beful'. Now, will the teacher not consider because of their honour, try to do honourable things in the classroom by teaching and giving quality education in the school while pursuing these question of low salaries, delayed and sometimes even non-payment of salaries. I ask this question because I feel your case will be strengthened, you will have the entire parenthood in this country to support you if they find out that your work is so exemplary that the government has to be forced to listen to your call for improvement of conditions of serve.
- ADC.: Yes. It is correct like you said Sir. Respect is better than having your belly full in disgrace. But I think as a union, on behalf of the teachers, we have a problem accepting this from two perspectives. Firstly, we would expect that, even the basic thing which the teacher will need to deliver the services have to be there; like they say 'an empty bag can not stand' but here we are talking about where even the basic salary – the month would com to an end and that basic salary is not even forthcoming that is the situation we are talking about, Secondly we have a problem of not accepting this totally because, we would want to see the authorities living by examples. The authorities from whom the teachers expect these provisions, would only exhibit austerity. When we see it in themselves then we would also as teachers be ready to tighten our belts but that is not the case.
- Male Inte.3: Well, thank you very much Mr. Conteh. My only comment to that is that, yes it is a difficult thing. People say, 'one must survive before one can serve'. I agree with that one. That is why I think in the army they say 'its better to survive to fight for another day'. Now, but I think the situation in which you have found yourself is something that have developed over a number of years; and probably you lost the fight to persuade or get the government to do what you need a long time ago. Perhaps some of the parents now even, instead of backing you or supporting you may be taken on the government's side. And I am only suggesting this to let you win over the parents on your side so that you can have a better fire.
- ADC.: Yes we shall try to pursue that alternative.
- Female: Thank you for your submission Mr. Conteh and also for your presentation here this afternoon. I am pleased to note your suggestion of peace education in the school and also of refresher courses for Heads of School and other teachers. I just wonder whether your union is discussion quality education for all, whether your union has considered zoning of schools and what is the opinion because I would think that where there is zoning of schools, the government and community will see to it that all the schools will be equally well equipped with staff and facilities. What I mean is that children will go to school in there area and the child will not have to leave a place like kissy to go to a far distance school as the Collegiate school.
- ADC: I think that makes very much sense. Currently the Ministry has set up a committee where you have the union, and they have as part of their terms of reference this idea of zoning schools, but one problem has to do with the parents having the right to chose, because the parents have their own perception of the categorisation of schools. The status of school A as against school B while the parent at Waterloo will decide to send the child across to P.O. at Kingtom rather than sending the child P.S.S which is situated there at Waterloo – that is one problem.

- Female: What I am saying is there will have been a condition; and that condition is both community and the government, would have see it that all the schools are of equal standard, equally equipped.
- ADC: And I think again that is very much correct and we will now hope as a nation, we are working towards such an ideal situation and I think that will be fine. One other strategy the Ministry has implemented I think for the past two years relating to this point, is when results come out – the NPSE results from class six for the children to go into JSS1 and children from JSS III after BECE going into SSS1. The ministry after the result will do the zoning based on the address of the child. They will ensure they get the child to the nearest school rather than the child going to the school of his/her choice – an attempt has been made.
- Female: Thank you
- Bishop: Brother Conteh we want to thank you very much for this presentation as my colleague said earlier on, we've been teachers before and we know what it means to be a teacher. There are two schools of thought. There are those who say, 'teacher you continue to work sacrifice on our behalf, your reward is in heaven'. A second school of thought, which belongs to the modern mind, he says that I believe that my reward is in heave but I want the advance here so that when I die I will get the balance in heaven.
- Bishop: Brother Conteh what the Commission needs from you, is a concrete comprehensive recommendations, coming from institution. One of your statements strikes me very much. There is an imminent new rebel war. It will be the war that you cannot use guns at all. What will this commission do in the light your experiences as a union very vital personalities in the country to help bring positive changes in your institution? My colleague will be asking you to make recommendations but I think you have got to sit down with our commissioner, your executive to sit down bring calculated international, intensive and comprehensive recommendations to the commission with that I thank you very much.
- Male: Thank you very much Brother Conteh for your presentation. I am making a few enquiries here for you to explain a few things. They may not be in a form of direct questioning as such. You have said that in order to augment the conditions of service for teachers, in schools, in addition to what government is doing that is in accordance with your paper now. In addition to what the government is doing there should be what they call – taxation. Whether a taxation ,a legislation must be passed taxing you said private or privileged groups and immigrant communities; and you defined immigrant communities as the Lebanese and the Indian communities would you think in terms of Human Rights that it would be fair to pass any kind of legislation just taxing a section of the community?
- ADC: It will depend on the approach. Now what we have in mind here, particularly so, not only restricted to the immigrant communities as referred to here. We have in mind the private sector those engaged in commerce – business. Now, this is on the basis that government has been complaining about the little budget allocation that made to education. So what we have in mind here is to impose some tax that would be called otherwise. For example if you impose a value added tax on any commodity that is bought, government will have the mind that the percentage of the additional tax that people pay on goods they procure, that percentage can

help to improve the budget allocation to education. That is the thing we have in mind.

Male: I see what you mean. You mean adding something like an education tax to purchases education tax to purchases of items.

ADC: Yes, exactly.

Male: What about the taxing of immigrant communities? Foreigners. Would you think that will augur well in human rights practices?

ADC: We do not see that as something that will be against their human rights; because it's like we are talking about the services being provided by the education sector. For example, these people in the private sector, rely on the personnel that are trained through the education at the end of the day, it is these people that the education system produce that will go into the enterprises that will make their business grow; by way of personnel input. So we think right from the start, they must also be seen contributing to human resource development by this way.

Male: I am also asking two very simple questions and I will encourage you to make the answers very brief. It says that you are saying on page four (4) of your written presentation that you don't see any commitment on the part of government towards education. Can you substantiate this statement that government is not committed to education?

ADC: The statement does not say – it does not at all say, government is not committed and I will just like to ready shortly: “one of the key problems is the adequate financing of education and the thin rack of commitment. In some areas, government would seem to show commitment but in other areas like I have said I have mentioned the flaws, and I have also mentioned the things that government has done that deserve commendation in this same paper.

Male: Ok. On page eight (8) of your paper, it says education service commission. Do you think the establishment of such a Commission will make a better impact in the educational system? Let me clarify this a little bit before you answer because when you establish a service education commission, issues would have to go from the teachers union or teachers to the commission to government, the Ministry or from the government to the service commission to teachers. Wouldn't you be creating an unnecessary bureaucracy in your dealing?

ADC: We don't think so. The first reason for suggesting this, is the fact that, the teachers contribute a very big bulk of employees paid by government. In fact it is the largest single work force paid by government . It is the largest single – one sector; so, that is one reason why we are suggesting this and I will go forward to clarify. There is the Public Service Commission to which the teaching profession does not belong. And that is why the teachers are not referred to as civil servants. That s all the more reasons why we must establish this body which would be responsible to coordinate; because currently teachers have over forty or more employers, forty and more different employers. And we will not have delays we are referring to when we have the commission infact it will reduce the delays because all of these activities before now that were operated by forty and more employing authorities will now be co-ordinated under one body where all these partners will be.

Male: thank you very much for this answer. Leader of evidence do you have any question for Mr. Conteh.

LEO: I have no question for this witness.

Male: Mr. Conteh we have asked you a lot of questions, you have made your presentations, do you have questions you can make because I see in the written presentation, you have made some recommendations already; those would be taken into good path. Would you now have questions?

ADC: Perhaps my question would be like a comment, but the comment will require you providing some information which I think I need. It has to do with the attendance. It's an observation I just wish to make. From your experience you have embarked on this very, very noble task; what would you say is or are responsible from your own experience why would you think you are having this kind of thing.

Male: This was one question we asked our partners responsible for disseminating information about TRC and its functions we asked this morning and they were not able to give me any satisfactory answer. All we have done as a commission was to ensure that the message gets to the people. As you are talking now you are on the air; you are on radio, and you will be on television. That leads me to the next part of the question – that because people are listen on.....

Male 2: I will like to add to what the chairperson has just stated. In my own opinion, there are two things that attract people to any forum. At this time, I mean in our own circumstances first of all, people want to know whether there is an immediate benefit to them. If we were providing entertainment and any other – you know – thing that will benefit people, this place would have been filled to capacity or even above capacity. The second thing is a threat to an individual if for instance, Mr. Conteh sitting down there, his relatives and friend had known that the outcome of his coming here would result in his imprisonment, they would have crowded here to hear what he has to say and what would be said to him. But we cant offer, we cant apply any of the two so we only appeal to people's responsibility and discharge of their civic rights and that does not appeal for warrant they are coming to sit down here and live their pursuit. So if you can help us as teachers, we would appreciate that. We can only continue to appeal to people to come. As you have said this is an important exercise and it affects in the end everybody in this country.

ADC: With your permission sir?

Male: Yes. In addition to that, you will also agree with me that – especially in the case of like traders and other professionals as long as now that we have the proliferation of radio sets all over, people are listening to these proceedings at their convenience; while they are sitting in markets, doing their work; that is why it doesn't bother so much if they come or not. And in the evenings they see it on televisions. So, that may be another factor..... all the same we are encouraging people to come but we are having sufficient number of witnesses that is making the work successful and that is very very important if we were not having witnesses coming forward, then we would be very much worried. So, we encourage you to and encourage people to come, but if the witnesses are coming up, I think the work of the commission is going ahead very successfully

Male: Yes Do you have any questions for us apart from that?

ADC: No

Male: Thank you very much. You may stand down now.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC HEARING HELD IN FREETOWN
REPRESENTATIVE OF NATIONAL FORUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
MR. SHEKU LAHAI

Mr. Sheku: It is in this regard that the National Forum for Human Right is making this humble submission as requested by the Commission.

ROOT CAUSES ABOUT THE ARMS IN SIERRA LEONE

1. The Emergence and Perpetration of Undemocratic Governance since Independence in 1961

Sierra Leone Peoples Party was the party that formed the government just after Independence and the APC formed the opposition. The subsequent election that was conducted in 1967 proved to be very controversial with each party allegedly getting 32 seats. 6 seats however went to the Independent Candidates. Sierra Leone then started to experience serious political upheavals through the cracks of the aftermath of the 1967 general elections that saw the subsequent seizure of power by the members of the Armed Conflict.

The political scene continued to deteriorate and culminated into a military coup d'état led by Brigadier Lansana, and a counter coup which established the National Reformation Council (NRC) with its leader as Juxon Smith. After about thirteen months in power they were toppled by non commissioned officers who formed the Anti-Corruption Reformation Movement (ACRM), which reinstated Siaka Stevens and his APC party. The APC feeling threatened started working towards a one party state, which they inter alia boycotted when the then ruling party (Sierra Leone Peoples Party) tried to introduce and establish. This was an indicator that the country will be plunged into violent and complex conflict.

Electoral fraud or rigging is another causative factor of the ten years war. From the 1967 election, which introduced stalemate in the general election, the political history of Sierra Leone continued to demonstrate this same tendency in other subsequent elections. The perpetration of

electoral fraud and election rigging by politicians in power even after the expiration of their mandate, engendered distrust and dissatisfaction among the Sierra Leonean populace.

As a corollary to the above, was the stage-management of coups to get rid of political opponents. Supporters of politicians who were extrapolated in these alleged coups were executed. This resulted to factionalism as some sections of the Sierra Leonean society became disgruntled and to some extent vindictive.

Further to this, is the over centralization of state machinery to the exclusion or isolation of rural communities. This is more the reason why it is generally echoed that 'Freetown is not Sierra Leone'. This resulted to severe inequalities in the distribution of state structures and functions to the dissatisfaction of greater majority of the population.

During the above stated period especially in the late 1970 to 1991 the rights of people were grossly violated with impunity. The rights to freedom of association and assembly, freedom of the press and expression, political participation etc. were egregiously violated by the state administration. Citizens were disenfranchised and party stalwarts made to go unopposed.

This environment serves as a fertile ground for the recruitment of these resented politicians and citizens in to the rebel movement.

2. Political Intrusions into the State Security Agencies

Few years after independent, the main scene in Sierra Leone was military coups, of open military intervention in political life, the establishment of military governments or installation of military presidents, sometimes accompanied by the dissolution of political parties and heavy restrictions on democratic activity of civilian society, at other times buttressed by a single party political system. On the other hand where the governments were officially civilians, the army was playing a major role in every decision they took.

There were serious lapses in the security institutions due to political interference. Since independent, there were deliberate and calculated move to politicize the law enforcement institutions by politicians. The recruitment into the police, army and the Special Security Division (SSD) was purely on the basis of nepotism and not on qualification. The card for recruitment was

then introduced wherein recruitment into the forces were only based on the possession of a card from a politicians or party stalwart. The recruitment into the forces therefore gradually became skewed in favor of a particular sect up to the outbreak of the war in 1991, the majority of whom were close relatives of the politicians.

The involvement of senior military and police officers into the day-to-day political activities during the one party era (1978-1992) also added to the factors leading to the military to become unprofessional. Heads of the police and military were members of parliament resulting to them becoming more of politicians than security agencies. Attempts by pressure groups to force the APC to introduce multi party democracy was therefore met with the stiffest resistance from the law enforcement agencies not based on principle but on personal interest.

Through this means, a lot of people were sent on exile while others were forcibly alienated from actively participating in the politics of the country. Most of these people became party of the main vanguard of the rebel movement.

3. Weakening of the National Judiciary System

The judiciary has not been independent for the past two decades. The executive arm of government was directly involved in the judicial processes, which invariably inhibited access to justice. Backlog of cases became the order of the day as the courts became overcrowded with cases. "Justice delayed is justice denied". People were held in custody for long periods without trial. Most Magistrates and judges were accused to be notorious for bribe taking and were known to have adjudicated matters in favor of their clients.

The instruments and structures used by the judiciary were and are still obsolete. Most of the laws are not in consonant with international standards and thus therefore only protected the political aspiration of the ruling party.

The customary judicial system levied fines that were not commensurate with the crimes committed. To some extent, this led to migration of some youths who became dissatisfied with the system. There are instances where such returnees as rebels have wrecked mayhem and destruction in return for the ill treatment meted out to them in the past.

4. Breakdown in the Socio-Economic Structures

Widespread and endemic corruption and mismanagement in both the private and the public sectors, incapacitated the state machinery resulting to the notorious 'voucher-gate/Squander-gate' saga of the late 80s. It was a general belief that officials of government were to be tipped to undertake jobs for which they were paid. There was no care for government property as people used them to achieve their own purposes. In short, corruption was institutionalized. In addition to this massive unemployment coupled with poor conditions of service militated against efficiency.

Education was seen as a privilege and not a right. The high rate of fees, which the average Sierra Leonean did not afford due to poor conditions of service left many children without access to education. Government's inability to pay salaries, which led to the infamous go-slow system further, exacerbated the situation thereby grinding the entire system to a halt.

Lack of essential items like rice, petrol, etc. in the market brought about the 'queue' element that created so much dissatisfaction in the populace to the extent of losing confidence in the government and looking forward for a Moses to free them from bondage.

On the issue of tribalism, jobs were not given on merit but by 'connectocracy' resulting to square pegs in round holes. These categories of people were not only inefficient but also corrupt. They embarked on selfish ploys in raping the country of its resources. At the same time these half-baked square pegs were basking in economic prosperity and affluence, while the mass of the Sierra Leoneans populace were languishing in misery and poverty. The short cut to economic emancipation for the youth in particular was to flood the mines where illicit mining and smuggling was the way of life supported by state agents who are supposed to guide.

The above stated condition served as a stimulus for the conception and execution of the war as the only means of correcting the unfavorable state of affairs in the country.

ROLES OF ACTORS

The actors in the conflict included the RUF/AFRC, Government forces, ECOMOG/UNAMSIL and the Civil Militia. We have tried to limit that to just few of them. I am just giving bullet points of their roles you can agree with me that it carried out a wide spread of amputations:

RUF/AFRC

- Amputation
- Arson resulting to burning of houses, churches, markets, mosques etc.
- Killings
- Rape
- Torture
- Ambushed commercial transportation
- Recruitment of child soldiers
- Widespread looting
- Child labour and enslavement
- Extermination
- Acts of terror
- Abduction of civilians and UNAMSIL peacekeepers
- Revenge killing

CIVIL MILITIA

- Killings
- Serve as state defacto security
- Torture
- Looting
- Recruitment of child soldiers
- Ambushes
- Extermination
- Revenge killing

GOVERNMENT FORCES

- Revenge killings
- Rape
- Torture
- Looting
- Use of child
- Collaboration with RUF (Sobel)

ECOMOG – 1997 - 2000

- Killings – military intervention and repelling the 1999 January 6 invasion of Freetown by rebel forces
- Disarmament
- Provided security for the ruling administration
- Restoration of democracy and government authority in 1998

UNAMSIL

- Disarmament
- Restoration of government authority.

COUNTRIES

- **Liberia**
 - Involved in diamond trade in exchange for arms
 - Provided mercenaries for the RUF/AFRC
 - Fuelled the war
 - Exploited the country during the war years
 - Harbored the rebels
 - Served as arms transit point
- **Ivory Coast**
 - Sale of arms to the RUF
 - Conducted academic training for the RUF fighters
 - Serve as the political base for the RUF especially in 1996
- **Burkina Faso**
 - Provided military training facilities for the RUF
 - Provided mercenary fighter

- Provided arms and ammunition
- **Nigeria**
 - Contributed greatly to the attainment of peace in Sierra Leone
 - Contributed the highest number of troops to the ECOMOG forces which interventionist capacity helped to keep the rebels at bay
- **Britain**
 - Provided logistical and technical support to the democratic government
 - Conducted training and actually became engaged in combat
 - Engaged in rebuilding of the Sierra Leone Army
 - The Training Head of IMATT acted as adviser to the Government of Sierra Leone
 - Eliminated the Westside boys and made it a spent force
 - Initially serve as the coordinating point of the RUF
- **Guinea**
 - Contributed the second highest number of troops to the ECOMOG forces
 - Guinea served as corridor for both the democratic government and the opposing forces.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF HOW THE CONFLICT COULD BE AVOIDED

- Early warning signs should be periodically identified and responded to in order to avoid an eruption of the conflict
- Some provision of the 1991 constitution and other undemocratic laws/policies should be reviewed. In light of this the constitutional review committee should be reinstated and made accessible by the public
- Security must be tightened and trained to promptly respond to situations
- The borders must be properly manned
- Conditions of service must be improved upon
- Job facilities need to be created to engage youths

- Fundamental human rights should be respected. The government should have a yearly review report of the human right situation in the country that can highlight the extent to which the government has gone in implementing international human rights instruments that it has signed and ratified. In facilitating this, the government should work towards establishing a National Human Right Commission that is autonomous and independent.
- A war museum should be erected that can have important information about the war including its causes and effects.

HOW VICTIMS MUST BE ASSISTED TO OVERCOME THEIR SUFFERING

- Non-formal reconciliation and counseling processes should be undertaken at community level. Traditional leaders, the government and civil society organizations should facilitate such processes.
- The victims' fund as spelt out in the Lome Peace Agreement should be established. A certain percentage (as will be determined by the government) of proceeds from the sale of minerals should be deposited into this account. Reparation of both individual victims and communities should be undertaken by this fund
- Resettlement facilities

REINTEGRATION OF PERPETRATORS

- Skills training
- Public acceptance and remorseful at community level
- Job opportunities for ex-combatants
- Communities need sensitization to effect the reintegration of ex-combatants
- Traditional cleansing ceremony should be undertaken

Thank you.

Comm.: We want to thank you very much brother Lahai for this concise and emphasize submission. We are glad that you can come here at this particular point in time. I would want to ask my colleagues if there are questions or issues for you to clarify.

Comm.: We thank you very much Mr. Lahai for your presentation and what I would like to know which name you would like to attach to the submission, there was no name given here, is it your name or any other name as coordinator?

Mr. Sheku: Myself, I am Sheku B.S. Lahai, Executive Secretary, National Forum for Human Right.

Comm.: I want to know whether the National Forum for Human Rights has been able to make any study to find out during which period there was the greatest number of the human right violation.

Sheku: Before or during the war?

Comm.: During the war?

Sheku: I would want to believe that is really a second phase of the war, that is after the collapse of the Abidjan Peace Accord, especially after the removal of the AFRC, when they retreated into the bush. From 1998 – 2000, I can say that period is the highest report of a gracious human right violations.

Comm.: Thank you.

Comm.: You mentioned in your presentation that 1970 was the time when human right violations began to take place under APC. Do you want to say that under the SLPP government, was there any attempt made to secure peoples right?

Sheku: Well certainly not especially with the death of the first Prime Minister, Sam Milton Margai. When Sir Albert Margai took over, he made a lot of efforts to stipple especially opposition parties or those politicians who were not dancing to his tune. In fact he was about to introduce the one party system which was vehemently opposed. So that shows that no.

Comm.: One more question, you mentioned in your presentation the role which the students played in bringing the.....

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.....

Sheku: Yes of course, I tried as much.....

.....

But what I know especially in 1977 students were.....

Certain against certain undemocratic.....steps which the government took. It was during that period, the governments band the Students Union government in all the colleges in the country. Some students were expelled from the University. And some of them went out of the country but they were in touch with some people who believed that the only way to kick the APC out of power was by through rebel armed movement in Sierra Leone. It was during this period that the green book written by I think Mohamed Ghadafi become so much famous among students because of some of the principles, some of the ideologies that.....

.....

TAPE B

Sheku: I am quite sure that there were certain people like the students who were affected, which I believed that this Commission must have invited them and will be able to throw light better on it.

Comm.: Thank you Mr. Sheku Lahai, this thing is a rather interesting presentation, we thank you very much. I would like to ask you about three questions, one of them on matters of fact, the other on an opinion.

On the question of fact I refer you to your first two paragraphs under the caption routes causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone. In the first paragraph the last sentence which I would like to read is

Sierra Leone then started to experience serious political up-heavels through the cracks of the aftermath of 1967 general elections that show the subsequent seizure of power by members of the arm forces that one shows that there was a seizure of power and then I want to know whether it is the same seizure of power or is a different one that you required to in paragraph two; when you said the political scene continue to deteriorate and culminated into a military coup led by Brigadier Lansana, are those two separate incidents?

Sheku: No they are not exactly separate because as you can see it was a **risky** statement in my first paragraph and then I tried to become specifically in the second paragraph.

Comm.: So it is the same?

Sheku: Yes, it is the same.

Comm.: Alright what I would like to ask; what was this political deterioration, and what form did you take?

Sheku: Well the form it took was that, there was this allege stalemates in the results – 32 seats and the issue of who should become the Prime Minister came up, at the end of it all Siaka Stevens was appointed to be the Prime Minister, because later there was certain investigation that revealed that infact some kind of electoral fraud you know which led for the APC to have a majority and so Siaka Stevens was appointed. But during the period of Sir Albert Margai, what he did was to plant key people within the military and so some of this people became dissatisfied, they thought that the whole thing has been manipulated and so the very best was for them to removed everybody and they come to power and had very kind of acute excuse for them to take over power.

Comm.: So there was one take over, again I want you to clarify for us how was it done, was there a bickering for who was to be or a Prime Minister was been sworn in at the time when that swearing in was stopped by.....

Sheku: But there was already a controversy, because there was a tie and then automatically somebody was appointed and then outside that scene, those who were not within the campus cannot understand exactly what led to the appointment of Siaka Stevens. And so some of these people were dissatisfied and some of this act can give some kind, for the military to justify their act that in fact this people there is no clarity you know this person has been appointed un democratically, we know our African military guys, they can always kind ofon some of these excuses and take over power.

Comm.: Mr. Lahai, I am asking because you see we have to get the facts rights when we are writing our reports. We also have information that during that time the figures for the parties were 29, 32 and there were three Independent candidates so that it was not 32, 32, it was 29, 32, 3 Independent candidates and 12 Paramount Chiefs were to come in.

Sheku: If you can maybe cross checked your facts are the first result that was published was a tie, stalemates 32, 32 since Independent, then after the internal investigation you note, they came out with that result that you are talking about that was just what I was saying, and so it was based on that result that Siaka Stevens was appointed to be the Prime Minister, otherwise Siaka Stevens was not to be appointed to be the Prime Minister.

Comm.: We shall certainly go to the records of the electoral content. Thank you. There are other ones I want your opinion, are firstly you said it was during the period that they were recruiting in the police and the army through politicians and you have a card system so that by

1997, would you say that most of the people in the army and the police were people who favoured the government in power?

Sheku: Well most of the people who were in the military really were those who were favoured by the then one party government which was really the APC, because it was during the APC era that they introduce this cards system. Wherein you have to get a card from either a politicians or a party stewards for you to be recruited into the army I mean it was famous everybody knows about that.

Comm.: so the army and the police were full of people who were nominated by the.....year, and it was a one party system therefore they were all recruited. Then you spoke of your early warning I think in one of your recommendations, what are these early warning signs you are talking about?

Sheku: Now, the government should be in position tothe security status from time to time for them to determine you know, crucial stage and may be medium at least favourable and then disfavourable, not favourable those kinds of thing, base on that review of the security situation, they could be in position to give early warning signs that this and this is happening, and that may be of security threat to the country and then everybody would be aware to be of security of the country and we can be in positions to easily respond to it.

Comm.: Alright thank you.

Comm.: Thank you very much for this very very appreciable but resourceful presentation, I have only two well not question, I just want you to clarify two issues. in the very first part in your presentation, there is an allusion made under political intrusions into the state security agencies, so look at the last paragraph, it says, through this means, a lot of people were sent on exile while others were forcible eliminated from actively participating in the politics of the country, most of

these people became part of the main vanguard of the rebel movement, can you just by way of reminder identify one or two people who were really sent not going sent on exile.

Sheku: May, I will advice that I forward to you in confidence.

Comm.: In confidence?

Sheku: Yes.

Comm.: O.K thank you very much. **Another area of clarification I will crave your indulgence to make for me is under** the involvement of countries, under Britain, Britain initially serve as the co-coordinating point of the RUF. Can you enlighten me a little bit as to how this happened?

Sheku: Yes of course you can agree with me that Omerie Golley was base in Britain and he was facilitating all the activities of the RUF from that point, and most of the other guys who were supporting the RUF were talking from Britain moving from Britain to Ivory Coast and co-coordinating selling out the RUF to the international world initially.

Comm.: Who is Omerie Golley, is he a British or a Sierra Leonean?

Sheku: Well he is claiming to be a Sierra Leonean but I understand that he is a citizen of Britain too.

Comm.: So was he speaking with British government authority?

Sheku: No.

Comm.: He was speaking on his own.

Sheku: Yes.

Comm.: So how then is the British government involvement?

Sheku: It is because the British government became.....a never kind of intervene to stopped that we should not do that from our soil.

Comm.: To arrest him?

Sheku: I cannot suggest that.

Comm.: Bud do you know the existence of any memorandum of understanding that warrant kind of agreement between Sierra Leone and Britain?

Sheku: No not to my knowledge.

Comm.: How then could he have been arrested whilst he was speaking on his own as a Sierra Leonean, how dare that.....

Sheku: Yes, he was speaking on his own but I think from international standard you should not allow somebody to use your country to perpetrate human right violations in another country, if you come to realize that he has the moral responsibility to ensure, that is his thought.

Comm.: Well thank you very much for this.

Comm.: Thank you very much brother Lahai, I think my first comment here is to get historical records in perspective in relation to 1967 result, your records shows that according to those results APC had 32, SLPP 28, Independent.....and those independents were assuming to be SLPP and therefore you have 32, 32 and the results for the Paramount Chief were pending that is the historical facts we wants to stay, we want to sets those records straight, that is the position as we have it. We are not going into all of those arguments because those are historical facts and we only **sits** what history has said. Coming to this other areas, I take it slowly and gradually because it is very important for the Commission. Roles of actors, among the others you said, that is civil militias and according to the record you say the factor states the factor security. What do you understand by that technical word state the factor security?

Sheku: You can agree with me that all of us were in this country. The constitutional security agency, especially the military kind of become also another group as a result of that there was a.....and because the civil militial the CDF was fighting to restore the oath democracy and to protect the government of the people in quote they apparently became the **succinctly** that the state agency was really using to make sure that government authorities is protected with the area that they occupied.

Comm.: Are you in effects saying for the records that the CDF, the civil militias receives the blessings of government in defending the nation?

Sheku: Yes, it was a respond from the people and then along the way it was really accepted by the government and they were receiving supports from the government.

Comm.: Thank you very much. In Bo one of the witnesses as incidentally I was chair in there, he said Chairman let me asked you this question, if my land is been attacked, and I go and say I will die for the sake of my life. It's depends on my land, is that a crime?

Sheku: No is not a crime, as long as it is done within the **amdict** of human right standards.

Comm.: The final word because we get, we rely so much on these Institutions, National Forum for Human Rights. The question which poses is that, and is a very important for the Commission, is indirectly coming from this submission. When did the burning of houses and killing of people for political reasons take place in this country; or was it in 1991 beginning 1991 or before 1991?

Sheku: Well in some parts of the country like within Kailahun district really started from the onset of the war. It started with burning of houses until they started to kill people from the on set.

Comm.: Lets me repeat myself when did the burning of houses and killing people for political reason take place in this country? Was it in the beginning of 1991 to the 3rd March 1991 or before that date?

Sheku: One question I would like to make is that the whole rebel movement was based on political interest because people believed that the political system that was in place was not working in the interest of the people and so they have to removed that political system and so everything that happened within the course of the war was based on political interest. To come to the point now, I will say for truth that the burning of houses for direct political reason really started after 1998, when the RUF at last were given the privilege to serve in the national government with the ministry and they were removed, and so everything they were doing now because they have known exactly what power is.

Comm.: Finally we depend on this submission and re.....ones for our records and from the perspective of it should my colleague Commissioner posed a question to you about the year 1997 and you seemed to have.....or bring it in, is 1997 devoid of 1998, 1999 and 2000?

Sheku: No 1997 not really, I mean from 1997 to 1998 as I can say when the AFRC and RUF were in power I can rightly say that the perpetrated a lot of human right violations directly based on political reason because they had wanted to maintain themselves in power.

Comm.: From your research what happened at Fourah Bay College in 1977 we are now coming to 77. What happened in 1977 to students at Fourah Bay College? Has it any relevant to the development which took place during this period onwards.

Sheku: Yes of course it was during that period that a lot of students were expelled and sent on exile, some of them left the country and most of this students went disgruntled, their relatives were disgruntled and they have this belief in the green book and the like and so they directly superto whatever movement that can come and remove the system that refuse them attaining their academic desire.

Comm.: From your record, is there anything mentioned about the reaction about the SSD in 1997 after the convocation, were the Chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone, "Late President Stevens" was humiliated that is two days after there was the SSD pierco in that campus?

Sheku: No, no I did not mention that, specifically.

Comm.: Thank you very much brother Lahai, we will now turn out to the leaders of evidence.

Comm.: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman I have about one or two questions for you. In your recommendations you said some provisions of the 1991 constitutions need to be look into, will you please because this Commission is task with the responsibility of recommending to

government what to be done, will you please tell us the provisions you have in mind which you think are undemocratic and need to be revisited?

Sheku: Well may be I can just state one; we can have other discussion on that. One of such is the issue dealing with the position the provision that really kind of appoint the Attorney General Minister of Justice, we may want that to be reviewed, the other one is the one dealing with press the libel case. The one that is criminalized, we may want that also to be reviewed. And the other one is the one dealing with the extension of government, in a situation where it is impossible for an election to take place. It is open and there is no limitation to it, we want that also to be reviewed to be in grade.

Comm.: Thank you very much. Yours is an umbrella organization, National Forum for Human Right. And as you said Freetown is not Sierra Leone, and the people can only defend their right if they know what their right are, what as an umbrella organization are you doing to ensure that this NGO's are effective in the rural areas, so that when the need arises they will be able to defend their rights.

Sheku: Well as you have indicated, this.....this integration we have also our limitation. Member organization are independent and autonomous, we can only advice them if the need be, but we are in constant touch, and we have our annual general meeting within which we review our activities and tried to identify our achievement and our weakness and the areas that we need to improve upon. So it is during that period that we bring on board certain recommendations that can empower member organization to be effective in their work. But I want to say that with the end of the disarmament processes, a lot of our member organizations have how moved into provincial areas and their presence is quiet felt within these areas that they are operating.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Comm.: Well I will also continue to thank you for that. We have been asking you some questions or matters for clarification now is your turn, if you have any question or any issue which is your concern in regards to the Commissions work. Is your turn to do so?

Sheku: My first question is that; are you satisfied with the co-operation you are receiving from the government, the civil society, the public and the International Community in relation to your work?

Comm.: The immediate answer is yes but we need more input from other these bodies you called.

Sheku: Is yes but you need more inputs?

Comm.: Yes.

Sheku: And are you also convinced that the statement taking was really really successful?

Comm.: You have double really, so I am going to use the word double really really successful. I will say from the perspective of the Commission and within the given time at the Commission's disposal statement taken was a huge success.

Sheku: And do you envisage finishing your work within one year or there is the possibility of you extending your time?

Comm.: The Commission is not contemplating on extending its work, we have the time line, we envisage completing our work this second phase by the ending of July.....or the.....August we should be completing. And by October by the end of October we should be presenting our reports with recommendations. That is our time frame and that is where we stand. We are not at this point in time one moment thing of extension of time.

Sheku: My last question; can you just, a kind of you given me an idea a comparative idea of the participations of victims and perpetrators in your public hearings and even in your statement takings?

Comm.: So far we can say that we have had more of victims than perpetrators, that's the first thing that has to be established.

Secondly to the surprise of a good number of people who did not know the culture and mental.....of the African especially the Sierra Leoneans. We have received some perpetrators coming forward and we have received some of those vulnerable coming forward whether in close section in public to give their testimonies that is to our satisfaction and more importantly, why the Commission ultimately looked forward to the presence of reconciliation that's the Commission had began initiating and putting into practice.

When the.....comes out you will see for yourself what I am talking about. It's not just something that you will just do today and put on records. But I think that some positive science are coming out and we hope that if we continue in this trend we will be able to get that positive result and I would here say, especially for those who were in Bo, I am sure it happened in Port Loko. While we were in session, people were still coming round, perpetrators say that we wants our statements to be taken because we want to speak, other people, if we had the resources we would get 20,000 more statements here. We did hear that people had thought that we were a conduit, information agent, we are Special Court, they now know that we have different mission for this country.

And so it is now that they are coming forward while we are moving ahead. And that is our consolation for the fact that people are becoming more and more aware of the importance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. That is in fact..... to your work as Human Right Forum and other related NGO's.

Sheku: I am now alright.

Comm.: Well we want to thank brother Lahai very much and all those who continue to support that Institution were grateful to God, we believed that you come here and have been the second person to set a pace. We are working through this process you engaged and send a message to our brothers and sisters institutions and bodies and individuals to help the Commission realized its mandate, by coming to the Thematic hearings. We want to thank you very much and you may step down now.

We have now come to end of our morning session, we will stand adjourn to 3:30 this afternoon when we resume our session. We want to thank you for your cooperation and we will encourage you to be here by 3:30p.m. Thank you very much.

DATE: 9TH May 2003.

WITNESS NAME: Alimamy Philip Koroma, Council of Churches of Sierra Leone

WITNESS NO:

REFERENCE :

SUBMISSION:

The Commission was called to order by the Presiding Commission. Commissioner Prof John Kamara

Silent Prayers

1. **INTRODUCTION:**
Council OF Churches in Sierra Leone:
- Founded in 1924

- Current membership of 19 churches denominations and twenty-six para-church organizations as affiliates.

Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone

- Founded on 1st April 1997
- Current membership includes protestant, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal and indigenous churches and Muslim faith groups including SL Muslim Congress, Supreme Islamic Council, Council of Imams, Federation of Islamic Organizations, SL Missionary Union, Federation of Muslim Women in Sierra Leone.

2. PURPOSE OF CCSL& IRCSL

- Drawing their moral authority from God, CCSL and IRCSL are created to:
- Proclaim the love of God for mankind
- Denounce all evil in society
- Forster good relation among faith communities
- Be peace makers, listen to the hurt of people and work for healing
- Engage in prophetic advocacy that accompanies and acts in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized.

3. WORK PRIOR AND DURING WAR

For CCSL: Prior to war

- Education, health, human resource development initiatives, youth Leadership development, vocational training and evangelism.

During War

- Humanitarian assistance (CCSL was among the first and leading Organizations to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons nationwide. Particular reference to 6th January – when all NGO’s fled – CCSL handled the humanitarian crisis in Freetown.)
- Limited development activities
- Established IRCSL
- Elections monitoring constituting civil and voter education and (1996) polling day monitoring.
- Information sharing and advice to political leadership (meeting with HE on Friday 23rd May on national issues and then coup took place on 25th May. IRCSL presentation founded in Presidents office, meeting again on weekend prior to January 6th invasion)
- **Encounter with AFRC** (Denounced coup, stayed in Sierra Leone throughout – providing moral guarantee to civilian population, threats from AFRC, several meetings at Cockeril, proposed trip to Conakry by helicopter, attempt for religious leaders incarcerated e.g. Arch Bishop Ganda, Bishop J.C. Humper, Religious leaders targeted – Moses B. Khanu from Lunsar, Prayer at Stadium stopped, Alimamy P.Koroma apprehended from church service.
- **Advocate for “dialogue for peace”** mobilized religious leadership - imams, pastors, lay leaders etc. Paramount Chiefs, MPs, Women’s Groups, Student, Press etc. for joint efforts.
- **Work with UN through UNAMSIL**
- International lobbying including visits to Conakry to met UNOMSIL, British High Commissioner, UNDP to get them not to abandone the country.

- Peace ambassadorial visits to Government of Guinea m- to thank for hosting our Government and people as refugees, to Liberia and met with President Charles Taylor on our course.
- Meeting with His Excellency President Kabbah and then RUF Leader- Foday S. Sankoh then in jail.
- Radio contacts with RUF/AFRC fighters while in the bush
- Negotiated the release of abducted children
- Visited RUF base and met
- Strategic humanitarian assistance (Dismantling potential new rebel faction at Mammy Yoko, Benguema ex-combatants, West side boys etc.)
- Lome Peace Agreement (visit with RUF during their internal preparations, then during dialogue with Government.
- After Lome, distribution of peace agreement to especially RUF and AFRC in the bush.
- Explanation of agreement and establishment of citizens fund for disarmament in partnership with NCDHR.

EXPERIENCES

- Religious for Peace
- Success in mediation requires patience, neutrality on the part of the mediator and sincerity on the part of the parties
- Peace surpasses humanitarian assistance.

SHORTCOMINGS

Thanks for peace; things are picking up, democratically conducted elections. However, there are short comings that need to be addressed. These include,

- Political landscape still linked to regions and somehow tribally. The voting pattern in last elections ratifies this.
- Coming from war to peace a more inclusive government could have set the peace for consolidation of peace.
- Youth unemployment still high and nothing concrete done to address this. A potential for uprisings more so when used for odd jobs.
- Certain structures put in place with good intentions but so far seem only superficial and seem to target specific persons/groups eg. Anti-Corruption Commission –no concrete or tangible result, commissions instituted but findings thrown eg. Commission on Sierratel, frequent cases of arson/medical stores, lotto office, NPA Kingtom etc.- yielded no useful results.
- Punishment of said "criminals" not commensurate to fearful charge or allegation of corruption. Eg. Harry Will seed saga, Momoh Pujeh now Sampha Koroma, Governor of Sierra Leone.
- Economy is donor driven, trade and commerce in the hands of immigrants.

- Poor monitoring of major projects/contracts eg. Klssy Road rehabilitation, airport rehabilitation.
- Active participation of Paramount Chiefs in partism or party politics. In the past, MP's interfered with Chieftaincy now, Paramount Chiefs meddle in national politics. Either way is dangerous.
- Unclear status of some institution eg. NEC – independent or NOT. How can it be independent when senior staff of NEC are government Civil Servants? Position of NCDHR – an independent commission or merely a vehicle to convey government's wishes.
- Decisions taken in parliament merely along party lines may not necessarily be in the interest of integrity and the country. Dangerous Civil Society to create space as buffer.
- No known clear Government strategy and plan for UNAMSIL's withdrawal.
- Poor coordination among government ministries, commissions etc. education vs NaCSA, NPA vs Sierratel vs Guma, TRC vs Special Court.
- Recycling of key politicians undermines accusations against past regimes as being corrupt.
- Unofficial institutionalization of the CDF – especially Kamajors. Potential conflict with official security forces, other regions etc. Government has not taken a position.
- No adequate use of potent structures like IRCSL, CCSL by political leadership on national issues.
- Seems Lome agreement is only for RUF. Certain aspect dealing with civilians shelved eg. War victims funds Council of Elders and Religious leaders.

Lessons Learnt

- Security matters are paramount
- Maginalisation in all forms can boomerang someday.
- In times of war, all suffer. Avoid war by doing the right thing.
- Outside aid can only be temporal. NGO's fled during war, therefore build local capacity manpower, institutional and financial resource base.

Comm John Kamara, thank you very much Mr Koroma, I will like to welcome the Chairman who has gone out for some other assignment. You have made this presentation, it is comprehensive, there are issues, I would like you to clarify. I will ask my colleagues to lament on

Comm Satang - I will like to thank you for a concise presentation on the work of your council and the inter Religious Council before and after the war, I will just want to ask a few questions for clarification. We all know that half of the people are youths according to your statement had done a lot of work with young people in the area of education, health, human resource development, youth training and skills training. I would like to know your experience with the young people before the war, was there any indication that they will become frustrated because of lack of education what did your council do to address these before the war?

Alimamy – The number of idle youths in the street, pretend to sell articles not worth 5,000 going to friends to beg, some resorted to drugs, the number of ghettos in the city, to be misused and abused by politicians. All of these in terms of frustration. Anyway we have been playing our part. CCSL and inter and any other NGO just a group to complement the help of government and not to take the lead. This question will be answered by the government. We are helping them on skills, engaging them in non violent activities, God fearing, this is not big enough to address the problems of the youths. This is just a contribution.

Comm Satang - You have told us how you supported the peace process and advocated for the dialogue of peace. You have explained how you were talking to other groups, the government in the sub region, and international friends. Now the war is over, how to sustain the peace, I think it is not really the government but all of us. I would like to know if these two council are still contributing.

Alimamy - We have worked for peace to prevail, we should not sit back and watch that peace perish. We as council churches will do all our best to sustain it.

The rehabilitation work all go towards in maintaining the peace. Expect that these talks will continue with govt. that is why we feel that government should involve the potential of the inter religious, there is a lot of good advice that the Inter Religious will give to the government, we are still waiting , we will continue to move and relate the message.

Comm Marcus Jones – I Thank you Mr. Koroma for coming here today and to thank the Council of Churches and Inter Religious Council for the courage shown, I wonder whether you have a forum like this before to tell about your activities during war, because the country would like to know about your activities.

Alimamy – we have our own way of doings things, we do not make noise of what we do, some talk because they wanted to be rewarded, some even lie. What we do is not a secret.. It is known by the international committee and the government actually we do not want to publicize. Our coming to this commission is to let the people know what we did in the war.

Comm Marcus Jones - Now that were have peace, what are you doing to make your voice heard, about the short comings.

Alimamy -We have the largest constituency of people in the country. People must be muslim or Christian. We use these people to preach to their congregation. We also meet with the responsible people of this country to let them know. There are times when it seems to appear that the CCL wanted to take side, but we will not relent we have not come to generally presentation. We will continue to work with those people that is not part of our strategies. We shall sensitize our fathers. We are also in touch with the international communities.

Comm. Marcus-Jones – With our enlightenment, we would like you to tell us about the inclusive Government .

Alimamy – Take a look at cabinet, government institutions, parastatals we are trying to assess the balance on the regions, gender, political briefing, that is what we mean by involving in inclusive govt. Before now the previous Government were not told of marginalisation. I suppose we have learnt how that led to the war. I believe we have learnt our lessons.

Marcus - Thank you

Comm Torto – I want to thank you for the paper you presented all seems to be sensible, I want you to make few clarifications, as regards to President Sheku Turay and Charles Taylor, what were they saying? Were they good?

Alimamy –The Chairman of the commission who is also here is the Chairman, our going to Charles Taylor was very fruitful. Charles Taylor with all evidence have been accused of giving helping to the war , but he always denied. When we met with Charles Taylor that was the first time he admitted that he was with the RUF even before we left Monrovia, he made contact with RUF. I will say he was glad when we went there.

Comm Torto – on page 3 under shortcomings, you said that politics in this country is not straight forward. How did the results of the last elections went through? Could you just make clarification in tribal and regional areas?

Alimamy – I did not say that it was not fair, I said that it was a democratic government, I am not saying it out of my personal behalf, how parliament is constituted, in western area the votes were shared, if you look at the north it was so and not so in the South and East.

Comm Torto – Punishment of said criminals, can you tell us why some of these big cases go to court but are not penalized properly. We want you to tell us.

Alimamy - Law is not my domain, we only interpret what people outside feel. There are other sensitive cases but they can be magnified or how the case was presented. When these things happen people loose faith. There is no eagerness to see people suffer. When you say someone is a thief, he should be investigated. People talk about Pujeh's case, he was sacked, he is now in Parliament and it is the same Government that sacked him.

Torto - You spoke about the sensitive position held by people who are strong people in politics, can you show us some example. But do not name names.

Alimamy - This is not my paper, but CCSL, the paper did not say that most people if not all in the NEC are people in the Government. We did not say they did a bad job. Inside democracy I think they did a bad job.

Comm Torto --- Thank you, It is amazing you can answer these questions, we pray that democracy will succeed in the other regions..

Alimamy - It was so successful but not so smoothly.

Comm Kamara - Thank you very much Mr. Koroma, I am sure you will take thanks to the two people you are representing. I will like you to highlight some of the issues raised for clarification, some actions taken by the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone in 1997 and 1998, you said you had an audience with the President about pertinent issues. We know about the coup, where there any action taken as a result of your meeting?

Alimamy - When we met with the President we told him all was not well, we told him the areas, there was no way for us to know that the coup was eminent. When the coup took place there was total disarray. We were here when the government and went to Guinea, like I told you we went to Guinea to know how we would salvage the problem.

Comm Kamara - You said you met the President late after prayers on Friday? a

Alimamy – Unfortunately, it was on a Friday, after prayers, Saturday was not a working day and the coup took place on Sunday.

Comm Kamara - Thank you.

Comm Kamara –As Comm. Jones said,I think there is weakness somewhere, you jhad some problems. Some members of the clergy and Imams supported the AFRC/RUF and because of this little support were there with the group. Do you have any way to penalize them?

Alimamy - That was very true, it is not uncommon that people can backslide and they also paid the price for it and we regret it. When they tried to go, we left them to go and they found their way. The religious people were together, there were traitors and those who tried to stop our efforts. Thank you for reminding us that bad people were around. Before we started to talk about peace, we set aside written rules, but if people did what they did we must thank god that we did what we were supposed to do.

Comm Kamara – I just want to remind you that when we started the Chairman was not around,

Comm Humper - We want to thank the Executive Secretary, for honoring our invitation. If I ask question from what is down, you will say that we were all party of what is written. Although I am Chairman of this Commission, I will make a few comments and perhaps ask one question.. I believe that if your child is trained about Godliness . we have here present two categories of people, Colonial and modern people, these are two different groups. What we are looking now for is peace,. Well for the years we have achieved independence,, the politics and the bad behaviour are all in the country. Someone who spoke here was talking about human rights. CCSL were faced with these problems of reconciliation. There are two schools of tort forgive and forget, forgive and not forget. The challenge which CCSL has to go with is one critical issue, what will we do as a body to clearly educate our people about TRC and Special Court that they are different groups. We know from our religious and Christian perception that sin is sin. The concept of those who bear the responsibility is that not all sin is sin. There are degrees of sin. What challenge does the religious body faced in this all important aspect? Finally with our ten years action is it possible now to say that the religious bodies are not only engaged in churches and mosques but all what is happening in the country?

Alimamy – Chairman, in the first place, I do not agree with the human rights phenomenon. The holy book says do unto others as you would want them do to you. If you do not want your hands to be chopped do not chopped other people's hand. It is not easy for people to forget. The mandate of the TRC is to enable it to get a record of all that happened. A lot of story had been written from colonial days. The TRC will make their story and it will always be on the mind of the people, to forgive yes but to forget no. We have to educate people on the work of TRC and Special Court even before TRC came into being because it was included in the Peace Accord. The first partners who came to talk about the TRC, we held consultative meetings, from the national level we cannot claim the capacity to do it all

Yes the church, the mosque it appear that these have been confined to them, I did not believe so. Particularly the church, the church had been involved in the social and economic activities. In the advent of the inter religious council, it has also helped our Muslim brothers, we are all engage in that exercise. what we will not do is to contest election, if we do we will win. That is not our mandate.

Comm Humper - Thank you

Mr Charm - I have a few questions but because of time, you stated in your paper that politics to a very large extent in Sierra Leone is on tribal base, with respect to the two religions especially in the past election if you talk to someone he will say I will vote for my brother who is a muslim or my brother who is a born again. What will the CCSL do about this so that one can vote for someone who can do something better?

Alimamy - it is very true it happened and it will continue to happen, politicians will always try people to get their way. The Muslim candidate will talk to his muslim brother and sister and the born again can also do that.. We pray that we will not have religious fanatic in this country. As a

group it has never happened for the inter-religious to support Muslim or Christian. We will continue to educate the people to vote for who is fit for the position

Comm Kamara - Once again we want to thank you. Have you any question to ask?

Alimamy - What do you think will be the use of your work?

Comm Kamara - We have a mandate primarily to produce an impartial record of the conflict, and out of that record the Commission is expected to seek the interest of the victims and particularly to pay attention to the needs of the women and children. We also address and make every effort to discover the causes of the war, we make recommendation to avoid a recurrence of such situation. I hope that answers the question

Alimamy –Will you have to wait till you finish writing your report and will Sierra Leoneans too have to wait till November before taking care of the convicts?

Comm Kamara – That is a good question, we as a commission met with authentic cases which need help. Unfortunately the commission had to address preparation or making efforts in the area of needs. We do not have money to do the job but we have to ask other institutions in the country like the CCSL, the Inter Religious Council to come to our aid for counseling and humanitarian needs. Now that you have asked the question yourself, I hope you will not be surprised to see us sending people to you.

Comm Kamara -We want to thank you very much

INDIAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN SIERRA LEONE

A BRIEF BACKGROUND

From the information available, the first Indian traders came to Sierra Leone, in 1882. The numerical growth of Indian business community over the years, has been largely, from the emergence of businessmen, who had previously been employees of the business houses, but later on set up their own business, using their knowledge and experience, of the economy and society of Sierra Leone. Normally, the Indian community, has been concentrated in Freetown, and only a few ventured in the major towns of up country, starting branch offices of their business. The business persons, their staff and families, account for 90% of the Indian community in Sierra Leone, whilst balance 10% consist of, professionals and experts of International organizations.

Prior to political conflict in Sierra Leone, the strength of Indian community, was around 800, but this number has dwindled down to 450 at present. The principal activity of the Indian community in Sierra Leone, has always been importation of general merchandise, with subsequent wholesaling and retailing. Some business houses, have ventured into the manufacturing sector, and this business trend economy, and creation of jobs locally.

INDIAN MERCANTILE ASSOCIATION (IMA)

Indian Mercantile Association, is the representative body of Indian business community in Sierra Leone The Association was formed in 1966 with the following objectives:

- a. To assist the Indian mercantile community in Sierra Leone, in trade, industry and other business matters.
- b. To promote better understanding between members and all departments of the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
- c. To promote social relationships, between members and Sierra Leoneans, and other communities resident in Sierra Leone. The Association has also been,

actively engaged in various charitable activities, by contributing financially to needy institutions in Sierra Leone. It regularly awards scholarships to deserving students, to promote educational development in the community. In fact the main focus of the Association, over the years has been to fulfill the social responsibility of the business community to the host community.

NATURE AND WORK OF INDIAN MERCANTILE ASSOCIATION

As mentioned above, the main objective of the Association, is to act as a liaison body, between the Government of Sierra Leone and Indian business community. It informs the members, of various business regulations, and new legal enactments made by the Government. It also organizes meetings and seminars, with officials of various Government departments, to inform the members of implications of the business laws to facilitate better implementation. It also represents the views of the business community, to Government functionaries.

EXPENDITURES DURING THE CONFLICT

During the political conflict in Sierra Leone, most of the members of Indian business community, suffered major financial losses. The shops and manufacturing premises, of many members were looted and burnt down. Four members of the community lost their lives. Some community members were forced to close down their business for good, due to financial losses, and relocated elsewhere, whilst others had to scale down their operations, by closing their branch offices in Freetown and up country.

During the conflict, the Association had to arrange evacuation of members and their families, three times to neighboring countries, at a big financial cost, thus causing major monetary hardship in difficult times. The education of school going children was, completely disrupted.

Due to absence of the majority of its members, the working of the Association went into a limbo, and it could not engage into any activities to fulfill its objectives.

With the return of normalcy in Sierra Leone, the economic environment, has greatly improved, and business activities are again gaining ground in Freetown as well as up country. The membership of the Association, has though reduced significantly, it has again started charitable and social activities, with generous contributions from the members.

TARGET GROUP

The Association mainly works, with the Indian business community, as is enshrined in its objectives. With the return of political normalcy in Sierra Leone, the improved business environment, has given sufficient confidence to members, to once again commence commercial activities up country, which definitely is a very positive development. Also, many more new trading and manufacturing ventures, are being set up, thus bringing in much needed investment in the economy.

ISSUES

The return of democratic set up, and absence of any political conflict, has been a very positive development, after a decade of conflict, and has boosted the confidence of the business community. The recent announcement by the Government, that a new investment code will

shortly be enacted, will definitely lead to increased foreign and domestic investment, in the business sector.

RELATIONSHIP

The Indian business community, has always maintained a very cordial and harmonious relationship, with the host community, and other communities resident in Sierra Leone. The Association has always encouraged its members, to be law abiding, and contribute positively to the development of the host community, thus fulfilling its social obligations.

CONSIDERATIONS

The conflict in Sierra Leone, had a very devastating effect on economic, political and social life of all communities, resident in Sierra Leone. But with the return of democratic set up, and end of conflict, and the efforts being made by Government of Sierra Leone, and other International agencies, towards economic rehabilitation, positive developments in social and cultural context will definitely follow.

CONSEQUENCES

The main consequences of the conflict have been disruption of economic activities in all sectors, like agriculture, mining, manufacturing and trading, with concomitant social problems.

The improvement, in political and business environment, will definitely provide much remedies for social problems.

LESSONS LEARNT

The main lesson learnt, from the decade long is, that war and confrontation, do not provide solutions, but only increase the existing problems. It is always easy to destroy, but very difficult to rebuild it again. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, a great Indian leader. 'An eye for an eye will leave the whole world blind.'

In the present era of economic globalization, economic activities are key, word for holistic development of any society. Hence Government and people of Sierra Leone, should concentrate on economic rehabilitation, to become part of a prosperous global community.

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

WITNESS NAME : IBRAHIM B. KAMARA (Civil Society Movement Rep)

My name is Ibrahim B. Kamara, rep Civil Society Movement. I am a Muslim. The oath was administered by the Presiding Commissioner, Professor John Kamara.

Mr Kamara we welcome you and thank you for coming to represent your organization.

SUBMISSION

1. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman, fellow civil society activists, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. The Civil Society Movement-Sierra Leone (CMS-SL) would like to associate itself with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in its endeavor to document events of the ten years rebel war so that the history of this country will be complete.

Civil Society Movement in Sierra Leone and all its membership share the view that sustainable peace can only be attained in this country when the truth is said and root causes of the conflict are identified and addressed.

2. WHAT IS CIVIL SOCIETY MOVEMENT

Mr. Chairman, historical events in this country will be incomplete if civil society as a movement and as groups fail to add their voice to such a history. Our story can best be understood if people are informed about where we are coming from as a movement and what we stand for. Loosely defined, Civil Society Movements are independent and voluntary people's movements/organizations acting collectively to serve a common purpose.

Civil Society emerged into the world stage at the end of the cold war, which allowed people's movement; popular participation in public events; and discussion on human rights, and so on. These movements came into the scene as a result of the failure of authoritarian regimes that fostered top-down and centralized models of development. This newly recognized power of people's movement sought to bring about major political and socio-economic changes in the world.

Against this background, Civil Society Movement all the world over are committed to the following:

- (a) Resisting corrupt and illegitimate regimes and struggling for a leadership elected by democratic means.
- (b) Building foundation and strengthening mechanism for a new socio-economic and political order.
- (c) Building up and sustaining mechanisms for preventing and dealing with conflict and the protection of the rights of citizens.
- (d) Working to bring about a transformed community and to foster a strong and self-sustaining civil society.

With the above goals in mind, Civil Society Movement in Sierra Leone (CSM-SL) has, since its inception in 1998, made considerable gains its effort to restore democracy; protect the rights of the citizens of this country, protect the security of the state, and setting up of structures and strengthening them in order to carry out its mandate countrywide.

Mr. Chairman, Civil Society Movement in this country has its membership drawn from commercial Motor Drivers and Transport Owners; petty Traders Association, the Sierra Leone Teachers Union, Youth Groups, Mine Workers Union, Women's Groups, other labour unions and a number of local Non-Governmental Organizations in the country. We are a consistent member of the Mano River Civil Society Movements through which the three Mano River Union countries (Sierra Leone, the Republic of Guinea and Liberia) are jointly pursuing the restoration of peace and economic stability within the three countries. The first Mano River Union Civil Society Movement Conference was held in Freetown in October 2001 – with CSM-SL as convener and the Second MRUCSM was held in Guinea in May 2002 with CSM-Guinea as the host. The instability in Liberia has not allowed the third MRU-CSM Conference. We are working with other civil society groups within the sub-region in Nigeria, the Gambia and the Republic of Senegal.

3. CSM-SL VISION, MISSION, MOTTO AND PROGRAMME PRIORITIES

Our Vision

The Civil Society Movement-Sierra Leone envisions a Sierra Leone that is free from arms conflict, violence, and a country that is peaceful and that has a culture of human rights, good governance and sustainable growth.

Mission Statement

The Civil Society Movement-Sierra Leone is committed to the promotion and consolidation of the culture of peace, good governance and human rights; designing and facilitating participatory programmes to mobilize the citizenry for positive actions that will transform institutions, communities and individuals for peace, democracy and sustainable development in Sierra Leone.

Motto

The Motto of the Movement is “Vox Populi, Vox Dei” (The voice of the people is the Voice of God)

Programme Priorities

The programme priorities of the Movement include the following:

- Capacity Building
- Citizen Education
- Sensitization and Information Dissemination
- Advocacy/Lobbying
- Development and Humanitarian Affairs
- Research and Documentation
- International Networking

4. CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

Mr. Chairman, it has become common knowledge that the major causes of the ten years rebels war are bad governance, mismanagement of public funds, bribery and corruption and the lack of accountability and transparency in public offices, nepotism, tribalism, sectionalism, regionalism which is a divide and rule technique that hinders cohesiveness to address issues of national concerns.

The consequences of the war are also too familiar. Sadly enough, our membership, especially commercial motor drivers, petty traders, women and youth bore the greatest brunt of the war.

The war came to a point when the Sierra Leone Army and the rebels pitched camps together and turned their guns against defenseless citizens. The high ways all over the country were no longer safe as a result of ambushes. Motor drivers and traders who braved the roads in those dark days stood the risk of being ambushed, goods looted, vehicles burnt down, women abducted and raped and other persons killed in cold blood. As a result, thousand of civilian lives were lost for no just cause. When our members particularly the petty traders decided to use the waterways and boats, just to earn their daily bread, the high seas and water routes soon became dangerous. There are a lot of instances in which the boats either ran into fatal accidents or were again attack on the high seas; looted and made to drawn.

Mr. Chairman, the Civil Society Movement of Sierra Leone, in its present form, consolidated itself initially as a defense force in December, 1998 when the rebels (RUF,SLA) were closing in on Freetown-they had by then been around Waterloo. The weeks after a mass rally held at the cotton tree in Freetown, the rebels invaded the city on January 6, 1999. Prior to the invasion, the Citizen's Security Movement was formed with the initiative coming from the leadership of some civil society groups such as the Civic Development Unit (CDU) the Sierra Leone Labour Congress, the Sierra Leone Teachers Union, and the National Union of Students.

It was in the January 6, 1999 invasion and upon the expulsion of the RUF/AFRC from Freetown by ECOMOG that the leaders of these civic groups reflected on the role of civil society in ensuring sustainable peace, security and the promotion of social justice; human rights and national development. In the light of these considerations the name was changed to Civil Society Movement of Sierra Leone and soon had its structures set up in order to take a national dimension.

Since then, Civil Society in Sierra Leone has continued to impact upon the unfolding social and political developments of the country to the extent that it has earned a name for itself as one of the most vibrant civil society movements in the region.

Following the arrest, disarmed and detention of the UN Peace keepers and other security threats, CSM-SL and Parliament jointly organized a peaceful demonstration march to the residence of Cpl. Foday Sankoh RUF leader in May 8th 2000 to know his position on the issue and demand the release of the UN Peace keepers. The reaction of the RUF leader to the intention of the demonstrators was negative which led to the death of 22 civilians. These includes:

1. Harding Kallon
2. Kabba Bangura
3. Foday Brima
4. Abu Bakarr Conteh
5. Alhaji Sesay
6. Peter A. Kargbo
7. Musa Kamara
8. Mariama Gassama
9. Saioma Maarrah
10. Ballah Turay
11. David Jusu
12. Kumba Brima
13. Soaman Conteh
14. E.T. Kamara
15. Kemoh Jusu
16. Lamin Massaquoi
17. Lucy Cole
18. Josephus Conteh
19. Manso Sesay
20. Foday Bangura
21. Suliaman Bah
22. Alie Koroma

Ladies and gentlemen let us stand up and observe a minute silence our brothers and sisters who lost their lives in their cause to liberate the nation and the UN Peace Keepers.

The ugly led to the subsequent arrest of Foday Sankoh and put behind bars. This urged international attention to involve in the crisis, notably in the crisis, notably, the role of the British forces to help stabilize the situation. The Civil Society Movement, despite the gains made has considerable challenges to grappled with. We shall examine these challenges in detail.

5. WHAT ARE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES?

We have been requested to discuss the role of immigrant groups resident in Sierra Leone. This is justifiable because these groups are part of civil society. The role some of them play in national development, peace and security is enormous. The major immigrant communities that have made significant contributions include the Lebanese; the Indian community; the Nigeria,

Ghanaian, Gambian, Guinean, Senegalese and Liberia communities resident all over the country, particularly in urban and Diamond Mining concentrations.

Immigrant communities who are mainly involved in commercial activities have had their own share in the atrocities of the ten years rebel war. The story is too familiar to us all. Supermarkets, shops stores and goods belonging to immigrants were looted, vandalized or burnt down and thousands of human lives perished.

In peace time, key immigrant groups such as the Lebanese, the Indians have provided grants to support the education of Sierra Leone Leoneans up to University level; they have supported National and grassroot development schemes such as school construction, promotion of games and sports, construction of roads and public infrastructures. It is worth nothing that some of these immigrants played negative role resulting to the wanton destruction of lives and properties.

6. ROLE OF IMMIGRANTS AND THE CIVIL SOCIETY

What then is the role-played by civil society groups and immigrant communities in the consolidation of peace and national recovery? Immigrant communities on their part, can only undertake economic activities in sustainable basis if there is peace and stability. Certainly, security can be ensured if immigrant communities comply with immigration regulations of the state; immigrant communities, particularly those involved in commercial can enhance economic recovery if they comply with tax regular as well as curb smuggling. Immigrant communities can help to maintain state security if they assist security and state intelligence personnel by providing vital tip offs on any security threats considering the fact that immigrant groups are part of civil society, it is suggested that they be involved by the Civil Society Movement of Sierra Leone in future projects that are of national interest.

The greatest challenge facing CSM-SL is to more proactive rather than reactive. For example a good number of rallies were organized by civil society movement in the early years of its formation shown to be reactive. Civil Society leaders should reflect upon and analyze political, developmental and state security with the view of forestalling any undesirable consequences.

Furthermore, CSM-SL should intensify its present programme of educating the people on issues relating to active citizenship of their rights and responsibilities and in preparing them to exercise such rights and responsibility

CSM-SL is on the right track by its ongoing sensitization project of the population at chiefdom level on the activities of the TRC, the Justice system, Anti-Corruption Commission and the Special Court. This will enable communities to participate more effectively in the activities of these vital institutions.

7. PROSPECTS

- Civil Society now plays a critical role in matters dealing with security, state stability and socio-economic welfare of Sierra Leone and its people. CSM-SL will continue to play significant roles in this direction.
- The present government, in particular the presidency has made it clear that its doors are always open to enter into dialogue with civil society.
- Civil Society has a pool of human resources, committed and dedicated to rendered invaluable services to the movement and the nation.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to make it clear that the success of Civil Society Movement in Sierra Leone depends on the collective efforts of all. When civil society speaks, it should speak with one voice, when civil society acts, it should act with one accord. And if civil society should speak with one voice and act with one accord for its voice to be heard and its action to make impact, then civil society must function as a unified force.

Comm Kamara - Mr. Kamara, we welcome you and thank you for coming. I want you to sit down and compose yourself.

Comm Humper – I join the Chairman to thank you, I have just captured one key sentence, in short you said that Civil Society should work as one people, and can you tell me what the civil society is trying to achieve in this country? If the key member in the CSM later leave the movement and concentrate on politics what will you say?

Civil Society – At times people call Civil Society Organisation but we say movement, however, Sierra Leoneans have the right to join any political party, I am glad to say that we have held our first national assembly meeting where we wrote our constitution. In a paragraph of that constitution it is fairly stated that if any member wants to go into politics, he should inform us three months before the time and resign and should not use the name of the CSM. He or she can go alone. This is in our constitution.

Bishop Humper – Thank you very much.

Comm Satang -I say thank you for what you have said and for making it short so that we can ask questions. You told us that bad governance caused the war, you spoke about bribery and corruption. I would like you to know that in a society there are people you rule and others who rule and this makes good governance. Most people who talk here put the problems on the Government. As you are a member of the CSM what do you think the CSM should do to have good Government.

Civil Society - As I mentioned in the paper, in the past what we do, we ask people to talk about something that is going on, we also ask them to give us their opinion when the war was on. Some people had wanted to be tribalistic, we were against that. When they went to Lome we heard that they had wanted to blame the interim government, and to hand over power to those who did not deserve it, because of that we had a sit down strike. We have just returned from the provinces to sensitize our people for them to receive what they deserve. They did not ask us where we came from because, they knew we were talking on behalf of the country.

Comm Marcus-Jones – Thank you for coming to us. My question is relating to your group because the CSM has so many groups that formed it. Do you not think it will be duplicated and that people in the group will divide their loyalty?

Civil Society -The CSM is here to see that the work you people are doing should go forward that is why people say our office is a place where people work and move forward. Our work is to help people that is why we announced that people should observe May 8 with prayers in Mosques and Churches on the following Friday and Sunday. The civil society movement is coordinating the activities of the other groups. We educate groups, organizations and individuals that they should always put Sierra Leone forward. We have been getting representations from all trade groups in our meetings.

Comm. Marcus Jones - Thank you Mr. Kamara.

Comm. Torto - I have interest in the section which you mentioned about foreigners, you have called some of the foreign groups that help Sierra Leoneans. You named Lebanese, Nigerians etc. Can you show us were the Liberian Community helped in Sierra Leone?

Civil Society – Before, Sierra Leoneans were going to Liberia to do petty trading. I can tell of one Lebanese in Malamah Thomas Street who carry Sierra Leonean passport and has established here.

Comm Kamara - As one of the Commissioners has rightly said, when you were talking about the root causes of the war, you did not speak about diamond, what is your opinion about diamond in the war.

Civil Society – Diamond played its own role in the war, I believe that it was bribery and corruption, if we the people are able to know the solution, we should not talk about diamond. If we are able to address the issue of bribery and corruption the diamond who contributed in bringing the war to our country would not have been a key role, e.g in Botswana, because of the way they handled their diamonds they are now contributing to UN

Comm Kamara - I know that the diamond in Sierra Leone does not benefit us.

Civil Society – Diamonds helped to prolong the war, I remember during the period of the crisis, we went to Francis Okello, we read in the newspaper that the RUF were selling our diamonds to get arms, and he accepted, that is why all of us came together. As I am speaking here we are also in the process of holding consultation that the diamond that is coming from Kono does not mean that it is for Kono people but for the country as a whole.

Comm Kamara – Thank you very much

Mr. Charm – I have two questions, I am sure there are civil societies all over Africa, what is the relationship between the civil society and the government and two during the war and after the formation of CSM, human right violations were committed, they were pointed out, what would you say about these atrocities committed by these members of the movement ?

Civil Society – As regards to those people who were killed, we want them to know that all what we want is peace. We as civilians all what we did was to point out fingers, it helped us in bringing peace, because most of them ran away into bushes. For those who were killed during Dec 26 demonstrations we showed our anger and also to those that wanted to rule SL by all means.

We have our rules and regulations, for the government, they always tell us that their doors were open, because they were listening we were hoping to see that things go on the right way because they have THE MANIFESTO which they presented to us. This government has over 70% of vote casted. Our role is to make sure that we improve our country. The civil society is not partisan, not political, we are a pressure group agitating the rest of the people of Sierra Leone.

Comm Kamara – Now you have answered all these questions, I want to ask you if you have any question.

Civil Society – It is not a not a question really, but an assurance. Sierra Leoneans are attending workshops, seminars, people are calling them talk. What would you do so that this report and recommendation will be accepted by every Sierra Leonean, whatever comes up; we will know that it is for the people of Sierra Leone. Civil Society will challenge, in other words you should not be biased.

Comm Kamara – The mandate of TRC makes room for our report. Initially the report will be sent to the President, from the President the Secretary General of the Security Council, then the President will take the report to Parliament, after Parliament had deliberated on it , it will be made available to the public, at that time every Sierra Leonean will benefit from it.

We thank you very much.

WITNESS NAME: Indian Community

My name is CXOPRE. I am an Indu.

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CONSIDERATIONS

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CONSEQUENCES

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The improvement, in political and business environment, will definitely provide much remedies for social problems.

LESSONS LEARNT

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In the present era of economic globalization, economic activities are key, word for holistic development of any society. Hence Government and people of Sierra Leone, should concentrate on economic rehabilitation, to become part of a prosperous global community.

Comm Kamara – We thank you for coming and for what you have done, you have made a submission, but some of my colleagues, would like to ask you some questions.

Comm Humper – I want to join my colleagues, in thanking you, you've been here since 1982, I have two questions for you. What impact did the civil conflict had on your association?

Indian - As an association, we lost one of our members, the association had definitely lost its strength, some went out of the country. Before the conflict we had 50 now we just have 28.

Comm Humper - What has been your experience or encounter with government officials, ministers in your business?

Indian - After the war the association appealed to government to reduce the tax, so that we will be able to cover our loss, some of our demands were met and others rejected, we were able to understand the position of the government. As an association we would have been happy if they had answered us, that should have helped our members for the loss.

Comm. Humper - Thank you.

Comm Satang - Since you have been engaged in business in the community. we all know that Sierra Leone, is a rich country if we want to compare it with other countries in the sub region.

Despite this, majority of Sierra Leoneans did encounter poverty. In your view what did you think is responsible for this?

Indian - This is my personal opinion, we all can say that Sierra Leone is rich with mineral resources. What really affected our economy is because we do not have instrument to shape them. The same thing happened in the fisheries area. What happened is the fall had moved from Manufacturing to service economy. Sierra Leone should make way to make things so that we could go to service economy. I will make reference to India, we have no money but we can export diamonds. They send it for polishing and shaping. The second is that the money they should put for raw material is still the same. Ivory Coast has the same problem, they did not have facility to manufacture, they send the raw materials. What we should do is to pay attention to the manufacturing sector which can add money to the things we can sell.

Comm Marcus-Jones – We thank you for coming, I shall wrap all my questions into one. Do you think that the Indian community during the war was targeted apart from looting? If this is true, is it for looting or targeted for some other reasons.

Indian: I believe that the Indians were not looking for this . They were interested to steal. They were just asking for money and items sold by the Indians.

Comm Marcus Jones – How did they kill the four Indians?

Indian - This was an unfortunate thing, the evidence we got was they were captured and some were killed in cross fire.

Comm Marcus Jones - We thank you and we are sorry.

Comm Torto - I have two questions and I hope the answers will be brief. From your paper, it seems that the Indians are specialized in trade, why cannot they teach be engineer and so on.

Indian - There are two reasons responsible for that, the Laws of Sierra Leone does not allow Indian lawyers and doctors to practice. The second reason is the money in Sierra Leone, because of the salary of the teachers, the Indians will not come and teach here.

Comm Torto – It is a saying that most of the items in the Indian shops are Indian products, most people would prefer most durable assets, why is this so?

Indian - I disagree with you that the what the Indians are selling is mainly Indian products, people are very sensitive to prices. Chinese goods are relatively cheaper to others. Business people will know the concept of demand, if people who buy prefer cheap goods, then we will import cheaper goods.

Comm Torto - Traders go to Guinea and Banjul, I am not saying that other products were not good, thank you its just an observation.

Comm Kamara. – In the 50s and 60s Indians were here to teach, I have worked with some of them in the university. I want you to tell us that on all the foreigners in Sierra Leone, the Indians do not mix.

Indian - I will like to make the difference between coming together. From what we have known, the Indians culture is different from what we see in Sierra Leone. because we have been in Sierra Leone for a long period and we are still practising our own culture. This makes people think that we do not want to ne together with Sierra Leoneans.

Ozonia - It is a question that rose from the Chairman of the Commission and I will make it a comments. Do you like to make a recommendation on the different people in Sierra Leone to be together and form business in this country.

Indian - First of all, I want to let people know that a business man do not draw line on business but pay attention on how the business will go forward.

Ozonia - What rise are you making in operation, the issue of standards, what gaps do you see on the issue of people in Sierra Leone. People from India do not like to mix and build confidence. Do you think that your business will not go forward? The second is the area that deals with the quality of our product in Sierra Leone.

Indian - Personally I believe that the Indians in Sierra Leone have no problem and we feel that we are all one and that the people are not angry with us. For different communities to come together is a process and it will take time, even the tribes in Sierra Leone, it will take time for them to be together and will not talk about those who are from abroad, we need patience.

The second question – when you talk about the law of import it is left with the Government.

Comm Kamara – Do you have any question to ask the commission?

Indian - I don't think I have question but a recommendation to make to the commission. In your recommendations, I would like you to ask government to help those who had suffered in the war in terms of business to help them recover from their loss.

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

WITNESS NAME : MR LAMIN HASSAMYEH (Lebanese Community)

My name is Lamin Hassamyeh. I am a Christian. The oath was administered by the Presiding Commission, Prof Kamara

Mr chairman

First of all and before proceeding to make my presentation. I would like on behalf of the Lebanese Community in its entirety to thank you for inviting me to this Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is my humble opinion that in order that real peace can be achieved that we have to be truthful to one another. To reconcile with someone who has done you harm he must be Truthful to you. It is in this light that I welcome the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Lebanese Community has been in Sierra Leone for about one hundred and thirty years, when I believe the first Lebanese set foot on Sierra Leonean soil. They came to this country to earn a living as that time their motherland was passing through a very difficult period

They persevered through hard work, and they were scattered all over Sierra Leone, even in some of the remotest villages. They were involved in the Produce Trade and when they were engaged in supporting "Rice Planting". Sierra Leone used to export rice to neighboring countries. They became successful, and with their acquired prosperity, they built houses, acquired properties and employed a lot of people in their various trades, which grew from produce to General Merchandise to the Diamond Industry, Tourism, Construction, and Medical Fields and some of the became Lawyer and Doctors. Sierra Leone has been very kind and hospital to us the Lebanese, and it is the fervent wish of every Lebanese Born in this country to be fully integrated into the Sierra Leonean Society./ After one Hundred and thirty years of existence in this country. The Lebanese who are now Fifth Generation are still regarded as foreigners. It is my humble opinion that those of the Lebanese Community who were born in this country, could contribute a lot amore than they are now doing if they are accepted as citizens of the country.

The committee of the Lebanese Community in Sierra Leone was set up in the early fifties. This Committee is usually elected by members of the community every Two years. This Committee is involved in the awards of scholarships to students of various educations institutions in Sierra Leone, Charitable work, and is to ensure the peaceful co-existence of members of the Lebanese Community with their brother and Sister Sierra Leoneans and other minority groups resident in Sierra Leone. Prior to the conflict. The community consisted of around Twenty Thousand Lebanese, scattered all over the country, carrying on with their trade peacefully. This number started to dwindle because of certain legislations enacted in the late sixties and early seventies banning them from certain trade, as well as prohibiting them from becoming citizen by birth, and that they were no longer allowed to purchase properties. By the time the NPRC came to power there were about Eight Thousand Lebanese in Sierra Leone. With the coming of NPRC the rebel war intensified with the occupation of rebels and then Government forces of Koidu Town, where vast damage to property and lives were committed. Members of my community had to flee for their lives, and their properties were looted. The majority of them became poor and penniless. Not a single person managed to escape with any of his property. I remember that we had to charter helicopters to go and look for them in the bushes. The rebels occupied Makeni and so did Government troops, and the residents continued to suffer loss of life and property. Members of my community had to flee for their lives and all their shops and houses were looted. In 1996 H. E. Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba was elected president of the Republic of Sierra Leone, only to be overthrown on May the 25th 1997. the AFRC came to power and the vast majority of the Lebanese Community closed their businesses and left the country. During the reign of the AFRC there were less than Four Hundred Lebanese in the whole of the country. Shops were looted and so were houses.

In February 1998 Ecomog Forces entered Sierra Leone and liberated Freetown and other parts of Sierra Leone from the AFRC regime. H.E the President was Re-Instated as president of the republic of Sierra Leone.

Having restored law and order, members of my community started returning. Shops wee renovated and re-stocked with goods and life seemed to be returning to normal. On the 6th of January 1991 the rebels invaded and occupied the commercial sectors of Freetown. Lives and property were then lost and it was only when they were attacked by ECOMOG Troops that they withdrew from Freetown. Thousands of lives were lost. Bodies were laid outside the Connaught Hospital mortuary and the streets of Freetown. I remover seeing a corpse at the Mobil Petrol Station Congo Cross being eaten by vultures. The Lebanese Community suffered the following losses:-

KILLED DURING OCCUPATIONS AND INVASIONS

- | | | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|----------|------|
| 1. | Yacoub Koussa | - | Zimmi | 1991 |
| 2. | Mrs Abdallah | - | Kailahun | 1991 |
| 3. | Domingo Yazbeck | - | Sumbuya | 1992 |

4.	Roda Khalil	-	Port Loko	1995	
5.	Mrs Roda Khalil	-	Port Loko		1995
6.	Yasubhan Watfa & Family consisting of eight children				
		-	Port Loko		1995
7.	Walid Roumieh	-	Freetown		1997
8.	Hassan Jamil Sahid	-	Freetown	1997	
9.	Hassan Hariri	-	Freetown		1999

KIDNAPPED BY R.U.F

1. Toufic Abdallah - from Kailahun (now presently in Freetown)
2. Laya Nohme, Abraham Nohme, George Nohme, Mariam Nohme, Salam Nohme, Babies Abraham Nohme and George Nohme were all kidnap;ed from Manowa ' – Kailahun District in 1991. Their houses and all properties they had were looted.

They were kidnapped for three years and were later freed by Government Forces under the command of Lt Yoki. They had to be admitted for nearly two years at the Bo Government Hospital for Treatment some, of them suffering from broken legs due to the vehicle they were traveling with falling into a land mine.

At present and with the assistance of the International Community the country is hopefully at peace, and life has returned to normalcy. The majority of my community has returned and now the count should stand at around Six Thousand Five Hundred members. It is the general idea that all Lebanese nationals are prosperous, with much regret I have to say that it is not so. There are many that are poor and penniless and are afforded assistance by members of the community. The conflict has inflicted misery on all of us without consideration as to whether you are a citizen or a foreigner. Besides all that I have already mentioned there are some of our women who were tortured and raped. The conflict that we all went through devastated everyone to the advantage of none. With regards to some members of my community having links with the R.U.F, one only has to look at the statistics of the Lebanese Community to realize the proper situation. During the A.F.R.C regime there remained in Sierra Leone less than Four Hundred Lebanese. The most absurd statement was recently made at this Commission about a member of my community being a founder of the R.U.F. Surely if you have founded something you will support it.

The member of my community in question fled in Sierra Leone and only returned after the re-instatement of His Excellency the President and his Democratic Government Articles have been printed with no substantive evidence with regards to Blood Diamonds and names published have no connection with our community, as evidence could not be found of them ever lived or registered business in Sierra Leone. I want to assure this Commission that the vast majority of my community members are law abiding decent members of society, at the same time we cannot deny that like any other community we do have our rotten apples. Fortunately for us they are in the minority, and the Community's reputation cannot therefore be smeared because of those rotten few.

The conflict has left a lot of children homeless. Priority should be given to these children in order that they may grow up to be decent members of society. Wherever you go in Freetown you will see them in the street. If care and attention are not given to them the tendency is that they will resort to crime. Presently it seems that no one cares for these children - therefore it should be one of the considerations of this Commission that the International Community as well as the authorities do something to come to the aid of these poor and innocent children. I remember when I returned from the United Kingdom in 1961 to join my later father's business that shops used to close if someone ran with a pen knife. Now people are so used to the sound of gunshot and the sight of spilt blood and they hardly close their business or vacate the streets. Therefore people, especially the younger generation should be taught about the devastation of war, and the misery it causes. Consideration of this Commission is to be given to matters of loyalty to Sierra

Leone, because if loyalty to our country is taught to us then we shall tend to be good citizen. These days self comes before country when it should be vise versa. The consideration of this Commission should be given to the low salaries paid, as this also tends to lead to crime. The ordinary man on his salary cannot afford a decent life for members of his family. The lesson learnt from this conflict is that if you live by the sword you shall die by the sword. You cannot achieve results by peaceful means and without destruction of life and property by persuasion and dialogue we can achieve the impossible. For those of us who have eyes and ears we have seen and heard and we hope not to see or hear of the horrible atrocities that had taken place in our beloved in Sierra Leone.

Comm Kamara – I thank you very much on behalf of the Commission for coming, on behalf of the communities, I want to say sorry for the loss of your property and the death of 19 Lebanese who were killed in the war. I will like us to observe a minute silence for the decease

Comm Humper – We want you to share with us in your presentation, some of the reasons of this ten year war in Sierra Leone.

Lebanese – There are many reasons, some might be poverty, some politics.

Comm Humper – What secret do you have when a Lebanese start business, you will see the brother joining him then another come and later he will open his shop, unlike Sierra Leoneans.

Lebanese –It is not a secret, it is business, if I am doing business and I see you are improving I will help you. I want to assure the commission that we are not doing business with only Lebanese.

Comm Humper - Did you retrieve some of the bodies of your people and give them fitting funeral?

Lebanese - Some of them were retrieved, some were chopped so we did not have them, the ones in Port Loko were burnt in a house.

Comm Satang - I want to join my colleagues to say thank you, your presentation is concise but it is usual to ask questions. I want you to look at page 2 towards the end of the last paragraph. You talked about the 50s and early 70s. I noticed that there is a gap and you did not talk about the APC regime. What was the composition of the Lebanese during the era of the APC

Lebanese – According to letter I got, I was not asked to talk about APC but if you want me to talk, I can.,

Comm Humper – Forget that you were not asked, we would like you to tell us what the business was between late 60s and late 80s.

Lebanese – I came to Sierra Leone from the United Kingdom after studying, then we got independence and the SLPP was in power. I remember during the election people were coming to my father's premises, they were telling us that when they took over they will know what to do. I presume they were APC supporters. When APC took over nobody disturbed us, but certain Lebanese ran away from this country. They told us that we had no right to interfere in the politics of this country. Anyone who ventures is risking his life. Any influence of Lebanese in the affairs of politics in the APC was personal but not on behalf of the Lebanese community

Marcus Jones – I am going to refer to page 2, you have expressed very good sentiments, that those that were born in Sierra Leone could contribute a lot more than they are now doing. I do

not think they are accepted as citizens of this country. In page 2 you said that the Lebanese Community will help Sierra Leonean brothers and sisters to stay together and I do not know whether you are aware that Lebanese people are not treating their servants well.

Lebanese - I will answer the second question, I have three servant who has worked with me for the past 20 years, also in my office I opened it in 1972, I still retain the same staff, I have no doubt that some of our brothers are harsh to their servants, but for now I have not received any complaint of that. In the newspaper we read that some Sierra Leoneans were taken to Lebanon and treated harshly. There were evidence that their parents went to Lebanon, to collect their children. They stayed in Lebanon for two years with the children, they started causing noise that their daughters were treated as slaves. Some of them are not bad. I am sure that there is some truth in some. People should not believe all complaints.

Marcus – Jones – Anyway, it appears you are aware of the allegations.

Comm Torto - Thank you for talking to us today. There are one or two things to talk about. Since the start of the war in 1991 Lebanese suffered, I have not heard from the Lebanese Government either to condemn or support what happened in Sierra Leone. There are so many Lebanese here. Why did not the Government make any comment? Do you know why?

Lebanese - What I wanted to say as President of the Lebanese Community and not on behalf of the Lebanese Government. Anything we are doing here is on behalf of the Lebanese Community. I agreed with you that the government had done nothing, I believe that they should have sent a delegation to Sierra Leone long before. A delegation came here six months ago to see the amputees

Comm Torto - In the late 60s, they made laws to stop foreigners being first class citizens?

Lebanese - I was born in Sierra Leone, I was asked to naturalize, I refused to be a second class citizen. I do not have anywhere to go, I will die here. If they want us to be part of the society they should allow.

Comm Torto If you want to buy a house will they allow you?

Lebanese – The law does not allow that.

Comm Torto - The area when you said your Lebanese friends want to do the laws of Sierra Leone, do you know the statistics?

Lebanese – Few had 8,000 and reduced to 400.

Comm Kamara – Thank you very much. I will take you back to the question of the facilities of making money. As you have agreed that Sierra Leone is a poor country, people find it very difficult to make sales out of business. Many people believe that those successful business men are doing business with government. I know that some Lebanese did business with government but majority are not .

Lebanese- Most businessmen do not do business with Government.

Comm Kamara - Most of these businesses were a channel of transaction to you it is business, but the country is loosing money, do you in your opinion think that the Lebanese community are responsible for the corruption in this country?

Lebanese – I believe that you have heard about the commission of enquiry and that no Lebanese had been found guilty. I disagree with you. In any society there are bad breed, there must be one

or two Lebanese who are involved, but I totally disagreed with you, for corruption to be wide spread two people must be involved. I am not going to sit by and allow people give the whole community stains. There are laws in Sierra Leone to govern that.

Comm Kamara – will you support any law that will find any person guilty?

Lebanese – Any body who is found guilty should be jailed.

Comm. Kamara - Thank you.

Ozonia – One of the things I want you to do is to talk to your legal adviser on how the law is discriminating the Lebanese in Sierra Leone. You should write it and compare it with the Constitution of Sierra Leone and must be submitted to the commission to make recommendations. On the 19th of May, the commission will be talking about corruption and handling of our mineral, one of the invitees is the business community, inclusive the Lebanese community, we believe that the Lebanese are very hardworking, many people were licensed as miners and diamond dealers. The commission will learn from these people. The commission will appreciate if the Lebanese community send its representative especially the major players. You argued that one of the member who was alleged to be a member of the RUF, we have sent a letter to him we have scheduled him to come before the commission on 20 May, we encourage you to use your good office to let him send his submission to the commission before honouring his invitation. I thank you very much.

Lebanese - I assure that the man will come, he was annoyed because of that. When he saw the agenda, he asked me to talk to the Commission for him to come and I was so glad that the commission has called him. If he is not here hold me responsible. When I was contacted, I told them I was not doing diamond business. I went there and gave them the paper. Mr. Basma was there. I did a paper and if the Commission needs it I will bring it.

Ozonia – How soon will we get it?

Lebanese - I will talk to my Legal Adviser tomorrow.

Comm Kamara – Do you have any question to ask

Lebanese – I will like the commission to deal with the streets children, most of them had no advice, what is the duty of the commission to make provision for the street children

Comm Kamara – I say thanks, we have note some concern about those children. The leader of evidence will look at it before the end of our hearings

Comm Kamara – It is now past 6, and we want to thank all the important personalities who have come to testify.
Thank you all for coming.

MANAGEMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ISSUES OF CORRUPTION

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS – FREETOWN.

**REPRESENTATIVE OF ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION
SHOLLAY DAVIES.**

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Gentlemen the commission has been out in the provinces for a week and we are back for our thematic hearing. I am sure that by the middle of the morning session we will have more of our people coming around. We are entering into another important phase of our thematic hearings. This week we will be dealing with very important issues and I will hope we will receive the cooperation of the public in terms of attendance and in terms of representation.

To start up, even as we try to get our sitting places as usual we would want to commit this day to the Lord our maker. I would therefore invite us this morning to pray in silence as we do in our individual and respective ways.

It would be interesting for Sierra Leoneans, those who are hearing us today, to be present this week and subsequently at these sessions. This week's thematic hearings will be focusing of management of mineral resources and issues of corruption. This means that Sierra Leoneans, as many as can make it, will do well to be here and listen to the hearings. It is important that we announce this so that the community will know and follow up on what we are doing.

The groups which we hope are here for this thematic hearing are the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the business community, Partnership Africa Canada, Network Movement for Justice and Development, the Anti Corruption Commission, the Ombudsman, the Government Gold and Diamond office, the Nigeria Business Community. We do hope that all of these groups or representative would be here today. I want to welcome all of you and do hope that we are clearly familiar with the proceedings and procedures, rules and regulations governing our deliberations. Without much ado, I would like to call on the leader of evidence for the first witness

Leader Of Evidence: Mr. Chairman for this morning we have one witness, and it is hope that in the afternoon, the other witnesses might turn up. With my permission Sir, may I call the first witness for the day. He is the representative from the Anti-Corruption Commission, Shollay Davis.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: The name of the representative from the Anti Corruption Commission, Name?

Witness: Shollay Davis

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you. We want to welcome you brother Davis, we have a procedure, we would want you to take an oath before the commission, your religious affiliation?

Mr. Davis: Christian

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Please take the bible and say after me.

The oath was taken.

Thank you. We do hope that you will be of immense help to the commission in carrying out its mandate. We would now invite you to make your presentation.

Mr. Davis: Thank you. Mr. Chairman, commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, may I on behalf of the Anti Corruption Commission ACC, extend our appreciation to the TRC for inviting us to their thematic presentation.

We at the Anti Corruption Commission share the view that if the causes that led to the decade long war in this country are not shared and addressed, there is the possibility that society may slide back to where it was in the past. These thematic institutional hearings are therefore very important so that we could all learn from our mistakes and work actively towards concerted solutions.

Further to this, I would like to add that section 54 of the Anti Corruption Act makes provisions for the commission to present to his Excellency the president, a report of our activities. In addition section 4 sub section 1, states that subsequent to section 54 the commission shall account to the people of this country on its activities. Before I proceed, may I say that this presentation is limited in terms of our work to the period after the war, as the commission only started operations in the year 2000 when the act was promulgated. My presentation will also be limited to the issues of corruption, with minimum reference to the management of mineral resources as the Anti – Corruption Commission Act 2000 does not make provision for economic crimes, except where they relate to bribery, tax evasion and other corruption related matters. The act is very clear about what constitute corrupt practices in part 4 of the Anti – corruption Act 2000. These corrupt practices include:

- Corrupt acquisition of wealth
- Soliciting or accepting advantage
- Using influence for contracts
- Corrupting public officers
- Soliciting or accepting advantage for public officer
- Misappropriation of public funds or property
- Misappropriation of donor funds or property
- impeding foreign investment and
- Corrupt transaction with agents.

I will now proceed to the nature of the problems in this country. Sierra Leone in the recent past has suffered many cruelties, from armed conflict, injustices human right abuses and deprivation due to bad governance. Perhaps a major reason for the decade long war in this country is corruption, perpetrated by politicians and entrenched by a weak judiciary. Corruption has given rise to a very low standard of living for our people and we are the poorest nation in the world according to the United Nations Development index for the year 2002. Corruption either grand, i.e. the looting of state funds by those in public trust or illegal trading in diamonds or petty charge demanded by a low ranking officer for service that should be free remains endemic in Sierra Leone. Society has come to accept and even expect corruption. As always, the poorest suffers most, and the poorest of the poor, most of all. This same

view was shared by the former Secretary of State for International Development, the Right Honourable Claire Short in her speech on corruption and governance at the British Council Auditorium in Freetown on the 27th February 2002.

Poor people are denied access to education, health care and medicines because they cannot afford to make the extra payment demanded by corrupt officers. They are denied justice when bribery and nepotism twisted the legal system. And they suffer when corruption diverts scarce resources away from development or retards essential domestic and international development. Also the system for prosecuting those found out to be corrupt itself been corrupted by the failure to punish those responsible. Too many people entering politics and the public service in Sierra Leone do so in order to line their pocket. Personal gains and loyalty to family, party is put before national interest. The consequence of these is that the society was sprung into a civil conflict that is considered one of the most brutal in human history.

For the first time Sierra Leoneans, with the help of some aliens, took up arms against their own brothers. Some as a means of seeking redress for their pains of resentment, against the system, while others was for their own selfish business. Our natural resources which could have been of use to the development of this country were transformed into fuel for destruction. Our diamonds and other resources were taken to rogue states in exchange for arms and ammunition. As a result what was supposed to be a blessing became a curse. By the end of the war, and the reinstatement of the government of Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabba that was ousted by the AFRC in 1997, the government of Sierra Leone with the help of the British government saw that it was necessary for the establishment of the anti-corruption commission. The aim was to address the impunity perpetrated by corrupt individuals or groups so as not to allow our society to slide back to where it was, and also to foster speedy economic recovery and development. It is important to note Mr. Chairman that several attempts have been made in the past to deal with corruption and other economic crimes, through various commissions of enquiry, but the problem still persists and is escalating. From voucher gates when the money involved was in the thousands to squandergate when it was in the hundreds of thousands and then to the milliongate involving millions of the leones. Now we are talking about billion gates. We can see that corruption is pervasive and is not restricted to positions or individuals. The failure in the past has been greatly due to the lack of an effective punishment mechanism and the absence of a well structured public service that is corruption resistance. If a corrupt individual is removed from a position of authority but the system that allows him to be corrupt is not removed, then someone else might come to that same position and be corrupted, more than the predecessors.

Also in the past, those found out to be corrupt were fined a minimal amount and set free. The next thing you will here of them is that they are driving luxurious cars and building mansions at the expense of State funds. Some went back to their former jobs while others were given new appointment, as if to compensate them for the wrongs they have committed. With time Sierra Leoneans became proud, of stealing large sums of money from state funds and they went unpunished. Those who have their children in the public service incited them to grab their own share of loot.

Hence to address this problem of corruption, which has become so endemic in our society, the Anti-Corruption Commission was established by an act of parliament on 3rd February 2000 with the specific mandate to provide for the prevention of corrupt practices. Three ways by which this act makes provision for are:

1. taking necessary measures for the prevention of corruption in government ministries or departments and other public bodies including instructing, advising and assisting any person or authorities on ways in which corrupt practices can be reduced or eliminated
2. educating the public about how to get away from involvement in corrupt practices and by soliciting public support in the fight against corruption.
3. investigating instances of alleged or suspected corrupt practices referred to it by any person or authority or which come its attention by way of complaints or otherwise.

The commission hopes to achieve this through quality service delivery, personal and professional conduct, constitutional and legal principles and coalition building.

I will now go on to the organisational structure of the commission itself:

1. the commission comprises the office of the commissioner, and the office of the deputy commissioner.
2. the directorates comprising the corruption prevention department, community relations department, investigations department and the research and development department.
3. Support services, mainly administration and account.

The commission uses a three prong approach in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone. These approaches are:

1. Community Education
 2. Corruption prevention
 3. Corruption investigation
1. Community Education: the Anti-Corruption Act makes provision under section 5 -sub section 2 C and D to educate the public against the evils of corruption and to enlist and foster public support in combating corruption. In other words we educate and enlist the support of the public. I.e. get them to change their perception and attitude in the interest of combating corruption.

Since its reception, the commission has undertaken many sensitisation meetings, community theatre, workshops and seminars towards this drive. Radio and television discussion as well as soap opera have also been undertaken to sensitise the public about the evils of corruption, and the benefits of a corrupt free society. The print media was also not left out in

this campaign. In addition, we also published our quarterly newsletter called the "Eye" to further educate and inform the public about issues of corruption and also to entertain our readers.

Also I have mentioned earlier, at the end of every year, an annual report is presented to His Excellency the president on our Activities for the year under review. Further to this, the commission has also to some extent succeeded in enlisting the support of the public in combating corruption through establishment of a coalition with civic society groups, non-governmental organisations and other governmental institutions.

I want to proceed unto corruption prevention. The commission has a corruption prevention department whose strategic objective is to promote and enhance best practices and service delivery across all public sector institutions. This is done to enhance best practices and service delivery across all public sector institution. This is done through the examination of the systems and procedures of clients in order to eradicate or minimise corruption opportunities. The ACC also has the mandate to instruct and advice where necessary. This is contained in section 5 sub section 2A and B of the Anti Corruption Act 2000. In the area of corruption prevention, a number of government institutions have been targeted, based on a public perception survey that was conducted by Dr. Joe Lappia on the most corrupt institutions in the country.

In that report the ministry of education Science and Technology was once the most corrupt, followed by the Ministries of Health and Agriculture. Since then we have focussed on these ministries and we have worked intensively with them in reviewing their service delivery and revenue collection mechanisms. I am sure if another survey is conducted today, the trend would have changed in terms of magnitude of corruption. The prevention department has also been looking at the activities of the NGO's in other to ascertain whether the activities are consistent with their mission statements if any. Other departments we have worked with are, the customs and excise department, Sierra Leone Ports Authority, Births and Deaths. The prevention department has also provided support to various institutions needing our assistance.

In additions to these functions the prevention department also receives complaints from the reports sent to it by the public on corruption related matters for intervention. These cases are examined by officers and a report of findings and recommendations presented for the attention of senior management of the commission. When approved, the final report is sent to the complainant and the accused. Where it becomes apparent that a corrupt practice is perpetrated, the matter is then sent to the investigations department for further investigations and possibly prosecution. I will now go on to the corruption investigations department.

The Anti – Corruption Act makes provision for the investigation of corrupt practices under section 5 sub-sections 1 which states that the object for which the commission is established is to investigate instances of alleged or suspected corruption referred to it by any person or authority or which has come to its attention whether by complaints or otherwise and to take such steps as may be necessary for the eradication or suppression of corrupt practices. Many attempts have been made by this department to investigate instances of alleged corrupt practices. Some of the reports received however, do not fall within the purview of

the commission. Those that fall within our purview are investigated and sent to the office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justices for prosecution. The Anti-Corruption Commission Act, is forward making and does not seek to criminalize anybody for offences committed before the February 3, 2000, when the act was promulgated.

I will now proceed to Research and Development Department. This department does the information gathering processing and storage for the commission. It also provides useful data to other department when required about individuals and institutions in general. The department maintains a report centre that receives report in the forms of complaints form the public and with advice from senior management makes referrals to the various agencies concerned.

For the year ending 2002, about 1,062 reports were received by the commission and distributed to the following agencies in and out to the commission. One was Investigation where we sent 144 of these complaints. Prevention had 33, Research and Development had 217, other agencies for example the police, and the public service etc. has 668. Reports sent to other agencies are those, which in the opinion of the commissioner, do not constitute a corrupt practice and are sent to the respective institution for their action. Most of our cases are now in court while others are awaiting prosecution. Many, however, have been put on hold for lack of evidential material.

I will now go on to the institutional problems. In spite of the many efforts made by the commission to stamp out corruption there are many problems, which need to be settled.

1. Remuneration for public sector worker appears to be motivation for corruption in this country.
2. The lack of prosecutor to advice and prosecute our cases in court and where possible a special court for anti-corruption cases.
3. The slow judicial system that causes delay in our matters
4. The apathy to change and the lack of compliance sanctions on preventive recommendation.
5. The absence of our physical presence in the provinces.

The commission has been widely criticize for its inability to produce tangible results in the exercise of its duties mainly as a result of the above-mentioned problems. In addition, the Anti-Corruption Act 2000 only makes provision for corrupt practices and not economic crimes. In effect, the commission has not been able to successfully intervene in the diamond industry. Except however, in cases where taxes on the sale of such diamonds are evaded. A case against a new member of parliament Honourable Momoh Pujeh is still lingering in the court. In countries like Botswana, Hong Kong and Australia etc. where similar commissions have been successful, economic crimes is also part of their commission's activity. This is not the case for us in Sierra Leone. Our scope is narrow; I would like to conclude with the words of the commissioner in the Anti Corruption Commission newsletter of December 2002 I quote,

'much continues to be written and spoken about the activity of the ACC with expressions of a wider range of views and opinions. I see this as an increasing positive trend. The ACC will continue to lend an attentive ear

taking into good parts all that is been said and written by our partners in the fight against corruption. This trend will contribute greatly in helping this young organisation map out future strategies that will enhance the commissions work and its relentless drive to live up to the expectations of you the public. ...We at the ACC have made it a collective resolve to do all that is humanly possible to carry out with the sacred mission to fight corruption in all its manifestations and help make Sierra Leone a better place in the interest of the common good.'

And with that quote I will like to end my presentation. I thank you.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We want to thank you Mr. Davis, Representative of Anti Corruption Commission, this concise and apt presentation indeed shows that you belong to the prevention department. The commission will be asking you questions for clarifications, and some other points for our education. I will be the last, but I want to ask one question and ask the commissioners to engage you. Mr. Davis you are a Sierra Leonean I believe, how old is corruption in Sierra Leone?

Davies: Thank you Mr. Commissioner for that wonderful question. In my opinion, corruption has been in existence since the colonial era. But the level of corruption was not as serious as it is today. As I have mentioned earlier in my report, there was a trend in the growth of corruption, it started mildly, and then it became very very serious. So far I would say that the scale of corruption in this country has risen to the highest level ever.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I now ask the commissioners to begin their questioning.

Commissioner Mrs Jow Thank you for that most interesting presentation. My first question follows up really on your last comment. How can you, on what basis can you compare the level of corruption, why did you say that it is at the highest level now, therefore presumably higher that it was 20yrs ago or 40 years ago?

Mr. Davis: Yes I would use two yard sticks, one as I mentioned earlier, I did say that, formerly in this country, we used to talk about voucher gates, and then it developed into million gate. Now people are stealing in the billions, that is one area I would talk about. Another area is the public perception survey that was conducted. And the people expressed that the scale of corruption has risen. These are the two areas by which I can justify to support the statement.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Mr. Davis whilst you were talking you mentioned that corruption is engaged in mostly by those working in the government and you even stated that the reason the war in Sierra Leone was due, why would that be?

Mr. Davis: In any country where corruption prevention has been successful, the political will has to be very strong. This political will must be expressed in terms of the institutional support they give to the commission, by making it as independent as possible. That is my answer to that question.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: I must say I am not very satisfied with that answer because it doesn't seem to respond to the question, which was why was corruption a cause of the conflict?

Davis: With regards to the effects of corruption and our war in Sierra Leone, its causes were rooted in the untold sufferings wrought on our people by corruption which deprived them of what should get to them. What was supposed to go to the health care was diverted into personal pockets and bank accounts. What was supposed to go towards the education of children was also diverted into private accounts and pockets. With time, this resulted in the collapse of most institutions of government. These and many other reasons resulted in a morbid state of affair.

Commissioner Mrs Jow: Thank you. But your answer leads to a very troubling conclusion when combined with your statement that corruption is at a higher now in this country than previously. Would you agree with that?

Mr. Davies: Frankly as I have said, it is at an all time high. There is a great risk of the ministries and departments where we have made some improvements and recommendations going back to where they were before our intervention. This is primarily as a result of the fact that the commission does not have what we call compliance sanctions. In the presence of compliance sanctions, it will be possible for the commission to punish individuals who repeats acts they have been advised against. But as it were, we do not have anything called a compliance sanction in our act.

Commissioner Mrs Jow. You focused on some of the short comings of the commission because of its legislation, can you tell us about the commission's annual budget?

Mr. Davis: As far as I know, the budget of the commission was at half a billion leones for this fiscal year

Commissioner Mrs Jow. 500 million

Mr. Davis: About 500 million

Commissioner Mrs Jow: About 2 million dollars. Is that right?

Mr. Davis: I don't know the exchange rate...

Commissioner Mrs Jow: How many employees does the commission have?

Mr. Davis: I cannot categorically give that now because I am not with the information at the moment.

Commissioner Mrs Jow Can you give us an idea of an order of magnitude, I am not a Sierra Leonean, I don't know whether this institution has 2000 people or 20 people who worked for, what scale is it all roughly?

Mr. Davis: Probably 50 or more?

Commissioner Mrs Jow: 80 people?

Mr. Davis: About that , I cannot give definite figure

Commissioner Mrs Jow How many of those people will be carrying out investigations into corrupt practices.

Mr. Davis: About 20 or more

Commissioner Mrs Jow Are these professionally trained investigators?

Mr. Davis: Yes

Commissioner Mrs Jow You said they were assessing the different ministries, that the Ministry of Education had been judged as the most corrupt. Is the Ministry of Education corrupt?

Mr. Davis: It is not for me to say whether the Ministry of Education is corrupt. A man is presumed innocent until he is found guilty.

Commissioner Mrs Jow How high does the corruption goes within the Ministries?

Mr. Davis: Corruption is a very serious problem in the Ministry of Education. Because this is one of the largest Ministries in this country, it has the largest budgets. It has the largest share of the national budget and is involved in large scale service delivery, from the teaching profession down to the level where services are rendered to students in the institutions, payment of grant in aid, payment of allowances, to students in colleges, etc.

Commissioner Mrs Jow But it is a very pessimistic picture that you present especially with the information, your assessment that corruption is rising at its highest level. And I accept your assessment that corruption was one the principal if not the principal cause of the conflict. But we are interested in both understanding the causes of the conflict and preventing future conflict. So if corruption was the cause of the conflict, and it is worse now than it was 12 years ago, then this is a very badly news for Sierra Leone. I suspect that in Sierra Leone corruption is still widely accepted, it has been something people do.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Mr. Davis I will like to thank you for your presentation. I only have a few questions and you've told us that the system is corrupt by inertia and also that there is an apathy to change but, then, as your commissioner said, much is been written about the Anti Corruption Commission. Would you say that there is less inertia now and that apathy to change is less, is on the decrease?

Davis: To some extent, it was helped to change the perception of most people on corruption like I stated it earlier. The trend will change with time but certain institutional support is needed. In terms of the revision of the act, to include compliance sanctions, because apathy to change will only be dealt with when there are strong laws and these laws are effected without which this apathy to change will continue.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you. You told us that you have an information department, and then you have information on individual and institutions; I just wanted to know whether you, is it possible for you, is it part of your mandate, to investigate individuals without any complaints at all? I am thinking of a corrupt acquisition of wealth.

Davis: Yes we have the right in the act to investigate individuals who in the opinion of the commissioner may have acquired wealth by corrupt means.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: You told us of a number of setbacks and you have given us low remuneration and lack of prosecutor, and slow judiciary system, if you were asked to categorise them which do you think you would put first.

Davis: I think the legal aspect has to be settled first before we think about increasing the remuneration of public sector workers because if you do not correct the system, and you increase the salaries, you will double your problem. So an individual who may have squandered million of leones through a corrupt voucher would now be getting more than a million, say probably two million when the salaries are increased.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Now you also told us that you examine some of the NGO's and some departments as well, and one department you named was Births and Deaths. I wonder if you can tell us if you have any recommendation for Births and Deaths. Because if documents are not well kept, if the documents are missing, then there is an easy way for corruption.

Davis: Part of our mandate is to review systems and practices, and to examine these systems to see whether they could lead to corrupt practices and find ways by which such practices could be minimise or eliminated. I worked at births and deaths and helped the department in restructuring and putting certain aspects of its operation into proper footing. Record keeping is now properly taken care of, most of their data bases now are now on computer. This has been a result of our intervention.

Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you Mr. Davis.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Davis for coming, I have very few questions for you because my colleague commissioners have asked you some of them, more professional ones. I am talking to you like a layman from the street who actually hears about corruption and reads about corruption. You cited some of the limitations and problems that are forestalling the fight against corruption. You stated low salary scale of public officers; you cited your absences in the provinces, slowness of the legal process, and above all apathy towards change. Would you then agree with me that the commission has been useless since its setting up in 2000?.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Commissioner, with all sincerity I will say no, the commission has not been useless. There are certain successes we have scored. In the aspect of prosecution, a number of cases have been successful in court, on prevention a number of improvement recommendations have been put in place in most ministries. We are monitoring those improvement recommendations, and above all, the people of Sierra Leone now know that there is an institution, a specialised institution to tackle corruption. That level of awareness alone has helped to a greater extent to serve as a deterrent for most individuals who would want to become corrupt. In the past, they could do it with impunity, but today these excesses are been checked. At least some progress has been made in the public as well the private sector. It is hoped that in the near future, when we have more support, in terms of our mandate, the commission will be able to do exceedingly more than what it is doing presently.

- Commissioner Torto: I do not actually want to refer you to several issues but there was a man before this commission sometime ago, he almost wept at the range of corruption that was going on. He cited Ministry of Education, State Lottery, here and there, and above all and he cited the amount of houses been broken because the owners didn't have the proper documentation, what has the Anti Corruption commission done to actually investigate the issuance of housing permit that allow the building to those houses that are now been pulled down?
- Mr. Davis: Well the Commission receives complaints from the public and conducted investigations on those complaints. It is possible that this person who testified here did not make his complaint known to the commission for investigation. All complaints that are received by the commission are followed. If it boiled down on corruption, we will follow the matter to the letter, but if it does not, we will refer those matters to the land ministry for action. So my reaction in to that, is that the individual may not have contacted the commission on this particular issue.
- Commissioner Torto: And nobody, none of the affected people have ever contacted the Anti-Corruption Commission?
- Mr. Davis: I cannot say so categorically, because I am au fait with every report that comes to the commission.
- Commissioner Torto: Then you will agree with me that there is a lapse in the reporting system, in investigation system, because you are not getting the issues. That there is a lapse in the reporting system, investigational reporting system, because as a very senior officer, otherwise you will not been here, you do not know some of the things we are asking about your Commission. For instance, you do not know the number of staff you have, now I am hearing that he is not aware that reports are coming but he is not receiving. All I am saying is that would you agree to me if I say that there is a lapse in the reporting system and the investigating system of Anti Corruption commission?
- Mr. Davis: Frankly I will say it does not necessarily mean a lapse in our reporting and investigation, it could be that the reports that we receive are so many and that every Senior Officer would know every detail of a report. Some information are classified. They are meant for Senior Management, probably the commissioner and the directors, so there is not, necessarily, a lapse in the communication.
- Commissioner Torto: in your original presentation you cited three Ministries that are leading corruption. Education, Health and Agriculture. Are you here satisfied with the performance of the Ministry of Works and Finance?
- Mr. Davis: I must reiterate that those ministries I categorised were not categorised by the commission; it was based on the public perception survey. I am sure if another survey is conducted today, the trend may be different.
- Commissioner Torto: I don't know if I am getting you clearly, you don't seem to take that report, Dr. Lappia's report, seriously. So are you telling me that since Dr. Lappia did not mention finance and works you don't take it seriously?
- Mr. Davis: No, not necessarily, the point is the perception survey that was done was to rank institutions according to the level of corruption that is being perpetrated in those ministries. And like all public perceptions survey, they

vary with time. If there is an improvement in the trend then the perception of the public will differ. So if the Ministry of Education was classified some one or two years ago as being most corrupt, and if two years after that, the Ministry takes active steps to correct itself, and the people see it visibly, then their perception about corruption in that ministry will change. So the Dr. Lappia's survey is important for the time we are talking about.

Commissioner Torto: How many cases have you been able to prosecute in court successfully, prosecute and convict? And I want to know the percentages, prosecutions, pending hearings, those that you were not able to prosecute, cases convinced successfully prosecuted and convicted, and those that were considered as not consequential and not important and were referred to the agencies for redress, If you can just give me rough percentages.

Mr. Davis: I will not like to mislead this commission for I do not have the statistics with me.

Commissioner Torto: But would you agree with me, you have successfully prosecuted far less number of cases than you were able to prosecute? That is, the number of cases, percentage of cases you were not actually able to prosecute, that stopped either at the hearing stage and died naturally because of lack of evidence, and those you could not take forward, compared to the number that were successfully prosecuted? Would I be right to conclude thus?

Mr. Davis: Again I will not be able to give you the correct answer because I do not have the statistics of the cases we have prosecuted, so I can categorically tell you that we have not been that successful.

Commissioner Torto: You don't or you don't know about it; what is it?

Mr. Davis: I don't have

Commissioner Torto: There is one available?

Mr. Davis: Yes

Commissioner Torto: Would you please let the commissioner have that in due course, not right now?

Mr. Davis: I will endeavour

Commissioner Torto: Say, by Wednesday?

Mr. Davis: Alright

Commissioner Torto: Now what happens to your report once they have been sent to the president? How many of those have you sent? And what happens to the ones you sent?

Mr. Davis: We have successfully presented about 2 reports, the third one is pending. And usually, after the presentation of our report, His Excellency the President will then give his reactions to our reports.

Commissioner Torto: Definitely, whatever, opinion expressed by his Excellency are taken into part, are implemented by senior management.

Mr. Davis: Senior management

Commissioner Torto: And none has been implemented so far?

Mr. Davis: Well all of these recommendations as far as I know had been put into practice.

Commissioner Torto: They are taken into good parts? And nothing done about it

Mr. Davis: they are implemented.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. Davis, I joined the other commissioners in thanking you for coming here to make a presentation. I have a few questions, but I will like to start with the answers that you have already given. You did not indicate or tell us that one of the causes of the conflict, rebel war and perhaps also one of the factors that make people practice corruption, is the low salaries or wages in the country. But when you were asked whether salaries will be increased before measures are taken to reduce or prevent corruption you denied that approach, you said that if people are paid, if people's salaries are increased, they will get a greater temptation to be corrupt. Am I correct in my understanding of that answer? You even went so far as to quote figures, if a man is receiving one million and you give him 2 million he may be tempted to take more money.

Mr. Davis: I think I have been misunderstood on my opinion on corruption as far as it relates to salaries. I have said clearly that the low remuneration appears to be a motivation and when questioned about what should be done first, improve the legal system or salary? I said the legal system, the aspect that covers legal issues must be dealt with first because where an individual is handling monies or say a voucher, and that individual is used to embezzling, say for a million leones, if you increase the salaries, definitely the problem will also increase by the same token. That is to say the individual can now if he has five people that are ghost workers, and those five people are giving him a million leones every month, if you increase the salaries you are increasing his take.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: And you don't think that if somebody's salaries is increased, that person will be less likely to be corrupt, because it means that as people used to say there is bread for him. So but it is the absence of bread i.e. the inability of whatever people receive now to support them and their families for the month that makes them practise corruption. But if that money is enough to support him then he or she will be less likely to practise corruption and risk dismissal in his office. But I just want to know whether you believe in your theory?

Mr. Davis: I believe in my theory; there are exceptions to that.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright, let us move forward. Now you also spoke about the question of the level of corruption in the country and at institutional level, and you said if a new survey is to be carried out, there would be a difference from what Dr. Lappia arrived at, I don't know was it 2001? Do

you think this difference will be a new distribution or will it be a reduction in the practice?

Mr. Davis: It could be either ways. It could be that corruption would be minimised in certain ministries whereas in some other ministries that were considered low in the ranking could rise. So the perception could vary.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The next question is having been given the lead on this opinion poll, because that was what it was, have you tried to make investigations to bring out the real level of corruption in terms of economic loss to the country?

Mr. Davis: Our commission have always been proactive, another survey is on the way which definitely will give us an impression of what the status quo is. But as of now no one can predict what is the status of corruption as far as its magnitude in the various institutions are concerned until we conduct that survey.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Well it is good to hear that the survey is on. Am I correct?

Mr. Davis: The survey will be on soon. It is not yet on.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The other question is what is your relationship with audits? Is that how they call it, or do they call it a department?

Mr. Davis: Audit department. Our relationship has been that of interdepartmental cooperation. They have been giving in us useful information as a guide for our corruption prevention drives. Usually the audits department would produce a report of its audited account of various government ministries. And we have been using those information to do proactive preventive interventions in those ministries. And we have also been subjected to audits by the audit department. So it is that of inter dependency.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So therefore you have to be careful how you handle them. They are auditing you, not so, are you satisfied with their performance? The performance of the audit department?

Mr. Davis: We are satisfied with their performance

Commissioner Professor Kamara: We want to get, are you satisfied with the staffing of the audit department?

Mr. Davis: I can say we are satisfied with the work of the audit department and since we are satisfied with their work invariably it means that we are satisfied with their staff because it is the product of the staff that has given us that satisfaction.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are they not to going to be transformed into independent institutions?

Mr. Davis: It is difficult for me to say whether the audit department should be independent or not. I think they can better answer that question.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I would have thought that was a fairly open secret. Anyway let's drop that. Now you have told us that you need the political will

for you to perform better than you are doing now, what about the public will, are you satisfied with the will of the public, civil society?

Mr. Davis: We are satisfied with the cooperation of the public in terms of the support of civil society; we have been able to develop coalition between those societies, those organisations. As at now we have about 20 coalition members including some NGOs. So as far as I know, the cooperation of civil society has been very good.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Have you every tried to go beyond the organised or institutionalised so called civil society? To get down to what also is referred to as the grassroots?

Mr. Davis: Our commission is a young organisation and we started operation in the year 2000, which means we have been operating now for about 3 years. We are yet a young institution, and we do hope that in the future we will consider other groups, but as of now we have been dealing with organised institutions in the civil society.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I am asking you because I want to ask you the next question. What do you think is the opinion or attitude of people towards people who are corrupt and yet display the product of their corruption? Did they regard them as you know wealthy people to be honoured or do they condemn them?

Mr. Davis: Civil society has always condemned those individuals who are said to be corrupt in the society. But on the contrary, some people admire individuals who acquire wealth by corrupt means. Either because they look at them as victors in the system, or they look at them as individuals who are untouchable

Commissioner Professor Kamara: And so they feel that, I think you mentioned it in your presentation, that they take corruption for granted as part of the culture.

Mr. Davis: Yes I did mention that in my presentation, I said people have come to accept and even expect corruption.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So in that kind of situation what do you think should be the approach of your commission?

Mr. Davis: Well I think that all the plausible solution as of now is to embark on massive sensitisation campaign and also to ensure that the individuals that are found wanting are punished. This will send a signal to others.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Which of the two is more important?

Mr. Davis: As I have said earlier, the commission does not seek to criminalize. So we prefer as a first step to do massive sensitisation. And we will follow that with preventive actions. And where it is pervasive, we institute investigation and punish.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you. Is centralized financial management by the government, where everything is centralised in the Ministry of Finance in Freetown, better than decentralization? Which of this approach do you think is better?

Mr. Davies: It will be better if finances are decentralised. As I had mentioned earlier, the commission has been in partnership with other institutions, quite recently, the Ministry of Finance undertook a survey on public expenditure called PETS survey and we took part in that exercise. One of our recommendations was that the Finances of the government should be decentralised because some institutions in the region were complaining that, though they knew about the budget, they had not been able to access these forms from Freetown. It will be better if our financial transactions in the central government are decentralised.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Now that you had mentioned this, how do you find the PETS working?

Mr. Davis: Yes, I think it is working because the outcome of the survey was put together and implementation is already underway.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Those ministries that were asked to account for certain sums, have accounted for them?

Mr. Davis: The process is underway, it has not yet been concluded.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Okay thank you.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We want to continue to thank you Mr. Davis for representing Anti-Corruption Commission, you are addressing one of the most important issues of our day. Would you agree with me that most of us in this country are either accomplices or perpetrators or party to this endemic disease, corruption, in this country?

Mr. Davis: Mr. Chairman, I will agree with you entirely. In fact in my presentation I did say corruption has become a way of life; nearly everybody is involved in one-way or the other. So I agree with you.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Did I also hear you say in your presentation that your mandate does not include dealing with economic crimes, fraud etc?

Mr. Davis: Yes

Commissioner Bishop Humper: If you take economic crimes out of the basket of Sierra Leone's issue, what are you left with, in terms of hunting for corruption in this country?

Mr. Davis: As I started earlier, economic crimes is not part of our mandate. Our area of coverage are purely on corrupt practices. That is why it is our desire that the laws be reviewed to include economic crimes in corruption issues.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We will be coming to you perhaps, you will be helping the commission here, because some of us are a little concerned about the scope of your mandate. Let me ask this question and this only one of the few questions I want to ask and then we go on. What do you see wrong in this country, either by government or government agencies or institutions giving contract to people who do not even know how to nail a board, and then they say they are contractors and suddenly even before the completion of the project or immediately there after, you see this person building mansions?

Mr. Davis: I say, the problem borders on integrity. The people of this country have for a long time now lost their moral fabric simply because they want to fill their pockets. I have seen situation where somebody is a poor man but because he has some integrity, he will say no to a bad system. But because there is decadence in our moral standards, the problem of corruption is very pervasive.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: You mentioned politics, people running to enter parliament and civil service to fill their pockets; we hope that when we come to ask you questions and suggestions and recommendations you will mention something about that. Did you imply that probably the time has come when before you enter parliament we will want to know your money's worth or financial means? Something like that, and not every Jean and Jack will now run to enter into parliament because to fill their pockets?

Mr. Davis: I say that is a welcome recommendation Mr. Chairman. Asset declaration is an important aspect that should be considered. And not only considered, but investigated. I think we should step in the right direction

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Finally did I hear you say that you are not established in the provinces?

Mr. Davis: Yes, the ACC does not have physical presence in the provinces.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Do you have suggestion boxes either in Freetown or in the provinces? Or are you contemplating on having suggestion boxes in those various areas where you don't have physical presence but there are people who could help you?

Mr. Davis: It is our hope that very soon the commission will be able to have its physical presence in the provinces

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Mr. Davis. Now we want to invite the Leader of Evidence.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and thank you very much Mr. Davis. Mr. Davis, in your presentation you have outlined a number of

constraints your commission is facing. Some are statutory and some are also operational. For purposes of recommendation, we will like to know from you, whether or not in your act you have special investigation powers? And if you do, what are they?

Mr. Davis: Like I mentioned in my earlier presentation, the commission has powers under section 5. sub-section 1 to investigate instances of alleged corruption. In fact part 5 (five) of the Anti-corruption act, spells out all the powers of the commission to investigate.

Commissioner Mrs. Jow: Thank you, what I have really wanted to clarify is, do you for example have the power of search? To enter into premises to conduct search? Or to issue a subpoena to solicit to enforce a receipt of information, for example?

Mr. Davis: Yes we do have powers to arrest and we have powers to search. Powers to search is under section 32 of the Anti-Corruption Acts. And we also have powers to subpoena somebody to the commission.

Commissioner Mrs. Sooka: Thank you, another clarification we like to have is do you have a policy or a position on the issue of gifts because as far as your mandate is concerned, you are to deal with corrupt practices and you have been given various parameters. You may agree with me that almost everything can be covered under the guiss of gifts. Have you really looked at it carefully and developed a position as how to handle issues of gifts within an official set-up.

Mr. Davis: The commission is very clear about what is an acceptable gift and what is not an acceptable gift. Apart from gifts, which are customary in nature, all others need to have the permission of his Excellency the President. If the individual is having dealings with an officer, that individual must not accept gift from that officer or vice-versa.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: Thank you very much. I was thinking of, at the level of the civil servant, for example, when someone has to have a file processed and the person, let's say, after processing the file gives something. And you all know very much that is also in anticipation and if it is also not given, next time when you go, you are not really going to be entertained and I really had that kind of practise in mind and I think at such circumstances the individual may not go and meet the president or write an approval from the president before accepting such a thing. So I think that maybe if you happen to look at it from this angle, probably this is an area you need to consider because those are the most important issues probably eating into the system. Thank you very much. Please another issue I wanted to find out is about what happens after your report. In the cause of the proceedings you mentioned that it was submitted to the President. Do you consider this as the effective means, how about a situation where we have the report presented before parliament. Which one do you prefer as a better option, and why?

Mr. Davis: I think I will answer the first one, where there was a difficulty in understanding whether my statement about gifts was meant for those in the highest echelons, it

was meant for everybody, the law is not discriminatory. That was why that clause was included in the Act. And it is a crime to solicit or accept an advantage under part 4, section 8 (eight). On the second part of your question, you are absolutely correct when you suggested that, it would have been better if we present our reports to parliament instead of to His Excellency the President. But we have been acting under the provision of the act second 54. And I think, there is an oversight committee in parliament that is responsible for Anti-Corruption issues, if there is any need for the commission to answer to parliament, we will do so in consonance with section 4 sub-section 2, which shows that the commission must be ready to tell the people of this country about its activities.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much, brother Davis, it is now your turn to ask us questions relating to our process or to make recommendations to this commission.

