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Security Sector Reform and British Counterinsurgency: The Immediate- and Medium-Term Impacts of Prioritising Security in the Malayan Emergency (1948-60), the Kenyan Emergency (1952-60) and the Sierra Leone Military Intervention (2000-2002)

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Abstract

This thesis critically examines British counterinsurgency and security sector reform practices through a comparative analysis of three cases: the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), the Kenyan Emergency (1952–1960), and the British-led military intervention in Sierra Leone (2000–2002). It explores how British interventions have consistently prioritised security sector stabilisation as a means of restoring order, and how this approach has shaped the trajectory of post-conflict governance, institutional reform, and peacebuilding outcomes.

Employing a comparative methodology, the study draws on original archival research in the UK National Archives and fieldwork in Sierra Leone, including interviews with political, security, and civil society actors. It engages critically with both counterinsurgency doctrine and normative security sector reform (SSR) frameworks, particularly those emphasising accountability, local ownership, and positive peace, to assess how British practices align with or diverge from these principles in theory and implementation.

The thesis finds that while British interventions have often succeeded in restoring state authority and suppressing insurgency, they have also embedded securitised governance structures that constrain democratic development. Across the three cases, SSR was frequently subordinated to the imperative of short-term stability, limiting the prospects for inclusive political settlements and sustainable institutional transformation. This dynamic is conceptualised as a *security–democratic governance nexus*, through which security provision both enables and restricts the development of accountable governance.

By bridging archival and field-based research, this thesis provides original insight into the continuity of British interventionist logics from the colonial to the post-colonial era. This thesis challenges liberal peacebuilding assumptions about linear transitions from order to reform and calls for greater alignment between stabilisation efforts and the principles of democratic security governance from the outset of intervention.

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- T.C.B. my love.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACPP – Africa Conflict Prevention Pool

ACRM – Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement

AFC – Armed Forces Commander

AFRC – Armed Forces Revolutionary Council

AI – Amnesty International

AMISOL – African Union Mission in Somalia

APC – All People's Congress

ASJP – Access to Security and Justice Programme

AU – African Union

BRU – Bike Riders Union

CCSSP – Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project

CDF – Civil Defence Forces

CHRDI – Campaign for Human Rights and Development International

CPP – Conflict Prevention Pool

CPDTF – Commonwealth Police Development Task Force

CRD – Community Relations Department

CSV – Community Support Volunteer

DDR – Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration

DfID – Department for International Development

DWP – Defence White Paper

ECOMOG – Economic Community of West Africa States Military Observer Group

EO – Executive Outcomes

FCO – Foreign Commonwealth Office

FOB – Forward Operating Base

FPB – Forward Patrol Base

FSU – Family Support Unit

HBTC – Holding and Basic Training Centre

HRC – Human Rights Commission

HRW – Hurman Rights Watch

IGP – Inspector General of Police

IMATT – International Military Advisory Training Team

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ISAT – International Security Advisory Team

ISU – Internal Security Unit

JFC – Joint Force Command

JSC – Joint Support Command

JSDP – Justice and Security Development Programme

JSLG – Justice Senior Leadership Group

JSRSIP – Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan

KPM – Kono Progressive Party

LAB – Legal Aid Board

LPPB – Local Police Partnership Board

LNP – Local Needs Policing

LURD – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy

MAGOSL – Military Advisor to the Government of Sierra Leone

MP – Member of Parliament

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

MRP – Military Reintegration Plan

NAP – Native Authority Police

NEO – Non-combatant Evacuation Operation

NPFL – National Patriotic Front of Liberia

NPRC – National Provisional Ruling Council

NRC – National Reformation Council

NSC – National Security Council

NUP – National Unity Party

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OLRT – Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team

ONS – Office of National Security

OSD – Operational Security Division

PEMB – Police Executive Management Board

PCIA – Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs and Local Government

POC-D – Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Defence

RSLAF – Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces

RUF – Revolutionary United Front

RTP – Road Traffic Police

SDN – Security-Development Nexus

SILSEP – Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme

SLA – Sierra Leone Army

SL-MoD – Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence

SLP – Sierra Leone Police

SLPP – Sierra Leone People's Party

SLRSA – Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority

SSD – Special Security Division

SSR – Security Sector Reform

SS&R – Strengthening Security and Resilience

STTT – Short-Term Training Team

UDP – United Democratic Party

UK-MoD – United Kingdom Ministry of Defence

ULIMO – United Liberian Movement for Democracy

UN – United Nations

UNAMSIL – United Nations Mission to Sierra Leone

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNOISIL – UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone

UNOMSIL – United Nations Observer Mission to Sierra Leone

WSB – West Side Boys

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Context, Objectives and Contribution

This thesis investigates the strategic use of Security Sector Reform (SSR) within British counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts, focusing on how SSR has functioned not only as a tool of conflict stabilisation but also as a means of shaping the political and institutional structures that emerge in the aftermath of violence. The purpose of this research is to critically analyse how SSR has been embedded in British COIN practice, and to evaluate the consequences of prioritising security objectives over democratic development and inclusive peacebuilding. Through a comparative study of the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960), the Kenyan Emergency (1952–1960), and the British-led military intervention in Sierra Leone (2000–2002), this investigation explores the prioritisation of security and the restructuring of host-state security institutions. Despite differing in time and political context – with the Malayan and Kenyan emergencies being late-colonial conflicts and Sierra Leone a post-colonial international mission – these cases reveal a strategic logic in which security reform functions not only as a post-war activity, but as an extension of counterinsurgency itself.

The objective of this thesis is to critically assess the consequences of prioritising security within British counterinsurgency strategy, focusing on how SSR has been deployed both as a short-term stabilisation tool and as a foundation for longer-term governance. As we will observe, British-led SSR in the case study examples has often operated less as a pathway to democratic reform than as a means of consolidating state authority through externally guided, and frequently coercive, institutional transformation. Through a comparative analysis of the cited British interventions, this study investigates how conflict-phase security sector reforms have shaped the restoration of order, the reassertion of state authority, and the post-conflict nature of democratic representative governance and oversight. In doing so, this work not only evaluates the institutional and political outcomes of SSR but also interrogates how these reforms were and are experienced by the populations they serve. This includes attention to short-term impacts on civilian security, freedom of movement and wider rights, and exposure to coercive policing during the conflict phase. This is accompanied by assessments of medium-term effects on trust in state institutions, perceptions of legitimacy, legacies of institutionalised force, the challenges of donor dependency and sustainability of reforms, access to justice, and the inclusivity of governance structures. This thesis is therefore

concerned with the extent to which SSR may support or undermine democratic accountability, state-society relations, and the sustainability of peace.

Contrary to conventional assumptions that SSR occurs in a distinct post-conflict phase, this thesis contends that SSR frequently begins during the conflict itself to rapidly reassert state authority and suppress insurgent activity. As we will observe, this stabilisation process blurs the boundaries between conflict and post-conflict phases, and between coercive and developmental goals. In Malaya and Kenya, wartime restructuring of the security apparatus was central to British COIN efforts and profoundly shaped the post-conflict political order. In Sierra Leone, British intervention introduced similar stabilisation measures during the conflict phase, laying the foundation for an extensive post-war SSR programme that transformed the country's security institutions over the subsequent two decades.

This thesis offers a more critical reassessment of the doctrinal underpinnings of British COIN, frequently framed through the 'hearts and minds' narrative. This author argues that British counterinsurgency in practice relies heavily on coercion and the early restructuring of security institutions to combat insurgent threat. These reforms, while often effective in restoring short-term stability, raise important questions about their longer-term political and social consequences, particularly where the prioritisation of security compromises the broader goals of democratic development. While such prioritisation may succeed in suppressing insurgency and restoring surface-level order, it often does so by entrenching coercive practices and excluding local political voices, thereby undermining the legitimacy and sustainability of the peace that follows. These trade-offs present significant challenges for building accountable governance and inclusive institutions in the post-conflict period.

The British operation in Malaya has often been retrospectively observed as a successful example of the calibrated or appropriate use of 'minimum force'. These claims have contributed to a doctrinal legacy that emphasises restraint, legitimacy, and measured coercion. However, this thesis interrogates such narratives by examining the gap between principle and practice; and considers how appeals to restraint have served to legitimise broader strategies of institutional control. In this way, Kenya appears to be the antithesis of the Malayan paradigm despite the similarity of COIN approaches adopted. In doing so, this thesis contributes to ongoing debates about how liberal democracies manage the relationship between coercion and governance in stabilisation settings. Doctrinal texts such as the

UK/NATO joint-publication *AJP-3.27* and the US Army/Marine Corps Field Manual *FM 3-24* (and its civilian counterpart the *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook*) will serve as important points of reference throughout this thesis, offering insight into how COIN is formally conceptualised in terms of population security, legitimacy, and institutional reform.[1] These documents provide a doctrinal framework that helps illuminate the disconnect between official principles and the realities of implementation in British-led interventions.

To explore these dynamics, the study employs a comparative framework. The cases of Malaya and Kenya serve as historical baselines through which to trace the continuity and evolution of British counterinsurgency strategy and its emphasis on control through security reform. Both cases are examined through a close reading of archival material including Colonial Office and War Office records, internal policy memoranda, and correspondence between officials, alongside a critical engagement with the existing historiography on British imperial governance, decolonisation, and COIN doctrine. This dual approach allows the thesis to situate contemporary practices within their longer institutional and ideological lineage, while also interrogating how historical narratives have shaped prevailing interpretations of British effectiveness. By revisiting these campaigns through both primary sources and secondary debates, the thesis identifies not only operational continuities, but also the enduring assumptions about authority, order, and institutional legitimacy that underpin British approaches to security reform in post-colonial contexts.

The Sierra Leone case, by contrast, allows for a more detailed empirical examination of the medium-term effects of security prioritisation. While the experiences of those in Malaya and Kenya are now receding into record, Sierra Leone presents an excellent opportunity to learn from the experiences of those who lived through the 2000-2002 intervention and its aftermath. Sierra Leone also offers an excellent opportunity to engage with the next generation of citizens who did not fight or experience the war but today live with its legacies. This analysis is grounded in five months of field research conducted in the capitol city Freetown, and the districts of Kenema and Kailahun - combining semi-structured interviews with government ministers, local officials, members of the security services, civil-society actors and ordinary citizens. These interviews were complemented by document analysis of local policy papers, donor reports, and SSR programme evaluations. Together, this qualitative evidence enables a close reading of how security reforms were received,

[1] UK MoD & NATO, *Allied Joint Publication-3.27: Allied Joint Doctrine for Counter-Insurgency*, (NATO-SO, 2023); USDoD, *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook* (Chicago: Skyhorse, 2007).

negotiated, and contested at the local level. Particular attention is paid to the lived experiences of communities subjected to restructured policing, military reforms, and justice reforms, including their perceptions of protection, legitimacy, fairness, and access to redress. By centring these user perspectives, that are often overlooked in state-centric or macro-level policy and academic assessments of COIN and SSR, this thesis examines not only what reforms were implemented, but how they were interpreted and experienced by those most affected. In doing so, it contributes a more grounded understanding of the social consequences and political reception of externally driven stabilisation efforts in a post-conflict context.

The selection of Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone is designed to illuminate both continuity and transformation in British interventionist practices over time. Malaya provides the prototype of COIN 'success' within British official memory, Kenya reflects the dissonance between counterinsurgency doctrine and colonial brutality, and Sierra Leone serves as a test case for the adaptation of these strategies within a post-colonial, internationalised context. While distinct, these cases are bound by a shared logic: the use of early-stage security reform to suppress insurgency and stabilise the state, often in ways that imposed external priorities over local political settlements. This comparative approach enables a critical perspective on how British-led security interventions have been shaped by enduring institutional and strategic preferences, even as they have adapted to changing international norms.

The original contribution of this thesis lies in its critical re-evaluation of the timing, purpose, and consequences of SSR within British counterinsurgency, offering both conceptual and empirical advances. Conceptually, it challenges the widespread assumption that SSR belongs strictly to the post-conflict phase by aligning with the concept of 'security sector stability' (SSS) that captures reforms to the security sector enacted during conflict to stabilise rather than reform the security forces of a host state.[2] It also questions the conventional linearity of peacebuilding models, complicating the idea that security and development follow a sequential path. Furthermore, it critiques the normative framing of SSR as inherently liberal or benevolent by exposing the persistence of coercive logics, elite bargains, and externally driven agendas within reform processes. Empirically, it contributes to the underexplored case of Sierra Leone by integrating fieldwork-based perspectives into

[2] For a discussion of SSS during COIN see Chapter 2: Literature Review (pp. 34-39).

the broader COIN-SSR debate, offering a rare user-centred account of how externally led reforms are experienced on the ground. Moreover, by bringing colonial and post-colonial interventions into comparative dialogue, the thesis illuminates the persistent influence of imperial logics on contemporary stabilisation efforts – a dimension that remains largely overlooked in existing SSR and COIN scholarship.

This thesis advances understanding of how the prioritisation of security affects end users in both the short and medium terms. In the short term, security stabilisation may bring an immediate sense of physical safety and relief from armed violence, but it is often accompanied by heavy-handed policing, restrictions on civil liberties, and a lack of accountability – especially when reforms are enacted through militarised or externally driven measures. Populations may be 'secured' but not necessarily 'protected' in a democratic sense. In the medium term, the legacy of such reforms can result in persistent tensions between state security providers and the communities they serve, especially where issues such as corruption, impunity, ethnic exclusion, or politicisation are left unaddressed. Thusly, we must recognise that the sustainability of peace depends not only on institutional capacity but on public confidence in those institutions. In Sierra Leone, for example, while military reform has been widely regarded as successful, police and justice reform remain contested – highlighting the unevenness of SSR outcomes across different branches of the security sector.

By combining historical and contemporary analysis, this thesis seeks to contribute to understandings of the interrelationship between counterinsurgency, institutional reform, and post-conflict governance. Rather than following a straightforward security-to-development trajectory, this thesis introduces the concept of a 'security-democratic governance nexus' to capture the complex relationship between efforts to stabilise conflict-affected states and the simultaneous construction of political authority. This differs from the widely cited 'security-development nexus', which tends to frame security and development as complementary and sequential components of peacebuilding. In contrast, the 'security-democratic governance nexus' highlights the strategic and often fraught overlap between stabilisation and democratisation, foregrounding the tensions and trade-offs that arise when efforts to restore order conflict with goals of political inclusion and accountability. The 'security-democratic governance nexus' reflects how British-led SSR initiatives have historically navigated, and often blurred, the line between restoring security and promoting democratic governance – highlighting the inherent tensions between these overlapping objectives. In this model, SSR serves overlapping and often conflicting purposes: initially to restore control and suppress

violence, and subsequently to support democratic transition that is a vital component of development. Yet the tension between these phases, particularly when early prioritisation of security undermines inclusive, accountable governance, frequently leads to uneven and ambiguous outcomes.

To better assess these outcomes, this thesis draws on Johan Galtung's distinction between negative and positive peace. Galtung defines negative peace as the absence of direct violence, while positive peace entails the presence of social justice, equity, and the resolution of structural grievances. Applying this framework allows the study to interrogate whether British-led SSR efforts led to sustainable, legitimate governance of a positive peace; or whether they merely established a superficial stability that characterises a negative peace of unresolved political and social issues. In doing so, the research seeks to contribute a more grounded understanding of how security-led interventions shape not just the end of conflict, but also the nature and durability of peace that follows. In this sense, we not only challenge dominant narratives of British counterinsurgency success but also contribute to a broader understanding of how security interventions shape political order, legitimacy, and peace in post-conflict societies.

Ultimately, this thesis seeks to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the legacy of British counterinsurgency by examining not only how conflicts were brought to an end, but how security institutions were restructured, and how these changes have shaped state-society relations in the years that followed.

1.2 Research Questions and Research Questions Rationale

Research Questions

1. To what extent did British counterinsurgency prioritise security and security sector reform in the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone military intervention?

2. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what were the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector

reform on armed insurgency and restoring stability in the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone intervention?

3. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what are the medium-term impacts or legacies of prioritising security and security sector reform for users and democratic governance in post-conflict Malaysia, Kenya and Sierra Leone?

Research Question Rationale

This section outlines the rationale underpinning the three core research questions that guide this study. Each question is designed to interrogate a specific dimension of the relationship between counterinsurgency and security sector reform within the context of British military interventions in Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. Together, these questions provide a structured analytical framework for examining how the prioritisation of security and institutional reform influenced the trajectory of conflict resolution, the restoration of state authority, and the longer-term prospects for democratic governance and stability.

1. To what extent did British counterinsurgency prioritise security and security sector reform in the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone military intervention?

This question explores the integration and timing of security sector reform within British counterinsurgency strategies, challenging the conventional notion that SSR is a post-conflict process. As identified in the literature review, British COIN efforts, while often romanticised as ‘hearts and minds’ operations, increasingly exhibit characteristics of coercion, suggesting a nuanced application of security priorities. The concept of ‘security sector stabilisation’ that is introduced in the literature review suggests that immediate reforms during conflict can be instrumental in restoring order and supporting COIN objectives. By comparing three case studies – Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone – this question interrogates whether and how British COIN doctrine operationalised SSR principles during conflict, offering critical insights into the doctrinal overlap and the realities of interventionist practices.

By situating these case studies within a broader continuum of British military and political doctrine, the research also aims to assess the extent to which the prioritisation of security and SSR represented a coherent strategic intent versus an adaptive, context-driven response to crisis. This distinction is crucial for understanding whether British COIN operations maintained a consistent philosophy regarding the role of institutional reform in conflict settings, or if SSR was selectively applied to achieve tactical or political expediency. Furthermore, by tracing the evolution of SSR practices across these interventions, the study will evaluate how lessons from earlier campaigns may have influenced subsequent approaches, thereby contributing to a more nuanced historiography of British post-colonial and post-Cold War military engagement.

2. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what were the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector reform on armed insurgency and restoring stability in the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone intervention?

This question is designed to assess whether prioritising security during the conflict phase through security sector stabilisation, effectively suppressed insurgency and fostered short-term stability. As noted, success in this context is frequently measured through indicators such as reduced violence, the holding of elections, and restored territorial control. However, literature also warns that immediate stabilisation efforts may compromise long-term SSR goals. The comparative case analysis will reveal the extent to which these security priorities contributed to immediate tactical success but sustained/created deeper structural issues and have hampered the redress of grievance. Understanding these impacts can inform the debate on the trade-offs between achieving quick wins versus sustainable peace.

In examining the immediate-term impacts, particular attention will be paid to the mechanisms through which security sector stabilisation was operationalised, such as the expansion of the security forces, legislative changes, and imposition of undemocratic administrative structures. These measures, while often effective in reasserting control and deterring insurgent activity, may also entrench authoritarian practices or marginalise civilian oversight. Through a detailed examination of the tactical dimensions of each intervention, this study explores how short-term gains were achieved and whether they laid the

groundwork for legitimate governance or instead created dependencies, imbalances, or public mistrust that resurfaced in the post-conflict period. This analysis will illuminate the complexities and unintended consequences of prioritising rapid stabilisation in fragile, conflict-affected environments.

3. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what are the medium-term impacts or legacies of prioritising security and security sector reform for users and democratic governance in post-conflict Malaysia, Kenya and Sierra Leone?

This question shifts focus to the lived experiences and democratic outcomes following SSR and COIN interventions. As we will observe in the literature review, while SSR is intended to bolster state legitimacy and personal security, overly militarised or externally driven reforms may fail to deliver lasting democratic governance or address structural grievances, leading to a Galtungian 'negative peace'. Medium-term metrics such as user perceptions of security services, political representation, accountability, and the persistence of non-state security actors are essential for evaluating the success of reforms. By analysing how these legacies unfold across the three case studies, this research will contribute to a nuanced understanding of how early SSR decisions shape long-term peace and democratic resilience.

To achieve this, the research will employ a multidimensional framework that considers political, institutional, and social indicators of reform effectiveness, as well as qualitative assessments of user experiences and perceptions. This approach enables a granular analysis of how reforms have influenced public trust in state institutions, the inclusivity of governance structures, the universality of services, and the persistence or resolution of conflict-era grievances. By moving beyond state-centric metrics and integrating user-level perspectives, this study aims to critically assess whether security sector reforms have merely stabilised post-conflict states or genuinely transformed them into resilient, democratic polities.

1.3 Case Study Rationale

The selection of case studies in this thesis is guided by the need to analyse British counterinsurgency as a historically embedded and institutionally consequential practice. This thesis adopts a historically sensitive comparative approach to examine how Britain has responded to political disorder across shifting colonial and post-colonial contexts. The purpose is not only to investigate the tactical dimensions of counterinsurgency, but to interrogate the broader institutional, ideological, and governance outcomes it produces. In particular, the study is interested in how Britain has deployed security sector reform and stabilisation strategies as instruments of control, order-making, and post-conflict reconstruction. The cases of the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency, and the intervention in Sierra Leone were selected precisely because they reflect distinct phases in the evolution of British power, from imperial governance to post-imperial peacebuilding, while exhibiting shared logics of external intervention and institutional engineering. These cases enable this author to test and trace the continuity of British strategic habits, and to evaluate how counterinsurgency has operated not only as a military doctrine, but as a form of political and institutional statecraft with lasting implications for post-conflict societies.

This thesis examines the evolution of British counterinsurgency within the broader contexts of decolonisation, post-colonial state-building, and international intervention. Central to its analytical framework is an interrogation of how security has been prioritised, both operationally and ideologically, over political inclusion and institutional reform. In doing so, it employs a comparative case study methodology to explore the relationship between coercive stabilisation and post-conflict governance. Each case reflects a moment in which Britain, acting as an external or transitional authority, sought to suppress insurgency while also restructuring political and security institutions. Despite their differences in context and chronology, these cases collectively allow for a longitudinal analysis of the continuities, adaptations, and contradictions inherent in British approaches to stabilisation, SSR and the broader state-building agenda.

The methodological rationale for selecting these case studies is grounded in established comparative case study logic, particularly the ‘most different systems’ design outlined by George and Bennett and the notion of ‘crucial cases’ developed by Eckstein.[3]

[3] Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005); Harry Eckstein, ‘Case Study and Theory in Political Science’, in F. Greenstein & N. Polsby (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science Vol. 7* (Reading, MA: Addison-Weasley), pp. 79-137.

These cases span vastly different temporal and geopolitical contexts – the former are set within the late colonial period, and the latter in the early twenty-first century post-colonial environment – yet all are united by Britain's role as a dominant external actor seeking to assert control and impose institutional reform in response to insurgent or internal disorder. This variation in context, juxtaposed with convergence in strategic and institutional logic, allows for what Gerring terms a 'diverse case selection strategy', whereby each case is representative of a broader phenomenon, but differs in important dimensions that enable the researcher to test hypotheses and trace mechanisms across time and space.[4] This comparative method facilitates a robust exploration of the historical continuities and strategic adaptations in British COIN, particularly in relation to the sequencing and implementation of security stabilisation and reform. By selecting cases that reflect different stages of Britain's global role as colonial ruler, decolonising power, and post-colonial intervener – this thesis may evaluate how COIN and institutional reform have evolved in form but retained underlying logics of external authority, elite accommodation, and the prioritisation of security over political transformation. The design also allows for analysis of how British interventionism has responded to shifting normative environments, such as the rise of human rights regimes and peacebuilding discourses in the post-Cold War era, while still reproducing strategic habits of stabilisation and control.

The Malayan Emergency provides the earliest and most formative example of British counterinsurgency in the late colonial period. It is widely cited in military and policy literature as a successful or paradigmatic case, often attributed to Britain's supposed ability to combine military force with political reform.[5] However, this thesis approaches Malaya less as a model than as a foundational episode in the institutionalisation of security-first governance. The British response to the communist insurgency centred on a highly structured programme of population control, legal exceptionalism, and administrative consolidation. Crucially, reforms were targeted, technocratic, and executed under the premise of tutelage rather than partnership. Security restructuring, such as the creation of the Special Branch, the expansion of paramilitary police units, and the use of emergency ordinances, laid the groundwork for a post-colonial state in which security institutions remained central to governance. The Malayan Emergency thus serves as a key example for analysing how colonial

[4] John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[5] Robert Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organisation of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1972).

counterinsurgency produced post-colonial governance architectures that are heavily influenced by security-first thinking. Malaya serves as the comparative baseline from which the evolution of British COIN can be traced. It is especially useful for highlighting how colonial counterinsurgency generated enduring institutional architectures, and how SSR, in its early incarnation, functioned as a mechanism for embedding state power rather than transforming it. While such measures succeeded in weakening the Malayan communist insurgency, they also embedded a highly securitised governance structure that persisted into independence. The institutional legacy of British rule in Malaya, particularly in relation to ethnic stratification within the security sector and the endurance of emergency-era legal frameworks, exemplifies the ways in which COIN strategies can become foundational to post-colonial state formation. The case thus provides a valuable opportunity to interrogate how security imperatives shape institutional architectures and generate long-term consequences for governance and legitimacy.

The Kenyan Emergency is both structurally and politically comparable to Malaya, yet its divergences are equally instructive. Like Malaya, Kenya witnessed the deployment of emergency legislation, mass internment, and militarised policing as central components of British COIN. Both campaigns involved targeted attempts to restructure security institutions under colonial auspices. Yet, Kenya also reveals the limits of Britain's reformist ambitions in settler-dominated contexts. Whereas Malaya's reforms were facilitated by relatively cohesive administrative control and Cold War imperatives, Kenya's political landscape was fragmented by settler interests, racialised land struggles, and a more overtly violent rupture between colonial authorities and the insurgent population. The failure of SSR in Kenya, exemplified by the marginalisation of reformist figures like Col. Arthur Young, underscores how technocratic COIN innovation can entrench coercive legacies if not underpinned by inclusive political processes. By comparing Kenya with Malaya, the thesis can more precisely distinguish between forms of security restructuring that were incorporated into post-colonial governance and those that were resisted or subverted. This contrast also allows for an exploration of how colonial political economies shaped the scope and limits of institutional reform during pressures of conflict.

This divergence is further illuminated by the aftermath of the conflict and the institutional inheritance of the post-independence Kenyan state. Unlike in Malaya, where the security infrastructure underwent incremental reform and was absorbed into a relatively stable political transition, the structures forged during the Kenyan Emergency were

transferred wholesale into the post-colonial regime with minimal alteration. The apparatus of surveillance, militarised policing, and emergency law was retained by Jomo Kenyatta's government and used to suppress political dissent in the early years of independence. This trajectory underscores the enduring effects of counterinsurgency on the political culture of newly independent states. In Kenya's case, COIN not only defeated an insurgency but also provided the institutional template for authoritarian consolidation. By linking the colonial security state to its post-colonial successor, the Kenyan case challenges the assumption that independence demarks automatic transition to democratic governance. Instead, it reveals how counterinsurgency and SSR, when deployed in the absence of democratic accountability or broad-based legitimacy, can produce path-dependent outcomes that perpetuate coercive governance long after the formal end of empire.

The intervention in Sierra Leone represents a post-colonial case, yet it is analytically continuous with the two colonial examples. Firstly, Great Britain was instrumental in shaping the authoritarian structures and practices of the security services during Sierra Leone colonial period and maintained such influence into the independence period and initial flirtations with representative democracy. While conducted under the guise of humanitarian intervention and international peacebuilding, Britain's twenty-first century engagement in Sierra Leone involved familiar patterns as those in Malaya and Kenya: an initial stabilisation effort focused on securing the capital and key infrastructure, followed by a British-led programme of SSR. Although Sierra Leone was a sovereign state and the intervention framed in multilateral terms, the underlying logic remained colonial in form: external actors diagnosing dysfunction, prescribing institutional blueprints, and managing implementation. The case is especially valuable for comparison with Malaya and Kenya because it allows the thesis to assess how earlier patterns of British intervention – emphasising order, hierarchy, and technocratic control – resurfaced in a new normative environment shaped by liberal peacebuilding discourse. Importantly, Sierra Leone also demonstrates the partial reconfiguration of COIN into SSR: the violence of colonial suppression was replaced with developmental language, but the strategic sequencing remained largely unchanged: security before reform, and reform as a means of enabling external withdrawal and internal compliance.

Such continuity is further evidenced by the limited extent to which SSR in Sierra Leone addressed the deeper political and social roots of conflict. While externally-driven reforms succeeded in rebuilding centralised security institutions and improving technical

capacity, they often failed to engage with the historical grievances, patterns of exclusion, and localised experiences of insecurity that had fuelled the civil war. Much of the reform agenda focused on state-centric frameworks without fully incorporating the voices of rural communities or marginalised groups who had borne the brunt of both rebel and state violence. In Sierra Leone, the principle of restoring personal security was frequently interpreted through a narrow institutional lens, equating security with regime stability and the reassertion of state authority. This replicates patterns observable in both Malaya and Kenya, where British COIN similarly prioritised territorial control and elite accommodation over the lived experiences of security. In all three cases, personal security was subordinated to strategic and administrative objectives, revealing how British counterinsurgency in both colonial and post-colonial settings has tended to reify state-centred stability at the expense of inclusive and participatory security provision. The Sierra Leone intervention, therefore, not only echoed earlier British approaches in form and rationale but also reproduced their underlying contradictions, demonstrating the challenges of translating personal security and the redress of grievances from doctrine into practice in the aftermath of conflict.

We now turn to other potential case study candidates that were considered but ultimately excluded from this analysis. Counterinsurgency campaigns conducted prior to the Malayan Emergency have been deliberately omitted on both conceptual and methodological grounds. While earlier British campaigns, such as those in Ireland (1919–1921), Palestine (1936–1939), or Iraq (1920), offer important historical insight into imperial policing and military suppression, they do not align with the core analytical focus of this study. The Malayan Emergency represents a critical inflection point in British COIN doctrine – marking the shift from ad hoc imperial enforcement to a more formalised, integrated approach. As such, Malaya has been widely framed in both scholarly and official discourse as the archetypal modern counterinsurgency campaign.[6] This thesis is concerned with tracing the legacy of that model: its institutional logic, its strategic sequencing, and its adaptation in later colonial and post-colonial contexts. Including pre-Malaya campaigns would introduce cases that are neither informed by this doctrinal framework nor situated within the same evolving discourse of development, reform, and post-conflict governance. The selection therefore begins with Malaya, not to disregard earlier episodes, but to anchor the analysis around the

[6] See: Karl Hack, 'Using and Abusing the Past: The Malayan Emergency as Counterinsurgency Paradigm' in Dixon (ed.), *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 207-242; John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 33-61.

campaign that set the precedent for British counterinsurgency as it came to be globally understood in the latter half of the twentieth century.

The British counterinsurgency campaigns in Cyprus (1955–1959) and Aden (1963–1967), though notable within the broader history of imperial withdrawal, do not satisfy the analytical requirements for inclusion in this study. The central focus lies in examining contexts where Britain acted as an external authority with a sustained role in transitional governance, employing counterinsurgency in conjunction with deliberate programmes of security sector stabilisation and reform. In contrast, British engagement in Cyprus and Aden was primarily characterised by tactical responses to insurgency and an accelerating imperative for withdrawal, rather than efforts to construct or reform indigenous governance and security institutions.[7] These campaigns lacked the institutional depth, developmental trajectory, and post-conflict planning found in the selected case studies – and are therefore excluded from comparative analysis.

Cyprus, while a British colony at the time of the insurgency, was never fully integrated into the broader administrative logic of British empire in the same way as Malaya or Kenya. The EOKA movement, led by Greek Cypriots, sought *enosis* or 'union with Greece', rather than independence or anti-colonial self-rule in the traditional nationalist sense.[8] This positioned the Cypriot conflict more as a struggle over political alignment rather than a decolonisation process driven by internal revolutionary forces. The conflict was also highly entangled with international and regional dynamics, particularly involving Greece, Turkey, and the Cold War geopolitics of NATO, making it significantly more multilateral and externally influenced than the relatively bilateral colonial struggles in Kenya and Malaya.[9] Moreover, the British counterinsurgency in Cyprus was militarily intense but politically shallow in terms of state transformation. Unlike operations in Malaya or Kenya, where counterinsurgency was intertwined with the construction of new political orders that led to post-colonial statehood, the Cyprus campaign largely failed to create sustainable political institutions.[10] The outcome was an abrupt departure and the establishment of a highly contested independent republic, fraught with unresolved ethnic tensions that quickly

[7] Newsinger, pp. 88-111 & 112-135.
[8] Ibid., pp. 88-91.
[9] Tamer Balci, 'The Cyprus Crisis and the Southern Flank of NATO (1960-1975)', *International Review of Turkish Studies* 2:3 (2012), pp. 30-55.
[10] Simon Robbins, 'The British Counter-Insurgency in Cyprus', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23:4-5 (2012), pp. 720-743.

devolved into inter-communal violence. This absence of systematic security reform following the conflict sets Cyprus apart from Sierra Leone, where Britain implemented a comprehensive post-conflict SSR programme designed to reconstitute state authority.

Aden was indeed a formal British colony during the insurgency. However, its strategic role, brief and abrupt trajectory towards withdrawal, and lack of substantive state-building initiatives render it analytically distinct and conceptually limited for post-colonial comparison. Unlike Malaya and Kenya, where Britain invested heavily in constructing political and administrative institutions in preparation for independence, Aden was governed primarily as a military outpost and strategic asset within the British Empire's broader geopolitical posture in the Middle East and Indian Ocean. The counterinsurgency campaign there was shaped less by a vision of developmental governance or managed decolonisation and more by strategic withdrawal under duress, following a surge in nationalist violence and the untenable costs of maintaining imperial control.[11] This fundamentally limits Aden's utility as a case for analysing how counterinsurgency shaped post-colonial statehood. The British withdrawal in 1967 was chaotic and unaccompanied by any meaningful SSR initiatives or transition planning, resulting in the emergence of a Marxist one-party state in South Yemen in 1969.

While the British military campaign in Northern Ireland (circa 1969-1998) constitutes a significant episode in the history of British counterinsurgency, it also does not qualify as a suitable comparative case study within the scope of this thesis. The core analytical focus of this research lies in exploring British COIN strategy as exercised in colonial or post-colonial settings, where Britain functioned as an external or transitional authority engaged in the restructuring of security institutions as part of broader processes of state formation or reconstruction. The campaign in Northern Ireland falls outside these parameters due to its distinct constitutional, legal, and geopolitical character.

Northern Ireland is a devolved region within the UK and was never formally classified as a colony. As such, it lacks the post-colonial or decolonising context that defines the selected case studies of Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. In each of those cases, Britain acted either as a colonial administrator or a post-colonial intervener: managing sovereignty transitions, suppressing insurgencies, and actively shaping the trajectory of local governance

[11] Andrew Mumford, 'Exit Strategies in Counter-Insurgency: Britain in Aden and the Lessons for Afghanistan', *historyandpolicy.org* (n.d.) <https://historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/exit-strategies-in-counter-insurgency-britain-in-aden-and-the-lessons-for-a> [accessed 23 April 2025].

through coercive and administrative means. In contrast, the British Army's operations in Northern Ireland took place within the framework of UK domestic law, governed by parliamentary sovereignty and judicial oversight.[12] The British state was not an external force intervening in a foreign polity – but rather acting within its own territorial jurisdiction.

This distinction in sovereignty and authority is analytically decisive. Malaya and Kenya, as late colonial territories, were subject to British imperial governance, with insurgency perceived as a challenge to Britain's legitimacy as a colonial ruler. In Sierra Leone, the British intervention represented a post-colonial re-engagement, framed around humanitarian stabilisation and executed through formal SSR initiatives. These included the reconstitution of the army, the reform of national policing, and the imposition of new mechanisms of civilian oversight. These processes reflected Britain's continued influence as a former colonial power and exemplified the external application of SSR as a tool of state-building. No such externally administered reform process occurred in Northern Ireland. While security reform was indeed undertaken in Northern Ireland, most notably the transformation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary into the Police Service of Northern Ireland, this reform was the outcome of internal political negotiation, not externally imposed state reconstruction. The reforms were codified through the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, a product of bipartisan and multilateral engagement involving local political actors, civil society, and the governments of the UK and Ireland.[13] In this sense, SSR in Northern Ireland was part of a domestic peace process, reflecting a fundamentally different trajectory from the externally-driven reform agendas observed in post-colonial interventions.

Northern Ireland does not exhibit the element of externality that characterises the other cases studied in this thesis. In Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, Britain intervened from outside the sovereign space of the polities in question, either as a colonial ruler or a post-colonial guarantor. These interventions involved varying degrees of control over political and institutional design, legitimised either through imperial mandate or international norms. Northern Ireland, by contrast, represents a case of internal conflict management within a democratic state, lacking the international dimensions of post-colonial state-building or neo-imperial interventionism that form the core theoretical concerns of this research.

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[12] Ronald Weitzer, 'Contested Order: The Struggle over British Security Policy in Northern Ireland', *Comparative Politics* 19:3 (1987), pp. 281-298.

[13] CAIN: Ulster University, 'A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland', *CAIN: Conflict and Politics in Northern Ireland* (Sept. 1999).

Furthermore, the discursive framing of the Northern Ireland conflict diverged significantly from that used in colonial and post-colonial theatres. In Kenya and Malaya, insurgents were typically framed through racialised, dehumanising colonial tropes that sought to delegitimise their political aims and justify extraordinary violence. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front was presented as an apolitical and criminal entity, warranting robust military and institutional intervention. In Northern Ireland, however, the insurgency was publicly acknowledged to possess constitutional claims, specifically the unification of Ireland, which required political negotiation. The conflict was situated within a framework of sectarian history, civil rights mobilisation, and democratic accountability, making it ill-suited to a comparative analysis focused on external COIN and post-colonial governance.

To summarise, although Northern Ireland shares tactical elements with other British COIN operations, such as the use of internment, intelligence-led policing, and civil-military integration, it is not comparable in terms of the structural logic or institutional objectives of British interventions in colonial or post-colonial environments. The deployment in Northern Ireland was a response to a domestic crisis within the territorial bounds of the United Kingdom, governed by democratic institutions and legal norms rather than by imperial authority or transitional sovereignty. Moreover, British strategy in Northern Ireland increasingly aligned with a counter-terrorism framework, that was focused on disrupting armed networks and protecting civilian infrastructure, rather than the broader state-building imperatives that define counterinsurgency in overseas contexts.[14] As such, it lacked the externality, developmental agenda, and decolonisation dynamics that underpin the cases of Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, and is therefore analytically distinct from the post-imperial interventions examined in this thesis. Its inclusion would therefore undermine the coherence of the thesis's analytical framework, which is explicitly concerned with the use of counterinsurgency and SSR in the governance and reconstruction of states at the margins of or beyond British sovereignty.

Thusly, the selection of the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone 2000 intervention are congruent to the objectives and purpose of this study. Comparing these cases together enhances the analytical depth of the study's claims by revealing both continuities and contextual shifts in British counterinsurgency and state-

[14] Christopher Tuck, 'Northern Ireland and the British Approach to Counter-Insurgency', *Defence and Security Analysis* 23:2 (2007), pp. 165-183.

building. All three cases reflect a logic in which security institutions were not merely stabilised but restructured in ways that aligned with British strategic interests. They allow the thesis to examine how SSR has functioned less as an end in itself and more as a mechanism for managing political transitions, regulating dissent, and consolidating elite authority. They also demonstrate how COIN has been deployed not just as a military strategy, but as a tool of institutional design with long-term implications for post-conflict governance. Methodologically, the variation across these cases in terms of colonial/post-colonial status, geopolitical era, and international legal framing supports a design that can test hypotheses about the durability of British interventionist logic across time and context.

We turn now to the Chapter Outline section of this introduction.

1.4 Chapter Outline

The thesis is structured across seven chapters, beginning with an introductory chapter that sets the research context and objectives. It critically interrogates British counterinsurgency and security sector reform practices, establishing the rationale for a reappraisal of the intersections between conflict-phase stabilisation and post-conflict state-building. The research questions, analytical frameworks, and case study rationale are clearly outlined, and a discussion of the original contribution that this study makes to existing scholarship on COIN, SSR, and liberal peacebuilding is incorporated. In particular, it introduces a comparative, cross-temporal approach which draws on both historical archival research and contemporary fieldwork, allowing for a rare integration of user-centred and institutional perspectives.

Chapter Two undertakes a comprehensive review of the pertinent academic and doctrinal literature surrounding counterinsurgency and security sector reform. It examines the conceptual and operational overlaps between COIN and SSR, challenges the conventional separation of these practices into conflict and post-conflict phases respectively, and introduces the concept of security sector stabilisation as a critical intermediary process. The emergence of SSR as the principal post-Cold War interventionist tool is explored alongside the key debates surrounding state-centric reform versus local ownership. The chapter concludes by establishing evaluative criteria for COIN and SSR success, drawing upon both doctrinal and critical perspectives, and introducing Johan Galtung's framework of negative and positive peace to interrogate the social impacts of security prioritisation.

Chapter Three outlines the methodological approach of the study. The chapter furthers the selection rationale for the three case studies and discusses the challenges inherent in cross-temporal comparative research. It highlights the original archival research conducted for the Malayan and Kenyan cases, drawing upon Colonial Office and War Office records, policy memoranda, and official correspondence, offering new insights into the practical realities of British COIN strategies. The methodology underpinning the five months of fieldwork conducted in Sierra Leone is explained, including the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Ethical considerations, issues of positionality, and the limitations of the study are critically examined.

Chapter Four offers an in-depth analysis of the Malayan Emergency (1948–1960). It explores British strategic objectives and the implementation of security sector stabilisation during the conflict, focusing on how security restructuring operated as a tool for counterinsurgency and post-conflict governance. Drawing on extensive archival research, this chapter provides new insight into the ways in which security reforms were implemented to suppress insurgency; and the impact such reforms would have on shaping the institutional architecture of the post-colonial Malaysian state. Immediate impacts on insurgency suppression and the restoration of stability are evaluated, followed by a critical assessment of the medium-term legacies, including the institutionalisation of security-first governance and the constrained political settlement that emerged thereafter.

Chapter Five examines the Kenyan Emergency (1952–1960), highlighting both parallels and divergences with Malaya. It considers the British counterinsurgency approach within the racially and politically fragmented context of colonial Kenya, revealing the coercive underpinnings of security sector restructuring efforts. The chapter draws on new archival material to illustrate how security reforms were subverted by settler interests and how colonial administration prioritised control over inclusive governance. Immediate outcomes regarding the suppression of the Mau Mau insurgency are considered alongside the longer-term effects on governance, where repressive security architectures and authoritarian state practices became entrenched in the post-independence Kenyan state. This chapter therefore contributes to understanding of path-dependent consequences of COIN-driven institutional design.

Chapter Six turns to the British military intervention in Sierra Leone (2000–2002). It charts the collapse of state authority and the subsequent British-led stabilisation and SSR

initiatives, focusing on how military and police sector reforms were prioritised during and after the conflict phase. The chapter draws extensively on original empirical research undertaken during five months of fieldwork in Sierra Leone, incorporating the voices and experiences of ministers, security officials, civil society actors, and ordinary citizens. It examines how the reconstitution of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) through British mentoring and restructuring was largely successful in professionalising the military, depoliticising its leadership, and preventing future coups. By contrast, police reform efforts, though extensive, produced far more ambiguous outcomes. The Sierra Leone Police (SLP) underwent a comprehensive restructuring under British guidance, yet issues relating to corruption, political partiality, and public mistrust persisted well into the medium term. Immediate outcomes such as the cessation of open violence, the restoration of territorial control, and the facilitation of democratic elections are critically appraised. The analysis then shifts to the medium-term impacts, evaluating the differing trajectories of the military and police sectors, and considering how these have affected democratic governance, user trust in security institutions, access to justice, and the persistence of grievances linked to security service behaviour. Particular attention is paid to the unevenness of reform, where military success in stabilisation contrasts sharply with the continuing challenges within policing and civil security provision. This chapter offers an original, grounded contribution by centring the user-level impacts of SSR reforms – a perspective often marginalised in policy and academic assessments.

Chapter Seven contains the comparative analysis, future research recommendations and conclusion of this thesis. It draws together the findings from the three case studies, identifying enduring continuities in British counterinsurgency practices across colonial and post-colonial contexts. The chapter critically assesses the concept of a ‘security-democratic governance nexus’, demonstrating how security-first approaches have often succeeded in restoring order whilst simultaneously constraining inclusive political development. Special attention is paid to the differing outcomes of military and police sector reforms, where stability in the armed forces contrasts with ongoing challenges in civilian policing and justice provision. Reflections are offered on the implications of these findings for contemporary interventionist practices, particularly within liberal peacebuilding paradigms. By integrating historical archival analysis with fieldwork-based user experiences, the chapter offers an original synthesis that challenges the linearity of post-conflict reconstruction models and highlights the enduring tensions between stabilisation, governance, and legitimacy. The

limitations of SSR in achieving positive peace are underscored, and suggestions for future research are proposed, thereby concluding the thesis.

We turn now to the literature review chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The following chapter provides an overview of some of the pertinent tenets or characteristics of counterinsurgency and security sector reform that have informed ongoing discussions around the nature and application of these approaches. The material below is intended to reflect the purpose of the research questions and so is concerned with exploring the academic perspectives and discussions surrounding the relationship between counterinsurgency and security sector reform. Of particular importance is establishing the connection between prioritising security, security sector reform and successful counterinsurgency practice. Thusly, this chapter is concerned with establishing the academic and doctrinal principles of a successful counterinsurgency campaign and highlighting where such the principles of security sector reform may intersect or overlap.

In the first section, we will establish the overlap that exists between counterinsurgency theory and that of SSR: challenging existing conceptions that the two activities occur independently of each other in the conflict and post-conflict phases respectively. Where counterinsurgency activities are primarily concerned with creating state legitimacy, security is a prerequisite of such legitimacy as both personal security and an environment in which elections may be held are common markers of restored stability. As we will observe, a process of 'security sector stabilisation' (SSS) may occur during the shooting-phase of a counterinsurgency action to restore such stability, which may be supportive of or challenging to later activities associated with post-conflict SSR and legitimacy building. This argument is supported by a sub-section that explores the key tenets or ideas of counterinsurgency and demonstrates where COIN doctrine, and SSR principles/ and objectives overlap.