Davies: I do not have questions. I only have recommendations, and my recommendations are based to the problems that had been highlighted before. On page six (6) of my report, I talked about the numeration of public sector workers, government must look into it. I also spoke about the lack of special prosecutor or a special court for anti-corruption cases. This also must be looked into so as to enable the commission to act independently. I also mentioned this single factor, attitudes of most government workers must change. It is my recommendation that the act be reviewed to include compliance sanctions. These are my recommendations

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much brother Davies, you may step down.

REPRESENTATIVE GGDO – LAWRENCE NDOLEH MAYERS

Commissioner Professor Kamara: For our records would you please give us your full name

Mr. Myers: My name is Mr. Ndoleh Myers

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright Mr. Myers we would like you to take an oath and so we want to know what your religion is

Mr. Myers: I am a Christian

Commissioner Professor. Kamara: So you hold the Bible and repeat after me.

The oath was taken.

Alright thank you Mr. Myers. We are not a court but the truth commission and all we are interested in giving us what information you have to help us proceed with our work. We will now ask you to just relax and tell us what you have.

Mr. Myers: Thank you Mr. Chairman, first of all my office is part of the Ministry of Mineral Resources and I believe my minister had appeared before this commission and had mentioned the Government Gold and Diamond Office (GGDO) as a component of Ministry of Mineral Resource. I will present to the chairman copies of exports done under the GGDO and

also exporters involved during and after the interregnum. I will give the background information of the GGDO. The GGDO came into being in 1985 in pursuance of government's policy to remedy the acute shortage of foreign exchange. The functions really are:

- To compare diamonds bought in Sierra Leone as against the amount of money brought into the country
- At the same time we should check whether this is blood money, whether it is drug money or whether it is legal money from a bank. Therefore you should bring in a photo copy of the cheque when you cash that money. You should declare the money at the air and in one of the local banks before you start buying. When you do start buying, we send all these photocopies brought in to your local bank, they in turn do a tested telex message to verify your money. The functions of the government Gold and Diamond Office as set out in Gazette 100, Tuesday 17th December 1985 are as follows:
 - o To examine, assort, value, parcel, market and export gold and diamond.
 - o To export proceeds of goods shipped by GGDO, which shall accrue as income to the whole nation
 - o To put the marketing of gold and diamond on an organised and sound basis thereby increasing the free flow of foreign exchange through the local banking system.
 - o Institute more effective measures in the marketing of gold and diamond of diamonds by ensuring the valuation is done with the highest standard of efficiency.
 - o To provide a strong credible basis for government to raise external loans even its stock of gold and diamond if necessary.

From the inception of the GGDO the following functions were carried out: purchase and sale of diamonds, valuation of the gold and diamond, and collection of taxes on behalf of government. The GGDO did not succeed in stockpiling diamonds to be used as collateral necessary for government to raise external loans. The GGDO never bought or sold gold and only started in 1993. The buying and selling of diamonds ceased because of lack of finance. In the diamond business you need to have huge capital.

A particular point I should mentioned is that the GGDO does not know where it belongs because we have a board comprising members from the public sector, but still we are being run by the ministry of Mineral resources. The GGDO itself comprises 23 workers, three executives, five management, two senior staff, 2 junior staff, and 11 supporting staff. It initially derived its revenue by withholding 1.5% of all exports. In 1990, the government brought in DCI company, in conjunction with the GGDO to see that effective and correct prices are placed on the diamonds. The proceeds that the GGDO earned was 1%. The money that was stockpiled during the operations of the GGDO through re-buying was depleted because the 1.5% which went to management was reduced to 1% on May 26th.

When our friends came to Freetown, the GGDO office was a significant target. They went in, destroyed every sector of the office, including working material, burnt the entire office. So, in other words, the GGDO

effectively ceased operations from that point onwards. After the war, between 1998 and 1999, the Commonwealth in conjunction with the British Government, and the UN that helped create a certification system to avoid blood diamonds. In anticipation, the GGDO had to buy valuation equipment and furniture to meet the requirements. But because of the reduction of revenue 1.5 to 0.75% and the rebels had occupied all diamondiferous areas in the country, very little diamond came through the official channel. And the proceeds that came to GGDO were so meagre that we were unable to buy all these equipment for us to get ready for the certification system. In addition, there was a ban on all diamonds from Sierra Leone because of the blood diamonds issue. The Ministry in conjunction with the GGDO visited many countries for assistance. The Diamond High Council of Belgium and the World Diamond Office produced lots and lots of equipment we are now using as valuation equipment. As I talk to you now exports in the year 2000 with the certification system was 6.5 million and 2001 26.1 million and 2002 41.1 million. That clearly indicates that the certification system is working. At one point in time the whole world decided to frown on all diamonds because of the Sierra Leone issue, so the certification system was taken to the UN and that in fact created the global certification system, which we now enjoy. There was a resolution 1306 which said that all diamonds that don't use certification system should be impounded. So the success of Sierra Leone created an atmosphere for the UN to be able to implement a new revolution globalising the certification system which we now enjoy here in Sierra Leone.

With the certification system, we are very optimistic about 2003. In the first quarter, we exported 16.5 million as against 14 million for the same period in 2002. This gives an average monthly export figure of 36 thousand carats valued at 5.5 million. The driving force behind the rapid growth in exports seemed to be the certification system. In October 2000 till the end, the average export was 0.4 million per month. And in 2003 the average now is well over 5.6 million. The first time in the history of the GGDO or the diamond in history as a whole, yearly export figures rose above 41 million per year. The bloody nature of African civil wars, especially that which occurred in Sierra Leone and Angola, indeed perpetrated blood diamonds. Since the implementation of the Kimberley process which I have just explained, exports have soared to a unprecedented level. As of 19th May 2003 a total 180 thousand carats valued 27 million. The chart provided there gives you an indication of all what I am saying. Countries that have been involved in the certification system are listed as shown: Angola, America, Botswana, Brazil and countries in the EU all members of the certification system. Because of the big exports we do now it is the desire of the Ministry of Mineral Resources, the board and management to properly house the GGDO and other related offices. We will set up offices in Kenema area where there are diamonds. And also conduct training for many other related individuals who might want to get into the diamond business and who are indigenous Sierra Leoneans. Mr. Chairman in short this is an overview of what the GGDO stands for and what we do.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. Myers. We appreciate your coming to give us this statement. Now that you have completed we would have to ask you some questions.. So my colleagues starting with the Chairman will ask you questions.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Mr. Myers I want to join my colleagues in thanking you so much again for enlightening us. As you may be aware if there is any one thing that captured the attention of the international community in relation to the civil conflict in this country, it is a diamond issue. By the fact that there has been some progress in the diamond industry as we see from the graph or statistics available here, I just want to ask two questions, I do not know whether you may be in position to respond to the first one but I hope you do. Just right now you said you intend, that is, your government intends to open offices in the major centres or cities in the country, I personally have been so much concerned about the fact that every corner you turn in Bo, Kenema, some parts of Freetown somewhere you have diamond buying offices. I do not know whether that is part of government policy or whether it is in the interest of GGDO?

Mr. Myers: Yes, before now, government has brought in place mines monitoring officers, so before you get involved in any diamond business, you must either be an agent of an exporter or an agent of a dealer or a miner. Therefore, most of the offices that do exist in Bo, Kenema and even in Freetown are offices recognised. If you go to Kenema, almost every shop deals in diamond The shops are monitored by the monitoring officers. Therefore most of the offices you find in Kenema and Bo are registered and you must either be a dealer, a registered dealer or an agent of a dealer or an exporter. When we set up offices in Kenema, Bo and Freetown, we would advise ordinary people who don't understand the value of diamonds before they take their diamonds to exporters.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: The second question which should be of real concern to the commission is something I got out of your presentation if I understood or heard you well. It seems to me that GGDO has two bodies either you called it one the board of directors or GGDO or another body under the Ministry of Mineral Resources. Is that the case?

Mr. Myers: Yes

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Why is that so, do you have any idea? It seems to me that if you have these two bodies, then one is ceremonial body and the other one is the real body and that in our view creates some problems as to where the accountability lies. What is the function of this first one, the board of directors, whatever name you have for it. I know the Ministry of Mineral Resources is under the Minister in charge. But why this system and how is it operating, and in whose interest was this system established?

Mr. Myers: The board comprises of representatives from the diamondferrous areas, and they in turn give information to the administration that passes it over to the Ministry. But just as I talk to you, I receive a telex from the Diamond High Council that the GGDO must give its functions before it could become fully accepted in the global certification system. So in other words your question is so confusing - I am a board member reporting to the Ministry and we are neither a parastatal nor governmental, so we find ourselves in limbo, between being parastatal and being government.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I will leave the rest to my colleagues commissioners.

Torto: Thank you very much, Mr. Myers. I want to continue with Chairman Humper's question. The membership of the board, how are the members

selected, based on what criteria and who appoints them and for how long?

Mr. Myers: Before the interregnum, when the Khaki boys took over, the chairman of the board was the Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone because the formation of GGDO was primarily to look for foreign exchange for the country. Then we have the Minister of Finance, Financial Secretary, the Director of Mines, a public service commission officer and three members from the diamondiferous areas. That was changed when the khaki boys took and members are now directly appointed by the ministry.

Commissioner Torto: And how does the Minister select the board, members based on what criteria?

Mr. Myers: It is difficult for me to say...

Commissioner Torto: Well

Mr. Myers: Chairman

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. So you don't really know how they...

Mr. Myers: The names are submitted to us when the board is selected.

Commissioner Torto: Anyway that has changed now. I was going to ask you about the involvement of the bank governor the and financial secretary. Were not those people players and referees at the same time? But I think that question is irrelevant. I have gone through this statistics, I have seen certain names who were supposed to have obtained licenses and other things, I see a grace period, grace period for so long ending up with and amount of money and percentage of exports what does that mean?

Mr. Myers: The names that don't satisfy the criteria don't receive licenses and they are banned from dealing with diamond. Only those that are really up to date that satisfy requirements are allowed. At the end of every year, you have a block amount you have to export to sustain and hold onto you licenses. If you don't, the following year, your request for a license would be refused. So in other words as you see there, the ones that don't satisfy the requirement will not receive licenses this year.

Commissioner Torto: Mr. Myers I don't think we are on the same page. I am seeing here, I don't want to call names, because we are on air, I see here licenses numbered, but under licenses number you have grace period. Date issue grace period. Caratage 197. 663 carat. Export value 54, 614 dollars I believe. 0.1, so you see there are figures against these columns, but there are no names. All you have there is grace period. How do we come by this grace period? And who is considered, and who in fact grants that period?

Mr. Myers: I don't really

Commissioner Torto: Second page

Comm. Kamara: Yes this, the indigenous; are you talking about the indigenous nationals and foreign nationals?

Commissioner Torto: Yes under summary of diamond exporters performance mid year 2003, I don't know whether you numbered them, enter page 1 or page 2. The pages are not numbered but it is the second page of their paper.

Mr. Myers: Yes, but this clearly shows you know the date, if you look at dates, is Makie

Commissioner Torto: You don't need to name names

Mr. Myers: No is DL03

Commissioner Torto: Yes

Mr. Myers: Date issue 14/1/03 caratage exported, this is mid month, 118,070 , amount exported 15.8 million.

Commissioner Torto: We are not again on the same page, I am sorry, under indigenous.

Ndoeh: That's what I am saying, that's what I am reading.

Commissioner Torto: You have there, I don't want to call these names, well let me go to the first. It says under grace period,

Mr. Myers: Grace period

Commissioner Torto: Okay read, this is DM, on that name you should see DM, that is the name Okay grace period, grace period, then you have 78 carat on the caratage, on 99, then you have 50,074 dollars 64 cents then 0. Why do we have this grace period under date issue? But those people do not have licenses to operate and if they don't, why are they mining and then ending up those with figures?

Mr. Myers: No, there, what you see here is that they have a grace period at the end of the year we assess them. This is a mid year report, and that means that they need 78.99 carats and 50,000 dollars to satisfy the requirements.

Commissioner Torto: Anyway

Mr. Myers: I know what you are trying to say, you are trying to ask why do they have the grace period when their names should have been deleted. They have taken an export licenses for year, but half yearly we access every individual's performance and we have written letters to all these people that have grace period. As I said before now, if you don't satisfy the requirements placed by the Ministry of Mineral Resources, your for license in the following year will be refused.

Commissioner Torto: Okay then, you have, I think, was it January 6 or May 26, vandalism of the office, when was it, was it January 6th or May 26?

Mr. Myers: It is a mistake it is May 26th

Commissioner Torto: May 26 and you said the office and its equipment were all destroyed. Where any diamonds stolen during the process?

Mr. Myers: Yes, Sir there was a parcel that was in the vault, and they requested it. The Kaki boys took me from my house and obtained the diamond and gold.

Commissioner Torto: Who are kaki boys?

Mr. Myers: The AFRC

Commissioner Torto: Well call them by names, we need that on records. kaki boys could be high way robbers, it could be anybody

Mr. Myers: The AFRC boys took me down to the Bank of Sierra Leone and took the diamonds and gold from the safe.

Commissioner Torto: How much was that?

Mr. Myers: It was about 178 thousand dollars worth of diamonds.

Commissioner Torto: Who exactly took the diamonds from you? And time?

Mr. Myers: Massaquoi and three other soldiers who I cannot now...

Commissioner Torto: What Massaquoi?

Mr. Myers: Who is commonly known as Maskita

Commissioner Torto: Is that his name? Maskita, Sam Maskita Bockarie

And who else?

Mr. Myers: And two other soldiers

Commissioner Torto: Okay they were not soldiers they were RUF

Mr. Myers: RUF yes

Commissioner Torto: But it happened during the AFRC time

Mr. Myers: Yes

Commissioner Torto: Okay, they never got back in touch with you on that as to what happened to the diamonds.

Mr. Myers: I made the statement to the police when we came back and the case was on and I think the Attorney General is pursuing that

Commissioner Torto: Is pursuing that? Does your office buy diamonds in Leones or dollars? Which one is more profitable to the people of this country?

Mr. Myers: Well just as I said at the beginning of the presentation, the GGDO buys gold and diamonds and value them. If The GGDO was to buy in Leones and convert the diamonds into dollars for the government.

Commissioner Torto: Buy from the sellers in dollars

Mr. Myers: In Leones, with the parallel bench mark

Commissioner Torto: Equal equivalent

Mr. Myers: Parallel benchmark

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, then what mechanisms do you have in place against smuggling of diamonds in this country?

Mr. Myers: The Ministry of Mineral Resources had put in place for the first time mines monitoring officers and I think they now numbered 204 or 206. These go round town, they are at the air port, they go around town, they have the right to search and to ask you for a license if you deal in diamonds. That has increased the exports so far because most of the illicit dealings don't go official.

Commissioner Torto: There was a testimony given by somebody before this commission that the guest houses in the country generally are often taken by diamond smugglers, diamond buying agents, and those are not targeted by mines monitoring officers. They come, take up accommodation in guest houses, not hotels. But you may have a mechanism for the hotels, but illicit diamond buyers often occupy the guesthouses, does your office know about that?

Mr. Myers: Yes, when we get information we pass it over to the minister of mineral resources for the attention of the mines monitoring officers and mines warden. And I think they are taking adequate steps. As I said, this is why all of a sudden from 26 million, we are projecting for this year, about 70 million.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. Myers, I have just a few questions. These exports you are taking about, do they include kimberlite diamonds or are limited to alluvial diamonds?

Mr. Myers: No Sir, this is purely alluvial and just as I said the policing and the certification system has increased official participants.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: On the structure of the board and you know the link with the Ministry. Is there a plan to correct that so that the GGDO becomes purely parastatal or even a commercial enterprise because this was the original idea.

Mr. Myers: I think that is approved but we must work in conjunction with the Ministry of Mineral Resources because the two go together. It is the composition of the board ...

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes but it depends also on its functions. As you also mentioned, one of its original function was to purchase and sell.

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Now if we establish it as independent body, purchasing and controlling and is going to function as a commercial enterprise then it cannot be a civil service institution, it will have to operate as a commercial enterprise, to make profit, to be as efficient as possible, so it

cannot be a civil service body. But it means that it will have to have its own capital which you emphasized is lacking, which means it might have to borrow money from somewhere and operate itself but if it is going to be a government or civil service enterprise then it will be funded by the Ministry or Government through the Ministry. And it failed because there was no such support from the government. I was myself Chairman of GGDO at one time, yes when in 1987 the Bank Governor Bruce advised that this body should be independent. The governor was not the first chairman, it was either the Minister or the Secretary to the President. Governor Bruce advised against it. He said it would not be efficient so they changed it; they handed it over the Jamiru I'm sure if you read the notes of information in the office. And Jamiru squandered a whole year's proceeds of diamonds in this country. The Sierra Leone Government or the people of this country did not get a penny from the gold and diamond that Jamiru under P.M.M.C. collected for a whole year. So what I am trying to say is I mean I see with you, I support your idea that it should be independent, it shouldn't be under the control of the government. My own board was sacked because we took a position which was not going to favour some people. So Minister Conteh, Birch Conteh, he was Minister of Natural Resources dissolved our board. Well we preferred to leave. But I don't know how it is operating now but it used to be efficient and depending on its functions it will have to be fairly independent and not under the control of the government.

Mr. Myers: Mr. Chairman, all what you've said is true and then I was at the buying office in Kenema. Then we were buying and selling locally and then inviting big diamond dealers from outside to come and value and buy diamonds. That is why I had given all the scenarios for the council to take a decision as the recommendation towards the Ministry.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: But the alternative is why can't you look at the possibility? You don't need to have, you get the diamond, you value them, you keep the packet and you auction. The diamonds are bought and paid for in Sierra Leone in dollars but you advertise them overseas in Europe and America and then people used to fly and come and bid for packet here. So you don't have to have capital, you know liquid money. GGDO did not have the capital when you auction them, the people come and they pay for them, then they take their packets out.

Mr. Myers: I'm happy that you have an understanding of the whole scenario. This was how it operated and this is how we expect it to be, generate funds for the government.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So the question, another question, are you satisfied with, well perhaps you are not, I mean with the proceeds coming to Government because these figures you are quoting, the figures you are quoting, compared to what you told us the country was getting before the introduction of the certificate seemed a pittance. I mean people are talking of hundreds of millions of dollars now. I know there is an improvement, already you have for this year or half the year about 35 million.

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You may probably end up getting about 70 or 80 million but people are talking of hundreds of millions of dollars, how you account for the gap?

Mr. Myers: Well we had series of meetings in South Africa and in Belgium and in Israel whereby we are asking them to go by the letter of the global certification system whereby you have to show diamonds with their certificates before you can deal with them. That would help increase the level of export from us.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: The other thing is the Bank of Sierra Leone and not GGDO, at one time Bank of Sierra Leone was buying gold.

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Are they still buying gold?

Mr. Myers: No they have stopped buying gold. Some discrepancies, we are now operating the role arrangement.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How do we deal with the gold, have we got a system for gold?

Mr. Myers: Yes all these machines as I said in my preliminary, that all our machinery was destroyed when the soldiers came to town but now we are putting in place these equipments and we have started looking for experts. And I think if a body in the Bank of Sierra Leone is set up they can still make foreign exchange for the country.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Well how do you get it from the provinces without paying for them? For or you have to pay them, where do you get the capital from?

Mr. Myers: I think the board has to recommend it, it is the set up of the board that creates an atmosphere for all these things

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Now I'm talking to you. You've said you have started collecting

Mr. Myers: Assessing for export?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: How do you get it?

Mr. Myers: How do you get it

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes, the gold.

Mr. Myers: Exporters, exporters came in with their diamonds but with the gold but

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Do you keep it on behalf of the exporter?

Mr. Myers: We assess to find out the value and you pay 3% of the value.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: GGDO pays 3% of the value.

Mr. Myers: No, No the exporter who is exporting the gold pays 3%.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: And don't have to make any financial input.

Mr. Myers: No we have nothing to do, we authenticate the value.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright thank you

Leader any question

Leader of Evidence (Ozonnia): Mr. Myers, I have one or two questions for you, you've given the Commission a copy of the diamond exporters aforementioned, do you have one for dealers? Dealers performance, do you have a copy of the measuring mechanisms for dealers performance?

Mr. Myers: That is done by the Ministry of Mineral Resources but I think they have a quota, a quarterly quota you have to satisfy to maintain your export license, your dealer's license.

Leader of Evidence: So once the dealer satisfies the quota what he or she does with the diamond is not anybody's business.

Mr. Myers: Well for the exporters that I know, if you surpass 10 million the Government tax you pay is reduced from 3% to 2.5%.

Leader of Evidence: Now when a dealer takes possession of the diamonds from a miner, is he/she at liberty to dispose of the diamond internally without coming to the GGDO? Can he sell to anybody within the country without coming to GGDO?

Mr. Myers: Yes he can sell to an exporter.

Leader of Evidence: Only an exporter.

Mr. Myers: Only an exporter, before now to satisfy the books and the quota given to them by the Ministry, a diamond is sold to another dealer and the dealer sells that, so everybody performs with the one stone; but now a dealer sells directly to an exporter.

Leader of Evidence: So all the dealer needs to do is to, once the dealer meets the bench marking given to him or her, he or she can sell to anybody else and it's possible that it can't be traced to him and the diamond could simply be smuggled out of the country. That's a possibility.

Mr. Myers: That's a possibility.

Leader of Evidence: So would you think that one way of dealing with the situation?

Mr. Myers: Yes, but we also have in place miners monitoring officers who from time to time keep records.

Leader of Evidence: Yes I actually heard you say that, you said there are about 204 – 206.

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: And my question, what is the total area of diamondiferous areas in relation to the total sites of land being mined right?

Mr. Myers: All over the country.

Leader of Evidence: Yes total sites give me the estimation more than 10,000 acres.

Mr. Myers: Yes about 15,000 acres.

Leader of Evidence: 15,000 acres for 204, 206 mines monitoring officers, Mr. Meyers, you will see that they are so insufficient that corruption is a possibility and that monitoring is very difficult.

Mr. Myers: They also have on top of the 210, mines wardens who are employed directly by the Ministry of Mineral Resources, the mines monitoring officers are an additional force brought in during the certification.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much, now these mines wardens and mines monitoring officers are paid at Civil Service grades, is that correct?

Mr. Myers: Not the mines monitoring officers, the mines monitoring officers are paid through exports, the more exports we made the more your salaries are increased.

Ozonio: Thank you very much. My final question, looking at this performance sheet how does one explain the fact that indigenous participants account for less than 15% of the business.

Mr. Myers: That's a very interesting question, the President in his wisdom said that Sierra Leoneans should be involved directly with in the diamond business and as you can see here is about a flood of the total exporters are foreigners and

Leader of Evidence: Is actually much less than a third you only have 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Mr. Myers: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Accounting for less than 22% of the business.

Mr. Myers: I say

Leader of Evidence: That does not

Mr. Myers: **It is** the capital involved in this diamond business. You see the foreigners come with their dollars, these are all foreigners and they come in with their raw dollars, these are Sierra Leoneans, this was because of the President's quest for Sierra Leoneans to get involved in the diamond business that most of them obtained export licenses but until you know I think DFID is trying to finance indigenous Sierra Leoneans to get involved in the diamonds business and in fact they have motivated the GGDO to open offices in Kenema, Bo Makeni, Kono to sensitize the average Sierra Leonean so that he gets a fair price for his diamonds.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Mr. Myers I like to ask you to make a further written submission to the Commission on the conditions for obtaining the miners licenses, the dealers' licenses and an exporters license in writing. What

is the expected or anticipated yield of the land both for the foreigners and for the Sierra Leoneans. That's all commissioners, thank you very much.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. Myers, now that we have asked you so many questions have you got any question to ask us? You don't have?

Mr. Myers: It's only a statement I would want the Board to be stronger, and for control on the foreign exchange arrangements, the Bank of Sierra Leone should be involved directly with the GGDO, for sustenance of foreign exchange.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you Mr. Myers; we've noted your recommendation and I would only like to say that the Leader of Evidence has asked you to give us further information, I hope you will be able to add that recommendation or any other recommendation you may have in the submission you are going to make so that we can have it down. We thank you very much and you may now step down Mr. Myers. Thank you.

RE: MANAGEMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ISSUES OF CORRUPTION-KASSIM BASMA.

I believe I should first and foremost thank the commission for giving me this opportunity to make my own submission on the background of some frivolous allegations levied against me in previous submissions not too long ago.

I wish to inform the TRC that I have been dealing in diamonds for the best part of my life; ever since I was in my early thirties to date. and if you take a look at me it is quite easy to discern I'm already living in my bronze age. that, I'm sure gives you an indication of my wealth of experience in the diamond sector.

I first started as a diamond dealer that was sometime back in 1970 and gradually rose to the present status of diamond exporter. I should hurry to pronounce that all transactions effected under these licences were legitimate and in full compliance with the Mines and Minerals policy i.e. receipts were issued for all the diamonds which were bought by me and such transactions were duly recorded in rough and uncut minerals record book supplied to me by the Ministry of Mineral Resources.

Alongside the marketing of diamonds, I ventured into the mining aspect of the product which led me to incorporate my own mining company in the late seventies. the name of the company was K.B. Mining Company with mixed shareholders -partly Lebanese and partly indigenous Sierra Leoneans.

The company, like many other mining companies also became a victim of the civil conflict. All its equipment and machines were vandalized, burnt down or stolen. and we had plenty of

mining machinery and equipment ranging from vehicles, earthmoving machines to treatment plants, jigs, pumps, dredges, and electric generating units.

Coming back to the issue of the conflict, like I previously informed you I am a businessman perched in my diamond office and expecting to do business with the public i.e. people who come up with the product and wish to make a deal with me. Sometime, if you're lucky you know that these person or group of persons in front of you are licensed and offering a diamond stone for sale, which is your focus as a businessman, you are therefore enticed to entertain that person or group. In the process you primarily determine the weight of the stone, next you take a close look at the stone with the use of a loop (magnifying glass) to examine for cracks and possible inclusions. After all this you then begin to haggle over the price being offered until, you arrive at an agreeable amount. Documentation of the transaction then follows and which includes preparing a receipt in accordance with the approved format by the Ministry of Mineral Resources. This involves providing very useful information about the name of the seller, the type of licence under which the diamond is sold, the weight of the stone and the amount received as proceeds. Such data are crucial in tracking the product in the event of disputes and also ensure that the product is not eventually smuggled out. Indeed, inspite of the effort of the Ministry of Mineral Resources in combating smuggling through policy review and the enactment of stringent penalties as a deterrent, it is an open secret that smuggling was the order of the day. However, the establishment of the Certificate of Origin scheme for the exportation of diamonds and now Kimberley process has dramatically diminished the smuggling of our precious minerals. This is evident in the current volume of diamonds being legally exported through G.G.D.O. at this juncture, I wish to appeal to the government not to relent in supporting the Kimberley process and also recommend the continuation of the present policy relating to precious mineral exportation.

I can remember vividly that in 1995 and 1996 consecutively, I was classed the number one diamond exporter in Sierra Leone i.e. in terms of the volume and value of diamonds which were exported through G.G.D.O. also in the year 2001, my business house came first and the following year 2002 was rated second to another successful buying office.

Well, successes often come with opportunities and alongside these opportunities there are threats that accompany such [success. My](#) successes in the diamond business often come with more threats than opportunities; particularly during the period of 1997 to the end of 1999.- for example, on the day of the AFRC coup, which I can still remember was a Sunday, soldiers suddenly started raiding my residence. Some came requesting for money others to loot and commandeer vehicles while some groups did both. This harassment continued until I had to hide away my family from my residence. Actually, what finally precipitated my moving out of the house was when I narrowly escaped being shot by a group of soldiers obviously mixed with some RUF rebels. One of them brandished a pistol and threatened to shoot me in the leg; stubbornly repeating his desire to leave a scar on me. I only succeeded in dissuading him by allowing them to take a way the carton of money I had in the house and which was meant for the Kono branch diamond office. Another instance I wish to site was that while I was in hiding I got a telephone call reliably informing me that some RUF personnel in Kono were planning to kidnap my son Jihad together with my daughter and son-inlaw. They were the ones responsible for the running of my diamond office in Kono. On hearing this I immediately linked up with Jihad who confirmed that infact the RUF made a futile attempt the previous day to capture them, but thanks to the assistance they got from some good neighbours who risked their lives to hide them. Jihad further informed me that he had already sent a runner to the Executive Outcomes at the D.O. barracks to request for assistance in moving them out of the town. I later learnt that one Major Yan did heed to their request and got them out of their hiding place in a military convoy and took them over to their camp. They passed the night peacefully with the South Africans and the following day were airlifted to Freetown to join the rest of the family.

In Freetown, we suffered embarrassment and because of the social unease coupled with the unpredictable nature of the happenings of the time, I finally decided to send my family over to Lebanon in June 1997 then one week later I followed suite. I had to slightly delay my departure in order to officially close down my establishment before leaving.

In respect of interaction, I think I enjoy quite a warm and cordial relationship with every sector of the communities where I have an establishment.

As a diamond businessman, having a healthy public relations is always a priority. and because of that I am always ready to contribute when called upon to community development programmes. also of importance is the fact that I coincidentally held the office of chairman, Lebanese Community and subsequently provided liaison between the Lebanese community and others with a view to creating social, economic and cultural harmony for the wider community.

May I at this stage thank you all for your indulgence in listening to my submission. and wish to emphasize that this is my true story and all that which has been previously reported is totally false and was maliciously designed to smear my reputation and defame me.

Thanks so much

MANAGEMENT OF MINERAL RESOURCES AND ISSUES OF CORRUPTION

Alh. M.S. Deen

Minister of Mineral Resources

PRESENTATION AT THE PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TRC

Formal mining started in Sierra Leone in the early 1930s with iron ore mining by the Sierra Leone Development Company Ltd. (DELCO) in the Marampa Chiefdom, Port Loko District, chromite mining by the Sierra Leone Chrome Mines Ltd. (SLCM) in the Nongowa chiefdom, Kenema District, and diamond mining by the Sierra Leone Selection Trust Ltd. (SLST).

The chrome mines closed down in the early 1960s after independence when the subsidy on the transportation by rail was lifted, and the depleted ore reserves could not support higher transportation costs.

The mining policy of 1969/70 which mandated that government could take majority shares in any mining company forced DELCO to close down prematurely in 1975 to escape the perceived problems of operating a mine with majority government shareholding.

Government actually acquired 51% shares in SLST to form NDMC (National Diamond Mining company) Ltd. In 1970, which turned out to be a disastrous decision for this company and the mining industry in general. SLST was already paying 70% corporate tax to government, and with 51% of the remaining 30% profit (about 16%) as dividend the government total take was about 86% of profit. Because government could not pay for its shares up front it was allowed to pay from dividends, which meant that the company was forced to pay dividend every year until

1980 when the accounts showed a loss for the first time since 1933. Because dividends were paid every year, there were no reserves to purchase essential spares and to replace worn out equipment. The demise and collapse of the company was therefore imminent even before the rebels attacked the mine in October 1992.

Exploration and mine development came to virtual halt because of the 1970 mining policy. Rutile and bauxite mining started in the 1970s and eventually compensated for the loss in revenue from iron ore and formal diamond mining activities. Before the rebel war intensified in 1994/95 the mining industry contributed 20% to GDP, 70% foreign exchange earnings and 15% government revenue. The bauxite and rutile mines were operating 16 miles apart and both mines were attacked by the RUF rebels in the same week in January 1995, and up till now there has been no formal mining operations (large scale operations), only the artisanal diamond mining has been providing foreign exchange earnings from diamond exports.

It is the function of my Ministry to adopt appropriate policies to attract investment capital and promote the mining industry to take a lead in kick-starting the economy of Sierra Leone which has been battered by the rebel war.

In this regard, government is lending \$25 million Euro obtained from the EU as a grant to the rutile mine for resumption of operations. In addition to the repayment of the principal, an interest of 8% will be charged. The company is due to restart operations in the second half of 2004 with about 1000 jobs for Sierra Leoneans and over \$15 million revenue to government per annum.

The bauxite mine is expected to start operations next door in July 2004 with over 300 jobs for Sierra Leoneans and over \$5 million per annum in revenue to government.

In Kono the Kimberlite diamond mining is expected to start production in August/September this year with over 200 jobs for Sierra Leoneans and about \$5 million per annum in revenue to government.

The global capital investment in exploration and mining is dwindling every year with only 5% coming to Africa; 3% of this 5% goes to Southern Africa and the remaining 2% goes to the rest of Africa. The competition is rather keen, therefore, with every country fighting to have a slice of this tiny cake.

With Sierra Leone coming out of a devastating war my Ministry is engage in a promotion campaign, and our first effort is a supplement of the leading mining magazine - the MINING JOURNAL in February 2003. I attach a copy to this presentation.

Because of our experience with the 1970 disastrous mining policy - the majority shareholding policy, in our 1995 and 1998 policies the emphasis shifted towards a private sector enterprise where the government would not take any shares in any mining company; rather, government's role is to adopt a policy of facilitation and providing the appropriate business climate for investors in the mining sector.

The management of the artisanal and small scale diamond mining has presented considerable difficulties to succeeding governments since the colonial times. Sir Morris Dorman had cause to expel a certain group of foreign africans in 1950s for persistent illicit diamond mining (IDM) and diamond smuggling. This government is facing the same problems today. But three recent events have combined to ease the problem somehow.

The first is that government has introduced a scheme whereby a certain amount from the export fees collected from diamond exports is disbursed to the diamond mining chiefdoms to finance a project which will benefit the entire chiefdom - a court barri, a clinic, school, bridge, any infrastructural project that will benefit the chiefdom people, and not an individual. This is called the Diamond Mining Area Community Development Fund (DMACDF). The amount is distributed in proportion to the number of diamond mining licences operating in the Chiefdom. This creates some amount of competition among the chiefdoms with each aiming to maximise its share from the Fund. The scheme is very popular with the chiefdom authorities, this is the first time that any government has considered the interest of the diamond areas with all the damage that diamond mining operation causes to good farming land, the authorities therefore pledge to help in the fight against IDM in their chiefdoms.

The second event is the appointment of chiefdom mining committees to allocate land for diamond mining with the Paramount Chief as Chairman, and four (4) others; two elders and two youths, male and female each. This is mainly in Kono, Tongo and Kailahun where the rebels occupied and controlled mining for extended periods when the local people had no access to their land for mining and farming. This scheme has returned the rights and ownership of the land to the chiefs and local authorities and is very welcome. They therefore help to arrest IDM in areas that are not allocated by the committee.

The third event is certification scheme introduced by the United Nations Security Council resolution 1306 (2002) of July 2000 which prohibits the import of diamonds from Sierra Leone without a certificate issued by the government of Sierra Leone to show that the diamonds were exported under the authority of the Sierra Leone Government. The object of this resolution was to deny the RUF rebels the access to world market with illicit diamonds which they sold and purchased weapons to prolong the conflict, hence the term *conflict diamonds*.

In addition to this UNSC resolution Sierra Leone is also a founder member of the global certification scheme known as the KIMBERLY PROCESS CERTIFICATION SCHEME. This scheme, because of its global application, covers an even wider area.

Diamond exports have increased considerably since the UNSC resolution was introduced in October 2000. I attach the export records from October 2000 to April 2003.

The issue of corruption in the diamond mining and marketing sector derives from the very nature of a diamond; easy to conceal, high value and in great demand worldwide. From the foregoing it can be seen that government has adopted a number of schemes and policies to minimise corruption in the artisanal diamond sector and laws have been introduced to provide deterrent to corrupt practices, but the law enforcement officers, mines officers, the police, the army, foreign and national court officials, have all fallen short of expectation and yielded to the attraction of the perceived wealth created by the DIAMOND. The Government and everybody, citizens and foreigners owe it to this country to fight corruption in any and every circumstance.

I thank you for your attention.

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS
TAPE CODE – 34
DAY 1 WEEK 3
WITNESS: THE OMBUDSMAN – MR. GABBIDON

TRANSCRIBER- SOPHIE AMADU TAYLOR

SECRETARY - MARIAMA J. BAH.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We welcome you to this session Mr. Gabbidon. Your name is a household name in Sierra Leone and in many ways you have contributed to bringing us where we are at this particular point in time. It is but natural that you continue the process. We are at the River Jordan and we want to cross that river together, and so we put our hearts and minds together and carve out a destiny for our nation. We are here as you might have received from the office for issues pertaining to the judiciary. Your presence or absence in that office and what your experiences had been vis-à-vis the ten-year civil conflict will be our present focus. How you see the judiciary functioning in the past, now and in the future and everything that has to do with this process that will bring a new Sierra Leone. This is essentially why you have come and we've enjoyed your cooperation – your help in getting the TRC not to get materials from outside but people who themselves are architects as it were, for the carving out of their condition. You know the process I may not tell you; you helped to carve the instrument and we know that whatever you say here could be said in good faith and we accept it in good faith, and digested in good faith. We thank you for coming. I will now give you the opportunity to make your presentation.

Mr. Gabbidon: Thank you very much Bishop Humper – let me first of all say how pleased and privileged I am to be here.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I'm sorry Mr. Gabbidon, we left a little bit of process that you needed to go through and that is the taking of the oath.

SUBMISSION

Mr. Gabbidon: Distinguish Chairman, and fellow Commissioners, let me firstly say how humble and privileged I am to appear before you this morning, to testify at this all important Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I honestly don't think a better group of people could have been appointed than you here to sit on a panel like this where the integrity, probity and reputation of the Commissioner is so important and I can assure you that, those of us who are in the position to help, cooperate and assist this Commission will do so and I personally will do so to help you succeed; because your success is our success, not just for now but for posterity. You see Chairman, you are right to say that, in my own humble way I played some part in seeing this TRC established, because, after the Lome Peace Accord the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights decided to do some sensitisation on the Lome Peace Accord and to explain to the people of this country – our brothers and sisters, what this accord is all about. Why it was signed, why it was necessary for us to see it work. If we recall, at that time, we were all bitter, we were all angry, because of what had taken place in our country over years. Many lives were lost; thousands of people injured; maimed; houses destroyed and professor Pemagbi, who is now the Ambassador of UN approached me to help, to explain to the people of this country in simple language the Lome Peace Accord, and in my own humble way for over a year, I tried to explain to people, the terms and conditions of the Lome Peace Accord, the meaning of these terms and why the government had to sign that accord because some people think it was a bad agreement. It could be, but at that time the government had no choice but to sign that agreement. Even up to yesterday, I was reading a book called "Deliver us from Evil" which is written by an American; and he said he quite sympathises with the government of Sierra Leone to have signed that agreement; because, there is no doubt that the ex-combatants would never have left the bush or would have signed the Peace Accord if some of those terms were not inserted in that agreement. As somebody said its probably difficult to make peace than to wage war; but I believe that the government was right in signing that agreement and we can now see the benefits of that; because we've done a wonderful job despite what we say amongst ourselves – there's been disarmament, demobilisation and integration and if we can consolidate and build on this, I'm sure we have a future,. Mr. Commissioner, I'll like to talk on a few things concerning judicial governance and my office; but do permit me to digress a few minutes because there are one or two things I'll like to talk about, to fit into this picture.

Firstly, I think one of the biggest mistakes we ever made in this country was when the one-party system was introduced. It was a disaster for Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone should never have established a one-party state, because we had inherited a system from the British in which we had the Judiciary, the legislature and the executive, and that system with all its faults worked. It worked well. Sierra Leone was peaceful; had a good level of education, business economy that was picking up and I believe, we made a big mistake when I say we, I say all of us. It's not time now to point fingers because we accepted it as it then was but it was a disaster when we look back. The reason for saying so is that the one-party state did not benefit the people of this country. It only benefited one man and a few of his coat-tails and as such most the institutions collapsed – the

judiciary collapsed, the executive collapsed and the legislature was virtually a rubber stamp; and because these institutions collapsed because there was virtually no opposition, no accountability – it means that the consequences of the collapse of these institutions was that the people of this country had nowhere to complain to; nowhere to air the grievances and nowhere for people to know how we felt. Even a few of the newspapers that tried to challenge or to criticise were dealt with harshly. So that's the first point I'll like to emphasise that never again should this country go back to that type of system – never – it should never go back to that type of system. All they did was to create a lot of disaster for this country. We did not benefit anything even though some people felt that, it helped to unify us and bring stability. Even if it did, it was a stability that was short-lived because eventually what we refer to as sitting down was a powder keg that exploded. So that stability that some people argue was as a result of the one-party, was a fragile stability. Because what in fact it was holding was a powder keg and the powder keg exploded which we saw in rebel war and all the disturbances that we had. So that was a big mistake.

I think the second mistake we made in my insight was the holding of the OAU Conference. Sierra Leone was a small country and even though the African countries were rotating the hosting of the OAU there was nothing wrong with us telling our brother African countries that we were not in the position to host it. If we recall Addis Ababa was fixed. Ethiopia was the permanent site for hosting OAU countries just as we have New York for UN conferences and only those countries that are rich and can afford it could do so outside of New York or Addis Ababa, but we decided to host the OAU in 1980 and that again was for the benefit of the vanity of one person and it meant that we squandered all the resources and reserves of this country. A hundred million dollars in 1980 which was the total reserves Sierra Leone had were used to host the OAU. It might have helped our image and to some extent the infrastructure but the long-term consequences were economic and social disaster for which we are still paying the price. The OAU of 1980 was an economic disaster just as the one-party establishment was a political disaster. So these were two events, that shaped the destiny of this country adversely; because of these institutions – the executive, the judiciary and the legislature. It meant as I said, more or less us creating a situation where the state did not function or even if it functioned, it did not function well and efficiently. There was no accountability to the people of Sierra Leone. People did what they wanted in these institutions. The Army in particular was self-accounting – they were not accountable to the people of this country. Armies all over the world are accountable to the civilian government. In our case the Army was accountable to itself. The amount of resources and money spent on the Sierra Leone army during that period was unbelievable; and most of it went into the private pockets of senior army officers who used it to build houses, purchase cars and other amenities that suited them, rather than develop and strengthen the army that we had, that was so famous many years ago when it was part of the contingent that went to the Congo during the peace keeping operations; it went to Burma and distinguished itself in the first world war and in the second world war in Cameroon. So also, apart from state institutions, the beginning of the disintegration of the army started during that period; during that one-party period when the army was not accountable to the people of Sierra Leone. They were accountable to themselves, nobody however knew the state of the army; they did what they liked and we are paying the price and thank God for the British and other countries that have come today to help us to restructure and develop our army. So these were fundamental mistakes that were made, but let me say, immediately that much as I'm criticising the government then, we also, that is we the people of the country must accept some of the blame; because we did not challenge the government then, as have been done in

Ghana and Nigeria. The middle class – we the middle class, the professionals and intellectuals - failed the people of this country because in Ghana and Nigeria when similar circumstances arose, we saw that the Ghanaian middle class or Nigerian middle class and intellectual and professionals looked to the streets, went to the courts, were prepared to go to prison, and were prepared to die. But regrettably, we, and as I say we I include MYSELF, WE ALL Sierra Leoneans we were cowards because people felt that the existence of the SSD then, was (the SSD now is a different SSD) was used to intimidate and tyrannise the people of this country. The SSD have played a role over the last few years but then it was the instrument of tyranny in this country. It was used to cow opposition leaders; it was used to cow the press, the citizens, students and people who try to protest. Never again should we have an arm of the police that is an instrument of tyranny. The SSD as is doing now, and I praise them now, has transformed itself to be part of the police for good. But at that time, it played an infamous role and some of the big disasters were perpetrated by them - the killing of people, maiming and to some extent even armed robbery. There were instances when in fact in those days some of the SSD personnel then were involved in armed robbery – it is a fact and people know it but everybody kept silent because of the fact that we were scared that, they could seek their revenge. So the collapse of the army, the collapse of the police forces were as a result of that unlawful marriage. The police then was heavily politicised. The introduction of the army and the police into politics was another disaster. The army and the police and the Civil Service should be neutral and impartial at all times. They should support the government of the day. They should be loyal to the government but they should not be politicised. Inspector Generals of Police then were appointed on tribal grounds rather than merit or experience or ability. Promotions in both the army and the police were based on tribe, rather than merit, ability and experience. So were the seeds of disaster sown and we are now paying the price. I knew, I predicted this, I told my wife many years ago that we were sitting on a powder keg. Sir, it did not come to me as a surprise when Sierra Leone exploded. It was bound to explode. What I was not sure about was the way and manner in which it would explode. Any true Sierra Leonean would not say that the ways and means this country was governed was not a tinder-box for explosion; but I did not believe that Sierra Leonean will cut each other's hands. I did not believe that we would dismember women. I felt and believed that there would be a protest, that people would revolt to change the country into better society; but talking to some of the RUF; and I talk to quite a few of them up to today; some of them have admitted that, this was not what they envisaged at first. In the end instead of helping us to change the country, they inflicted harm and murder on the very people they said they were protecting. So the collapse of the state institutions, the army, the police, the civil service was politicised. These are things that we should never do again. The civil service, the police and the army should be based on merit and ability. We must not allow tribalism to go into these institutions; because the moment you introduce tribalism in these institutions, it is the country that suffers. Even though those who take the decisions think they're doing something good, they also end up paying the price. When you have a bad leader, the country pays the price. So even those who think they were doing their tribesmen a favour, in trying to put their own men there, did not realise that they were doing all of us a disfavour because after some time, the edifice was going to collapse and we all paid the price. So that is why one has to commend this government for now going on criteria such as merit, ability, and experience. When you look at your commission, Mr. Chairman, you could see merit, ability, integrity and experience. It is quite possible that a couple of years ago, if a similar institution was elected it could not have had the integrity and reputation of people like you. It could have been based on tribal or other grounds. That is why I say if we now

see institutions work and work well it's because of the absence of these negative factors.

Mr. Chairman, the point I'll also like to bring in which, just digressing when I come to my main point is that, we also have a reputation for being very friendly, hospitable and warm; which is good. Sierra Leoneans are basically warm, hospitable, and friendly but this is more with outsiders. We tend to love outsiders more than ourselves. Why? We open our hands to outsiders – fine; but why don't we also concentrate that love and unity for each other. We need to love and unite more. This has also been a problem in place. We are at each other's throat too many times. There is nothing wrong with competition. We should compete amongst each other. There is nothing wrong with trying to be able to strive for success. But we see the unity at now the level we want it. In other words we should try to love ourselves more and to love our country more. That's why people like me have come into public life, to play our own part. Instead of sitting in an office, I could be making millions of Leones. I used to; but I decided with age and time that we should put back into society what we've gained and to help our society build itself again or we could have gone out of this country and taken any international jobs but that is not the answer, we have to build our country. The Sierra Leoneans who run out of this country build somebody else's country. They do not build Sierra Leone and foreigners are not going to build this country for us. We have to build this country. Now the point I want to make here is that, not only us driving the lack of unity which we are trying to now cultivate and the patriotism which we are also trying to cultivate. We have opened this country too much to foreigners and we are suffering for it as well today. The way this country is opening up to outsiders is too much. We won't see this in other countries; and this is why we also have a problem; because we do not necessarily attract good people into this country. We have a lot of people in this country that have no business here, in the economy, in business, living in the best houses, driving the best cars, and to that extent, a lot of Sierra Leoneans feel alienated; because they are not enjoying the best of their country. You do not see this in any other West African country. Whether you go to Guinea, even Liberia with all its problems, Gambia, Nigeria, Ghana, the inhabitants of those countries, enjoy the wealth of their country. To some extent, apart from a few you have made it, the majority of Sierra Leoneans need to be empowered economically. That does not mean that Sierra Leoneans don't have to work hard to achieve that economic success; because to some extent, some people criticise us to say we are lazy. I do not believe we are lazy, I think if the Sierra Leonean is well motivated financially and otherwise, he will work hard although we still have some people who don't want to work; they prefer to go around the streets begging and loafing. Now Mr. Chairman, the Judiciary and my office which I want to link up are my main theme.

The Judiciary and My Office

The Judiciary and my office have to be strengthened and taken seriously. If democracy has to succeed, if democracy has to survive in this country, the bed-work is the judiciary. The bed-work of democracy when you look at the United States of America, Great Britain and other developed democratic countries, the judiciary is seen as a premium asset. If you do not develop or strengthen your judiciary, all the other institutions will collapse, because at the end of the day, it is the judiciary that has to make the necessary pronouncements on the rule of law, on the constitution of the country, on whether our laws are valid, on what happens to people who flaunt the law. So the judiciary has to be empowered and I must say that over the years, it's only now we are seeing a judiciary being empowered. Although I must give credit to the late Francis Minnah, and I want to

say it on record politics aside, he was the only Attorney-General of this country that took the judiciary seriously. Talk to any senior lawyer, they will tell you that. In terms of conditions of service, in terms of the way he empowered judges, salaries, pensions, the incentives to work, the late Francis Minnah politics aside, took the judiciary seriously; and for this, I would go on record and a lot of those who don't have the guts to say it would admit it in private that he did take his judiciary seriously in that judges were happy to work at that time, and some of the benefits we are enjoying today are as a result of the initiative he took? As I say, I'm here to talk about his tenure as attorney General and some of the things he did are there on record. So I must give credit to the late Francis Minah; may his soul rest in peace for the fact that, politics aside, he did a job to help the judiciary.

Some Of The Ways The Judiciary Has Gone Wrong Over The Years And Which We Must Try To Put Right

From 1973 up to today, there is no system of law reporting in Sierra Leone. A judiciary cannot function without a proper system of law reporting. Unlike the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, we do not have a system of law reporting and I believe this government is now trying to put the mechanism in place. Without law reports, the judicial is meaningless. It's law report that we have to look to, find what the law is and what the law has said; but now all we have is unreported cases and I was briefing the Special Court judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers on Saturday and I told them, they have to make do with the fact that what we have is an unreported system and they just have to accommodate themselves to it until such time that we have law reporting.

The other problem we have is that the laws of this country have been static. They've not been reformed. Thank God we now have distinguished juries – Doctor Peter Tucker who has been appointed to help the Law Reform Commission – you must commend this government for that and that Commission has an able secretary Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff and this is a good team. Because these are solid lawyers and with the help of some of us – I now intend to help them - we should go back on track to revise and review our laws. Most of our laws as my learned judge here will tell you are outdated. They do not meet the present conditions of this country. Laws have to be dynamic, they cannot be static. They have to move with the times. Regrettably, since 1960, when we had the major law reform in this country, law reform over the years has been peace mill. Rather than comprehensive, and now I think the government is trying to have a comprehensive system of law reform. So, law reform and law reporting must also be given serious consideration, and I believe they are now being given that, because there is a Law Reform Committee that now works at state house under Dr. Peter Tucker and Yasmin Jusu Sheriff and the law reporting has not started, but I have the feeling that, I believe DFID wants to help us set it up. These are the tools of the trade; it's like a Doctor without a stethoscope. A Judge without his law report cannot make the necessary diagnosis – a doctor needs his stethoscope in order to examine to find out what is wrong. The lawyer, the judge, needs his books; needs his law reports also as there have been an absence of law libraries in this country. It's basic but it's a fact. You cannot have a legal system without good libraries. We must take these simple things seriously. You might just see a library and think – this is a place where I go and borrow books. No. It goes beyond that. It is your books you use to write your judgments and your rulings. Your law library is important. So we need law libraries we need to have books. The University law library is virtually non est. The best law library we now have in this country is the Law School library; which is very good, and I believe the Law Officers Library is now going to be empowered; or is being

empowered by DFID. So these institutions work, when you have the necessary ingredients. You must have law reporting, you must have law reform, to update your laws, you must have libraries to have your books. Also, the conditions of service and terms of conditions of service and terms of conditions of the judiciary have not helped; our judges, magistrates and law officers are paid pittance and if you pay them pittance you will have pittance judgments and pittance rulings. Judges and lawyers all over the world are paid well. The reason for this is one, when you pay them well, they can take their work seriously and then they will resist corruption so that if you find them corrupt you come down heavily on them. Judges are paid well, in England the moment you become a judge, they are knighted automatically. This is to enhance your status, so that probably what you lose in practice, you make up in in-made prestige and a reasonable amount. We are not saying they should be paid astronomical salaries, no. But pay them a decent wage so that if you find any evidence of corruption; you can come down on them heavily. As for any of us for that matter, who work in the public scrutiny; logistics, transport, infrastructure are in short supply. But let me not lay too much emphasis on those, because I think other people have spoken about these areas, and we all now accept that the judiciary has to be transformed, it has to be restructured and we have to have personnel. This is another problem. We've not been able to recruit some of the best personnel from the BAR into the judiciary bench. People complain about the judiciary but we the lawyers must take some of the blame; because we have refused to go to the bench. It is small salary, small conditions so those who have taken the risk of sacrifice like our learned Commissioner here must be commended, because it shows that it was not just money that drove them into office, but there were other attributes. But at the same time, that should not be an excuse for judges, lawyers or those who work in the government service not paid well vis-à-vis the private sector to undermine their integrity the way we often hear these days. If you have two colleagues who went to let's say the Prince of Wales School – one becomes a lawyer, one works at the brewery - the one who works at the law officers department would be paid let's say two hundred thousand Leones a month. The one who works at the brewery probably gets seven eight hundred thousand. You see that disparity and probably even when they were at school, the one who became the lawyer was more brilliant. What happens – the one who is in the law officers becomes frustrated – yes he is disillusioned. The one at the brewery is well looked after. Probably it's unfair to compare both of them but that is what you see. In that probably the one at the Brewery will work there for twenty years because he's paid well, is well looked after, he takes his job seriously; but then if you pay somebody two hundred thousand Leones after six years in law school he starts to say why the hell did I bother to read law. I could have been doing something else. So that is why we say, we're not demanding or asking that the legal system is paid astronomical amounts but let them be given a living and decent wage which will keep them and their families going. I think one of the things I'll like to suggest to this Commission is that we should now stop the system of appointing judges from the magistrate bench. We've been lucky in the past to have the likes of the late Mrs. Justice Awunor Renner and we have Justice Marcus Jones here who are the few whom we can commend. But let me say here openly that a number of magistrates, who were promoted to the bench, had no business there. They were promoted because that is the system; but their legal knowledge was not all that commendable. They did not have any practice at the Bar; and so, much as they were made judges, their contribution to judicial improvement or advancement here was very minimal. I'm not saying that it is only people who are appointed from the BAR who do well; but that has proved a better system, because we do have judges who are appointed from the Administrator General's office like the Late Justice Parson Davies and D.M. Williams. We have those who have been appointed from the Law officers –

Justice Adorph, Aladi, and a few others but the bulk of our judges, should be appointed from the BAR. But of course it's a vicious circle because, somebody would answer me and say, well, Mr. Gabbidon where are you going to get these people from, because your colleagues refuse to go and take these jobs and that is why we say, make them attractive, make them good, the lawyers will come. Just as the World Bank has been able to recruit recently, four lawyers from private practice to help the law officers department, and the money they're paying them is not fantastic in terms of an astronomic earning but it was descent enough to attract four good lawyers from the private BAR now joining the government: the persons of Mr. Barbar, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Sesay and Mr. Thompson. So, that is the clue. Give people a nice descent wage which is reasonable, they will work for the government. I believe that the government can introduce a system where you have what we call part-time recorders; where people in private practice or some of us who do not practice any longer could do part-time work for the judiciary. They do it in other countries. You sit part-time as recorders, to help the government clear backlog, to help with complex cases. Because of our experience we could develop a system of part-time recorders because we cannot afford full-time recorders. Some part-time recorders can be made to work in the provinces while others could be made to work in town. These are ways and means to improve the judicial system in this country; and these part-time recorders would be made up of lawyers in private practice who are prepared to sit at the magisterial or high court or whatever bench to have the system. The other problem we've had is that an important office like the Master and registrar has also not attracted very good people. Now Masters and Registrars all over the world, in the British Common Law system, perform very vital role in the Judiciary. They are the ones who run the Administrative set ups and to some extent play an important judicial role; but because of poor wages and salaries, we've not been able to attract solid people there; but let me pay my credit to the Late William Johnson who became a judge, who was a very good Master and Registrar, Mrs. Showers, now Justice Tola Thomson, but we need to attract people there not just for Freetown; Bo, Kenema, Makeni to have their own registrars. So what we have is a system where we just have one or two in Freetown, and the provinces have no registrars. We should have registrars all over the country at the judiciary. So these are areas where even if it's outside help – let us go for it. But if you want to have a judiciary functioning, these are the weak areas that have to be strengthened.

Now, the other failure of us; when I say so, I include myself. I don't try to point fingers just at people, I point fingers but also we collectively must accept some of the blame, because the judiciary did not challenge the establishment of the one-party system under Siaka Stevens; but we challenged it under Albert Margai; and Albert Margai resisted and abandoned it. But we failed to challenge it under Siaka Stevens. Probably because Albert Margai was a lawyer I don't know or a democrat. But when Desmond Luke, T.S. Johnson, Jalayakin and others went to court; the late Kutubu Kaisamba; L.E.M Gerald, they said no we don't want it, the late Sir Albert resisted, but when it came to the one-party of Siaka Stevens, the judiciary did not do anything. So we have to take the blame for that. Why didn't we the lawyers challenge, why didn't we go to court, even if the court had ruled against us? So we have to accept that. Some of the reasons why this country collapsed at that time was what I might call fear; cowardice amongst us professionals people who say well, I'm not going to risk my life, I don't want to die; but you must have martyrs if a country has to progress. No country develops or progresses without people dying. Look at the amount of people dying in Iraqi whether it is Iraqi's or Americans for different reasons. So the failure of the Sierra Leoneans has to do with their reluctance to go to jail. We don't like to go to prison, nobody wants to go to prison, but Ghanaians, Nigerians, Gambians, do

go to prison for a course. So we've had a problem. Who wants to bell the cat? Nobody wants to bell the cat. We have too many armchair critics in this country. People who don't even want to come here and speak the minds. They sit in their houses criticise, go to newspapers, write a lot of balderdash but you ask them to come up and talk and really go on record they will not do it; they say – I don't want to go to jail, I don't want to be victimised; but no country will develop in a culture of silence, but if you criticise, it must be constructive, it must be reasonable and you must put forward an alternative solution. It is not just to criticise, the criticism, must be constructive. It must be reasonable and you have to come forward if necessary with an alternative solution. So even when people criticise us now, within a short period of time, people don't realize the miracle that has happened over the last few years; in that very few countries, who have been through a ten year rebel war, have turned around within the period of two years to this extent. To the extent that I have an article, which I'll put at your disposal, written by a Professor of Politics at Florida University. I've never met him. I got it when I went to England last year. It's a twenty page article by a man who came here; and the, article is entitled, "The Country that came back from the dead" that was the heading: the country that came back from the dead. And he argued vigorously that Sierra Leone unlike other countries like Somalia or any other of these failed states has been able to come back from that collapse, from that failed state syndrome and we are back on the road to recovery. He said the country that came back from the dead. And this can only be a credit to all of us. Even though we have to thank UNAMSAL, IMATT, ECOMOG our Nigerian brothers and sisters, but the will to survive the resilience of the Sierra Leonean, the faith in God, or God put us to the situation where we are back again; to the extent that some people come here after so many years abroad and say – "but where is the country that was at war I don't see anything". Some of my friends came over Christmas, they said "but I can't see what you are talking about" – I said but that is because you were not here a couple of years ago. So if they can come and see, this green mess of Sierra Leone and not the fire that was engulf in this country, let us congratulate ourselves. Mr. Chairman, I am of the view that the establishment of the office of Ombudsman has been an important one. Not because I occupy this position. This is a position that should have been established a long time ago and I was telling why or how the absence of it contributed to some extent to what we went through in the sixties (60's) a lot of African countries decided to establish this office. It came from Scandinavia, down to Europe then to Africa. The first African country to establish it was Tanzania in 1962 under Julius Nyerere. The good thing about the office—is that it acts as a safety valve. The office, of the Ombudsman is a safety valve between the government and the people. In previous years, people had nowhere to go and complain. Absolutely nowhere! If they went to the courts they probably won't get justice because the stronger man succeeded or the man with the money succeeded. The poor, the weak, the vulnerable had no chance of redressing their grievance from the courts; if he went to parliament to complain to his MP, his MP had no time for him. For him, if he went to see one who was a Minister, he was simply told "I'm busy", and of course he had very little access to the Executive. People had nowhere to turn to for addressing some of these grievances, some of these disputes and these feelings of misadministration were boiling up and some people; some people I believe turned to arms, resorted to arms when they felt all else had failed. Whether it was the right thing for them to do is a matter for history to decide. That is not for me to decide; but when people felt that all sources of democratic channels had failed them with nowhere to complain, and nobody to listen to them, they decided to resort to arms. What was wrong was the way and manner I believe the arms were used against their own brothers and sisters. Nobody would deny that Sierra Leone was not tinder-box waiting to explode. So the Ombudsman's office acts as a safety valve;

because, now, people have somewhere to complain. They have somebody to go and talk to. We don't send them away. We try to help them either by linking them to other institutions like the police or the Anti-Corruption Commission or the National Commission for democracy and human rights or ICRC etcetera or we send them to LAWCLA.

We do a lot of aid work at Brookfields. These young men have been doing a lot of good work. We are ashamed we the senior lawyers because it was these young lawyers that set up the first legal aid system and today they are flourishing. If you interviewed those who went to the bush they will tell you "I had a land case for twelve months Mr. Gabbidon I was not having justice.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Mr. Gabbidon for coming here; we already have before us what you called the trio yesterday: we heard the Chief Justice whom you already heard and then the president of the Bar Association. As it is our practice at this Commission we would ask you questions for clarification and after that we'll ask you for your own input and then the leader of evidence will ask you his own questions. So I'll now call on my colleague to ask you questions.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Mr. Gabbidon I want to join the chairman in thanking you for accepting our invitation to share with us your experience I can say I have been a living witness to most of what you have said in your introduction. I would want you to clarify a few areas that you have raised in your statement. They are the area of national mistake you mentioned that has cost the country immensely. Another was the introduction of the following: the army chief of staff did not only become a member of parliament but also a minister of state.

The inspector general of police was both MP and minister of state. The civil service became a member of the central committee of the ruling party; and chiefs as well as traditional rulers became indoctrinated into politics above all the Attorney General became a minister of state and sat in cabinet. And you as a lawyer would know what that means more than me.

Mr. Gabbidon: Commissioner Torto, thank you. Well what you said is correct. Those who should have stood up should have been us lawyers because we have a fundamental duty to challenge government when the freedom of the people was violated, because the establishment of a one party state contravenes the constitution because there should have been freedom of association.

REPRESENTATIVE OF JAMES INTERNAITONAL – ERIC JAMES.

TRANSCRIBER: ALIE KARGBO

SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Welcome again, the rules remain the same and we shall invite witnesses to come and address us but while they are doing so, nobody should ask question or aught or show any emotions or do anything that could distract the witness. So haven said that, I will like us to proceed straightaway. So I will ask the leader of evidence whether the witness is already there.

Leader of Evidence: Yes Mr. Commissioner, the witness is here.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Could you please invite the witness?

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Commissioner the witness for this afternoon is Mr. Eric James of James International.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Hello Mr. James, could you tell us what your religion is?

Eric: I am a Christian.

I Eric James, who solemnly swear that the statements I will give to this commission, shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help me God.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. James, we welcome you for coming here to make this statement or presentation and we want you to realise that this is not a court but still we are after the truth and therefore everything that you say must be carefully considered and given to us. We also want you to relax, nobody is going to harass you here, nobody is going to charge you of any crime even if in the making of your statement you indicate or tell us that you had committed a crime, the worst that can happen to you, that if you had offended anybody we will try to reconcile you with that individual, you will not be prosecuted for anything that you would have done. So take your time and give us your statement. I now invite you to do so. Thank you.

Eric: Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Chairman, I greet you all in the name of God. This is a chapter in my life I never wanted to re-enter because the memories are awful and too painful. However, my family and some good friends had encouraged me to go ahead and recount my experiences. Now thing of which I am supposed to comment is only a tiny part of my economic in business activities. I am mainly involved in Agricultural development, distribution and retailing at the bottom economic level. This means that, before the war, my distribution and retailing activities were confined entirely to addressing the needs of the less privileged. I did not establish expensive on top of the range supermarket. I was in the position to do so, but I believe that doing so, will run against my fundamental psychological, moral and social values. Because I was brought up to take care of the poor, I do not know how to take care of the rich. Unfortunately, government really or never supported or encouraged us for our endeavours. I want to bring mining on a large scale. The war frustrated this effort. The war descended on us when just as I had set-up the company to start a Sierra Leone owned and controlled diamond mining operations on a large scale. Now you ask me about the nature of my work. I distributed commodities such as; rice, flower, sugar, Magbass sugar made in Sierra Leone, salt, oil milk, onions and so forth and so on. Until the change of president in 1985, I was the sole nationwide distributor of the sugar produced at the Magbass sugar factory. Now the Chinese built the sugar factory, they produced both sugar and ethanol. And the Chinese tried to sell the ethanol to Wellington distillery, a British company which owned and operated ac factory producing rum in Sierra Leone. Wellington distillery rejected the ethanol, the factory was producing. Having no immediate market and no storage place for the ethanol, the Chinese then started to dump the molasses which from which the ethanol is produced on their compound. An ecological problem loomed, so much molasses were been dumped on the floor in their area of operation. So the Chinese approached me to help them solve the problem. I bought books and I taught myself how to make rum. I made a rum called sassman and it became an instant success nationwide and it also solved the problem of the Chinese. I built a tank that was 3 times bigger than that of the Chinese. I bought tankers to take the ethanol from their

limited storage facility down to Freetown. This single action of mine made it unnecessary for at the Magbass to dump the molasses that they produced. I set up a complete factory to produce that. As soon as we had a change of government in 1985 and the new minister of agriculture was appointed, everything was corrupted with the complicity of the Chinese management team at Magbass. I ended up losing all my investment on that trading venture. The Minister took it away from my company, and ran it himself with the Chinese Management at Magbass. Now, there was nothing I could do for a very long time, the Chinese having been acting in exploiting the stupidity of our so-called politicians. Sophian Kargbo and the very Chinese management in Magbass also shot down my rum-producing factory by simply depriving me of the raw materials I needed to produce the rum and keep the sassafras factory functioning. The Minister had the political authority to make himself the sole distributor of the sugar and most importantly the ethanol, which was crucial for the production of the rum sassafras. The moribund factory is still standing there in Cline town for us to see.

I established the retail business called Peny Peny super-market, selling basic commodities to the economically weak in Sierra Leone. My company was the first and last to distribute the American public law 480 food and which ensured that the food aid went directly to the poor. The then American Ambassador Arthur Lewis, Peter Tucker and the nation called Sierra Leone are my witnesses, they know that I took the American Public Law 480 rice supplied to the Republic of Sierra Leone straight to the desiring public and in particular the poor people of Sierra Leone.

Sadly, this performance was not recognised by the new government under President Joseph Saidu Momoh. The contract was transferred to Ben Kanu, the Deputy Minister of Trade of the new Momoh government of the 80's. Joseph Saidu Momoh was misled by Samsu Mustapha who was the Deputy Minister of Development and Economic Planning of the outgoing Siaka Stevens's government. At that time, the Minister of Development and Economic Planning controls the PL480 programme.

Samsu Mustapha distorted the picture of my handling of the PL480 programme; the incoming and inexperienced government of president J.S.Momoh swallowed the bait. Now the gullible and anxious power and money hungry new government succumbed to Samsu manipulation. The government swiftly transferred the programme from James International to Ben Kanu who was also deputy Minister of trade in the 1986 government and a close relative of the President Joseph Saidu Momoh. Today, Samsu Mustapha is the World Bank consultant, the transportation consultant attached to the Ministry of Transport in the new SLPP government.

Prior to that, I had a transport company and those transport companies, transported all the goods and equipment for the Chinese, development project in Sierra Leone in the 70s. We delivered 80% of all materials required for the construction of the Youyi building, National Stadium, Magbass-farm, Magbass sugar factory, the Mange Bridge and the Dodo Hydro Electric project in the Eastern province. I introduced a nation wide transportation system to successfully build the difficult transportation problems after the phasing out of the railway in the early 70s. At the time I used 25 tons juggernaut, 15 tons capacity N.A.L. trucks with accompany trailers of 16 tons plugs. I initiated this development as far back as 1974 when I had 5 trucks with accompany trailers and two juggernaut which were the first to be held privately by a Sierra Leonean investor. In countries like America, Germany, Britain etc. the government would have promoted such pioneering spirit and supporting it to grow and get bigger and better. But in Sierra Leone sadly, mean, naked, greedy people full of envy and stupidity who called themselves politicians do nothing other than to cross the spirit of enterprise of every well meaning country man and woman in their country. We were rarely encouraged or supported in our endeavours and politicians who continued to use their office

and their political power to take any my business the moment I had developed it. The ghost of the politicians has always been chasing us. I had developed my business with the rural formers and enterprise that was devoid of any or every government involvement, the political class cut up with me again most time around, the political class introduced war. Now you want to know about my work prior to the conflict as well as my experience during the conflict and what current activities I am still engaging and what are my plans for the future. My area of focus prior to the conflict was Job creation nationwide. I wanted to contribute to the development of a strong economic base that is crisis resistant for Sierra Leone. Because I admired the Americans who believe in spreading rather hoarding money, because when you spread money, it increases production, hoarding it increases the unproductive strength. I also have great admiration for the people of Singapore. I went to college with a couple of Singaporeans. I admired their discipline and their sense of purpose. And then, I wanted to imitate their system for development in Sierra Leone.

Before the war, I was deeply involved in what I thought was right. I gave secured loans to rural formers, I marketed the harvest of rural farmers, I invested in the development in the rural areas and about to start manufacturing cocoa butter and to produce chocolate drinks in order to create value added to farm product. I made a part payment to establish the cocoa factory at Wellington to carryout this operation just months after the war started. I established the largest mining company, only Sierra Rutile was bigger in Sierra Leone in a joint venture with the Russians in 1990. I did secure jobs in the mining industry to hundreds of Sierra Leones. The then APC government under President Momoh never gave my company a mining consension. In April, 1991 at the peak of the cocoa and coffee season I was discharging a cargo of 5000 metric tons of rice which I bought in for food and imported into the country. It was the time to supply the cocoa and coffee farmer in the Kailahun, Kenema, Pujehun, Bo and Kono district in advance of the raining season. The shipment has caused my company one million, two hundred and twenty thousand dollars. Kailahun been the largest cocoa and coffee producing zone and with impossible roads when the rains start, was the first district to be supplied. Payment for the rice supplied to formers, was expected to effected by the harvest of the farmers after the rains. As you all know the rebels entered Sierra Leone in April 1991 by the Kailahun district, shooting, killing and terrorising the entire population in the district, causing the helpless people to abandon their villages and towns to flee the neighbouring countries of Guinea and Liberia. In fact my company was the first ever to take relief items to refugees in Guinea. On the 20th of April 1992 the day when the NPRC ceased power, my house was raided by soldiers and my brand new Mercedes was commandeered and damaged so badly, I had to send it back to Germany for repairs, my main stores at Cline Town were raided by soldiers and civilians; the stores were comprehensively looted over 300000 dollars worth of goods damaged. My company lost 60 light vans, which I could have provided to farmers to collect produce from villages and to bring to the urban countries. 664 tons of cocoa valued at one million twenty eight thousand dollars was abandoned in Kailahun town and Gbendembu. Cash credit owned me by farmers total one million, one hundred thousand five hundred and eighty-four dollars went up in flames. Paramount chief, James Gbonduka also an agent of James International was killed in Mange Chieftdom. Another agent of mine, Paramount Chief Kabe Sieh in Panguma Chieftdom fled with his family across the river to the Republic of Guinea probably he may be up to now in refugee camps. Paramount Chief Katugbu abandoned this upper Bambara Chieftdom and left me in Kenema. I advised him to proceed to Freetown. He died in Freetown of a broken heart. Now as the rebels intensified their campaign, many of my loyal and produce agents were slaughtered. Among them was Alhaji Umaru Koroma, whose wife and children were massacred. In fact Alhaji Umaru Koroma was stabbed in the back of the brand new jeep which I had provided for him as the President of the Eastern Province Farmers Union. His body was dragged with his head down on the road and his feet up behind the jeep to the town centre of Joijoma which is distance of two and half miles. When I got this

information, I felt bereaved, I started behaving in ways my wife considered to be strange. My wife who is a German, noticed this strange behaviour, she asked to take the family back to Germany, which I did. I stayed away from Sierra Leone for one year. My wife and children where here in Freetown after two months because of the children's school commitment. In 1992 as soon as the NPRC had a grip on power, a grind of lies designed to discredit me, undermined my confidence and dislocate my successful business in a commission of enquiry set up by the NPRC under Arnold Commissioner Bishop Humper Gooding who was the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. The commission of enquiry and in particular that of Mr Nylander were the latest ghost of cruelty lies and officially sanction injustice. Arnold Gooding deliberately avoided Judges of improving integrity such as Abel Strong and Mansaray, to name a few. What they did was this. In 1984, during my expansion pride; I was only James International enterprises. The national insurance company limited tended some empty space on the building at number 18 to 20 Walpole Street which they the National Insurance company had earlier intended to operate as a restaurant but later changed their mind. A number of interested parties including James International Enterprises tendered for the space which James International Enterprises won. A lease agreement was entered into, signed and registered at the Registrar General's office, on the 5th of June 1984 under the registration number volume 73. The floor's listed were the 7th 8th and 9th floors plus the cool room and other apartment including toilets and the swers which were installed in the 10th floor. The tenth floor was therefore not mentioned in the lease of agreement by virtue of the fact that the cool room and their apartments had already been mentioned in the agreement. After we signed the agreement an inventory was drawn up and it was signed by James International Enterprises and NIC. After signing the agreement, however, the National electricity supply degenerated to almost nil situation making it impossible for James International to follow through with the initial intensions of James international to use the premises as a restaurant. I then approached the NIC and I requested the commission to convert the premises to offices. The permission was granted and the area of the lease which comprised the 7th 8th and 9th floor, was duly converted to house the main administrative office of James International Enterprises. The NIC did not release the 7th floor to us. Nevertheless, we carried on with our businesses which grew from strength to strength and it eventually became one of Sierra Leone's best known indigenous commercial houses until the NPRC took over in 1992. On the 15th of April, 1993, James International received a secret document SG/NPRC/1999 dated 15th April 1993, demanding immediate payment of the cost of the kitchen utensils and cutlery to the National Insurance Company. We duly replied that at no time did we never receive kitchen utensils and cutlery from the NIC. We forwarded the list of the inventory taken when we took over the premises and we informed the NPRC that we infact had returned every item listed in the inventory. We wrote several letters to the then Attorney General and Minister of Justice Arnold Commissioner Bishop Humper Gooding, forwarding a copy of the list mentioning that if anybody owed any body money then it was the NIC who did not give the 7th floor to James Internaitonal, Now in the letter to the secretary confiscated asset committee we clarified the issues. But the managing director Mr. Arthur Yasky deliberately refused to provide the letter, that letter never reached the Secretary of the confiscated access committee. 6 months later, on the 25th of November 1993, Mr. Yasky redrafted the whole letter, distorting the fact to confuse the issue. Now I was a bit naïve, I was unaware of the political class capacity to think and do evil and more so the extent to which people in such a small country like Sierra Leone will go to destroy competent individual just by using their political power. NIC had given the impression passively or otherwise to the commission of enquiry established by the NPRC and headed by and Nylander that I was using NIC cutlery and kitchen utensils worth hundreds and thousands of pounds in my house. The claim was outrageous; hundreds of thousands of pounds starling kitchen utensils can not have enough space in my house or in any other house in Sierra Leone for that matter. In fact, it will require over twenty containers to contain all of them. But in the fit of hate, envy, and cruelty they just believe the nonsense and wrote it in his findings. Such is justice in Sierra Leone. While obviously, I did not know that the authority will not give up at that point, so I was sitting in my office when one day, the personnel of the NIC and the CID suddenly materialise with a search warrant in my home. I was naturally dumbfounded, but I took them

into my home where they made a thorough search. It was at the end of this search that both the CID personnel and the NIC who went to identify the items I have realised the ridiculous nature of the whole exercise. Naturally become nothing other than my personal belongings in my room. On the 6th of May 1993, the managing director of National Insurance Company, ordered their legal counsel to write to us and demand payment for forty-seven thousand, three hundred and eighty-six thousand pounds sterling for cutlery and kitchen utensils. On the 4th of June, 1993, all our current accounts in the country were ordered to be frozen by the government and the remained frozen until 30th July 1995 when the freeze was lifted on just one account number 1255874 Barclays bank. On the receipt of the order to freeze all our account on the 8th June 1993, we were force to close the company James International Enterprise limited and laid off 183 persons with out notice. On the 21st of May 1993, we were forced out of our tenancy in which we have two and ten years left on our lease. The premises were leased out again by the managing director of the National Insurance Company, and all our pictures were confiscated by the NIC. Our new private commercial bank building which we had just been completed could not be open. Two super-market projects that were being planned had to be abandoned, no bank could credit us and we find ourselves penniless. The NPRC government tried to seize my land at Lumley, Lumley beach, and when I proved to them that it was my bona fide property, they then went on to incite the public to destroy the fence around my property at Lumley Beach. Again the then Attorney General Arnold Commissioner Bishop Humper Gooding was requested to throw light on the status of the property. He flatly refused to do so, My farm at Ogoo farm was confiscated by the NPRC secretary of State for agriculture. My bungalow in Kenema was commandeered by the military despite the fact that I had donated four new vans to the government to assist with the war effort and I also transported several types of food to the soldiers in the war front free of charge. The NPRC government and the war comprehensively destroyed everything my mother and I had spent over 60 years building. In December 1992, the RUF struck Kono where my mining company was started operating. The Russians I had there fled to save their lives leaving behind five (5) bull dozers, one fully equipped machine shop, five electric generators, two mobile phones, 4 tanker trucks, 8 aipers, 30 tons dumpers and 8 containers of spare parts, all value for 3 million, 5 hundred thousand dollars. Two of my juggernauts were burnt at the Kono/Makeni highway and on the Masiaka/Mile 91 highway. I had ordered these juggernauts brand new, one from Germany and one from Russia. My Kono produce section, the Kono produce section of my company lost one hundred eighty-four tons of cocoa value at 248 thousand dollars. Several bags and items too numerous to mention. We hardly had time to recover from the Kono shoch when we had another devastating blow, this time in Buajebu. Buajebu is a mining town in the Simbaru Chiefdom in the Kenema district. It was attacked in 1993. At Buajebu, I had 5 bull dozers and extremely well built and equipped mining complex. 750 thousand dollars worth of machines were burnt and complete engines and transmission systems as well as 50 sealed containers and spare parts and equipments. Two water pumps, driving processing appliance and accommodation for 150 workers. In Buajebu, the losses were of 6 million dollars. My plans for the future can only be the resurrection of my business. I am presently sadden with a monumental hips of destruction, I have no clue how to go about rebuilding the business, about 60 years established out of nothing. I do not have reconstruction capital; I do not have the resources to restart such a vast operation that has been demolished by power-hungry Sierra Leoneans of every political complexion and agenda. In financial terms, I am finished, I am not a European nor am I an American like Sierra Rutile an American company that has currently secured a reconstruction and a rehabilitation loan to the tune of 30 million and more dollars to resume their operations. I have zero access to development, rehabilitation or reconstruction credit. I have no access to long-term credit of any sort. I cannot get a loan to buy tyres for my car, let alone a loan to restructure my destroyed business. Government has not yet found a way to help me get out of the misery in which I found myself. Only President Kabba has looked up to my role in the society and acknowledge it. He acknowledged my contribution to his society long before he was elected president in 1996. Although the saying cannot be said for some ministers that continued in the SLPP government. President Tejan Kabba has never done anything to help any of my business aspirations since he came to

power. He has been trying to find ways and means to help me restart my business, but he had had no success so far, because of the overwhelming nature of my losses and the fact that there is no statutory provision in this country for war compensation. Our laws make no provision for war damage reparation or compensation. And finally I think you wanted me to give a detailed discussion on the nature of the problems and its impact on the society. Now I have seen sixty years of very, very hard work, starting from the days when my mother started doing business in 1943, destroyed by so called politicians. Well I have been asked to round-up now and I cannot conclude anything, I thank you.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Well thank you Mr. Eric James for coming to share all these information with us, we would have preferred that you concluded, at least summarise what you had just told us which is a lot. And then give us the opportunity to ask you a few questions for clarification. We still want to maintain that you don't want to rap-up and we want you to end properly rather than just stop abruptly.

Eric: Well it is a question of what do you leave out and what do you say, I can finish it, I just want to finish this one page. I can let you have some copies of the manuscript.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright, we thank you very much. Anyway, having given us all these information, I am sure that there are gaps which will require filling up and the commissioners will like to ask you some questions to fill up those gaps or to get clarification to some of the issues that you have raised.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr. James for coming to the commission. I had read your submission and now I had just listen to your verbal explanation though you have pieces of information in there that are not included in the written submission. All the same, they are well understood. I must first of all start by congratulating you though belated for the initiative to start a business of that nature. As a Sierra Leonean, I am highly impressed at the venture, the risk you took bring up the economy of your own country. It is unfortunate and very much so for what has happened to you at the end. But I just want you to make a few clarifications from your submission. I will start from somewhere; you said you had established a business that was the first and the largest Sierra Leone mining business that was only second to Sierra Rutile. This is in accordance with the written submission. Was it bigger than the National Diamond Company in terms of capital, resources and the number of people employed?

Eric James: When we started the West African Mining company, the NDMC had folded – up, it was not in existence.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, then going through the second page of your presentation you actually started by saying, which you emphasised throughout the written submission and the verbal presentation, that you were actually pushed around or treated absurdly, and you used that word, by series of government. What do you think could be responsible for that?

Eric James: That is disciplinary, a mentality question really. The type of governance we have, you see, whatever you are, governing for development or you are governing for self. And I think, more or less, what happen was that, these people, when they actually had power, they used it to benefit themselves and not the nation.

Commissioner Torto: So there were no ramifications or no reasons which could be political, tribal, regional, any kind of vice in the society that led the kind of treatment meted out to you.

Eric James: The funny thing here is, I am not a politician and we in Sierra Leone do not have political parties like your political parties in South Africa. We do not have political parties like the ANC, we just have groupings and titles and names because most of the APC politicians are now in the SLPP and tomorrow morning if there is another change of administration, you have the APC, everybody will move to the APC. If you have military government, everybody will move to the military government.

Commissioner Torto: So which party do you belong to, sorry if I may ask.

Eric James: I mean up to 1992, we only have a one party state. Anyway and everybody who was interested in politics was in the APC, and thereafter, you had these military interregnum, this NPRC time and during that time, you know, politics were virtually banned in this country and when the elections came in 1996, I actually supported President Kabba for the Presidency.

Commissioner Torto: But your problems actually started from the days of the APC according to this submission

Eric James: Yes, that is correct, during the APC regime, it was not so much despotic as a party, the individual occupying the office, would take this decision to destroy your business if he so desires and there was very little you can do about it.

Commissioner Torto: From your submission, three cabinet ministers actually seized your property, if I remember rightly, one was the sugar complex that was appropriated by the minister of Agriculture himself, the other was the PL 480 rice system that you were operating that was again taken over by another Minister, the Deputy Minister and then a farm at Ogoon farm or land at Ogoon farm. That was also seized by a Minister. Did you actually seek the law in any of those cases to find out why those people were just taking these things away from you?

Eric James: Until very very recently, nobody could sue the government of this country, anyway it was impossible. You would have to go back to the Attorney General for permission to sue the government and that would have got me nowhere. So there was nothing that I could do. I mean I could have continued my business. I could have other ways of doing things. If it wasn't for the war, but the war put a total stop to everything.

Commissioner Torto: On the 20th of April 1992, your property at Cline town was looted by soldiers. Do you know them? Could you remember them now?

Eric James: As individuals, no. But you know I was at home and I was called on the phone and told that they broke into the complex and there were hundred of people in there just looting. I cannot identify the individuals but they were soldiers and civilians.

Commissioner Torto: On the 4th of June 1993 your accounts were frozen, only one was released thereafter. What is the position of these account now and if I may ask, how much do you think are actually in those account?

Eric James: I am sure if you are familiar with business, you can still know that kind of transaction and w were very very credit worthy, so we don't have problem in terms of getting fund for our business. Until they froze the accounts and there was nothing we could do.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, and my last question is one of consolation to you and encouragement. And I started by saying that, by congratulating you for actually establishing a venture of that type. If you have a way and have some means would you start all over again?

Eric James: Yes, exactly because you know it is a family business that has been going on for years, and years and years and years and if we do go back into business, a large scale profile, it would have to be more modern, and it has to cope with the present day and not the past. But because of the perception and the old way of doing things, we will still be the same.

Commissioner Torto: I thank you very much, so please remember to send us some of the pieces of information that are not in the manuscript, Thank you.

Eric James: Thank you too.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Mr. Eric James we want to thank you very much for giving us a very comprehensive document.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION THEMATIC HEARINGS 5TH MAY 2003

Commissioners

Bishop Joseph C. Humper -
Justice Laura Marcus Jones
Madam Satang Ajaratou Jow
Mr. Sylvanus Torto

Presiding Commissioner

Prof. John Kamara

Leaders of Evidence

Mr Ozonnia Ojielo
Mr Abdulai Charm

WITNESS NAME: Mrs. Olayinka Creighton Randall - Campaign For Good Governance(CGG)

A silent prayer was observed by all.

Alhassan Kargbo took the oath of confidentiality as interpreter .This was administered by Commission Chairman Bishop Joseph C. Humper.

1st Witness: Olayinka Creighton Randall. A Christian. Bishop Humper administered the oath.

SUBMISSION :

Mrs. Randall : The Campaign for Good Governance has already made a full and comprehensive submission to the Commission and I am simply here to represent the highlights concerning its submission.
Done .

TESTIMONY:

Bishop Humper: Thanks to the representative. If we should allow her to say all that she had wanted to say, she would be the only witness here this afternoon. The way she spoke about Sierra Leone and what had happened; the nation, according to what I heard here is about to die. But there is still hope: What we are about to do now is to join hands and try to ensure that we have Sierra Leone. Against this background I now ask other Commissioners for comments as well as questions .

Justice Marcus Jones – Thank you for a very good presentation and thanks that you have worked within the stipulated time. As regards the TRC we have interest in women and children, I just want to know how you would describe the progress which Campaign for Good Governance has achieved since existence in women and gender equality.

Mrs. Randall – On that, we have what we call the Gender Empowerment Department whereby women are empowered politically and economically. Economically, we have micro credit loans for market women in 48 markets in the Western Area, and also Markets in Matru Jong, Bonthe District, and in Moyamba District. Politically, we have done a number of training sessions for women, especially on the last elections. We taught them about voter's education and in the physical process between women campaigners. We also trained in Gender Orbit and Gender System. This Gender Orbit had 20 women in the 12 districts in Sierra Leone. Under our Human Rights Department we organized workshops for women and children across the country. We also provide legal and medical help to women and children who had suffered domestic and sexual violence in the war.

Justice Marcus Jones – My question is in line with what the chairman said; what is our hope for the future?

Mrs. Randall - As mentioned in my statement, Sierra Leone is in a unique situation to advocate for legal reforms for women and children. As I have said, our submission deals with such. I honestly believe that, it does not matter how effective the police works for the arrest of rape cases, if the laws are not strong their work will become futile.

Justice Marcus Jones – I thank you.

Mrs.Satang Jow – Thank you for your presentation. I would like to join my colleagues, in thanking you for your presentation. We know the roles of civil society in bringing about democracy and good governance. What are you doing in the area of raising awareness to the majority of people? What are some of the challenges, as an organization how and what have you done to face these?

Mrs. Randall – The first thing is that illiteracy means lack of appropriate intelligence. We have carried out a huge number of workshops primarily out of the Western Area, inviting men and women from every chiefdom to educate them about their rights and responsibilities. Although a lot more needs to be done in that area, I believe the average Sierra Leonean on the basic level, knows their rights and responsibilities. As an organization, the CGG, our current challenge, is to formulate public policy that the average Sierra Leonean will benefit from. Therefore, we carried research into public issues. Without assuming that we know it all, we are calling on other civil societies and other organizations to let us know what they want us to pass on to the government that will benefit everybody.

Prof Kamara - I want to join my colleagues to thank you. I think you have done a good work, especially when you spoke of the reasons for the war in Sierra Leone, we know that there are other factors responsible for the war. Please be patient with me as I ask you for the research you have made here, the reasons that you said were responsible for the war in Sierra Leone, the university became a revolving door to recruit corrupt ministers, what is your opinion and what do you expect from the University of Sierra Leone.

Mrs. Randall – Like other institutions, during the time we are talking about, the University was not having enough money to be able to perform well and the students did not get hope for the future; therefore, they were easily corrupted. As an institution if the University receives adequate funding and support, they can get good lecturers; the students will, therefore, benefit from good education. They need to get a conducive atmosphere so that students know that they will be employed in future, that their chances are high. And if they think that the chances are hard, whilst in University they will be trying to make a future by any means necessary. This is not only for the University but our society as a whole.

Prof. Kamara – You did say that the interference the intervention does not give Paramount Chiefs the leverage to act independently. I just want to ask whether the powers of the Paramount Chiefs were greater than those of the Member of Parliament?

- Mrs. Randall -** I believe so, the Paramount Chiefs deal directly with the people in the province whilst members of Parliament reside in Western Area, and they only go to the Constituency when they want something from them. The Paramount Chiefs are closer to the people.
- Prof. Kamara –** On the military you said they contributed positively or negatively on the war based on information we had received, Do you have hope that the reformation would serve the country better than before.
- Mrs. Randall –** First of all to clarify my submission; the military contributed positively at the start but became negative; as the war prolonged the situation turned around .To answer your question, the reforms that are taken place now should be done looking towards the future and not a short-term solution. Like I have said, something which should be done inside the army; for instance,there should have been human rights violations checks. And those involved should have been removed from the army. Having said that, I believe it will be necessary to have institutionalized reconciliation, e.g; inside the army sort of TRC amongst the military officers. So that they can tell us what they did and what they had suffered and in that process to reconcile with the public generally. We also have to make sure that the democratization is done properly, in order to ensure that the military should be accountable to the civilians.
- Prof. Kamara –** I want to ask a final question to help us on; what should have been done in the 1960s and 1970s and what should have been done to prevent the dictatorship of the RUF ?
- Mrs. Randall –** First of all we must realize the concept of civil societies in the country 1960s and 1970s; I do not think it was in any war structure. I think the challenge now is to keep it as intact as possible especially when dealing with specific issues, which will take us back to were we were. It is easy for civil society to mobilize against the nation. The challenge now is to look in wards and to critically analyze so that we would be able to guide them in the right path so that we would not turn back to conflict.
- Commissioner Torto -** I thank you for the concise statement you have made. I am interested in Social Justice, and I would like you to enlighten me on - first the police, their attitude not being encouraging, equipment and logistics. You also mentioned about SSD's being along tribal lines, is it between the higher cadre?
- Mrs. Randall -** Impartially it is so, as there is one ethnic group against the other.
- Commissioner Torto –** And your comments on legal practitioners, the behaviors of Lawyers in Court. They held a lot of blame, Does it mean that nothing is done in those areas?
- Mrs. Randall –** No, I have to make the statement comprehensive, definitely our legal practisioners had a lot of blame. It is my humble opinion that Mrs. Marcus Jones can correct me that the judges are in charge of their court, and if a lawyer for no reason decides to delay a case, the judge has the power to take correct action.
- Commissioner Torto –** Are the customary laws in force?

Mrs. Randall – They are already in force at the moment. I made reference to that earlier, and they must try to put certain mechanism in place; so that all the laws should have the same effect.

Bishop Humper - Thank you for your answers;now, as the Chairman of the TRC,how did you come about the observations and comments in regard to the TRC and Special Court.

Mrs. Randall – November and December 2002 survey.

Bishop Humper – Do you have any intention of conducting another survey now that the TRC has started its operations or will the figures remain the same?

Mrs. Randall – We would have loved to but there are no funds for us to undertake such functions.

Bishop Humper – According to your submission we have a powerful Executive and Legislative but the Judiciary is weak, can you comment on that?

Mrs. Randall - That is what we believe.

Bishop Humper – Yesterday over the BBC, President Obasanjo in a statement , said that too many political parties are not good for Nigeria and that it should be cut down to three. I am asking whether CGG will make a recommendation to the Commission as to how to help our country reduce the number of its political parties..

Mrs.Randall – If the Commission wants us to submit that recommendations on the number of political parties;thought it should be something well thought out .As present in Sierra Leone, we have a number of political parties. These parties are based on people. But if and when parties start looking at the operations on basis of the ideology they stand for; they will be reduced. Because we do not have many ideological alternatives to entertain.

Leader of Evidence - Mr. Ozonia Ojielo

Mr. Ojielo – I refer to page 8 of the submission, on the war victims fund. I would ask you to make a recommendation as to who are the victims, and which measures to be put in place for them to benefit?

Mrs. Randall - As we all know most Sierra Leoneans have suffered. So,we have to streamline the victims for the purposes of these funds. We look at people who suffered physical violence: Those who were raped and the amputees. There are other means outside the war victims funds that can help other victims.

Mr. Ojielo– What kind of recommendation should be made to the Commission?

Mrs. Randall - Although money is in the minds of most victims as means of compensation, the perpetrators should help to build communities that they destroyed.

Mr. Ojielo – Thank you very much.

Bishop Humper - Do you have any comments, issues or point to raise for us to discuss in relation to the mandate of the commission ?

Mrs. Randall – For now I have no questions or issues to raise. I promise that before the end of the commission I will have my recommendations made.

Bishop Humper – I think we would appreciate your recommendations, to help us in our report. I thank you for coming; for people that are listening. I think you have now opened a chapter. According to our mandate we need recommendations and questions to complete our work. We hope that peace loving Sierra Leoneans that are listening would come forward and present their submissions. Thank you very much.

OTHER NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION WITNESSES :

The commission is now ready to receive submissions from the various NGOs who have been working very closely with women and girls before conflict, during the conflict and out of the conflict. They are partners in TRC and we thank them for accepting our invitation here to make presentations and submissions this afternoon. Our first witness from the NGO is from FAWE, Forum for African Women Educationalists, Ms. Christiana Thorpe.

SUBMISSION ;

Ms. Thorpe: Thank you Madam Presiding Chair. I would like to thank the commissioners for inviting FAWE to share its experiences with you and the nation. FAWE Sierra Leone is one of the 33 Chapters in Africa. It is a Non-Governmental Organisation that is duly registered with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Development. I started the organisation on the 23rd March 1995. And today we continue to focus on the mandate of supporting girls and women to acquire education and development. As to date we have so many women in all works of life in the seventy branches through out the country. We work very closely with three ministerial departments, namely, Education, Social Welfare and Development. Madam Chair person what I have to say, I am an ordinary voice. In the audience you find the people who are the hands, the feet and faces. The full text of our submission from where my presentation this afternoon comes has already been submitted to the commission. Accordingly , I make the following presentation.

DONE.

TESTIMONY :

Commissioner Jow: Christiana, thank you very much for your presentation which you have made on behalf of FAWE. Really you have not given all due explanation but you have said that all the things that you have read are in the paper. We also thank you for sharing with the TRC surveys conducted by your organisation and for your recommendations. This time I will ask commissioners to ask questions for clarifications.

Bishop Humper: Sister Thorpe I want on behalf of the commission to express our profound gratitude to you for this great day. I have one main

question but it is to be drawn within a context. I do not know whether you clearly and deliberately thought out the date of the founding of this vision FAWE or was it a coincidence ? But you may recall by now that on the 23rd March 1991 according to the record, the decade long conflict that assumed monstrous dimensions began in this country. Precisely four years after the 23rd March 1995 this institution was founded. If you have never thought about the significance of that day for Sierra Leone; then better do note its significance . But I want to commend you on behalf of the commission for this presentation in particular the recommendations. Here we have a total of twenty recommendations. Your own presentation enforces our conviction that the commission work of healing and reconciliation, had already begun even before the commission was established. Many people move on to the wrong notion that the implementation of TRC work is a future endeavour awaiting its eventual realization. But your various programmes focusing on education, scholarship and training in skills and education indeed embrace the commission's understanding of real reconciliation and hope for our country. Furthermore your collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Development and Economic Planning and social Welfare Gender and children affairs has further served to increase our conviction that TRC will succeed in this country ; because there are many NGOs who will carry out the commission the recommendation of our report sequel to the expiry of our temporal mandate. My one question against this background is: How can your organization help to have establish NGOs support network in your areas of operation or community supportive network so as to carry out the process of healing and reconciliation ?

Ms. Thorpe:

Thank you Mr. Chairman. The issue of networking is an integral aspect of civil society practice today. As a normal process we work in collaboration with NGOs on the ground. Each branch of our organization is inextricably linked not just to other branches, but as well to other civil society organisations within the immediate area of operation. And this is the reason I think for our success in working with IRC in Kenema and other grassroots initiatives with other organizations in Kissy. So, I want to assure you that network is there, the outreach is there. What we lack is the means of funds.

Prof. Kamara:

Thank you very much . May I join our chairman to thank you for coming to us this afternoon and giving us a very good paper and also to commend you for the work you have already accomplished. There is no doubt that the focus of your organization is very important. Of course , the education of women is are going to be the hope this country especially when the women succeed in acquiring fifty percent and not fifty two percent, which they represent in the population. I have many questions to ask, but I want to make an observation. First of all, you are very interested in the education of the girl child whether it is a girl mother or otherwise. You aware of the existence of street children in this country. And I am sure those children are not all boys. So, what are you doing, to address that problem; that is, how much are you seeking the partnership of other institutions to carry out survey in order to establish to true position of the problem with regard to street children or girls in the street ?

Ms. Thorpe: Thank you Mr. Commissioner; three of the surveys we gave you in our submission are in collaboration with UNICEF, on street children in Freetown. And one of the mandate of each of our branches for our regular programme is that we work on girls of primary school age and get them go to school. We go through the streets and market places to locate them and get them go to school. During the course of the year, our members go out locating them and talking to their parents. And these children are recruited in September into our schools. So our primary schools are mainly seventy to eight percent for children that we go after and bring in.

Bishop Humber: Are you saying that most of the street children have parents and are not orphans ?

Ms. Thorpe: Yes, a bit may be orphans. But those ones they have like in Kroobay, they have parents that are still very much around. Some of the parents cannot afford to take care of the needs of their children and they allow them to roam the streets. In Dwarzack, on the other hand they go to the market places to sell. These are the children who sale chewing gum and what ever along the roads. Some of them do not have anybody ;but some of them are simply abandoned to the street.

Bishop Humber: Yes, I am also interested in your perspective or theory or idea concerning youth violence . And I am thinking here in terms of our normal situation. The worst and the most dangerous situation which you have identified has been the increasing violence among the youth. Is this a situation we think will continue ? Is it not come and gone ? And what is to be done to control the violence or prevent youth from developing a violent attitude ?

Ms. Thorpe: Mr. Commissioner allow me to disagree with you that violence is gone. I will say that the war type of violence is gone but violence is very much here and real. The war lasted for ten years. So, it means that any child that is ten years old, today does not know anything about peace. It also means that most of our teenagers up to twenty would have been about ten when the war started; with all the manner of violence that attended it. So, we would be talking about people who are twenty to twenty five not knowing anything about peace .Therefore I would say that the war violence is gone ;but there is still a whole lot of violence on the ground. The young people are hungry. There are several sources of violence that are very much around. And if strategies are not putting in place to control or prevent explosion; the violence will erupt in different ways as we see in the schools, at home and so forth.

Bishop Humber: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Madam Chair for coming to the commission this afternoon. I must congratulate you and your staff for coming up with FAWE. There are several grey areas; but I really do not have any question based on what I have read or heard. I just want a clarification on of the item you have mentioned on page 15 under legal reform. And if I may read: That UNAMSIL personnel stop encouraging school girls in the commercial sex trade especially in

Freetown, Lungi, Port Loko and Kenema. It shocks me as I read it. Now, my area of clarification; is this just from the fact that UNAMSIL staff has diplomatic immunity ? What is the result and impact of this reality in most of the towns where it happens ? Because for you to actually recommend what you have clearly underscores the seriousness of the situation. And now in respect of the temporary stay of UNAMSIL staff in the country, what are the legal routes and weaknesses concerning the situation. If you can remember, what I actually happened in some of the cases; did the cases go to court and if they did what happened ?

Ms. Thorpe:

Yes Sir, Mr. Commissioner I will take this case or two. We have a particular case in our provincial town, where the UNAMSIL personnel was repatriated as the case was going on. So, that was the end of it. I mean they would have not done anything like that . But what prompted this, is the growing number of young girls in this town that are getting involved with UNAMSIL personnel. Parents send out these girls for dollars. I am speaking specifically of let me not name the places; but in Freetown and across the water here , we have these girls who are really ready to be used and abused. Be that as it may, there are branches of our organization that are working on them. And we are considering when to begin to call names of those involved as well as take very strong action. This is because at the end of the day, we are left to take up the broking pieces. You know that these UNAMSIL staff relationships with our girls apart from other consequences, sometimes result in unwanted pregnancies . Six months and we are left with the children here. And there they come Sierra Leonean girls and women and children and disturbing the development of our nation.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you Founder Chair for your presentation. I just want to know whether for the benefit of listeners here you would tell us a bit about your Training for Peace.

Ms. Thorpe:

The humble beginning of the programme goes back to the refugee days in Guinea, when there was much discussion on the way forward for Sierra Leone. Accordingly, when we came back in June or July of 1998 mechanisms began to be set in motion. By August of the same year, we did the survey in the four regions. FAWE focuses on women for peace; because we know that women are peace makers. And we went to see how the women would bring about peace. What came out of that was that there was a mediation network and the rest is now history. Now ,for the cultivation of a culture of peace, our focus is on education and therefore on our schools system. And together with Plan International we are piloting in the Moyamba chiefdom. And most of our branches are involved in the daily work in the communities as well as in the schools .While we appreciate the significance of the involvement of the Ministry of Education through appropriate development and teaching of the curriculum for peace ; we however , appreciate that only about forty-five to fifty percent of our children are within the schools . It means we have another forty five or fifty percent out of school. Therefore, we are working at school-based as well as community-based Peace Training initiatives. So that peace will come to everybody whether you are in and out of the schools system.

Commissioner Sooka : Thank you Ms. Thorpe for your very the very insightful submission of the FAWE as well as for the many initiatives of the FAWE the policy implications and recommendations of which I hope would be given serious attention. Of much significance is the fact of the predicament of rape victims. The question of the reintegration of rape victims into their families is very important. The way things are now, there is it appears an imposition of guilt upon the girls. And guilt feelings are dangerous. But things are now being made to look as if the girls were responsible for the rape and therefore whatever be their fate serves them right. On the contrary, these girl were raped and even sometimes gang-raped , sometimes forced into pregnancy and therefore, made to bear children totally unprepared. Therefore, everybody, particularly their families should understand that these victims need reintegration and acceptance and not rejection. The families need to get active about their basic needs: They also need love as well as want to pursue education or learn a skill as well as get medical attention. So , that area is very clear my question however, concerns numbers because while you talk 2000 cases, the minister talks about 64,000 cases. So how do we reconcile this for the avoidance of doubts? Then there is this issue about how to carry out campaign concerning the reintegration of these rape victims.

Ms. Thorpe: Thank you Madam Commissioner. I can speak with accuracy for the numbers that FAWE provided and in this respect, the two thousand is for the Western Area. The seven thousand that we actually worked with is in the provinces. However, we understand clearly, that we are only one NGO among others that are involved in these initiatives using various approaches. Therefore, if you can multiply seven thousand times number of NGOs; that will give you a little close to what the Minister is saying. So, that is what I know about the numbers. And to address your second issue about how I think that more publicity work is to be done. There is a video cassette that we have that is called "Witness To Me". I think if that video is made available through out the country so many people who are in darkness will see the light. The video which brings to light what happened will go along way to making the victims free from the bondage in which they have found themselves and guilt would no longer be their lot but that of the perpetrators as well as the families that have failed in the reintegration duty .

Leader of Evidence :Ms. Martien Scottsman

Ms. Scottsman: Thank you Chairperson . I have one question and I do not know if you have the answer to this question. A number of victims in their testimony before this commission said that sexual violence was random; that they took place on large scale and that only few women or girls were spared. On the other hand, the commission has some perpetrators who though they accept that sexual violence took place systematically; but they however said that this sexual violence was not based on order, therefore, it was not policy. So, there is an acceptance that it took place, the issue now is whether it was sequel to a command by the higher level of command; but then they say it was not order. So, I want to know your opinion: Was this sexual violence just path of the gender

violence during the conflict, was it some like looting property ? You also loot, the women and the girls you use them? Or on the other hand was it something deliberate to destroy the future of the country through the women and the girls or to contaminate the women fabric in order to destroy traditional value or to destroy the social fabric?

Ms. Thorpe: I think is a big mistake for anybody to say after the magnitude and regularity of the crime that Sexual violence or rape during the period under review was not order. Every violence that was committed must have been learnt or spoken up at some stage. They must have had meetings where they carried out assessment of activities and they had camps and all that. Though I cannot even answer directly but it will be very difficult to see how it was not path of the campaign of systematic destruction. I mean just like the others like amputation and burning down of towns and villages. In addition, within the Sierra Leone culture I mean every boy and every man knows that sleeping with a woman that is not your woman is not acceptable and ,therefore to do this by violence is something worse than anathema. So, I find it hard to understand them when they say it was not according to a plan . And if there was no plan as they want us to accept how come they looked the other way when the crime happened on a continuous basis. There may have been some elements that somehow popped up. But there was certainly some form of order.

Ms. Scottsman: We say thank you very much for your presentation and for the way and manner, in which you have answered that question. I am not going to ask you for any recommendations ;you have already done that in your submission and in the testimony here. But is there anything you want to tell us, is there anything you want to say to TRC?

Ms. Thorpe: Yes Madam Chairperson; thank you very much. I want through the TRC to say something to the nation. The temporal mandate of the TRC will be gone shortly. I think that for peace to come in Sierra Leone another commission needs to come that will be called YMC,which means You and Me Commission. The You and Me Commission I am talking about concerns every Sierra Leonean man, woman and child .We were here from 1960 to 1990, before the war came we were and we know about what led to what happened that you are looking at now. Soon your mandate will expire and we are going to be the ones to carry on the implementation or whatever. And my message to Sierra Leoneans if the You and Me Commission comes after the TRC will not just be that rape is bad;but also what caused the rape ? What made the people to go into the bush? Then we have much address and that is the corruption. Why do I say You and Me? We the Sierra Leoneans, were and still are the ones who caused and still cause all the problems.To convey correctly what I mean there no English word for it. In krio they say: Yekisi, dakujako rataruhu-You use what you have to get what you want. The correction that is needed is some how in each and everyone of us. And if this peace is going to come; if we are going to make it happen. Then, you and I –Sierra Leoneans are the ones who are going to make this peace to come and then sustain it. So, to begin let me ask myself what is the

corrupt element in me. Let me start by addressing and pointing finger at you. If each and everyone of us addresses the corrupt element in each other.I first of all and then in the other. Then we shall have peace.So,my message is that, the You and Me Commission for Sierra Leone after the TRC is what we are going to have in order to bring peace to this country. Let us put corruption aside and start rebuilding our country. Thank you

Ms.Scottzman: Madam Thorpe, thank you very much for this very strong message which you have sent to all Sierra Leoneans. The commissioners are very much aware of what you are saying. And the chairman and all of us have said it over and over again especially during our tour to the districts: That the TRC is here to facilitate the process of reconciliation, healing, peace etc. And once the commission's mandate expires, it is for the YMC to ensure the basic Reconciliation is sustained.

2ND WITNESS – Mrs. Jennifer Nowrage

Mrs. Nowrage: My name is Mrs. Jennifer Nowrage. I represent coalition for women's human rights in conflict situation. We work with lawyers and women rights activists who come together from different non-governmental organisation to ensure that crime against women and conflict are not ignored. I work for an organisation for women rights watch and we are responsible for releasing a report in terms of those who do crime in sexual violence in Sierra Leone; and then, we help witnesses.

Commissioner Torto:We say once again that we thank you for coming. We have your very detailed submission; but I want you to summarise this for us as briefly as you can.

Mrs. Nowrage: It is obvious that time is too late for the presentation of our submission and I will want to be very brief because I know that the day is already very far spent ;yet I have to underscore a few key points to you commissioners.

DONE .

I thank you for allowing me to testify and especially this late time in the evening. I know every one is tired, I appreciate that.

Commissioner Torto:Jennifer, we thank you for your presentation made on behalf of the Coalition on Women's Human Rights in Conflict Situation. The position of your group is very clear. And we appreciate the tremendous work you have done to produce this document. And we also acknowledge for our public hearings that Jennifer is a member of a team sent by UNICEF to provide training for the commissioners and the senior staff of TRC.The commission is really delighted to know that we are not alone. We have the support of national and international NGOs and other institutions. And all of them are helping to make our mandate work. I would like my fellow commissioners to ask you a few questions perhaps to clarify certain issues raised.

Ms.Scottsman: We want to thank you for coming here to present this kind of paper and; by the way you have helped to make this particular gathering here today possible.The two things which I will like to discuss about is the question of systematic nature of these crimes.Your comment is relevant in terms of the research access that you have and secondly, the peace keepers and this is related to the comment that was made by the last presenter for FAWE. So, while it is a fact that certain people are contributing to peace keeping and to ensure the return of normalcy; there is now the conflicting reality in view of what is happening between peace keeping operation and accountability. In the first instance, we have to talk about the way bad things were done to women and whether it was deliberate or fortuitous vis-à-vis the current state. This whole question of the abduction of women as well as the rape and abuse of women needs to be critically examined and in line with the dictates and interpretations and nuances of international law. For example, you are a commander of a group of fighting men and may be ,let us say for the purposes of argument that you did not send your men to do sexual violence to any one; but you were the one who instructed the soldiers that were under your supervision to go and capture women. And then you see them doing bad things to thing to these women and you do nothing and you have the power to punish them. Following the law, you are worse than any accomplice because you did not say or do anything to put a stop to the cruelty while it was going on .Worse still when you had the power and/ or gave the command in the very first instance for the abduction of women. And coming to the second issue of Peace Keepers one has to agree with Christiana Thorpe that the international intervention is very useful; it does not mean that we should turn our eye to abuses that are committed by them. And we should be fair to hold them up to standard. We, women and girls, can be safe from rape and sexual exploitation from them. We are not undermining the peace process by doing it. We are in fact helping the peace process by doing that.

Commissioner Jow: Any more questions or comments from commissioners? I do not have a question; but I want to take this opportunity to thank you and your organization for the work you are doing with regard to the status and rights of Women and Girls. Thank you.

Mrs. Nowrage : Thank you too.

Thematic and Institutional Hearings

Name of WITNESS –Mrs. Nenneh Binta Barrie,
CENTRE FOR VICTIMS OF TORTURE

Commissioner Jow: Madam chair person, our 2nd to last witness for today is Mrs. Nenneh Binta Barrie, the Centre for Victims of Torture. So for our records, can you tell us your name and the institution you are representing?

Mrs. Barrie: I am Nenneh Bointa Barrie, from the Centre for Victims of Torture (CVT).

Commissioner Jow: Nenneh, we would like to take the Oath. We ask your religious affiliation?

Mrs. Barrie: Muslim.

Commissioner Jow: Can you take the Holy Koran and repeat after me?
The Oath is taken.

Nenneh thank you very much for coming to represent your organization the CVT. And it is a pity that you were not able to establish a working relationship with us in the early days of the TRC. I still remember with gratitude in this respect that a group organized a workshop for Trauma Counseling for the Commissioners and the staff. So, we are very happy to have you here with us and I would like without taking much of your time to allow you to make your presentation to us.

Mrs. Barrie: DONE.
I am really sorry I did not come with the very comprehensive copy of our submission but I promise to do that later.
Thank you.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you very much Binta for that brief but very valuable presentation on the services you are providing to victims whom most people are not really aware of. You know that these are the victims who are not obvious. Because they do not have any chopped-off limbs. But deep down, they have the psychological problems. And we are happy that the Centre like yours, is really attending to their needs. The second thing I would like to say, we would like to have a written document and perhaps files for our records. Because we cannot go back on that.

Mrs. Barrie: You will get that, I have already made a promise in that respect.

Commissioner Jow: And you also made mention of a Mental Health Survey which you have conducted. I do not know, since the results are not out yet, when do you expect them?

Mrs. Barrie: Next week.

Commissioner Jow: Is it a nation wide survey?

Mrs. Barrie: We are presently in Kono.

Commissioner Jow: Anyway, we should be interested in the result of the Survey. Fellow Commissioners, we now invite your questions to the witness.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Chairperson, I have no questions.

Commissioner Jow: Chairman, Bishop Humper?

Bishop Humper: Nenneh, did you say you have five internationals who are helping the nationals in training them to handle the programme?

Mrs. Barrie: Yes.

Bishop Humper: How many Centres do you have in the country?

Mrs. Barrie: Now we have one Centre, one Permanent Centre and three mobile centres. The PSA is going round the villages and doing some assessment as well as the community sensitization on the effect of the psychological defectors of the conflict. So far now we just have one permanent centre and three mobile centres.

Bishop Humper: How do you categorize victims of torture?

Mrs. Barrie: Okay, according to the mandate of CVT, when we started first in Guinea, we only worked with victims, but not perpetrators, for example, like ex-combatants of course, though we were working with child ex-soldiers because we found out that they themselves are victims because the reason for that. Sometimes, it is very difficult, eg a rape victim to come to you for psychological assistance at the same time, while seeing the perpetrators also coming to the same person for assistance. Because of this we assure them of strict confidentiality which is the strongest principle of what we were doing. In Sierra Leone here, we work with both perpetrators and also the victims because here we are in the process of rebuilding and reintegrating. So, now we cannot distinguish this people. First of all the ex-combatants as I have said are also victims. They too need some psychological assistance. And by helping them to talk about what they have done and giving assistance, we found out that the burden of guilt. And this guilt feeling as a destructive force equally needs to go away. Now, in view of this, we are helping both perpetrators and also the victims.

Bishop Humper: Thank you.

Commissioner Jow: Commissioner Prof. Kamara?

Prof. Kamara: Thank you Madam, Mrs Barrie, I think, I myself have not got substantive question; but you said, this your organization CVT was established only in 1999 in Western Area, and you came to Sierra Leone when, the same year or ?

Mrs. Barrie: I came to sierra Leone this year. I was sent to South Africa for training; so, after the training I came last month anyway.

Prof. Kamara: So, you have not done more than a few months?

Mrs. Barrie: We are new but we have PSA's who have been here, I think since the year 2001

Prof. Kamara: They had been here since 2001. Now I am asking this question because I want to know what relationship exist between CVT and our Commission. Because certainly we could refer some our witnesses and people that we meet to the CVT. So, this is really the reason why I have been asking this question. But I am sure, I mean our Leader of Evidence, will be interested in the

same thinking apart from that, I have no question to ask you. We thank you for coming and letting us know of your existence and what you are doing and we hope that we can hitch up better and more permanent relationship now that we know you exist, thank you.

Mrs. Barrie: Thank you.

Commissioner Jow: Commissioner Justice Marcus Jones any questions?

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you very much Mrs. Barrie, I was not here when you started, is this the CVT of Tengbeh Town?

Mrs. Barrie: Yes Ma.

Justice Marcus Jones: We did have a session at the very beginning with CVT; we went there for a Court, before we actually started. So, I we appreciated that very much, I have no question. I just want to thank you very much for coming. And may be we will happen to go there later.

Mrs. Barrie: Ok; you are welcome.

Commissioner Jow: After Commissioner Yasmin Sooka may have made a few comments I would want to pass on to the Leader of Evidence if are there questions.

Commissioner Sooka: Madam Chairperson, indeed we have already established a context within the TRC for the Centre for victims of torture and we have already a considerable number of witnesses in the Districts where you work with your organization; we thank you very much for that help. Indeed in the beginning of our Hearings, we were hoping that some of you International Psychologists will give us some more indepth analytical systems. But I now understand that they were all very, very much involved in the work in the field and were not available to give a more than occasional assistance to the TRC. Thank you very much. But I think your organization has experience on Trauma Counselling. This is important, especially in regard to experiences in Sierra Leone since 1999. So, I hope that when you send this your submission that it will also explain to us how many people have you provided counselling to and which different categories: children, adults, how many ex-combatants, how many victims, what kind of victims and in the submission you will explain to us the consequences, that is, the psychological consequences of the different kinds of crimes on the different categories of victims. And I also hope that in your Submission you will make some recommendations that the TRC could or that you would make some suggestions or recommendations that the TRC could make to the government on Psycho Social Counselling for victims and ex-combatants in Sierra Leone. Perhaps one question that is also intriguing me is: Do you think that the fact of a victim being traumatized prevents the person from really appreciating any aid, that you see that the person is receiving and instead creates a feeling of permanent dissatisfaction. Put differently, it doesn't allow the person to see and to use the help that the person

receives to build up a better future. Do you have any opinion on this?

Mrs. Barrie:

Yes, we have the stages of treatments. At first, we try to build relationship with this person. The second stage is that which we call the Storming stage. Here, we help this person to really be aware of what has happen to him/her and how it can be handled by trying to normalize the situation and their feelings. And the final stage is the Recovery stage by rebuilding their future. This is focused on the psychological because the CVT does not give direct material benefit after the treatment. What happens is that if the victims come again to the realisation that, yes they have their own personal strength, then that is the arrival. This is because generally at the beginning of the process, what is found are mostly persons that are hopeless and helpless. They feel so powerless. But the work is done if after the treatment, they say "Yes, I think I have my own personal strength, I think I can use this to make farmwork, I can use this to take care of my children and so forth". But the problem is at the beginning and the needy, while in the field completely powerless, they feel they are nothing, they feel there is nothing they can do about themselves. But after the treatment, they really see. Sometimes they come to us and say: 'Look we want to involve in that Income Generating Programmes'. So, that is the time we will refer them to other partners for material assistance, because at CVT we do not provide material assistance, that is not in our mandate. So, actually after the treatment, they themselves will come and say look, we really need some money to do some ,you know activities. I do not know if this answers your question anyway?

Commissioner Sooka:

My major worry is that your Centres provide Trauma Counselling to a number of people, but the number of victims in Sierra Leone is much higher; so I was wondering if the fact that the several other victims do not receive trauma counseling does not constitute a very considerable obstacle to even exploiting the opportunities that abound for the victims from other aids programmes?

Mrs. Barrie:

Yes, it is an extremely difficult situation because for now I do not know if there are other Trauma Counselling Groups, but for now CVT is considered to be the expert. And like for Kailahum, we have four sites, we have a site each at Pendembu, Boidu, Koidu and Kailahum Town itself. But sometimes, you know after sensitization, people welcome this assistance. But here we do not have enough man power for that especially the trained PSA's. So, we find out that it is a big problem. And at the same time, the Head Offices asking us for, I think ,each PSA to treat 40 client or see 40 clients and more. And sometimes, we plan our treatment for 12 units. So, if we receive, one (1) patient for twelve (12) units; where each unit comes with its own specific time calculations, then what time will you have to treat the other people. That issue of number and counseling is the most difficult thing, but we hope to continue as CVT is training the nationals and perhaps professionals and I believe that even after the experts shall have gone, we will continue to help our people.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you.

Commissioner Jow: Madam Barrie, once again, we thank you for coming. We thank you for your Presentation, and for all the answers, you have provided to our questions. Like we do with all other witnesses, before you step down, do you have anything else that you want to tell the Commission?

Mrs. Barrie: Yes, the only thing I am thinking of is to on behalf of my Programme to extend our gratitude to the TRC because you have helped us a lot. We found out that most who are coming to us for assistance have already wiped off that guilt because in dealing with this Trauma, the most difficult aspect is the guilt, how can you handle the guilt. And a lot of this positive development is due to the work of the TRC. People now find the situation easier to handle. And also the referrals in Kenema and other areas. There are even people from the TRC who are also getting support from the CVT. It is very interesting and we hope this relationship will continue. Thank you.

Commissioner Jow: Binta, thank you very much; but we are still looking forward in receiving your written Submission and any other further material you may have on the CVT and we will really continue as partners with you in your area of expertise. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Barrie: Thank you.

Commissioner Jow: You may now step down Binta. Can we have I hope the final witness for today

Commissioner Jow: Thank you very much, can we sit down now? Is there any programme for you now?

Bishop Humper: For now

Commissioner Jow: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission welcomes you all to this special event, the Thematic Hearings on Women. But before we go into the programme, I would like to introduce the Commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation commission who since their inauguration in July 2002 have been working very very hard in collaboration with their partners, national and international to achieve the mandate of the TRC. For this particular session, I am the Presiding Commissioner, Commissioner

Satang Jow, from the Gambia and I am one of the three international Commissioners of the Commission. On my far left, we have Commissioner Yasmin Sooka, from south Africa, a one time Commissioner of the TRC in South Africa. Next to me, on my left we have the renowned Sierra Leonean woman by the name of Justice Laura Marcus Jones, a Sierra Leonean. On my right, we have the chair person of the Commission, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Joseph C. Humper. Next to Bishop Humper we have Commissioner Professor John Kamara, also a renowned Sierra Leonean and last but not the least; we have Commissioner Sylvanus Torto. So these are your Commissioners and we are delighted to know that out of seven Commissioners, three of us are female. It is not quite fifty-fifty but it's very close to fifty-fifty. The TRC is delighted that various women groups and organizations have turned out in full force to express their solidarity and support not only to the TRC but to the cause of our women folk. We also acknowledge the support given to the TRC by regional and international organizations that deal with women's issues. Some of them have travelled from very far to join us on this very special occasion and the TRC would like to acknowledge your presence. We cannot name all of you but all of them are here with us today. I think by now we are aware what the mandate of the TRC is, the TRC has to compile an accurate report of what happened not only to Sierra Leoneans during the conflict but to women and girls during the conflict. In addition, the Commission's mandate requires that it make recommendations. We all know that for too long women and girls in Sierra Leone and other developing countries have suffered in silence, they have suffered gross violations quietly, the TRC in Sierra Leone now provides some opportunity to have the voices of these women and girls heard in print, on radio or television, on the internet, on all forms of communications available in the modern world. It may please you to note that the TRC had collected written testimonies from women and girls all over the country, in all the districts, in the chiefdoms, in the villages and, the commission therefore has had the opportunity to get first hand information or first hand data about violations. The hearings we are having today, the thematic hearing on women which will run up to Saturday will provide another platform for selected girls, selected women witnesses to share their experiences with the public. The girls I am talking about who are going to testify after the introduction and the opening ceremony are special witnesses whose identity we need to protect and so you will only hear their voices from behind the screen but you will not see them in person and I think what is important is that their voices be heard and at the same time we take the necessary measures to protect their identity. In order to obtain the comprehensive information then we need for our reports the Commission will also received submissions from NGO's from groups, from institutions both national and international. And as I have said these are NGO's and groups who have worked with women around gender based violence and other violations before, during or after the conflict. We have rules governing our hearings but some of you are coming here for the first time, and I would like to remind you what some of these rules are. As I have said our witnesses are VIPs. They are very special to us; they have given us very vital information not only for the report but for the good of this country, for the sustainable peace we are all talking about. Therefore, I urge the audience here to treat them with the respect and dignity that they deserve. We will be listening to their testimonies but according to the rules governing our hearings, we are not expected to participate verbally, you can listen attentively but we cannot participate

verbally, we cannot clap, we should not boo them and as I have said we listen and give them all the attention they deserve. So, on this short introductory note, once again I would welcome the Honourable Minister who is a very busy lady but because of her particular portfolio and her solidarity with the women folk, she has given some of her precious time to be here with us today. So, on that note I would like to invite the honourable minister to declare the thematic hearings for women and girls open at this YWCA hall this morning. Thank you very much.

Honourable Gbujama: I believe it is necessary for me to speak in Krio. I do not know, but let me say part of it in English, I thank the Commissioners first of all for inviting me here to speak on Women: Pre conflict, Conflict and Post conflict. Before I declare the session open, I will say a few words on that and say in krio when it is necessary to say it. Let me please read this I think in English as stated.

ADDRESS IS PRESENTED:

Commissioner Jow: Honourable Minister, the Commission would like to say thank you very much for that comprehensive and well-presented submission. You have explained very clearly the condition of women and girls during the conflict, before and after the war. We have also taken note of the laudable recommendations you have made to improve the condition of women and the girl child. The Commission would be further grateful to you if you give us more of your time so that we can ask questions based on submission or on other issues, which may fall within the mandate of your ministry. The Commissioners will pose questions, the leader of evidence facing me will also pose a few questions and then before you step down we will have you give us your final word concerning our mandate. Fellow Commissioners, the floor is now yours for questions or issues of clarification. May we have the chairperson of the Commission, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Humper.

Bishop Humper: Honourable minister, we want to thank you for this wonderful presentation and for starting the day for us on a very good footing. I am going to quote a few sentences from your presentation, precisely on page four (4) and then talk in general before my colleagues come to take some look at the document you have presented to us here. On page four (4) you said and rightly so, that the issue of good manners, discipline, self respect, respect for elders and fear of God, etiquette and good education and vocational training was once the order of the day and norm in society. And the following paragraph and succeeding ones tried to amplify why that happened in the society at that particular point in time. I want in my own little way to put this historical context. As soon as I read that portion of your presentation I went back to my history book to talk about 1787 to 1991, precisely April 27th 1961 that is 1787 to 1961. I will ask a question for clarification based on this other historical contact 1960 to 1966. And you have another block of history called 1967 to 1992. Then 1992 to 1996. 1997 to the present. And the present in my understanding, the question you are posing and which the Commission is trying to grapple with is simply this, what does the future hold for our young girls and women in this country and our mothers. Honourable minister, from politics – historical perspective would you agree with me that the foundation for the socio-economic demise of our women and girls was laid between the period 1960 and 1966? An amplification of that is simply that prior to independence, in 1960, in October of 1960 an opposition emerged which continued to have a powerful pulse in this nation. That is the context in which I am asking this

question and I have placed that historical block for you to see whether or not the foundation for the demise of our girls did not emanate from that period?