Having established the relationship between security, security sector reform and counterinsurgency, we continue with a review of the emergence of SSR and an illustration of how this approach has become the primary method of intervention since the early 1990s. This is accompanied by an overview of the debates encapsulated within SSR: including the ambiguity of the concept, discussions surrounding state-centred reform verses local ownership and a justification for micro-level examinations of states that have experienced reformative security interventions.

We continue with an examination of the dimensions of successful SSR, as identified by relevant academic and professional military/policing perspectives. In this section, we will

identify the factors by which we may adjudge the overall success of the SSR approach in Sierra Leone, including factors such as: the extent to which politicisation within the security services has been addressed; how far legitimate security providers have assumed total responsibility for security; equality of gender and ethnicity; the curbing of corruption and patronage and the installation of professionalism through accountability to and oversight by civilian institutions.

In the final section, we examine the perspective of Johan Galtung and his core theory of 'structural violence'. The purpose of this section is to establish a framework with which we may better understand the impacts of SSR during and after counterinsurgency interventions on users themselves. In brief, Galtung's identification of 'negative' and 'positive' peace will help us to understand how COIN and SSR may produce a desirable end to hostilities but the sustainment of causal grievances or the creation of new ones. Conversely, we are also able to test the suitability of Galtung's premise by exploring the extent to which the case studies exist in a state of negative/positive peace and what this means for long-term stability and democratic governance.

From this literature review it is possible to generate specific metrics which may be employed to adjudge the success of each of the case study examples in the immediate and medium-terms. The section on counterinsurgency principles and tenets will allow us to establish the impact that security prioritisation and stabilisation during the shooting-phase of an intervention may have on suppressing violence and restoring stability. As we will observe, several principles of COIN are security related and should be enacted during the hot war to counter insurgency. This is followed by a more extensive SSR programme that undertakes more dramatic changes to the security sector. The dimensions of SSR established in the later section of this chapter will help us to adjudge the medium-term impacts for both the state and for users. We return to this discussion of analytical frameworks in Chapter 3: Method and Methodological Considerations.

2.1 Security Sector Stabilisation, Security Sector Reform and Counterinsurgency

We begin with an examination of the relationship between counterinsurgency theory and practice, and that of security sector reform. As we will observe, rather than one activity preceding the other, we may understand SSR as an activity that occurs during and after the conflict phases of a COIN intervention; and is concerned in both phases with the

creation/restoration and sustainment of government legitimacy. The approaches in the different phases may be different, and sometimes counterproductive, but both share this objective.

One purpose of this investigation is to explore the extent to which security sector reform plays a role in countering insurgency, with RQ1 seeking to establish the linkage between the prioritisation of security, security reform and success in the counterinsurgency (COIN) case study examples; and RQ2 seeking to understand the immediate impact that stabilisation of the security sector may have on combatting armed insurgency and bringing an end to open violence.

As Thruelsen observes: 'The time is right to take the debate on [SSR] further and to acknowledge that, even though the full SSR concept was not originally developed as an element in stabilising states in the phase of war or insurgency, it is very much being used exactly for that.'[1] Collette and Muggah agree, stating that where SSR as a concept is generally observed in the post-conflict phases of counterinsurgency operations, we may detect a 'mandate creep' in states where immediate reforms to the security sector may align with addressing the wider grievances that fuel the insurgency. These grievances include the legitimacy of democratic government, personal insecurity, a lack of access to justice, or impropriety by the security forces and their leaders.[2] This perspective aligns with the principles of British COIN doctrine that identify a counterinsurgency action as one that seeks to address the political grievances of insurgency to reduce its popular support.[3] As we will observe latterly, in all three case examples, insurgent grievances related to the lack of representative democratic government; and the partial provision of civil services such as personal security and equality of justice. This is supported by Ansorg and Kurtenbach who highlight the overlapping concerns of COIN and SSR, that concur that both immediate stability and long-term reform may be fermented by addressing the pre-conflict weaknesses or failings of the security sector. For example, the legitimacy of the government and the overall COIN effort is linked to user's (civilian) perceptions of the security sector's legitimacy. A security sector that conducts its operations without regard for human rights, the

[1] Ibid., p. 619.
[2] Nat Collette and Robert Muggah, 'Context Matters: interim stabilisation and second generation approaches to security promotion', *Conflict, Security and Development* 9:4 (2009), p. 429.
[3] *Army Field Manual (AFM) Vol. 1, Combines Arms Operations, Counter Insurgency Operations, Strategic and Operational Guidelines – Part 10*, Army Code 71749 (July 2001). The COIN principles discussed in this manual are a synthesis of those outlined by Sir Robert Thompson in: *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (London: F.A. Praeger, 1966); and General Frank Kitson in: *Bunch of Five* (London: Faber & Faber, 1977).

law, or accountability to the democratic government is unlikely to gain sufficient public trust and support – thusly undermining the fragile authority of the state and its external backers.[4]

Collette and Muggah argue that a more contextual 'second generation' evaluation of how SSR can address immediate sources of instability beyond the buttressing of the security forces can contribute to overall success and restoration of stability.[5] However, as Thruelsen observes, such approaches may result in immediate actions taken to produce immediate results in the COIN phase that are not beneficial to the longer-term post-conflict reconstruction phase.[6] For example, as we will observe in the examination of the metrics of SSR below: the reduction of a post-conflict state's armed forces and transition to a more manageable peace-time structure that maintains good political oversight is a tenet of SSR but this is often conducted in response to an initial war-time COIN reform that increases the size of the armed forces, employs unaccountable intelligence gathering methods and maintains an efficacious but undemocratic leadership structure to counter threat. Therefore, argues Thruelsen, we should view SSR during COIN operations as firstly intended to produce 'security sector stability' (SSS) by enhancing security during the conflict and immediately after, and latterly 'security sector reform' in the post-conflict period to ensure civil grievances relating to security issues and government legitimacy are addressed.[7] Ball is supportive of this perspective, observing that a reformative activity that promotes personal security during a conflict such as increasing the size of the armed forces may 'enhance security', but not reflect the normative SSR agenda.[8] Immediate stabilisation may not organically address or negate the challenges that a lack of democratic oversight, lack of access to security and justice, or security forces impropriety may have contributed to initial destabilisation; but may produce a secure environment in which elections may be held and representation fostered.

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[4] Nadine Ansorg and Sabine Kurtenbach, 'Security Sector Reform: Rethinking state-society relations for long-lasting peace', *Rethinking Security* (October 2024) <https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/2024/10/31/security-sector-reform-rethinking-state-society-relations-for-long-lasting-peace/#:~:text=SSR%20programmes%20should%20be%20designed,over%20short%2Dterm%20security%20gains.> [accessed 22 February 2025].

[5] Ibid., pp. 425-453.

[6] Thruelsen, p. 619-620

[7] Ibid., p. 619 & 624.

[8] Nicole Ball, *Dilemmas of Security Sector Reform: Response to 'Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries'* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004), pp. 2-3.

Democratic oversight of the security services may then follow to enhance the legitimacy and authority of the government and its institutions.[9]

In this way, elections are viewed as an important metric of success in COIN and security stabilisation and reform campaigns. As Condra et. al. observes, 'competitive elections are essential to establishing the political legitimacy of democratising regimes' that is the beginning of the process of 'creating inclusive political institutions' that are a core element of successful state reconstruction.[10] Fukuyama agrees that the holding of free and fair elections can promote long-term peace in post-conflict states where elections may reduce the incentives for popular support of insurgencies.[11] Thusly, elections are symbols of 'state-building, territorial consolidation and democratisation' where the state's legitimacy and authority may be reinforced by representative participation in governance and oversight.[12] The conduct of elections themselves are also considered to be an indicator of a successful COIN and SSS campaign as they signal a 'transition from violent to peaceful modes of political contestation and spearhead efforts for more inclusive and legitimate governance' where electoral credibility assists with 'legitimizing political institutions' in general.[13] This is reflected in the UN's peacebuilding agenda, that emphasises the holding of multiparty elections as both a tool to foster social cohesion and respect for democratic governance through representative choice.[14]

However, as the *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook* observes, 'security is essential to setting the stage for overall progress' and that 'after security has been achieved, dollars and ballots will have more important effects than bombs and bullets.'[15] This is supported by Smidt, who observes that a prerequisite for elections is security: the UN and then local actors take responsibility for ensuring public safety from insurgent attack or

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[9] Patrick Donley, 'Economic Development in Counterinsurgency: Building the Second Pillar', *Joint Force Quarterly* 81 (2016); Luke Condra, et. al., 'The Logic of Insurgent Electoral Violence', *American Economic Review* 108:11 (2018), pp. 3199-3231; ACE, 'Focus on Elections and Security', *aceproject.org* (2018) <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/focus/elections-and-security/onePage#:~:text=An%20equitably%20secure%20environment%20for,goal%20of%20an%20election%20itself.> [accessed 04 March 2025].

[10] Condra, p. 3199.

[11] Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014).

[12] Condra, p. 3200.

[13] Hanne Fjelde and Hannah Smidt, 'Protecting the Vote? Peacekeeping Presence and the Risk of Electoral Violence', *British Journal of Political Science* 52:3 (2022), p. 1113.

[14] UN, *Capstone Doctrine – United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (New York, UN: 2008).

[15] US DoD, *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook* (Skyhorse and US DoD, 2007), Ch. 1 p.27.

political intimidation during elections, guarding polling stations and safeguarding voting materials.[16] Therefore in peacekeeping terms argue Condra et. al., the holding of successful elections has become synonymous with a successful COIN approach and security stabilisation programme that has ended open violence and ushed in the post-conflict period.[17] Of course, the British and American missions in Afghanistan and Iraq partly undermine this perspective: elections were held in Afghanistan 2004, three years after the initial invasion; and in Iraq in 2005 after two years. Both countries were beset with internal violence bordering on civil war for decades after these initial elections were held; and despite protracted COIN and SSR campaigns that sought to address grievances of democratic representation whilst simultaneously reforming the security sector to resist radical Islamist groups. The need for expansive security in the post-conflict period was demonstrated by Gen. David Petraeus's 'surge' strategy between 2007 and 2011, in which 30,000 additional US troops were dispatched to Afghanistan and 20,000 to Iraq to counter growing insurgent action.[18]

Criticism of the use of elections as metrics for success continues. As one German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) report observes: 'There is more to government legitimacy than elections. The holding of elections alone often does not suffice to render a government legitimate in the eyes of citizens.'[19] Therefore argue GIGA, reformers who seek to foster long-term stability must be aware of the insecurity felt by many citizens and therefore should improve state-society relations by improving personal security and access to justice. Where the security services themselves were sources of insecurity or grievance, a SSR programme is vital to ensuring that open violence does not return.[20] GIGA also provide a warning that without sufficiently reformatted security, elections may in fact become sources for increasing violence and instability as insurgents seek to control or spoil voting. For example, an absence of effective security may embolden insurgents to attack newly forming governments or disrupt election proceedings. Conversely, citizens may not participate in

[16] Hanna Smidt, 'Keeping the electoral peace? Activities of the United Nations peacekeeping operations and their effects on election-related violence', *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 38:5 (2021), pp. 580-604.
[17] Condra, p. 1113.
[18] See: Frank Hoffman and Alexander Crowther, 'Strategic Assessment and Adaptation: The Surges in Iraq and Afghanistan', National Defense University Press (2015) <https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/Books/lessons-encountered/lessons-encountered_Ch2.pdf> [accessed 10 March 2025].
[19] GIGA, 'Elections and Government Legitimacy in Fragile States' *Focus Africa* 7 (2021), para. 2.
[20] Ibid., paras. 3-4.

elections if they feel that the security services are politically partial and may undertake electoral fraud on behalf of the government or opposition. Therefore, security sector stabilisation and later reform are vital precursors and later guarantors of markers of success such as elections and the creation/restoration of democratic governments.[21]

In summary, while SSR is an activity normally associated with the post-conflict reconstruction phase, partial reform to the security sector that may be described as 'stabilisation' may occur during the counterinsurgency phase of the conflict. As we will observe below, several facets such as reconstituting and expanding the armed forces to meet the threat of open violence; expansion of the security services to control the population; control of the security sector by a small number of undemocratic leaders; and the use of high levels of force are congruent with counterinsurgent principles and tenets. These activities are often antithesis of normative SSR approaches but may be required in the immediate-term and may have unbeneficial consequences in the medium and long-terms. This need for immediate security aligns with the UN's key metric of elections as a marker of successful peacekeeping and stability, where the representative governments they produce are the foundations of public perceptions of state legitimacy and authority. However, security and an absence of open violence are preconditions of such elections, exposing the vitality of security-stabilisation and reform related activities during and after insurgent conflict. However, as we will observe, both COIN and SSR perspectives align on the issue of sustainability, where elections and an absence of violence may not equate to the redress of political grievances and so such a state would exist in Johan Galtung's description of a 'negative peace'. We return to this discussion below.

We now turn to a brief appraisal of pertinent counterinsurgency principles and tenets to demonstrate the concurrence of COIN related activities and SSS/SSR related activities that are intended to supress violence and begin reconstruction.

2.2 The Security Sector and the Principles and Tenets of Successful Counterinsurgency

In the following section we will examine the pertinent principles and tenets of counterinsurgency. The purpose of this section is to establish the criteria by which a successful COIN campaign may be measured; or how the empirical case examples may be

[21] Ibid.

employed to critique such established premises. While authors such as Rigden correctly observe that COIN is a multifaceted endeavour that requires the cooperation of multiple agencies of the military and civilian worlds, our focus is on the impact that security sector stabilisation and reform may have on restoring peace during a COIN campaign, in its immediate post-conflict phase and in the medium-term reconstruction phase.[22] Thusly the principles and tenets discussed here are selected to reflect this focus.

Concerning the purpose of counterinsurgency, Solomon identifies two pertinent perspectives that characterise COIN as either a traditional militaristic short-term activity intended to combat armed violence and terrorism; or as a non-traditional collection of activities that focuses on eliminating the root causes of insurgency. This is undertaken by addressing issues relating to personal security and limiting civil exposure to insurgent coercion; and draining support for insurgency while restoring that of the government through legitimacy building.[23] Cloake agrees, observing that classical perspectives of COIN reflect a direct approach to defeating insurgency that is the same as fighting a conventional war. A large military presence is required to combat insurgent attacks on people and infrastructure; while police are needed to secure the civil population and detect/detain internal spoilers; and both are informed by good intelligence apparatus. The indirect approach argues Cloake involves 'winning hearts and minds' through political concessions to redress grievance and the promotion of legitimate government through the provision of good governance, civil services and personal security. Cloake however admits that such considerations are difficult to realise in an environment that lacks general security.[24]

As both Paul Dixon and John Newsinger observe, literature surrounding British counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns are generally celebratory and agree that historical examples of Britain's approach produced successful results without dishonouring their record with brutality and slaughter.[25] The classic model of British COIN strategy was adherence to the principle of 'minimum force' and the recognition that countering insurgency was a

[22] Rigden, p. 209.
[23] Hussein Solomon, *Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgency from Al Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram* (London: Springer, 2015).
[24] John Cloake, *Templer: Tiger of Malaya* (London: Virgin, 1985), pp. 24-26.
[25] See: Paul Dixon, (ed.), *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 1; John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 1.

political activity that required police primacy and a coordinated civil-military approach.[26] These tenets were formulated and codified in the Malayan Emergency (1948-60) that would later inform US military approaches to COIN in Afghanistan and Iraq.[27] The practioner guides of Robert Thompson and Frank Kitson were key ingredients in later studies of the Malayan Emergency in particular, informing the influential interpretations of Richard Stubbs and Anthony Short.[28] Accompanied by Richard Clutterbuck, this trio formed the core of an 'Orthodox Camp' that agreed that British COIN is characterised by the application of a 'hearts and minds' programme intended to win support from the local population.[29]

Leading the revival of British COIN strategy in the 21st century was US Gen. David Petreaus who sought a differing approach to suppressing violent insurgency in Iraq than that of a conventional/direct COIN emphasis on a militarised solution.[30] Petraeus' belief that the British 'hearts and minds' approach, that emphasised restraint and cooperation with the local population, combining security reform and developmental programmes and addressing core grievances, would be best suited to solving armed insurgency in Iraq. However, large numbers of US troops were required to create a secure environment in which such practices could occur – prompting the 2007-2011 'surge'. This approach was reflected in the US military's *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (2007).[31]

The deficiencies of British counterinsurgency were however exposed by defeats in Basra (Iraq) and again in Helmand Province (Afghanistan) between 2006 and 2009.[32] As Mumford observed following these failures, there was 'an increasingly inescapable conclusion that the British are not as good at counter-insurgency as was previously assumed' that 'pulled the mask away from the hitherto rosy popular trans-Atlantic perception of British

[26] Huw Bennett, 'Minimum Force in British Counterinsurgency', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 21:10 (2010); Dixon (2012), p. 1.
[27] John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
[28] Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency: The Lessons of Malaya and Vietnam* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966); Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-60* (New York: Crane & Russak, 1975); Frank Kitson, *Bunch of Fives* (London: Faber & Faber, 1977); Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-60* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
[29] Richard Clutterbuck, *The Long, Long War: Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1966).
[30] Dixon (2012), p. 1.
[31] US Army and Marine Corps, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007).
[32] Newsinger (2015), p. 3.

competence at counter-insurgency.'[33] This in turn led to a growing body of literature that sought to critically evaluate the source of the British approach, the Malayan Emergency and to a certain extent its sister conflict, the Kenyan Emergency (1952-60).[34] Early criticism of the Malayan and Kenyan paradigms emerged from serving officers, who observed that reality was far more brutal than theory. Col. David Benest, a seasoned COIN practioner in Northern Ireland, Iraq and Afghanistan observed in 2006 that: 'Bluntly put, coercion was the reality – "hearts and minds" the myth' of British counterinsurgency.[35] David French is equally critical: 'The cornerstones of most British counter-insurgency campaigns were coercion and counter-terror, not kindness and economic development … waging counter-insurgency operations by employing coercion and intimidation continued to be the mainstay of British practice.'[36] As Newsinger observes: 'The claim that the British waged counterinsurgency operations humanely, always practising minimum use of force and seeking to win hearts and minds, was always a myth'.[37] This myth argues Newsinger, stems from British engagement with opponents who were comparatively weak and posed limited threat after World War II.[38]

This new consensus has openly rejected the benign characterisation of British counterinsurgency and has raised questions regarding accountability.[39] The position of this camp was further supported with the release of the Hanslope Park archive records in 2012, that exposed the brutal and coercive nature of British counterinsurgency at the nadir of the British Empire.[40] However, a further interpretation has emerged that accepts the coercive and

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[33] Andrew Mumford, *The Counter-Insurgency Myth: The British Experience of Irregular Warfare* (London: Routledge, 2011), p.1 & 153.

[34] See: David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War at the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005); Mumford, (2011); Karl Hack, 'Using and Abusing the Past: The Malayan Emergency as Counterinsurgency Paradigm', in *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan*, ed. by in Paul Dixon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 207-242; Newsinger (2015), pp. 33-61 & 62-81; Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau: the British Army and counter-insurgency in Kenya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[35] David Benest, 'Aden to Northern Ireland, 1966-76'm in *Big Wars and Small Wars: The British Army and the Lessons of War in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Huw Strachen (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 118-119.

[36] David French, *The British Way in Counter-Insurgency, 1945-1967* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 65.

[37] Newsinger (2015), p. 2.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Huw Bennett, 'Baha Mousa and the British Army in Iraq' (2012), in Dixon (2012), pp. 173-204; Brice Dickson, 'Counterinsurgency and Human Rights in Northern Ireland' in Dixon (2012), pp. 291-313.

[40] Owen Bowcott, 'Batang Kali relatives edge closer to the truth about "Britan's My Lai massacre"', The Guardian (25 January 2012) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/25/malaysia-military> [accessed 18 July 2024]; Dominic Casciani, 'British Mau Mau abuse papers revealed', *bbcnews.co.uk* (12 April 2011) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13044974> [accessed 18 July 2024]; Riley Linebaugh, 'Colonial Fragility: British Embarrassment and the So-Called "Migrated Archives"', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 50:4 (2022), pp. 729-756.

forceful nature of 'hearts and minds', admitting that coercion is a vital ingredient of any successful counterinsurgency campaign.[41] As French observes, the foundation of British COIN actions in the Golden Age was not discriminatory population control where force could be targeted precisely, but was instead an exercise in effective coercion of the general population that was created through the use of or threat of force in a secured environment. Succinctly, convincing 'minds' that it was unwise to oppose the government and its security forces, and then winning 'hearts' by addressing political grievances, was the cornerstone of British strategy.[42]

Academic and casual interest in counterinsurgency has certainly exploded due to the war on terror and the COIN campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq. Collections of essays that approach the topic from multiple angles have become popular, as have case-study comparisons of British counterinsurgency actions in Malaya, Kenya and beyond.[43] However, conspicuously absent from these collections is an examination of the Sierra Leone intervention and an assessment of the extent to which that success story may be reinterpreted.[44] Whilst certain literature has focussed upon the events of the conflict and relate that campaign in a narrative format, there is still a dearth of work concerning the nature of the British intervention in Sierra Leone, the extent to which force was employed and how 'hearts and minds' were secured in that conflict.[45] Much of the literature that emerged after the conclusion of the shooting war in Sierra Leone is celebratory of the British intervention without providing a critical balance.[46] Where specialist literature has burgeoned around the post-conflict SSR programme, more useful studies have engaged with the conflict years and

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[41] Paul Dixon, "'Hearts and Minds"? British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32:3 (2009); French (2011), p. 247 & 251.

[42] David French, 'Nasty not nice: British counter-insurgency doctrine and practice, 1945-67', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 23:4-5 (2012), pp. 744-761.

[43] See: Max Boot, *Invisible Armies* (New York, NY: Liveright, 2013); Simon Innes-Robbins, *Dirty Wars: A Century of Counterinsurgency* (Gloucestershire: History Press, 2016); David Ucko and Robert Egnell, *Counterinsurgency in Crisis: Britain and the Challenges of Modern Warfare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Dixon (2012); Newsinger (2015).

[44] For example, eminent counterinsurgency scholar Andrew Mumford failed to address Sierra Leone in his PhD thesis and in his later release *The Counter-Insurgency Myth*. See: Andrew Mumford, 'From Belfast to Basra: Britain and the "tri-partite counter-insurgency model"' PhD Thesis (University of Warwick, 2009).

[45] See: Larry Woods and Timothy Reese, *Military Interventions in Sierra Leone: Lessons from a Failed State* (Fort Leavenworth, KA: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008).

[46] William Fowler, *Operation Barras* (London: Cassell Military, 2005); Andrew Doorman, *Blair's Successful War: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone* (London: Routledge, 2009); Walter Roberson, *British Military Interventions into Sierra Leone: A Case Study* (Biblioscholar, 2013); Peter Penfold, *Atrocities, Diamonds and Diplomacy: The Inside Story of the Conflict in Sierra Leone* (London: Pen and Sword, 2013); Andy Pacino, *SAS: Sierra Leone – Deliver A Blow: The Story of Operation Barras* (London: No Ordinary Family Publishing, 2017).

attempted to establish links between decisions and actions taken during the military intervention of 2000-2002 and the subsequent state of security in Sierra Leone at the start of the SSR process.[47] Where many studies agree is that the reformation of the SLA into RSLAF has generally been a triumph as the armed forces has not (successfully) usurped power since the end of the war nor prevented the transition of power from one party to another.[48] Further alignment may be found regarding criticism of the Sierra Leone Police and wider justice system, that are often presented as spoilers to social stability despite significant British tutelage.[49] This study generally aligns with these assessments, and seeks to contribute to a greater understanding of the extent to which these conclusions are accurate. As we will observe, SSR decisions taken during the conflict years to curb insurgency and restore government authority and legitimacy had dramatic impacts upon the character of security in Sierra Leone after the war. This author argues a similar pattern is detectible in Malaya, Kenya and Sierra Leone.

To better understand the approaches and objectives of COIN, and ascertain potential metrics of success, it is firstly important to establish the purpose of insurgency. Turning to the 2023 British MoD *Allied Joint Doctrine for Counter-Insurgency* (AJP-3.27) we may establish that insurgency may be defined as: 'Actions of an organised, often ideologically motivated, group or movement that seeks to effect or prevent political change within a country or region through subversion.'[50] The AJP-3.27 manual identifies the struggle between insurgent and counterinsurgent as that of a 'competition over the most legitimate form of government as viewed by the affected population' and so the people are the focus of any successful COIN campaign. The manual states that government should foster legitimacy by meeting the 'basic needs' of people that are 'acceptable to the cultural and social expectations of the population'.[51] This understanding of insurgency emphasises the struggle undertaken by the

[47] Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); David Ucko, 'Can Limited Intervention Work? Lessons from Britain's Success Story in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 39:5-6 (2016); Roberts.

[48] See: Jeremy Ginifer, 'The Challenge of the Security Sector and Security Reform Process in Democratic Transitions: The Case of Sierra Leone, *Democratization*, 13:5 (2006), pp. 791-810; Osman Gbla, 'Security sector reform under international tutelage in Sierra Leone' *International Peacekeeping*, 13:1 (2006), pp. 78-93; Sarah Detzner, 'Modern post-conflict security sector reform in Africa: patterns of success and failure', *African Security Review*, 26:2 (2017), pp. 116-142; Ucko, (2016); Roberts.

[49] See: Gbla; Lisa Denney, 'Reducing poverty with tear-gas and batons: The security-development nexus in Sierra Leone', *African Affairs*, 110:439 (2011), pp. 275-294.

[50] UK MoD & NATO, *Allied Joint Publication-3.27: Allied Joint Doctrine for Counter-Insurgency*, (NATO-SO, 2023), p. 27.

[51] Ibid., p. 29.

COIN practitioner to win the support of the local population that is encapsulated in the British 'hearts and minds' approach discussed further below. The AJP-3.27 manual identifies the following objectives or metrics or a successful COIN campaign:

- A safe and secure environment,
- The redress of core grievances,
- Promotion of legitimate government and the rule of law.[52]

As the AJP-3.27 manual concludes: 'political legitimacy provides long-term stability, assuring that transition activities [to host nation control] have popular support and that the political process is likely to endure'.[53] This highlights the importance of elections as indicators of a successful campaign, whereby the people are free to democratically select their own representative government and achieve political self-determination – the cornerstones of an enduring democratic system.

The quintessential US Army treatise on counterinsurgency is *The US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook* – from which multiple US Army doctrinal publications since 2007 have drawn their inspiration – agrees that 'the primary objective of any COIN campaign is to foster development of effective governance by a legitimate government.'[54] The *Handbook* identifies the core indicators of legitimacy that mirror those of the British-NATO manual, where-by stability may be demarked by:

- The ability to provide security for the populace (from internal and external threats).
- Selection of leaders by frequent elections that are just and fair in conduct and representation.
- Civil participation in governance and oversight.
- Limited corruption and endeavours to suppress it.
- Culturally acceptable levels of and rates of political, social and economic development.
- Respect of the rule of law by the ruling government and its agents and institutions.[55]

[52] Ibid., p. 27.
[53] Ibid.
[54] *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook*, Ch. 1 p.21.
[55] Ibid., Ch. 1 pp. 21-22.

Thusly, we may compile a doctrinal understanding of successful COIN as the establishment and continuation of multi-party democratic governance, through free and fair elections, in a safe and secure environment. Further metrics include respect for the rule of law, a lack of corruption in government and its institutions and political, social and economic development.

There is however certain criticism that can be levelled against the suggested metrics described above. They describe the end-state or product of a successful COIN campaign – improving legitimacy – and do not discuss some of the required practices to achieve such success. The *US Counterinsurgency Handbook* provides a suitable framework by which we might measure more immediate successes and criticisms of the case study examples.[56] A brief synthesis of the *Handbook* principles include:

- The provision of personal security to the population and maintaining border security. Protecting key infrastructure.
- The training of indigenous military personnel in the conduct of conventional operations against enemy units to establish and expand secure areas to deny sanctuary to insurgents. Decentralisation of troops and bases.
- Deemphasising kills and captures of enemy combatants. Providing amnesty and rehabilitation for those willing to support the new government.
- Employ police and paramilitary police to combat armed insurgency within the population and separate the population from the insurgent.
- Expand and diversify the local police and prioritise their role in local security as soon as the situation permits. Restore civil policing responsibilities.[57]

From such lists we may concur that security stabilisation and reform play key roles in the COIN phase or shooting-phase of the war, and also into the post-conflict and reconstruction phases.

Continuing with the discussion of security and legitimacy, the British counterinsurgency manual is clear that there is a distinct relationship between popular support for emerging or embattled governments and personal security. Firstly, 'security sector stabilisation' is viewed as a priority during the shooting-phase of the conflict as 'security forces operate to counter the security threat' and 'seek to create the requisite safe and secure

[56] Ibid., Ch. 1 p. 29.
[57] *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook*, Ch. 1 p.29.

environment' in which wider government services may return/operate, and people can resume their daily lives.[58] AJP-3.27 expands further, outlining that the primary focus of COIN is the population and so 'ensuring their [civilians] security and controlling centres of population are operational necessities'.[59] Thusly, security is a prerequisite of activities intended to 'address the populations grievances and enhance the government's legitimacy'.[60]

The joint manual also identifies the primacy of host-nation security forces in the prosecution of insurgency and the conduct of routine security activities such as policing.[61] However, simultaneously the manual accepts that there may not be the capacity or capabilities within host-nation forces to undertake tasks, especially if they have been degraded by years of conflict or political malfeasance. Therefore, international military forces may have to take responsibility for operations in the early to middling phases of the conflict; while building up the host security forces and transitioning responsibility to them.[62] Security tasks that contribute to COIN success are identified as: defeating insurgent forces and structures; providing security for the population; restoring essential security services; training indigenous security personnel and providing interim governance and enforcing the rule of law.[63] As we will observe in the sections on SSR below, each of these responsibilities overlaps with those observed to be a part of effective SSR programmes.

COIN literature also observe that security sector stabilisation and later reform also perform a further role in successful COIN campaigns that seek to foster perceptions of legitimacy from the population. As noted above, the British-NATO manual identifies the need to address the root grievances of an insurgency and as we will observe below, SSR perspectives agree that the security forces themselves may be a historic and/or contemporary source of agitation. Where COIN and SSR literature agree is that legitimacy will not be sufficiently fostered if host nation or interventionist forces demonstrate a lack of respect for human rights, fail to provide equitable personal security nor equal or effective access or application of the law. Such disregards will ultimately drain legitimacy and authority from the state.[64] This is supported by the US COIN *Handbook* that describes the 'behaviour of [host-nation] security force personnel' as 'often a primary cause of public dissatisfaction' and a

[58] *AJP-3.27*, p. 27.
[59] Ibid., p. 31.
[60] Ibid., p. 28.
[61] Ibid., p. 29.
[62] Ibid., pp. 29 & 80.
[63] Ibid., p. 30.
[64] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

cause of decline of government legitimacy.[65] Therefore, in the contest for popular support, those agents working on behalf of the government must contrast their actions against those of the insurgency and demonstrate a commitment to positive change.

Concerning commitment, a further factor we should consider is the of time. As Rigden observes, the direct understanding of counterinsurgency is that it is a war that is fought conventionally and so is subject to the same political dimensions and limitations as that of a conventional conflict.[66] One such consideration is support for the war both in the host nation and in that of the intervening state. As we observed regarding Afghanistan and Iraq, what public support existed for those actions drained as the campaigns ground on and US/UK troops shouldered the burdens of security well beyond the first elections and creation of governments. Prolonging or ending the war therefore became a political decision which did contribute to the defeat of Gordon Brown's Labour Party in 2010. This further characterised these campaigns as occupations rather than counterinsurgency and state building actions in the eyes of critics. Prolonged campaigns cost both blood and treasure, which can translate to public pressure to end the conflict swiftly: by achieving set objectives such as militarily defeating the enemy and capturing territory – beginning a process of withdrawal and demobilisation.[67] Thusly, maintaining both domestic and international support and the legitimacy of the intervention is based upon transitioning responsibility to a democratically elected government and their security services in an expeditious manner.

However, as the US *Counterinsurgency Handbook* observes, insurgencies are protracted by nature and so 'COIN operations demand considerable expenditures of time and resources' where the 'means, ability, stamina and will to win' are all factors that host nation populations may use to judge whether a government is worth supporting.[68] In relation to security, the populous must feel that the return of personal security and access to justice is not fleeting, as is the quality of such provisions that should only improve. This highlights the importance of sustainability, not just in resources such as cash, buildings and bullets, but also in terms of continuing relationships where examples such as training initiatives and exchange programmes reflect an unending partnership to improve security and maintain public support for the government. This is supported by the US *Handbook* that highlights the inherent

[65] *US Army COIN Handbook*, Ch. 6 p. 2.
[66] Rigden, p. 217.
[67] RAND, *Select RAND Research on Counterinsurgency, Stability Operations, Support to Foreign Internal Defense, Nation-Building and Special Operations: 1962-2019* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2021).
[68] *US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook*, Ch. 1 p. 24.

contradiction of 'reducing [international interventionist] military force levels as quickly as possible' with 'providing support for [host nation] institutions [that] usually remains for a long time'.[69] The *AJP-3.27* manual supports this assessment, confirming that there is an inherent tension between a need to transition security responsibilities swiftly to host control and the sustainability of reforms implemented to achieve the necessary gains to withdraw.[70] As we observed above with our discussion of the role of elections in demarking success in COIN campaigns, they are a powerful tool with which to justify withdrawal without serious consideration for sustainability. As we shall observe below in our examination of Galtung's theory of structural violence, a 'negative peace' is often characterised by the absence of open violence but a failure to address causal grievances than continue to harm the population. If security sector stabilisation produces a sufficiently stable environment for elections to be held and democratic governance to occur, reformers may not see a need to press on with broader, more costly reform packages that seek to address popular grievances with the security sector and historical politicisation of security. This in turn may lead to such medium-term consequences that are the concern of this investigation.

To undertake such an assessment of the immediate and medium-term impacts of SSR, we now turn to a discussion of its purpose and how we may observe its impacts.

2.3 Security Sector Reform: Discussions of Purpose and Observing Impact

SSR is a relatively new concept but locates its roots in the late 1990s as discussions surrounding 'human security' emerged with the proliferation of intra-state conflicts.[71] Contrasting against accepted state-centred concepts to security, the human-centred approach placed particular emphasis upon human security and the experience of the individual receiving service. However, the state remains the sole dominant provider of security and so the openly normative approach to SSR is that of bilateral or multilateral donorship, where economic and technical assistance is provided directly to central government.[72] Patrick observes that this preference for state to state assistance is explained by 'dominant Western

[69] Ibid.
[70] *AJP-3.27*, Ch. 4 pp. 29-32.
[71] Michael Wingens, 'Security Sector Reform: Limitations and Prospects of the Scholarly Debate', *Exchanges*, 4:1 (2016), p. 106.
[72] Ursala Schroeder and Fairlie Chappuis, 'New Perspectives on Security Sector Reform: The Role of Local Agency and Domestic Politics, *International Peacekeeping*, 21:2 (2014), p. 135.

discourses' that identify states with weak governance and a limited monopoly on violence as potential vacuums in which international criminality and terrorism can thrive.[73]

Other factors have driven the emergence of SSR. Firstly, the proliferation of peace settlements in the early 1990s was accompanied by increased involvement of the UN as a transitionary agent in conflict-affected regions, facilitating the introduction of democratic central governments and disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programmes.[74] Secondly, examples such as Rwanda and Somalia demonstrated that the internal security forces of destabilised states may present significant challenges to reconstruction. As such, the emphasis on state or regime security reorientated to that of human security and was embraced by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). In this fashion, services such as the police, judiciary and penal system would need to be reformed to meet the criteria of human rights based international law.[75] Thirdly, the wave of democratisation and the end of many military regimes in Latin America prompted discussions over how to best bring armed forces under newly established civilian control. In 1994, the *Code of Conduct on Political-Military Relations* was released to normalise democratic control of post-conflict states' security services.[76] Finally, a security-development nexus emerged in response to the failure of economic aid programmes in Africa and South America, where proponents of international assistance identified security as a prerequisite for economic and social development.[77]

With the increase of international involvement in states embroiled in conflict or emerging into a post-conflict state, interest in the impact of SSR has generally focussed on the creation of theoretical frameworks rather than discussions about real-world applications and consequences.[78] Despite its growing popularity as a subject of scholastic scrutiny, SSR has been described as an 'ambiguous' and 'contested' concept where there is work yet to be

[73] Stewart Patrick, 'Weak states and global threats: Fact of fiction?', *The Washington Quarterly*, 29:2 (2006).
[74] Heiner Hanggi and Vincenza Scherrer, 'Towards a Common UN Approach to Security Sector Reform: Lessons Learned from Integrated Missions', *DCAF Policy Paper* 25 (2007).
[75] UNDP, *Human Development Project 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); Lis Gindarsah, 'Security Sector Reform: A Literature Review' *Peace Capacities* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2015), p. 3.
[76] Gindarsah, p. 3.
[77] Ibid., p. 4.
[78] Albrecht Schnabel and Hans Born, *Security Sector Reform: Narrowing the Gap between Theory and Practice*, SSR Papers 1 (Geneva, DCAF: Ubiquity Press, 2011), p. 6f.

done to better understand the tensions and contradictions inherent in developing peace through reform of a states' security services.[79]

At the root of the discussion surrounding the emergence of SSR as an approach to fostering peace in post-conflict states, is a dichotomy between classical interpretations that perceive peace as a Weberian absence of conflict and the development of statehood; and a critical strand that questions the extent to which the impact of SSR on local security governance and wider society is understood.[80] As Ball and Henrickson observe, SSR programming and evaluation is predominantly state-centred and reduces the significance of non-state actors and informal practices that are more readily experienced by the population of a host state.[81] A further debate concerns ownership and the extent to which SSR control should be diffused to local actors. A maximalist approach argues for total devolution of powers to local actors whereas a minimalist approach would see power retained by international interventionists.[82] Each of these approaches has implications for the population of the host state: the maximalist approach presents obvious concerns regarding oversight; while the minimalist approach ignores the input and experiences of sub-state level providers, informal providers and the recipients of services.[83]

Research limitations have been observed due to an overemphasis on state-centred results. As Wingens observes: 'State-centrism is an unresolved problem in SSR research and practice' as numerous studies and templates emphasise local ownership but practice state-centred engagement with political and security leadership.[84] This stems from a belief that the state should possess absolute sovereignty over its territory and maintain the monopoly on violence, even if this is not the reality in-country. Ball and Hendrickson note that such a strategy ignores the vitality of informal, non-state actors and historical/traditional practices of which the population are accustomed.[85] This is not due to ignorance on the part of SSR interventionists argues Denney, but instead due to a stringent state/non-state divide that does

[79] Schroeder and Chappuis, p. 133; Wingens, p. 106.
[80] Shroeder and Chappuis, p. 133f.
[81] Nicole Ball and Dylan Hendrickson, *Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Policy, Practice and Research*, CSDG Papers (London: King's College London, 2009), p. 38.
[82] Eirin Mobekk, 'Security Sector Reform and the Challenges of Ownership', in *The Future of Security Sector Reform*, ed. by Mark Sedra (Waterloo: The Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), p. 231.
[83] Wingens, p. 107.
[84] Ibid., p, 111.
[85] Ball and Hendrickson, p. 38.

not permit engagement with local actors.[86] However, in such conflict-affected states as Sierra Leone, there is often a plurality of security and justice provision that spans both formal and informal/traditional structures. As noted above, assumptions of instability stem from observations of government weakness and inability to project authority through the monopoly of violence. Therefore, decisions not to engage with non-state actors are a conscious decision to improve the power and authority of central government by creating Western-like institutions and drain such power from their informal rivals. For example, the creation of a new national military or police would be undermined by the existence of informal militias, civil defence groups or tribal police, as would state courts by traditional providers of justice. This is of course problematic in states where the armed forces or police are centralised by design or circumstance and so cannot compete with their local rivals.

Mannitz further illuminates the reasons why a state-centred approach is often favoured: firstly, the UN or intergovernmental organisations cannot bypass existing host structures.[87] To do so would risk alienating the existing security services and encourage seizures of power. Mannitz notes that only NGOs or private initiatives may be well placed to widen their scope to non-state actors, a point this author contests as British interventionists in Sierra Leone did eventually entreat with informal/traditional providers to produce a hybrid structure.[88] Mannitz does highlight the importance of contextual knowledge and understanding that can only be obtained through engagement with local leadership and citizenry. A warning is provided that such engagement may lead to a legitimisation of competing actors who may feel emboldened to challenge central government.[89]

A further strand of argument in support of SSR interventions in conflict-affected states is the linkage between security and development. We return to this theme on several occasions within this thesis, but it is important to note here that a justification for reformative intervention is the destabilising nature of the security services themselves. As Egnell and Halden observe: 'Poorly governed and unreformed security sectors in states are an obstacle to the promotion of sustainable development and democracy'. Additionally, Brzoska highlights police and military brutality in Timor-Leste in 2006 as an example of how a decline in

[86] Lisa Denney, 'Overcoming the State/Non-State Divide: An End User Approach to Security and Justice Reform', *International Peacekeeping*, 21:2 (2014), p. 251.
[87] Sabine Mannitz, 'From Paternalism to Facilitation: SSR Shortcomings and the Potential of Social Anthropological Perspectives', *International Peacekeeping*, 21:2 (2014), p. 271.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., p. 272.

individual security and living standards can draw the population into clashes with the security services.[90] This perception of security as a prerequisite for development is encapsulated in the 'security first' approach that is discussed below and throughout.

The objectives of SSR are to reform the roles and tasks of all state and non-state actors that are involved in the provision of security for the state and its population.[91] A successful SSR campaign should 'develop an operationally effective and efficient security sector that is subject to civilian, democratic control within the framework of rule of law while respecting human rights.'[92] However, Brzoska warns that while an emphasis on human rights is vital to improving a populations experience of its security providers, the most fundamental keystone is the rejuvenation or reconstruction of oversight and control systems. Without such consideration, there is limited opportunity for improvement in the structures below.[93]

Definitions of the security sector are ambiguous, multi-faceted and in a state of flux as there is a debate regarding the scope of SSR and how narrow or broad interventions should be.[94] The narrow approach is state-centred and focusses upon military institutions that reflect the states' responsibility to protect its integrity. This includes any civilian oversight mechanisms such as the executive or legislature bodies.[95] In contrast, broader definitions include population-orientated elements such as law enforcement and justice provision as well as non-state actors such as civil defence groups, private/commercial security companies, ad-hoc security providers and even paramilitary outfits.[96] Current academic trend argues Jackson, is to focus on the broader definition when undertaking analysis of the impact of SSR whereas the operational reality maintains a steady concentration on state-level results.[97] Thusly, Anderson is critical of the application of SSR policies that create formulations and templates that do not reflect the individualistic nature of the human security approach.[98] For example, one individual citizens perceptions of personal security may vary widely to the

[90] Robert Egnell and Peter Halden, 'Laughable, ahistorical and overambitious: security sector reform meets state formation theory', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 9:1 (2009), p. 30; Michael Brzoska, *Development Donors and the Concept of Security Sector Reform* (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2003), p. 48.
[91] Schnabel and Born, p. 10.
[92] Wingens, pp. 108-109.
[93] Brzoska, p. 31.
[94] Wingens, p. 109.
[95] Ibid.; Egnell and Halden, p. 31.
[96] Paul Jackson, 'Security Sector Reform and State Building', *Third World Quarterly*, 32:10 (2011), p. 1811.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Louise Riis Anderson, *Security Sector Reform and the Dilemmas of Liberal Peacebuilding*, DIIS Working Paper (Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies, 2011), p. 10.

next. This is referred to as the 'conceptual-contextual divide' where normative assumptions about state level interventions do not provide greater understandings of the contextual reality, and so the effective design and implementation of SSR programmes is inhibited.[99] To reverse this overemphasis upon such assumptions, it is therefore vital that research focus on the lived experience of the population who adjudge their government by the services that they receive.

The 'contextual dimension' as Hanggi observes, is constituted of a country's historical conditions, economic development, the type of political system that was/is in place, and the security environment and conditions of the security services.[100] Baker supports this observing that definitions of policing in Africa must be ambiguous as each force's character, objectives and methods will be dependent upon differing political and socioeconomic contexts.[101] We may apply this understanding to criticise wider British counterinsurgency, that has until recently been championed for its paradigmatic status without consideration for the unique contexts of each conflict.[102] As Wingens observes, technocratic approaches that are largely prescriptive and lack sufficient knowledge of the reform environment 'entail failing on a political level and making fragile states worse due to potential unintended consequences'.[103] Therefore, qualitative investigations of the micro-level impacts of SSR contribute to a more theoretically sound understanding of how to link state level interventions to improving grass roots human security.[104] Seeking to better understand the 'contextual dimension', Shroeder and Chappuis call for a closer appreciation of the dynamics between international interventionists, domestic actors and the citizenry.[105] However, Mobekk is critical of attempts to do so thus far, as consultation is not the same as participation nor ownership, where external actors will only work with those local stakeholders who are already compliant.[106]

Nathan perhaps best summates the change in strategy that is necessitated, where 'what is required is not local support for donor programmes and projects, but rather donor support

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[99] Jane Chaana, *Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), p. 61; Egnell and Halden, p. 33.
[100] Heiner Hanggi, 'Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction', in *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*, ed. by Alan Bryden and Heiner Hanggi (Geneva: Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2004), p. 6.
[101] Bruce Baker, *Multi-Choice Policing in Africa* (Upsala, Norway: NordiskaAfrikaInstitutet, 2008).
[102] Paul Dixon, 'Conclusion: The Military and British Democracy', in *The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: From Malaya and Northern Ireland to Iraq and Afghanistan*, ed. by Paul Dixon (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 354-355.
[103] Wingens, p. 110.
[104] Schnabel and Born, p. 62.
[105] Schroeder and Chappuis, p. 133.
[106] Moebekk, p. 231.

for programmes and projects initiated by local actors.'[107] This is encapsulated by a 'hybrid' approach to security orders where existing local structures incorporate international standards into their organisations without engaging in outright transformation.[108] Examples include adherence to international laws on human rights and the implementation of civilian control/oversight of the security sector. Police and military structures that reflect government authority may have to accept co-existence with competing structures such as traditional courts or local civilian defence groups. In this way, hybridity represents an increasing understanding of non-state security actors as stakeholders of the process and its outcomes, as universal state-level security provision for the individual is usually not feasible in post-conflict countries such as Sierra Leone.[109] This dilemma is not unique to Sierra Leone, with academic focus attributing the emergence of non-state security providers in Kenya to challenges presented by weak security structures and a lack of community engagement.[110] As Mamdani highlights: weak policing may lead to the emergence of informal non-state actors, who are characterised by a lack of legitimacy and the contestation of the monopoly on force.[111] Where the government is unable to provide security and justice to every individual within its territory, it must decide whether to compete with those informal actors who occupy the vacuum, or to co-opt them.

Differing models of policing and wider security reflect the political environment they inhabit. As Otiso and Kaguta observe, the recognition of state and non-state policing is vital to any study of policing in Africa, where the mode of policing is informed by the political system it is a part of.[112] Firstly, neo-feudal or regime policing and wider security is based upon a strict bifurcation between approved formal and informal providers where the police maintain an absolute monopoly on force. Such powers may be devolved to actors such as commercial security organisations who may use force in defence of private property or

[107] Laurie Nathan, *No Ownership, No Commitment: A Guide to Local Ownership of Security Sector Reform* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2007), p. 4.
[108] Wingens, p. 115.
[109] Denney, (2014), p. 258.
[110] David Anderson, 'Vigilante Violence and Politics of Public Order in Kenya', *Africa Affairs*, 101:405 (2002), pp. 531-555; Mutuma Ruteere and Marie Pommerolle, 'Democratising Security or Decentralising Repression: The Ambiguities of Community Policing in Kenya', *Africa Affairs*, 102:409 (2003), pp. 587-604.
[111] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and the Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[112] Wycliffe Nyachoti Otiso and Ruth Joyce Kaguta, 'Kenya at Fifty: State Policing Reforms, Politics and Law, 1963-2013', in *Kenya After 50: Reconfiguring Historical, Political, and Policy Milestones*, ed. by Michael Mwenda Kithinji, Mickie Mwanzia and Jerono P. Rotich (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 224.

personal security.[113] Regime policing is also bifurcated in this way, but power may be devolved to actors whose responsibility is the protection of the ruling elite such as paramilitary police, presidential guards or aligned militias or gangs. This system is multilateral in nature where state and non-state approved actors cooperate to form a network that regulates social order. Both state and non-state actors employ force and coercion to maintain social order.[114] Clapham observes that security services in this system are established to protect the positions of the ruling elite, do not provide universal service to all citizens and are not accountable to the wider population.[115] This contrasts strongly with democratic policing norms such as adherence to the law, universal service, transparency of action, community representation within the ranks, respect of human rights and provision of personal security.[116]

In a multi-choice system, state providers of security must compete with non-state providers that may be public of private in nature. Citizens may select who they wish to entreat with to provide their security, which is commonly manifested as a competition between state-level police, local police or informal providers such as traditional police or civil defence groups.[117] In such cases, territorial disputes between different providers are common as the overlapping nature of such a system does not equate to natural cooperation, creating a situation where certain laws are enforced by one agency but not another. Similarly, citizens may wish to approach one form of policing at the expense of the other due to poor service and malfeasance such as corruption. Personal connections and social status may also inform decisions.[118] Where citizens opt to engage with one service over another, researchers may gain valuable insight into why this decision is made and what factors contributed to the inclusion/exclusion of different providers. One simple example may be citizens choosing to call for help from local police or informal providers who they interact with regularly but hesitating to contact state or paramilitary police due to reputations of force and corruption.

Having now established that a micro-level appreciation of the medium-term impacts of SSR should accompany assessments of immediate and medium-term macro- (or state-

[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
[116] Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), 'Police, the People, the Politics: Police Accountability in Kenya, Nairobi' *Kenya Human Rights Commission* (Nairobi, Kenya: CHRI, 2006).
[117] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 225.
[118] Ibid.

level) impacts, we now turn to outlining the metrics and dimensions of SSR by which we may establish a framework to adjudge such immediate and medium-term impacts.

2.4 The Metrics of Successful Security Sector Reform

The following section is concerned with ascertaining what SSR is for and identifying what the accepted academic perspectives of its objectives are. As noted above, the objective of security sector reform is to reconstitute a host country's security sector. As one DCAF report observed, the conduct of activities related to improving the security apparatus of a state beset by internal conflict is not necessarily a new approach and precedes the label of 'security sector reform'.[119] Its primary objectives are the improvement of basic human security and the restoration of government authority and legitimacy.[120] While SSR may be viewed as a means by which the relationship between society and its security institutions may be strengthened; SSR activities during and after COIN interventions may be observed as means of gaining popular support by reducing poverty and combatting socio-economic inequality by creating a stable space in which democratic governance may thrive, and development may occur.[121] Thusly, SSR in COIN interventions may be observed as both an immediate activity to restore stability and as a medium-term post-conflict reconstruction activity that seeks to ensure ongoing stability and peace by addressing the causes of conflict. To understand the impacts of security sector reform in the medium-term, it is firstly important to establish a standardised conception of how SSR may contribute to the successful curbing of violence and eventual reconstruction towards a long-lasting peace.

While it is true that the metrics used to judge the success of a SSR programme may be as unique as the conflict's context, causes and events, Wingens argues that there is congruent agreement that a triumphant SSR campaign should 'develop an operationally effective and efficient security sector that is subject to civilian, democratic control within the framework of

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[119] DCAF, *United Nations Approaches to Security Sector Reform* (Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2006); DCAF, 'SSR: Applying the principles of good governance to the security sector', *SSR Backgrounder* (Geneva: DCAF, 2019), p. 6.

[120] DFID, 'Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform', *Conflict and Human Affairs Department: DFID* (London: DFID, 2002).

[121] Jane Chaana, 'Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects' (New York: *The International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 2002), p. 29; and Russell Glenn, *Rethinking Western Approaches to Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Post-Colonial Conflict* (Oxford: Routledge, 2015), p. 123.

rule of law while respecting human rights.'[122] The OECD DAC objectives for SSR reflect this perspective, noting that a successful campaign will have: firstly, improved basic security and justice delivery; secondly, established effective civil governance, oversight and accountability of the security sector; and thirdly developed local leadership and ownership.[123] These objectives are especially vital in states where a root cause of violence is the absence of basic security and access to justice due to security services partiality; where the security services are co-opted by political leaders or engage in regime defence; and where universal local participation in the security sector is denied by the ruling elite or ethnic majority.

We may further identify metrics of a successful SSR programme by exploring the DCAF literature on the UN approaches to security reform. One 2006 report establishes the priority of activities and markers of success based on the phase of conflict – that is the shooting phase, post-conflict phase and reconstruction phase.

- During the initial conflict phase, DCAF notes that priority should be given to restoring the security sector's capacity to counter destabilising threats. Military and police forces may undergo partial reform, while non-state or parallel actors should be integrated into state structures, with rivals neutralised or absorbed.

- Once violence is contained, the focus shifts to rebuilding civil oversight of the security sector. This includes establishing mechanisms such as parliamentary oversight and ensuring democratic control of the armed forces.

- In the reconstruction phase, SSR should address security-related grievances by prioritising policing, reducing the size and role of the armed forces, improving access to justice, and empowering marginalised groups.[124]

Mark Sedra provides a framework that mirrors the tenets, observing that the perceptions of end users is vital in both the immediate and medium-term phases of a SSR programme, where 'essential services' are delivered in a 'fair, accessible, and rights-respecting fashion'.[125] Sedra also agrees that the priority of SSR following the cessation of hostilities should be the

[122] Wingens, pp. 108-109.
[123] OECD DAC, *Handbook on Security Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (2007), p. 10.
[124] DCAF (2006), pp. 4-7
[125] Mark Sedra, 'Security Sector Reform 101: Understanding the Concept, Charting Trends and Identifying Challenges', *SSR Resource Centre* (Ontario: CIGI, 2010), p.5.

safeguarding of democratic governance and the strengthening of civil oversight of the security sector to align with 'basic democratic standards' of representative leadership.[126] As Col. Rigden observes, insurgencies may by typified by their dissatisfaction with the ruling government and its agencies – a cause that may resonate with the general public who have experienced the same degradation of services.[127] Thusly, to win popular support the counterinsurgent must address the grievances that coalesce around security services impropriety to restore public faith in the authority and legitimacy of their government.[128]

Reforms enacted in the immediate shooting phase of the war should be enacted with consideration for sustainability in the medium-term where threats to the safety of the citizenry will be prevented from returning.[129] Crime and general insecurity are often sources of instability and such ongoing challenges may result in a loss of faith in the central government (and its institutions) and so it is vital to ensure that universal security is prioritised. Finally, Sedra highlights the importance of participation in international security activities such as the prevention of cross-border illegality or conducting joint-peacekeeping operations in other conflict-addled states.[130]

By 2019, DCAF had produced updated guidance on the conduct of a successful SSR programme that is congruent with the principles outlined above.

- Firstly, the 2019 guidelines prioritise the importance of both human and state security. The human security aspect must be accompanied by an understanding that security must be universal and that activities that 'provide security for one part of the population at the cost of another, contribute to insecurity and are inconsistent with the definition of SSR'.[131] Human and state security are interlinked, as effective armed forces ensure national defence and public safety, and both are essential for reinforcing perceptions of government authority and legitimacy.[132]

[126] Ibid.
[127] Ian Rigden, 'The British Approach to Counterinsurgency: Myths, Realities and Strategic Challenges', in *Short of General War: Perspectives on the Use of Military Power in the 21st Century* (Carlisle, PN: US Army War College, 2010), p. 210.
[128] Ibid.
[129] See also: Glenn, p. 139.
[130] Sedra, p. 5.
[131] DCAF (2019), p. 4.
[132] Ibid.

- Secondly, a successful SSR programme aims not only to enhance capacity through modernisation but also to ensure accountability and promote 'good governance'.[133] 'Good governance' involves democratic civilian control, rule of law, human rights, anti-corruption measures, and professional standards. It also requires independent security services, free from political interference.[134]

- Thirdly, SSR programmes should promote local and national ownership, ensuring reforms reflect local knowledge and community needs. Without meaningful participation, externally driven reforms risk lacking legitimacy and failing to address real security concerns.[135]

- Lastly, SSR programmes must be holistic, addressing both formal actors and informal groups. Effective reform requires balancing all elements to build a secure, supportive environment for development.[136] SSR is a long-term process spanning conflict, post-conflict, and reconstruction phases. While some reforms may yield quick results, deeper changes like professional standards and political neutrality can take a generation to embed.[137]

Summary

Having examined several key sources that discuss the metrics or principles of a successful SSR campaign we may now assemble a credible framework through which we may judge the success of programmes enacted in the case study examples.

The primary aim of SSR is to restore human and state security. During conflict, this means responding to armed threats; post-conflict, it involves maintaining stability and reinforcing government legitimacy. As Thruelsen notes, this phase often focuses on stabilisation over immediate reform.[138] Later reforms should reflect universal access to security and justice as the situation permits. Good governance is fostered through civil

[133] DCAF (2019), p. 4.
[134] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[135] Ibid., pp. 4-5.
[136] Ibid., p. 5.
[137] Ibid., p. 5.
[138] Peter Thruelsen, 'Security sector stabilisation in counterinsurgency operations: the case of Afghanistan', *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 22:4 (2011), p. 624. (619-643)

oversight, accountability, and impartial security services, supported by professional training and leadership. Key to this is democratic representation—security forces must both protect democratic processes and be overseen by elected civilian authorities. National and local ownership are vital to enhancing the legitimacy of SSR. While initial reforms may target security forces to stabilise post-conflict environments, efforts should broaden to include justice systems and address pre-war grievances like marginalisation. However, these shifts must not undermine core capabilities or the universality of services.

Having established these core metrics and principles of a successful SSR campaign we now explore these dimensions of good security sector reform in greater detail.

2.5 Exploring the Dimensions of SSR: The *Political, Institutional, Economic* and *Social*

This study explores how wartime enhancements to the security sector, aimed at combating insurgency and promoting stability, may complicate post-conflict reform. Research Questions 2 and 3 address the short- and medium-term impacts of such reforms. To assess this, the study develops a framework of overlapping metrics drawn from relevant scholarship, used to evaluate how prioritising security affects long-term stability and peace.

First, the *political* impact of security sector reform should be assessed through the development of democratic oversight and representative civilian control. Second, the *institutional* dimension involves building independent security bodies with clear leadership, roles, and legal constraints, supported by adequate training. Third, the *economic* aspect considers the size and resourcing of security services relative to the economy, ensuring sustainability and limiting corruption through transparency. Fourth, the *social* dimension relates to public perceptions of service quality, including equal access to personal security and justice.[139]

Commonalities in the definitions of SSR coalesce around the professionalisation of the security services and the creation/restoration of democratic oversight of the security sector.[140] The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) observe

[139] Dylan Hendrickson, 'A Review of Security Sector Reform', *WP1* (London: Center for Defence Studies, 1999), p. 5; Jane Chaana, 'Security Sector Reform: Issues, Challenges and Prospects', *Adelphi Paper 344* (New York: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002), pp. 28-30; Herbert Wulf, *Security Sector Reform in Developing and Transitional Countries* (Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, 2004), pp. 4-5; Ball (2004), pp. 6-8; and Thruelsen, pp. 625-626.
[140] Roberts, pp. 394-395.

that SSR will produce a security system 'that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance'; while the African Union (AU) identify improvements to security 'policies, structures, and [institutional] capacities' as vital to promoting democratic control and reflecting the needs of the citizenry.[141] Linking peacebuilding to SSR highlights the need to depoliticise security forces, promote legitimate state actors over informal groups, ensure gender and ethnic equality, reduce corruption, and instil professionalism through accountability, transparency, participation, and effectiveness.[142] This study of the Sierra Leone security services seeks to demonstrate how far these factors have been achieved to provide a more granular evaluation of British SSR programming. SSR activities linked to strengthening government authority include military reform, reintegration of ex-combatants, police reform, establishing democratic security institutions, civil oversight, and professionalising security services.[143] A significant element of any SSR programme is an effective disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme.[144]

In the following-sub-section, we will explore the pertinent scholarly perspectives related to the dimensions of SSR to better understand how an efficient and effective SSR programme may be enacted.

The Dimensions of SSR: Military Reform and Integration

As Knight observes, a correctly administered military reformation and integration initiative 'significantly improves the prospects for maintaining peace' in a post-conflict state.[145] Military reform typically follows one of three strategies: disbanding and rebuilding the armed forces; restructuring existing units; or integrating insurgents into the current military.[146] Military reform aims to enhance capacity, embed civilian oversight, and foster

[141] OECD, *The OECD Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (Paris, France: OECD Publishing, 2007), p. 20; AU Commission, 'African Union Policy Framework on Security Sector Reform' (Addis Ababa: AU, 2003), p. 6.
[142] Brzoska (2006), pp. 8-9; Chana (2002), pp. 26-30;
[143] Brinkerhoff (2005), pp. 5-6; Ball (2010), pp. 35-37.
[144] Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy Weinstein, 'Demobilization and Reintegration', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 51:4 (August 2007), p. 531-532.
[145] Mark Knight, 'Security Sector Reform: Post-conflict Integration', Global Facilitation Network for Security Sector Reform (GFN-SSR), (Birmingham: Birmingham University, 2009), p. 13.
[146] Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Building "National" Armies – Building Nations? Determinants of Successes for Postintervention Integration Efforts' *Armed Forces and Society*, 33:4 (2007), pp. 577-580.

cohesion through inclusive representation in leadership and ranks.[147] Thusly, military integration is a source of reconciliation between former enemies.[148] Reforms that create power asymmetries between groups undermine credible security guarantees, as dominant/subjugated factions may revert to former, factional structures.[149] As Glassmeyer and Sambanis argue, integrating former irregular fighters into new forces is often economically driven, as releasing large numbers of low-skilled ex-combatants into a weak job market can destabilise fragile economies.[150] Thus, military integration can succeed both at the macro level by enhancing state-wide security and at the micro level by providing economic livelihoods for individuals.[151] Military reform can reduce national insecurity by strengthening border and internal security, fostering reconciliation among former factions, reinforcing government authority over force, and addressing social group concerns over power shifts.[152]

A warning accompanies this assessment. Poor planning and implementation of military reform and integration is observed to have an impact on the wider peace process of a post-conflict state.[153] Impartial peacekeeping and international assistance in the form of technical training is vital to the success of any reform and integration programme.[154] All reintegration processes require non-state actors to surrender a degree of personal security, as their own informal security providers are dismantled and integrated into the new force.[155] Without state security, communities may form defence units, and former or new non-state actors can resurface. States may compete with or incorporate them, leading to hybrid SSR that includes traditional leaders and local justice, especially in rural areas.[156] Reintegration programmes should also provide training for future employment opportunities for those

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[147] Stephen Burgess, 'Fashioning Integrated Security Forces after Conflict', *African Security*, 1:2 (2008), p. 70; Roy Licklider, (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces After Civil Wars* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2014), pp. 3-4.
[148] Ibid., p. 25.
[149] Knight, p. 15.
[150] Katherine Glassmeyer and Nicholas Sambanis, 'Rebel: Military Integration and Civil War Termination', *Journal of Peace Research*, 45:3 (May 2008), pp. 365-384.
[151] Knight, p. 26.
[152] Mats Berdel, *Disarmament and Demobilization after Civil Wars: Arms, Soldiers and the Termination of Armed Conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 54-56; Charles T. Call and William Stanley, 'Military and Police Reform after Civil Wars', in *Contemporary Peace-making*, ed. by John Darby and Roger Mac Ginty (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 212-223.
[153] Knight, p. 25.
[154] Ibid., pp. 22-23 & 26.
[155] Ibid., pp. 22-23 & 26.
[156] Peter Albrecht, *Hybridization, Intervention and Authority: Security Beyond Conflict in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: Routledge, 2020).

entering the military temporarily and who will rejoin wider society.[157] Such programmes may prioritise short-term containment over lasting reintegration. Lacking proper training, ex-combatants risk criminality or renewed violence, prompting their temporary use in police or military roles as 'safety-valves'.[158]

Internal Security Reform: The National Police

Promoting legitimate internal security, often through police reform, is crucial. Notably, 41% of peace agreements between 1989 and 2011 included provisions for reforming the police.[159] This is in part to address common grievances such as distrust in the police and limited access to personal security or justice.[160] This disregard by the police for their civil duties is often accompanied by predatory policing where 'officers mainly use their authority to advance their own material interests rather than to fight crime'.[161] As Roberts notes, police in conflict-affected states often reflect broader institutional corruption, using power for personal gain or to suppress dissent.[162] O'Neill agrees, observing that the police are often isolated from the population they serve and act more as a military contingent than public service.[163] Paramilitary police forces may emerge as a result of distrust or a lack of capability on the part of the armed forces and civil police.[164] Paramilitary police are often deployed in limited response to unrest or riot and so possess 'the structure and skills of the army with civil-order maintaining aspects of the civil police'.[165] Police are often used to suppress dissent under the guise of maintaining civil peace. While conflict studies highlight the military's role in deterring violence, the police's role has received comparatively little attention.[166] Police

[157] Knight, p. 26.
[158] Knight, pp. 19-21 & 26.
[159] Nadine Ansorg, Felix Haas and Julia Strasheim, 'Police reforms in peace agreements: 1975-2011: introducing the PRPA datasheet', *Journal of Peace Research*, 53:4 (2016), pp. 597-607.
[160] Tor Tanke Holm and Barth Eide, (eds.), *Peacebuilding and Police Reform* (London: Frank Class, 2000), p. 2; Burgess, p. 70.
[161] Theodore Gerber and Sarah Mendelson, 'Public experiences of Police Violence and Corruption in Contemporary Russia: A Case of Predatory policing?', *Law and Society Review*, 42:1 (March 2008), p. 1.
[162] Roberts, p. 397.
[163] William O'Neill 'Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know', *The Security-Development Nexus Program* (New York: International Peace Academy, 2005), <https://www.ipinst.org/wp-content/uploads/publications/polreferpt.pdf> [accessed 29 February 2024], p. 1 & 5.
[164] Benjamin Beede, 'The Roles of Paramilitary and Militarized Police', *Journal of Political and Military Strategy*, 36:1 (2008), p. 1.
[165] Kenneth Bechtel, *State Police in the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1995), p. 26.
[166] Tom Tyler, 'Enhancing Police Legitimacy', *Annals of the Academy of Political and Social Science*, 593:1 (2004), pp. 84-99; Licklider, 'Introduction'.

often act as agents of repression, so their transformation into enforcers of the rule of law is vital for public trust and government legitimacy after conflict.[167] In post-conflict settings, police often encounter armed groups and there is a risk of conflating efficacy with militarisation as the police train and equip to engage such threats.[168] This can erode public trust, reduce civil policing services, and increase violence against civilians.[169] Amid growing police militarisation, some argue it fosters a view of civilians as adversaries instead of recipients of service.[170]

Indications of a successful police reformation process include police decentralisation, state-wide visibility and universal access to services.[171] The newly formed police should contain specialised units that can respond to specific grievances that may have caused conflict.[172] One such example is specialist units dedicated to promoting justice for women, which forms a part of a larger approach to wider gender equality.[173] Gender equality should be reflected in the recruitment and composition of the police and wider security services.[174] Systems to boost police accountability and reduce impunity should include complaints

[167] Christian Davenport, 'Introducing DyoRep: A database of perpetrator-victim dyads within repressive spells', *Journal of Human Rights*, 19:1 (2000), pp. 117-137; Robert Blair, *Peacekeeping, Policing and the Rule of Law after Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Yanilda Gonzalez, *Authoritarian Police in Democracy: Contested Security in Latin America* (New York: NY: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[168] Niels Uildriks, *Mexico's Unrule of Law: Implementing Human Rights in Police and Judicial Reform Under Democratization* (Washing D.C.: Lexington, 2010).

[169] Lucia Tiscornia, 'Police reform in the aftermath of armed conflict: How militarization and accountability affect police violence', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6:1 (January 2003), pp. 383-397.

[170] Eliav Lieblich and Adam Shinar, 'The Case Against Police Militarization', *Michigan Journal of Race and Law*, 23:1/2 (2018); Tom Nolan, 'Militarization has fostered a policing culture that sets up protestors as "the enemy"', *TheConversation.com* (2 June 2020) <https://theconversation.com/militarization-has-fostered-a-policing-culture-that-sets-up-protesters-as-the-enemy-139727> [accessed 1 March 2024]; PBS News Hour, 'What happens when police officers see protestors as "the enemy"', *PBS.org* (2 June 2020) <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/what-happens-when-police-officers-see-protesters-as-the-enemy> [accessed 1 March 2024]; Joel Wendland-Liu, 'We cannot have the police viewing people as the enemy', *peoplesworld.com* (17 July 2020) <https://peoplesworld.org/article/we-cannot-have-the-police-viewing-the-people-as-the-enemy/> [accessed 1 March 2020].

[171] Roberts, p. 397.

[172] Charles Call, 'Competing Donor Approaches to Post-Conflict Police Reform', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 2:1 (2002), p. 101.

[173] Megan Bastick, *Integrating Gender in Post-Conflict Security Sector Reform* (Geneva: DCAF, 2008), pp. 168-170.

[174] UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 'Gender-Sensitive Police Reform in Post-Conflict Societies', 2nd Ed., *unwomen.org* (October 2012) <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2012/10/WPSsourcebook-04B-GenderSensitivePoliceReform-en.pdf> [accessed 1 March 2024].

procedures and mechanisms encouraging investigations into officers, elites, and other security actors.[175]

In post-conflict states, police incentives are a concern, as promotions often depend on patronage, ethnicity, or corruption rather than merit.[176] Reform must prioritise integrity, ensuring promotions and rewards are based on performance, not political favouritism or nepotism.[177] Recruitment should transparent and impartial, where recruitment drives and selection criteria are publicised.[178] Reform initiatives should be informed by the perspectives of all ranks of the force if 'the grain of the organization' is to be supportive of change.[179] One study has that found police reform is best accepted when shaped by officers themselves, not external advisors.[180] Thusly any successful reform programme must foster local ownership from the earliest planning stages to capture civil and security services buy-in.[181]

One significant concern that O'Neill highlights is the propensity of police in post-conflict states to conflate respect for human rights with 'being soft on crime'.[182] Officers must trust that reforms will reduce crime and boost effectiveness. They may resist rights-based reforms if seen as weakening authority or enabling crime.[183] Therefore any reformation process must strike a balance between effective and respectful policing, where the public believe that 'democratic policing is not weak policing'.[184] This is challenging in post-conflict states, where violence is common and civilians lack recent experience with formal policing. Effective policing reform must also be accompanied by broader improvements to the wider internal security structure. This includes improving access to the criminal justice system.[185] This aspect of SSR involves updating laws, training judges, decentralising courts, and creating humane, reform-focused detention facilities.[186]

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[175] O'Neill, p. 7.
[176] Ibid., pp. 9-10.
[177] Ibid., p. 9.
[178] Ibid.
[179] David Bayley, *Democratizing the Police Abroad: What to Do and How to Do It* (National Institute of Justice, 2001), p. 20.
[180] Rachel Neild, *Themes and Debates in Public Security Sector Reform: A Manual for Civil Society – Community Policing* (Washington D.C.: Washington Officer for Latin America, 1998).
[181] Eleanor Gordon, 'Security Sector Reform, Local Ownership and Community Engagement', *International Journal of Security and Development* 3:1 (July 2014) <https://stabilityjournal.org/articles/10.5334/sta.dx> [accessed 1 March 2024].
[182] O'Neil, pp. 2-3.
[183] O'Neil, pp. 2-3.
[184] Bayley, p. 40.
[185] Roberts, p. 397.
[186] O'Neill, p. 3.

Promoting Civil Control: Security Institution Reform

Many countries which have made the transition from authoritarianism to democratic governance still face challenges to civil control from the security services.[187] It is observable that a failure of civil control is 'sufficient to account for the existence of non-democratic regimes in many countries'.[188] As Dahl notes, democratic governance requires civilian control of the armed forces to legitimise its rules and processes.[189] The armed forces are not the only group which may usurp power from governments who do not exercise strong civil control: militias, traditional leaders and religious leaders are examples of parallel structures that may circumscribe power.[190] However, in most circumstances, it is the military that possesses such power as to effectively challenge democratically elected representatives for control of the state as they possess the coercive means to impose their will upon society.[191] This is especially true in emerging democracies, where militaries often supported prior authoritarian regimes and remain politicised with substantial political influence.[192] The loyalty of the security forces is often purchased through granting of benefits such as shares of state revenues or autonomous control of security and defence policy.[193] The blending of governance and military leadership can create challenges during transitions to democracy. Efforts to reduce military influence and promote civilian control may face resistance, confrontation, or violence from security forces.[194] Newly formed democratic institutions are often too weak to resist military coups and rely on international peacekeepers for stability.[195]

Civil-military relations have often been understood as a binary dichotomy of civil control or military intervention, where strong democratic governance is identified by an

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[187] Aurel Croissant, David Kuehn, and Sigfried Wolf, 'Beyond the Fallacy of Coup-ism: Conceptualizing Civilian Control of the Military in Emerging Democracies', *Democratization* 17:5 (2010), p. 950.
[188] Robert Daul, *Democracy and It's Critics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 250.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Samual Valenzuela, 'Democratic Consolidation in Post-Transitional Settings, Notion, Process and Facilitating Conditions', in *Issues in Democratic Consolidation: The New South American Democracies in Comparative Perspective*, ed. by Scott Mainwaring and Guillermo O'Donnell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), pp. 92-6.
[191] Peter Feaver, 'The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz and the Question of Civil Control', *Armed Forces & Society* 23:2 (1996), pp. 149-761.
[192] Croissant, et. al. p. 953.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid, pp. 953-954.
[195] Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, (eds.), *Civil-Military Relationships and Democracy* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), Ch. 1.

absence of overt military intercession in political transitions or general governance.[196] This is challenging for those studying military involvement in politics, as civil control is often measured by the absence of successful coups. As a result, minimalist interpretations of civil control fail to capture the full extent of military interference.[197] As such, other forms of military involvement in civil politics, that stop short of outright seizures of power, are perceived as compatible with the norms of civil governance.[198] However, the involvement of active or retired military personnel in political decision making bodies such as the ministerial cabinet, parliament or oversight committees is in direct contradiction 'to the fundamental democratic provision that all political representatives are chosen through popular elections'.[199] While retired military personnel may legitimately stand for election, concern remains that these persons will occupy positions of influence and promote the interests of the military within civil government.[200] Once appointed, these former military officers may have influence over future electoral processes and opportunities to further entrench themselves through manipulation of election results.[201] Although coups have generally declined, there is still debate over whether militaries have fully accepted the surrender of power to civilian leaders.[202] Some may view the absence of successful coups in post-'third wave' states as a sign of good civil control, while others may argue that the military is content with its political influence through civilian or retired military politicians.[203] Military leaders may intervene in political transitions only if the party or politicians they support are at risk of losing office.

Rising politicisation and security services' interference in government can impact citizens' rights. As military influence over policymaking grows, they may face increased criticism and resort to repressing political opponents, the media, and the public.[204] Military involvement in public policy and recruitment of elites to positions of influence are often sources of popular discontent towards armed forces who usurp power.[205] Limiting the military to areas like force organisation and national defence can reduce opportunities for

[196] For discussions regarding the demilitarisation of politics see: Anthony Forster, 'New Civil-Military Relations and its Research Agendas', *Connections* 1:2 (2002), pp. 76-81; Daniel Nelson, 'Definition, Diagnosis and Therapy: A Civil-Military Critique', *Defense & Security Analysis* 18:2 (2002), pp. 157-8.
[197] Valenzuela, pp. 62-63.
[198] Martin Edmonds, *Armed Services and Society* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1988), p. 93.
[199] Croissant et. al. p. 961.
[200] Ibid.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid., p. 954.
[203] Peter Feaver, 'Civil-Military Relations', *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2:1 (1999), p. 218.
[204] Croissant, et. al., p. 961.
[205] Ibid.

repression by preventing military control over security services or public policy. Manipulating the police allows suppression of criticism, as military-led forces may use excessive force in civil disorder, unlike the police, who typically favour minimal force.[206]

Reform initiatives for security institutions focus on reducing corruption, increasing civilian oversight, and enhancing accountability and transparency in the security sector.[207] This is achieved through reforms in public spending, increased transparency in budgeting and procurement, and civil oversight mechanisms, such as civilian leadership roles in the MoD and police.[208] This requires a focused effort to instil democratic norms in security leadership and improve civilian expertise in security systems.[209]

External donors and international training teams often promote structural reforms that enhance civilian oversight by creating civilian leadership roles in security institutions like the MoD and intelligence agencies.[210] This creates opportunities for the military to fill key roles with loyal retirees, reinforcing internal networks. Despite rhetoric of local ownership, peace processes are often externally driven and prioritise security reform over civilian needs.[211] Thus, grievances rooted in security services' misconduct are likely to be ignored or even replicated in efforts to quickly address insecurity during and immediately after a conflict.

Professionalisation and Professionalism

Reforms that enact professional change within the security services may strengthen the legitimacy of security institutions and that of wider central governance. Samuel Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* (1957) remains a foundational text when discussing professionalism and professionalisation of armed forces.[212] Huntington identified three components of professionalism: responsibility and subordination to civilian officials,

[206] Albert Reiss, 'Police Organisation in the Twentieth Century', *Crime and Justice*, 15 *(1992)* cited in Croissant, et. al., p. 962.
[207] Roberts, p. 396.
[208] Bernard Hardborne, William Dorotinsky, and Paul Bisca, (eds.), *Securing Development: Public Finances and the Security Sector* (Washington D.C.: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – The World Bank, 2017), p. 7.
[209] Croissant, et. al., p. 955.
[210] Roberts, p. 396.
[211] Nicole Ball, 'Strengthening Democratic Governance of the Security Sector in Conflict-Affected Countries', *Public Administration and Development*, 25 (2005), p. 32.
[212] Suzanne Nielson and Don Snider, (eds.), *American Civil-Military Relations: The Soldier and the State in a New Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

expertise in technical skills through training and experience, and corporateness, which reflects cohesion and solidarity between ranks and commanders.[213]

A more contemporary appraisal of the markers of professionalism may be drawn from Patterson's discussion of US assistance to the developing militaries of partner nations.[214] Firstly, an understanding of military subordination to civilian officials and institutions must be inculcated within the security services, and especially the armed forces who possess the means to seize and hold power.[215] The President and Minister of Defence should both be civilians, and the military should not be involved in political or strategic decisions, such as going to war or using military personnel for civil policing or emergency response.[216]

Soldiers must undergo continuous military education and vocational training to operate, maintain, and repair equipment, as well as meet housing needs. The sustainability of reforms depends on both national security services and personnel, not just international donors. The state must provide the infrastructure to legitimise reforms, but is all too often the responsibility of donor nations.[217]

Thirdly, personnel should be taught to abide by the principle of minimum force in their interactions with civilians. As Huntington noted, they should focus on the 'management of violence, not the act of violence itself', practising their skills within the boundaries of the law.[218] Personnel should be versed in the Law of Armed Conflict and Human Rights Law to 'promote universal values such as good governance, transparent and accountable oversight of security services, rule of law … delivery of fair and effective justice, and respect for human rights.[219] Patterson highlights a compatibility challenge, noting that while Western militaries, like the US, are fully indoctrinated in these principles, enforcing them in host states may not always be beneficial. In countries like the UK or US, strong civil police structures reduce the need for armed forces in civil roles. However, in post-conflict states with weaker policing capabilities, the military may be needed to support internal security and combat threats,

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[213] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, Harvard University, 1957).
[214] Pat Paterson, 'Measuring Military Professionalism in Partner Nations: Guidance for Security Assistance Officials', *Journal of Military Ethics*, 18:2 (2019), pp. 145-163.
[215] Paterson (2019), pp. 151-152.
[216] Ibid., p. 152.
[217] The US Army for example spent $76m in 2015 to fund the education and training of 40,500 soldiers from 46 African countries. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
[218] Huntington, p. 13.
[219] US Department of Defence, *Defense Institution Building*, Dir. 5205.82 (January 2016), p. 3.

sometimes requiring actions beyond the legal boundaries typically set for established militaries and police forces.[220]

Transmission of ethical standards is also highlighted as indispensable to creating professional security services.[221] Ethical instruction is intended to instil correct habits of mind, improve moral reasoning, and prepare personnel for dilemmas they may encounter when fulfilling assignments.[222] As soldiers and armed police officers are authorised to use lethal force, they hold a unique authority in society that can give them leverage over others. As Grassey observed, security services may be swayed by 'the passions of battle, the desire for vengeance' and even 'the lure of power' which may manifest in the improper use of force, abuse of civilians or indulgence in corruption.[223] Separating military and police roles is key to professional security forces, as soldiers are unsuited for routine policing. Their conduct affects public trust and government legitimacy, while police actions such as arrests or use of force shape future civilian cooperation.[224] In post-conflict states with weak policing, the military may assume policing roles, risking harm to both soldiers and civilians. Lacking clear targets, soldiers may prioritise self-protection over civilian safety, increasing the risk of casualties.[225]

Professional standards are also measured by personal misconduct. In one US study of Navy misconduct, sexual harassment and assault, and alcohol/drug abuse were significant examples of malfeasance that constituted 90% of court martials discharges, while only 10% were constituted of professional errors or poor performance. Officers were technically proficient in their duties, as training focused on vocational skills. However, the study concluded that ethical standards were inadequately instilled in the officer corps, and there was a lack of consistent leadership oversight, with competency training prioritised over ethical awareness.[226]

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[220] Patterson (2019), p. 154.
[221] Ibid, pp. 155-159.
[222] Beth Behn, *The Stakes Are High: Ethics Education at U.S. War Colleges* (Montgomery: Air War College, 2016), p. 16.
[223] Grassey, pp. 44-47.
[224] Pat Patterson, *Training Surrogate Forces in International Humanitarian Law: Lessons from Peru, Columbia, El Salvador, and Iraq* (Tampa: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2016).
[225] Patterson (2019), pp. 156-157.
[226] US Navy Inspector General, 'Commanding Officer Detach for Cause Study' (2010), <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/ig/FOIA%20Reading%20Room/NAVINSGEN%20Commanding%20Officer%20Dismissed%20For%20Cause%20(DFC)%20Study%202010.pdf> [accessed 25 March 2024], pp. 3-4 & 9

Financial misconduct is another example of personal misconduct and a failure to instil ethical standards. Common types include abuse of authority, bribery, conflicts of interest, failure to disclose unofficial income, fraud, misuse of government resources, and political interference.[227] Like other forms of personal misconduct, financial malfeasance arises from a lack of oversight by impartial bodies such as Inspector Generals or Parliamentary/Congressional committees. Without such oversight, security services gain greater autonomy and control over budgets, procurement, or personnel salaries, leading to opportunities for personal enrichment and patronage. As a result, funds meant to sustain and improve military and police forces are diverted into private channels, degrading services.[228]

As Skorupski and Serafino observe, international security is intrinsically linked to 'the effectiveness of [practitioners] efforts to help partners and allies build their own security capacity.'[229] This requires a clear framework of assistance that goes beyond rebuilding the physical capacity of security services, focusing also on the quality of security providers. This quality is judged by the professionalism of officers, their education and training, subordination to civil authority, political impartiality, and adherence to human rights and ethical standards. In this way, we can better assess the reformation of security services and evaluate their medium-term success.

Summary

SSR success can be assessed through political, institutional, economic, and social dimensions, all of which influence the legitimacy of the security sector and, by extension, government support. Politically, success means strong civilian oversight and an impartial, representative security sector accountable to the public. Clear separation of powers and defined roles between security branches are essential. Professionally trained personnel and adherence to legal standards bolster social trust. Economically, the sector must be right-sized and financially sustainable, avoiding donor dependency or overburdening the state. Socially, effective service delivery and public trust are key to maintaining legitimacy and support.

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[227] US Department of Defense Standards of Conduct Office, *Encyclopaedia of Ethical Failure* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2015).
[228] Patterson (2019), p. 157.
[229] Bolko Skorupski and Nina Serafino, *DoD Cooperative Security: An Overview of Authorities and Issues* (Washing D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2016), p. 3.

2.6 Johan Galtung and Structural Violence

One approach to better understanding the medium-term impacts of security sector reform as a part of a wider and continuing counterinsurgency campaign is the application of Johan Galtung's theory of 'structural violence'.[230]

Firstly, Galtung's work assists us in identifying and defining the objective of 'peace' to help adjudge the success of COIN and SSR in the case studies. Galtung defines the term firstly as 'social goals at least verbally agreed by many' which, in the context of this investigation, may include such factors as the absence of violence, the creation/restoration of legitimate representative democratic government and the holding of free and fair elections.[231] These suggestions align with wider perspectives on the purpose of SSR, that highlights the importance of reforms to the security services in pursuit of these objectives.[232] In each of the case study examples of Malaya, Kenya and Sierra Leone – violence was in-part spawned by the political and social marginalisation of particular groups of people and so success should be assessed in part by attempts to redress this grievance.

Secondly, Galtung identifies 'peace' with 'the absence of violence', with McGill supporting this assessment by noting that any condition in which violence may still be experienced, directly or indirectly, should be viewed as an absence of peace.[233] This binary approach makes the application of Galtung's theory challenging, as in all three case examples political peace was achieved while personal and structural violence was/is still experienced by certain groups. Hack agrees with this assessment, observing that: 'This term [structural violence] has, up to this point, been very sparsely used in counterinsurgency literature' as

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[230] Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6:3 (1969), pp. 167-191.

[231] Ibid, p. 167.

[232] James Kariuki, 'The UK will continue to be an advocate for security sector reform and governance: UK statement at the Security Council', *FCDO:gov.uk* (2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-uk-will-continue-to-be-an-advocate-for-security-sector-reform-and-governance-uk-statement-at-the-security-council#:~:text=We%20have%20done%20so%20because,a%20broader%20system%20of%20government> [accessed 11 February 2025]; Evie Redman, 'Interview with Dr. Nadine Angsorg and Sabine Kurtenbach: Security Sector Reform', *Kentuniversity.com* (2024) <https://research.kent.ac.uk/federal-studies-centre/news/?article=6620> [accessed 11 February 2025]; UN, 'Security Sector Reform', *peacekeeping.un.org* (n.d.) <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/security-sector-reform> [accessed 11 February 2025].

[233] Ibid, pp. 167-168; Daire McGill, 'Different Violence, Different Justice? Taking Structural Violence Seriously in Post-Conflict and Transitional Justice Processes', *State Crime* 6:1 (2017), p. 3.

there is 'the question of whether some highly coercive actions that do not cause direct and immediate physical harm to individuals … can be embraced' by those seeking to understand the structural consequences of COIN.[234] A further examination of Galtung's perspective on violence is perhaps more useful, as he defines it as the 'avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or ... the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible'.[235] Paul Farmer is supportive, asserting that: 'Structural violence is not the result of accident, [but] the consequence, direct or indirect, of human agency'.[236] Galtung observed that structural violence may be indirect and thusly 'there may not be any person who directly harms another person' but 'the violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances.'[237] Thusly, we are able to judge the outcomes of COIN based SSR programmes by viewing them as 'positive' whereby there is an absence of direct violence and the redress of causal grievances such as need (see below); against that of 'negative' peace, where there is also an absence of violence but ongoing structural harm such as unequal power or life chances that continues to, or may, impact the population or sections of it.

Hack assists us in linking structural violence to security sector reform undertaken to counter insurgency by 'defining it as policies tightly bound up with counterinsurgency, in a way that impairs human life to the extent that fundamental needs are systematically denied or deteriorated'.[238] These 'needs' may be as immediate as sustenance, shelter and employment; but as Ansorg and Kurtenbach observe, should also include factors such as the provision of personal security and access to equal justice, political participation and representation, and the protection of rights. As they also note, too often are counterinsurgency SSR programmes dominated by international actors who fail to seek the perspectives and input of local owners.[239] This is supported by Galtung who observes that a source and consequence of structural violence is denied access to 'the power to decide over the distribution of resources' such as 'services existent in some districts and for some groups, and so on'.[240]

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[234] Karl Hack, 'Devils that suck the blood of the Malayan People: The case for Post-Revisionist analysis of counterinsurgency violence', *War in History* 25:2 (2018), p. 3.
[235] Quoted in Ho (2007), p. 3.
[236] Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), p. 40.
[237] Johan Galtung, 'Cultural Violence', *Journal of Peace Research*, 27:3 (1990), p. 291.
[238] Galtung (1990), p. 291.
[239] Redman.
[240] Galtung (1969), p. 171.

Gready helps to further our understanding of how structural violence may impact on the individual or groups of individuals by identifying the measures of 'social marginalisation' and 'political exclusion'.[241] Regarding 'social marginalisation', this argues Gready is manifested in-part as the deliberate or structural exclusion of certain groups from social services that are provided to others; while 'political exclusion' is caused by the inability of certain groups to influence policy or participate in oversight to improve their positions due to their status as outsiders.[242] This may be an inability to participate in elections generally, but more importantly to this study, for certain groups to participate in oversight and control of the security sector through the democratic government. Here, Galtung's perspective on 'manifest' and 'latent' violence may assist us in understanding how inequality may result in harm. Where 'manifest violence' refers to observable harm or difference of life quality that stem from a lack of access to services; 'latent' violence refers to the potential for such harm or inequality to come into 'manifest' existence due to circumstances such as lack of political representation.[243] The first however, does not necessarily precede the second: a lack of representation or participation in governance by specific groups may lead to inequality of services for them; while inequality in services may also lead to disillusionment and apathy towards participation – thusly denying such groups access to the power to make change.

This investigation has potential to offer criticism to Galtung's premise of 'positive/negative' peace. As we will observe, in each of the three case study examples, there are detectable signs of structural harm that are a result of reformative action taken to combat insurgency. Under such conditions, each would qualify as a 'negative' peace within Galtung's framework, but Malaysia today is certainly as far from instability as a state is possible to be. Kenya too has ensured challenges since independence from Great Britain, but the country has not descended into civil war. Similarly, Sierra Leone has struggled with development since the end of the one-party state, but democratic rule and an absence of violence have endured uninterrupted. This begets the question of whether an enduring condition of 'negative' peace is truly detrimental to the future stability of a state?

In summary, Galtung's theory of 'structural violence' helps us understand the immediate and medium-term consequences of SSR actions aimed at countering insurgency

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[241] Paul Gready, *The Era of Transitional Justice: The Aftermath of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 15.
[242] Ibid.; Lisa Hecht and Sabine Michalowski, *The Economic and Social Dimensions of Transitional Justice* (Essex: Essex TJN, 2012), p. 5.
[243] Ibid, p. 172.

and supporting democratic governance. While security sector reforms may effectively combat armed insurgency and contribute to its defeat, the absence of physical violence does not equal 'positive' peace if these reforms continue to harm certain groups. This harm may result from the denial of services, partial services, or the exclusion of groups from political representation and control over the security sector. If these grievances are not addressed, the potential for renewed violence from marginalised groups remains.

2.7 Conclusion

In the first section of this literature review, we established the relationship between counterinsurgency and SSR, observing overlap between activities associated with COIN and those linked to security stabilisation, both aimed at restoring government legitimacy. As COIN seeks to re-establish authority through democratic representation, security becomes a prerequisite for credible elections and the formation of a representative government. Legitimate elections require a stable environment in which the electorate can freely express political will without fear of violence or intimidation. Similarly, security services must not undermine the integrity of these elections. However, the urgency of creating such a security environment may necessitate reforms that diverge from the normative ideals of SSR, particularly in the short term.

In examining the principles of COIN and SSR, we find shared emphasis on personal security as both an immediate and long-term goal, linking public perceptions of safety to state legitimacy. Yet, a tension emerges between protecting the population during conflict – often through military or paramilitary means – and providing accountable, civilian policing post-conflict. For instance, while paramilitary units are essential during active combat, long-term peacebuilding requires a shift toward civil policing to ensure access to justice and everyday security. This abrupt transition can be jarring for civilians and may shape their post-conflict trust in security institutions. Galtung's theory of 'structural violence' offers a valuable framework for understanding these enduring effects of conflict-era security measures on post-conflict governance.