Honourable Gbujama: The way I see it is that obviously for problems to have sprung up in 1967 to 1973; there must have been some germination in the period that you are talking about previous to that.

Bishop: Thank you very much honourable minister, some of us love history and nothing in this country has happened by chance. It has come as a result of something else. My last question and the Commissioner will take over is, what was the role of our parents during the period 1967 to the 80s and 90s, the role of parents, our elders after you have mentioned those 'Tangains days', the good old days, what was their role during this period which militated against the development of our girls and women today?

Honourable Gbujama: Post independence, is that what you are saying Sir?

Bishop: Yes correct.

Honourable Gbujama: The post independence period I would say like I have said in my paper, the parents definitely had a role, there was no doubt about it except that as would I say as children started to be enlightened by the situation around them, the new experiences they were having in the post independent period, things changed and our parents did not seem to have that much control as they had, you know, when we were younger so to speak. Especially when it comes to the situation, the fact that some of them were much involved in the political fabric of the country and they were not may be paying much attention anymore to the children. But definitely this is mainly because most of what was happening was now left to mothers more or less. And without the economic strengthening of the women at that time because as things got bad it was the women who suffered, she did not have jobs, she could not go to an office and start having a job or anything to be able to bring up the child in the home. She had to depend on the father and as things got worse and more difficult, it was easier for the children to go astray more than during the time when these things had not happened.

Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much minister for coming to the Commission and giving us your submission in person. I just want us to look at a few issues raised in your submission and others that I will come up with later. We will look at them collectively. One, is on the page four (4) of your presentation that is talking about ownership of land by women in certain society; would it not be infringing on traditional practices of those societies that actually opposed this kind of trend concerning what is there for women, do you not you think that this kind of act in a cultural society is tantamount to stepping on their cultural rights?

Honourable Gbujama: I believe that if we want really to ensure that we have the statutory reality that is desired in the development of this nation, there are some traditions that we must break. I am not saying that they should be done overnight. In fact, they could go gradually, but there is a need for them to go and this is why we are making that kind of suggestion. I must tell you

that sometime ago, I went to the parliament and in a sub-committee spoke to them about these matters. This was, when we were pushing the policy of gender, men's training and women in development. I remember that some parliamentarians at that time felt very strongly the same way and,asked this kind of question you are now posing. But in the end we all agreed that these laws or that these traditions and customs must change if we should have a better participation of our women in the fabric of our development in this country. And it will not happen overnight but it should happen.

Commissioner Torto:Thank you. Let us come to more mundane issues in society. You eloquently stated the issues of sexual abuse of children and women in general, as a ministry are there definitive policies against issues that could provoke those kind of vices like x-rated movies, pornographic materials that influence the growth of children?

Honourable Gbujama:We do not have those laws yet but let me say that we should also take a look at what is happening now . For example you must have heard about the Rainbow Centre at the hospital at Fourah Bay Road that has just been opened. In two months between March and April, there were ninety-one (91) cases of rape in that Rainbow centre, ninety-one cases, I do not believe that the rape of those ninety-one women happened because they were watching any films. It was not initiated by them in a number of cases, infact all the cases. So, I do not think that has to do with it, but I do agree with you that there is a need for a censor of a kind of the films that our children are watching. And definitely it has come up and we are paying attention to it; although nothing specific has yet been done but definitely it is receiving attention.

Commissioner Torto:Another part of your question is the way our young girl dressed, are moves being made to actually address the kinds of provocative dresses put on by our young girls ?

Honourable Gbujama:This is a very good question.And in that regard I have received two delegations in my office on that same matter one from no less a group that the Children's Forum and another from a group of Muslims and I agree that there may be a need to look into it. We have looked at the situation and thought about it in connection with the rights of people;that we would we be tampering with their rights if we started to control what they wear. We are thinking about it still. It is something definitely, since it keeps coming up; we must pay some attention to it.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you very much for these questions; I will now turn to my left to invite the female Commissioner to also ask questions, then I will come back to Professor Kamara.

Justice Marcus Jones:Madam Minister, I would like to thank you very much for your presentation this morning and I noticed that the very first of your recommendations is that the government should take concrete steps to build and strengthened the capacity of your Ministry. Possibly one area in which the government could strengthen your capacity is in the connection with the adoption of children. Now, during the conflict, we lost a number of our children. They were adopted and taken overseas and in some cases there appeared to be a racket. And this was being done as they said,' for the welfare of the children'. Now, that it is post conflict period, I hope the Ministry, your Ministry will look or will be empowered to examine

more carefully the question of adoption; because your ministry and the courts are partners in adoption. I wonder Madam minister whether you were at any time yourself worried about this dynamics in the adoption of our children?

Honourable Gbujama: First, let me say that I did not realise that you had already the copies of the address that I had presented; but then you would note that were amendments. For example, I did everything I could in order to avoid asking the government to do something because this is something that I believe is the joint responsibility of all of us. So, it is not necessarily that the government must strengthen the ministry and, infact that was my last submission. Where I said in a selfish way: I am going to end up with the fact that we want the ministry strengthened to be able to do these things that must be done in strengthening the gender base in post conflict situation. But having said that let me say that the question of adoption during the conflict period was not necessarily such that it came to our notice or we could do anything about it at that time. But now I am in a position to formally seek the cooperation of the chief immigration officer in the question of girls going out or not necessarily girls, children generally but particularly girls going out of the country without, I mean with people who are not their parents. It is crucial that we should be advised and informed; so that we can clarify and ensure that we know who these people are going with and that they are infact going out properly with these young persons. We could not do that during the conflict situation. And I agree with you, we heard about adoptions. But we could not confirm some of these adoptions but simply believed that they were true. And at that time there was not much we could do about it; but definitely it was worrisome, and it was all part of the atrocities that women and girls experienced.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you Madam commissioner, Commissioner Sooka.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Chair, Madam Minister thank you for your submission and clearly you are going to be quite an important partner for us in the question of our recommendations. Rape has been the Silence crime of the conflict and women of course do not rape themselves. They are usually raped by men and in this particular conflict they have been raped by both men and boys. Many of them who have come before us infact have said that even though the guilt and the shame should not be theirs, they cannot go back home because their families are embarrassed and often the immediate communities feel shamed by their presence and humiliate them. The recommendations that you proposed making in terms of changes in law and policy are really commendable. But the reality is that we need an attitudinal change and the attitudinal change need to happen both at the level of men, boys and of course our own societies. My question and you pointed to the fact that already with the establishment of the Rainbow Centre the number of reported rapes are increasing and usually in post conflict societies, what is a rape in terms of war becomes part almost of an accepted social fabric in our societies and so one really has to step up the effort to deal with attitudes which allow rape and such violations to take place. I wonder if you have any suggestions on how we and NGOs working in this area can begin to tackle this particular problem because women do not ask to be raped, they are the victims of rape?

Honourable Gbujama: The only way I see that you can participate as far as NGO's and so on who are concerned is by sensitization. You know, making people know how harmful it is to society for us to have those kinds of people in our midst ;and ensuring that they are shown when caught. I mean in addition to punishment of course, stressing for them to receive the severest punishment and making sure the homes into which the girls must return are prepared to accept them by way of counselling. You know, talking to them and making them aware that is not the fault of the girls or the fault of the women but that they should stand by them. But I believe the greatest thing we should do is to ensure punishment: Really, really, the worst punishment that we see possible for people who perpetrate rape of women and girls. I know that there are, I think there is, there are one or two countries in which there have been suggestions of, you know, I think it is life sentence in some cases for that kind of thing. So, I don't know, may be we can together, I mean with the civil society - NGO's and so on can help to push this kind of thing and make sure that we are able to give out the severest punishment. But above all to make sure that the people, the women feel and the girls feel comfortable to talk about it, to come forward to give the evidence, to ensure that they can, you know, receive the support from family to be able to give out the evidence that is needed for them for us to identify those who are actually carrying out that kind of thing.

Commissioner Jow: Thank you. Professor kamara.

Prof. Kamara: Thank you Madam Chairman. I join my colleagues in thanking you Madam for coming to make this presentation to us. I am particularly interested in the part that relate to pre-conflict Sierra Leone. In that part of the paper or presentation, you gave us a summary or a bird's eye view of the historical perspective of the development or the adoption and development of all those things that affected or caused us to deteriorate and affected the youths including girls in this country. You referred to the initiation and development of thuggery in country just after independence; then the development or encouragement and development of corruption and the acquisition of wealth and also how politics tend to focus on the retention of power and all these factors help to bring about indiscipline and help mislead the youths in the country and create the kind of situation in which we found ourselves even before 1991 when the war started. One factor, one important aspect of our mandate is to carry out this diagnosis, to be able to make recommendations that will protect us after this conflict, in the post conflict era, how we can get this country back to normalcy and get our own people again to behave normally. So, because of this I would like to ask you a few question. Firstly, on the question of thuggery, what do you think should be done, should this country try to use constitutional means, legal means or what kinds of means do you think the country should adopt to stamp out or at least minimise thuggery in the future?

Honourable Gbujama: It has to be through all angles. Definitely there has to be provision in the constitution. There has to be provision for a legal action when it becomes necessary; I mean where somebody violates it and for the courts to be able to take the most, you know, the most needed actions as provided in the laws when those kinds of things happen. All methods must be employed, we cannot just concentrate as one aspect of it.

Prof. Kamara: On the question of corruption, I want to ask your own opinion. What do you think should be the treatment of corrupt people, I want particularly your opinion on whether properties seized by the Commission's of enquiry should be returned to their owners at any time?

Honourable Gbujama: That is a very interesting question. Usually when we talk about corruption, I say to myself it depends on who is looking at it, that is at the particular thing, at the particular time. But let me say on the question of seizing of property. If the property is returned, what benefit would it bring back to the coffers of the nation at the time or the government at the time. It is not just to return property for the sake, and then you know, it is used by somebody else. That will not answer the question of corruption for me. Rather than returning the property, I should think, may be, property must be allowed to be sold by whoever owns it and that money returned to the coffers of government than just having the property confiscated. That would be my personal thought on it because strictly speaking it is not the property that is desired, it is in fact, the amount of money that has gone into that property which could have been used for the benefit of the nation. It is not necessarily the property; but we should have some kind of redeeming value when we talk about returning of property. That is my way of looking at it.

Prof. Kamara: Okay, the subsidiary question is, it is enough to just seize somebody's property; somebody who has been proved to be corrupt to seized the property and allow the person to go free?

Honourable Gbujama: I am assuming Sir, that this question is asked of me in my individual capacity.

Prof. Kamara: I am asking you not in your individual capacity, now you have told us that because this corruption, the culture of sugar-daddy, you know, corrupting the youths of this country came up and it is these people, corrupt people that are going to continue this practice. Something has to be done to stop people from being corrupt and therefore as a Minister of Social Welfare, you should have interest and try to get answers to these problems.

Honourable Gbujama: That would be an enormous task for the ministry. I will tell you why. Let us assume you have in every ministry or in I mean in society, you have one thousand people who have been corrupt or who have made money in a way, they should not make it and spending that money on young girls, how is the ministry going to be able to stop you know, the way in which that money has been accumulated, except that you are in a position to find out how each one accumulated their money. That is not an easy task for the ministry to make a straight statement about,. It will have to be done on an individual basis when the person has been discovered to be corrupt. There are of course broad things that one can do to stop corruption. We have said may be increase of salary will curb corruption; but people will be corrupt if they want to be corrupt. There are first a thousand ways of stopping corruption for a thousand people.

Prof. Kamara: Alright, I will not continue asking further questions.

Commissioner Jow: Honourable minister, we thank you very much for those pertinent answers. We know that you are a very busy woman and your time is very valuable to you. But this is the TRC process through which all witnesses

have to go through. We thank Madam Minister for her patience and her willingness to answer all these questions today. DO you have any questions or recommendations ?

Honourable Gbuiama;-Government and its partners should adopt responsive policies that recognise gender equality as a crucial factor in addressing poverty and economic decline.

- Women's greater participation in decision-making processes and bodies can allow them to take a powerful stand against the feminisation of poverty. Possible areas of action include:
- The engendering of National budget to gender sensitive resource mobilisation and allocation mechanisms. This will allow women to receive a fair share of National resources.
- The government and its partners should establish a national women's development fund to be administered by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's affairs. The fund will support advocacy with financial institutions, business skills development, market identification and development, and direct them to women entrepreneurs.
- Finally, there is compelling evidence that gender inequality is a contributing factor to HIV/AIDS vulnerability. Inequality precludes access to information, ability to negotiate sex, an initiative to protect women's sexual and reproductive health. The large number of unaccompanied Peace Keepers and humanitarian workers with money to spend has increased the demand for casual sex and consequently the communisation of girls and women. The government of Sierra and Humanitarian medical agencies ,therefore, to provide reproductive health services for displaced persons and returning refugee populations

Commissioner Jow : Thank you very much Honourable Commissioner. Your recommendations have been noted. You may now step down.

TRC TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

WOMEN AND GIRLS

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: MRS. JEBBEH FORSTER – UNIFEM REPRESENTATIVE.

Justice Marcus Jones: Welcome Mrs. Forster. I think I must thank you publicly, for all the help you have been giving to the TRC. Now will you give your name in full?

Mrs. Forster: I am Jebbeh Forster, Programme Specialist, UNIFEM Sierra Leone

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you. You are here in familiar surroundings; so, please carry on with your presentation.

Mrs. Forster: Mr. Chairman...

Justice Marcus Jones: And I would ask you if you could do a summary because we have your presentation here.

Mrs. Forster: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen, I make this presentation on behalf of UNIFEM; especially the UNIFEM Anglophone West African Regional Office in Lagos, Nigeria. As you already have a copy of my presentation, I would only give a brief background information on UNIFEM. UNIFEM and post-conflict Sierra Leone and recommendations.

DONE.

I thank you for the attention and the opportunity to make this presentation.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you Mrs. Forster, for your very interesting summary of your submission to this commission. The Commission will study in detail the different suggestions, recommendations and analysis that you have made in your submission. We are now going to ask you questions. The commission will ask questions and then the leader of evidence if he has any. Commissioner Sooka.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Mrs. Forster. I do not really have a question because I think its very comprehensive and we need to pick up some of the issues with you; but I think the three that are really intriguing are the issues you raised around the presence of peacekeepers and the issue of certain social malaise; also the question of trafficking which is almost related to that; and of course the issue that is being raised in your paper that we need to redefine what we understand by global security and rather not focus it on military options but on issues of human dimensions. The other area that we certainly would want to pick up with you is this question of women ex-combatants and the fact that you saying in your paper there are treated with hostility and suspicion for breaking both gender and sex roles; I think that is almost fundamental to some of the problems we have to deal with. So, I am not going to ask you a question but simply to say – I will follow up those issues with you on another occasion.

Prof. Kamara: Thank you again Mrs. Forster. I have only one – well, I call it a question but more of an opinion I would like to get from you. That is in connection with this your effort and all the other organisations that are interested in women in this country; to reduce the poverty of women in this country. I know that or, if I am, right although you are established in Sierra Leone but you are an international organisation more or less. Am I correct? But since you are functioning here, you should have an interest in what goes on even at the local level. So my question is – are you or have you been following this micro credit programme or project and are you satisfied with it?

Mrs. Forster: Maybe, just to make a few comments before I answer that question. UNIFEM works in very strategic areas because of the way the organisation

is organised and in Sierra Leone we work very closely with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. And we have provided the gender consultant for the Ministry to help them establish a functioning gender department and within that department we hope that some of these issues would be addressed. We cannot directly go and address those issues but we will assist the Ministry to address these issues, through the programme that we are developing with them.

Prof. Kamara: Well that is what I thought but if you had an interest in it, then you would have been following up what was happening out there. I asked this question particularly because I have met a few people who have told me that the poverty alleviation is sometimes regarded as poverty acceleration and some people to feel that when these women are given these tiny sums of money with even the interest or what is exerted from it before they receive it and is not enough for them to carryout and I think you even referred to it or somebody else earlier on...

Mrs. Forster: Yes we discussed it.

Prof. Kamara: It does not give them the opportunity to make the impact or help them to move out of this rot of poverty; rather it helps them to sink deeper into it.

Mrs. Forster: The Regional Director for Anglophone West Africa Mrs. Brutegra discussed the issue of Micro Credit with the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs – Mrs. Shirley Gbujama and why micro credit was very crucial in meeting immediate needs of women. It has not been enough to bring them out of the poverty domain. They needed something more than just micro credit to move them on to bigger markets, and that is why we are advocating for systematic plan to expose them to greater credit and that will include training and other things.

Prof. Kamara: All right. You have also proposed here, a fund being established within the Ministry of Social Welfare and Gender affairs; but somebody else, I think it was yesterday, had proposed an exclusive bank for women affairs. Which one of these do you think is more appropriate?

Mrs. Forster: If it is the fund you are talking about, it is not necessarily giving money to women but creating an establishment or an institution that will help women to rise above the level of poverty where they find themselves it will take the form of providing the bank for them which will give them more favourable terms to access credit. It will also involve training; it could also involve linking them with international market or regional markets. It would also involve providing them with information that they need to carry out their current aid. If for example, we look at the women who are involved in Regional trade. There are certain provisions within the ECOWAS treaties for example, that women do not enjoy, because they do not have that kind of information. So, they face a lot of difficulties. But if that institution of funding or whatever name they call it exists, it will help to empower women economically by giving them the relevant information, the relevant contacts and opening to them markets within which they can sell the goods that they produce.

Prof. Kamara: I thank you.

Justice Marcus Jones: Thank you. Commissioner Sooka?

Commissioner Sooka: Mrs Forster, we thank for that very comprehensive submission and also for the support UNIFEM – your organisation has given to this commission particularly during the preparation for our hearings; and we want to acknowledge that maybe publicly here. Now, in page ten of your submission, you have told us how, as a result of the war, a number of women now suffer from a number health related diseases. But you have touched on an area which a number of people do not talk about and that is, how the war and violence perpetrated has affected the mental health of our women. People normally talk about being traumatized; but I think there is more to it as you have said here in some areas that just being traumatised. I wonder whether you are aware of any study which has been carried out to determine how the violence, how the war has affected the mental of some of our women and girls – in this country ?

Mrs. Forster; No studies, per se, that have gone out deliberately to look at these issues. But if you talk to a lot of medical officers, they will tell you that there is an escalation in the prevalence of this thing hypertension. A lot of people who never suffered from such ailments and they see other diseases that related to stress and some of these unfortunately, we hear just die suddenly. And it is really because of the kind of trauma that they have experienced. But a study – per se, just looking at that has not really been done.

Bishop Humper: Mrs. Forster, we want to thank you very much for this important and well thought out document that you have presented to the commission. We have been partners in this process and you have been of immense help to this commission. I would ask one question. Although my colleague – Halezas Bitubitab, we are not sitting together but she lifted that up but I want to lift it up in a different context to see how the commission can be helped in our process as we go from district to district. How do or can we devise some mechanisms to help the commission, going into a particular district or zone district to see where these women ex-combatants are and could be helped to be reintegrated and accommodated in the exercise ? This will be very crucial for us. We just returned from Kailahun. Those of us who went to Kailahun. And this is just one of those issues that came right before us. Here is this RUF woman ex-combatant. She lives there practically as a taboo. They claim that she has been accepted. But we were able to discern that from the perspective of the community, that she is yet to be fully integrated into this place. We need this sort of input in order to be able to begin this process even before the commission completes its work. So, if there is any mature idea, any way we can be helped that could be helpful.

Mrs. Forster: I think in that aspect of the commission's work; the commission has to look at certain international standard that has been applied in that respect. I know the normal thing is reintegration and reconciliation. But I think the way it was brought in at international level; there were some people that perceived that it will be very difficult for them to come back and be reconciled and be reintegrated into their societies and a lot of them were provided with resettlement opportunities. Unfortunately some these were the most brutal. But a lot of our experts went for resettlement. And I think that particular standard could also be applied to certain categories of ex-combatants who have found it difficult to be resettled in their places of origin. And I think, the commission should consider that in its work and in its recommendations.

Bishop Humper: My second contribution is not a question but is coming out of your conclusion. Where indeed as you said the TRC, cannot undo the past which means that we have to get to the root causes of the war. This is endemic in our perceived notions of what had happened in this country. It, therefore, means that we envision Sierra Leoneans with microscope or a telescope, standing from different corners of this country. Looking at the issues and the problems that have caused the problems in this country; and depending on the type of microscope or telescope we have, we must have seen one thing or the other. It, therefore, means that for us to come together and have an acceptable and an accommodating material for both national and international consumption; I am just thinking aloud, if it will not be in place, for you and the other women who are here and who have been here, to use your executive power to come together to begin to collect and collate these recommendations as a sort of working document. So, that when the workshop is ready, the commission's workshop with you, will have some material that all of us together we can come and have the comprehensive, reiterative and powerful document for the TRC and for our people in this country and international community. I am just thinking about this, whether that sort of process could be explored by you and other members who are here. The Executive alone coming together.

Mrs. Forster: Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much for that question and also comment. I think women in this country have been working assiduously in the past and up to this time present – make that kind of presentation to the government, I remember myself, as an individual I was a refugee in The Gambia and I know that the Women's Forum- that was as soon as the women got to Banjul. They reconvened the Women's Forum in The Gambia to Sierra Leone Women's Forum and a lot of recommendations were made by that body to the government of Sierra Leone. And I think even when they went to Guinea I think the Women's Forum, partner organisations of the Women's Forum including FAWE were the ones who started the peace building blocks in providing schools and education for children. And when we look at the time when cessations there was a breakdown in communication between the countries in the Mano River Union, you may find out that it was women's groups that kept mediation efforts and connections alive and they were working in the sub-region and I think some of those recommendations are still around; and I think the TRC possibly is the opportunity to re-submit some of recommendations that were made by some of these women's organisation. UNIFEM is committed to the coalition of NGOs that have come together to look at TRC and we will be working with them providing financial and also technical support in implementing some of the recommendations that will come from the TRC that are within our mandate.

Justice Marcus Jones: I do not have a question as such but just to thank the commission for the support that it has given to especially the cause of women. I think the women of Sierra Leone are particularly pleased that with the start of the thematic hearings of women, I think the commission was out there in full force and we are looking to the commission to at least address some of these endemic issues that have been facing women. We know that some of them are going to be very revolutionary recommendations but we feel that without these revolutionary recommendations, especially as regards the legal status of women; the rights of women under inheritance, and so on, I do not think there will be any sustainable peace in Sierra Leone. So, we are really entreating the commission to treat those recommendations

with seriousness and determination that had been shown by the women. I want to thank you very much.

Justice Marcus Jones: It is reciprocated. We thank you for all your support and we can assure that we will treat everything you have said with the utmost seriousness.

END OF HEARING.

**THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS ON MILITIAS AND ARMED GROUPS
LOCATION: YWCA, Brookfields, Freetown**

Leader of Evidence: Mr Chairman Our Next Witness for today is Mrs Elizabeth Lavalie.

Commissioner Torto: Can we know your name.

Mrs E Lavalie: I am Honourable Elizabeth Alpha Lavalie.

Chairman Commissioner Torto: Muslim or Christian?

Honourable Lavalie: Christian

(Administering of Oath)

Chairman Humper: We have before us here a written presentation by you.

Honourable Lavalie: Yes.

Chairman Humper: Can you please present the paper since we now have it in writing?

Honourable Lavalie: Thank you very Much Mr Chairman. To introduce my self am the daughter of the Late Joseph E Tucker a professional dispenser, former deputy speaker of the S/L parliament under the SLPP government; and Vivante E Tucker nee Cole who was a mid-wife and farmer, Niimagboru babor Chiefdom Bo District. I am the wife of the late Dr Mohamed Lavalie, a Historian by profession and former Lecturer FBC. I am a banker by profession, now Politician and a Member of Parliament. At the start of the war I was a bank Manager at the National Development Bank Freetown and was transferred to head the Kenema branch in Jan 1992 at the height of the rebel war.

Mr Chairman, Commissioners of the TRC, I am greatly honoured today for the opportunity accorded me to deliver a statement at the historic Hearings of The TRC of Sierra Leone. Permit me Mr Chairman, to say that the current effort is yet another important mile-stone in a drive as a nation towards consolidating the hard work; it is a moment of reflection on the things we got wrong, and a moment of rethinking so that these things be put right. Indeed it is often said that only God and fools do not change As Sierra Leoneans I know that we are no gods and we are also no fools, hence, this is our moment to change, change that must be for the better and not only for the sake of change. This change is to be predicated on a basic lesson of history and we need to have a retrospective insight into our immediate past, evaluate our current situation and use our experience to fashion a peaceful, just, democratic and civilized nation worthy of emulation in the world over .In this connection the present hearings could not have been more

timely. They are necessary for stocktaking, for genuine contrition on the part of those who wronged us and for the aggrieved to forgive perpetrators, if our present and future are to be meaningful than our dreaded past. Mr Chairman I crave your indulgence to allow me to take a thematic approach to this presentation. Prior to the conflict situation, Sierra Leone was experiencing a history of political misrule for decades under various governments. Bad governance, social and political injustice was the order of the day; mismanagement of resources was predominant, unemployment was at its highest, youth were supplied drugs to exhibit violence during elections; the climate of malcontent and discontent engulfed the country.

Mr Chairman, a direct consequence of this economic, political and social injustice was the advent of the dorbor wusu conflict in southern Sierra Leone in the 1980s. But the lessons of the dorbor wusu did not mean anything to those in whom state authority was entrusted and widespread corruption pervaded the society. The armed Conflict in Sierra Leone in March 1991 saw the advent of the war in Sierra Leone. The RUF rebels supported by mercenaries from Burkina Faso and Liberia entered the south-eastern part of Sierra Leone. Properties were destroyed, civilians killed and youth abducted in larger numbers to be recruited into rebel forces. The then Government was either incapable or reluctant to prosecute the war. Phrases like “dis na mendeman war leh den kil dem sef” permeated the city, Freetown, whilst the war raged on and village after village town after town in the eastern and southern part of the country fell under rebel control. Reasons given for the war by RUF was to oust the repressive regime of the APC.

At a mammoth meeting at the State Avenue about a month after the RUF insurgency, President Momoh confessed his government's inability to prosecute the war. He therefore advised the chiefs and other traditional leaders to organize the civil population into vigilantes to defend their localities.

These local communities were supplied with cartridges for their local guns .The vigilantes were later integrated into the military to help prosecute the war. The method of recruitment left much to be desired and the consequence may have been the birth of an unprofessional national army. At the early stage of the war, it was discovered that senior military officers were in league with the rebels and Charles Taylor, who was then fighting his own rebel war, ousted the Liberian government of Samuel Doe.

THE NPRC ERA

On 29th April 1992, the National Provisional Ruling Council (N.P.R.C.) overthrew the corrupt A.P.C Government. Amongst the excuses given for the coup were the non-payment of soldiers' salaries and the lack of political will to prosecute the war. The junta promised to put a speedy end to the war.

But the war still raged on and civilians were killed and abducted, girls were gang-raped and forced to become wives of rebels; vehicles were ambushed and other valuable properties were either looted or destroyed. The civil population seemed to be at the mercy of the rebels. Town and village chiefs were deposed or killed and replaced by rebel representatives. Families were disintegrated and married homes broken. There was total breakdown of cultural and traditional norms. Rebel ideology governed these towns and villages.

THE BIRTH OF THE CIVIL DEFENCE FORCES (C.D.F.)

In desperation, the civilians organized civil defence structures to defend their towns and villages, their properties and families, and their wives and children. This received the approval of the military regime – the NPRC Government. These civil defence forces teamed up with soldiers. They were instrumental in guiding soldiers through terrain unfamiliar to them. The period of union between the national army and the C.D.F. has been referred to as Phase One of the war.

The coalition of soldiers and CDF was very successful. We saw progress in the war. The rebels were now on the run, surrendering towns and villages to government forces and retreating to neighbouring Liberia. Amnesty was declared by the then Head of State, Captain Valentine Strasser for one month (30 days) in November 1993, so that the rebels can lay down their arms. This was met with civilian protest because they expected the government to prosecute the war to its logical conclusion; they had the advantage over the rebels.

The C.D.F. comprised the following entities

1. The Tamaboro from Koinadugu District;
2. The Kamajors from Kenema, Kailahun, Bo, Moyamba, Bonthé and Pujehun Districts;
3. The Donsos from Kono District;
4. The Gbethis from Tonkolili and Port Loko Districts;
5. The Hunters from the Western Area;
6. The Kapras from Bombali and Kambia Districts, and
7. The vigilantes from the Youths nationwide.

The C.D.F. were drawn from professional local hunters and warriors who claimed to have mystical powers. They were recruited through the recommendation of their village chiefs, town chiefs, and headmen, in the case of the Western Area. One criterion for recruitment was that they should be of good character in the community. They were then registered and issued identity cards.

These men had the blessing of their community and government. The community contributed through a tax levied on each household. This ranged between Le500 and Le1, 000 per household. During the farming season, the community volunteered labour for absentee farmers who were on missions of defence.

This was a sort of self-defence mechanism adopted by the people of Sierra Leone. The government provided logistical support in the form of cartridges, medicines feeding and transportation.

On 25th December, 1993, the R.U.F. rebels attacked Segbwema in Kailahun District and Nomo Farma in Kenema District and massacred hundreds of unsuspecting civilians who were celebrating the Christmas season. A new turn to the rebel war evolved. We dubbed this, Phase Two.

In this phase, the civilians were targets of both the rebels and soldiers. Rebels claimed that the civilians were disclosing their whereabouts to soldiers and soldiers accused the civilians of being

rebel collaborators. This brutality and savagery mainly directed towards civilians generated an unprecedented level of hatred and mistrust among the people. Soldiers were accused of being in league with the rebels to wreck havoc on the civilian population - killing, maiming looting, raping and burning villages. Soldiers were called Sobels (soldier-rebels). The slogan "watch you Neba", meaning, "watch your neighbour" was used to show how the people had lost faith in the soldiers for security. They pressed on the government to provide logistical support for the C.D.F. so that they can continue to defend their land property families. I want to emphasise here that civilians were forced to organize the C.D.F. as an instrument of self-defence and in defence of their families, when they found out that the military government had lost the will to prosecute the war and were then compounding their agony. As the war intensified and it was increasingly more evident that the soldiers who were supposed to protect the civilians were now hand in glove with the rebels, there was the need for the civilians to strengthen the defence of their localities. More men were needed. They looked up to the *karmohs* who initiated people to acquire mystical powers that the professional hunters and warriors have. A new-breed of C.D.F. was born.

PHASE THREE OF THE WAR

The situation in the country worsened when a loose coalition of elements of the national army, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (A.F.R.C.) and the Revolutionary United Front rebels seized power on 25th May, 1997 and again on 6th January 1999 on a mission to shoot their way to power, causing mayhem nationwide. There was spontaneous opposition to the junta rule and a state of civil disobedience existed.

During the junta's oppressive rule in 1997, indiscriminate killing, summary executions, rampant looting, armed robbery, massive destruction of social amenities and countrywide insecurity led to a state of social chaos and anarchy. This era saw the advent of massive amputations.

Whilst we were in exile in the Republic of Guinea, it was reported that the C.D.F. were siding the government of President Tejan Kabbah and were loyal in defending their country. They were putting up strong resistance against the junta in the provinces and working with the ECOMOG troops.

In February 1998 there was an intervention by the ECOMOG troops. The Junta was ousted and the democratically elected Government was restored. There was then a lack of confidence in the Sierra Leone military. ECOMOG, the few loyal troops and the C.D.F. provided security for the country until a new army could be reconstructed.

During November and December of 1998, there were persistent threats of insurgence and it became evident that ECOMOG troops could no longer defend the capital city, Freetown. As if there was a coalition to see the city fall, rebels of R.U.F. and West Side Boys (a group of renegade soldiers that held out in a hill 39 miles outside Freetown), continued to pose a continuous threat to the stability of the country. In all these situations, the C.D.F. always acted as a stabilizing force.

Like President Momoh before him, the ECOMOG General in charge of defence of Freetown confessed he was unable to defend the city and advised us to retreat to our towns and villages and mobilize the C.D.F. to come and retake Freetown, as it was imminent that the city was soon to fall into the hands of the rebels. Again the people turned to the C.D.F. to defend their homeland against anarchy and wanton destruction of life and property.

The C.D.F. were airlifted from various localities into the city and were based at Lungi, Jui and Brookfields Hotel in Freetown. This was because the roads were constantly prone to ambushes by the West Side Boys - remnants of the A.F.R.C.

It was, however, discovered that ECOMOG and the Chief of Defence Staff of the Sierra Leone Military were reluctant to equip the C.D.F. to defend the city. Rather, youths were haphazardly recruited into the military; an act oblivious of the conditions of recruitment agreed upon. These new recruits were not disciplined and included elements of the R.U.F. and the West Side Boys.

Mr Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is therefore not surprising that when the city was attacked on the 6th of January, 1999, only a couple of ECOMOG soldiers, the O.S.D., a few loyal troops and the C.D.F. were at hand to defend the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS

At this moment, kindly allow me space and time to proffer some suggestions for consideration in mapping the way forward. My intention is not to put forward an exhaustive profile of what needs to be done to redress the misfits in our society. The intent is to give a humble contribution that may be useful in charting the way forward.

Let me start by mentioning Article 28 of the Lome Peace Agreement which states: "Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation, reconstruction and development programmes to enable them to play a central role in the moral, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone".

Expecting the TRC to be more gender sensitive. I thus recommend the following:

- To equip women with requisite skills for improved participation in all spheres of life.
- To revisit women's human rights situation e.g. aspects of the Sierra Leone constitution which discriminate against women especially as regards inheritance, adoption and marriage laws. CRC and CEDAW should be legislated into Sierra Leone law.
- Address poverty issues with proper law enforcement for defaulters. Micro-credit schemes, skills training and business management are to be instituted nationwide, as part of government's poverty reduction strategy.
-
- Education
- Given that women constitute about 80% of the illiterate adult population, their lot should be improved through civic education, advocacy and lobbying with the appropriate authorities for their needs to be addressed more coherently.

-Welfare

- Vulnerable groups such as victims of sexual abuse,
- Children

- Commercial sex workers
- Girl child mothers

Street Children

Address the issue of street children, which has become the bane of our society. Children have been orphaned and abandoned. These are very vulnerable and open to abuse. They could be used as slaves, robbers, drug pushers, etc.

Child-care centres, medium/ long term, (in the pattern of SOS children and villages, should be established to address this issue, particularly for children with no families.

Children at these centres will attend school; learn skills until they could be appropriately placed either in Foster Homes, substitute families or as a last resort, for adoption. There should be adequate budgetary allocation to the ministry of social welfare Gender and Children's Affairs to address the welfare issues of the disabled, the aged and amputees.

Further assistance should be given to strengthen NACWAC to help NGOs build up existing childcare centres to take the children off our streets; to economically strengthen foster families and organizations; to institute outreach programmes for recreational facilities for children, in each chiefdom.

YOUTHS AND WOMEN

To further address the issues of women and youth for participation reconstruction; short-term effective skills training programmes should be instituted in every chiefdom headquarters, so that even the villages can fully participate in development programmes; encourage their involvement in income generating activities e.g. Backyard gardening, farming, production technologies in handicraft.

Establish youth and women cooperatives in every chiefdom. Not forgetting ones in western area. Soft loans should be provided for women and youth who are now household heads to rebuild their homes. This will address the problems of war widows.

SECURITY

Mechanisms should be put in place to give early warning signals so that these could be addressed. The structure of civil intelligence should be strengthened.

Recruitment in the military: There should be a laid down policy, which must be adhered to. This should incorporate the equitable recruitment by geographical area so that personnel from one geographical area do not dominate the military. Paramount chiefs, headmen/women for western area, and community elders should attest to the suitability of recruits as regards behaviour. The military should be professional; i.e., military personnel should be given the opportunity to be specialized - for e.g., army engineers, etc. The military should be disciplined and well equipped.

Nepotism in recruitment should be avoided and the issue of the proliferation of small arms must be addressed.

The borders of Sierra Leone are porous. There is the need for a territorial force to secure the borders. To maintain law and order, the police force must be well equipped and trained. There is also the need to train National (Local) Administration Police Force particularly in chiefdoms without the presence of the regular Police Force.

GOVERNANCE

One of the factors responsible for the deteriorating situation in Sierra Leone was bad governance. Therefore I recommend that democratic governance must be encouraged. Resources for rebuilding social infrastructure must be equitably distributed, and areas of health, education and social welfare are cases in point. The Anti-Corruption Commission should be more effective.

CIVIL SOCIETY

In all this Civil Society of Sierra Leone should act as guarantors of the peace process. Therefore, it should continue to be actively engaged in reinforcing initiatives to enhance the processes of peace, reconciliation and good governance through advocacy campaign, workshops and seminars; sensitisation through electronic and print media, CBOs, National and International NGO's and Inter-Religious Organizations.

PARLIAMENT

As representatives of the people, parliament should uphold the constitution, amend laws that are discriminatory against women and children and promulgate laws that seek to enhance the powers of women in governance; enact legislation into Sierra Leone laws to give effect to treaties, charters and conventions that have been ratified; for example the convention on the Rights of the child, child trafficking (CRC), convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Laws should be enacted to address the issues of the disabled, the aged and amputees, and advocate for Civil Service reforms; ensure equitable distribution of resources through budgetary control to enhance democratic good governance. They should work in close collaboration with the Executive and Judiciary though at the same time is observers concerning the separation of powers.

TRC

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) should be instrumental in advocating for implementation of the afore-mentioned recommendations. They will go a long way to consolidate the peace. If we are to attain and heal the wounds in moving towards reconciliation, the needs of the victims and perpetrators alike should be addressed.

RECOGNITION AND GRATITUDE

Taking a clue from earlier gestures, this exercise of reconciliation and peace building will be more meaningful if the C.D.F. and loyal Republic of Sierra Leone military personnel are decorated. This is an instance of reward for their defending the citizens of this country against the mayhem, carnage and merciless brutalisation of the R.U.F. and A.F.R.C. Junta.

May God in His Mercy bring total peace, reconciliation and development to our beloved nation, Sierra Leone.

I am grateful to all of you for your valuable time.

Chairman Humper: Thank you very much Honourable for that detailed presentation. By logical terms two months after the war was launched at Bumaró you said Momoh made this appeal to the people in the country which means the idea existed at the time and it was only developed later on by people in different parts of the country for the Tamboros and other civil defence that was established in different parts of the country.

Honourable Lavalie: Yes you are correct it originated from that request from President Momoh in 1991.

Chairman Humper: The other area I was pleased with was the way you presented the situation of January 6 1999; but the other information I have about General Khobe not being able to mobilize the ECOMOG forces - I want you to tell me whether I am wrong or confirm it -because at that time he had already moved out of ECOMOG and was our CDS (Chief of Defence Staff) and therefore had no control over ECOMOG. So when Shelpidi left his post and went across, there was nobody to give command to any of the ECOMOG forces. Is that the correct situation?

Honourable Lavalie: Mr. Chairman that is the correct situation and like I said earlier General Maxwell Khobe was looked upon as a junior and you know in the Army the juniors do not give instruction to seniors so that was why we were in that quagmire because even before the January 6 when Shelpidi left here, instructions to them through General Khobe was not adhered to because I can remember that there was a time when the highway was ambushed and some people were to supply the ones at Murray Town, the PAE, yes they had fallen into ambush earlier on. General Khobe was concerned and was told that the highway area was secure; he had asked the ECOMOG to safeguard it and reported back that it was safe and they had put their soldiers along the highway to safeguard it so it was on that same day that I heard that there was an attack and that PAE vehicle was ambushed. Incidentally the driver of this vehicle was a relative of mine and that was how I got to know about it .So I went to General Khobe and told him. He had told me earlier on that day that ECOMOG had secured the highway and it was safe for vehicles to go through and yet there was an ambush. I insisted to him that there was an ambush and it was a PAE vehicle that was involved then he said that I should give him ten minutes and he will call me back; he did and confirmed that I was right. 'I don't know what to say', he said. 'Whenever I ask these people to help me out they don't.' I even asked him about that attack in which the soldier Major Hassan was killed and he said, 'I don't have an army'. I said to him, 'you recruited people

into the army against our advice' and he said he was desperate because the ECOMOG did not take instructions from him.

Chairman Humper: Finally looking at the recommendations I just want to ask, have you got a parliamentary committee for women and gender issues?

Honourable Lavalie: Yes, we have a parliamentary committee for Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs. We have a parliamentary committee for that.

Chairman Humper: Yes, thank you. Leader of Evidence do you have questions?

Leader of Evidence: Mrs. Lavalie you said the initial reason for the establishment of the CDF was because the army was too weak to defend the country and that people were motivated to defend themselves and their country from rebels. I wonder when SLPP came in power after the elections in 1996 and was in power for about a year and then the rebel (RUF) coup took place and then there was the AFRC coup and then another when President Kabbah came to power after the ECOMOG had rejected the junta. During this time why did they not decide to reform the army to make it stronger and give more training and equipment etc, why did they not decide to integrate some of the members of the CDF into the army then, robust strong men and give them military training so that on the one hand the army could have been stronger and on the other hand the risk of having ninety six thousand troops who did not have any training at all on which the control was quite weak would have been avoided.

Honourable Lavalie: Mr. Chairman, it may surprise you to note that most of these men who formed the CDF were not interested in becoming soldiers they only went into the CDF because they wanted to defend their localities; they wanted to help defend their wives, children and property; they were not interested in becoming soldiers they could not stand the rigours and time it takes to train somebody to become a soldier; that was why General Khobe had to recruit or take back those soldiers who had been disloyal; he had to take them back into the Army because it takes time and money to train a soldier. However, some of these CDF who were interested in becoming soldiers are now in the Army as soldiers.

Chairman Humper: My other question is about reconciliation, you suggested in your recommendations that the CDF should be decorated; on the other hand we heard this morning that Dr. Joe Demby had agreed that some apologies are appropriate for violations that the CDF committed. Do you think the CDF needs to acknowledge that violations took place and crimes have been committed? I am not saying by everyone and all the time, but would you agree with that?

Honourable Lavalie: Mr. Chairman, I believe like you said, that anybody who has committed any atrocity in this war has a duty to apologize to the people. It is a duty that is very personal to the individuals. I cannot apologize on behalf of the CDF and like you said earlier we have had nobody coming forward to say I did this particular atrocity or a particular violation, it is all generalized. So if you say to generalize there are some people who would say 'I fought hard honestly and I defended people' and you cannot put them under blanket apologies. You should impose on our people who have wronged the people of Sierra Leone to apologize. If I may just digress; incidentally I come from the same chiefdom like Victor Foe he is my relative and I want to recall what Joe Demby said here that people in this Commission should be very cautious with the statements made to them because there is a lot of misinformation. People try to twist things on their own side. I believe that my own brother who is apologizing on behalf of the APC had a lot of apology to do for his people and I believe he should be made to realize that. I had spoken I had pleaded with the people and they are ready to reconcile. He only had to apologize so an apology should be personal to people and should not be generalized like the amnesty was generalized. In fact I was not in favour of the general amnesty because I said the Lome Agreement called for no judicial or official action to be taken against the perpetrators; I would have been comfortable with no official actions, then it would have been that the government cannot take action but then if

civilians wanted to take action because of wrongs done to them they should be allowed to take that action. So that is why am saying that these people should be made to confess personally of the specific wrongs they had done whether they raped, looted, killed, maimed. There is a person down there who was raped. If you know you have to, go to that person and say I am sorry. For instance, my aunt was put in the house and the house set on fire and she died; nobody has come out to say I killed and burnt the house at No. 24 Sanders Street. Like I said earlier, nobody has come out to say we planned the death of Dr. Alpha Lavalie. I believe that is what the Commission should be emphasizing on. We are all adults and should take responsibility for our actions personally. Even in war some atrocities are committed that were not on the orders of the commanding officers because when it comes to self defence and you are faced with a gun you will find something of equal force to defend yourself. So that is why I say atrocities have been generalized. How do we address these wrongs as stated in the Lome Peace Accord, if people do not claim own up to specific wrong doings? How do we address the issues of the victims if the perpetrators do not come out and say I did this to that person so that the person can find it in her soul to forgive that particular individual?

Commissioner: Thank you very much. Let me just make one or two statements. In Moyamba there were perpetrators coming forward to explain what they actually did. How they were captured, the towns they burnt, and how many people they killed. A man apologized publicly as you have seen on T.V. The fellow was a teacher and he has gone back to teaching; his fellow teachers actually embraced him and accepted him back. But what was interesting is he really confessed to the towns, villages and the type of offences he carried out, raping and killings.

This addresses the area of owning up to specific acts. People have come forward from Balu, Boyama and admitted to wrongdoing. A woman was accused of wrong doing by her town mates; we had to actually get the people involved and she reconciled with them openly in Barra town in the presence of the Regent Chief Lans Lamin and the CPO and the town elders from there. Libations were poured and we had to reconcile this group of people at Moyamba; it was a really interesting and moving ceremony at that time. In Kambia they had reconciled a few people who had confessed to have done certain things but all we can do is arrange for reconciliation. In fact there was a specific case when we were in Kenema. Somebody testified and named your husband; all of them were serving ERECOM is that the name, I think Eastern Region something Civil Defence Force. Their plan was to get the people involved. The Commissioner here was leading the team; we have our leaders of evidence working on something wherein those people would be met. In fact one person who was actually working with your late husband in ERECOM had explained this story, but the people they named are out of this country. Some of the people they named were Tom Nyuma, Colonel something, Idriss Kamara and then at that time we were under the NPRC and most of the people were out, but we are actually planning to meet those people and bring them together in Kenema if they are within the country. So it may not be happening as much as you want to but it is happening.

Honourable Lavalie: Well I want to say...

Chairman Humper: Now that you have been kind enough to answer all our questions with a lot of strain, do you have questions for the Commission?

Honourable Lavalie: Yes, I have put down my recommendations and I expect that at the end of the deliberations, the TRC will also come with their own recommendations. What mechanism are you going to put in place to see that these recommendations are carried out?

Chairman Humper: The act that was created gives us the power at the end of it all to set up a committee to see that Government implements our recommendations. So we rely on that, including the fact that the civil society groups will also be monitoring to see to it that our recommendations are implemented. In addition to the Civil Society now that we have a parliamentary committee on Gender and Children's Affairs we also count on that body. Those are

a few of the mechanisms that I believe would actually implement our recommendations when we shall have completed the hearings.

Honourable Lavalie: This involves a lot of resources, financial and otherwise. Would you be well equipped financially is there a budgetary allocations for the TRC to see that these recommendations are implemented?

Chairman Humper: Yes, there would be budget I don't know maybe that is beyond us but our own responsibility is to make recommendations appropriately and it would be left with them to quantify the cost; a few of those things and implement them. Budgetary aspects are left with you. What consoles us further is the fact that our report would be laid before the Security Council; you can never tell what they would do, having heard and read those kinds of stories. We are optimistic that it is possible that some philanthropists would say look we have to do something for some of these victims that have been named here and therefore a mechanism for financing should be set up. Apart from that, all we can do is to actually find out what happened, find out the cause and then put our recommendation on paper and pass them on to you. You here, meaning Parliament.

Honourable Lavalie: Can I hand over this copy of my presentation because there are some alterations that are not in the other copy?

Chairman Humper: By all means hand it to our staff. Do you have any other recommendations to add to the ones we have on the paper?

Honourable Lavalie: I would think of something; there are many recommendations I just thought that I did not want to bore you with so many recommendations so I put them in writing and sent them to the Commission.

Chairman Humper: We need as many as you can give us.

Honourable Lavalie: Thank you very much.

Chairman Humper: If you don't have anything to add you may stand down. I want to apologize to Honourable Victor Reida for our inability to really take him on today. This is because we have been sitting since 10.00 a.m. this morning to now. We have not had time to get up even for a few minutes because they told us that there were only two witnesses available. Then all of a sudden they told us you two were around so we want you to please accept our apologies because we are not able to listen to you today .We are very sorry and thank you for your attendance.

We have come to the end of today's hearing and I want to adjourn the hearing to tomorrow morning at 9.30. I thank you all for coming and listening.

**THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS
TAPE 12 – W14 Joe Demby VP REP SL
W 15 – REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT PARTY –
JONATHAN KPOSOWA**

DAY 4 - 19/6/2003

Leader of Evidence - Mr Chairman may I present you this first witness for today He is Hon Joe Demby Vice president of Sierra Leone

Chairman Humper: Please give us your name in full for our records.

DR DEMBY: My name is Dr. Albert Joe Edward Demby, son of the Late Paramount Chief Alfred Cenawa Demby of Gerihun, Baoma Chiefdom, and Bo District, in the Southern Region of Sierra Leone.

(The Oath)

Presentation

Dr. Demby: The general situation in the country started to decline in terms of governance in the early 70s. There was dissatisfaction everywhere in terms of employment, social amenities and political activities, which culminated to a one party rule and Republican Status. Party politics and party affiliation gave people all the advantages to live a comparatively better life.

In 1989, the Liberian civil war started, which greatly affected this country, especially those of us living near the border with Liberia. Streams of refugees poured into this country and at that time there were no refugee camps, no NGOs and we did not hear of UNHCR. We assisted these people by providing them with shelter, food, medicines etc. By 1990 we were told that Sierra Leoneans were training in Libya to come and overthrow the A.P.C Government. Students spoke of the Green Book, democracy and, news of their friends being recruited to Libya for military training. Within the country also the talk of and yearn for multiparty system of governance began.

Then came the sad news in March 1991 that rebels from Liberia had invaded this country led by one Corporal Foday Sankoh.

We in Kenema also realized that our Army was small and ill equipped as was told by the soldiers themselves. Hence within a short space of time the war had moved very fast into the country. Our first-hand information of the nature and seriousness of the war came from a Foreign Catholic Priest who was stationed in Koindu, Kailahun District. He narrated his ordeal during his face-to-face encounter with the rebels in his mission house, where he was surrounded and captured by the rebels one night. While in Kenema he was very timid and anxious to leave the country. He said that he was only allowed to leave because he was a foreigner, but he saw the corpses of many of those he had known in Koindu Town. He emphasized that it was a real invasion that intended to stop at nothing to overthrow the A.P.C government. He said that they spoke with a Liberian accent and not a single Sierra Leonean language. They told him that they had come to destroy, while those after them will do the repairs etc. Also that they were hired for three months and within that time they should capture Daru (Moa Barracks) and hand over to Sierra Leonean Rebels.

A few days after his narration we began to see streams of Sierra Leonean displaced people arriving in Kenema from Kailahun and Pujehun Districts, each with awful stories of their ordeal at the hands of these rebels. Those who stayed for few days with the rebels said that they told them

that they had come to liberate them from the A.P.C misrule, etc. This they demonstrated by wearing palm leaves on their wrists signifying that they were SLPP supporters. But with time, their true colour of cruelty was revealed; when they started to rape, loot, abduct, murder, slaughter animals, burn houses and appoint their own chiefs etc.

While our rebel war was in progress, the Liberian refugees organized themselves into a fighting or armed group, as most of them were former Liberian Government Soldiers who had escaped into Sierra Leone during the Liberian Civil war. Their group was called ULIMO. We accepted them, as our soldiers were few and had not been exposed to rebel war. The APC Government gave them recognition and supported them. They then fought side by side with our army. But later, we noticed that they were very wicked as they began to kill other Liberians who were from other ethnic groups on the pretence that they were NPFL rebels who had invaded this country. So any one with a tattoo on his body was killed. They introduced the term "washing" i.e. to kill a person by the riverside and throw the body into the river.

The APC Government brought in the Nigerian Army to help fight the war and we heard about their deployment in Pujehun. Later they also invited the Guinean Army that went to defend the Moa barracks. The Guinean Army successfully beat back the advancing rebels into the Moa Bridge and killed their commander, "Rambo". Thus, their timely intervention saved the Barracks from falling into rebel hands.

On the political front, the cry for multi-party election and democracy became louder the more. Finally, the APC Government gave in to multi-party election but with a hidden agenda. They began to register only in the Western and Northern Regions with the excuse that there was war in the South and Eastern parts of the country. Also many prominent APC people were not in favour of the return to multi-party system and not ready for election at that time. It should be noted here that since the 1967 General Elections, all the elections under APC were full of violence and intimidation etc. The situation by then was better imagined than described. I was arrested and detained at the Police station, for my membership in the SLPP and for leading the SLPP election campaign for late Mr. B.S.Massaquoi in Kenema while a government Medical Doctor in 1972 and 1986. I was forced to resign from the civil service in 1975 because I was always in trouble with the APC Government, as they knew that my parents were SLPP founding fathers.

In early 1992, information was rife about the involvement and connivance between the top APC members and the rebels. This was demonstrated by the APC Government's failure to supply adequate logistics to the war front. They continued their election arrangements while the war was spreading deep into the Southern and Eastern parts of the country. They claimed that it was not a serious war, but it was the Mendes fighting one another, and they called it "Mende War". This statement and other happenings in the country angered us the South-Easterners and we became more confused as to the cause or essence of the war.

To our delight a messiah came i.e. the coup of 1992, which stopped the APC plan against the South-Easterners. We danced and danced for the end of the APC misrule and hoped that the war will then end. But still with the fall of the APC Government, the war continued after few months of lull. We were told that the rebels and the New NPRC Government failed to agree on an accord.

By the end of 1992 when the NPRC was now in power, the Rebel war had engulfed the whole of Kailahun and Kono Districts. About the same time, Lieutenant Tom Nyuma, the then Secretary of State, Eastern Region, addressed us the elders in a meeting in Kenema Town. At that time, Kenema Town had hosted most of the chiefs and elders from Kono, Kailahun and other parts of

Kenema Districts that were under rebel control. He told us that a decision had been taken in cabinet to request us to mobilize our hunters called Kamajors to help the regular Sierra Leone Army by guiding them in our bushes etc. He said, "America lost the Vietnam war because they did not know the terrain". The SLA encouraged and recruited youths called vigilantes, employed as carriers and informants, most of whom eventually turned out to be child soldiers in both the SLA and CDF. We then formed the "eastern Region Defence Committee" the membership which comprised all Paramount and Regent Chiefs, S.D.O, Chairman Kenema Town Council, Senior State Council and other prominent people from the three Districts - Kenema, Kono and Kailahun. The Late Dr. Alpha Lavalie was appointed Chairman and myself, Dr. Demby as Treasurer. Also a similar message was sent to Koinadugu District. They also mobilized their hunters, called "Tamboros".

The militia stayed in their villages and were only mobilized and brought to Kenema on the request of the Brigade Commander for a particular mission. We funded this militia by providing transportation and shotgun cartridges; they had their shotguns. Occasionally Lieutenant. Tom Nyuma did help with money and cartridges. But once they were with the Army, it was the responsibility of the Army to take care of them until the end of that mission. The initial cooperation between the militia and the Army was very cordial. The Kamajors and the Tamaboros helped the army to liberate Kono and Kailahun and the war almost came to an end in December 1993. We even held a victory meeting at the Kenema Praying Field where plans for a victory parade were arranged.

With that euphoria, the army relaxed, and neglected their forward position especially at Normo Farma i.e. Sierra Leone - Liberia border town. So while the commander, Capt. Gbonkeleke and some of his officials were in Kenema arranging for a Christmas party, the rebels attacked and a large cache of arms and ammunitions was captured. The war then not only progressed, but also escalated.

Before December 1993, some of the Kamajors had learned the use of automatic weapons and were even allowed to use the captured weapons. They joined forces with ULIMO who had now been recognized and were supported by the NPRC Government and the three forces became allies. Later, the once cordial relationship between the soldiers and the Kamajors became sour, due to what they saw as unpleasant happenings while they were in the bush, between the rebels and the soldiers.

These strange relationships resulted in the loss of many of their family members, looting of their properties, arson and even threats to kill them if they revealed what was happening in the bush. Many of the Kamajors later refused to go back with the soldiers and openly told us their plight. Some ULIMO fighters also told us that our war was very complex, with the type of co-operation they saw existing between our soldiers and the rebels, to the extent of supplying them with ammunitions and other logistics. In fact it was difficult for them to identify the real rebels and this made most of them return to Liberia for fear of their lives. The civilians who escaped from the Rebel held territory also narrated similar stories of the co-operation and that the soldiers were more wicked to them than the Rebels.

From 1994 onwards there was no improvement in the war as our fighters were only on the defensive. They only reacted when places were attacked .I think this information was passed to the NPRC, which led to the purging of the army, in which about 14 top senior Military Officers were retired. But this did not help the situation either, as the war still intensified.

By this time, the NPRC recruited a Mercenary group called the Gurkhas. At that time the war was around mile ninety-one in the Tonkolili District. Their stay in the country was for a short time as they left soon after the death of their commander. NPRC then brought another Mercenary group called Executive Outcomes to replace the Gurkhas. They were more experienced, trained and did extremely well. They fought along side the Army and the civil Militias. They remained in the country until after the 1996 General Election. The SLPP Government inherited them and continued to support them until November 1996 when the Abidjan Peace Accord asked that all mercenaries leave the Country. That ended their contract and that of ULIMO.

Also by 1994 when the war had reached Bo District, I informed my Uncle, the late Paramount Chief A.S Demby who was brutally murdered by the rebels in 1997, about the formation and success of the Militia in Kenema. We decided to invite Chief Hinga Norman, then Regent Chief of Jaiama Bongo chiefdom, adjacent to our Chiefdom, and his elders. It was at this meeting in Yamandu that I introduced the idea of Civil Militia to Chief Norman and his Chiefs, and the essence of forming an alliance to defend our two Chiefdoms together with the Army, in the event of a rebel attack on either of the chiefdoms. We decided to train young male volunteers and asked Chief Norman to be in charge. I regret to report that the only group that went to Talu were those killed at Talu, which is known as the "Talu massacre" in which over 200 people were killed including my younger brother Arthur, and Chief Norman narrowly escaped the onslaught. So the idea was abandoned.

Then came the campaign and the General Election of 1995-1996. These rebels went all out to disrupt it, creating lots of atrocities on the civilians. With the victory of SLPP, I was appointed Vice President. At about this time also the idea of the civil populace defending themselves and their towns and villages spread fast like bush fire and with success against the rebels. Other chiefdoms began to mobilize their hunters and using their Tribal names to identify them. The Kamajors mainly from the Mende ethnic group in the Southern and Eastern Regions, the Donsos from Kono also from the East, the Tamaboros from the Korankor ethnic group and the Gbethis and the Kapras from the Temne ethnic group in the northern Region, while the Organized Body of Hunters Societies (OBHS) represented the Western Area The respective Chiefdoms controlled their respective militias using volunteers. They were never recruited or conscripted. They appointed their commanders from among themselves; some asking retired service men to lead them. The Kamajors, it will be recalled, are from the South and East of Sierra Leone bordering Liberia. They were the first to be attacked and suffered the most and longest.

They were the focus of the whole country, some using political or Tribal connotations to describe them or refer to them. At the same time, there emerged from among the civil populace, men and women with mystical powers. They prepared herbs which when used in the war front, rendered them bullet proof. Whether it was true or physiological, many of the fighters joined this society and were initiated. They paid their initiators who also seemed to have control over them. The news of these initiators also spread very fast and every Chiefdom in the Southern, Eastern and part of the Northern Chiefdoms recruited their own men and women initiators. It was also a voluntary initiation and certain prominent people in our society joined or allowed themselves to be initiated, for self-protection. In some cases it was the Chiefdom elders and prominent people from those chiefdoms that contributed for their fighters to be initiated but not recruited. The government was not responsible for either initiation or the recruitment and had no control over who was to be initiated as the people made a private arrangement and paid for them. As stated above, every chiefdom, District, or Region appointed their leaders, Commanders, and Administrators using their native names, which led to confusion. Government then decided to group all of them and called them "Civil Defence Forces" (CDF) with the same alliance to the Sierra Leone Army (SLA).

The Kamajors were the prominent single group in the CDF because of the size of the area that was under Rebel control and the duration of their occupation. It should also be recalled that over 90 percent of the CDF were illiterate without any form of military training and discipline. These were Village men, women and Children who came together voluntarily to defend their towns against looters and invaders using any defensive weapon to beat back the aggressors. Their actions were, in most cases, predicated by the activities of their aggressors and should be seen in that light. It was also very difficult for government officers to adequately control most of their actions because of their large number; the remoteness of their places and it was also risky to go there, as most of the areas were either occupied by Rebels or not under complete government control.

When the different militias were brought under one name, that is the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), their activities and logistical supplies were like other allied forces, under the same control of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). At that time, which was after the return of the Government, following the interregnum, it was the late General Maxwell Khobe. Later I was appointed in my capacity as Vice President, as Chairman of a committee that was responsible to seek the welfare of the CDF. The CDF operations were legalised and supported by Parliament and Government. And lastly, Honourable Lagao was appointed head the affairs of CDF after me.

The committee appointed by His Excellency the President, called the National Co-ordination Committee comprised:

1. The Minister of Finance
2. The Minister of Agriculture
3. The Minister of Presidential Affairs
4. The Minister of Information (Representative of the West)
5. The Deputy Minister of Defence
6. The Chief of Defence Staff
7. The Resident Minister, Eastern Province
8. The Resident Minister, Northern Province
9. The Resident Minister, Southern Province

10. Chief Brima Kargbo (Representative of the East)

11. The National Security Adviser

12. (Deputy Speaker of Parliament, who later became member of the Committee)

13. (Mr. Okere Adams later replaced the Northern Regional Minister)

A Deputy Secretary, who was the Secretary to the committee, headed the CDF office. The function of the committee was to look into the welfare the CDF. Government provided them with logistics, which was issued to Regions by the Secretariat, on the committee's guidelines.

Another Armed group called ECOMOG came to this country during the interregnum of May 1997 to March 1998. They also fought side by side with CDF and loyal SLA. It was these allied forces that removed the JUNTA (AFRC/ RUF) from power. They remained in the country until the end of their mandate in 2001 and were also replaced by UNAMSIL who finally, together with British Army, Loyal SLA and CDF, ended the war.

Our gratitude at this point should go to late General Sani Abacha, General Abdulsalamii Abubakar, President Olusegun Obasanjo, the late General Maxwell Kobe, and Retired General Victor Mallu, former Foreign Minister Chief Tom Ikimi and former High Commissioner Alhaji Abubakar all of Nigeria, President Lansana Conteh of Guinea, President Eyadema of Togo, Ex President Alpha Konare of Mali, former British Foreign Minister Robin Cook, and former British High Commissioner Peter Penfold. His Excellency SRSG Oluyemi Adeniji and His Excellency Kofi Annan of United Nations for their tremendous effort and contributions in bring lasting peace to our country.

CONCLUSIONS

With the number of different armed groups that participated in this small country under five different governments, one should not be surprised at the scale of destruction that took place, especially when sophisticated equipment such as Helicopter Gun ships, Warships, Tanks and Armoured Personnel Carriers and Fighter Jets etc. were used.

We Sierra Leoneans have suffered so much that we are now ready to forgive and overlook, but not to forget what happened. How can I forget the destruction of my five houses, three vehicles, my Office, my Lodge, and my clinic and the brutal murder of my brother Arthur, uncle, P. C. Demby and other family members and friends like B.S. Massaquoi and P.P. B. Kebbeh both of Kenema, my Nurse Saffa and my Driver Lansana?

The steps now taken by Government and the International Community to create a conducive atmosphere, wherein resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconciliation are taking place; all are steps in the right direction, that will bring lasting peace in this country. Thanks for your attention.

Chairman Humper: We thank you very much Hon Vice President for honouring our invitation. As is our practice commissioners would ask you questions for clarification and after that we'll ask you for your own input, questions or clarifications, as well as recommendations, and then we'll seal the process.

Chairman Humper: We want to know about this progression in the war.

Dr. Demby One of the chiefs from Kailahun who was then in Bo, with all this analysis said to the Commission, "Commissioner I am saying to you that this rebel war in Sierra Leone is 'N'dokuwi war'", do you know 'N'dokuwi? It's a chameleon war.

Dr Demby Chameleon yes.

Chairman Humper: Now Dr. Demby did I hear you say that the ULIMO who came to fight with us fortunately discovered that our war was a complex one?

Dr. Demby: Yes.

Chairman Humper: Is it possible to infer from all of these especially in the early beginning that the government then in power was not serious about the end of the rebel war and that, that particular opportunity could have been used to "conduct a multi party election even in the midst of the ravages of war". Could one infer that?

Dr. Demby: Most people said they were not properly supported with logistics and there were newspaper reports etc that some prominent people in the country, that is, APC people, were in connivance with the rebels. That was a widespread rumour; true or not true it was stated and it was demonstrated. Soldiers said they were poorly equipped because of certain reasons.

Chairman Humper: My final question Dr. Demby has to do with the support of the fighting forces out there. It is now clear not only from your presentation but from other presentations that in fact the arms and ammunition that the government got, some of those same security forces called soldiers, took those ammunitions and sold them to the enemies, but the point at issue finally is that once this has been established, it's a question of support. How was this organised in terms of support? Here you are sitting in the office here, we have the administrative structure. Could you tell us how the committee organised the support of these forces that were fighting on behalf of the country?

Dr. Demby: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we had a structure or an organogram, which we were working on, if you permit me I will go to that.

Chairman Humper: Please do.

Dr. Demby: A Committee was not only formed but was given guiding references and one of it was to provide a structure, which we provided. We had the

Ministry of Defence, National Coordinating Committee that was our committee, the District Defence Committee in which the District Officer was the Chairman, then the Chiefdom Defence committee, which was the Paramount Chief; so all logistics were sent through these organisations.

Chairman Humper: Thank you very much Dr. Albert, this is the last but one opportunity we may have before we go on to do havoc; but as some citizens who themselves have experience the ordeals of the rebel war in this country, what would you tell the Commission and the nation that were some of the basic factors that gave rise to these rebel atrocities for the last ten years in this country?

Dr. Demby: Well as the war started as I said due to bad governance, before some of us left this country for overseas studies, things were fairly all right in terms of employment, social amenities etc. But as I said from the early 70's following an undecided election, the 1967 election, which brought coups that were plotted by people with the determination to entrench themselves in power, live forever. So there was bad governance, that was the whole thing, the fabric, the civil service was involved in politics; the army, the security forces the police men were brought to parliament, made ministers; party loyalty played such an important part that people failed to even make promotions to deserving candidates, unless they had some party affiliation. So this was one of the major factors- bad governance.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Commissioner. Dr. Joe Demby, I am going to follow up on my fellow commissioners just for you to clarify issues. We are not actually subjecting you to intensive questioning.

Dr. Demby: Yes.

Commissioner Torto: We just want you to clarify issues for our records and I want to start by asking, as chairman of the committee overseeing the CDF, were the CDF 'Civil Defence Forces' a group of 'societies' or group of fighters?

Dr. Demby: They were groups of fighters; the hunters, kamajors are not a 'society'.

Commissioner Torto: As a group of civilians fighting a very formidable rebel group that had support from government outside, how were they armed?

Dr. Demby: This committee was a welfare committee. The fighting aspect was purely left in the hands of the Chief of Defence Staff and the fighters; we had nothing to do with it, and this is reflected in one of our minutes to show that. That was delegated to the Chief of Defence Staff and his commanders.

Commissioner Torto: You said in your statement a while ago that they were being supplied with shotguns and cartridges.

Dr. Demby: No, not shot guns, they had their shotguns initially. The hunters carried their guns to the bushes. So they wanted also to have some cartridges for self-defence, so we provided them in Kenema initially, but later on when they became CDF and others, it was the Chief of Defence Staff who made that provision. We never gave them guns.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you sir. As the committee overseeing a fighting group that was national, meeting people who probably may have been trained in warfare,

were there rules of engagement for the CDF; against the enemies and for the protection of the civilians?

Dr. Demby: I have told you that they were not trained and they did not undergo any discipline. These were a group of villagers who took defensive weapons - sticks, stones, knives, axes and guns to repel their aggressors. So they had no military training whatsoever, no rules of engagement, because they were not recruited by any organisation. They just spontaneously sprang up from their villages.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. They didn't have rules of engagement and testimonies of this have been heard before this Commission. To be precise, in Moyamba, torture chambers were used; why was it that torture chambers like "coolee" were used by the kamajors?

Dr. Demby: Such as what?

Commissioner Torto: 'coolee', 'coolee'

Dr. Demby: Conie axes.

Question: Not axes, that's a torture chamber made like a fowl coop or something like that, where people were placed in with thorns and things like that as a means of torture .

Dr. Demby: The very fact that I don't know what it is shows that I have no idea. They were just with the commanders during their fighting, so this is the first time I'm hearing what you are describing now.

Commissioner Torto: Leader of Evidence could you get somebody from the crowd who could actually interpret what 'coolee' is in the mende language?

Dr. Demby: Oh! 'coolee', well, I know now what's 'coolee' it's a sort of fenced area which ... eh... supposing an animal is passing, they set a trap, so when you step on it, it closes, the gate closes, so that is what we refer to as 'cooliho'

Commissioner Torto: Cooliho, Cooliho

Dr. Demby: Yes, this is my first time of knowing that such a thing was employed.

Commissioner Torto:It was widely used by the CDF as a torture chamber

Dr. Demby: Well that's information for me.

Commissioner Torto:It has been deduced before this Commission. Now how was the CDF funded?

Dr. Demby: The government provided the logistics. We had, as I said, a committee and a secretariat, from there we had regions, districts and others, which sent their requisitions. We looked at the requisitions and then gave guidelines but government provided the funds.

Commissioner Torto: Government provided the funds?

Dr. Demby: Yes,

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, now coming back to what I've just said; 'coolee' was an instrument used to actually punish rebel suspects and civilians. In some cases this was in fact abused by the kamajors; they used to punish civilians over civil matters. Was the committee aware that the CDF were also involved in committing atrocities out there in the field?

Dr. Demby: Yes, some complaints were made to us and we investigated and those that were caught were punished and some of them were even brought to Freetown for punishment etc; their local commanders punished some. Most of the punishments were meted out by their commanders because they knew what they were doing among themselves; we would hear them say, well this happened in this place and this was the step taken, like removing some of them from their positions etc.

Commissioner Torto: Yes, it was happening and at times civilians were used also, not just the fighting members according, to testimonies. Now, knowing that there were such things happening out there, is the committee past and present ready to render any form of apology to the people of this country for use of these kinds of torture chambers and other atrocities committed by the CDF?

Dr. Demby: That is a question for a committee; the committee has to meet and decide on it not I alone. I am just a chairman of the committee

Commissioner Torto: Past and present I said, past committee, present committee, whether it was just the chairmanship that changed, it's the same members, even if that was the case the committee still remains as a committee

Dr. Demby: Yes

Commissioner Torto: Are they in a position to render an apology to the people of this country for the atrocities committed by the CDF whether knowingly or unknowingly?

Dr. Demby: Well of course that's the essence of this Truth and Reconciliation, if that will bring forgiveness to all and sundry whosoever has committed in the name of CDF, we are prepared to do that.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much

Demby: Forgive all, don't forget.

Chairman Humper: Commissioner Torto: Thank you, Leader of Evidence, do you have questions for Dr. Demby?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Chairperson, I think we have some clarification, I think we already received a lot of clarifications today, which I am happy to hear; but I would like to ask some questions. At one point in your statement you said and they were asked to join the soldiers when they had to go to the bushes to show them the way etc. then at another point you said that children and women joined them as well and I would like to know the particular role of these children in the Kamajor, in the CDF movement.

Dr. Demby: I have told you that initially youths were used, recruited by the Army etc. as volunteers, these eventually became child soldiers in the army and CDF. At another time men, women, children, villagers took up defensive weapons to defend their areas.

Leader of Evidence: How old were these children?

Dr. Demby: What?

Leader of Evidence: How old, what was their age?

Dr. Demby: Children, those normally used, they take it as eighteen downward, not so? That is the normal standard but I was not in the villages to say the ages of the children. When they say rebels are coming, everybody in the villages took up arms etc and there are documents in my possession sent by commanders that children drunk with the power and revenge because their parents were killed in their presence took up arms. If you want that type of document, wherein it was stated that children below the age of eighteen were drunk with power because of the way their parents were killed before them and so took up arms to defend there their area. I have that document.

Leader of Evidence: Okay, I understand their motives. You rightly made the distinction between those in the villages who took up arms together with the whole population of the villages to defend themselves and those who eventually became child soldiers; could you tell me how old these child soldiers were?

Dr. Demby: What did you say? I am not following.

Leader of Evidence: How old?

Dr. Demby: How old, below eighteen I have a letter stating to us that children below eighteen years of age must not join the civil defence force. I have that document from kono to show that at least.

Leader of Evidence: Okay, I think the commission would be interested to have a copy of this document.

Dr. Demby: I will perhaps give it to you before the end of the day.

Leader of Evidence: I was also happy with the distinction that you made after a question of between fighters and secret societies. So does this mean that not all members of Kamajors etc. were initiated, that some people were initiated but were not Kamajors or were all the fighters initiated?

Dr. Demby: Initiation was voluntary; a herb was administered to render a man bullet proof, so some may have joined others may have not. I am not sure as to what happened in Kono, Kailahun, and Koinadugu so I cannot say all of them joined.

Leader of Evidence: At one point in your statement you said that those initiators seemed to have control over the people that they initiated, what do you mean by that, what kind of control did they have?

Dr. Demby: Well it is just like a teacher having some influence over pupils. You say look I am giving you this thing to prevent you but I have my added law so you tend to cling to that individual initiator so that your immunity continues. That is what I mean; they seemed to have control over their initiates; they say well look when you go to this place this is what you would do and since

I am not a member of that society I don't know the rules but I know there are rules.

Leader of Evidence: So what would you say was the relationship between on the one hand the initiator who initiated at least part of the Kamajor or the CDF and I think you explained the chain of command on the fighters over the fighters, the local chiefs etc. What would be the relationship regarding the control of the fighter between the initiators and the chiefs.

Dr. Demby: Yes, because nobody goes to a chiefdom to do anything without the chief knowing. So some of them had the blessings of the chiefs to do the initiation of the CDF, not Kamajors. I want us in this place to use the word CDF please.

Leader of Evidence: I am trying to understand who actually controlled these groups of fighters. So if I understand you well, you say the power of the chief or the control of the chief was more powerful than the control by the initiator.

Dr. Demby: I've said the fighters have their commanders just as the government may have its own hospital and then a dispenser comes to a town, he wants to open a clinic- a very good dispenser or a very good doctor obviously he informs the authority that he wishes work there. So the actual thing is that the chiefs are in charge of their chiefdoms, the commanders are in charge of their fighters. The chief allows the man to stay. It was a voluntary initiation. Nobody ask A, B or C go and be initiated. They paid for it themselves as I said there are people among our community from Freetown all over who went just to get that initiation or that medicine so that they render themselves bullet proof just in case, so they have nothing to do with the chiefdom people or the fighters except those who came to be initiated.

Leader of Evidence: So everyone who joined these fighters was a volunteer. Were all candidates accepted or who made the selections or what were the criteria or conditions?

Dr. Demby: Everybody was joining - teachers, lecturers, other workers everybody. It was the people, the traditional hunters but everybody who wanted to liberate his area joined. There was no limitation. These are individuals who said, we cannot sit down to allow looters or these bad people to destroy our area. So they came together, teachers, clerks etc. to repel the aggressors.

Leader of Evidence: Were there also female fighters?

Dr. Demby: That was why I said men, women and children, -it's in my presentation- took up arms to defend their area. It is in here in my presentation.

Leader of Evidence: At what point actually did they change from being hunters assisting the army, to a real fighting force; at what point actually did they change?

Dr. Demby: I cannot tell you exactly but I said men women and children, when they saw that these aggressors, voluntarily took up arms with perhaps people who already had an experience as ex-military officers, these people decided to join and this was how it evolved. There was no real recruitment, no; it was just a voluntary movement, as they saw that what was happening was unpleasant.

Leader of Evidence: Okay, and then you explained that it started perhaps small but then slowly the numbers of CDF members increased gradually. Did you say that even when the number of CDF members was high all the actions and activities of the members were still under control?

Dr. Demby: It was difficult but it was left into the hands of the chiefs, their commanders; they know their people, they were the ones controlling them, they knew the number but by and large with the large number it was difficult, that I admit.

Leader of Evidence: So don't you think it was a decision with risk for the government when you say on the one hand that it was difficult for the government to control all the activities and on the other hand the government decided to organise and support them with logistics etc, wasn't that, wasn't it risky that on the one hand you don't have control over them and on the other hand you supported and you called them your allies?

Dr. Demby: Yes, but as I say we had a structure, which we were working on. Even though there was a command and control problem that doesn't mean that by and large there was no structure, there was a structure through which these guidelines were sent just as we have areas where in there is problem in payment, but that doesn't mean that they were not being paid. But when you have that large number, particularly as, I repeat, this was a bush war, a war that the villagers - men, women and children decided to defend their area and went all out; so their actions were predicated by the actions of their aggressors. Therefore it was difficult because if you say look you have to stay here and do this, they next moment you hear that they have attacked another place in your chiefdom. Then people wanted to get rid of the army, which was difficult, but that doesn't mean that they should not be supported.

Leader of Evidence: Can you explain to us what the logistical support was? What logistical support did the government give?

Dr. Demby: Government initially gave rice and money. Out of that we provided transportation. For example, for somebody coming from Kailahun or Pujehun to come for his rice supply, normally we had to use part of this money to get transportation. We had a group fighting on the Guinea-Sierra Leone border in Kono and Koindu; they came by way of Conakry to Freetown for their supply. These 500 or 600 bags of rice are given in monetary value. This money is taken to pay their transportation by air to Conakry or Guinea, buy rice, and pay their transportation. These people also get sick. Besides the government drugs, some of them were admitted, it was out of these logistics that we were paying for them, buying drugs, providing their medical needs. Secondly some of them used to fall sick or die; this logistics was used to carry the bodies from the war front to their homes and for burial. We were given the mandate to provide for their welfare out of this rice and money only. Those were the two things government was giving.

Leader of Evidence: Okay, how many people are we talking about? How many members of CDF were there?

Dr. Demby: Well at a particular time when UNAMSIL wanted us to give them the numerical strength and the arms and ammunitions that they had. There were about 96,000 of them. This is the statistics; I had for each chiefdom,

each district and the whole country. At a particular time, the government said it couldn't support 96,000 but only eight thousand. I have a document here which shows how the rice and money was to be disbursed. The secretary has more details but as chairman of the committee I have a few details in my file.

Leader of Evidence: Yes, I think the commission would also like to have a copy of these documents. It is said sometimes that the coup of AFRC was inspired by some disgruntled SLA soldiers who felt that they were disadvantaged compared to the CDF, what would you say about that?

Dr. Demby: Very well! I want you to compare; CDF as I say were provided with rice and condiments for their welfare, they were not given uniforms, they were not given barracks, they were not given any welfare; the only thing government gave was rice and these condiments but nothing else; no uniform, no transportation, nothing. At that particular time in the history of Sierra Leone, politics had already crept in. We noticed that the party or the country was divided and the army per se because the SLPP was perceived to have its strong holds in the southeast where the Kamajors are from. Therefore anything that was related to the Kamajors, had to do with the SLPP.

Leader of Evidence: I understand that in the beginning, even if they were called the CDF at that time, that people in the villages took up turns to defend themselves etc. The commission also heard testimonies from members of CDF saying that they were also sent to fight in other parts of the country occupied by the rebels. Is that correct?

Dr. Demby: I would not be able to say that because what was happening in the war front, I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: Can you tell us anything about the relationship between the CDF and ECOMOG, particularly around January 6, 1999?

Dr. Demby: The time ECOMOG just entered in this country, I was in Lungi; that was during the interregnum, I can't tell much. We found eh, the Sokor and ECOMOG in Lungi. By and large later when we came down we saw that the loyal SLAs, the few civil defence that were here and ECOMOG were working. There was a cordial relationship and General Kobe as I have said was in charge of the civil defence and all their logistics etc. before it later came to me, so I think it was very good.

Leader of Evidence: Were you then, as a member of the committee also as a Vice President then as a person aware, you said you were informed of some violations), of instances when Kamajors handed over civilians to the ECOMOG during January 6, 1999? Did you hear about cannibalism, did you hear about people being burnt in Kenema with tyres over their neck? And I am talking about civilian victims because a number of them gave testimonies in this way to the commission, were you aware of those violations?

Dr. Demby: At that time there was no committee. This time you are referring to, there was no committee, it was during the interregnum as I've said I was in Lungi, so when the intervention happened, they came down town here; what happened, what did not happen, I cannot tell. I heard that they were burning people but who, I don't know.

Leader of Evidence: The violations referred to in Kenema were actually committed in 1997/1998 as testified by some witnesses before this commission.

Dr. Demby: In Kenema?

Leader of Evidence: In Kenema

Dr. Demby: Yes, what happened?

Leader of Evidence: People were burnt and cannibalism occurred as well.

Dr. Demby: This is news to me. You know there was war all over the country in that area, whether people were burnt etc. I don't have any specifics of that.

Leader of Evidence: So you said before that the CDF would be ready to apologise for the violations committed by its members, for which kind of violations will they apologise?

Dr. Demby: Very good. The Commissioner or the chairman has said that a lot of areas have said that CDF committed crimes, "are you ready to say sorry for it?" I said yes on one condition - if you are able to establish all what they did we or I, am ready, even though I was not chairman throughout the whole period to apologise on behalf of the CDF on condition that all of them are forgiven. No exception.

Leader of Evidence: So at this point can you acknowledge or can you not acknowledge any violations committed by the CDF?

Dr. Demby: Well yes some complaints were made to us. For example, they were carrying money somewhere and they alleged that it was hijacked at a checkpoint, they went there and investigated and some of the money was taken, some people reported. But you see this commission has to be careful of the evidences being given. It is true that when there is an exodus of people, at the checkpoint, people who are perceived to be civilians, innocent people, were found to be carrying cartridges and ammunition in their luggage.
There are also people who are complaining. In as much as I do agree that some people as I say they had no knowledge of what they were doing but because an act had been committed in their presence and they pursue the group and do any harm, that may be taken as committed by civil defence. There are also proofs beyond all doubts that the rebels sewed the civil defence uniforms or people who want to discredit the civil defence. But there are many, many times that we did, I did investigate some of the complaints and we found out that they were just exaggerated but some were true, I don't want to deny.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you I have no further questions.

Dr. Demby: Okay.

Chairman Humper: Dr. Demby we thank you very much for answering all the questions we have asked you.

Dr. Demby: Thank you.

Chairman Humper: Do you have any questions for the commission?

Dr. Demby: Well no per se but just that as I have said, the commission has to be very careful about the character of some people coming to give some evidences here. Let them not use this commission to settle old scores. We do agree that for now some achievement has been made in peace and reconciliation. Let us continue this lest people use this commission to destroy because certain people who come here will be afraid to go back home because we have not seen A coming to say I was the one who killed Dr. Demby's younger brother, who burnt his house, they will perhaps come and say I burnt houses, I raped, I this and that. It is very difficult for some of them, but if we could get those people to come and say I did this to A, B and C and we call the individuals to come and apologise it will be good. But that blanket thing - some of them still have something underneath their sleeves and therefore we must be careful. But I want to thank this commission because at the end of the day, one aspect we are going to achieve, is to get the historical background of what really went wrong in this country, what happened during the war and the remedy to it. I'm sure with the information we are giving will go a long way. But for reconciliation aspect we have to be very careful, as there are some people who think that this is an opportunity to bring down t people. That is all.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you very much, we will take your advice into good part and be very watchful and careful as you said and not allow anybody to distract us from the good work you said we've started doing. I don't know if you gave us recommendations in your written presentation, but do you now have any recommendations you can put to this commission to put forward with regards to the causes of this war and what should be done to forestall a recurrence of the war?

Dr. Demby: Well yes, as I have said, the primary cause was bad governance. Let us at least make sure that the governance of this country is based on democracy, accountability and let people really know the essence of belonging; this country belongs to us, that this national cake is for all of us. Let human rights s for everybody prevail. In those days, in the judiciary particularly, the right of the people were tampered upon. There are some cases that have not been heard for nine to ten years; justice delayed is justice denied. But with steps now taken to refurbish the law-court and then the different committees that have been set up, I think with time this country will regain its past glories. Let people benefit from the natural resources gained from their hard work and effort, farmers must be paid well for their produce and be encouraged. The youths must be employed because during the war these were the people who joined either sides and create this problem on us .If they are satisfied (though you cannot satisfy everybody even in the most advance countries, there is unemployment) but I think if we look at this properly, there will be improvement with time.

Commissioner Kamara: We thank you very much; we will be very careful and take cognisance of what you have said. Do you have other suggestions or recommendations to make?

Dr. Demby: Not now, if I do, I'll put in writing.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you very much you may step down. Do we have another witness?

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Commissioner we have another witness but unfortunately the interpreter has gone to the rest room. But Mr. Commissioner our next witness is Mr. Jonathan Kposowa from the Revolutionary United Front Party.

Commissioner Kamara: Mr. Kposowa, again identify yourself.

Jonathan Kposowa: I am Mr. Jonathan Kposowa, the present Secretary General of the Revolutionary United Front Party.

Commissioner Kamara: Muslim or Christina?

Jonathan Kposowa: I am a Christian

Commissioner Kamara: Could you please take the oath and repeat after me.

(The witness was sworn on the Bible.)

Commissioner Kamara: on the 19th of June you made a written submission to the TRC, we have copies. May we now hear you verbally on the submission about militias and armed groups in Sierra Leone?

Jonathan Kposowa: Mr. Commissioner I think before answering, in about minutes, I can rectify something that the commission wanted. The question indicating are you responsible for atrocities, opening pregnant women's stomach, raping, misusing of children by forced labour, mass killing? I want to give an answer to that.

Commissioner Kamara: Didn't you answer it?

Jonathan Kposowa: No, Sir, I mean it could be referred to any other time but I am ready to answer it.

Commissioner Kamara: Okay all right, briefly go ahead...

Jonathan Kposowa: The question has placed me in a very critical position, being that I am an individual working for a party, if I have seen somebody involved in the charges that were stipulated by the commission indicating that we have committed atrocities, and if only I had done it myself I would have been here to fervently say it. But anytime I appear here, I do so as a political party member. Some men broke away, they betrayed and left the APC and the RUF, they left the other parties and these are the people going who give evidences without any basic foundation. Therefore on the question of the guilt of SLPP or RUF, the RUF is not guilty at all. Point of clarification, my appearance here is on behalf of the party and I will only talk according to the voice of the party. As an administrator in the Revolutionary United Front, I can conclude that we are not at all guilty. Not guilty in the sense that all those people responsible for serious crimes levied are represented under detention and they are there because they have been charged. They are given priority by the government of Sierra Leone or by the Special Court to give lawyers and the lawyers have already been given so if I do sit down here Mr. Commissioner to tell you that I am guilty when that lawyer knows that I am not guilty, it will cause a problem within the scope of my party. So the RUF is not guilty of any of your charges I thank you. Now for today's topic...

Commissioner Kamara: Just a minute, yes before we go on this, there is a point you have raised and we need to react to it.

Jonathan Kposowa: Yes Sir

Commissioner Kamara: Commissioner Kamara wants to react to this statement

Commissioner Kamara: All right thank you Mr. Chairman, I was the chairman yesterday when that issue came up. And I'll start by saying that em... it was not an issue really for the successor of the RUF. The Successor of the RUF is RUFP but the predecessor. We are considering the actions of the predecessor of the RUFP and when we started the discussion I asked a few questions. I asked you whether you knew of any atrocities that the RUF caused during the war and you answered positively. I also asked you whether the RUF was determined or prepared to ask for this country's forgiveness, forgiveness of the people and you answered positively. So I said as a commission we will go with you for reconciliation with the people of this country only if you came out to admit what you had done to the people, failing which, we will not. If your answer today is that RUF did not commit any atrocities, then there is no way I think this commission can be involved in getting you reconciled with the people of this country. So we are not accusing anybody. We got information that the RUF committed atrocities and we listed them and we asked you to either accept that your group the RUF committed such atrocities during the war or reject the accusations.

Jonathan Kposowa: It's a rejection.

Commissioner Kamara: Well we are not a court.

Jonathan Kposowa: Okay

Commissioner Kamara: We will not take a party or an individual to court. We will not even respond to anybody who asked us to give information about anybody who comes here. Our own responsibility here is to get the truth and help people who have committed atrocities reconcile with those people against whom they have committed atrocities.

Jonathan Kposowa: Okay

Commissioner Kamara: and let me also go further by saying that the Lome Peace Agreement gave a blanket amnesty to all the combatants not only the RUF but all the other fighting groups that took part in the war. But that is different from people who are known to have committed atrocities against individuals and the communities in this country, getting reconciled with those individuals and those communities. If somebody feels that the Lome Amnesty is adequate for him or a community or group feels that amnesty is adequate, well there is nothing we can do about it. We can't force anybody to accept what he or she thinks he or she has not done.

Jonathan Kposowa: Okay

Commissioner Kamara: But where somebody comes to acknowledge that he or she had committed an atrocity and we know the person or the community to whom he or she has committed those atrocities, it is our responsibility to see that, that individual or group is reconciled with the other individual or group.

Chairman Humper: Thank you very much. Commissioner Kamara and in addition to that Mr. Kposowa I don't think anybody should be edgy about some of these things. You just heard the Former Vice President of this country wanting to apologise publicly to the nation for what ever may have happened whilst he was chairman of a committee. What is wrong if the RUF apologises for those kinds of things?

Jonathan Kposowa: Okay.

Chairman Humper: So I want you to feel at ease, we are a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Jonathan Kposowa: okay

Chairman Humper: Thank you.

Jonathan Kposowa: Thank you Mr. Commissioner.

Chairman Humper: Yes

Jonathan Kposowa: I thank you very much. You see what I was trying to clarify was on the side of the party. But I am convinced that the RUF has committed a crime against the state, but if it is a body that has a head, then they must call on the people... that is the channel they need to use. Just like the amnesty during the Lome Peace Accord, which was, an agreement not only by one person, Foday Sankoh and the other people were convinced and all of them came up with one solution. But now before I say, I am going to meet the same people and if they agree, I am willing to say that we are sorry. In my paper I indicated that if we are found guilty we'll tell the nation that we are sorry and regret all atrocities committed but I was put in a critical position yesterday and that is why I told you that you should give me time.

Commissioner Kamara: Okay

Jonathan Kposowa: If possible I'll come to this same body and tell that to the nation. I'll say it either on paper, through the media or by whatever means to say I am sorry.

Commissioner Kamara: That's all we want you to know; the commission has been doing this all over the country.

Jonathan Kposowa: okay, I will do that

Commissioner Kamara: So may we now hear from you

Jonathan Kposowa: Thank you very much

Jonathan Kposowa: I'll continuously embrace the effort of the TRC. The topics that are being given by the TRC are due to the fact that an organisation had not been immediately formed for reconciliation. Should I go forward?

Commissioner Kamara: Yes

Jonathan Kposowa: the actors during the war the RUF, the CDF and the West Side Boys were all different and carrying different views during the war each and everyone of them was thinking that, it was going to win and rule the nation and therefore cannot say sorry to any of the groups. Now that the former fighters have not won the battle at all, there is a necessity for all of us to ask for pardon and come together for reconciliation and progress. For those that fell victim during the war, we are praying to the Almighty God that the government of Sierra Leone as our father will be blessed and be able to help them. The slogan that it was Mr. X or Mr. Y or Mr. W that brought the war should now be abandoned, there should be forgiveness and all should come together and plan the way forward, instead of gossiping. One major obstacle that we are facing as political parties is that most of the people that fell victims or were affected in the war were sponsored by people or the RUF, CDF, Westside boys; the commanders are presently in jail. Most of them are in Pademba or in Bonthe and most citizens have still not accepted those amputees despite the fact that the TRC is doing her best. So let us all embrace the work of the TRC and so find lasting solutions.

Prof Kamara Thank you Mr Kposowa. You may now step down

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Chairperson. Our next witness for this morning is Maj. Gen. T. S. Carew, Chief of Defence Staff.

Chairman Humper: The full name of the witness and religious affiliation.

Major General Carew: Major General Tom S. Carew. I am a Christian.

(Oath administered)

Chairman Humper: We want to welcome you here as CDS. We are delighted to have your consent to come and be part of this nation building process. We call the TRC. We believe that your participation in this process goes a long way nationally and internationally to bring credibility to the institution and to impress on the International Community, how much we yearned for sustainable peace. So we welcome you and we encourage you to share with us whatever you wish about the arm of government for which you are responsible and your personal view of our situation in the country. You are now welcome to give your presentation.

Major General Carew: Mr. Chairman, members of this Commission, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. I will try to be brief because my submission is already with you but indeed it gives me the greatest privilege to appear before your Commission for the first time to make this submission at the public hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Furthermore, I will like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. Chairman, your executive Secretary who is not here and gallant commissioners for organizing such a symbolical even at this auspicious time in the history of our beloved Sierra Leone. The topic, which I will be speaking about, is the January 6 1999 rebel attack on Freetown.

As you all know this day is very fundamental to the people of Sierra Leone and that particular day is commonly known as J-6. It is an unforgettable date in the minds of all Sierra Leoneans especially Freetonians. The horrible memories of the actual events of the fatal day will linger in the minds of Sierra Leoneans so many years to come. Mr. Chairman in making this presentation in pure military style. I will give the

aim, then the scope and then I will give a brief conclusion. Now the aim of my presentation is to recount the sad event of the 6 January 1999 rebel attack on Freetown and its after effects. In giving the scope, I will use the following:

I will briefly talk on the event before the attack, the attack itself, then and the effects of the attack. So let me start with the events before the attack. Two weeks before January 6, intelligent reports were coming in that the AFRC/RUF rebels were planning to invade the city of Freetown. During that period, the intervention force, ECOMOG, was solely responsible for security of the city, and indeed the entire country. Mr. Chairman, it was the same ECOMOG that won the single credit of flushing the AFRC junta from Freetown, thereby paving the way for the restoration of the democratically elected government of the day. By that time, the national army was dormant and the bulk of the surrendered personnel had been camped at three locations and these are Lungi Garrison, Benguema Barracks and the National Stadium Swimming Pool. In my presentation or my submission to you, I mentioned certain problems that the heads were having at that particular time which I will not like to mention openly but there was some problem with ECOMOG and their leadership. Well this strained relationship is attributed to petty jealousy somehow but we never made or they never made a contingency plan for any attack of such nature. For their part, the rebels took advantage of the prevailing situation on the ground coupled with the complex problems ECOMOG was facing. So the rebels took advantage of all this and started launching series of attacks on ECOMOG positions across the country. Their main plan was to systematically attack the overstretched and thin ECOMOG deployment, taking maximum advantage of the terrain. The attack started by the launching of a separate assault on ECOMOG positions from the Northern axis under the command of late Capt. S.A.J. Musa. ECOMOG troops were cut off from the rear. Completely isolated areas like Alikalia, Kono, Magburaka, and Makeni were overrun after all these attacks from the north. They continued the attacks until they arrived on the outskirts of Freetown - that is, the Waterloo general area. To be more specific, the armed forces training centre at Waterloo was their first target. At that time the ECOMOG leadership and indeed the traumatized populace did not fully trust the SLA troops to be very frank. So ECOMOG made sure all the encamped SLA personnel arms were securely kept in the barracks angle. So when the rebels eventually launched a surprise attack on the encamped troops at Benguema our own troops withdrew and Benguema fell easily to the rebels. So Mr. Chairman in the following mopping up operations after their short-lived victory, the rebels proceeded to destroy everything they could lay hands on including the expensive military equipment, stores and ordinances. These rebels broke into the armoury and took out all the light arms they could lay hands on and carried some away and destroyed some of the heavy weapons so that a counter attack will be impossible. Without thinking of the danger involved. S.A.J. Musa gave an instant order to his rebels to set fire to the armoury building which at that time was full of high explosives, heavy shells and dangerous bombs. In the ensuing high explosion, several rebels who were within the danger zone were all torn to pieces. S.A.J. Musa who gave the orders for the armoury to be burnt down was himself on the spot and also met his tragic and painful end. The fragment from the explosion wounded SAJ Musa's body and his entire skull was scattered. That was the demise of the men who had caused so much havoc and catastrophe on his fellow citizens and who was aiming to become the

President of this country. Of course that was indeed divine providence and divine justice. Hours after the explosion, the few surviving rebels managed to drag his body from the scene along with the other casualties and they were buried in an unmarked grave without military honour. SAJ Musa's death was indeed sad news to the rebels but a big blessing to the government forces. With the death of this feared and notorious commander, the rebels were demoralized and temporarily thrown into a terrain with no credible commander to take over the mantle of leadership. The junior rebels' commanders tried strenuously to put the men together to plan the diabolic invasion of the city. Now let me talk on the attack on the city itself. The rebels invaded the city on Wednesday 6 January 1999. The actual invasion reached the ears of ECOMOG high command from 4 ECOMOG troops at about 4.00a.m. It was not only a big surprise but also a great shock for the unsuspecting ECOMOG troops who took the rebel invading forces for civilians. The actual invasion started from the Eastern part of the city in the Calaba Town general area. The rebels disguised themselves and mingled with the huge exodus of civilians who were entering the city in waves as displaced persons. The rebels also tactically made maximum use of the prevailing darkness to conceal their identity and true strength. Before daybreak they had penetrated the centre of Freetown and started firing from all directions in the East and centre of the city to throw residents into a state of panic, confusion and pandemonium. In no time the rebels had taken over these areas to the surprise of the entire residency of Freetown and indeed. Even the ECOMOG Generals in the ECOMOG headquarters at Cockeril were all shocked, astonished and dumbfounded when this ugly incident took place. In their attempt to dominate the entire Freetown, the invading rebels proceeded to extend the attack to the West end of the city but were met by a very strong ECOMOG resistance at Congo Bridge, where they suffered incredible and fatal casualties.

That was the first offensive operation of ECOMOG which I was part of, to halt the invading rebels. The ECOMOG troops, under the command of one Major Musa made a surprise deadly ambush that totally engulfed the leading elements of the rapidly advancing rebels. All the leading vehicles and their occupants were blown to pieces in that particular encounter. And indeed this greatest single victory by ECOMOG against the rebels broke their invisibility and put a final halt to their rapid advance into the East end of Freetown, I mean West end of Freetown. As I said earlier ladies and gentlemen, during all of this period, the national army was dormant. ECOMOG was solely responsible for the security of the country with the Nigerian born General Timothy Shelpidi as Force Commander, General Abu Amadu as ECOMOG Task Force Commander and then General Khobe as our Chief of Defence Staff by then. To drive home this point, I will just give a simple example. I was Colonel in charge of Administration; I was placed under a Captain to control me. So this shows exactly how dormant the SLA was. At that Congo Bridge encounter, after having halted the rebels' advances towards the west, ECOMOG finally seized the initiative and embarked on decisive attacking, pursuing the retreating rebel elements. After three days of fierce gun battle and massive bombardments, ECOMOG forces, in a three fold simultaneous attack on the rebel positions, cleared the rebels from Brookfields, Kingtom, New England, Pademba Road area and the whole of the central Freetown up to East End police area. Having suffered serious casualties and setbacks, the rebels had no choice but to beat a top retreat in the face of the rapid in the face of the rapid

ECOMOG assault. These fleeing rebels started to vent their anger on defenceless civilians, carrying out wholesale burning of government buildings and civilians' residences and vehicles. They did not stop there. They also started acts of amputating, mutilating and massacring innocent civilians including women and children. Of course Mr. Chairman, sorry to say, the only casualty on our part on that particular day was the loss of one Major J.B. Arrow and one junior personnel who was with us. As a result of these two casualties, government troops temporarily halted the pursuit to evacuate the casualty and wait for fresh reinforcement. General Khobe and myself coordinated this. Early the next day, we received the reinforcement and we started the advance. As I said we started the advance the next day just to give morale to the troops; that was why we were with these people actually. At that time to be very frank, there was little command and control on the side of the rebels, because their most feared commander, SAJ Musa, was out of the scene. Again when the rebels realized that they had lost the initiative and could no longer halt the momentum and rapid advance of government troops towards the east in our bid to clear the entire city of rebel elements, the rebels decided to intensify their usual acts of atrocity and abduction of beautiful women and children. Thus after suffering serious defeat at the hands of ECOMOG with maximum casualty, the retreating rebels split into two factions. One faction returned to Makeni to rejoin their colleagues while the other element returned and established a notorious hideout at Okra Hills. Of course this group called themselves The West Side Boys, it was this same gang that stubbornly held out at the base even after the transition from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL and it was the same group that launched series of attacks on Masiaka and its environs, ambushed the Waterloo-Masiaka High Way on countless times and dug several ditches as death traps across the tarred highway in the flow of vehicular traffic. They were in this type of operation until their abduction of the British who were out there on patrol; they met their waterloo. They were persuaded to release these people but they refused. So we finally used force, which was the language they could understand. So the British organized an operation, demolished their notorious base and routed these bandits; they exterminated the stubborn ones and of course captured the rest and they are still at the Pademba Road Prisons. Now let me talk a bit on the effects, which we are all witnesses to. The effects of the AFRC/RUF attack on Freetown on 6th January 1999 were immense. In the East and Central of the city itself the rebels attacked defenceless civilians and committed many atrocities. They raped, burnt houses and did so many other bad things. Of course Sierra Leoneans as well as the international community were witness to the huge scale of destruction of human and material resources that accompanied the January 6 invasion. Of course we all know how badly people suffered. So I need not say much on this issue. Again, following their crushing defeat and pursuit from the capital, the rebels resorted to the wanton destruction of lives and property before fleeing the city. Government buildings and other state facilities were not spared. Seven churches were burnt down. They went to the extent of even destroying the National Stadium, The Kissy Mental Home, schools, churches, as I said earlier, were all destroyed. So many people suffered, even transport owners, motorists, whose vehicles were burnt. So they had no hope of getting an income. In conclusion Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, for the past few minutes I have been discussing the January 6 rebel attack on the city of Freetown. I first started by stating that the lack of unity and cooperation which I would not like to

mention was the cause of all this because had there been co-operation we would have made a contingency plan to counter these people but this did not happen. Mr. Chairman, I also mentioned the way in which SAJ Musa met his death. To me this time it was not a call of the Special Court but a call made by the divine God Almighty for him to go and face God's court for all that he has done in this country. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you all for listening to me. I will now wait for some questions.

Chairman Humper: Major General Tom Carew, we want to thank you very much for this time you have taken to give your expertise in unravelling the January 6 1999 invasion of Freetown. We now as a Commission will endeavour to pose some questions for clarification, after which we ask the Leader of Evidence for questions or clarification as well and we will come back to you later. So I would now turn to my colleagues to engage our CDS.

Commissioner Torto: I thank you very much Maj. Gen. Carew for this presentation. I must also join the Chairman in thanking you for even honouring our invitation to be here. I have so many questions for the Maj. Gen. but because of the systematic way of presenting it as required, I will try to limit as much as possible my questions to the issue under discussion and I must tell you that they are not actually personal. They are from hearings, people's testimonies and all I want from you is to really clarify the issues as they stand. I am going to start by asking you on the presentation. You said that as all this was happening, the national army was dormant. I don't know why the national army was dormant. Were there not loyal officers, men and women in the army who could have actually stood to answer to the call of this country when the country needed them most, not a single one?

Major General Carew: Well actually there were some people. I was one of those that surrendered to ECOMOG at Lungi then I went to Conakry. I was there until ECOMOG came and drove out the people and I came back, reported myself to General Khobe and there were some other people whom we called the loyal troops. These were few soldiers and some SSD Personnel who were with us. The people did not trust us because as I said earlier, the percentage of those with the bad guys was so high that the civilians never trusted us anymore. It would have taken some time for them to have that confidence and faith in us. so when we came and reported ourselves, what General Khobe did was to keep us in the barracks, get all the arms and ammunition stored so that none of us will think of doing anything bad anymore. So we were just there. For some of us whom they believed to some extent, they attached us to some of their operations. That was how it went.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. The next question: our army has been reported to be a very strong force; the Sierra Leone Army had the reputation of being a very strong and brave force in the West Coast of Africa for a long time and it had actually enjoyed that respect in the sub region. What gave the cause for a foreigner General Khobe to be appointed Chief of Defence Staff when there were so many brave people in the army?

Major General Carew: Well again Mr. Commissioner, the answer to that question is in all what I have said that we were not trusted anymore because as I said earlier, about 80% of our men at that time, were on the other side - that is on the

RUF/AFRC side. It was very difficult for people to trust us so when General Khobe came and they decided to root out these guys, they were in command of security in the country and whosoever is in command of the security must be the Commander according to our own principle. So General Khobe was automatically declared as the Chief of Defence Staff of Sierra Leone. There were honest people but, I mean, you yourself will not trust people at that time. So to clear that doubt we will just leave it at that. Mr. Commissioner I will be talking on that in my next presentation on the armed forces and the police.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Then again there is a general feeling, especially among the Freetonians, so to speak and even throughout the country that the invasion of Freetown was possible by the rebels only with the connivance of SLA, that without the SLA, the rebels could have never penetrated the city. Can you comment on that?

Major General Carew: Well actually everybody has his own view. For my part, I want to agree partly with what you are saying Sir, because by then if 80% of them were well trained, with all the tactical knowledge in them, maybe if they had not gone to these people surely they would not have been able to succeed. SAJ Musa for example, was a well-trained combatant Officer; if he had not gone over, maybe these people could not have been able to penetrate a bye pass over position.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Most victims who have appeared before some of us at this Commission have stated that all what this country is going through today even this commission and the Special Court was all caused by the Sierra Leone Army. Do you agree?

Major General Carew: That is your own view Sir, but if I should explain, I mean, in any society you must have few bad elements that will try to spoil the institution but among these people, there must be some good ones I mean like the loyal troops; I would not say myself. I come from a Christian background, the late Chairman Humber: B.A. Carew brought me up, and I want to believe that power comes from God and that nobody should fight for power. If you should get it, you will get it. As a military man, you should not aspire to become president but a General. That is my own belief.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. The very last question for now, because I know you are going to be coming again on the 19 May. The May 25, 1997 coup was staged by very low ranking officers, not officers in fact, other ranks. Privates in the army according to testimonies before this Commission, people who commanded no dignity, no respect, with no form of education, not to talk of having any intelligence or any idea of running a country. Why were the Senior Officers in the army so dormant as to allow themselves to be overrun by mere boys of theirs on May 27, where were they?

Major General Carew: Well actually, this is a very controversial question. Sir, if you look the ratio of officers they far over stretched us. So when you look closely it is not that those guys would have been able to overcome us but is that they are in a larger number and they planned this thing when some officers do not know about it, because I want to believe that even though we are small in number, if we were well prepared and had that will power to say no we would have resisted this. But not all of us that could withstand this

tension. I particularly had to leave this country because I said I will not salute any Corporal and I fled to Guinea to seek refuge. I was placed in Pademba Road. They said I do not want to co-operate with them. I was there for two and a half months. That was why I left this country.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Jones: Thank you Major General for coming here and for giving us your testimony. I am curious to know whether the task force commander was ever brought to book for the lapse in contingency plan which brought a disaster to Freetown?

Major General Carew: Yes Madam Commissioner, actually this is why I said I do not want to say it in public because these are military matters. The task commander was not a Sierra Leonean by then. We have certain rules that do regulate any action that is to be taken which, in this open hearing will not be proper to discuss.

Commissioner Jones: I just want to comment that I hope that, Major General, in the training of the army officers they are made to realize how destructive petty jealousies could be among Senior Officers.

Major General Carew: Well actually this is true. If I should make my recommendations maybe this is one lesson. We call them lessons learnt. From any history, any campaign, you at least summarize lessons learnt, how best you can develop some of these mistakes that you have made. So I put them under lessons learnt and then I will make some recommendations.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you Major General Tom Carew. I join the other Commissioners in welcoming you to this Commission and we hope that even if we do not exhaust all questions on the military to understand a lot of things that happened, we will have other opportunities on aspects that might not have been dealt with. Coming to your current presentation, you did say that, and you have repeated it a few times that Sierra Leoneans do not trust the army. As a very senior officer even then, you must have had an idea of what created this mistrust. Can you tell us why the people of this country did not trust the army?

Major General Carew: Well actually I need not say much now. As I said, in the next paper, I will actually give the reasons, in my view, why I think the discipline in the army deteriorated so much. It all depends on discipline. If people are disciplined they will do things that the civilian populace who is now pays them to recognise us as servants of the people and then all this will not arise.

Commissioner Kamara: Alright, I know that we need to get more information from the army but I would like to know whether your statement means that the military was no longer serving the people or protecting the people it was meant to protect.

Major General Carew: Actually that might be your view, but my view particularly was that some were actually working in the interest of the people of this country while others, you know, went on the other side that is, they were thinking that getting power by the barrel of the gun was the best way to serve which is not correct at all.

Commissioner Kamara: So Major General, on the average were the people of this country receiving as much as they were expecting from the army, I mean that is an opinion I you can make?

Major General Carew: Well I don't know what they may feel but I want to believe that since this is the time for reconciliation I would, like I mentioned in one of my papers ask the whole nation to forgive us because staging coups, this will not allow people to trust you anymore. The people should forgive us, forget about the past and look forward to the new army, which is now well trained, well disciplined and accountable to the people of this country.

Commissioner Kamara: Yes, Major General Carew, it is true that the main concern of the Commission is to bring about reconciliation in the country but before reconciliation, these has to be something a prerequisite and that is, people should come out and admit any fault atrocities or displeasure they would have caused that made people not to trust them so are you saying by that statement that you accept now as head and on behalf of the army that there was a period, the period we are discussing now, when the military was not serving the people of this country so as to be trusted by the people of the country?

Major General Carew: Yes exactly. You know as I said, in any society or any organization, you must have people who are bent on destroying the good image of an institution. So I will not argue on that point. Just like you rightly say, I will just beg, you know, I mean members of this Commission to help us to talk to the people of the country and that is why your staff go to my headquarters, I will always welcome them and try to tell my junior officers to make sure we assist them because we know this is the only forum whereby we can come and vent out our views and actually ask for forgiveness which I will now do.

Commissioner Kamara: All right but we have a duty that goes beyond that. Apart from bringing about reconciliation, we are also to find out the cause or causes of what happened here so that we can make recommendations that will prevent the reoccurrence of what happened and this is where you and all the other people come in because you are the ones who were the actors in those places where all these things happened. You are the ones to come and tell us what went wrong that created the circumstances that led to the problems that this country had. When we get that information and analyse it along with others, we will then be able to make appropriate recommendations. Otherwise if we just gloss over it, we will not be able to come out with recommendations that will be worthwhile. So this is why I am asking for instance, what happened in the army that only 5% of the military created this dissatisfaction within the army for the army to behave the way it did?

Major General Carew: Okay, these are all in my next paper but I will just summarize them, I would say some of these things; you can put them under training. Training brings in so many things like discipline and you have so many other things that you derive from discipline. We do what we call military history. In these courses you will read about ten Generals and you will actually study them properly then you take three to know actually what the qualities of these men were. Why was liked by his subordinates? Why was he winning victory upon victory? This is how we do study and I studied Field Marshal Montgomery. He was a man who was always with

his men. He feared God in the first place. So whatever it is, he was always thinking that there is somebody behind watching him.

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS
TAPE 6 – W 5 CONTINUED
TOM CAREW – CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF – SIERRA LEONE ARMY
DAY 2 – 15/7/03
TRANSCRIBER: KIPTIYU B. SESAY
SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH**

Chairman Humper: I would hold some of my question but I want to say here that a lot of questions that we need answering are going to the army. So I will withhold some of these questions and ask only one question now. Would you have us believe that when the army, no the intervention came the rebels were pushed eastwards from the west end of Freetown and they split into two one to Makeni and the other group remained at Okra Hill, the West Side Boys. Well what would you say to another opinion that the west side boys were all Sierra Leone Army and not just rebels .

Major General Carew: In my presentation Sir, I told you that the other side what I mean is I am talking about the RUF/SLA/AFRC. So most of these people who went to West Side base were those die heart AFRC elements that did not want to hear anything about peace and causing all sorts of problems. In fact they attacked the British people and we really organised operation "BAHRAH" which actually taught them a lesson.

Chairman Humper: Are you saying that among the West Side Boys you had RUF and SLA? The point I am trying to make here is the split. When they went out the RUF went one way the SLA went another way, the SLA were the ones who formed the group at Okra Hill and all those that went to Makeni were all RUF. But they had a common linkage with their RUF counterparts in Makeni. That is how they were working.

..... Thank you. Major General before I came to my question I want us to get one clarification probably that would help us in the last question my colleague asked. My understanding is that those who stayed here the West Side boys and some of those who went there put together a good number of old allegiance to Johnny Paul Koroma. That is what is to be kept in mind. Because if you don't do that then we would lose the trend and track of what was happening.

Major General Carew: You are correct Sir.

Chairman Humper: Thank you very much Sir now let me come to your experience before I come to this January 6 invasion. Did I hear you say that with your experience as a Colonel you were put under a junior?

Major General Carew: Yes Sir.

Chairman Humper: You had intelligence information about the pending invasion two weeks before the time; that was the information received according to you. What I would

like to know is your saying that no mechanism was put in place to follow up on that information received.

Major General Carew: Well to be very frank chairman the whole operational issue was left in the hands of the ECOMOG.

Chairman Humper: Yes, you have answered my question. CDS do you have anything just in summary, because you are well guarded and I am also going to be well guarded in asking my question. Do you have any inclination of there being some sort of conflict between the commanders of ECOMOG and the then CDS of the country who is not a Sierra Leonean? In other words did you have any inclination of the conflict between Shelpidi and others and General Khobe who was then CDS?

Major General Carew: That was what I put in the nutshell, that there were some problems.

Chairman Humper: In other words it is the general assumption that this general commanding over ECOMOG considered the CDS junior why should a junior come to command me a senior but the questions now put here is that would it be maintained that but for the in fighting among ECOMOG commanders, it might have practically impossible for RUF to invade the city?

Major General Carew: Mr. Commissioner that is why I said I had wanted it to be in a closed hearing. If I should give my own view I would say maybe if there was cooperation from all commands maybe we would have had strong plans to forestall all these issues.

Chairman Humper: the final one is the one all Sierra Leoneans maybe should answer but you are sitting here you are going to answer on behalf of all Sierra Leoneans. Freetown was considered the darkest city in the world. Did I hear you say that one of the reasons why the rebels easily invaded the city was because of the darkness in which we lived in the city?

Major General Carew: Well you are correct because during the junta days there was complete confusion in the country no good administration no good light all these things people were expecting.

Chairman Humper: There are a good number of questions I kept for tomorrow because they probably belong to tomorrow we don't want to bring it up now. In your next presentation, which you have really done well to analyse, we will be dealing with those but the January 6 invasion as you said left an indelible mark on the minds of people in this country and constitutes another dark chapter in the history of our country. So when we are dealing with it everybody is listening keenly to know what went wrong on the whole how things went wrong and changed for better and worse at "Benguema" when SAJ Musa was no longer in the city, that is now history. We would only hope that all of us in our respective positions would learn from history. I would now ask the Leader of Evidence if he has any question or any input at this point.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Chairperson my first question is about Brigadier General Khobe I was told that before he became a Chief of Defence Forces he was the one actually in charge of the ECOMOG troops. Is that correct?

Major General Carew: Yes

Who took the decision to replace him by Nigerian personnel and why was this decision taken?

Major General Carew: Well I think a request was made along the line that since this man had done so well and there was no trusted Sierra Leonean at that time that we must have somebody like him, in whom the people of Sierra Leone had trust; so that he would actually control the armed forces of this country until such time when we have settled down then they would appoint a Sierra Leonean.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Was it a decision taken by ECOMOG or the Sierra Leonean government?

Major General Carew: I cannot now actually pin point who.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: do you think that, the decision to remove General Khobe from the ECOMOG forces contributed to what you described as petty jealousy for supremacy, or was it also because there was a different treatment of ECOMOG compared to the SLA soldiers. I mean were there more benefits for ECOMOG?

Major General Carew: I want to believe that no true Sierra Leonean had any doubt about General Khobe's selection at that time as leader of this army because he was the hope for peace in this country.

Leader of Evidence: Is it correct that the number of ECOMOG troops had been reduced just before the invasion or sometime before the invasion?

Major General Carew: Yes it is true that they had started cutting down the numbers because of our logistics, but actually we had a good number of them, even at that time.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: So how many ECOMOG troops were in Freetown at that time and how many SLA were left in Freetown just before the invasion?

Major General Carew: Actually I cannot give the figures now because in military operations it is only the commander that knows the exact number of troops that are under his command. At that time I was, because of my loyalty to Brigadier Gove, in care of logistics but even at that I had little to do because the Nigerians were actually you know...

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: So can you find this information for the commission can you communicate this to us?

Major General Carew: No that one I cannot promise the Commission because most of these documents were with the Nigerians and when they left they took most of them away. And I have nobody I can ask. if anyone should have such information it is only people like me because I was with him. But when he died suddenly nobody knew so they took all the documents from the office and after 2 months or so they called me and they said I should act as CDF till December of that year before, I was made substantive.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Can you find the information on the SLA?

Major General Carew: That one I can do because the number was small, not more than a company and that is roughly about one hundred and twenty. Those of us that surrendered to the government were not more than a company really.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Can you tell us about the relationship and the collaboration between SLA and CDF just before the invasion and during the invasion?

Major General Carew: All I know is that when I came back from Guinea ECOMOG had driven out the junta elements. As I said the loyal troops were very few. They were assisting yes, but to my knowledge they were not taking part in any operation here in Freetown. So most of them were up in the provinces because ECOMOG was wholly and solely responsible for the security of this city.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: My last question is about the west side boys how come you had to wait for the abduction of some British Soldiers and for the British to come and Free them in order to chase the west side boys or take over the west side boys. Why didn't the ECOMOG or later the UNAMSIL and the LA why didn't they succeed.

Major General Carew: At that particular point in time the British were here to train the Sierra Leone Armed Forces because the government decided that an army of reconciliation is necessary whereby all fighting factions would be brought together so as to have a national army. So when the British came they started training the army and during that time they were on patrol in that particular okra Hill base area. No sooner than they went there these guys surrounded them and they were apprehended they tried to negotiate with them for about a week or two, to no avail.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: But why were the West Side Boys particularly strong, did they have heavy arms, what made them so invincible?

Major In my own view, I know the British would have flushed them out but they would have had many casualties. So they did not want that and wanted to use diplomacy doing it, but they decided to negotiate with them. So since that was not a language they could understand the only language they could was force so the British prepared themselves. We were at BTC and no time was given; the striking hour was only given to people like myself and other important people and they decided to organise operation BARRAS. It was early that morning at four that we actually showed them that they are no force to reckon with any national troop or any government.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Thank you very much

Chairman Humper: Now CDS you now have a chance to ask questions or to make recommendations.

Major General Carew: Actually with regards to such a topic I don't think I have questions. I would just try to maybe put down on paper some of the lessons learned from such operations. Like the commissioner was saying, in such operations we need cooperation, understanding. These are things or lessons I learnt. I would send it down to you.

Chairman Humper: Thank you very much CDS we again want to reiterate that you are one of the greatest personalities in this society that we depend on to accomplish our mandate and deal with the question of what went wrong, why we encountered this ten year senseless war. This would require all who had been helping, working in this country to come up with their own ideas so that we will put all of these together and educate ourselves. We want to thank you for coming ad we see on our schedule your appearance again because we feel that unless we have this hearing we will not be able to arrive at definitive decisions on what happened or on specific events that took place in this country. Thank you again for the time you took in explaining clarifying and amplifying points.. So we hope

we will meet again here in due course to continue the same process. We now ask you to stand down.

Commissioner Torto: May we have your names please in full?

Major General Carew: Major General Tom Sebana Carew.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Major General. You have been with us yesterday. You now know the procedure but by way of reminder, it's the same exercise. You will be presenting and we would ask you questions, followed by the Leader of Evidence and if you have questions and recommendations at the end, you will have opportunity to offer them to us. So may we now hear from you?

Major General Carew: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. Today again, I stand before you to respond to the task, assigned to me with reference to the hostage taking of the United Nations peacekeepers in Sierra Leone, in 2000. Actually I was deployed in Freetown when the hostages were taken. Many stories have been told to inform the pensive world. What I intend to talk about is how we got to know the hostage taking stage. How the hostage taking stage impacted on us nationally and internationally. I will however attempt to describe the peculiarity of the war years, and how it played out in West Africa, even beyond. Then I will conclude by recommending some reforms and practices aimed at protecting UN peacekeepers in the management of cease fire during civil wars., Now let me just say a few things prior to the conflict, and during the conflict itself.

Now before the war broke out in 1991, I was deployed as adjutant of Lungi Garrison at Lungi. At the onset of the war, I got posted to Mano River Bridge. I was later posted to Potoru in the Pujehun District, and then I was subsequently posted to Koribondo as battalion commander in 1993. I became third brigade Commander in the Southern Province in 1994; that was just after I returned from Ghana, from my Senior Staff College Course. By then the brigade headquarters was in Bo, and my rank was colonel and the rebel was a strange animal to many soldiers and to the RSLAF at large. However in a very short space of time, my troop became used and stood firm to face the enemy, which was by then the Revolutionary United Front. Then the rebels for fear of long-term identity started to wear the uniforms of fallen regular soldiers and we became labelled as Sobels, like one of the Commissioners was saying. Also that time, the National Provincial Ruling Council known as NPRC and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) became united. And in fact got into what we call a

marriage. The created regimes of interregnum and the one time combat focused Armed Forces again became blemished because of the lack of that mark of identity between the RUF and a portion of RSLAF that went into marriage with these people. In future like I have always done, I will implore our soldiers, sailors, aircraftmen, to do their constitutional duties and only perform all other tasks when our civilian master passes instructions within the provision of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone.

Now let me come on to the topic itself.

THE ARREST OF ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED UN PEACEKEEPERS

The brief scuffle between the UN forces and the RUF was related to three issues, in my view. These are:

- The problems relief – in place operating between the UN forces and ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone.

- Another one is the logistic principles of impartiality on the side of the UN and Civil/Military relationship problems in Sierra Leone at that particular time. At the time the UN decided to deploy its forces in Makeni, which is one hundred and forty (140) kilometres away from their Freetown headquarters, the force size was small, the mandate was not combative, and there was no established relationship between the UN forces and the splintered regular RSLAF forces.

- And also because of lack of mutual trust. As it were, the International Community mistook the AFRC/RUF alliance for the entire RSLAF forces. Now for example, before the Kenyans headed for Makeni, a team visited the Armed Forces training centre to inform the RSLAF trainers and Security personnel who joined the Nigerians to liberate Freetown after the RUF invasion on the 6th January 1999. The SLA did advise that the AFRC had monitored an RUF radio that suggested the arrest of some peacekeepers in order to improve on their stake in the peace process. However, that situation forced the UN to improve on their mandate, which allowed us to see UN personnel, exercising that natural element of self-defence. Actually, my disappointment was that the hostages were only released to the President of Liberia – Mr. Charles Taylor, who handed the former hostages to the UN authority in Freetown. I must say that we thank God our colleagues resurfaced although some died at the initial stage of the hostage taking; that is what it takes to manage uncertainty. Nevertheless, I personally learnt the following lessons and I wish to share them with the TRC. These are:

- UN peacekeepers must observe the partnership of the local forces in order to gain any entry point into securing a credible peace operation. And the second lesson is that peacekeepers should be trained and organized to transform into a peace reinforcement role, by developing a force protection party, should a situation demand it. Indeed I am looking at why reforms in the RSLAF should happen in this regime of restructuring the Ministry of Defence; but such reforms need to be enhanced by the International Community, especially in areas such as peace support operations within West Africa. And to summarize, I want to say that I saw the beginning and the end of the civil war. Restructuring

with the aim of inducing the military to work within the ambit of the laws – national and international. As for the hostage taking of the peacekeepers one hundred and fifty kilometres (150km) away from the UN headquarters, there was an amnesty between the ECOMOG exit strategy in 1999 and the UN's take over tactics in 2000. Mr. Chairman, this is not going to be a very long topic. I will leave the rest for questioning.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, Commissioner Kamara.

Commissioner Kamara: Yes, thank you very much Chief of Defence Staff, T.S. Carew. We are happy to receive you again today, for the second time in two days. This hostage taking of the peacekeepers - I don't know, maybe I misunderstood you so I want you to confirm my own understanding of your presentation. Are you saying that the reason for it was only to enhance or increase the negotiating power of the AFRC/RUF?

Major General Carew: Yes Mr. Commissioner, I want to say that this is my own view that this must have been one of the reasons why they took these people.

Commissioner Kamara: All right. Then I refer you to – because I want clarification on a statement you made that's paragraph six (6) of page two (2) where it's stated and I quote "before the Kenyans headed for Makeni, a team visited the Armed Forces training centre to inform the RSLAF trainers and security personnel who had joined Nigerians to liberate Freetown. What was it? Was the team sent to the training centre to tell them or warn them of this attack? Or were the Kenyans at that time to move in from Freetown to Makeni. I can't really understand that.

Major General Carew: Mr. Commissioner you see, when moving troops, the very first thing you must do as a military commander, is to get enough information on the routes you will be travelling and all that you need before you move your troops. So what I am saying is that peacekeepers should work hand in glove with the local forces. So when these people were about to go, from my latest information at that time, they went to AFTC and they were informed that they have monitored some messages which spoke of wanting to kidnap some of these people. I will not blame them really because of, as you were saying, people do not trust most of our soldiers at that time as some of them could manufacture information and just pass them across and to say 'ah we received this from the rebels'. So maybe that was the reason they never gave heed to it.

Chairman Humper: Kamara: And therefore can one conclude that the blame for what happened rested squarely on the peacekeepers?

Major General Carew: Not at all. I will not say that Sir. What I'm saying is that, they should not be blamed; because that might have been diversionary tactics by the rebels to pass on those messages to their counterparts, because some of these guys were part of those rebels, mind you. For example, when I came back from Guinea, when we went to actually recapture Kono, we went there with so many vehicles so many tanks. What they did was send a false message to our location, telling us that they needed those vehicles back. By then we have spent about two weeks. We had no food; we were just depending on raw mangoes and all those things. So there was nobody to come back. Then I decided to go back with the vehicles in Freetown. On our way we fell in a terrible ambush and that

was where I got this mark. So this was the diversionary tactics that the rebels were using. So we cannot blame them at all.

Commissioner Kamara: Yes but Major General is it not true that all is fair in battle? Of course they have a right also to deceive the enemy. So if they send false messages and you fall in the trap that they set for you, well, that is to their own benefit; but what you have told us in this case was that, the peacekeepers were warned by the Sierra Leone army about this message. Whether true or false the peacekeepers should have taken some measures to make sure that if the message happened to be true, they would also deal with it, but I don't think they did; and because they had been warned it shows that they took responsibility for their action and the time.

Major General Carew: Mr. Commissioner, if the situation was stable, we can say we blame them; but at that particular point in time, there were so many diversionary tactics used by rebels. So it was very difficult for to say those people were at fault. So we just leave it as it is.

Commissioner Jones: Thank you for coming again and thank you for waiting so patiently for us call you up to the podium. Now, in what proportion was the RSLAF splintered?

Major General Carew: Actually, I cannot be exact now; but just like I was saying yesterday as at the time of the AFRC days, we had about roughly eighty percent (80%) on the other side, that is AFRC/RUF side.

Commissioner Jones: Eighty percent on that side?

Major General Carew: Initially I could not tell the percentage; but up to when the AFRC took over, it was about 80%. Very few loyal soldiers surrendered to ECOMOG.

Commissioner Jones: So you will agree that the proportion, which stayed regular, was not high enough for the UN to have established any relationship with?

Major General Carew: That is why I am saying that we should not blame the UN. Just like you were saying, the percentage was too high and so the people do not trust us anymore.

Commissioner Jones: Could you explain to us in what particular areas you disappointment lay about the release of the hostages to the President of Liberia?

Major General Carew: Actually all information that we have received shows that Charles Taylor was the man supporting the RUF. So I particularly had something against him. So for these people to be handed over to him confirmed what I had against him. He was the main man supporting these people to fight against this country.

Commissioner Jones: Thank you.

Chairman Humper: CDS, we welcome you again for being so patient. The other day I asked many questions for clarification. Today, I will ask but the three main questions I have to pose to be perceived from the perspective of the mandate of the Commission. One part of our mandate is to establish a historical record of the violations and abuses of Human rights s

International humanitarian law from the 23rd of March 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement on 7th July, 1999. CDS, my first question now is this: Did the arrest and killing of some of the UN peacekeepers take place before the Lome Peace Agreement or after the Lome Peace Agreement?

Major General Carew: Actually the arrest took place after the Lome Peace Accord.

Chairman Humper: Alright, the Lome Peace Agreement Article 9 stipulates that those who were involved – the warring factions were granted amnesty and pardon. but in the pursuit of the objective, up to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement that's on 7th July, 1999. Thereafter the assumption is that that it follows that any crime committed after that was within the purview of that amnesty is that not the case?

Major General Carew: Mr. Chairman, I want to believe that we should go by what the law says. Luckily I was part of the delegation that went to sign that peace accord. We were there for over two months; these people were giving us a lot of problems. There will come a day when they will go to court. Foday Sankoh will say something today and say a different thing another time. Only people like the honourable Vice President were patient; had it been left to us, we would have just left the place.

Chairman Humper: OK before I ask my third question. The sub-question that follows immediately therefore CDS, is , would you agree with me that it was within the context of the Lome Peace Agreement that UN sent the Peacekeeping force to Sierra Leone and that they had every right to go to every area of this country, as a result of the Lome peace Agreement?

Major General Carew: Mr. Commissioner, I want to agree with you (100%) hundred percent.

Chairman Humper: My final question now CDS is this: What impact, negative or positive did the arrest and killing of some of the United Nations peace keepers by our own people in this country have, on the International Community and particularly, those, whose lives were lost in the pursuit of ensuring a peaceful Sierra Leone?

Major General Carew: Mr. Chairman, I want to say this was a very shameful act. Any true Sierra Leonean should be ashamed by the way these people acted. This shows you the amount of lawlessness that was carrying on during these days.

Chairman Humper: Thank you sir.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Major General T.S. Carew. In paragraph two (2) of your submission, you said that you intend to talk about how we got to the hostage taking stage and how the hostage taking impacted on National and International political scenes. In paragraph five (5) you said that the arrest of about five hundred Peacekeepers was related to three issues in your view. The problems of the relief in place operation between UN forces and ECOMOG forces, and then you talked about the second probably being the legalistic principle of impartiality, and thirdly civil/military relation problem in Sierra Leone at that time. What if you could explain exactly do you mean by those three points?

Major General Carew: O.K. let me start with the problem of economic communities changing over. You know at that time when ECOMOG was being replaced, so to speak, there was a lot of confusion on the ground. These particular people coming in did not know the ground, so there was complete chaos in the general area. So in my view, this is one of the reasons why these people were able to capture those people. Otherwise, they would not have been able. That is what I am saying here. Then coming on to the second one the logistic principle of impartiality. The UN troops thought that they were going to a friendly place. So they never went in that combatant role, with more logistics like tanks, in case of any problem. They were not given that mandate so they went unprepared for any scuffle with these people. So I want to believe that is the reason they could capture those people; if those people were properly armed and in their combat role, ready for battle, they would not have come their way. Coming down to the last one, the civil military relationship problem, I want to believe that that was the first time the UN troop was on ground. So they would not have had friends on the ground – like talking to civilians, who will actually direct them to say 'don't go that way' and so on and so forth. So, because, of all these problems. They went there, not knowing anything about the ground and therefore they were surprised by these rebel elements who went around and capture them. But I know if they had had that civil relationship properly in place, people would have advised them not to enter certain areas occupied by rebels. Added to all this, as I said earlier, they were not thinking that they were going for any combat role. The size of the force itself was very small. Five hundred (500) was less than a battalion and those people were more than a brigade in that particular region. According to our ratio, we do fight one to three (1:3). So let us say if we have about a brigade in that place, we should at least carry a division there because we have two brigades in one division. So that is how we carried out our operational planning.

Commissioner Sooka: So could one conclude from your testimony that in your sort of expert opinion the capture could probably be attributed to a combination of not doing the proper sort of intelligence survey, not being prepared and also combination of distrust in the information supplied by the army.

Major General Carew: Well maybe that might be possible but I don't want to agree with the first one because, UNAMSIL has facilities for better information gathering. So I don't want to believe in the first one, but maybe the second one, because of the diversionary tactics, which the rebels used. They could not believe our men there, so that just felt these people were telling lies and that they could go in that small number, because they were not expecting a fight.

Commissioner Sooka: But you know from your testimony, you talked about the fact that the group was too small and in a sense you seemed to suggest that they were unprepared for what was going to happen. That is why I'm asking if in your opinion, you think they were not properly prepared and perhaps were not briefed about what they would encounter?

Major General Carew: Well actually I want to believe that these people felt that they were not going to meet any resistance; because they were here to help us keep the peace. So they were not expecting anything like that. To their surprise, the people, of course you know them, they were not disciplined, did not regard any law; they can sign papers today and say afterwards,

'ah we don't agree with this agreement', so they can do anything. It was just too unfortunate for them.

Commissioner Sooka: Just two last questions, In point eleven (11) you talked about the fact that the hostage took place a hundred and forty kilometres (140) away from UN quarters. Then you also said that there was an ... between ECOMOG exit strategy and the UN's take over so, could you sort of explain that?

Major General Carew: Well, you know, Makeni, which is a town in the Northern Province, is about a hundred and forty (140) kilometres away from Freetown. So I am just talking of the town itself. I'm just giving you the distance from Freetown to Makeni, just to let you picture the distance from UNAMSIL's headquarters, which is in Freetown; and the way they captured those people.

Commissioner Sooka: Yes but my second question really is about what you mean when you said that there was an ... between the exit strategy on the UN's take over. That is in the last paragraph of your statement.

Major General Carew: No, I'm not talking of ECOMOG, its not there.

Commissioner Sooka: It's the last sentence actually in you're...

Major General Carew: The last sentence, But there is not like that here, it's eleven you said paragraph eleven?

Commissioner Sooka: Yes paragraph eleven you said there was, as for the hostage taking of the peacekeepers a hundred and forty kilometres away from UN headquarters and there was an ... between the ECOMOG exit strategy in 1999 of the UN's take over tactics in 2000; and I am asking you to clarify what you mean by that.

Major General Carew: This is what I am saying. I am just trying to actually give you the distances between Freetown and Makeni and also the tactics of these rebels, compared to that of ECOMOG who were just getting out of the scene, it's just a sort of summary. As compared to the tactics that ECOMOG was also using. In that they were coming in, ECOMOG was planning leave the scene and these other people were trying to take over from then. Well this is what I was just trying put in position to say that, it was during that period, that this confusion took place, and maybe the sooner these left, they know for sure that these people had no knowledge about the locality. So they used that opportunity to go and capture them.

Commissioner Sooka: That you well the last question. This was even in your recommendations and you said I personally learnt the following lessons. There seems to be an element of situation perhaps that the UN did not do things properly and you stated that the UN peacekeepers must observe the partnership of winning the local forces, in order to gain any entry point into the secured, credible peace operations. Now, perhaps, I think what we are all trying to get at is, you seem to be fairly critical about the way in which they managed this particular operations. Maybe we can even drag from the tender of your submission.

Major General Carew: You know, this is just like what I was saying yesterday that in the Military you always try to study some lessons from any failure of a command. So to me, there were problems with this operation while these people were captured. So to me, there was a bit problem with this operation, which led to the capture. Why were these people were captured, and as a result what lessons can we learn to make sure that other peacekeepers are not just taken hostage like that. So this is one of the suggestions I am making. That when we have troops or arrival of new troops, they should actually try to get more information about the terrain, from those people who were occupying the ground to curb difficulties. This is just my personal view.

Commissioner Sooka: So it seems you go back to the question really of being prepared in a sense?

Major General Carew: You see, when dealing with rebels like those in Sierra who really do not have any aim, it is actually good. My advice to any peacekeeping troop is to be well prepared because they can do anything.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Brigadier Carew. I am sorry to reduce you but, it is my fault, I am not so much aware of your rankings even though I am seeing the buttons and so you have to forgive me. I just have very minor areas that I want you to clear for me, based on your written submission. You are saying that, according to the very first paragraph, last sentence, 'the rebels for fear of long-term identity, wore the uniforms of our regular soldiers, and we became Sobels'. Was that the only day that you became Sobels? Secondly as a part of this question – are you aware that there were connivances among your officers, between the rebels and some officers of the Armed Forces?

Leader of Evidence: Commissioner, the Chief of Defence Staff will be scheduled for a close Session on the 22nd because we think it is important that a number of issues be interrogated with the CDS, so perhaps for today ...

Commissioner Torto: OK. So I can hold on to that, thank you. For now we take this for the reason. The last part is stated and has something to do with the function or the office of the Major-General of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces if you look at it in paragraph ten (10) 'To summarize I saw the beginning and the end of the civil war.' The restructuring with the aim of inducing the military to work within the ambit of the laws; now, who should do this restructuring since it is coming from you? Is it an appeal you are making to us since you are now the CDS?

Major General Carew: This is just a general introductory paragraph I am giving. What I am saying is that the restructuring is going to be done by a team - that is the IMATT team, and some of us Sierra Leoneans. So it is just something that I am putting in passing that we should consider when doing this restructuring.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Leader of Evidence you have questions for the Major General.

Leader of Evidence: Honourable Commissioner, I have no questions for the CDS on the kidnap of UN peacekeepers, but I have two requests to make of the

Chief of Defence Staff. The first is to assist the Commission in terms of the testimony that came through about the objective conditions within the country that led to the onset of the civil war. The commission will be very interested to receive further submissions from you Sir, on the 'Ndobowusu' rebellion. What was the role of the military in that rebellion, which were the actors, what was the nature of the disturbance? I think that will be a critical contribution that the Commission would be expecting from the military in writing.

Major General Carew: I will delegate my staff to do it; because, as I am now talking here, I was not the Commander at that time, and I was a very low officer – I mean lower in rank at that time.

Leader of Evidence: It is not about your person Sir, it is about the Military as an institution and so there certainly must be records.

Major General Carew: During 'Ndobowusu' time?

Leader of Evidence: 1982 certainly. There must be records of the roles that Army has played over the years; who the Commanding Officers were, the experiences and what they have done in different places. So certainly, your officers will need to look at your records.

Major General Carew: No actually. If you talk of records, to be very frank, when the people came in they destroyed everything. I will only try to do it because I want to assist the Commission. Maybe I will contact people like General Gortor to help us with some of these things because he was the Commander of that Operation.

Leader of Evidence: That would be wonderful. In which case Sir, could you ask him, tell him that we want to see him. It might be more helpful for us to interview him, than for him to put something in writing. So I will discuss with you after the session so that we can write a formal letter requesting for him specifically.

Major General Carew: OK.

Leader of Evidence: Second one Sir, is in respect to the hearings two days ago, which dealt with the 1998 trials and executions. Even though you were not invited as a witness, because we were not having you on our list, the Commission would be very much interested in receiving further documentation from you sir. You were President of the Court Martial Board. So I would like to have a transcript of the proceedings of the Court Martial, as well as the interrogations of the officers by the army.

Major General Carew: Let me clarify that point again. You have already sent to me, and I have already replied to your letter and I have spoken to your team. It is very difficult to get those records now, because let us say for example, after the proceedings, what you do is, you go and handover everything to the CDS and by then he was General Khobe. He in turn will have to take it to a higher level. So during the intervention, these guys, when they were coming, nobody dared to keep these records, people would just throw them away. Maybe it is only people like SLBS and these other people that would have these things; because they were attending these trials on a daily basis but to get it from our own archives now, is impossible.

Leader of Evidence: Well thank you very much, the Commission will explore all possible means to go to SLBS, the office of the Vice President and the Attorney General to see whether we can have access to those records. They are very important documents for the work of the Commission. Thank you very much CDS. That is all Commissioners.

Commissioner Torto: Thank your Major General you have questions for us, for the Commission?

Major General Carew: Actually again, just like what Brigadier Conteh was saying, I do not know how you people intend to interview some of my officers, because I have been receiving letters but some of them are out of the country. So I do not know what arrangements you will make for them to either write to you people, or what arrangements you will put in place for these people, I mean to ...

Commissioner Torto: You mean serving officers, or members who were with the...

Major General Carew: No, serving officers.

Leader of Evidence: Mr. Commissioner we have sent to the CDS a number of letters. Apart from Colonel Mundeh who is in Nigeria, my understanding is that all the other officers would be invited, serving within the country and one of them has actually come forward.

Major General Carew: Well he is out of the country he is attending a course.

Leader of Evidence: Really, when will the course end Sir?

Major General Carew: He has about one more year.

Leader of Evidence: I think he is a very important witness; he is actually on the list of invitees in the army and the expectation of the Commission is that, since the military has a duty to cooperate with the Commission, then it would be the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence Sir, to produce those officers, particularly the gentleman you just mentioned. He is a very critical witness for the Commission.

Major General Carew: Like you sent another signal for Bangura?

Leader of Evidence: That is right Sir,

Major General Carew: Bangura is also on a course outside of the country. So this is my concern now. Whether maybe you will just wait for them; but again you have some time limitation.

Commissioner Torto: How long are they taking in the course?

Major General Carew: Let us say towards the end of the year. Most of them would have come.

Leader of Evidence: Colonel K. Squire is on a course for one year and ...

Major General Carew: But he is doing his war college. He is completing in July, and then he will be doing another year, to complete his Masters.

- Leader of Evidence: Honourable Commissioners, I think it is something that the Commission needs to take up at the level of the Ministry of Defence and if need be the Presidency. These are very critical witnesses that the Leaders of Evidence have through the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Commission, written to the Military authorities, that they come to the Commission. They are so significant that they need to come and talk to the Commission.
- Commissioner Torto: I see one of them has made a written submission in the person of Komba Mondeh, has Kess Mboya made any?
- Leader of Evidence: No he has not and he is a very critical witness for the Commission. In the context of Mondeh, we did not request his further appearance because, first is that the Head of State during that era- Captain Valentine Strasser we want to bring him, and so if Valentine Strasser can testify before the Commission, then the Leaders of Evidence would not intend to present Colonel Mondeh as a witness, but for K. Squire and Bangura, these are very significant witnesses, that the Leaders of Evidence think the Commissioners need to interview either in closed session or possible open sessions as well.
- Commissioner Torto: OK. Since this is the case we are asking that we will take the matter up as you have said through the Ministry of Defence officially between the Ministry and the Commission, but with regards the submission of a written testimony to us, we want to ask you to remind Kess Mboya to send in his submission. Already Komba Mondeh has sent in his submission from Nigeria. We think Kess Mboya can do the same thing. He has to actually send in a written submission. The other efforts to get him bodily, before the Commission, would be pursued by the Commission.
- Major General Carew: Yes Mr. Commissioner, in my own little way, since I have actually promised to go all out to make sure that this Commission succeeds, I will try to contact him, and my M.A. will phone him after here. Then I will request that he spends about a few days. We may have to get the tickets for him to come and explain and then go back.
- Commissioner Torto: Yes. Just a few days and then he can take off.
- Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much CDS. The Commission's intention is to help you sir, to build a very professional Army and so some of those who have some answers to provide for the Commission, are so critical and I am sure that you will be very happy with the report of the Commission in respect of their experiences and the roles that they have played. So we would appreciate it if you can facilitate their return, so that we can interview them.
- Commissioner Torto: Thank you. We see you have some suggestions or recommendations in your paper, are those all you have, or do you have any to add?
- Major General Carew: For the peacekeepers.
- Commissioner Torto: On the papers you have presented even this last one – I believe they are your recommendations, right?
- Major General Carew: Yes, I will try to make some additions.

Commissioner Torto: Please do that in writing and let us have them.

Major General Carew: The only thing... ok I will talk to you in camera.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. If you do not have anything more to add, we thank you very much for coming and appreciate your time with us. You may now step down.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS
REP NCDHR CHAIRMAN
MR. GEORGE COLLRIDGE TAYLOR:
TRANSCRIBER: GLADYS KAIN

SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH.

Leader of Evidence: Mr Chairman, May I call the first witness for the day. He is the Chairman of the NCDDR

Chairman Humper: Can we have your name please

George Collridge Taylor: My name is George Collridge Taylor:

(The Oath)

Chairman Humper: We welcome you to our important body and we would want to thank you for your important cooperation. We do hope that you will be of immense help to the Commission in carrying out its mandate we would now invite you to make your presentation

George Collridge Taylor: Thank you Mr Chairman, Commissioners of the TRC, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, May I on behalf of the NCDDR extend our thanks to TRC for inviting us to their presentation

NCDHR Report to the TRC - 2nd July 2003.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Commissioners of the TRC;

Recalling the events, which gave rise to the TRC has always been a traumatic experience, even for those whose interest may be only academic. For those of us who have dedicated our life, and work to the preservation and advancement of our motherland, watching its rise and fall has been simply devastating. Our only consolation is derived from the realization that the revelations and reflections, which engage the attention of this Commission, are destined to reverse the course of this nation's fortunes and put her back on the path to recovery through reconciliation.

Against the background of the NCDHR's mandate for the protection and advancement of democracy and human rights, my presentation will be concerned with the ways in which the

observance, or disregard of these concepts can help to explain our historical past and prepare the way for a historic future.

The people of Sierra Leone have invariably shown a marked preference for democratic values. Bai Bureh declared war because he was required to pay tax but denied representation. Sengbeh Pieh rebelled because he was denied equality, justice and human dignity.

In more recent times, men like the Hon. H. C. Bankole Bright, who opposed the divide and rule strategy of the pre-independence elections, accepted the results because they expressed the will of the majority.

It is not surprising then, that Sierra Leone was so peaceful throughout our first years of independence, when free association free expression and commodious living made us the envy and admiration of nations far and wide.

Regrettably, it has to be admitted that this was a reflection of the colonial administration and its after-glow. The indigenisation of politics unleashed the interactive cultural stresses between the supremacy of the popular will and welfare on the one hand, and the indigenous ideal of a benevolent autocracy, which turned out to be negligently malevolent.

Political divisions and loyalties were tribally delineated; wealth and power were co-extensive and restricted to the privileged elite; minorities were either marginalized or excluded and avenues for redress or complaints either non-existent or virtually inaccessible.

In this climate of deprivation, discontent was fermented as a national reaction, resulting in alienation of the masses from the ruling class. In their delusion of security, little thought was given by the rulers, to the welfare of the people or the interest of the nation. Poor financial management and disastrous fiscal policies soon led to a catastrophic economic climate in which unemployment flourished among the youth, while over-centralization of power and wealth engendered and condoned corruption, injustice, nepotism, disregard for law and order, which together produced a recipe for bad governance.

Powerless and dispossessed, the people waited impatiently for relief to the point of exasperation. Many were even ready to sacrifice an elected government for an autocratic military dictatorship.

As it turned out, it was the politicians who initiated this retrogressive practice. The coup of 1967, the first of an unfortunate series, actually introduced the practice of manipulation of the military by the politicians, thereby opening Pandora's box and preparing the way for future interventions.

The NRC, NPRC and AFRC were logical outcomes of that first misguided act, transforming the noble institution that won honour and glory at Mayoung to the Sierra Leone version of West Side Story.

Of course, the army had its own gripes, deeply anchored in causes, which are happily becoming 'a thing of the past'. They resented the political manipulation, which encouraged and invited them to intervene when it was convenient for one side or the other. Recruitment was equally politicised, as politicians sought ethnic and constituency quotas to facilitate election thuggery and strengthen their power base.

A major and very important fact ignored by these politicians was that soldiers were recruited from the civilian population and carried their discontent with them into the army. The army thus represented a melting pot of incompatible ingredients. On the one hand, tribal divisions were tearing them apart in competitive rivalries as each sector strove for dominance in influence and numbers. On the other hand, they were united by discontent with the status quo. When this situation was compounded by a deliberate policy of marginalizing them, the recipe for revolt and disloyalty was complete and it persisted into the war.

Marginalization manifested itself in low and delayed salaries, inadequate and uncomfortable accommodation, denial of benefits for the family; withholding the supply of arms and uniforms, which constitute the pride of the soldiers' profession and subjecting them to the ultimate indignity of creating a rival and better equipped national security force.

This confluence of negative forces was a dynamic stimulus for violent rebellion, and provided a prominent, persuasive platform for the demagoguery of Foday Sankoh, while the lure of easy wealth, accessible through pillage and banditry, attracted many. For others it provided access to the envied acquisition of inordinate wealth, corruptly acquired and displayed with defiant ostentation by corrupt officials.

As with all civil strife, the nation was plundered. The foundations of its economy were destroyed, its institutions scuttled, citizens killed, violated and displaced. The difference in Sierra Leone was the sub-human depth to which it sank and the bestiality of the atrocities visited on innocent, unarmed civilians. Witnesses before this Commission have already revealed these in tearful and gruesome detail.

Through these changing scenes of one party rule, military dictatorship and civil conflict tele-guided from abroad, the underlying craving for a return to democracy persisted among the majority of the citizens.

This explains the unusual fact that a military regime, the NPRC, should have set up the National Commission for Democracy by Decree in 1994 with the primary aim of cultivating a democratic tradition and advancing the democratic process. The Commission's success has been largely demonstrated by the increased civic awareness of the citizenry and the emergence of a strong and vibrant civil society. It is no secret that the Commission played a leading role in the preparations for the 1996 and 2002 elections and in guiding attitudes to post electoral democracy.

Following the addition of a human rights portfolio to its mandate, the Commission has encouraged and, in some cases, spearheaded, human rights awareness through interventions at various levels of the community - schools and students, war-affected children, women's groups, youth groups, ex-combatants, internally displaced groups, the business community, security forces and other arms of government. It also initiated the idea and coordinated the

participation of civil society groups in the Lome Peace Talks and propagated the Peace Agreement.

Through our involvement with both sides in governance i.e. the government and the governed, we have embraced and promoted the idea that repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and respect for human rights are necessary pre-requisites for lasting peace and development. Underlying this equation is, of course, the fundamental adherence to good governance (including equitable dispensation of justice) and responsible citizenship on the part of all.

This dispensation of justice is being admirably actualised by the functioning of your esteemed Commission, the TRC, and the Special Court as transitional justice systems. They are transitional because they are not ends in themselves but we hope you will be the means to a desirable ideal, which is Peace with Justice.

To be of lasting success, however, ancillary programmes and systems confronting and addressing the ills, which contributed to the darkest chapter in our history, must buttress your institutions.

Having outlined most of them at the outset, I do not wish to repeat those ills here. It is enough to state that good governance and good citizenship demand attitudinal changes among our people.

Patriotism, above all must be enthroned. Our first duty to our nation is to make it peaceful, prosperous, prominent and proud. Only then can we expect to benefit as citizens.

Unfortunately, our orientation has been totally materialistic and this has been the slippery slope to our downfall. We recognize the need for material prosperity and a comfortable quality of life for all. But if we build our future on a culture without values and positive attitudes, then our material prosperity will only lead us to worse doom and destruction than we have ever witnessed or experienced.

This is the greatest challenge confronting us as individuals and as a nation and this is the greatest preoccupation of the NCDHR because it is the core of our mandate. We are committed to the management of attitudinal change in a nation poised for recovery, but we need the men, materials and funds, which are in very short supply at the moment. We are miserably deprived and this is a national mistake that can lead to a national disaster.

In conclusion, I shall use this public forum to appeal to the authorities and the international community to provide every possible support - staff, equipment, transportation and programme funding, to facilitate that task so that we can continue to make a difference. I thank you

Chairman Humper: Thank you Mr C Taylor. Would you subscribe to the view which is issued out among so many of our people in the country that the insatiable quest for political power, wealth and fame contributed in no small measure towards the strangulation of democratic principle in this country and subsequently to the civil conflict?

George Collridge Taylor: As I have said the lust for wealth and power diverted us from the straight and narrow path. So to some extent or to a large extent, it was the leadership that misled us, because they were the ones striving for power, they were the ones misusing the youths, they were the ones misguiding the half educated, they were the beneficiaries of the nation's wealth and prosperity; the leadership was responsible for our deviation again from the path of democracy.

Chairman Humper: Thank you very much Mr. Collridge Taylor.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr. George Collridge Taylor: for this resourceful paper and the expert presentation. I must first of all start by thanking your commission very much for instilling the acceptance of defeat at elections in our people, because we all know that we used to have a political science professor who wrote a book on the politics of defeat; it was a sold out, because people tend to forget defeated candidates and don't even take them seriously. As it is also, parties right now will tend to forget and not even take defeated candidates seriously. We keep them at bay. We considered them as failures in life not only at the polls. Now I come to your presentation. First I want to start with the very easy ones. Our population is about 3 or 4 million I don't know the statistics; if there are people out there listening please correct me on that. Would your commission think that proliferation of several political parties in this country is a more representative process as supposed to an enforced existence of one or two political parties?

George Collridge Taylor: There are two related questions there, as I see it. First of all whether the proliferation of parties is desirable and their implications, I think legislation or other imposed measures are necessary to regulate the growth of parties. I will take the second question first, if we talk about democracy, human rights and freedom of association, it will be self-contradictory to propose legislating a certain number of parties or banning certain parties. What one can do is to stipulate criteria that will facilitate the political process. That is to say, In the 1996 election as I recall, registered parties were to have representatives in every district; there was to be no preponderance of one particular tribe in any party so that parties assume a national character. That kind of stipulation is quite legitimate because it set values; it set benchmarks by which politics can be regulated progressively. But to say we should not have more than two three or four parties I think would be over stepping the bounds of propriety in a legitimate democracy. So that will be my answer to that second question.

And to the first question, whether the number of parties the first purification of parties is in fact desirable for Sierra Leone being so small we may all have different opinions. But I would say in the real environment of politics Darwinian law must be made to exist. The fittest can still survive. I mean, let them come with their 100 parties. If 56 of them get no seat and the only three parties find representation there will be a privatisation towards the possibility of success. Those that cannot survive will weed out themselves, so if you ask me personally I will say there are so many parties but there have been two parties yet. It makes politics perhaps too divisive, it makes it too contentious and you know we have one or two reasons one can give but you cannot legislate against them; allow the system to weed them out and I think you will be practising real democracy.

Commissioner Torto: Okay, there has been a presentation before this commission in a testimony given by one of the youth groups, which pointed out the result of the last

election as being on regional basis and so that is why the result came out the way it did, South, the North and so on. What is the view of NCDHR on this allegation?

George Collridge Taylor: Let me say this that political education does not achieve optional results. The kinds of pattern, which emerge from the last elections, are the outcome of years of political habits. The politicians again have used their position of advantage in winning support on grounds that they considered favourable. In many areas they would exploit ethnic links. We are hoping that gradually, these lines of division will overlap, merge and eventually probably disappear. It is easier for instance, in the capitals, to achieve this sort of result than in conservative rural constituencies even in the more advanced so-called democracy. Voting is usually by old established conservative bonds, and you find this everywhere. So even I would not say that voting was basically on tribal lines, no, that is the implication of the question. They may have been largely on local loyalties and affinities etc. Which also correlate with tribal boundaries yes, but not necessarily on the basis of tribalism. Let's face it, Cyril Rogers Wright won elections in Port Loko against an indigene years ago. That was change coming about and we were not then in existence. So let us hope that with us in existence, doing our job provided of course with the basics, we would be able to change these patterns in time. These are not changes that take place only locally in isolation; for example you will find the children in Bo and Kenema having boy friends from Makeni and Lunsar and Freetown, so there is a social mix evolving. This is what dilutes tribal conservatism and we are experiencing it in this country, especially among our young people. So what may have happened, perhaps, is explainable even if not justified, but there is hope that changes are taking place. This is my repudiation.

Commissioner Torto: Second to my last question is a simple one, does the NCDHR have a program for defeated candidates at elections with the aim of tapping their resources and their abilities?

George Collridge Taylor: Well as you noted in your first comment, our preparations for the elections include advice, information and guidance about the acceptance of defeat and the peaceful adjustment to the result of the election. So to that extent you can say we have a programme for all candidates before the election, which will of course include the defeated candidates. But we have

not set up a post-electoral defeat program and I don't know if that would be very necessary, if we have done enough before the elections and we see the results reflected in the post electoral attitudes then I don't think we really need a separate programme for defeated candidates; but if we notice otherwise, then we shall certainly begin to think of programs that could address that. But as you know, we have had programs for parliamentarians in which we all participated.

Commissioner Torto: Parliamentarians?

George Collridge Taylor: Yes parliamentarians.

Commissioner Torto: Those are victorious candidates.
Only those who win are catered for. My concern here is about those who don't win.

George Collridge Taylor: Well, we feel gratified that our pre-electoral programs have made it unnecessary to set up post electoral programmes for defeated candidates because they have comported and conducted themselves well subsequently.

Commissioner Torto: Now my last question; I don't even know now to phrase it because it might sound like micro-economics, but in your presentation you dwelt a little bit on some of the problems in our society with the youths. Do you have or would there be a system or a program to bridge the gap between rich and the poor? In other words how do we democratise wealth?

George Collridge Taylor: Well attacking the nation's problem has to be an orchestration. It has to be an inter-sectoral enterprise. We concentrate on the mental, the psychological, and the behavioural aspect of the citizen's development. Different bodies will concentrate on different aspects. Programs which concentrate on the material needs of the individual, are the other side of the coin because as I said, if you provide everything that people need materially and they have the wrong attitude, they will not benefit and the nation will not benefit; they will waste resources and continue to cry that nothing is available. If they have the right attitudes to development, to nationalism, to personal advancement given whatever little is available, they will optimise it, and they will get the best results, which will encourage input from outside and from others. So we do not have a specific programme targeted towards bridging the gap between the rich and the poor in material terms. But that confrontation which is engendered by this division of fortunes, we can address that. People need to apply themselves to work harder and more honestly to benefit themselves, their employers and so on. If we do that on our side, both sides will gradually converge to a happy medium where both are happy and the nation is at peace and prosperous.

Commissioner Torto: Alright thank you very much Mr. George Collridge Taylor: you've answered all these question. I don't have any questions to ask but at least I want to check on the facts or figures or dates that you have given us, because presentations give us opportunities to check on these facts which must be fairly accurate by the time we come to put them down on record.

Now you were talking about the first coup in this country and you said in 1968 well we have other information that the first coup was in 1967 and in fact there were two coups in 1967 before the 1968 coup when the NRC was overthrown. I hope I am correct.

George Collridge Taylor: Yes.

Commissioner Kamara: All right, we appreciate all the information. We accumulate as many opinions and theories as possible so that in the end we can go through them to see which ones to adopt. I will now turn to the Leader of Evidence, if he has any questions.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you commissioners, I have no questions for Mr. George Collridge Taylor: but I will like to make a request for certain documents from him. It is my assumption that from the information of the national commission for democracy and human rights s, they have been publishing annual reports on the state of human rights s, I hope I am correct.

George Collridge Taylor: Annual reports of the work of the commission, which is democracy and the human rights, not separate reports on human rights s.

Leader of Evidence: But those reports will include evaluation on the state of human rights s in the country for each year?

George Collridge Taylor: Well I will make copies available and you can make your own extrapolation.

Leader of Evidence: Very well, we will then request you to send us those copies but if the report does not include evaluations of the state of human rights s, then the commission is requesting you to make further written submissions to it on the conclusions of the national commission for democracy on human rights on the state of human rights s since its establishment on Dec. 31 2000. Thank you commissioner, that's all.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you, Mr. Collridge Taylor. You having done so much - given us your statements and answered all our questions, we now want to turn to you if you have any question to ask the commission.

George Collridge Taylor: I have no question except you say that I hope you have accepted our explanations, for our delivering the fact.

Commissioner Kamara: All right if you haven't any question do you have any specific recommendation you would like the commission to include in its report?

George Collridge Taylor: well sir, given the opportunity now I can only reiterate the concluding paragraph of my presentation that the preservation and support of the NCDHR is vital to the sustenance of democracy, peace and prosperity this country.

One the final observation on the same point, perhaps the recommendation of preserving the NCDHR could also be made in the context of a new a separate Human rights s Commission for Sierra Leone. I know the idea is being floated and discussed and frankly I think there is legitimate argument for strengthening the human rights sector of the NCDHR rather than investing in a new "independent Human rights s Commission ". If the independence of the present commission in terms of human rights s is open to question then certainly the same consideration and stipulations that might be put into a new Human rights s Commission would well be introduced with the existing one to make sure that it meets the expected standards and criteria. To start up a new Human rights s Commission when the present one is starved of staff, transportation and resources, even with initial funding from external sources to establish a new one, when the funding ends, as it usually

does, Sierra Leone will be left with a problem and human rights s will be sliding down the drain. That is my observation.

Commissioner Kamara: Well thank you very much for all that, we've noted statement in its entirety and including your reference to the idea of establishing a permanent Human rights s Commission. And I am sure when that idea is developed, you, i.e. NCDHR will certainly be part of it , but for us as commission, we are going to phase out in accordance with the act because our successor is going to be a committee to implement the recommendations that we would be making in our report. So as I say, if there is any move to establish the commission or something to strengthen or replace NCDHR, you will certainly be involved.

George Collridge Taylor: Thank you sir

Commissioner Kamara: I will ask you now to please step down.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT STATEMENT TO THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF SIERRA LEONE

The role of the British Government

The British Government is delighted to see the TRC up and running. We have always believed that the TRC is a vital tool to help in the healing process after a decade of death and destruction.

The British Government has already provided the TRC with a large dossier outlining British policy at every stage of the conflict. These are public documents which are available on the FCO website and Hansards. There is therefore very little to add today.

It would be useful to recall that the sole objective of the British Government's involvement throughout Sierra Leone's long crisis was the restoration of peace and democracy. We fought hard to achieve both of these. The restoration of peace and democracy were the guiding principles that determined our policy. The key post conflict objective of the British Government is to help Sierra Leone rebuild its institutions and infrastructure destroyed in the course of a decade of war. With strong and democratically accountable institutions, Sierra Leone should never again experience such a terrible time. We are conscious of the fact that the very heart of Sierra Leonean society has been damaged and hurt by the long crisis. Our support for the work of the TRC therefore goes without saying.

There are certain key moments in the decade of war which are worth a brief mention. No sooner had the RUF rebellion begun than Junior Officers mounted a coup against the APC government. The British Government worked tirelessly to return Sierra Leone to civilian rule. We even gave scholarships to the Junta leaders to study in the UK as a means of persuading them to step down. We supported the efforts of civil society and others through funding for the Bintumani I and II Conferences, which decided on the sort of democratic system that Sierra Leoneans wanted. We were heavily criticised by outsiders at the time for pressing for elections when the RUF rebellion was still in full swing and some parts of the country were inaccessible. But Sierra Leoneans wanted to get the military out. Our logic was simple. We supported the holding of elections in 1996 as a means of drawing the RUF into the political process, Unfortunately, they refused to take part and began their campaign of chopping off limbs to prevent people voting.

The elections, the first multi-party elections to be held in Sierra Leone since the mid 1960s, brought President Kabbah to power. The British Government supported his decision to open peace talks with the RUF. This eventually resulted in the first peace agreement, The Abidjan Accord, signed in Nov 1996. But it soon became clear that the RUF leadership had no intention of abiding by its terms. Soon afterwards, the military struck again, ousting President Kabbah's government which went into exile in Conakry. The British High Commissioner, Peter Penfold also moved to Conakry. This unusual move was a sign that the UK Government was serious about supporting democracy. The British government worked tirelessly thereafter to have the democratically elected government restored to power. We succeeded in getting the UNSC to impose an arms embargo on the junta and gave material and financial assistance to the ECOMOG force which intervened to enforce peace and provide security. Happily, the democratically elected government was restored in February 1998. But elements of the Army were by then disloyal and worked in collusion with the RUF rebels which continued the pattern of maiming and killing innocent Sierra Leoneans.

The British Government again supported the government when President Kabbah decided to open new peace talks with the RUF. The Lome Agreement of July 1999 was signed. The UK Government was not a signatory, nor one of the moral guarantors. The Lome Agreement's terms were generous, offering the RUF ministerial posts and other privileges in return for an end to the rebellion. These concessions were controversial inside Sierra Leone, as was the blanket amnesty offered to the RUF. But they were seen as the price for peace.

The Lome agreement provided for a UN Peacekeeping Operation to monitor the peace and provide security. The British Government lobbied hard to get the force up to the size required for the job. But in May 2000 the RUF took UN peacekeepers hostage and threatened to overrun Freetown. The British Government's response was swift and robust. British troops were sent to Sierra Leone to secure the airport and other key points while the Royal Navy sent ships as a back up. This action averted the threat to the democratically-elected government and put the RUF on the back foot.

There is one final point we should make. It took us and others in the international community some years to realise that the RUF was not a wholly indigenous movement. It was only in the late 1990s that it was fully realised that Charles Taylor was behind the RUF, was using the RUF, and exchanged Sierra Leone diamonds for guns with the RUF leadership. Once this relationship was fully understood, the British Government worked hard to get the United Nations Security Council to impose sanctions on Liberia in an attempt to break the Taylor/RUF relationship. The RUF rebellion continued far beyond its natural life because of the support it received from Taylor - and his allies.

The British Government wishes the TRC well in its work. We look forward to its Report. We are committed to the peaceful and successful future for Sierra Leone. Thank you for giving us time to say a few words about British policy towards Sierra Leone during the conflict years.

Embassy of the United States of America

Freetown, Sierra Leone

STATEMENT TO THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC, EVENT SPECIFIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS JULY 2, 2003
BY U.S. AMBASSADOR PETER R. CHAVEAS

On behalf of my government, permit me to express appreciation for this opportunity to briefly address an institution of great significance to the future of this country and to the possibilities for the entire region to live in peace and provide for the well being of all its citizens. There is a well known saying that those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it. No one would conceivably want this country or any country to repeat the horrors that have been its history for far too long.

The United States is proud to count itself among the strongest supporters, both morally and materially, of two institutions created to assist Sierra Leoneans in their efforts to address the past and to avoid further tragedy. While the Special Court and this Commission are independent of each other, they are inextricably bound together in a national and international effort to come to grips with the truth, the truth that will end the cycle of impunity that for too long has been permitted to be the standard response to the most reprehensible of actions in many parts of Africa and the truth that will permit those who suffered and those who caused them to suffer, often the same persons, to come to personal terms with their experiences and actions. We have listened with great interest to the testimony to date before this Commission and in many cases have been inspired by the courage and simple honesty of so many who have recounted their experiences despite the obvious pain involved in the retelling. We wish to commend the Commissioners, both national and international, as well as the dedicated professional staff who have combined to effectively develop this forum and have guided it in a manner calculated to "create an impartial historical record . . . , to address impunity, to respond to the needs of the victims, to promote healing and reconciliation and to prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered" as required by the Act of Parliament that established the Commission.

It is to the final point of that quotation, "to prevent a repetition," that I would like to very briefly address myself. At the end of these proceedings, it will be the heavy responsibility of the Commissioners to produce a report that is worthy of the courage demonstrated by so many average citizens who have endured pain and risk to testify, to dare to tell their stories irrespective of consequences in the hope of finding closure, compassion and reconciliation. In so doing, those people demonstrated great faith in the integrity of the Commission and those who have chosen to support it. I hope and trust that the final product will be consistent with that great faith.

Yet the most brilliant and honest of reports will be for naught if it is not used to motivate and assist Sierra Leoneans and their friends in answering one simple but terrible question - why did this happen? It is only by beginning to answer that question that Sierra Leoneans can hope to identify the actions essential to preventing a repetition. I imagine that the final report will faithfully reflect the experiences of those who testified at hearings as well as the research and investigations conducted by the Commission. But it must not be an end in itself. It will only be successful to the extent that it serves to assure that what has happened to Sierra Leone over the past eleven years and for decades before that is never repeated. To achieve that objective it must be a catalyst to a continuous and long-term process of introspection, by Sierra Leoneans and by their friends in the international community. It must also lead to a credible and therefore independent National Human Rights Commission to support this introspection and concrete action to attack any future abuse or forgetfulness with respect to the lessons of the past. It must aid Sierra Leoneans in their thinking about their own values and what role those values played in the horrors that have occurred. Sierra Leoneans must ask questions that no outsider can pose and contemplate answers that no outsiders could conceivably provide. International partners must at the same time also ask themselves hard questions. Did we fail to read properly the signs

of impending disaster? Did we fail to do enough to influence the course of events? How can we best continue to contribute to the work of this Commission and whatever successor institution there may be?

Too often in the past the international community, faced with the horrors such as those experienced by Sierra Leone, has said "never again" and yet it has happened again. We fervently hope that the proceedings and results of this Commission will serve as a landmark in our collective efforts to assure that indeed, this will never, ever happen again.

TRC- THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

TAPE 18

26TH AUGUST, 2003.

W-17 - MS. HIKEMQWE MKHIZE

F- COMMISSIONER OF SOUTH AFRICAN TRC

DAY TWO WEEK TWO

W-18- DR. LASEOHO MAKHANDA(south Africa)

Leader of Evidence Hikemqiwe Mkhize who also is former member of the South African TRC.

Com. Sooka On behalf of the commission I would like to welcome you to our proceedings. Before we begin however could I ask you to state your full names and the position you are occupying at the moment to put that on record please.

Mkhize: My name is Hikemqiwe Mkhize I have been a commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and I'm currently simply assisting with finalization processing of the reparations and rehabilitations application forms.

Thank you. Do you have any objective to taking the oath?

Mkhize: No.

Then you should say after me

Mkhize: Says the oath after the commissioner.

Commissioner: Thank you, you may begin.

Mkhize: The chairperson of the commission, Commissioners and members of staff I just want to say thank you for inviting the government of South Africa to give their message of solidarity and support to our special Truth and Reconciliation Commission session. This invitation is critical within the African renaissance revolution. I see invitation as a concrete example towards the realisation among others of the NELISA agreement for instance: this is the agreement between Nigeria, Libya South Africa to join hands with Sierra Leone. This also increased awareness and realisation within the continent that colonization in Africa resulted from well thought father polices and therefore to deal with this legacy or to counter it, we should a common frame work called new partnership for Africa's development affectionately known as NEPAD should be embraced by all of us. In South Africa we will all remember our current president, President Tabo Mbeki for his consistent emphasis on the fact that we should all remember that we are Africans located across the continent and as such our thinking about the reconstruction and development of the continent should move from that premise - that is the African identity. While on this point I would like to share with you are of president Mbeki's former sayings which captures the sisterhood and brotherhood and neighborliness across the continent. He likes saying "when something goes wrong in Somalia the residence of Death's Main Creek are somewhere in Mississippi, don't say some thing has gone wrong in Somalia, they say something has gone wrong in Africa; and when somebody steals a Presidency in

Togo they don't say somebody has stolen a Presidency in Togo, they say the Africans have done it again.

I also will like to say thank you to Mr. Laseona Makanda who is the counselor in the South Africa Embassy based in Abidjan serving six other countries including Sierra Leone as well. Your Excellency, I would like to stand so that commissioners can see you. Thank you so much.

Had it not been for your insistence that the South Africa government should send somebody to the TRC I would not be making this statement today. This act had further made it vividly clear in my own mind that South Africa should have known issues within the continent so it would be able to realize some of the promises that are made by our government on a daily basis. To the people of Sierra Leone, I would like to express my humble, humble appreciation of your openness to the world or global village to hold your hands were they still exist as you are re-examining your history and repositioning yourselves in such a way that future generations do not have re-experience gross violations of human rights like the war, abductions, killings and many other atrocities that you have undergone. Putting mystery's in front of the nation is the most difficult part for the nation. In South Africa we used to say "it forced to go through a mourning and grieving period". Post 1994 the tendency was to celebrate that when the era of the TRC came we all began to feel the pain of what we had gone through as people. The process invokes a mixed bag of emotions: one person can say in certainty what kind of emotions are involved by the process. For some nationals the process of exposing the Truth calling for justice helps families to bring closure to the past. Bringing closure does not imply possibilities of for forgetting, it simply creates opportunities and possibilities of interpreting that part of the memorable of the past and possibly using it as leading light or driving force to ensure that never again the future generations have to go through similar experiences or be exposed to such levels of trauma or shattering experiences. In South Africa some survivors did not have the political and moral courage to come forward and talk about their experiences, images but I imagine that the same can be said of this country as well and my humble opinions that those we choose to be frozen should be respected. The type of gruesome acts against others can some survivors or surviving family members to be bitter and know anger those reactions and feeling should be respected as well.

Courageous resistance to tricks akin is threatening the nation will be mentioned in total consequent struggles. In South Africa there is a common saying that if we overcame apartheid real challenge us bigger than all of us standing together. The major challenge of this process is that those who seek justice through the truth are often let down or further victimized by perpetrators when they ridicule the process by telling half and quarter of truth. During the life of the South Africa TRC I had an experience which for me raised a big question mark about nations of justice through truth telling. As the commissioner and chairperson of Reparations and Rehabilitations Committee, I remember taking families of mainly mothers of children and youths activists who were abducted by one of the spies of the security agents of South Africa and killed the elder brother of South Africa and Botswana. We were also accompanied by the Bishop of the Anglican Church Bishop Patrick Mata....., who was also heading the reparation desk at the South Africa Council of Churches. He performed the rituals and said the prayers. Mothers of the ten children also performed (cultural) rituals, talking to the spirits and told them that families will come together and perform symbolic burials at home. The perpetrator who had applied for amnesty had assured the amnesty panel that he will show families where the children were buried after been cured.

That disclosure often to meet the criteria of full disclosure and was granted amnesty on these basis. All arrangements were done by the state, the family members prepare beers slaughtered animals, and went to the exhumation early in the morning. On my arrival five police vans were ready to accompany us to the grave yard. The Municipality tractor was graving all over the place in search of the bones and remains. We all moved very close expecting the machines to move The drama went on for half a morning with no success. The area earmarked for use as graveyard was huge and removed from one spot to the other. I have never inhaled so much dust in my life as I did that day. At about lunch time we negotiated with family members that the process should stop and that the commission would open further discussions with the perpetrators. Am talking before your panel chairperson trying to illustrate what one can call half truths. These are actions and words that can further cause injuries to family members of the victims and make it impossible for them to bring out the closure to the past. Am trying to illustrate further quality on the part of perpetrators which can undermine the innovative and noble cause of seeking alternative routes to justice other than the traditional course.

Another area which comes to mind and I believe its worth talking about is that of difficulties in getting women to talk about their experiences during times of conflict. I remember one woman from the rural areas of one of our provinces who shared her experiences of rape in front of her husband and her daughter in law. She was from a traditional setting were a mother-in-law cannot even eat in the presence of the daughter-in-law and vice versa. She went down to say that for the past 16 years she was ashamed and afraid to go outside and meet with people within the village.

South Africa today is moving forward but she is left with a wound which brought her life to an end. There are many women who were in their thirties who appeared before our women's hearings who had developed all sorts of psychosomatic illnesses and believed that there is nothing they can do with their lives. Their lives are finished. And I mentioned in these examples chairperson because women find it extremely difficult to open up willing patriarchal societies in fear of further humiliations and victimizations. Yet another challenge is that of children who are emotional and linguistically not yet developed at the time of TRC process. We had to get quality psychologists to help them articulate their experiences through drawings and art work which are key in understanding children's plights during times of conflict. Among other challenges for the TRC process was that of redress, which generally speaking refers to as such for a mechanism to facilitate the restoration of dignity for those who lose that the most and a mechanism which aims at promoting community rehabilitation, institutional transformation and awarding of reparation. As a commission we made concrete proposals and recommendations to the president of the Republic of South Africa. We costed the financial assistance at about 3.2 billion in our currency which I think in your currency will be about nine hundred and sixty billion. Our proposals was that it should be awarded to our twenty-two thousand victims over a period of 6 years. When we submitted the final reports of the commission to the President on the 21st March this year all victims started coming for reparations. The challenge of awarding reparations is that in any one country only a few victims can come forward in any one time. In the case of South Africa a country of forty one million people only 22 thousand people made statements. Also there are other practical challenges like levels of poverty in our case and lack of basic services like water, electricity, and waste management facilities for the previously disadvantaged people. In general all these challenges tend to challenge the

integrity and sustainability of heavily investing in individual based forms of reparations. Over some time failure to award reparations could promote impunity and be travesty of justice for the poor voice. There are many lessons which we have learnt and I believe might be worth noting.

The first one: we should all lift campaigns never to allow any leader to create victims. Feelings of victims are painful, dis-empowering and energy draining. In our case we had the majority of citizens 80% really been dragged into that position of been victim and suffering enormously from that. The second point I want to raise is that we should all never take positions of bystanders during these processes our investigators tend to track down a few perpetrators that were no means of compelling millions of people who were in the position to prevent such levels of human sufferings that they choose not to. This finger can as well be pointed to the international community. Thirdly leaders should continuously be capacitated so as to ensure good governance, mediation skills, conflict prevention, management and resolution. Pure review mechanism should be strengthen and its implementation carefully monitored by the human rights community. Fourthly all beneficiaries have their duty and responsibility to account and to reposition themselves differently. Denial and avoidance behaviours are not helped and they became a hindrance to future development. They do not facilitate healthy co-existence. Fifthly the Corporate sector in particular should be compelled through legislation to work in line with governments. In the world today we have the bug of what is commonly known as the Kimberly process which aims at regulating and monitoring diamonds sales so as to ensure that diamonds are not used again for fueling conflicts. We know that in Africa in some instances of the occurrence of incomprehensible suffering. Sixthly local community base organizations CBO, non governmental organization and whole community should be assisted to promote the commission's process at a community level. International NGOs help in promoting the country's initiative at an international level that those findings do not find their way back to communities were there impact of the commissions outcome should be found. Civil society has a huge responsibility in their realization of the commissions recommendations in the memorization of the past. The second point is that government should commit to the recommendations of such costly processes like commissions: by putting in place indicators by which each sectors an interest group could measure progress made in terms of ensuring never again. The last point which I want to highlight is that we should aim at strengthen the culture of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Onenessness which is often a consequence of human rights violations is equally devastating. Thank you chairperson I promise to submit a revised document before I leave.

Chairperson: Thank you Mrs. Mkhize. We usually ask our commissioners if they have any questions to ask of clarifications.

Comm. Marcus Jones: Thank you Mrs. Mkhize for coming and for giving this submission to the TRC. It's quite an experience to have this straight from the horses mouth as it were I just have one question that I want to ask what happens in the case of reparation when the recipient or who ever should be the recipient has died

Mkhize: Well there is a financial component as well as other components of reparations that we have recommended. When it comes to the financial component the magistrate assists family members to write an affidavit and access what ever allocation was

made for that person if they are found legal in terms of our laws to be qualified for that.

Bishop: Able representative from South Africa we want to thank you that the two countries can converge here together, the point of convergence is at the truth telling enter and saying never again. Your presence here is symbolic of the fact that Africa us becoming a new Africa. You people have not only released Yasmin to be part of this commission but have also released you as part of the commission to come to share with us here today with remarkable, soul lifting, is enlightening and its very encouraging. I think Africa is thinking differently today and I think your presence here alone apart from this presentation is sending a new signal to the world that we are together in the struggle. When we are talking about the rainbow country we know what that means and you've come to give us insight into all the struggle and cautioning us as to how far we should go and where we should go. What are the expectations we've begun experiencing in some of these things already. Interestingly enough we leave here barely consoled of the fact that indeed the commission has been doing some jobs. Out of 41 million we had twenty-two thousand statements whose who were willingly to give statements. We are not quite sure of the population of Sierra Leone at the moment; some put it all different levels, the final census is yet to come maybe after before 2007, some put it at 4.5, some 3.9 and so on, but we have been able to reach and to capture the attention of between 7-8 thousand statement givers. My colleagues will agree with me that this presentation here will go a long way to helping us continue to cope with our process and to say that it is not a lie job. Finally one key portion of your presentation has to do with operation and you made representation, and recommendations to government as to EX amount we are going to learn from you as to whether or not this commission will say to this government in terms of reparation EX amount then the question would be will the government be in the position to pay to give either to raise the hope of the person and later dash the person through to ground or to say no stay were you are this is where you should be. We want to thank you so much and I only want to ask one question which our colleague commissioner has been posing to us but we want it to come from you. When as a commission in your experience the going gets tough and the tough gets tougher, what do you as a commission as an re-energize yourself, to resuscitate yourself to regroup.

Mkhize: It was a very difficult question thank you chairperson. We did different things; we used to go for a retreat. I was just chatting our ambassador yesterday that at a certain point I went to a local Methodist church I sat with somebody and then said I should attend some classes and we tried different things but also our net works within communities were very hardcore in terms of helping and dealing with whatever we were encountering and of ensure the South African TRC had attracted an international community a lot. I remember towards the end we have even offers from some countries to visit and just relax and I suppose they have been inviting us at different times during conferences and so on. To be honest it is a very costly process and emotionally during and after. It remains in one's heart and mind and you really need to slow down and deal with it put things go and keep on listening and d and keeping awake and letting other things go and deciding for yourself what is it that you want to hold on to. But the importance is to really realize that ever you as commissioners are going through, it is more difficult for members of the community out there especially in our case the only organization which you can find everywhere in the countries: the church and we have been a SACC, the South African council churches is going around right now challenging the church to take its place in terms of helping with the healing which

should continue for sometime but for us as commissioners it's difficult as you are dealing with it right now I suppose.

Bishop: Thank you very much

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you very much madam chairperson I hope I am going to try and call your name and I hope I get it right Ms. Mkhize I hope I'm right in pronouncing. I would like to join the other three commissioners including the chairperson in we leaving and thanking you for coming all the way from South Africa like our other commissioners seated here to come and help us in this exercise we appreciate very much what you have done and particularly the presentation of this documents. I have no question to ask except for a clarification. I am interesting in the lessons that you have learnt and in the first one but I want a clarification on the meaning of that lesson and I read it

"We should all lead campaigns never to allow any leader to create victims". I really failed to understand that am afraid: what does that mean?

Mkhize: Basically what I was trying to say is that the human rights family has got an responsibility to be extremely watchful and vigilant and be the first ones to see the only warning signs which could be displayed by any leader which indicate that there is a ask or danger of losing power that leaders often have in such a way that some people could be casualties or victims within that system. I'm saying this because if you just look within the continent were there had been commissions like Rwanda, Nigeria, South Africa, a little bit of Malawi. It clear that perpetrators don't wake in the morning and commit gross rights violations. There are decisions that are taken by the leadership of the time over a long period of time which put certain people at risk and often citizens choose to turn a blind eye and react at a time when a massacre has taken place so I really believe as human rights people we have the responsibility to be the first ones to take a stance.

Comm. Kamara: Thank you very much I hope that I and all of us have it very well in simple language that civil society should always create mechanism were by repressive government or leader are stopped or they are trapped towards creating victims in their own territory.

Mkhize: I think what is important to really to emphasis is that civil society is an important role to play in this processes but unfortunately local organisations often do not have the capacity financially during the lives of the commission and yet when the commission's lifespan is finished they have the responsibility to be watchful and ask questions about the implementations of the recommendations and generally also they are the ones who are on the cutting edge very close to the poorest poor who do not have access to any form of help that they can play a major role in assisting at a community level if they are well resourced. Also when it comes to this process of really re-examining the past there is a challenge as to how do ask people then carry that memory forward without causing bitterness and divisions within the community. Civil society could be created by using cultural plays right now at home there are people from all over the world who are coming up with local groups to encourage them to use our local culture to have plays, songs, dances including the memory of the past but of course it got to be managed so that memory is not the kind of memory which would promote divisions that is ensuring that people don't forget some thing similar to what the few have done the world. The Holocaust experience which is remembered to energise people to

move forward in a determined fashion in empowering people so that they are easily victimized.

Com. Torto: Thank you Ms. Mkhize for coming to share your experience with us. I have two questions / well areas for you to clarify and then a statement a very brief one at that. One I will just ask the areas of clarifications during the war in Sierra Leone there was a fighting group operating in the kono district and the other mine areas especially I think in the protection of Bumbuna Hydro Electric Power I don't know if they were there. We have this in process security of those areas was done by a group of armed faction called the Executive Outcomes are were told those were coming from South Africa. I don't know whether you are in a position to know as to whether the South African government knew of the existence of the Executive Outcomes in Sierra Leone and their operations?

Mkhize: I cant remember whether in our Truth Commission process we did come across those records that what we know that there were decisions taken during the apartheid years sometimes to invade certain countries but here in as far as my memory can go I don't remember that specific aspect but as I know as I indicated here with this processes you have to deal with half truths when people are subpoena to to testified they choose what to tell you and they would give you limited information it is possible we were not preview with those documents with that information but I cannot rule out that is a possibility.

Com. Torto: Another area of clarification is: from the South African experience what was the level of cooperation of the fighting forces with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission? Was there cooperation high? In other words we are more members of the fighting forces appearing before the commission?

Mkhize: In the case of our commission we had people who were invited to come forward; we had to examine conflict from both sides that is people from the South and people who were in liberation movements as well as. I would say on the side of the previous government for understandable reasons there was a lot of caution and fear. They did not really trust the outcome of the process ,they were reluctant to share experiences but of course besides the TRC process there was an amnesty committee which people knew that if they were not granted amnesty at the end of the life of the commission they could be prosecuted so that in a way also compelled most of them to come forward but when we look at the number of people for instance families who made statements and when we made an audit the money of families who had not given information in terms of abduction and people who disappeared: It's clear that we did not get much cooperation from those who were perpetrators. On the part of the liberation movement that was a major structure and a major source of conflict and resistance sometimes in terms of saying it is just a war we were fighting for our liberation and we were coming with our human rights songs in terms of saying; in some instances you didn't observe the Geneva convention. So those are some of the tensions which I would claim that would resolve completely which society has got to continue looking at them as part of healing and really setting parametres of waging structures in future.

Com. Torto: The last point is just by way of statement and I want to make this statement - I am not speaking for the commission! am speaking out as a commissioner, as an

observation by a commissioner not commission. During the war I have noticed that we have had a lot of assistance from neighboring countries and from countries elsewhere, we've had from Nepal, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and then from Africa we have Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana, and even in Southern Africa- we've had Zambia, Kenya before the military intervention of Britain some of us here in Sierra Leone look upon South Africa to be a leader in many ways especially in the arms struggle and from the little current affairs I used to read Sierra Leone stood tight very close to South Africa during the struggle in fact I remember it was at independent 1961 before we established diplomatic relations that is after we had independence, the South Africa mission that was here was expelled in 1961 just to associate ourselves with our brothers in South Africa's struggle. My observation is that I have not seen much coming from that part of the world our brothers and sisters actually by way of assistance during those very tedious struggles. I am just expressing my own personal feelings that we really forward to South Africa in this areas in future and we however thank the South African government and the people for letting us have the services of Yasmin whose experiences we are benefiting from very immensely and very very much. That we are grateful and thankful for; but like I said there has to be room for improvement in those areas that my personal feeling I thank you.

Com. Sooka: Thank you. I think just for Torto's benefits when the new government came into power and they learnt about what ex-South Africa military men were doing particularly in Executive Outcome the South African government actually passed a law outlawing it or making a criminal offense for any South African to be enlisted as a mercenary and in fact charges can be laid in South Africa by the state against any South African who participated in mercenary activity. I have no questions for Ms. Mkhize except I think to ask if when we discuss reparation at our workshop is she would be available. I think with her own rich experience of the difficulties of the would share that with the commissions especially as we have been discussing this issue in the last week. Does she have questions?

Leader of Evidence: Actually, I was going to ask a question about reparations I wanted to find out madam commissioner that in deciding on reparation did you make specific reparations in respect of individual cases or did you make it at a collective reparation targeting a particular group of people or a community and I also want to know the factors that informed the kind of reparations to make; was it as a result of your own needs assessment? Did you conduct your own needs assessment or was it done on request made by the victims and also did you in any way test the waters with government did you in any way consult the government concerning the figures were going out with so as to probably prompt and prepare the mind of the government did you?

Mkhize: Thank you chairperson. Our reparation policy has got I think three components: the individual financial grants and the other category is what we called community rehabilitation in other wards proposing specific services which can benefit more people were by violations stood at a larger community level. The third category symbolic reparations in other words things like parks, memorials like what now is called the freedom parks which is quite a comprehensive park which traces our history from colonial era, apartheid years where we are today and where we are going. It's a huge construction. When it comes to individual financial grants I would really say we debated the issue at length. In the case of our commission, we had an amnesty clause whereby perpetrators were granted amnesty irrespective of the crimes they had committed

as long as they met the legal criteria. The question then this commission is likely to be in favour of perpetrators if victims are only promised services; so we were faced with this dilemma is to how do we justify the granting of amnesty to perpetrators and not have anything concrete for victims because we knew post ending conflicts, it takes time to have services up and running and also there were pressing needs presented by people who were victims like some were on wheelchairs which were falling apart; some were living on medical assistance of some kind and found in abject poverty. So we said look maybe to give government time to come up with our needed services let's provide the financial component which can enable people to buy whatever pressing needs they had ultimately then merge that with government. So that's how we came about with this individual financial grants but the huge component of our reparation is really looking all what would be needed to assist communities and families so that we don't create conflict again in communities and we trusted and believed in the generosity of our people that they will accept that they should give a small acknowledgement of how we suffered which is not really anything; it won't make anyone richer or anything. As to how determined needs assessments I remember that we had a database, a frame work and whenever we are making or taking statements are asked people to determined needs so some had needs for educational assistance, health assistance, some in need of housing and so on. And then we captured the right zones; a family needed financial assistance especially in the case where bread winners were killed and grandparents were left with the responsibility of bringing up small children and in those instances we felt there was a need for educational assistance as well as financial assistance. So it wasn't done through a research process but it was just determined based on people needs. In the process of working we kept the minister of justice informed that when looking back, I would say commissioners it's important to insist that government should establish inter ministerial working committee so that with each phase we breed a quicker group of ministers especially about significant recommendations because then you created a by-room during the life of the commission. Otherwise in our case we had a good relationship with the minister then but I don't think insisted on ensuring that these inter ministerial committee which is briefed on a regular basis. We relied on the relationship and also as a commission, we welcomed issues, we wanted our independence and sometimes I don't know whether we took that to extremes a bit. In a way I think we could have achieved more if we had managed that independence better. South Africa is likely in that we have a very strong voice of civil society and that have helped a lot to keep issues burning even now people are still not reliable in terms of saying how much more can you get in support of our victims.

Com. Sooka A number of those questions are things perhaps when we have workshop we can talk about that Ms. Mkhize can tell is the struggles related to dealing with government on those issues. I know that Mr. Makhanda wants to say something but I am proposing that in order to afford him a proper opportunity we should take him first thing in the morning at ten o'clock when we start nine thirty lot possible. I think you should cross a few things say it might be useful if first thing in the morning you deal with those. It only remains for me to think Ms. Mkhize for traveling so far and sharing her wealth of experience with us and it's a pleasure in a sense to welcome someone from home and at this stage for our regular listeners we are adjoining the hearing and we will commence tomorrow morning at nine thirty thank you. Stand as the commissioners take their leave.

W-18 - LASEONA MAKHANDA

Comm. Torto: Morning all we once more welcome you to the TRC hearings here at the YWCA Hall for those who are listening on the radio am Slyvanus Torto commissioner presiding for the day. Before we go on to the business of the day maybe rise for the Muslim and Christian prayers respectively.

PRAYERS

Com Torto: For those of you who are attending this commission hearings for the first time maybe it will be important for us to remind or state the major procedures. Do we have our first witness.

Leader of Evidence May it please the commission the government of South Africa had sent a representative who has kindly assisted the commission in presenting one of commissioners of the South African TRC to make a presentation to the commission in terms of her experience and that was the witness we had yesterday but the political the first secretary at the South Africa Embassy in Cote D'Ivory then wants to make a brief statement on behalf of the government of South Africa so may I now invite Mr. Laseona Makhanda.

Com Torto: Thank you for coming to share your experience with us we appreciate your presence. We have had Yasmin with us for sometime for since our beginning we have benefited immensely from her practical experience in this exercise, your presence just make it adding more to that and we want you to know the commission very much appreciate your presence and thanks the government of South Africa very much for letting you come here to share your experiences with us. You know the procedures I don't have to state you are witness we don't have to bother with procedures.

Laseona: Honorable commissioners grace and peace. Allow me to thank you and also our commissioner Ms. Mkhize for affording me this opportunity to respond to the chairperson to the commissioner Slyvanus Torto's personal questions raised yesterday. Commissioner Torto is absolutely correct that Sierra Leone made valuable contributions towards our own struggles against the abominable polices of apartheid who the international community correctly label as crimes against humanity. Indeed I myself on a personal note traveled on a Sierra Leonean passport as a Sierra Leonean for most of my thirty years in exile even though I have never set foot in this country until only several weeks ago when I came to this public hearings here in Freetown. Having said this let me turn to the two questions already touched upon earlier by the commissioner why the Executive Outcomes after our freedom on 27th April, 1994 all mercenary activities were outlawed by an act of parliament which set out heavy punishment for any one found or convicted, found and convicted of contravening with these provisions. The group in question that is Executive Outcomes upon learning of this act announced that they have seized all operations and would disband. The

government of South Africa scrupulously monitors and investigates any and all allegations that would contravene this law it will not and does not tolerate any mercenary activities. Mr. chairman honorable commissioners, my colleague commissioner Mkhize quoted our president Tabo Mbeki's observations in her statement she made yesterday. Those observation had to do with people who some what had become African pessimist. If our president concern was only for his country South Africa and his people the said quotation would not have bothered him at all let alone make him pay any attention to it, given us the onerous task he has to fulfill. I also humbly draw the chairperson's attention to president Mbeki's

Statement to parliament made several years ago, titled "I am an African". Sierra Leone is an integral part of Africa. South African's foreign policy has it chief priority the continent of Africa every action and program of our government and our department of foreign affairs is guided by that policy. The African renaissance and NEPAD have as their genesis this vision contrary to all informed aparenthies by those who claim NEPAD is a western inspired program. Coming to the specifics therefore in Sierra Leone, South Africa is a member of a group of three countries chosen by the fore runner of the African Union that is the OAU in a program titled Nelisa which stands for Nlgeria, Libya and South Africa; the three countries were appointed by the fore runner of the AU to work with the government of Sierra Leone in terms of rehabilitation and assistance to Sierra Leone. My current director-General Mr. Mammah Bohlor had traveled several times to Freetown in pursuing that mandate. It is in that project the Nelisa project, South Africa has approved a sum of approximately 20 million Rand to kick start the project. The project is a very massive project as I said that we have already approved the sum of twenty million into that project as an initial allocation toward Sierra Leone and that project as I say is a long term and a very massive project. In that way South Africa not only takes into consideration the contribution of Sierra Leone but also carries out its responsibility within the context of the Africa Union and the NEPAD program. As I said before, Mr. chairman it would helpful to add this in our scripts am grateful that chairperson allowed me to make this few remarks and I think correctly so because as I stated that it is very important for us to be seen to not only talk but to work the talk and as the good book says- "The footsteps of the righteous are guided by the Lord" least did I know when I carried the Sierra Leonean passports which stated that I was born in Freetown I did not know I only knew Freetown was in some part of West Africa somewhere that one day I will be sitting here in Sierra Leone and speaking to the distinguished commissioners who are doing such an important job. Thanks you very much Mr. chairman.

Comm. Torto: We want to extend our thanks to Mr. Mkhanda for coming into talk to us one important information we omitted really was to state that Mr. Mkhanda himself was a member of South African TRC he served as a commissioner, that had been stated by the leader of evidence the procedures here is for the commission not to talk government officials questions we have not done so in the case of Britain and United States we are not going to do so in the case of South Africa so we thank you very much for this presentation and except if the chairman waits to make a comment before you step down.

Bishop: Mr. Mkhanda we want to thank you very much for this presentation but at every stage we seize opportunities to send message across and when we see representatives coming from other parts of the country like South Africa it is important that you give the message to that Ambassador and through that Ambassador this message would go far and wide. Having heard from you I

believe that in the first placed Africa is coming of age and it is now my conviction from what you have expressed if that is the case then South Africa and Nigeria must lead while others follow. That is our message as a commission for our leaders through you and we are gratified and really privileged to have you here to say what we have not heard before in simple and clear terms because people did not know that South Africa out there was doing something for Sierra Leone. I am sure about that. I'm clear in my mind about that. So my message to President Mbeki and president Obasanjo is South Africa and Nigeria must lead whilst others in Africa follow. Thank you.

Comm. Torto: Please convey our sincerest appreciation to the government of South Africa for the efforts. Thank you.

DECEMBER 1992 COUP TRIALS AND EXECUTIONS

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION THEMATIC & INSTITUTIONAL HEARING, 30th July 2003 TAPES 37-38– VALENTINE STRASSER

Commissioner Kamara: I would like to welcome you again to another day of hearings this week. As you know we always remind those of who are here with us and those listening to us in their houses and other places where they maybe having their radios, that we treat this exercise very seriously and particularly our witnesses. They need all the respect and regard that we can give them. So while the evidence is proceeding, we wouldn't like anybody to laugh, clap, boo or do anything that will distract our witnesses. So we want you only to sit down and listen and not interfere or interrupt in what goes on. Even for photographers, only such accredited people are allowed to take photographs, and even they can only take photographs before or after the evidence has been given. But before we start even the hearings we normally have prayers, inter-religious prayers and I would like to ask somebody to lead us first in Christian Prayers and then in Muslim prayers.

Prayer was done both in Muslim and Christian faith

Commissioner Professor Kamara: And Leader of Evidence, have we got witnesses for today?

Mr. Charm: Thank you Mr. Commissioner. As for now we have two witnesses present.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Two witnesses, so shall we have the first witness please.

Mr. Charm: Mr. Commissioner, our first witness for today is Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: For purposes of our records will the first witness here give his full name?

Valentine Strasser: Valentine E.M. Strasser

Commissioner Professor Kamara: What's your religion please?

Valentine Strasser: Christian.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So you take the bible and repeat after me.

The oath was then administered to the witness by Commissioner Kamara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you Mr. Strasser again. We are happy that you are able to come to us to give us your statement and I want to remind you of this if you have not heard it before: we want to tell you that nothing that you say here will qualify you for any prosecution, we are not a court, we are just seeking the truth and we expect you to just feel relaxed and tell us what ever information you want to give us. Thank you.

Valentine Strasser: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure for me to be here and I would like to use this opportunity to first of all apologise for being late. And that is due to the heavy traffic on the main roads that I used to get myself here. Now Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, you would remember that I was here some days ago, and I was officially informed by your good self and your Commission that you would have to call me on one stated day and time and then comment on four major issues. I am here today actually to comment on the four issues that you raised. The first issue that was raised was the December 1992 executions and the tribunal hearings. The second issue was the war and its prosecution by the government that I was heading. The third issue was the overthrow of the government that I was heading and the fourth and final issue was the government human rights record, and its economic management policies.

Mr. Chairman, I would handle the issues around them and I would like to say before I start addressing the issues... I would like to say that the life of the government that I headed was just two and a thousand days. And I would also say this additionally that the four main priorities of the government then at the time was one, to end the war quickly, to eradicate if you like corruption, to turn the economy around, and lastly to return the country to a democratic rule. Those were four major objectives or priorities of the government that I was heading. I start with the third issue that had to do with why the government was overthrown. Now my feeling is there might have been three main reasons why the government was toppled by officers who were members of the same government; specifically the deputy who was Brigadier General Maada Bio. The first reason had to do with proposed constitutional change and succession. Now at the time when the programme for returning the country to Multi Party democracy had been published, dates for registration in primarily presidential elections were set. And some people might have felt that I had intentions to change or amend the constitution

so that the constitution will make it possible for me to run in the presidential elections so as to succeed myself. You would perhaps know that our constitution has an upper age limit of 40 years, that if you want to put yourself up as a candidate in the presidential elections you have to be 40 years old and above. Now there were those who were arguing that if somebody has attained that person had to be voted for if he or she wants a public office. Now I will say this clearly: I had no intention to succeed myself because I knew then at the time the constitution made it impossible for me to contest in that particular presidential election in 1996. But some of the members of the government might have felt that I intended to change or amend the constitution with parliament in suspension so that it would be possible for me to put myself up as a candidate in the presidential election and in so doing succeed myself; that might have been one of the reasons. So, that may be why the government was overthrown. I actually don't know. The second likely reason, or the second possible reason, will have to do with perhaps selfishness and greed. I think that the Deputy at the time was selfish and was pursuing his own selfish interest and was greedy and he had wanted power for the sake of power, so that he could acquire wealth, and then leave the country. That's another reason. Now the third might have been because this would have to be with what I chose to see as nepotism. He hails from Bonthe, he is Mende by tribe and he is a southerner. Now in my part the idea that they would be of interest for that party to win the general elections, might perhaps have been another reason why he did what he did on January 16, 1996. That's all I can say on the issue of why I think the government was overthrown.

I go on to the second issue, which has to do with the war and its prosecution. If you remember in my introduction line, I stated that one of the government's mandates was to end the war quickly. Now at the time when I took office the army had a lot of problems. In fact I was serving before I took office, so some of the problems I was aware of. One of the problems that the army had at the time had to do with the very size of the organisation. It was very, very small, we had about three infantry battalions at that time. And these units were at the south where heavy fighting was going on with the government soldiers and the rebels belonging to the Revolutionary United Front. It was small and badly organised. The first thing I had to do was to reorganise it. Now I argued that if we had three infantry battalions then we should have a brigade headquarter or a brigade. That was how the first infantry brigade was actually established. The other problem that the army had at that time was insufficient training. Now most of the personnel lacked the basic skills to fight the sort of war we were fighting at that time; so that was another problem. Another problem also had to do with the equipment or the weapon systems that the army was using at that time. The army never had tank, no armoured, no artillery. The army was only using mortal and light weapons and most of these light weapons were old and so therefore it was almost impossible for the army to deal with the guerrillas. So another problem had to do with re-equipping the army, I mean my challenge was re-organising, retraining and re-equipping the army that I was commander in Chief of when I took office.

When I took office I made sure that machine guns were acquired and issued to the front line units, which was why it was possible to reverse the advances of the rebels to the city. The other area that I would want to touch in with regards to the army handling of the war at the time when

I was there in office is related to how many of those killed in action, those who were wounded in action and those who were missing in action, now those figures that I would be given you are actually ... I will suggest that if you want accurate figures, you can actually find perhaps these figures with the different forces. Now these are just basically rough estimates. My assumption is that there were about 37 personnel who were killed in action at the time when I was in office. There was about 112 that were wounded and 8 missing in action, but like I said you will have to confirm these figure with forces records. Another area that I would also want to touch in is equipment that was lost or destroyed. Now one armour was lost in an ambush, it was ambushed by rebel troops in one attack to re-capture a tank that was under the occupation of rebel forces. One amour was lost, several networks were also lost and several three quarter turn land rover were also lost, and some personnel actually died or got killed in action, or got missing in action or wounded in action as the case might be.

I'll go into the fourth issue, which has to do with the government human rights record and its economic management policies. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to make the point that I have never seen a perfect government anywhere in the whole world. Now for me to say that, that government that I was in heading was the best government I have ever seen will be an under statement. Mistakes I will admit and for those mistakes I would like to use this opportunity, ladies and gentlemen to actually apologise to those friends and families, or to those ones who might have been hurt in any way, by the actions that that government took at the time when I was in office. I would like to remind the audience here and you Mr. Chairman and your commissioners there the face of the crises at that time, and it was such that that country's security was threatened. And the rebel army was predetermined to take the capital city. I will tell you because I was at the front myself and I could see how determined the rebel forces were to actually over-run the entire country.

On the government human rights record, nobody was killed that had to do with a political motive. What I'm trying to say here is that there were no political motivated killings. There weren't any political motivated killings at all. Nobody was tortured while in detention, that I can assure you. One soldier was reported missing, you might want to ask if there were any disappearances, there was none actually but one soldier was reported missing who was at the Military Hospital and a report came up, that someone did kidnap him, abducted him from his bed where he was receiving treatment and took him to some unknown location and eliminated him. I investigated it and it was found that this soldier actually died on his bed of wounds that he sustained while he was in action in one of the operational areas. So I can tell you as well that there were no disappearances at all. Now there were fourteen detentions without trial and those ones who were detained without trial were predominantly politicians who held offices with the previous government. But these ones were later released from detention after a period for about 26 or 27 days put under house arrest pending investigations in one of more of the public enquiries that were actually going on. Now after compliance with white papers orders, there were lots of them we set free. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, it is sad to say that 26 were executed by firing squad for fomenting what you might call treason. It was actually military intelligence that indicated that a group of army and police officers were

plotting to overthrow the legitimate government. Now I would want to make this clear that at the time when this report was actually given to the government, there wasn't any time for a proper trial. I use the word again - for a proper trial to go on. Because then the war was serious and commanders were needed more at the front than in Freetown. That I would have to say, on the human rights record that's all I would have to tell you.

Now finally on the issue number one which has to do with December Executions and coup trials, I would say this: the 26 who were arrested and detained by the police, I mean the 26 army and police officers who were arrested and detained by the police were given to the government by one intelligence officer, with the military intelligence branch. In fact he was stationed in the group to find out exactly what the plans were, or what their intentions were, how they were going to carry out the coup, where they were going to hide their arms and armour that they will use to carry out the operations, and so on and so forth. And after this report the police came out with their investigations and a number of searches were carried out as well. Now caches of arms and armoured ammunition were found in several addresses, including the address of one Mr. Salami Coker, somebody I never knew before and one Miss Salima O. Kamara, somebody I have never known before as well. After the executions, there was a public tribunal hearing. Now the public tribunal hearing did find 26 of the army and police officers guilty of treason and the death warrant was subsequently signed by my very self. That's all I could say.

Now on the government economic management policies, I'll make the following points. The country's debt loan was wiped out at the time of the very year that the government took power. The government also was able to undertake a major educational reform. It was that government that actually introduced a new school system, the 6,3,3,4 system of education and brought into the syllabus of schools subjects like basic technology and so on; that government was first on health care and sanitation. More beds were introduced into our public hospitals, and I can also tell you that the patient waiting list was almost exhausted in the first hundred days that that government was in office. Now on sanitation I think the government did very well as well. The government worked with various or several youth groups throughout the country in terms of street cleaning and so on and so forth. On sports, the government also did well, it was only during that regime Sierra Leone won the Amical Cabral cup twice and qualified for the African Nations cup. On transport the government also did well. There was a public transport system of coaches and bushes, ordered and were in use for communities. The government also did well on road construction. In fact it was the government that actually rebuilt the city and undertook major road construction projects including the Freetown-Masiaka highway; electricity and water were never in short supply and the government also did well with telecommunications. There were public pay phones all over the cities and in the provinces and so on and so forth. And the government also never allowed petrol, diesel, or kerosene to be in short supply. Ladies and Gentlemen, that's all I have to say, thank you very much for this opportunity for me to say this.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Capt. Strasser. As I said before, we appreciate your coming to talk to us, and the procedure here is that haven given us your statement, the Commissioners will ask you

questions for clarifications. And following that we will ask the Leader of Evidence to also ask any question that he may have before we come back to you to make a statement or make recommendations if you feel like making recommendations. So I will start with the Commissioners and ask them to ask you a few questions.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser, I want, on behalf of my colleagues Commissioners, to thank you for your cooperation in coming to help us re-write the history of this nation. I want with my colleagues to use this opportunity to send a message to the nation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission will not and should not engage in finger pointing. We are not here to levy blame because we want to levy blame. But our mission, our mandate requires that we are to establish an impartial historical record of what went wrong in this country, we are to have an in-depth story.

Then we wrestle with the question of how we can in fact make a change in the country. I want also to use this media to say that the Commission in our hearings all over the country, has come to this conclusion and we categorised and assessed into one, perpetrator; two, victims; three, victim-perpetrator; witness four; and five, perpetrator-victim; six, victim-witness. You would from this analysis discover where you are; where I belong. Your presentation, the Commission will be dealing with these areas, which you have touched on. But they go into the records so that we have a clear consistent and analytical presentation to help us in our work. You've responded to most of these but I have written this down so that my colleagues will capture this, so that whatever they leave out I'll come there later. Why did you and your people in the very first place stage a coup to overthrow a democratically elected government, a legitimate government, why did that happen? You've mentioned about the trials and executions in 1992, Bambay Kamara, Sallami Coker and others. How did it go? Is the Court Marshall trial judge alive, if he is alive where is he at the moment, how can we reach him? It's of importance, of significance for the Commission. What went wrong within your administration during the course of your work, did anything go wrong, if so what was wrong, what happened. Number four, the Commission would like to know from you why the unilateral cease-fire? From the information we gathered all around said and the rebels themselves said that they were almost in the verge of extinction in Koidu, you have already cleared them off the country and suddenly there was a unilateral cease-fire, and so they regrouped. Why did that happen, what went wrong what motivated this? Not to be seen as

the only bad guy Good and bad guy or combination of all. And what you and I and the people of Sierra Leone will do to turn the table. This is my submission and I would let the Commissioners engage you now. Whatever you leave out I will come in.

Valentine Strasser: Thank you very much Mr. Commissioner. Now I would like to make one point clear, I did not topple a democratically elected government. In fact the government was a one party dictatorship. Momoh's government wasn't a democratically elected government. This man was chosen by President Siaka Stevens to succeed him. And he legitimised his own power in a referendum; he was not democratically elected as our president in the world today. What I can tell you was that his regime was a one party dictatorship. Fundamentally, when the army took a decision to change the regime or to go for a regime change was because troops in the front had not the support that they needed to fight the war essentially, both the economic problems aside and the corruption and so on and so forth. Basically I would say that again, if I would stress that out, basically it has to do with the government's lack of support for the troops. Government troops, I mean government soldiers, at the front line against rebels. Rations were not available, re-enforcement was not made available, and re-supply was not made available and so on and so forth. So it became clear or it became evident that the government was negligent in its handling of the war. And officers and men were losing their lives. That answers your first question. Now I want to deal with the second question but...

Commissioner Bishop Humper: The Commissioners will deal with those. I thought I wanted to give a general preamble.

Valentine Strasser: You wanted to know if the trial judges are still alive as well. Now the trial judge at the time was in fact the President of the tribunal. I heard that he is out on a course. I think he is out of the country. I think he is in Nigeria. There is another point that you also

made and this has to do with the cease-fire. The government was doing everything it could do to defeat the rebels... Militarily, the government failed and I was to find a diplomatic solution, to end the crises. You know it wasn't the way that I saw things at the time. I felt that if the government from a position of strength declared a cease-fire it would demonstrate to the rebel forces that it was serious about peace talks. But at the time the rebels were determined to overrun the country and take it, and they made it clear by counter- attacking the government in their positions and so on and so forth. They were not interested in a diplomatic solution to the crises in the country.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: I would like to thank retired Capt. Valentine Strasser for coming to the TRC today and for the testimony he has given. My question has about three branches. I wonder whether you were, retired Capt. Valentine Strasser, in complete control of your government until you were ousted. And if not at what stage did you begin to lose control and what were the signs that you were losing control?

Valentine Strasser: Thank you very much for your assumption. That's an assumption; I don't think I lost control at any one time. The deputy mounted the coup that's all I can tell.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Well, that leads to my next question and that you can give us a step by step way in which the officers, the people, the coup plotters as alleged came to be executed. Now their arrest, their detention, their trial and their execution and your signing of whatever you have to sign at the end.

Valentine Strasser: That's step by step you know... the very question that you rule and you just answered the question as well. But I would add to that that they were executed by firing

squad, very much the same way 24 people were executed in this country by firing squad for collaboration.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: They were executed by firing squad, can you tell us at what location?

Valentine Strasser: We don't have a firing squad range in this country. We've never had experience with firing squads in this country. I wonder if you are aware of that. Well I will tell you that one was constructed at the Sierra Leone infantry battalion in that general area. That was where the execution took place.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: I am sorry, I haven't got you clear.

Valentine Strasser: The seven battalion area, where the seventh infantry battalion is.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: So they were executed at the seventh battalion?

Valentine Strasser: Yes, in that general area.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you recall the date?

Valentine Strasser: December 29.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: December 29?

Valentine Strasser: Correct.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: My next question is: had you any reason to believe that anyone in your government had sympathised with the rebels and was having communication with the rebels?

Valentine Strasser: What I can tell you in response to that question is that there were talks going around that elements within the army were actually dealing with the enemy, the rebels. But no evidence was shown to prove that.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Did you make any attempt or any effort to find out?

Valentine Strasser: They were basically baseless and unfounded. Because if somebody can say that this particular officer or this particular soldier are, I mean with pictures and with video tapes for example this particular officer or particular soldier was seen in rebel controlled areas exchanging arms or ammunition for money or whatsoever, I mean on video tape or picture for example that will be a credible evidence wouldn't it, but there was none.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser for coming to the Commission the second time. We will surely benefit from your testimony. But

before I go on to my questions I thought that there is an area of the question that didn't actually satisfy me very well that I still need your assistance on. You overthrew a government that was not democratically elected, that was imposed in power by somebody else, corrupt, that had all the ills, and there was every reason that it shouldn't be in power. My confusion is, was it the responsibility of the army to change a government of that type?

Valentine Strasser: My honest answer in response to that question is that the government should be chosen by the people in a democratic way. Yes through the ballot box that's my honest opinion. But in cases where it might seem impossible to change a regime democratically it now becomes useful in the interest of the masses to change such a regime the way the army normally does. But that's essentially not the army's business really. The army should be in the barracks and stay out of politics. You know what it's like in Africa and so on and so forth. It might become useful if you like to go for regime change that way where it seemed impossible that such a government will not be changed in a democratic way.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser. Another unfinished business that should be made clear to me before I proceed on to my question, was the one asked by Justice Marcus Jones that at some point in your regime you lost control within, you lost power. I want to quote a submission here from your Minister of Defence who was Secretary of State Defence.

Valentine Strasser: Hang on, point of correction, I never had a Secretary of State Defence, I had an Under Secretary of Defence.

Commissioner Torto: Under Secretary of Defence, the

Valentine Strasser: I say at what period?

Commissioner Torto: Secretary of Defence under the NPRC.

Valentine Strasser: At what time because there was...

Commissioner Torto: I don't want to drop names. The first time in 1992, I can't exactly remember the date.

Valentine Strasser: You are talking about Komba Kambo, he is not in the country, he is in the US.

Commissioner Torto: Well I am talking about a Secretary of Defence or Under Secretary of Defence who served the NPRC while you were leading.

Valentine Strasser: Go ahead.

Commissioner Torto: There were cases of and I quote: there were cases of raids done by members of the army. These cases were most times not handled with strong hands because of sentiments. And there was no military tribunal to deal with such defaulters.

Valentine Strasser: That's not true, that's incorrect. Because I can tell you that soldiers who commit a military offence will be charged and taken for orders and subsequently punished. That's a lie.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Capt. Strasser. My question is: was the NPRC regime a failure or a success in view of the following factors that I want to itemise so I want your assessment on it. One in your statement that you took over power to end the war, the war didn't end. Another reason was to eradicate corruption. That's a far-gone conclusion, it was never eradicated.

Valentine Strasser: But I would expect those allegations to be backed with solid evidence.

Commissioner Torto: That's why I said they are submissions.

Valentine Strasser: You know I had people who make assumptions without evidence. You know you don't accuse me of any wrong doing when you don't have evidence got back you up.

Commissioner Torto: I am just putting instances from submissions.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: We do not

Commissioner Torto: These are from submissions, Capt. Strasser.

Valentine Strasser: You don't just come here and state allegations against me, I would like the evidence. Now if you are accusing me of being corrupt, I think I would like the evidence to show that I was, but if there aren't any it is ...

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser, we've asked you to come here voluntarily to help us discover the truth. We are not having any confrontation with anybody, either with Commissioners or even with other witnesses. The allegations are mentioned to let you know that other people have come and given us information. And we try to check that information when we see somebody who can confirm or refute information that we have received, all we have to do this to deny or confirm the information. So as I said before you started talking you are not going to be indicted, you are not going to stand before a court of law or be punished in any way for anything that you say here.

Valentine Strasser: If I had done anything criminal or wrong I would expect that I would have to face the full penalty of the law.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: But now not for us...

Valentine Strasser: I'll cooperate with you because I recognise the value of the work you do.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes. Thank you.

Valentine Strasser: But I hate people who make baseless and unfounded allegations.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes, but also we can't stop anybody from making any statement. We do not take any statement as fact on the face of it, that's why we confront other people with those statements to find out whether those statements are correct or not.

So if you reject them we also note that, that you have rejected those statements. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Mr. Chair, I will at my discretion want to leave that question alone and go on to another one. Pardon me, I would want to be a little brief about the participation of a few fighting forces or mercenaries, as to how they actually got involved in the war during the NPRC time and on what conditions briefly. Those were the Executive Outcomes, the Gurkhas, the ULIMO forces, the Ukrainian group. I would want to know how they actually became involved in the war and at what cost.

Valentine Strasser: Good question. Well, with the Gurkhas and the Executive Outcomes including the Ukrainian group, I said this that they were basically providing similar services that the IMATT is providing right now. They were essentially training troops and they were supporting operations from time to time.

Commissioner Torto: They never engaged in fighting?

Valentine Strasser: I said supporting combat operations from time to time

Commissioner Torto: What does support mean here?

Valentine Strasser: Well, actually...

Commissioner Torto: Another question, or another area of classification, about the involvement of the CDF in the war?

Valentine Strasser: CDF?

Commissioner Torto: CDF.

Valentine Strasser: Oh you, mean the militia...

Commissioner Torto: Yes, Civil defence forces.

Valentine Strasser: Well, actually...

Commissioner Torto: Let me conclude my question here – I have here again on submission, presented again by a personality, high standing personality. Allow me to read: “by the year of 1992 when the NPRC was now in power the rebel war had involved the whole of Kailahun and Kono Districts. At about the same time, Lt. Tom Nyuma the then Secretary of State Eastern Region addressed us the elders in a meeting in Kenema town. At that meeting, Kenema town had hosted most of the chiefs and elders from Kono, Kailahun and other parts of Kenema District that were under rebel control. He told us that a decision had been taken in cabinet to request us to mobilise our hunters called Kamajors to help the regular Sierra Leone army to guide them in our bushes, etc.” He said, according to him, America did not win the Vietnam War because they did not know the terrain. My question is was the involvement of the CDF in the rebel conflict in Sierra Leone sanctioned or approved by a cabinet under your care?

Valentine Strasser: Well, what I can tell you is part of the government's own strategy to deal with the war is that it felt that militias could actually guide the army in the areas where they were operating. Now I do know that the constitution doesn't transfer the role of the military to any other group. And therefore cabinet would not - that's not correct - cabinet would not sanction the use of militiamen as active service personnel. What happened eventually was that some of those militiamen were actually enlisted as regulars in the armed forces or in the military.

Commissioner Torto: I would advise myself to stop at this point; I have no more questions for retired Capt. Valentine Strasser.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright, thank you very much retired Captain Valentine Strasser. I have a few questions anyway to supplement to questions you have been asked before. And I start with the Kamajors: our information is that your regime introduced the idea of local hunters who later on acquired the name Kamajors, is that correct?

Valentine Strasser: Yes.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Is that correct also that you utilised them and we have also information that about the time when you declared your cease-fire with the rebels, the rebels had almost been pushed to the corner and they were going to give up. My question is: did you have full information about what was going on in the country and in particular at the war front? Or put in a different way, would you have declared a cease-fire if you knew that you were making success in the front?

Valentine Strasser: I have made the point that government declared a cease-fire from a position of strength. Now all of the towns that were under rebel occupation fell to the government soldiers. But because the rebel forces were not serious about embracing the cease-fire as a demonstration of the government's own commitment towards finding a solution, what they did was they obtained reinforcement from Liberia and they regrouped and counter-attacked government positions.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I mean really my question, and this information came from the RUF. This I think was around 1993 or 1994 that they were so pressed that if you and the Kamajors or hunters had just pressed on a little bit more, you would have done ...

Valentine Strasser: The war would have been won.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes. This was what they told us in Kailahun. But when you declared the cease-fire, that gave them the opportunity to regroup.

Valentine Strasser: To re-organise...

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes.

Valentine Strasser: And counter-attack government positions.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So my question is if you had known that that was the point at which you were in the war, will you have declared a cease-fire?

Valentine Strasser: I knew that was the point I was at that time.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: And yet you declared a ceasefire?

Valentine Strasser: Yes, which was essentially why the cease-fire was declared realising that the war had been won, a military and diplomatic solution will still be needed in the interest of longer-term peace stability.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Well, I have two supplemented questions for you that first if you knew the extent of your strength why did you not put in place means to control and make effective the gains that you had already made to prevent the RUF at the time from regrouping and reversing the situation, why?

Valentine Strasser: There was sufficient preparation for the rebel counter-offensives. Now you know what the rebel war was on, now rebel troops will occupy this town today and the next day government soldiers will retake the town. If you see what is going on in Liberia that tells you exactly how rebel wars are in Africa; which was why I actually saw the need for a diplomatic solution to the crises. Now if we continue that way, the war wouldn't have been ended. I mean it could be government troops will occupy this town today, two days after rebel forces will re-capture that town from government soldiers and so on and so fourth and that's what we will continue to have. If you take places like Angola, that's what they are having right now. Now the government would have made gains but those gains would have been reversed by the rebel forces and it will happen to move on for as long as 20 to 25 years and so on and so forth.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Some reasons had been put forward for this and I would like your opinion on it. Have you ever heard the word "sobel"?

Valentine Strasser: Yes, I heard it all.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: You've heard it. And that meant soldiers acting or converting ...

Valentine Strasser: Soldiers by day, rebels by night.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Rebels.

Valentine Strasser: It's one of those propaganda I heard; I don't think it's true because no proof was shown. That a soldier is a rebel with the rebel army you know at night and he is a soldier by day in the national army. I've never seen any civilian or anybody come up with any evidence to prove those allegations. This is the reason why I have already emphasised the need not to stress on allegations.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright now, I think you were asked before about the effectiveness of the NPRC. My own question is on hindsight knowing what you experienced during that period and also assuming because you joined the army to defend your country about your patriotism. If you were to have the same opportunity now, would you do what you did in 1992, overthrow a government?

Valentine Strasser: If I was serving in the RSLAF?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes.

Valentine Strasser: Would I..?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Knowing what you went through, how you performed, the effect on this country and knowing your patriotism because you must have had some patriotic feelings to join the army for you to defend your country. With all this background, with all this information, if you had the opportunity again, would you overthrow a government?

Valentine Strasser: No, no, no, because the government that we have right now is a democratically elected one.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank You.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser, there are allegations, and this commission has reservoir of evidences to talk about sobels in this country and some of your brothers have come before us, we have their information.

Valentine Strasser: If you can produce names that can be fine.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Excuse me, we have them, don't worry about that, they will soon come out. They have come and have confessed and are now in the army. I am just saying nothing but the plain truth.

There are certain facts that are undeniable. I thought I needed to share that with you before we go any further. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Leader of evidence, have you got any questions to ask?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Hon. Commissioner. We have a few questions to ask Capt. Valentine Strasser for purposes of clarification. Please Captain, I'm asking you in relation to submissions we have received and also investigations and research we have conducted. We need to have your input to clarify some of these issues. Some are basically a follow-up on the questions asked by the commissioners earlier on. You have made it clear to us this morning that in November 1992 twenty-six people were executed. What we would like to know is you've also indicated that after the executions there were trials, they were found guilty and subsequently you signed their death warrants. What was the nature of the trial? Was it a court martial or a civil trial?

Valentine Strasser: It was a military tribunal.

Leader of Evidence: Could you please explain to us why civilians among these 26 people tried, died from court martial. The people who were executed, some were civilians.

Valentine Strasser: Correct, that's right.

Leader of Evidence: Could you please explain to us why these civilians were also posthumously tried?

Valentine Strasser: Yes, that's a very good question. Actually, they were tried under decree twelve. Decree twelve actually gives powers to the government to try civilians for certain category of offences.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much. Still on this issue, you have mentioned in your submission this morning, that your government made some mistakes, we really want to hear your opinion, and do you consider the executions of 1992 in this respect as one of the mistakes your government probably made?

Valentine Strasser: I consider that as perhaps the biggest or only mistake my government made, yes.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much, we still need certain clarifications particularly on our research issues. Could you please confirm that the government employed the services of ULIMO to fight on the side of the government, your government? Did you enter into an agreement for ULIMO forces to fight on behalf of the government?

Valentine Strasser: Actually, to understand...

Leader of Evidence: Give us a background.

Valentine Strasser: That's the point I was going to make, some background into who ULIMO. Essentially, in my period, it was made up of Krahn's and Mandingos,

Liberian refugees who crossed the border from Liberia fleeing the fighting in Liberia. If you remember in Liberia the fighting was essentially between the Krans and Mandingos on the one hand and Gios and Manos on the other hand and Congos perhaps as well. The Krans and the Mandingos were seen as those people and when the NPFL occupied some parts of Liberia, the Krans and the Mandingos were actually targeted or killed and so on and so forth. So they fled and crossed through the borders and came into Sierra Leone. When war broke out here in our own country ...

From Taylor that I can tell you, sufficient evidence are there, I guess that would indicate Taylor's involvement in the civil war in Sierra Leone. Now, the Liberian refugees who fled Liberia from Taylor's forces said that they needed also to take up arms and defend themselves against the RUF and some of Taylor's national Army. That is how more or less ULIMO became our partners against the RUF and some of Taylor's other forces.

Leader of Evidence:

The ULIMO forces actually initiated the move and approached your government?

Valentine Strasser:

In fact ULIMO was not established under that government. It was established under Momoh. ULIMO was formed when Momoh was Head of State and commander in Chief actually. You might as well try asking Momoh why ULIMO became involved in the war. What I did was to actually demobilize.

Leader of Evidence:

Thank you very much. Still on the issue of mercenary involvement, we would like to know, you have indicated clearly that the services of the Executive Outcomes from South Africa and the Gurkhas were secured to support the government in the fight against the rebels.

Valentine Strasser:

They were essentially there to train or retrain the army.

Leader of Evidence:

You actually clarified it. What we would like to know is that how were these services paid for? Was it by money or was it by giving them mining concessions?

Valentine Strasser:

Well, actually, it was paid with mining concessions, yes.

Leader of Evidence:

Mining concessions?

Valentine Strasser:

Yes.

Leader of Evidence:

Could you explain why the government paid them by granting them mining concessions as opposed to funds?

Valentine Strasser:

Because then the government lacked the resources to pay them for their services.

Leader of Evidence:

Ok, thank you very much. Could you please also clarify: during your term of office the government entered into an agreement with the government for the Guinean Army to fight on behalf of the government of Sierra Leone?

Valentine Strasser: Actually, the Guinean troops were under the defense pacts within the Mano River Union. You know, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea signed the Defense pact under the MRU, so that was how we came to be there.

Leader of Evidence: Please, still one question, could you give us the names of- still revisiting the issue of 1992 trials- could you please give us the names of those who presided over the trails?

Valentine Strasser: Actually I don't have all the names but the President of the tribunal was called Kes Boya. The judge advocate I cannot remember.

Leader of Evidence: Could you also remember the Minister of Justice at that time?

Valentine Strasser: The Minister at that time was Arnold Bishop Gooding.

Leader of Evidence: And the Attorney General?

Valentine Strasser: Yes.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much for your cooperation. Thank you Honorable commissioner, we don't have any further questions.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Rt. Capt. Valentine Strasser. We appreciate everything you have done this morning, going on to early afternoon now. Haven answered all these questions and following your delivery, we now want to ask you if you have any questions to ask the Commission.

Valentine Strasser: I don't have any questions for now.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: No questions, do you have any recommendations you would like the Commission to consider preparing it's report, any recommendations on things affecting the army, Sierra Leone in general, what this country should not do again?

Valentine Strasser: What I would say is that I would expect that after you would have been able to document crimes committed against innocent Sierra Leoneans during this civil war , at the end of the day you would be in a position to pay final reparations to victims as is the case in South Africa?

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Well, okay.

Leader of Evidence: Retired Capt. Valentine Strasser, could you please inform this Commission about your current status and also generally about your conditions of life? Would you want to address the Commission about it?

Valentine Strasser: My mother is well and alive; I share an apartment with her. I have written through the office of the President indicating that. I would expect his government to make pension and benefit payments available to me in the capacity of being a former Head of State. At a time when Dr. Joe Demby was the Vice President, he was ready to argue that the constitution doesn't make provision for benefits or pension payments to

be made available to former heads of state but to ex-presidents. Now in the letter I addressed to the President, I made the point that I think his government is giving a very narrow interpretation to that provision and I would expect a broader interpretation to be given because the purpose of that provision was, still remains, to provide benefits and pension payments to somebody, anybody, who so ever had held that high office for whatever period.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much retired Capt. Valentine Strasser. As I've said before, we appreciate your coming here and since you have no further statements to make and you've given us your concerns to consider when preparing our report, I now again thank you and ask you to step down.

Valentine Strasser: Thank you very much.

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL DAYS
W7 BRIG. GEN. (RTD). KELLIE CONTEH CONTEH

TRANSCRIBER:- KADAY JALLOH

SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH

Commissioner Torto: Ladies and gentlemen, we once more welcome you to today's session of TRC hearings here at the YWCA hall. For those of you who might be listening in on the radio, I am Sylvanus Commissioner Torto, chairing today's hearings. May we start the process with prayers please? Could we stand up and then pray in the Muslim and Christians ways respectively

Prayers

.... May we have the first witness please?

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: May it please the commission; the first witness for today is Brigadier Kelli Conteh.

Commissioner Torto: Brigadier Kelli Conteh, we welcome you to today's hearings and the procedure is that you will actually present your paper as opposed to reading it. But please chose whichever is more convenient for you in conveying your information to us and after your presentation, commissioners here on this side will ask you questions. After which, the leader of evidence will ask you questions if he has any. At the end of it all, we will also expect from you questions as pertains to our work and then whatever recommendations you may have that you think you can pass on or include in our report or analyse and considered in our recommendations. So this is the usual procedure. May we now hear from you? Your name please in full.

Kellie Conteh: I am Brigadier Retired Kelli Hassan Conteh

Commissioner Torto: Christian or Muslim?

Kellie Conteh: I'm a Muslim.

Oath taken.

Kellie Conteh: Chairman of the TRC, honourable Commissioners, let me first of all say I would like to present my paper, reading exactly what I have written and if there is further information and if I have time for that I'll go on and explain further. I'm thankful to God almighty for me to be here today to witness the beginning of the healing process of what many of us thought a couple of years ago, would never come and that if it came, we would not be here. I thank the TRC in inviting me to contribute in throwing light on the terrible tragedy that befell our nation and perhaps in that way, guide us away from a similar tragedy in future. My presentation will therefore focus on the following issues, my work prior to the conflict as well as my experience during the conflict and current activities carried out by my organisation; specific knowledge I might have of the 1992 coup and of the events leading to the executions, including judicial processes for the trials and the impact on the regime and the political context; the peculiarities of the situation on how these played out in the political and social context in Sierra Leone; the consequences of all the foregoing and whether any existing structures or processes provide any remedies and the levels of access that exist, to the remedies and; finally, to make recommendations. I hope I'll be able to adequately address myself to these issues. Please permit me Mr. Chairman and Commissioners of the TRC, at this juncture to express my wish to dedicate this presentation to all those who fell in the conflict, fighting for the government of the day for it was they who paid the ultimate price to allow us to be here today. Let me then start with my work prior to the conflict. I was in my 15th year of military service before the war broke out in 1991. I was enlisted in 1976 as an officer

cadet together with 11 others who underwent officer training in Tanzania, with 11 of us graduating in 1977 and commissioned second Lieutenant into the then Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces. By the time the war started, I was a General Staff officer, working in the operations department, the G. Branch for short at the military headquarters, Murray Town barracks which a little later, was transferred to Cockrill barracks. My responsibilities included operations, training - local and overseas - and sports. Our department had the responsibility to draw plans for operations, prepare the commanders orders for operations and generally direct policies on training, sports and the general preparedness of the army. We worked alongside the support and logistics department responsible for providing logistics for the army, the O branch for short and the administration department responsible for personnel matters including recruitment, the A branch for short. These 3 branches, the G,Q and A branches, effectively controlled the day to day functioning of the military on the overall directives of the force commander. By 1989, just 2 years before the war, the headquarters had assessed that the army needed to organise a series of large-scale training exercises in readiness for the increasingly disquieting indicators that has started rearing their heads in the Mano River Union basin. Intense political interference at the time had suppressed most training initiatives. The military had less and less training of whatever kind since its last 3 exercises in the Port Loko district, in 1980. Almost all our RSLMF troops at the time had not had "the privileged" of practising their skills at the range for instance, for long periods even with their personal rifles. Most of them as long as 10 years or more. It seemed the deliberate strategy to make the army a non-effective fighting force. In 1989, field exercises were reluctantly approved. I will not bore you with my personal role in the strategic thinking that went into putting these exercises together. My job required a lot of teamwork either with other staff officers at the strategic level or with commanders and their staff at the operational and tactical levels. Much of what I would therefore say today would be about relevant issues in which I was a key player.

We had come to appreciate by 1989 that if the army was going to fight a war, it was most likely going to be as guerrilla kind of warfare, far more than the one the army experienced during the "dorgbowusu operations" in Kenema and Pujahun districts in 1983. Our objective therefore, was to exercise the troops on guerrilla warfare operations with special attention in the support and logistics areas. The results of the training exercises were quite revealing. By the end of the field exercises, it was clear that the RSLMF grossly lacked the logistic support required even for the small fighting manpower it could boast of. The army had less than 3 infantry battalions, that is, about a thousand five hundred men, many of whom needed much more training. It had less than 30% of its transportation required; it had less than 20% of support weapons and many more essential equipments in drastically short supply or non-existent. In the late 80s also, the headquarters had reviewed the army's policy on developmental training linked with promotions of officers. The army still had laid down criteria upon which officers were promoted. Officers had to pass, for instance, a lieutenant or captain exams to be promoted to captain. I review in addition into these 2 stages even before qualifying for the Lieutenant or Captain exams, namely, progressive qualification schemes levels 1 and 2, PQS 1 and 2. These exams were for combatant commissioned officers only. Specialist officers and administrative commission officers being exempted. It was the policy that combatant officers, who failed to pass their lieutenant or captain exams after a second chance, would have to resign their commission or convert to administrative commission officers. Captain to Major exams to gain promotion to major were also reinstated. Of course those training and examinations that follow were only a part of a list of criteria, not least of which was the conduct of the officer. I played

a key part in the formulation of these initiatives to improve on our standards. We managed to conduct only about 2 sets of PQS training programme before 1991 when the war started. Most of our junior officers who had benefited from these training programmes excelled themselves very well in the initial ECOMOG operations in neighbouring Liberia. Our hope was that we would continue with the programmes and insist that all officers undertake them as they progress through their careers. This was the state of the army when the war started on Saturday March 23rd 1991, with an incursion into Bomaru and Sengah in the Kailahun District. The NPFL rebels in Liberia and a small contingent of RUF elements had attacked a small unit of army engineers stationed at the time at Bomaru and had killed an officer and another officer at Sengah. The latter was on his way to support the former. The officer was coming from Sengah to meet the other one in Bomaru. As the state of the army was, these 2 separate units that were supposed to be supportive of each other, never had the means of communication between them. So as it turned out, a second officer with little knowledge of the true situation of Bomaru simply ran into operations without any kind of communications or equipment remained a critical witness throughout the war. The army and the nation paid dearly for this. I was assigned on the afternoon of that same day to go to Daru and assess the situation. I was also to visit other troop positions in the border areas. On arrival at Daru, it was clear that something unprecedented had happened in that area. There was a visible, panic stricken and unsettled public with various versions of what had happened and what was to come. So much was exaggerated especially in respect of the number of rebels that had crossed the border. Some said they were about a thousand whilst some put the figure upward to 5000. I was beginning to learn first hand, how exaggerated messages can filter down to Freetown, for indeed, some messages had already been sent to Freetown from the police and military net, speaking of some 5000 NPFL rebels, advancing deep into Sierra Leone territory and some even added with tanks and artillery. Most of what we heard in Daru and read in signal messages sent from Kailahun proved to be grossly exaggerated. I left Daru the following morning for Bomaru and Sengah. The rebels had retreated. I inspected the house in which the first officer was killed, spoke to soldiers and civilians alike. The engineer unit had been attacked.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: We consider records very important for history and wondering whether the military still has on its record all these self styled Brigadiers and Colonels and Generals and if that is so, whether those records should not be expunged. If you cannot answer the questions at all keep it for another witness we're going to have later on.

Kellie Conteh: Please permit me madam to leave that question for you to ask a more competent person.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you, you told us that the NPRC from their movement perhaps were not interested now in doing the most important things concerned with the war. From what you said that's the idea I got that they were not interested in prosecuting the war and I am wondering whether apart from that, whether they were not interested in having the RUF defeated. What do you think about this that they were not even kin on having RUF defeated?

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much Madam, I am not sure, I think if one has to be fair I think I am not sure about this but I want to believe that they actually felt the need to really finish the war. They saw a lot of gains out of it. I believe they wanted to, but its their approach to it, and the way they did things would frustrate a lot of people because if you actually wanted to finish this war then, if I was in their position, maybe, say pass it on to people who know how to do it. We were not short of experts who were around to support us. One such was the Nigerian assistance in training group that was sent here. That was headed by a very seasoned Brigadier General who was himself on the ground here, he had his unit to help us train but they would not even listen to him. As a matter of fact, one of the papers I attached to this presentation, he had to go and meet them and ask them, have you seen this one? They said yes. 'What are you doing about it?' But of course they were not ready to listen to that. We were not short of any of those advice at all, but they simply wanted to have a lot of publicity about themselves, how great they are how gallant they are, so and so person has just returned form the front and you know he managed to Push the rebels from maybe two miles form the ground and here in Freetown people did not even know the distances they were referring to. All of that affected the way people saw it. Personally I told them about this, 'look I think you guys are not serious for us to finish this war. Because there is a way to do it. Probably we do not have the full capacity, but we were not short of the assistance to do that and that's why we need some sober attention to what we do, on a day to day basis. This is not a one-off issue.' They would grumble my probing. They did not like to see maps drawn. If you go to any country today, even if they are not in operation, they will get their maps to show their troops position, the enemy's position, they don't play around with it. But if you don't want these things you think they are wasting your time, then you think you could just go off to the front and do what? So the point I'm making, the highest level they handled was the platoon level, 30 men that's what a lieutenant will control and that were your tactics or operational ability stops. There is no magic about adding to that, you cant, and you have to go through series of training and experience for you to be able to manage anything higher than that. You maybe able to patch up probably with a company that is twice of thrice a platoon level which you were commanding. But. thinking that alright we commanded a platoon therefore I can now command the army, of course it's so different. You looking at an entire theatre of operation, not your small platoon that was fighting probably on the bridge somewhere. This is the entire theatre so if one looks at the way they prosecuted the war, one will say clearly, that the NPRC was not ready. And therefore the army in its entirety was not ready. We had very very brave senior and Junior officers, very very brave and competent soldiers in the fronts and these were seen in particular battles that went on. One of the other witnesses here will bear testimony to that. He was himself a commander of one of those units; we had people who were ready to fight. And they were better trained, they were ready, they were simply looking for the leadership to trickle down. But when they receive complimentary orders, what do you do? I was left with no other conclusion to make but to come up to them and say look, we are not serious about this. Another instance I will mention why I said I don't think they were serious is the question of these tanks. There are officers at the military headquarters trained on transporting some of these things, over rivers. They know the weight of some of these equipment so that you could know which bridge they will cross and which ones they should not use. These are technical issues, and until you go through such training during your career you will not know. You think that a tank is a tank therefore it could walk over anything, no. There are officers trained who will ask you what is the weight of this tank. But if you ask them that, for what does it matter. So one day we had a whole battalion that was to cross a particular river. They said the tank must go first. Whilst sending the tank across first, what about the troops to protect them on the other side? But as we turn out, the tank went on this ramp; it was a ferry and the ramp sank, end of story. So nobody crossed, the tank was lost, nobody went across to the river there was boat, nothing like that was there. They saw that clearly but they would not accept that this comes with knowledge. You must know about it to use it properly. Or if I put all of that together some say, there is a loop, you guys you are really not serious some of us are wasting our time doing this and we might get killed for nothing.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, and I will like to join my fellow commissioners in thanking you retired Brigadier Kellie Conteh. Listening to you and reading the document you have given us, I get the feeling and I hope I'm right that you still very strongly feel about what was going on in the army in period 1991 – 1995, now if you have that strong feeling for the preservation of this country I want you to make a comment on the concern of people for the inclusion of the military officers who were serving at the time, and particularly those officer whom you did not give us their names but whom you know, were responsible for the deterioration of the army at the time?

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much Sir, you are right Sir but I feel still very very strongly about the activities of many of those officers during the NPRC rule, some of them even before that. I am not sure whether I would like to even name them. I will not name any of them. I may not go into the specifics of what government should do with those officers. Already as I mentioned my office is central to many decisions on national security matters. I think that forum has been given to me officially, so that forum is being used for some of these detailed issues and in the interest of the military, I'm sure the government has been considering very seriously, for the last two years or so on what they will like to do by way of restructuring the armed forces. It is on, we all know, the army is bloated, its well beyond what is required and certainly government will have to take the decision on downsizing. But certainly we have a target, government has a target for that as we increase the strength of the police. Now on what government should do against those officers, I'm sure is being considered at the highest levels and the defence council is the most appropriate body to think about that. But I am sure the structure itself will sort itself out. So that by the end of the day what we want to see is that the people of the country and the country itself must come first and not individuals.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you very much but I will like to go back on it and say from what you have told us about your current position, that your responsibilities include and I quote..... "advising the government on matter of national security". Now when we come to write the report and we begin to mention national security, we may want to make a recommendation and because of that it may be necessary to invite you to speak to us in camera.

Kellie Conteh: Yes, I would like to come but for that particular issue I think I need to have clearance from the National Security Council especially the Minister of Defence himself who happens to be the president. I think it is a critical issue which they are looking at, and many many others shall be more than delighted to discuss with the TRC in Camera. But I think it would be proper for me to obtain his own blessing before going further into the details, if that is not against your own conditions or rules.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I think the Commission will explore that possibility, perhaps not even writing to you directly but writing to the Security Council

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much.

Comm.. Kamara: All right I could not follow up statements you made about silent political sanctions can you just elaborate on that?

Kellie Conteh: Alright Sir, what I meant about that is well nobody came out openly to say that the army should not be improved, nobody, it was not rule. Nobody wrote any instruction say the army should not for instance receive their weapons, that they should not buy weapons, they should stop training, they should stop field exercises. It started creeping slowly until eventually the only training place we had was Hill Cut Road. And even that, one day, I think, somebody sent a bad message up at State house to say we were advancing into Freetown and probably it was a coup. That was the end of it. All training areas were taken away. So nobody said it was it was a policy, but the army was stagnant, there was nothing happening so I felt there was silent sanction on the general development of this army. And mine you, side by side with the army we had the SSD, well equipped, better equipped, I'm not sure if they were better funded, but one will not rule that out, but I am sure they were better equipped. I know that because at a stage when the army was looking for support weapons and mortars, we had to go the SSD to help us. They gave us mortars, for the army did not have any, except for the few that were in Daru barracks for training purposes, which was just for demonstrations. I wonder whether they even had firing pins. So all of these things were happening to an army which you want to use for your defence, I am not sure what you are talking about. That's what I meant sir, you know everything was closed. No training was encouraged, sometimes we had to have our officers trained in Ghana, Nigeria, but sometimes even those resources were cut. But if you don't train the officers and you don't train the men, I am not sure you are even preparing for the defence of the state.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright, thank you, my final question is about politicising the army. Now you've had your experience with this situation where the country or nation was told that there will be greater security. But now that you are in a position to advice government, will you even advice it convert the army from purely professional military to a political body as was in the case from 1975?

Kellie Conteh: Certainly not Sir, I have a very strong view on taking away completely any form of politicisation in the armed forces and I think one should extend that also to the police. All the primary forces in Sierra Leone should not have undue political interference. We've seen what happened with APC, with the NPRC and there has been some changes of late. We still need to strongly educate our elites, not just the politicians, but all our elites in this country. The soldiers themselves and the politicians because it takes two to tangle. The soldiers, if an officer is well trained, he really does not have much to do with politicians. I don't ever visit a politician in his house. I mean in the absence of a specific instruction to go there. I knew some of them, yes, but I will not, I don't see it as a habit, it is not part of me. It is not that you don't like them but your paths do not cross. You have an officer's mess, which is your club if you like, so I would even end up not knowing clubs in Freetown, for instance. You see you will stay away from trouble. You go to the officer's mess you drink your beer, sergeants and warrant officers will go to their sergeant's mess; the NCOs have a canteen they will go here. So I strongly strongly advice that those who think they will still toy with idea of having so called boys in the army or the police are simply wasting their time because clear examples have been made. The very first people who fired the first shots against people like Bambay Kamara we were told were his so called boys that he brought into the army. Indisciplined street boys, the very first one that fired the shot and everybody said it was him it was so and so officer that did it. Well that was his so-called nephew who did that. But he brought him in, I am sure he did not look at all his other characters, but he brought him in because he happened to be a relative of him. The army is a national institution for the defence of the country, period. If you treat them that way and give them what they want and give them the instruction on day to day basis, on month to month basis, year to year basis, they'll remain professional. Your task is not unduly coming to them to know why Private Sunu was posted for instance to this place and not to my village. Why don't I have troops in so and so district? That was what affected the army when we had one hundred and twenty four deployment areas at a point during the war. Out of the 10,000 you do the mathematics, you

will find out how many soldiers were in each of these places. So they were just piece meal, eaten away by the RUF because of political interference. So I will strongly advice they keep away completely from the army.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I said that, this was my last question but just remember that you mentioned targeting the Limba Officers in 1992 when NPRC took over and there was that extra judicial killing or execution. Now how did that come about? Was there strong tribal feelings within the army? Because we are getting information that is pointing away from tribal reasons for the war that we have just gone through, but if from this statement there existed tribalism in the army, we would like to know about it.

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much Sir, I don't think one would describe it as tribalism per se in the army. But what I was referring to there was that we had a group of NPRC officers who felt very very bitter against the APC and as we generally now say the SLPP is a mende man's party, the APC was referred to as the Limba man party. We had ill informed people both in the military and outside that felt something against Limbas. In the military with those new guys who came in for instance the officer who was responsible for logistics happened to be a Limba officer that was Colonel Kaotta Dumbuya, he was a Limba Officer, he was not there because he was a Limba Officer, he only happened to have been posted to that particular seat as a logistics officer. Some of the grievances they had were that these were the guys that are starving us. They were eating the money in other words; the APC has their own people in these key positions starving us in the front so he was one key person that was targeted. That trickled down to all his other brothers or relatives that were in the army. And we have quite a good number of Limber officers that again maybe coming from the card system. Since they were many politicians coming from those areas you had many of their own kith and kin in the armed forces. So whether that was misplaced or not but many of the NPRC officers felt that these Limba Officers were the ones that enjoyed the fruits of the APC rule. So for any little thing if they met to discuss, it would be interpreted as something sinister. They must be discussing us, they must be discussing the NPRC. They must be planning to overthrow. Now I'm not sure if that happened at all. But clearly the so-called executions, the so-called trials and execution in 1992, let us look at the statistics. I'm not sure and even the civilians, who were also brought in to that number turned out to be similar tribes. And these were two separate issues but they put them together, why did that happen? It must have been some kind of thing going on in their minds. And it never stopped. Many who ran away to the United States, to other part of the world, I think were the smartest of them that thought, no this is no place for me to stay. They left, I know many Junior Officers who did and they will not come near here. That's what I mean Sir, but one will not describe it as tribalism generally in the army.

Comm. Sooka: Mr. Conteh may I join my colleagues in thanking you for your submission, but I want to take you back to page 11 of your submission. You mentioned in paragraph 26 that you were not convinced and you are still not convinced that there were any coup plans. Why you think there was this allegation made about the coup?

Kellie Conteh: Well, to start with, nobody came to explain any story or any straight reason to any of us in the army, that's one. And two nobody made any, there was no trial, no hearing about this, and though we held high positions in the country to have heard some talk about it. Yes at later stages there were rumour that President Momoh made had the thought of making a come back. You cannot rule those things out, but I think it was put on specific people, at least people turned out to be kith and kin of President Momoh, he was a Limba too. So it was like as these rumours grew in the country, these officers became more targeted. Many of them were posted, for instance, I know of many of them that were posted

form their offices to up country or to some other instructions to be watched or things like that. I know that a report came one day. They came to the headquarter, why don't you remove this officer from so and so location? I replied 'but what has he done?' Well we have information that so and so is communicating with President Momoh in Conakry. I said that I did not have that, but will you want me to interview the officer?, oh no just keep it secret, this is State Security thing don't discuss it with him. I said no, if it is state Security, then it is more reason why I should bring in the officer to interview him. Because our first goal should be correct him, and bring him back on track, but if you want to keep it under cover, and then take some action later, I will not buy that. But of course it happened, many of them were removed, many of them were posted to places they were not trained for and eventually things happened, they got what they wanted, brought in many of them and I believe it was some kind of cooked up stories, put together that they did this. Whether they did, I am not sure. I'm still not convinced that it happened.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: My second question is you said in Paragraph 27 that quite morally bankrupt Senior Officers say they carried out the so called trials. And one is executed the other is alive and still serving now. Why would you allow morally bankrupt officers to remain in the army and what will that do for a new morality and culture that you are trying to establish? And before you answer I will expect that you give us the names?

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much Ma, I quite agree with you. I mean that goes back to my answer, which the Commissioner there asked on whether I would like to discuss some of these things in camera. Of course, I agree with you, if you continue to keep an officer who is morally bankrupt or who could do anything for money or some other favours, you are really not helping the institution and certainly you are not helping the state. In the long run that officer will become very dangerous to the state itself and that's why I said in the beginning that I don't think we should be condoning any of these things. If the military is meant for one thing, and it needs the best boys and girls the country can provide to go into that institution. Equally the police, the security forces should be looked at that way. It is only when we look at them very very seriously, and bring the very serious elements into them, that we will take our security very seriously. So I agree with you.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: On paragraph 30 on page 12 you said many key issues of government were discussed and decided by an inner circle of the coup makers themselves. Again it will be helpful if you give us in writing those you considered that constitute the inner circle. But it will also be useful if you tell us what were some of these key issues that were discussed.