These dynamics justify the research approach adopted in this thesis. While many evaluations of COIN and SSR measure success through top-down indicators such as the conduct of elections, restoration of state functions, or timely withdrawal of foreign actors – this study stresses the importance of micro-level, user-based assessments. Ultimately, it is the

everyday users of reformed security services who determine their legitimacy. Authority is granted or withheld by the population, making local perceptions of security central to understanding the true impact of COIN and SSR interventions

We turn in the following chapter to the method and methodological considerations of this investigation, that outline how such user perceptions were gathered, processed and interpreted.

Chapter 3: Data Collection Methods and Methodological Considerations

The following chapter concerns the method adopted to conduct primary research in Sierra Leone, how research informants were identified and contacted, why they were selected, and the semi-structured interview process adopted. This chapter also discusses ethical considerations pertinent to this study and outlines how research informants and their data was harvested, secured, and processed to meet the requirements of Swansea University's ethical framework. A discussion of methodological considerations is incorporated here to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the theory of research that has informed this work.

3.1 Methods, Sampling Information and Methodological Considerations

This study of the micro-level impacts of British counterinsurgency, the 'security first' approach and SSR places the experiences and perceptions of individuals at the centre of the analysis. Where much attention has focused upon the state-level impacts of British COIN and SSR, this study engages with the with the very people who are the recipients of service and the ultimate adjudicators of how far their personal security has improved. From the perspectives of Sierra Leonean citizens, we may better enrich our understanding of the longer-term legacies of the prioritisation of security.

This study consisted of three phases: Phase I involved extensive desk-based research surrounding the phenomenon of 'security first', and military and police reform. Phase II consisted of a primary research activity in Sierra Leone. Phase III consisted of data analysis and presentation of findings.

This study consists of three case study examples, with George and Bennett's framework stressing the importance of a defined theoretical focus and a clear research objective.[244] Where many case study investigations involve the comparison of nations, this study is also concerned with comparative situations.[245] The examples of Malaya and Kenya do share a temporal space but the linkage between Malaya, Kenya and Sierra Leone is that of insurgency and British intervention. Where the conflicts in Malaya and Kenya are now

[244] Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in Social Sciences* (Boston: MIT Press, 2005), p. 77.
[245] Tom Clark, Liam Foster, Luke Sloan and Alan Bryman, *Bryman's Social Research Methods*, 6th Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), p. 63.

considered to be historical case study examples, Petrina argues that the evidence drawn from such sources is still valid as it may 'illustrate or alternatively contradict and undermine a claim or thesis.'[246] Nash in 1952 established the framework through which historical events may be included in present-day comparisons, observing that the settings of the cases in history, the human aspects of the cases, the settings of the cases in intellectual and social discussions, and the modern relevance of facts and ideas justify the inclusion of historical examples.[247] Clark et. al. also highlights the utility of comparing historical examples with contemporary iterations, as we may observe how an effect may follow a cause in succession across each example. This approach allows the researcher to better understand the relationship between cause and effect across different or similar contexts such as countries that have experienced British counterinsurgency interventions.[248]

Following the 'building block' approach, this study firstly identifies the phenomenon of 'security first' in British counterinsurgency interventions and the classifications of military and police reform.[249] Following George and Bennett's approach, this study commenced with a general study of these classes and then devolved into subclassifications of reform programming as wider desk-research improved knowledge and understanding.[250] For example, this authors understanding of police reform devolved into understandings of community and paramilitary police reform, justice reform and the emergence of non-approved providers. This allowed a greater level of depth and a more granular approach to the primary research phase.

The empirical research presented here is drawn from a constructionist theoretical background where knowledge is developed through the interactions of people and the world they inhabit.[251] This is supported by Bryman who observed that 'social phenomenon and their meanings are continually accomplished by social actors.'[252] This research is therefore rooted in the understanding that meanings associated to the world are derived from humans, their

[246] Stephen Petrina, 'Historical Case Study', *Methods of Analysis* (2020) <https://blogs.ubc.ca/researchmethods/files/2020/11/Historical-Case.pdf> [accessed 08 July 2024].
[247] Leonard Nash, 'The Use of Historical Cases in Science Teaching', *General Education in Science* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 106-111.
[248] Clark, pp. 63-64.
[249] Harry Eckstein, 'Case Studies and Theory in Political Science', in: Martyn Hammersley and Peter Gomm, (eds.), *Case Study Method* (London: SAGE, 2009).
[250] George and Bennett, p. 77.
[251] Vivian Burr, *Social Constructivism* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2015), Ch. 1.
[252] Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford, Offord University Press, 2012), p. 33.

perceptions of their environments and the social interactions they engage in.[253] Where the subjectivity of individual impressions may not lend themselves easily to obtaining absolute truth, for this study an individual's perceptions of 'truth' are the products of social activities and exchanges rather than objective study.[254] Meaning is thusly derived from the subjective observations and personal experiences of the participants, and may be presented as fact.[255] Social constructivism allows for multiple understandings of an issue under scrutiny, where variations in perceptions based upon positioning reveal that differing realities occur simultaneously.[256]

To better gauge the perceptions, perspectives and feelings of local stakeholders, a qualitative research method is appropriate to this type of study.[257] This is supported by Sarantakos who observes that the qualitative approach is rooted 'in a need to study reality from the inside, that is, to understand it from the point of view of the subject.'[258] The process began with secondary desk-based research that focussed on improving understanding of the Sierra Leone civil war, its causes, and the historiography of the conflict. This proceeded into an examination of the specifics of the British intervention, which was devolved into scrutiny of military and police reform. The dimensions of SSR that are discussed in the Literature Review, and the observations drawn from the evaluative chapter on COIN in the 'Golden Age' of British counterinsurgency, helped to inform the creation of the semi-structured interview tool. The use of secondary and primary research enables greater reliability and validity to research findings by facilitating crosschecking by the researcher.[259]

The primary data collection method employed was the semi-structured interview approach with Sierra Leonean citizens, active security services personnel, politicians, and governmental representatives. Interviews were appropriate as they allowed the researcher to gather in-depth data regarding experiences and perceptions of practitioners and stakeholders;

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[253] Robert Matthews and Elizabeth Ross, *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences* (London: Pearson, 2010), p. 142.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Audie Klotz and Cecilia Lynchman, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).
[256] Peggy van Meter and Robert Stevens, 'The Role of Theory in the Study of Peer Collaboration' *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 69:1 (2000), pp. 113-127.
[257] Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step-By-Step Guide for Beginners* (London: SAGE, 2014), pp. 132-134.
[258] Sotirios Sarantakos, *Social Research* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 134.
[259] Ibid., pp. 144-145.

as well as allowing them to express insights and provide foresight for the future.[260] The unifying factor of this sample group is their experience of British counterinsurgency and SSR in Sierra Leone. The semi-structured approach was selected as it allowed for a continuity of questioning from one informant to the next but also the flexibility to explore issues in depth that may be more relevant to one interviewee than another.[261] This approach facilitated greater understanding of the varying realities that are presented by individuals who experience the world differently, by allowing them to relate their perceived 'truths'.[262] As this study seeks to identify how experiences may differ depending on geographical location, social status or ethnic group, the semi-structured interview approach is 'best suited to identifying diversity and variety' in responses.[263] While there are some concerns over standardisation, Mishler argues this is negated by the flexibility with which the researcher may explore issues to a greater extent and further improve the connections between discourse, meaning and truth.[264] The semi-structured approach is beneficial as such flexibility that is provided may be employed to overcome initial researcher biases, preconceptions or errors that influenced earlier iterations of the research instrument.[265] Interviews were also appropriate to the circumstances of conducting research in Sierra Leone, where English is spoken widely and there are varying literacy levels that create barriers to completing written responses such as questionnaires. During interviews, if an informant was unclear regarding a question, the interviewer could adjust the phrasing accordingly and still illicit a response. Many interviewees had little time to devote to participation and so the interview was deemed to be the most efficacious approach.[266]

To achieve this objective, a participant observation approach was adopted whereby this author resided in Sierra Leone for five months (March to July 2022) to gain an understanding of how life is impacted by the security sector reforms of the 2000s in the medium-term. Participant observation was suitable for this type of research project as this author was '"living" in the situation which is being studied' to better understand the

[260] Alpaslan Ozerdem, *Participatory Research Methods in Post-Conflict Reconstruction Visits* (London: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 232-233.
[261] Kathryn Roulston, 'Considering quality in qualitative writing', *Qualitative Research*, 10:2 (2010), pp. 199-228.
[262] Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (London: SAGE, 2016).
[263] Kumar, p. 177.
[264] Eliot Mishler, *Research Interviewing* (Harvard, Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 12.
[265] Marshall.
[266] Kumar, p. 182.

interactions between the security services and the population.[267] Through this approach, this author was able to attain a modicum of experience that reflects the daily lives of those living in Sierra Leone. For example, traveling around the capital Freetown via bike taxi revealed the reality of police corruption at road checkpoints and the impact it has upon the Okada community. Similarly, this author could no more safely walk along a deserted section of Lumley Beach at 3am than could a Sierra Leonean citizen. It should be noted here that the length of time spent in country was mainly dictated by funding, with Covid-19 creating an unexpected 18-month interruption of study and a drain on resources allocated for the research trip. As a mature student, this author was presented with personal and professional commitments in the UK that prevented engagement in a longer period of field research.

Participants in the study may be organised into three broad categories. Firstly, members of the Sierra Leonean public including the Okada bike taxi community and retired members of the Sierra Leone Army and the RUF; active members of the security services including military personnel and police officers; and pertinent government ministers and representatives. The insight of British officers with experience in Sierra Leone was also sought, however establishing contact with this group was difficult as this author possesses limited connections. Successful contact was eventually made with a retired member of the British armed forces who served in Sierra Leone. This connection was established following a recommendation and pre-contact via a Sierra Leonean military source. The challenge of including more perspectives from the British armed forces is a limitation of this study as the interviewee was not only commenting on their time in-country but also speculating about events that they did not participate in personally. A total of 55 interview excerpts are presented here, but this study is informed by over 200 conversations from impromptu meetings from which anonymous and confidential field notes were later generated.

This approach was adopted to enable a triangulation of data from multiple sources to 'provide a better understanding of a problem, situation, phenomenon or issue.'[268] Triangulation improves the rigour of findings and contributes to increased reliability of new knowledge.[269] In this study, members of the government and politicians were able to provide technocratic outlines of reforms; comment on the top-down impacts of SSR with a focus on the state or macro-level, and the potential futures of implemented initiatives; members of the

[267] Kumar, p. 157.
[268] Ibid., p. 386.
[269] Svend Brinkmann and Steiner Kvale, *Doing Interviews* (London: SAGE, 2015).

security services were able to discuss their impressions of reformative actions and the impact they have had on their lives and professions; and members of public provide insight into the structural benefits and challenges created by the British SSR intervention with regard to the reality of the security-development nexus. Almost all interviewees believed that the British intervention should be perceived as commencing during the conflict, continuing into the post-conflict period, and believe it is still impactful today. Therefore, the interview structure reflected these three time periods as well as a discussion of the future. The scope of this study is therefore concerned with the initial British intervention of 2000, the SSR programming of the post-conflict period and the medium-term impacts felt today. A discussion of the potential successes and challenges of the security services is also provided.

The Okada bike taxi community were selected for study as they are a cross-section of Sierra Leonean society, with school leavers, college graduates, former military personnel (SLA and/or RUF) and career riders comprising their ranks. The Okada community exists nation-wide, in almost all settlements and communities of Sierra Leone. The Okada's emerged after the conclusion of the war in-part as a response to limited economic opportunities for ex-combatants and today number between 200,000 and 250,000 riders.[270] Limited demographic information was recorded but the ages of riders are varied, allowing this author to access both younger riders aged 18 to 25 and older more experienced riders who were 26 and above. This was important as one of the primary causes of the war was youth disaffection, and so it is important to this study to detect similarities in differing generation's attitudes towards the state and its security services.[271] Riders were asked to provide a general age (18-25 or 26 and above) and requested to state whether they had any military experience. Those with military backgrounds (SLA and/or RUF) were often invited to a second interview that focussed upon military reform to gain insight from those who participated in the Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) for example. Police and military commanders were contacted once permission had been sought through a senior representative of the Ministry of Defence. Once a report had been established with the commanders, permission was given to tour facilities and speak with other personnel. Contact with retired police officers and army veterans was also established through in-country research assistants

[270] Krijn Peters, Jack Jenkins, Simon Ntramah, James Vincent and Patrick Hayombe, 'Covid-19 and the Motorcycle Taxi Sector in Sub-Saharan African Cities: A Key Stakeholder's Perspective', *National Academies: Transport Research Board* 2677:4 (November 2022), pp. 751-764.
[271] Krijn Peters, *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

who were invaluable in explaining the purpose and nature of the study in advance through the distribution of information sheets.

The locations of informants were either in the capital city Freetown, the cities of Bo and Makeni; or in smaller settlements in Kenema District and Kailahun District. The general locations of interviews are provided as is a general date. As the civil war was in-part influenced by the bifurcation of service and quality of life between the urban centres and the rural settlements, it was important to balance research time between urban locations such as Freetown, Bo, Makeni, Kenema Town and Kailahun Town and rural locations such as Blama, Tongo, Louma, Daru and Bomaru. Working in urban and rural areas required a degree of caution, as FCO warnings advised against travel during the night for non-Sierra Leoneans. However, many informants worked during the day and so interviews at night were often the only option available. Thusly, they were conducted in locations known well to this researcher and his assistants, often at a quiet café near to accommodation. A certain limitation on research locations was the dilapidated road network that made travel between rural settlements challenging, as well as maintaining personal safety requirements outlined in the field research application. Public transport is limited so there is an overreliance on Okada bike taxis to travel to various locations away from main roads and highways. For example, this author had permission to visit the Forward Operating/Patrol Bases along the Sierra Leone-Liberia border but accessing these outposts without guides nor the correct vehicles/equipment or training would have been difficult to dangerous. Some remote FPBs require a day's hike through jungle and mountain terrain to reach, exceeding the mandate of the safety requirements of the field trip. Guest accommodation in these areas is also sparse and often selection of locations was influenced by where suitable rooms could be located for the night. As such, only the more accessible FOBs that were near to road/bike-trail networks were visited in person. Similarly, military bases that were in or near to major settlements were far more accessible than those remotely located, particularly in the border areas. While remote locations could be accessed by motorbike along tracks, the distances and physical toll meant that visits to locations were restricted by circumstances.

Contacts with interviewees were conducted either through a prearranged meeting that was organised by a third-party representative such as a research assistant, or by an organisation representative such as Okada executives or public relations officers, or senior officers within the security services. Each interview lasted approximately one hour but some continued beyond this parameter at the informant's request. Interviews with politicians and

government representatives were often constrained by their tight schedules which impacted upon the selection of questions and the focus of the interview. For example, an interview with a representative from the Youth Council was focussed on the impact of SSR on young people rather than wider society or state security.

One certain limitation of this study is the underrepresentation of female voices. As Selimovic observes, female representation in post-conflict research is often muted due to the patriarchal nature of many post-conflict societies.[272] Sharoni agrees, observing that there is often an 'absence and/or marginalisation' of women in the field.[273] With regard to this study, this is due to several factors. Female representation in the security services and the ad-hoc security providers studied here is limited, and so encounters with male informants was more likely. The Okada community is the same in this regard, with riders being exclusively male. This author found that contacting female informants was problematic due to the patriarchal nature of Sierra Leonean society, where often the eldest male member of the family would speak with me during impromptu visits. Of the limited number of women who participated in this study, all were over 25 and this reflects this authors inability to contact younger female participants. Often, in an attempt to arrange an interview with a female informant, permission had to be sought from male representatives of the family. This created an ethical concern as it was impossible to maintain confidentiality of the informant when other members of the family needed to be informed of their participation. This may have an influence upon what the informant may say as well as their safety. As such, limited invitations were extended to female participants whose anonymity could be guaranteed. Therefore, a certain gap in the understanding of this study is the perceptions of younger female Sierra Leoneans and this has therefore impacted upon some of the interpretations presented here.

Interviews were conducted in English as this is the de-facto official language of the state due to its former status as a British colony. English is taught in all schools and this author found little difficulty communicating with people despite possessing no ability to speak the other dominant languages of Krio, Mende or Temne. Interviews were all conducted in person as this was identified as the most efficacious method: mobile phone and Wi-Fi coverage are partial throughout the country making telecommunications platforms such as

[272] Johanna Selimovic, 'Gendered silences in post-conflict societies: a typology', *Peacebuilding* 8:1 (2000), pp. 3-4.
[273] Simona Sharoni, 'Conflict Resolution: Feminist Perspectives', *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of International Studies* (2017), pp. 3-4.

skype or face-time impractical. Low literacy levels also meant that email correspondence or emailed questionnaires were unlikely to receive strong responses. Face-to-face interviews also allow the interviewer to observe non-verbal responses such as facial expressions, pauses and emphasis using body-language that would not be detectable via electronic communications.[274] All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the informant and later transcribed into research notes. Transcriptions and notes were stored on a password protected laptop. Informants were not given incentives for participation beyond the prevision of simple refreshments. Where informants wished to continue the discussion after the semi-structured interview had been concluded, conversations proceeded along an informal line of questioning that either further illuminated earlier revelations or introduced new ideas and issues not encountered previously. Impromptu meetings were either conducted as informal conversations and data was not audio recorded, or the potential informant was asked to return at a later date for an arranged interview that satisfied the established ethical requirements discussed below. Field notes were generated from impromptu conversations but not personal details or identifying data was recorded. Impromptu conversations were important to this study even though they were not formally recorded, as they helped to improve the authors understanding of the local context and adjust research instruments such as interview questions.[275] Some social encounters were conducted in this manner, as participants were on occasion eager to contribute upon learning about the nature and purpose of this study. This is concurrent with the snowballing technique that may be employed to widen the informant pool. As Kirchherr observes, the snowballing approach is most appropriate where research is concerned with 'difficult-to-reach' populations or subjects, and a research sample framework is therefore not feasible.[276] Critics of snowballing observe that it may produce a flawed sample group as those who do not wish to participate, or are members of smaller social networks, may be overlooked in the presentation of findings.[277] However, with the adoption of a snowballing approach, the sample size of this study would have been severely curtailed

[274] Valeria Lacono, Paul Symonds and David Brown, 'Skype as a Tool for Qualitative Research Interviews', *British Sociological Association*, 21:2 (May 2016), pp. 103-117.
[275] Roulston; Gary Thomas, 'A Typology for the Case Study in Social Sciences Following a Review of Definition, Discourse and Structure', *Qualitative Inquiry* 17:6 (2011), pp. 511-521; Marshall.
[276] Julian Kirchherr, 'Enhancing sample diversity of snowball samples: Recommendations from a research project on anti-dam movements in Southeast Asia', *PLoS One* 13:8 (2018), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6104950/> [accessed 25 May 2024], para. 7-9.
[277] Raj Bhopel, Abdolreza Shaghaghi and Aziz Sheikh, 'Approaches to Recruiting 'Hard-To-Reach' Populations into Research: A Review of the Literature', *Health Promotion Perspectives*, 1:2 (2011), pp. 86-94.

to the point of reflecting questionable validity.[278] Thusly, regarding 'difficult-to-reach' informants whose existence was not known to this researcher before field work, it became apparent that associative meetings were an effective way to improve recruitment and widen the sample size.[279]

3.2 Ethical Considerations

The conduct of the field research element of this study and the collection of primary data through the employment of semi-structured interviews was approved by the Swansea University Ethics Committee in January 2022. Health and safety requirements for this research field trip were also established and accepted at this time.

An initial list of informants was created before departure to Sierra Leone via in-country research assistants, who identified potential candidates and often made initial contact. These research assistants were provided by the research supervisor at Swansea University and have participated in field work with staff from that institution and others since the 1990s. The initial interview group mainly consisted of government or security services representatives who could be contacted directly using email or social media (WhatsApp). This group were provided with information sheets outlining the purpose and nature of the study; and ethical considerations and consent sheets to complete before participation.[280] In this way, such informants who worked in sensitive positions were given significant time to consider their involvement and make an informed independent determination.[281]

Those participants that were contacted whilst in-country were provided with the same ethical considerations. Where a potential participant was encountered, an initial discussion was employed to outline this researcher's work and the nature/purpose of the study. If the potential interviewee wished to participate, they were provided with an information sheet and an ethical considerations and consent sheet. This ensured that subjects were adequately informed of the type of information that was being sought, why it was being sought and what

[278] Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 6.
[279] Colin Robson, *Real World Research: A Resource for Users of Social Research Methods in Applied Settings* (Oxford: Wiley, 2011); Brenda Phillips, *Qualitative Disaster Research* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[280] Keneth Bailey, *Methods of Social Research* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1978), p. 384.
[281] Clark, pp. 118-119.

purpose it would be used for.[282] As observed, literacy levels in Sierra Leone are varied and to counter this challenge, information was also provided verbally. These potential participants were then given a minimum of five days to consider their involvement. Where contact was made with Okada riders through their executive representation, these riders were provided with information sheets and consent sheets during an initial meeting and given a minimum of five days to consider participation. Riders who wished to participate contacted this author or their research assistants independently of their representation and meetings were conducted in private to ensure anonymity/confidentiality. Similarly, it was correct to contact traditional Chiefs when working in their areas to inform them of the study. Once permission had been secured, several individuals were recommended by the Chief who were invited to an initial meeting where information sheets and consent sheets could be outlined and distributed. Willing participants then contacted this author or their research assistants to arrange a meeting.

No incentives were provided to participants, nor to any executive representatives to encourage participation.[283] All informants were informed clearly that this was a voluntary study during the initial meeting, on information sheets and before the interviews commenced.[284] In each case, the purpose and nature of the study was restated before the interview took place. Participants were informed again that they would be audio recorded, with responses transcribed and stored securely. Once the data was processed it was destroyed. The participants option to withdraw from the study at any time and not include their contributions was stated during the initial meeting, clearly on information and consent sheets and before the interview took place.[285] Each informant was provided with contact details for this author as well as those of the research supervisor at Swansea University.

Several safeguards were employed to maintain the anonymity and confidentiality of participants. Firstly, the information collected about the participants was kept to a minimum.[286] Details that may be used to identify participants such as names, gender, specific

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[282] Kumar, p. 285.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Steven Schinke and Lewayne Gilchrist, 'Ethics in Research', in *Social Work, Research and Evaluation*, ed. by R.M. Grinnell, (ed.), 4th Ed. (Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock, 1993), p. 83.
[285] UKRI, 'Consent', *Economic and Social Research Council*, 5 January 2024 <https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/consent/#:~:text=In%20giving%20consent%2C%20participants%20have,circumstances%20cannot%20then%20be%20excluded.> [accessed 4 July 2024].
[286] Kumar, p. 286.

ages, and specific details/locations of postings/activities during the war were not requested. To ensure the confidentiality of those active security services members who participated, contacts and interviews were conducted in locations away from their posts and communities. Where this author was invited to Wilberforce Barracks to engage in an informal discussion at a social event with several soldiers, the meeting was not recorded, and only general field notes were created. Ranks may also be a means by which service personnel may be identified. As such, the ranks of enlisted personnel are maintained in this study (e.g. constable, sergeant, private) as they are numerous within the security services. Those officers who are of a rank that may be used to identify them due to its rarity are generalised as 'senior officer'. Similarly, representatives of government branches or ministries are generalised to ensure their anonymity and confidentiality. Where the names of government representatives are stated, this is with the expressed permission of the interviewee and consideration by the author regarding the sensitivity of the information. Names have been associated with informants within this study. However, these names are fictional and were generated at random. Participants data was organised using fictional names and coding to indicate the date and general location of the interview on transcriptions/notes. Fictional names have been provided to assist the author and reader in differentiating one participant from another.[287] The use of fictional names does present some ethical challenges including misidentification and so names should be generalised to the degree where it is impossible to identify the subject. [288] This is accomplished by selecting popular names of which there will be many within a generalised geographic location.

As this study is concerned with the events of the Sierra Leone civil war and its post-conflict aftermath, there was potential for the participants to experience emotional distress when recounting experiences, that would be classified as psychological harm to the informant.[289] Similarly, some of the actions of the British and their Sierra Leonean partners did result in harm or degradation to others during the military intervention and post-conflict reformative period. This may have presented a challenge to the harvesting of data as some participants may have been reluctant to divulge an entirely accurate or complete recollection.[290] To ensure that any opportunity for participants to experience trauma in this

[287] Clive Seale, *Researching Society and Culture* (London: SAGE, 2017).
[288] Janet Heaton, '"Pseudonyms Are Used Throughout": A Footnote, Unpacked', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 28:1 (2021), pp. 123-132.
[289] Kumar, p. 286.
[290] Nissim Cohen and Tamar Arieli, 'Field Research in Conflict Environments: Methodological challenges and Snowballing Sampling', *Journal of Peace Research*, 48:4 (2011), pp. 423-435.

way was minimised, information sheets were employed to ensure that interviewees were fully briefed on the nature and purpose of the study, and were informed of the types of questions they may be presented with. Participants were informed that they did not have to answer any questions that they did not feel comfortable with and could withdraw any/all statements made. This author also reserved the right to end an interview if it appeared that the participants were potentially or were currently undergoing distress. This occurred on only one occasion and the interview was terminated immediately. This participant was informed that they should take some time to consider continuing their involvement and were instructed to contact the research team when ready.

3.3 Analysis

As this study primarily concerns the experiences of participants, a thematic analysis approach was adopted that was informed by the Braun and Clarke six-stage process.[291] Firstly, all interviews were transcribed within 24-36 hours of conduct and data was anonymised. Field notes and further remarks were added to the transcripts along with initial observations of thematic linkages between participants.[292] An analytically inductive strategy was employed as this was best suited to aligning data capture with analysis.[293] A broad research question enabled the creation of a hypothetical explanation from which evidence collected either reinforced the central argument of the study or forced the researcher to adapt their understanding and approach to incorporate deviant data.[294] This approach is supported by Thomas who argues that reliability and accuracy are improved when themes are informed or influenced by the data presented rather than just pre-established criteria.[295]

With regard to this study, the data itself was vital in identifying devolved sub-themes that were pertinent to military and police reform.[296] The identified themes could then be compared to the wider literature on the subject, identifying gaps in knowledge and thereby improving understanding.[297] This was a cyclical-evolutionary process whereby each

[291] Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3:2 (2006), pp. 77-101.
[292] Clark, p. 538.
[293] Ibid., p. 524.
[294] Ibid., pp. 524-525.
[295] David Thomas, 'A General Inductive Approach for Analysing Qualitative Evaluation Data', *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27:2 (2006).
[296] Clark, p. 538.
[297] Ibid.

interview had the potential to reveal new avenues of inquest that may be incorporated into the next data harvesting activity.[298] Of particular use were the thematic approaches of *repetition observation* and *similarities and differences* that highlighted recurring themes and differing interpretations of the same topics.[299]

This thesis adopts a comparative analytical framework that integrates doctrinal analysis with critical perspectives from peace and security studies to examine the interplay between counterinsurgency, security sector reform, and post-conflict governance. At its core is an original conceptual contribution: the *security–democratic governance nexus*. This framework reinterprets SSR not as a linear, post-conflict activity, but as a process that frequently begins during active conflict through *Security Sector Stabilisation* – the rapid restructuring of police, military, and intelligence institutions aimed at restoring state authority and suppressing insurgency. By highlighting this overlap, the thesis challenges conventional peacebuilding models that assume a clear temporal and functional division between wartime stabilisation and post-conflict reform. Instead, it highlights how early coercive reforms can shape, and often constrain, the longer-term prospects for democratic accountability and institutional legitimacy.

A central evaluative lens for the thesis is derived from established COIN doctrine, particularly as articulated in sources such as *AJP-3.27* and *FM 3-24*. These texts identify three interdependent objectives: the restoration of personal security, the addressing of political grievances, and the re-establishment of legitimate, democratic governance.[300] These principles are employed in this study not as ideal benchmarks, but as analytical tools for assessing the degree to which British interventions aligned with or diverged from their own stated goals. Importantly, they help trace the tensions and trade-offs involved when the pursuit of short-term stability compromises the conditions necessary for long-term peace and democratic transformation.

To interrogate these outcomes further, the thesis draws on Johan Galtung's distinction between 'negative peace' – the mere absence of violence – and 'positive peace', defined by the presence of justice, equity, and structural inclusion. This distinction allows for a nuanced assessment of whether British-led interventions produced only surface-level order or fostered

[298] Seale.
[299] Gerry Ryan and Russell Bernard, 'Techniques for Identifying Themes', *Field Methods* 15:1 (2003), pp. 85-109.
[300] See Chapter 2: Literature Review.

genuinely sustainable and inclusive political settlements. It also enables a shift from state-centric assessments to user-level analyses, incorporating perceptions of legitimacy, access to justice, and trust in security institutions.

Empirically, this framework is applied across the three case studies of Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone – spanning both colonial and post-colonial contexts. Each case is examined through a combination of primary archival research, critical engagement with doctrinal texts, and original fieldwork. This triangulated approach allows for a longitudinal analysis of British strategic preferences, while also foregrounding the lived experiences of those subject to security reform and stabilisation.

Ultimately, this analytical framework contributes a new lens for understanding the political and institutional consequences of security-first interventions. It enables a critical reassessment of liberal peacebuilding assumptions, while also elucidating the enduring logic underpinning British interventionism: a logic that has consistently prioritised state stability and external control, often at the expense of democratic inclusion and long-term peace.

We turn now to the exploration of the conflicts of the ‘Golden Age’ British counterinsurgency, where an examination of the Malayan Emergency in the next chapter and the Kenyan Emergency in a later chapter will assist in identifying the characteristics and consequences of prioritising security.

Chapter 4: The Malayan Emergency (1948-1960)

The Malayan Emergency (1948–1960) holds a foundational place in modern counterinsurgency historiography, often cited as a model campaign for its blend of military, political, and psychological tactics. British strategies, ranging from population control and intelligence-led policing to civil co-option through resettlement and propaganda are credited with restoring colonial order and setting the stage for Malaysian independence. Notably, both COIN and SSR literatures share core goals: restoring personal security and supporting democratic governance.

However, recent failures in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to critical reappraisals of British COIN, particularly its coercive nature and long-term social impacts. Traditional accounts focus on tactical success and state-level outcomes, often neglecting the experiences of citizens. This chapter addresses that gap by examining how British COIN in Malaya prioritised security and SSR as tools of state-building, and how this shaped governance, equity, and civil-military relations in post-conflict Malaysia.

Guided by the thesis's core research questions, the chapter first explores how British planners prioritised military force, law enforcement, and population control in stabilising contested areas. It then analyses the immediate impacts on the insurgency, including the disruption of the Malayan Communist Party and re-legitimation of state authority. Finally, it evaluates the medium-term legacies of these policies on democratic governance and citizen experiences of security in post-independence Malaysia.

Johan Galtung provides a vital framework with which to understand the consequences of prioritising security. Galtung's distinction between *negative peace* – the cessation of direct, physical violence – and *positive peace*, which entails the presence of social justice, equitable governance, and the fulfilment of fundamental human needs. Galtung's concept of *structural violence* – defined as avoidable harm embedded within institutional arrangements and power relations – serves as a critical lens through which to assess the deeper consequences of security-centric state-building. Through this lens, the British campaign in Malaya is revealed not simply as a pragmatic military success but as a foundational moment in the entrenchment of unequal social hierarchies and coercive governance practices.

This chapter contributes to a growing body of interdisciplinary literature that reassesses counterinsurgency not merely as a military doctrine but as a political and ethical project with profound implications for post-conflict governance. By integrating doctrinal

analysis from *FM 3-24* and *AJP-3.27* with empirical data drawn from archival records, oral histories, and socio-political studies, the chapter bridges the gap between policy prescription and historical consequence. In so doing, it reframes the Malayan Emergency not as a template for success, but as a cautionary tale about the risks of prioritising security at the expense of legitimacy, inclusivity, and long-term peace.

Moreover, this analysis holds relevance for contemporary post-conflict and fragile state environments, where SSR continues to be a cornerstone of international peacebuilding efforts. The Malayan case underscores the importance of examining whose security is prioritised, who defines the terms of reform, and what costs are borne by marginalised populations in the pursuit of stability'. In Malaysia, the structural legacy of Emergency-era SSR remains visible in the ethnic stratification of security forces, the enduring use of emergency legislation, and the continued marginalisation of minority communities. These dynamics complicate any simplistic reading of the Emergency as a triumph of counterinsurgency and instead highlight the importance of embedding SSR within a broader framework of transitional justice, equity, and democratic accountability.

4.1 Origins and Grievances of the Malayan Communist Insurgency

On 16th June 1948, a 'state of emergency' was declared and remained in place until 31st July 1960.[1] The declaration was made in response to attacks on European owned agricultural plantations by Malayan Communist Party (MCP) insurgents.[2] Despite the conflicts official in July 1960, guerrilla remnants continued to operate along the Malaysian-Thai border until a negotiated peace was reached in December 1989.[3]

At the insurgency's peak (1951-52), the MCP commanded 8,000 fighters, divided between the Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) and a civilian front called the M*in*

[1] C.C. Chin, and Karl Hack (ed.), *Dialogues with Chin Peng: New Light on the Malayan Communist Party* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 2004), pp. 3-37.

[2] These initial attacks were conducted by the 'Malayan Peoples Anti-British Army' who later re-titled themselves as the 'Malayan Nations Liberation Army' and is often referred to as the 'Malayan Races Liberation Army'. See: David Ucko, 'The Malayan Emergency: The Legacy and Relevance of a Counter-Insurgency Success Story', *Defence Studies*, 10:1-2 (2010), pp. 14-15.

[3] Karl Hack, 'The long march to peace of the Malayan Communist Party in southern Thailand', in *Thai South and Malay North: Ethnic Interactions on a Plural Peninsula*, ed. by Patrick Jory (Singapore: NUS Press, 2008), pp. 173-199.

Yuen or Masses organisation.[4] The insurgents were predominantly male, ethnic-Chinese and in their mid-twenties.[5] They had an average of five years jungle fighting experience by the conflict's conclusion and 40% of those captured or surrendered identified themselves as 'communist'.[6]

The two dominant ethnic groups of Malaya in 1946 were the Malay (49%) and the Chinese (38%).[7] The Malayan peninsula was economically vital due rubber and tin deposits, and commercial shipping access. By 1947, rubber exports reached a total value of US$200m, overshadowing Britain's US$180m total export value.[8]

The MCP came into existence in April 1930 with the 'ultimate purpose to establish a Communist Government in Malaya'.[9] However, core support was drawn from the ethnic-Chinese population, who were concerned with rights and citizenship.[10] The Japanese occupation in WW-II provided the MCP with the opportunity to develop its understanding of guerrilla warfare and build sufficient experiential confidence to launch the 1948 offensive. MPAJA tactics included terroristic raids, low-level assassinations and sabotage that would later characterise the insurgency's strategy.[11] Despite the dubious quality of the MPAJA, the MPAJA 'remained an armed, trained, jungle-based force inspired by a particular blend of nationalism and communism'.[12]

Debate surrounds the causes of the insurgency. The 1957 British military summary reflects traditional perceptions of communist revolution:

> In June 1948, on the instructions of the Cominform issued at two conferences in Calcutta four months earlier, the MCP started a campaign of murder, sabotage and terrorism

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[4] Chin, p. 2 & 148-49; The National Archives (TNA), CAB 129/74, 'Review of the Emergency Situation in Malaya at the End of 1954', 10 January 1955, p. 1.
[5] Karl Hack, 'Detention, Deportation and Resettlement: British Counterinsurgency and Malay's Rural Chinese', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 43:4 (2015), p. 4.
[6] TNA, WO 291/1785, 'Memorandum No. 13/54: Some statistics Relating to Communist Terrorists in Malaya', 1954.
[7] Malayan Union, *Annual Report on the Malayan Union for 1946* (Kuala Lumpur: Malayan Union Government Press, 1947).
[8] Newsinger (2015), p. 41.
[9] PREM 8/1406/2, 'The present day situation and duties of the Malayan Communist Party: note by Mr. Strachey for the Cabinet Malaya Committee commenting on a captured MCP document', MAL C(50)12, Doc. No. 215, 12 May 1950, *British Documents on the End of Empire: Malaya - Pt. II The Communist Insurrection, 1948-1953,* ed. by in Anthony Stockwell, Ser. B V.3 (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1995), p. 215.
[10] Ucko (2010), p. 15.
[11] Bayly, p. 262; A. Short, pp. 23-25.
[12] Ucko (2010), p. 15.

> designed to paralyse the Government and develop into an armed insurrection.[13]

This is inaccurate as the Malayan insurgency was established by November 1947, before the February 1948 conference.[14] As Hack observes: 'the MCP's decisions were shaped primarily by Malayan circumstances'.[15] Newsinger confirms this, observing that '[t]he domestic situation decided whether or not the Communists took the road of armed struggle' and 'wider international tension is seen only as part of the context in which the national party [MCP] leadership took their decisions rather than the sole determinant'.[16] Thusly, the Malayan Emergency was a conflict born from ethnic division and nationalist challenges rather than global confrontations.

The British return was initially welcomed.[17] However after almost four years of occupation, Stubbs described the predominant feeling as 'one of relief' rather than celebration.[18] The occupation had been particularly brutal for the Chinese, who were subjected to starvation and executions.[19] Those who fled to rural areas, faced deprivation and malarial disease.[20] Many Chinese viewed the British brand of imperialism as no different to that of the Japanese.[21] The collapse of Malaya and Singapore had tainted perspectives of British prestige, with Malays and Chinese referring to the war as 'the time the white man

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[13] TNA, Air20/10377, 'Review of the Emergency in Malaya June 1948 - August 1957', 1957, p. 7.
[14] Michael Stenson, *Repression and Revolt: The Origins of the 1948 Communist Insurrection in Malaya and Singapore: Papers in International Studies - Southeast Asia Series, Issue 10* (Ohio: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1969), p. 182.
[15] Karl Hack, 'The Malayan Emergency as Counter-Insurgency Paradigm', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32:3 (2009), p. 474.
[16] Newsinger (2015), p. 40.
[17] TNA, CO 537/3757, '"Unrest in Malaya", Malaya: Chinese affairs and correspondence with Mr. H. T. Pagden' (1948), para. 72.
[18] Stubbs, p. 10.
[19] At Sook Ching prison near Changi, Singapore, between five thousand and forty thousand Chinese were executed. See: Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 306; Boon Kheng Cheah, *Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation 1941-1946* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983), pp. 20-24. For Japanese war crimes in Malaya, see: Aubrey Kenworthy, *The Tiger of Malaya: The Story of General Tomoyuki Yamashita and 'Death March' General Masaharu Homma* (Create Space Independent Publishing, 2016). For crimes against civilians under Japanese occupation, see: Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese: 1941-1945' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 1:2 (1970), pp. 61-89; Jing Fu Qiu, *A Historical Record of the Suffering of the Negeri Sembilan Chinese People under the Japanese Occupation* (Negri Sembilan Chinese Assembly Hall Collection: Seremban Press, 1988); Edward Russell, *The Knights of Bushido: A History of Japanese War Crimes During World War II* (London: Frontline Books, 2013), Ch. 13; Bayly and Harper, pp. 211-214.
[20] Anthony Stockwell, 'Policing During the Malayan Emergency', in *Policing and Decolonisation: Politics, Nationalism and the Police, 1917-65*, ed. by David Anderson and David Killingray (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 105-126.
[21] Stubbs, p. 11.

ran'.[22] The end of the war had a profound impact on the establishment of the insurgency, with the British taking six weeks to reclaim positions in Southeast Asia.[23] During this vacuum of authority, the MPAJA meted out a victor's justice, with Malayan police officers and collaborators subjected to 'peoples trials'.[24] Almost 600 people were killed during the MPAJA 'reign of terror'.[25]

These violent clashes reflected Malaya's racial divide, worsened by the lack of Malay anti-Japanese resistance. While the occupation strengthened Chinese identity, it also left the MCP isolated from non-Chinese support. The use of banditry and terrorist tactics eroded support and even in its infancy the MCP was known as the 'Chinese Party'.[26] Little willing support could be found outside of the Chinese community, and as a 1948 report observed:

> The prospects of the rise of a strong [Malay] independence movement in Malaya ... appears to be exceedingly remote. In the present political state of affairs, and in the state of affairs likely to develop in the future ... the Malays may be expected to withhold support from the Chinese communists.[27]

Linehan also noted Malay apprehension because 'they fear above all Chinese political domination' and 'subordination to China'.[28] Ucko observed this division but argues that the British were unaware of such tensions, adding: 'Whilst the Chinese were politically disenfranchised, they were financially dominant and threatened "Malay jobs". British attempts to structure a Malayan nation were ignorant of the ethnic-Malay animosity toward the ethnic-Chinese community.'[29] These divisions were undoubtedly fuelled by the occupation and its aftermath. However, understanding the root causes of the insurgency requires recognising the political marginalisation and social exclusion of the Chinese as key factors.

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[22] Charles Allen, (ed.), *Tales from the South China Sea: Images of the British in South-East Asia in the Twentieth Century* (London: Futura, 1983), p. 254.
[23] Ibid., pp. 10-11.
[24] Allen, pp. 10-11; Cheah, pp. 133-5; Kee Onn Chin, *Malaya Upside Down* (Singapore: Jitts Publishing, 1946), pp. 203-204.
[25] Anthony Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948*, Monograph No. 8 (Kuala Lumpur: Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1979), p. 148; William Shaw, *Tun Razac: His life and Times* (Kuala Lumpur: Longman, 1976), pp. 56-60; Cheah, pp. 195-240.
[26] PREM 8/1406/2, p. 213; Cheah, p. 127-128.
[27] TNA, CO 537/3746, 'Prospects of the emergence of a strong independence movement: note by W. Linehan on the Malay dimension', N.9 (02 March 1948) in Stockwell (1995), p. 1.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ucko (2010), pp. 15-16.

The 1946 *White Paper* further increased tensions by proposing the naturalisation of all peoples in Malaya.[30] Angry Malay demonstrations followed and tighter naturalisation requirements for non-Malays were introduced.[31] Resultantly, only an estimated 350,000 Chinese became citizens (of some 3.6m) by 1952.[32] The controversial *Federation of Malaya Agreement* furthered this divide by granting 1.1m Chinese citizenship.[33] Approximately 2.15m Chinese did not qualify for citizenship, with 500,000 classed as 'squatters' who resided in shanty towns along the jungle fringes. This group had swelled during the occupation, as 100,000 urban Chinese had fled the cities.[34] The squatters represented the lowest paid, lowest educated section of society and received almost no political representation beyond rudimentary unionisation.[35] Many remained quasi-homeless after the end of the occupation, as poor Malays had appropriated abandoned Chinese urban dwellings.[36]

It was from the squatter population that the MCP drew its support.[37] The MCP had previously aided workers through a 'united front' approach to cross-party governance and staged strikes in 1946-47.[38] This close association was reflected in the ethnic composition of the MNLA, that was at the insurgency's peak in 1951, more than 90% Chinese.[39] Therefore, the central challenge for British counterinsurgents was to regain control over the rural Chinese squatter population.[40]

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[30] School of Oriental and African Studies Archives, University of London, GB 102 MS 169519, 'Malaya: Constitutional Working Committee Papers' (1946).
[31] John Parnell, 'Malayan Citizen Legislation', in Hack (2015), p. 2.
[32] Lennox Mills, *Malaya: A Political and Economic History* (London: Greenwood Press, 1973), p. 83.
[33] *Straits Times*, 'Citizenship Day in the Federation' (15 September 1952) <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/digitised/issue/straitstimes19520915-1> [accessed 29 August, 2020], p. 6.
[34] TNA, CO537/3758, '"Malaya: Chinese Affairs": Letter from Sir. Henry Gurney to Sir. Thomas Lloyd' (8 October 1948).
[35] Aziah Kasim, 'Politics of Accommodation: A Case Study of Malay Squatters in Kuala Lumpur', *Oriental and African Studies* (January 1985), pp. 63-78.
[36] Hack (2015), pp. 23-24.
[37] Robert Komer, *The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1972), p. 8.
[38] Wu Yin Hua, *Class and Communalism in Malaya* (London: Zed Books, 1983), pp. 76-85; Newsinger (2015), pp. 40-41.
[39] TNA, CO537/7270, 'Law and Order: The Squatter Problem' (1951).
[40] Hack (2015), p. 4.

4.2 The Military Counterinsurgency Response

The following section outlines the response by the British-led military in Malaya to increasing violence and well organised attacks against state infrastructure and private farm-holdings.

The opening phase of the counterinsurgency campaign was devoid of intelligence. Intelligence services in Malaya had little notion of insurgent motivations, no appreciation of military disposition, and only a vague strategy of suppressing a pan-Malayan nationalist uprising.[41] One 1948 report indicated more concern for unionisation than open rebellion.[42] The disposition of the military in 1948 reflects this lack of concern, as no troops were dispatched and the force ratio was approximately one soldier for every insurgent.[43]

Despite MCP/MNLA mobilisation occurring as early as 1945, correspondence between High Commissioner Edward Gent and Colonial Secretary Creech Jones confirm that increased violence in 1948 triggered the declaration of a state of emergency on 19th June 1948.[44] Attacks against Europeans and Malays had increased from 220 in all of 1947 to 470 in 1948.[45] By February 1949, the in-country situation did not match Whitehall perceptions, with Gurney stressing: 'if there is no immediate and spectacular result of the intensified efforts we have made during the past two months, there might be some sort of stalemate' with the MCP.[46]

The introduction of Lt. Gen. Harold Briggs as Director of Operations (DO) in April 1950 indicates a change in attitude and an acceleration of counterinsurgency measures. The installation of Briggs, a former Indian Army commander with combat experience in Burma, indicates increased British commitment towards containing communism from 1950. This coincided with the Korean War of which Malaya was a vital resource base, and the U.S.

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[41] John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency: An Analysis of The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 25; Mumford (2012), p. 31

[42] TNA, CO 537/6006, "'Internal Security – Malaya" Malayan Security Service report by Lt. Col. John Dalley' (14 June 1948).

[43] Nagl, p. 65.

[44] TNA, CO 717/167/52849/2/1948, f. 302, "'Declaration of emergency": inward telegram no. 641 from Sir E. Gent to Mr. Creech Jones' (17 June 1948), in Anthony Stockwell, *British Documents on the End of Empire: Malaya* (Royal Holloway: TSO, 2004), pp. 19-20. For a description of the killings, see: Barber, pp. 21-23; Yao Souchou, *The Malayan Emergency: A Small, Distant War* (Copenhagen, NIAS Press, 2016), pp. 40–41.