Kellie Conteh: Alright thank you, I don't think I'll be able to write it exhaustively here because I will need to think about it a little bit more. Yes, they discussed issues in some close just as in any other grouping; you would have a few at the top to discuss issues with.. In their own case certainly it was that small group of the coup makers, because they considered many in the military as threats. But most of the decisions that were taken were back handed decision. For instance, equipment for the military I mean these brought fat returns because the contractors would make some deal with them. But I don't know why. But most of the decision of equipment, very heavy equipment will be discussed by them. When it comes to economic issues with the Commercial Bank of Sierra Leone that was mainly their own area. And some times also diamond cases. Some fake, some just cooked up things against somebody to grab their wealth. Those sort of things will be discussed by them, because they trust themselves. Of course over time, many people knew what these people were doing and I'm sure the decision like the execution itself must have been taken by those people. I am damn sure that those key people were there. They must have been there

to take such decision, for they will not do it in the absence of some of them. In addition to that man, we had two sets of mercenaries that were brought into Sierra Leone. Now it will interest you commissioners, that army headquarters never knew about those arrangements. The first group that came Gurkhas, the armed Headquarters was informed on the day of the arrival, we had some people who are coming to help us train and we did not know about them. And we asked them who were they. So the army was left out of decision to receive some kind of reinforcement or assistance to prosecute the war. All of those kinds of decision they just dumped into the army and say prepare these people for fatigue today, we are withdrawing Land rovers, take them down to so and so place because are going to bring in people. Who are these people? Mercenaries. For God's sake it is the army that was fighting the war. Yes you are also part of it, but certainly you are the politicians. What about the main stream army don't you think out of courtesy to tell them that look we are receiving mercenaries. A lot of these kind of decision went bad and it was taken just at that level. They had a few civilians I think, who were like phoning them. People who thought that they have read a lot of war books and because they read some of these things and saw some of these things, they thought they knew it all, those were the Generals they were listening to.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: Thank you one final question and you may want to address this to as when you will want to do it in camera. You talked in paragraph 29, you gave us recommendations and practical solutions, but in paragraph 39 you said to achieve these goals, the elites must reflect on all our ills and their true causes. Firstly who do you considered to be the elites? Second question one of the ills and the true causes of what was wrong in the country at that time.

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much madam, again I will like to ask here that I address this issue when I address the others.

Commissioner Commissioner Torto: Thank you Brigadier for your testimony and we hope we have not subjected you to a very hectic time at the Commission. I have some photographs and some clips that I want to pass on to you to identify the personality, and what advantages are of the presence of such people in the army in view of what they are doing here.. So I want you to take a look without calling name.

Kellie Conteh: No. Mr. Chairman I don't think there is any advantage in keeping him. As a matter of fact he is a bad example, you know, for the others. The military stresses on leadership by example and to get a good soldier you need very strong and good real models and that is why people take the pains really, to not only ensure that officers who are brought in as officers cadets are the right kind of materials. But also pay attention to their development right through their career. A man who has in his hands the lives of others and the country at large must be exemplary. So again I'll stress on that, that we shouldn't have any place in our new army for these type of people, and again we have every opportunity now. The war is over, we have been beaten very seriously, we have our wounds which is what we are trying to heal and we are very grateful that the TRC was set up. And so therefore some of their ills must be treated, properly so that they don't come back and if for instance it is one man that has to be thrown out then by all means we have to do it. Why? Because he is no better than the very institution itself let alone the country which the institution is serving. So we shouldn't be condoning them at all.

Commissioner Torto: Again in your testimony both written and verbal, no mention is made of any kind of military campaigns you may have directed, and won against the rebels. It is not stated in the written testimony nor have I heard it in your verbal presentation. During

your tenure as Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) your primary responsibility was to fight the rebels, and then protect citizens. Did you at any time undertake that kind of campaign, and if you did what was the result?

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry I did not make mention of any specific operations which I undertook. But I think it suffices to say that in my position at both levels, starting first of all as a General Staff Officer my responsibilities included operations in the broad sense and that therefore required me to visit these units, first of all deliver their orders and be present when they are launched into operations, and be there to wait for reports as they come back, to feed it back to headquarters. Obviously that went on as force commander equally, I commanded the whole forces. Now if you are talking about specifics relating to when I was platoon leader, well I was not, I was never a platoon leader. I had past those positions by the time the war started. So you will need someone like a platoon leader who will say my platoon was deployed at Senga for instance. I was beyond that, I was already a Senior Staff Officer at the army headquarters. So my job will require, if you like brain storming for the force commanders and planning, making plans for him. Of course together with the Q branch which is the quartermaster branch, and also the A branches of the administrative branch, and those were my roles. But I think I paid several visits in the front that I met every unit that was deployed, and in many cases was present when they launched their operations. Well I personally will not talk about my specific roles, it belongs to those who like to brag about specifics. But I think it is enough to say, on two occasions I was with a battalion, for instance, virtually directing, it is not correct to do that, but virtually directing the battalion commander. He is the battalion commander and he should be seen in charge. But it turned out largely that I was like giving him such direction, whilst they were in the same theatre fighting. These things happened several times in my capacity as operations officer. And as commander, virtually every of those commanders were under me taking directive from me.

Commissioner Commissioner Torto: Thank your Brigadier, according to testimonies before this commission a major source of discontent among the private soldiers, since the APC days up to the NPRC days when you were CDS, has been the fact that welfare supplies were not reaching the private in the correct proportions. For instance the APC started compensating soldiers with bags of rice, onions and tomatoes, and things like that, and it was by then a bag of rice to a soldier. But there are reports that majors and captains, and colonels were receiving things like 150 bags, 50 bags,, and at times the private sharing a bag of rice or none at all, or instances where private soldiers will be required to move from say, Bonthe, if there was a platoon their to collect his bag of rice in Kono. When the cost of transportation alone was more than the salary he was receiving, will you actually throw light on this kind of practice during your tenure?

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, I think there is a mixture of a number of issues here, I will try my best to give a clear picture for you to understand the dynamics at the time. We will start first of all by blaming the self-posting by soldiers; people wanted the softer side of things at the time. Again this stemmed from the indiscipline we started talking about. We knew of soldiers who would post themselves from one area to another area. They decide on where they want to go. This is not sent down to military headquarter or even to his own battalion commander. Some times, we go to a battalion, whilst the commander is telling you about a 1,200 or something like, but he has physically on the ground far less than that. You also found at times when officers are posted officers platoon leaders and you found them moving around with soldiers. You must have noticed during the NPRC days, when officers as junior as Lieutenants had about 20 to 30 people going around with him in two jeeps driving all over the place. If such officers are posted from their units to another unit, what happens is that his men, his close men will simply go with

him. But things don't work like that in military. Because it takes time for those records to be sent out to the personnel department for logistics to know that these people have moved from point A to B. Now mind you, at this same time, the army had serious problems of wired communication, we also had serious problem of even mobility. We used to have a company, a civilian company Marican who used to lend us trucks, civilians trucks, like cattle trucks, where you will have to pack soldiers to move them from point a to point B. It is difficult for the pay office or administrative office to have taken note of such movement of personnel. So sometimes you find people in one location and they are paid by another paymaster in another location. So well, what we have is that this man is supposed to be here. Oh they say no he is still at the other location. That was a big problem really for the military and I don't think it was solved until when this whole problem, AFRC was toppled. And I think it took some time even with the new set up for IMMAT to even figure out where these soldiers are. So that one reason, indiscipline from the soldiers, second reason was this political deployment I am talking about. Some in the NPRC who had rapport with politicians made certain posting themselves. Moving people because a friend has asked you to post people in his village for no tactical reason. You find seven soldiers eight soldiers in that area. Well these were cut off entirely from the main stream military. I am aware sometimes when people sometimes do not receive their salaries. Yes there was a lot of problems with some of these unit commands, but mainly the quarter masters themselves. The commanding officers were not the people responsible for collecting the items from wherever it is. It is the quarter masters whose responsibility it is to take these items to the units. And from all records held at the military headquarters everything was accounted for. If you had a thousand men, which is calculated by the amount of money a man must have per day, I think it used be Le300 or so, it was calculated and sent to that unit. Well on the way the quarter master is expected to purchase every item they required for that location. Whether they were purchased is the question. And I believe yes that was happening to go up from to talk to troops. And I visited units, eat publicly from the pot of the soldiers to see how it taste. Because when they know I do that, they will increase the standard of the food itself. But now let's face this, with the problems the army had you find some units sometimes don't even have a pot, so you have to rely on the civilians. Even if they work for the rebels you have to ask them for things like that. The army could not serve all of these locations. And even when you have the pot would you like to cook? If there were other methods to prepare their food, that would have been very welcome. But no, so sometimes you find the troops themselves agreeing not to even prepare these foods. For many many reasons, for instance they would not like to be seen, from afar by them enemy. But what else will you give them? So there were a lot of problems really in terms of logistic support to troops. I am aware, yes there are certain officers who will do away with rice, for instance, and prevent the items from reaching the troops. But by and large the units were supplied with their own quota as approved by the army headquarters.

Now coming to the rice as compensation to the soldiers. I don't think it was compensating the soldiers per se. This was a regulation that was given that every soldier will be given a bag of rice. It is similar to what is happening today. It has be monetised, that's what has been done. But I think there were a lot of good points for doing that at the time. We had rice scarcity, we had other issues other than going to look for rice and I don't think one would have liked to add the unruly boys to the equation of fighting for rice in public. I think those good reasons to have the soldiers issued the rice was exploited by unscrupulous and corrupt officers and civilians who were contractors for the issuance of the rice. Yes I knew that officers had far more than the quota they required and that's why some of us when we took over command, reduced the quotas drastically. And what happened again, people thought some of the officers who did that, were stupid; maybe they did not like to make money. But we saved thousands of bags of rice by the time I left. And I was proud of that because I told them that I would keep rice sufficiently as reserve just in case you come to a point you will not be able to supply the army. But yes, that happened a lot. You have a free for all kind of situation and with poor leadership from the top, seeing these young officers who just came in earlier, living in the best of houses, driving the best of cars, that was no good example for a

quarter master. Those are some of the intricate things that happened. People ran away with whole salary of a whole company and having collected it from Freetown on his way, came up with a cooked up story that he was ambushed on the way by one person or the other. Although some of those ambushes that happened were actually real, those pay masters lost their lives. So it came to a point paymasters stopped even travelling. You see, you'll like the paymaster to go right to the front, that's how it should be, he goes to the front and they organised a pay parade and he pays them. But then pay masters started falling into ambush so what do you do, what's the compromise? You ask their own unit commander to come and collect their money. That worked for a time and the unit commanders begin to fall into ambush. Who was doing that, was it the soldiers themselves, was it the rebels, who knows precisely when an officer is going for salary? Was it that kind of arrangement nobody knows? But those things happened and those are the realities that impacted on how people should or should not receive their salaries on time or late. All of these ones I think are the factors that affected the army.

Commissioner Commissioner Torto: Interpreter just before you interpret that, I just want to add a little bit to the question. Do you consider rice to be motivational enough for the fighting forces and why was the process continued after the APC Do you think it was right and should it be continued?

Kellie Conteh: I don't think I personally sat down at any time to think of whether it was right or not right. And especially so when I became force commander. I think we had more serious priorities to talk about then, than to talk about slashing the rice or stopping it. I think it would have been disastrous if that had happened in the middle of war. I was trying to bring the army back to its feet and I don't know what would have happened if I had just cut off rice supply. Even though yes some people would claim they were not receiving their quota. But I don't think it was bad idea at that time. Because one reason I will give which some of the sergeant majors were giving, although at a stage we knew some of them were simply lying, but we had these soldiers up country in various deployment areas and some stayed for years without coming down to Freetown. You have their families down in Freetown. The first thing a wife of a soldier wanted was her bag of rice. This was the case ever since we were kids, I grew up in a barracks I know that for a fact. I am a son of a soldier myself, and I knew the mothers were always happy the soldiers come with their ration. And in old days they used to be given rations like we did with the rice. The ration was changed to a sack of rice per month, depending on the number in your family. The other time is that some of our junior soldiers that come in teamed up with girls and called it marriage. They were not responsible enough to ensure that they had the money at the end of the month to pay for rice. So the army was taking care of the welfare of his family to ensure that family was fed. So what happened in some of these companies, in fact the sergeant collected the rice of those bad soldiers that have been reported by their wives that they've not been receiving rice for two three months. The Sergeant major will collect that rice and go to those houses and distribute them himself. That is the only way you can ensure that those families have received their rice. Because if you give it to soldiers they will sell it. That was what simply happened. So that was a strong argument for soldiers to be given the rice, because at the end of the month many soldiers, and I saw this clearly with my father, by the time the month ends he would be penniless, nothing in the house. So the first thing they will fight for is to come and drop that bag of rice, the rest is left with our mothers to find fish and other condiments to prepare the food. He can now go on his own you know, whether he wants to find money or to do any other thing that's his business, but at least the house will be fed. And I believed that was the consideration that continued, that the army should be given rice. Over time, the army kept asking for more and more for many many reasons and they were given, and officers saw that they have an opportunity. I have a thousand of bags left, they distribute to the officers. But I'm sure people realise later that it was fair, it wasn't because I know of many other institutions that

were with that and that was perhaps why my staff advised that we do some savings of these rice and I think we saved quite a lot.

Commissioner Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much. The last coup, AFRC coup, according to testimonies was staged by private or how do you call them officers or rank and files working in the physical education department. A group of footballers met and decided on a coup. And also several of the bat men of very Senior Officers who saw their bosses living lavished life styles and acquiring property. Is that not indicative of the fact that officers of the army were really living well? And that's when their bat men waylaid them there by causing problem for the whole nation?

Kellie Conteh: Yes, I'll agree. Partly there were no good examples from those senior officers and you must combine that also with the indiscipline of the soldiers themselves, because you have other rules, or other channels to redress some of those wrongs if you saw it that way. So there are two sides to it. For some of the Senior Officers they were merely reckless, besides their being corrupt. They were unfit really for military service, because it was these very same soldiers that they were using as their labourer, to build the mansions or whatever they were putting up, and these soldiers saw exactly what was happening. It would make any man bitter, really. Although I will not support the kind of action they took. They should not overthrow the government. Every soldier has the right to see the commander in chief if you channel your report properly. Every soldier, to the last private soldier in the armed forces has the right to see the president. So I think if you have that and that the ceiling who else cant you see about a problem you think is affecting your morale. So I think the lavished lives of Senior officers, those who were in positions to be very corrupt and collect the loot from wherever and showed it recklessly outside, that they had the money.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much, leaders of evidence do you have questions for Brigadier Kellie Conteh?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you commissioner, a very few brief questions for Brigadier Kellie Conteh. The first will be to confirm the date in relation to December 1992. Brigadier General would you like to confirm that the announcement of the coup of December occurred on the 28th of December, that's when government announced about the coup attempt and people began to be arrested.

Kellie Conteh: Again I am not sure when that coup took place.

Leader of Evidence: I'm not talking about coup taking place, I am talking about the announcement.

Kellie Conteh: If it was made on the 20th of December I think those fellows must have been killed already because ...

Leader of Evidence: I was not only coming to that because the information available was that they were killed on the 29th of December, but you were an insider so you could even have better information and the commission will love to hear what are the right dates from you.

Kellie Conteh: I think if there was announcement at all, they were already dead. If there was any announcement made over the media, those people were already executed.

Leader of Evidence: Because the amnesty international report on the coup indicated that there was an announcement on the 28 of December and then a court marshal was to be convened by mid night on 29th of December 1992. Which will imply that the time from the announcement to the court martial to the execution was less than 24 hours. Now even you are saying that even by that 28th before even the announcement was made, they were already dead.

Kellie Conteh: I want to think so, because I happened to know about it when we were at the officer's mess. People were in corners I said what's happening? And somebody whispered and said, they have killed these people. I said who were these people, they said Kaota and others. I said for what reason? So if there was any announcement prior to that, I would have known that oh yes, there is some coup being reported of. But the very first time heard about it was about the execution. So if anybody wanted to patch it or make it nice afterwards, it must have come a day or so after or maybe the very evening, having realised that it was hasty.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much. The highest decision making body was the supreme council and you confirmed before this commission that the supreme council never discussed setting up a court martial, neither was there a meeting confirming any sentences from any court martial in relation to the 1992 coup.

Kellie Conteh: Nothing like that.

Leader of Evidence: Would you like to tell the commission what was the circumstance that led to the retirement of Mrs. Lucy Kanu?

Kellie Conteh: Oh no I don't quite remember, I cant place that now.

Leader of Evidence: Up to that point you were in charge of administration branch

Kellie Conteh: No, I was never

Leader of Evidence: In 1993 after the coup

Kellie: No No No No, It must have been Michael Conteh, Lieutenant Colonel Conteh, Michael, not me

Leader of Evidence: But you were still a member of the supreme council and there is a letter saying that the council had approved her retirement. What we want to know is what was the

offence she committed apart from being the wife of one of the alleged coup plotters. What was her offence that would lead to the retirement form the army?

Kellie Conteh: Again, really I am not sure. I'm not even aware of the letter you are talking about, and I don't think it was the supreme council that actually met. Probably it was that Supreme Council which I will keep referring to as the inner circle. But Lucy was a fine officer, and I didn't remember her causing any trouble. I would, should have known. I don't remember her causing any trouble to warrant her dismissal. Again those are some of the things I was talking about, about witch hunting. Her husband was bad so she is bad.

Leader of Evidence: You could clarify this for me now. Was there an army council that was responsible for military recruitment and promotion or was that the supreme council's responsibility?

Kellie Conteh: It was a mixture of both, it was supposed to be handled by the military body, the headquarters, but we also had them to stamp it. Sometimes they even did posting. That was the other unfair thing they did. They didn't know the officers, but were also posting people, just because they don't like you, sometimes they will post an officer who has been a tailor or some kind of job, for all his service, they tell him to go command a battalion, what do you expect from that man?

Leader of Evidence: So to your knowledge, Mrs. Lucy Kanu did not commit any offence to warrant retirement?

Kellie Conteh: No

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much. Would you like to mention the name of the Limba officer who was wrongly executed? Because if his rights were wrongly violated, the commission has the responsibility to investigate the nature of the violation and engage the military authority or authorities with view to discussing about the appropriate compensation for this family, for the violation of his right. So we would like to know the name and the circumstances of his execution so that we can investigate this case? Or was he part of the December 1992 execution? So my next question will be to ask you, may be by the time you became force commander you saw some of the paper work, to give us the names of some of those people who were executed in December, 1992. You can remember because we will also engage the current military authorities on the rest of the names.

Kellie Conteh: I think I will come up with the few I remember.

Leader of Evidence: And send it to us in written form?

Kellie Conteh: Yes

Leader of Evidence: Excellent. You have told the commission that the young soldiers who took over power were very inexperienced and they had number of civilians who were advising

them, and misleading them. So in your opinion, would it be right to say that these civilians were also culpable for most of the decisions that the young officers took during the regime of the NPRC.

Kellie Conteh: Yes, I mean one should blame them also squarely because the boys admired most of them, some of them were said to have back rolled the entire operation for the coup. They must have had a lot of influence over the boys, and they had people outside of Sierra Leone also who were also civilians, both Sierra Leoneans and other nationals, but were part of the cabal, which they set up.

Leader of Evidence: Two final questions, very briefly, would you like to talk about the regional balance of the officer core of the army when you were force commander, and whether this created any problems for you or for the management of the war?

Kellie Conteh: Yes, certainly there was an imbalance in the officer core of serving personnel from the various regions. Quite a lot of officers from the North and within that bracket you had more Limba Officers, yes, and I think I mentioned that earlier on that because of the system that was introduced, some of these people were in larger numbers. You had that affecting the thinking generally in the country, like all other things, which the government did in many other institutions. The army was not left behind in having its own share of interference and therefore the repercussions that followed. Like every other institution that had a taste of that kind of interference, the army was not left behind at all.

Leader of Evidence: Army officers who were in the NPRC according to you promoted themselves. And some of them are still holding important positions both locally and internationally, serving the government of Sierra Leone. What will be your opinion about what next should be done? Particularly where in terms of the ranks that they currently carry, they are now the superiors to some of those who were actually their senior at the point of enlistment and in terms of experience? What needs to be done in relation to some of these officers?

Kellie Conteh: Thank you very much can I also have that for the...

Leader of Evidence: Okay, finally the sobel phenomenon started when you were force commander. Do you accept some element of responsibility, for what the army did to the people of Sierra Leone?

Kellie Conteh: If you look at the entire situation, I think armed forces have a lot of apologies to make, that one is given. I think I was the very first force commander that openly said to the public that yes, there are bad soldiers amongst us. And there are records about this. I'm sure they have recording about this at SLBS TV, Radio.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka : No more questions .. We want to thank you for coming and your presentation made to the Commission. You may step down

**BRIEF TO THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION IN RESPECT OF THE SIERRA LEONE
CIVIL WAR. FROM COLONEL KOMBA SM MONDEH**

CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT.

The civil war in my mind was caused by a myriad of factors. However, the major factors to me that caused the conflict were namely;

a. Lack of Proper Intelligence; credible intelligence was not available to the government and security planners due to lack of training and funds.

b. Unemployment: Large number of unemployed youths (Lumpen Youths) who went about in a very idle manner around the big cities, were encouraged to form loose gangs of 'weed smokers' who were ready tools for trouble makers. They formed the nucleus of the fighters on all sides during the war.

c. Tribalism: This was the cankerworm that ate deep into the psyche of the society. The then 'statusquo' favoured one tribe/region over and against all others, despite their inadequacies in all sphere that was largely the portion of that group of people/region. They held vibrant positions that they were unqualified for largely due to political patronage.

d. Underdevelopment of the Country; The underdevelopment of the infrastructure in the country due to lack of credible and enduring infrastructural facilities nationwide also contributed to the outbreak of the crisis. As a result of lack of basic amenities (such as light and pipe borne water) in the major cities of the country, plenty of the citizens opted out of those areas for the capital city - Freetown or moved out of the country entirely. This helped a lot in breeding bad blood as people felt neglected by the central government.

e. Large scale illiteracy: Ignorance due to lack of adequate education was a serious problem that impacted, positively on the war. People were quickly conscripted by the rebels largely due to ignorance and lack of information on governments' plans and activities. In plenty cases of capture of villages and towns especially, the rebels played on the psyche of the citizens who were getting information via such news agencies like BBC, VOA and RFI, only.

f. Lack of Credible Democracy;& Perpetuation of political party:_The one party system of government which was introduced by the Siaka Steven led APC administration also created bad blood in the polity. The opposition which existed in reality was coerced so badly that they could not properly articulate any sensible issues against the government. This led to lots of them to flee the country due to threats on their lives.

g. Poor Security Deployment Nationwide:_The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) since independence was largely ceremonial. This kind of posture did not help matters when war broke out because basic military hardware and good intelligence were lacking. In addition, the strength and ORBAT (i.e. Order of Battle) of the army was very faulty, thus could not effectively thwart Rebel advances on the outbreak of the war.

h. Diamond Greed and Lust for Power:_The entire war seemed to revolve around the issue of Diamonds and Power. The RUF rebels and their bosses wanted to continue plundering Sierra Leone in order to sustain themselves, thus they embarked on their senseless campaign. They claimed they were initially against the JS Momoh led APC government, but even after the NPRC overthrew Momohs' APC, they refused to stop fighting. This therefore meant they were only interested in gaining political control of the state and also to loot the resources of the state. Thus the determination to control the mining regions of Kono and Mekanji.

ROLES OF ACTORS, INSTITUTIONS AND COUNTRIES

Various institutions and groups fought in the 11 years civil war. Amongst the groups, the following were prominent actors, namely;

a. Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF): This was the national Army of Sierra Leone. Though ill equipped, that institution defended the country with determination against all odds (especially the lack of logistics). There were cases of extortions and raids done by few members of Army. These cases were most times not handled with `strong hands' because of sentiments and there was no deterrence (in form of a standing military tribunal which would have dealt with defaulters). The attrition rate was very high amongst the rank and file due to lack of training and the NPRC military intervention of 1992. This further weakened the strength of the RSLAF. The final straw that broke the camels' back was when the AFRC sacked the SLPP government through a Coup of May 25 1997. They also did the unbelievable by inviting the RUF rebels (whom they had been fighting against for six years) to join them in forming a government. This action finally brought all forms of discipline and regimentation of the RSLAF to zero and ultimately finished the image of the RSLAF.

b. Revolutionary United Front:_The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) brought a senseless war to Sierra Leone which caused untold deaths hardship and suffering to an otherwise peaceful

country. They carried out a 'scorched earth' policy thereby burning whole towns and villages indiscriminately which has distorted the cartography of the country. They also raped (including the underaged and elderly), forcibly extorted monies, killed and mutilated in very gory manner and terrorised the poor and innocent people who lived in the hinterland. They really had no ideology and adopted a 'reign of terror' to coerce people into their fold. The main leaders/actors in this group were Foday Sankoh, Mohammed Tarawallie aka Zinno, Sam Bockarie aka Mosquito, Gibril Masaquoi, Mike Lamin and Dennis Mingo.

c. Civil Defence Force: The Civil Defence Force (CDF) came in as a handy support group to the RSLAF. It comprised of mainly group of hunters who have knowledge of the bush surroundings of their respective regions. They were divided by region in the following manner;

- a. Kamajor -Southern Province
- b. Tamaborahs/Kapras Northern "
- c. Donsos - Eastern " d. Hunters/Ojeh - Western Area.

This group was a very determined lot who felt they needed to support the National Army in defending the state. They really performed well all through the war by giving limited intelligences and acting as scouts during operations. However, due to lack of training and logistics, they could hardly bear the rigours of jungle life in pitch battle/war situation. Furthermore, due to ill training and no formal command structure, including lack of education (ignorance) they became largely indisciplined. On the advent of democracy. This role was misinterpreted by their masters who believed they were more important in the security equation than the National Army. Friction naturally occurred several times and this led mainly to the May 25'97 crisis.

SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE: The GOSL contacted the under mentioned groups to help them with the prosecution of the war due to shortage of personnel and reverses in the war. The groups were

- a. Executive Outcomes: A mercenary outfit largely made up of ex-South African Defence Force Officers who fought in Angola and Namibia. They made a positive impact in the war by giving the RUF a bloody nose. However, the maintenance cost of this group was very high.
- b. Ex-Gurkhas - This group of ex-British special forces suffered a terrible shock defeat in the very first campaign they embarked upon. They underrated the RUF who cut the throat/head of their leader at the MALAL HLLS defeat of May 1995. They withdrew immediately after this incident.

c. ULIMO: This group was made up of ex-Liberian soldiers and a cross section of civilians from Liberia. They were mostly indisciplined but needed to survive, so opted in fighting alongside the RSLAF. They were largely a menace to society as they were full of lies and intrigues. Their internal power tussle led to its disintegration.

A few countries helped the GOSL positively in its prosecution of the war. Such countries were Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, USA and China. China, USA and Nigeria need to be singled out as they contributed immensely with software (incl.; Uniforms, webbing, boots and tentages) hardware (incl.; Weapons, ammo, trucks etc) and personnel especially by Nigeria. The personnel Nigeria contributed provided security around the western area, Bo and Kenema district. This helped the RSLAF to deploy more men forward.

Burkina Faso, Cote d'voire and Liberia on the other hand, aided the RUF rebels with personnel and logistics in their bid to seize control of the state. A few Burkinabe and Liberian soldiers were killed inside Sierra Leone where they fought alongside their RUF cohorts. Arms and ammo bearing Burkinabe, Liberian and Libyan marks were retrieved at various times from the rebels. Cote d'voire provided the political leadership of the RUF with a base to operate from.

INTEGRATION OF PERPETRATORS

The perpetrators of the war can be integrated into the society in the following manner; namely;

- a. Through mass literacy/adult education campaigns which could form the basis of indoctrination lesson.
- b. Reconciliation in its entirety (by forgiving perpetrators of all atrocities they committed).
- c. Education for all to bridge illiteracy gap.
- d. Creation of jobs/enterprise set-up with GOSL cash support/learning new skills. This would stem the Lumpen youth culture.
- e. Housing to be arranged as a low cost scheme for mortgage by all perpetrators.

ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

The victims of the war who have been identified as genuinely innocent victims can be assisted in the following ways, namely;

- a. They can be given cash assistance to set-up various small/medium scale industries especially in the hinterland after some form of training sponsored by International NGOs.
- b. This set of people should benefit from free housing facilities provided for them by the GOSL in the areas they come from

- c. Children who were victims of rape or conscription should benefit/receive scholarship from GOSL for their entire education.

OFFICE OF THE DEFENCE ADVISOR

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Date: 19 March, 2003

Ref: SLHC/ABJ/DA/011/A

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION

114 PADEMBA ROAD

Freetown

Sierra Leone

Attention: RT. REV JOSEPH C HUMPER

Sir,

SUBMISSION
OF BRIEF

1. Thanks for your letter of 29 November 2002. This letter was only received by me on 12 March 2003 (kindly find attached photocopies of letters and dates received). I believe the delay was caused as a result of Nigeria's poor postal facilities.

2. I have sent you in brief, (kindly find attached), my observations and comments about the Sierra Leone Civil war from the informed point of a major actor. This submission covers the period October 1991 - July 1996 only, (I left Sierra Leone since July 1996) and suggestions as you spelt out in your letter.

During that period; (i.e. October '91 - July '96) I happened to have been privileged by the Grace of the Almighty to hold the following Army/Armed Forces appointments; namely;

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--|
| a. | 1991-1992 - | Platoon/Company Commander |
| b. | 1992-1993 - | Deputy Defence Minister |
| c. | 1995-1996 - | Director Training & Operation at
Defence Headquarters |
| d. | Jan. '96 - July 21 '96 | Chief of Army Staff |

It is hoped my submission will be useful to the TRC for the sake of posterity.

While I wish you and the members of the TRC success, kindly accept the assurances of my highest esteem.

KOMBA SMMONDEH COLONEL

DEFENCE ADVISER

Copy to

- Deputy Defence Minister; Ministry of Defence, Tower Hill, Freetown
- HE, Sierra Leone High Commissioner to Nigeria
- Chief of Defence Staff; Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) - DA (P/F)

TAPE 35

DAY 2, WEEK 3

TRANSCRIBER: LANSANA D. SESAY

SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE,
HON. EKE HALLOWAY ON THE 1998 DETENTION TRIALS AND EXECUTIONS

Commissioners Present:
Chairman Bishop Joseph Humper
Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones
Commissioner Sylvanus Torto
Commissioner Professor John Kamara

Leaders of Evidence:
Martien Schotsmann
Lydia Akporie

Leader of Evidence: Madam Chairperson, the next witness for today is the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Hon. Eke Hamad Halloway.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: What is your full name please?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: Eke Ahmed Halloway.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christian or Muslim?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: Christian.

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones, the Presiding Commissioner.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Mr. Attorney General, we would like to thank you very much for coming to answer to our invitation and there is nothing strange here to

you and so we just turn over to you and we're all anxious to hear your testimony.

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Madam Chairperson, Commissioners, I thank you for the invitation and in having this opportunity of making a submission to this Commission in relation to the 1998 detentions, trials and executions; in my capacity then as a defence counsel. I shall concentrate on the trials; I'll give a gloss on the detentions and a gloss on the executions. The year 1998 will be remembered in the annals of this country for treason trials; three of which were civil and one special Court Martial. I participated in all these trials as Defence Counsel; I was partly briefed by the government to defend and partly by the accused persons themselves. At the Special Court Martial, I represented Col. A.K. Sesay, Major Kulla Samba - the only woman in the Special Court Martial, Col. Nelson Williams, Col. Bashiru Konteh and Col. Sinna. They were all found guilty; the first two were executed and the others are still alive and holding prominent positions in the army. All accused at the Special Court Martial were represented by defence counsels and the majority of the defence counsels were briefed and paid by the Government of Sierra Leone to defend. Every opportunity was given to the accused in open court by testing the credibility of witnesses of the prosecution and presenting their cases in their defence. Reasonable access was granted to defence counsels to visit and interview their client in prison. To that extent, the trial was carried on in accordance with the due process of the law. I would however make this observation that the court martial tribunal cut me short in depriving me with the opportunity to address them on the penalty when it was death by firing squad and that penalty was not mandatory. The tribunal would nowhere had exercise it discretion to impose imprisonment rather than the death penalty. I would also like to comment that the accused persons had no right of appeal although that has now been restored.

In the civil treason trials, I represented among others before the Hon. Justice A.D. Rashid Savage, before the Hon. E.K. Cowan, Mr. Hilton Fyle before the Hon. Justice Cowan, Mr. A.B. Sesay. I succeeded in freeing a few of these accused persons. Again in this trials, the accused persons were represented by defence counsels most of whom were briefed and paid for by the Government to defend. The accused persons were given every opportunity to be defended in open court and to have access to their solicitors, to be interviewed and to prepare their cases. Those who were convicted were sentenced to death by hanging unlike the court martial, they had the right to appeal. They appealed against their convictions and sentences but withdrew their appeals so as to benefit from the amnesty granted by the Lome Peace Agreement. The environment then was hostile and tense and defence counsels were subjected to verbal assaults and threats for defending according to them "these animals" especially the court martial accused persons. The position however temporised as the trials progressed because they understood that we were doing our jobs as lawyers and finally end by respect of the detentions, there was a lot of detentions especially at Pademba Road Prisons and in respect of the executions, I learnt about it after the event of

Faithfully submitted.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Mr. Attorney General and Minister of Justice for your testimony. Now the procedure here is that Commissioners ask you questions if they have any and the Leader of Evidence too. And after the questions, you may ask the Commission questions if you have any. And we'd be pleased to have your recommendations. I don't know whether you'll be able to give them now or you would like to send them written to the Commission and we'll get to that later. Chairman, have you questions?

Bishop Humper: Hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney General, we want to commend you for coming to be part of the process of the Commission in accomplishing its mandate. I do not have many questions, only a few questions for clarification. You did say; we want to recall that the accused were given the opportunity to have defence counsels in the trials. Did I hear you say that this defence counsels, all of them were paid by government?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: Most of them; State briefs so to speak. Cases were capital offences and that's the area where legal aid is usually given not much but at least with something by the Government of the day.

Bishop Humper: To what extent can you say that the trials were carried out in accordance with the due process of the law from your own perspective?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: Well it's a question of what do you mean by due process of the law? In so far as the court was concerned, the accused persons were defended by counsels of their choice and secondly it was done in open courts and thirdly they were given opportunities especially with a counsels to represent and argue their cases. And then of course they were tried by their peers; in the civil courts by the Judge in Jury; especially the Jury. In the tribunal a special court martial by a military tribunal. To that extent one can say the due process of the law or the rule of law prevailed.

Bishop Humper: Hon. Attorney General, you are one of those personalities who have held and still hold very important positions in the community now, as a citizen of this nation i.e. Sierra Leone, in your personal judgement given the historical context in which they are now and discussing about all of these trials and execution, what would you say hampered or high jacked or prevented the administration of justice or facilitated the administration of justice i.e. given the historical context during which these events took place for which people were put on trials either in the civilian court as those independent and those in court martial we are just thinking about their historical context, the activities, the things that happened in the country which involved all of these people. As a citizen, how would you respond?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: There was a lot of atrocities, a lot of things done to the people of this country and they suffered a lot in all respects so justice had to be done. There were these persons who were brought to trial and indeed brought to trial because (1) to save mob justice, if they had not been brought in, perhaps there would have been a state of anarchy, so to contain the situation it was necessary that the persons who were alleged to have committed these atrocities to have been brought to justice. So it was worthwhile and it also further worth the while that in fact we've not only ended with the trials, but we've been able to put into a frame work the Commission of this nature as well as the Special Court so as to exercise what one would call transitional justice. So this the way, I see it

historically - and we do hope that like in the present treason trials, I made a statement that we hope that this will be the last of the treason trials in this country. We have to develop; we have to behave as civilised people in a democratic society.

Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Torto: Hon. Attorney General, we thank you very much for responding to our invitation and we are elated that you are here to show a shining example like the Vice President did. To the rest, some of those who are actually dragging their feet to come before us. Now that you people have come, we believe you will be here with interest and your spirit so we thank you. I only have two questions for your clarification for you to make not really a question. One is more generic. One, were you defending those people because they were innocent or justifying their actions?

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Well, according to our criminal jurisprudents, a persons is deemed innocent until he is proven guilty. I was not there to say they were innocent that is not to the tribunal as a lawyer, I was there to represent and argue my clients case whether they are guilty or not guilty was left to the tribunal. As I said in the civil court it was left to their peers i.e. the Jury and in the Special Court Martial to their peers - the military tribunal. So my function there was purely and simply as a lawyer. Not to say they are innocent or they are guilty and we have to accept that verdict and in the civil, the Jurors said they were guilty so we have to accept that verdict until it is challenged e.g. where there is a right of appeal.

Commissioner Torto: Or do you think their actions were justified?

Eke Ahmed Hallway: In so far as the court had pronounced their guilt, it was not justified in so far as the court has pronounced their guilt, their actions were not justified.

Commissioner Torto: Another general question. The Commission by the schedule we have, I think you have the names of the following people mentioned in there that we are going to have to require talking to them. I am just asking if your office will be kind enough to continue its assistance to the Commission by producing or forwarding these people to us, the following people:
1. Sam Maskita Bockarie

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Sorry Sir.

Commissioner Torto: I am calling names that the Commission have, it's list; that we would want to be talking to should we have problems after we subpoena them and they fail to appear, would your office continue its assistance to the Commission to identify...

Eke Ahmed Hallway: That's a focal point for the Commission. The Attorney General's office is a focal point for the Commission as well as the Special Court.

Commissioner Torto: So you are not interested in the names?

Eke Ahmed Hallway: No, No, we are saying it is our responsibility to assist the Commission as well as the Special Court, for example I think the Commission went there to get certain records had been taken or I don't know whether they were

made available to you by the Special Court in terms of the Treason trials executions and detentions. Yes we will be in a position to assist.

Commissioner Torto: Including Johnny Paul Koroma?

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Yes, if we can get information as to his whereabouts, although as alleged that he's dead, that has not yet been proven.

Commissioner Torto: **Dead!**

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Well that's what we heard. Of course Maskita as you know, his body has been brought here, it has been confirmed that he's dead, and infact his corpse/body should be handled over to the City Council for burial. But burial at a place where we would be able to exhume it in the future if further evidence is required in respect of Maskita.

Commissioner Torto: Then I also have a few names here that especially the last and featuring very prominently at the Bonthe hearings. King Dr. Kondowai of Tellu Bungor and of course Hinga Norman, Foday Sankoh. Would those, should we need them.....

Eke Ahmed Hallway: So far as Foday Sankoh is concerned, and Hinga Norman, they are now receiving the jurisdiction of the Special Court. They are indictees. I am sure if you require them, if the Commission makes an application to the Special Court I think that it is necessary as I see it that they should come and say something to the Commission, we will be there to assist the exercise. It is very necessary as I see it.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Madam Chairperson. Hon. Minister I would like to address this question to you in your capacity of former Defence Counsel in these treason trials. I want to refer to the questions I asked before to His Excellency, do you think as a Defence Counsel, the Defence Counsel that you were at that time that it would have been possible to amend the law and to allow an appeal before the Court Martial. Would it have been possible to make amendment to the law before the trials took place?

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Which law, which of the laws?

Leader of Evidence: The law on the court martial that at that time didn't allow an appeal and....

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Giving time and the environment, yes. I said time because when government came in in 1996, within less than a year, the government was toppled by the 1997 coup and so they went into exile. They came back in 1998; so at that time 1998 there was no Parliamentary sitting. The Cabinet was not sitting because it takes a process. The process in changing the law depend first of all; you have to go through cabinet and after cabinet it has to be taken to the legislature. So I say giving time and the environment because the environment was pretty hostile at the time. This is where expediency comes into show; giving time and the type of environment, I think Government ought to have restored appeal

for court martial. But the situation as it was then in terms of time and in terms of the hostile environment, it would have created a big problem in this country.

Leader of Evidence: My last question is what did you think at that time as Defence Counsel of the amendment of a criminal procedure act before the trials started?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: Well, this was a state of emergency. And a state of emergency have on these regulations that promogated by the president under the constitution so there could be changes so as to facilitate for example in terms of evidence. We have the rules of evidence, which talk about original evidence. So if yes have these original evidence, we will be able to get secondary evidence and a change in the law instead of that, we were thinking of the..... and majority as the case may be. So as I said like when you take America and what happened in the United States of America September's date - 11..... That certain regulation, war time regulations emergency regulations that can come in to shorten the process and remove a lot so that a trial can go on to vindicate at least atone the feelings, the agreements of the people. So again as I said whatever regulations were past, were done under the constitution because when the government came in they restored the 1991 Constitution and under the 1991 Constitution there is this part invested in the president to put out regulations. And such regulations haven't been done under the law. It is a question of law and not a question of morality. Having been done under the law, I think it was quite in place.

Leader of Evidence: So as Defence Counsel at the time you didn't object to the use of this public.....?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: I did not object.

Leader of Evidence: You did not?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: No! it was something done according to the law.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much I have no further questions.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Mr. Minister, Attorney General for coming and answering our questions. Now we've asked you a few questions and we wonder whether you would have a question for us on our processes and procedures.

Eke Ahmed Halloway: There is a reconciliation process, to what extent has the NCDDR exercise complemented your exercise of reconciliation? Has it complemented?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well they have assisted us and I should say yes it is complementary and then in some cases after listening to some witnesses we've been able to make some referrals to them for their help and assistance.

Eke Ahmed Halloway: I see now I saw on TV the Chairman up the provinces where reconciliation came in by people stooping down, begging for forgiveness how sustainable would that be?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, reconciliation cannot be done in one day and so we generally talk to the tribal heads, religious heads to continue the process and even to the community themselves because reconciliation concerns every one to continue with the process. I don't know whether chairman wants to add.

Bishop Humper: Generally the Commission serves as a facilitator. We establish the process and we expect that after our work the civil society, the NGOs, the traditional rulers and religious rulers all of these will take up from there to carry out the reconciliation process. And as the Deputy had said, it is not a one-term event. The real sustained reconciliation Not come perhaps during the reign of some of us who are now alive. It could take longer than others but the beginning is almost always the most important aspect. And we are gratified that all the districts we have been, we have been, we have had this break through for people to clearly understand where we are as a nation and that we cannot remain polarised nor divided or disintegrated and the only way we can come together, we can be reintegrated is by taking the first step which is reconciliation. So we invite NGOs, local people, community members, those who have influences like in sections, in chiefdoms I districts to carry out this work as reconciliation and a religious leaders who have greater constituencies in this whole country it is our responsibility either in the church, mosque or to her religious contexts will continue to sing the song of reconciliation - healing and reconciliation

Eke Ahmed Halloway: What's the provision of those who do not subscribe to religion.

Bishop Humper: Those who would not subscribe to religion but I believe have conscience and they live within the community, regardless of their non-religious affiliation, they are compelled by community integration to be part of that process. If they are not part of that process, they themselves will feel the pinch of it because the community itself will teach them a lesson that they will have no alternative but to join the people whether they like it or not. It may not be out of religious compulsion but the quest to live together and to unite and to co-exist. We still have the traditional process as far as we have in fact reconciliation had started long before the English people began to talk about reconciliation. Traditionally when you offend an elder, there is a Court barray; they go sit down there, the only evidence of true reconciliation is to prostrate before the people. If they don't touch you then they have not forgiven you and in a quest to say "we have accepted you" there is a token of something that you give to the chief to hold and then you become his friend. So that process had been existing and has been only reincarnated or reintegrated.

Take another example in Pujehun; a Kamajor killing another kamajor's father and they were living in the same town but they were miles apart. There is peace, the President said let us forgive and stay together. But these were vulnerable creatures, they were able to come together for the first time to embrace each other at the ceremony. For us, that was a real symbolic act of reconciliation which the people themselves appreciated because they thought that they were sitting on a time bomb where ex-fighters would come to engage each other, that would create another problem. So we believe that if only our traditional rulers and our religious leaders in their respective communities will promote the process of reconciliation, things would change and ultimately that will be our hall-mark, that will be our end result of attaining sustainable peace in this

country, when people will put the past behind them and move together. It will take sometime for others, the wound is so deep that they cannot heal overnight.

Commissioner Torto: I just want to add to what Chairman had said. There is also another aspect of reconciliation where it happens to be issues of mass killings or massacres. There are several places in the country from the history of the war itself you will be aware that there has been mass massacres, killings at a place like Tombodu in Kamaya Chiefdom where the Commission went; we saw the pit, the famous SAVAGE PIT where over two, three, four, five hundred people have been dumped, we saw the building where they were burnt alive. We have visited a village in Port Loko district called MANARMA where about according to the town chief he mentioned about fifty or sixty people were buried in a mound of earth. We have heard of the TALIA, GBONGBO - TELU, Telu massacre in Bonthe. On Saturday we were at TIHUN SOGBINI Chiefdom, Bonthe District where there was an incident of killing. The Chief was talking about hundreds and hundreds; we actually reconciled and I hope our media people will show that on Television where the Paramount Chief performed their kind of reconciliation ceremonies with the Paramount Chief and the chiefdom elders stooping down about two or three times and so on doing certain recitals. And we were being elated by the fact that we saw their countenance changed by the time we were leaving..... We didn't stop there, we went to the site where the chief said they gathered the bones and buried them all of about five or six hundred people. I don't know the exact number according to that chief. So, we lit up candles, stood around, I hope the television people will show that. The Deputy Chair and myself and everybody and the village Chief and the Paramount Chief again performed the traditional healing process which you know the act that established us allowed us to do. So we are very much doing this and both teams are satisfied at the pace we have been achieving this. It is usually symbolic; we cannot apologise or crave a kind of system to everybody in this country because everybody was affected. We will do some of these things so that the messages go down. As people see things by that they will take courage on the examples and from that kind of thing and then adapt their own psychological feelings to the whole town.

Eke Ahmed Halloway: I am gratified anyway.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Do you have any other question?

Eke Ahmed Halloway: No questions. I want to put in about three recommendations, but before I do that, I've spoken with the Executive Secretary, I think the Commission requested government to make a submission but since I was not in government, I ought to have come and make the submission. I have requested the Director of Prisons, which is an arm of government, the Inspector General, which is an arm of government at the time as well as the CDS an arm of government, they would do a presentation. That presentation, the submission of government will come in and fortunately the Vice President has come in and I think he's brought a lot of submission which concern the government of the time. So I felt I should inform the Commission about that case they say government. I don't want to be held for contempt of court.

And then my recommendation: 1. I think to sustain your work after you have completed your exercise whether it will not be advisable for a human right commission to be established by law.

2. The abolition of the death penalty as a sanction for capital offences. Enact laws in so far as it touches murder the death penalty is mandatory because those were laws that..... but when it comes to the treason trial, the offences it say shall be liable, and that has been settled that there is a discussion. But to clear every doubt of the future I think now that we are a democracy, a civilised country I think we should begin to think about abolishing the death penalty. Then so far as the court martial is concerned, we are happy that the appeal has been restored. But I think it is an appeal to a special appeal court martial tribunal. Not the normal appeals to the courts of appeal, to the supreme courts but a special court martial appeal tribunal perhaps we should consider that. So it doesn't go back as far as the civil appeal are concerned because when it involves the military it's a different matter, there must be speed so to speak. At the same time given an opportunity for the exercise for the rule of law. I think one stage is sufficient not going through the horror, the court of appeal and to the supreme. They should set a Special court of military appeal. It will be a court of appeal constituted by the soldiers themselves.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: May I suggest that you send these recommendations written so that you will be able to elaborate on them. We won't call you to read them.

Eke Ahmed Hallway: OK. I'll do that. And then finally, perhaps you might need time because I don't think you will be able to complete within the specified time I don't know. If that is so, then we are willing to extend the time.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well, yes I think we'll be very happy if you add and with the additional funds.

Eke Ahmed Hallway: Yes indeed and finally I must thank you very much for the public service you give to this country at least to bring justice at least by speaking the truth.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Mr. Minister and Attorney General, thank you for coming and for the time you've given to us. You may step down now.

I think this will be the end of our hearings for today the Commission has just returned from the provinces and we still trying to find our western area legs and so we close down a little earlier than usual today to come back at 9:30 tomorrow morning. Our apology to Mr. Victor Foe but he is here with us anyway and he'll come again. Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen see you tomorrow at 9:30.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS ON THE 1998 DETENTION TRIALS AND EXECUTIONS

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Ladies and gentlemen, the TRC has just come back from the provincial tours, Team A from Magburaka and Team B from the Bonthe District

and we are about to start again our Institutional and Thematic Hearings. As usual we should start with meditation and I'll ask you all to stand up and silently pray according to your different precision. Ladies and gentlemen this morning, I am presiding, Lawyer Marcus Jones and later on you will be able to hear the Chairman of the Commission Bishop Humber and the other commissioners as we go along. At the beginning of the week. I'll like to remind you of our procedure here. All the witnesses who come up to give their testimonies are treated with respect and as they give their testimonies photographers; those accredited are asked not to take photographs, they could after the testimonies or just before and while the testimonies are going on, we would ask you please not to talk, not to laugh, not to boo, not to clap but to listen quietly. We would not like to have the cause to ask anyone to leave the hall, thank you very much. Leader of Evidence are your witnesses here?

Leader of Evidence: Madam chairperson, our first witness for today is present. It is Mr. Solomon Berewa, Vice President of the country.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We may have our first witness, His Excellency the Vice President Solomon Berewa and on this occasion for record purposes, we are going to allow photographers to take photograph. While still he's here..... Please give his name in full.

Solomon Berewa: I am Solomon Denma Dominic Berewa.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christina or Muslim?

Solomon Berewa: I am a Christian.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Please take the Bible and say after me.

The Witness was sworn on oath on the Bible.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Your Excellency we are pleased to have you here this morning and particularly so that you'll be setting an example to others who are still dragging their feet to come and we are looking forward to your testimony. So please if you could tell us what you want about the topic for this morning and if you could please go a bit slowly because we have an interpreter and also we have people taking down your testimony. Thank you very much.

Solomon Berewa: Thank you my lord. Can I proceed?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Yes.

Testimony

Mr. Chairman, Members of the commission, in answer to your summons, I had prepared a brief statement on my activities as Attorney General, Minister of Justice during the period the commission is looking into. Please permit me to read that statement... I've already furnished the Commission with copies. I'll be prepared to answer any questions that may follow from it. I believe the matter concerning me and which I believe the commission would like to know about will be my activities during the period that I was Attorney General and the amount of prosecutions that I was involved in. so I will be confining myself to that topic unless honourable members of the commission would wish me to go outside it. I was appointed Attorney General and Minister of

Justice in April 1996 following the presidential and general elections of that year. I held that position until May 2002 when I became Vice President of this country. As Attorney General and Minister of Justice, I was the principal legal adviser to the government. I was in charge of the prosecution of criminal matters and I represented the government in all civil litigations, including litigations against government officials sued in their official capacities. My office has the responsibilities for drafting all legislations and legal documents for the government. I served also as a link between the judiciary and the executive and between the legislature and the executive. As attorney General and Minister of Justice, I also have the responsibility of leading the government's delegations to the several peace negotiations held between the government and the RUF leaders, the RUF rebels within and outside Sierra Leone. This resulted in the peaceful resolution of the eleven year armed conflict in this country. My first concern as Attorney General and Minister of Justice was to restore the full force of the 1991 Constitution which was suspended by the preceding NPRC junta and to remove from our laws all the draconian and obnoxious decrees introduced by that junta. The government also introduced legislations which will promote good governance, human right and reconciliation. These were the first, the very first measures I and the government took on assuming office. During my period as Attorney General and Minister of Justice, the only capital offences I prosecuted were treason trials conducted in the civilian court and treason trials by court martial. I am, I'll give an account of one of those types of cases, treason trials conducted in civilian court.

One, the democratically elected government of President Amad Tejan Kabba took over office in 1996 from the military junta the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). There were several reports of efforts by the military to destabilise the government. Early in 1996, a coup plot was discovered, as a result of this a number of junior military personnel and a military officer Major Johnny Paul Koroma were apprehended. Because of the prevailing mood then in the country and the desire to have a fair and objective investigation into the matter, His Excellency the President asked for and received from the Nigerian Government a team of experienced investigators. They conducted further investigations into the alleged coup plot and out of a total of over thirty suspects in custody, the investigations revealed the active involvement of about nine of the suspects. Although all these nine suspects were military men, I chose to charge them with treason in the civilian court. The charges were duly preferred under the treason and state offences act 1963. So now if you see I'm not stating exact figures because I cannot now recall exactly how many of them they were and I have to go to the records. I'll try to get the indictments so that I can see precisely how many of them... eh... these suspects were. So I can only say they were over thirty (30) or more than that. I checked with the Law Officers Department for the files that are no longer there. I understand they have been either taken by the Special Court or by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It's five (5) years ago so I can't remember the exact figures. All the persons charged being military men were liable to be court martial but I chose to have them tried by a civilian court because as the law then stood, the right of appeal existed only after a conviction by a civilian court and not from a conviction by a court martial. In addition to the other procedural advantages the accused persons would have in a civilian court, I wish then to exhaust all the judicial processes of appeal in the event of their being convicted in the high court. The trial of those accused persons was in an advanced stage when the coup d'etat of 25th May 1997 occurred. All the accused who were then in custody and other convicted prisoners were released from prison, the trial was aborted. Major Johnny Paul Koroma then headed the resulting military junta the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and a number of his co-accused were appointed to various offices in the government.

The next stage of treason trials is the one I'm coming to now. When the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabba was restored to power in Freetown in February 1998, I was one of the officials who together were dispatched by him from exile in Conakry to act as a vanguard party to kick-start the government and prepare for the return of the President of Sierra Leone. For a few days after the ECOMOG intervention and the routing of the AFRC junta from Freetown, there was a vacuum in the governance of the country. Because of this our vanguard team had to return to Freetown without delay. On our arrival at the Lungi international Airport I came to know that hundreds of AFRC members and their active collaborators have been arrested largely by the

civilian population and were then detained at the airport and also at various detention centers in Freetown including the Pademba Road Prisons. I was also informed that the civilian population had taken reprisals of the number of those AFRC members and their collaborators who were then perceived as enemies of the people and were seen as those responsible for the torture, maiming and suffering the people have endured during the nine months rule of the junta. One of the first things I did on my return to Freetown was to comply with the instructions I received from the President before I left Conakry namely: To take measures to ensure that no one took the law into his own hands and that all persons in custody anywhere in the country were duly protected and not subjected to any form of ill treatment. At the first opportunity, I relayed this instruction to the ECOMOG officers on the ground and by and large they did everything to afford the necessary protection.

I then directed that all persons detained were to be removed to the Pademba Road Prisons be removed to the Pademba Road Prisons or police stations where their personal protection safety would be better assured, this was done, neither I nor the government ordered the arrest of any person after the restoration of the democratic government in February 1998. This was not necessary because all those who needed to be detained were already in custody.

In due course, investigations were conducted into the events leading to the coup d'etat of 25th May 1997 and the conduct of the members of the junta and their collaborators during the period of the junta rule. This resulted in preferring treason charges against a total of about 60 civilians and the preferment of charges against about 30 military personnel in the same category in a court martial. All the trials attracted a lot of public attention local and international. A number of foreign and local journalists witnessed the entire trials. I took extra care to ensure that there were due process and that the trials were truly fair and transparent and the accused persons received proper legal representation of their own choice. Various international human right organisations, the International Bar Association and the British Bar have representative witnessing the trials. The conduct of the proceedings were on the whole commended by all as fair.

Out of the four indictments preferred against the civilians, three were tried to conclusion and all the accused persons were convicted and sentenced to death. The trial on the fourth indictment was never completed. While the appeals of the accused persons sentenced to death were pending, the atrocities of the 6th of January, 1999 leading to the huge massacre and destruction in Freetown occurred. This was followed by the peace negotiations in Lome, Togo which I led on behalf of the government. Because of the amnesty provision in the resulting Lome Peace Agreement, all those convicted on the three indictments and those still to be tried on the fourth indictment were amnestied, that brought an end to those treason trials.

Then the first set of trials, the 34 or so military personnel who were charged with treason for their roles in the Coup d'etat of 25th May, 1997 and for their activities during of the junta were tried by court martial convened by the Chief of Defence Staff under the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces Act 1961. Again strict due process was observed at these trials and the same foreign and local observers as of the trial of the civilians witnessed these trials. The accused persons were duly represented by lawyers of their own choice. I led the prosecution, I was very sensitive to the fact that the accused persons were facing capital offences and that they had no right of appeal under the law, so I ensured that the trials were even further transparent by seeking and obtaining the permission of the court martial for a live television and radio broadcast of the entire proceedings. The proceedings were acclaimed as very fair by both local and international observers. It resulted in the acquittal of two of the accused persons and the conviction of the rest. Their convictions were duly confirmed as required by the 1961 Act. After the consideration of the prerogative of mercy committee established under Section 63 of the Constitution, some 23 of the accused persons were executed. It needs to be noted here that the 1961, that is the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces Act originally contained an elaborate appeals provision for trials by court martial, but the then APC government in 1971 had repealed. The entire appeals provision in that Act there by rendering appeals not available to persons convicted by court martial, the right to appeal after conviction by a court martial has now been restored by the present government. So court martial now have the right to appeal.

Then, the last topic I have written down is that dealing with the establishment of the review committee now hundreds of persons have been detained mainly by aggrieved civilians in the

wake of ECOMOG intervention in February 1998. I discovered that I could not.... That I could obtain credible evidence to prosecute only those who have been subjected the false civilian indictment and the court Martial. The rest were in custody on basis of insufficient evidence. There was intense popular agitation and resentment against the release of all those still in custody, and there was repeated and often violent demand from the population for their trial. Professional I could not..... to such demands as the evidential materials then in my possession were not sufficient to warrant the preferment of any charges against such persons. I therefore had to find a way of ensuring the early release of such persons and at the same time prevent a popular unrest having regard to the precarious security situation then prevailing in the country for this reason I caused the appointment of a committee to review the cases of all persons..... any charges. The committee was given wide powers including the power to order the immediate release of any person who after the review of his case deserved to be released immediately. The only power this committee did not have was the power to recommend the prosecution of such person. The committee was headed by a senior legal practitioner and its membership included representatives of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, Sierra Leone Association of journalist, the University and Students Organisation and other civil society bodies, even the Council of Churches of Sierra Leone was represented on it. It was through this process that we were able to bring an early end to the detentions and at the same time prevent a popular uprising following the restoration of the government in February 1998. That's my brief statement. ...Eh..... members in the Commission.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much, Your Excellency for your testimony. The Chairman and Commissioners will ask you questions just for elucidations of some points, and the Leader of Evidence will ask you questions too if she has any. And after the questions, if you have questions for the Commission, we'll be pleased to have your questions and then your recommendations, which you would like us to include in our final report. Chairman,

Chairman: Your Excellency I want to join the presiding chair our Deputy in thanking you for honouring or invitation. Your presence and before this time that of the Attorney General who is also present here will send a signal to the Sierra Leone community that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission cannot accomplish its mandate without the total cooperation of every Sierra Leonean. Your Excellency, the Commission is now engaged in thematic and institutional hearings, we had before this time dealt with the 19... December 1992 trials and executions and we come to 1998 about detentions trials and execution. In the case of the 1998 trials and detentions, there are two schools of thoughts I want to establish before we go forward in asking those . some of those questions for clarification and for our proper understanding. But that's the sum total of it all in dealing with this theme; one school of thoughts maintains that the trials were done hurriedly and therefore devoid of justice, that is one school of thought. The second school of thought maintains that infact there was no need for those trials and therefore the government dared in the execution of those they executed. Those are the two schools of thought.

Solomon Berewa: I thank you very much for raising these two issues. I never, never really thought that anybody would hold the view the trials were done hurriedly. After the restoration of the government and as I said we didn't spend any time arresting people, they were already in custody and we set in motion, the mechanism for investigating those in custody, one the prison was very full and there was a lot of taunting by members of the public of suspects, their families and so forth. So it was necessary for an early action to be taken on their matter. I decided to concentrate on the case of the civilians in the first place. I set up a large team of investigators; Special Branch investigators, CID men, I drafted a lot of them to do the investigation, to obtain statement from almost everybody who was in custody and then... that is the civilians first, went through those, I shifted then those who were to be charged and as I said the category the vast majority of them were not to be charged. So we narrowed it down to a very small number and preferred those charges... am took the civilians to court while the trials were on, the same team that investigated that large number of civilians investigated

the military men. They did the same, they took the same time, the same care to investigate and narrowed their number down to the 30 or so I have given. And that was submitted as it is, as the law required the findings from the investigators were submitted to the CDS. They too have a council that looked at these things and then they okayed the findings. The statements and the findings. The statements and the findings were submitted. They took some time there then they gave their clearance, the confirmation for the court martial to be held. Then we didn't go to the court martial immediately, there was the other question of even convening the court martial. That itself took sometime because as.. we needed a.. one a military man who was also a lawyer, the Sierra Leone army doesn't ... nobody have those types of combining papers. So we tried to get somebody from outside who was a military man and also a highly qualified lawyer to act as Judge Advocate. It was only after we put all those things together that the trials started.. eh.. we distributed to each of the accused persons... I mean the... all the material that was against them. Now we served them all to their lawyers. They had them all, we gave them time to study them before we came to court, the court settled down and then we started taking the evidence, and no accused person or any of the observers either local or international complained that any accused was prevented from putting his case. In fact the court bent so much back to accommodate them. Their lawyers took a very dilatory process putting their case and all that, asking for adjournment we endured all that. We had a television set in the Court room, played video sets, video cassettes of activities in which the accused persons were involved, not just the statements but the cassettes of activities which they were involved. They saw it, those.. the the, the audience in court saw it and I believe the nation too saw it and from all that piled up, anyway we spent a long time on it. I cannot tell you the... I wish I knew or either searched to tell you how long it took. It took months, not weeks. It took months for the matter to be concluded. The defence were given enough time to put their defence. The Judge Advocate addressed the Court for days analysing the evidence then the panel took their decision. So if there is any accusation of having been... the trials having been hurriedly carried through, I don't think with respect there is any basis for that. We were so particular about that one. I can assure you of this because even if, even though that's what I would have done in anyway but the mere presence of those international observers, reminded my doing, my exercising a little bit more caution. Then the next thing that the trial... there was no need for the court-martials, well we now know we now know why there is a need for just or some type of accountability for things. If after the coup, after the restoration of the government in 1996, those who were involved in the malpractices during the NPRC junta period, if they had been tried, we may never have had the 1997 coup, we may never have had the problems we had, we may never have had the 6th of January in the country. That's why some of us are so happy that the TRC is there now, the Special Court is there. People can now know that they will not treat the citizens of this country just anyhow. Deprive them of their properties, their lives, their arms, their eyes,... something had to be done and I can say this... eh.. in 1998 if the government did not act, there will be a real backlash against the government and it was necessary that to be done . Now you mentioned the executions of 1992, there is no comparison. The executions of 1992, there is no comparison. The executions of 1992 were extra judicial nobody even knows where the trials, if any trial, where it was held. Nobody even know where their executions were held, nobody knows who presided, nobody knows whether it was in day time or night time, nobody even knows under what law, nobody knows what offences they committed. That is it, that was the state of affairs at that time. So they are not comparable with respect at all, infact these were some of the obnoxious laws I referred to in my statement. The NPRC enacted a decree, Decree no. 12 of 1962 which came out after the executions,

we saw it after the people have been executed which authorized them to try civilians in what they call court martial without specifying the place of trial, the panel for the offences, so those are the early decrees that we disposed off, so they are not comparable. This one as I was saying, so I carefully referred to the legislation that was in force and infact it's just now that we have really amended... eh...eh drafted the new Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces Act. But the 1961 legislation which was based on the English Army Law - Army Act, it was based on the English Army Act, very fair with all inherent protection for the accused are there except that appeal thing which the APC government removed, the whole appeal section, they removed it in 1971. Of course we could not introduce it retrospectively to meet the due then at hand in 1998, but after that we have reintroduced it. So there is now an appeal system like for any civilian court. So I think there was real need for those trials to take place. I mean we now know even ..eh.. after the trials we came to know more of the atrocities that were committed by those people at that time. So to have left them without some type of punishment, I think that means we would not have done justice to the population or to the victims concerned.

Bishop Humper: Yeh... Excellency I follow up on that last point of .. em.. so to speak meddling with the constitution. I am asking a hypothetical question, if APC had not meddled with the Constitution repealed the right of trial in the constitution, would the government or the trial body have used a different mechanism in handling this situation at that time?

Solomon Berewa: I mean; infact it was not the constitution it's the Act.

Bishop Humper: the Act?

Solomon Berewa: Yes the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces Act.

Bishop Humper: Correct.

Solomon Berewa: The APC had removed the whole as I say the whole provision dealing with appeals. If they had not removed it of course we would have been bound by it, just like with the civilians. Eh..e... we would have been bound by it, the accused persons or those convicted would have had a right to appeal and the government would have abided by that. But then there was... it didn't have it... there was no right to appeal and no appeal court will hear you if it did not.. eh..eh...eh. . your sister there knows the appeal court will not hear you unless you tell them the authority under which you have involved them... you see, so they couldn't have gone before them to... so there was no right of appeal.. yeh... but because we knew it was dangerous, that's why as soon as the government settled back, we reintroduced it. We just cancelled their repealed provision and we say we go back to where it was before 1971. So the military people have now the same right of appeal; the court of appeal to a supreme court like any civilian and we would have abided by it of course we couldn't have done otherwise, even if it took ten years, we would have been on it, we would have gone to the court of appeals, the supreme court taking our time... we were not in any particular haste, and there was nothing more left to be done after their conviction except the consideration that the prerogative of mercy committee. First the confirmation of the conviction by the .. eh.. Chief of Defence Staff. He had to confirm it, then he sends it now to the prerogative of mercy committee which will consider it and advice the president accordingly. So all those processes were scrupulously observed.

Bishop Humper: your Excellency, the general assumption is the .. em.. the government detained those people and from your explanation you go back to the penultimate paragraph on page 4 of your presentation, you've given us some new dimension as to "who detained those people who were already at Pademba Road before you finally came back to take over, and who were at Lungi and other areas already detained?", but the question we yearned, we are very much particular about detention, that is the detentions, so you'll need to give us some more clarification on that one you see, whether it was government parse who came in began burning up people all over or you already found that in place?

Solomon Berewa: Yes that's interesting. Infact as I look in this hall, I can see some of those who were already detained at Lungi when we arrived. Some of them are sitting in this hall, .. eh... they were there and there were a number of them at the central ... eh.. eh.. George Street, that's the Police Headquarters. There were also a number of them at the Central Police Station just by Big Market. I knew there were more of them again at .. eh.. Congo Cross but of course there were non of them in Kissy, at the Kissy Police Station. Instead of arresting them further we put an end to further arrest, because they were just arresting people left and right for different reasons... I mean you know this place.. eh.. this our place, our country, people will be self thing that perhaps people have some motives other than just to ensure that justice was done, so we had to put an end to any further, infact I had to make an announcement in the radio that no civilian had the right to arrest any other person. So we put an end to the arrest and as I said in my paper, there was no need for government to arrest anybody, our concern really was to reduce the number of them because the government came there was no money, there was no food... when they are in custody they had to be fed. So it was important that the number of those in custody was reduced as quickly as possible so we did not go on arresting more increasing the number, but at the same time as I say the mood of the population was such that if we have precipitate about it, there would have been a real problem again and they would have turned against the government or some of us... the few of us who had returned from exile. So we had to go very carefully and therefore those we deemed it who did not deserve to be in custody stayed a little longer like they would otherwise have been... if was a normal situation. I would not have asked for a review committee to be set-up as Attorney General, we would have just looked at it and instructed and they released them but if I dared do that, that time, we would have been in real trouble. So we tried to bring all those who can talk ..eh.. civil society those who we have. Who could.. who would oppose this, we put them all together, we say you look at them and you decide and as soon as they say there was no case against any particular one, lets allow him.. Don't tell me just order his release. A very senior lawyer was chairman of that body. University lecturers, journalists, trade union members, council of churches were all represented there. So we threw the bulk at them with one condition that doesn't recommend that any of them would be prosecuted. Because if they recommended that they should be prosecuted I would have been bound by it and I knew there was no evidence. So we did not arrest anybody, this I can say almost to certain, from the day we came back from exile, this could have been about two, three days after the ECOMOG intervention. I.. my office had nothing to do with the arrest and I don't know of any government order given that any person must be arrested. The place was too full, the place was too full. Everybody... the young man would go and arrest a big man like that,... but who would sent him there, we say no this was too bad, there was chaos... then it was leading to a chaotic situation. So that was the first thing we tried to put an end to.

Bishop Humper: Your Excellency, my last question for now is .. em.. is a question I myself have been..... with as Chairman. People come to me... in Article 9 of Lome

Peace Agreement, you have amnesty and pardon for those who in pursuit of their objectives would be granted amnesty and pardoned from 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement the 7th July 1999 the pertinent question interesting while I'm interviewing one.... That people asked is that, when in early 1996 Johnny Paul Koroma and his cronies attempted an abortive coup, was that part of their pursuit of their objective and what objective was he as a military officer using government's tax payers money to be sustained. Was he or pursuing an objective. Then the next question that follows I do not want to have a second one, .. as you looked at the AFRC-RUF government in 1997 of which the same Johnny Paul Koroma became Chairman in, would it be rational for one to infer that most of those who constituted his government were the previous coup plotters whose trials was aborted because of the development which took place later. In other words, did the Lome Peace Agreement covered those set of people? If so how much did it cover Johnny Paul Koroma and his cronies particularly? Thank you very much Sir.

Solomon Berewa: Well the Article 9 of the Lome Agreement is... I mean very simple, very straight forward.. eh... it gave amnesty to persons irrespective of what they did in pursuit of their objective. Now there were factions in this thing. There were government factions, there was a government faction, there was the rebel faction and... eh... the .. the rebel faction comprised as you know the RUF who had initiated the civil conflict in the first place, they as we all know later on came to articulate what their objective was. For years nobody knew what their objective was except to overthrow the APC government which they described as corrupt and inept. Later on we came to know that they want power or at least to participate in the governance of the country, so we can take that as their objective. But that objective was not won. I suspect that could be shared by a military which has its own objective clearly spelt out in the constitution. The constitution state the purpose for the military to safe-guard the nation against external aggression, to protect the population and also to protect the achievements of the people, that's the objective of the military. So anybody in the military who does not pursue that, then he is not pursuing the objective of his vocation. Rebels by definition are to object or oppose the government if possible destabilize it, that's their own objective. Military man, a military ma, a commissioned military man who has taken the oath of his office is to protect the government, not to overthrow the government, that's not your objective. So the amnesty provision in the Lome Agreement could not be said to be applicable to those military men who did what was directly opposite, the opposite of their objective, an objective for which they've taken an oath to protect... they were to protect the constitution not to suspend it. Yes they swore solemnly that "well protect the constitution, uphold the constitution", not to suspend it. To suspend it was to act contrary to their sworn objective. So I'll say with respect that the Lome Agreement article 9 does not extend to them. They cannot avail themselves of the benefit of that provision and this would apply to all the military men there. The government interpreted the Lome agreement very widely. There were a number of civilians who were opportunist, they were neither RUF were not military men but when the coup happened they looked at that as an opportunity to enrich themselves, they jumped on the bandwagon then they started plundering the wealth of this country. They started giving very wrong advice to the AFRC. They started purporting that they have the authority to interpret the constitution, which they didn't understand at all. They started misleading the public, going on the radio with the constitution under their hands purporting to be lawyers and then misleading the whole publicly because they were benefiting from it, it benefited them. They even attempted to have access to the external resources of this country.

So that the basis of the nation can destroy them. They were opportunists. They were neither rebels initially some even had official positions with government before the coup they were not soldiers but the government in his generosity allowed them all to benefit from the provisions of the amnesty, they didn't deserve it. But the government allowed all of them to benefit from it. So that's how generous the government was in the interpretation of Article 9. Of course Johnny Paul Koroma says he could not claim the benefits of the amnesty at all so also the question as I said in my statement the number of those who were facing the trial in 1997 became head offices in the AFRC some were just the lowest military officers they were made to head the Athens of government. So that's why their conduct was so reckless because they were not responsible people. You will see a Lance Corporal given a Ministerial position, he could not even sign his name, doesn't know what was the dignity of the law that's why they went and executed any number of students without trying them. It was no business of theirs seeing dead bodies on the street every morning because they were not responsible people in the community. So they became heads of various departments controlling people around so I don't think they too can avail themselves of the provisions of Article 9.

Commissioner Torto: Yes I have a few areas of clarification that I will want his Excellency to really make clear for us. But I must join my colleagues in thanking you for your appearance before the Commission and that you are aware of our mandate appearance before assistant. Mandatory so for a very high ranking government official to offer to appear before us is a very good example that we are very much happy about. So I have to join my colleagues to congratulate you for that. I would now come to areas of clarification. 1. Earlier in your report you stated that on page two that just after the NPRC had handed over power there were persistent attempts of coup or rumours or the exact words there are what? "Several reports of efforts by military to destabilize the government which went on until 1996 when a senior government officer in the name of Johnny Paul Koroma was arrested." Why were those attempts at least the first ones were two attempts not nipped in the bud to forestall a recurrence of a military coup in this country?

Solomon Berewa: Well you see everything was done, let me say this, everything was done in 1996 to forestall any further military coup those who were in the NPRC who handed over power to President Kabbah, a very generous arrangement was made of them and a lot of them, it was arranged for them to be out of the country. The President had thought, had taken care to restructure the upper echelon of the Military. So we thought those who had tendencies towards destabilising the government had been removed. But in spite of that you get people making statements some not so well informed or some not having access to accurate information, they will come and tell you things about people planning to destabilize the government. If you follow everyone, you'll spend all your time doing nothing else. So those types of rumours were coming round until that morning when ordinary batsmen to the NPRC boys who had gone, their batsmen were the ones who joined Johnny Paul Koroma who were caught in 1996 - late 1996 in the coup plot that was charged to court that one was, I think a very substantial one because when the rumours became repetitive of course the intelligence people started pursuing it. It was the combination of those rumours that led to that plot and the arrest of Johnny Paul and his junior military officers. Not that nothing was done about it but they had to be pursued otherwise even they would come today and say "this man is plotting a coup against me" then they will send soldiers there, the thing will become very unsightly, the government will become so unpopular because some people will even enjoy a creative exhaust stories to create more unpopularity for the government. So

discreet investigations will have been done by the intelligence people from their earlier reports and that led them to increase their vigilance and that led to their discoveries of the coup plot in which Johnny Paul Koroma was involved.

Solomon Berewa: I agree with you outright that the mechanism, the security mechanism was very weak and that is so true. Remember that the government has succeeded to a military regime, which had been in office for over four years. The military Junta is not a government, a systematic government. I mean, we were in the country we know how they were doing things. The way they handled security is the same way they handled public finances, everything. So there was nothing that the government succeeded to which it could build upon. Everything has to be started from scratch so this was what was on. Let me tell you that within two months of the elections of 1996, the government had succeed in bringing a team of Ghanaian intelligence experts to study the situations and to help us put together a security outfit and those have just submitted their reports when that first coup was discovered. Again intelligence is not something I mean you can just teach people with books, they had to have some real training, the police force, we know how the police force was. So you have the military intelligence which was completely destroyed; you have the police force which was nil. So the two sources of information, meaning the security information were not available to the government in most cases some of them believe in misleading the government so that was the first attempt the government was doing to put in place a structured intelligence structure. Now of course, we have all of these things put in place. We have a whole department of National Security. But those were not there when the government took over. And that Johnny Paul Koroma's Coup took place within seven months - less than seven months when the government took over. Those fires were on. You must also remember that the government immediately took over, President Kabbah embarked on this peace process because government believed that if there was peace, if there was no rebel war other things could be put together so within days the government was fully involved with that as well so these were, if it was the question of having waited for two years there was nothing in place, then one could blame the government, one could say the government was negligent but you see the lapse of time between the elections of 1996 and the coup, the first coup of 1996, a matter of months then the May coup was just within a year. After that after 1998 the preparation, the security outfit that is there now is so cat-eyed that I think if there was none like that by now then one would blame the government for negligence but now when the government has had enough time sending people out for training and the correct gadgets have been acquired, there was no money in fact of collectors they would have acquired peace. But now, those that have been acquired, the proper outfit is now in place, so I don't think, in as much as I agree with you that the security situation or mechanism was weak in 1996, but that's not the cause of the government's negligence the regime that the government succeeded to did not have anything in place they were just busy collecting money, sending monies abroad, so that was the NPRC.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, my next question is why did the Judiciary Department, or your Department charge military men with treason in a civilian court and maybe if the answer was or is going to be a top leniency, was that not being too lenient enough to compromise the state security because the people were brought back into the army and they succeeded what they had attempted. So these are, I don't know if my question is really clear? Why did you charge military men it should have been a military matter that should have been dealt with by court martial or some form of military discipline, was that not compromising the state security?

Solomon Berewa: It was not. Really it was not I don't think it was compromising state security. Whatever way they were charged the end result would have been the same only that charging them in a civilian court will make them avail themselves on the appeal process and therefore the final determination of the matter would have been longer. When the evidence is good in the court martial it will be good in a civilian court - maybe convicted, they have to go to court of appeal and then the supreme court but the end result will be the same only that the process will be longer. So either way they will not go back to the military if the evidence had gone against them as we knew it was. Then you are right again that, you know we were lenient perhaps, lenient in the sense that we wanted them to have the best procedural advantages that the law could give an accused person. Because it is to the average lawyer it is repugnant to the average lawyer that there could not be an appeal against a capital offense an offense for which the person may be convicted - executed. So we wanted, it's a matter of conscience really by taking a man to court one grain conviction without that conviction being tested by a higher court then he is executed. It's a matter of conscience so we thought we are to play it even if we are accused of being lenient for that first occasion - let us do it that way. But we realized that our leniency was misplaced and that gave rise to the other coup so its not because we were compromising as I say whatever it was the result will be the same if the matter had gone to conclusion, if the first trial of 1996 had gone to conclusion to the final court from a civilian court to the same thing it would have been the same, now you see it would have been the same. If a court martial is now held somebody is convicted there he had the right to go to the court of appeal at least. You have no right to the Supreme Court even now, but you have the right to go to the Court of Appeal. And in addition to that whatever the appeal court may say, that judgement will have to be confirmed by their own military body. So its not a question of delaying it but I don't think it is intended to compromise the security of the state its just a matter of treating people fairly, which I think the government should really aim by doing that to all its citizens. Except those who could prove that they don't deserve it. As the members of the AFRC showed. When they showed that they don't deserve it they went to the court martial. That's why we didn't try them in the civilian courts again in 1998, we went to the court Martial we said this is what we had. We are very lenient with you that's why you did all those things and staged the 1997 coup. So the other time we took them there. We are now justified there were no concoction of conscience anymore. We say you are now getting what you deserved. If we did anything less we will be at fault.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you - second to my last question. Its going to be in two parts: 1. On your return from exile in Guinea you found out that according to the written submission I have here the numerous citizens arrest were made by civilians rampantly and not to mention the extra judicial killings, my question is where the citizens legally right to have made those arrests, not to mention the extra-judicial killings? 2. The second part is that, were any efforts made to actually investigate some of the extra-judicial killings that took place?

Solomon Berewa: Well these are two questions in one. Generally, generally I will say every citizen has a right to effect arrest in respect of certain crimes which you know have been committed. Generally, you find that in our criminal procedure act-its there. Felonies - if I see anybody stealing this book I have the write to arrest him. Whether I am a policeman or not. The policemen can arrest on mere suspicion. Citizen, he must know that the crime is committed. The conduct of the AFRC at the time, people knew, I will not want to go into some of those things. But people knew some of the things they did which led to the death of so many people in this country. They remembered the student demonstration and the number of students that were shot there. They remembered the extra-judicial execution of

the number of young men who were opposed to their conduct citizens saw those things and they were urging the AFRC not to do those things because they never concealed what they did. Anything they did they will take a camera there, a video camera film it and show it on the Television. The population were seeing that. So when it comes to popular violence - popular agitation, any government has to be very careful. Especially a government that is on his way out or that they ousted. We are hearing that in other countries now. The civilian who were not talking, because is there now. That was the time they didn't want these people to escape justice at all. Because a lot of them were prepared to go away. A lot of them ran away even Johnny Paul Koroma and others ran into the bush. So the civilians wanted justice to be done to those who had suffered in the hands of the AFRC. Because of that they tried to arrest as many as they could. Then as to whether any investigations had been conducted into the extra judicial executions, to be honest with you, no formal investigations have been conducted. Because you wouldn't even know where to start. These were mob actions. Mob reprisals and nobody has ever, as far as I know, I'm not a policeman but if it had gone to the police when I was Attorney General I must have known. Nobody had ever gone to the police as far as I know who will say that I know this and that who were ever present when a particular person was executed extra judicially as a need to follow-up on the investigations on those matters. So frankly speaking, no investigation had been conducted. I know about two or three of them, I heard about two or three of them, there might have been many more but the prominent ones, I mean I know some of them even when we were in Conakry some were going there taunting us in Conakry. I know them. So when I knew they were far away we thought we were in a safe haven there. Some were going there they meet us on the street in Conakry they will taunt you. They will try to provoke you and then come back to Freetown. So when the 1998 intervention happened and I heard that some of those who were going up come from here to Conakry to provoke us there. When I heard that some of them had been executed I was not surprised. Because if they could do that to us there, I wonder what they were doing to the people who were resident with them, living with them here who could not go anywhere. So I was not surprised that mob action - mob justice was what they earn for themselves. I'm not justifying it, but I mean one should avoid it. Avoid creating a situation where you can face mob justice.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you my very last question Sir is to know before the departure of Johnny Paul he was a very important legislator - Member of Parliament as such senior government functionary - politician so to speak. My questions are in two parts, first where is he now?

Solomon Berewa: Where is he now?

Commissioner Torto: That's right.

Solomon Berewa: I wish I knew.

Commissioner Torto: That's the first part of my question as to his whereabouts. Secondly, if he is absent from this country how would one describe his absence, what would be the position of government with regards to his absence, would I be right to conclude that to government his absence is sad, happy or just plain lip evadance of bad rubbish. Is that the kind of - what the position of government along those lines?

Solomon Berewa: Well the first answer to the first question is that I do not know where Johnny Paul is, and I tell you if I knew where he was I would have got that information past so that he will be brought to justice. So I do not know. As to the

second part of your question I wish he was alive, because like the process we are on now which we are all hoping that at the end of this exercise people will learn how to behave. So I believe if Johnny Paul was around he would have been made to account for a number of things he did. Which people saw, that whether you are president, you are Attorney General, you are governor, whatever you do, you have to account for it one day, those in authority will learn to act properly. It's not so much for him but for others to learn that because they are in office today, that doesn't give you a license to do whatever you want to do to everybody at any hour and that there is a reckoning day one day so that those who may be in office after him will know how to behave next time so it would have taught a lesson to people and because he is not available now for that lesson to be taught, I think I will regret it, I will regret his absence and I believe a lot of members in the government will regret that absence. And I believe he has acted like a real coward, not like a soldier. He should have come like a soldier and own up the..... And justify what he had done but to run away before he was indicted, I think he behaved like a big coward. An attribute which we do not associate with soldiers. It's a matter of opinion really that aspect.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Leader of Evidence have you any questions?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much. I have a few questions for His Excellency. Mr. Vice President, you say in your written submission that during the court martial trial in 1998 there was no right of appeal. Of course the APC government had repealed the appeals provision in 1971. You also say in your submission that when you took office as Attorney General and Minister of Justice you started modifying legislation and also removing from the legislation all the draconian and obnoxious decrees introduced by that Junta. So some laws were amended but this particular law that repealed the right of appeal for the Court Martial.....

Solomon Berewa:introduced by the Junta and the repeal of the appeals provision in the Court Martial was not introduced by the Junta. In any case, we honestly thought that during our term of office we'll never try anybody before a Court Martial. As I told you we thought coups were matters of the past so nobody thought of procedures or Court Martial at that stage. All I was concerned with, like for instance removing decree No 7 which I mentioned just now which the Junta introduced. They introduced a number of decrees, those were to be removed immediately before the government could function and they suspended a number of provisions of the constitution by way of decrees or proclamations so I had to get those repealed immediately otherwise the government could not function. But this 1971 thing has nothing to do with the Junta. It had occurred over twenty-three years before the Junta came into office. It could have been repealed later on anyway but it was not a matter of any immediacy. There are still a number of laws which we were removing gradually. We could have done this as well as if we had remained in office for one year, two years, three years before the coup. But the coup happened within months after we had taken office - after the elections. So it is an - that one is obnoxious, I am aware of it but at that time I was not aware that it was going to be removed from the statute book even though I was a lawyer in practice, I was not practicing court martial law. Its one of the most archaic things which lawyers have ever practiced.

Leader of Evidence: But as soon as it became clear that you had to organize trial before the court martial, why didn't you change the law at that point?

Solomon Berewa: We don't change laws retrospectively, you don't change laws - let me say this....

Leader of Evidence: Please let me finish my question first. Since the right of appeal is so fundamental and since it is not against general principles of law to change the law retroactive as long as it is to the advantage of the person who has to stand trial - of the accused?

Solomon Berewa: Now it was - I try to create a scene for you. Now we are sitting here in 2003 its quite convenient. There's no problem there but I told you even to just release accused persons suspects whom I knew has nothing to answer, it was not safe, it was not safe for all those policemen or myself whoever was involved in those matters, it was not safe. Now if I look upon myself at that time to say here was an appeal - even the question - let me tell you one thing, I didn't want to say this but if you allow me I'll say it. The - we had a situation wherein the NPRC had confiscated people's properties. The government came and say no let us return some of - let us return them; set up a judicial process since it was not a trial, it was just a commission of inquiry. Let us return them. If they were trials, okay but they were not trials. The government got, people became so angry that it is not you why should you bother with it. That was when there was no problem yet in the country. When there was no coup yet. Now those who were facing those court Martial were regarded as number one enemies of the country. So it would have been, I would have taken personal risk if I did not pursue the law as it stood. The law had to be enforced as it stood. There was no injustice to them, by applying the law as it stood and that was the state of the law at the time. Why should I change the law? I had a duty to do a favour to them. I tried it once, when I tried, when I had military men who could otherwise have face a court Martial, tried by civilian court and as commissioner Torto asked me, it appeared I was compromising the security of the State. So if at all again I did not apply the law, as it stood, I try to have it changed. I give the impression that I wanted to confer some favours on the accused persons. I would have run a personal risk to allow the law to be applied as it stood thereafter we'll brought in an amendment.

Leader of Evidence: But if you wanted to apply the law as it stood, why was the re-modification of the Criminal Procedure Act 1965 by public notice number 4 of 1998 right before the treason trial started?

Solomon Berewa: I knew that there is.... Can you repeat that for me?

Leader of Evidence: Yes so if you wanted to apply the law as it stood, why was then amendment of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1965 by public notice number 4 of 1998. Dated 9th April 1998 before the treason trial started and more in particular, why was the rule that asked for unanimity of the jury to sentence someone to death changed into the rule of eight votes on twelve which are required to sentence someone to death. Why was that modification, amendment brought to the criminal procedure act before the treason trials?

Solomon Berewa: I did not say that there was anything wrong in amending the law. What would have been dangerous for me was to amend the law to give the perception that I wanted to compact favours on the accused persons. That would have been wrong. You have said that introducing an appeals provision in the law is a fundamental thing. The law you refer to is a procedural amendment. Procedural amendment can be made at anytime whether retrospectively or prospectively. What you cannot do is to make an amendment. The substantive law or a fundamental law as you referred to. But the law you referred to is a procedural provion. You might leave it to the jury, those are procedural things. So, and the public notice you are referring to, they all dealt with procedure as evidence. For instance we made provision so that secondary evidence could be received in

less stringent measures than normally could have been - we made provision for certain things which were all procedural. So those could be done retrospectively or prospectively. But the one you have referred to as an appeal, I could not have done it - 1. because it was fundamental as you yourself have said. 2. it will give the impression that I wanted to confer favours on the person which would have been improper for the prevailing situation at the time. So I didn't bother with it. But as soon as it became possible after all the treason trials have been concluded, the amendment was made. But let me just end that by saying, we all accept that an accused person has no property in procedure. The procedure goes on, it could go on, it could go on as the case is going on. What cannot be changed according to the constitution is for instance penalty, or charging, creating a substantive offense after the event. Those ones are not allowed in our constitution. So it was noting like that that we did in 1998; the procedure is to facilitate the trial without necessarily doing - appearing to have done injustice. And in our system even a single judge can try an offence except of course capital offences.

Leader of Evidence: But apparently in 1996 you just said that this right of appeal was so fundamental that you brought the military accused of the coup before a civilian court instead of a court Martial. So in 1996 apparently you judged that the right of appeal was so fundamental that brought the military accused of the coup in 1996 in front of the civilian court, which did not happen in 1998. As you stated before because you said that the AFRC had shown that they did not deserve it?

Solomon Berewa: As I, that's correct, I mean we tried it in 1996 and as I say again as Commissioner Torto raised his question, he said by doing what I did in 1996 would be interpreted as my compromising the security of the State. And I didn't deny him. I tried to be very lenient then because of this disadvantage which existed in the court martial. But in 1998, I said well lets apply the full force of the law. We do nothing wrong if you apply the law as it stands and that's all that we did.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you. My other question is about the review committee. I would like to know what the legal status of this committee was and was there a law which established this committee and how were the members nominated? That's one and secondly, I would also like to know how many people were tried between (by this committee) since it didn't have the power to send someone into - to order the prosecution of someone, have all these people been released and if not what happened to the people who have not been released?

Solomon Berewa: In the first place, under the constitution, it is the absolute description of the Attorney general to decide on whom to prosecute, whom not to prosecute. That was my own, my entire discretion. I could have done it without reference to any other committee but we must always remember the prevailing circumstance. I could have been stoned to death. So I delegated my power to these committees. I delegated my powers to this committee. There was no legal statutory basis to it. I delegated my powers to this committee just as the Attorney General does to the police. To the Attorney General or prosecute a particular case - that's what I did. But because of the sensitivity of the matter, I brought in all the groups that were very articulate. I tried to bring in the opinion formats. And I tried to bring in persons who will be very objective in their assessments of facts and rule to understand it. That's why I brought in members of the association of Journalists because they are very inquisitive rightly so that their job I brought in students they too are quite vocal and articulate. That too is natural, I brought in university lecturers, I brought in members of the CCSL - that's a religious group, they will balance it. I tried to bring in the Trade Union

people - all of them. I mean this people whose collective decision will be accepted and above all I already knew that there was nothing to charge them for. I didn't want them to recommend that I do what could not be done. So I excluded from their powers the ability to recommend prosecution. From what I have seen already, from what I have..... this again shows how fair we were. When we get some people who had been investigated but just a limited number of them could be prosecuted. So I told them I will give it in the end nobody was prosecuted, and nobody no -no penalty of any sort was inflicted on any of those that I left. We just submitted to them all the statements that pertained to the rest of the people and they went through them and look at it and decide there was a very-very - one of the most senior lawyers in this country was Chairman. Of it - to guide them. So if you want for the things to be done transparently let a decision in that matter not be taken by one-person even though he was the Attorney General. So this was it, our desire was to be fair.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you, I want to come back to the second part of my last question it is said that some 5000 people had been arrested at that time, can you confirm that all those 5000 have been released? Or are some still in prison? Or what became of them?

Solomon Berewa: As far as I know, all those who were detained, arrested by these civilians, they were either prosecuted, or their release was ordered by these review committee. And I even had a list of them. When they ordered the release of anyone they will copy, they will write to me, they will write to the Director of Prisons and I will tick those other people could have been there after that but for those whom we met in custody I don't believe there's any one left after the review by that committee.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Your Excellency, I think what is left is for you to ask us questions and then to give your recommendations for the Commission. But I think it would be fair to you if you submitted your recommendations later on, we have written recommendation from you and it will be more helpful to the Commission. We will call you in again about the recommendations. And so for today we'll just take your questions. Have you questions you'll like to ask about our process, our work?

Solomon Berewa: Except to say that I feel the government has been vindicated in - I will say the insistence on having these procedures - this commission, establish the other court there. Because as we follow the evidence that comes out here, I can say - the provincial tours of the commission particularly where you conducted these reconciliation ceremonies I think that is going to accelerate the process of that reconciliation so much. I don't just know whether it is possible for persons who come before this commission and give evidence to any wrong doing on their part against people in a particular area whether the commission has the facility for sending that person to that area in the company of an official of the commission to go and reconcile that person with the community there?

Solomon Berewa: If at all it was followed up really the practical sense by the Commission sending that person with an official of the commission to that locality for him to go and repeat what he said to the Commission here and then the commission's officials who goes with him to reconcile that person in the community, I don't think that is possible at all.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well so far we have been dealing with communities the communities where we are or communities not too far away from where we've been having the hearings but I understand what you mean and I'll hand over that to the Chairman.

Bishop Humper: Your Excellency we are engaged in reconciliation with the self's reconciliation with the community and reconciliation with sections or chiefdoms as well as district level. This means that where we perform the reconciliation ceremony on the last day and get these perpetrators to come, on behalf of the District or the chiefdoms, the Paramount Chiefs and the religious leaders will accept these people. We have discovered that some of these people have dual residence. They have their original homes like somebody coming from Pujehun and then meeting him at Tonkolili. Now what the commission has done is that we tell the person you have to be accepted here in the reconciliation process. But this has to be repeated in the home. We have come to discover that infact some of these boys did such atrocious acts in their places of origin that they came over here and are thinking that having been reconciled here will be the end of it all. Now we are working out a problem that whereby we would take these people themselves to take them to their own community of origins and to have the reconciliation process replicated.

Solomon Berewa: That is it! That's very good sir. Because I noticed like Makeni for instance, there are a lot of young men from the South and East in Makeni who might have committed atrocities in both places. Their places of origin and Makeni as well. You may reconcile them to the community in Makeni but still they won't be willing to go to their places of origin so that will be hanging over their heads indefinitely and those ones will be watching for the time he will go for them to have theirs back at him. So to make it wholesome, sometimes they will tell you their correct places of origin because they don't want to be put on the spot.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Any other Question?

Solomon Berewa: Yes Except to say thank you also for a service well done to this nation.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you I would like to thank you for coming here and giving your testimony and for answering our questions. Thank you. You may step down your Excellency.

Silent prayers

The hearing was called to order by the Presiding Commissioner Bishop Humper

My name is Victor Foh. I am a Christian.

The oath was administered by Presiding Commissioner.

SUBMISSION

I am the Regional Chairman in the Southern District. I covered Bo, Bonthe, Pujehun and Moyamba. I am here to represent the APC party, my topic is about The 98 Detention trials & execution.

The All Peoples Congress (APC) Party hereby acknowledges receipt of your letter requesting it to make submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The APC considers this an opportunity to present its side of the story relative to the causes of the war which has devastated the country.

THE ALL PEOPLES CONGRESS (APC) - A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

(a) The APC was founded in the wake of Sierra Leone's Independence struggle, and was officially declared a political party on the 17th October 1960. This was in response to the clarion call by democrats to address injustices emanating from the poor colonial dictatorial form of governance that the British were bequeathing to the SLPP in the wake of the wind of change in Africa. A populist grassroots democratic political party, the APC was formed to address the needs of the poor, deprived, abused, underprivileged, depressed and marginalized within the elitist and undemocratic SLPP setup. In addition, there was a demand for "ELECTIONS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE" as was the case in other former British Colonies. Elections are the best form of eliciting the participation or concurrence of the electorate. This demand to involve the masses of the people was flatly rejected by the SLPP Government, hence the formation of the "ELECTIONS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT" which later metamorphosed into the APC.

(b) The history of the APC in office is one that is chequered with coups and attempted coups instigated by some SLPP big guns. On the very first day the APC won the 1967 Elections, the late Brigadier David Lansana ordered Lt Hinga Norman (now Minister of Internal Affairs and Co-ordinator of the SLPP Kamajor Militia) to arrest the Governor-General (Head of State), the newly sworn-in APC Prime Minister, Siaka Stevens, and other APC stalwarts at gunpoint, and declared Martial Law. That treasonable action was the genesis of military coups and political instability in our country. We in the APC will always remember that horrible incident and for which we hold the SLPP responsible as the original cause of the continued political instability in Sierra Leone. Because the SLPP refused to bow to the democratic wishes of the people expressed through the ballot box in 1967, free and peaceful elections and consequent peaceful change of government has not been the norm in our country for a long time.

(c) To blame the APC for the devastating war that ruined almost every infrastructure which our Party in government constructed, is not only unfair, but glaringly shows a

lack of knowledge of the source of our country's instability. Since the APC was returned to power after the SLPP led Military interregnum in 1968, the ever present threat to remove the party from office by force of arms, forced successive APC governments into a self-defense and state defense posture. In the process, internal security and stability assumed a very prominent place on government agenda thus slowing down the full impact of our development strategies. Even so, the APC is proud to present to this nation significant achievements in nation building, a reality which even our political opponents will acknowledge.

- (d) In spite of this stark reality, those opponents have continued to engage in an intensive smear campaign of vilification, mudslinging, misinformation and downright lying against the APC. This evil propaganda gained prominence during and after the Strasser Coup d'etat of April 1992 and the devastating 11-year-old war. Eleven years thence, there is still no discernable national development in the country. We in the APC proudly look back and affirm that the only significant infrastructural development in Sierra Leone since Independence was provided by our party in government.

TREASON TRIALS AND COURT MARTIALS

The APC is making reference to the various Treason Trials by successive governments with a view to ascertaining whether due process of the Law was observed. Thereafter, we request that efforts be made to ensure that extra judicial killings are addressed and discouraged. Also, the APC appeal to the TRC to recommend that the Laws of Treason be delicately and scrupulously guarded to avoid abuse and misuse.

TRIALS DURING THE APC GOVERNANCE

i) Brig. David Lansana and Others

The first treason trial was the case of David Lansana and others in 1968. That case is reported in the All England Law Reports, 1969 (Sierra Leone Edition). The APC stand by the records in those reports. That action by Lansana and Hinga Norman directly aborted our democratic experiment and brought the military into the politics of this country. In spite of this, during the APC administration, David Lansana, Berthan Macauley and others appealed against their conviction and the Court of Appeal presided over by judges of high integrity upheld the appellants appeals and they were accordingly freed.

ii) Brig. John Bangura and Others

The APC inherited an Army and a Police Force that were already very politicized. The first few years of APC rule were spent at repelling coup attempts by the Army and in the process valuable time was spent on consolidating national security. After several attempts by Brig. Bangura to overthrow the government, he was tried and convicted by a Court Martial through due process of the law. The views of the new Leadership of the APC regarding political executions is radically changed and our hope is that the Laws of the country relating to Court Martial would be revised in view of current international human rights considerations.

In particular the APC would urge that the process of appeal be maintained for Court Martial cases.

iii) Mohammed Sorie Fornah and 14 Others

Those treason trials lasted for almost two years and went through the due process of the Law. Death sentences were subsequently carried out. It will be recalled that both Mohammed Sorie Fornah and Ibrahim Taqi were senior cabinet ministers in the first Stevens' government in 1968. They left the APC and formed a new political party which unleashed unprecedented violence in the country. The violence was so extreme that the government was left with no alternative but to ban the Party. In their frustration, they resorted to subversion and treason for which they were tried and found guilty. Records of those trials are a testimony of the truth in defense of the APC and the Laws of Sierra Leone.

iv) G. M. T. Kaikai, Francis Minah and Others

That matter went through all Superior Courts of judicature. In all those courts - High Court, Appeal Court, Supreme Court, Mercy Committee, the verdict was guilty. The Chief Justice at that time was the late M. S. F. Kutubu, a Mende of known SLPP sympathies. That verdict was carried out in accordance with the Laws of Sierra Leone.

EXTRA JUDICIAL KILLINGS BY THE NPRC JUNTA

The NPRC Junta was an illegal, treasonous, brutal and inhumane regime. The APC believes that no legality could come out of an illegality and we humbly submit that whatever the NPRC did cannot be justified let alone the brutal extra judicial killings they committed.

The NPRC executed 29 people who had been allegedly convicted by a Military Court headed by Lt. Col. Kesboyah for allegedly plotting to overthrow the junta. All those executed with the exception of a handful of military officers including Major A. S. Jalloh and Col. Kahota Dumbuya were already in prison having been arrested on the 29th of April 1992 on the day of the coup. Bambay Kamara the ex-Inspector General of Police and Lt. Col. Yayah Kanu for example had been arrested and detained on the day of the said coup. All 29 people were allegedly tried on the night of 29th December and executed on 30th *December* 1992. The APC submits that no formal trials were conducted, but rather those 29 unfortunate Sierra Leoneans were tortured and killed extra judicially.

The victims of those extra judicial killings included 19 civilians who were arrested in a drinking pub at Lumpa village. Police had declared all of them innocent of the alleged crime. However, whilst detained at Pademba Road Prisons under the State of Emergency, they were dragged out of the Prisons and killed.

It is strongly alleged that those extra judicial killings were far in excess of 29 persons as announced by the NPRC Junta at the time. We appeal to the TRC to ascertain the number of bodies dumped in a mass grave at Kingtom Cemetery after those executions. In the interest of national reconciliation, the APC appeals to the TRC to recommend compensations to the families of the victims of this heinous crime. In addition we request that the TRC recommends that the ring leaders of the NPRC junta including its leader,

Capt Strasser and their Advisors come forward and confess their sins and ask for forgiveness.

THE 1998 SLPP TREASON TRIALS / COURT MARTIALS

When President Kabbah was re-instated in 1998, he abandoned the pacific and reconciliatory line as was required by the fluid military and political situation then. The SLPP vigilantes and Kamajors were let loose like wild dogs on defenseless people. In a most unprecedented manner, Public Servants and many others who were collectively called collaborators were arrested and tortured. It is reported that the number of so-called collaborators who were detained at the maximum-security prison at Pademba Road numbered about 5,000 people. This is a prison with a capacity for less than 400 inmates. Perceived political opponents of the SLPP government were all rounded up, tortured and detained. Many unfortunate Sierra Leoneans were lynched or burnt alive by hysterical SLPP youths and Kamajors. People like Musa Kabia, Sheikh Mustaba, Sakoma and Abu Black - all *members of the APC* - suffered this fate. Radio 98.1 played a decisive role in instigating those murders.

The SLPP 1998 Treason Trials

Those trials were vengeful acts and a travesty of justice. All suspects were tortured and brought before the three established treason courts. They were described by Solomon Berewa, now Vice President, as "collaborators". The Treason and State Offences Act 1963 has no place for collaborators! Was President Kabbah himself not a collaborator during the NPRC Junta which he served as Chief Advisor?

Public Notice No. 4 of 1998 issued by Vice President Berewa, then the Attorney General, is a disgrace to the integrity of all Sierra Leoneans. By that Public Notice which was issued after the offence of the alleged treason, Solomon Berewa deprived the accused persons of FAIR HEARING and violated Section 25 of the Constitution.

Public Notice No. 4 of 1998 also changed the old age Criminal Procedure Act of 1965 and the standard, historic and the unanimous 12-man verdict of the jury to a politically manipulated 8-man verdict of the jury. This was at the expense of the lives of innocent ordinary citizens of our country.

The treason trials were irregular, unfair and emotionally dressed up as the law even though they were not legal. In a desperate and exasperating effort by the Kabbah/Berewa SLPP Administration to exterminate perceived political opponents, that obnoxious Public Notice was issued. The APC appeals to the TRC to address that miscarriage of justice against political opponents in the interest of national reconciliation.

THE 1998 SLPP COURT MARTIAL

Never in the history of Sierra Leone has a government proclaiming itself a democratically elected government of the people, descended to such barbarous depths of brutality and revenge killings. When President Kabbah was re-instated in 1998, he appealed to all rebels and soldiers to surrender and promised that those who surrendered would be protected. A large number of soldiers thus surrendered to ECOMOG or to the Guinean authorities in the Republic of Guinea. Killing surrendered soldiers did not encourage their colleagues in the bush to lay down their arms. As a result, some soldiers joined the

RUF rebels in a self-defensive move. It was that group that invaded Freetown, broke into Pademba Road prisons and set free all inmates.

With indecent haste and reckless indifference, the Kabbah SLPP administration having Solomon Berewa as hatchet man, killed 24 (twenty -four) soldiers - most of *them Senior Officers* - They were shot and killed after a very poorly conducted Court Martial.

The current head of the Armed Forces of Sierra Leone and Nigerian Military Officers helped President Kabbah and Berewa to do this dirty job. No appeal was allowed! Can such act engender national reconciliation in a democracy? The answer is an emphatic No!

Of the 24 soldiers executed, only 2 (two) were coupists - *Tamba Gborie and -Abu Sankoh a.k.a Zagallo*. Both Gborie and Sankoh confessed in open court but Kabbah and Berewa refused to listen. To satisfy their whims and caprices, they tied valuable lives to stakes and shot them in cold blood. A woman Military Officer, *Major Kula Samba* in charge of rehabilitating child soldiers and combatants, was amongst those killed in cold blood.

We appeal to the TRC to investigate those Court Martial trials. The APC believes that President Kabbah's revenge arrests, trials and executions cannot promote national reconciliation. They are a bad precedence for our fledging democracy.

CONFISCATED PROPERTIES AND THE DEPRIVATION OF ENTITLEMENTS, ETC

The APC strongly requests the TRC to address the issue of confiscated properties to the State by Military Juntas starting with the National Reformation Council (NRC) under the late Lt. Col. Juxon Smith in 1967 to the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) of Capt Valentine Strasser in 1992. Whenever the Military intervenes in the affairs of state governance, they are quickly surrounded by opportunistic opponents of the ousted government who chart a course of action which invariably targets marked individuals of the previous government. Commissions of Enquiry in Sierra Leone have been used by Military Juntas as a quick method of vilifying officials of deposed governments and justifying their illegal act of overthrowing a legitimate government.

Commissions of Enquiry were set up by both the NRC and NPRC Juntas. Whereas the former formulated their white papers and followed the recommendations submitted by reputable judges of the Commissions and based their actions on those reports, the NPRC mostly disregarded the recommendations of the judges and vengefully punished all those they perceived to be implacable enemies of the NPRC from among the selected Ministers and Civil Servants who were summoned to appear before the Commissions. Furthermore, whereas the NRC allowed those adversely affected to appeal against the decisions, the NPRC disallowed all appeals. Also, the NRC published the Reports of the Commissions, but the NPRC refused to publish their Commissions Reports contrary to Article 149(4) of the National Constitution, which stipulates that Reports of Commissions of Enquiry should be published within 6 (six) weeks of their completion.

The NPRC reports were only made available to the Cross Commission four years later, in 1996. The said Cross Commission selectively absolved top SLPP members who were Vice Presidents and Ministers in the overthrown APC government of J. S. Momoh.

President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and Vice President Solomon Berewa, as Chairman and Member respectively, of the NPRC National Advisory Council, played decisive roles in influencing the bungled Commission Reports for which Berewa was a hostile Prosecuting Counsel.

The treatment meted out to Ex-President J. S. Momoh, his former Vice President Abdulai Conteh and other APC officials by the Kabbah sponsored Cross Commission was very

selective and unjust. The decision of the Kabbah government to strip them of all their titles and properties was not done in the interest of national reconciliation. Particularly unfair is the decision to deprive the President and Vice President of their retirement benefits. Former Leader of SLPP Salia Jusu Sheriff and who was also Vice President under Momoh was curiously rehabilitated by Kabbah in spite of the fact that there was an adverse report against him. Our Party frowns at such high handedness and vindictive injustice handed down to our APC Leaders and Officials.

President Kabbah has been less than candid in his promises to restore to Momoh entitlements due him as a former President of Sierra Leone. The public and the international community are given the impression by Kabbah that he has returned properties confiscated from Momoh and rehabilitated him. President Kabbah told the UN General Assembly in 1997 that he had rehabilitated Momoh and accorded him treatment befitting an Ex-Head of State.

Compare the above treatment meted out to ExPresident Momoh to the humane reconciliatory gesture made by Momoh to President Kabbah when he returned home from his over 20 years self-imposed exile. The gesture included restoration of his own properties earlier confiscated in 1967 by the NRC Junta. President Kabbah ignored the implementation of the provisions of Act No2 of 1986 relating to Retirement Benefits for Ex-Presidents and Vice Presidents.

Even the late Dr Siaka Stevens was not spared the wrath of the NPRC Junta to which President Kabbah was Chief Advisor. The Parent decree establishing the Commissions of Enquiry did not cover the period of the late Dr Stevens' administration. However, a witch-hunt was directed against the late President. In the end, Dr. Stevens' properties were confiscated to the state in an unprecedented show of vengeance. As if that was not enough, the late Dr Stevens was stripped of all his titles and honours post-humously. In our view, this is a bad precedence which cannot engender national reconciliation and unity.

Against this background, Kabbah is believed to have dished a lucrative retirement package to his erstwhile Vice President Albert Joe Demby. We request the TRC to ensure that Ex-President Momoh and his Vice President Abdulai Conteh are given their gratuities and pensions using the same parameters. National Reconciliation demands compliance with legislative enactments.

The TRC may wish to find out where the NPRC leaders, who assumed a holier-than-thou attitude to their APC victims, stored their loot after they were removed from power. Most of them are believed to have bought mansions in Europe and America. Other civilian NPRC Junta leaders like John Benjamin and John Karimu who championed the 1992 coup d'etat and known to have acquired considerable wealth both within and outside Sierra Leone were also instrumental in the seizures of APC properties under the NPRC Junta. Interestingly, they are today members of the SLPP holding high offices and receiving favours from the current government.

The APC requests that properties confiscated by the various Commissions of Enquiry from 1967 be returned to their owners in the interest of National Reconciliation. The TRC is requested to ensure that retirement benefits deprived of people affected by the Commissions be re-instated.

At this stage, it is pertinent to state that the SLPP Government continues to illegally occupy APC properties. These include the Party's National Headquarters at 39 Siaka Stevens Street and its Multipurpose (We Yone) Building situated at Old Railway Line, Brookfields. These properties were never the subject of any Commission of Enquiry. Their continued occupation by the present SLPP government is unfair and will neither enhance national reconciliation nor promote our new democratic dispensation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

i Our submission ends on the note that the strength of the APC lies in the many infrastructural developments the party undertook all over Sierra Leone. Our greatest pride and strength are found within the pages of the 1991 Multi-Party Democratic Constitution (Act No. 6 of 1991). This is the APC gift to Sierra Leone.

ii To our political adversaries, the SLPP, we ask that they kindly hold sacred this Constitution in the interest of National Reconciliation, Democracy, the Rule of Law and Freedom of the Press. We regret to note that President Kabbah has deliberately yet consistently violated many sections of this Constitution in his vengeful and autocratic tendency to downplay democracy and strangle opposition to his SLPP administration. Such a tendency cannot enhance national unity and reconciliation.

iii Politics in our country is an APC / SLPP affair even in the context of Multi-Party Democracy.

iv. Like the chicken and the egg situation relating to which of them is older, so it is with the SLPP and the APC with regard to which party did what and during what period in the history of the country.

v. The SLPP accuses the APC for all the evil befallen Sierra Leone. We in the APC flatly deny this charge and instead, we blame the SLPP, the oldest political party in our country for being the architect of all dirty political tricks and evil that have befallen Sierra Leone including, but not limited to, the under listed:

a. Nepotism

b. Tribalism

c. Corruption

d. Vandalism

e. Election Rigging

f. Military intervention in politics and coup d'etat

g. The tribal "Ndorgbomvosoi" war in Pujehun District in the early 1980s

h. The Foday Sankoh RUF War of destruction and devastation

i. Legislation of bad laws: The Public Order Act of 1965

j. Expulsion from Parliament of Opposition Members of Parliament

k. Political interference in judicial appointments - the Gershon Collier appointment as Chief Justice and Desmond Luke as Chief justice

l. Political interference in appointment in the Civil Service - the Peter Tucker and John Kallon appointments as Head of Civil Service and Establishment Secretaries respectively in the early 1960s.

m. Banishment of Paramount Chiefs and political opponents from their home chiefdoms into strange lands. n. Cannibalism and Ritual Murders

o. Use of Secrete Societies in politics - Poro Societies.

The list of examples is unending.

vi. Accusing President J. S. Momoh of promoting the Limba Tribe through his love of Akutay is as good or bad as accusing Prime Minister Albert Margai of promoting Mende Tribesmen in all sensitive positions during his term as Leader of SLPP and Prime Minister of Sierra Leone.

Vii. Can anyone deny the fact that it was Prime Minister Albert Margai who refused to accept SLPP defeat at the polls in 1967?

viii. Can anyone deny the fact that the SLPP Prime Minister Sir Albert Margai urged Hinga Norman and Brig. David Lansana, Head of the Armed Forces to stage the first coup d'etat in 1967?

ix. Can anyone deny the fact that the Beoku Betts Commission of Enquiry into the special coffee deal indicted SLPP President Kabbah in 1967 and declared him unfit to hold public office for which good character and integrity are prerequisites?

x. Is it not a fact that with the approval and blessing of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, ECOMOG Forces and Sandililne Mercenaries invaded Sierra Leone and killed thousands of innocent civilians and destroyed properties in the pursuit of his inordinate desire to be restored to the Presidency? Did he initially obtain ECOWAS and UN approval? No! No! No!

xi. Is it not true that President Kabbah killed 24 soldiers in October 1998 after a sham Court Martial? Kabbah also got 69 civilians condemned to death for Treason for serving a Military Junta even though Kabbah himself had served the NPRC military junta as Chief Advisor.

xii. These and many more unsavoury actions on the part of the SLPP are hard to forget. They are the issues that make national reconciliation difficult.

xiii President Kabbah and the SLPP have given the most inhumane treatment to former President Momoh. This treatment of Momoh is the worst any democratic country has ever given a former President. Rehabilitating Ex-President Momoh who is today a destitute in Guinea will be a big step towards national reconciliation.

xiv. Sierra Leone has been torn apart because of the vices of political administrators in the two political parties in this country - the SLPP and the APC. These vices are most prevalent and inherent in the political prostitutes with alternating allegiances. The likes of Dr. Sama Banya, S. B. Marah, Alex Koroma, Solomon Demby, J. B. Dauda, Harry Williams, Alhaji Daramy Rogers, Francis Conteh, Abu Aiah Koroma, Michael Abdulai and many more are dangerous in the context of national reconciliation.

x-v. The APC is under political persecution at the hands of the SLPP. Democracy is threatened by the over bearing ambition of the SLPP to continue breaching the Constitution in a desperate maneuver to hold on to political power even against the wishes of the people.

xvi. National reconciliation cannot be achieved with an SLPP hand picked National Electoral Commission. The APC accepted this commission's conduct of the May 14, 2002 Parliamentary and Presidential elections in the interest of National Peace and National Reconciliation.

xvii. The PEACE we are currently enjoying is a result of the resolve of all Sierra Leoneans to have PEACE. The APC congratulates all Sierra Leoneans for accomplishing this feat.

xviii. The APC denounces all evil elements and over ambitious politicians in the ranks of the SLPP for encouraging and supporting the criminal and ruthless RUF to wage war on and destroy this country.

xix. Can the RUF and the Kamajors - CDF and their collaborators justify cutting off hands and feet of our unfortunate countrymen? The APC is saddened at such heartless inhumane treatment the RUF / Kamajors have left as indelible scars of their unnecessary fratricidal war in the name of a conspiracy to overthrow and remove the APC administration from office. In our quest for national reconciliation, the APC submits that AMPUTEES should be appropriately cared for and compensated.

xx. The APC is proud of her records in office and these records are visible developments all over Sierra Leone. However, politics is not saintly and it becomes dirty with greed., impropriety and undemocratic overtures on the part of the players. As we urge our brothers and sisters in the SLPP to play the game according to the rules, we at the same time extend to them and all our countrymen and women, an open and forgiving heart and a hand of friendship and reconciliation. To all who the APC may have hurt in anyway what so ever, we say SORRY. Please forgive the APC and let us move this country forward.

xxi. For and on behalf of the APC, the Honourable Ernest Bia Koroma, Leader and Head of the All Peoples Congress (APC) extends to every Sierra Leonean his personal sympathy for the sufferings all Sierra Leoneans have been through. At the same time, the APC Leader extends to the entire country, love, friendship and good will.

xxii. In the words of Honourable Ernest Bat Koroma, Minority Leader of the Sierra Leone House of Parliament and Leader of the All Peoples Congress (APC) Party -

"The APC has forgiven the many people who connived to dismantle the APC and in the process, destroyed Sierra Leone and Sierra Leoneans"

"The APC embraces the 1991 Constitution, an APC gift to Sierra Leone and Sierra Leoneans"

"I invite Sierra Leoneans, in the democratic spirit, to put country before self and to turn a new page in the politics of this country."

"To all my countrymen and women, please note that a political party is like a soccer team playing a game. The coach and players keep changing and so are the rules governing the game. The APC blends the old and the new membership and as a party both new and old APC are our valuable assets to play the game of politics.

However, my countrymen and women, be assured that our coach has been changed; our rules of the game are changed within democratic parameters and the current Leadership of this glorious party is an embodiment of change for the betterment of Sierra Leone."

"The All Peoples Congress (APC) is urging the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to exercise its mandate without fear or favour. I believe that only the truth can heal the many wounds inflicted on the people of this country and on both sides of the cultural and political divide."

"Forward Ever, Backward Never. Truth crushed to earth shall rise again."

Bishop Humper: Thank you Brother Foh, we have collected and collected evidences information that comes before the Commission and it is only then that we ,..... to establish points of issues for clarification. Yesterday again, while the Vice President was making is presentation here, he shared, because and that is also in his submission, that the 1961 session of treason trials or what have you or Court Martial was repealed in 1971, when APC was in power that they did not allow the accused to appeal after conviction. They found that in the records. And they have gone ahead to do something about it but the fact of the matter is that is it the case that

that particular laws was repealed. In 1971 as was stated by the Vice President?

Victor Foh: In answer to the Chairman's question whether the law of appeal for Court Martial was repealed in 1971 is correct, they were repealed in 1971. Out then, the Vice President's statement about conducting the Court Martial under the existing law, is like I do know, here who were tried and accordingnor it substantially changing a whole lot of issues fair trial of government were appearing, if government were not vengeful, if those list were not drawn from Conakry, that is the same taken by which public notice No.4 was promulgated, government is the be all and end all. They could have gone to Parliament, they could have amended the court martial law, there was no need for the rush. It was indecent rush and haste the lives are gone, they cannot come again. I am saying for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, if even where the law is law, I will expect the Government to say yes the law took the course. It is regrettable that it happened. The law is not always right. And also a Court of first instance, 10 days after those people were remind, one day after the 10th day, they were all slaughtered. Is that law? We are going to stand by these laws. For the sake of unity and reconciliation in this country, is that law? The APC killed many people, through treason trials and court martial. And I regret those killings. I regret it for and on behalf of my party. I said we were sorry for such loss of lives, valuable lives, I expect and I expected this from the Vice President yesterday, the law has killed those people. But we regret it . By is not forth coming. I will be going to reconcile this country, those who have gone have gone, but they have families. And it is a small society, 4 million people in Sierra Leone, one farm, one city in America has 10 million plus. 12 million plus, 15 million plus, why can't we come together, have we taken politics of revenge, all the 22, 18, years of APC, well never even send people to the Reaching 24. Few years of SLPP rule, at one go 24 people were slaughtered how we are going to reconcile all of these, the APC was wrong, and I regret that we went wrong. If only so, and I stand bold that the SLPP was Wrong. They should stand bold to say they were wrong. And then we reconcile, we talk to families, we talk to people, so this country can go before. That is the way I can answer. Shorten the stable, does not pay. If they have put back the laws of repeal, are those laws going to bring back the 24 people killed? No, those laws ought to have been put back before the trials; so putting the laws now does not help the situation of course they do if we follow those laws, but by the same token they may taking them tomorrow. However, we are promising now that the APC of now under Ernest Bai Koroma's leadership will not tamper with those treason laws. And we as a party, again that we don't want these killing extermination for political crimes. We should stopped it, sentence should e repealed must be revisited.

Bishop Humper: So brother Foe, on the question of extra judicial killings is not part of our association here, but is your concern and is also the concern of the Commission. The 1992 trials and execution, we only hope that Brigadier Kelly Conteh, he had made the submission but had not had the opportunity to get him here, and to make his public submission to us, we also hope that Captain Tom Nyuma and Brigadier Maada Bio, and Captain Valentine Strasser will make themselves available for us to get detailed of those things that happened during their reign. It is very crucial,for this country. But it is these personalities, who were quote unquote the key

players, who could help us to get to the root of those extra judicial killings and we will make sure that we follow up that and we Ask you and the public to help us contact these personalities, so that we will be able to arrive at the core of protest here. I will now ask the Leader of Evidence if he has any questions to ask.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Chairperson, I have some brief questions, and I hope that perhaps that your answers might be brief and brief as possible. My first question is what was the official accusation if the APC on the AFRC coup in 1997 and how was this accusation expressed?

Victor Foh: The official accusation of the APC on the AFRC coup and every military coup is they are illegal, the APC never support change of Government by using means of force. So the APC as a party, decries, the AFRC coup, that is the official accusation, and that official accusation if you look at my statement personal experience, Friday 1st July on the very first stage, under item two, the APC never sent me to do what I did, during the AFRC period. The APC came as a result of democracy at independence elections before independence we stand by Section five of this Constitution wherein says sovereignty belongs to the people, not of the barrel of the gun.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you, my next question goes about the treason trials 1998, one of those criticism on this trial is that there was not right of appeal for those trials by the Court martial but the strength of appeal has been abolished by the APC in 1971 if I am not mistaken. So why did the APC abolished it and why during the 20 years I think the APC could have restored this right to appeal, why they did not they restored it?

Victor Foh: In our parent submission, we accepted having gone round on many fronts in governance. Within these rounds, we did a whole lot of development. A whole lot of group changes, it was mixed bad. The bad side of governance at the time. In 1971 one of them was the repeal of that law. But I have said quoting Prof. A.B. Dicey an expert of unconstitutional law, some parliament government does not band in successful. So if APC in yester yeas was doing bad, do we expect SLPP today to continue doing bad? No so there is no excuse that they had to deal with bad laws. Bad laws must be expunged from the laws of this land. And I will assure you when the day comes, when APC get into governance, under Ernest Bai Koroma, we will look at the bad laws whether they were passed by the SLPP or the APC so that this country will be given good laws, to go straight. So bad laws, it was bad that the APC repealed the appeal, the right of appeal. It was equally bad, or it was even worst, that the SLPP that is in the other political divine could go with the bad laws.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you, in your written submission you, said that President Kabba when he was staying in Conakry in 1998 sent a task force to Freetown to carry out a nasty but hasty and killed anti SLPP elements in Sierra Leone. Do you have any evidence of this?

Victor Foh: I have, I was in jail with Abu Black who was a Temne headman for the Western Area. The Kamajors beat him up and put him in a wheel barrow and dumped him half dead in the cell. He laid there for 9, 10, 11 days unconscious and died. I was in jail with Sankoh Filed Martial, the first name I have forgotten, they beat him and he went momentarily blind, he went deaf, he went drunk and he died, we have evidence we know that. It is because we want to reconcile some of these names I can call them here.

Leader of Evidence: Excuse me, I am not asking if you have evidence of the violations. I would like you to tell us if you have evidence on the effect that there were these ten men task force and that this task force were sent by President Kabbah. I said if you have any evidence on that?

Victor Foh: Yes this evidence was elucidated here yesterday by no other person but the Vice President who called it another name. He said they came ahead and they were doing this and they were doing that, that is before, the same thing he said in his statement, I don't know why he to, but check the records yesterday, he named the force. He was part of it. Julius Spencer was part of it, Alie Bangura was part of it. Anthony he name the task force, and this was the task force that metamorphosis into a screening panel. There were a lot of cautions on the screening panel which I said went into a money making screen.

Leader of Evidence: Yes, but I think you gave it a different purpose, in your statement you said that the task force had to carry out a hit on the Anti SLPP elements. that is my question, Do you have any evidence of that?

Victor Foh: The abounce, whilst we were held, so many people were said right at the Bank of Sierra Leone, dressed on the walls of State House. They took us to jail I have told you here in my public testimony that I traveled by land, sea and air from George Street Police Headquarters to Pademba Road. They were taken us from here and there to kill us. They killed so many people some of them they said were crimes, but they were never brought before the law. There is sufficient evidence, I have it, infact we have compiled list of people so We have it.

Leader of Evidence: So perhaps if you have any of the link between this task force and the visitations you can submit it.

Victor Foh: Everything that happened it was a government sponsored, if it were not, what was the kamajors doing at Brookfields Hotel? What were they doing there? If it were not government sponsored, I have given a made to them, it was part sponsored.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you, I have one last question. Do you think there was a link between the treason trials and the invasion of January 6 1999, and what should be this link?

Victor Foh: Yes in our view, my personal view and as a party's view, is in this submission that heals the situation. When the Government was restored. If it were managed better, perhaps the January invasion should have been avoided; but when government said the army avoided; but when government said the army was disbanded in one throne they said again no, the army is not disbanded. That was sending the wrong signals to the military. It send so many of these soldiers, most of the soldiers into the mission. They took up arms, and those intension, when some of these people saw their colleagues in that way, they send a wrong signals. I think the Greminer Convention does not allow one to kill a surrender soldier. If you surrender, you should have the protection of the law. But this people surrender and they were brutally killed. So there was

a direct link within those detentions huge amount of people, the majority of them were soldiers. And when the soldiers and rebels broke the jail, some of us who cannot fire a gun did not hold a gun. But the soldiers, the guns is their own tools so they came and fought. I think there was a direct link between the miscalculations of the treason trials, the detention, the court martial and the January 6 invasion. And that is expressed hereby in our party position.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you.