[45] TNA, CO 717/167/52849/2/1948, f. 302, "'Declaration of emergency": inward telegram no. 641 from Sir E. Gent to Mr. Creech Jones', 17 June 1948, in Stockwell (2004), pp. 19-20.

[46] TNA, CO 537/4750, No. 35, "'Internal Security and the Chinese": letter from Sir. H. Gurney to Mr. Creech Jones on measures to avoid a stalemate', 28 February 1949, in Stockwell (2004), p. 114.

Truman Doctrine. With British prestige in doubt after WW-II, Westminster was eager to remain an influential partner of the superpower.

Propaganda during the Emergency focussed upon both the military aspect and was directed towards the guerrillas; and the civil aspect that sought to inform the public of counterinsurgent strength, actions and succusses. Propaganda was certainly utilised to characterise the Chinese rebellion as irrationally terroristic. Where the MCP were presented as 'Communist-Terrorist' in nature but limited in resource and national support, Carruthers notes that the tactics employed by the British to secure the acquiescence of the population 'reveals much about the British government's determination to manage the presentation of terrorism in a fashion which accorded with its own political objectives'.[47] Propaganda exploited negative perceptions of terrorism and the Malay-Chinese divide to foster hostility toward communism among the broader Malay population. Law-abiding Chinese were pressured to choose between association with a criminalised insurgency or alignment with state authority. This strategy helped mitigate the 1948 manpower shortage, with 25,000 mainly Malay volunteers joining the security forces by September. Gen. Gerald Templer's arrival in early 1952 spurred the recruitment of a further 42,000 volunteers.[48]

Ramakrishna highlights the impact of the propaganda campaign, with the Government Psychological Warfare branch given credit for mass surrenders in 1958.[49] However, propaganda lacked the sophistication required to engage educated citizens and the emphasis on written pamphlets failed to appreciate the near non-existent literacy levels of rural Chinese citizens.[50] By 1953, 110,800 radio licences were issued and over 1,400 communal radios were installed.[51] 'Voice aircraft' circled the jungles, broadcasting audio messages that encouraged surrender and 100% of surrendered enemy personnel (SEPs) admitted that the broadcasts had partly informed their decision to capitulate.[52] However, without the introduction of coercive security measures discussed below, these fighters would not have heeded the messages. Chin Peng agreed that the MNLA's inability to feed its troops had as

[47] Susan Carruthers, 'Propaganda, Publicity and Political Violence: The Representation of Terrorism in Britain, 1944', Institute of Communications PhD Thesis (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1994), p. 79-80.
[48] Short, pp. 124-125.
[49] Kumar Ramakrishna, '"Telling the Simple People the Truth": The Role of Strategic Propaganda in the Malayan Emergency', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society,* 75:1 (2002), p. 49.
[50] TNA, CO 967/181, 'A.D.C. Peterson's report on Organisation of Information Services in the Federation of Malaya' (20 August 1952).
[51] Stubbs, pp. 184-185.
[52] Nagl, p. 95.

much to do with ending the insurgency as advertising the availability of food upon surrender.[53]

SEPs were offered financial rewards upon capitulation but these were unpopular with Malays who disagreed with paying former fighters while many lingered in high levels of poverty.[54] Payments for information that led to the capture or killing of an insurgent varied from M$2,000 to M$60,000.[55] However, Operation Cobble (1956) is the most successful example of this unsuccessful programme, with only three mid-level insurgents killed following a tip-off. [56]

Many SEPs were turned by the promise avoiding jail or deportation. They were posted to the Special Operations Volunteer Force (SOVF) and referred to as 'running dogs' due to their shifting allegiances.[57] Twelve teams were constituted but their efficacy was stunted by MNLA anti-infiltration 'traitor-killing camps' that prevented significant penetration of the insurgency. Ultimately only a handful of enemy combatants were killed by SOVF fighters.[58] Thusly, SOVFs were most effective as a propaganda tool that could be simultaneously used to demonstrate to the Chinese that their own fighters were capitulating in the face of British strength and to Westminster that the strategy was working.

As John Nagl observes, the prerequisite to securing 'hearts and minds' is the deprivation of popular support for the enemy, conventional operations, and territorial gains. This is reflected in the early Gent/Gurney-era strategy of large battalion level patrols intended to 'break the insurgent's concentration' by forcing an open confrontation.[59] However, captured MCP documents reveal that this did little to disrupt the insurgent's activities as the small-cadre structure was able to avoid large patrols and aerial bombardment.[60] Indeed, fatal attacks on Europeans and Malays had doubled to 470 incidents in 1948.[61] One explanation for the limitations of the military approach in 1947-48 is the convoluted command structure, where civilians Gent and Gurney were in-charge of the overall military counterinsurgency

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[53] Chin, pp. 160-161. For food shortages: pp. 208-209.
[54] Ibid., p. 351-352.
[55] Approximately £33 to £1000 equivalent in 1953.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Richard Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America and Cold War Secret Intelligence* (New York, NY: Overlook Press, 2002), pp. 508-510; Kitson, p. 49.
[58] Luise White, 'Precarious Conditions: A Note on Counter-Insurgency in Africa After 1945', *Gender and History*, 16:3 (November 2004), p. 619; Mumford (2012), p. 121.
[59] Nagl, p. 11.
[60] Chin, p. 163.
[61] Malayan Union, pp. 8 & 124-125.

response.[62] Coordination between the different branches of the security services was non-existent and a 'coordinating officer' was recommended to draw the response into a unified command. This was resolved with the assassination of Gurney in October 1951 and the installation of Gen. Templer as High Commissioner and DoO in January 1952.[63]

The use of force as a strategic lever remained consistent throughout the tenures of Gent, Gurney, Briggs and Templer. The 'liberal idealist' interpretation of British strategy places prominence on respect for the 'minimum force' principle – that emphasises development and aid over coercive force.[64] Strachen observes however that 'minimum force' is of lesser concern than presenting an image of strength, as 'we are not talking about being nice to the natives, but about giving them the firm smack of government. "Hearts and minds" denoted authority, not appeasement'.[65] Dixon agrees, arguing that restrictions on force weakens the ability of counterinsurgents to convince 'minds' that it is too dangerous to oppose the authorities.[66] Encapsulated as the 'conservative realist' interpretation, the use of coercion is vital in securing the 'acquiescence of the population' towards measures that deprive them of basic civil rights.[67] This coercive process places the individual in a position where they must choose between their political ideology and their own personal security. Once acquiescence is demonstrable, then 'political and social reform might accompany firm government.'[68] Col. I.A. Rigden, a Gurkha brigade Commander in both Iraq and Afghanistan is supportive of this re-interpretation. Noting from his experiences:

> "Hearts and minds" is often mistaken to mean a soft approach when dealing with the civilian population, but this is a misnomer. The key is changing the *mindset* of the target audience and, sometimes, this requires tough measures and a hard approach.[69]

Thomas Jackson agrees, adding that 'far from minimum force being the keynote … it can be argued that victory was won by the availability and sometimes the application, of

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[62] Nagl, p. 68.
[63] Komer, p. 26.
[64] The 'liberal idealist' approach encapsulates the 'hearts and minds' interpretation of British COIN practice, especially in Malaya. This interpretation emphasises minimum force and gaining popular support by addressing social and economic issues. See: Dixon (2012a), pp. 64-65; Thomas Mockaitis, *Iraq and the Challenge of Counterinsurgency* (London: Praeger Security International, 2008), pp. 23-24.
[65] Hew Strachan, 'British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq', *RUSI*, 15:6 (2007), p. 8.
[66] Dixon (2012b.), p. 65.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Strachan, p. 8.
[69] Col. I.A. Rigden, 'The British Approach to Counter-Insurgency: Myths, Realities and Strategic Challenges', *Strategy Research Project*, U.S. Army War College (PA: Carlisle Barracks, 2008), p. 12.

overwhelming force' that is 'more likely to be found in a police state or feudal monarchy than a liberal democracy'.[70] Therefore 'hearts and minds' was as much about coercion and acquiescence as winning the socio-economic battle for the support of the general population.

Senior British officials in Malaya condoned such coercive force, with Creech Jones observing that '[t]he Chinese are as you know notoriously inclined to lean towards whichever side frightens them more'.[71] With regard to the legal difficulty this course might encounter, Gurney admitted in 1949: 'The offensive action against the civilian members of the community ... raises most difficult questions of law. It is in fact impossible to maintain the rule of law and to fight terrorism effectively at the same time.'[72] As such, concluded Gurney: 'In order to maintain law and order … it is necessary for the Government itself to break it ... At present time the Police and Army are breaking the law every day'.[73] Further evidence is provided in a 1951 Colonial Office memorandum that prompted forces to 'secure the active cooperation of the Chinese, if necessary, by a more forceful policy towards those who fail to "come off the fence"'. [74]

A particular challenge was the newly embedded obligation to protect civilians under the 1949 Geneva Conventions.[75] Whilst the Conventions were not ratified until August 1949, correspondence indicates British compliance as early as 1948.[76] However evidence also demonstrates that senior officials were not in favour of protective measures for civilians and

[70] Thomas Jackson, *The Malayan Emergency and Indonesian Confrontation: The Commonwealth's Wars, 1948-1966* (London: Pen and Sword, 2008), pp. 12-22.
[71] See: Bayly and Harper, p. 455; Newsinger, (2015), p. 50; Karl Hack, "'Devils that suck the blood of the Malayan people": The Case for Post-Revisionist Analysis of Counter-insurgency Violence', *War in History*, 25:2 (2008a), p. 217.
[72] TNA, CO 537/4753, 'Statement by the High Commissioner for Malaya' (28 January 1949).
[73] Ibid.
[74] TNA, CAB 129/48, 'The Situation in Malaya' (20 November 1951), p. 105; TNA, WO 291/1670, 'Report No. 1/57: A Comparative Study of the emergencies in Malaya and Kenya', 1957, p. 35.
[75] ICRC, 'Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War', *Geneva Conventions*, 1949, specifically: 'Article 31: "Prohibition of Coercion"'; 'Article 32: "Prohibition of Corporal Punishment, Torture, Murder, etc."'; 'Article 33: "Individual Responsibility, Collective Penalties, Pillage, Reprisals"'; and 'Article 53: "Prohibited Destruction of Property"' [accessed 16 September, 2020] <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=AE2D398352C5B028C12563CD002D6B5C>.
[76] TNA, WO 32/13612, 'Geneva Conventions, 1949: "Ratification Discussion - General Policy", Minute Sheet, Army Chief of Staff to Sir Robert Craigie' (December 1948); TNA, WO 32/13614, "'Implementation of Geneva Convention, 1949", War Office Correspondence' (February 1950).

that ‘a complete ban on reprisals could not be allowed in situations like Malaya today ... an occupying power must have powers to take stern measures against passive resistance’.[77]

Individual shootings were common and were classified as ‘Force Used on Persons Escaping’ (FUPE).[78] In July 1948 a Chinese plantation worker was shot after he ‘tried to make off’ during questioning.[79] On the 21st July, security forces ‘shot two Chinese who refused to stop when called upon to do so’ and on 8th August another civilian was killed ‘while trying to escape after arrest’.[80] An examination of the 1948-49 *FARELF Situation Reports* reveals 125 incidents of FUPE: 77 killed whilst escaping; 37 captured whilst escaping with 7 wounded; and 4 killed in accidental circumstances.[81] As the reports show, there was a disproportionate number killed whilst escaping rather than non-lethally captured, indicating an unwillingness or inability to apprehend escaping suspects alive. The demonstration of consequence for trying to escape is certainly one explanation.

The recording of accidental shootings suggests that the majority were intentional and purposeful. For example, during a Perak province operation (April 1949) ‘Police killed one bandit and arrested four male and two female suspects. One female civilian accidently shot’ and then in the same month, a 10th Gurkha Rifles patrol ‘killed one of two Malay fishermen mistaken for bandits.’[82] It is therefore a fair assumption to argue that those classified as ‘killed while escaping’ were purposeful shootings with troops trained/permitted to open fire on those attempting to flee.

To counter the dubious legality of escapee shootings *Regulation 10A* was introduced, placing the use of deadly force at the discretion of on-scene personnel.[83] Further, historical killings were retroactively legalised by *Reg.27A,* which stated: ‘Any act or thing done before the coming into force of this Regulations which would have been lawfully done if this

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[77] TNA, WO 32/13613, “‘Minute re. Geneva and Malaya, reprisals”, Geneva Conventions 1949 - Questions of principle arising at Diplomatic Conference Geneva’ (July 1949).

[78] ‘Military Situations Reports - Far East Land Forces (FARELF)’, available at: TNA, CO 717/170/1; CO 717/170/2; & CO 717/173/1.

[79] TNA, CO 717/173/1, ‘Telegram from Officer Administering the Government of Malaya (OAG) to the Secretary of States for the Colonies’ (22 July 1948).

[80] TNA, CO 717/173/1, ‘Telegram from OAG to Sec. of State’ (21 July 1948). The 22nd July telegram corrects the recording error that the first killing occurred on the 21st not 20th July. Bennett notes that it was common of British forces to fail to report the killings of individuals accurately. See: Bennett (2009), p. 435; TNA, CO 717/170/1, ‘FARELF Sitrep. No. 4’ (28 July - 10 August 1948).

[81] See: See ‘Military Situations Reports - Far East Land Forces (FARELF)’, available at: TNA, CO 717/170/1; CO 717/170/2; and CO 717/173/1.

[82] Ibid.

[83] For Emergency Regulation 10A, see: TNA, CO 1827/2011, “‘Claimants Skeleton Argument”, Batang Kali Massacre Hearing’ (8 May 2012), p. 32, para. 2.71.

Regulation had been in force, shall be deemed to have been lawfully done under this Regulation.'[84] Recognising the difficult issue of escapee shootings, *Reg.27A* mandated that: 'Before any lethal weapon may be used ... an officer shall call upon him, in a loud voice, to stop and the person so called upon shall be given a reasonable chance to stop and submit to arrest.'[85] Many Chinese did not however understand English. It appears that these amendments were not intended to curb the use of force against civilians, but instead reflect a desire on the part of the British to indemnify themselves against accusations of criminality.

The most overt example of violence against the civilian population occurred in December 1948 when 24 Chinese workers were shot at the Sungei Remok Estate, Batang Kali district. The incident was first reported as 'twenty-eight bandits killed' and that it constituted 'the biggest success in any one day's operation in one area since the emergency began' furthering the conflation of Chinese civilians and insurgent fighters.[86] Official records are equally prosaic and reflect the sanitised language of the FARELF reports.[87] When questioned, Creech Jones' assessment was routine, noting that 'had the SF not opened fire, the suspect Chinese would have made good an attempt to escape.'[88] This was contradicted by the testimony of one participant – Alan Tuppen – who stated that 'none of the villagers were shot while trying to escape of their own free will or after being forced away by any action on our part.'[89]

Orthodox accounts largely overlook the Batang Kali massacre, with no mention in contemporary reflections by Robert Thompson or Frank Kitson. Short's assessment aligns with official narrative despite possessing privileged access to restricted documents, and those documenting British experiences between 1950 and 1990 appear unaware of the true nature

[84] For Emergency Regulation 27A see: Ibid, p. 33, para. 2.72-73.
[85] Ibid., p. 33, para. 2.72.
[86] *Straits Times*, 'Police, Guards Kill 28 Bandits in One Day', 13 December 1948 <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19481213-1.2.2> [accessed 16 September 2020], p. 1.
[87] TNA, WO 268/555, 'Headquarters Malaya District G Branch, Quarterly Historical Report' (October - December 1948).
[88] TNA, DEFE 70/101, "'Incident, Selangor", Excerpt from *Hansard*' (26 January 1949).
[89] TNA, DEFE 70/101, "'Testimony of Alan Tuppen to *The People*", 1 February 1970, Allegations of a Massacre' (1948).

of the killings.[90] Short can be forgiven for this, as the documents surrounding the events were only declassified in 2011 following a UK High Court ruling.[91]

Those killed at Batang Kali were publicised as enemies of the state and Sir. Charles Boucher likened the massacre to punitive punishment: 'it must be widely understood that those who have consorted with or assisted bandits were enemies of the state and ran the risk of incurring military action in the same way as those who were killed at Batang Kali'.[92] The chaplain of the Scots Guards indicated a wider unspoken strategy: 'The shooting of escaping prisoners was inquired into - and accepted as a nasty, but necessary part of a nasty operation'.[93] These statements indicate regret but recognise the need to deter civilian support for the insurgency and encourage acquiescence. As brutal as the killings were, they were weaponised to demonstrate the dangers of opposing the military.

'Population control' formed a further component and was encapsulated by the 'Briggs Plan' of 1950: an extension of the 'haphazard and inefficient forced relocations' of 1948-9.[94] Forced relocations were rationalised as an attempt to restore stability through 'effective administration and control of all populated areas'.[95] By 1960, 400,000 squatters had been forcibly transported to 'Resettlement Areas' that consisted of wooden shacks with few medical or educational facilities.[96] The camps deprived internees of basic rights and were characterised by 'the application of overwhelming force'.[97] The 24-hour flood lit compounds were ringed by barbed wire fencing and subjected to curfews. The inhabitants were routinely searched and only permitted to leave for specific reasons such as work.[98]

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[90] A. Short, p. 166.

[91] For coverage of the declassification of the documents see: *The Guardian*, 9 April 2011 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/09/malaya-massacre-villagers-coverup> [accessed 16 September 2020]

[92] Malay Confederation, *Malayan Monitor 1*, 1948-1956 (London: Putera, 1954), p. 5.

[93] TNA, WO 296/41, Frank Robson, and Tom Brown, 'Guards "killed reds as they fled"' *The Express* (03 February 1970).

[94] Coates, p. 87. 'Briggs Plan': TNA, CAB 21/1681, Cabinet Malaya Committee - MALC(50)23.

[95] TNA, CAB 21/1681, MAL C(50)23 '"Federation plan for the elimination of the communist organisation and armed forces in Malaya" (the Briggs plan): report by COS for Cabinet Malaya Committee' (24 May 1950).

[96] Newsinger (2015), p. 50.

[97] Ibid., p. 52.

[98] Tan Teng-Phee, '"Like a Concentration Camp, Iah: Chinese Grassroots Experience of the Emergency and New Villages in British Colonial Malaya', Chinese *Southern Diaspora Studies*, 3 (2009), pp. 221-227; Newsinger (2015), pp. 52-53.

Collective punishment continued under Templer, with food denial operations matching the increase in small unit operations.[99] In June 1954, guidance was released instructing that '[t]he imposition of the reduced ration should be regarded as punitive and the people told that the ration will be increased to normal when they show a change of heart.'[100] Lt. Gen. Stockwell supported this approach and noted that: 'The value of food control measures as a potent weapon has been amply proven, and food denial operations remain the only methods which promises to clear up an area permanently.'[101] By 1956, the *Federal Emergency Food Denial Organisation* was coordinating a systematic food denial programme.[102] Despite the callous nature of these initiatives, food denial proved to be effective. Prior to 1951, food denial was rarely listed as a reason for insurgent surrenders but from 1952 it became the most consistent motivation given.[103] Of particular note, is the confessions of self-identified 'committed' fighters who admitted that food denial was more persuasive than propaganda.[104] Those aiding the insurgents by supplying food were also coerced into ending their efforts, as anyone found with supplies could be imprisoned for up to five years without trial.[105] Food denial was viewed as 'a particularly effective tactical weapon against terrorism'.[106] It was also a highly effective way to limit the supplies of food being smuggled to the MCP by Chinese sympathisers, as they were unlikely to give away food when they could barely sustain themselves. They were also unlikely to risk their lives fighting for the MCP if they could not provide basic sustenance. Chin Peng supported this, revealing after his surrender, 'we [the MCP] got a lot of money, but couldn't get a bit of food. If it turned into rice, it would've been very good.'[107]

These measures did have an impact. While the most dramatic decline in violence occurred after Templer's installation in mid-1952, violence levels peaked in June 1951 at over

[99] Komer, pp. 59-60.
[100] Kings College London Archives (KCLA), Talbot 3/8, 'Director of Operations Instruction No. 36: Food Denial Operations' (24 June 1954), p. 11.
[101] KCLA, Talbot 3/5, 'An Appreciation of the Military Situation in Malaya' (15 October 1953), p. 28.
[102] TNA, WO 106/5990, 'Review of the Emergency in Malaya' (September 1957), p. 19.
[103] TNA WO 291/1792, 'Review of recent trends in surrender behaviour: "Reason for Surrender", (Disagreement with CT policy, Food Shortage, Loss of Hope in Victory, Internal Friction)' (1955).
[104] TNA, WO 291/1763, 'Memorandum No. 1/53: A Study of Surrender Behaviour Among Chinese Communists in Malaya' (1953), pp. 6-7 & 12.
[105] TNA, CO 1030/73, 'Report on the Conduct of Food Searches at Seminyih' (30 March 1956), pp. 3-4; French, pp. 80-81.
[106] TNA, KV 4/408, 'Malayan Lecture Material: The Problems We Faced in Malaya and How They Were Solved' (January 1948 - December 1954), p. 43.
[107] Chin, pp. 160-161. Chin also discusses recruitment challenges due to food shortage operations: pp. 208-209.

600 incidents but were already in decline by February 1952.[108] Similarly, overall casualties underwent their steepest reduction in 1952 but were already in decline by October 1951.[109] Therefore the decline in violent incidents rates and casualty figures indicates the effectiveness of the Briggs resettlement plan but it took longer for the measures to take effect than was anticipated. Briggs himself supports this stating that the Plan 'had begun to mature' in late 1951 and his interim successor Robert Lockhart also noted that Briggs had 'achieved wonders' with the limited resources with which he had been provided.[110]

Templer's arrival was less of a break from the practices of the Gurney/Briggs-era than the orthodox narrative presents. Firstly, Templer is celebrated for adopting targeted ambushes that produced a decline in SF causalities and the increase in insurgent casualties.[111] By Templer's 1952 arrival, resettlement had mostly removed Chinese non-combatants, allowing troops to treat remaining areas as 'free-fire' zones, preceding U.S. tactics in Vietnam.[112] Body count remained the main success metric due to its simplicity. A 1952 memo noted the challenge of quantifying public sentiment, making insurgent deaths, arrests, and civilian relocations easier to report than measuring support or indifference.[113] A 1957 War Office study confirmed body count as a key success metric with a rise in insurgent deaths after Templer's arrival.[114] This was higher than at any time during the Gurney/Briggs period. During the May 1953 to January 1954 period, insurgent killings spiked dramatically.[115] As killings rose, so did surrenders.[116] The intensified use of force significantly impacted enemy morale, leading fighters to question the viability of continuing against overwhelming odds.

The coercive nature of 'population control' is clear. There was a coercive psychological element to relocation, whereby '[t]he forcible resettlement of hitherto rural and

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[108] TNA, WO 291/1670, Appendix B, 'Comparative Study of Emergencies in Malaya and Kenya: "Incidents"' (1957).
[109] TNA, WO 291/1670, Appendix B, 'Comparative Study of Emergencies in Malaya and Kenya: "Casualties"' (1957)
[110] TNA, WO 106/5990, 'Review of the Emergency in Malaya from June 1948 to August 1957' (September 1957), p. 9; TMNA, 1995-01-165-53, 'Extracts from a Note by Director of Operations' (26 November 1951), p. 6.
[111] TNA, CAB 129/74, 'Malaya: Review of the Situation', 6 April 1955, p. 2; CO 1030/19, 'Panning Guidance for 1955' (11 August 1954), p. 3; Thompson, pp. 115-120; Komer, pp. 50-51.
[112] Dixon (2009), p. 362; Marilyn Young, 'Counterinsurgency Now and Forever', in *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam: Or, how to not Learn from the Past*, ed. by Marilyn Young and Lloyd Gardner (New York: The New Press, 2007), pp. 185-188.
[113] TNA, CO 291/1725, 'Memorandum 5/52: Patrolling in the Malayan Emergency' (May 1951), p. 1.
[114] Monthly averages exceeded 100 in mid-1952 and 80 from mid-1953 to early 1954. See: TNA, WO 291/1670.
[115] Ibid.
[116] See: TNA WO 291/1670 Appendix A, f. 1: 'Insurgent Eliminations' (1957).

isolated squatters into self-contained social units, where the political framework was defined by the government, resulted in a coercive acquiescence towards the British agenda for Malaya'.[117] The Resettlement Areas 'functioned as a tool of population control and coercion' as movement outside of the camps was restricted by barbed wire, armed check points, identity cards and searches. Basic resources (food, medicine) were severely restricted and those convicted of assisting the insurgency faced prison, deportation, or execution.[118]

Forced Relocation and Post-Conflict Structural Violence

The medium-term impact of the British counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya has received little attention in Western scholarship. However, where focus is drawn to the grass-roots experience of life after the conflict, a 'structural violence' analysis is appropriate.[119] Though shootings reflect direct violence, arrests, detentions, and deportations may not appear extreme. However, as we will see, these non-lethal controls had lasting structural harms on Chinese and aboriginal populations.

Firstly, establishing the violent nature of non-lethal counterinsurgent measures, we observe that Galtung defined violence as the 'avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or ... the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible'.[120] Therefore, avoidance indicates that actions taken that are not entirely necessary should be considered violent in nature. Farmer is supportive, asserting that: 'Structural violence is not the result of accident, they are the consequence, direct or indirect, of human agency'.[121] Secondly, Galtung observed that structural violence is indirect and thusly 'there may not be any person who directly harms another person' but 'the violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life chances.'[122] In an examination of the lives of the residents of the New Villages today, we can observe the credence of this perspective.

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[117] Mumford (2011), p. 105.
[118] Coates (1992), p. 93.
[119] The study of 'structural violence' is attributed to Johan Galtung. See: Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research*, 6: 3 (1969), p. 167; Kathleen Ho, 'Structural Violence as a Human Rights Violation', *Essex Human Rights Review*, 4:2 (2007), pp. 3-5. Hack also highlights the potential of 'structural violence' for improving understanding of the impacts of counterinsurgency – see: Hack (2008a).
[120] Quoted in Ho (2007), p. 3.
[121] Paul Farmer, *Pathologies of Power* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 2005), p. 40.
[122] Johan Galtung, 'Cultural Violence', *Journal of Peace Research*, 27:3 (1990), p. 291.

One study by Siew Nooi Phang and Teck Hong Tan of the Chinese 'New Villages' is revealing.[123] Today, some of the oldest villages have existed for over 75 years with approximately 600 villages located in Perak, Selangor, Penang, and Pahang.[124] Originally intended to accommodate 600,000 resettlees, by 1995 the population had increased to 1.68m predominantly Chinese people. These temporary camps are now 'beset with many physical and social problems.'[125]

Conditions in villages were primitive and neglectful. Oral testimonies of Pulai villagers outline hardships such as 'poor site selection, language problems with neighbouring ethnic groups, and the lack of job opportunities'.[126] Many villages were situated on the outskirts of urban centres but a number were located in remoter rural locations isolating them from mainstream society.[127] Phang and Tan observed that such isolation was exacerbated by their locations that were chosen for short-term military necessity and not their sustainability.[128] Another survey indicated that dwellings remained 'simply as living units ... without any prospects for diverse and vibrant growth' and that settlements had 'become unliveable and the quality of life within [the villages] is low.'[129] One 2005 survey concluded that rural villages were at least 30km away from the nearest town, had fewer than three social facilities, and two or less types of recreational facilities.[130] The survey also catalogued a lack of basic infrastructure including concrete roads, electrification, piped water, public transport and sanitation facilities.[131] Perceptions of central government are understandably negative, with Phang and Tan noting that '[t]here is a universal perception … that the authorities concerned are guilty of poor management and neglect.'[132] A dearth of education and employment opportunities has led to sustainability issues as some younger people migrate to urban centres. For example, from 1970 to 1995, 27% of departees were 18 to 24 years old. Those departing cited 'frustration' with 'the declining quality in their lifestyle and the living

[123] Phang Siew Nooi and Tan Teck Hong, 'Re-positioning urban-based new villages in Malysia towards sustainable living and a better quality of life', *ICOIS*, 3-4 (April 2013), pp. 1-22.
[124] Ibid., p. 1.
[125] Ibid., p. 18.
[126] Tan Teng Phee, 'Oral History and People's Memory of the Malayan Emergency (1948-60): The Case of Pulai', Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia, 27:1 (2012), p.110
[127] Phang and Tan, p. 18.
[128] Ibid., p. 2.
[129] Ibid., p. 9.
[130] Ibid., p. 14.
[131] Government of Malaysia: Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *New Villages Master Plan Peninsular Malaysia* (Malaysia: Kuala Lumpur Govt. Print, 2012).
[132] Phang and Tan, p. 20.

environment as a result of poor maintenance and shortfall in public service delivery'.[133] Resultantly, this out-ward migration of youth has intensified 'existing social problems and living conditions as the older population are unable to undertake construction or maintenance work.'[134]

The jungle dwelling aboriginal population, the Orang Asli, were also impacted.[135] The Asli people were preyed upon by the insurgency following their withdrawal into the jungle in response to the early counter-terror arrests.[136] To counter the influence of the MNLA on the Asli people, this group were forcibly relocated to New Villages but these efforts have been characterised as 'uncoordinated, chaotic and misguided'.[137] Leary estimated that a minimum of 35,000 people were forcibly resettled from 1951, with between 5,000 and 7,000 people dying from 'severe physical and psychological trauma'.[138] Camp conditions were poor and Iskandar describes the settlements as 'miniature concentration camps … without shelter' and that the food was 'inadequate or not compatible with the tribespeople's normal diet'.[139] Williams-Hunt observed that 40 inhabitants of a Phang village perished due to food allergies, septic wounds and malaria. [140] Poor planning during construction of one camp led to an outbreak of dysentery when its drinking water supply was contaminated by waste from a

[133] Ibid., p. 4.
[134] Ibid.
[135] For details of the culture and society of the Orang Asli, see: Richard Noone, *Rape of the Dream People* (London: Hutchinson and Co., 1972); John Leary, *Violence and the Dream People: The Orang Asli in the Malayan Emergency, 1948-60* (Athens, OH: Ohio University, 1995); Roy Jumper, *Power and Politics: The Story of Malaysia's Orang Asli* (London: CDR Press, 2011).
[136] In 1951, the MCP issued the 'October Directive' that accepted that military victory over the now reformed and reinforced British/Malay security forces was not possible. Political subversion and terrorist tactics were to be staged from jungle positions and direct confrontation was to be avoided. See: Rhodes House, MSS British Empire s486/2/1, Misc., 53, 'Short History of the Emergency', paras. 33-5; 'Aim and Strategy of the MCP', paras. 33-4, Operations Branch, Federal Police HQ, 21 (October 1952); Hack (2009), p. 390.
[137] Leary, p. 42.
[138] Leary, p. 44; Salleh Hood, 'Orang Asli Perceptions of the Malay World: A Historical Perspective', *Malaysian Social Science Association*, 12:6 (1984), <https://malaycivilization.com.my/omeka/items/show/213844> [accessed 16 September 2024], p. 6.
[139] Iskander Carey, *Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 307.
[140] P.D. Williams-Hunt, *Notes on the Administration and Recording of Technical Data Relating to the Malayan Aboriginals*, Department of the Advisor on Aborigines (Kuala Lumpur: Federation of Malaya Press, 1951) pp. 32-33.

second camp further up the valley.[141] Only 46% of homes had piped water and sewage systems in 2000.[142]

The medium-term impact of Asli relocation had received little attention in later codifications of the experiences of the counterinsurgents. However, one 2010 study concluded that the Asli people are amongst the poorest in Malaysia: 77% live below the national poverty line and 35% are identified as 'absolutely poor'.[143] In comparison, only 1% of all Malaysian citizens are considered to live in poverty.[144] The 2010 study indicated that the average monthly income of one family is less than RM1000 (approx. £185), with some incomes as low as just RM398 (£73).[145] The average family income of Malaysia in 2010 was approximately RM4-5,000 (£830).[146] Only 36% of houses were connected to the national electrical grid as there was either a lack of facilities or the family could not afford the costs.[147]

The Orang Asli were recorded as some of the unhealthiest people in Malaysia. Average life expectancies are 53 years, almost twenty years less than the national average. Infant mortality was recorded as 51% deaths per 1,000 births, compared to the Malaysian average of 16%. Asli children are three times as likely to contract tuberculosis and adults are five times. Asli people represented 52% of those treated for malaria in one year and 35% were observed to suffer from energy malnutrition.[148] This was attributed to poor incomes and a change in diet as people were forced to rely on processed food and government-provided dietary supplements rather than fresh food harvested from the jungle.[149]

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[141] Ibid., p. 15.
[142] Colin Nicholas, *The Orang Asli and the Contest for Resources: Indigenous Politics, Development and Identity in Peninsular Malaysia* (Copenhagen: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2000), p. 30.
[143] Chung Yi Fan, 'The Orang Asli of Malaysia: Poverty, Sustainability and Capability Approach', MA Thesis, *Lund University Centre of Sustainability Science Collection (LUCSUS)*, (Scania: Lund Press, 2010), p. 27.
[144] World Bank, 'The World Bank in Malaysia', *worldbank.org*, April 2024 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/malaysia/overview#:~:text=Moreover%2C%20Malaysia%20has%20achieved%20notable%20success%20in%20poverty,poverty%20line%20among%20its%20upper-middle-income%20peers%20at%20US%245.50.> [accessed 22 August 2024].
[145] The poorest Malay or Chinese family income was approximately RM661 (£122) per month in 2010. Chung, p. 27.
[146] Ministry of Economy, 'Mean of monthly household gross income by ethnic group, strata and state, Malaysia, 1970-2022', *ekonomi.gov.my*, 2023 <https://www.ekonomi.gov.my/sites/default/files/2023-12/Jadual3-Pendapatan-Isi-Rumah-Kasar-Bulanan-Purata-Mengikut-Kumpulan-Etnik-Ketua-Isi-Rumah-%20Strata-dan-Negeri-Malaysia-1970-2022.pdf> [accessed 22 August 2024].
[147] Chung, p. 28.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid., p. 38.

Returning to Galtung's perceptions of 'structural violence', we may conclude that 'avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs' characterised the experiences of those subjected to the Briggs resettlement plan, and still impacts upon their descendants today. The objective of the Briggs Plan was to sever the insurgency from its civil support base and not to improve the quality of life for the resettlees, nor address political grievances such as citizenship and worker's rights. Some improvements to conditions were undertaken during the Templer administration but the ongoing impact of relocation suggests little consideration was made for medium to long-term sustainability of these New Villages.

Summary

In the above section we have examined the military counterinsurgency response in Malaya. We have detailed the evolution of the counterinsurgency strategy, from initial challenges and intelligence failures to the implementation of coercive measures and population control tactics.

The early phase of the counterinsurgency was marked by insufficient intelligence on insurgent motivations, military disposition, and effective strategies. The threat was initially underestimated, with more focus placed on unionisation and Malay nationalism, leading to a delayed and inadequate military response in 1948. The early emphasis on military solutions correlated with an increase in violence. Initial military strategies were criticised for having a convoluted command structure and poor coordination between different security services. Large battalion-level patrols aimed at disrupting insurgents often failed, as small insurgent groups were able to evade them.

The appointment of Gen. Harold Briggs as Director of Operations in April 1950 marked a shift towards a more committed and accelerated counterinsurgency approach. Under Briggs, a SSR programme was initiated, expanding the armed forces and creating Home Guard units from Malay volunteers. Additional British troops were deployed to address the force ratio deficiency at the war's start. Special forces units were used for ambush tactics to harass the enemy, but large-scale operations and sweeps remained common throughout the conflict. Population control strategies were often characterised by poor conditions and restrictions on basic rights. Collective punishment, including food denial operations, was also used to pressure the population into cooperating with authorities. Senior

British officials recognised the necessity of breaking the law to effectively combat the insurgency.

The focus on security led to coercive measures, including overwhelming force, food denial, and forced relocation of civilians, resulting in human rights abuses such as the Batang Kali massacre and mistreatment of civilians in resettlement camps. Over time, these harsh measures, along with food denial, contributed to a decline in insurgent strength, as evidenced by increased surrenders and fewer violent incidents. While the Briggs Plan and food denial were effective in reducing violence and insurgent activity, their effectiveness is tempered by the acknowledgment of their coercive nature and significant human cost. The use of 'body count' and arrest numbers as measures of success led to a misinterpretation of progress by senior military leaders. While immediate objectives were achieved by prioritising security, these measures had lasting structural consequences for the Chinese squatter population and the Asli people.

We turn now to the police response to the Malayan communist insurgency.

4.3 The Police Counterinsurgency Response

The following section examines the Malayan Police's role in countering the MCP/MNLA insurgency, tracing the initial paramilitary response, its challenges, and subsequent reforms aimed at restoring normal policing. These reforms were key to rebuilding public trust and government legitimacy. However, post-Emergency policing retained paramilitary elements to manage potential unrest and civil dissent.

The Decline of Community Policing Before the Emergency

To understand the challenges presented to the Malayan Police and the impact they had upon the character of policing in the Emergency, we must first appreciate the relationship between the British colonial authorities and the Chinese community. From 1887 until the Japanese occupation of 1941, British officers maintained close relationships with the Chinese population. This was referred to as the 'Chinese Protectorate', with British officers expected to speak Chinese-Malay Mandarin and possess knowledge of various secret societies, trading

blocs and social structures.[150] The police operated from posts throughout Chinese settlements and so ingrained were British officers within Chinese communities that they were treated as 'village elders' and referred to as *taijin* (great man). British officers often served as ombudsmen in disputes over land, money, or insult.[151]

Post-WWII, the Protectorate was not reinstated, and the underfunded Chinese Affairs Bureau, staffed by just one official and a clerk, could only provide vague reports due to limited intelligence capacity.[152] Resultantly vital community contacts needed to counter rising communist influence among disaffected Chinese youth were lost, reflecting the broader post-war rift between the population and the government where.[153] This exposed a governance gap between urban and rural areas, where, after the Protectorate's dissolution, Chinese communities interacted with the state mainly through military and paramilitary forces. Policing was urban-focused and anti-Leftist, leaving rural areas vulnerable to broad arrests over targeted efforts. The lack of rural policing reflected a fractured state-society relationship, which the MCP sought to exploit.

Coercion and Force: Paramilitary Policing under William Gray and Harold Briggs

The appointment of Police Commissioner William Gray in August 1948 significantly reshaped policing. Drawing on his experiences of policing in Palestine, Gray implemented reforms that adapted paramilitary counter-terror strategies previously used against Zionist insurgents.[154] The police assumed greater responsibility for anti-MCP operations and officers received paramilitary training.[155] The police were observed to demonstrate only 'rudimentary'

[150] Federation of Malaya Police, *The Federation of Malaya and its Police: 1786-1952* (Kuala Lumpur: Charles Grenier & Son., 1952).
[151] Kumar Ramakrishna, 'The Police Must be Part of the People and the People Part of the Police: Policing in the Malayan Emergency, 1948-50', in *Policing Insurgencies: Cops as Counterinsurgents*, ed. by C. Christine Fair and Sumit Ganguly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 52.
[152] Kumar Ramakrishna, *Emergency Propaganda: The Winning of Malayan Hearts and Minds, 1948-1958* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 2002), p. 60.
[153] Lucien Pye, *Guerilla Communism in Malaya: Its Social and Political Meaning* (New Jersey: Princetown, 1956), p. 202.
[154] A. Short, pp. 120-121.
[155] Stockwell (1992), p. 110. The core of the post-WW-II police force consisted of officers who had wartime military experience in India in 1944-45. See: Ramakrishna (2014), p. 56.

knowledge of their duties and possessed limited capabilities.[156] The quality of the men was poor, with 131 of 230 officers failing a basic rifle shoot test.[157]

The indigenous population play a vital role, with Nagl noting that 'on their own, foreign forces cannot defeat an insurgency; the best they can hope for is to create the conditions that will enable local forces to win'.[158] Mumford agrees, observing that indigenous personnel 'understand the often complex loyalties and relationships that frequently determine access to information or decision making'.[159] However, British personnel retained dominance, leading both British and local units. With the Chinese Protectorate gone, intelligence suffered due to a lack of Chinese officers or embedded British staff, deepening mistrust and creating a critical intelligence gap.

By September 1948, 25,000 predominantly Malayan volunteers had been recruited; and by 1952, the police consisted of 73,000 men, of which 32,000 were Regulars and Special Branch detectives, and 41,000 were Special Constables.[160] A part-time auxiliary cadre and the Home Guard were comprised of 250,000 personnel by 1952.[161] British officers were responsible for leadership and investigative roles, with the Special Constabulary and Home Guard, who were responsible for guarding resettlement camps and plantations staffed by Malays.[162]

The 1948-49 'counter terror' phase was accompanied by sweeping legal provisions that restricted civil liberties and strengthened government control of the population. For example, *Regulation 17D* was observed to impose 'a veritable "police state" upon the people of Malaya', as legislation introduced 'the death penalty for unlawful possession of arms, power of detention of any persons, search of persons and premises without warrant and power to occupy properties'.[163] The 1,500 arrests that were made before the implementation of Emergency Regulations were retrospectively legalised and prison sentences were raised to

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[156] Ibid.
[157] TNA CO 537/5434, 'W.C. Johnson to Henry Gurney, 18th October 1949' in 'Review of police and security forces in relation to communist infiltration' (1950).
[158] Nagl, p. xiv.
[159] Andrew Mumford, *Puncturing the Counterinsurgency Myth: Britain and Irregular Warfare in the Past, Present and Future* (Carlilse, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2011), p. 114.
[160] A. Short, pp. 124-125.
[161] Stockwell (1992), p. 110.
[162] A. Short, pp. 124-125.
[163] Stockwell (1992), p. 20. Curfews, collective punishments, mandated ID cards and food denial were also implemented. See: French (2012), pp. 750-752; Hack (2009), pp. 386-388; Newsinger (2015), pp. 47-50; Stubbs, pp. 70-78; and Thompson, pp. 52-54.

two years.[164] Resultantly, 28,892 individuals were detained without charge by the end of 1949, with 226 facing execution.[165]

The use of mass arrests reveals a failure to gather and employ good intelligence.[166] This dearth of intelligence led to a misinterpretation of the nature of the insurgency and an assumption that it was a popular communist uprising rather than a Chinese-nationalist rights-based campaign.[167] Resultantly, the initial wave of arrests was mis-targeted towards socialist organisations. The entire staff of the *Min Sheng Pau* newspaper were arrested, as were 1,000 trade unionists; and Malay Trade Union President S.A. Ganapathy was executed for the possession of a firearm.[168] Arrests escalated throughout 1949 and over 5,000 Chinese were detained without trial.[169] Intelligence failures and heavy handedness led to errors, and the attempted arrest of MPAJA ex-Comrades Association President Lau Yiu failed as police raided the wrong house.[170]

As arrests in the cities failed to curb rural violence throughout 1949, large-scale 'cordon and arrest' jungle sweeps were enacted. Those within the cordon were screened and 892 detentions occurred without due process.[171] *Regulations 24(1)* and *17(1)* effectively suspended individual rights and legalised mass-detentions for either 24 days without charge, or 18 months to 2 years without trial.[172]

The efficacy of these screenings should be questioned. Some suspects were detained on the word of a single informant.[173] Screenings took time and required multiple interviews to identify a single insurgent. One July 1948 Semenyih province operation detained 500 people, of which 400 were released.[174] Another Perak-based operation detained 1,775

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[164] A. Short, p. 184.
[165] Detentions: Barber, p. 182. Executions: Newsinger, (2015), p. 46.
[166] Stockwell (1992), pp. 105-109.
[167] Newsinger (2015), p. 44.
[168] M-G.com, 'Malay S.A. Ganapathy: Former Trade Unions President Hanged', *The Malay Mail*, 4 May 1949 in Malaya-gunpathy.com (24 June 2015) <https://www.malaya-ganapathy.com/2015/06/former-trade-unions-president-hanged.html> [accessed 15 September 2020].
[169] Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Masked Comrades: A Study of the Communist United Front in Malaya, 1945-48* (Singapore: Times Books, 1979), pp. 63-72.
[170] Gerald de Cruz and Michael Stenson, *The 1948 Communist Revolt in Malaya* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Press, 1971), p. 24.
[171] TNA, CO 127/173/1, 'Telegram from OAG to Sec. of State' (6 July 1948).
[172] TNA, CO 1827/2011, p. 33, para. 2.72-73 (1948).
[173] Malcolm Caldwell, 'From "Emergency" to "Independence", 1945-1957', in *Mayaya: V. 1: The Making of a Neo-colony*, ed. by Mohammad Amin, Malcolm Caldwell (Kuala Lumpur: Spokesman, 1977), pp. 221-222.
[174] TNA, CO 717/173/1, 'Telegram from OAG to Sec. of State', (27 July 1948).

suspects producing only 14 arrests, of which 12 were later released.[175] Other operations in 1949 resulted in only 19 arrests from 1,300 screenings and another yielding a single sympathiser from 1,000 interrogations.[176] Altogether, 34,000 people were detained between 1948 and 1959, and this total does not include those held for less than 28 days without charge nor the 2,800 deported to China.