Bishop Humper: We thank you again brother Foe, it is now your turn, if you have any question or recommendation you can now make.

Victor Foh: I want to take this opportunity as some body representing the political party the APC to ask this question, the TRC may not answer it but I hope it could be answered.

We have said in our submission that political players in the two parties in this country, the APC and the SLPP are responsible for the problems of this country. My question is, why is it that foreign heads of states are trampled the and then Of their right in this country? Why is it that the foreign heads of states of Sierra Leone will come in and go and by the next meeting we are disgraced, is disgraced? We have denied everything all our right, why is? And what can the TRC do to ensure that there is equity, there is law, human right of foreign heads of states are not violate, excessively violated? Unnecessary because in Nigeria there are so many heads of states, foreign heads of states, but here in Sierra Leone our foreign heads of state are disgraced and how do we stop it?

Bishop Humper: That is a good question and the nation is listening to you, we at the Commission can only receive this one and then we begin to put it in context whether it falls within our mandate. The question though, the first part of the preamble which will concern with the Commission here you have categorically said this and this is not the first time, that the political turmoil in this country has to be twist to particular political in this country, the APC and the SLPP were we have heard that over and over again. And the Commission will look at that statement very seriously, but the question of foreign elements coming and going those are arms that are not immediately within our competence as the case may be, within our mandate, and I see my colleague will want to make a comment on that one.

Commissioner Torto: Mr. Victor Foe I thought as you actually remind you of somebody who has been in Parliament and as a matter of fact one of those who actually passed the act as to the benefits of former heads of states I believed you are very much aware of the benefits that should go to former heads of states after serving two terms, you qualify for Ex.

Victor Foh: Those who have left office fallen, those who have left office.

Commissioner Torto: That's what I am really addressing, there were now laws you will agree with me very well, you were one of those, you actually passed the act, that there is a legislation as to the entitlement of foreign or fallen people ex-heads of states so to speak, people who have served before, that is if they have served for two terms. There is a package for a head of state

and the vice, well the Vice President that you be, I think you will agree with me on that. So to say they have been trampled on, I don't know what else or what you exactly mean by that. Because I remember very well, you were a member of parliament what that act was passed.

Victor Foh: Commissioner Sir, we are not entirely wrong, I was not in Parliament but there was an act, Act No.2 of 1986, benefits of Presidents and Vice Presidents Act. No.2 of 1986, but I posed this question because this party that I am representing, All Peoples Congress, made the submission here. President Momoh plus many others who have fallen from grace this country, had been deplored. His military pensions, seized his presidential pensions and he is languishing.

Bishop Humper: May I interrupt brother Foe, I would like us to have ourselves focused and the issues of the day, that is the 1998 detentions trials and executions. Those other components are all the things that have been piled up here. What we will do as a Commission, we had not have this report that leaders who have been out of this office are trampled upon that has to do with the Immigration and the process of law in the country which the Commission is not mandated as it were to go through but to go through those related ones. What we would do instead of spending much time on this, is the information we have received from you. We are the Commission will use our necessary instruments to find out whether these things are happening. And if they are happening what the nation can do in order to prevent them from happening.

Victor Foh: Yes I will appreciate that, but that is in our submission. I appreciate the precision of the TRC for continuity for reconciliation for the betterment of this country we should learn to respect our leaders.

Bishop Humper: Thank you, any recommendation?

Victor Foh: So we will recommend to the TRC some investigations still, boarding on, you know you have said it all, if it could be recommended that, let government investigate one of this extra judicial killings and two, the killing of Musa Kabbia and others, let some Commission of Enquiry, when it was said yesterday and that nobody has complain to the police, there is silent majority, or let the government come out bold and set up an enquiry. That is our recommendation from the party. For the majority of people who have suffered this way of such brutal fate are our party people.

Bishop Humper: Alright, I thank you very much. Any other one that you need to recap that you have already recommended this time you were talking, now is the time for recommendation is here. That has to do with the right of appeal court martial.

Victor Foh: Yes the right of appeal for all classes of citizen be you a military man or a civilian, that right of appeal should be entrenched. It should not be tampered with.

Bishop Humper: Any more?

Victor Foh: And we have said this is just a repletion, the death penalty, I think we should, as a party, we are not in favour of, this death penalty, more for this

political offences, the trivialities people loose their lives. The death penalty, I think I will and here do for today.

Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Mr. Foe I think you have always been helpful to us, and even with these recommendations which are very critical our existence as a nation we be taken into good part. I want to continue to thank you for your cooperation and even more so far one today, I will now ask you to stand down.

Victor Foh: So before I stand down Sir, so the party still has two according to the programme one the destruction of Koribondo, and finally reconciliation, unity and reconciliation. I think by tomorrow next tomorrow I submission the destruction of Koribondo will be in and early next week, the submission for national reconciliation unity and reconciliation will be in. I am sure the party leader will personally deliver the national unity and reconciliation paper.

Bishop Humper: Thank you

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION HEARINGS

DATE 14 JULY 2003

NAME OF WITNESS: FODAY S. CONTEH (DIR. OF PRISON)

Leader of Evidence: Chairperson our next witness for today is Mr. Foday S. Conteh, Director of Prisons.

Bishop Humper: Witness of religious affiliation.

Foday Conteh: Foday Soko Conteh, Christian.

Bishop Humper: Please take the bible and repeat after me. (The oath is taken.)

We welcome you here Mr. Conteh and we will now count on you as one of those who will help the Commission in accomplishing it mandate. This is no main task, all of you who appear before us will constitute part of the history of the Commission and the history of designing the new Sierra Leone. We will now as a Commission in joining you to share with us what you have proposed to do.

Foday Conteh: I have submitted an Copies of what I propose to do and I will ask the Commission to read from it.

First of all I will define the role of prison service in the Community. The role of the Prison service is first under the law to hold those committed to custody, whether on remand, committed for trial, convicted and awaiting sentences or lawfully detained by Court of Order or executive actions and to provide conditions for their detentions which are currently accepted in the society.

Secondly in dealing with conditions of those offenders, there is an obligation on the service to all that could be possible within the occurrence of the sentence to encourage and assist them to be law abiding and on their discharge.

In addition to that we have two main functions that of custodian which I have just defined, and the other is to reform and rehabilitate the individual to fit back to society. Now on the conflict, on divers dates in February, March and April 1998, several arrests were made by ECOMOG, CID and other personnel of those who worked in collaboration with the AFRC regime and overthrow the legitimate government of the SLPP. Those arrested were brought to Pademba Road Prisons as detainees for safe custody to protect them from extra-judicial executions and other re..... And honestly Mayiba was tortured and maybe one was killed, when they were in our custody. In fulfilling our roles and responsibilities, we contained civilians and military personnel who were brought into our custody, when the constitutionally elected government was re-instated. We held these In the Commission of security, as supervision, wherein were appropriate for them. They had access to legal representations, they are provided with food, medical facilities And the main conditions that were required of them are spelt out in our needs and All of those who were referred for medical attention as for the cases who were conveyed to the military hospital and were treated there, and the complement of their treatment were brought back to the prisons. We even allowed private medical practitioners to visit in with and travel or prescribe medication for them. In addition to that we granted visits by family members and loved ones to all the detainees. On divers days in May 1998, those brought to the detention at the Pademba Road were and escorted out of the prison by CID and Ecomog personnel to obtain statements from them. There after they were brought back into the Prisons to be detained. In June 1998 after the investigation had ended at the CID, those detained at the Freetown Central Prisons were categorized into three divisions.

1. The military officers were charged to attend Court Martial Presided by senior military officers i.e. the military tribunal.
2. The civilians that worked in collaboration with the then AFRC were to face treason trials presided over by judges.
3. And the third groups those that have little or no connection with The AFRC were to face the Tejan Cole Committee. All of them were in castrated at the Freetown Central Prisons. As the then Attorney General stated most of these people had nothing to do with the but because of hatred, jealousy, individuals arrest them, and take them as collaborators, but it was later proved, that they were not so these people were taken to the Tejan Cole Committee to look into their cases.

The Court martial started on around the 23rd of July 1998. During the sittings the Prison Department provided

END OF TAPE A

TAPE B

The something applies to the treason trial and those who face the Tejan Committee. They provided escort to take them to these various areas and them back. And before the 12th October 1998 when the court martial ended 34 senior military personnel including one female were condemned to death at the military tribunal. The under mentioned three military personnel were acquitted and discharged and were released from the Freetown Central Prisons on the 26th of October 1998 upon the orders of the Attorney General. These were Lieutenant A.B. Bah. Lieutenant Alimamy Ketta and Colonel S.A. Sinah. The undermentioned 10 officers

were sentenced Imprisonment by the Court Martial. They were later on granted Presidential Pardon on 17th of July 1999 by His Excellency Alhaji Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabba and were released from the Freetown Central Prisons on the same day. They were SLA 333 Major

555 Major Tamba A. Abu, SLA 415 Lieutenant Commander AB Harrod, SLA 527, Captain Abdul Hassim SLA 652 Freight Officer Arnold H. Bangura, SLA 157 Colonel Alpha Saba Kamara, SLA 215 Colonel A.C. Nelson-Williams, SLA 848 Lieutenant Commander Francis M. Dowie, SLA300 Lieutenant Colonel Bashiru Conteh, SLA 214 Colonel A.B. Mansaray, SL 18163392 Warrant Officer 2 Showers J.D.

On the 12th of October 1998 24 male including one female had/were/condemn to death by firing squad, SL 674 Captain Abu Bakarr Kamara, SL 272 Lieutenant Colonel P.F. Foday, SLA 18163271 Sergeant Abu Sankoh, Elias Zagalo, SL 429 Captain Idrissa Tommy Lahai, SL 51501, Captain Sima Sankoh, SL 301 Colonel James Max Kanga, SL 44 Colonel David K. Anderson, SL 462 Captain Albert Johnny Moore, SL417 William Abdul M. Koroma, SL200 Brigadier Hassan K. Conteh, SL 223 Lieutenant Colonel Boizie Palmer, SL 495 Major Bayor Conteh alias, SL 531 Lieutenant Sesay, SL 412 Lieutenant Commander Abdul Aziz Dumbuya, SL 240 Colonel Samuel FY Koroma, SL 250 Lieutenant Jimmy Kelly, SL 220 Colonel John A.S. Conteh, SL 339 Major Kula Samba, SL 465 Major Augustine F. Kamara, SL 405 Lieutenant Colonel Bai Samuel K.B. Gilbert, SL 448 Leader Victor King, SL 434 Captain Josiah Boise Pratt, SL 1816 4384 Captain Tamba Gborie, SL 287 Colonel Abdul Karim Sesay. On the 18th of October

I was informed by then acting Inspector General of Police who was that he had received orders for the execution of 24 Junior and senior military personnel who were condemn to death by firing squad at the court martial. On the 19th of October 1998, the Sheriff, the Deputy Inspector General of Police who was acting Inspector General of Police came into Central Prisons demanding for the 24 military personnel. He handed them over to the Sheriff handcuff with no resistance. Later the Prisons Officers escorted them out of the Prisons into the Police vehicle that was packed in front of the prisons. All the 24 sentenced military personnel boarded the vehicle and ECOMOG provided security. The vehicle drove off from Pademba Road Prisons into the Goderich firing range where they were handed over to another military personnel they met at the firing range. The 24 were escorted to the firing range for execution by firing squad. The then Inspector General of Police Mr. Kandeh Bangura, the Prison Imam, the Assistant Superintendent of Police Mr. Ibrahim Sankoh, the then Prison Chaplain Rev..... Williams, the Prison Medical Officer, Dr. J..B. Sandy and myself were present during the execution by firing squad. The execution took place on

the 19th day of October 1998, and was done by military pass. They were dressed in military uniforms at the Goderich firing range in Goderich.

After they were executed, the Prison medical doctor, Dr. J.B. Sandy examined them to satisfy that they were dead. There after the corpses were handed over by the Prisons Department. And were buried at the Kissy Mess Mess cemetery at the east end of Freetown. Immediately after the execution 24 death certificates were issued to me which were signed by the Deputy General of Police, the Sheriff in the presence of the Prison Imam, the Prison Chaplain and the Medical Doctor, for the records. That is all and the Sierra Leone Prison Service welcomed and appreciated the establishment of the TRC by the Government of Sierra Leone in patient with article 3b of the Lome Agreement 1999 to address impunity both in the circle of violence, provide a forum for both victims and perpetrators, of human right violations to tell their stories and get a clear picture of the past in order to facilitate general healing and reconciliation in order to prevent the re-occurrence of what happened?

Bishop Humper: We want to thank Mr. Conteh very much for this presentation, we listened intensely and that I am sure the Commissioners will have a few question for clarification especially as it pertains to the detention and the that the execution of those people. I will now call on my colleagues to engage you.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Mr. Conteh for the testimony, I have very few areas for clarification and I will suggest you help me with. In your brief introductory statement, you said the Prison Department serves two major functions, one is custodial detention of prisoners and the second is reformation of rehabilitation something like that, that is to reform people, and get them back into civilized society. How much of this aspect of reformation responsibility or activity is the prison department doing apart from the custodial one? How much of they?

Foday Conteh: In order to attain our objective, we have so many decisions in prisons to carry out to play our role in society. And the first of all according to the rules and ordinance, the prison officers should be an example to the unit, to be As a But we have a religious aspect of it. That is why we have an Imam, we have a Reverend , we have a Church and a mosque, to reform the soul, because the soul is the most important element in reforming, if you cannot reform the soul you can not reform the individual. So we introduce the religious organizations and we even allow outside religious organizations to visit the So the Reverend and the Imams preach to them, pray for them and to certain extent counsel them. And also various workshops where in those that are sentenced a long term imprisonment were asked for their areas of interest so that they will train in various skills, so that on discharge they will be self employed or they will be employed by people. Secondly they also train them in the hospital, they train them in the offices and some that were/are/skilled personnel when they go there, they encourage them to continue preaching their skills which they have acquired before being imprisoned so that they will not

forget all those tortures are there. And then we trained officers who are there to supervise them or to train them, in order to acquire these skills. We have various workshops.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, what facilities do you have for child offenders?

Foday Conteh: We don't accommodate child offenders.

Commissioner Torto: What happens to them?

Foday Conteh: Well when ever they are brought, we draw the attention of the Ministry of Gender Affairs, Ministry of Gender and Child Affairs and then they will inform the Attorney General that these people were brought for detention but we have no room for them. And something is done to take them to their respective place.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, I don't know if you were here yesterday, if not you may have been listening on the radio, there was a testimony Before the Commission that on the return of the Attorney General from exile, they found thousands of people in the prisons and in a testimony submitted this morning, which it happens to actually witness and listen to, there is an exact figure quoted here that there were about 5,000 people in the prison cells. On whose orders, according to the "PP" they found people in prisons at Pademba Road about, thousands, and thousands, they did not know how they got there, they did not give the orders, and that testimony is confirming that, are here before us, that there were up to five thousand on whose orders were you detaining five thousand people at that particular moment in time?

Foday Conteh: By then ECONOMOG was in charge and the ECOMOG Commander ask that we these people so that no one will kill them, no one, will so that we can contain them and until some time when there is calm. And then this 5,000 will be a record recorded by some people, but they were not there at the same time. They taken them, sometime they leave them, they take them and leave them, but there was no time we got up to 1,000 prisoners in our prison at the time.

Commissioner Torto: So am I to understand that the 5,000 of 50 people including the previous witness before you who was among the 5,000 were detained purely for protection reasons?

Foday Conteh: That was the case infact, we classify them as for protective custody. That was the language we use at the time.

Commissioner Torto: so it was not a question of unlawful detention?

Foday Conteh: It was a question of unlawful detention because the first commanders explained to us that they don't want this extra judicial killings and also hazards, so as a result, infact some people gave themselves up to ECOMOG personnel who took them to us for safe keeping.

Commissioner Torto: OK the very last question is again testimonies have been addressed before here about conditions in prisons. A particular witness

explained his ordeal that there about 5, 6 10 people in a small cell without or with an expose toilet facilities right in front of them, in a small room is that true?

Foday Conteh: Probably it might be true because of lack of space. That institution was built for 324 onwards and then having up to 900 or a thousand means we have to be located in that number.

Commissioner Torto: So it is true that there were 10 people in a room with their sanitary facility exposed?

Foday Conteh: That is true, the sanitary and up to now we are still using the bucket system.

Commissioner Torto: Up to now is the process?

Foday Conteh: But we have started replacing them with flush toilets squirting toilets. Infact the new prison that have been built with squirting toilets or flush toilets for the

Commissioner Torto: Is that in line with the International standards, that International conditions of Imprisonment? Are you practicing that act in line with what is described by international standard, is that the way it should be to prisoners of similar offences else where?

Foday Conteh: Well, that was the condition available to us at the time.

Commissioner Torto: So it is not in line?

Foday Conteh: At all.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Chairman.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much Mr. Conteh for your testimony, I am interested in the group of people taken to the Tejan Cole Committee, I wonder whether you can help us by telling us exactly how many of them were taken to the Tejan Cole Committee and at what stages they were released, and you authorized their release?

Foday Conteh: With respect to that, I am asking the Commission to allow me to do my homework and come out with figures, because as I to us inter alia that the institution was vandalized and all the records was destroyed, we are only now trying to put them in place, we are searching frantically to get this information for you.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Submit the details of what I have asked about to the Commission.

Foday Conteh: Yes ma.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much.

Commissioner John Kamara: Well I will join my other Commissioners for thanking you for this submission and presentation. I was going to ask some of the few questions but some of them have already been answered. On

the question on the capacity of the prison we have, you said that, normally, it should carry only, hold only 324 inmates, how many inmates have you got there?

Foday Conteh: The number we have now is around 700.

Commissioner John Kamara: You have 700?

Foday Conteh: Is around 700, I don't know for the figure for today.

Commissioner John Kamara: Or more than double?

Foday Conteh: More than double.

Commissioner John Kamara: Is the capacity. Prisons are known throughout the world to be a place for torture all horrible acts. Will you say that the Sierra Leone Prison is not different from this kind of accusations or claims?

Foday Conteh: I think I will clearly state here that none of the inmates in castrated in that institution were tortured even at present no torturing take place. I will refer you to the Amnesty International report. And the ICRC report will show that we don't torture. And even Victor Foe would have stated that here if he had been tortured.

Commissioner John Kamara: The other question is what influence is brought on you in the treatment of prisoners by politicians? Do politicians influence the way you treat prisoners in the prison?

Foday Conteh: Not at all we go strictly by our rules and regulations. That is why we don't torture, we try to keep them in a humanly condition. Give them all that the law permit us to give them

Commissioner John Kamara: So you are saying that all prisoners are treated the same?

Foday Conteh: They are all treated equally according to our rules and ordinance because they are in classes and then some are given treatment recommended by medical officer on medical grounds.

Commissioner John Kamara: So the only difference is difference that is recommended on the main ground. Only, that when the medical doctor recommends that a prisoner be treated on way, then you will treat that prisoner, according to that prescription or recommendation?

Foday Conteh: Yes.

Commissioner John Kamara: Also have you ever, I don't know how long you have seen, not only Director of Prison but have been a member of the prison institution but did you notice throughout your service that care of the institution and the treatment of the prisoners change with the change of the administration, change of government?

Foday Conteh: It is true that if the treatment changes, there is a change of government and that to be frank with you it is improving.

Commissioner John Kamara: So the position now is that Prison conditions have been improved?

Foday Conteh: They are improving.

Commissioner John Kamara: They are improving?

Foday Conteh: Compared to those days because the death rate has reduced drastically. Even the public has noticed that.

Commissioner John Kamara: Alright thank you.

Bishop Humper: Thank you Mr. Conteh. I would want to come first of all to the detentions which part of our concern here. There has been and still continue to be the notion that is why infact the Commission is going through this. It has to establish and understood and grasped. The perception of many people before then and now had been worse than it is that the detention in 1998 within this given period that we are talking about were illegal, unwarranted, uncalled for and unnecessary and infact they should not have happened. That is the general assumption will come to those details that have been asked. You mentioned something why did the detentions took place would you respond to that before I go to the other?

Foday Conteh: My own personal view, I think that was done purely to the situation. By then if that had not been done, there would have been chaos because people will be fighting here and there. They see people take Because is antagonist of somebody that has done bad to him has been taken to Pademba Road Prisons for detention and of course just as previous speaker has said, that there were a lot of extra judicial killings maiming etc. etc. Had that not been done, I think there would have been chaos in the city at that time. Because I will clearly with confidence say, none of those detained in our institution was tortured at the time, or killed or maltreated, with the exception of the lack of space which we cannot be of.

Bishop Humper: We all believe not just believe, we know that Pademba Road was built during colonial days. Now somebody came here and we want to cross check and not only assumed that because somebody had said it so therefore it is the But somebody came here to say that there were 5000 of them in that cell. Is that the case?

Foday Conteh: That is not true.

Bishop Humper: My last question as Director of Prisons and the arm of the government that is responsible for maintaining order and discipline in the country, sends an accused to you for a safe keeping as it was, where or not you have enough space what will you do?

Foday Conteh: In such cases, we have to receive them, and if once institution is over filled, overcrowded to the extent that we cannot accommodate we transfer others to other districts prisons so that we provide space for that prison.

Bishop Humper: Well this is the sub question that follows if then, how many people in your estimation at any given time within the time frame you have, did you keep at Pademba Road, from February to April 1998 this is

the question we are talking about those detention at any given time how many can you guess were accommodated there?

Foday Conteh: We give and take about 3,000.

Bishop Humper: **Leader of Evidence:**

Leader of Evidence: I have some questions as well, regarding this arrest. You said at that time the Ecomog Commander was in charge, and asked you to maintain these prisoners, was Ecomog the only institutional instant troop that brought prisoners to you? Or were groups or civilians also bringing prisoners to you at that time?

END OF TAPE B

Another group was the Police. Some of these people surrendered themselves to the Police and when ECOMOG got wind of that they ordered the police to take them to the Prisons for safe custody.

Leader of Evidence: And do you know who initially arrested those people before ECOMOG and the police brought them to you, who had initially arrested them?

Foday Conteh: I cannot tell for now because that was a time of too much confusion, commotion. It was difficult to really recognize any particular person.

Leader of Evidence: And then in answer to Commissioner Torto's question, you said that normally you don't detain children. You will inform the Ministry of Social Welfare etc. At that time were there only children amongst those 3,000 detainees?

Foday Conteh: At the time we had that number, infact that number was swollen by military personnel that were at Lungi at one time and when there was this threat of invasion from the Northern part of Sierra Leone, they were brought to Freetown and there was no safe place for them to be contained. So they were taken to Pademba Road Prisons and frankly we didn't even lock them up because there was no space. We allowed them to use the corridor. It was an open detention so to speak. Some of them were in the fields. We don't lock them up because we don't want any tragedy to occur by death because suffocation etc. They were around, they were in corridors, they were in the campus of the prison. We didn't lock them. That was the only time we had up to 3,000 but when they were removed there, we never had up to 1,000 inmates.

- Leader of Evidence:** And I think normally when you keep in a prison that has the capacity of about 300 people, and you keep 3,000 people in it, I think you are aware that that involves some risks to the health of those people. Did you Mind you consider to another question that normally when people are sent to you and there is overcrowding that you try to transfer them to other prisons. Was that possible at that time to transfer them?
- Foday Conteh:** It was not possible by then because by then even the provincial prisons were not safe. Some of them have been vandalized and the war was in all parts of the country except Freetown. Infact it was less tan two weeks when Freetown was invaded and they were all freed buy the invaders.
- Leader of Evidence:** Can you tell us how many of those several thousand and people who were arrested at that time died before they were tried or before they were set free?
- Foday Conteh:** I cannot tell you that number because those people were only kept there not for offences they committed but they were kept there for security reasons so that they will not fill the number of the invading rebels. That was why they were kept there.
- Leader of Evidence:** So did any die or none of them died during detention?
- Foday Conteh:** I cannot think of any death of the time because they were there for less than two weeks. We made all provisions to make sure that we take care of them.
- Leader of Evidence:** I think the period we are talking about is February 1998 at least until April 1998 when you had the Treason Trials and the January 6 Invasion was in January, several months later. So we are talking about more than two weeks I think.
- Foday Conteh:** These people were brought in close to close to January 6, 1999 when Freetown was invaded. During the treason trials we did not have that number. We had less in that number. We did not have to up to 1,000. When the question was posed that whether at any one time the number of people we had at the prisons that was why I gave that answer.
- Now let me talk the period I am referring to is the period between the reinstating of Tejan Kabba as President and the invasion in January 6 1999. That is the period I am talking about. So during this time did any of those civilians that were arrested for their protection as you say, did any of them die during detention?
- Foday Conteh:** Yes, some of them, few of them died, one was Abu Black I cannot tell the exact name and others. I have to consult the records. So if you want a list of those that died during that process but is very few.
- Leader of Evidence:** Yes please I think the Commission will be interested in that: you say that nowadays ICRC (The International Committee of the Red Cross) is making report on the conditions of detention was that also

the case in the period of referred to? Was ICRC present and making reports on the conditions of detention in that period?

Foday Conteh: They were not around but I was just explaining about conditions of treatment of inmates. That was why I made that generalized statement and even at that nobody will testify here that Prison Officer actually tortured any of the inmates.

Leader of Evidence: No I am not talking about torture.

Foday Conteh: No I am just explaining. They were not around at the time but even at that there were living witnesses. People were there living witnesses. People were there; they will come and give testimony.

Leader of Evidence: And did you make any report to the authorities, to the authorities, to the government or to the Minister of Justice on the overcrowding at that time in the prisons and the possible risks that that involved?

Foday Conteh: I cannot remember but we sent in the figures to our Minister by then?

Leader of Evidence: Isn't that It sounds to me a bit bizarred that you will arrest those people for their own protection because they were likely to be killed instead of arresting those that were likely to kill them, that you will arrest the potential victims instead of the potential perpetrators.

Foday Conteh: We don't arrest. We only receive people that are brought to us for custodial reasons and the reason we were given that that reason is tenable that to prevent them from being killed by civilians as a reprisal etc.

Leader of Evidence: Is this kind of protective custody as you call it still practiced nowadays?

Foday Conteh: No, that has been After the conflict we no longer keep people for protective custody.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you my last question is about the execution of the military who were sentenced to death by the Court Martial. There have been some criticisms on the way they have been executed. Was this the normal way of executing people after death sentence like for instance the people who were executed in 1992 under the NPRC were they executed the same way? Secondly who executed them? Were they Sierra Leonean soldiers or prison officers or others?

Foday Conteh: In the case of 1992, I have not got much to say. I only knew that military personnel came with their vehicles and demanded the release of certain personnel which were handed over to them. What happened next we were not a party to it.

Leader of Evidence: So you were not part of execution?

Foday Conteh: Pardon?

Leader of Evidence: You were not involved in the execution?

Foday Conteh: We were not involved.

Leader of Evidence: Okay, thank you very much I have no further questions.

Bishop Humper: Conteh do you have any of questions or recommendations to make?

Foday Conteh: Well I think I will go and write my recommendations and submit them together with a response to some of the issues
You want me to clarify.

Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Bishop Humper: In the context of Sierra Leone just before you go, we want to establish or the commission wants to establish the process we are following. We have others, when the judiciary or the government, or the appropriate authorities take orders in the Prisons like to Director of Prisons and his inmates, they also have their own responsibilities; specific responsibilities that they must carry out or they ought to carry out or else they themselves will stand trial for not carrying out these orders. So what we are saying here is that we need to understand clearly what the limitations of these people are, what is within their own combat. For example, if one is taken to Prisons, it is the responsibility of the Director of Prisons to accept that person for safe keeping or for custody as the case may be until if that person is demanded by law and then in terms of execution the Director of Prisons has to control over the process of execution. It is the law that carry out its processes and condemns and not condemns, and when those people are demanded by law, the Director of Prisons is required by law to hand over those personnel and his work terminates as her the law itself terminates and according to the law of Sierra Leone, if it is execution by firing squad, there are specific people who are supposed bylaw to be present at the scene of execution and the final death certificate is given to the Director of Prisons for safe keeping. That is the process that we understand in Sierra Leone as far as the constitution is concerned and the prerequisite principles or procedures involved. We just want the records turn out to be straight enough before we say thank you to Brother Conteh for having carried us through this process and we hope that we will receive these recommendations from you in due course. Thank you very much.

Foday Conteh: Thank you. To make things clearer, to the Public, it is the Sheriff that is responsible for execution and not the Prison Authority.

Bishop Humper: Thank you very much. You may stand down.

Leader of Evidence: Honourable commissioners, our next witness is Mr. Oliver O. Nylander, the President of the Bar Association of Sierra Leone, making submissions on behalf of the Association.

Oliver Nylander: Oliver Ogunade Nylander

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim.

Oliver Nylander: Christian

The witness was sworn on oath on the Bible by Commissioner Justice Laura Marcus-Jones the Presiding Commissioner.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: We welcome you Mr. Nylander for the second time to the TRC and you watched the CJ give his testimony and it is a very fortuitous thing that you are coming right after him. So, we continue our education about the judiciary this morning, we take another aspect of it and that is the lawyers?

Oliver Nylander: yes Madam chair because going by my instruction from the letter, it only says that we write to confirm that the date for your appearance at the public hearing of the commission, the subject judiciary will be on Monday 26th July. So I shall be looking at the judiciary.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: From your own perspective

Oliver Nylander: From the perspective of the legal practitioners.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Alright thank you very much. You may begin.

Oliver Nylander: madam chairperson, Commissioners, as President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, I will have a look at the judiciary from the practitioners point of view. The judiciary is one of the three arms of government, others begin the executive and the legislature. Successive governments have over the years neglected and failed to pay due attention to the needs and problems of the judiciary. As a result, there had been a sharp decline in the quality of justice dispensed by courts which has resulted in the rule of law being eroded and the public losing confidence in the judiciary. It is our opinion that the most pressing problem facing the judiciary is the lack of personnel and trained personnel to man the courts. There has been an acute shortage of magistrates on the lower bench and judges of the superior court of judicature that is the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. My own valuable Chief Justice Dr. Abdulia Timbo, can confirm this as he has on several occasions made public pronouncement of this fact. The last being at the annual conference of the Sierra Leone Bar Association held on the 2nd of July 2003 at the British Council. In view of this shortage of Judges and Magistrates, there is a heavy workload of cases of the few Judges and Magistrates available. Its

not uncommon for at least 20 cases to be a day for hearing before a High Court Judge, especially civil matters and also about 30 criminal cases to be listed for daily hearing before a magistrate, particularly the Magistrate Court No.1. this might be a contributing factor to the long delays in trial of cases thus making litigation very expensive. Hence there is the issue of numerous adjournments. It has been alleged that lawyers take on too many cases for which they have not got the capacity to handle. This necessitates or give rise to request of frequent adjournment of cases. There might be some truth in such allegation from some of our colleagues but most times, adjournments have been requested because the parties or litigants and their witnesses have failed to appear on the day for the trial. In such situations the lawyer will have no alternative other than to apply for an adjournment. Therefore lawyers are not entirely responsible for the numerous adjournment of cases. There is also the burning issue of shortage of materials like stationery. At times Council will request that notices be sent out to both absent parties and their solicitor. This request might be granted by the judge, then comes the next adjourn date. Parties and their solicitor might fail to appear. The reason being failure by the Registrar to sent out notices as requested and this will be due to the fact that printed notices forms were not available. Then the lack or need for continuous legal training for both legal and para-legal supporting staff of the judiciary, like the Registrar Court Clerks and Bailiffs is also lacking. Then I have proceeded to make recommendations as we see the plight of practitioners. May I proceed?

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: You say you have something lacking in what we have here because the next Alright carry on

Oliver Nylander: The government must improve the conditions of service for judges and magistrates so as to attract the right calibre of people to the bench. Firstly, the salary should be made more attractive, the supply of electricity to the residence of judges and magistrates should be made a priority so that they could be made readily available for prompt delivery. The medical allowances given to judges and magistrates should be increased the allocation of vehicle to each judge so as to enable them to arrive in court promptly for court sittings. Provision of legal aid. Government should seriously consider the establishment of a legal Aid and Assistance scheme, which will enable indigene litigants who could not afford the high cost of litigation to access justice and not to be deprived of their rights to seek redress in court for wrongs done to them because they are impecunious. Already a group of lawyers know a LAWCLA has established a form of assistance to indigent litigants. The Bar Association has also been running a few clinic at the Bar Association Secretariat whereby, free legal advice are given to persons who cannot solicit the service of a lawyer because of the high cost involved in litigation. The reforming of our laws especially absolute ones in this area, I must commend the government of Sierra Leone, who has recently activated the Law Reforming commission, who will be holding a seminar on the commercial use of land in Sierra Leone from the 30th - 31st of July 2003. It first major activity to reform of the law relating to the commercial use of land in Sierra Leone. Another problem has been the absence of reported Sierra Leone law cases and this has

hampered the work of judges, since the last reporting of Sierra Leone on law cases was in 1973. My association with funding from DIFID, has embarked upon the publication of Sierra Leone law reports covering a 10 year period from 1990 - 200 of cases presided in the court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. On completion of the first phase, my association will embark in reporting cases presided by the High court for the period 1973 to date. Recently, some members of the Sierra Leone Bar Association came together to form a local non-governmental association known as Legal Reform Initiatives. They are committed to support legal reforms in Sierra Leone and to provide a bridge between the national and international ongoing justice efforts. We believe that the legal community must be at the forefront of promoting justice and impartial rule of law and to participate in difficult vital and important projects of improving the country's judicial system. The government should also seriously consider the provision of continuous legal training for both judges and magistrates and the para legal staff of the judiciary. I was privileged together with the Honorable chief Justice Dr. Abdul Timbo, the learned Attorney General , Mr. Eke Halloway to have attended the all-African conference of law, Justice and Development held in Abuja Nigeria sometime in February this year. At this conference, the need for continuous legal training for judges, magistrates and barristers was stressed, if we in Africa are to leave the challenges and opportunities offered by globalisation. Thanks to the UNDP who conducted sometime in March 2003 a course for Justice of the Peace, clerks and Bailiffs of the judiciary. Within a very short time, we the legal practitioners have started seeing the benefits of such legal training especially among Justice of the Peace, who presides over our cases, over cases in the Magistrate Court as they now have the law stored in their bosom. We the members of the legal profession, are sure that now that we have the President, the Vice President, who are both lawyers by profession that the need of the judiciary will continue to be looked into. That is my recommendation. The Bar normally involves legal practitioners, the lawyers who are practitioners from the Sierra Leone Bar Association and the judiciary comprises of the Bench that is judges of the Superior Court of judicature, that is the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court and the Lower Bench, the magistrates, so there are two distinct situations two distinct offices.

Commissioner John Kamara: Alright my next question which follows this and will recommendations coming from the Bar Association or the judiciary have a multiplying effect on the effectiveness of these two bodies.

Oliver Nylander: Yes because we have very frequent consultation for example, the President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association is a member of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Likewise, we also have both formal and informal meetings with the chief Justice, Honorable Chief Justice so at least we could put across the views of our clients and also what we see as impediments in the way forward as far as just administration of justice is concerned. We are always given the opportunity to put forward our ideas and I must commend my Lord the Honorable Chief Justice is always willing to listen to our views although at times he done not agree entirely with our views but he gives us the opportunity to be heard.

Commissioner John Kamara: Thank you Mr. President, then my plea with you if this is workable is for you to work with the judiciary having listened to the CJs presentation here, then to get us a comprehensive recommendation that will bother on the judiciary and the Bar Association because the Commission has this is one of its very important things, areas of concern in this country and your first town sentences in this presentation summarises everything for me as far as I am concerned and the subsequent recommendations, probably you will be working countenance with the Law Reform Commission or other arms body to get a workshop, to get a real comprehensive document for the Commission's consideration that is my plea with you.

Nylander: Mr. Commissioner, I whole-heartedly agree. As a matter of fact, we have been working with No Peace Without Justice to produce something very comprehensive but unfortunately, time has not been in on our side but we shall endeavour and we shall try.

Commissioner John Kamara: thank you very much.

Marcus Jones: Thank you Professor

Commissioner John Kamara: Thank you very much and I will like to welcome you Mr. Nylander and President of the Bar Association. We thank you for coming to make this presentation. I haven't got questions as such but I am a little surprised to hear or see this statement in your submission and I will read it. Under the recommendation, paragraph three you said, provision of legal aid. Government should seriously consider the establishment of a Legal aid and Assistance Scheme. So I am surprised to see that. I had assumed all the time that there is a national provision to help people who need legal assistance but this seems to be telling me that there is no such provision in this country. Am I correct or wrong?

Oliver Nylander: Well Mr. Chairman not absolutely wrong. There is a provision for legal aid but in criminal cases like in cases for murder where the accused person have the right to be defended and the state will pay the legal fees to defend the accused persons but not in all other areas. Like in Britain, they have the Legal Aid and Assistance Scheme whereby not only for criminal cases but in Sierra Leone, as far as my knowledge goes the government provides financial assistance for defence or accused persons who are charged with capital offences like murder for them to be tried, for them to be defended in these cases. That is as far as my knowledge goes but it does not extend to other areas especially in civil matters.

Commissioner John Kamara: So all this time and up to this point, people in Sierra Leone who have not got the resources to afford legal aid have had no justice in those matters.

Oliver Nylander: Well I do not say they do not justice but they do not have recourse to the courts to redress their wrongs because they haven't got the finance or they have got the money. That is the problem and Mr. Commissioner, there is nowhere in the world that you have a level

playing field when it comes to the matter of justice. You have to pay for justice like any other commodity. You have to pay your lawyers.

Commissioner John Kamara: But also, you have told us that there are provisions in some countries.

Oliver Nylander: Yes they are like in Britain I am aware of that.

Commissioner John Kamara: But we have got. Well I hope your recommendation will be heeded to and sometime in the future, provision will be made to help people who cant afford legal aid in this country.

Oliver Nylander: Indeed Mr. Commissioner. It is my wish, I hope that we will arrive at that situation someday.

Commissioner John Kamara: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Nylander for coming to the Commissioner and more so want to join my colleagues in appreciating your contribution. I have read your very short testimony and going down in the fourth paragraph, I was reminded of , I am sorry to put this but its just a way of reminder to quote from a book I have read before “Law without Lawyers” and he is saying that at a portion of that book he is saying that “the laws are made by the rich, for the protection of the rich” and he is saying that “the legislature are the rich people assuming those who make their ways to the4 house, to be in position to help make the laws, must be people in the higher income”. That is the argument put forward. However, in order to correlate that statement with your testimony, I have done here with me, like you said in the fourth paragraph, where you said the postponement of adjournment of cases, I heard when you said it is not entirely the responsibility of the lawyers at times. But the complainance in this particular case, are the people, the civil populace who are not lawyers. It is they who are complaining that there s persistent adjourn of cases which means, the fault is not coming from them, that it is the lawyers who persistently and frequently adjourn cases at time for no reason, at times for some other reason to say go and wait for me at the court, I will be there, only to find out that they don’t even show up. So this is the allegation. I don’t know how much you contribute towards either refuting this or confirming it?

Oliver Nylander: Well, as I said earlier, there might be some truth in these allegations because some of our colleagues take more cases than they have the capacity to cope with. But a more of situation that I have witnessed that I have been involved in throughout my practise is failure on the part of witnesses to appear. I will give you a classical example that occurred last week. We were in the High Court in a murder trial, we were expecting the doctor to turn up. Unfortunately, he could not come because he was extremely ill and we had no alternative other than to have the matter adjourn. At the next adjourned date all efforts were made by the prosecution as well as the defence to see that transport was provided to bring the doctor from his accommodation.....not to help him to the court and he came, he was able to deal with the autopsy, which

he presented because it was murder trial and that closes his own section because if we had not got that doctor at that particular stage, the doctor flew out on Friday. It means we would have encountered difficulty and there would have been a prolongation of that particular trial. These are some of the problems we face, for example, we also have criminal matters like in the Magistrate Court where you have the police witnesses. Police fail to turn up, investigators who fail to turn up, that's not the fault of the complaint or the lawyers but the investigators who fail to come up whose matter could not be proceeded with.

Commissioner Torto: thank you for your explanation. It has just been stated, I think you were in the hall listening to the testimony of the CJ, that the judicial department is suffering from a very very acute staff shortage and the tendency has been for lawyers to actually move from government service into private practise and that has caused, is the major cause. Well, the major case is conditions of service anyway, but other additional reasons are there which you know better than myself as to why actually they are leaving, going into private practise. Can the Bar Association, pass a resolution in order to actually forestall this kind of trend, in order to stabilize the personnel of staffing in the judiciary and the Bar Association pass a rule to say every practising lawyer who is just coming into practise from college or from outside, must serve the government for five years before opting out.

Oliver Nylander: Mr Commissioner, I do agree and see your anxiety being expressed but I think a resolution to that effect might be interfering the lawyer's own human rights. Certainly, it would interfere with them because it is your choice on completion of both your academic and professional training to enter into which field either as a practitioner or into the Bench. Personally, I have served my own national service I did my own national service. Immediately I left school, I worked as a clerk in 1961, at the Establishment Secretary's Office on to the Prime Minister's Officer, Cabinet Secretariat, Establishment Secretary's Office again and I ended up at the Ministry of education. I went on study leave, when I came back I had to work at the Law Officers Department as a State Council and I worked for four solid years. So its up to the individual but as I said earlier, the conditions could be made more attractive, definitely it will attract younger practitioners to come unto the Bench but we need people of calibre because it is been said in certain quarters that corruption is rampant but you need not only to recruit lawyers, but lawyers with high calibre who would say not to the temptation and not yielded to the temptation of corruption. So, all boils down to the question of making the conditions of service more attractive, then you will have them and as my Lord, the chief Justice said earlier, even the younger colleagues, leaving the law school they do not fancy coming up to the Bench. I have gone all my way, I have spoken to them and even to older colleagues, its extremely difficult. The CJ will confirm that we hold conference with them in private under attractive social conditions, talk to them, please come into the Bench, but they would not. They say the conditions are not attractive and that is the position.

Commissioner Torto: thank you Mr. Nylander. Would you agree to the general statement that the law is actually made by the rich for the protection of the rich because legal service is only available to those who can afford and those who can afford are the rich. Don't you believe? What do you say about this assertion.

Oliver Nylander: I would not only agree with that assertion that the law, because the law is passed by parliament and not only rich people are in parliament. We have people of different financial status are in parliament, they pass the law and the courts are there to interpret the law and they may say that the law is meant for the rich. There are certain areas unless you have money, you could not have redress especially in civil matters, like the shipping cases, the land tenure cases but in other areas, the poor man goes to the court. If he is offended, he goes to the Magistrate Court issuing the summons, complainant persons and he had been heard. So I would not agree entirely that the law is meant for the rich because its is not the rich people who pass the laws, not the rich people, ordinary parliamentarians and not all parliamentarians are wealthy that one I could say.

Commissioner Torto: thank you. There is also a general allegation or accusation going round. At times, I don't know whether it is true or false or not that there is the tendency for lawyers of complinace and lawyers of accused to team up together to fix a case. Are you aware? Is your organisation aware of this case?

Oliver Nylander: I am not, they are nor have complained that effect come to my knowledge because if that be the case, its grave professional misconduct for which you could had your wigs removed off your head and you are debarred from practising. So I don't think colleagues will go to that extent to risk their livelihood, risk the person of being debarred, where you would starve not only you, you and your family. But no complains have been brought to my knowledge were lawyers team up with complaints to defeat the aims of Justice.

Commissioner Torto: thank you then. The very last of my questions for areas of clarification is this one bothering on this staffing issue. You have just rightly said that it could tantamount to interfering with human rights of the lawyers who may be required to actually sign an agreement for a number of times and then opt out. But this practise was actually, been done in the teaching field, wherein teachers were required to sign a bond and then go to teaching for about a number of years and then up till now there after. I don't know whether the practise is still invoked or it has actually bee.....with time. But since it was right, don't you think what is right for the goose is right for the gander. The teachers were subjected to it why shouldn't the lawyers.

Oliver Nylander: Well Mr. Commissioner, provided that your fees were paid by government because speaking from my own experience, when I worked as Assistant Student Secretary in the Ministry of Education, students were bonded. That was around 1968, 69 they were bonded because the scholarships that were given or their fees were paid by government. But if my fees were paid by the parents, I

don't see why I should be bounded to go and serve the government. But if government spends the resources, pay for my education, then it's my obligation and duty to serve government for the money spent upon on. So if the government could provide the scholarships for student to come to the Law School or to complete their studies at the University, then come unto the Law school, then we might introduce that sought of bond for students who serve the government, as it has been in other fields.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you chair. I am sorry there is an area that is of interest to me where you really recommended the various welfare systems which is right, quite in place in order for judges and lawyers to actually perform their best. There has to be that kind of improvement in the conditions of service. There's no doubt about that. But would you think that all by itself would solve the problem? Are there not other issues that one would consider in order to make the lawyers and judges more effective? The welfare system are taking in good parts I agree with you but I think there should be more to it than this. In terms of attitude to work, personality, other forms of motivation that these ones may not satisfy.

Oliver Nylander: Agreed Mr. Commissioners also from within the individual that is my duty to serve on the Bench. But from conversations and discussions held with colleagues, what has come out primary is the conditions of service, which are not attractive. That is the main reason.

Commissioner Torto: thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: thank you Leader of Evidence have you questions?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Honorable Commissioner and thank you very much President of the Bar Association of Sierra Leone. Our first observation is that the Commission would want to have a comprehensive, very comprehensive written submission, which should include certain areas, such as absolute laws. What you perceive as absolute laws and therefore requires reforms. You mentioned that there are absolute laws, we would want you to specifically identify them and give reasons why you think reforms are necessary, and then also on the rule of law generally and how the judiciary have fared. We would want to have a comprehensive written submission assessing the various political regime from independence as far as the rule of law is concerned in this country and many actually other area. The question I would also want to ask is what is the Bar Association doing in terms of determining or ensuring qualify service delivery by lawyers to their client because, of course it could be inferred from your submission that there are incessant adjournments and all of that and as we all know the saying that justice delayed is justice denied. In a country like Nigeria for example, the Bar Association has set up an institute of advance legalwhich allows lawyers to go for continuous legal education. I am also aware in Ghana for example, the Bar Association organises periodic workshops on specific issues or to upgrade the lawyers with current issues and you know, when a facility is made available, then it is up to a particular lawyer to pay to attend that kind of programme so we would really want

you to address that issue. What is your association doing in terms of ensuring quality legal service delivery in terms of training and also in terms of several other issues. What are you doing with your lawyers? Thank you very much.

Oliver Nylander:

Yes. Firstly I would say that we have the Bar cancelled, who is responsible for the overall work done, to see that quality services are rendered by solicitors to their clients and if the clients have complains, they could write to the Bar Council, who would immediately respond whatever complains they made. As far as the Bar Association is concerned, I would say that with the introduction of the Special Court, it was observed that few legal Sierra Leone practitioners have got the international exposure. By that I mean, few have got the opportunity of practising in International Criminal Court. That is why in conjunction with no Peace without Justice, we solicited the help of the Humanitarian Bar Council of England and Wales and a course was organised which we have just finished on Saturday, to train barristers and solicitors out there to give them the exposure, how to make pre-trial submissions, what type of work they will face in the International Court of Justice, like the Special court and we have that course organised. It started on the 22nd of July and ended on the 26th day of July inclusive. You see, all comes down to the question of funding because as I stressed in my recommendation when we were at Abuja, it was stressed that we need a legal education as something continuous because we do not have a static world and if we are in need of globalization, to meet the challenges we must be ready and so we are trying with the help of other international bodies to organise training courses as we have just succeeded in organising this last one held with the No Peace Without Justice and the Bar council of England and Wales to provide at training course for would be solicitors and barristers appearing before the Special Court. But all comes down to the question of funding which is not easy to come by these days.

Leader of Evidence:

Thank you very much but as I also said perhaps one area you may have to consider asking the lawyers actually to pay, you know, because its form of investment for them. If you make the facility available, then you encourage them to actually pay by way of investment to upgrade themselves. Think you may have to also consider that kind of workshop. Another issue we would like to have clarification and as a President of the Bar Association, which is such a powerful association, we really want to have your opinion on this issue as regards executive interference in administration of justice. What has been your experience. Do you think that our judges in time past and even now have asserted their independence in terms of delivering bold and impartial decisions? Or you know, we would really want to have your opinion in terms of their independence as far as executive interference is concerned.

Oliver Nylander:

Well I will start off by answering the question as far as my own personal knowledge of something I have been involved in. I remember in 1982 as a state council in the Law Officers Department working with my learned senior Mr. Cyril Juxon-smith. We had this matter of Agro-commercial and NIC. That was the case in which Agro Commercial sued the NIC for rice imported into Sierra Leone, which were damaged during transit. There were available evidence

to the fact that before these rice were put on board the boat, they were not even fit for human consumption. There was certificate to that effect before they were insured and this matter came up. We tendered the certificate in court, did everything that is humanly possible and it's a young practitioner coming from Britain. We used to go to court, my books were in cartoons, I had the police carrying them all display of the legal knowledge. At the end of the day we lost the matter but what really pains me, after loosing the matter when I came back, I was asked by the then solicitor General the late Pierre Boston to write an opinion whether we could appeal. I wrote an opinion and said that there are good grounds for us to appeal against that decision. The opinion also of Albert Medzegar Esq. Was sought and he said that this is a matter that we should appeal because the rice were not fit for human consumption before they were put on board the boat. Who owned Agro Commercial? It was the Late Siaka Stevens and Mohamed Jamil or Sahid Mohamed. Mohamed Jamil threatened the NIC that if they are going to appeal, he would withdraw all his fishing boats that were insured with the NIC. As a result, the NIC did not appeal and that was one of the main reason why I left the Law Officers Department. I immediately said to myself, I cannot go on with this so I went straight to the then Attorney General the Late Francis Minnah and Pierre Boston and said well I am afraid because when we lost that case in particular, I was so sure that all the facts were in our favour. I came back to my room, I cried for hours had a rap on the door. My learned figure opened the door, he said "Oliver what are you crying for". He said prepare to shed more tears for cases that you are going to loose. But that was a case it was so patent that they should not have lost that matter and when we wanted to appeal to redress what we consider today wrong judgement, we were deprived or denied that right and so poor NIC they did not appeal and when our clients do not instruct us, we cannot go on. These are particular instance that I know of the executive interfering with the judiciary, with the Law Officers Department. This is from my own personal knowledge. But with regards to the executive interfering with judges, that I cannot say because none has been brought to my personal knowledge nor have I involved in a matter which judgement has been delayed in which I feel the judgement was not fair. But let me say it comes up, if even you have the matter delayed at the High Court, you always have the right to appeal. You go to the Court of Appeal and if you are not satisfied with the ruling of the Court of Appeal then you go to the Supreme Court. There is always the avenue for appeal.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Mr. Nylander for answering all our question. Now

I wonder whether you have any questions for the commission.

Oliver Nylander: I haven't my Lord.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Well recommendations I suppose you have been asked to work with the judiciary, the Chief Justice and put together a more comprehensive document which will be of use to the Commission so I suppose all your recommendations will go into that document.

Oliver Nylander: Certainly my Lord. The only thing is that the notice was very short because I had another letter dated 21st July, which actually touched on the judiciary. All what we were asked to talk about it the question of execution and what not. So I shall endeavour with my members of my association to work in conjunction with the judiciary so that we produce a very comprehensive document.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you very much. You may step down now.

Oliver Nylander: Thank you madam chairman and members of the Commission

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS: THE JANUARY 6, 1999 ATTACK ON FREETOWN

DATE:

BEFORE:

Commissioner Joseph C. Humper (Presiding)

Commissioner John Kamara

Commissioner Laura Marcus-Jones

Commissioner Yasmin Sooka

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto

Leader of Evidence:

WITNESS No.: 1

WITNESS NAME: Dr Samuel J.M. Maligi ii

Commissioner Humper: Thank you very much Dr. Malige for responding to our invitation to attend this hearing. The usual procedures here are that you give your testimony and Commissioners from this side will ask you questions. Officials of the Commission will ask you questions afterwards. At the end of it all you too may ask the Commission questions. You may also make recommendations to the Commission. This is how the Commission operates. Can we now hear your testimony?

Maligi: SUBMISSION

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for inviting me to this hearing and to start by saying that prior to the conflict, I was employed and still employed as the national Executive Director of the Sierra Leone Opportunities Industrialization Centre (SLOIC). In 1995, I was appointed Secretary of State by the NPRC in charge of

local government, rural development and national security. In respect of that appointment I took a leave of absence from the Sierra Leone OIC for a year.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, you may wish to know what SLOIC is and what it does. SLOIC is a human resource development programme that helps young men and women acquire skills so as to be gainfully employed and become productive citizens. Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, our current mission of SLOIC is to assist the government of Sierra Leone with the rehabilitation reconstruction and resettlement reintegration of ex-combatants war affected individuals, unemployed youths and school leavers. SLOIC works in the areas of technical/vocational skills training, job creation, entrepreneurial development, credit assistance, counselling, and peace building for reconciliation. Our training is free. We have training centres in Bo, Bonthe, Makeni and here in Freetown. We also intend to establish centres in other parts of the country. The establishment of OIC centres is highly dependent on the needs of the community. In other words the community requests our establishment in their areas.

I will come to my experiences during the conflict. In 1991 when the conflict started SLOIC operations were going on at our various centres. In fact the Makeni Small Enterprise Development Centre was official opened in 1991. The Mattru Jong Integrated Rural and Women's Development Centre was established in 1993. 18 months after the start of the Mattru Jong Centre, the rebels overran the town making it a no go area. This was the beginning of anxious moment from me particular. I worried over the lives of the trainees and staff, and also worried over the building materials that were just shipped to Mattru Jong. We were able to evacuate staff and trainees to either Bo or Bonthe. Some of them were eventually brought to Freetown by sea. Our operation was now limited to Bo and Makeni. Freetown had the head offices.

There were at least 37 checkpoints between Freetown and Bo, and about 30 between Freetown and Makeni. At that time the checkpoints were mounted and manned by soldiers and personnel of the Special Security Division. In January 1995 I was appointed Secretary of State Internal Affairs and Rural Development. During my brief period of service I recommended the formation of the Council of Chiefs at each administrative level- district, provincial and national. It was approved by the Council of state. The idea was to have an organised group of chiefs that government could interact with and relate to. I also travelled extensively within the country to talk to our internally displaced people. I even went to Guinea, a trip that created some problems for me. I cannot exactly remember what I said in Gueckedu in one of our refugee camps that angered Foday Sankoh. He declared me a wanted man. Our ambassador in Guinea intercepted the radio announcements when Sankoh was communicating with his commanders. The ambassador quickly informed Freetown.

I believe I did my best as a Secretary of State in spite of disagreements here and there. After the palace coup of January 1996 I resumed my duty at the SLOIC. In June 1996 we opened the Freetown Centre. When Johnny Paul Koroma's May 25 1997 coup took place I wanted to stay in the country for a while. I was however advised to leave immediately. Four days after the announcement of the coup I left for Conakry, Guinea. While in Guinea I worked with the Forum for African Women Educationalists. We wrote a proposal to UNDP, which was approved for the opening of a school for our refugee children. We registered over 2000 primary, secondary and tertiary students. UNICEF helped with school materials and over 85 Sierra Leonean teachers were employed. While in Conakry my house at Murray Town was completely looted and most of

the vehicles taken away. Those that would not be taken out were vandalised. I was later called from the United States that my home was burnt. It was apparently seen on CNN news.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, my plans for the future are to work hard and establish OIC in every district in Sierra Leone. Interest groups have been formed in a few districts. The districts include Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and Koinadugu. The other plan is to ensure that SLOIC provides handymen in every community in Sierra Leone. All of these require support from the government, donor organisations and people of Sierra Leone.

Let me come to the specific issue of the January 6th attack in Freetown. Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, ladies and gentle men, the event of January 6th 1999 is common knowledge to every one that was in Freetown. I will therefore limit myself to events that affected me as an individual, family head, head of an organisation institution and as a responsible citizen. At about 1:30am on January 6, I heard a heavy bang on my door like a detonation. I heard the voice of my nephew: "uncle Sam, den don cam, den don enta". I was half naked when I got up and asked who? The rebels he replied. This was not quite a surprise. I made a few telephone calls to the east side of town to know if it was really true and to check on my staff and relations that were on that side of town. We continued to monitor the situation until day break.

From that Wednesday morning on January 6 it was like hell on earth for everybody. My greatest concern was for my staff members most of whom were in the east end. I had also had some relatives in the east. I was worried for my younger sister who served as a juror on the last treason trial before the even of January 6th. By the end of that week I had over 60 people in my home. A little over a week after the 6th of January a team of ECOMOG soldiers entered my compound and launched two rocket propel grenades into my home and sprayed my bed room windows with bullets. Few minutes later, they banged at my door ordering us to open the door or risk been killed. Most of my people ran to the basement of the house leaving few of us including my mother in her wheel chair. I however braved it to the door and opened it. There were about 5 guns immediately pointed at my chest. I was pushed further into the house from the door. They immediately ordered every one outside including my mother in her wheel chair. It was at this point that I lost my cool and was ready to die by their guns. I slowly moved my mother out. The ECOMOG soldiers asked all the men to prostrate with their faces on the ground. They kicked every door open. And each time they opened a door, they will push me inside before they enter. They searched every box and bag in every room before I was matched outside again. While we were outside my cousin Patrick Tucker was identified as somebody they saw spying on them from our veranda. He was given a nasty slap. They later ordered me to go with them to their base at Murray Town. It was on our way to the base, that I learnt that somebody was shooting at them from my compound. I was not even given a chance to either explain or defend myself. I was shocked to see bodies floating near the base. They told me, "don't worry you will soon join your people' referring to the floating bodies. I was ordered to sit on the ground to wait for the last order from their boss who was at that moment out of the base.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, you can imagine how I was feeling at that moment. I became very indignant. I must forever be grateful to a private soldier by the name of Joseph Peters who materialised there to save my life. I was labelled a rebel and we all know that at that time such label simply meant death. Joseph was prepared to lay his life for me. They argued about me in a Nigerian language so that I would not understand what was been said. Today I sit here to

talk about it. The young soldier was only demonstrating gratitude for what he believed I had done for him and colleagues in the past. I was later released that evening and Joseph was asked to bring me home.

One important thing I forgot to mention here Mr. Chairman, was the President's declaration of a ceasefire. All that divided us and the rebels at that time was the Congo Cross bridge. I was so nervous that I developed diarrhoea. I must have visited the toilet for times in 30 minute knowing fully well that the rebels were occupying the greater and best part of the city. Reflecting on it today, I say thank God the President made that declaration. If the war had continued and we would have lost far more lives than we did. Indeed the President was acting from his head while most of us were thinking from our hearts. A few days after my ordeal in the hands of ECOMOG news came that my stepfather's house at Kissy Mess-Mess was burnt down. Gunmen shot down him and his eldest son. One such gunman was identified as a Mr. Kamara also known in the area as 'Babu suk lem". It took a week to inform our mother about the death.

After two weeks we exhumed their bodies for proper burial. My mother died in hospital nine days later. May her soul rest in peace. Another things that shocked me at the time took place at the Stadium Hostel while we were waiting for an interagency meeting. One young lady was shot over four times for her friend's missing baby. After the young lady was shot four times, she still struggled to get up. ECOMOG and SSD personnel dragged her to the cemetery and sprayed her body with more bullets. In less than 30 minutes a young man was shot dead too. The bullet went through him and met a man who was just by me. Both People were killed by ECOMOG.

Upon the arrival of the two officials, we were waiting for, the Chairman of the Re-integration, Resettlement and Rehabilitation programme and the Deputy Minister of Finance, Development and Economic Planning, I made a bitter complain to them. I asked my staff members to get out of the meeting and go home without attending that meeting. The unfortunate case of Evil Spirit was public knowledge. I however, did not see any of his killings, but practically every day reports were made about his madness.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, the rebels' invasion of Freetown on January 6 was disastrous to say the least. It caused extensive damage to an already inadequate economic and social infrastructure. It contributed in no small measure in heightening poverty, unemployment, and destitution. This has impacted negatively on the government. SLOIC was not spared of the negative fallouts of this milieu. Payment of SLOIC staff salaries were unduly delayed, causing massive exodus of dedicated personnel to international NGOs and other organizations. Regardless of all the human efforts within the power of SLOIC's management this situation has still not been alleviated up to this moment of my submission at this Commission.

In spite of the of the fact that security has stabilised there a few displaced people still occupying the SLOIC training centre in Freetown thus making the environment unattractive to donor support. SLOIC has revived it full operations, however. In Makeni DFID has constructed part of the OIC centre and promised to furnish it with tools and equipments. European Union assisted the rehabilitation of the Mattru, and Bo OIC centres. The government of Sierra Leone through ministry of Education has also given rehabilitation support to the Bo centre. Presently a German-based aid agency is currently assisting us in skills training programmes at Mattru, Bo, and Freetown. Mr. Chairman and Commissioners ladies and gentlemen, so much has been said about the causes

of this senseless war. Corruption has been given as one of the major causes. I see it a little more than that. I believe the main cause is that we allowed formal organizations to degenerate into informal organisations. We have created lawlessness, incompetence tribalism, discrimination and injustice. Formal organisation is any social unity that is deliberately organised for the explicit purpose of reaching specific goals. Formal organizations operate on definite rules. On the other hand informal organisations has no formal organisational structures. They may have leaders and followers, procedures and taboos but there are no written rules or elected officer. Prior to 1967 Mr. Chairman, you will agree with me that our government had firm formal structures.

A loose structure approach to governance has many problems. There are problems of bureaucrats with unlimited freedom to set their own policies and rules as long as it yielded personal profit. This was how corruption had root in our system. I will be most deceitful to say that prior to 1967 there was no corruption in this country. There is no corruption-free society if I may add, my Chairman. It is the looseness of the system that has brought us to the point where bank customers had to bribe to withdraw money, scholarships were awarded not on merit but by affiliation and money. Jobs were offered on the same principles. People were made Paramount Chiefs not on merits but by might. The youths who became frustrated and had no means of living were found on the streets. A few went to Liberia to struggle for survival. Dissaffected and disgruntled persons lay in wait to take advantage of any opportunity to create chaos.

Mr. Chairman and Commissioners I recommend the following that Government ministries be strengthened. I further recommend that TRC be given additional responsibility as a follow up to reconciliation. What I am trying to say here is that in addition to reconciliation there are a lot of NGOs now offering counselling services around the country. There has to be a coordinating unit or coordinating mechanism. This I think could be added to your mandate. A lot of people need counselling. Thirdly, Mr. Chairman I sincerely believe that we need a complete overhaul of the civil service. I recommend again, Mr. Chairman, that our leadership be more opened and be more responsive to public opinion. We have put ourselves in cocoons and we don't really get to the public. We don't talk to them and we don't know what they want because we don't hear them. We listen to few people who are around us and who tell us what they believe we should know. I recommended also that we pay special attention to our youths. Let's train our youths. Let us provide a future then. I thank you very much.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you very much Dr. Maligi for this presentation. The commissioners will now ask you questions. Commissioner Marcus-Jones.

**Commissioner
Marcus-Jones:**

I want to thank you very much Dr. Maligi for coming to the TRC and for your submission. I feel a bit disheartened and disturbed by some of the things you mentioned- things that really need to be corrected in our country. I wonder whether you would not agree that it is because as individuals we accept things even when they are not right. One of the things you mentioned is your inability to pay our staff for a period of four months now because of the insensitive attitudes of some public officials. As I said, I wonder whether these things don't happen because we have been accepting everything so quietly. We keep quiet over burning issues for long time only 'to burst up' at some point. And this leads to greater conflict.

Maligi:

Thank you very much Commissioner. It may be true to say that people don't complain but I want to state here that a few things have happened in the past that I followed personally. Let me give you a typical example. On his re-instatement after the AFRC interregnum, President Kabbah made pronouncements that people should be paid their salaries whether they had been in or out of the country. I can tell you that up to this moment I am still owed a year's salary. I have complained to the highest authority in this country. I have still not received a penny. What do I do? I can't go to court. Here is another incident. When my wife and I just came from Liberia she went through an interview for a scholarship. After the interview, some members of the scholarship committee came to me saying: "oh, Sam congratulations, your wife did so well, infact we have recommended her for the scholarship". The minister at the time did not only delete my wife's name but replaced her name by his own daughter.

I keep saying this: we are suffering from yesterday's drunkenness. This is why I am strongly recommending an entire overhaul of the civil service. We have been used to a system. There are only a few people who can stand their ground and say what is right. Most citizens are afraid. If you are not part of the powerful group you have nothing to depend on. People say "A nor go live pan briz". If they fire you today you become a loner. I honestly believe that we need to introduce a merit system.

The civil service needs to be overhauled. I personally did not even believe that Permanent Secretaries should be vote controllers. They should be professional heads. The man or the woman that has worked his or her way from the bottom to the top, who knows the cracks and corners of that ministry, must have a say in the disbursement of funds. Somebody who is coming there for two three years and is transferred to another ministry should not be given all the powers. An engineer would say it takes twenty million Leones to do this road. The Permanent Secretary who has no knowledge of engineering would say twenty million is too much. But at the end of the day you look at the real voucher you see the cost is forty million Leones, instead of the twenty million that was initially asked for. This is the kind of system I am talking about.

**Commissioner
Marcus Jones:**

Thank you Dr Maligi. The Commission will do its best to put forward your complaints and recommendations.

Commissioner Humper:

Dr. Maligi we want to thank you so much for coming here and making your presentation. Your submission entails substantive recommendations for this country. We will treat those recommendations very seriously. I only want to ask one question: Why Sierra Leone? What went wrong? What needs to change? But let me get my facts straight- did I hear you say that you held the position of Secretary of State from 1995? OIC is synonymous with Sam Maligi in this country; that I know.

Now, this is my pregnant question. As a worthy and eminent citizen of this nation what would you objectively say was or were the difference or differences between NPRC, AFRC/RUF and the constitutionally elected governments that were overthrown. This question recognises the fact that you worked for the NPRC, which is your inalienable right to do as a citizen.

Maligi: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I don't know where to start but I will try. Let me look at the differences first. N.P.R.C was a military government. Like you said yourself the government that was ousted out of power by the AFRC was a constitutionally elected civilian government. I cannot honestly say much about the AFRC because during their period of rule I was out of the country. They came to me and asked me to be part of them. I refused. A friend had however told me not to sleep in Freetown that night. That was how I left that particular afternoon for Conakry. I therefore really cannot say much about the AFRC rule. I can say something about the NPRC rule. There was determination on the part of the NPRC government. But they were young people. The NPRC looked like one group but it had layers. I was part of the council of secretaries of states but there was another layer that was a little higher than the one I belonged to. That layer was the supreme council. And I also believed that there were small pockets of power groups where the real decisions were taken. Decisions could have even been taken without the knowledge of the head of state.

I was able to do what I thought I was brought into government to do. Once or twice I asked to be relieved of my duty. The Chairman said no. Naturally, we had arguments here and there. The civilian government we have now is constitutionally elected. I am part of it as a Member of Parliament. It would not be very fair for me to sit here and really make comparisons between the NPRC that I served and the present civilian government. I served there in the NPRC as a minister; and in the SLPP I am a Member of Parliament. It would not be morally correct on my part to talk about political correctness.

Commissioner Humper: Dr. Maligi, it is a question that may be answered in the broader context of good governance and corruption.

Maligi: Mr. Chairman, in deed there was a lot of corruption in the N.P.R.C. As a government we raised it. We talked about it. Some of us even threatened to leave. All I am saying here is that I don't really want to get into details. It is difficult to see a corrupt free society. This is even true with the constitutionally elected government today. I will be mad to say that there is no corruption today. It is something we talk about it in parliament. The system is such that it is going to take an army of counsellors to really change the attitude of the people of this country. When we talk about corruption we limit it only to government officials. There is corruption almost everywhere and at every level of our society. Take the women who sell in the market. Buy ten cups of rice and go home and measure it. You will hardly get up to eight cups. Taxi drivers who are supposed to take four passengers, takes 6 passengers. Teachers ask children to bring this and that. That is corruption. Even office messengers sometimes take bribes to allow people to see their bosses. They will stick their necks out to convince or persuade the boss to see you as long as you have given them something. That too is corruption. So there is corruption everywhere Mr. Chairman.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Chairperson. I also have two questions for you Mr. Maligi. In your recommendations you singled out three ministries that you said needed to be strengthened. I would like you to elaborate.

Maligie: Thank you very much. If I were in the President's position three ministries I would really strengthen would be the ministry of defence, the ministry of health and the ministry of education. I remember we raised an issue in parliament few weeks ago when they were talking about this dreadful disease from china – Sars – yes I asked the question what is the ministry of health doing? We have our business people going to Hong Kong; they are screening people at the airport? No they are not, we are waiting until it becomes an epidemic in our society. You know we should now move from crisis management to crisis prevention. You know that is what I am saying. And of course you know the mess with education today. I don't think I need to elaborate on that. We have a very high level of illiteracy. We still need to honestly put a lot of money into education. We have a lot of degree holders with no jobs. Let us now put emphasis on skills training and vocational education in preparation for national reconstruction. We have been paying lip service to technical and vocational training. Let it be seen to be done .

Commissioner Sooka: One more question. You spoke about a coordinated approach to counselling. Can you explain that please?

Maligi: I am aware of the fact that a lot of organisations, especially NGOs, are providing counselling service to our communities. Even SLOIC is providing counselling. We also train counsellors. But I am talking about getting a special unit to coordinate these various efforts. Coordinating counselling around the country could be added, for instance, to the mandate of a body like the TRC. That is what I am saying. It is a way of giving us common direction. We cannot just do counselling to fulfil requirements to get money.

Commissioner Kamara: I would like to join the others to thank you Dr. Maligie for coming here to share your thoughts with us. I am not going to ask you questions. I just want to make observations that you may want to comment on. You have given us a very honest review of the ills of the country. It is a fair diagnosis of what went wrong. But I must say that I feel little disappointed by the recommendations or the prescriptions you have given to solve those problems. Because to me the recommendations seems more like the stereotype recommendations one hears around. You cited specific cases of wrong doing for which complaints were made. And you say that nobody took any action to correct things. I was therefore expecting more innovative recommendations. That is my disappointment.

Maligi: You are very correct Mr. Commissioner. I don't want to say it was deliberate, but I knew questions were going to be asked. It would have taken me a lot more time to really handle the recommendations the way you want them. But I want to say to you that if you really want me to do some extra work on these recommendations for your satisfaction it could be done.

Commissioner Kamara: I am sure the Commission would welcome confidential submission from you. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you very much Dr. Maligi. I have only one question for you. And the question is simply about the treatment you received from ECOMOG.

Did you report your maltreatment by ECOMOG to any superior official at that time? And what was the reaction.

Maligi: Mr. Chairman, I called military headquarters and spoke to a few senior military officers.

Commissioner Torto: I must congratulate you for what you've achieved personally or done for this country as brought up in your paper. You spoke about your pioneering work with the SLOIC- an institution you have been running and expanding since. I commend your efforts in that direction. I must also thank you very much for highlighting the ills of the civil service. I only want to implore you to help the Commission with a submission of further recommendations. We particularly want to have something on civil service restructuring. Leader of Evidence, do you have anything for Dr. Maligi?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Mr. Commissioner. I believe we have about two questions from Dr. Maligi. Dr. Malige on page two of your submission you said the current mission of the SLOIC is to assist the government of Sierra Leone with the rehabilitation, reconstruction, resettlement, and reintegration of ex-combatant, war affected individuals, unemployed youths and so on. Do you have any specific programme for amputees as war-affected individuals?

Maligi: Yes, we have programmes for amputees. A person who lost one leg can still do tailoring. When it's for in-take for our assistance programmes we advertise. We identify people as war-affected when they apply. Our counsellors also move from community to community to identify people who would need our training. Practically, every technical training area at OIC is open to amputees.

Leader of Evidence: As a follow-up to Commissioner Torto's question- you said you were labelled a rebel. And definitely we know as a matter of fact that ECOMOG acted on information. Were you able to find out those who labelled you a rebel and if so have you reconciled with them or do you want to reconcile with them? Could you give the name of the person or persons to the Commission so that would find a way of reconciling you if that has not been done?

Maligi: No, nobody specifically labelled me a rebel. When the ECOMOG troops took me to their base they said all Sierra Leoneans were rebels. They said I was a rebel so I just sat down there. I even gave them my passport. At that time I had a diplomatic passport. I told them who I was. They didn't even want to listen to me. So I just kept quiet waiting to be thrown into the water too.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you Dr. Maligi. Do you have questions for the Commission pertaining to our work, and how you think we could improve on what is missing?

Maligi: Frankly I don't have questions. It is only disappointing that a lot of us don't come here. This is a place one would expect to be jam-packed. People have to come and support the Commission and hear what people

are saying. But I am greatly disappointed that the place is empty you. I however, want to congratulate you for doing a very good.

Leader

of evidence: Our next witness for this morning is Major General Tom S. Carew, Chief of Defence Staff.

WITNESS No.: 2

WITNESS NAME: Major General Tom S. Carew

Commissioner

Humper:

We want to welcome you here as Chief of Defence Staff. We are delighted that you agreed to come here and be part of this nation-building process called TRC. We believe that the participation in the TRC of personalities like you will go a long way nationally and internationally to give the institution credibility. We welcome and encourage you to share with us whatever you have that will help us this country. You are now welcome to give your presentation.

SUBMISSION

Carew:

Mr. Chairman, members of this Commission, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. I will try to be very brief because my submission is already with you. In deed it gives me the greatest privilege to appear before your Commission to make this submission at its public hearing. Furthermore, I like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. Chairman, your executive Secretary who is not here and gallant commissioners for organizing such a symbolical even at this auspicious time in the history pf our beloved Sierra Leone. I shall be speaking about the January 6 1999 rebel attack on Freetown as you've asked me.

The day commonly known as J-6 is unforgettable in the minds of all Sierra Leoneans especially Freetonians. The horrible memories of the actual events of the fatal day will linger in the minds of Sierra Leoneans so many years to come.

Mr. Chairman in making this presentation, two weeks before January 6, intelligent reports were coming in that the AFRC/RUF rebels were planning to invade the city of Freetown. During that period, the intervention force ECOMOG was solely responsible for security of the city, and indeed the entire country. Mr. Chairman, it was the same ECOMOG that won the single credit of flushing the AFRC junta from Freetown thereby proving the way for the restoration of the democratically elected government of the day. At that time, the national army was dormant and the bulk of the surrendered personnel had been camped at three locations, Lungi Garrison, Benguma Barracks and the National Stadium Swimming Pool. In my presentation or my submission to you, I mentioned certain problems that the heads of ECOMOG were having at that particular time which I will not like to mention openly. Suffice it to say that there were some problems with ECOMOG and its leadership.

Petty jealousy was even mentioned. It is safe to say however that because of some internal squabbles ECOMOG never made contingency plans for

any attack of the nature of January 6. For their part, the rebels took advantage of the prevailing situation on the ground. They seized the initiative and attacked the people. The rebels started launching series of attacks on ECOMOG positions across the country. Their main plan was to systematically attack the overstretched and thin ECOMOG deployment taking maximum advantage of knowledge of the terrain. The attack started from the Northern axis under the command of late Captain S.A.J. Musa. Through these attacks ECOMOG troops were cut off from the rear and in many instances completely isolated. Locations like Alikalia, Kono, Magburaka, Makeni were overrun after all these attacks from the north.

They kept on the attack until they arrived on the outskirts of Freetown. To be more specific, the armed forces training centre at Waterloo was their first target. At that time the ECOMOG leadership and indeed the traumatized populace did not fully trust the SLA troops. So ECOMOG made sure all the encamped SLA personnel and arms were securely kept in barracks. So when the rebels eventually launched a surprise attack on the encamped troops at Benguma our own troops withdrew and Benguma fell easily to the rebels.

So Mr. Chairman in the mopping operations after their victory, the rebels proceeded to destroy everything they could lay hands on including expensive military equipments, stores and ordinance. The rebels broke into the armoury and took out all the light arms they could lay hands on and carried them away. They even destroyed some of these heavy weapons to prevent us making any counter attack. Without thinking of the danger involved S.A.J Musa gave instant order to his rebels to set fire to the armoury building which at that time was full of high explosives, heavy shells and dangerous bombs. In the ensuing high explosion, several rebels who were within the danger zone were all torn to pieces. S.A.J Musa who gave the orders for the armoury to be burnt down was himself on the spot. He died. Hours after the explosion, the few surviving rebels managed to drag his body from the scene. They dug an unmarked grave and without any military ceremony buried him.

SAJ Musa's death was indeed sad news to the rebels but a big blessing for government forces. With the death of this feared and notorious commander, the rebels were demoralized and temporarily thrown into disarray with no credible commander to take over the mantle of leadership. The junior rebels commanders tried strenuously to put the men together to plan the diabolic invasion of the city.

Now, let me talk on the attack on the city itself. The rebels invaded the city on Wednesday 6 January 1999. The actual invasion reached the ears of ECOMOG High Command from ECOMOG troops at about 4.00a.m. It was not only a big surprise but also a great shock. The actual invasion started from the eastern part of the city in the Calaba Town general area. The rebels disguised themselves and mingled with the huge exodus of civilians who were entering the city in waves. The rebels also tactically made maximum use of the prevailing darkness to conceal their identity and true strength. Before daybreak they had penetrated the centre of Freetown and had started firing from all directions. Residents in the East

and centre of the city were thrown into a state of panic, confusion and pandemonium.

I have just said that even the ECOMOG Generals in the ECOMOG headquarters at Cockerill were all shocked, astonished and dumbfounded. In their attempt to capture the entire Freetown, the invading rebels proceeded to attack the West end of the city. They met by a very strong ECOMOG resistance at Congo Bridge where they suffered incredible and fatal casualties.

That was the first offensive operations of ECOMOG. I was part of it. The ECOMOG troops under the command of one Major Musa made a surprise and deadly ambush that totally engulfed the leading elements of the rapidly advancing rebels. All the leading vehicles and their occupants were blown to pieces in that particular encounter. That was indeed the greatest single victory by ECOMOG against the rebels. It broke their invisibility and put a final halt to their intended advance into the West end of Freetown.

As I said earlier ladies and gentlemen, during this period, the national army was dormant. ECOMOG was solely responsible for the security of the country with the Nigerian born General Timothy Shelpidi as Force Commander. General Abu Amadu as ECOMOG Task Force Commander. General Khobe was Chief of Defence Staff of the Sierra Leone Army by then. I was Colonel in charge of administration. I was placed under a Nigerian Captain to control me. This shows exactly how dormant the SLA was.

After halting the rebels' advances towards the West at that Congo Cross Bridge encounter, ECOMOG finally seized the initiative and embarked on decisive attack, and pursuit of retreating rebel elements. After three days of fierce gun battle and massive bombardments, ECOMOG forces in a three-fold simultaneous attack on rebel positions cleared Brookfields, Kingtom, New England, Pademba Road area and the whole of central Freetown. ECOMOG went as far as East-end Police. Having suffered serious casualties and setbacks, the rebels had no choice but to beat a top retreat in the face of the rapid ECOMOG assault. The fleeing rebels started to vent in their anger on defenceless civilians. They carried out wholesale burning of government buildings, civilians' residences, and vehicles. They did not stop at that. They also started acts of amputation, abduction, and mutilation. They massacred innocent civilians including women and children.

Mr. Chairman, the only casualty on our part on that particular day was the loss of one Major J.B. Arrow and one junior personnel. As a result of these two casualties, government troops temporarily halted the pursuit to evacuate the casualty and wait for fresh reinforcement. General Khobe and myself coordinated this. Early the next day, we received the reinforcement and we started the advance. We were with the troops just to give them morale. Because their most feared commander, SAJ Musa was out of the scene there was little command and control on the side of the rebels.

The retreating rebels split into two factions. One faction returned to Makeni to rejoin their colleagues while the other element returned and established a notorious hideout at Okra Hills. The Okra Hill group called

itself "West Side Boys". It was this same gang that stubbornly held out at the base even after ECOMOG was replaced by UNAMSIL. And it was the same group that launched series of attacks on Masiaka and its environs, ambushed the Waterloo-Masiaka highway on countless times. They dug several ditches as death traps across the highway to deter the flow of vehicular traffic. The "West Side Boys" met their Waterloo when they abducted seven British soldiers who were out on patrol. The British undertook operation Barras to free the soldiers, demolish the notorious base, and route the bandits. Scores of the bandits were killed. Those who were captured are still at the Pademba Road Prisons.

The effect of the AFRC/RUF attack on Freetown on 6th January 1999 was immense. In the East and Central parts of the city the rebels attacked defenceless civilians and committed so many acts of atrocities. They killed and raped people. They looted property and burnt houses. Of course Sierra Leoneans as well as the international community were witnesses to the huge scale of destruction of human and material resources that accompanied the January 6 invasion. I need not say much on this issue.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, distinguish guests, ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you all for listening to me. I will now wait for some questions.

**Commissioner
Humper:**

Major General Tom Carew, we want to thank you very much for your time. You have done a good job to unravel the story of the January 6, 1999 invasion of Freetown. Commissioners will now ask some questions to seek further clarifications. The Leader of Evidence may afterwards ask questions or make comments. I will now turn to my colleagues to engage our Chief of Defence Staff.

**Commissioner
Torto:**

I thank you very much Major General Carew for this presentation. I must also join the Chairman in thanking you for even honouring our invitation to be here. I have so many questions for the Major General. I will try to limit my questions as much as possible to the issue under discussion. Many of my questions draw from people's testimonies. And all I want from you is to make clarifications.

I am going to start by asking you a question about something you raised in the presentation. The national army you said was dormant. I don't know why the national army was dormant. How could the whole army at that time be dormant? Were there not loyal officers, men and women in the army who could have actually answered to the call of this country?

Carew:

There were actually some people. I was one of those that surrendered to ECOMOG at Lungi, before going to Conakry. I was in Conakry until ECOMOG came and drove out the AFRC. That was when I came back and reported to General Khobe. There were some other soldiers who were called 'the loyal troops'. These were few soldiers and some SSD personnel who were with us. The people however, had little trust in us because as I said earlier, the percentage of soldiers who were with the bad guys was very high. It was going to take some time for people to have confidence and faith in us. General Khobe just camped us in barracks, and stored all the arms and ammunition so that none of us would think of doing anything bad. Some of us who were trusted to

some extent were attached to some of the military operations. That was how it went.

Commissioner

Torto:

Thank you. Our army was reputed at one time to be a very strong force. The Sierra Leone army had the reputation of being a very strong and brave force in the West Coast of Africa for a long time. What gave cause for a foreigner -General Khobe to be appointed Chief of Defence Staff when there were so many brave people in the army?

Carew:

Again Mr. Commissioner, an answer to that question could be found in what I said about trust in the Sierra Leonean soldier. About 80% of our men at that time were on the other side- that is on the RUF/AFRC side. It was very difficult for people to trust us. When Government decided to root out the guys who were in command of security in the country, General Khobe was automatically declared as the Chief of Defence Staff of Sierra Leone. There were honest people but you yourself would not have trusted them at that time. Mr. Commissioner I will be talking on the armed forces and the police in my next presentation.

Commissioner

Torto:

Thank you. There is a general feeling especially among Freetown residents, that the invasion of Freetown by the rebels was only possible with the connivance of SLA. It is said that without the SLA, the rebels could have never penetrated the city. Can you comment on that?

Carew:

Actually, everybody has his own view. For my part, I want to agree partly with what you said, Sir. There were about 80% of our men with the rebels. They were well-trained compared with the rebels. A person like S.A.J. Musa was a well-trained combat officer.

Commissioner

Torto:

Thank you. Many people who have appeared before this Commission as victims have stated that what this country is going through today was all caused by the Sierra Leone Army. Do you agree?

Carew:

That is their view, Sir. But let me explain. In any society there are bad elements. The military had its own bad elements bent on destroying the institution. But the institution had its own good people. We could point to the loyal troops for instance. I wouldn't want to point at myself as a good element in the military. But I want to believe that power comes from God. Nobody should begin to fight for power. I hold this believe because of my Christian background. I grew up in the home of the late Bishop B.A. Carew. A military man should aspire to become a General and not to become President. That is my own belief.

Commissioner

Torto:

Thank you. This is my last question for now because I know you are going to face the Commission again. The May 25, 1997 coup was staged by very low-ranking officers. They were not officers in fact. The people who staged the coup according to testimonies before this Commission were just batmen of the Junior Officers. They commanded no dignity, and no respect. They had no form of education, not to talk of any idea of running a country. Why were the Senior Officers in the army so dormant

or allowed themselves to be overrun by mere boys of theirs on May 27- where were they?

Carew: This is a very controversial question, actually. Sir, the rank and file far outnumber the officers. The rank and file planned this thing without the knowledge of officers. I want to believe that even though we were small in number, if we were properly prepared and had the will power to say no the coup could have been resisted. We could have stopped them. But it is not every officer that can withstand tension. I had to leave this country because I was not willing to salute any Corporal. I fled to Guinea to seek refuge. Before going to Guinea I was kept at Pademba Road prison. They said I didn't want to co-operate with them. I was there for two and a half months. That was why I left this country.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Major General for coming here and giving us your testimony. I am curious to know whether the Task Force Commander was ever brought to book for the lapse in contingency plans which brought disaster to Freetown?

Carew: Madam Commissioner, because these are military matters I have opted not to discuss them in public. The Task Force Commander was not a Sierra Leonean by then. We have certain rules that regulate any action that is to be taken. I cannot elaborate in this open hearing.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I just want to one comment. I hope Major General that in the training of army officers they are made to realize how destructive petty jealousies could be among senior officers.

Carew: Actually this is true. If I should make my recommendations maybe this is one lesson learnt. From any history, any campaign, one must learn lessons.

Commissioner Kamara: Thank you Major General Tom Carew. I join the other commissioners in welcoming you to this Commission. We have not exhausted all questions on the military. We still want to understand a lot of things that happened. We hope to have other opportunities for clarifications on aspects that might not have been dealt with. Coming to your current presentation, you said a few times that Sierra Leoneans did not trust the army. As a very senior officer you must have had an idea of what created this mistrust. Can you tell us why the people of this country did not trust the army?

Carew: I may not need to say much now. In the next paper I will actually give my views on how and why discipline in the army deteriorated so much. It was all about discipline. If people are disciplined they will do things that the civilian populace accepts.

Commissioner Kamara: Alright. I know that we need to get more information from the army. But I would like to know whether your statement means that the military was

no longer serving the people or protecting the people it was meant to protect.

Carew: It is my view that some soldiers were actually working in the interest of the people of this country while others went to the other side.

Commissioner Kamara: Major General, were the people of this country receiving what they expected from the army. I want an opinion?

Carew: Well, I don't know what people may feel. But since this is the time for reconciliation I just want to ask the whole nation to forgive us. We know that people do not to trust us anymore because of our actions. Let us forget about the past and look forward to the new army that is now well trained. Let us look forward to a well-disciplined army that is accountable to the people of this country.

Commissioner Kamara: It is true Major General Carew that the main concern of the Commission is to bring about reconciliation in the country. But before reconciliation there has to be something- a prerequisite. People should come out and admit any fault of theirs or displeasures they would have caused the country.

Carew: As I said, in any society or organization, you will have people who are bent on destroying its good image. I continue to beg for forgiveness on behalf of the army. I want to humbly ask members of this Commission to help us to talk to the people of the country.

Commissioner Kamara: Apart from bringing about reconciliation, the Commission is also to find out the cause or causes of what happened so that we can make recommendations that will prevent its reoccurrence. And this is where you and all the other people come in. You were the characters in the stories, in those places where all these things happened. It is people like you that should come and tell us what went wrong or created the circumstances that led to the problems that this country had. When we get the information and analyse it along with others, we will then be able to make appropriate recommendations.

Major General Carew appears again before the Commission the following day

Commissioner Torto: Thank you Major General. You have been with us yesterday. You now know the procedure. You will do your presentation, which will be followed by questions from us. The Leader of Evidence will thereafter ask you questions. At the end of it all you will have a chance to ask the Commission questions and make recommendations. So may we now hear from you?

SUBMISSION

Carew: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. Today again, I stand before you to talk about the taking of the United Nations peacekeepers hostage, in 2000. I was deployed in Freetown when the hostages were taken. Many stories have been told to about this. What I intend to talk about is how we got to the hostage taking stage. How the hostage taking impacted on us nationally and internationally. I will however attempt to describe the peculiarity of the

war years, and how those peculiarity of the war years, played out in West Africa. Then I will conclude by recommending some reforms and practices aimed at protecting UN peacekeepers in the management of ceasefire during civil wars.

Now let me just say few things before and during the conflict. Before the war broke out in 1991, I was deployed as Adjutant of Lungi Garrison at Lungi. When the war broke out I was posted to Mano River Bridge. I was later posted to Potoru in the Pujehun District, and subsequently posted to Koribondo as Battalion Commander in 1993. I became third Brigade Commander in the Southern Province in 1994. I had just returned from Ghana, where I did my Senior Staff College Course. The brigade was headquartered in Bo, and I was a colonel. The rebel was a strange animal to many soldiers and to the RSLAF at large. The rebels for fear of long-term identity wore the uniforms of fallen regular soldiers. That was how we became labelled as "Sorrels". The National Provincial Ruling Council (NPRC) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) became united. Now let me come on to the topic itself.

There were three issues in my view, that made the hostage incidence possible : the problems of UN forces relieving ECOMOG in Sierra Leone, the principle of UN's impartiality, and civil/military relations. At the time the UN decided to deploy its forces in Makeni, the force's size was small. Its mandate was not combative, and there was no established relationship between the UN forces and the splintered regular RSLAF forces.

As it were, the international community mistook the AFRC/RUF alliance for the entire RSLAF forces. For example, before the Kenyans headed for Makeni, a team visited the Armed Forces training centre to inform the RSLAF trainers and security personnel who took part in the liberation of Freetown after the RUF invasion on the 6th January 1999. The Sierra Leone Army did advise that it monitored an RUF radio communication that suggested the arrest of peacekeepers as a way to improve the movement's stake in the peace process. The UN obviously was not in a position to heed such advise given the level of mistrust everybody had for the Sierra Leone Army.

However, even when the peacekeepers were about to be taken hostage a more robust mandate could have taken care of things. A robust mandate could not have missed the natural element of self-defence. Actually, my disappointment was that the hostages were released to President. Charles Taylor. It was Taylor who handed the hostages to the UN authority in Freetown. And I must say that we thank God our colleagues resurfaced although some died.

Nevertheless, I personally learnt the following lessons and I wish to share them with the TRC:

- UN peacekeepers must recognize partnership with the local forces in order to gain any entry point into secure and credible peace operation. And the second lesson is that peacekeepers should be trained and organized to move into peace reinforcement role. The UN should also develop a force protection party, should a situation demand it. As reforms

in the RSLAF are being undertaken it must also not be lost on the international community to contribute to the reform process by preparing the RSLAF for peace support operations within the outside West Africa.

- And to summarize, I want to say that I saw the beginning and the end of the civil war. Mr. Chairman, I will say the rest ing answers to your questions.

Commissioner

Torto: Thank you. Commissioner Kamara?

Commissioner

Kamara: Thank you very much Chief of Defence Staff, T.S. Carew. We are happy to receive you here again. There is something I don't know or perhaps misunderstood about the taking of the peacekeepers as hostage. I want you to confirm my own understanding of your presentation. Are you saying that increasing the negotiating power of the AFRC/RUF was the reason for the hostage crisis?

Carew: Yes, Mr. Commissioner. It is my view that this must have been one of the reasons why they took those hostages.

Commissioner

Kamara: To what extent would we blame the peacekeepers for what happened ?

Carew: I could say that they cannot be blamed, Sir. The rebels may have been using diversionary tactics to pass on those messages to their counterparts. Some of our guys were part of those rebels, mind you. When I came back from Guinea, for example, we went to recapture Kono. We went there with many vehicles and tanks. A false message was sent to our location that those vehicles were needed back in Freetown. By then we have spent about two weeks. We had no food. We were surviving on raw mangoes. Then I decided to go back with the vehicles to Freetown. On our way we fell in a terrible ambush. These were some of the diversionary tactics that the rebels were using. So we cannot blame the peacekeepers at all.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming again and thank you for waiting so patiently for us to call you up to podium. Can you give proportions of the Sierra Leone army's splinter?

Carew: I cannot give exact figures. But as I said yesterday, at the time of the AFRC, we had about 80% of our men on the AFRC/RUF side.

Commissioner

Marcus-Jones: Eighty percent on that side?

Carew: Yes, it was about 80%. Very few loyal soldiers went to surrender to ECOMOG.

**Comissioner
Marcus-Jones:** So you will agree that the proportion of soldiers that stayed on the Government's side was not large enough for the UN to have established any relationship with?

Carew: That is why I am saying that we should not blame the UN. I have said that the percentage of soldiers on the side of the rebels was too large. Nobody could therefore trust any soldier.

**Commissioner
Marcus-Jones:** Could you explain to us why you were disappointed that the hostages were released to the President of Liberia?

Carew: It is actually known that Charles Taylor was the man who was supporting the RUF. I particularly had something against him for that. I was therefore not pleased that those people were handed over to him.

**Commissioner
Marcus-Jones:** Thank you.

**Commissioner
Torto:** Chief of Defence Staff, we welcome you again and thank you for your patience. My first question now is this: Did the arrest and killing of some of the UN peacekeepers take place before the Lome Peace Agreement or after the Lome Peace Agreement?

Carew: Actually, the arrest took place after the Lome Peace Accord.

**Commissioner
Torto:** Alright. Article 9 of the Lome Peace Agreement granted amnesty and pardon to those who were involved in the fighting. The amnesty however covered only the period between the start of the war and the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement. It follows therefore that any crime committed after the Lome Accord is not covered by the amnesty provisions?

Carew: Mr. Chairman, I want to believe that we should go by what the law says. Luckily I was part of the delegation that went to sign that peace accord. We were there for over two months. Foday Sankoh and his people gave us a lot of problem. It was only the patience of people like the honourable Vice President that saved the situation.

**Commissioner
Torto:** Would you not agree with me that it was within the context of the Lome Peace Agreement that UN sent a peacekeeping force to Sierra Leone? And had they not every right to go to everywhere in the country?

Carew: Mr. Commissioner, I want to agree with you hundred percent.

**Commissioner
Tortp:** My final question now, Chief of Defence Staff is this: What impact, negative or positive did the arrest and killing of some of the United Nations by our own people in this country have on the international community?

Carew: Mr. Chairman, I want to say that it was a very shameful act. Any true Sierra Leonean should be ashamed of what those people did. This shows you the amount of lawlessness that was in the country during those days.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you sir.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Major General T.S. Carew. In paragraph two of your submission, you said that you intended to talk about how we got to the hostage taking stage. And how the hostage taking impacted on the national and international political scenes. In paragraph five you said that the arrest of five hundred peacekeepers was related to three issues in your view: The problems of the withdrawal of ECOMOG forces and replacement by UN forces, the legalistic principle of impartiality, and the problem of civil/military relations in Sierra Leone at that time. Could you explain exactly what you mean by those three points?

Carew: Let me start with the problem of ECOMOG/UN forces change-over. There was a lot of confusion on the ground at the time when ECOMOG was been replaced. Those UN who were coming in did not know the ground, so there was complete chaos in the general area. I want to believe that this was one of the reasons why those peacekeepers were captured. Let me come to the second issue of the legalistic principle of impartiality. I think that the UN troops thought they were going to a friendly place. So they were never prepared for combat. They didn't have Chapter Seven mandate. On the last issue of civil/military relations, let me start by saying that it was the first time the UN troops were on ground. They therefore hadn't civilian friends on the ground that could advise them on where and where not to go. That was why in my opinion, they ended in surroundings where rebel elements could encircle and capture them.

And of course, added to all these, as I said earlier, was the fact that the peacekeepers were not prepared for any combat role. The size of the force itself was very small. Five hundred men is less than a battalion. The rebels in the area where the hostages were taken were more than a brigade.

Commissioner Sooka: You talked about UN peacekeepers not winning partnership with the local people. Do you think this is a fair criticism of the UN's early operations? .

Carew: As I was saying, yesterday, in the military you always try to learn lessons from any failure of a command. As far I was concerned there were problems that led to the capture of the UN peacekeepers.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Major General Carew. There are very minor areas that I want you to clear with me, based on your written submission. According to the last sentence in your first paragraph, the rebels for fear of long-term identification wore the uniforms of our fallen regular soldiers.

That was how our soldiers became known as sorbels. Was that the only way our soldiers came to be known as sorbels? Are you aware that there were connivances between the rebels and some officers of the Armed Forces?

Leader of evidence: Commissioner, the Chief of Defence Staff will be scheduled for a close Session on the 22nd. There are a number of important issues to talk about with the Chief of Defence staff.

Commissioner Torto:

Thank you. Does the Leader of evidence have questions for the Major General?

Leader of Evidence:

Honourable Commissioner, I have no questions for the Chief of Defence Staff on the kidnap of UN peacekeepers. I have only two requests to make to the Chief of Defence Staff. Firstly, I want the Chief of Defence Staff to assist the Commission with opinion on the objective conditions in the country that led to the civil war. The Commission will also be very interested to receive submissions on the 'ndogbowusu' rebellion. What was the role of the military in that rebellion? Who were the actors? What was the nature of the disturbances?

Carew:

I will delegate my staff to do it; because I was a low –ranking officer at that time.

Leader of Evidence:

It is not about you as a person, Sir. It is about the Military as an institution. There must be records.

Carew:

During 'Ndobowusu' time?

Leader of Evidence:

1982 certainly. There must be records of the roles that the Army has played over the years.

Carew:

If you talk of records then I must be very frank to say that everything was destroyed. I only want to assist the Commission. I will contact people like General Gortor to help with some records because he was the Commander of that Operation.

Leader of Evidence:

That will be wonderful. Could you, in that case tell Gortor that we want to see him. It may be helpful for us to interview him directly.

My second question concerns the 1998 trials and executions. We would like to hear from you because you were President of the Court Martial. I would like to have a transcript of the proceedings of the Court Martial, as well as the interrogations of the officers by the army.

Carew:

Let me clarify that point again. You have already sent a letter to me, to which I have replied. I have also spoken to your team. It is very difficult to get the records of those trials now. Every document was handed over

to the Chief of Defence Staff. The Chief of Defence Staff by then was General Khobe. He too had to take those records to higher level. And we know that during the intervention, nobody wanted to keep such records. People just threw them away. Maybe an institution like SLBS has such documents. SLBS staff attended the trials on a daily basis

Leader of Evidence:

Thank you very much. The Commission will explore all possible means to go to SLBS, the office of the Vice President and the Attorney General to see whether we can have access to those records. They are very important documents for the work of the Commission

Commissioner Torto:

Thank you Major General. Do you have questions for the Commission?

Carew:

I do not know how you people intend to interview some of my officers. I have been receiving letters from some of those who are out of the country. I do not know what arrangements you are going to make for them.

Commissioner Torto:

You mean serving officers, or members who have left the army?

Carew:

No, serving officers.

Leader of Evidence:

We have sent a number of letters to the Chief of Defence Staff. Apart from Colonel Mondeh who is in Nigeria, my understanding is that all the other officers serving in the country will be invited.

Carew:

There are officers who are pursuing also pursuing courses of study outside the country. This is my concern. Do we wait for them?

Commissioner Torto:

How long are their courses going to last?

Carew:

Let us say they will be here towards the end of the year. Most of them would have come.

Leader of Evidence:

Honourable Commissioners, I think it is something that the Commission needs to take up at the level of the Ministry of Defence and perhaps, the Presidency. These are very critical witnesses that the Commission has to talk to. The Leaders of Evidence have through the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Commission written to the Military authorities that these people come and be interviewed by the Commission.

Commissioner Torto:

I see one of them has made a written submission in the person of Komba Mondeh, has Kess Mboya made any?

Leader of Evidence:

No, he has not. And he is a very critical witness for the Commission. We did not intend to request Mondeh's further appearance. We are going to talk to the Head of State at the time- Captain Valentine Strasser. if Valentine Strasser can testify before the Commission, then the Leaders

of Evidence would not intend to present Colonel Mondeh as a witness. K.E.S Boyah and Bangura are very significant witnesses that the Leaders of Evidence think the Commissioners need to interview in closed session or open sessions.

Commissioner Torto: OK. Since this is the case we are asking that the matter be taken up with the Ministry of Defence. But regarding the submission of written testimonies to us, we want to ask you to remind K. E.S. Boyah to send in his submission. Already one of his colleagues, Komba Mondeh has sent his from Nigeria. We think K.E.S. Boyah can do the same thing. He has to actually send in a written submission. Efforts to get him to appear before the Commission in person would be pursued by the Commission.

Carew: Mr. Commissioner, in my own little way, I will try to contact him. My assistant will phone him after here. I can ask that he spend a few days here. The only thing we may have to do is to get his return air tickets.

Commissioner Torto: Yes. Just a few days.

Leader of Evedence: Thank you very much Chief of Defence Staff. The Commission's intention is to help you build a very professional Army. I am sure that you will be very happy with the report of the Commission in respect of the experiences of the roles some people have played in the army. We would therefore appreciate if you can facilitate the appearance of some of your officers before this Commission.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. We see that you have some suggestions or recommendations in your paper. Are those all you have, or do you have any to add?

Carew: Yes, I will try to make some additions.

Commissioner Torto: Please do that in writing and let us have them.

Carew: I may need to talk to you in-camera.

Commissioner Torto: If you do not have anything more to add, we thank you very much for coming and appreciate your time with us. You may step down now.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARING: JANUARY 6 ATTACK ON FREETOWN
DATE: Day 2: 15th July, 2003.

BEFORE:

Commissioner John Kamara (Presiding)

Commissioner Joseph C. Humper

Commissioner Laura Marcus-Jones

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto

Leader of Evidence: Our witness this afternoon is Dr. Julius Spencer.

WITNESS No.: 1

WITNESS NAME: Julius S. Spencer

Commissioner Kamara Dr. Spencer your name is a household name in Sierra Leone. We want you to continue to help the Commission in making Sierra Leone the country we want it to be. In different ways we have all been playing our roles. But at a critical moment like this we want to put our thoughts and ideas together so as to help the nation and the international community in mapping out the problems in Sierra Leone. We appreciate that you accepted our invitation, in addition to the comprehensive interview with the Commission. You are welcome and the Commission is ready to listen to you.

SUBMISSION

Spencer: I will be brief and limit my comments to the January 6, 1999 invasion of Freetown. That is the theme I believe that I have been invited to talk on. I will start by saying that prior to January 6 and I was Minister of Information Communication Tourism and Culture. Let me however mention that before becoming a Minister I was a private citizen. In fact I was in the United States when the coup happened in May 1997. When the coup took place I decided that I needed to do something to help reverse it. I had terrible fears about what would happen to Sierra Leone. I offered to help establish a radio station for the government of Sierra Leone. We ran the radio for roughly nine months. I also should make this comment that I was not and still not a

member of any political party. I only once in my life joined a political party, and that was the National Democratic Party was established in 1991. I have no political ambition.

In December 1998 after I became Minister I moved away from military matters. Prior to my appointment, during the period I was at Lungi I was very close to ECOMOG. I knew most of the officers and operations. I was almost one of them. I observed ECOMOG working. Late General Khobe was commander of ECOMOG Task Force. I observed the tremendous discipline with which he operated and the efficiency with which the ECOMOG operated. So I had absolute confidence in ECOMOG abilities to provide defence for Sierra Leone. When I became Minister I moved away and concentrated on my ministerial responsibilities. It was not until late that I began to realize that things were not working the way they should. I began to hear of things not working well with ECOMOG. ECOMOG positions were been over run the rebels. One day, myself, Alie Bangura and a few others went to General Khobe to discuss with him what was going on. At that time he was no longer in charge of ECOMOG. He was Chief of Defence Staff of the Sierra Leone Army.

It was there that I realized, that in the first place, ECOMOG hadn't full troop strength. Troops that had been withdrawn had not been replaced. Many things had gone wrong. Sierra Leone soldiers had been disarmed. Some of them were re-armed and worked alongside ECOMOG. ECOMOG did not have enough supplies, vehicles, equipments etc. ECOMOG was simply not in full strength. Myself and a few other people decided to get close to ECOMOG to have clear ideas about what was going on and how we could help. The ECOMOG Task Force Commander was Brigadier General Abu Amadu. When we met him on a couple of occasions he asked that we air programme on radio and television to calm the civilian population and stop the large movement of people. We started doing programmes on radio and television on this issue. But this did not seem to have the desired effect. It also became clear to us that General Khobe no longer had any working relation with ECOMOG. They were not listening to him when he advised them on what to do. He was a slightly junior officer to both the ECOMOG Task Force Commander, and the

ECOMOG General Commander. At one time I was at Wilberforce Barracks which was then the headquarters of ECOMOG. Some officers came from Makeni which had been overrun to report to the Force Commander that they had been betrayed by some of the Sierra Leone soldiers who had been integrated into their ranks to defend in Makeni.

I also remember when Masiaka was attacked and the Guinean Commander coming to the barracks terrified about what was going on. ECOMOG forces seemed powerless and always overrun all over the place. At the time I don't think there was any formal national defence council which was in charge of security. It was obvious that the Sierra Leone Government was not really in the position to do anything because the government at that time did not have an Army of its own. General Khobe kept complaining that he had no soldiers. Government had just started training and recruiting officers and men. Around the January 2, a number of us went to see General Khobe to discuss the situation and asked what we needed to do. He basically said that there was nothing he could do. He told us that his advice to ECOMOG General's on what should be done to ensure that fighting did not take place in the city was not heeded.

However, it was obvious that the rebels were advancing on Freetown. On January 5 rebels overran Jui which had an ECOMOG base at the time. I found it hard at that time to believe that the rebels had got that far. On the evening of January 5 I jumped in to my vehicle with my two bodyguards and a driver and to go and see things for myself. We drove all the way to Foamex where the front line was at the time. We got there to find SSD personnel, ECOMOG soldiers and some Kamajors preparing for the night. They told us it was not quite safe to go any further but I insisted that I wanted to go and see what was going on. We drove past and went all the way to Jui. I expected that we'll meet an ECOMOG check point at the junction but there was none. The area was no man's land. We drove down the road going to the ECOMOG base. We didn't see anybody. We came across a few corpses along the road. After a while we saw somebody coming towards us leaping. My driver who was an SSD officer said that the person was a rebel. We turned around and came back to town. I remember going to his Excellency the President and

telling him that I am just from Jui and didn't find anybody. He called and was told that they were there in their trenches. I did not see anybody in trenches. So I went to bed that night. I used to monitor the police network and I had one of the handsets. It must have been around midnight when reports started filtering in of movement of people into the city. Around 2 or 3 a.m. Alie Bangura called me and we discussed the matter. And I think I also talked to Abdulai Mustapha who was working with the Security people. We agreed that we needed to go on air and talk to the people to keep off the streets and stay indoors. ECOMOG was complaining that they could not do anything because there were crowds of civilians about. So we then decided to go on the air at FM 98.1 which was at the location it is now at Signal Hill. I was surprised how quickly we began to hear reports about rebels here and there. We got a call that they were at Brookfields, Goderich, and all over the place. The whole situation became very confusing. Obviously what had happened as we discovered later was that the city was infiltrated by the rebels coming in small groups or individually and hiding weapons around. When the attacks started they all came out and started firing and that created a lot of confusion. I learnt that the President was no longer in Freetown. While monitoring the Police Communication Network I had heard the code that he was been taken out. And I know he barely looked out of government wharf before the place was overrun. At day-break we did not know where the President and the Vice President were. We could not even account for General Khobe, General Shelpidi who was ECOMOG Force Commander, and the Deputy Minister of Defence. Myself, Alie Bangura, Abdulai Mustapha, Sheka Mansaray who was National Security Adviser and Dr. Jonah went to Wilberforce Barrack to get a clear picture of what was going on. Wilberforce itself seemed to be under attack because there was gunfire in the area. We were told that the President was in Lungi. Somebody came and told Dr. Jonah that the President wanted to see him at Lungi.

So he reluctantly left for Lungi in a helicopter. It turned out to be a lie that the President had sent for him. But it seems as if ECOMOG wanted us out of Wilberforce Barracks. Because while we were there one Major pulled me aside and said; "you people are better off out here, because if this is attacked we are all going to run". But we decided that we had nowhere to go and that we

could not just move away. We needed to do something. We decided to continue broadcasting because it was clear at that time that ECOMOG was severely demoralized. The troops had almost lost hope and did not know what to do because the commander at that time was incompetent. I am talking about Brigadier Amadu. He was totally at a loss as to what to do. The man could not even give order. He was just sitting in his office staring at his officers who came with situation reports. I remember vividly one of the armour cars came back in a rush that they were out of ammunition. The Sergeant Major who was the driver jumped down and tried to rally troops around. He was telling them that the rebels were coming around Hill Cut Road and that they need to go and block that road. He needed troops. The Force Commander was leaning a railing looking looking blanking at nowhere. I expected that he could have taken over the issuing of orders. But the man could not give any orders. He confessed to me later that he was at a loss. He said he was a conventional officer and that kind of warfare was not something he was used. He said he felt abandoned by his Force Commander Shelpidi who had gone away with the President.

General Khobe decided that he needed to take the President and the Vice President out because he was convinced that ECOMOG could not provide significant defence for the city and he did not want the President to be killed. General Khobe obviously informed the ECOMOG General Shelpidi, who opted to go to Lungi too. Brigadier Amadu said to be he was abandoned by his commanding officer. He was left alone to sort out the mess. In my view leadership was one of the major problems ECOMOG faced at the time of January 6 invasion. There was a serious problem of incompetent leadership in ECOMOG. For a period of about of thirty six hours after the invasion started the responsibility of deciding what to do lay in the hands of a few of us.

Obviously we consulted and decided that a curfew needed to be imposed. We also decided to continue the broadcasts.

I believe that we were in a life and death struggle. If we had not taken control in a way and tried to ensure that ECOMOG fights and that some kind of defence should be provided in a short time whilst re-enforcement was been sort the whole of the city could have been overrun. It was that time we realized very clearly that ECOMOG did not have enough men and ammunition. On morning of January 6 at Wilberforce barracks people were calling for ammunition. We had run out of it from A.K 47, which is the basic weapon of the soldier. We were blessed that can the rebels did not have enough confidence to advance as quickly as they had started. They could have over run the whole city. We had to, in a way bluff our strength which was why we continued broadcasting to assure the public that ECOMOG was in control and that the situation would be reversed. It was only a temporary measure to keep the morale of the ECOMOG troops; particularly those who were cut off behind enemy lines. Those whose position had been over run were also been assured by the broadcasts that they could be rescued.

Even government officials and many other ministers did not know what was going on. They too were assured by our confidence on radio. They started coming out. They started congregating at the Presidential Lodge were consulted on what should be done.

ECOMOG started pushing the rebels back after we had been able to get re-enforcement from Nigeria. We had to call Abuja. I know it was Alie Bangura who was able to get through to talk to the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff and explain the situation to him. He promised to get troops to Freetown in a couple of days. I think it was a battalion or two that came. That was how we were able to stabilize the situation and move the rebels back. I think on January 8, 6 or 7 the President made contact with us. He came back after a couple of days.

It took me a while to realize what was going on. ECOMOG could send out patrols to clear the rebels wherever they were. ECOMOG would move all the way to Up Gun and come back and report that the area was cleared, only for rebels to reappear there again. What was happening as

I realized much later was that the rebels did not stand and fight. They would put up very little resistance run off. so ECOMOG would send a patrol to look the area and no rebels would be seen. ECOMOG would tell us to inform the people that the area was clear. We informed the people accordingly. I ran into an ambush at Brookfields because I wanted to go and turn on the telephone exchange there. The batteries had run low. I wanted to go and find out what was happening as Minister of Communication. Some foreign correspondents followed me. We have been told of course that the area was clear. We heard gun fire before we reached the bridge. There was a check-point at the bridge. We stopped to check what was going on. I even sent the officer-in-charge of the security detail to go back to Wilberforce Barracks to find out what was going on because we tried to communicate with the handset it could not get through. He came back and told us that it was nothing serious. He said it was just a sniper and we could go ahead. We drove across the bridge. I was combat fatigue and carried a rifle. I was driving my own vehicle because I could not find my driver. We got to F.S.S.G School and heard some gunfire. But since we have been told the place was clear we assumed that it must have been some ECOMOG or CDF in the area. We turned a corner by Marine House and we saw about five men standing at the corner eating. There was food and beer on the ground. The men were carrying weapons. Some were dressed in the "Ronko" (country cloth) like what the CDF wore. We stopped. All of us thought that they were friendly forces. My ECOMOG bodyguard told us to go there. "It's our own people" he said. The lead vehicle had started moving. I started moving also and suddenly we heard gun fire. Instinctively we all jumped down and responded.

One American journalist was killed. A Canadian who got a bullet in the head survived. He wrote a book about his experience, which I have recently received. The Canadian in his book explained that the America who was the cameraman wanted to film these guys who were at the junction. He says that was why the guys decided to fire. So it turned out that the guys were rebels.

I don't believe that ECOMOG was deliberately trying to mislead anybody. They probably were not aware of the fact that the rebels would run away and come back. The situation eventually began to stabilize and more troops and ammunition coming in. We also succeeded in getting General Khobe to get directly involve in the operations. In fact orders were given from Abuja that Khobe should take over the command. Shelpidi did not completely obey the instructions. A sort of joint command was eventually agreed on. Khobe started leading troops out to clear the city. I was with him when State House was captured for the fourth time. They had tried to capture it before but the rebels always came back.

Another thing that was partly responsible for ECOMOG inability to defend the city was that many of them had become slack and too friendly with the civilian population. They had girl friends even at checkpoints. An incident that convinced me of this was the Captain who was in charge of security detail at Pademba Road Prison. We found out later that he had a girl friend whose father was one of the detainees. He was taking information to the father. And when the Prison was broken into the detainee- Christian Kargbo, the AFRC Governor of the Bank, went to the Captain's house hide. The house was close to 98.1. Many people came to give us information that the man there. We decided to search the place. We took troops along. When we were at the gate, the Captain came out. He was not in uniform and I recognize him as a Nigerian Officer.

I told him that we had information that Christian Kargbo was in the house. He said he also heard that. He said he had checked and found out that it was not true. We went back. Unfortunately for them somebody who was in the house at that time got scared when see us coming and banging at the gate. He jumped the fence and tried to run away. One of the soldiers at 98.1 caught him. When we went back they told us that this man had run away from the house. We questioned and threatened him. And he confessed that Christian Kargbo was in the house. We went back and the same officer opened the gate. I told him that the man we were looking for was inside the house. He said he was going to get his own troops to help with the search. He walked off. We went in

and Mr. Kargbo and another person who had also escaped from Pademba Road. We arrested them and took them to Wilberforce Barracks. My security guard insisted that the officer at the gate was in league with the rebels. They went and dragged him. They would have shot him if I had not been there. I prevented them from shooting him. We took him to the Wilberforce Barracks. I believe that he was court martialed. When we reported the incident to the Senior Officers at the barracks they were extremely annoyed. He was stripped of his uniform and chained. That is just an example. ECOMOG had become friendly with everybody. They let down their guard and were not very security conscious anymore.

Finally, I think I want to make a comment on the kind of atrocities that took place in Freetown at that time. It seems to me that the rebels began to react to the fact that they were not getting their way. When it became obvious that they were been pushed out that was when they turned on the civilian population and started the killings, arson, amputations and so on. I also knew that I was a target of rebel attack. A friend of mine who was cut up behind enemy lines confirmed the rebels intentions for me. I remember going to the President and telling him that I didn't I want to continue broadcasting. The President convinced me against that decision. I agreed with him. I reduced my broadcast time however. I did not go on air as frequently as I had been doing. In a nutshell this is what I have to say on the invasion of Freetown and am prepared to answer questions.

Commissioner

Humper: We want to thank you very much Dr. Spencer. I think today is going to be another important day for Sierra Leoneans. So many things were concealed about the January 6 invasion of Freetown. As a result many of us were wallowing in ignorance. I believe you will have another opportunity to elaborate on some issues in answers to questions from the Commissioners.

The essence of this Commission as you said is to set records straight and establish an impartial historical record of what transpired during the ten years rebel war. My colleagues will now begin

their questions. You will also have an opportunity to ask us questions and make recommendations relating to our work.

Commissioner

Torto: Thank you very much Dr. Spencer for this testimony. I have actually read your interview. But I will ask you questions based on testimony because much of what was in the interview is not mentioned here. It may be that issues covered in the interview are not pertained to January 6 invasion.

Let back to the point where the President was taken out of Freetown and explained ECOMOG didn't even have enough arms, ammunition and men to hold the ground. Under what conditions was the President brought back two days later?

Spencer: I think they probably believed that the situation had stabilized a bit and that he could be secured. ECOMOG had successfully defended the Congo Cross bridge to confine the rebels only to central and eastern Freetown. At the Presidential Lodge, security beefed up as well.

Commissioner

Torto: Thank you. In a film strip, "Cry Sierra Leone" I saw you in arms at P.Z. what were you looking for.

Spencer: That was the day that I said I was with General Khobe, when State House was captured for the fourth time. My particular mission in going to these areas was to try and turn on the telephone system that had gone dead. We could not communicate, not only locally but internationally. We wanted to make many international calls. We had to use a satellite phone. So I went town to find out what the situation was. Again I had been told that all that area was clear. I had with me two security guards. I was driving myself. I got to State House and met General Khobe. In fact General Amadu and some senior officers at the former Vice President's office were there. I joined them. Troops were deployed at State House. It was decided that the surrounding needed to be cleared. That was how I went along with them to P.Z. At P.Z. we came under fire but the resistance was successfully cleared. It was at that point that this boy who became a subject in the "Cry Freetown" film, Moses came out of one of the buildings. And of course everybody believed he was a rebel. He was caught and put in the van. He jumped down. They tried to keep him in the van but he kept jumping down. They tried to tie him up but he fought so hard. I went to talk to him, and the way he grabbed me, I thought he was high on drugs. They decided to shoot him. I protested. General Khobe also came and said no. He was tied up and eventually taken to Wilberforce Barracks. We tried to talk to him for several days but he couldn't respond. He was just

screaming. We all were convinced that he was on drugs. We even took him to the hospital. The doctor said he was on drugs. We decided to keep him there hoping that he will recover.

It was days later that I realised the fellow was deaf and dumb. He was absolutely terrified. That was why he was behaving that way. But at the time nobody knew that was the case. It was the day we discovered the boy at P.Z. that a fellow called Junior Sawaneh also was killed. An ECOMOG Major, whose name I've forgotten was also killed on that day. They were both shot when Khobe led some troops up to Up-Gun.

Commissioner

Torto: Thank you. My other question was going to be on the radio announcement but has actually been clarified during your explanation. Why did they just take Dr. Jonah and leave you at that particular time when you were in so much danger at Wilberforce?

Spencer: Well, I don't know. They probably felt that Dr. Jonah was much more a high profile and international figure.

Commissioner Torto: Was he more valuable?

Spencer: I don't know. I can't speak for them. But I know that they called him. I was there. An officer came to him to say that the President was calling him. The President was in Lungi. But Dr. Jonah told us later that when he got to Lungi the President denied sending for him.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Would you now remember the group you were talking to by Freetown Secondary School for Girls or Hannah Benka Street and Railway Line junction? Was it an ambush you fell in and met that group of people. Do you remember their faces? Do you know any of them or do you know or whether they are in fact alive?

Spencer: No. In fact, I think they were all killed eventually. There were two ECOMOG soldiers in the car with the journalist. When the ECOMOG soldier fired into the suspicious car, gin fire was returned. The ECOMOG soldier killed two of them on the spot. The other three ran off. And I believe two of them went to hide in a vehicle that was packed along the road. A Rocket Propelled Grenade was fired into the vehicle. I suspect that one of them escaped.

Commissioner Torto: Now, my second to last question. Were you aware that some ECOMOG officials were engaged in human right violations like arbitrary killing? Evil Spirit, an ECOMOG sergeant or major has been accused of killing people at random at Brookfields. Or was it Aberdeen Ferry Road area? Were you aware of what he was doing? What did you do? What happened to him?

Spencer: Well, I heard the stories. I know of one or two persons, in fact who I believed were killed by Evil Spirit. They were accused of being rebels. We heard many stories like that. I believe I talked to one of the senior ECOMOG officers about it. I don't think anything was done to Evil Spirit. I believe he eventually went to Nigeria. But I've heard recently that he had died. I don't know if that's true. I don't know if he's still alive. Indeed, we heard reports of extra-judicial killings. It was not just Evil Spirit. There were many, many such violations; maybe too numerous even to mention. But I think that the catalyst for those violations was the civilian population. It was civilians who were going to ECOMOG soldiers and pointing who was or was not a rebel. They were asking ECOMOG to kill people who accused of being rebels.

I remember intervening on a number of occasions to save number people from being executed. One instance involved a surrendered soldier who had been kept at Collegiate School compound. He left the compound one day to go and find food or do something else. He was caught and accused of being a rebel. He kept insisting that he was one of the surrendered soldiers. He insisted that we took him away for verification. So I took him to Collegiate School and was able to prove that indeed he was a surrendered soldier. Everybody recognised him as soon as I took him there. There were a number of instances like that. But like I say, civilians spread this kind of thing. There was a time, I remember, when a truck load of surrendered soldiers were brought to Wilberforce. Many people were saying: "why did they bring them here, they should have just killed them". "What are they keeping them for"? Many people, from all works of life, all strata of society held that kind of view. I remember arguing with a senior person in government who was saying the same thing. Some days later, this same person was very upset when the wife or girlfriend of one of his security officers was accused of being a rebel and killed. I then drew his attention to what I'd been saying some days earlier that this is the kind of thing that happens when you condone extra-judicial killings. No matter what, we have to go through due process. But the situation was such that it became uncontrollable. And I think that because ECOMOG felt that betrayed by Sierra Leoneans, they became a bit brutal in the way they treated people who were accused of being rebels. But invariably, it was civilians who accused people of being rebels. ECOMOG did not have any means of saying that this person was a collaborator. It was civilians who were spurring on the ECOMOG troops to carry out the killings.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. However, what happened to Abu Amadu and Shellpidi later for the way they deceived this country? Look at the kind of havoc the country underwent.

Spencer: Well, I think they've been retired from the army eventually. I don't know if their retirement was particularly because of the ECOIMOG operations or for other reasons. Soon after President Obasanjo took over, I believe they were retired. I don't think they are in the Nigerian Army anymore.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you Dr. Spencer for your testimony and also for the interview you had with the Commission. I recalled that when Freetown was burning you were on the radio advising people to stay indoors. You were saying that ECOMOG was in control and they are pushing back the rebels here and there. I wonder, whether you are aware that there are at least two interpretations to what you were trying to do at the time. I'll start with the better of the two. You were like Winston Churchill during the 2nd World War when the British had nothing at all, but he made his famous speech about fighting on the beaches and so on. But at the same time, there were other people who felt hurt that you did not make them realize the situation at the time. Such people say that if they had been allowed to come out, they might have been able to save their property from being destroyed.

Spencer: Well, first of all I'll say that I was Minister of Information. I was the official spokesman of the government. I was not speaking on behalf of Julius Spencer. It was only once that I expressed my own personal view. And that was in a BBC interview. There had been this call for a ceasefire. And the President had reached some kind of agreement with Foday Sankoh that there should be a ceasefire. I was pushed by, I think, Robin White to give my own views. I said I didn't think it would work. That was my own personal. With regards to information about what civilians needed to do, I told the public what I had been advised to tell them by the Security forces. It was the security forces logic that for ECOMOG to operate on the streets, civilians had to be kept out of the way. If there are

civilians on the street, and because the rebels do not wear military uniforms you cannot quite distinguish rebels and civilians. If ECOMOG saw people on the streets during an operation, they are going to consider all of them as rebels. And they are going to open fire on them. After the initial experience of the way the rebels came into the city, that was ECOMOG's position. In the first few days in fact, the curfew was for 24 hours. Nobody went out. We had to plead with ECOMOG that people needed to find food to eat. We asked ECOMOG to reduce the curfew hours; to which they agreed. Curfew, I think was pushed up to midday. After a while, we had to go back and say that the mid-day time was not enough time. They shifted it to 3 o'clock. On one particular day they called me to agitate that there were too many people on the streets. We were asked to tell people to go back home otherwise ECOMOG was going to start opening fire. At that time ECOMOG was very jittery. So it was in the interest of the public that people were asked to stay off the streets. It was not only for their own safety, but also because being on the streets, was hampering ECOMOG operations.

Over and above that, I had no personal objective to achieve. I was simply doing my job. And that job was to pass on to the public information that had been given to me to. We must also bear in mind that we were in a life and death struggle. The life and death struggle for this country, not individual lives. I believe even to this day that if the rebels had succeeded in overrunning the city, this country would have been doomed. We would not be sitting here today talking about reconciliation. We would not have had the kind of peace we have today. It is not so pleasant being in the forefront as a mouthpiece for the government in such times.

I understand the feeling of hurt of those who were caught up behind rebel lines and saw their relatives killed or their houses burnt. But to it is unreasonable to blame me for the rebels reckless behaviour. I understand if they feel hurt, if they blame me for the loss of their property of their loved ones, I understand that. But I also believe that the picture is bigger than that. There is a bigger picture that the individual out there could not see and cannot see even today. But that is understandable. I also believe that you cannot please everybody. I know that there are people who have said to me that they believe they are alive today because they listened to what I said. So it goes both ways.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones - Thank You.

Commissioner Humper: Let me join the other commissioners in welcoming you to this commission. We have heard other versions of what took place during the period you've spoken about. There have been criticisms, complaints and dissatisfaction about the way you handled situation. There are people out there who feel even today, that you were deliberately misinforming people. I would like to ask one question. Why did ECOMOG announce that areas were secure when it was not true? ECOMOG must have known that people were likely to go into those areas to carry out other economic or life saving activities.

Spencer: Well I cannot really speak for ECOMOG. But we not forget that the situation at the time was not normal. It may also be that ECOMOG officers and commanders themselves

believed that those areas were safe. Perhaps they didn't fully understand the tactics that the rebels were using. When ECOMOG sent out patrol the rebels would run away. ECOMOG thought that the rebels were running away for good. Let me also say that ECOMOG's communication network may not have been that good. I know that they did not have enough communication equipment. Troops in the front had problems communicating with headquarters. We were to discover later that Headquarters sometimes didn't even know where exactly all their troops were located.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you. What was the reason for the low strength of ECOMOG at the time?

Spencer: I don't really know. I don't know. I know that troops were rotated after a few months. Troops that have served are taken back home. Newer troops are brought in. Finance may have been the problem. I think it was costing Nigeria so much money to keep soldiers here. Nigeria may have been trying to reduce expenditure on the soldiers. That's my own interpretation. It's my opinion.

Commissioner Humper: How did General Khobe come to take over the Sierra Leone army?

Spencer: I believe that after ECOMOG took over Freetown in February 98, there was a need to restructure and reorganise, the Sierra Leone army. Government at the time decided that we needed somebody of proven integrity and competence to do that. And of course Nigeria had agreed to help Sierra Leone. I believe the President asked the Nigerian President to second General Khobe to Sierra Leone so that he could manage the process of restructuring the army. That's how Khobe came to be Chief of Defence Staff of the Sierra Leone army.

Commissioner Humper: The poor management of the security at that time has been attributed to the fact that Khobe was junior to the other ECOMOG Commanders-Shellpidi and Amadu Do you don't support this position?

Spencer: No.

Commissioner Humper: People have told us that.

Spencer: I know. What I'm saying that the issue of rank only became a problem after Khobe had become Chief of Defence Staff. Khobe was no longer in control of ECOMOG. He could only advise. And because they saw him as a junior they may not have been willing to take his advise all the time. I believe very strongly that if Khobe had been in control of ECOMOG at the time he would have done a much better job in defending this city. I had seen him in action. I know that he could lead his men at the front. Soldiers were willing to follow him and do whatever he wanted them to do. He was not a soldier who sits in an office.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you. Government had information indicating that the rebels were moving westwards from the provinces. At that time we still had some

Sierra Leone Government soldiers. Why were steps not taken to get the Sierra Leone Army to halt the movement of the rebels?

Spencer: I'm not sure we could say we had a Sierra Leone Army. We had a relatively small number of troops under arms because there was not much faith in the majority of the soldiers. A large numbers of soldiers were in detention. Some soldiers were armed and sent to work alongside ECOMOG. I have said that some of them betrayed ECOMOG and went over to the other side. There was really no faith in the soldiers.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you very much Dr. Spencer.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you Chairperson. I have asked questions this morning about the number of troops that were actually based in Freetown just before the invasion on January 6th. The Chief of the Defence Forces said that there were only 120 soldiers left in Freetown. He said that some of them were not even armed. You said in your interview that several thousand soldiers were also held at Lungi at the time. Civil Defence Forces were not allowed to bring their guns into Freetown. They were not given weapons either. What was the number of the troops therefore fighting on the side of Government? How many of them were armed. And why were the Civil Defence Forces not armed?

Spencer: I don't know the exact number of troops. I don't have those figures. I don't know. All I know is that the numbers were drastically reduced from what they were in February 1998. I know that Freetown was being defended by something like a company of troops. It is true that Civil Defence Forces were brought from places like Bonthe to help to defend the city. It may be that they were not given arms because arms were not available. I know that there was a shortage of weaponry. Some Civil Defence Forces however fought. The relationship between ECOMOG and the Civil Defence Forces may not have been very good but they agreed to work together. ECOMOG did not have that much faith in the Civil Defence Forces because they did not believe they were disciplined troops. And in many cases they were not.

Commissioner Sooka: I think you have already commented on the killings committed by some ECOMOG troops. Would you have any specific information on the death of Mr. Eric Lewis, who was Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Labour? A person called Evil Spirit allegedly killed him.

Spencer: I knew Mr. Lewis very well. We grew up together in the same area. Their family and my family are friends. The Lewis's house and my family's house are adjacent. At one time in 1998 my sister told me that Eric Lewis had been accused of being a rebel collaborator. When his car was seized by ECOMOG at one point he came to seek my help. I don't have any evidence that he collaborated with the rebels. I intervene and got his vehicle released. Another information I got from my sister however was that there was some dispute over some land that Eric was trying to develop. I think he was detained for a while and, released. In 1999 he was again accused of being a rebel collaborator. Evil Spirit- as he was called- wasn't asking many questions. I think he just took the man and shot him. Another Lewis also was killed from what I gathered. Two of them were killed. But it all boils down to the fact that it was the civilians who instigated things like that. We must not forget also that it was not

uncommon for that people were also using the 'rebel collaboration tag' to settle scores with their enemies.

Commissioner Sooka: Thank you very much. I have no further questions.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you. It is now your turn Mr. Spencer to ask questions or make recommendations relating to the Commission's work.

Spencer: I think I have a fair understanding of the process that you are going through. I support it. I believe very strongly that we need to fully understand what this country has gone through to ensure that it doesn't happen again. I am not one of those who say we should forget. We should never forget. We should always remember what we went through in this country so that we can ensure that we don't go through it again.

Commissioner Humper: Thank you very much Dr. Spencer. You may now step down. We have come to the end of the day and we want to thank all of you. We will adjourn to 9:30 tomorrow morning.

Commissioner Bishop Humper administered the oath to Police Commissioner Hudson with a copy of the Bible.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Please go ahead

Police Commissioner Hudson: Thank you very much sir. I have already submitted my paper to the Commission. What I am looking at is the importance of the presence of the United Nations Civil Police in Sierra Leone and its relationship with the Sierra Leone Police. Mr. Chairman, as all of us know, a democratic government should uphold the rule of law and the human rights of its citizens. It was in this light that UNAMSIL was tasked with assisting in training the SLPP to be a force for good by providing and improving standards, operations and services delivered to peace. Citizens, this was considered important because of the years of war had obliterated proper policing and it was considered by the government that the country needed proper policing.

To do that Mr. Chairman, the police must be free from political interference, which was hitherto the case. But a lot of changes has taken place since the beginning of international efforts to help the Sierra Leone Police. A Sierra Leonean has taken over from an expatriate inspector General, and he is being helped in the running of the police by the Executive Management Board.

Mr. Chairman, respect for Human Right is integral to a good police force, and they can only do this if they are properly trained. I am here to say that a number of training programme had been implemented and others planned. I should hasten to tell you that SLP had been looked upon as a corrupt institution, but there are number of things that could be done to address this. A priority area in this vein is the welfare of officers in terms of salaries accommodations and communication. Mr. Chairman, your Commissioners would help me to say that SLP suffered and is being assisted by various donors, but it is also important for the gains to be consolidated by governmental action to properly look into conditions of services.

The last point I want to mention is about the recruitment and formation. It is very important in any service or force that recruitment is down across the board without any consideration or interference. What I mean is when you are recruiting we should look at qualities of officers and also of course ethnic considerations and also this goes with promotions. The SLP has come up with a policy of equal opportunities. You are promoted because you can fight.

And the last one I want to mention is the improvement of the Criminal Justice System. However much the Police Service improves, if the judicial is weak we are going to have a problem. So far, a lot has been done to improve policing, but hardly has any work been done address problems with the judicial system. Courts are almost non existent; people are arrested and end up in cells because it take times to go to court.

Also, the prison service and conditions are poor. Prisoners keep on escaping, which in effect meant an incompleteness of judicial processes. This undermines police as the efforts are complimented or sustained in the other branches of the criminal justice system. Your Commissioners have already been presented with copies of my presentation; what I have just said is but a summary of what is contained in those copies.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you, we will now ask you some questions. We will start with Professor John Kamara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you for coming. I have for you one observation and question. Many times people and perhaps even the Police themselves wonder why the Police failed to investigate crimes rapidly or why they fail to score successes in these investigations. People often say that the thing that scares the public from co-operating with the Police is that anybody who offers to serve as a witness becomes the criminal suspect. Instead of the Police making an effort to seek the criminal they now take whoever is responsible for reporting the criminal case to be the criminal. This is what discourages people and because of that they fail to give the necessary support to the police. In your training of the new police do you

include advice on how they must relate with the public and treat the public in a gentler and encouraging way.

Police Commissioner Hudson: I take this one as a genuine question and observation that has been going on for sometime. Actually we have devised a means to assist SLP with this kind of approach because if we don't get support from the public then whatever we do we will not succeed. Community policing is one way to deal with this, and also public relations and victims supports which is known here as the family supports units. We are now getting support from the community and currently SLP is running programmes that are improving its image. UNAMSIL are also running programmes wherein we invite Senior Police Officers and UNAMSIL Officers to talk to the public in phone-in. We may also need to advise the Police to put in place mechanisms for people to report events to the police without giving their names. This has been successful in other countries. You don't need to ask for names, just give your information on war crime and then the Police are expected to do a follow-up. Generally, the police do not consider those report crimes as criminals; but they ask questions as to how they knew about what was happening. If you come to talk about a dead person the first thing they want to know as Police is what were you doing in that area and you have to explain correctly to avoid making the police think that you were the one that killed the person.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: I don't have any more questions but I would like to add this observation and comment. Now in January 6th 1999 when the rebels entered Freetown, the Police was one institution that was targeted by the rebels and dissatisfaction with and the injustices and Human Rights violations that the Police were committing was cited as a reason. Thus I want all police officers to know that acting in the proper way and respecting the human rights of the people will in the long run help them and their families.

Police Commissioner Hudson: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman, we recognize the importance of human rights in policing. UNAMSIL's Human Rights Unit has been running Human Rights seminars for SLP. As am talking to you now, Mr. Chairman we are having a second

seminar in Makeni in Human Rights. We have been to Kono, Kailahun, last week we have been around the headquarters and we will be going to Kenema. We have been in Koindu and this is the second time we are at Makeni. So we definitely know the importance of human rights.

Commissioner Ms Sooka: I have two questions; in most modern day Police Forces two of the biggest problems are corruption and the fact that Police don't see their jobs as an opportunity to enrich themselves, I wonder what is been done in respect to training them to address this. The other question relates gender based violence. Given the fact that gender based violence during the conflict was perhaps the largest in terms of violation, what training has the Police received in dealing with complains of rape and sexual violence in the country situation at present. Before you answer, let me just say most of these women groups had made submission and indicated that the Police have never seen Gender based violence as a serious crime and like most women receive absolutely no co-operation from the Police.

Police Commissioner Hudson: I will start by looking at corruption, corruption is generally called a crime of greed but corruption also should be considered in two other ways:

1. The corrupted person and also the one that is corrupting you. In condemning the Police we should look at the general citizens because these are the people who are giving money to the Police. Efforts are being made to tackle this; if you go around you will find that there are a lot of posters saying "Please Do Not Corrupt The Police." We want to sensitize the Community; they should not succumb to Police corruption; they should report matters to senior officers. At UNAMSIL, we receive reports and we forward this reports to Sierra Leone Police. We have officers who are with the SLP in advising on how to handle these cases. We are preparing seminars on corruption. The Traffic unit is perceived by the by the public as corrupt, but that is being addressed
2. I want to mention that the lack of courts predispose people to be corrupt. There are few courts to send , for instance traffic offenders to, so they initiate bribery and corruption to

get off that which may end nowhere. This of course is no reason why the police should be corrupt, so we are working assiduously to tackle this problem on the police side.

Relating to Gender based violence we have a family support unit within SLP. We have gender specialists within the UNAMSIL. One is with CIVPOL and the other with Human Rights. What has been done now is to sensitize the public steps to take in relation to the issue of gender based violence. You will agree with me that previously we never had reports coming because people kept off from calling the Police but now we get a number of reports coming not because crimes are committed more but people now have confidence in the Police that once you report action would be taken. I think in the shortest time all this gender violence would go down.

Commissioner Ms Sooka: I wonder if you could advice about a unit within the police where complaints could be made about police corruption because there seem to be a trend in modern police forces that you have a special unit that you can report to when police are not behaving properly.

Police Commissioner Hudson: We have a unit like that aims at improving professional standards. Also we have in every unit what is commonly called CDID; these are officers who are looking at the activities of fellow officers.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We want to thank you very much for coming today. You have already given us a comprehensive document which will be very valuable to our work. I have one main question. From your own general assessment what did you consider to have been the militating factor against the efficiency, effectiveness, motivation and commitment of our Police Force which is now dubbed a force for good?

Police Commissioner Hudson: Mr. Chairman, I am unable to answer that question.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Now Commissioner Marcus Jones

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Can you help us in answering the question as to whether the Police is not interested in its environment because I am always puzzled by the fact that that right at the door of the Police Station one finds people piling up rubbish as high as possible and police officers go by with a blind eye. So I often wonder whether the police is not interested in its environs?

Police Commissioner Hudson: As a police force they should be responsible and concerned. But likewise the community, they should not do things that irritate others. I would plead that we give a bit of time for SLP to improve its standard because these are people who are coming from war conflict situation. We are all working on it. We are also sensitizing the community, for they should understand what the Police are supposed to do. Because if they don't understand, it would pose a lot of problems for the police.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: I wonder what your opinion is about Police patrolling certain areas. To improve the image of the police may mean seeing the police being friendly and helpful, for instance giving directions to people and generally improving security in the country.

Police Commissioner Hudson: Beat patrols should take the police to the community and this is what we are actually trying to do now. But lack of maps is hindering us. Areas should be demarcated into small portions where police officers go and take care of. It is also important here for the police officer to know the citizens or subjects who are there and if there is a visitor coming he would know who had just come in that place. Our general information service at UNAMSIL are working on providing maps to SLP at every station and posts we have already demarcated, and we have already putting the areas of responsibility of the officers who are there. So that has been taken care of.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: One reason put before this Commission for the rampant corrupt practices in the Police Force is the low level of salaries paid to them. Is that a justifiable position, if not, have you done anything to address this issue?

Police Commissioner Hudson: I want the Commissioners to know that corruption cannot be considered wholly in the terms of emolument because if people who are getting the same amount of money don't get involved in the vices which you are involved in, then you cannot justify your corrupt acts.

We have carried out public surveys in Freetown, Makeni, and Kabala to find out about corruption and other perceptions relating to the police and the Inspector General is integrating the findings into his strategy to tackle corruption and the other problems facing the police force.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I wonder if you can make available to the Commission the results of the findings. Can you please send us the report of the findings of the consumption of the Commission, please do that as soon as you can?

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Leaders of Evidence do you have any questions for our man here?

Leaders of Evidence: No question.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you; please remember to send us the findings of this exercise. Do you have any questions for the Commission?

Police Commissioner Hudson: No, I don't have any question. All I want to say is to thank the Commission for this opportunity to make a presentation before it.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you too, you may step down.
Leaders of evidence do we have another witness?

Witness 21 – Rtd. Major Abu Major (rtd) Noah

May it please the Commission that the next witness is Major Abu Major (rtd) Noah (Rtd)

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We thank you very much for responding to the invitation of the Commission, we are confident that your submission and your testimony before the Commission would help us a whole lot in looking at a few issues. Are you a Christian or Muslim?

Major (rtd) Noah: Muslim.

Commissioner Bishop Humper administered the oath

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Mr. Major (rtd) Noah we have received your written submission and it was very interesting. But I must appeal to you to make a presentation of it instead of reading it page by page. It will help us and you also to save a lot of time. So please let us hear you.

Major (rtd) Noah: Commissioners, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen I would like to start the topic from the background knowledge that all the nations of the world made mistake at one time or the other in the past. No nation is free of that charge and I strongly believe that a developing nation in contemporary times would commit mistakes and cause many socio-cultural disasters to happen. I will advocate that sleeping dogs be let alone. My reason would unfold as I advance my argument but foremost in my catalog of events is the fact that things are changing fast these days, changes in attitude, relationships, indeed generally society changes. Many trends have also traumatized our people, especially this senseless war. We should endeavor to foster the exhilaration of this trend. But in order to address this trend we need to go back into history, to where it started.

I would say the main crux of the destructive force in the country that led to the civil war and everything that we are experiencing today was the breakdown of discipline in the army and the police. The army lost sight of their traditional role of protecting the sovereignty of the state when called upon and got involved in political activities which derailed it completely. Politics went into the army, the politicians took it to the army and there by destroyed the norms and traditions that held the army together throughout the colonial era and the period before 1964.

The marriage between the police and the army and politics was a destabilizing factor that led to the erosion of order and discipline in these institutions. It also led to the castration of the officer core which was the mainstay of the army from which discipline percolated down to the rank and file. This action of the politicians destroyed the officer corps; promotions were no longer meritorious, you have to belong to the dominant political grouping. The wrong people were elevated, they got positions as a result of tribalism, others suffered as a result of this, some lost their lives and a good number of men were kicked out of the army thus depriving the army of the power in the officer-corps that kept it going. The Army and the Police were brought into politics in 1965/1966 when Brigadier Lansana and the Commissioner of Police were invited to a political party meeting. They became more and more interested in political activities than the administration of the army. They put officers in positions they did not merit and in the process marginalize more senior officers who were not in their political good books. The treatment of Colonel Ambrose Ganda in 1966 was a case in point. He was the most Senior Officer in the absence of Colonel Bangura who was abroad doing a course. Brigadier Lansana was to attend a meeting of the OAU Defence Commission in Ghana as battalion Colonel Ganda should act as army commander in the Brigadier's absence. The latter however did not appoint the colonel to this position and instead chose an officer (major) junior in rank to the colonel. This major was a British officer who was not even a combatant officer. Colonel Ganda rightly complained about this. But he was cashiered out of the army as a result and given a diplomatic post in Britain.

Politics got so deep into the army that Lieutenant Colonel Ganda and myself were branded as APC supporters. Colonel Ganda was a soft spoken gentleman, he was very respected, he was interested in a children programme titled "Uncle Ambrose" in which he was presenting forest animals like snakes, monkeys, chameleon. He was very popular in the army and that did not go down with Lansana because popularity bothered him. The next thing was that Colonel Ganda came from Moyamba, he was very close to Sir Albert and Madam Ella Koblo Gulama. I think that created a state of panic in the army.

I was sent to Daru under a foreign commander with a letter that associated me with politicians. I never knew about this. I went there to do my work. In the end the commander found out my character was at variance with what the letter said about me. Then he produced a letter to confirm what he said to me. This letter was written by Brigadier Lansana accusing me of being a politician, of associating with politicians and that I should be sent to Pademba Road. I asked the Commander if I could get a copy of the letter he said no, he would not go that far, that he has already done enough to show me the letter, that giving me a copy would be too much. I dropped the issue. About six months later he recommended that I was over due for promotion and that I was wasting over there. I was transferred to Freetown and appointed as Adjutant of the military academy. It was while I was there that I became aware of the trend politics had taken in the army because politics was moving at a break neck speed. Political Parties was trying to get voting. The Brigadier was busy putting together his political his war machine. He had organized on traveling bases, group of officers and men to counter the elections that was going to come. I didn't know about this though I had seen the signs all over the place. I knew something was wrong and something was going on but I was in the military academy then. They invited me to his house and he brought the subject; he told me what he was going to do. I listen and I thought this was a mistake. I sat there watching all the officers who were coming in either from the West or from the East. I mean the South or the East, I never saw a single officer from the North or the Western Area. I became disillusioned over the whole thing. I said it was bias and it was not going to work. So he left me briefly and all of them went into another room. By the time he came

back I had left his building. I never went there again. So this thing continued. He did not call for me again. Then eventually all the officers and men from the Western Area and the North were disarmed, all ammunition were removed from them whilst the other segment had ammunitions. But these other officers took contingency measures and for that we were arrested and thrown into prisons on framed up charges of wanting to overthrow Sir Albert. We believed no matter what happened the election result should decide who was to rule and we also believed, I particularly believed, that it would have been a very beautiful thing for democracy for Sierra Leone for the government to go into opposition. I believed then, I do believe it now that if Sir Albert had gone into opposition it would have been very difficult if not impossible for Siaka Stevens to become a dictator in this country.

I believe what we face today started from that moment when politicians were not prepared to accept the result of the choice of the people. From that incident a lot of things happened. Violence was introduced into the political arena, unemployed youths from all over the country were incited unto violence for political reasons. That ugly phenomenon is still with us. After the elections these youths were abandoned, their lives were not organized, jobs were not provided for them, they were left high and dry without bearing. So what happened, they had been disgraced, Freetown was too small to keep all of them, so they resort to sleeping in King Jimmy and they complained about it because we invited them unto politics. They established their own businesses they started selling diamba, cocaine and cheap wine. After they had been used and abandoned they had no way to go and nothing to do but to continue in the trade that they had been introduced into, and this culminated into war. Young men and women who were starving and had no work no homes, no bearings, in short they had no life at all. Those men were ready, they could go into anything and they were easy targets for those who were recruiting for rebels. Even now you could find them in the corners, King Jimmy, go there every time and you see these people there and the most painful sight is that you have children been brought into this setting, growing up in that setting. What happened in the past is being perpetuated, the future of our lives are not organized.

There is also the Institutionalization of corruption. This was made manifest in the statement of Siaka Stevens when he said that they are talking about Bailor Barrie and you are talking about Davidson Nicol. This means "while people are talking about money you are talking about education, are we surprised about what is happening now. Did not our political leaders engender corruption?"

Then another President came on, he said education is a privilege and not an obligation. Only those who could afford it sent their children to school, and those who could not were transformed into thieves. We see the police picking up the pick picketers everyday.

Siaka Stevens wanted to stay in power by all means and used all means. After that, of course, we had the mushrooming of military governments. This started as a result of the action of Colonel Jumu who was then the battalion commander Politics had already been introduced into the army and it included our arrests, which we knew was going to be explosive. It precipitated the actions of Colonel Jumu when he arrested Brigadier Lansana, Siaka Stevens and the Governor General Sir Lightfoot Boston immediately. That was a noble action. I applauded that action. But it went wrong when they formed a military government; that was the beginning of a wrath that is still eating the further of the country. All they could have done to uphold the constitution was to have listened to the Governor General and spearheaded the constitutional replacement of a civilian government They did not have to go and put the Prime Minister in jail, put the Force Commander in jail and the leader of the opposition and other authorities in jail. That was the first mistake. Though I served as a commissioner I one of the subsequent probes, it was not my intention to be part of any mechanism that entrenched the overthrow of any government. It is not my business but I shall never be afraid to tell those in power that they are doing wrong when they are doing wrong. That happened when Siaka Stevens created a joint Army Police structure which was wrong. The function of the Army is quite distinct from that of the Police. The police is a civil force, you don't bring them and the army together in an operation. Let the police do their operation and

where they could not handle the situation, they could of course invite the army. But bringing the army into a civil affair or an uprising which the police should handle is abusing the army and misusing it to oppress the people. The joint police army structure, purportedly set up to combat crimes soon degenerated into an instrument for the persecution of opposition parties, as was seen in the arrest of UDP members (United Democratic Party) and the Doctor Sahid. Army commanders would start instructing people to go and arrest people and Police Officers started grumbling about the illegality of the operation. The apprehension was all over. I did not know about it but they know that I was very close to Major Farahjoya. He was my friend so they grumbled to him that what they were doing was illegal and that they had to consult the Brigadier.

So Farah told me. I asked him if he was sure. He said yes, I said where did you get this information from. He said from the Police, but that it was passed on to him by Amadu Kargbo. We went to Amadu Kargbo, he took us to the Police Officers and asked them about the operation. They said this thing was unconstitutional, and that our colleagues had condemned the members of the NRC for the same action. We have been pushed into something that would land us in the condemn cell like those people. So I went to the Brigadier, I asked him if the operation was constitutional. He said he did not know, I said 'Brigadier you don't know and you are risking our lives. No, Brigadier this operation is going to stop now, I'm stopping it. I asked him to call the commissioner of Police Mr. Jenkins Smith. We decided to meet in the morning, and that no body in the interim should go out on an operation and I went out and dismissed everybody.

The following morning at 10 O' clock, we went to meet the Commissioner of Police. We found them in their conference hall. No senior police or army officer was absent, we were all there. The Commander brought the subject up, the commissioner told us that the operation was illegal. This was stupid, how can we be taking part in an illegal operation similar to that for which our colleagues were in the condemn cell. We would not confront the Prime Minister with the issue; he would say something else. So we decided to take the matter to our commander in chief, the governor general to explain to him the situation, that he could talk to the prime minister to drop

the operations. We drove up to the governor general and the Brigadier addressed the General on the issue. The Governor General was shocked. 'What is this?' he asked, 'are you people arresting politicians? why did you do that? The prime minister never told me about it. The Prime Minister does things without telling me.'

We suggested to him that he tells the Prime Minister to drop the operation, and that we are not planning anything against him. The governor-general thanked and asked us to come back at 12 0' clock, the same day. He said he was going to get the Prime Minister and his Cabinet to explain this matter and he wanted us to be there.

At 12 0' clock we all met in the office of the governor general. Fortunately I was ten minutes late. As I was arriving I saw a group of soldiers coming up independent avenue with all sorts of weapons, singing songs of praise to the Prime Minister and the APC and condemning the Army and the Police. I parked my car, walked out of the door, took out my revolver, lifted it up for all of them to see and told them to stop singing immediately and that everybody should go and wait for the Prime Minister at his office. As I turned around moving into the hall The Honorable S.I. Koroma and C.A. Kamara-Taylor were coming out. I told them not to worry, that everything is over as I have dispatched them. The two men thanked me and said that the guys could have caused some trouble in the place. I laughed and said there was no way that these boys would have caused any trouble, that they would have met determined resistance from the army, and that the trouble would have turned against them. We turned around and they sandwiched me, both of them. We moved on and S.I told me I was their man and should not join those people in there. He told me they knew what the guys were planning and that I should not be a Party to it. I replied that since they knew, and I did not, I should go into the meeting to find out, and that whatever I do would then be observed by the government. We entered the hall. The Governor General, the Prime Minister, Force Commander, army and police officers were all present. The force commander was saying that what they agreed upon went on stage was the First Commander on the carpet that was not what we agreed on, that they they did not come to the

meeting to be blamed by the Governor General, but rather to witness the Governor General advising the Prime Minister that the operation was illegal.

The First Commander turned to the Police and Army officers for confirmation, but nobody stood up for him, they abandoned him. I felt bad, mad, I really went out of my head, then moved into the centre of the hall, asked the First Commander to sit down and then turned to the Governor General and asked him whether it was not him that told us the operation was illegal and that he was going to tell the Prime Minister. He finally answered in the affirmative after I repeatedly posed the question to him. 'Why then,' I asked, 'was he blaming the Force Commander' He finally told the Prime Minister what we agreed upon and the matter was resolved.

What I am trying to show here is that the caliber of the officers in the army at the time were not the same, and that there were others who would have done what I did to put things aright while at the same time maintaining respect for the authority. But we did not want them to use us the way they wanted. Some allowed it and saw it as an opportunity to fly to the top of the officer corps. We saw the result of this later when you have private soldiers shooting up to Lieutenants and lieutenant to Colonel and Brigadier General. What sort of nonsense is that? This was the trauma we went through when the civilians layed lots of politics with the military, and soldiers sat down and allowed the destruction of this beautiful institution with impunity.

Siaka Stevens institutionalized corruption because he wanted to keep his power at all cost. Everybody could do whatever he wanted to do as long as it did not touch Siaka Stevens' power. But even if he was dreaming and you were some cause of some misfortune to him in the dream, if you are not careful, you wold see yourself the next day before a kangaroo court, found guilty and hanged.

You look at the judiciary and wonder how members of such a respectable institution that should upkeep the constitution and protect our rights and liberty would allow themselves to be used by

people like Siaka Stevens. For instance while Brigadier Bangura and others were being tried, parliament passed a law that affected these people there and then and they were eventually hanged. The judiciary allowed all this to happen right under their noses. Go even now to Pademba Road and see how people are still on remand for more than two years. Soon the place is an incubator of criminals, people come out of as hardened criminals. Lawyers have too many case loads and there are lots of delays in delivering justice. People are not getting justice, which as we all know is integral to our constitution.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I feel that your presentations both verbal and written are so interesting and very educating and resourceful to this Commission. I have some questions for you. So we were wondering whether you could zero-in and round up so we would have time to ask you questions.

Major (rtd) Noah: Mr. Commissioner you know I spent 10 years 8 months in jail wrongfully because Siaka Stevens would have brought Guinean soldiers here without informing us. We stopped the coup, but there was some misinformation about Sierra Leone being at war with Guinea, and Guinean soldiers invited by Siaka Stevens were all over the place taking shots at the soldiers and that created tensions in the barracks. So we said we should have a meeting with the prime minister and his ministers. The meeting took place in the town hall. Again I was late. When I arrived, my first shock was to see a Guinean Lieutenant with guns piled on the ground which obviously he had taken from my colleague officers and soldiers who had gone to the meeting. He told me to surrender my gun. I said, 'what! you come all the way from Guinea to this country to ask for my gun in my country. I am the constitutional soldier here. What right has he. I pushed him, moved two steps above him, turned round and said to him I am going to that hall with my gun, that the only way you can stop me is to shoot me. He didn't move so I entered the hall and when I got there I found all our officers in there surrounded by Guinean soldiers who were carrying arms, giving the impression that they had quelled the coup. I got angry. Tom Caulker was chosen to address the Prime Minister. He was talking but I looked around at the

faces of these Guinean Soldiers and their conquering stance I got extremely angry and walked up to Tom Caulker and told him to sit down. I turned to the Prime Minister and said if these funny people dared fight again in this country again we will deal with them so well that they would not forget us in a hurry. I asked that the Guinean leave the hall. The prime minister told them to do that. But I also added that if any one of them should fire a single shot in the country, we would interpret that as a declaration of war and we shall attack them. Then I told the Prime Minister that we were fed up with the bloodshed in the country and that we have killed and killed but there seemed to be no end to the killings.

**THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS**

TAPE CODE: TAPE 23 W 23

DATE OF HEARING/INTERVIEW: DAY 3 WEEK 2 - 23/07/2003

**NAMES OF WITNESS: BRIMA ACHA KAMARA
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE**

**NAMES OF COMMISSIONER: COMMISSIONER MRS SOOKA
COMMISSIONER BISHOP HUMPER
COMMISSIONER JUSTICE
MARCUS-JONES**

TRANSCRIBER: MARY-ROSE A.T. GANDA

SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: We have received your submission. I would ask that you not read the whole submission but address us on the issues that are raised in your submission please.

Acha: Mr. Chairman, members of the TRC, on behalf of the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) let me thank you very much for inviting us to give out our own view of what went wrong during the eleven (11) years civil war. My presentation will take the form of giving the historical account of the SLP, the problems encountered during the war, and the way forward. I sit here as a proud and honoured representative of our noble institution to present our views to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. These views are based on victims and perpetrators. We were both perpetrators and victims during the war. My presentation is a clear manifestation that we in the SLP honestly believe in the principles of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. First, I will start with the legal status of the SLP. The 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone, section 1551 act number six (6) of 1991, stipulates what the functions of the police are and its relationship to the state. It is directly under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and its main duties are the protection of life and property and keeping the peace. The first day after independence, when the police act of 1964 was enacted, successive governments used the police to restrain the army from politics and to stifle opposition. When Siaka Stevens became Prime Minister in 1967, and the plans to un-sit him failed, he began to rely more on the police than the military to protect him under-take his state functions. Recently, a para-military wing was formed in the police, and gradually, it became an instrument of tyranny and suppression. This was the start of the drift from its traditional peace keeping constitutional rule to that of a fighting force and a subsequent failure to protect the people from the excesses of the state. This fighting force was used to suppress all segments of society; including members of the opposition party, the army, youths, and others who were perceived as threats to the Stevens administration. Successive government continued to use the police force to suppress opposition in all its forms. However, there did not appear to be any visible beneficiaries. Neither did the political nor the police leadership care for the men and women under their command. The police leadership was corrupt and self-serving. They cared only for themselves and used their position to

amass as much personal wealth as they could. This was clearly to the detriment of the junior personnel who were deliberately kept in abject poverty. In as much they were being used against political opponents, these aggressors had their own agendas to acquire wealth through corrupt and unjust means. The same was also the case with many of those with grievances against the state. They would, to gain recognition and support, advance the grievances as the motivating factor. We all know that, the cause of the rebel war in Sierra Leone varies across individuals and organisation. You may say that, at the start of the conflict the grievance explanation seemed convincing but as the war progressed, it became apparent that the self became greater than the good of the state. It became clear that as a result of personal greed and the thirst for economic and political power. As I said earlier, the SLP as an institution suffered as a victim as well as a perpetrator. Several factors were responsible for this dual role, and if I may, I will attempt to catalogue some of them so that we'll get a very clear view of where we were, where we are and where we want to be in the future. However, the most important factor is that we want to put where we were behind us, and concentrate on our future as an institution that is committed to protecting human life and property.

The Politicization of the police: the deployment of the SLP continued as it distracted from its constitutional duties. The police spent less and less time protecting the individuals in society. The rule of law that says that, 'No one is above the law' and that all men will be treated equally regardless of their status, was blatantly ignored. People were arrested and locked up for taking alluvial diamonds found on apparently common land but the corrupt practices carried on in high government circles, the diversion of millions of dollars away from the state and into private bank accounts, no one was ever arrested for these. The checks and balances surrounding the doctrine of separation of powers - those who have the power to make the legislation are constitutionally kept separate from the upholders of those legislations - were ignored. The Inspector General of Police whose constitutional powers revolved around protecting the lives of the individual was key to that process. But, ironically, he was brought into that process, into the political arena. He was given a seat in the cabinet and invited to contribute to the debates in parliament. If ever there was a time when the IGP wanted to raise a voice against the excesses of the government, once inside the parliamentary machine, he was silenced. Like promotions, postings had become so politicized that they were done either at state house or Parliament, in many cases, without any reference to the IGP, SLP and indeed the police council.

I now go on the transformation of the Police into an instrument of Tyranny. The traditional role of the SLP is to keep the peace. However, previous governments succeeded in transforming it into an instrument of tyranny. Politicians and people in high places used police personnel when they wanted to plant or manufacture evidence on people whom they saw as threats. This was no secret. People were tortured at the Criminal Investigation Department and forced to falsely admit their involvement in cases of treason, murder, or any high profile case. Armed policemen were used to terrorize the people and regularly used to raid their homes and harass the youths. In fact, they would terrorize anyone who was perceived as being a threat to the administration. The special branch was solely used to spy on political opponents of the government. At times, it would appear that only personnel who were loyal to the party were posted to the Special Branch. They reported directly to the powers that be, rather than to the head of the force. In fact, some members of the force certainly contributed to the early demise of some former Inspector Generals of Police. There is no doubt that they have good skills but the intrusive nature of their inquiries was channeled towards what the politicians wanted rather than what the citizens needed.

The general public, victims, relatives and the youths themselves did not take kindly to this. When the opportunity came through a rebel war, we saw the army, armed civilians, masquerading as members of the Civil Defense Force and some unarmed civilians attacking, maiming burning and killing police personnel and destroying buildings, vehicles, and other forms of police equipments.

I will now talk about recruitment and promotion malpractices. It is crystal clear that any well meaning organization has an objective recruitment policy that is aimed at bringing in good quality people who would support and improve the organization. However as a result of the politicization of the force to engender the affiliation of political patronage of the police to its party politics, most of the new recruits were deliberately targeted because they were not competent. Many were illiterate and within a very short time, effective service delivery of SLP was to a large extent diminished. Others were targeted because they had reputation for being able to cause people to comply with the wishes of the political masters. These political thugs were thought to be useful assets and they were sent to the police for recruitment. This simply means that we were infiltrated. The same applied to promotions. Traditionally, promotion was merit based and the selection process was used to fill vacancies with those officers who had earned the respect of their senior officers. However, it all changed. It was from amongst this incompetent bunch that personnel were taken and promoted to higher ranks. This happened through nepotism, cronyism and often, as a reward for dubious favors. These officers – both junior and senior – moved up the ladder not because of their ability but because they had their various godfathers. They were prepared to serve their godfathers instead of the communities. Invariably, they were not working in the interest of safety and security of the state. Owing to the inhuman ways in which many of the police conducted themselves in maintaining the status quo the public no longer trusted their local police. They had no confidence in anyone in the SLP to protect them. Additionally, within the police, there were many competent, hardworking officers who were kept down. Well, they too

began to harbor a sense of grievance. One strategy they embarked upon was to informally join the rebels by passing on vital information to ensure the success of the rebels with the sole intention of catapulting these godfathers out of positions of influence.

I'll go into another area: **POSTINGS AND TRANSFERS:** Postings and transfer of police traditionally, are done by senior police officers who allegedly have the expertise and competence to objectively assess the suitability of the police officer to perform a task in a given situation. But what happened in the police force was that people were put as square pegs in round holes. What would regularly happen was that top politicians gave names to senior police officers with instruction that they should be posted or transferred to specific areas of interest like Kono, traffic, etc

UNLAWFUL DISMISSALS: many police officers were unlawfully dismissed on trumped up charges and that is the difference between the leadership then and the leadership of today. These dismissals culminated in the final unlawful dismissal of thirteen (13) very senior police officers by the NPRC. Almost the entire leadership of the force was wiped out. Others were imprisoned and tortured. Most of them again joined the militias and caused mayhem during the rebel war. Another is **EXTRA-JUDICIAL KILLINGS:** in 1992, as the war progressed, the army decided to cease power. Some Senior Police Officers, police drivers and laborers who were on drinking spree at Lumpa, Waterloo were arrested and falsely accused of treason. They were later summarily executed. Some other officers were brutally murdered by the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), another warring faction, an act that caused despair to many police officers and their relatives. This fanned the flames of enmity with the families of the massacred officers, which in turn led to them to helping the rebels. The circumstances under which the police officers were killed, clearly indicated that the enemy forces ignored the conventional rules of engagement in conflict. Our records revealed that throughout the war, a total of two hundred and ninety-three (293) police personnel were killed. Forty-two (42) wounded and thirty-seven (37) missing in action. Making a grand total of three hundred and seventy-two (372). This, to me, is an astronomical number. This is of considerable operational and economic cost to the organization. The first victim of both the Koindu and Zimmi attacks were police officers. The Civil Defense Forces in Bo and Kenema killed close to fifty (50) police officers and during the reign of the AFRC close to two hundred (200) police personnel were killed. The killings of these unarmed police officers can be linked to the killing of unarmed civilians. Police officers are citizens in uniform, thus, it is tantamount to gross violation of international humanitarian law. I think, the perpetrators must take full responsibility for the sake of peaceful co-existence.

THE POLITICS OF RICE: It was during this period that we saw some of our most senior men receiving over five hundred (500) bags of rice per month, whilst the junior ranks received (1) bag. This was regardless of the size of the family they supported. According to spectators at the time, it was heart rendering to see that at times even this one bag was taken from some of the most junior officers by the same senior officers who would have received his or her five-hundred (500) bags of rice. Most surprisingly, the end result was the start of a grudge against those in authority and a big rift set in between the junior and the senior officers.

It was reported that shortly after this, some of these aggrieved officers began to support the rebels and many soiled their ranks.

PUBLIC ORDER ACTIVITIES AND THE ABUSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

The police are constitutionally bound to keep the peace and be legally responsible. The legitimacy of their actions does not extend into suppressing dissenting views. However, the police did use this power to control governmental opposition and those who had held dissenting opinions. Processions and demonstrations held by opposition parties, students or pressure groups for which the police had no political backing would always be turned down. The effect of this public denial was that the groups chose to go under-ground. If they could not vent out their grievances in the open, they resorted to private clandestine methods. We could not effectively put in place any intelligence network to monitor these underground networks. Any spontaneous outburst were put down heavy handedly. Subsequently, most of these aggrieved people joined the ranks of the rebels and then targeted the police. Others, as a result of the tyrannical attitude of the police and treatment they received from the police, store up anger waiting for the right moment to retaliate. Some were tortured and forced to admit wrong doings and many of the innocent were sent to prison. When the rebels released them from the prison, they were seen as their saviors and they immediately wrecked havoc on the police and anything that gave them cause to remember what the police had done to them.

THE HALLMARK OF THE REBELLION : the rebellion was marred by destruction, terror and violence, the likes never seen or perpetrated anywhere before. The atrocities have been well documented elsewhere and those surrounding the amputation and brandings witnessed in Freetown were simply a replica of what was happening in the rural areas. With the above scenarios, the organization was wildly viewed as a citadel of corruption, an instrument of tyranny, an obstacle to the socio economic progress of Sierra Leone. Before the war, the police was confronted with problems of all sorts ranging from the shortage of logistics to welfare issues of personnel. The war brought along its own problem. It hindered effective service delivery, increased the crime rate and any movement of personnel and logistics was a complete nightmare. We became targets for the various warring faction and policing was limited to only government-controlled areas. We were also faced with the enormous challenge of maintaining a balance between containing the enemy forces and performing our traditional roles. As I said before we were not spared. Although I am really trying to explain the role of the police during the war, and we know that many saw us as perpetrators, we need to tell you that we also suffered as victims. Today, we are short of manpower to effectively police the country and we are now running a non-stop recruitment drive. This is one of the effects of the war that we are now facing. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the catalogue of the areas I've already listed, many police officers were either killed or declared missing in action at the forefront. Some of our personnel officially joined the ranks of the army and were killed in active service whiles defending their motherland. Others were trained by ECOJMOG peacekeepers at Lungi to help remove the AFRC from power. In fact, it is a common knowledge that without the OSD having a defensive position along the Congo Cross Bridge the rebels would have over-run the whole city. In the process, some were killed in battle, others brutally murdered by the various factions. Their only alleged crime was that they were police officers. To

really portray the depth of hatred against the police personnel, mere pictures or uniform of police personnel were considered legitimate targets. To illustrate a point, it is known that whenever the RUF rebels entered any town their first task was to locate the police station and structures and target the personnel. Both will be burnt and killed respectively. The damage to structures and equipments is so enormous that it is difficult to attach realistic cost. Just as they saw us as legitimate targets, so too did they target the SLP infrastructure.

Our encounter with the armed factions through investigations and intelligence from other sources indicated that the RUF in particular, was getting support from certain rogue states. Collaboration from within the country was also a worrying problem for the Sierra Leone Police. The internal collaboration became more apparent when the RUF joined forces with some elements of the national army. Now, what is the way forward? The guns have now fallen silent and we pray to the almighty God that the situation shall remain like that for some time to come. The question now is, how do we maintain this new found peace and what do we do in the years to come to ensure that such a horrible nightmare does not befall this nation? The war brought untold sufferings to the people of this country creating in the process, deep seated resentment that can be a real obstacle to peaceful co-existence.

I believe one way is through the TRC and the restorative justice system. Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa observed that an offence injures a relationship. But restorative justice, he said, can restore that injured relationship. As an organization, we could not agree with him more on this. We pray that the Sierra Leone TRC be another success story. However, to achieve this goal, the perpetrators must muster the courage to confess their misdeeds and beg for forgiveness. The victims too, for the sake of peace, should forgive. Even psychologists have contended that forgiveness is good for one's health. Such bold and courageous actions can surely provide a free state for peace co-existence. At this juncture, please allow me to rest as I feel free. Free in the sense that, as perpetrators of the war and a repressive arm of the government during the pre-war years, the general public, including the various combatants, saw the police as an enemy. This battered image alienated the police from the community. As an organization we confess and apologize for our misdeeds to the public at large. Today, we are policing through mutual cooperation. That is, local unit policing. The populace has once more accepted their police – the cooperation and the appreciation is enormous, otherwise, we would not have been sitting here today. I repeat, I feel free because today, before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we have officially vented out our feelings, our position, the mistrust and misgiving throughout this ten (10) years civil war. I hope all will appreciate, forgive us and we all will turn a new page so that we push Mother Sierra Leone forward. To ensure that we provide an efficient and effective service to the community, we are appealing to the government and the people of Sierra Leone, and to some extent, to the international Community to do their best to improve our conditions of service. I have already outlined the functions of the police and its primary peacekeeping role. The constable is the lowest rank of the service. But it is at that junior rank that the majority of the service delivery is carried out. It is the constable that has the power to arrest for a multitude of criminal offences. It is the constable who is patrolling the streets at night. Yet the pay and conditions of service for a

person with so much power is a bit small. The salary that the constable takes home each month is the equivalent of a sack of rice and a sack of onions with a little left over to buy some loaves of bread. To us, as an organization, we see it as tantamount to an abuse their human rights.

The police is being challenged by local needs policing, and because of that, recently, we have established, throughout the country, local policing partnership. The government policing charter and our police emission statement came about as a result of the Inspector General of Police asking His Excellency, the President about the style of policing he wanted for the Sierra Leoneans. That document is a government's decision for policing in Sierra Leone. And the mission statement tells the public how we, the SLP, will deliver that style of policing. The local Policing Partnership boxes are the medium where we ask the communities what their concerns are and to help us tackle crime in the neighborhood. The civil society is our focus, and in that vain; we are establishing local partnership bonds nationally. It is part of our strong commitment to provide a service to the individuals who live in diverse range of communities throughout Sierra Leone. We know that to become an efficient service the police has to be free from corruption; not only corruption, but also political interference. We are now going through a period of time when the community is visibly showing that their trust in the police service is returning to how it used to be. However, there is a negative side to what I have just said and I want to be realistic. I believe we all agree in the type of police service we need to feel safe in our beds. But we can not expect the police to deliver a professional service on a less than professional wage. If you ask members of our complaints, discipline and internal investigation department, what is the number one reason why police officers take bribes on the streets, they will tell you it is to feed the family or pay for their school-going expenses. The majority of our men and women live in poverty. Go to Kingtom or Ross Road barracks and see for yourselves. There is overcrowding. Temporal structures are springing all over the barracks. There are not enough barracks for our new recruits, the ones we need to replace those who we have lost in the war, our men and women are sleeping rough. Some are sleeping on the floors of friends' houses. Others are paying exorbitant rents for one room. Our terms and conditions of serving include a rent allowance; it is Le1,000.00 per month, a bottle of coke costs more. What we need now as part of our own TRC is adequate recompense for the professional job we do. Good housing conditions and appropriate allowances in view of accommodation. Our welfare scheme is limited. We would like to expand it to include some form of maintenance to support the families of our personnel who were killed or are missing in action. Micro-finance opportunities will also be used for the police' wives and their children; to help support their families. We also need adequate logistics including transportation and communication to help us bear the burden with the community. At times, those in remote areas feel vulnerable; more so, along the Liberian border. Above all, what we will like to see is the dearest minimum so that we can begin to put the past behind us and ever sleep in peace and harmony. The period of the rebel war needs to be relegated to history books for our descendants to read and understand just exactly what went on in Sierra Leone and why the police suffered the way they did. In order to build the new Sierra Leone, which will be a land of prosperity, adhering to formal democratic practices and the rule of law, it is appropriate that those who are responsible for igniting the machinery of justice should have their terms

and conditions of service improved. We in the Sierra Leone Police, on our part, have forgiven all those who traumatized us. Those who killed and maimed, maimed our colleagues, brutalized their families, raped our wives and daughters, burnt our houses and police stations during those turbulent years. We do, however, hope that none of this will ever occur. It is an organization, which with all intents and purposes continues to be a force for good. We hope for everlasting peace in the land that we love, Sierra Leone, Thank you.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: Thank you very much for that. It's usual for us to ask you questions. I'm going to ask my colleagues if they have questions for you.

Commissioner Bishop Humber: Inspector General Kamara, I want to use this opportunity on behalf of my colleagues to congratulate you on your elevation to that enviable office, a very tasking office of Inspector General of Police.

Acha: Thank you Sir.

Chairman: We are most fortunate in that even before your elevation you had manifested great interest in the TRC and had worked with us and designated somebody to work with us. We want to say here that we very much appreciate the contribution that this institution had been making and continue to make towards the accomplishment of the mandate of the commission. I have great temptation to talk too much, but I will not. I will leave most of what is in the presentation to be addressed by my colleagues. We have called you as a symbolic representation of that institution to address a few pertinent questions that are very crucial for the work of the commission. We have some resume, a synopsis of these issues but I want to read them, probably for you to take note of them, and my colleagues will be dealing with these issues within this context. The questions the commission continues to grapple with includes among others: 1, why Sierra Leone? 2, what went wrong? 3, what needs to change? 4. who must effect the change? 5, who are the beneficiaries of this change? This is what I foremost in the mind of the Commission, in everything we have been doing, I now want, as my colleagues engage you for clarifications want you to know that we are clearly aggrieved as a commission that in order to deal with the antecedent of the war, we start from the year, 1961. So, you have helped us to an extent. But for clarification we would like to view the police in the context of the following periodization.:

1960 to 1961.

1964 – 1967

1967-1970

1971 – 1985

1985 – 1992

1992 – 1996

1996 – 1997

1998 – 2000

the year 2000 to present

The commissioners will not be quoting these dates but it is within this context, this boarder context that your paper, as we see, is presented and we all are familiar with the history of this country. That's why I have tried to analyze it in my own way so you have this at the back of your mind. Indeed you have rightly quoted that the 1991 constitution, and in that constitution, section 161-25-1 Act no. 6 states, "among the duties of

the police force, is the protection of life and property and keeping the peace. And this is what I think also the commissioner believe in. Because, as the questions come, we have to put them in context. In the universal declaration of human rights, 1948 December 10, stipulates among other things that every human being has the right to belong to a group, to an association, to free expression of views and you constitutionally have the right to vote and be voted for.

Within this broader context, the one simple question, I.G. that does not require much labouring over is, as a police force, as citizens of this nation, regardless of your own group affiliation, what is required of you in the discharge of your responsibilities in accordance with the constitution?

Acha: Thank you very much Sir. I see a tripartite relationship in this whole scenario.

There is the government that employs us to give certain services, you have the public at the other end who will be receiving these services and you have the police. And the police organisation has contracted individuals, us to do specific tasks in order for us to meet our own obligation. I believe both the public and the government have their own dual role to assist the police and if the government or the people do not do their own bargain, I don't believe the police force will be in that position to effectively deliver quality service. As an organisation, in accordance with their constitution, we really have to make sure that there is peace in this country. There are times, as an organisation, we ask too much from the public and the government. Then we do not ask ourselves, what are we doing? So, in order to answer the questions, it behoves us, really, to deliver the service that the constitution stipulates. But this is predicated on other issues.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: As a commission, we have the responsibility of establishing an impartial historical record and in our work, if we get somebody, a witness, coming to either name names or institutions in regard to Thematic Hearings or public hearings, we have the responsibility of cross-checking. So, yesterday, you might have listened to the radio or you will listen later, one of our witnesses here maintained that the Dombolo (meaning trouble) that befell this nation was largely the responsibility of the army and police. What do you say about that?

Acha: I absolutely do not agree with that; with his statement. The police lives within a sub system, a larger system, and mind you, if the political

atmosphere is not conducive, we cannot do anything. And it is because of the present president; because of the vision he's got for the police, that is why, in fact, we are making great improvements. So let's start from the political situation in the country. Under the one party state, there were many honest police officers but because the political powers were corrupt, it affected all sections of the community. If you look at the two systems, now because we have somebody as president, a leader who has a vision, who knows the problem, that's why in his government policing charter, he says "this is how I want the police to perform; to tackle corruption, involve the community, this is exactly, as an institution, what we are doing. If we had been in a military state, this improvement in the force would not have come. So let us look at the bigger picture instead of blaming individuals. We were politicized. We were corrupted from above and if you don't heed them, either you will be dismissed or your family will suffer.

As an organization, we have so many forces impacting on us; political, economic, social, so we behave according to those forces. So in order for us to cut off this vicious circle of politicization we need to work, really, as a unit and stop the mutual blaming game.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you, I.G. my second to last question is a pro-proposition so I want to present it to you. Is it a tenable proposition that institutionalized corruption, the get rich quick syndrome for personal aggrandizement, the prostitution of the constitution, apathy, call it indifference to the cry of the poor masses contributed in no small measure to the political and socio-economic demise of this nation during the period under review?

Acha: I agree with you sir

Chairman: One other important question is that, it has been asserted in many circles that tribalism, sectionalism and nepotism were considered requisite qualification, and not the formal qualification itself for the recruitment of the police force. If you so subscribe to this view, what effect does this have on the effective and efficient functioning of this institution?

Acha: In my presentation, I touched on it and it's quite true that all of this affected the quality of personnel we had in the SLP. And up till this day, we still have some of them who have been catapulted – given senior ranks, without really performing their present role. And because of it, if you go through the government policing charter, the president has said that all of our policies will be based on equal opportunities. So we've got an equal opportunities department and our recruitment promotion nowadays is very much transparent. So much that we have not been getting policemen grumbling nor going through the press to challenge the decisions we have made. It's a very transparent decision; it's no longer a one man's show. At the top of it, we have the executive management board comprising police headquarters, staff, departmental (and regional commissioners). It is in this board, really that major decisions are taken and not as it used when a dictator would take all the decisions. We don't have a dictatorship in the police force. It is very transparent and even the constitution says that no one should be discriminated against because of his or her own tribe or the region he comes from.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I.G. the presiding chair will be asking you to do us some favour. On page ten (10) of your submission, you have some comprehensive

submission as a form of recommendation and the commission will be very much interested in helping us to say what concrete substantive achievable recommendations we would receive from your institution in order to make it a real force for good.

Commissioner Justice Marcus- Jones: I would like to thank the I.G. for his submission and for his presentation here this morning and I would like also to associate with the chairman in congratulating the I.G. I am sure he is going to get the support of the force. For one thing, the support we see here this morning, I don't think people have ever seen such support for any presenter to the TRC so, I think the future is bright for you, IG.

I want to extend sympathy to the police force for the loss they suffered during the ten (10) years conflict. Whilst we did our hearings, we listened to many accounts of violations against the relatives of members of the force. We even have on our staff, a member whose father was killed just because he had been a policeman at one time or another. So, we do appreciate your suffering and we sympathize with you as a commission.

This is not actually a question. It appears, from what we've been told here, in this commission that, and we know that we have perpetrators and the victims in this conflict and, we've found out that some victims were changed into perpetrators. For example, people who were abducted were trained, taught to use guns to loot, and they eventually, themselves became perpetrators. But I would think, from all we've heard that maybe the police force started off by being perpetrators and ended up being victims. And it appears also that the army and the police who were supposed to be protecting civilians and the state were not performing that duty and that if their duty had been performed properly, things would not have gone the way they did during the conflict. Do you have any questions or recommendations

Acha **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY**

- (i) The Constitutional provisions governing the SLP should be strictly adhered to by government if the Force is to be professionally administered.
- (ii) Improvements in the conditions of service/increase in salaries and allowances of SLP personnel.
- (iii) To improve accommodation facilities for the entire membership of the SLP. In lieu of accommodation, an allowance proportionate to the inflationary trend should be awarded from the current rate of Le1,000.00 to at least Le50,000.00 per month
- (iv) The families of those killed in action during the war should be compensated as was done in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces.
- (v) Micro -Credit schemes should be extended to police wives.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: We want to thank you for your presentation and recommendations. They have been noted. Thank you IG you may step down

Leader of evidence: Our next witness for this morning is Maj. Gen. T. S. Carew, Chief of Defence Staff.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: The full name of the witness and religious affiliation.

Carew: Major General Tom S. Carew. I am a Christian.

Oath was taken by Maj. Gen. Carew.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We want to welcome you here as CDS. We are delighted to have you as part of this nation building process we call TRC. So we encourage you to share with us whatever you want to share with us that will help us in this task. You are now welcome to give your presentation.

Carew: Mr. Chairman, members of this Commission, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. I will try to be very brief because my submission is already with you. It gives me the greatest privilege to appear before your Commission especially for the first time to make this submission at the public hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Furthermore, I like to seize this opportunity to congratulate you Mr. Chairman, your executive Secretary who is not here and gallant commissioners for organizing these hearings at this auspicious time in the history of our beloved Sierra Leone. The topic which I will be speaking about is the January 6 1999 rebel attack on Freetown which you wish me to give a talk on.

As you all know this day was very fundamental to the people of Sierra Leone and is commonly known as J-6 . It is an unforgettable date in the minds of all Sierra Leoneans especially Freetonians. The horrible memories of the actual events of the fatal day will linger in the minds of Sierra Leoneans for many years to come. Mr. Chairman in making this presentation, I will do it in a purely military style. I will give the aim, then the scope and then I will give a brief conclusion. Now the aim of my presentation is to give the sad event of the 6 January 1999 rebel attack on Freetown and its effects. In giving the scope, I will use the following:- I will briefly talk on the event before the attack, then the attack itself, then the effects of the attack.

So let me start with the events before the attack. Two weeks before the actual day of January 6, intelligence reports were coming in that the AFRC/RUF rebels were planning to invade the city of Freetown. During that period, the intervention force ECOMOG was solely responsible for security of the city, and indeed the entire country. Mr. Chairman, it was the same ECOMOG that won the single credit of flushing the AFRC junta from Freetown thereby paving the way for the restoration of the democratically elected government of the day. By that time, the national army was dormant and the bulk of the surrendered personnel had been camped at three locations and these are Lungi Garrison, Benguma Barracks and the National Stadium Swimming Pool. In my presentation or my submission to you, I mentioned certain problems that the heads were having at that particular time which I will not like to mention openly

but there was some problem with ECOMOG and their leadership. Well this strained relationship is attributed to petty jealousy. In essence we never made or they never made contingency plan for any attack of such nature. The rebels took advantage of the prevailing situation; they seize the initiative and thereby decided to attack the people. They started launching series of attacks on ECOMOG positions across the country. Their plan was to rapidly and systematically attack the city, attack any position from the north. Their main plan was to systematically attack the overstretched and thin ECOMOG deployment taking maximum advantage of the terrain. They were under the command of late Capt. S.A.J. Musa. Locations like Alikalia, Kono, Magburaka, Makeni were overrun after all these attacks from the north. They kept on the attack until they arrived on the outskirts of Freetown that is, the Waterloo general area. To be more specific, the armed forces training centre at Waterloo was their first target. At that time the ECOMOG leadership and indeed the traumatized populace did not fully trust the SLA troops to be very frank. So ECOMOG made sure all the encamped SLA personnel arms were securely kept in the barracks angle. So when the rebels eventually launched a surprise attack on the encamped troops at Benguma our own troops withdrew and Benguma fell easily to the rebels. So Mr. Chairman in the following mopping operations after their short-lived victory, the rebels proceeded to destroy everything they could lay hands on including the expensive military equipments, stores and ordinance. These rebels broke into the armory and took out all the light arms they could lay hands on and carried them away and even destroyed some of these heavy weapons so that in case we wanted to make a counter attack, it will not be possible for us. Without thinking of the danger involved SAJ Musa gave instant order to his rebels to set fire to the armory building which at that time was full of high explosives, heavy shells and dangerous bombs. In the ensuing high explosion, several rebels who were within the danger zone were all torn to pieces. SAJ Musa who gave the orders for the armory to be burnt down and who was himself on the spot also met his tragic and painful end. Mr. His entire skull was scattered. That was the demise of the man who had caused so much havoc and catastrophe on his fellow citizen and who was aiming to become the President of this country. Of course that was indeed divine providence and divine justice. Hours after the explosion, the few surviving rebels managed to drag his body from the scene along with the other casualties and they were put in an unmarred grave without any ceremony or military honour. SAJ Musa's death was indeed sad news to the rebels but a big blessing for government forces. With the death of this feared and notorious commander, the rebels were demoralized and temporarily thrown into terrain with no credible commander to take over the mantle of leadership. The junior rebels' commanders tried strenuously to put the men together to plan the diabolic invasion of the city.

Now let me talk on the attack on the city itself. The rebels invaded the city on Wednesday 6 January 1999. The actual invasion reached the ears of ECOMOG high command from forward ECOMOG troops at about 4.00a.m. It was not only a big surprise but also a great shock for the unsuspecting ECOMOG troops who took the rebel invading forces for civilians. The actual invasion started from the Eastern part of the city in the Calaba Town general area. The rebels disguised themselves and mingled with the huge exodus of civilians who were entering the city in waves as displaced persons. The rebels also tactically made maximum use of the prevailing darkness to conceal their identity and true strength.

Before daybreak they had penetrated the centre of Freetown and had started firing from all directions in the East and centre of the city to throw residents into a state of panic, confusion and pandemonium. In no time the rebels had taken over these areas. Okay as I just say, even the ECOMOG Generals in the ECOMOG headquarters at Cockeril were all shocked, astonished and dumbfounded when this ugly incident took place.

In their attempt to dominate the entire Freetown, the invading rebels proceeded to extend the attack to the West end of the city but were met by a very strong ECOMOG resistance at Congo Bridge where they suffered incredible and fatal casualties.

That was the first offensive operations of ECOMOG which I was part to halt the invading rebels. The ECOMOG troops under the command of one Major Musa made a surprise deadly ambush that totally engulfed the leading elements of the rapidly advancing rebels. All the leading vehicles and their occupants were blown to pieces in that particular encounter. And indeed this greatest single victory by ECOMOG against the rebels broke their invisibility and put a final halt to their rapid advance from the East end of Freetown. As I said earlier ladies and gentlemen, during all of this period, the national army was dormant; ECOMOG was solely responsible for the security of the country with the Nigerian born General Timothy Shelpidi as Force Commander. General Abu Amadu as Ecomog Task Force Commander and then General Khobe as our Chief of Defense Staff. To drive home this point, I will just give a simple example. I was Colonel in charge of Administration; I was placed under a Captain to control me. So this shows exactly how dormant the SLA was. At that Congo Bridge encounter, after having halted the rebels' advances towards the west at Congo Bridge, Ecomog finally seized the initiative and embark on decisive attacking, pursuing the retreating rebel elements. After three days of fierce gun battle and massive bombardments, ECONOG forces in a three fold simultaneous attack on the rebel positions cleared the rebels from Brookfields, Kingtom, New England, Pademba Road area and the whole of the central Freetown up to Eastern police end. Having suffered serious casualties and setbacks, the rebels had no choice but to beat a top retreat in the face of the rapid ECOMOG assault. These fleeing rebels started to vent in their anger on defenseless civilians and carrying out wholesale burning of government buildings and civilian residences and vehicles. They did not stop there. They also started acts of amputating, mutilating and massacring innocent civilians including women and children. Of course, Mr. Chairman, sorry to say that the only casualty on our part on that particular day was the loss of one Major J.B. Arrow and one Junior Personnel who was with us. As a result of these two casualties, government troops temporarily halted the pursuit to evacuate the casualty and wait for fresh reinforcement. General Khobe and myself coordinated this. Early the next day, we received the reinforcement and we started the advance. As I said we started the advance the next day. At that time to be very frank, there was little command and control on the side of the rebels because their most feared commander, SAJ Musa was out of the scene. Again when the rebels realized that they had lost the initiative and could no longer halt the momentum and rapid advance of government troops towards the east in our bid to clear the entire city of rebel element, they decided to intensify their usual acts of atrocity, abduction and taking away of

beautiful women and children. Thus after suffering serious defeat at the hands of ECOMOG with maximum casualty, the retreating rebels split into two factions. One faction returned to Makeni to rejoin their colleagues while the other element returned and established a notorious hideout place at Okra Hills. Of course this group called themselves The West Side Boys, it was this same gang that stubbornly held out at the base even after the transition from ECOMOG to UNAMSIL and it was the same group that launched series of attacks on Masiaka and its environs, ambushed the Waterloo-Masiaka Highway on countless occasions and dug several ditches as death traps across the tarred highway. They were in this type of operation until when they finally went out of the way by abducting the British who were out there on patrol. They tried to persuade them to leave these people but they refused. So we finally used force which was the language they could understand. So the British organized an operation known as operation Barass. This operation actually dealt with these people, they demolished their notorious base and routed these bandits, they exterminated the stubborn ones and off course captured the rest and they are still at the Pademba Road Prisons.

Now let me talk a bit about the effects of all this. The effect of the AFRC/RUF attack on Freetown on 6th January 1999 was immense. In the East and Central of the city itself the rebels attack defenseless civilians and committed so many acts, atrocities. They raped people they burnt houses and did so many other bad things. Of course Sierra Leoneans as well as the international community were witnesses to the huge scale destruction of human and material resources that accompany the January 6 invasion. Of course we all know how serious people suffered. So I need not say much on this issue. Again following their crushing defeat and pursuit from the capital, the rebels resorted to the wanton destruction of lives and property before they fled the city. Government buildings and other state facilities were all not spared. Seven churches were burnt down. They went to the extent of even destroying the National Stadium, Kissy mental Home, schools, churches of course as I said earlier were all destroyed. So many people suffered, even transport owners, motorists, they burnt all their vehicles. So they have no more hope of getting any more income.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, for the past few minutes I have been discussing about January 6 rebel attack on the city of Freetown. I first stated that the lack of unity and cooperation which I don't like to mention was the major cause, for had there been that co-operation we would have made contingency plan to counter these people but this was not there. Mr. Chairman, I also mentioned about the way in which SAJ Musa met his death. To me this time it was not a call of the Special Court but a call made by the divine God Almighty for him to go and face God's court for all that he has done in this country. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank you all for listening to me. I will now wait for some questions.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Major General Tom Carew, we want to thank you very much for your expertise in unraveling the January 6 1999 invasion of Freetown. We now as a Commission will ask some questions for clarification, after which we ask the leader of evidence for some questions or clarification as well So I would now turn to my colleagues to engage our CDS.

Commissioner Torto: I thank you very much Maj. Gen. Carew for this presentation. I must also join the Chairman in thanking you for even honouring our invitation to be here. I have so many questions for the Maj. Gen, but because of the systematic way of presenting it as required, I will limit or try to limit as much as possible my questions. I must tell you that my questions come out the hearings, people's testimonies, and all I want from you is to really clarify the issues. I am going to start by asking you about things said in the presentation. You said during all what was happening in the army, and so on, the national army was dormant. I don't know why the national army was dormant, was the whole army at that time dormant? Were there not loyal officers, men and women in the army who could have actually stood to answer to the call of this country when the country needed them most, not a single one?

Carew: Well actually there were some people. I was one of those that surrendered to ECOMOG at Lungi. Then I went to Conakry. I was there until ECOMOG came and drove out the people and I came back, reported myself to General Khobe and there were some other people whom we called the loyal troops, few soldiers and some SSD Personnel who were with us. They were all there but the people did not trust us because as I said earlier, the percentage of those who were those bad guys was so much that the civilians never trusted us anymore. It would have taken some time for them to have that confidence and faith in us. So when we came and reported ourselves, what General Khobe did was just to keep us in the barracks, camped us, get all the arms and ammunition stored so that none of us will think of doing anything bad anymore. So we were just there. For some of us whom they believed to some extent they attached us to some of their operations. That was how it went.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you, the next question; our army has been reported to be a very strong force; the Sierra Leone Army has the reputation of being a very strong and brave force in the West Coast of Africa for a long time and it actually enjoyed that respect in the sub region. What gave the cause for a foreigner, General Khobe to be appointed Chief of Defense Staff when there were so many brave people in the army?

Carew: Trust was not so much placed on us anymore because as I said earlier, about 80% of our men at that time were on the other side, that is, on the RUF/AFRC side. It was very difficult for people to trust us. So when General Khobe came and they decided to root out these guys, they were in command of security in the country and whosoever was in command of the security must be the Commander according to our own principle. So General Khobe was automatically declared as the Chief of Defense Staff of Sierra Leone. There were honest people but, I mean, you yourself will not trust people at that time. So to clear that doubt we will just leave it like that. Mr. Commissioner I will be talking on that in my next presentation, the armed forces and the police.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. There is a general feeling, especially among the Freetonians, so to speak, and even throughout the country that the invasion of Freetown was possible only because of the rebels conniving with the SLA, that without the SLA, the rebels could have never penetrated the city. Can you comment on that?

- Carew: Well actually everybody has his own view. For my part. I want to agree partly with what you are saying Sir, because by then if our people, as I said about 80%, who were well trained I mean they have all these tactical knowledge in them as compared to the rebels, may be if they had not gone to these people surely they would not have penetrated the city. People like SAJ Musa. He was a well trained combatant Officer, If he had not gone to them, maybe these people would not have been able to penetrate or by pass over positions.
- Comm. Torto: Thank you, my penultimate question is most people who have appeared before this Commission have stated that all what this country is going through today was all caused by the Sierra Leone Army. Do you agree?
- Carew: That is your own view Sir, but if I should explain, I mean, in any society you must have few bad elements that will try to spoil an institution. But among these people, there must be some good ones. I mean like the loyal troops. I believe because from my Christian background, I was brought up by the late Bishop B.A. Carew, I want to believe that power comes from God and that nobody should begin to fight for power. If you should get it, you will get it and to be a military man, you are not aspiring to become President but aspire to become a General. That is my own belief.
- Comm. Torto: Thank you. The very last question for now because I know you are going to be coming again is that the recent coups in this country were staged by very very low officers, not officers, in fact, other ranks. Privates in the army according to testimonies before this Commission. Just your batmen, batmen of the Junior Officers, people who commanded no dignity, no respect, no form of education, not to talk of having any intelligence or any idea of running a country. Why were the Senior Officers in the army so dormant or allowed themselves to be overrun by mere boys, where were they?
- Carew: Well actually, this is a very controversial question. Sir, if you look at the ratio of officers to the other ranks, they far outnumber us. So when you look closely it is not that those guys would have been able to overcome us but they were more numerous and when they planned this thing, some officers did not know about it. Because I believe that even though we were small in number, if we were properly prepared and had that will power to say no we would have resisted them, we would have done it, but not all of us could withstand this tension. I particularly had to leave this country because I would not salute any Corporal and I fled to Guinea to seek refuge. I was placed in Pademba Road. They said I did not want to co-operate with them. I was there for two and a half months. That was why I left this country.
- Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much.
- Commissioner Justice Marcus- Jones: Thank you Major General for coming here and for giving us your testimony. I am curious to know whether the task force commander was ever brought to book for the lapses in contingency planning which brought a disaster to Freetown?
- Carew: Yes Madam Commissioner, actually this was why I said I do not want to say it in public because these are military matters, and also that the task commander was not a Sierra Leonean. We have certain rules that do

regulate any action that to be taken that I think it is not prudent to discuss in public.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: I hope, Major General, that in the training at the army officers they are made to realize how destructive petty jealousies could be along Senior Officers.

Carew: Well actually this is true. If I should make my recommendations maybe this is one lesson. We call them lessons learnt. From any history, any campaign, you have these lessons. You have to at least summarize lessons learnt, how best you can avoid some of the mistakes that you have made. So I put them under lessons learnt and then I will make some recommendations.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Thank you Major General Tom Carew. I join the other Commissioners in welcoming you to this Commission and we hope that even if we do not exhaust all questions on the military, we will have other opportunities on aspects that might not have been dealt with. Coming to your current presentation, you did say that, and you have repeated it a few times that Sierra Leoneans do not trust the army. As a very senior officer even then, you must have had an idea of what created this mistrust. Can you tell us why the people of this country did not trust the army?

Carew: Well actually I need not say much now. As I said, in the next paper, I will actually give the reasons why I think the discipline in the army deteriorated so much. It all depends on discipline. If people are disciplined they will do things that the civilian populace that is now paying them appreciate. They are using salaries to contribute. I mean to say our salaries, I mean they will do things to let the people realize that after all we are not masters, but we are servants of the people and then all these things will not arise

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright, I know that we need to get more information from the army but this I would like to know whether your statement means that the military was no longer serving the people or protecting the people it was meant to protect.

Carew: Actually that might be your view, but my view particularly was that some were actually working in the interest of the people of this country while others, you know, went on the other side. They were thinking that getting power by the barrel of the gun was the best way to serve which is not correct at all.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: So Major General, on the average were the people of this country receiving on the average as much as they were expecting from the army?

Carew: Well I don't know what they may feel but I want to believe that since this is the time for reconciliation I would act just like I mentioned in one of my papers that I will ask the whole nation to forgive us because we know people have actually made people not to trust us anymore. I mean staging coups, this will not allow people to trust you anymore. We are asking the people to forgive us, forget about the past and look forward to the new army which is now well trained, well disciplined and accountable to the people of this country.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes, Major General Carew, it is true that the main concern of the Commission is to bring about reconciliation in the country but before reconciliation, there has to be something, a prerequisite, and that is people should come out and admit any faults, atrocities or displeasure they would have caused that made people not to trust them, so are you saying by that statement that you accept now as head of the army, on behalf of the army, that there was a period, the period we are discussing now when the military was not serving the people of this country and were thus not trusted by the people of the country?

Carew: Yes exactly. You know as I said in any society or any organization, you must have people who are bent on destroying the good image of that institution. So I will not argue on that point. Just like you rightly say, I will just beg, you know, I mean members of this Commission to help us to talk to the people of the country and that is why anytime members of your staff go to my headquarters, I will always welcome them and try to tell my junior officers to make sure we assist them because we know this is the only forum whereby we can come and vent out our views and actually ask for forgiveness which I will now do.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright but we have a duty that goes beyond that. Apart from bringing about reconciliation, we are also to find out the cause or causes of what happened here so that we can make recommendations that will prevent the reoccurrence of what happened and this is where you and all the other people come in because you are the ones who were the actors in those theatres, those places where all these things happened. You are the ones to come and tell us what was it that went wrong, that created the circumstances that led to the problems that this country had. When we get that information and analyze it along with others, we will then be able to make appropriate recommendations. Otherwise if you just say we are sorry and are over with it, we will not be able to come out with recommendations that will be worthwhile. So this is why I am asking for instances. My other question is what was it in the army that, even if it is only 5% of the military, that created this dissatisfaction within the army that led to the army behaving the way it did?

Carew: Okay, these are all in my next paper but I will just summarize them, I would say some of these things, you can put them under the following: training, there was no good enough training for people. Training brings in so many things like discipline and from discipline you have so many other things that you derive from that. You see you will now know how to teach your fellow soldiers. You now know how to take care of him even your subordinate. We do what we call military history when we do our officers courses. In these courses you may be reading about ten Generals and you will actually study them properly; then you take three to know actually what the qualities of these men were? Why were they liked by their subordinates? Why was he having victory upon victory? This was how we study and I took that of Field Marshal Montgomery. He was a man who was always with his men. He feared God in the first place. So whatever it is, he was always thinking that there is somebody behind watching at him.

**TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION
THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS
TAPE 6 – W 5 CONTINUED
TOM CAREW – CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF – SIERRA LEONE ARMY
DAY 2 – 15/7/03
TRANSCRIBER: KIPTIYU B. SESAY
SECRETARY: MARIAMA J. BAH**

Commissioner Bishop Humper: There are a lot of questions that we need answers to, but I will only ask one question. What would you say to the opinion that the west side boys were all members of the Sierra Leone Army and not just rebels?

Carew: In my presentation Sir, I told you that about the other side, that is the RUF/SLA/AFRC. So most of these people who went to West Side base were those die hearted AFRC element that did not want to hear anything about peace, those were the guys out there causing all sorts of problems. In fact they attacked the British people and we really organized operation Barass which taught them a lesson.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Are you saying that among the West Side Boys you had RUF and SLA?.

Carew: The point I am trying to make here is that there was a split when they went out of Freetown; the RUF went one way the SLA went another way. The SLA were the ones who formed the group at Okra Hill and all those that went to Makeni were all RUF. But they had a common linkage with their RUF counterparts in Makeni. That was how they were working.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you. Major General before I come to my question I want us to get one clarification probably that would help us in relation to the last question. My understanding is that those who stayed here, the West Side boys, and some of those who went there put together a good number of old allegiance to Johnny Paul Koroma.

Carew: Your are correct Sir

Commissioner Bishop Humper: because if you don't do that then we would lose the trend, and tract of what is happening. The old allegiance to Johnny Paul Koroma.

Carew: You are correct Sir.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Sir. Now let me come to your experience before I come to this January 6 invasion, did I hear you say that with your experience as a colonel, when the ECOMOG people came you were put under a junior officer?

Carew: Yes Sir.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: You had intelligence information about the pending invasion two weeks before the time. Are you saying that no mechanism was put in place to follow up on that information received?

Carew: Well to be very frank chairman the whole operational issue was left in the hands of the ECOMOG.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Yes, you have answered my question. CDS do you have anything just in summary because you are well guarded and am also going to be well guarded in asking my question. Do you have any inclination of there been some sort of conflict between the commanders of ECOMOG and the then CDS of the country who was not a Sierra Leonean. In other words, did you have any inclination of the conflict between Shellpidi and others and General Khobe who was then CDS?

Carew: That was what I put in the nutshell that there was some problems.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: In other words it is the general assumption that this general over commanding ECOMOG consider the CDS his junior; so why should he come to command me a more senior officer. Would be right to say that but for the conflict between these officers it might have been practically impossible for RUF to invade the city.

Carew: Mr. Commissioner that was why I said I had wanted it to be in a closed hearing. It would be out of place to say things along those lines in an public. But if I could give my own view I would say maybe if there was cooperation from all commands maybe we would have had strong plans to forestall the invasion.

Commissioner Commissioner Bishop Humper Humper: The final question is the one that all Sierra Leoneans should answer. But you are sitting here, so you are going to answer on behalf of all Sierra Leoneans. Sierra Leone was considered the darkest city in the world. Did I hear you say that one of the reasons why the rebels easily invaded the city was because of the darkness in which we lived in the city?

Carew: Well you are correct because during the junta days there was complete confusion in the country, no good administration, no good light, all those things people were expecting.

Commissioner Commissioner Bishop Humper Humper: There are a good number of questions I will keep for tomorrow because they probably belong to tomorrow; we don't want to bring them up now. But the January 6 invasion as you said left an indelible mark on the minds of people in this country and constituted another dark chapter in the history of our country. So when we are dealing with it everybody is listening keenly to see what went wrong and whether things changed for better or worse at Benguma when SAJ Musa could no longer arrive in the city, that is now history. We would only hope that all of us, in our respected positions, will learn from history. I would now ask the leaders of evidence if he has any question or any input at this point.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Thank you Chairperson my first question is about Brigadier General Khobe. I was told that before he became Chief of Defense Staff he was the one actually in charge of the ECOMOG troops. Is that correct?

Carew: Yes

LEO: Who took the decision to replace him by a Nigerian personnel and why was this decision taken.

Carew: Well I think a request was made along the line that since this man had done so well and there was no trusted Sierra Leonean at that time that we must have somebody like him whom the people of Sierra Leone had trust in to the armed

forces of this country until such time when we have settled down and a Sierra Leonean appointed to that position.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Was it a decision taken by ECOMOG or the Sierra Leonean government?

Carew: I cannot actually pin point now who took te decision.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Do you think that the decision to remove General Khobe from the ECOMOG forces contributed to what you described as petty jealousy for supremacy or was it also because there was a different treatment of ECOMOG COMPARED TO THE SLA soldiers. I mean there were more benefits for ECOMOG

Carew: I want to believe that any true Sierra Leonean would question the appointment of General Khobe to lead the army at that time because at that time he represented hopes for peace in the country.

Leader of Evidence: Is it correct that the number of ECOMOG troops had been reduced just before the invasion or sometime before the invasion?

Carew: Yes it is true that they had started cutting down the numbers because of logistics. But actually we were having very good number of them. Even at that time.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: So how many ECOMOG troops were in Freetown at that time and how many SLA were left in Freetown just before the invasion.

Carew: Actually I cannot give the figures now because in military operations it is only the commander that will know the exact number of troops that are under his command. At that time I was attached maybe because of my loyalty to Brigadier Gove to take care of logistics but even at that I had little to do because the Nigerians were actually running defense affairs.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: So can you find this information for the commission can you communicate this with us?

Carew: I cannot promise the Commission because most of these documents were with the Nigerians and they took it with them when they left. And I have nobody I can ask. if I should have such information it is only people like me because I was with General Khobe. But when he died, they took all the documents from the office. It was not until after 2 months or so before they called me and they said I should be acting as CDF.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Can you find the information on the SLA

Carew: That one I can do because we were very few, not more than a company, that is roughly about one hundred and twenty. We were not more than a company really; those that surrendered to the government.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Can you tell us about the relationship and the collaboration between SLA and CDF just before the invasion and during the invasion?

Carew: All I know is that when I came back from Guinea, ECOMOG had driven out this junta element. As I said the loyal troops were very few and I know that we had some government forces which included the CDF. They were assisting, yes. But they were not taking part in any operation, to my knowledge, here in Freetown.

Most of them were up in the provinces because ECOMOG was solely responsible for the security of this city.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: My last question is about the West Side boys; how come you had to wait for the abduction of some British Soldiers and for the British to come and Free them in order to chase the West side boys or take over their base? Why didn't the ECOMOG or later the UNAMSIL and the SLA do that?

Carew: At that particular point in time the British were here to train us. They were training the Sierra Leone Armed Forces because the government decided that we want an army of reconciliation whereby we would bring all this factions that were fighting together in a national army. So when the British came they advised, in fact they brought this idea; so they started training the army and during that time they were on patrol in that particular area okra Hill base. They were surrounded by these guys and abducted. They tried to negotiate with them for about a week or two, but they refused.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: But why were the West Side Boys particularly strong, or had they heavy arms made them so invincible?

Carew: For me I know the British would have flushed them out but they would have had many casualties. So they did not want that and wanted to use diplomacy doing it But that was not a language they could understand; so the British used force. We were at BTC; no time was given for the striking hour. It was only given to people like myself and other important people. It was early that morning at four that we actually showed them that they were no force to reckon with any national troop or any government.

LEADER OF EVIDENCE: Thank you very much

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Now CDS you now have a chance to ask questions or to make recommendations.

Carew: But actually with regards to such a topic I don't think I have questions. I would just try to maybe put down on paper some of the lessons learned. I will send them to you.

Commissioner Commissioner Bishop Humper Humper: Thank you very much CDS. We again want to reiterate that you are one of the great personalities in this society that we will depend on to accomplish our mandate to deal with the question of what went wrong, why we had this ten year senseless war? It would require all of us who had been helping, working in this country to come up with their own ideas so that we will put all of these together and educate ourselves. We want to thank you for coming ad we see on our schedule your appearance again. We feel that unless we have this dramatic hearing we will not be able to arrive at definitive decisions on what happened on specific events that took place in this country. Thank you again for the time you took in explaining and clarifying some points. So we hope we will meet again here in due course to continue the same process. We now ask you to stand down. Our thanks and appreciation.

Commissioner Torto: May we have your names please in full?

Carew: General Tom Sebana Carew.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. You were with us yesterday. You now know the procedure. You will be making a presentation and we would ask you questions, followed by the leader of evidence and if you have questions and recommendations at the end, you will have opportunity to offer them to us. So may we now hear from you?

Carew: Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen. Today again, I stand before you to respond to the task, assigned to me with reference to the taking of the United Nations Peace keepers hostage in Sierra Leone, in 2000. Actually I was deployed in Freetown when the hostages were taken. Many stories have been told to inform the pensive world, what I intend to talk about is how we got to the hostage taking stage. How the hostage taking impacted on us nationally and internationally.

I will also attempt to describe the peculiarity of the war years, and how these peculiarity of the war years played out in West Africa and beyond. Then I will conclude by recommending some reforms and practices aimed at protecting UN peacekeepers in the management of cease fire during civil wars. Now let me just say few things prior to the conflict, and during the conflict itself.

Before the war broke out in 1991, I was deployed as adjutant of Lungi Garrison at Lungi. At the outset of the war, I got posted to Mano River Bridge. I was later posted to Potoru in the Pujehun District, and then I was subsequently posted to Koribondo as battalion commander in 1993. I became third brigade Commander in the Southern Province in 1994; that was just after I returned from Ghana, after doing my Senior Staff College Course. By then the brigade was headquartered in Bo, and my rank was colonel. The rebel was a strange animal to many soldiers and to the RSLAF at large. However in a very short space of time, my troop became used to the situation and stood firm to face the enemy which was by then the Revolutionary United Front. Then the rebels started wearing the uniforms of fallen regular soldiers and we became labeled as SOBELS; just as what one of the Commissioners was saying. Also that time, the National Provincial Ruling Council known as NPRC and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) became united. And in fact got on to what we call a marriage. The AFRC interregnum again blemished the Army because of the lack of that mark of destination and identity between the RUF and a portion of RSLAF that went into marriage with these people. In future like I have always done, I will implore our soldiers, sailors, aircraft men, to do their constitutional duties and only perform all other task when our civilian masters pass instructions within the provision of the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone.

Now let me come on to the topic itself.

THE ARREST OF ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED UN PEACEKEEPERS

Three were issues were important here:

- The change over problems between the UN forces and ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone.

- Another one is the logistic principles of impartiality on the Side of the UN and Civil/Military relationship problems in Sierra Leone at that particular time. At the time the UN decided to deploy its forces in Makeni, which is one hundred and forty (140) kilometers away from their Freetown headquarters, the force size was small, the mandate was not combative, and there was no established relationship between the UN forces and the splinted regular RSLAF forces.
- And also because of lack of trust. As it were, the International Community mistook the AFRC/RUF alliance for the entire RSLAF forces. Now for example, before the Kenyans headed for Makeni, a team visited the Armed Forces training centre to inform the RSLAF trainers and Security personnel who had joined the Nigerians to liberate Freetown after the RUF invasion on the 6th January 1999. The SLA did advise on the that the AFRC and also that a monitored RUF radio signal suggested the arrest of some peacekeepers in an effort to improve on their stake in the peace process. Sierra Leoneans felt this in their flesh; I am sure even UN personnel felt the same way. However, that situation forced the UN to improve on their mandate. Actually, my disappointment was that the hostages were only released to the President of Liberia – Mr. Charles Taylor, who handed the former hostages to the UN authority in Freetown. And I must say that we thank God our colleagues resurfaced although some died, at the initial stage of the hostage taking, that is what it takes to manage uncertainty. Nevertheless. I personally learnt the following lessons and I wish to share them with the TRC; and these are:
- UN peacekeepers must enter into the partnership with the local forces in order to gain any entry point into secure and credible peace operation. And the second lesson is that peacekeepers should be trained and organized to transform into a peace reinforcement role, by developing a force protection party. But such a force should be enhanced by the International Community, especially in areas such as peace support operations. And to summarize, I want to say that I saw the beginning and the end of the civil war. So I believe in Restructuring with the aim of inducing the military to work within the ambit of the laws – national and international. As for the hostage taking of the peacekeepers – a hundred and fifty kilometer (150km) -away from the UN headquarters. There was lack of fit between the ECOMOG exit strategy in 1999 and the UN's take over tactics in 2000. Mr. Chairman, this is not going to be a very long topic. I will leave the rest for questioning.

Commissioner. Torto: Thank you, Commissioner Kamara.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes, thank you very much Chief of Defence Staff, T.S. Carew. We are happy to receive you again today, for the second time in two days. This hostage taking of the peacekeepers. I don't know, maybe I misunderstood you so I want you to confirm my own understanding of your presentation. Are you saying that the reason for it was only to enhance or increase the negotiating power of the AFRC/RUF?

Carew: Yes Mr. Commissioner, I want to say that this is my own view, that it must have been one of the reasons why they took them hostage.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Alright. Then I refer you to – because I want clarification on a statement you made - paragraph six (6) of page two (2) where it's

stated and I quote “before the Kenyans headed for Makeni, a team visited the Armed Forces training centre to inform the RSLAF trainers and security personnel who had joined Nigerians to liberate Freetown..” What was it? What was the objective and outcome?

Carew: Mr. Commissioner you see, when moving troops the very first thing as a military commander, you must do is actually to get enough information on the routes you are taking. So what I/m saying is that peacekeepers should work hand in glove with the local forces. So when these people were about to go, from my latest information at that time, was that they went to AFTC and they were informed that they have monitored some messages that they want to kidnap some of these people. Well I want to believe because of lack of trust, and I will not blame them really, but because of trust and maybe just as you were saying, people do not trust most of our soldiers at that time, some of them could manufacture information and just pass them across and to say ‘ah we received this from the rebels’. So maybe that was the reason, so they never gave heed to it.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: And therefore one can conclude that the blame for what happened rests squarely with the peacekeepers.

Carew: Not at all. I will say that Sir. What I’m saying is that, they should not be blamed; because maybe these were just diversionary tactic by the rebels to pass on those messages to their counterparts; because some of these guys were part of those rebels – mind you. So maybe, this was just a notice for example, when I came back from Guinea, when we went to actually recapture Kono, we went there with so many vehicles so many tanks. What they did was that they sent a false message to our location, telling us that they need those vehicles back. By then we have spent about two weeks. We have no food; we were just depending on raw mangoes and all those things. So there was nobody to come back. Then I decided ‘Ok today, I’ll go back with these vehicles to Freetown. On our way we fell in a terrible ambush, half a mile ambush. That was where I got this scar. So this was the diversionary tactics that the rebels were using. So we cannot blame them at all.

Commissioner Professor Kamara: Yes but Carew General is it no true, ast most people say, that all is not fair in battle? These people, of course, have a right also to deceive the enemy. So if they send false messages and you fall in the trap that they set for you, well, that is to their own benefit; but what you have told us in this case was that, the peacekeepers were warned by the Sierra Leone army that we have got this message, whether true or false it meant that the peacekeepers should have taken some measures to make sure that if the message were true, they would also deal with it; but I don’t think they did; And because they did not, it shows that they took responsibility for their action at that time.

Carew: Mr. Commissioner, you know, at a time when situations are stable, we can say we blame them; but at that particular point in time, you have so many diversionary tactics used by rebels. So it was very difficult for you to say those people were at fault. So let us leave it at that.

Commissioner Justice Marcus-Jones: Thank you for coming again and thank you for waiting so patiently for us call you up to podium. Now, what was the proportion – in what proportion was the RSLAF splintered?

Carew: Actually, I cannot be exact now; but just like I was saying yesterday as at the time of the AFRC days, we have about roughly eighty percentage (80%) on the other side. That is on the AFRC/RUF side.

Comm. Jones: Eighty percent on that side?

Carew: Initially I cannot tell the percentage; but up to the time of the AFRC, when the AFRC took over, it was about 80%. Very few people – loyal soldiers that went to surrender to ECOMOG.

Com. Jones: So you will agree that the proportion which stayed regular was not high enough for the UN to have established any relationship with?

Carew: That was why I was saying that we should not blame the UN. Just like you were exactly saying, the percentage was too large. So the people did not trust us anymore.

Comm. Jones: Could you explain to us in what particular areas your disappointment lay that the hostages were released to the President of Liberia?

Carew: Actually from the information we have received, Charles Taylor was actually the man who was supporting the RUF. So I particularly was having something against him. So for these people to be handed over to him, just confirm what I had against him, that he was the main man supporting these people against this country.

Commissioner Marcus-Jones: Thank you.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: CDS, we welcome you again for being so patient. The other day I asked many questions for clarification today. Did the arrest and killing of some of the UN peacekeepers take place before the Lome Peace Agreement or after the Lome Peace Agreement?

Carew: Actually the arrest took place after the Lome Peace Accord.

Chairman: Alright, the Lome Peace Agreement Article 9 stipulates that those who were involved – the warring factions were granted amnesty and pardon - up to the signing of the Lome Peace Agreement, that's on 7th July, 1999. Thereafter it follows that any crime committed after that was not within the purview of that amnesty, is that the case?

Carew: Mr. Chairman, I want to believe that we should go by what the law says. Luckily I was part of the delegation that went to sign that peace accord. We were there for over two months; these people were giving us a lot of problem. There will come a day, they will go to court, Foday Sankoh will say ok I have said these things, today I don't say it anymore. It was only people like the Honourable Vice President who was so patient; because had it been for us, we would have just left the place.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: OK before I ask my third question. The sub-question that follows immediately therefore CDS, is that, would you agree with me that it was within the context of the Lome Peace Agreement that UN sent the

Peacekeeping force to Sierra Leone and that they had every right to go to every area of this country as a result.

Carew: Mr. Commissioner., I want to agree with you (100%) hundred percent.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: My final question now CDS is this: What impact, negative or positive did the arrest and killing of some of the United Nations by our own people in this country have on the International Community and particularly, those, whose lives were lost in the pursuit of ensuring peaceful Sierra Leone?

Carew: Mr.; Commissioner Bishop Humper I want to say, this was a very shameful act. Any true Sierra Leonean should be ashamed of the way these people acted. This shows you the amount of lawlessness that was going on during those days.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you sir.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: Thank you General T.S. Carew. In paragraph two (2) of your submission, you said that you intended to talk about how we got to the hostage taking stage. And how the hostage taking impacted on national and international political scenes. In paragraph five (5) you said that the arrest of about five hundred peacekeepers was related to three issues in your view. The problems of the relieving of ECOMOG with UN forces, and then you talked about the second probably being the legalistic principle of impartiality, and thirdly civil/military relation problem in Sierra Leone at that time. What if you could explain exactly what you mean by those three points?

Carew: O.K. let me start with the problem of changing over. You know at that time when ECOMOG was been replaced, there was a lot of confusion on the ground. The UN people coming in, do not know the ground, so there was complete chaos in the general area. So I want to believe that this is one of the reasons why these people were able to capture those people. Otherwise, they would not have been able. Then coming on to the second point - the logistic principle of impartiality. I think the UN troops thought that they were going to a friendly place. So they never went in that combatant role, with more logistics taking up tanks. So in case of any problem, they change the combative posture or or chapter seven (7) so to say. They were not given that mandate so they went out there ill-prepared for any scuffle with these people. Otherwise, if those people were properly armed, went in their combat role, well ready for battle the rebels would dare not attack them. Coming down to the last one, civil military relationship problem, I want to believe that was the first time the UN troop was on ground. So they would not have had friends on the ground – like talking to civilians, who will actually direct them to say ‘don’t go that way and so on and so forth. So they went there, they did not know anything about the ground and it was easy for the rebel to encircle and capture them. But I know if they had had that civil relationship properly in place, people would have advised them that – don’t go to let’s say Town X on the right side of the town, this is an area that is being occupied by rebels and so on and so forth. And of course, added to all these as I said earlier, they were not thinking that they were going for any combat role. The size of the force itself was very small. Talking of the five hundred (500) it was less than a battalion and those people were

more than a brigade in that particular region. So I think these would create some disturbances for these people, and according to our ratio, we do fight one to three (1:3). So let us say if we have about a brigade in that place, we should at least carry a division there because we have two brigades in one division. So that is how we do carry out our operational planning.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: So could one conclude from your testimony that in your sort of expert opinion the capture could probably be attributed to a combination of not doing the proper sort of intelligence survey, and not being prepared and also combination of distrust and in the lack of trust in the information supplied by the army?.

Carew: Well maybe that might be possible but I don't want to agree with the first one; because, UNAMSIL have facilities for better information gathering. So I don't want to believe in the first one, but maybe the second one, because of the diversionary tactics which the rebels used. They will not believe our men there, so that just feel that these people were telling lies and that they can go in that small number, because they were not expecting that they were going to face any fight.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: But we know from your testimony, you talked about the fact that the group was too small and in a sense you seemed to suggest that they were unprepared for what was going to happen. That is why I'm asking if in your opinion, you think they were not properly prepared and perhaps were not being briefed about what they would encounter?

Carew: Well actually, I want to believe that these people felt that they were not going to meet any resistance; because they were here to help us keep the peace. So they were not expecting anything like that. That to their surprise, those people, of course, you know them, they are not disciplined, they don't regard any law; they can sign papers today and say 'ah we don't agree with this agreement' so they can do anything. It was just too unfortunate for them.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: Just two last questions, In point eleven (11) you talked about the fact that the hostage taking took place a hundred and forty kilometers(140) away from UN headquarters. Then you also said that there was a lack of fit between ECOMOG exit strategy and the UN's take over so, could you sort of explain that?

Carew: Well, you know, Makeni which is a town in the Northern Province is about a hundred and forty (140) kilometers away from Freetown. So I am just talking of the town itself. I'm just giving you the distance from Freetown to Makeni, just to let you picture the distance from the headquarter by then. UNAMSIL's headquarters which is in Freetown; and the way they captured those people, just for you to see the distance between the two towns.

Sooka: Yes but my second question really is about what you mean when you said that there was a a lack of fit between the exit strategy and the UN's take over. That is in the last paragraph of your statement.

Carew: No, I'm not talking of ECOMOG, its not there.

Sooka: It's the last sentence actually in you're?

Carew: The last sentence, But there is nothing like that here. It's eleven, you said paragraph eleven?

Sooka: Yes paragraph eleven you said there was, as for the hostage taking of the peacekeepers a hundred and forty kilometers away from UN headquarters and there was a lack of fit between the ECOMOG exit strategy in 1999 of the UN's take over tactics in 2000; and I am asking you to clarify what you mean by that.

Carew: This is what I am saying. I am just trying to actually give you the distances between Freetown and Makeni and also the tactics of these rebels as compared to that of ECOMOG who were just getting out of the scene, it's some sort of summary. ECOMOG was planning live the theatre and these other people were trying to take over from them. It was during that period that this confusion took place, and maybe the sooner they left, they know for sure that these people have no knowledge about the locality. So they used that opportunity to go and capture these people.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: This was even in your recommendations and you said I personally learnt the following lessons. The UN did not do things properly and you said that UN peacekeepers should win the confidence of the local forces in order to gain any entry point into the secured, credible peace operations. Now, perhaps, I think what we are all trying to get at is, you seem to be fairly critical about the way in which they managed this particular operations.

Carew: You know, this is just like what I was saying yesterday, that in the Military you always try to study some lessons from any failure of a command. So to me, there were some problems with this operation. And as a result what lessons can we learn to make sure that other peacekeepers are not just taken hostage like that. So this is one of the suggestions I am making. That when we have new troops they should actually try to get more information about the terrain, they should try to get more information from those people who were occupying the ground; and then must try to get the best information as possible, so that when they get there they will not find any difficulty. This is just my personal view.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: So it seems you go back to the question really of forces being prepared in a sense?

Carew: You see, when dealing with rebels like those in Sierra Leone, these people who really do not have any aim, it is actually good. My advice to any peacekeeping troop is to be well prepared because they can do anything.

Commissioner Mrs Sooka: Thank you.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you very much Brigadier Carew. I am sorry to reduce your rank, but I am not so much aware of your rankings even though I am seeing buttons and – so you have to forgive me. I just have very minor areas that I want you to clear with me, based on your written submission. You are saying that, according to the very first paragraph, last sentence, 'the rebels for fear of long term identity, wore the uniforms of our fallen

regular soldiers, and we became sobels". Was it only on that day that you became sobels? Were you? Secondly as a part of this question – are you aware that there were connivances among your officers, between the rebels and some officers of the Armed Forces?

Leader of Evidence: Commissioner, the Chief of Defence Staff will be scheduled for a close Session on the 22nd because we think it is important that a number of issue be interrogated with the CDs, so perhaps for today we may end the questioning

Commissioner Torto: OK. So I can hold on to that, thank you. For now we take this for the reason. The last part is stated and has something to do with the function or the office of the General of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces if you look at it in paragraph ten (10) 'To summarize I saw the beginning and the end of the civil war.' The restructure with the aim of inducting the military to work within the ambit of the laws, national and international. Now, who should do this restructuring since it is coming from you? It is an appeal you are making to us since you are now the CDS, who should now do this restructuring.

Carew: This is just a general introductory paragraph I am giving. What I am saying is that the restructuring is going to be done by a team. That is the IMATT team, and some of us Sierra Leoneans. So it is just something that I am putting in passing. That we should consider when doing this restructuring, so that we can think of all these things.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. Leader of evidence you have questions for the General.

Lead: of Evidence: Honourable Commissioner, I have no questions for the CDS on the kidnap of UN peacekeepers, but I have two requests to make of the Chief of Defence Staff. The first is to assist the Commission in terms of the testimony that come through about the objective conditions within the country that led to the onset of the civil war, the commission will be very interested to receive further submissions from you Sir, on the 'ndobousu' rebellion. What was the role of the military in that rebellion, who were the actors, what was the nature of the disturbance? I think that will be a critical contribution that the Commission would be expecting from military in writing.

Carew: I will delegate my staff to do it; because, as I am now talking here, I was not the Commander at that time, and I was a very low officer – I mean lower in rank at that time.

Lead: of Evidence: It is not about your person Sir, it is about the Military as an institution and so there certainly must be records.

Carew: During 'Ndobowusu' time?

Lead: of Evidence: 1982 certainly. There must be records of the roles that Army has played over the years, who were the Commanding Officers; their experiences and what they have done in different places. So certainly, your officer will need to look into your records.

Carew: No actually, if you talk of records, to be very frank, when the people came in they destroyed everything. I will only try to do it because I want to assist the Commission. Maybe I will contact people like General

Gortor to help us with some of these things because he was the Commander of that Operation.

Lead: of Evidence: That would be wonderful. In which case Sir, could you ask him, tell him that we want to see him. It might be more helpful for us to interview him than for him to put something in writing. So I will discuss with you after the session so that I can – we can write a formal letter requesting for him specifically.

Carew: OK.

Lead: of Evidence: Second one Sir, is in respect to the hearings two days ago, which dealt with the 1998 trials and executions. Even though you were not invited as a witness, because we were not having you very much on our list but the Commission would be very much interested in receiving further documentation from you Sir. You were President if the Court Martial Board. So I would like to have a transcript of the proceedings of the Court Martial, as well as the interrogations of the officers by the army.

Carew: Let me clarify that point again. You have already sent to me, and I have already replied to your letter and I have spoken to your team. It is very difficult to get those records now, because let us say for example, after the proceedings, what you do is, you go and handover everything to the CDS and by then he was General Khobe. He in turn will have to take it to a higher level. So during the intervention, these guys, when they were coming, nobody dared to keep these records, people just threw them away. Maybe it is only people like SLBS and these other people that would be having these things; because they were attending these trials on a daily basis. But to say you get it from our own archives now, it is not possible.

Lead: of Evidence: Well thank you very much, the Commission will explore all possible means to go to SLBS, the office of the Vice President and the Attorney General to see whether we can have access to those records. They are very important documents for the work of the Commission. Thank you very much CDS. That is all Commissioners.

Commissioner Torto: Thank your Carew General you have questions for us, for the Commission?

Carew: I do not know how you people intend to interview some of my officers, because everyday, I have been receiving letters but some of them are out of the country. So I do not know what arrangements you will make for them

Commissioner Torto: You mean serving officers, or members who were with the military?

Carew: No, serving officers.

Lead: of Evidence: Mr. Commissioner we have sent to the CDS a number of letters, apart from Colonel Mondeh, who is in Nigeria, my understanding is that all the other officers would be invited, serving within the country and one of them has actually come forward.

Carew: Well what he is out of the country, he is attending a course.

Lead: of Evidence: Really when will the course end Sir?

Carew: He has about a year more.

Lead: of Evidence: I think he is a very important witness; he is actually on the list of invitees from the army and the expectation of the Commission is that, since the military has a duty to cooperate with the Commission, then it would be the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence Sir, to produce those officers, particularly the gentleman you just mentioned. He is a very critical witness for the Commission.

Carew: Like you sent another signal for Bangura?

Lead: of Evidence: That is right Sir,

Carew: Bangura is also on a course outside of the country. So this is my concern now. Whether maybe you will just wait for them; but again you have some time limitation.

Commissioner Torto: How long are they taking in the course?

Carew: Let us say towards the end of the year. Most of them would have come.

Lead: of Evidence: Colonel K. Squire is on a course for one year and

Carew: But he is doing his war college. He is completing in July, then he will be doing another year, to complete his Masters.

Lead: of Evidence: Honourable Commissioners, I think it is something that the Commission needs to take up at the level of the Ministry of Defence and if need be the Presidency. These are very critical witnesses.

Commissioner Torto: I see one of them has made a written submission in the person of Komba Mondeh, has Kess Mboya made any?

Ozonnia: No he has not and he is a very critical witness for the Commission. In the context of Mondeh, we did not request his further appearance because, first is that the Head of State during that era- Captain Valentine Strasser, we want to bring him, and so if Valentine Strasser can testify before the Commission, then the Leaders of Evidence would not intend to present Colonel Mondeh as a witness, but for K. Squire and Bangura, these are very significant witnesses, that the Leaders of Evidence think the Commissioners need to interview either in closed session or possible open sessions as well.

Commissioner Torto: OK. Since this is the case we will take the matter up as you have said through the Ministry of Defence. With regards the submission of a written testimony to us, we want to ask you to remind Kess Mboya to send us his submission. Already one of his colleagues sent in his submission from Nigeria – the person is Komba Mondeh. We think Kess Mboya can do the same thing. He has to actually send in a written submission. The other efforts to get him bodily, before the Commission would be pursued by the Commission.

Carew: Yes Mr. Commissioner, in my own little way, since I have actually promised to go all out to make sure that this Commission succeeds, I will try to contact him, and my M.A. will phone him after here. Then I will request that he spends just about few days. The only thing maybe we will have to get the tickets for him to come and explain and then go back.

Commissioner Torto: Yes. Just a few days and then he can take off a few days and then return

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much CDS the Commission's intention is to help you Sir to build a very professional Army. So some of those who have some way, answers to provide to the work of the Commission, are so critical and I am sure that you will be very happy with the report of the Commission in respect of their experience and the roles that they have played. So we would appreciate if you can facilitate their return

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. We see you have some suggestions or recommendations in your paper, are those all you have, or do you have any to add?

Carew: For the peace keepers.

Torto: On the papers you have presented even this last one – those I believe they are your recommendations, right?

Carew: Yes, I will try to make some addition.

Commissioner Torto: Please do that in writing and let us have them.

Carew: The only thing – ok. I will talk to you in camera.

Commissioner Torto: Thank you. if you do not have anything more to add, we thank you very much for coming and appreciate your time with us. You may step down now.

International Human Rights Law Group

MAKING RIGHTS REAL FOR 25 YEARS

*SUBMISSION AND PUBLIC TESTIMONY AT THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION
COMMISSION BY THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW GROUP.*

Theme: **'The Judiciary, the Legal Profession and the Rule of law'**.

I. Introduction and Overview of the situation.

The recent years of conflict have exacerbated the deplorable state of the justice sector in Sierra Leone, which was (and is still) in a very poor state of affairs. Through the Sierra Leone history, there has been a gradual decline in the independence and impartiality of the justice sector as well as in the quality of resources.

Inside and outside the country, some think that abuses in the justice system, impunity and the state's failure to protect citizen's rights were among the causes of the war.

Sierra Leone is one of the most impoverished countries in the world, and the vast majority of Sierra Leoneans lack awareness of both the substance of their constitutional and human rights, and the available means by which they can seek redress if such rights are violated. Moreover, most Sierra Leoneans lack the means to surmount the formal legal systems' daunting barriers to justice. Legal services are expensive, and almost all legal professionals are situated in Freetown. Access to justice is characterized by expense, delays, geographical remoteness and cultural distance. The system is not equipped, either in terms of physical infrastructure, or personnel to meet the needs of the poor and marginalized, and in particular women and youth.

While not formally part of the judiciary, both private legal practitioners and state counsel play a daily role in its functions. The Law Officers Department has responsibility for prosecuting and defending on behalf of the state, but its ability to perform this function is extremely constrained. The full complement of legal officers was 38 in the national office in Freetown alone, but at the time of research there were only 10 officers in Freetown and one, serving simultaneously as a customary law officer and state counsel, in the provinces. The deficiency was primarily due to poor remuneration, which made it impossible to attract even new graduates to government service. Although the Law Officers Department is empowered to prosecute cases on behalf of the state at any court level (save the local courts), in practice it had to hire private practitioners on contract for serious cases in the superior courts. It relied largely on the police to prosecute criminal cases at the magistrates' courts level.

Private practitioners, whose situation is not consistently as dire as that of their counterparts in government service or on the Bench, have also suffered from Sierra Leone's general economic collapse. Barristers lost their best source of income when almost all formal, large-scale commercial activity dried up by the latter half of the 1990s. Legal practice in Sierra Leone is to a large extent the domain of sole practitioners. Less than 10 per cent of barristers work in a firm. The result of a legal profession increasingly starved of revenue has been a sharp drop in *pro bono* legal assistance that barristers were once able to give in addition to their paid work.

The Sierra Leone Bar Association (SLBA) is nevertheless an active body with a fully constituted executive, a human rights committee and an impressive record of service to the legal community. It has campaigned on a number of legal issues, some of which advocate for basic civil rights within the justice system rather than for the narrowly defined "interests" of private practitioners as a group of professionals. The SLBA has, for example, protested the use of police prosecutors in place of independent professional state prosecutors in the magistrates' courts, even though it

might be more advantageous for defense barristers to face prosecutors with less specialist legal training than themselves.

The erosion of the machinery of justice is just one of the factors contributing to an altogether more fundamental problem: the general cultural erosion of the notion of criminal accountability and the rule of law. Sierra Leoneans' expectations of justice have been woefully low due to their accrued experience of failed court systems, powerful local militias and a weak police force. There are few parts of Sierra Leone where official courts, supported by policing and facilities for detention, have existed over the past ten years. Even before the civil war, under-capacity, corruption and arbitrariness had hobbled the authority of the courts. However, with the onset of chronic insecurity in 1991, a host of improvised justice systems emerged to compete with or replace the state's judiciary, just as vigilantism in the form of civil defense militias (CDF) filled the vacuum created by the retreating official Sierra Leone Army (SLA). As a result, the authority of the courts has been seriously eroded.

Outside Freetown and the provincial capitals of Bo and Kenema, the police Criminal Investigation Department freely admitted that at that time the local cells of the CDF supplied the sole guarantee of order and possibility for redress in criminal and civil matters. These local bodies were loosely organized but well armed and drew from a largely illiterate rural population. They dispensed an unpredictable brand of summary justice in what the police and members of the Bench refer to as 'bush courts'. They were completely beyond the reach of official structures, and therefore of any means of appeal or standards of fair trial and predictable punishment. The CDF militias in some cases did and in some case did not co-operate with traditional authorities - Paramount Chiefs and Councils of Elders - and the local customary law courts, but it is widely reported that both Chiefs and local court Chairmen were powerless to challenge the power of militias. The savage violence meted out by the rebels to civilians is well documented, and has nothing to do with justice, regardless of the claims made by the RUF to this effect. There may be a form of traditional justice administered at the village level by the local courts, but these authorities have been powerless to resist or punish the abuses of the RUF over the past decade.

2. Modest contribution of the International Human Rights Law Group.

The International Human Rights Law Group has a longstanding interest in promoting and protecting human rights in Sierra Leone. In June 1999, when Law Group Executive Director Gay McDougall visited Sierra Leone with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the National Forum for Human Rights, an umbrella organization composed of nearly thirty human rights organizations, requested that the Law Group establish a program of support for human rights NGOs in Sierra Leone. During the next year, the Law Group remained involved in Sierra Leone through serving as an expert consultant to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, while maintaining close relationships with Sierra Leonean activists and human rights groups.

In 2001, the International Human Rights Law Group opened its office in Freetown to respond consistently to the needs of the local NGOs. Examples of our work to date include:

- Building the confidence and capacity of the local human rights community, allowing them to participate more effectively in deliberations over the political, security and human rights situation in the country. For example, the Law Group's support provided local NGOs with the

capacity to participate constructively in national discussions concerning the relationship between the TRC and Special Court in December 2001.

- Helping set the agenda for prioritizing reforms of the justice sector in Sierra Leone by organizing an important rule of law consultative conference in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Bar Association. The proceedings from the conference form the foundation of involvement by the World Bank and the British Department for International Development in this sector.
- The Law Group provided technical support to the National Forum for Human Rights (NFHR), and Community Based Organizations (CBOs), in the production of the organization's first annual human rights report. This was the first comprehensive human rights report prepared by a Sierra Leonean organization in the post-conflict period. Through activities such as this, the Law Group has helped place the NFHR at the forefront of the human rights struggle as the most vibrant human rights coalition in Sierra Leone.
- Facilitating the participation of four local activists in the 57th and 58th Sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights. The participants joined an annual Law Group training program on human rights reporting and advocacy at the UN Commission, which is the preeminent UN human rights forum. By bringing this knowledge and experience back to Sierra Leone, these activists have strengthened the capacity of the local human rights community to include UN human rights language in their engagements with government, thereby improving their skills and general confidence in presenting human rights arguments to Sierra Leonean government officials.
- The Law Group was instrumental in the formation of the Women's Task Force in Sierra Leone. The Women's Task Force consults regularly with the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to create an enabling environment that will encourage the participation of women at all levels in these two transitional justice mechanisms in Sierra Leone. The Women's Task Force also pushed for the creation of a special unit to investigate gender-specific war crimes during the country's decade long civil war.
- Driving and facilitating the formation of the NGO Steering Committee on the TRC that coordinated and organized the sensitization efforts on the TRC to ensure quality, synergy and maximum coverage of the country with funding from the Office of the High Commission for Human Rights in Geneva.
- The Law Group, in collaboration with the NFHR, established the initial infrastructure for a Human Rights Resource Center at the Law Group's offices in Freetown. The Resource Center is currently equipped with a television, videocassette recorder and two computers with Internet access. With the addition of research materials, the Resource Center will become an invaluable asset to the human rights community in Freetown. The Resource Center also serves as a training center, where workshops are conducted and NGO activists meet on an informal basis. This has become an increasingly important space for NGO activities given the paucity of infrastructure within the NGO community in Sierra Leone.
- Advancing discussions around the concept of women's equality in inheritance rights. The Law Group has initiated a training program for two lawyers who will provide advice and

information on inheritance issues to returning refugees and internally displaced persons especially in Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu.

For these two years 2003-2004, the International Human Rights Law Group will focus on two key areas of mobilizing civil society on anti-corruption issues and access to justice.

• **Mobilizing Civil Society on Anti-Corruption Issues:** In mobilizing Sierra Leonean NGOs and grassroots communities, especially in Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu, to effectively combat corruption at all levels, the Law Group will continue to provide formal training in advocacy, coalition building and grassroots mobilization, as well as informal mentoring support to build up strong networks of stakeholders to make the parliament and the government accountable. In particular the initial focus will be on various forms of advocacy, in conjunction with Freetown based networks, to force the government of Sierra Leone to take action on the cases presented for prosecution by the Anti-Corruption Commission that are yet to be prosecuted. In addition, the Law Group will introduce training on Grassroots Budget Tracking in the three geographical areas that will enable NGOs and CBOs to link budgetary figures for specific community development projects in their areas with actual disbursement of the funds to ensure accountability at both the national and local levels. Furthermore, working in conjunction with the Freetown NGOs and CBOs in Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu, the Law Group will help civil society draft bills and mobilize their constituencies on anti-corruption legislation.

• **Access to Justice:** To reduce tension between returnees, refugees, "remainees" and demobilized soldiers, and to encourage mechanisms of alternative dispute settlement and mediation, the Law Group will launch a program of access to justice that trains and works with credible CBOs in the three geographical areas to provide Community Liaison Officers who can act as mediators and settle disputes. This program will also work with the Court Barrays in these areas.

Finally, the Law Group would like to reflect with its partners the best ways the Special Court, which is unique in the international criminal practice, could benefit the Sierra Leone judiciary before it completes its work. It would be very unfortunate to see the domestic justice system continue to function inefficiently after Sierra Leone has accommodated an international court for more than three years.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Commissioners, the Law Group is pleased to make the following recommendations:

1. Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, the Law Group learnt with dismay that there is an unbelievable inadequacy of personnel to deliver justice to the people of Sierra Leone, especially the indigent. One of the factors that might be responsible for this is the deplorable salaries and conditions of service. To salvage this ugly situation, we strongly urge the Government to:

• Consider improving the conditions of service and salaries that could be very instrumental in improving the delivery of justice because we believe that functionaries of the judiciary are hugely demoralized because of their low salaries. Although it may not be the solution to the perceived corruption, an increase, we believe must be part of any serious law reform effort. Thus far, we are informed that eighty-six (86) Justices of the Peace have begun work but these usually retired honourable citizens engaged in providing valuable support to their

communities need enough legal education and training to be able to fulfill their difficult mission. To this end, UNDP and the Sierra Leone Bar Association and other NGOs could be encouraged to conduct regular workshops to continuously train JPs on the legal issues they are facing. Moreover, the daily sitting fee of Le 3,000 (plus Le 2,000) travel reimbursement is meager and needs to be revisited.

- Consider putting in place a grant system for law students in order to make it obligatory for them to serve the government before proceeding with private practice.

However, for this to be achieved there has to be the political will on the part of government and an additional indication or willingness on the part of functionaries to accept change; and for members of the donor community, human rights and civil society groups to give them the required support.

2. THE DEATH PENALTY: Mr. Chairman distinguished Commissioners, the Law Group believes that it is becoming increasingly accepted international practice to abolish the death penalty. Sierra Leone should consider the option of outlawing the death penalty for all crimes and thus establish itself at the forefront of international human rights law. It is likely that there will be enough support in the Sierra Leone legal community to lobby on a concerted basis for the abolition of the death penalty. This would be consistent with other ongoing human rights and reconciliation efforts currently occurring in the country and would signal the country's commitment to the value of life. Moreover, the imposition of the death penalty in a country with inadequate legal representation and widespread illiteracy is especially hazardous and unfair. Many impoverished defendants have no resources to appeal against their sentences. Thus, from a standpoint of judicial fairness, it would be prudent to repeal the death penalty. A campaign for such could be orchestrated through the Sierra Leone Bar Association and domestic and international human rights groups. These groups could form a committee to study the death penalty and lobby parliament and the executive to consider making changes to the current law.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS: The Lome Peace Agreement makes provision for an independent National Human Rights Commission which has to date not been established. It is our hope that such an institution could be set up to monitor human rights developments in the country. Furthermore, we advocate the introduction of human rights in school curricula to make them knowledgeable and aware of human rights. This would obviously require the Bar Association, NGOs and related agencies conducting workshops and providing them with educational materials. Personnel of the courts as well as the lawyers deserve and need to be adequately trained in human rights and other updated international standards of undertaking their duties so that minimum standards are maintained.

4. CORRUPTION:

Internal Leadership and a Code of Conduct:

Corruption presents a monumental problem to fair and equal justice in Sierra Leone. Unfortunately, there is no silver bullet that will take care of this problem. As mentioned, one part of the alleviation of corruption lies in increased salaries for judicial personnel. Nonetheless, more

important than any financial disincentive will be principled leadership from within. Therefore, it is imperative that the judiciary be subjected to a binding code of conduct. The Chief Justice of the Sierra Leone Bar Association should draft a code of conduct that sets out clear principles. Thus, the fight against corruption must start from the top - as the saying goes it should be leadership by example.

Corruption Legislation: Parallel to a push for internal corruption measures, parliament must pass and implement much tougher anti-corruption laws. The current provisions are simply inadequate and rarely enforced.

5. Law Reform: The existence of obsolete and archaic laws in the Sierra Leone judicial system continue to render the system retarded and unwilling to adapt to the changes of our times. The preservation of draconian customary laws compounds the problem of discrimination against women and children, thereby paying lip-service to several international covenants/instruments especially the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child signed and ratified by the Government of Sierra Leone. The Law Group therefore strongly urges the Government through the Law Reform Commission and encourages the Law Reform Initiative recently launched by some legal practitioners to continue the nationwide consultations on an acceptable level of harmonization of these laws for them to reflect the views and interests of Sierra Leoneans irrespective of their sex and regions of origin.

Bearing in mind the dramatic increase in the occurrence of sexual and gender based violence throughout the country, the open manner in which the courts prosecute such cases and the consequent stigmatization suffered by the victims as well as the exorbitant amounts requested by medical practitioners to examine victims, the Law Group urges the Government to:

- ensure that SGBV cases are heard in camera so that prosecuting witnesses are well protected and that the victims are protected from public eye.
- ensure that minimal charges are requested from victims of sexual violence
- criminalise the refusal of persons to provide evidence for cases of sexual and gender based violence crimes.
- include child trafficking and the use of other objects in rape as offences in the laws of Sierra Leone

We also strongly encourage non-governmental organisations that have women and child protection as part of their mandate to collaborate with government agencies to ensure that the public is made aware of these crimes and the negative impact that these acts could have on the lives of the victims.

6. The Legal Profession Development and Education: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, the recent history of Sierra Leone demands that today's and tomorrow's generation of lawyers are educated in the area of human rights and international humanitarian law to assist the country in its arduous rebuilding process. This could be made less onerous if proposals are made for the incorporation of these courses into the curriculum. Simultaneously, adequate funding needs to be sought to entice additional professors or lecturers to cover these areas of law.

A Diversified Legal Expertise: Coupled with this, the Sierra Leone Bar Association needs to take responsibility for specialised law training. The Bar could form committees of interested members focusing on various topics. Substantive support would be possible through international organisations in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, the Bar Association should attempt to initiate

partnerships with international bar associations. These partnerships could lead to mutual exchanges and further assistance to the Sierra Leone legal system.

International Legal Expertise: The currently assembled international legal talent should be tapped for the benefit of Sierra Leone's Judiciary. Workshops in international humanitarian law and human rights law could be conducted by numerous international practitioners and institutions in the country (e.g. the Special Court, UNDP, and DFID). These workshops for lawyers, judges, magistrates and JPs could be jointly organised by the Sierra Leone Bar Association on a regular basis.

7. Mr. Chairman, Commissioners, it is also the conviction of the International Human Rights Law Group that the combination of the offices of Minister of Justice and that of Attorney General should be separate to ensure independence and practical separation of powers. We would therefore encourage the Government to consider separating these two offices as an important ingredient in the process of democratisation.

I thank you very much for your attention and look forward to your continued cooperation with the Commission.

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS

REPRESENTATIVE OF LAW GROUP – MR. JOE H. PEMAGBI ALISON SMITH – COUNTRY DIRECTOR – NO PEACE WITHOUT JUSTICE.

Marcus Jones: Name in Full

Witness: Joe Hindoveh Pemagbi representing The Human Right Law Group

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim. Please take the Bible and say after me.

Mr. Pemagbi: Thank you very much

Commissioner Marcus Jones: And we are all ears to follow your submission so you may carry on.

Mr. Pemagbi: **SUBMISSION**

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mr. Pemagbi I will now ask the Commissioners to ask you questions beginning with Commissioner Torto.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Pegmagbi for this academic presentation of the issue. I have read it, grasped some areas, listened to your interpretation of it but I am still confused about some of the issues you have actually reiterated. People had mentioned those before this Commission and some of them are issues that continue actually to occupy our thinking. One of them is the abolition of the death penalty in as much as the whole world is following the trend according to your testimony, and therefore Sierra Leone should follow suit. I would like to know what should happen to compulsory killers.

People have an addiction to killing and when they are brought to you, you will imprison them for life. Agreed, but there are aspects of the penal code of conduct that actually empower prisoners to release convicts while putting up good behaviour. In other words, they are released on account of good behaviour in detention after some years and it is the same people who go back into the society. What will happen to such an individual who has had the kind of impulse to kill with the prevalence of that if death penalty were to be abolished? How would you handle a situation like that?

Mr. Pemagbi: Yes, thank you very much Commissioner Torto. The criminal procedure act of 1965 makes provision for lots of discretion on the part of our magistrates and our judges in this country. We know there are consequences for releasing people that are in the habit of murdering. We have several instances of convicted murderers in this country but the Law Group is not mere making a recommendation for the abolition of the death penalty because other countries are doing it. One if we look at where we are from for the past 10 – 12 years we have had several executions and as part of the curse of the war a lot of people have mentioned this death penalties. We have had series of unpleasant executions in this country. No execution is pleasant though but we have had series of those and that has sadly been the case and that has been mentioned as one of the causes of the war. Secondly, as I said we know the dire course of religious people. The prisons department has an obligation to the people of this country first to ensure that the people are reformed and not only kept in prison. So the issue of sending people to jail for a couple of months or days still goes back to the judiciary in implementing very stiff sanctions for murderers. I think that is where I will stop for now. And that the courts should ensure that we have stiff sanctions for murderers and that we would ensure that our prisons are safe and fortified enough for jail breakers.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I hear you. My question really was alluding to criminals who may have an impulse to kill: not executions because of political reasons, that's not what I am really concerned about.

Mr. Pemagbi: I think I made an attempt to look at that particular question that in as much as we have people that have made murder a profession the duty of our prisons is to ensure that people are reformed. The duty of our judiciary is to ensure that we have stiffer bails for people that have committed murder and not only send them for a month or two we should ensure that we have stiffer sanctions for people that have committed such offences that is my due.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Okay. That brings me directly to the next question I was going to ask, which you have bordered on. The Prisons Director was here sometime ago and I asked him questions as to what the conditions were in terms of trials and the dispensation of judgment. Definitely I would like you to throw light on this a little bit.