Anti-insurgent operations took their toll on officers, with three police killed for every British soldier.[177] High casualty rates fuelled criticism of the paramilitary strategy, with critics arguing that police efficacy had been compromised by such expansion. Vital language training had been neglected, and the lack of ethnic-Chinese and Chinese speaking officers led to challenges to intelligence gathering capabilities.[178] The prioritisation of paramilitary training over civil policing had impacted civil policing capabilities. Gray had insisted that 'all members of the Force had to be trained to fight' and that that there were no distinctions between 'operational' and 'purely police' duties.[179] Lastly, the police were under direct control of the British colonial government and not responsible to Malay/Chinese civilian leaders. Thusly, those empowered with the use of deadly force were not answerable to the civil population. A 1949-50 review criticised Gray's reforms as counterproductive to 'ordinary police work' as the police were 'ceasing to be a Police Force and [was] becoming a paramilitary organisation'.[180] Federal council member R. Ramani denounced the 'new despotism of the [British] executive and the newer despotism of the police' while fellow member Tan-Cheng Lock complained vociferously about the curtailment of Chinese civil rights by the police.[181]

A March 1950 review had identified a need to return to the practices of 'normal policing' where restraint, impartiality, and respect for the law were to be emphasised.[182] Col. Arthur Young was selected as the new Police Commissioner and was in every sense the

[175] TNA, CO 717/170/1, 'FARELF Sitrep. 17' (30 Oct.- 5 Nov. 1948).
[176] TNA, CO 717/170/2, 'FARELF Sitrep. 39' (01-07 April 1949); TNA, CO 717/170/2, 'FARELF Sitrep. 58', 20-(26 August 1949).
[177] Stockwell (1992), p. 111.
[178] Ibid.
[179] TNA, CO 1022/148, 'Note of a conference between senior officials and the Malay Chief Ministers' (26 October 1951).
[180] TNA, CO 537/5417, 'Report of the Police Mission to Malaya March 1950', Kuala Lumpur, 1950.
[181] Cited in A. Short, p. 159.
[182] TNA, CO 537/5417.

opposite of Gray. As Commissioner of the London Police, Young reflected metropolitan democratic policing and not the Palestinian paramilitary approach.[183]

The prescription for Malaya's ailments lay in the cooperation of the Chinese population and fostering community participation in policing. A meeting between Gray and community leaders revealed the challenges facing the police.[184] The Chinese leaders felt that the Malay-centric bias of the British was reflected in the composition of the police and their treatment of Chinese people. One observer commented that officers found it 'hard to be courteous and forbearing' as the police were 'almost entirely composed of Malays who do not speak Chinese and who, generally speaking, are unsympathetic to Chinese problems.'[185]

Several explanations are presented regarding the unwillingness of Chinese to participate in policing. Firstly, people were hesitant to join a force that was Malay in composition. Perceptions of police partiality were prevalent, an understandable observation considering the Chinese focus of the counterinsurgency campaign. Secondly, participation in Malayan institutions and elections was limited, with Chinese voters only constituting 11% of the electorate in the 1955 elections. Thirdly, a general apathy towards state security services was explained as an inheritance from overseas Chinese who had experienced state oppression in China.[186]

To overcome these challenges, pay and conditions of service were improved, a focus on community policing was reintroduced, and equipment and vehicles were improved.[187] Policing was aligned with the wider counterinsurgency 'hearts and minds' campaign by rebranding the 'Force' as a 'Service'; increasing Chinese recruitment; decentralising services; and aligning citizenship with service.[188] A recruitment drive attempted to encourage more Chinese men to join and Chinese officers and Mandarin speaking British officers were dispatched from Hong Kong.[189] In July 1951, the Officers' Language School was established.[190] Chinese recruitment remained a significant challenge and of the 400 recruits

[183] Ramakrishna (2014), pp. 58-59.
[184] Stockwell (1992), pp. 114-115.
[185] TNA, CO 1022/148, 'Commissioner Gray notes on "Conference with Chief Ministers of the Malay States"' (26 October 1951).
[186] Stockwell (1992), p. 115 & 177.
[187] Ibid., p. 115.
[188] Cloake, p. 233.
[189] TNA, CO 537/6007, 'Federal Government Press Statement, 19th December 1950' in 'Imposition of collective punishment on local inhabitants who fail to render assistance' (1950).
[190] Ramakrishna (2014), p. 57.

expected to join in June 1952 only 36 enrolled as officers.[191] By November 1953 there were only 1,824 Chinese in comparison to 19,729 Malays.[192] One review concluded that the police remained ineffective due to this imbalance and that officers were as likely to resort to force as diplomacy.[193] Poor decentralisation contributed to mistrust as officers would attend crimes from great distances rendering their responses ineffective. People were hesitant to provide intelligence or express interest in joining the police as their safety from insurgent reprisals could not be guaranteed. Despite attempts to 'normalise' policing experiences the ongoing counterinsurgency role of the police resulted in continued militarisation; and a lack of crime prevention and detection that added to the sense of injustice held within the Chinese community.[194]

Early 1952 assessments concluded that this failed relationship had fostered a sense of general Chinese culpability within the Malayan Police. As MNLA guerillas were almost entirely Chinese, officers regarded 'all Chinese as hostile'. Officers believed that there was 'no use being soft with them' as Chinese communities would only respond to 'even stronger force' than the insurgency could present.[195] Briggs and Gray's coercive approach saw force as key to deterring Chinese support for the MCP. Challenges also stemmed from undertrained Malay officers, particularly the Special Constables.[196] Police mistreatment/malfeasance was a significant recruitment tool as fear of arrest, imprisonment and deportation was a motivator for Chinese to join the insurgency.[197]

From a 'Force' to a 'Service': Population-Centred Police Reform Under Young and Templer

To combat the disconnection between the Malayan Police and the Chinese population, Col. Young adopted a new population-centric approach and declared that 'the police must be part of the people and the people part of the police'.[198] *Operation Service* was mounted to foster public acceptance of the new approach and the 'Force' was rebranded as a 'Service'.[199]

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[191] TNA, CO 1022/149, 'Monthly Review of Chinese Affairs' (August 1952).
[192] TNA, CO 1022/169, 'Strength of whole-time police force in Malaya' (1952-53).
[193] TNA, CO 1030/168, 'Reports of the Inspector General of Colonial Police' (1955-56).
[194] Ibid.
[195] Ramakrishna (2014), pp. 57-58.
[196] Ramakrishna (2014), p. 58.
[197] TNA, WO 291/1781, 'Study for reasons for entering the jungle among Chinese communist terrorists in Malaya: Pt. IV "Conclusions"' (1954).
[198] Quoted in Ramakrishna (2014), p. 59.
[199] Cloake, p. 233; Stockwell (1992), pp. 115-116.

New directives outlined reorientation towards criminal investigation rather than paramilitary actions. Officers were encouraged to return to collecting evidence and conducting interviews rather than relying on Emergency arrest powers; and abandon the 'friend and foe alike' mentality towards the Chinese.[200] Officers were encouraged to act not as soldiers, who were trained to respond swiftly to threats with deadly force, but instead with poise and consideration.[201]

To promote this new agenda, 60,000 officers were retrained in 'comprehensive basic training'.[202] Collective punishment was abandoned in 1953 and so-called 'White Areas' were demarked where restrictions could be lifted.[203] Officer promotions were linked to the 'relationship with and attitude to the public'.[204] Officers visited schools and youth centres; and police stations were renamed from *rumah pasong* (house of incarceration) to *balai polis* (house of the police).[205] Further community-oriented reforms included the dissolution of the much-maligned Specials.[206] Beginning in Malacca State in May 1952, week-long civic courses were arranged at government and police facilities; and sketches helped demonstrate some of the problems and solutions that could be adopted.[207] Housing was improved, as was access to medical and educational services. In 1952, 55 Malay-Mandarin speaking officers were recruited and by January 1953, 330 Assistant Resettlement Officers were created.[208]

Summary

In summary, policing was crucial to ending the Malayan insurgency, despite early deficiencies. The police, largely Malay and lacking ties to the Chinese community, were a pre-conflict source of grievance, reinforcing ethnic divides. During the conflict's early phase, they adopted a coercive, paramilitary role, relying on mass arrests and sweeps that produced

[200] Arthur Young, 'Young Papers: The Duties of the Police' and 'Malaya' (1967), citied in: Ramakrishna (2014), p. 59.
[201] Arthur Young, 'Young Papers: The Duties of the Police' and 'Malaya' (1967), citied in: Ramakrishna (2014), p. 59.
[202] TNA, CO 1022/168, 'Federation of Malaya Savingram No. 1377', (10 July 1953).
[203] Ramakrishna (2002a), pp. 136-139.
[204] Young, 'Malaya', cited in Ramakrishna (2014), p. 65.
[205] Officers were encouraged to provide community support and resultantly 10,000-20,000 'deeds of service' were recorded within twelve months. Ramakrishna (2014), pp. 64-65.
[206] TNA, CO 1022/169, 'Federation of Malaya Savingram 1601', 19th September 1953; and 'Federation of Malaya Savingram 2455' (12 December 1952).
[207] Ramakrishna (2002a), pp. 150-151.
[208] MNA, Dept. of Chinese Affairs, File No. 164: 'Acting Chief Secretary to All *Mentri Besars* and Resident Commissioners' (08 March 1952).

little intelligence, fuelling resentment and even recruitment to the MCP. Col. Young's reforms marked a shift toward community policing and restoring law and order, helping to rebuild trust and generate useful intelligence. However, limited Chinese recruitment to the force reflected ongoing challenges in legitimising the security sector.

With the immediate impacts of security prioritisation examined, we now turn to its medium-term legacies in post-conflict Malaya

4.4 The Security Forces After Independence

We turn now to the assessment of Malaysia's security forces after independence to better understand the consequences of priortising security reform during the Malayan Emergency and into the 'Second Emergency' of the late twentieth century.

Civil-Military Relations in Malaysia

Today, Malaysia has maintained stable civil–military relations, with no coup attempts in its 67-year history. This is attributed to effective civilian control, military loyalty to the monarchy, and consistent ethnic-Malay dominance across government and security institutions. The 2022 General Elections occurred without interference by the security services and were generally observed to be free and fair.[209] Military subordination to the government is outlined in the Malaysian Federal Constitution, with Part 10 (Public Services) of Article 137 (The Armed Forces Council) outlining that all matters pertaining to military command and control are the responsibility of the Armed Forces Council (AFC).[210] Membership of the AFC is a balance of armed forces officers and civilian leaders, with the civilian Chairman of the AFC drawn from the ruling party.[211] Oversight and tasking of the AFC is provided by the Minister of Defence who is currently the Deputy Prime Minister.[212] Defence policy formulation is a cooperative approach between the Malaysian Armed Forces

[209] Ibid.
[210] Azman Ayob, 'Good Civil-Military Relations in Malaysia: Contributory Factors', *Journal of Media and Information Warfare*, 2:1 (2009), pp. 63-64.
[211] Ibid., p. 64.
[212] Government of Malaysia, *Malaysian Constitution* (Kuala Lumpur: MDC Publications, 1994), p. 115; Ayob, pp. 68-69.

(MAF) leadership and the civilian government, with parliamentary scrutiny of policy orientation and budgetary concerns such as procurement.[213]

While pay and conditions for soldiers are challenging, the government makes efforts to improve salaries regularly, provide sufficient budgets for arms, equipment and training; and modern facilities such as barracks.[214] Public appreciation for the armed forces is evident in festival traditions, where civilians send food and gifts to soldiers, reinforcing their role as part of the community. This practice, supported by the government and organised by BAKTI, highlights civilian-military solidarity.[215]

The loyalty of the armed forces can however be explained beyond tributes or constitutional obligation. Ethnicity plays a vital role in shaping the relationship between the MAF, civil government and wider society. At the core of the MAF is the Royal Malay Regiment (RMR), whose roots may be traced to 1933 when the first Experimental Squad was established.[216] The RMR is the finest fighting cadre in the MAF but reflects traditional Malay culture through unique uniforms and practices.[217] The moto of the RMR is *Taat Seia* or 'to stay loyal' which aligns with the Malay societal tenet of *pantang menderhaka*, meaning 'never go against' or 'never revolt against' authority.[218]

The armed forces are unlikely to threaten democratic governance, given the strong Malay dominance across civil society. Ethnic demographics remain similar to the colonial era, with Malay-Bumiputera comprising 50.1% and Chinese 22.6% of the population.[219] In Malaysia, it is widely known that the army is Malay-dominated, with limited Chinese participation. A 2022 report found non-Malays made up only 15.25% of the armed forces, including just 10% in the Air Force and 1.7% in the Navy.[220] Malaysia's national service

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[213] Dana Dillon, 'Contemporary Security Challenges in Southeast Asia', *Parameters* (Spring 1997) <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters/vol27/iss1/2/> [accessed 15 September 2020].
[214] Ayob, p. 69; Abdul Taiming, 'New RM646 million army base will strengthen Sabah security', *New Straits Times* (14 January 2022) <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2022/01/763045/new-rm646-million-army-base-will-strengthen-sabah-security> [accessed 27 June 2024].
[215] Ayob, p. 69.
[216] Ibid., p. 67.
[217] Alan The Leam Seng, 'Take of the songkok', *Straight Times* (06 May 2022) <https://api.nst.com.my/news/nation/2022/05/794040/tale-songkok> [accessed 28 June 2024].
[218] Ayob, p. 67.
[219] 'Ethnic Groups of Malaysia' *World Atlas* <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-of-malaysia.html> [accessed 28 June 2024].
[220] Dzuhailmi Dahalan, Ismi Arif Ismail, Jeffrey Lawrence D'Silva, Asnarulkhadi Abu Samah and Narul Akhtar Kamarudin, 'Managing Diversity in Malaysia: Readiness of Non-Malay Youths to Join the Malaysian Armed Forces', *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 12:7 (2022), pp. 1897-1898.

programme reflects broader military demographics, with 60% of conscripts being Malay and only 28% Chinese.[221] The RMR has only accepted one Chinese graduate into its ranks.[222] Similarly, one 2023 investigation found that federal government employees are 78% Malay, with 80% occupying senior positions.[223] Gender equality is also a challenge, with only 849 female soldiers serving in its ranks in 2021.[224]

The current Commander-in-Chief, Gen. Mohammad Ab Rahman, is ethnic Malay, as were all 19 of his predecessors. The Joint Chiefs and their adjutants are also Malay, as are all civilian members of the MAF Council Group.[225] Malays have dominated Malaysian politics, with every Prime Minister since independence belonging to that group. Familial ties also link the military and government, as several Prime Ministers have appointed relatives or royal affiliates as Chiefs of Defence.[226] Malaysia's ceremonial monarchy supports elected governments, reinforcing institutional unity and military loyalty to the monarchy, state, and Malay majority. This reduces the risk of ethnically driven coups. The MAF maintain strong civilian relations, with no concerns noted in US HRRs (2019–2023).

The MAF's post-independence professionalism is partly due to its ongoing ties with the UK. British advisors supported counterinsurgency during the Second Emergency and aided the transfer of authority after independence. UK officers continue to serve as advisors and liaisons within the MAF; and today, the British forces conduct joint exercises in Malaysia as a part of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).[227]

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[221] 'Military in Malaysia', *Facts and Details* <https://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Malaysia/sub5_4d/entry-3679.html> [accessed 28 June 2024].

[222] Sando Ram, '"Until the end of my life" – Chinese Commando Who Completed Malaysia's Gruelling Training', *SAYS* 30 April 2024 <https://says.com/my/news/lt-m-chan-ming-youn-only-chinese-commando-training> [accessed 28 June 2024].

[223] Kua Kia Soong, 'On DAP, the civil service and reforms', *Malaysia Now* (13 February 2023) <https://www.malaysianow.com/opinion/2023/02/13/on-dap-the-civil-service-and-reforms> [accessed 28 June 2024].

[224] UN, 'Experts on the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women Commend Malaysia on Legislation to Address Gender-Based Violence, Ask about Female Genital Mutilation and Citizenship', *UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights*, 22 May 2024 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2024/05/examen-de-la-malaisie-devant-le-cedaw-tout-en-saluant-des-progres-considerables-les> [accessed 26 June 2028].

[225] 'Malaysian Armed Forces Council Group: Meeting Members', *mod.gov.my* <https://www.mod.gov.my/index.php/en/about-us/management-team/malaysian-armed-forces-council-group> [accessed 28 June 2024].

[226] Ayob, p. 66.

[227] UK-MoD, 'Defence Minister Baroness Goldie reaffirms UK commitment to Malaysia', *Ministry of Defence Press Release* (30 March 2023) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/defence-minister-baroness-goldie-reaffirms-uk-commitment-to-malaysia> [accessed 28 June 2024]; UK-MoD, 'UK underlines strong Indo-Pacific relationships as Defence Minister visits Malaysia and Thailand', *Ministry of*

Post-War Policing: Civil Rights and Policing in the 'Second Emergency' and Beyond

Within two years of Templer's and Young's arrivals, Malayan policing had shifted significantly towards a population-centric model. Rebuilding trust with the Chinese community was key to improving intelligence and weakening insurgent support. Police numbers were reduced from 47,601 in 1955 to 36,260 by July 1958.[228] However, the 'Service' continued to maintain a significant paramilitary character. Whilst the MCP's cause had been largely undermined by independence, elements continued to operate along the Malay-Thai border – and from 1955 to 1956, paramilitary Police Special Squads were increased from 22 units to 50. British special forces continued anti-insurgent operations and to train the highly effective but controversial civilian defence unit the *Senoi Pra'aq*. These units continued to operate throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s.[229]

The ongoing need for paramilitary policing is reflective of what has now become known as the 'Second Emergency', where remnants of the insurgency reorganised as the Communist Party of Malaya (later Malaysia, CPM) and continued to operate in southern Thailand until 1988/89.[230] The second emergency was predominantly a subversion campaign that employed assassination and propaganda rather than confrontation.[231] In response, emergency legislation was entrenched in national law through the creation of the Internal Security Act (ISA) that empowered officers to arrest any persons suspected of threats to national security. Individuals are today subject to detention for up to 60 days without trial, and a further two years without judicial review.[232]

Defence Press Release (14 May 2024) <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-underlines-strong-indo-pacific-relationships-as-defence-minister-visits-malaysia-and-thailand#:~:text=UK%20Defence%20Minister%20The%20Earl%20of%20Minto%20said%3A&text=The%20Indo%2DPacific%20is%20critical,region%20remains%20free%20and%20open.> [accessed 28 June 2024].

[228] With the Korean War reaching its stalemate in 1953, profits from that conflict rapidly diminished. See: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 'Federation of Malaya Annual Report, 1955 & 1956' (HMSO: London & Kuala Lumpur, 1957) <https://archive.org/details/b31416172> [accessed 20 September 2020], p. 293.

[229] A. Short, pp. 493-494.

[230] Ong Weichong, *Malaysia's Defeat of Armed Communism: The Second Emergency, 1968-1989* (London: Routledge, 2014).

[231] Gregor Bennet, 'Malaysia's "Second Emergency" (1968-1989), *Verso Blog* (May 2018) <https://www.versobooks.com/en-gb/blogs/news/3855-malaysia-s-second-emergency-1968-89> [accessed 20 May 2024].

[232] Amnesty International, 'Malaysia: Towards Human Rights-Based Policing', *Index: ASA 28/001/05* (April 2005) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/ASA28/001/2005/en/> [accessed 15 September 2024], p. 12.

The ethnic cleavages of Malaysian society were again revealed in May 1969 following the contentious electoral success of the CPM-backed Democratic Action Party.[233] The schism between Malays and Chinese exploded into post-election violence that left between 196 and 800 people dead.[234] The police response was forceful and around 80 people were killed by paramilitary police.[235] A curfew was imposed, mass-arrests conducted and censorship of foreign press enacted for a further two years. Parliament was suspended from May 1969 to February 1971, with a military council head by the President and senior Ministers controlling police and military actions.[236]

The ISA was used to justify such draconian impositions.[237] However, the background of those detained under its auspices today has changed from suspected communists to 'deviationist' Shia Muslim groups, journalists, activists and trade unionists; and alleged Islamist 'extremists' or 'terrorists'.[238] *Amnesty International* have accused the government of persecuting political rivals under the guise of internal security due to the wide scope and limited oversight of the ISA.[239]

The Malaysian Police have been severely criticised for the use of punitive force, arbitrary arrest/detention and actions that have led to perceptions of officers as '"enforcers" of a powerful executive' that has 'dominated without interruption' for decades.[240] Encounters with the police can be dangerous and criticism met with repression. Detainees risk ill-health due to prison conditions and denial of medical care; face potential torture; and bias towards

[233] Julian Lee, *Islamization and Activism in Malaysia* (Singapore: ISAS, 2010), p. 41.
[234] Official figures place casualties at 143 Chinese killed, 25 Malay, 13 Indian and 15 others whilst certain Western diplomatic sources estimated 600 killed and John Slimming calculating almost 800. Police were ordered to dispose of bodies as quickly as possible making accurate estimations difficult, with evidence of disused mines being used as mass graves and bodies being thrown into rivers. See: In-Won Hwang, *Personalised Politics: The Malaysian State under Mahathir* (Singapore: ISAS, 2003), p. 72; Karl von Vorys, *Democracy Without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), p. 364; John Slimming, *The Death of Democracy* (London: John Murray, 1969), pp. 47-49.
[235] Slimming, pp. 30-31.
[236] von Vorys, pp. 352-354; Slimming, pp. 54-56.
[237] Victor Ramraj and Arun Thiruvengadam, (eds.), *Emergency Powers in Asia: Exploring the Limits of Legality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 183.
[238] Amnesty International (2005) p. 13.
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid., p. 13 & pp. 20-22.

the Malay ethnic group is prevalent as is corruption.[241] The abuse of vulnerable groups such as women and juveniles has also been observed and continues to this day.[242]

4.5 Conclusion: Security and Counterinsurgency in the Malayan Emergency

In the following sections of this chapter's conclusion, we will engage with the research questions established in the introduction. We will commence with a discussion of the extent to which British COIN strategy in Malaya prioritised security and security sector reform to achieve success. This is followed by an assessment of the principles and tenets of counterinsurgency and security sector reform established in the literature review, from the perspectives of immediate-term impacts on armed insurgency and restoring stability; and from that of medium-term impacts or legacies for democratic governance and the users or recipients of security services.

Prioritisation of Security and Security Sector Reform in the Malayan Emergency

1. To what extent did British counterinsurgency prioritise security and security sector reform in the Malayan Emergency?

The Malayan Emergency presented a complex challenge for British colonial rule. The first research question explores how far British counterinsurgency prioritised security and police reform to defeat the communist insurgency. The conflict's protracted nature required balancing immediate security with long-term institutional reform that is key to assessing the strategy's effectiveness and legacy.

Rising violence in 1948, marked by attacks on Europeans and Malays, led to the June Emergency declaration. The initial British military response was inadequate, with too few

[241] Amnesty International (2005), pp. 15-20 & 24-43; Muhammed Mohan, 'Transparency International Malaysia Urges the Royal Malaysian Police to Embrace the IPCMC', *TransparencyInternationalMalaysia.org* <https://www.transparency.org.my/pages/news-and-events/press-releases/transparency-international-malaysia-urges-the-royal-malaysian-police-to-embrace-the-ipcmc> [accessed 20 May 2024]; USSD, 'Kenya 2022 Human Rights Report'.
[242] Amnesty International (2005), pp. 45-49.

troops and a low soldier-to-insurgent ratio, reflecting an underestimation of the MCP and MNLA threat. This exemplified a 'security first' approach, with officials like Creech Jones prioritising control over the Chinese population. The forced resettlement into Briggs' 'New Villages' was the clearest expression of this securitisation strategy. Early counterinsurgency efforts relied on boosting troop numbers, deploying British battalions, and recruiting Home Guard and Malay personnel. However, large-scale patrols and cordon operations proved ineffective, as insurgents evaded direct confrontations. Coercion was central to British counterinsurgency strategy, with officials endorsing force to secure compliance, often at the expense of legal norms. This underscored the tension between rule of law and effective action, as force was seen as essential to assert authority, deter support for insurgents, and instil control. Paramilitary policing became central to coercion during the Emergency with Commissioner Gray intensifying militarisation.

As the conflict progressed, British strategy shifted toward a more nuanced 'hearts and minds' approach, for which the Malayan Emergency is best known. By the early 1950s, it was clear that military force alone was insufficient. Gen. Templer recognised the need for civilian support, unifying command and improving civil-military coordination while promoting social initiatives. Still, security remained central, with increased use of force in free-fire zones, continued reliance on body counts, and state propaganda reinforcing legitimacy. Social measures, such as education and healthcare were introduced but as positive tools of coercion. Police reform was the clearest example of wartime SSR. Initially militarised to combat insurgency, the force was reoriented under Col. Young toward community policing, especially with the Chinese population. Efforts included decentralising duties, recruiting Chinese-speaking officers, and promoting accountability to improve intelligence and public trust. Yet, Chinese recruitment remained low, reflecting the long-term challenges of building legitimacy and cohesion.

Overall, British counterinsurgency prioritised security and SSR early in the conflict, with civil reforms following once basic stability was achieved. The resettlement of squatters and the Asli into 'New Villages' epitomised the securitisation of the population, reinforcing control but limiting legitimacy, particularly among Chinese communities. These strategies reflect a dual focus on enhancing security to reinforce government authority through military and police actions and reforming the security sector to improve its effectiveness and establish control over the state's territory and people. The priority of British counterinsurgency in Malaya was initially focused on security and security sector reform, later followed by policies

to address social and political grievances. While security was heavily prioritised, the limitations of this approach eventually led to reforms aimed at winning over the population and enhancing the effectiveness and legitimacy of the security forces.

The Impact of Prioritising Security in the Immediate-Term

2. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what were the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector reform on armed insurgency and restoring stability in the Malayan Emergency?

We now address the second research question, which assesses the impact of prioritising security and security sector reform on defeating armed insurgency and restoring stability. This section examines the interaction between security and counterinsurgency during the conflict phase to end violence and promote post-conflict stability. We revisit the principles of counterinsurgency outlined in the literature review to better understand how security-based approaches contribute to a successful COIN campaign, with the ultimate goal of restoring stability and fostering government legitimacy.

Nearly all counterinsurgency campaigns begin with poor security, which enables insurgents to recruit, gather resources, and target vulnerable areas using guerrilla tactics before potentially engaging in open conflict.[243] The role of the Malayan counterinsurgents was initially to improve security and prevent the MCP/MNLA from operating freely. This reflects the early 1948-1950 ‘counter-terror’ strategy. The poor security environment and initial response were partly due to insufficient intelligence about the MCP’s support base, grievances, and objectives, exacerbated by strained relations between the Chinese community and British colonial authorities after WW-II.

The initial focus on security in Malaya aimed to stabilise the environment and suppress the insurgency, but it often had detrimental effects on government legitimacy. The military and paramilitary approaches, focused on coercion, led to civil rights abuses, including mass arrests and capital punishments, which may have reinforced government

[243] For the three stages of insurgency, see: Mao Zedong, *On Protracted War* (1938).

authority but failed to foster legitimacy, especially within the Chinese community. Heavy-handed tactics alienated the squatter population and pushed innocent Chinese civilians into supporting the insurgency to escape security forces. While security improved, personal security for the Chinese was inconsistent, with severe punishments for non-cooperation. From 1950, a more coordinated strategy combined increased force with population control. The 'Briggs Plan' isolated Chinese communities from insurgents but also restricted their autonomy. Though framed as winning 'hearts and minds', the approach remained coercive, offering rewards for compliance. Special forces and conventional tactics improved security, but Chinese communities faced poor conditions in resettlement camps. A key positive was police reform. Initially marked by paramilitary excesses under Grey, policing deepened ethnic divides, Col. Young's arrival shifted focus to civil policing, improving intelligence and gaining Chinese support. Such reforms reduced reliance on Emergency Regulations and promoted fair, accountable policing to build legitimacy and trust.

Malaya provides some interesting insight into the utility of the law as a tool to pursue political objectives. As we have observed, there is a tension between upholding the rule of law and prosecuting an effective counterinsurgency campaign. British colonial authorities faced significant legal and ethical dilemmas when attempting to suppress insurgent violence. As Gurney's 1949 admission reveals that British authorities recognised their strategy involved legally questionable tactics such as extrajudicial killings and widespread detentions.

The rule of law was often subordinated to operational needs. Actions like forced resettlement, food denial, collective punishments, and extrajudicial shootings, though contradicting legal norms, were justified as necessary to undermine insurgent morale. The British relied heavily on Emergency Regulations, which granted sweeping powers that suspended basic legal protections and civil liberties. Mass arrests, detentions without trial, and collective punishment marked a shift from legal norms to authoritarian control. While effective in containing immediate threats, these measures damaged public trust, particularly within the ethnic-Chinese communities, and undermined the rule of law, weakening government legitimacy.[244] The continuation of Emergency Regulations through the ISA reflects ongoing use of the law as a tool of suppression to achieve political objectives, supported by the majority Malay population, who share the same enemies within minority groups.

[244] TNA, CO 537/4753, 'Statement by the High Commissioner for Malaya' (28 January 1949).

Returning to counterinsurgency principles, we note that the second tenet of the *AJP 3.27* manual is addressing the grievances that fuel insurgency. In Malaya, a key grievance of the Chinese population was their exclusion from citizenship and equal rights. The transition to independence in 1957 and the creation of Malaysia in 1963 addressed this by granting citizenship to all within the territory. Security was crucial for holding elections during the war, such as the 1955 Federal Legislative Council elections, and later the 1959 and 1964 parliamentary elections. The creation of the Federal Legislative Council fostered civil oversight and participation, a significant shift from previous British leadership. These elections, as noted in the literature review, demonstrated stability, and were aligned with UN and US Army guidelines for free and fair elections in a secure environment. While these elections were part of a successful COIN campaign that undermined the MCP, they did little to improve the political agency of the Chinese population, as the majority Malays later dominated Malaysia's politics and governance.

Despite the negative impact of coercive actions on perceptions of legitimacy, there is a strong link between prioritising security in the short term and promoting government legitimacy in the medium to long term. This aligns with the third maxim of the *AJP 3.27* manual, which emphasises the promotion of legitimate government. While forceful actions may harm legitimacy, they can be necessary to create an environment where a democratic government can emerge and be sustained without insurgent threat. A central feature of British counterinsurgency was the 'hearts and minds' strategy that is aimed at ensuring security, addressing grievances, and legitimising government. In practice, however, it often contradicted its humanitarian rhetoric, prioritising coercion over consent. The British openly acknowledged breaking legal norms to impose control, using fear and authority over persuasion. Reforms and genuine civilian engagement came later and remained largely symbolic.

Having examined the impact of security and security reform on the course of the war and the role that security plays in a counterinsurgency action, we now turn to our assessment of the medium-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector reform to defeat armed insurgency and foster legitimate democratic governance.

3. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what are the medium-term impacts or legacies of prioritising security and security sector reform for users and democratic governance in post-conflict Malaysia?

We begin by assessing the impact on democratic governance. As of August 2025, Malaysia has enjoyed 67 years of uninterrupted democracy, marked by elections, parliamentary processes, and judicial review. While the Barisan Nasional coalition dominated the first six decades, the 2018 election saw a peaceful transition of power to the Pakatan Harapan opposition coalition.[245] This coalition collapsed in 2020 but was able to restore a new coalition under Muhyiddin Yassin and later Ismail Sabri Yaakob.[246] During Malaysia's turbulent political period, the security services remained politically neutral and did not interfere with the 2018 transition of power to the opposition, despite their ethnic alignment with the pre-2018 governments.

While recent developments show improved ethnic representation, this was absent for decades after the Malayan Emergency. British COIN and SSR targeted Chinese communities, deepening the ethnic tensions central to the MCP's grievances. SSR reinforced Malay political dominance, aligning security institutions with majoritarian interests. Today, the Malay-dominated armed forces and police remain closely tied to the government and monarchy, leaving minorities marginalised. Malays dominate unelected civil service roles, reinforcing structural inequality; and ethnic homogeneity fosters patronage between the military, government, and civil service – where ties to elites blur lines between public service and political loyalty. To many Chinese, post-conflict security forces continued to appear as protectors of Malay dominance.

Emergency-era regulations and security structures persisted after 1960, embedding wartime powers into Malaysia's post-conflict governance. Rather than breaking from colonial authoritarianism, SSR reinforced executive dominance under a civilian-led, democratic

[245] John Funston, 'Malaysia's 14th General Election (GE14) – The Contest for the Malay Electorate', *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 37:3 (2019), pp. 57-83.
[246] Kai Ostwald, 'Malaysia 2020: The Impasse of Two-Coalition Politics', *ISEAS: Perspective* 25 (2020), pp. 1-8.

façade. The ISA is one of the most significant legacies of Emergency-era SSR. Originally drafted to replace colonial Emergency Regulations and address residual communist threats, its use quickly expanded. Today, the ISA allows for preventative detentions, warrantless arrests based on suspicion, and executive decision-making without parliamentary oversight. It became a tool of executive dominance, used to suppress political opposition as much as to combat insurgency. The broader ideological shift in Malaysia's conflict-era SSR was the normalisation of security as a primary political value, justifying extraordinary powers and civil liberties suppression. This legal continuity ensured Malaysia's post-independence governance retained authoritarian tools from the British era that are now used against internal enemies, political rivals, and minorities. Alongside legal reforms, Malaysia's SSR saw the ongoing militarisation of internal policing, which evolved in part into a paramilitary domestic security apparatus with strong executive ties. SSR aimed not to democratise security forces but to entrench them within the Malay-dominated political order, maintaining the security forces' protection of the regime.

As noted above, the wartime security sector stabilisation approach has posed challenges to democratic governance. These legacies have created structural consequences in Malaysia, where the majority Malays have strong representation, while ethnic minorities are excluded. The application of Galtung's theory of structural violence offers a powerful analytical tool for evaluating the medium-term impacts of SSR. Central to Galtung's theory is the distinction between *negative peace* – the mere absence of direct violence – and *positive peace*, which entails the presence of social justice, equality, and the fulfilment of fundamental human needs. By this measure, while British-led SSR efforts in Malaya successfully achieved negative peace by dismantling the insurgency and restoring basic state order, they largely failed to generate positive peace. Instead, the counterinsurgency approach entrenched forms of structural violence that perpetuated ethnic inequalities, political exclusion, and socioeconomic deprivation for minorities. The forced relocation of over 400,000 civilians illustrates the pursuit of negative peace at the expense of positive peace. Though militarily effective in cutting insurgent support, resettlements harmed community well-being, leaving lasting poverty, poor services, and isolation. These avoidable hardships reflect structural violence—peace without justice or dignity.

Continued Malay dominance in government has left minorities without strong representation, resulting in imposed peace rather than inclusive reconciliation. SSR has entrenched ethnic hierarchies, with Malays still dominating the security sector and Chinese

communities remaining distrustful. The lack of political participation and oversight sustains marginalisation and reflects ongoing structural violence. Legal and institutional reforms introduced during and after the Emergency further entrenched this structural violence. The ISA today allows for detention without trial and is used against political opponents and minority groups. Though initially enacted as temporary emergency measures, such legislation became normalised within Malaysia's legal system, reflecting a securitised approach to governance that prioritises state control over individual rights. This framework perpetuated a state of legal insecurity and political suppression rather than respect for civil liberties and equitable access to justice, where such conditions are antithetical to positive peace.

The Malayan case highlights the need to differentiate between ending violence and fostering sustainable peace in SSR and post-conflict reconstruction. While stability has prevailed since independence, the ongoing ethnic dominance of Malays in government and the security sector has suppressed popular discontent. The armed forces, for example, do not need to intervene in politics as their interests are already represented in governance and society. A focus solely on negative peace – such as body counts, captured territory, or disarmed insurgents – can obscure the persistence of injustices that lie beneath the surface. Positive peace requires long-term socio-political inclusion, equitable development, and human dignity. In Malaya, the British focused on stability and control through security sector stabilisation, neglecting historical grievances and inclusive governance. While military peace was achieved, it was neither holistic nor just, as enduring socio-economic disparities and the marginalisation of certain groups created a stable yet structurally violent peace.

Thus, the medium-term impacts of SSR during the Malayan Emergency exemplify the dangers of conflating security with peace. Structural violence, in Galtung's terms, serves as a warning that systems built upon coercion and exclusion to produce short term stability risk reproducing the very tensions they aim to resolve. For COIN-based SSR approaches to truly succeed, they must not only dismantle insurgent networks but also build institutions that empower all segments of society. Only then can peace be both lasting and legitimate.

In the following chapter we turn to the examination of the second counterinsurgency intervention of the 'Golden Age' of British Counterinsurgency, the Kenyan Emergency of 1952-1960.

Chapter 5: The Kenyan Emergency (1952 – 1960)

This chapter examines the British counterinsurgency response during the Kenyan Emergency (1952–1960) through the lens of security sector stabilisation and reform. It investigates the divergence between short-term efforts to re-establish order and the absence of long-term transformation in Kenya's security institutions. While stabilisation measures such as mass arrests, the expansion of paramilitary forces, and the implementation of emergency laws were successful in suppressing the Mau Mau insurgency and restoring colonial control, they did not address the structural deficiencies that had contributed to the conflict.

The distinction between stabilisation and reform is critical. Security sector stabilisation focuses on the immediate reassertion of state authority through the deployment of force, often in response to acute threats. By contrast, security sector reform involves the comprehensive restructuring of security institutions to ensure accountability, professionalism, civilian oversight, and respect for human rights. In Kenya, the British response overwhelmingly prioritised the former, enabling short-term tactical gains but entrenching patterns of coercion and politicisation that would endure into the post-independence period.

This chapter analyses the consequences of this approach, arguing that the British failure to invest in genuine reform allowed a militarised and repressive security architecture to take root. These institutions, designed to protect the regime rather than the population, were later appropriated by Kenya's postcolonial leadership to consolidate executive authority and suppress dissent. By contrasting the immediate operational gains with the long-term governance costs, this chapter underscores how the securitised logic of emergency rule undermined democratic development and state legitimacy in independent Kenya.

5.1 Origins and Grievances of the Mau Mau Insurgency

The state of emergency in Kenya was declared on 21st October 1952 and remained in place until 12th January 1960. The declaration was made in response to attacks on agricultural

plantations and settlements by the Mau Mau insurgency.[247] These attacks were motivated by the denial of political rights, land alienation and worsening living conditions.[248]

At the insurgencies peak, Mau Mau was constituted of 12-15,000 combatants. However, due to a dearth of intelligence at the conflict's outset, British estimates placed support for Mau Mau at nearly 1-1.5 million.[249] The insurgencies members were predominantly drawn from the Kikuyu ethnic group, that constituted nearly 15% the population. Political radicalisation of the Kikuyu emerged in the 1920s as a reaction to population increase and the enclosure of tribal land.[250] The 1915 Land Ordinance, Hut Tax and Poll Tax further reduced Kikuyu farmland to untenable levels.[251]

Political grievances fuelled the Mau Mau movement. The colonial government suppressed Kikuyu groups such as the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) due to its anti-colonial stance, popularity, and use of traditional oathing. Oathing was central to Kikuyu culture and later became a tool for both indoctrination and enforcing loyalty.[252] This difference was misunderstood by Europeans.[253] At the conflicts outset, the British viewed oathing as a superstitious practice but once it was noted that the system did bind the insurgency together, another misunderstanding resulted in the suspicion of all Kikuyu who had undertaken an oath.

100,000 Kenyans served in the Allied armed forces during WW-II.[254] Veilleux-Lepage notes the profound impact of the war on Kenyan veterans, who were 'no longer impressed by the mystique of the white man' and were 'more politically aware than their predecessors.'[255] The veterans had served alongside British troops who were drawn from similar impoverishment, and had 'seen for the first time [the British] as no more than equals.'[256]

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[247] Yannick Veilleux-Lepage and Jan Fedorowicz, 'The Mau Mau Revolt in Kenya: 1952-56', in *A History of Countering Insurgency: Vol. 1 From South Africa to Algeria, 1900 to 1954*, ed. by Gregory Fremont Barnes (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2015), p. 183.
[248] Randall Heather, 'Of Men and Plans: The Kenyan Campaign as part of the British Counterinsurgency Experience', *Conflict Quarterly* (Winter 1993), p. 17.
[249] Randall Heather, 'Intelligence and Counter-Insurgency in Kenya', *Intelligence and National Security*, 5:3 (1990), p. 58.
[250] Maloba Wunyabari, 'The Mau Mau Struggle in Kenya: A Historical Analysis of the Evolution and Impact of the Peasant Revolt', Ph.D. Thesis (Stanford University: Standford CA, 1998), p. 45.
[251] Veilleux-Lepage, pp. 179-180.
[252] Rodger Hughes, *Emergency in Kenya: Kikuyu and the Mau Mau Insurrection* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Development and Education Command, 1984), p. 9.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Veilleux-Lepage, p. 177.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Brian Lapping, *End of Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), p. 404.

Resultantly the KCA successor movement, the Kenyan African Union (KAU), and achieved popularity through a nationalist agenda that criticised the British colonial administration. At its peak, the KAU generated a 100,000 strong membership.[257]

During the war, peasant Kenyans saw economic gains as demand drove up prices.[258] This prompted severe urban migration, and Nairobi grew at a rate of 17% per year from 1941-48.[259] Spiking unemployment levels resulted in violence as youths mixed with disillusioned veterans. These gangs formed the urban nucleus of Mau Mau, as the unemployed were swayed by the nationalism of the KAU.[260]

The KAU's moderate position was quickly undermined by veterans who had remained loyal to the KCA. Concomitantly by 1948, mechanisation of the largest plantations had rendered swathes of Kikuyu labourers redundant, forcing the unemployed into the Central Province and Nairobi.[261] The *Anake a Forti*, or 'Forty Group' was established as the militant arm of the KAU and re-branded itself as anti-colonial and Kikuyu-supremacist.[262] However, as no coherent manifesto was ever produced, Mau Mau was perceived as atavistic and irrational and membership was proscribed in August 1950.[263] Severity and frequency of attacks increased dramatically in 1952 and by October, Governor Evelyn Baring signalled alarm at a 'planned revolutionary movement'.[264] A state of emergency was declared on 20th October 1952.

5.2 The Military Counterinsurgency Response

The Emergency began with the same indifference seen in early Malaya, but lacking ties to international communism, the East African conflict was treated as a minor irritation,

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[257] Mumford (2012), p. 39

[258] David Throup, *The Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1998), p. 8.

[259] Ibid., p. 10.

[260] Hughes, p. 9.

[261] Daniel Branch, *Defeating Mau Mau, Creating Kenya: Counterinsurgency, Civil War and Decolonization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 6.

[262] For a comprehensive examination of the political, social and economic causes of Mau Mau and a discussion of the 'myth' surrounding the actual and perceived grievances of the insurgency, see: David Throup, 'The Origins of Mau Mau', *African Affairs,* 84:336 (July 1985), pp. 399-433; Dane Kennedy, 'Constructing the Colonial Myth of Mau Mau', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 25:2 (1992), pp. 241-260.

[263] Bennett and Mumford, p. 84.

[264] TNA, CO 822/444, 'Assessment of strength of Mau Mau in Kenya' (October 1952).

prompting cruder suppression methods than in Malaya. As leadership in London increasingly focussed upon Cold War obligations from 1950 and simultaneously engaged in a withdrawal from empire, the conflict in Kenya emerged as one that Gen. Frank Kitson could only recall as 'a sideshow amongst sideshows.'[265] This apathy was shared by Secretary of State Oliver Lyttleton, who did not take 'a very alarmist view of the situation in Kenya.'[266]

The departure of Governor Mitchell in June 1952 resulted in a leadership vacuum that was only filled four months later by Baring. By the time of Baring's arrival, the policy of restricting membership to Mau Mau but not engaging with them militarily had alienated swathes of the Kikuyu population, whilst simultaneously allowing the insurgency to operate with impunity. Many who joined the insurgency did so to insulate themselves from the predatory actions of the insurgency rather than out of a sense of political motivation.[267]

A 1952 communiqué reveals concerns of a 'security and intelligence vacuum'.[268] Fears that Mau Mau might replace an independent government with an anti-European regime shaped the British response not as a Cold War imperative, but as reluctant support amid competing pressures from settlers, wealthy Kikuyu, and colonial elites. This indifference partly explains the blunt counterinsurgency tactics and the high death toll of nearly 23,000 suspected or active insurgents, reflecting the harshest aspects of the Malayan campaign.[269]

Further explanation is the use of effective propaganda, which portrayed the insurgency as localised and atavistic violence that delegitimised its underlying grievances. This framing reduced the Mau Mau cause to terror, while British disinterest stemmed from Kenya's perceived strategic insignificance.[270] A coordinated campaign characterised the conflict as an internal-ethnic conflict between landed and working-class Kikuyu and prevent perceptions of 'another Malaya' from arising.[271]

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[265] Kitson, p. 13.
[266] TNA, PREM 11/472, 'Telegram from Secretary of State for the Colonies, O. Lyttleton to PM 9th September 1952', in 'Criticism of delayed arrival in Kenya of new Governor Sir Evelyn Barring' (1952).
[267] Daniel Branch, 'The Enemy Within: Loyalists and the War Against Mau Mau in Kenya', *Journal of African Studies*, 48:2 (2007), pp. 291-315.
[268] TNA, CO 822/444, 'Top Secret: Letter from Sir Evelyn Baring to Secretary of State for the Colonies, Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttleton, 9 October 1952' (1952).
[269] Branch (2009), p. 5.
[270] Susan Carruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media and Colonial Counter-Insurgency, 1944 - 1960* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), pp. 144-147.
[271] TNA, CO 102/7, 'Letter from A.C.E. Malcolm to C.Y. Carstairs, 22 November 1952' (1952).

In theatre, this propaganda strategy unshackled the security forces to 'fight a nasty guerrilla war with good conscience' as perceptions of barbarism cultivated attitudes of revulsion.[272] The Lari Massacre of March 26th 1953 greatly contributed to this perception, where 120 Kikuyu civilians linked to the Home Guard were brutally killed in a Mau Mau raid.[273] Mau Mau killings were presented as 'terrorist acts' and contrasted against policing actions that were justified as 'counter-terror' operations to the public. [274] The result was the solidification of Mau Mau as 'apolitical terrorists.'[275] The presentation of Lari as an act of barbarism did much to drive indifferent Kikuyu to the government side, with Bennett and Mumford observing that 'loyalism as a political movement seemed a logical choice in terms of self-preservation.'[276]

As numbers of violent attacks against settler property increased in January 1953, a series of increasingly desperate communiques expressed concerns over a 'second Malaya', resulted in the installation of Gen. William Hinde as Chief Staff Officer.[277] However, as a WW-II European theatre commander, there is little indication of counterinsurgency expertise in Hinde's resume.[278] Hinde's tenure was short-lived and characterised by mass-arrests, detentions, and paramilitary policing.[279] Hinde was replaced in May 1953 by Gen. George Erskine, whose installation reflected growing concerns of a pan-East African uprising.[280] Mirroring the installation of Gen. Templer as the 'Supremo' in Malaya, Erskine was appointed as commander of both the civil and military responses.[281]

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[272] Bruce Berman, 'Nationalism, Ethnicity and Modernity: The Paradox of Mau Mau', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 25:2 (1991), p. 192.