Mr. Pemagbi: Commissioner Torto, I think I touched on the point of correction, to be very specific on the issue of developing the code of conduct for the judiciary. I said that it is imperative for the judiciary be subjected to a binding code of conduct. The chief justice and the Sierra Leone Bar Association should draft a code of conduct that sort of clears issues, principles of practice. Obviously these codes will only be worthwhile if they are enforced by the Bar Association and the judiciary. That is one recommendation that I clearly mentioned in my submission Sir.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Pegmagbi. I don't have further questions for you.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much Madam Chairman, Commissioner Sylvanus Torto. I would like to welcome you. Thank you for coming to make this presentation to us. Let me say I have no question on the paper itself but I have some comments to make. I am impressed by the comprehensiveness of the document. The only thing of course it covers areas which have already been covered by other people of course there is a good reason for that I know but my comment here is that like many of the other witnesses, the recommendations have not been specific. They are more general than specific in most of the cases and this is where I would like to ask that perhaps in collaboration with many people like the bar association and other NGOs that are interested in human rights and the injustices that were meted out to women, you can work with them to come up with more specific recommendations. Let me call specifically on three areas. That law reforms on the inheritance as it refers to women. I think we need more specific recommendations to what the laws should be and also I would like to ask in that respect why you refer to having some interest in Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu. Why do you not mention the other districts? I would like you to give us more specific legal reform on corruption. You said there should be tougher laws of what kind; I mean how tough should these laws be? How tough should they be in terms of people's access to justice? I also thought I should turn to the area of reconciliation directly. I will read from page 5. To reduce tensions between returnees, refugees, "remainees" and demobilised soldiers and to encourage mechanisms of alternatives to the settlement of disputes and other mediation efforts. The law group will launch a programme of access to justice and train the workers to work with credible CBOs in the three geographical areas. You will launch a program of access to justice that is to people who have suffered injustices in these three areas. The areas you mean those three districts or in the three provinces.

Mr. Pemagbi: Can I go on?

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Yes.

Mr. Pemagbi: First I will start with the inheritance right. The Law Group has been doing some work on women's inheritance rights. It's part of our overall programmes from head office. Each field office has the mandate to look at women's rights, to be specific we have women's inheritance rights. That is what we are looking at. Last year we sent magistrate Claudia Taylor and another female activist to attend our annual inheritance program in Ghana and this is an annual programme wherein we bring female lawyers in Africa together to discuss women's rights. You will agree with me that Africa is a large continent where we have very little regard for our women. So we bring women together from over 25 countries to discuss the issues that cut across and how we can move the process of allowing women to inherit properties especially from their deceased spouses, husbands. We have been working and we are still working with the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's affairs on the issue of women's rights. In the next four weeks we would be looking at recruiting a gender person to be in charge of General affairs specifically as part of our effort to look at women's inheritance rights. And I personally have attended and presented a paper at three workshops looking at women's rights with more specificity on the women's inheritance rights in Sierra Leone. You asked why the three Ks: Kono, Kenema and Kailahun Districts. Madam Chair, Commissioners, you may agree with me that these three districts were largely devastated during the conflict. For even prior to the conflict these places were almost ignored by our government. So

these are the areas we want to start looking at for now as a start. We must start somewhere and we also depend on the amount of resources available in order to attempt to cover the entire country. So we need to begin with these three districts because first, they were largely devastated and two, even prior to the war these areas were largely neglected.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: So they are going to be limited to those three?

Mr. Pegmagbi: Yes for now. For a start we will be limited to those three districts.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Yes.

Mr. Pegmagbi: We also talked about the Anti-Corruption Commission. For now the process calls for the present Anti Corruption Commission to submit its reports to the attorney general's office. And it is largely discretionary for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General to prosecute cases which we don't really favour. As an organisation that's why we are recommending that it becomes mandatory for the Minister of Justice and Attorney General's office to prosecute all cases brought before them. To make things easier for the Anti Corruption Commission it would be better for them to have their own prosecutors and probably judges as well.

They should have their own judges to prosecute such matters because there is always a tendency for the government in power to wield influence over institutions they have set up. That is why we are recommending that we have tougher laws and that is why we will be embarking on advocacy to ensure that we have such tough laws in the interest of the Anti-Corruption Commission in this country. That is why we are all going through civil society groups to join so that doesn't become a one man show: it becomes the business of the entire civil society of Sierra Leone. You also talked about how you will want to reduce tension between refugees and "remainees" as well as ex-combatants, am I right?

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Yes Sir.

Mr. Pegmagbi: Very often you have witnessed some kind of animosity between people that stayed behind during the conflict and those coming back. By the time people leave their places of sojourn or their towns or villages to come back some of their farms, their pieces of land, have possibly been cultivated by those that remained. There is also the possibility for refugees to benefit from donations from WFP and other donor agencies or other Commissions like NaCSA. That we have now so you would expect that animosity to exist between those that stayed behind and those that are coming in because the economic situations of these two parties are not quite different. I have personally had such encounters before while working with refugees as well as displaced persons. You can imagine people living in remote villages with hardly enough to eat then you bring in refugees say from Liberia give them supplies of two coups of bulgur, cooking oil or whatever you may have and you leave the host population behind, going without. So you will always have that animosity. There is always a cold war that exists between these two parties, that is why we are looking at such communities.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Finally am I correct in thinking that according to your sentence on the top of page 5 that you are going to be providing model laws or bills in aid of these law reforms, you are, therefore, recommending something? Because you say here "working in conjunction with Freetown NGOs and CBOs in Kono, Kailahun and Koinadugu the Law group will help civil society draft bills and mobilise their constituencies on Anti-Corruption or on all the law reforms you anticipate.

Mr. Pemagbi: Well as I stated earlier on in my presentation we have women's rights as a priority and we are also closely looking at Anti-corruption and access to justice. That's the starting point now. That is what we can do with the available resources at this point in time.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. Em... Chairman?

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I join my colleagues in thanking you for the comprehensive documents, the presentation you have put together almost all the recommendation that people have put together for our consideration and that is very helpful. Without taking the other documents we can take your documents because they all are recalling recommendations, which means in the country many people are thinking the same way. I only have one question to pose with regard to your work, the work of the international human rights law group. And the question borders on how independent you are against this background. My personal understanding is that I should be aware there is the international human right law. International criminal law and international humanitarian law all of these put together I think this is the basis on which you are working as a group. There is in our context the Sierra Leone constitution, which in some ways limits the activities of the "international human rights law group". What is out there may not be applicable here. What do you think are some of the constraints you think you face and what further recommendations in terms of reform law would you want to propose in disentangling you from carrying out your responsibilities only because there is a national law and there is an international law.

Mr. Pemagbi: International human rights law group is just the name of an organisation Sir. We know there is the international human rights law, humanitarian law and the rest. And we know there is a constitution of Sierra Leone that consists of our laws. Definitely we expect that with the scarcity of human resources within the judiciary we as a nation are finding it difficult to go through Law reforms. We must be very appreciative. On behalf of my organisation let me state here that we are here to complement the efforts of the government of Sierra Leone to revitalise the Law Reform Commission. We do hope to be working closely with all of these institutions: the Law Reform Initiative, the Law Reform Commission. I was invited to the workshop they organised two weeks ago. The mere fact that I was invited is a sign of collaboration between my organisation and other partners, so it is a process. I don't see any animosity or any rift developing between my organisation or any other groups while the international law group is just a non-governmental with our head office in D.C. Washington of the United States. We've got branches in several other countries. Five of those are in Africa: one in Sierra Leone, the other in Nigeria, Congo we have two officers there , one in Morocco and the fifth one is in Burundi so to just another non Governmental Organisation just to help in resolving human rifts all over the world.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you.

Mr. Pegmagbi: Maybe if I may just add to that you talked about the problems I which we encounter because of the scarcity of our limited resources. At this point in time we work in collaboration with other offices of the law group. We will also be bringing a colleague from our Nigeria office to help us sort some of these challenges that we are experiencing. He would be here in September to help work with the law reform commission and other agencies.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Leader of Evidence, any question?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Commissioner, I don't have a question but from the submission it is obvious that they are doing a grand research with respect to women's issues, particularly on inheritance and sexual violations. Since this has become obvious, we would really want to request that they send us a written submission basically on women. We would send invitations to them to that effect with the guidelines on the specific issues they will have to address based on the work they have done and the experience they have had on the ground so far. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Mr. Pemagbi: We will be pleased to do that Madam Chair.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Mr. Pemagbi we've included the recommendations contained in your submission so I think all I am left with is to ask whether you have any questions for the Commission.

Mr. Pemagbi: None at the moment if we do have some questions later, we will submit them to the Commission.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright I know you are always in and out of the office. We will be pleased to entertain your questions at any time. Thank you very much for coming and you may step down now.
Leader of Evidence is this your last witness for the morning?

Leader of Evidence: Yes, Honourable Commissioners, we will have to adjourn and come back later after lunch to continue the proceedings.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you so much ladies and gentlemen we are breaking off now and we will be back at 3: O'clock to continue. We hope we will see all of you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to our afternoon session. Leader of Evidence is your witness here?

Leader of Evidence: Yes Madam Commissioner, the witness is here.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Please call her.

Leader of Evidence: Madam Commissioner our first witness for this afternoon is the Country Director for No Peace Without Justice Ms. Allison Smith.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Your name in full.

Allison: My name is Allison Smith.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Any objection to your taking the oath?

Allison: If it pleases the Commission I will prefer to affirm.

The Oath is taken.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I don't know whether you have been following our hearings here or on the radio.

Allison: Some.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: But there is nothing for you to feel worried about. Just give your testimony, feel relaxed. After you've finished the Commissioners here will ask you some questions. The leader of evidence will do the same, that is if they have questions and then if you have any questions on the procedure and processes of the Commission you will ask your questions and at the end if you have any recommendations you would like us to include in our report you are free to make them. So thank you so much for coming and the floor is yours.

Allison: Thank you Honourable Chairman, Honourable commissioners, ladies and gentlemen. I first have to thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and speak before you today on behalf of my organisation No Peace Without Justice on issues relating to the rule of law in Sierra Leone.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: The TRC is grateful for your testimony but it is regretted that the Commissioners haven't your submission in front of them and I will ask them to ask you questions if they have questions to ask and we will start with the chairman.

Commissioner Bishop Humber: I want on behalf of the Commission to thank you for the presentation. I am sure sooner or later we will get copies of the document. You started off and that for me was very important and crucial for the Commission to take very seriously into consideration. I heard you mention violations and abuses of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by all factions without exception. That is very critical and we take that very seriously to continue to explore what went wrong in this country. So many people and some others join in saying that peace and justice are two sides of the same coin. The question that comes to mind from the angle of the Commission (probably you may not respond to that question) is what is justice and in the context of Sierra Leone, in what sense and at what stage would you use this word that will capture the minds of both victims and perpetrators. When you talk about dispensation of justice, how do we intend to capture these two concepts?

Allison: Thank you for that question. Before I answer it I would like to apologise to the Commission for not having their written submission available yet as I mentioned. We are gathering information from around the country and we only just finished the exercise. I am sorry that the information to inform our written submission as well as the conflict mapping report are not available. So I do apologise and I will have the written submission to you as soon as possible. The question of what is meant by justice, I believe, is encapsulated in what I discussed about the rule of law that there are rules that apply to everybody. Justice is seen in application of those rules to individuals. International criminal law to be allowed to this kind of individual responsibility and they find security by such applications and not by abstract entity. It is difficult to talk about state community as one individual. So it is all individuals living under the law and justice is making sure that the rule of law applies to the individuals and that they answer for what they have done in contravention of the rules. The question of when justice should apply is a difficult one to answer. Justice can be dispensed by military forces themselves during the conflict. In fact it is their responsibility to ensure that their forces adhere to the laws of war. In terms of this the greatest responsibility is a matter of practical ability. And I should also say that through international criminal justice mechanisms such as the special court and the international criminal court, should

question the key leaders. As I mentioned before I think the most liable culprits are the leaders and this is partly because it's the leaders who decide how war is going to be fought and they plan out a system of how they are going to conduct warfare. At that point they decide whether or not it would be conducted by going through the laws of war or by violating the laws of war including things such as the attacking of civilians, hospitals, undefended tenants, and etcetera. And so they are the people who should take responsibility and they should be held criminally responsible for violating the laws of war and their people. People further down the chain of command do not matter much. Well I think there should be some form of accountability. The international criminal process of law is not necessarily the most appropriate one for them. That is what I was leading to when I spoke about an integrated system of accountability and because there should be accountability in some form. And I think the TRC provides a form of accountability for people who perhaps fall within the top levels and the people who are not there as well. The international criminal justice mechanism also covers the child perpetrators so that answers the question.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: One other question I would like for your clarification or consideration here is that the general impression people get when they hear about no Peace Without Justice is that you are leading more towards a legal position. That is the general impression that people get and so that leads me to this question for your consideration. It may not be for you but in the mandate of the two institutions: the Special Court and the TRC. For the Special Court it is from November 30, 1996 to the present, to put it broadly. And the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's mandate is from 1991 to the signing of the Lome Peace Accord 1999. The fact of the matter (and this is factual) is that I want to see where Peace and Justice or No Peace Without Justice is coming into play. I have no doubt on my mind that the groups involved in that time line of the Special Court's mandate from 1996 – present are no different from the same group involved from 1991 to present. Now how do you see the implication in dealing with the whole scenario? You are faced with two institutions which appear to be dealing with two issues. As the time line indicates it appears that there are two different entities in the eyes of the outsider but to the Sierra Leonean they both involve the same people, what is your view on that?

Allison: On the temporal address the theme of the Special Court and to be completely candid I think it should have been set from 1991 as in the case of the commission of the TRC because international law begins to apply the moment a conflict begins. So from the moment the first battle took place in 1991 humanitarian law began to apply so that in my personal opinion the Special Court should have had jurisdiction from 1991 but it didn't happen that way. I think the Special Court will have to look at what happened before 1996 to get an understanding of what happened after 1996 and to what extent. I think the two institutions are looking at the same things from the time perspective and they are looking at different people and also the Special Court is to try the people that bear the greatest responsibilities; the top level people and the TRC has a much greater ability and opportunity and I think has been going at reaching out more people across the whole country. But I think as I said a minute ago you could have the TRC and the Special Court but as an integrated system of accountability, which is not just criminal justice but is coming to terms with what has happened. I think for Sierra Leoneans for every case coming out of the conflict that extends its time bounds, the period of the conflict should not begin or end arbitrarily at a point either way. I'm sorry, I don't know whether that answers your question.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much. Has Professor anything to say?

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much Madam Chair, and let me say welcome and thank you to Allison for coming to make this presentation. Well we always welcome submissions like this that add to the variety of materials and a broader perspective to the way we are going to look at our mandate. The challenges are huge and complex particularly regarding the subject which you are dealing with. Peace Without Justice has many challenges which we need to look at from different perspectives, not only from the context in which the problem we are examining occurred or was carried out but from the context of the broader world perspective. I think that is the global picture of justice for some of us as we have gone out meeting people and talking to them asking their opinion about what should be done to satisfy them. Because of what they have suffered, they seem to be presenting different clues as to what justice is not. It is not an invariable or homogenous, or it cannot be seen from only one point of view, it is relative. What one person may consider as satisfying whatever will meet his or her justice criteria will be different from the opinion of her people. So that is why we feel that your presentation, I hope we get it submitted to us at some future date, will give us an opportunity to study the matter very carefully. But from what I have said already I hope you understand that we hold the view that justice is relative. I mean there is no one single justice just like truth. I don't want to go on to develop that and give examples even of recent times where we have seen it demonstrated by people whom we have the greatest respect for. For me I haven't got any question to ask on your submission but I have interest in it from the point of view of giving another perspective to justice. We are seeking to discover the meaning and the how of dealing with that aspect of it in our minds. This is why I am thanking you so much for that submission. I look forward to receiving the document, which I hope will come.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Commissioner Torto

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much Chairman, I want to join the other commissioners in thanking Allison for this presentation. I am asking that you please let us access the written version of your statement in order that some of us will read it in detail and be able to react to it in a more forceful way. So I will encourage you to please let us have copies in time for us to read and then follow. But besides that I just have one area of concern that I would like you to help us out with as an organisation. We have heard various aspects of justice like Professor Kamara has just told you especially in the African setting. Some people are pleased with a mere apology. If you just stoop down for them to touch you on your back they are satisfied and the feeling of hurt is gone for good. They don't want to go beyond that. Others want to retaliate and for them that is what satisfies. Others will take you to some elderly person to complain so that the matter is adjudicated and then whoever is right or wrong is declared and that approach for some provides satisfaction. We in the commission are looking at it from all those angles. Therefore we want to we thank you very much for your contribution. It gives us other areas that I want you to help us out with. I mean either from the point of view of your organisation or you yourself we want you to help us actually reason out or add to our reasoning or correct the wrong reasoning we may have on the issue. And this is it, between the TRC and the Special Court which one of these institutions in your opinion or in the opinion of No Justice Without Peace would provide the fairest and the most just situation to victims enacting from the last conflict.

Allison: I think that that's a very good question. That is also relative. I think that as you are saying, some people see justice as one thing and to give justice is a totally different thing. So I am trying to say which institution is fairer or better for victims. I think that each institution is necessary for victims. But I think it's necessary in different ways. The Special Court only has jurisdiction for those who bear the greatest responsibilities. It has a limited mandate in a sense and it also has a time-limited mandate. It only has three years to do its work and because of the nature of criminal justice it is reaching the international criminal justice system. It is seen as a conflict in many ways as in international system and very few victims relatively speaking will actually participate directly in the work of the court. So very few people will actually get to tell their story to the court and I think that is very strange. The TRC has for victims what the Special Court perhaps doesn't have. Perhaps it is meant to have but nevertheless it doesn't. By that same token I think the leaders could plan that war be conducted in that way, attacking civilians and burning their houses. I think the first thing for victims is that the person perpetrating violence is prosecuted and in that way you can reach the culprits. I think a very large number of victims are at the top of the chain of command and because orders have been given down, down, and down the violence spreads to all of the victims in the country. But it is a very different process and as I said I think some processes are necessary as well as others. TRC has its own constraints and so I think that the Community based forms of accountability or justice, forms of reconciliation are probably also necessary in order to fully overcome what has happened, especially for speaking to the victims' needs. I don't know if that answers your question.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you chairman.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Leader of Evidence have you any questions?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Madam Chair. Actually I don't have any question for the witness. All I have is a request because very soon we will be embarking on what I want to say is this question of reform. We all know that some of our laws are absolute and if the constitution needs some amendments then you include that in your submission when compiling your report. We want you to look at the legal areas; those areas that you think need reform so that at the end of the day the judiciary will be able to function well and so they will dispense justice accordingly. Please pay special attention to the substantive laws and even the constitution where you think the reforms are necessary so that when you make your submission on them we will look at them and incorporate them in our report if necessary.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I wonder if you have any questions for the Commission about our work, our process, and procedures.

Allison: Well at this stage now I don't have any questions but I do appreciate the opportunity given to us.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: I know we are going to receive your recommendation when you do send us your submission but I also know that you have some recommendations here with you and I think it will be rounding up your views for the public if you just give us an idea of your recommendations now.

Allison: Thank you very much and thank you for the permission to submit our written recommendation after making the oral submission. We will certainly address those areas that you mentioned in our written submission. I do have some

preliminary recommendations from our organisation that I will read now. We will as I said give a preliminary submission in the following:

First, that the Special Court will follow the principal fundamentals of the rule of law in all aspects of its operations. Second, that the International Community continues to support accountability efforts in Sierra Leone in particular and those should include the agreement or cooperation with the Special Court. Regarding the necessary financial support both for the TRC and for the Special Court, we recommend that the international community extends its support to efforts in rebuilding the judiciary in Sierra Leone, particularly in line with Sierra Leone's international obligations. That the Government of Sierra Leone and others work to ensure that security forces are trained and are au fait with all other aspects of humanitarian and international human rights law and also that the government of Sierra Leone and others work to make sure that information on international and human rights law is disseminated in an appropriate manner to the general public. We would respectfully ask that the TRC acknowledges the importance of instituting the rule of law in the Sierra Leone society as one of the key elements for attaining sustainable peace and reconciliation and as such to highlight the world of past impunity and corruption of the rule of law that applied in and sustaining the 10 years conflict. Finally we would again recommend respectfully that the TRC recognises that the hearings to international humanitarian law are not only an obligation of the government but they are central to the interest of peace and reconciliation of the nation. Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much for coming. You may step down.

Allison: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Can we have the next witness?

Leader of Evidence: Madam Commissioner, I am sorry that is the last witness for the day.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you ladies and gentlemen. We have come to the end of our day's hearings and so we are going to adjourn now until tomorrow morning at 9:30 and please come again and bring some friends with you so that this hall will be crowded. Thank you.

Leader of Evidence: May I ask that we all stand for the Commissioners?

THEMATIC HEARING: MR FRANCIS GABIDON OMBUDSMAN OF SIERRA LEONE

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We welcome you to this session Mr. Gabbidon. Your name is a household name in Sierra Leone and in many ways you have contributed to bringing us where we are at this particular point in time. It is but natural that you continue the process. We are at the River Jordan and we want to cross that river together, and so we put our hearts and minds together and carve out a destiny for our nation. We are here as you might have received from the office for issues pertaining to the judiciary. Your presence or absence in that office and what your experiences had been vis-à-vis the ten-year civil conflict will be our present focus. How you see the judiciary functioning in the past, now and in the future and everything that has to do with this process that will bring a new Sierra Leone. This is essentially why you have come and we've enjoyed your cooperation – your help in getting the TRC not to get materials from outside but people who themselves are architects as it were, for the carving out of their condition. You know the process I may not tell you; you helped to carve the instrument and we know that whatever you say here could be said in good faith and we accept it in

good faith, and digested in good faith. We thank you for coming. I will now give you the opportunity to make your presentation.

Gabbidon: Thank you very much Bishop Humper – let me first of all say how pleased and privileged I am to be here.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: I'm sorry Mr. Gabbidon, we left a little bit of process that you needed to go through and that is the taking of the oath.

SUBMISSION

Gabbidon: Distinguish Chairman, and fellow Commissioners, let me firstly say how humble and privileged I am to appear before you this morning, to testify at this all important Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I honestly don't think a better group of people could have been appointed than you here to sit on a panel like this where the integrity, probity and reputation of the Commissioner is so important and I can assure you that, those of us who are in the position to help, cooperate and assist this Commission will do so and I personally will do so to help you succeed; because your success is our success, not just for now but for posterity. You see Chairman, you are right to say that, in my own humble way I played some part in seeing this TRC established, because, after the Lome Peace Accord the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights decided to do some sensitisation on the Lome Peace Accord and to explain to the people of this country – our brothers and sisters, what this accord is all about. Why it was signed, why it was necessary for us to see it work. If we recall, at that time, we were all bitter, we were all angry, because of what had taken place in our country over years. Many lives were lost; thousands of people injured; maimed; houses destroyed and professor Pemagbi, who is now the Ambassador of UN approached me to help, to explain to the people of this country in simple language the Lome Peace Accord, and in my own humble way for over a year, I tried to explain to people, the terms and conditions of the Lome Peace Accord, the meaning of these terms and why the government had to sign that accord because some people think it was a bad agreement. It could be, but at that time the government had no choice but to sign that agreement. Even up to yesterday, I was reading a book called "Deliver us from Evil" which is written by an American; and he said he quite sympathises with the government of Sierra Leone to have signed that agreement; because, there is no doubt that the ex-combatants would never have left the bush or would have signed the Peace Accord if some of those terms were not inserted in that agreement. As somebody said its probably difficult to make peace than to wage war; but I believe that the government was right in signing that agreement and we can now see the benefits of that; because we've done a wonderful job despite what we say amongst ourselves – there's been disarmament, demobilisation and integration and if we can consolidate and build on this, I'm sure we have a future,. Mr. Commissioner, I'll like to talk on a few things concerning judicial governance and my office; but do permit me to digress a few minutes because there are one or two things I'll like to talk about, to fit into this picture.

Firstly, I think one of the biggest mistakes we ever made in this country was when the one-party system was introduced. It was a disaster for Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone should never have established a one-party state, because we had inherited a system from the British in which we had the Judiciary, the legislature

and the executive, and that system with all its faults worked. It worked well. Sierra Leone was peaceful; had a good level of education, business economy that was picking up and I believe, we made a big mistake when I say we, I say all of us. It's not time now to point fingers because we accepted it as it then was but it was a disaster when we look back. The reason for saying so is that the one-party state did not benefit the people of this country. It only benefited one man and a few of his coat-tails and as such most the institutions collapsed – the judiciary collapsed, the executive collapsed and the legislature was virtually a rubber stamp; and because these institutions collapsed because there was virtually no opposition, no accountability – it means that the consequences of the collapse of these institutions was that the people of this country had nowhere to complain to; nowhere to air the grievances and nowhere for people to know how we felt. Even a few of the newspapers that tried to challenge or to criticise were dealt with harshly. So that's the first point I'll like to emphasise that never again should this country go back to that type of system – never – it should never go back to that type of system. All they did was to create a lot of disaster for this country. We did not benefit anything even though some people felt that, it helped to unify us and bring stability. Even if it did, it was a stability that was short-lived because eventually what we refer to as sitting down was a powder keg that exploded. So that stability that some people argue was as a result of the one-party, was a fragile stability. Because what in fact it was holding was a powder keg and the powder keg exploded which we saw in rebel war and all the disturbances that we had. So that was a big mistake.

I think the second mistake we made in my insight was the holding of the OAU Conference. Sierra Leone was a small country and even though the African countries were rotating the hosting of the OAU there was nothing wrong with us telling our brother African countries that we were not in the position to host it. If we recall Addis Ababa was fixed. Ethiopia was the permanent site for hosting OAU countries just as we have New York for UN conferences and only those countries that are rich and can afford it could do so outside of New York or Addis Ababa, but we decided to host the OAU in 1980 and that again was for the benefit of the vanity of one person and it meant that we squandered all the resources and reserves of this country. A hundred million dollars in 1980 which was the total reserves Sierra Leone had were used to host the OAU. It might have helped our image and to some extent the infrastructure but the long-term consequences were economic and social disaster for which we are still paying the price. The OAU of 1980 was an economic disaster just as the one-party establishment was a political disaster. So these were two events, that shaped the destiny of this country adversely; because of these institutions – the executive, the judiciary and the legislature. It meant as I said, more or less us creating a situation where the state did not function or even if it functioned, it did not function well and efficiently. There was no accountability to the people of Sierra Leone. People did what they wanted in these institutions. The Army in particular was self-accounting – they were not accountable to the people of this country. Armies all over the world are accountable to the civilian government. In our case the Army was accountable to itself. The amount of resources and money spent on the Sierra Leone army during that period was unbelievable; and most of it went into the private pockets of senior army officers who used it to build houses, purchase cars and other amenities that suited them, rather than develop and strengthen the army that we had, that was so famous many years ago when it was part of the contingent that went to the Congo during the peace keeping operations; it went to Burma and distinguished itself in the first world war and in the second world war in Cameroon. So also, apart from state institutions, the beginning of the disintegration of the army started during that period; during that one-party period when the army was not accountable to the people of Sierra

Leone. They were accountable to themselves, nobody however knew the state of the army; they did what they liked and we are paying the price and thank God for the British and other countries that have come today to help us to restructure and develop our army. So these were fundamental mistakes that were made, but let me say, immediately that much as I'm criticising the government then, we also, that is we the people of the country must accept some of the blame; because we did not challenge the government then, as have been done in Ghana and Nigeria. The middle class – we the middle class, the professionals and intellectuals - failed the people of this country because in Ghana and Nigeria when similar circumstances arose, we saw that the Ghanaian middle class or Nigerian middle class and intellectual and professionals looked to the streets, went to the courts, were prepared to go to prison, and were prepared to die. But regrettably, we, and as I say we I include MYSELF, WE ALL Sierra Leoneans we were cowards because people felt that the existence of the SSD then, was (the SSD now is a different SSD) was used to intimidate and tyrannise the people of this country. The SSD have played a role over the last few years but then it was the instrument of tyranny in this country. It was used to cow opposition leaders; it was used to cow the press, the citizens, students and people who try to protest. Never again should we have an arm of the police that is an instrument of tyranny. The SSD as is doing now, and I praise them now, has transformed itself to be part of the police for good. But at that time, it played an infamous role and some of the big disasters were perpetrated by them - the killing of people, maiming and to some extent even armed robbery. There were instances when in fact in those days some of the SSD personnel then were involved in armed robbery – it is a fact and people know it but everybody kept silent because of the fact that we were scared that, they could seek their revenge. So the collapse of the army, the collapse of the police forces were as a result of that unlawful marriage. The police then was heavily politicised. The introduction of the army and the police into politics was another disaster. The army and the police and the Civil Service should be neutral and impartial at all times. They should support the government of the day. They should be loyal to the government but they should not be politicised. Inspector Generals of Police then were appointed on tribal grounds rather than merit or experience or ability. Promotions in both the army and the police were based on tribe, rather than merit, ability and experience. So were the seeds of disaster sown and we are now paying the price. I knew, I predicted this, I told my wife many years ago that we were sitting on a powder keg. Sir, it did not come to me as a surprise when Sierra Leone exploded. It was bound to explode. What I was not sure about was the way and manner in which it would explode. Any true Sierra Leonean would not say that the ways and means this country was governed was not a tinder-box for explosion; but I did not believe that Sierra Leonean will cut each other's hands. I did not believe that we would dismember women. I felt and believed that there would be a protest, that people would revolt to change the country into better society; but talking to some of the RUF; and I talk to quite a few of them up to today; some of them have admitted that, this was not what they envisaged at first. In the end instead of helping us to change the country, they inflicted harm and murder on the very people they said they were protecting. So the collapse of the state institutions, the army, the police, the civil service was politicised. These are things that we should never do again. The civil service, the police and the army should be based on merit and ability. We must not allow tribalism to go into these institutions; because the moment you introduce tribalism in these institutions, it is the country that suffers. Even though those who take the decisions think they're doing something good, they also end up paying the price. When you have a bad leader, the country pays the price. So even those who think they were doing their tribesmen a favour, in trying to put their own men there, did not realise that they were doing all of us a disfavour because after some time, the edifice was going to collapse

and we all paid the price. So that is why one has to commend this government for now going on criteria such as merit, ability, and experience. When you look at your commission, Mr. Chairman, you could see merit, ability, integrity and experience. It is quite possible that a couple of years ago, if a similar institution was elected it could not have had the integrity and reputation of people like you. It could have been based on tribal or other grounds. That is why I say if we now see institutions work and work well it's because of the absence of these negative factors.

Mr. Chairman, the point I'll also like to bring in which, just digressing when I come to my main point is that, we also have a reputation for being very friendly, hospitable and warm; which is good. Sierra Leoneans are basically warm, hospitable, and friendly but this is more with outsiders. We tend to love outsiders more than ourselves. Why? We open our hands to outsiders – fine; but why don't we also concentrate that love and unity for each other. We need to love and unite more. This has also been a problem in place. We are at each other's throat too many times. There is nothing wrong with competition. We should compete amongst each other. There is nothing wrong with trying to be able to strive for success. But we see the unity at now the level we want it. In other words we should try to love ourselves more and to love our country more. That's why people like me have come into public life, to play our own part. Instead of sitting in an office, I could be making millions of Leones. I used to; but I decided with age and time that we should put back into society what we've gained and to help our society build itself again or we could have gone out of this country and taken any international jobs but that is not the answer, we have to build our country. The Sierra Leoneans who run out of this country build somebody else's country. They do not build Sierra Leone and foreigners are not going to build this country for us. We have to build this country. Now the point I want to make here is that, not only us driving the lack of unity which we are trying to now cultivate and the patriotism which we are also trying to cultivate. We have opened this country too much to foreigners and we are suffering for it as well today. The way this country is opening up to outsiders is too much. We won't see this in other countries; and this is why we also have a problem; because we do not necessarily attract good people into this country. We have a lot of people in this country that have no business here, in the economy, in business, living in the best houses, driving the best cars, and to that extent, a lot of Sierra Leoneans feel alienated; because they are not enjoying the best of their country. You do not see this in any other West African country. Whether you go to Guinea, even Liberia with all its problems, Gambia, Nigeria, Ghana, the inhabitants of those countries, enjoy the wealth of their country. To some extent, apart from a few you have made it, the majority of Sierra Leoneans need to be empowered economically. That does not mean that Sierra Leoneans don't have to work hard to achieve that economic success; because to some extent, some people criticise us to say we are lazy. I do not believe we are lazy, I think if the Sierra Leonean is well motivated financially and otherwise, he will work hard although we still have some people who don't want to work; they prefer to go around the streets begging and loafing. Now Mr. Chairman, the Judiciary and my office which I want to link up are my main theme.

The Judiciary and My Office

The Judiciary and my office have to be strengthened and taken seriously. If democracy has to succeed, if democracy has to survive in this country, the bed-work is the judiciary. The bed-work of democracy when you look at the United States of America, Great Britain and other developed democratic countries, the judiciary is seen as a premium asset. If you do not develop or strengthen your

judiciary, all the other institutions will collapse, because at the end of the day, it is the judiciary that has to make the necessary pronouncements on the rule of law, on the constitution of the country, on whether our laws are valid, on what happens to people who flaunt the law. So the judiciary has to be empowered and I must say that over the years, it's only now we are seeing a judiciary being empowered. Although I must give credit to the late Francis Minnah, and I want to say it on record politics aside, he was the only Attorney-General of this country that took the judiciary seriously. Talk to any senior lawyer, they will tell you that. In terms of conditions of service, in terms of the way he empowered judges, salaries, pensions, the incentives to work, the late Francis Minnah politics aside, took the judiciary seriously; and for this, I would go on record and a lot of those who don't have the guts to say it would admit it in private that he did take his judiciary seriously in that judges were happy to work at that time, and some of the benefits we are enjoying today are as a result of the initiative he took? As I say, I'm here to talk about his tenure as attorney General and some of the things he did are there on record. So I must give credit to the late Francis Minah; may his soul rest in peace for the fact that, politics aside, he did a job to help the judiciary.

Some Of The Ways The Judiciary Has Gone Wrong Over The Years And Which We Must Try To Put Right

From 1973 up to today, there is no system of law reporting in Sierra Leone. A judiciary cannot function without a proper system of law reporting. Unlike the Gambia, Ghana, Nigeria, we do not have a system of law reporting and I believe this government is now trying to put the mechanism in place. Without law reports, the judicial is meaningless. It's law report that we have to look to, find what the law is and what the law has said; but now all we have is unreported cases and I was briefing the Special Court judges, prosecutors and defence lawyers on Saturday and I told them, they have to make do with the fact that what we have is an unreported system and they just have to accommodate themselves to it until such time that we have law reporting.

The other problem we have is that the laws of this country have been static. They've not been reformed. Thank God we now have distinguished juries – Doctor Peter Tucker who has been appointed to help the Law Reform Commission – you must commend this government for that and that Commission has an able secretary Yasmin Jusu-Sheriff and this is a good team. Because these are solid lawyers and with the help of some of us – I now intend to help them - we should go back on track to revise and review our laws. Most of our laws as my learned judge here will tell you are outdated. They do not meet the present conditions of this country. Laws have to be dynamic, they cannot be static. They have to move with the times. Regrettably, since 1960, when we had the major law reform in this country, law reform over the years has been peace mill. Rather than comprehensive, and now I think the government is trying to have a comprehensive system of law reform. So, law reform and law reporting must also be given serious consideration, and I believe they are now being given that, because there is a Law Reform Committee that now works at state house under Dr. Peter Tucker and Yasmin Jusu Sheriff and the law reporting has not started, but I have the feeling that, I believe DFID wants to help us set it up. These are the tools of the trade; it's like a Doctor without a stethoscope. A Judge without his law report cannot make the necessary diagnosis – a doctor needs his stethoscope in order to examine to find out what is wrong. The lawyer, the judge, needs his books; needs his law reports also as there have been an absence of law libraries in this country. It's basic but it's a fact. You cannot have a legal system without good libraries. We must take these simple things seriously. You

might just see a library and think – this is a place where I go and borrow books. No. It goes beyond that. It is your books you use to write your judgments and your rulings. Your law library is important. So we need law libraries we need to have books. The University law library is virtually non est. The best law library we now have in this country is the Law School library; which is very good, and I believe the Law Officers Library is now going to be empowered; or is being empowered by DFID. So these institutions work, when you have the necessary ingredients. You must have law reporting, you must have law reform, to update your laws, you must have libraries to have your books. Also, the conditions of service and terms of conditions of service and terms of conditions of the judiciary have not helped; our judges, magistrates and law officers are paid pittance and if you pay them pittance you will have pittance judgments and pittance rulings. Judges and lawyers all over the world are paid well. The reason for this is one, when you pay them well, they can take their work seriously and then they will resist corruption so that if you find them corrupt you come down heavily on them. Judges are paid well, in England the moment you become a judge, they are knighted automatically. This is to enhance your status, so that probably what you lose in practice, you make up in in-made prestige and a reasonable amount. We are not saying they should be paid astronomical salaries, no. But pay them a decent wage so that if you find any evidence of corruption; you can come down on them heavily. As for any of us for that matter, who work in the public scrutiny; logistics, transport, infrastructure are in short supply. But let me not lay too much emphasis on those, because I think other people have spoken about these areas, and we all now accept that the judiciary has to be transformed, it has to be restructured and we have to have personnel. This is another problem. We've not been able to recruit some of the best personnel from the BAR into the judiciary bench. People complain about the judiciary but we the lawyers must take some of the blame; because we have refused to go to the bench. It is small salary, small conditions so those who have taken the risk of sacrifice like our learned Commissioner here must be commended, because it shows that it was not just money that drove them into office, but there were other attributes. But at the same time, that should not be an excuse for judges, lawyers or those who work in the government service not paid well vis-à-vis the private sector to undermine their integrity the way we often hear these days. If you have two colleagues who went to lets say the Prince of Wales School – one becomes a lawyer, one works at the brewery - the one who works at the law officers department would be paid lets say two hundred thousand Leones a month. The one who works at the brewery probably gets seven eight hundred thousand. You see that disparity and probably even when they were at school, the one who became the lawyer was more brilliant. What happens – the one who is in the law officers becomes frustrated – yes he is disillusioned. The one at the brewery is well looked after. Probably it's unfair to compare both of them but that is what you see. In that probably the one at the Brewery will work there for twenty years because he's paid well, is well looked after, he takes his job seriously; but then if you pay somebody two hundred thousand Leones after six years in law school he starts to say why the hell did I bother to read law. I could have been doing something else. So that is why we say, we're not demanding or asking that the legal system is paid astronomical amounts but let them be given a living and descent wage which will keep them and their families going. I think one of the things I'll like to suggest to this Commission is that we should now stop the system of appointing judges from the magistrate bench. We've been lucky in the past to have the likes of the late Mrs. Justice Awunor Renner and we have Justice Marcus Jones here who are the few whom we can commend. But let me say here openly that a number of magistrates, who were promoted to the bench, had no business there. They were promoted because that is the system; but their legal knowledge was not all that commendable. They did not have any

practice at the Bar; and so, much as they were made judges, their contribution to judicial improvement or advancement here was very minimal. I'm not saying that it is only people who are appointed from the BAR who do well; but that has proved a better system, because we do have judges who are appointed from the Administrator General's office like the Late Justice Parson Davies and D.M. Williams. We have those who have been appointed from the Law officers – Justice Adorph, Aladi, and a few others but the bulk of our judges, should be appointed from the BAR. But of course it's a vicious circle because, somebody would answer me and say, well, Mr. Gabbidon where are you going to get these people from, because your colleagues refuse to go and take these jobs and that is why we say, make them attractive, make them good, the lawyers will come. Just as the World Bank has been able to recruit recently, four lawyers from private practice to help the law officers department, and the money they're paying them is not fantastic in terms of an astronomic earning but it was descent enough to attract four good lawyers from the private BAR now joining the government: the persons of Mr. Barbar, Mr. Roberts, Mr. Sesay and Mr. Thompson. So, that is the clue. Give people a nice descent wage which is reasonable, they will work for the government. I believe that the government can introduce a system where you have what we call part-time recorders; where people in private practice or some of us who do not practice any longer could do part-time work for the judiciary. They do it in other countries. You sit part-time as recorders, to help the government clear backlog, to help with complex cases. Because of our experience we could develop a system of part-time recorders because we cannot afford full-time recorders. Some part-time recorders can be made to work in the provinces while others could be made to work in town. These are ways and means to improve the judicial system in this country; and these part-time recorders would be made up of lawyers in private practice who are prepared to sit at the magisterial or high court or whatever bench to have the system. The other problem we've had is that an important office like the Master and registrar has also not attracted very good people. Now Masters and Registrars all over the world, in the British Common Law system, perform very vital role in the Judiciary. They are the ones who run the Administrative set ups and to some extent play an important judicial role; but because of poor wages and salaries, we've not been able to attract solid people there; but let me pay my credit to the Late William Johnson who became a judge, who was a very good Master and Registrar, Mrs. Showers, now Justice Tola Thomson, but we need to attract people there not just for Freetown; Bo, Kenema, Makeni to have their own registrars. So what we have is a system where we just have one or two in Freetown, and the provinces have no registrars. We should have registrars all over the country at the judiciary. So these are areas where even if it's outside help – let us go for it. But if you want to have a judiciary functioning, these are the weak areas that have to be strengthened.

Now, the other failure of us; when I say so, I include myself. I don't try to point fingers just at people, I point fingers but also we collectively must accept some of the blame, because the judiciary did not challenge the establishment of the one-party system under Siaka Stevens; but we challenged it under Albert Margai; and Albert Margai resisted and abandoned it. But we failed to challenge it under Siaka Stevens. Probably because Albert Margai was a lawyer I don't know or a democrat. But when Desmond Luke, T.S. Johnson, Jalayakin and others went to court; the late Kutubu Kaisamba; L.E.M Gerald, they said no we don't want it, the late Sir Albert resisted, but when it came to the one-party of Siaka Stevens, the judiciary did not do anything. So we have to take the blame for that. Why didn't we the lawyers challenge, why didn't we go to court, even if the court had ruled against us? So we have to accept that. Some of the reasons why this country collapsed at that time was what I might call fear; cowardice amongst us

professionals people who say well, I'm not going to risk my life, I don't want to die; but you must have martyrs if a country has to progress. No country develops or progresses without people dying. Look at the amount of people dying in Iraq whether it is Iraqi's or Americans for different reasons. So the failure of the Sierra Leoneans has to do with their reluctance to go to jail. We don't like to go to prison, nobody wants to go to prison, but Ghanaians, Nigerians, Gambians, do go to prison for a course. So we've had a problem. Who wants to bell the cat? Nobody wants to bell the cat. We have too many armchair critics in this country. People who don't even want to come here and speak the minds. They sit in their houses criticise, go to newspapers, write a lot of balderdash but you ask them to come up and talk and really go on record they will not do it; they say – I don't want to go to jail, I don't want to be victimised; but no country will develop in a culture of silence, but if you criticise, it must be constructive, it must be reasonable and you must put forward an alternative solution. It is not just to criticise, the criticism, must be constructive. It must be reasonable and you have to come forward if necessary with an alternative solution. So even when people criticise us now, within a short period of time, people don't realize the miracle that has happened over the last few years; in that very few countries, who have been through a ten year rebel war, have turned around within the period of two years to this extent. To the extent that I have an article, which I'll put at your disposal, written by a Professor of Politics at Florida University. I've never met him. I got it when I went to England last year. It's a twenty page article by a man who came here; and the, article is entitled, "The Country that came back from the dead" that was the heading: the country that came back from the dead. And he argued vigorously that Sierra Leone unlike other countries like Somalia or any other of these failed states has been able to come back from that collapse, from that failed state syndrome and we are back on the road to recovery. He said the country that came back from the dead. And this can only be a credit to all of us. Even though we have to thank UNAMSAL, IMATT, ECOMOG our Nigerian brothers and sisters, but the will to survive the resilience of the Sierra Leonean, the faith in God, or God put us to the situation where we are back again; to the extent that some people come here after so many years abroad and say – "but where is the country that was at war I don't see anything". Some of my friends came over Christmas, they said "but I can't see what you are talking about" – I said but that is because you were not here a couple of years ago. So if they can come and see, this green mess of Sierra Leone and not the fire that was engulf in this country, let us congratulate ourselves. Mr. Chairman, I am of the view that the establishment of the office of Ombudsman has been an important one. Not because I occupy this position. This is a position that should have been established a long time ago and I was telling why or how the absence of it contributed to some extent to what we went through in the sixties (60's) a lot of African countries decided to establish this office. It came from Scandinavia, down to Europe then to Africa. The first African country to establish it was Tanzania in 1962 under Julius Nyerere. The good thing about the office—is that it acts as a safety valve. The office, of the Ombudsman is a safety valve between the government and the people. In previous years, people had nowhere to go and complain. Absolutely nowhere! If they went to the courts they probably won't get justice because the stronger man succeeded or the man with the money succeeded. The poor, the weak, the vulnerable had no chance of redressing their grievance from the courts; if he went to parliament to complain to his MP, his MP had no time for him. For him, if he went to see one who was a Minister, he was simply told "I'm busy", and of course he had very little access to the Executive. People had nowhere to turn to for addressing some of these grievances, some of these disputes and these feelings of misadministration were boiling up and some people; some people I believe turned to arms, resorted to arms when they felt all else had failed. Whether it was the right thing for them to

do is a matter for history to decide. That is not for me to decide; but when people felt that all sources of democratic channels had failed them with nowhere to complain, and nobody to listen to them, they decided to resort to arms. What was wrong was the way and manner I believe the arms were used against their own brothers and sisters. Nobody would deny that Sierra Leone was not tinder-box waiting to explode. So the Ombudsman's office acts as a safety valve; because, now, people have somewhere to complain. They have somebody to go and talk to. We don't send them away. We try to help them either by linking them to other institutions like the police or the Anti-Corruption Commission or the National Commission for democracy and human rights or ICRC etcetera or we send them to LOWCAA.

We do a lot of aid work at Brookfields. These young men have been doing a lot of good work. We are ashamed we the senior lawyers because it was these young lawyers that set up the first legal aid system and today they are flourishing. If you interviewed those who went to the bush they will tell you "I had a land case for twelve months Mr. Gabbidon I was not having justice.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much Mr. Gabbidon for coming here; we already have before us what you called the trio yesterday: we heard the Chief Justice whom you already heard and then the president of the Bar Association. As it is our practice at this Commission we would ask you questions for clarification and after that we'll ask you for your own input and then the leader of evidence will ask you his own questions. So I'll now call on my colleague to ask you questions.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Mr. Gabbidon I want to join the chairman in thanking you for accepting our invitation to share with us your experience I can say I have been a living witness to most of what you have said in your introduction. I would want you to clarify a few areas that you have raised in your statement. They are the area of national mistake you mentioned that has cost the country immensely. Another was the introduction of the following: the army chief of staff did not only become a member of parliament but also a minister of state.

The inspector general of police was both MP and minister of state. The civil service became a member of the central committee of the ruling party; and chiefs as well as traditional rulers became indoctrinated into politics above all the Attorney General became a minister of state and sat in cabinet. And you as a lawyer would know what that means more than me.

Gabbidon: Commissioner Torto, thank you. Well what you said is correct. Those who should have stood up should have been us lawyers because we have a fundamental duty to challenge government when the freedom of the people was violated, because the establishment of a one party state contravenes the constitution because there should have been freedom of association.

THEMATIC AND INSTITUTIONAL HEARINGS Chief Justice Dr Abdulai B Timbo

Leader of Evidence: Hon. Commissioner, our witnesses for today's hearings are present. We have here as our first witness the Hon Justice Dr Abdulai B Timbo the Chief Justice of Sierra Leone.

Commissioner Marcus Jones - Please give us your name in full.

Hon Timbo: Babajeh Timbo.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you a Christian or A Muslim?

Hon Timbo: I am a Muslim.

THE OATH WAS ADMINISTERED

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Chief Justice we are glad to have you here this morning and I am sure you have been following our proceedings on the radio and maybe on the television; so you are aware of what we do here and you have nothing to worry about. We are not going to use your testimony against you in any way nor are we going to persecute you; so please feel confident and relax. The normal procedure is that you give your testimony. And then the Commissioners asked you questions if they have any and then the Leader of Evidence will also ask you questions and after all our questions if you have any questions and recommendations for the Commission you can ask / say them.

I believe I noticed recommendations in your submission but if you have any other you may like to give, you may do so at the end. The floor is yours.

Hon. Timbo: Thank you very much Madam. The topic of my evidence is the Judiciary, the legal Profession and the Rule of law within the Special Court and issues of Amnesty, and dignity; and the constitution of Sierra Leone.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We want to thank you very much CJ for your testimony which you've given this morning so that every one should be clear by now the difficulties and the problems facing the judiciary. It is one thing to criticise and to blame and it is quite another thing to support financially and otherwise and to solve the problems in front of the judiciary. I will allow the Commissioners to ask Questions.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: We want to register our thanks to you not only for making your submission but also for coming here. This will go a long way in helping us as a Commission. You have responded to many things and that constrains us in asking further questions. I will come to a few questions that border on the work of the Commission. We had peace keepers that came from the United Nations or ECOWAS. Those peace keepers were charged with responsibilities to keep the peace when they were called upon to come here. To what extent can they be prosecuted for committing crimes during the charge of their responsibilities? Let's say UNAMSIL, ECOWAS, or other groups who came here and in the course of their duty happened to have committed crimes. In what context do you understand that?

Hon. Timbo Before the peace keepers themselves came to Sierra Leone they were given instructions and guide lines with respect to what they should do and not do. I feel and I believe and I submit that if they go outside those regulations and directives they should be properly prosecuted.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: My second question borders on our work with regard to the difficulties we find ourselves in as a Commission. My question is would somebody be prosecuted for committing crime after the 7 of July 1999 (when the Lome Peace Agreement was signed). Let's say on 8th July a person who committed a crime on 7th July is granted amnesty and pardon. Is such a person coverable if he commits a crime after that date and is he subject to persecution?

Hon. Timbo: Well as you have already mentioned, that I think is the situation. The people were worried about people committing offences after that period and there is provision

for that. The special court act for persecutions after July 1999 I believe can be properly investigated and invoked, and a person can be prosecuted thereby in my opinion.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Chief Justice could you please help us again to have some insight into the non legal and legal concept of impeditive justice. The TRC is dealing with the understanding of the non legal but the Special Court is dealing with the Legal. There appears to be a tension between these two institutions. Will you help us to get some insight into the workings between the two?

Hon. Timbo: From the beginning it was stated that not every body will be prosecuted under the special court provisions. Therefore it follows that those who committed offences that fall outside the ambit of the Special Court should be investigated thoroughly by the TRC. Because as we have been doing people have been coming forward but down-playing their own participation in the rebel war and I believe as we have made it clear to them you are not collecting the evidence to submit to the Special Court so I don't see any difficulty in that as such. However I still think it a boosting that they should be investigated even if there is no prosecution. They can come plain with it as it has been happening to make apologies. It has been done with people confessing their roles and pleading forgiveness. We are all part of Sierra Leone; we want peace and want to be able to go to bed with both eyes closed and I think the TRC is doing a wonderful job. I am speaking for the judiciary and I commend you for your work.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: This is the last question I am asking you not in your capacity as Chief Justice but as an individual and as a citizen of this country. In your opinion, how far has the interference or non interference of the executive branch of government into the professional work of the judiciary hampered or undermined justice in the period under review.

Hon Timbo I have difficulty to speak as a private person because I have been a judge for the past 17 years so I should be able to say what I have noticed on the bench rather as a private person. I don't believe or remember any one moment when the executive has interfered with me or any body I have known of. On the question of non interference I hope I am correct to say that I blame the government for not seeing to it that we have proper financial provisions for the bench and the judiciary in general. The Minister of finance should know our problems. They should come and assist us realizing that without an upright and functional judiciary little will be achieved in terms of good governance. The public or the ordinary person will want to know that if he or she has a problem with somebody else he has a place to go to and they will get justice. That is why I believe it's of utmost importance that the judiciary is given a face lift. I even went to England recently to do the interview for the judges for the Anti Corruption Commission and I did emphasise that without a functioning judiciary, there's hardly anything that can function properly in our Republic. It is the same thing I am saying here that members of this Commission should do everything to see that the judiciary functions properly.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you Chief Justice.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: I will like to join Madam Commissioner and the Chairman of the Commission in thanking the Chief Justice. In your submission you are saying you are asking for self accounting. What is the implication or what effect will this have on what people are complaining about the access to justice, the affordability of justice and you know those things that will make justice affordable to the ordinary person

Hon Timbo: The first thing is this; we have established a system by which there are courts presided over in every district headquarter town and some other sub stations. For example we have courts in Makeni, Kamakwei, Kabala, Kambia, Mashaka and many other places. We are having problems in getting magistrates who supervise or in getting JP's to go to these areas. We don't have money to give them fuel for their vehicles. They may go and make claims afterwards but where will the money come from? It will be much easier for us to make our own arrangements for them so that they will be able to move from point A – B faster than one would expect. And when we talk about access to justice it means we should go nearer to the people who need justice so that one need not move down to Freetown before realising. When an electric bulb gets blown up you can't get money to replace it, they say buy it and claim the money later. But where is the money going to come from? These are the sorts of things we are going through. The master is here, Mrs Showers knows it because she has gone through it over the years. If we had this self accounting system before and it worked, why can't we have it again to be able to run our courts efficiently? We have recently received motor cycles. I appealed to the Chinese Ambassador and he gave us 4, and DFID gave us 14. Problems that arose immediately we got these things had to do with finance. They had not been budgeted for so we had difficulty using them. They had not been licensed and just as there was no money for fuelling them. So I had then stocked in the court building for nearly 2 months and had to appeal to the Chief Executive Secretary of the Road Transport Corporation to remove the vehicles on terms and that we would pay later, so many of them Mr Commissioner. I now give you a most recent example when I tried to establish the high court in Port Loko. Because of the scarcity of personnel and the fact that there is only one judge who moves from point A – B, I had to come in myself. I wanted money to travel but the accountant asked me to wait in the office so that she could go and look for money. She spent nearly the whole day without success and she was afraid to come back to me to say my lord, I am sorry there is no money. So I had to spend my own money. Fortunately I was able to get money from somewhere and I went to Port Loko. Until now I have not been reimbursed. If we have a self-accounting system, we will be able to generate funds in the judiciary and we will also be able to take care of these minor things. Then again the UNDP said they were going to make a case for us to the government but first we were expected to generate funds and to take care of the funds we received on a daily basis, like fines and other impositions. What I did was that 2 weeks ago, as soon as I came from England, I took steel boxes to the police stations and asked the clerks to put their takings for the day; and I kept them under lock and key. We thought we should produce something so that our case would be easy to handle. These are the ways in which I am trying to bring in some help so that we can take care of our immediate needs. Without these it is virtually impossible to get people to do things. I put pressure on my staff and even embarrassed them while they in turn embarrassed me because we want to move forward and take justice to the people. But in all of these you need money and it is for these reasons that we are suggesting that we come back to where we were before. And I am appealing to this Commission to help us get back this self accounting system. The judiciary has to move forward we are willing to do so but please help us.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much. What I am proposing here is you have asked us to help you towards this self-acquiring self-accounting system. But we cannot do that until we have received all the information that will guide us in making an informed contribution or recommendation towards that because one of the considerations as far as I am concerned, will be that whatever system is adopted, is not going to be worst than what

exists now that the people of this country, the public will be able to afford justice, that is legal services to give them justice. If you have a system which makes it impossible for the ordinary man to afford legal services, then it is of no good use. I am sure you will agree with me, it will be of no good to anybody.

Hon Timbo: I quite agree with you Mr. Commissioner but I am sure whilst we are here, my master would assist, then we can submit something by the time you rise, I am sure you will have something to hold onto.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Timbo: Am I right my master? Mr. Showers

Mr. Showers: Yes indeed.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Our staff will get in touch with you on that. The other question I want to ask has to do with the question we often meet as we go out to talk to people relating to this amnesty and the Special Court. Now there are people, who are described as having to bear the greatest responsibility for the war, who go into the Special Court. But there are other people, who do not fall within that category. Well, one may perhaps understand that the punishment or the effort to punish those who bear the greatest responsibility is a way of having accountability for everybody who took part in the rebel war. Indeed those who bear the greatest responsibility were responsible for the atrocities committed by others under them down the line. But other people have been asking the question, why is it that after the amnesty, these same people are selected for punishment? For instance, a person who has killed another person's relative is as culpable as a person who led the rebel war. So they feel that those people too, should be punished and there is the other completion as the chairman asked earlier. Those people who committed crimes after the 7th of July 1999 are all these people covered by the amnesty? Can these people take action against them if they want to in spite of the amnesty?

Hon. Timbo: Well for a start, the Special Court is made for people who have committed the greatest atrocities, down the line silent in between. You are the TRC, your function is to try to bring out all these things into the open and try to reconcile as much as you can with the people. Thereafter, if people feel they are not satisfied, I believe they should be free to go to court, and then the court will be able to interpret the amnesty provisions of Lome. That should be left with the court and that should be left to people who are not satisfied after all your effort. That's how I think I should put it at this level.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: There is a subsidiary to that and this goes on page 4 of your submission and I read the appropriate section. It says the court will therefore be entitled to impose custodial sentences additionally; the Special Court will have the power to order forfeiture of any convicted person's property, proceeds and assets which were considered to be acquired unlawfully. Now we have also been approached by people who had acquired property of others, they are now and those are properties which they hold while they deprive the victim and impoverish, and can't afford them at this stage. But these people have not everybody is saying they have amnesty. I will give you an example. In Binkolo,

one man went and took another man's building materials, put up a building and now lives in it and there was this man who was deprived, he cannot now afford to put up a building and every time he passes by and sees this man living in a comfortable house, you know, something moves within him. So he asked the question, can't this man pay for the materials or give me that building which he now possesses which should have belonged to me because these people are not going to be put in court because they do not bear, the greatest responsibility?

Hon. Timbo: I believe, the amnesty should be limited to criminal activities. I cannot see, during the rebel war, somebody takes my car away and in peacetime, I see him going up and down with that car, I do not do something to repossess that car. That is the civil aspect, I do agree with those people who pose those questions that there should be remedy somehow and that's why I am saying if you try the civil court, it will be a matter for the court, to determine whether that is covered by the amnesty. Some of these cases should be tested in the court there you will find the answers. I would not like to say so sitting down here. As a Chief Justice or as a judge when the matter comes before me, it may be said, this was what you said at the TRC, so I would not go beyond what I think I have already said if you will excuse me please.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Thank you very much.

Hon. Timbo: Thank you.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Before I ask Commissioner Torto, I just want to say what has occurred to me that these people who would want to bring these cases, would not be able to afford test cases. They are the type of people who would not be able to afford test cases.

Hon. Timbo: Well, that is why the Commission is there. At the Commission people can make their own recommendations, it is as a system of legal aid somehow, then they can pursue their rights and test the cases.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Commissioner Torto?

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much chairman. Chief Justice, I must first of all join my colleagues in thanking you for your appearance before the Commission and sharing your experiences with us on this very very important matter. I have a few areas that I really want you to help me out with in terms of clarifying them. I will start with very short ones that deal with personnel. It is disheartening to hear you and also read from the paper how much your department is suffering from shortage of personnel that has hindered your effective performance so seriously. My question in that regard is, has the establishment of the law school not helped the situation in terms of alleviating staff shortages at the judiciary.

Hon. Timbo: Well, as I mentioned, not even the young are interested in the judiciary. Last week, when the law school met, Council for Legal Education, I as chairman, we were going to recommend that in fact students should be bonded like in the past so they will be able to serve the country. I cannot get as I say even those who are 2 or 3 years. They can be magistrates but they refuse to come and it is very disheartening. There was a time when I even called some of them in my chambers but I saw nobody. "My Lord, I will give you an answer," but the next minute I heard they were somewhere else. Two of them went to the Law office, they took a consultancy and little did I know that they had in fact applied

to go to the Law office and they were with me for about 45 minutes. I have done that continuously and it appears the Law School doesn't seem to be in a position to help us. The answer to this would be improved conditions. UNDP is working on that but even the suggestion they want to put before government, I have been testing people to see their reaction; people are still not satisfied. The figures UNDP is even suggesting are too small. Even before government accepts them, they say it's too small so why wouldn't it be.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. My next question has to do with Corporal Foday Sankoh. Many a time he stated during interviews, testimonies and explanations and even statements that one reason he took up arms to actually fight against the government of this country, was the injustice meted out on him. That he was falsely accused, falsely prosecuted, falsely charged and falsely imprisoned and that was one reason he thought the best way he said he could remedy the situation was to change the system by force. Chief Justice, do you think there are possibilities of such actions in the judiciary department that people could be falsely accused, falsely charged, falsely prosecuted and falsely imprisoned.

Hon. Timbo: Well with the greatest respect to you, I do not agree such cases are many, if any. The question of falsely charges and falsely imprisonment, there are so many loopholes, so many gaps. Corporal Foday Sankoh never told us what the offence was, he never told us he tried to appeal, he went to the highest court in the land, he never told us that. So we have to take it with a pinch of salt. As events showed later, it was more than just locking up Corporal Foday Sankoh. We all know, Corporal Foday Sankoh had his own ambitions, it was just a question of having been locked up unnecessarily in his own words.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. I also want to make reference to a testimony before this Commission. I don't want to call names because it's going to portray a different situation for witnesses who have testified and categorically described the proportion of inmates at the Pademba Road Prisons; saying that the greater percentage is made up largely of people awaiting trial, who are actually serving remand. Some people have been in that kind of situation for 2 or 3 years, still awaiting trial. He has cited a lot of reasons for this one that lawyers gain by adjourning cases, and that presiding magistrate's attitude of not treating cases with the utmost urgency they deserve. In addition there is a lot of professional malpractice going on in the judicial system. Lawyers prolong cases by asking for adjournments repeatedly and as a result of that, there are lots of cases pending judgment, and that has raised the prison population to a very high level with most inmates on row as remand prisoners.

Hon. Timbo: As I have already mentioned, we have this serious shortage of staff, and of course there are so many cases with a volume beyond our handling and the question of sending people on remand makes it worse. You might have heard recent complaints against us that the courts often release prisoners only for them to go again and commit worse offences. What do you suggest we do? We need to send cases of aggravated robberies to prison and refuse them bail. We have to refuse them bail so they will be there. The answer to the question of cases dragging in court is that we do not have enough magistrates or judges. Since I became Chief Justice, I introduced court sittings on Saturdays just to see if we

can go faster. They are still doing that. Now, there is also a fast track system, which is being experimented by my office and DFID. Well, with the JPs again, the JPs are helping very greatly in Freetown here and in the provinces so that we can reduce the backdrop of cases and the cases for those awaiting trial. But we are caught in between as to whether we should release these people on bail, or send them in. If we send them in can we cope with the volume of cases? I must say here and I believe that is the truth. Something has to be done about personnel. Our female Commissioner on the other side did so much work for us but then we lost her to the TRC. Her cases had to pass through other judges; it meant they had to be tried all over again. I wish she had some time to go and complete some of those cases. I don't know whether she can but that is the situation. We are desperately looking for judges and I believe if the conditions are improved, the senior members of the bar will come and assist us. That's why I think we should put the emphasis for you to use your good offices to see that we have personnel.

Commissioner Bishop Humper: Yes sir. He also mentioned the unnecessary adjournment of cases by lawyers. That those cases are prolonged unnecessarily and the buyers gain by that. I don't know what he means by that but this is the allegation. So I don't know whether there is any excuse for that.

Hon Timbo: I don't know how they gain by that but I am told by magistrates and judges, don't adjourn cases beyond two weeks. That is a rule, a guideline I have given them and they have been keeping to it but the lawyers have so many cases. They come to court and find that at times they have ten or perhaps fifteen cases per day. They have to be in all these courts, if they don't do it the witnesses or the accused persons will say the magistrate has been bribed or the magistrate had an interest that was why he is refused to adjourn. So here again, we are caught between justice and the demands of the system. We have tried to improve on all these things although we have to have basic ingredients that are magistrates and judges. The intention in fact, is to have one magistrate in every district, rather than go by what we have now. For example we have Magistrate Shyllon covering Bombali, Koinadugu, Tonkolili and Kono Districts. He goes to each of these places three days in a month. When he is not there it is the JP's. The reasons we put the JP's there is to make sure that if somebody is charged with an offence, within 72 hours, the law says you should appear in court so the JP's will be there, so we are making this improvement. Most of these are not being highlighted. It is the other things, the negative side that comes up most of the time. This is unfortunate but it is not to say that we will stop the progress of the court.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you. For how many weeks can a case be adjourned?

Hon. Timbo: Pardon?

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: A case can be adjourned up to 2 weeks. How many times of two, two weeks can it go on?

Hon. Timbo: Before now it used to be one month, 2 months, 3 months at a time. Definitely, there is a limit.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: So you can adjourn for two weeks?

Hon. Timbo: No, we will not take it up to a year; not even six months, everything else being normal. If we have enough magistrates, we have enough judges, a case will not last more than 3 months. That is my target but we need the step.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: My last question sir. It's the area of the office of the CJ. The swearing in of Johnny Paul Koroma has been criticised by journalists in editorials sometimes. Some say it was wrong of him to have done so, others say it was right. I want to know whether in such circumstances it is right for a Chief Justice to swear in a junta leader, thereby legitimising his position as Head of State with all the facilities and privileges of that post. Is it right?

Hon. Timbo: Legally, I would say it is not right but it is left with the individual chief Justice to make his own decision. Recently when we went to interview the anti-corruption judges, the one from Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands did not have to abandon the thing because you have so many associations there because they did not think it was right. It was not a properly constitution government, so they refused. That is why I say it's left with the individual judge but legally, I do not think it is right.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Even if the Chief Justice is held under gunpoint to administer an oath of office for President?

Hon. Timbo: That is another matter altogether with respect. If I am held at gunpoint with words such as "put your pen there or you die", it will still depend on the particular person administering the oath.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: But still it legitimises the oath take not so?

Hon. Timbo: No but you will want to know the circumstances under which he did it. If he did it under duress, that is you live or die, and yet an opportunity arises for him to retreat or to do something else but fails to do it, that becomes another matter for consideration.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Above all, I thank you very much for this paper. You have raised the problems and actually offered solutions to them in your recommendations. So I think this paper is going to be of immense help to a lot of us in the Commission. I thank you very much.

Hon. Timbo: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much. Leader of Evidence have you any questions?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Honorable Commissioner, we have a few questions to ask please. Honorable Chief Justice, first and foremost, I will like to request that subsequently, our research unit would clarify certain issues with you by putting it in writing and when we do, kindly oblige us with such request.

Hon. Timbo: Pardon?

Leader of Evidence: We will ask you to clarify certain issues by sending to you a written request and when we do, please oblige us with that request. But now, I would like you to address the Commission on how the judiciary is

complying particularly with a certain constitutional provision. That is section 120 sub section 16 which reads, with your permission under this constitution shall deliver its decision in writing not later than 3 months after the conclusion of the evidence and final addresses or arguments of appeal and punish all parties to the cause of matter, determined with duly authenticated copies of the decision on the date of the delivery thereof. Honorable Chief Justice, could you please address us, whether or not the judges are complying with this particular constitutional provision, that is, by delivering written decisions or judgments within three months of conclusion of evidence.

Hon. Timbo: Thank you very much for that interesting question but if you look at other provisions of the constitution, all other things should be equal. I have outlined the number of judges we must have, I have also stated the number you have in post, so that by itself makes it impossible to comply with that provision. I tell you when I was in England very recently I read in the Commonwealth bulletin an article written by an eminent lawyer from Nigeria. He said their own constitution was the only constitution that had that provision. For a start, I believe it was wrong because we have it also. Then, he went on further to say if you do not comply with that provision does it nullify the proceedings or any subsequent judgment? He said yes, the other argument that he should not if it does not resolve in a miscarriage of justice, you can still accept it. But the third thing he said was that everything being equal, if you have all the judges, you have all the staff, all the other things you will need to comply with that provision, it will be wrong to exceed that three months period. I wish we got to that place whilst I am still Chief Justice; I will make sure that that provision has been complied with. That is why my emphasis is on the cost of recruiting judges to be able to turn out cases faster than we have at the moment. But surely we cannot blame the judges all the way, the lawyers all the way, we have these limitations and that is the limitation I am asking this Commission to address very seriously,

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Honorable chief Justice. From everything you have addressed particularly the problems, the judiciary is confronted, would you please therefore confirm my opinion if I do say that justice is not accessible to the ordinary person of Sierra Leone and for that matter, the rule of law is really hampered?

Hon. Timbo: With this qualification, justice is not accessible to the people of Sierra Leone as how we would want to see it.

Leader of Evidence: Ok thank you very much. My last question please do you think that in deciding on transitional justice mechanism that is accountability mechanisms in dealing with the atrocities committed, Sierra Leone really needed to have the 2 models, operating concurrently, that is the Special Court and the TRC? We would please want to have your view on that.

Hon. Timbo: Yes I think that is perfectly correct and that is why you have these institutions. The fact that we will not be able to prosecute everybody that was involved in the war meant something had to be done to bring those people to say something like an apology or compensation to the victim. Then for those who bear the greatest responsibility, you have the Special Court. I think the two institutions have rightly been chosen.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Madam Commissioner, no more question from us.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you Chief Justice I would like to thank you for the frank way in which you have answered all our questions and for the time you have spent here with us, this morning. Now I wonder whether you have any question for us.

Hon. Timbo: Well I suppose the questions I have to ask I would have asked and the questions I have already highlighted in my submission except perhaps if you say any further appeal to make to the Commission. In that case I will only repeat the appeal I have already made. The question of personnel is a problem for me. I am determined to see that there is a change in the judicial system; I am determined to see that people have access to justice because justice is affordable. But we need the personnel, without them, it is not possible to perform the way I would want to perform. I thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you, you may step down now.

Thematic & Institutional Hearings President Bar Association Sierra Leone – Mr. Oliver O. Nylander

Leader of Evidence: Honourable Commissioners, our next witness is Mr. Oliver O. Nylander, the President of the Bar Association of Sierra Leone, making submissions on behalf of the Association.

Nylander: Oliver Ogunade Nylander.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Are you a Christian or a Muslim.

Nylander: Christian.

The oath is administered

Commissioner Marcus Jones: We welcome you Mr. Nylander for the second time to the TRC and you watched the Chief Justice give his testimony and it is a very fortuitous thing that you are coming right after him. So, we continue our education about the judiciary this morning, we take another aspect of it and that is the lawyers?

Nylander: Yes Madam chair because going by my instruction from the letter, it only says that we write to confirm that the date for your appearance at the public hearing of the Commission, the subject judiciary will be on Monday 26th July. So I shall be looking at the judiciary.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: From your own perspective?

Nylander: From the perspective of the legal practitioners.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Alright thank you very much. You may begin.

Nylander: Madam Chair, Commissioners, as President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association, I will have a look at the judiciary from the practitioners point of view. The judiciary is one

of the three arms of government; others being the executive and the legislature. Successive governments have over the years neglected and failed to pay due attention to the needs and problems of the judiciary. As a result, there had been a sharp decline in the quality of justice dispensed by courts which has resulted in the rule of law being eroded and the public losing confidence in the judiciary. It is our opinion that the most pressing problem facing the judiciary is the lack of personnel and trained personnel to man the courts. There has been an acute shortage of magistrates on the lower bench and judges of the superior court of judicature that is the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. My own valuable Chief Justice Dr. Abdulai Timbo, can confirm this as he has on several occasions made public pronouncements of this fact. The last being at the annual conference of the Sierra Leone Bar Association held at the British council on 2nd July 2003. In view of this shortage of Judges and Magistrates, there is a heavy workload of cases on the few Judges and Magistrates available. It is not uncommon for at least 20 cases to be a day for hearing before a High Court Judge, especially civil matters and also about 30 criminal cases to be listed for daily hearing before a magistrate, particularly the Magistrate Court No.1. This might be a contributing factor to the long delays in trial of cases thus making litigation very expensive. Hence there is the issue of numerous adjournments. It has been alleged that lawyers take on too many cases for which they have not got the capacity to handle. This necessitates or gives rise to requests of frequent adjournments of cases. There might be some truth in such allegation from some of our colleagues but most times, adjournments have been requested because the parties or litigants and their witnesses have failed to appear on the day for the trial. In such situations the lawyer will have no alternative other than to apply for an adjournment. Therefore lawyers are not entirely responsible for the numerous adjournments of cases. There is also the burning issue of shortage of materials like stationery. At times Council will request that notices be sent out to both absent parties and their solicitors. This request might be granted by the judge, then comes the next adjourned date. Parties and their solicitors might fail to appear. The reason being failure by the Registrar to send out notices as requested and this will be due to the fact that printed notice forms were not available. Then the lack or need for continuous legal training for both legal and para-legal supporting staff of the judiciary, like the Registrar, Court Clerks and Bailiffs is also lacking. Then I have proceeded to make recommendations as we see the plight of practitioners. May I proceed?

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: You say you have something lacking in what we have here?
Alright carry on.

Nylander: The government must improve the conditions of service for judges and magistrates so as to attract the right calibre of people to the bench. Firstly, the salary should be made more attractive, the supply of electricity to the residence of judges and magistrates should be made a priority so that they could be made readily available for prompt delivery. The medical allowances given to judges and magistrates should be increased as well as the allocation of vehicles to all judges so as to enable them to arrive in court promptly for court sittings. Next we look at the provision of legal aid. Government should seriously consider the establishment of a legal Aid and Assistance scheme, which will enable indigent litigants who could not afford the high cost of litigation to access justice and not to be deprived of their rights to seek redress in court for wrongs done to them because they are impecunious. Already a group of lawyers known as LAWCLA has established a form of assistance to indigent litigants. The Bar Association has also been running a few clinics at the Bar Association Secretariat whereby, free legal advice is given to persons who cannot solicit the service of a lawyer because of the high cost involved in litigation.
The reforming of our laws especially absolute ones:

In this area, I must commend the government of Sierra Leone, who have recently activated the Law Reforming Commission, who will be holding a seminar on the commercial use of land in Sierra Leone from 30th – 31st July 2003. Its first major activity is to examine the reform of the law relating to the commercial use of land in Sierra Leone. Another problem has been the absence of reported Sierra Leone law cases and this has hampered the work of the judges, since the last reporting of Sierra Leone on law cases was in 1973. My association with funding from DIFID, has embarked upon the publication of Sierra Leone law reports covering a 10 year period from 1990 – 2000, of cases presided in the court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. On completion of the first phase, my association will embark on reporting cases presided by the High court for the period 1973 to date. Recently, some members of the Sierra Leone Bar Association came together to form a local non-governmental association known as the Legal Reform Initiatives. They are committed to support legal reforms in Sierra Leone and to provide a bridge between the national and international ongoing justice efforts. We believe that the legal community must be at the forefront of promoting justice and impartial rule of law and to participate in difficult vital and important projects of improving the country's judicial system. The government should also seriously consider the provision of continuous legal training for both judges and magistrates and the para legal staff of the judiciary. I was privileged together with the Honorable chief Justice Dr. Abdulai Timbo, the learned Attorney General, Mr. Eke Holloway to have attended the all-African conference of law, Justice and Development held in Abuja Nigeria sometime in February this year. At that conference, the need for continuous legal training for judges, magistrates and barristers was stressed, if we in Africa are to leave the challenges and opportunities offered by globalisation. Thanks to the UNDP who conducted sometime in March 2003 a course for Justice of the Peace, clerks and Bailiffs of the judiciary. Within a very short time, we the legal practitioners have started seeing the benefits of such legal training especially among Justices of the Peace, who preside over our cases, over cases in the Magistrate Court as they now have the law stored in their bosom. We the members of the legal profession are sure that now that we have the President, the Vice President, who are both lawyers by profession that the need of the judiciary will continue to be looked into. That is my recommendation. The Bar normally involves legal practitioners, the lawyers who are practitioners from the Sierra Leone Bar Association and the judiciary comprises of the Bench that is judges of the Superior Court of judicature, the High Court, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court and the Lower Bench, the magistrates, so there are two distinct situations two distinct offices.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Alright my next question which follows this and with recommendations coming from the Bar Association or the judiciary have a multiplying effect on the effectiveness of these two bodies.

Nylander: Yes because we have frequent consultations as for example, the President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association is a member of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission. Likewise, we also have both formal and informal meetings with the Honorable Chief Justice so at least we could put across the views of our clients and also what we see as impediments in the way forward as far as just administration of justice is concerned. We are always given the opportunity to put forward our ideas and I must commend my Lord the Honorable Chief Justice as always willing to listen to our views although at times he does not agree entirely with us but he gives us the opportunity to be heard.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you Mr. President. My plea with you, if this is workable, is for you to work with the judiciary; having listened to the Chief Justice'

presentation here, then to get us a comprehensive recommendation that will be of interest both to the judiciary and the Bar Association. Because the Commission has this as one of its very important areas of concern in this country and your first hand comments in this presentation summarises everything for me as far as I am concerned and the subsequent recommendations that should follow. Probably you will be working in conjunction with the Law Reform Commission or other arms to get a workshop, to get a real comprehensive document for the Commission's consideration. That is my plea with you.

Nylander: Mr. Commissioner, I whole-heartedly agree. As a matter of fact, we have been working with No Peace Without Justice to produce something very comprehensive but unfortunately, time has not been on our side but we shall endeavour to do something.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you Professor.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you very much and I will like to welcome you Mr. Nylander, President of the Bar Association. We thank you for coming to make this presentation. I haven't got questions as such but I am a little surprised to hear or see this statement in your submission and I will read it. Under the recommendation, paragraph three you said, provision of legal aid. Government should seriously consider the establishment of a Legal aid and Assistance Scheme. So I am surprised to see that. I had assumed all the time that there is a national provision to help people who need legal assistance but this seems to be telling me that there is no such provision in this country. Am I correct or wrong?

Nylander: Well Mr. Chairman not absolutely wrong. There is a provision for legal aid. In criminal cases like in cases for murder where the accused persons have the right to be defended, the state will pay the legal fees to defend the accused persons but not in all other areas. Like in Britain, they have the Legal Aid and Assistance Scheme which is not only for criminal cases but in Sierra Leone, as far as my knowledge goes the government provides financial assistance for defence or accused persons who are charged with capital offences like murder for them to be tried or defended in these cases. That is as far as my knowledge goes but it does not extend this to other areas especially in civil matters.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: So all this time and up to this point, people in Sierra Leone who have not got the resources to afford legal aid have had no justice in those matters.

Nylander: Well I will not say that they have no justice but they do not have recourse to the courts to redress their wrongs because they haven't got the finance. That is the problem and Mr. Commissioner, there is nowhere in the world that you have a level playing field when it comes to the matter of justice. You have to pay for justice like any other commodity. You have to pay your lawyers.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: But also, you have told us that there are provisions in some countries.

Nylander: Yes, there are like in Britain I am aware of that.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: But we have got. Well I hope your recommendation will be heeded and sometime in the future, provision will be made to help people who can't afford legal aid in this country.

Nylander: Indeed Mr. Commissioner, it is my wish, I hope that we will arrive at that situation someday.

Commissioner Prof. Kamara: Thank you.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much Mr. Nylander for coming to the Commission and more so I want to join my colleagues in appreciating your contribution. I have read your very short testimony and going down in the fourth paragraph, I was reminded of, I am sorry to put this but its just a way of reminder to quote from a book I have read before "Law without Lawyers" and at a portion of that book he is saying that "the laws are made by the rich, for the protection of the rich" and he is saying that "the legislature are the rich people assuming those who make their ways to the house, to be in position to help make the laws, must be people in the higher income". That is the argument put forward. However, in order to correlate that statement with your testimony, I have down here with me, like you said in the fourth paragraph, where you said the adjournment of cases is not entirely the responsibility of the lawyers at times. But the compliance in this particular case are the people, the civil populace who are not lawyers. It is they who are complaining that there is persistent adjournment of cases which means, the fault is not coming from them, that it is the lawyers who persistently and frequently adjourn cases at time for no reason, at times for some other reason to say go and wait for me at the court, I will be there, only to find out that they don't even show up. So this is the allegation. I don't know how much you contribute towards either refuting this or confirming it?

Nylander: Well, as I said earlier, there might be some truth in these allegations because some of our colleagues take more cases than they have the capacity to cope with. But in more of what I have witnessed or have been involved in throughout my practice there is failure on the part of witnesses to appear. I will give you a classical example that occurred last week. We were in the High Court in a murder trial; we were expecting the doctor to turn up. Unfortunately, he could not come because he was extremely ill and we had no alternative other than to have the matter adjourned. At the next adjourned date all efforts were made by the prosecution as well as the defence to see that transport was provided to bring the doctor from his accommodation just to help him to the court and he came. He was able to deal with the autopsy, which he presented because it was a murder trial and that closed his own section because if we had not got that doctor at that particular stage, the doctor flew out on Friday. It means we would have encountered difficulty and there would have been a prolongation of that particular trial. These are some of the problems we face. For example, we also have criminal matters like in the Magistrate Court where you have the police witnesses. Police fail to turn up. It is not the fault of the complainant or the lawyers when investigators fail to turn up. That's not the fault of the complainant or the lawyers but the investigators who fail to come up, whose matter could not be proceeded with.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you for your explanation. It has just been stated, I think you were in the hall listening to the testimony of the Chief Justice, that the judicial department is suffering from a very very acute staff shortage and the tendency has been for lawyers to actually move from government service into private practice and that has been the major cause. Well, the major reason has to do with conditions of service anyway, but other additional reasons are there which

you know better than me as to why actually they are leaving or going into private practice. Can the Bar Association pass a resolution in order to actually forestall this kind of trend? In order to stabilize the personnel of staffing in the judiciary, can the Bar Association pass a rule to say every practising lawyer who is just coming into practice from college or from outside, must serve the government for five years before opting out.

Nylander: Mr. Commissioner, I do agree and see your anxiety being expressed but I think a resolution to that effect might be interfering with the lawyer's own human rights. Certainly, it would interfere with them because it is your choice on completion of both your academic and professional training to enter into which field either as a practitioner or into the Bench. Personally, I have served my own national service I did my own national service. Immediately I left school, I worked as a clerk in 1961, at the Establishment Secretary's Office on to the Prime Minister's Officer, Cabinet Secretariat, Establishment Secretary's Office again and I ended up at the Ministry of education. I went on study leave, when I came back I had to work at the Law Officers Department as a State Council and I worked for four solid years. So it's up to the individual but as I said earlier, the conditions could be made more attractive, definitely it will attract younger practitioners to come onto the Bench but we need people of calibre because it is being said in certain quarters that corruption is rampant but you need not only to recruit lawyers, but lawyers with high calibre who would say no to the temptation and not yield to the temptation of corruption. So, all boils down to the question of making the conditions of service more attractive, then you will have them and as my Lord, the chief Justice said earlier, even the younger colleagues, leaving the law school do not fancy coming up to the Bench. I have gone all my way, I have spoken to them and even to older colleagues, and it's extremely difficult. The Chief Justice will confirm that we hold conference with them in private under attractive social conditions, talk to them, please come into the Bench, but they would not. They say the conditions are not attractive and that is the position.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you Mr. Nylander. Would you agree to the general statement that the law is actually made by the rich for the protection of the rich because legal service is only available to those who can afford and those who can afford are the rich? What do you say about this assertion?

Nylander: I would not agree with that assertion that the law, because it is passed by parliament is for the rich when not only rich people are in parliament. We have people of different financial status in parliament who pass the law and the courts are there to interpret the law but people may say that the law is meant for the rich. There are certain areas unless you have money, you could not have redress especially in civil matters, like the shipping cases, the land tenure cases but in other areas, the poor man goes to the court. If he is offended, he goes to the Magistrate Court issuing the summons, complainant persons and he had been heard. So I would not agree entirely that the law is meant for the rich because it is not the rich people who pass the laws, not the rich people; ordinary parliamentarians and not all parliamentarians are wealthy that one I could say.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: thank you. There is also a general allegation or accusation going round. At times, I don't know whether it is true or false or is there a tendency for lawyers of complainant and lawyers of the accused to team up together to fix a case? Are you aware? Is your organisation aware of this case?

Nylander: I am not, that complaint has not come to my knowledge because if that be the case, it will be considered a grave professional misconduct for which one could have his wigs removed and they are debarred from practising. So I don't think

colleagues will go to that extent to risk their livelihood, risk the person of being debarred, where you would starve along with your family. But no complaints have been brought to my knowledge where lawyers team up with their opponents to defeat the aims of Justice.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you then. The very last of my questions for areas of clarification is this one bordering on this staffing issue. You have just rightly said that it could tantamount to interfering with human rights of the lawyers who may be required to actually sign an agreement for a number of times and then opt out. But this practice was actually, been done in the teaching field, wherein teachers were required to sign a bond and then go to teaching for a number of years and then up till now there after. I don't know whether the practice is still invoked. But since it was right, don't you think what is right for the goose is right for the gander. The teachers were subjected to it why shouldn't the lawyers.

Nylander: Well Mr. Commissioner, provided that your fees were paid by government because speaking from my own experience, when I worked as Assistant Student Secretary in the Ministry of Education, students were bonded. That was around 1968/69. They were bonded because the scholarships that were given or their fees were paid by government. But if my fees were paid by my parents, I don't see why I should be bonded to go and serve the government. But if government spends its resources, pays for my education, then it's my obligation and duty to serve government for the money spent on me. So if the government could provide the scholarships for students to come to the Law School or to complete their studies at the University, then come into the Law school, then we might introduce that sought of bond for students to serve the government, as it has been in other fields.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you Chair. I am sorry there is an area that is of interest to me where you really recommended the various welfare systems which is right, quite in place in order for judges and lawyers to actually perform their best. There has to be that kind of improvement in the conditions of service. There's no doubt about that. But would you think that all by itself would solve the problem? Are there not other issues that one would consider in order to make the lawyers and judges more effective? The welfare systems are taken in good parts I agree with you but I think there should be more to it than this. In terms of attitude to work, personality, and other forms of motivation these ones may not satisfy.

Nylander; Agreed Mr. Commissioner. Also from within the individual that is my duty to serve on the Bench. But from conversations and discussions held with colleagues, what has come out primarily is the conditions of service, which are not attractive. That is the main reason.

Commissioner Sylvanus Torto: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you. Leader of Evidence, have you any question?

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much Honorable Commissioner and thank you very much President of the Bar Association of Sierra Leone. Our first observation is that the Commission would want to have a comprehensive, very comprehensive written submission, which should include certain areas, such as absolute laws. What you perceive as absolute laws obviously requiring reforms. You mentioned that there are absolute laws, we would want you to specifically identify them and give reasons why you think reforms are necessary, and then also on the rule of law generally and how the judiciary have faired. We would want to have a comprehensive written submission assessing the various political regimes from

independence as far as the rule of law is concerned in this country and many other areas. The question I would also want to ask is what the Bar Association is doing in terms of determining or ensuring quality service delivery by lawyers to their clients because, of course it could be inferred from your submission that there are incessant adjournments. And as we all know the saying goes that justice delayed is justice denied. In a country like Nigeria for example, the Bar Association has set up an institute for advanced legal learning which allows lawyers to go for continuous legal education. I am also aware that in Ghana for example, the Bar Association organises periodic workshops on specific issues or to upgrade the lawyers with current issues and you know, when a facility is made available, then it is up to a particular lawyer to pay to attend that kind of programme so we would really want you to address that issue. What is your Association doing in terms of ensuring quality legal service delivery in terms of training and also in terms of several other issues? What are you doing with your lawyers? Thank you very much.

Nylander: Yes. Firstly I would say that we have the Bar Council, who is responsible for the overall work done, to see that quality services are rendered by solicitors to their clients and if the clients have complains, they could write to the Bar Council, who would immediately respond to whatever complaints that are made. As far as the Bar Association is concerned, I would say that with the introduction of the Special Court, it was observed that few legal Sierra Leone practitioners have got the international exposure. By that I mean, few have got the opportunity of practising in International Criminal Court. That is why in conjunction with no Peace without Justice, we solicited the help of the Humanitarian Bar Council of England and Wales and a course was organised which we have just finished on Saturday, to train barristers and solicitors out there to give them the exposure, how to make pre-trial submissions, what type of work they will face in the International Court of Justice, like the Special court and we have that course organised. It started on 22nd July and ended on 26th July inclusive. You see, all comes down to the question of funding because as I stressed in my recommendation when we were at Abuja, it was stressed that we need a legal education as something continuous because we do not have a static world and if we are in need of globalization, to meet the challenges we must be ready and so we are trying with the help of other international bodies to organise training courses as we have just succeeded in organising this last one held with the No Peace Without Justice and the Bar Council of England and Wales to provide a training course for would-be solicitors and barristers appearing before the Special Court. But all comes down to the question of funding which is not easy to come by these days.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you very much but as I also said perhaps one area you may have to consider is asking the lawyers actually to pay, because it's a form of investment for them. If you make the facility available, then you encourage them to actually pay by way of investment to upgrade themselves. I think you may have to also consider that kind of workshop. Another issue we would like to have clarification on and as a President of the Bar Association, which is such a powerful Association, we really want to have your opinion on this issue as regards executive interference in the administration of justice. What has been your experience? Do you think that our judges in time past and even now have asserted their independence in terms of delivering bold and impartial decisions? We would really want to have your opinion in terms of their independence as far as executive interference is concerned.

Nylander: Well I will start off by answering the question as far as my own personal knowledge of something I have been involved in. I remember in 1982 as a state council in the Law Officers Department working with my learned senior Mr. Cyril

Juxon-smith. We had this matter of Agro-commercial and NIC. That was the case in which Agro Commercial sued the NIC for rice imported into Sierra Leone, which were damaged during transit. There was available evidence to the fact that before this rice was put on board the boat, it was not even fit for human consumption. There was certificate to that effect before they were insured and this matter came up. We tendered the certificate in court, and did everything that was humanly possible and I was a young practitioner coming from Britain. We used to go to court, my books were in cartoons, I had the police carrying them all to display my legal knowledge. At the end of the day we lost the matter but what really pains me, after losing the matter when I came back, I was asked by the then solicitor General the late Pierre Boston to write an opinion whether we could appeal. I wrote an opinion and said that there are good grounds for us to appeal against that decision. The opinion also of Albert Medzegar Esq. Was sought and he said that this was a matter that we should appeal because the rice was not fit for human consumption before it was put on board the boat. Who owned Agro Commercial?

It was the Late Siaka Stevens and Mohamed Jamil or Sahid Mohamed. Mohamed Jamil threatened the NIC that if they are going to appeal, he would withdraw all his fishing boats that were insured with the NIC. As a result, the NIC did not appeal and that was one of the main reasons why I left the Law Officers Department. I immediately said to myself, I cannot go on with this so I went straight to the then Attorney General the Late Francis Minnah and Pierre Boston and said well I am afraid because when we lost that case in particular, I was so sure that all the facts were in our favour. I came back to my room, I cried for hours had a rap on the door. My learned figure opened the door, he said "Oliver what are you crying for". He said prepare to shed more tears for cases that you are going to lose. But that was a case it was so patent that they should not have lost that matter and when we wanted to appeal to redress what we consider today wrong judgment, we were deprived or denied that right and so poor NIC they did not appeal and when our clients do not instruct us, we cannot go on. These are particular instance that I know of the executive interfering with the judiciary, with the Law Officers Department. This is from my own personal experience. But with regard to the executive interfering with judges, that I cannot say because none has been brought to my personal knowledge nor have I been involved in a matter where judgment has been delayed in which I feel the judgment was not fair. But let me say it comes up, even if you have the matter delayed at the High Court, you always have the right to appeal. You go to the Court of Appeal and if you are not satisfied with the ruling of the Court of Appeal then you go to the Supreme Court. There is always an avenue for appeal.

Leader of Evidence: Thank you Mr. Nylander for answering all our questions. Now I wonder whether you have any questions for the Commission.

Nylander: I haven't my Lord.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Well with respect to recommendations I suppose you have been asked to work with the judiciary, the Chief Justice and put together a more comprehensive document which will be of use to the Commission so I suppose all your recommendations will go into that document.

Nylander: Certainly my Lord. The only thing is that the notice was too short because I had another letter dated 21st July, which actually touched on the judiciary. All what we were asked to talk about was the question of execution and what not. So I shall endeavour with members of my association to work in conjunction with the judiciary so that we produce a very comprehensive document.

Commissioner Marcus Jones: Thank you very much. You may step down now.

Nylander: Thank you Madam Chairman and members of the Commission.

**THE JUDICIARY, THE LEGAL PROFESSION AND THE RULE OF LAW (INCLUDING THE
SPECIAL COURT AND ISSUES OF AMNESTY AND IMPUNITY)**

**BY GEORGE BANDA THOMAS
MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

The Constitutions of the majority of modern states have as one of its fundamental principles the "Rule of Law". This is simply the concept that the government itself, including the president and ministers, the members of the judiciary and the parliamentarians are subject to and must abide by the laws of the state. Central to this issue is the thought that all men are equal in the eyes of the law and must abide by the laws of the state. The rule of law is one of the central guiding principles of the modern state and for any nation to be accepted in the comity of nations this idea should be the bedrock and foundation of its laws.

In the absence of the rule of law, there is tyranny and dictatorship. Paradoxically where the rule of law is present in any state and working effectively, citizens will see the laws passed by government as promoting the good of all in a reasonably equal manner and therefore feel an obligation to obey them. They will not see the laws as merely restraints imposed on them by the privileged ruling class, but as a means of establishing a system of rules and regulations where the weak and the strong, the rich and the poor, the affluent and the under privileged can coexist. The members of the government must themselves see that they are subject to the law of the land.

Certain criteria must be present for the effective operation of the rule of law. One of these is the existence of a democratic state, where the government of the day is elected by the majority of the people of that state. It is this government that is entrusted with the sacred task of enacting laws

for the benefit of the general good of the people. These are laws that will apply generally to all persons in the state irrespective of race, colour, religion or sex. It is submitted that there can be no true democracy in the absence of the rule of law. These two concepts of democracy and the rule of law have a symbiotic relationship. The citizens may be more likely to obey the laws passed by persons that they themselves have chosen from amongst them.

The Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No. 6 of 1991 makes sufficient provision for the protection of all persons in Sierra Leone. Chapter 3 of the Constitution from sections 15 through 29 contains provisions protecting the fundamental human rights of the all persons residing in this country. Whilst guaranteeing these freedoms, the constitution ensures that in the enjoyment of these rights and privileges the rights of others are not impaired. The constitution secures the right to due process of law, the protection of life, freedom of conscience, association, etcetera which are the ingredients that make for equality of all persons within this country. It is submitted that the fundamental rights of all citizens and persons within Sierra Leone are adequately secured by the constitution. Incidentally our Ruling Party's Constitution states as one of the aims and objectives of the Sierra Leone Peoples Party and I quote **"To promote the rule of law, fundamental human rights, genuine social justice, constitutional rule, and other democratic values, institutions and practices in Sierra Leone as essential prerequisites of good governance."**

Although the National Constitution does not contain any explicit provision which states that the Government, the President and his Ministers, the Parliamentarians and the Members of the Judiciary, are expected to abide by the law, it is submitted that this is implied. One has only to study the oaths of offices of these various officials as prescribed under second and third schedule of that document to see that all officials are expected to preserve, support, uphold, maintain and defend the same constitution and to do right to all manner of people within the sovereign territory of this country. In fact all of them may be removed from office for violation of the constitution. Section 51 of the constitution for instance provides for the removal from office of the President in the event of violation of the constitution or any gross misconduct.

The Anti-Corruption Act No. 1 of 2000 is a very good example of one instance in which the highest officials of this country have been explicitly subjected to criminal prosecution in the same manner as other more ordinary officers of the state. To date a Minister of State and a Judge of the High Court have been charged and prosecuted under this act. It is also true to say that our criminal code by and large is applicable to and enforceable against government executives as well as parliamentarians. In the recent past a senior Parliamentarian of our Ruling Party was prosecuted for Assault and an opposition MP has been facing a criminal charge.

Some of the factors that are directly relevant for the effective operation of the rule of law in any state are a high rate of literacy and observance of due process by all members of the legal profession responsible for the implementation of the law. The legal profession has a pivotal role to play for the effective implementation of the rule of law, especially in light of the high level of illiteracy in this country. I should at this juncture note that government and various non-governmental organisations have been of great assistance in the education of the masses of their rights as secured by the law. Numerous programs over the radio and television have assisted in educating the citizens of this country of their rights under law. Ministers, Parliamentarians, Lawyers Policemen and other public officers have all been over the wires explaining to the public their right on various matters ranging from traffic matters, bail, the rights of women and children, etc.

The existence of an accessible and affordable judicial system is also of invaluable assistance to the operation of the rule of law. The legal system must be accessible and affordable by all, from

the man in the city to the man in the village in the provinces. The rebel war had the effect of disrupting and indeed completely destroying the system of administration of the law and justice in all of Sierra Leone except Freetown. Even in Freetown the system of administration of the law was greatly impaired by the rebel war. However progress has been made in the reconstruction of the courts infrastructure in Freetown and in the provinces by the government. Part of the reconstruction of the judiciary should involve the engagement of competent Lawyers to serve as Judges and Magistrates. Although government has made numerous approaches to the most qualified practitioners unfortunately most of them have not accepted the offers. The issue of legal aid for the poor is also relevant to having an accessible system of justice .

Let me say that government is committed to continuing to create an enabling environment for the operation and promotion of the Rule of Law. Given our violent and destructive past as a nation, we are faced with increasing challenges. Firstly there is the need to reconstruct legal and judicial frameworks having gone through so much destruction. Secondly there is the need to weigh the demand for immediate justice against the need for comprehensive legal and judicial reforms.

Thirdly, there is a shortage of qualified and capable Lawyers, Judges and other legal personnel.

Fourthly, we know of the total collapse of the institution and destruction of judicial infrastructure. In an attempt to adequately address these concerns government has embarked on several programmes and projects.

1. It has established a law reform commission
2. There is now a functioning elected and independent legislative. Government and its partners are now giving Parliament the required support to build its capacity for law making and carrying out its oversight functions.
3. In an effort to deal with transitional justice issues, there are the TRC and The special Court. Our aim has been to allow the country to move forward within a system that fosters national peace and reconciliation.
4. With regard to the Ministry of Justice, Judiciary, Police and Prisons, Government policy has been geared towards rebuilding their facilities and restructuring and building or enhancing the capacities of these institutions. In sum let me emphasise that the Rule of Law is not a rule. It is not a law rather it is an expression that signifies a concept. The following are a number of broad principles underlying the concept of the rule of law:
 - (i) The right of every nation to representative and responsible government including the protection of civil liberties;
 - (ii) The need for proper control of delegated legislation and the provision of adequate remedies for the protection of the individual's rights

- (iii) The strengthening of the independence of the judiciary as well as the ensuring of an organised and autonomous legal profession. I pause here to say that in this jurisdiction there exists a much organised and hopefully autonomous legal profession.
- (iv) The right of an accused person to a fair hearing before an impartial and independent tribunal constituted by law; the adoption of the presumption of innocence, and the right of an appeal as part of the criminal procedure of every country and the avoidance of cruel, degrading or inhuman punishments.

There is no doubt as to the immense assistance of the Judiciary and the legal profession to the application and promotion of the rule of law in this country. It is my considered view that in order to enhance their role, there is need for a code of ethics for both the Bar and Bench. The Legal Practitioners Act No. 15 of 2000 is a step in this direction regarding the provision of a code of ethics for the Bar. Section 4 (2) (d) of that act empowers the general legal council to prescribe the standard of professional conduct and code of etiquette for legal practitioners. Unfortunately the council has still not drawn up this document. There is need for the Judicial and Legal Service Commission to make similar rules.

Similarly, there is an urgent need for Judges and Magistrates to adopt a code of conduct for judicial officers. There is a need for judicial officers to actively participate in establishing, maintaining and enforcing and observing high standards of conduct so that the integrity and respect for the independence of the judiciary is preserved. I would further submit that an independent, strong, and respected and respectable Judiciary is indispensable for the impartial administration of Justice in a democratic state such as ours.

It must also be emphasised that the bench must hear and determine cases as expeditiously as possible. Judgments must be delivered not later than three months after the conclusion of the evidence and the address by counsel as stipulated by the constitution. There must be adherence to due process by all officials of the Court involved in the administration of justice. An important issue here is that of bail. There is a need for the provision of practice directions to be given to guide the bench and the prosecution on this matter. Incarceration of accused persons on trial for invariably lengthy period of trial has the effect of defeating the presumption of innocence and denying justice.

In closing I should say that development of the rule of law in any state is a process. This government has taken numerous steps in the right direction and I am sure it will continue to do more to develop the culture of a state where all men are subject to the law of the land. The legal profession has a most important role to play both in fostering the culture of the rule of law and in the nursing and guardianship of meaningful democracy in this country. Judges must be vigilant to ensure that due process of law is observed by the executive and the other organs of state responsible for implementing the law. The Judiciary must jealously guard and protect the rights of the citizens as established by law.

THE SPECIAL COURT AND ISSUES OF AMNESTY AND IMPUNITY

The Lome peace Agreement was signed on the 7th July 1999 and it was later enacted in Sierra Leone as the Lome Peace Agreement (Ratification) Act.

Article ix provided for an "absolute and Free Pardon for Corporal Foday Sankoh and for an amnesty for all other combatants in respect of anything done by them in pursuit of their objectives as members of those organisations, since March 1991 up to the signing of the Agreement".

It may be necessary to consider Amnesty provision in relation to the constitution of Sierra Leone and The Special Court Agreement (Ratification) Act 2002, To enable the Commission to appreciate the background facts that led to an amnesty provision and later an enactment for a Special Court I would refer to a portion of President Kabba's speech to the Royal Commonwealth society on 24th July 2003.

"A major problem we have had to contend with in our efforts to sustain lasting peace and development in our country is impunity. We can all recall how the Government had to agree to the granting of a near-blanket amnesty to the RUF and renegade elements of our army, as well as their leaderships, in order to bring the war to an end. The people of Sierra Leone were unanimously against this amnesty but eventually accepted it as the price of peace.

Concern continued to be expressed, however, about granting amnesty to people who had committed some of the most heinous crimes known to man. It was felt that peace could not be sustained without justice and that all human rights violations should be investigated; and redress provided for the victims. We are pleased to report that the Government of Sierra Leone and the UN have been able to set up both a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court to address this issue.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is gradually promoting healing and Reconciliation by providing a conducive climate for constructive exchanges between victims and perpetrators so that the victims can regain their human dignity and perpetrators given the opportunity to repent. The Special Court, on the other hand, is set up to bring to book those who bear the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during the war. Both institutions are progressing well. We are convinced that they will achieve their objectives of addressing impunity, responding to the needs of the victims of the war and preventing a repetition of the violation of human rights that occurred during the war".

Let me stress that even after the execution of the Lome Agreement and its Amnesty provision the atrocities continued unabated. This was in marked contrast to the situation in the country following the setting up of the Special Court

- Namely an end to atrocities and impunity

Transitional justice is and has been a troubling human rights issue. The question that is most commonly asked is how should States emerging from periods of serious human rights violations frame the relationship among truth, justice, and reconciliation? Some jurists pose the issue as a difficult balance between punishment and reconciliation while others see truth or, alternatively, justice, as a precondition for reconciliation. Human rights

advocates generally have adopted the latter position, without clearly defining under what conditions and through what methods justice should be achieved.

The paths chosen by states are now viewed as issues of international concern, rather than solely domestic matters. In the last ten years, there has been a wave of change, prompted both by the end of the cold war, and by recognition that failure to come to terms with past cycles of violation may lead to future violations. International human rights groups now routinely demand and assess accountability for past violations, and anti-impunity measures are no longer simply a question of national choice. It is therefore not surprising that The Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations attached to the Lome Peace Agreement the following caveat:

"The United Nations interprets that the amnesty and pardon in Article 9 of this agreement shall not apply to international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other serious violations of international law."

Article 10 of the statute of the Special court provides that:

"An Amnesty granted to any person falling within the jurisdiction of the Special Court..... shall not be a bar to prosecution."

In my view this article to some extent addresses the issue of Amnesty granted under the Lome Agreement. Additionally also it may be argued that the Amnesty provisions must be considered in the light of the constitutional provision which guarantee the rights to life liberty and judicial protection.

Let me end by saying that it is the hope and prayer of our Party the SLPP and the government and people of Sierra Leone that justice be done to all. As a Lawyer and Legal Adviser to our Party it is my considered view that minimum international standards guaranteeing fair trial for Accused persons are provided for in the Special Court Act.

SPEECHES AT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION CEREMONY

Representative of chief of Defense staff- Brig. Nelson Williams

The chairman committee of management, his Excellencies, honorables, representatives from various groups and societies, NGOs, colleague officers of the republic of sierra Leone armed forces, distinguished ladies and gentlemen. I want to thank you for your presence and the curtesy of your attention. I stand here to deputize the chief of defense staff who is unavoidably absent due to some exigencies of duty, he's gone to Bo. Let me start by describe the fug of war to you all, war fighting is a complex and dirty contest; the players don't know the rules of the game. Those rules are not found in any past lessons, this means that every war is unique. Uncertainties and confusion is anybody's weapon. The RSLAF used these weapons against friends and foes alike, we have a message, do let us compare a pitch, dark, where even the bravest the bravest leader or follower cannot rationally explain the fear surrounding his advances or retreats. Sierra Leoneans employ their children to do among other people security duties by day and night and under shine and in rain. Those soldiers committed atrocities, yet we need them, for they are our children, we need them because they are Sierra Leoneans, we need for they deserve a share in the history of Sierra Leone, we are even here to plead for some of them posumously, may their souls rest in peace. Nevertheless, the RSLAF were expected to defend Sierra Leone and its people with sense and not senselessness, with decency and not bloody hands, with timeliness and not undue delay, with necessary transparency and not unnecessary myth and with ample respect for humanity of all categories, especially women, children and the helpless. How the RSLAF did did it? We have told those stories bits and expressed deep and profound regret which I will repeat to sanctify this land marking ceremony. Today, as we gathered here to rededicate a land future we are not only looking at this ceremony as a first leg in process in two unstirred land future. We see this ceremony as the pathway on the military land map, to reconciling Sierra Leoneans, Sierra Leoneans including the Sierra Leone armed forces must come out here to accept the God almighty message in the Lord's Prayer which says "and forgive us our trespasses - debt as we forgive our trespassers – debtors. As the republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces went out to fight, a lot of atrocities and crimes against humanity were committed against sierra Leoneans, does this make sense? The answer confronts us, beleaguering our hearts, besieging our hearts, importuning our wheels, and it is intimating engaging, let us try to transform cruelty with kindness, insult with forbearance and patience and justice with magnanimity and hatred with love. It is only with the presence of God that one can reconcile with such a situation that does not appear on one's wish list. Let me reiterate in aid of emphases that I say again let me reiterate in aid of emphases that we beseech you to forgive the RSLAF. Forgive your fallen and living children, forgiveness starts with reconciling with God, yourself before reconciling with your fellow human being. It is only the prince of peace who can give us true peace. Forgiveness and

reconciliation, Jesus Christ our lord and savior who died on the cross for the propitiation of our sins and forgiveness, when he said Father forgive them for they know not what they do. Therefore let us all ask God almighty for lasting forgiveness which is the first instrument in the preservation of the national reconciliation that Sierra Leoneans need. Let us march forward with determination, commitment, fortitude and indomitable courage with no turning back and mindset for this fellowship of purpose. To the international community, we have to be thankful for creating the enabling and conducive environment for Sierra Leoneans to be seen as their own peacemakers, but what we are largely thankful about is the replacement of that ugly picture with one that has carved the same Sierra Leone as a peace model in the west African sub-region and the world at large. History has forgiven all carriers of arms ever since man took war as an extension of politics. Military men are not architects of war, but they are looked upon as necessary part of the solution. This is the stage where we must ask our masters to lay premium on second generation training in areas such as civil military relations, the rights of children in the broad concept of international humanitarian for the good of our society. Sierra Leone expects every man to this duty. Let me recall the immortal words of President Cyrus, which states that a small debt produces a debtor, a large one, an enemy. The RSLAF owes this nation a large debt; let us result to pay up with interest, not only by giving democracy a chance, but also by standing in the vanguard of peace protection, the consolidation of democracy will continue to be a major preoccupation, this is our sacred duty and we cannot afford to fail again. But let us go a little further by saying that if all Sierra Leoneans should live the immortal words of President Kennedy when he said "ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country" and go ahead in our respective ways to do our best and offer unqualified service and total commitment to building this nation, then, all the glory and achievements we admire in other developed democracies will surely be here too. May the good lord continue to give us all strength to be at which will benefit the majority of our people. Finally, I want to conclude on this note we cannot make peace, reconcile our pains without recalls to adopting the practice of forgiveness for ever and ever. As Sierra Leoneans, there is so much in us that unites us than divides us. We must recognize this fact, and learn to live with each other. I stand here today on behalf of the RSLAF to promise that the RSLAF has taken a human face. You labeled the police as a force for good, we want you to label the RSLAF as a force for good peace and peace to all I thank you all

Representative of the inspector general of police

Chairman of the TRC, other commissioners, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, and fellow Sierra Leoneans. I stand here on behalf of the inspector general of police and the entire membership of the Sierra Leone police force to give a valedictory speech at the closing ceremony of the public hearings of the TRC. As we all are aware, when the country chose the path of peace as enshrined in the Lome peace accord the concept of peace without a victor was enshrined and the TRC was made provision for and I am happy on behalf of my colleague officers to be part of this ceremony today marking the end of the public hearings. The country has gone through a turbulent past and the work you have done can be likened to a surgeon's job. When he conducts a surgical operation in order to ensure that the healing of the person who has been troubled by illness begins. Through the various statements that you have received and through the various testimonies that have been presented before you, you now have a clear picture in your mind as to what the causes of the war were. And we do hope that at the end of your work; you will come out with the recommendations that will ensure that the decade long civil war does not arise anymore. We on our part, during our presentation, we did make mention of the fact that as police officers who are involved in the process of delivering justice, serve both as perpetrators and victims of the decade long civil conflict and I'm here again this afternoon to reiterate the point and to emphasize the point that we are also prepared to reconcile with all sectors of the society to ensure that lasting peace remains in Sierra Leone. During your work, you were able to carry out an environmental scanning looking at the political, economic, social, cultural and legal considerations so that the firm foundation for lasting peace could be laid in our country Sierra Leone. This marks the end of an era and it also marks a new beginning in the sense that henceforth there will be national reconciliation, there will be national cohesion and there will be national integration. We will henceforth continue to inculcate ideas of delivering a just society doing the right things and

doing things right so that no sector of the community and the society at large can feel marginalized to the point that they would have utter disregard for law and order. We do also hope that there will be reform in governance as part of the healing process, so that we all will contribute in one way or the other in making sure that the seeds of discord are never sown in our society anymore and we also hope that at the end of this exercise all Sierra Leoneans will have a new vision, a vision that will take the country forward, a vision that put the country first instead of personal interest, so that the notions of hatred and ill will be things of the past. I also wish on behalf of the members of the Sierra Leone police force whom we have accepted inter alia to have been both perpetrators and victims to express remorse for all the wrong doings which we and our personnel did both before and during the war and to genuinely apologize for all such wrong doing with a promise that such will never be repeated in the course of our history. As we strive to be a force for good, we do hope that all people within Sierra Leone and even beyond who have paid so dearly a price for our past mistakes will continue to help us so we will forge ahead and be part of the framework to establish a new S/L, a S/L which all of us will be proud of, a S/L which our children will be proud of, a S/L to which people from all over the world can come and feel safe, can come and work and can come and enjoy themselves. Once more, I wish to thank the commissioner, the chairman and all those who have participated in one way or another in making your job a success and who have contributed in diverse ways up to this point we are now celebrating the end your public hearings. I wish and pray that all of us will be united for a common destiny, one that will make our country what it is supposed to be, an envy of all nations. I thank you very much and I hope that total forgiveness will be rendered to us so that our country can rise from the ruins of war to one of an enviable country as compared to other countries in the world, I thank you very much for your attention.

Representative of the APC

Honorable commissioners of the TRC, chairman of the SLPP, representatives of other parties, all protocols observed. My name is Dauda Sulaiman Kamara Member of Parliament for Kambia district. I stand here on behalf of my leader Mr Ernest Bai Koroma, who called me this morning to say he was a little ill disposed and could not be here to this very important occasion. He requested that I must come in here to take part and I am very very glad to be here. My party, the APC took seriously from the beginning the setting up of a TRC. We defined it right at the beginning as an important outfit of reconciling this nation. As a result, we have followed them in their work from Freetown here to the provinces from districts, submitting our own statements in support of their work we are very glad to have done so in the name of our party and in the name of this country. We believe that the most important engagement which we as a people (Sierra Leoneans) are in today is about peace and the TRC and the TRC in the quiet recesses of their offices will produce for us a report which we hope shall be a great symbol of peace for this nation. The march we have just completed from Victoria Park through the streets of Freetown step by step and I could see how people turned out to see us, to look at us. Some of them clapping in joy, others looking at us may be in quite amazement and in appreciation of the steps we are taking, symbolic steps towards peace to this field, the national stadium. It is our wish as a party that the symbol of this field shall contain all Sierra Leoneans within a field of peace where we shall see no more war, where we shall accept that we are one and the same people, where we shall understand that the laws we make to regroup into political parties are intended to make us in a better democracy where we shall begin to understand that political parties and their members should not be feared, but should be welcomed because they are our creation. I want to thank the members of the TRC at this point and to wish that when they shall have retired after today to their officers, Allah will be with them, to guide them so that they will be wiser to produce for this nation something that we shall cherish. Soon, we shall be proceeding to the bridge, only dedication for peace and I hope that, that dedication shall be taken by all of us as a nation and indeed and indeed a millstone in our desire to bring peace to this country. I want to thank all other parties here that have come in to share in this occasion and indeed all of us that have traveled from the hills of Kabala right down to the river areas of Pujehun and Bonthe, from Kailahun through Bo, Makeni, all of us have come in here to take part in this march – a great symbol of our desire for unity, I want once again on behalf of the APC to thank you and to say that we as a party, our submissions to this TRC which are meant to contribute to a building process of peace, we shall

live by them and I believe that if all other parties do, Sierra Leone shall be a country of peace and a happy nation, thank you very much.

Representative of RUF – Mr. Kposowa

Sierra Leoneans, members of the diplomatic Core, our mothers and fathers, representatives of various organizations, fellow citizens, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am here to speak what the Sierra Leoneans think I should speak, and it is indeed the right time and the venue for us to speak the reality after so many sufferings of the TRC. I am here this morning with a very bad swollen heart and dismay over the chaotic activities of the revolutionary united front and all the parties that participated. We were convinced at the beginning of the war that we were fighting a war that would end peacefully, but it ended in a form of comet tragedy. This was due to the incursions of some of the other unscrupulous elements that joined the RUF with principles of war, including the former members of the AFRC and the later. Despite this, through the help of the almighty God, and those without them this chapter cannot be completed I would want to say we have derived that nobody will win the war but the force of reconciliation and the help of his excellency Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba. We also welcome the following; we have to remember Ambassador Oluyemi Adenijie, the former SRSG and now the foreign minister of the great hero of Africa, the federal republic of Nigeria, he is now the foreign minister, we also remember Lt. Gen. Opande- the force commander of UNAMSIL, we also remember the international community, Mr Kelvin Lewis who has repetitively given the correct report of the events, also Fofanah Lansana. We also remember Rev. J.C. Humper, the TRC and staff, Dr. Francis Kaikai of the NCDDR and staff, the women organizations, special tribute to Professor Amara Kamara of the TRC, lawyer Marcus Jones, Mr. Torto and the rest. With all these I have named, the charter can not be completed if we talk about reconciliation; I therefore give them a very big bravo. After winning no war, we have only derived at a position of stop the irrelevant war for better of Africa and S/L. after all the causes of the war known to have been for corruption, nepotism, sectionalism and lack of good governance in S/L for the past decade, we have monitored the affairs of the government since their induction in office. From that time, we have seen symptoms of transparency, productions of corruptive manpower to the public, minor nepotisms and minor tribalism. Fellow citizen, we are at this condolent mood asking and crying to all fathers, all mothers of S/L, all representatives of organizations and the entire Sierra Leonean populace that we as Sierra Leoneans, we should therefore reconcile at this time with another roof under the TRC as hard working staff and the commissioners including the evidence table. We should remember that reconciliation is the only way is the only problem to be at the peak of each and every one of us. Again Sierra Leoneans, we are pleading through your Excellency's office to the president his Excellency Dr Ahmed Tejan kabba, to start his formula of executive reconciliation by considering the lome peace accord and make those that are suffering now should be reconciled and be freed from pademba. I am with the notion that our second in command Solomon Ekuma Berewa will also bear with me that this was stipulated in the former accord. We the members of the RUF do not agree with the special court of course that our president his Excellency has no power over the special court. He has a supreme power over the special court, he is the supreme power of S/L and there is no supreme that is beyond the supreme court of S/L. it is therefore upon this venture that we as Sierra Leoneans are pleading again to H.E Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba to have the full right to declare a state of clemency to even those that are presently in jail, that are being indicted by the special court. Echoing the statement of H E Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba yesterday I quote no justification in the war, yet I have concluded in forming the TRC. What ever devices that are being used by either the APC or the SLPP as quoted by some politicians should now be pit far aback and we should start to talk about development, unity and progress. Even after the elections that were conducted in previous years should be forgotten now, the only one that should be regarded now is the one that was formed during the 2002, all of the others should be put far aback, let us no longer condone autographies, biographies because Sierra Leoneans have agreed upon final victory that we should be reconciling now. Both my brothers and sisters and the African continent, Dr Tejan Kabbah, our president has done so many even when we were in the bush, he was still coming to us to talk on peace, both at international and in the bush. We should put hands up together; we should now put hands under H E so that we can also be in peace as how Maj. Gen. Issa sesay did to the president. Finally ladies and gentlemen, with all the destruction and

atrocities committed by the RUF and whosoever fought the war, those attitudes were all mankind, manmade ventures and therefore at this time in the name of the lord almighty lord, I raise my hands to say to sierra Leoneans that all of us are the same, whatsoever might have been injected into us to have caused atrocities, to have formed whatsoever, to have raped, to have done whatsoever chaos activities that the war might have done, I am saying that you should have pardon on us. We are your children. We are sorry! We are sorry that the episode that we have formed was not really from the brains of some us. So at this time, we are all cratedly captured and we have come at this stage to say pardon, we are therefore pleading for mercy and reconciliation. May God bless us all, may god bless the continent, may God bless Africa, I thank you.

Representative of the SLPP – Dr Sama Banya

One country! One people! One nation! Mr. Chairman and members of the TRC, fellow Sierra Leoneans, ladies and gentlemen, I stand here before you this morning representing the oldest and largest political party in the country whose leader is present the president Alhaji Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba. We must continue to thank the almighty God for his continuing grace and mercy and especially a day like this. For over ten years, we went through pain, hardship and suffering, during which we participated in or witnessed or experienced strange things. Yes! Things that we never imagined will happen in this country – which is generally known for its peace, friendliness and generosity, but slowly and painfully even helplessly we saw our country sliding towards total destruction. We may in those preceding years had eluded our selves that we will be insinuated from what was happening, e thought it will affect others but certainly not ourselves but indeed and to our shame and remise we all in our different ways contributed either by commission, omission or by playing indifference. God's words tell us that the first to repentance is to admit wrong doing and then to ask for forgiveness. I represent a party that ruled this country in the years immediately after independence; we may have made our own mistakes. Perhaps we should have stood up to be counted, instead acquiescing or capitulating. In the last so many months since the beginning of May, we've had strange stories of man's inhumanity to man, of human suffering, of wanton destruction. We thank god for the inspiration he has given us to acknowledge and confess our wrong doings. More importantly, for giving us the grace to forgive those who wronged us. We thank him for those who have counseled us, that is the members of the TRC and those who enabled us to forgive each other publicly. It may be difficult to forget, but time, the healer of pain and suffering will help to soften our hearts as we continue to embrace each other in brotherly love..This has been the message of our leader President Ahmed Tejan kabba to the people of this country where ever he has been. May God's almighty grace protect us from a future re-occurrence. Once again, on behalf of our leader, deputy leader and all and all members of the Sierra Leone's People Party, I congratulate all of us on our achievements; I thank you for your attention.

Representative of PLP – Dr Kandeh

PLP!..... Shall we just stand for a minute silence to remember those who died as a result of the war irrespective of what faction they belong to. Members of the TRC, representative of the SLPP party, representative of the All People's Congress, members of the diplomatic core, traditional rulers, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, not forgetting of course representatives of the army and the police. On behalf of the peace and liberation party, I greet you all, I want to start my statement by congratulating not the TRC as you would expect but the international community mainly UNAMSIL, the British and American governments, member states of ECOWAS, other countries in Europe and Asia, international NGOs for their tremendous material, financial and moral efforts in putting an end to the war which has brought untold misery to our beloved country. To the people of our country, I want to congratulate them for their understdning and courage after all we have gone through. The culminating of all these efforts you will agree is that we are meeting here today. I now want to congratulate the TRC for giving me the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of our party in this epoch making event in the history of our country. I feel greatly honored. I further want to congratulate all the officials of this very important commission for taking up this acqulian task of getting people to come and say the truth and ask for forgiveness as perpetrators and to forgive as victims of the war in our country where you will

agree people hardly accept the truth, where saying the truth brings hatred and contempt, where people take decision on tribal, regional, blood relations, religious and other sentiments. Mr. Chairman, in the invitation addressed to our party, you requested our party to tender an apology to the people of S/L for all action, inactions if I should quote or omission that our party may have in any way contributed to the war. it is no hidden secrete that our party was formed prior to the presidential elections of 2002 and 2003 and thus have not contributed to the war as political party. As a party that is concerned to bring lasting peace and liberation to our country irrespective of tribe region, nepotism, cronyism, religious character we do sympathize with everybody of our beloved country as we are fully convinced that hardly will you find anybody who have not suffered from the war directly or indirectly. If it is not our relatives, it is our friends or neighbours or tribesmen or somebody from the same region or whom we know fro another region. The reality is that some people especially in the provinces felt the war as far back as 1991 when the war started, others during the intervention of 1998 and others during the 1999 invasion of the city. Now it is no hidden secrete that all the warring factions committed atrocities. As a party of national character, we feel deep sympathy for our country and what we all went through. Our party is a rational nationalist party that recognizes the fact that the world is a global village; hence we should have a very good relationship with the international community not to the extent wherein we Sierra Leoneans look like strangers in our mother land as is presently the case. Consequently, we feel deep sorrow for our country and people that with all our wealth, we continue to be strangers irrespective of the hazards that we have gone through as a result of decade long war. we are still not above those vices of corrupt character that led us to the war. Decisions are taken not devoid of aforementioned sentiments, misuse of entrusted power for private or group benefit that started during the early days after independence continues till present day. Corruption continues in areas of public procurement, rezoning of land, revenue collection, government opportunities and local government, kick – back on government contracts and frauds of all kinds, official practice, extortion by threatening to surcharge tax payers or importers unless bribes are paid in which case low assessment of goods pass form importation without payment of any duty at all, ghosts are created to pad payrolls, fictitious institutions exist which are entitled to state funds, even the state which committed itself to financing our educational institutions have not been doing so on time. The non payment of lecturers and teachers on time and not providing the necessary conditions of service to enhance the effectiveness of their profession is a case in point. Consequently, these institutions show miracles of commercial inventiveness by extorting money form students and pupils which are a burden on the parents. Mr. Chairman, to put it in a nutshell, institutions of national integrity such as the executive, the legislative, legislature, judiciary, the media, the public servant and even watchdog agencies like civil society, public account committee, auditor general, ombudsman, police, anti corruption etc are handicapped as regards inspecting their case rules and practices. Mr. Chairman, a complete analysis of the aforementioned institutions of national integrity and their corresponding case rules and practices will fall beyond the time limit of this statement. Permit me to recommend that if we to minimize corruption which started in the 13th century BC and can't be eliminated, apart from adhering to the standards of public life which are selfness, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and good leadership, it is inevitable that in our country decisions and actions reflects the earlier mentioned sentiments the sufficient awareness of Morals and national character must be paramount. When S/L and not tribe, region or blood relationship will be the social psychology and consciousness of our people. In achieving this, a lot depend on the group of leaders, not a leader I want to emphasize. They must moral and national patriotic character in the true sense of the word for the people to emulate them we must have an ideology of moral and national character. Once we have these, we will not think of plundering the country's wealth to the detriment of our people and country, we will not allow other people to look like masters in our country and we as strangers, we will not think of fighting each other, we will see ourselves as Sierra Leoneans and not Mende, Temne, Limba, Loko, Creole, Kono etc. we must build the political will of our people, which is not simply the will of politicians, we should be looking at leaders from all works of life, professional groups, the private sector, trade unions, religious institutions, and the civil groups and see how these can be energized with moral patriotic awareness in fighting corruption and building morale integrity. Permit me to say Mr. Chairman that when moral and rationalistic awareness penetrates the conscience of our people, the above

mentioned standards will manifest itself in practice. Even the international community which have done so much and is still doing more will be pleased to see their efforts bearing good fruits. To conclude, I want to inform my fellow countrymen that most developed countries that we see today made great strides in their political, economic and social lives after they attained this form of consciousness and that the peace and Liberation Party will always contribute and cooperate in the rebuilding of our nation, is determined to ensure that this hard won peace after ten years of senseless war caused by all the vices attributed to corruption will always be maintained. We will never support any action to destabilize our beloved country and bring suffering to our people and will always support democratic change of government through the ballot box. On behalf of the party, I thank you all may God bless and protect us all.