[273] Veilleux-Lepage, p. 189. See: *Pathe Newsreels*, 'Mau Mau - Lari Massacre Trial 1953', New York Times, 29 March 1953, 70:27 (20 April 1953) <https://www.britishpathe.com/video/mau-mau-lari-massacre-trial> [accessed 08 July 2021].

[274] Melissa Tully, 'All's well in the colony: Newspaper coverage of the Mau Mau Movement, 1952-1956', in *Narrating War and Peace in Africa*, ed. by Toyin Falola and Hetty Haar (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2010), p. 65.

[275] Ibid., p. 66.

[276] Branch (2009), pp. 56-9; Bennett and Mumford, p. 93.

[277] TNA, WO 216/560, 'Appointment of Brigadier Hinde to co-ordinate and direct operations against Mau-Mau, Dec. 1952 – Jan 1953' (1953).

[278] Bennett (2013), p. 17; Branch (2009), p. 91.

[279] TNA, PREM 11/472, 'Cabinet Defence Committee, Kenya: Report by the Chiefs of Staff' (27 February 1953); Wiliam Jackson, *Withdrawal From Empire: A Modern View* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), pp. 105-106.

[280] W. Jackson, p. 107; A.S. Clearly, 'The Myth of Mau Mau and its International Context', *African Affairs,* 89:355 (April 1990), pp. 227-245.

[281] Weigart, p. 31.

The influence of Malaya may be observed in the approach adopted from April 1954. The military response was reorientated away from ineffective large-scale sweeps to targeted patrols and ambushes.[282] This reflected the relatively sparse manpower available to the army in comparison to Malaya, and alternative methods of recruitment were sought. The induction of SEPs in Malaya into Special Operation Volunteer Units (SOVFs) was transplanted to the Kenyan theatre. Sanctioned in June 1954, Gen. Kitson noted that 'there was in fact nothing original about the idea itself (of SOVFs), variations of which have been used in countless wars throughout history.'[283] A Special Methods Training Center (SMTC) was established in July 1954 and later expanded by May 1955. Kitson and Detective Superintendent Ian Henderson established five Special Forces Teams comprised of ten former insurgents and a European officer per team.[284]

An examination of relevant archives reveals that the utility of SOVFs or 'pseudo gangs' is undeniable, with Gen. Gerald Lathbury noting that turned insurgents were 'the most effective weapon against the terrorists', which is supported by his decision to expand the SMTC in May 1955.[285] SOVFs offered effective intelligence, though their ranks were filled through coercion, with many joining under threat of prison or execution. The SOVFs themselves served as examples that SEPS could be treated relatively fairly upon capitulation. Henderson supports this, noting that a group of captured insurgents 'fighting against us yesterday, became a tamed gang fighting for us today' when faced with their former comrades. Henderson also agrees that coercion played a significant role in turning fighters, noting: 'We were not exactly converting these desperate men, but we were certainly recruiting them.'[286]

With limited rural manpower, the counterinsurgency shifted to urban areas after April 1954. *Operation Anvil*, the war's key urban operation, began on 24 April, targeting Nairobi as the suspected Mau Mau command hub.[287] Echoing Malaya's early mass arrests, *Anvil's* success is questionable. Of 24,000 detained, only 206 were convicted and 2,416 deported. While it reduced Mau Mau presence in Nairobi, many insurgents escaped to forest

[282] Mockaitis (2009), pp. 222-223.
[283] Kitson, p. 49.
[284] White, p. 619.
[285] TNA, WO 236/20, 'The Kenya Emergency, May 1955 - November 1956: A Report by Lt-General Sir Gerald Lathbury' (1956).
[286] Ian Henderson and Philip Goodheart, *The Hunt for Kimathi* (London: Pan, 1962), p. 124.
[287] TNA, WO 236/18, 'The Kenya Emergency, June 1953 - May 1955: A Report by General Sir George Erskine' (1955).

strongholds. *Anvil* also reinforced perceptions that the British could not, or would not, distinguish Mau Mau from the wider Kikuyu population – likely pushing many innocent Kikuyu toward the insurgency.[288]

The rural campaign should also be considered ineffective. Following the mass-detentions of *Anvil* and an exodus of Kikuyu from Nairobi, the population of the forested areas increased and resultantly so did perceptions of threat.[289] Commencing three years into the campaign, *Operation Hammer* involved 10,000 troops entering the Aberdare mountain region. [290] Free-fire zones were established in 'prohibited areas' as early as January 1953, but British forces had previously lacked the manpower to exploit them. *Hammer* was however not a demonstrable success: only 161 insurgents killed or captured, and Erskine begrudgingly admitted that 'I did not expect spectacular terrorist casualties, neither were they achieved'.[291] Further operations were conducted in the Mount Kenya region in March to April 1955, with *Operation First Flute* mustering a 20,000 soldiers to neutralise a force of 3,000 fighters. After two months, only 277 Mau Mau were killed or captured.[292] *Anvil* and *Hammer* illustrate how, despite Erskine's attempts to emphasise raids and ambushes, British strategy remained anchored in large-scale operations.

Justifying Breaches in the 'Minimum Force' Principle

The Kenyan Emergency's historiography does possess a particular defining characteristic that sets it apart from its sister-conflict in Malaya – the almost universal condemnation by scholars of the use of force.[293] Upon his arrival in Kenya in January 1953, Gen. Hinde outlined the importance of minimum force: 'We must heed the example of Malaya and ensure that repressive measures do not result in an unbridgeable gap of bitterness

[288] To add modern appreciation to this practice, the British and American forces in Iraq were criticised for their 'de-Baathification' policy that effectively excluded large swathes of Iraqi society from participation and forced them into the ranks of various terroristic groups which they ethnically and religiously identified with. See: Miranda Sissons, and Abdulrazzaq Al-Saiedi, 'A Bitter Legacy: Lessons of De-Baathification in Iraq', *International Center for Transitional Justice* (March 2013), pp. 9-13; Cherish Zinn, 'Consequences of De-Baathification', *Cornell International Affairs Review*, 9:2 (2016), pp. 80-100.

[289] For fears of expanding Mau Mau influence in rural areas, see: TNA, CO 822/778, 'Colonial Office: East Africa: Operation Hammer against Mau Mau terrorists in Kenya' (1954-55).

[290] TNA, WO 276/448, 'Anti-Mau Mau Operation Hammer 1' (1 January 1954 - 28 February 1955).

[291] TNA, WO 236/18.

[292] Ibid.

[293] See: D. Anderson (2005), pp. 289-328; Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Bodley Head, 2005).

between us and the Kikuyu.'[294] However, the use of beatings, torture and shootings were invaluable as coercive tools that encouraged an environment of fear. As Bennett notes: 'Fear became a strategic level for combating the insurgency' in Kenya.[295]

As seen in the Malayan Emergency, the idea of 'minimum force' was vague and supported by permissive laws. Newly uncovered archives have shifted the historiography, with events like Batang Kali casting British tactics as deliberately violent. As Mumford observed with regard to Kenya: 'Academic opinion on the British conduct in Kenya has been uniformly damning - arguably only assessments of conduct in Northern Ireland match the Kenyan case for indictments of widespread disregard for civilian rights.'[296] Elkins observes a purpose to violence directed against the Kikuyu was tantamount to 'state-sanctioned terror' that was, as Newsinger describes, employed with 'unprecedented ferocity'.[297] Report *FC0:141* in particular documents an array of deaths of internees at the hands of loyalist Kikuyu screeners and guards, most infamously at the Hola Camp in Adios.[298]

Food denial, restricted movement and arbitrary searches were all transplanted to Kenyan concentration camps; and acts of brutality included the removal of dead fighter's hands for fingerprinting.[299] Mumford supports this, highlighting the link between 'colonial perceptions of entering the savage African heart of darkness' and 'justifying savagery' through a 'civilising process'.[300]

From 1952 to 1958, 3,000 Kikuyu were tried for terroristic acts in hostile courts. 1,090 were executed by hanging.[301] Anderson noted that 'the powers of these courts were absolutely formidable' and that '[t]here were more hangings here [Kenya] than during the emergencies in Malaya, Cyprus and Aden put together'.[302] The American Consul-General in Nairobi Edmund Dorsz condemned the brutality, reporting that the 'arbitrary methods … are

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[294] Cited in David Percox, 'British Counter Insurgency in Kenya, 1952-56: Extension of Internal Security Policy or Prelude to Decolonisation?', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 9:3 (1998), p. 71.
[295] Huw Bennett, 'The Other Side of the COIN: Minimum and Exemplary Force in British Army Counter-Insurgency in Kenya', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 18:4 (2007), p. 647.
[296] Mumford (2012), p. 68.
[297] For 'state-sanctioned terror', see: Elkins (2005), p. 73. For 'unprecedented ferocity', see: John Newsinger, 'Minimum Force, British Counter-Insurgency and the Mau Mau Rebellion', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 3:1 (1992), p. 50.
[298] TNA, FCO 141/6332, 'African Affairs: Detainees and Detention Camps, Complaints and Petitions, Gathigenri Incident' (1957).
[299] TNA, WO 32/15834, 'Court of Enquiry: Kenya' (December 1953).
[300] Mumford (2012), p. 70.
[301] D. Anderson (2005), pp. 6-7.
[302] Cited in: Stephen Cook, 'Whitehall put in the Dock over Kenyan Hangings', *The Guardian* (01 December 1999) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/dec/01/3> [accessed 18 June 2021].

also playing into the hands of the Mau Mau by alienating the good-will of the law-abiding Africans'.[303] Governor Baring also raised certain concerns over what he described as the 'inhuman methods' in February 1953 and but was only reassured that Whitehall was 'determined to do all possible to prevent such excesses and to deal with them, if allegations are substantiated'.[304]

Lyttleton would later divert attention from a state-wide strategy of terror to more individual failings, as abuses were attributable to 'the breakdown of the quality of mercy under strain, or to panic in men of low intellectual capacity or low personal courage.'[305] A 1953 communiqué from Erskine illuminates the indemnification of senior officers from indiscriminate shootings.[306] However, in the same testimony Erskine provides clear qualification, stating that the majority of violence was perpetrated by African security officers.[307] Perhaps more telling is Erskine's interpretation of how predominantly British units failed to conduct themselves with propriety due to the distance between commanders and units.[308] However, that these units remained within the British chain of command and that conditions in camps were set by the British, was irrelevant in Erskine's opinion.[309]

The following section is an examination of the role that mass-detention and rehabilitation played in the Kenyan iteration of coercive population control.

Population Control: Detention, Resettlement and Rehabilitation as Levers of Force and Coercion

By mid-1953, the Malayan population control strategy had started to produce tangible results and the Briggs Plan was adapted to combat Mau Mau. Newly penned 'Emergency

[303] Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 'The Consul-General at Nairobi (Dorsz) to the Department of States, Subject: Growing Concern over Mau Mau Activities (10 October 1952), Vol. 10', Part 1: African and South Asia (1952-54).
[304] For the exchange of communiqués, see: TNA, CO 822/471 (11 and 12 February 1953).
[305] Oliver Lyttleton, *The Memoires of Lord Chandos*, (London: The Bodley Head, 1962), p. 402.
[306] TNA, FCO 141/6301, 'African Affairs: Detention Camps' (May 1957).
[307] Ibid.
[308] Ibid. This conclusion was echoed in the investigation following the Hola Camp massacre on 3rd March 1959, where eleven detainees were killed by Kenyan guards. British investigators attributed the violence to ethnic tensions and a desire for revenge. See: TNA, CAB 21/2906, 'Cmd. 778: "Documents relating to the deaths of eleven Mau Mau detainees at Hola Camp"' (1959).
[309] TNA, FCO 141/5667, 'Emergency: Unrest Mau-Mau, Detainees and Detention Camps - Petitions and Complaints' (January 1953).

Detained Persons Regulations' of 1952/53 were copies of Malayan 1948 counterparts.[310] An extensive detention system, known as 'the Pipeline,' was established to rehabilitate detainees through vocational training and counter-indoctrination programs.[311] Violent coercion was a feature of the rehabilitation process, with one 1957 report noting that 'resistance of these men breaks down quickly ... under a form of psychological shock.'[312] Many detainees were employed as unpaid labourers in civil infrastructure and agricultural projects.[313] Indeed, one report reveals that the 'prime responsibility' of the camps was not rehabilitation through education but to promote 'confession and obedience' as the 'best visas for an unhindered journey home' for detainees.[314]

The 'pipeline' was comprised of 100 facilities and by the conflicts end in 1960, over 80,000 Kikuyu had been interned. In the opening 48 hours of *Operation Anvil*, 11,600 people were screened in a single province, producing 8,300 detentions. By the conclusion of *Anvil*, 50,000 Kikuyu had been screened, resulting in 24,000 detentions including 2,150 women and 4,000 children. Of these arrests, only 206 detainees were ever convicted.[315] Prison camp conditions were punitive and coercive, with the petitions of detainees outlining: 'Improper feeding and discrimination difference in detainees rationing', 'brutality', a lack of 'leisure facilities', poor 'medical facilities' and 'denial of rights.'[316] Only 37 Rehabilitation Officers and 87 Assistants were employed to cover 100 camps.[317]

Forced labour accompanied mass-resettlement.[318] £7m was allocated to modernisation projects and additional £5m was distributed for agricultural projects.[319] However, the reality

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[310] Elkins (2005), pp. 102-106.
[311] Carloine Elkins, 'The Struggle for Mau Mau Rehabilitation in Late Colonial Kenya', *International Journal of African and International Studies*, 33:1 (2000), pp. 24-26; Weigart, pp. 30-31.
[312] TNA, FCO 141/6303, 'Preliminary Progress Report 23-12-57' in: 'Kenya: detainees and detention camps' (January 1957 - December 1958).
[313] Such examples include the Embakasi Airport that was built by prisoners from the Embakasi Prison or the Swynnerton Plan that drafted prisoners into agricultural work details. See: John Oucho, *Undercurrents of Ethnic Conflict in Kenya*, African Social Studies Series 3 Vol. 3, (Leiden: Brill 2002); Anderson (2005), p. 294.
[314] TNA, FCO 141/6303.
[315] Anthony King, *Command: The Twenty-First Century General* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2019), pp. 194-96. To contextualise the scale of the detentions, at the high-water mark of the communist insurgency in Malaya only some 1,200 detainees were awaiting interrogation in prisons. See: R. Heather (1990), pp. 70-72.
[316] TNA, FCO 141/5667.
[317] Hansard, HC DEB 'Detention Camps (Rehabilitation Officers)' Vol. 563 cc170-2 (23 January 1957). <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1957/jan/23/detention-camps-rehabilitation-officers> [accessed 09 June 2024].
[318] Carruthers (1995), p. 156.
[319] Percox, pp. 64-65.

was the forced resettlement of over one million people into 854 new villages.[320] Academic perspectives on resettlement are damning. Percox concluded that the primary purpose of resettlement was 'to disrupt the activities of the insurgent supply network' who relied on the villages spread along the forest fringes.[321] Anderson observes that the resettlement programme was 'little more than concentration camps to punish Mau Mau sympathisers.'[322] Mumford notes that 'the benefits of this approach seem to have been dwarfed by the degenerate effects' of poor camp conditions, ill-treatment of prisoners and food denial – that had a radicalising effect on those not already committed to Mau Mau.

5.3 The Police Counterinsurgency Response

Policing reform was reflective of the wider dichotomy in professional identity between the police as auxiliaries of the armed forces or as servants of the community.[323] Firstly, at the outbreak of insurgency the police maintained its pre-WW-II paramilitary posture that defended the colonial regime and its racial hierarchy.[324] The continuation of paramilitary policing after World War II was due to reinvigorated imperialism to regain lost possessions; to combat communist expansion in post-war vacuums; and to counter the disruption to societies of returning colonial authorities.[325] As in Malaya, new officers were drawn from European militaries or from the paramilitarised Palestine Police.[326] The use of tear-gas, live fire and armoured car assaults during the Mombasa 1947 strikes, and the Nairobi 1949 and 1950 strikes were indicative of the pre-emergency tactics employed by the Kenyan Police.[327]

Policing was divided between the government's approved providers such as the regular police, and informal providers sponsored by their communities or workplaces.[328]

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[320] Mumford (2012), p. 59.
[321] Percox, p. 62.
[322] D. Anderson (2005), p. 294.
[323] Bennett and Mumford, p. 86.
[324] For attempts at community-based reform, see: Anthony Clayton and David Killingray, *Khaki and Blue: Military and Police in British Colonial Africa* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Centre for International Studies, 1989), pp. 4-6. For the reality, see: Bennett and Mumford, p. 86.
[325] Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonisation, 1918-1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 95; Throup (1992), p. 127.
[326] Georgina Sinclair, *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and the Imperial Endgame, 1945-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 146.
[327] Clayton and Killingray, p. 115.
[328] Dagmar Engels and Shula Mars, *Contesting Colonial Hegemony: State and Society in Africa and India* (London: British Academic Press, 1994), p. 251.

Tribal police oversaw 'African Areas', with District Commissioners serving as tribal leaders, police heads, and magistrates. This politicised policing, as local forces followed tribal orders, deferring to state police only for major crimes or those involving Europeans.[329]

From 1954, the police were employed as the primary counterinsurgency institution and the Colonial Office believed that there was opportunity for population-centred police reform. The reorientation of the Malayan Police as a 'service' was highlighted, and training for community policing activities was recommended.[330] However, the District Commissioners and Commissioner Gray resisted reform.[331] Prevailing opinions believed that victory would require increased 'fear of the consequences of adhering to Mau Mau'.[332] Police numbers were expanded to 12,649 regulars and 9,883 reservists.[333]

Despite the assistance of Col. Young from Malaya, Bennett and Mumford observe that 'the paramilitary approach dominated policing because the wider strategy … relied on fear instead of justice.'[334] Emergency legislation was repressive, and provided the police with unlimited powers of arrest, detention and destruction of property.[335] Police repression was rife.[336] The brutal Mau Mau attack on Lari was portrayed as the work of a savage enemy. In response, police backed military actions with mass arrests, widespread beatings, and forced relocations targeting suspected supporters.[337]

By the end of the Emergency in 1960, the police had swelled from 7,703 officers to 12,146 officers and this had an impact upon community-policing skill and competency.[338] Key policing challenges stemmed from an ongoing identity crisis. With paramilitary roots and leadership focused on enforcing Emergency Regulations, Kenyan police remained militarised. As the force expanded, it grew more repressive, not community-oriented. Unlike Malaya, Kenya saw no community reform, resulting in weaker intelligence gains and eroding

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[329] Ibid., p. 261; Sinclair, pp. 136-137.
[330] Sinclair, p. 170; Bennett and Mumford, p. 88.
[331] Bennett and Mumford, p. 89.
[332] TNA, CO 1037/36, 'Kenya Police Force: Reorganisation' (1954-57).
[333] TNA, CO 544/81, 'Administration Reports: Part II' (1954), p. 2-3 & 14.
[334] Colonel Young remained in country for only six months, resigning in December 1954 in protest at the ongoing militarisation of the police. See: Bennett and Mumford, p. 90.
[335] Ibid., pp. 90-91. The first major operation, *Jock Scott*, saw 8,500 arrests and 31,450 civilians screened in Nairobi. Future President Jomo Kenyatta was detained without trial for nearly nine years. See: L.S.B. Leakey, *Defeating Mau Mau* (London: Methuen Publishing, 1954), p. 2: Percox, p. 143.
[336] Following the 23rd November 1952 attack on the police outpost at Kiruara, 20 Kikuyu were killed, 30 wounded and 350 arrested. See: Throup (1992), p. 143.
[337] Bennett (2007).
[338] Police officers were recruited for their proficiency with a rifle and an understanding of counter-terror operations, not community-based policing activities. Ibid., pp. 101-102.

public trust. While expanding and professionalising the force was key, Kenya showed that armed policing struck a balance between coercion and security, proving effective for controlling the civil population.

5.4. The Security Forces after Independence

Kenya's post-independence armed forces have posed challenges to democratic governance, while also engaging in regime defence and political suppression. These dynamics underscore the enduring impact of Empire's end, particularly the colonial strategy of divide and rule, which fractured social cohesion, hindered ethnic integration, and compromised national stability. The unified command structure developed to counter Mau Mau later facilitated presidential dominance and in times of political threat, the executive increasingly tightened its grip on the security apparatus to ensure regime survival.

The first challenge faced by the newly formed Kenyan Defence Forces was the attempted secession of Northern Frontier District (NFD) and the conflict with the Somalian backed NFD Liberation Movement (NFDLM).[339] The counties of the NFD were the most marginalised of the indirectly ruled regions and the results of a 1962 referendum on self-determination were ignored by the central government.[340] This 'shifta' war culminated in a humbling stalemate and Kenyan leadership were certainly embarrassed by the defeat.[341] This led to the mid-'shifta' 1964 Lanet Barracks (Nairobi) mutiny, in which mid-ranking officers refused deployment orders to the front.[342]

British troops quelled the mutiny, but the underlying message was clear: Kenyatta's presidency and Kenya's broader security remained reliant on colonial institutions and British backing. A *Kenyanisation* of the armed forces was essential and Kenyatta strengthened ties with the security forces to target his political opponents. Opposition parties were dismantled, key leaders assassinated or imprisoned and protests suppressed.[343] The Kenyatta regime represented a 'pact of domination' between the elites, who were aligned with the British or

[339] Mumo Nazu, 'The Challenge of Securing Kenya: Past Experiences, Present Challenges and Future Prospects', *The Journal of Social Encounters*, 2:1 (2018), p. 41.
[340] Kenya National Archives, 'Report of the Northern Frontier District Commission Presented to Parliament', (London: HMG, 1962) in Nazu, p. 41.
[341] 'Shifta' means rebel or bandit. Nazu, p. 42.
[342] Timothy Parsons, 'The Lanet Incident, 2-25 January 1964: Military Unrest and National Amnesia in Kenya', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 40:1 (January 2007), pp. 51-70.
[343] Nazu, p. 43.

moderates that had emerged at independence, the executive and the security services to maintain a pre-independence state and social structure.[344] Nazu agrees with this assessment, observing that the priority for Kenyatta was regime security and not national priorities.[345]

A purge followed and officers aligned with the Kenyatta government were promoted to senior positions. Cullen identifies the *effendis* as a significant group of Emergency veterans who were rewarded with loyalty to the Kenyatta government and maintained significant influence over the army throughout the 1970s and 1980s. These officers were ethnic-Kikuyu and reflected Kikuyu dominance of politics and civil/security institutions.[346] In response to the political purges of rival politicians and increasing political and ethnic alignment of the army's leadership towards Kenyatta, Major General Joseph Ndolo staged an unsuccessful coup in 1971.[347]

Further alignment occurred following the absorption of Kenyatta's opposition, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), rendering Kenya as a one-party state. Kenyatta was installed a top-down security structure that placed all security institutions under the direction of the central government. All security related policy, tasking and specialised departments were collated into the executive office.[348] This was however counterproductive, as Kenyatta was unable to effectively employ the armed forces to drive off the Ugandan occupation of Kenyan territory following the emergence of despot Idi Amain.[349]

In October 1978, Daniel Moi was selected as President and formed the '*Nyayo*' KANU government. This occurred against the backdrop of ethnic and social divisions within the security forces.[350] Resultantly, on 1st August 1982 a group of Air Force officers titled the 'People's Redemption Council' (PRC) attempted to seize control of the government.[351] The coup was crushed but Moi tightened his grip on the security forces and continued to employ them as suppressive agents. National security policy under Moi was highly personalised and

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[344] Daniel Branch and Nicholas Cheeseman, 'The Politics of Control in Kenya: Understanding the Bureaucratic-Executive State, 1952-78', *Review of African Political Economy*, 33:107 (2006), p. 11.
[345] Nazu, p. 43.
[346] Poppy Cullen, 'Military decolonisation and Africanisation: the first African officers in the Kenyan army, 1957-1964', *Journal of East African Studies*, 17:3 (2023), pp. 515-533.
[347] Nazu, p. 43.
[348] Hilary Ng'weno, *Makers of a Nation: The Men and Women in Kenya's History* (Nairobi: Kenya History and Biographies Co. Ltd. & National Media Group, 2010) citied in Nazu, p. 44.
[349] Nazu, p. 43.
[350] Joseph Karimi and Philip Ochieng, *The Kenyatta Succession* (Nairobi: Transafrica, 1980).
[351] AP, 'President of Kenya Announces Crushing Attempted Coup', *New York Times* (2 August 1982) <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/02/world/president-of-kenya-announces-crushing-of-attempted-coup.html?pagewanted=all> [accessed 25 June 2024].

focussed upon regime survival: parallel intelligence networks, political purges, detentions without trial, torture and forced exile were all characteristics of security in the *Nyayo* government.[352]

The end of the Cold War ushered in the return of multi-party politics and with-it significant abuse of the security forces to ensure political longevity. Army units were employed to pressurise opposition communities, displacing whole settlements to gerrymander the voting demographic.[353] KANU won two electoral victories by employing the security forces as agents of coercion and by co-opting groups of criminals and youths for use as political agitators.[354] Personal security declined dramatically as local conflicts, cattle rustling and banditry in the northern region went unchecked. Militia groups such as the *Mungiki* and the Sabot Land Defence Force funded their activities with general criminality and smuggling, as the army were unable to maintain border integrity.[355]

On 30th December 2002, the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government was inaugurated under President Mwai Kibaki.[356] The Kibaki government's approach to regime security was not dissimilar to its predecessors and security forces used live fire to break up bitter demonstrations during the 2007 elections.[357] A coalition was formed with opposition leader Raila Odinga, but reforms intended to promote civilian control, professionalisation, accountability to civilians and politicians and greater transparency to the media were all shelved in favour of maintaining the status-quo.[358]

Since the dawn of the 21st century, the security forces are only able to partially provide personal security to the people; and maintain the sovereign integrity of the state and its borders.[359] Post-independence Kenyan governments have prioritised regime preservation over citizen security, weakening the effectiveness of the security forces.[360] Failures such as the 1998 US Embassy bombing and the 2013 Westgate Mall attack highlight critical lapses in intelligence and defence. Security structures remain geared toward political survival,

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[352] James Dianga, *Kenya 1982 - The Attempted Coup: The Consequences of One-Party Dictatorship* (London: PenPress Ltd., 2002).
[353] Nazu, p. 46.
[354] Walter Oyugi, *Politics and administration in East Africa* (Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers 1994).
[355] Nazu, p. 48.
[356] Ibid.
[357] 1,500 people were killed and a further 630,000 displaced. See: Nazu, p. 48.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Ibid., pp. 49-54.
[360] Ibid.

mirroring colonial-era priorities. The close ties between the executive, army, and police reflect Emergency-era command models. While military coups have ceased, this reflects not improved civil-military relations but a fusion of military and political power. Ethnic and political alignment further entrenches corruption, nepotism, and public mistrust, with the military serving the government before the state or its citizens.

Policing After Independence

As Kenya made its adjustment to independence, the leadership of the police underwent *Kenyanisation*. In October 1963, Gen. Wilson Boinett was appointed as the first Kenyan-born Intelligence Director, and by 1965 the British Commissioner had been replaced by Bernard Hinga.[361] The change in leadership did not produce a change in organisational structure nor the adoption of community-based policing approaches.[362]

The police under Kenyatta were drawn into regime security and protected the interests of emerging elites as they had those of Europeans.[363] The Lanet Barracks mutiny resulted in further alignment of policing with politics, as opposition parties were banned. The police were implicated in several assassinations, including the murder of government critic J. M. Kaiuki.[364] Policing under Kenyatta was certainly directed towards supressing grass roots nationalism and maintaining the status quo for elites and their British partners.[365]

Policing under the Moi government was a continuation of the Kenyatta years, with increasingly supressed public discontent, investigations into political rivals, and imprisonment of opponents. This manner of policing, that was generally militarised and performed counter-dissident activities, continued throughout the first Moi democratic government.[366]

The Kibaki administration is credited with establishing the reformative roadmap for community-based policing reflected in the 2010 constitution.[367] This is understandable as the

[361] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 221; Kenyan Police, 'Police Commissioners of Police and DIGs', *kenyapolice.go.ke*, <https://www.kenyapolice.go.ke/pages/search/73-post-colonial-commissioners-of-police.html> [accessed 26 June 2024].
[362] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 221.
[363] Ibid., pp. 221-222; Branch and Cheeseman, p. 11.
[364] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 227.
[365] Ibid., p. 221.
[366] Nazu, pp. 45-46.
[367] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 222.

internal security situation in December 2002 was untenable and the Kibaki government had campaigned on a reformative platform.[368] The 2010 constitution marked the first major effort to depoliticise policing by devolving policy to civilian politicians, enhancing parliamentary oversight, and securing judicial independence.[369] However, the Kibaki government buckled under political opposition and government control of the security forces increased.[370] This recentralisation of control resulted in a lack of strong oversight at the regional or community level. The police were regarded as a predatory outfit where personal security was guaranteed by association or corruption, with security provided to the highest bidder.[371]

With the inauguration of the Jubilee government of Uhuru Kenyatta in March 2013, a grass roots programme was initiated to curb crime and insecurity. This programme is called *Nyumba Kumi* and is a Kiswahili phrase meaning 'ten households': every citizen is expected to know ten other households within their neighbourhoods and report any suspicious activities.[372] The rationale is the engagement of local citizenry with their own security and partner them with the state police to tackle crime. The CHRI 2006 report approved as 'the public begins to see the police service as an ally in keeping peace rather than an instrument of oppression' and therefore are 'more willing to share information which can help prevent and solve crime.'[373] Concerns about *Nyumba Kumi* include the obvious infringements on personal privacy and mild overtones of neighbourly denunciations found in authoritarian states. Otiso and Kaguta observe that *Nyumba Kumi* is in contradiction of Article 31 of the constitution that guarantees civil liberties such as freedom from arbitrary surveillance and the right to free association.[374]

Some key advancements have been achieved since the 2010 constitutional reforms. Accountability has improved as the promotions and appointments of senior officers are now publicly scrutinised. A vetting process was instituted from December 2013, with Kenyans able to petition against officers and be informed of pre-appointment hearings. The media were permitted to engage in coverage and commentary. Officers are now subjected to

[368] Nazu, p. 47.
[369] Ibid., p. 48.
[370] Ibid.
[371] Thulani Shabangu, *Research Report on International Standards of Police Reform* (Pretoria: Institute for Democracy in South Africa, 2009).
[372] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 241.
[373] Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), 'Police, the People, the Politics: Police Accountability in Kenya - Nairobi', *CHRI/KHRC*, 2006.
[374] Otiso and Kaguta, p. 242.

standardised competency tests and must provide wealth declarations.[375] The organisation of the police has also been depoliticised to a degree, with both the regular police and auxiliaries placed under the command of the Inspector General (IG). The IG serves for a term of four years are appointed by the external National Police Service Commission.[376]

Decentralisation has only been partially achieved and there is tension between the national police and the Administration (rural) police over incorporation and oversight.[377] Officers are poorly paid, housed in outdated facilities and receive no mental health support.[378] HRW has released a critical review condemning police sexual violence against female Kenyans during Covid-19 curfews.[379] Female representation in the police is poor, with latest tallies indicating 7,457 women of 106,830 officers (6.9%).[380]

Corruption is an ongoing challenge with traffic police routinely collecting bribes at checkpoints.[381] Citizens are hesitant to contact the police due to poor relations and expectations of partial service.[382] Kenya is ranked in the bottom tiers of the Corruption Perceptions index and the police are perceived to be the tenth most corrupt force of a hundred reviewed.[383] However, a more granular assessment indicates the efficacy of the *Nyumba Kumi* community policing reforms. One 2002 study found that police officers are bribed at least four times a month and that an interaction with the police would result in payment 95% of the time.[384] Similarly, the police were ranked as the most corrupt institution in 2012 and the

[375] Ibid., p. 236.
[376] Ibid., pp. 235-236.
[377] Adrian Matofari and Tobias Opana, 'Enhancing Police Reforms to Foster Social Order', *KIPPRA* (08 January 2024) <https://kippra.or.ke/enhancing-police-reforms-to-foster-social-order/> [accessed 26 June 2024], para. 13.
[378] Ibid., para. 14.
[379] HRW, 'The Were Men in Uniform: Sexual Violence against Kenyan Women and Girls by Security Forces', *HRW.org* (14 December 2017) <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/12/14/they-were-men-uniform/sexual-violence-against-women-and-girls-kenyas-2017> [accessed 26 June 2024].
[380] Security Women, 'Number of Kenyan women police officers almost halves between 2018 and 2023', *securitywomen.org* (14 August 2023) <https://www.securitywomen.org/post/number-of-kenyan-women-police-officers-almost-halves-between-2018-and-2023#:~:text=While%2014%2C042%20women%20were%20registered,were%20women%20%E2%80%93%20representing%206.9%25.> [accessed 28 June 2024].
[381] Matofari and Opana, para. 12.
[382] Ibid., para. 15.
[383] Transparency International 'Corruption Perceptions Index', *Transparencyinternational.com* (2023) <https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/CPI-2023-Report.pdf> [accessed 26 June 2024]; Index Mundi 'Police Corruption Index', *IndexMudi.com* <https://www.indexmundi.com/surveys/results/1/table> [accessed 26 June 2024].
[384] Baker.

occurrence of bribery still maintained an above 60% average.[385] However, by 2019 and five years of *Nyumba Kumi*, *Transparency International* found that 47% of respondents to their survey had paid a bribe in the last year.[386] This fell to 30% in 2020 in a survey conducted by the Independent Policing Oversight Authority.

More disturbingly, the ongoing militarisation of the police since independence and their political alignment has led to police brutality. As noted above, anti-government critic J.M. Kariuki was arrested and then found dead in a ditch two days later under the Kenyatta regime. Under Moi, a black site was established, with a reported 358 cases of torture taking place against political rivals and activists. Even the reformative government of Kibaki used unlawful force to curb post-2007 election violence, with one officer shooting an unarmed civilian on live television.[387] One 2009 UN report observed that the police were responsible for numerous extrajudicial killings; and in 2012 the government was forced to publicly admit that unlawful killings by the security forces were a significant societal challenge.[388]

Sadly, change seems slow to come. At the time of writing (26th June 2024), the police have reportedly opened fire on protestors, with ten to twenty-three killed.[389] It is with shades of irony that the same police has received praise for their participation in peacekeeping operations in Haiti in the same 24-hour news cycle.[390] This is not an aberration: *Barons* and *Agency France Presse* reported a total of 118 people killed extrajudicially by the police in 2023.[391] Both the 2022 and 2023 USSD HRRs indicate ongoing kidnap, torture, murder, abuse of female citizens and minority groups, arbitrary arrest and detention without trial, political suppression and use of deadly force against protestors. The penal system is not

[385] Douglas Kivoi and Casty Mbae, 'The Achilles' Heel of Police Reforms in Kenya', *Social Sciences*, 2:6 (2013) <https://sciencepublishinggroup.com/article/10.11648/j.ss.20130206.13> [accessed 15 August 2024].
[386] Matofari and Opana, para. 11.
[387] Kivoi and Mbae, p. 226.
[388] Kivoi and Mbae, p. 226.
[389] Guardian, The, 'Kenyan police open fire on protestors as crowd tries to storm parliament', *The Guardian* (25 June 2024) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2024/jun/25/kenyan-police-open-fire-on-protesters-as-crowd-tries-to-storm-parliament-video> [accessed 26 June 2024]; Giulia Paravicini and Aaron Ross, 'Kenyan protestors promise more rallies after at least 23 die in clashes', *Reuters.com* (26 June 2024) <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/kenyan-protesters-promise-more-rallies-after-deadly-parliament-violence-2024-06-26/> [accessed 26 June 2024].
[390] Mariana Daras, Gloria Aradi and Pascal Fletcher, 'Haiti vows to restore order with Kenyan-led force's help', *BBC.com* (26 June 2024) <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cy7772v3j89o> [accessed 26 June 2024].
[391] Barons, '118 People Killed by Kenyan Police in 2023: Rights Groups', *Barons.com* & *Agence France Presse* (24 April 2024) <https://www.barrons.com/news/118-people-killed-by-kenyan-police-in-2023-rights-groups-df6bbf00> [accessed 26 June 2024].

reformative, and conditions are life threatening. This is conducted in an environment of impunity and limited accountability for security officers and leaders.[392]

5.5 Conclusion: Security and Counterinsurgency in the Kenyan Emergency

We now return to our assessment of the relationship between British counterinsurgency and security prioritisation; and the immediate consequences of adopting such an approach for defeating armed insurgency and restoring peace, against the medium-term impacts on citizen-users security and the provision of democratic governance.

Prioritisation of Security and Security Sector Reform in the Kenyan Emergency

1. To what extent did British counterinsurgency prioritise security and security sector reform in the Kenyan Emergency?

This section addresses the extent to which British authorities prioritised security measures to restore stability in Kenya during the Mau Mau insurgency. By evaluating the balance between short-term stabilisation efforts and the absence of sustained institutional transformation, the analysis seeks to illuminate how British approaches to security shaped the legitimacy, effectiveness, and legacy of colonial governance in the context of the Mau Mau uprising.

Our first observation highlights the contrast between the short-term goals of SSS and the longer-term objectives of SSR. Security sector stabilisation focuses on militarised efforts to restore state control and address immediate threats, often through the rapid expansion of security forces, mass arrests, and emergency laws. In contrast, security sector reform aims for comprehensive, long-term transformations in the ethos, governance, and accountability of security institutions. SSR is based on principles of professionalisation, democratic oversight, human rights, and the provision of security as a public service.

[392] USSD, 'Kenya 2022 Human Rights Report'; '2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Kenya'.

In Kenya, genuine reform was largely absent. Despite the efforts of reform-minded individuals like Col. Young, who advocated for a service-oriented, community-focused police model, reform initiatives were consistently undermined by colonial and settler opposition. As a result, the coercive, militarised policing model continued, unable to build community trust or foster sustainable peace. Stabilisation was characterised by large-scale operations, the establishment of detention camps, and widespread village resettlements. A key feature of this approach was the rapid expansion of the armed forces, police, and Home Guard. While increasing manpower helped reassert territorial control and suppress insurgent activity, it prioritised quantity over quality. Recruitment standards were relaxed, and training focused on force protection and combat effectiveness, with little emphasis on accountability, community engagement, or human rights. While these forces achieved short-term operational success in stabilising key regions, they did so through methods that alienated civilians and entrenched a culture of coercion and impunity. These actions, though effective in the short-term, left the underlying institutional culture and structures largely unchanged.

The distinction between stabilisation and reform is not merely academic; it has profound implications for post-conflict governance. In Kenya, the prioritisation of security during the Emergency (1952–1960) led to the suppression of the Mau Mau insurgency but also entrenched authoritarianism and left long-term societal grievances unaddressed. While stabilisation efforts, such as large-scale operations and mass detentions, successfully disrupted insurgent activity and restored order, they failed to address the root causes of the rebellion, including political exclusion, land disputes, and economic inequality.

The British counterinsurgency approach in Kenya largely ignored the principles of security sector reform (SSR), which advocates for professionalised, accountable, and community-oriented security institutions. Instead, the focus remained on militarised measures aimed at suppressing the insurgency quickly. Security forces were expanded rapidly, but recruitment standards were lowered, prioritising loyalty and combat effectiveness over professionalism, accountability, and community engagement. Training focused on counterinsurgency tactics, with little emphasis on human rights, legal norms, or community relations. As a result, security forces became instruments of repression rather than public service, alienating the civilian population and reinforcing a culture of coercion and impunity.

The absence of SSR meant that the post-Emergency security apparatus remained deeply politicised, militarised, and unaccountable, ultimately undermining the legitimacy of

the post-colonial Kenyan state. Instead of transforming security institutions into public service providers governed by democratic principles, the British approach entrenched authoritarian control, which hindered the establishment of effective governance and popular trust in state security.

Though British counterinsurgency measures achieved some tactical successes, they did so through methods that deepened civilian resentment and failed to foster long-term stability. The use of mass detentions, collective punishment, and indiscriminate sweeps, coupled with the over-reliance on the Home Guard, perpetuated cycles of violence and reinforced colonial hierarchies. The failure to implement SSR not only compromised the immediate effectiveness of counterinsurgency efforts but also left the foundational issues of political exclusion and societal divisions unresolved, ultimately hindering Kenya's post-colonial development.

In contrast, a genuine commitment to SSR would have involved the transformation of the police and military into accountable, professional institutions that could build trust with local communities and promote human security. This would have entailed a shift from coercion to community-based policing, improved oversight, and respect for legal norms and human rights. Without these reforms, the British counterinsurgency strategy in Kenya, while achieving short-term stability, laid the groundwork for long-term challenges in democratic governance and national cohesion.

The Impact of Prioritising Security in the Immediate-Term

2. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what were the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector reform on armed insurgency and restoring stability in the Kenyan Emergency?

Beginning with a short appraisal of the impact of COIN strategy in Kenya, we may observe that the prioritisation of security during the Kenyan Emergency (1952–1960) played a decisive role in dismantling the Mau Mau insurgency and restoring stability across the colony. Initially marked by under-resourcing and fragmented command, the British response

evolved into a robust and coordinated campaign that restricted Mau Mau activity to rural areas; and eventually facilitated the fracturing of the insurgency and its ultimate surrender.

The appointment of Gen. Erskine in 1953 marked the ‘Malayification’ of the war, as military authorities consolidated a joint civil-military approach. Both military and civil security forces were reinforced, enabling the adoption of a conventional strategy modelled on Malaya's tactics. In line with US Army COIN principles, indigenous personnel were trained in conventional operations to help expand control over territory and people. Key operations like Anvil and Hammer were crucial in disrupting command structures and operational networks. Anvil, in particular, was effective in dismantling the insurgency’s urban infrastructure, denying the Mau Mau a critical base of operations and severing its supply and communication lines, despite the mass arrests and limited convictions it ultimately produced.

Mass resettlement and detention programmes, though controversial, significantly weakened the insurgency's ability to gain civilian support. By relocating over a million Kikuyu into fortified villages and creating a detention and rehabilitation pipeline, the British isolated insurgents from their base, reduced recruitment, and brought large parts of the population back under state control. The focus on security also improved the capacity and coordination of colonial policing. The expansion and professionalisation of the police, though paramilitary in nature, ensured consistent law enforcement and internal stability in both urban and rural areas.

By 1960, these combined efforts led to the collapse of the Mau Mau movement and the restoration of order. Prioritising security not only protected settler and urban communities but also paved the way for Kenya’s transition to self-governance. Despite significant challenges, the targeted use of military and police power effectively ended the insurgency, stabilised the colony, prevented a broader regional conflict, and secured British strategic interests in East Africa.

The British approach in Kenya largely subordinated the principle of personal security to the strategic goal of suppressing insurgency through coercion. Contrary to the *US Army COIN Handbook*, success was measured by enemy kills, captures, and territory gained, much like in Malaya. Instead of creating a secure environment for the Kikuyu and other affected communities, counterinsurgency efforts prioritised the protection of the regime and settlers, often blurring the line between insurgents and civilians. As we have seen, key operations exemplified this approach, and while these tactics may have achieved short-term military

gains, they simultaneously undermined personal security, leading to lasting damage to civilian trust and state legitimacy.

This securitised approach was most evident in large-scale operations like Anvil and Hammer. Rather than providing security, these operations effectively criminalised entire communities, creating an atmosphere of fear and suspicion. The Kenyan population, particularly the Kikuyu, experienced these measures as collective punishment, with minimal legal safeguards and limited recourse to due process. Operation Hammer, for example, achieved only 161 insurgent captures or killings – far below its objectives. However, it succeeded in militarising rural life, establishing free-fire zones and prohibited areas. Civilians in these zones faced indiscriminate violence, forced displacement, and curfews, with no distinction made between insurgents and non-combatants. This failure to differentiate combatants from civilians breached personal security and was compounded by the fragmented British command structure. Unlike the integrated civil-military coordination in Malaya under General Templer, Kenya's leadership was disjointed, with a reactive strategic approach. Intelligence gaps and reliance on racialised profiling prevented British forces from conducting operations with precision or restraint, leading to widespread civilian victimisation.

The prioritisation of security and military control may have contributed to the eventual suppression of the Mau Mau insurgency, but it also had significant implications for one of the core principles of effective counterinsurgency: addressing underlying political, economic, and social grievances. As observed, the focus on coercive security measures in the early stages of the Emergency often hindered efforts to engage with the legitimate concerns of the Kikuyu population, complicating the broader goals of sustainable peace and post-conflict stability.

From the outset, British authorities adopted a securitised view of the conflict, framing Mau Mau as an outbreak of tribal violence rather than a legitimate political protest. This narrative, reinforced by effective propaganda, delegitimised the insurgents and downplayed Kikuyu grievances. By portraying the insurgency as an apolitical terror movement, British strategy justified a focus on punitive containment and suppression over engagement or reform. As a result, military-led operations became a campaign centred on enforcing stability through mass arrests, indiscriminate detention, and collective punishment.

The securitisation of the response extended beyond combat operations into institutional design. The limited socio-economic development measures introduced during the Emergency were also securitised. Agricultural and infrastructure projects, supported by multimillion-pound investments, were primarily aimed at controlling the population rather than promoting developmental equity. The forced resettlement of over one million Kikuyu into protected villages was driven by military strategy to disrupt insurgent logistics, rather than an effort to redistribute land or empower marginalised communities. While operationally effective, these measures reproduced patterns of exclusion and reinforced the socio-economic hierarchies that had originally sparked the uprising.

Security sector stabilisation was prioritised over meaningful reform of the army and police. Instead of developing accountable, community-oriented security institutions to build public trust, the colonial administration expanded the size and coercive capacity of paramilitary forces, empowering them with sweeping Emergency Regulations. The Kenyan Police Force remained militarised and racially stratified, with little focus on community engagement or impartial law enforcement. Recruitment centred on loyalty and coercive capability rather than professionalism or legitimacy. Consequently, policing aligned more with regime defence than public service, replicating the repressive nature of the pre-Emergency colonial order. The militarisation of both the army and police also had long-term effects on post-conflict governance. The centralised command structure, characterised by ethnic patronage and executive dominance, was later mirrored by post-independence regimes. This legacy of centralised control and politicised security institutions hindered democratic accountability and civic trust, reinforcing the colonial pattern of using security forces as tools of regime survival rather than protecting citizens.

In conclusion, while the prioritisation of security led to the short-term suppression of the Mau Mau insurgency, it failed to address the fundamental grievances driving the conflict, such as demands for political inclusion, land justice, and economic redress. British counterinsurgency policy in Kenya violated the COIN principle of winning ‘hearts and minds’. The resulting peace was fragile, imposed by force rather than earned through legitimacy, and set the stage for a post-independence state where security institutions remained politicised, militarised, and distrusted by large segments of the population.

The Impact of Prioritising Security in the Medium-Term

3. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what are the medium-term impacts or legacies of prioritising security and security sector reform for users and democratic governance in post-conflict Kenya?

This section examines the third research question, focusing on the medium-term effects of security sector stabilisation during the Malayan Emergency's conflict phase. Doctrines like the British *AJP 3.27* and the US Army's *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* emphasise the need for counterinsurgency efforts to prioritise civilian protection and reinforce lawful, accountable governance. These principles are reflected in the DCAF 2019 SSR framework, which highlights personal safety, civilian oversight, legal norms, human rights, and resistance to political interference. While SSR scholarship often focuses on national-level reforms, less attention has been given to how stabilisation efforts during conflict affect individuals' access to justice, perceptions of safety, and trust in state institutions. This section analyses how such interventions influence democratic state-building and citizens' everyday interactions with the security sector.

The prioritisation of security during the Kenyan Emergency (1952–1960) shaped the postcolonial state, embedding a model of governance that favoured authoritarian control over participatory democracy. What began as a colonial counterinsurgency against the Mau Mau insurgency led to a deeply centralised state apparatus, which persisted long after independence, significantly impacting Kenya's democratic trajectory.

During the Emergency, the British colonial government centralised administration to restore law and order, granting the Governor sweeping powers. The military, police, and civil administration were integrated into a unified security structure, prioritising control through coercion over governance by consent. This allowed authorities to bypass legal procedures, relying on mass detentions, collective punishments, and extrajudicial measures to suppress threats. This centralisation was not dismantled after colonial rule ended; instead, it was inherited by the post-independence Kenyan state. The architecture of emergency governance proved highly adaptable to the needs of the emerging ruling elite, who viewed challenges to their authority through the same securitised lens as their colonial predecessors. Consequently, the apparatus of repression was redirected, not to protect colonial order, but to secure the power of the new national government.

The institutional legacy of emergency rule was evident in the Kenyatta regime's approach to state-building. Rather than dismantling the coercive institutions of colonial governance, Kenyatta's administration absorbed them into a framework of executive dominance. The postcolonial presidency became the central authority, controlling both state violence and political patronage. The police and military, already structured for domestic repression, were further politicised to suppress dissent, manage ethnic competition, and maintain elite cohesion. This continuity was not accidental but reflects what Branch and Cheeseman describe as a 'pact of domination'. In this arrangement, the newly independent Kenyan state maintained the coercive logic of colonial rule, not as a historical relic but as a functional tool for governance. The Emergency's model of command governance became foundational to the postcolonial Kenyan state.

The immediate post-independence years saw the suppression of opposition and the consolidation of power in the executive. The ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) absorbed or eliminated rival parties like the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), leading to a de facto one-party state. This consolidation of political authority was supported by the security structures developed during the Emergency, which remained tools of internal control rather than serving the public. The consequences for democratic governance were clear. The security-centric state hindered the growth of a participatory political culture, stifled civil society, and limited the development of a strong system of checks and balances. Executive control over security institutions prevented the professionalisation of the military and police, fostering loyalty and patronage instead. This contributed to cycles of political repression, especially during times of heightened contestation, such as the 1982 attempted coup and the violent aftermath of the 2007 elections.

The Kenyan case highlights the enduring nature of institutional path dependencies. Structures created during emergencies, particularly those related to internal security, often persist because they help consolidate power. Post-independence leaders' reliance on inherited security frameworks ensured regime stability but also resisted reform. This structural inertia delayed democratisation, restricted civil liberties, and entrenched a political culture where security concerns frequently outweighed democratic accountability.

The Kenyan Emergency was not just a period of heightened state violence and authoritarianism; it established a postcolonial state focused on control rather than consent. The centralisation of power, politicisation of security institutions, and suppression of political

pluralism during this time became lasting features of Kenyan governance. As a result, prioritising security over democratic processes during this formative period created a foundational rupture in Kenya's democratic path, with lasting effects still visible in contemporary civil-military relations and governance.

The militarisation and politicisation of Kenya's security institutions persisted into the post-independence era, with the colonial security apparatus reconfigured for internal control. The military and police were tasked not with protecting the public, but with suppressing political dissent, particularly among the Kikuyu. This created a foundation for successive governments to use security forces as tools of regime protection. Rather than dismantling coercive structures, post-independence administrations adapted them to benefit the ruling elite. The integration of security agencies into the executive entrenched a culture of politicised security, where loyalty to the regime outweighed professionalism or adherence to the rule of law.

Efforts to reform the security sector, such as the 2010 constitutional reforms and community policing initiatives like Nyumba Kumi, have yielded only modest results. While institutional oversight has improved on paper, deep-rooted politicisation and the historical legacy of coercion continue to hinder meaningful change. The continued alignment of security forces with ruling political factions erodes perceptions of neutrality and deepens societal divisions. The legacy of the Emergency is evident not just in Kenya's security institutions, but in the broader political culture, where state control has long been prioritised over citizen rights. This has established norms where coercion is favoured over consensus, and security is linked to regime survival rather than human security. This legacy remains a significant barrier to consolidating democratic governance and restoring public trust in the security sector.

Returning to Galtung's theory of structural violence, we may further understand the medium-term impacts of security sector stabilisation in Kenya. While British counterinsurgency efforts were effective in restoring territorial control and suppressing Mau Mau operations, they simultaneously entrenched coercive governance structures that prioritised regime security over the development of participatory governance. Structural violence, understood by Galtung as the indirect harm caused by systemic inequalities and institutional injustices, continued to shape the experiences of citizens long after independence. Immediate security sector stabilisation focussed on restoring order through the

expansion of police and military capabilities, but without laying the groundwork for an accountable, rights-based security sector that SSR frameworks prescribe. Instead, the colonial administration's emphasis on centralised, militarised control entrenched practices of exclusion, discrimination, and the politicisation of security forces. The failure to dismantle or meaningfully reform emergency-era institutions allowed political exclusion, land alienation, and economic marginalisation to persist across generations, even in the absence of direct conflict. In this context, stabilisation efforts that focussed narrowly on suppressing insurgency, without addressing the deeper socio-economic grievances that fuelled the conflict, created a postcolonial state that was outwardly stable but inwardly fragile. Although overt violence diminished, the underlying structures that reproduced inequality and disenfranchisement remained intact, undermining prospects for inclusive state-building and sustainable democratic development.

Galtung's distinction between negative and positive peace further illuminates the limitations of the Emergency's legacy and its consequences for postcolonial governance. Negative peace, characterised merely by the absence of open conflict, was achieved through the securitisation of the state and the suppression of dissent, rather than through efforts to create just and equitable institutions. Positive peace, by contrast, entails not only the absence of violence but the active presence of social justice, human rights, and participatory political structures capable of redressing historical grievances. In Kenya, post-independence SSR efforts were either superficial or deliberately circumvented, as the newly independent government retained the colonial architecture of coercion to consolidate executive power. Security institutions originally designed for repression were not transformed into bodies accountable to the public or subject to robust civilian oversight, as envisaged in later SSR doctrines such as the DCAF 2019 framework. Instead, security institutions remained politicised and aligned with regime interests, contributing to repeated cycles of repression, exclusion, and contested legitimacy. Consequently, Kenya's political trajectory was marked by episodes of electoral violence, state-led human rights abuses, and public distrust in the state's security apparatus. The Kenyan experience illustrates how the achievement of negative peace, without an accompanying commitment to genuine structural reform and positive peace, can entrench latent instability, undermine citizen trust, and obstruct the consolidation of a durable and inclusive democratic order.

In conclusion, the Kenyan Emergency shows how prioritising security over structural reform led to immediate tactical successes but long-term strategic instability. British

counterinsurgency efforts degraded Mau Mau operations and restored territorial control through coercion, mass detention, and authoritarian governance. While effective in suppressing violence, these measures ignored the political and socio-economic grievances driving the insurgency. More importantly, the lack of genuine security sector reform entrenched a militarised and politicised security apparatus, which was later used by Kenya's postcolonial governments to consolidate executive power, suppress opposition, and marginalise dissenting communities. This ultimately undermined democratic accountability and civil trust, demonstrating how failing to transition from emergency stabilisation to sustainable reform can institutionalise repression and delegitimise post-conflict governance.

As the following chapter on Sierra Leone will demonstrate, similar tensions between short-term security imperatives and long-term institutional transformation persisted during and after conflict, raising important comparative insights into the challenges of implementing effective security sector reform in fragile and post-conflict states.

Chapter 6: The British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone

This chapter examines the British-led intervention in Sierra Leone between 2000 and 2002, focusing on the role of Security Sector Stabilisation (SSS) and subsequent Security Sector Reform (SSR) in restoring order, suppressing insurgency, and shaping the post-conflict governance environment. In line with the broader analytical framework of this thesis, this chapter explores how early-stage stabilisation measures were deployed not merely as a reactive response to disorder, but as a deliberate strategy to reconstitute state authority through the restructuring of security institutions. Echoing the doctrinal and operational logics of British counterinsurgency in Malaya and Kenya, the intervention in Sierra Leone reveals the persistence of a security-first approach wherein immediate tactical stabilisation was prioritised, often at the expense of democratic development and long-term institutional transformation.

Sierra Leone offers a post-colonial analogue to the colonial-era cases explored in previous chapters. While formally a sovereign state and the recipient of international peacebuilding assistance, the nature of Britain's involvement was characterised by direct control over reform trajectories and extensive donor influence that closely mirrored earlier forms of imperial tutelage. The British intervention began as a military operation firstly extract foreign nationals from the combat zone and later evolved to repel the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and assist the UN to stabilise a state under threat of collapse. However, the intervention swiftly transitioned into an extensive SSR programme that aimed to reconstitute the Sierra Leone armed forces and the Sierra Leone Police (SLP). These reforms were guided by the strategic imperative of restoring security, but their long-term effects on governance, accountability, and civil-military relations warrant critical scrutiny.

Drawing on five months of original fieldwork conducted in Freetown, Kenema, and Kailahun, this chapter incorporates the perspectives of those who experienced the intervention first-hand: government officials, members of the security services, civil society actors, and civilians. These accounts allow us to interrogate the disjuncture between externally driven institutional reforms and local experiences of security, protection, and justice. This user-centred lens provides a vital counterpoint to technocratic assessments of SSR success, grounding the analysis in the lived realities of those subjected to reformed security structures.

This chapter is structured into four main sections. The first section examines the structural causes of the Sierra Leone civil war, with a focus on the collapse of political authority, socio-economic exclusion, the decline of personal security and the disintegration of civil-military relations. Particular attention is paid to the politicisation and fragmentation of the security forces, which contributed to widespread insecurity and public mistrust of state institutions. The second section analyses the immediate stabilisation phase of the British-led intervention (2000–2002), detailing how the deployment of British troops alongside international actors reasserted state control, halted the advance of insurgent forces, and introduced early-stage security reforms. This section explores how stabilisation efforts were grounded in British counterinsurgency doctrine and sought to create the conditions necessary for post-conflict reconstruction. The third section focuses on the subsequent reform of the armed forces, evaluating the process of professionalisation, efforts to depoliticise the officer corps, and the reintroduction of civilian oversight mechanisms. It critically assesses how these reforms contributed to restoring order and legitimacy, while also considering the long-term sustainability of donor-driven transformation. This work is informed by field work and interviews with serving and retired army officers and enlisted personnel as well as pertinent government ministers. The fourth section turns to the reform of the police, providing an in-depth analysis of reform design, implementation, and outcomes. Drawing on extensive fieldwork data, this section explores public perceptions of policing, the persistence of corruption and political interference, and the challenges of achieving inclusive, accountable security provision. In doing so, the chapter highlights the uneven impacts of security sector reform and interrogates the broader implications for democratic governance, state legitimacy, and the relationship between external intervention and local agency.

The analysis underscores the central tension explored throughout this thesis: that the prioritisation of security through rapid institutional stabilisation may generate short-term order, yet simultaneously constrain the emergence of accountable and inclusive governance. In Sierra Leone, this dynamic is manifest in the stark contrast between military and police reform outcomes, the enduring influence of donor agendas, and the continued perception among many citizens that the security sector serves political rather than public interests. These findings support the thesis's broader argument that British-led SSR often functions less as a pathway to liberal peace than as a mechanism for restoring elite control and managing political transitions in fragile states.

6.1 Origins and Grievances of the Revolutionary United Front

Sierra Leone is comprised of almost 28,000 square miles and shares a northern border with Guinea, a south-western border with Liberia and adjoins the Atlantic Ocean to the east. At the outset of the conflict, the transport infrastructure of the country was partial, with 372 miles of paved highways; 52 miles of partially useable railway; and only one airport at Lungi, capable of landing large aircraft.[1] Sierra Leone possesses an abundance of natural resources including diamonds, oil and metals and agriculture. At the outset of the conflict, Sierra Leone was ranked 139 of 144 countries on the UN Human Development Index (UNHDI) with life expectancy averaging at 38 years old.[2] Sierra Leone remained at the bottom of the UNHDI, placing 150 of 151 states in 1999 and maintained an average crude death rate of 25% of the population.[3] By 2004, only 35% of adults were deemed to be literate after two years of peace.[4] The GDP of the country in 1991 was US$780m which fell to US$669m by 1999 as the war strangled economic capacity.[5]

The Sierra Leone civil war began in March 1991 with the invasion of Liberian special forces and exiled Sierra Leoneans into the east and the south of the country. By December 1996 more than 15,000 people had been killed by government and rebel forces, 3 million people had been displaced and the state's economy had collapsed. By the end of 1999, almost 50,000 people had been killed and the capital Freetown was partially destroyed. 70% of schools were non-functional and 70% of school age children did not attend formal education. The various factions of the war recruited or kidnapped child soldiers from the educationally destitute; engaged in looting and predation upon the civil population; and meted out vicious punishments such as amputations to those who resisted.[6]

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[1] Woods and Reese, p. 5. Today, Sierra Leone only has 8 airports and Lungi remains the only paved airport with over 3,047m of runway. See Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), 'CIA World Factbook', available at <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/sierra-leone/#transportation> [accessed 03 October 2021].

[2] Country Economy, 'Sierra Leone – Life Expectancy at Birth', *countryeconomy.com* <https://countryeconomy.com/demmography/life-expectancy/sierra-leone> [accessed 04 October 2021].

[3] Country Economy, 'Sierra Leone: 1999', *countryeconomy.com* <https://countryeconomy.com/hdi/sierra-leone?year=1999> [accessed 04 October 2021].

[4] Country Economy, 'Sierra Leone – Literacy Rate' *countryeconomy.com* <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/literacy-rate/sierra-leone> [accessed 04 October 2021].

[5] Data Commons, 'Gross domestic product per capita in Sierra Leone' <https://datacommons.org/place/country/SLE?utm_medium=explore&mprop=amount&popt=EconomicActivity&cpv=activitySource%2CGrossDomesticProduction&hl=en> [accessed 04 October 2021].

[6] Gberie, pp. 5-6.

Despite the conflict emerging three decades after decolonisation, its roots lie in a colonial legacy of governance aimed at extracting maximum profit from the land's raw materials. While others have charted the division between Freetown and the rural protectorate, it is crucial to recognise how indirect rule entrenched a 'core-periphery' dynamic that still shapes Sierra Leone's politics and society.[7] Post-independence governance reflected an over-centralised state dominated by Freetown elites who co-opted institutions for personal gain and political security. Like their British predecessors, these elites maintained patrimonial ties with traditional structures – rewarding loyalty and excluding rivals.[8] Security forces were bought or coerced, with army officers seizing power during fragile moments of the Stevens/Momoh regimes. For those outside the patronage networks stretching from the presidency across national life, the result was systemic marginalisation, deprivation, and injustice.

Independence and the Post-Colonial Legacy of Two Sierra Leones

Sierra Leone achieved independence on 27th April 1961. The Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) won the May 1962 elections with support from the ruling Chiefs and urban upper classes but failed to gain popularity amongst the rural labour class.[9] This election reflected deep societal divisions, rooted in the 1927 discover of diamonds in Kono District.[10] Controlling diamonds strengthened the rural Chiefs, where 'the colonial authorities overlooked serious breaches of the law ... including even murder and … forced labour'.[11] Illegal mining surged from 1952 to 1955, prompting the creation of the Sierra Leone Selection Trust and granting exclusive licensing rights to South Africa's De Beers to secure state diamond revenues.[12]

[7] For 'core-periphery' split, see: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 6. See also: Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone,* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1998); J-P. Pham, *The Sierra Leonean Tragedy: History and Global Dimensions* (New York: Nova Science Publishers, 2006).

[8] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 6.

[9] Woods and Reese, p. 11. Peters (2011), p. 40.

[10] Sigismond Wilson, 'Diamond Exploitation in Sierra Leone 1930 to 2010: a resource curse?', *GeoJournal*, 78:6 (2013), p. 4.

[11] Gberie, p. 30.

[12] Lorenzo D'Angelo, 'From traces to carpets: unravelling labour practices in the mines of Sierra Leone', in *Micro-Spatial Histories of Global Labour*, ed. by C. De Vito and A. Gerritsen (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave MacMillan, 2018), p. 13.

However, the contract allocation process was a broader network of 'unscrupulous state agents' that managed the diamond sector and directed profits to the politically connected, in what Reno described as the 'shadow state'.[13] Such funds were used to maintain social order but as Peters has noted became vital in financing the emerging political parties: the SLPP who were supported by the Chiefs and the British administration; and the Kono Progressive Party (KPM), who drew their support from labourers and diamond-poor Chiefdoms.[14] The KPM would later align with other political parties, most notably the All People's Congress Party (APC) led by trade unionist Siaka Stevens.[15]

Societal divisions were reflected in the first post-independence May 1962 election. The SLPP leveraged their access to diamonds and the influence of the Chiefs to emerge victorious. PM Milton Margai, and later his brother Albert, undertook wide-ranging reforms to increase the power of the Mende tribe.[16] These included the installation of Mende tribesmen in bureaucratic and security positions, and increasing the army's officer proportion from 26% Mende to 52%.[17] This created a cauldron where 'ethnic tensions seethed beneath the calm exterior'.[18] The abuses of the Margai governments and Mende favouritism produced a slim electoral victory for the APC in 1967.[19] The APC dominated politics until 1992, and Temne supremacy was reinforced by replacing politicians, policemen and army officers with trusted men. APC oppression alienated the population with the Internal Security Unit (ISU) employing brutal measures against their opponents.[20] Stevens abandoned the parliamentary system in April 1971 for a one-party system. Those hinterland Chiefs who traditionally supported the SLPP were marginalised, alienating the Mende populations of the south and east.[21] Indeed, as Peters observed, some RUF recruits were motivated by Mende tribal affiliation and a belief that the insurgency was anti-APC in nature.[22]

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[13] For 'unscrupulous state agents', see: Peters (2011), p. 37. For 'shadow state', see: William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 1.
[14] Peters (2011), p. 40.
[15] Gberie, p. 24.
[16] Albert Margai assumed the position of Prime Minister upon his brother's death in 1964.
[17] Earl Conteh-Morgan and Mac Dixon-Fyle, *Sierra Leone at the End of the Twentieth Century: History, Politics and Society* (New York: Lang, 1999), p. 78.
[18] Woods and Reese, p. 11.
[19] A greater appraisal of the civil-military relationship and the SLA's role in Sierra Leone's political history is undertaken in Chapter 6.
[20] Woods and Reese, pp. 11-12.
[21] Peters (2011), pp. 42-43.
[22] Ibid., p. 63.

Profits from the shadow state were directed to private accounts via patrimonial networks to ensure political security.[23] Discontent was directed towards the non-functional government as only those who were a part of the patrimonial structure thrived due to their connections.[24] Tensions over poor governance were augmented by traditional centres of power such as the Chiefdoms. During the colonial period, traditional leaders cooperated with British authorities to ensure indirect control over resource rich areas, a system that had continued into independence.[25] The Chiefs maintained control though influence over justice, distribution of resources, education, employment, marriage, and property rights.[26] Reflecting the bifurcated nature of indirect rule, parallel security, justice and social institutions were maintained that were largely independent of state authority.[27] Indeed, Richards argues that this system best resembled a historical slave structure and that the war should be viewed as a slave revolt against a system of infantilisation.[28] The deliberate targeting of sources of authority during the war does support this argument. However, as Fanthorpe observed, this was not a universal phenomenon and Chiefs in other parts of the country were not targeted extensively by their subjects.[29]

Stevens' retirement in 1985 ushered in the premiership of former army chief Joseph Momoh. Momoh oversaw the expansion of the 'shadow state', with Lebanese allies of the APC acting as intermediaries and applying their experience as outsiders to bribe politicians and administrators.[30] Momoh expanded the use of the security forces to consolidate control of the diamond fields, but was embarrassed as army leaders instead seized mines in Kono for their personal profit.[31] The actions of Stevens and Momoh, and latterly security services officers and members of the wider patrimonial system, lends support to the argument of greed as a causal factor of the conflict.[32] However, the exploitation of natural resources by the few,

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[23] Ibid., pp. 41-42.
[24] Richards, pp. 35-36.
[25] Christine Cubitt, 'Responsible Reconstruction After War: Meeting Local Needs for Building Peace' *Review of International Studies*, 39 (2013), pp. 91-112.
[26] Richard Fanthrope and Roy Maconachie, 'Beyond the "Crisis of Youth"? Mining, farming, and civil society in post-war Sierra Leone', *African Affairs*, 109:435 (2010), pp. 251-272; Peters (2011), pp. 48-53; Mitton (2013).
[27] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 7.
[28] See Paul Richards 'To Fight or to Farm? Agrarian Dimensions of the Mano River Conflicts (Liberia and Sierra Leone)', *African Affairs*, 104:417 (October 2005), pp. 571-590.
[29] Cited in Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 8.
[30] The Lebanese population were natural allies of the APC, as the SLPP and aristocratic chiefs refused to accept their citizenship as Sierra Leoneans. See: Peters (2011), pp. 40-41.
[31] David Keen 'Liberalisation and Conflict', *International Political Science Review*, 26:1 (2005), p. 80.
[32] See Ian Smillie, Lansana Gberie and Raplh Hazleton, 'The Heart of the Matter: Sierra Leone, Diamonds and Human Security' *Social Justice*, 27:4 (2000), pp. 24-31; Peters (2011), p. 7.

and the subsequent economic collapse, created the sense of grievance felt by the many as they were exposed to heightening degrees of degradation.

Chronic mismanagement of natural resources deepened public distrust.[33] Diamond extraction was nationalised in 1971, and nepotistic mining contracts bankrupted the state treasury. Smuggling was rife and an annual export of two million carats in 1971 dropped to 48,000 by 1988.[34] One estimate claims that 97% of all 1980s exports departed illegally.[35] Diamonds were not only a cause of the conflict but also a facilitator and a prolonger of the violence.[36]

The Momoh regime continued the practices of its predecessor. Educational opportunities became scarce, and graduates competed for limited opportunities that were often offered to the elite. Petty crime and alluvial diamond mining ensured survival for many young people, who indulged in drug abuse, anarchic behaviour and recreational violence as a distraction from reality.[37] Such is the 'crisis of youth' that Peters charts, simultaneously a cause of the war, a driver of ongoing conflict and a motivation for the extremity of violence perpetrated.[38] From these ranks of the excluded and marginalised the RUF drew its cadres, some voluntarily and others by force, but all bound by a shared experience of exclusion and disenfranchisement.

6.2 The War in Sierra Leone (1991 – 2000)

The Revolutionary United Front

In March 1991, National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) fighters launched an incursions into the eastern Kailahun and southern Pujehun districts.[39] Of the 2,000 strong

[33] Michael Chege, 'Sierra Leone: The State That Came Back From the Dead' *Washington Quarterly*, 25:3 (2002), pp. 147-160.
[34] Reno, p. 107.
[35] Smillie, et. al., p. 1.
[36] TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 2 'Findings' (2004), p. 12.
[37] Kwaku Nuamah and William Zartman, 'Case Study: Intervention in Sierra Leone', *School of Public Policy, Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland* (December 2001) <https://cissm.umd.edu/research-impact/publications/case-study-intervention-sierra-leone> [accessed 15 September 2024]; Chege, p. 153.
[38] Peters (2011).
[39] Woods and Reese, p. 15.

invasion force, 1,600 fighters were Liberian, or Burkinabe mercenaries, and approximately 400 were Sierra Leoneans led by political activist Foday Sankoh.[40]

This force reflected the deteriorating relationship between Momoh and Charles Taylor. Taylor was angered by Momoh's willingness to allow Economic Community of West Africa States Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) aircraft to stage attacks from Lungi Airport (Freetown) against NPFL positions in Liberia.[41] By late 1990 Sankoh and Taylor had mobilised a revolutionary force from refugee and detention camps along the border.[42] Sankoh's charisma attracted a diverse group known as the 'RUF Vanguard' – comprising exiles, educated professionals, youths, and even children..[43]

The initial eastern incursion consolidated control over the Kono diamond fields, but the RUF failed to secure the Moa Barracks at Daru.[44] This was accompanied by attacks upon the civilian population in the Koindu area.[45] The southern front yielded success, and insurgents were able to threaten the second city of Bo by 19th April 1991, isolating Momoh's forces in Freetown.[46]

Many RUF recruits were freed prisoners, abductees, or those 'willing "Revolutionaries"' who were motivated by disaffection.[47] All factions employed child soldiers.[48] The general failures of the army, and a decline in public trust of the security services' ability to protect them, led to the emergence of bush hunter-based civil defence force (CDF) units.[49] Initially armed with improvised weapons and low in numbers, CDF units combined local knowledge of terrain with mysticism that bestowed a sense of invulnerability

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[40] Hirsch, p. 145.
[41] Momoh deployed the one operational battalion of the SLA in support of ECOMOG forces to prevent the NPFL from deposing Doe. Momoh also allowed United Liberian Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) fighters to stage attacks from Sierra Leone into Liberia. Momoh had also supported the anti-Taylor resistance group United Liberian Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) See: Woods and Reese, p. 14. The incursions were intended to create a buffer-zone between NPFL and ECOMOG/ULIMO forces, and secure diamond rich areas such as Tongo to fund the ongoing NPFL campaign in Liberia. See: David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (London: James Currey, 2005a), pp. 36-38. See also: TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 3 pt. 40.
[42] TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 3, pt. 55.
[43] TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 3, pt. 66.
[44] TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 3, pts. 162 & 221-222.
[45] Ibid, pt. 159.
[46] Ibid, pt. 168.
[47] Ibid, pts. 198-204 & 207-211; TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 141.
[48] Woods and Reese, p. 20.
[49] Ibid., pt. 331.

upon the militiamen.[50] CDF units were later incorporated into the state security structure, diverting resources from the SLA and further degrading the capabilities of the armed forces.[51] CDF units did prey upon the civilian population, as well as conducting brutal discipline exercises and killings of their own ranks.[52] However the *TRC Report* does acknowledge the vitality of the CDF in preventing large sections of the country from being overrun.[53]

The First International Intervention: Mercenaries and the Abidjan Peace Accord (1995-1996)

By March 1991, the RUF occupied positions 20 miles from Freetown. Alluvial diamonds enabled the conflict due to the ease with which they were 'panned', hidden and smuggled. Sankoh's strategy of denying diamond access to the Momoh government helped collapse state services and cripple the armed forces. Citing incompetence, junior officers formed the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) and overthrew Momoh in April 1992. Led by Captain Valentine Strasser, the NPRC's anti-corruption drive recovered $13.5 million from APC politicians and sought to restore public trust.[54]

The NPRC launched a patriotic recruitment campaign, swelling SLA ranks to 10,000 within three years.[55] However, most recruits were uneducated, undertrained youth who received only weeks of preparation.[56] Problems with army pay and recruitment led to frontline problems including lawlessness, ineffectiveness and RUF infiltration.[57] As the NPRC's Security Advisor Gen. Sam King observed, 'with hindsight there was little long-term merit … of flooding the warfront with youths'.[58] Recruitment of 'irregular' fighters who were older, unemployed or had served in the wider security forces was also increased.[59] Military discipline crumbled as ill-trained personnel outnumbered professional soldiers.[60] The security

[50] This included cannibalism. The sense of invulnerability conveyed by drug use, engaging in mystic ceremonies or wearing charms led to a high casualty rate amongst the *kamajor* cadres, as they were known to fearlessly charge enemy positions. This in turn led to a belief amongst RUF and later rebel soldiers that *kamajor* fighters did possess a degree of invulnerability and heighted fear when engaged in battel against them. TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 334 & 345; Woods and Reese, p. 17; interview with former RUF Military Police officer, conducted in Freetown area in March 2022.
[51] Woods and Reese, p. 18.
[52] TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 2 pts. 332-333; Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 4.
[53] TRC Report, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 335.
[54] Woods and Reese, p. 27; Gberie, pp. 70-71.
[55] TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3 pt. 308.
[56] Gberie, pp. 70-71; TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pt. 320.
[57] TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3 pts. 309-314.
[58] Ibid., pt. 315.
[59] Woods and Reese, p. 28.
[60] TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pts 321-322.

forces soon became a challenge to personal safety and civil trust. Civilians labelled NPRC forces as *sobels* or 'soldiers by day, rebels by night', as troops supplemented low wages and limited supplies with criminality. SLA officers would strike deals with the RUF to share diamonds in exchange for a ceasefire during mining.[61]

By March 1995, the state treasury was depleted and appeals for military intervention to the UN were refused.[62] Resultantly, Strasser was forced to turn to the South African private mercenary company Executive Outcomes (EO).[63] In exchange, EO secured rights to 62.5% of diamonds extracted by their sister company Diamond Works, who took control of mines in secured areas.[64] Within ten days, the RUF were pushed back by 60 miles from Freetown.[65] EO's second mandate was the retraining of the SLA, and by January 1996 two SLA infantry battalions had recaptured Kono District and the Kangari Hills.[66] Facing such pressure, the RUF entered into negotiations for the first time in almost six years.[67]

The breathing room acquired by EO allowed the NPRC to declare elections in March 1996, but Strasser was removed from power following a bloodless coup by his lieutenant (and current President) Gen. Julius Maada Bio.[68] Under pressure from the UN and EO, Bio agreed to the elections and Ahmed Tejan Kabbah's SLPP secured victory over the United National People's Party by 59 to 41.[69]

Accompanying the election of President Kabbah, peace negotiations between the took place at Abidjan (Ivory Coast) but resulted in failure as Sankoh pressed for the removal of all foreign troops (especially EO) and his installation as Vice-President. EO were again contracted in October 1996 and pressurised Sankoh to sign the Abidjan peace accord on 30th

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[61] Gberie, pp. 90-92.
[62] Keen, (2005a), pp. 91-93.
[63] For an expanded outline of Executive Outcomes, see: Jeremy Harding, 'The Mercenary Business: "Executive Outcomes"', *Review of African Political Economy* 24:71 (1997), pp. 87-97; William Bowles, 'Tony Blair's Pet Bulldog? The Curious Case of Colonel Tim Spicer' (20 May, 2006) <https://williambowles.info/2006/05/20/tony-blairs-pet-bulldog-the-curious-case-of-colonel-tim-spicer-by-william-bowles/> [accessed 17 January 2024].
[64] Hirsch, p. 39.
[65] Gberie, pp. 92-93.
[66] SLA/EO forces were supported by a MI-24 helicopter gunship and APC support. See: Woods and Reese, p. 30.
[67] Hirsch, p. 39.
[68] Strasser had attempted to alter the requirements for president to allow him to more easily run for office. Changes included lowering the mandatory age from 45 to Strasser's age range of 30 and above. See TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pt. 611.
[69] 60% of the population participated in the elections despite the RUF preventing rallies and using violence to dissuade voters from turning out. See: Woods and Reese, pp. 31-32.

November 1996. The RUF however had no guaranteed place in government.[70] Monitoring groups were established to oversee the new peace and the subsequent DDR process.[71] The RUF were permitted to apply for political party status and immunity from prosecution was provided to insurgent fighters. No provision was made for the fate of the *kamajors*, nor any reconciliatory mechanism included to provide recompense to civilians for the atrocities perpetrated against.[72] This decision may be justified when considered against the likelihood of government troops or CDF members being prosecuted in open court for human rights abuses.

The Abidjan accord collapsed in December 1996 as tensions between Kabbah and Sankoh worsened. The RUF were unable to gain a position in government as the elections had been held prior to the signing of the accord and the constitution omitted automatic inclusion.[73] The RUF's commitment to the peace was questioned in January 1997 when radio transmissions were intercepted indicating preparations for a renewed offensive following the departure of EO. Sankoh was arrested in Nigeria in March 1997 while trying to acquire arms and ammunition.[74]

The intervention of EO certainly had a demonstrable impact on the course of the war. Indeed, EO was deployed within two weeks of contracting and had noticeable successes within ten days.[75] A fact often overlooked in the pro-British interpretations. EO training programmes improved the capabilities of the SLA and also engaged well with the civil population. EO supplied and worked with *kamajor* fighters and engaged with chiefs to buttress local defence.[76] Without doubt, Sankoh would not have entreated with the government without the intervention of EO, and the very fact that peace was predicated on the departure of the mercenaries indicates the impact that the South African outfit had.

The decision to contract with EO is however also a source of criticism for the NPRC government, as the stunning successes of the mercenary outfit further shamed the beleaguered SLA. The profits extracted by Diamond Works characterised the EO intervention as an exercise in war profiteering and natural resource plundering, whilst simultaneously

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[70] Yusuf Bangura, 'Reflections on the Abidjan Peace Accord' *Africa Development*, 12:3-4 (1997), p. 221; Woods and Reese, p. 32.
[71] Woods and Reese, pp. 220-221.
[72] Ibid., p. 234.
[73] Woods and Reese, p. 234.
[74] Hirsch, pp. 54-55.
[75] Ibid., p. 34.
[76] Ibid., p. 35.

draining resources that could have been better deployed in support of the state. Shades of the future can be observed as EO were directly tasked by President Strasser as Minister of Defence, rather than working for the Ministry of Defence and the legislature, rendering a degree of unaccountability to the mercenaries and the Executive.

The Second and Third International Interventions: The Economic Community of West Africa States (1995-2000) and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (1999-2002)

As EO withdrew in February 1997, the SLA assumed responsibility for civilian security, but citizens continued to face the same social and economic hardships. Government legitimacy eroded further due to IMF-imposed spending cuts, worsening unemployment and inflation. Amidst this crisis, SLA soldiers led by Maj. Johnny Paul Koroma deposed Kabbah on 26th May 1997.[77] Justifying the coup as an anti-corruption action, the new Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) failed to win popular support.[78] The AFRC/RUF period was a decent into chaos as civil services collapsed and junta troops engaged in looting, murder and rape. Personal security evaporated and general lawlessness filled the security vacuum.[79]

The coup was condemned by ECOMOG and the Conakry Peace Plan was signed on 23rd October 1997, stipulating the restoration of the Kabbah government by April 1998.[80] Koroma reneged and with economic sanctions only proving partially effective, ECOMOG troops were deployed to Lungi airport and had recaptured Freetown by 13th February 1998.[81] To lessen casualties, AFRC/RUF troops were permitted withdraw fully armed.[82] A wave of revenge and civil disorder erupted in the absence of state security services.[83]

The UN Observer Mission to Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) was established to monitor a renewed DDR process, whilst ECOMOG forces attempted to contain AFRC/RUF aggression.[84] On 6th January 1999, a 8,000 strong mob consisting of senior citizens, women and children; and a fighting force of approximately 2,000 AFRC/RUF fighters entered

[77] Penfold, pp. 17-38.
[78] Woods and Reese, p. 40.
[79] Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, p. 143.
[80] Penfold, p. 52; Woods and Reese, p. 41.
[81] TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pt. 855; Woods and Reese, p. 42. TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pt. 862
[82] Ibid., pts. 870-874.
[83] Following his return to power on 10 March 1998, Kabbah demobilised the SLA. See Woods and Reese, pp. 44-45.
[84] TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pts. 880-886.

Freetown.[85] The ECOMOG liberation of Freetown resulted in 10,000 killed, 150,000 homeless and 600,000 displaced to refugee camps in Guinea.[86]

In July 1999, the Lome peace agreement was agreed that outlined shared governance and a pardon for Sankoh. RUF politicians were given ministerial positions and leaders were exempt from prosecutions.[87] ECOMOG forces began to withdraw by March 2000 and the UN assumed responsibility for security on 4th May.[88]

Despite gains by EO and ECOMOG, the RUF was not defeated. Around 40,000-50,000 fighters remained active, often acting as de facto security. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) oversaw the DDR programme from January 2000 and immediately faced logistical and coordination issues due to diverse languages and military cultures.[89] Disarmament was slow as make-shift barracks resembled prisoner of war camps with few amenities.[90] Surrenderers spent six weeks at camps and received vocational training, but those exiting the DDR process were expected to obtain their own job upon completion, a significant challenge considering civil perspectives towards former RUF fighters and the dire economic situation.[91]

Although the Lomé Agreement guaranteed UNAMSIL access nationwide, weak state security led to ambushes at illegal roadblocks.[92] As ECOMOG troops withdrew in April 2000, RUF fighters seized a Kenyan unit in Kono and took Zambian hostages. As the RUF began to once again advance on Freetown, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan requested international intervention to prevent the UNAMSIL mission from collapsing.[93]

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[85] TRC Report, Vol. 3a Ch. 3, pts. 973 & 1007.

[86] Nuarmah and Zartman, pp. 133-150; David Pratt MP, *Sierra Leone: The Forgotten Crisis*, report to Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs (23 April 1999), citied in Woods and Reese, p. 47.

[87] Keen (2005), pp. 250-252.

[88] Woods and Reese, p. 48.

[89] UN Resolution 1270 (October 1999) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/287753?ln=en> [accessed 31 January 2025]. UNAMSIL was comprised of troops from Nigeria, Kenya, India, Jordan, Guinea and Zambia. See Woods and Reese, p. 57.

[90] Shalini Chawla, 'United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone: A Search for Peace', *Strategic Analysis: A Monthly Journal of the IDSA*, 14:9 (December 2000), pp. 1745-1755.

[91] Krijn Peters, 'Reintegration Support for Young Ex-Combatants: A Right or a Privilege?', *International Migration*, 45:5 (December 2007), pp. 35-59; Mark Malna, Pehnyo Rakate and Angela McIntyre, 'Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight – DDR' *Institute for Security Studies Monograph Series* 68 (Pretoria, SA: ISS, 2002).

[92] UNSC, *Third Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone* (7 March 2000).

[93] Woods and Reese, p. 60.

6.3 A Tale of Four Operations: The British Military Intervention (1999 – 2002)

Operations Palliser, Basilica, Barras *and* Silkman

The wider corpus of work discussing the British intervention in Sierra Leone generally consider the campaign as a unified effort, commencing 7th May 2000 and concluding 14th January 2002.[94] In reality, the campaign consisted of four operations, *Palliser, Basilica, Barras, Silkman*, that were reactive rather than prescriptive and reflect an approach that was spontaneous and improvised. Problematically, specialist literature tends to over-focus on two of the more dynamic, dramatic and violent phases of the campaign, *Palliser* and *Barras*. This is detrimental to an appreciation of the campaign as a whole, specifically challenges encountered and decisions made in operations *Basilica* and *Silkman*.[95] This imbalance has ramifications for those championing the prescriptive abilities of the British COIN paradigm, as the confusion of the component parts for the whole can, and has, led to belief in the supremacy of the approach. Basing future COIN campaigns on the approach undertaken in Sierra Leone is likely to be problematic as the dramatic actions of *Palliser* and *Barras* do not reflect a more protracted and nuanced counterinsurgency campaign that engaged firstly in security stabilisation and then reform.

The campaign itself was fought primarily with conventional methods and the resultant DDR programme is a testament to the psychological impact of overwhelming force on convincing 'minds' that the struggle was unwinnable. Indeed, the previous attempts to demobilise insurgents was a failure precisely because the RUF remained in a position of strength at the signing of Abidjan. The bulk of the fighting was shouldered by Sierra Leoneans, with Britain providing technical and logistical support that primarily focussed on escalating reform to the security sector. Despite the conflict's characterisation as a British

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[94] These texts are treatise on the wider war and so tend to coagulate the four operations into a single intervention. David Harris, *Sierra Leone: A Political History*, (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2020); Tunde Zack-Williams, *When States Fail: Studies on Intervention in the Sierra Leone Civil War* (Pluto Press, 2011); Gberie.

[95] See: Dorman; Fowler; Woods and Reese, pp. 55-82; Paul Williams, 'Fighting for Freetown: British Military Intervention in Sierra Lone', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Col. 22 No. 3 (2001), p. 141. An internet search exposes the imbalance in popular literature: *Palliser* returns 2,750 results within texts held by Google Books; *Barras* 3,880; *Basilica* 127 results; and *Silkman* 166. Search conducted February 2024 using the Advanced Search feature of Google Scholar. Key words: 'Operation _____' and date range '1994 to 31st December 2023'. This is largely mirrored by a similar Google Scholar search that reveals 343 results for Palliser, 180 results for Barras, 34 for Basilica and 25 for Silkman. The U.S. Army's study devotes a four pages to *Palliser* and a further seven to *Barras*, whilst *Basilica* is incorporated into the actions of *Palliser* and is not mentioned by name. Further to this, *Operation Silkman*, arguably the most vital and protracted phase, only received the anecdotal treatment of just two paragraphs. See: Woods and Reese, pp. 60-73.

counterinsurgency intervention, British forces only engaged the RUF and splinter groups on a handful of occasions. By buttressing the UN mission and building up the capacity of the SLA (later Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces or RSLAF), the RUF were defeated militarily by 14th January 2002.

Operations Palliser and Basilica

Operation Palliser encompasses the first engagement between British forces and the RUF during the insurgencies advance on Freetown in early May 2000, and subsequent clashes around the international airport at Lungi. The historiography of the Sierra Leone campaign is monopolised by *Palliser*, which has become a lay substitute for the wider campaign. There is good reason for this misconception, as retrospective praise for the British intervention in toto was confused for its most famous elements.[96] However, *Palliser* was not intended to, nor did it, end violent actions by the RUF, and further intervention was needed to buttress UN and SLA resistance. This was encapsulated in the second operation, *Basilica*, that shored up the UN mission and began the process of transferring operational responsibility to the SLA. Ucko supports this assessment, noting that the British government were 'torn between the opportunity to do good and the political cost of "mission creep" beyond *Palliser's* stated mandate of evacuating British nationals.'[97] The positive appraisals highlighted above are certainly guilty of a degree of hyperbole, as they overstate the influence of the initial rescue mission. By overestimating the impact of *Palliser,* accounts provided above ignore the fluidity and reactivity of the wider campaign, where each new phase built upon the gains and failures of its predecessor.

[96] For example, Con Coughlin of the *Telegraph* observed that the dynamism of *Palliser* 'ended a bloody civil war in just a for few weeks' and the BBC found it 'remarkable to see this country's fortunes turn around in the space of perhaps 48 hours'. Con Coughlin, 'A last salvo from General Sir David Richards', *The Telegraph*, 17 July 2013 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/10185613/A-last-salvo-from-General-Sir-David-Richards.html?msockid=0d472351cc8f6aee1f0830e2cd746b71> [accessed 18 March 2022]. *Our World*, 'Returning to Sierra Leone' BBC, 28 May 2010 in Ucko, (2016). Similarly, Richard Connaughton observed that the *Palliser* phase acted as a 'glass of water to douse an early fire, thus obviating the need for a massive fire brigade-sized response' with other sources agreeing that the operation was a critical fulcrum that 'turned the tide' by 'intimidating the RUF and others while inspiring UNAMSIL and the government of Sierra Leone'. For 'glass of water: Richard Connaughton, 'The Mechanics and Nature of British Interventions in Sierra Leone (2000) and Afghanistan (2001-2002), *Civil Wars* 5:2 (2002), p. 84; 'turned the tide': Woods and Reese, p. 77.

[97] Ucko (2016), p. 852.

Palliser and the wider British commitment commenced following increased RUF aggression in early May 2000. Despite a recommitment by the UN in February 2000, that increased peacekeeping forces from 6,000 to 11,000 troops, attacks increased in frequency and intensity in early 2000. These attacks occurred in a quasi-vacuum of security as UNAMSIL commander Gen. Jetley continued to enforce a strict policy of neutrality.[98] A demonstration of UNAMSIL's weak position was the RUF blockade that prevented Indian and Ghanaian detachments from entering the Bendu area.[99] Another UNAMSIL patrol was prevented from entering a Makeni DDR centre by RUF troops.[100] The situation was compounded by the withdrawal of ECOMOG troops in April who constituted the largest combat force and this emboldened RUF troops to seize Kenyan UNAMSIL soldiers on 4th May. The British force deployed on 5 May 2000 and was initially comprised of a small Operational Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) led by Brig. Gen. David Richards. Richards was selected for this role due to his operational experience in Freetown, where he previously commanded the mission that returned the British High Commission to the embassy in January 2000.[101]

The mandate of *Palliser* limited Richards' team to planning for the evacuation of Commonwealth citizens. However, this in turn led to the first major escalation of British involvement in the conflict, with the OLRT determining that a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) would not be feasible without first securing Lungi Airport. With RUF troops positioned along the 'horseshoe road' that connected Freetown to the airport, Richards' solution was to airlift evacuees from the city to the airport.[102] The OLRT was converted to a Joint Task Force on 7th May and 'full political and military decision-making powers' were transferred to Richard's team, giving him full purview over the British contingent.[103] Similar

[98] See: UNSC, S/RES/1289 U.N. Security Council Resolution 1289 'The Situation in Sierra Leone', (7 February 2000) <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/1289> [accessed 4 October 2021]; Reese and Woods, *Military Interventions*, p. 59.

[99] Gen. Sir David Richards, 'Sierra Leone- "Pregnant with Lessons?"', cited in: *Royal United Services Institute Whitehall Paper 63- Global Challenges and Africa: Bridging Divides, Dealing with Perceptions, Rebuilding Societies* (August 2004), pp. 9-21.

[100] UNSC, *Fourth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone* (19 May 2000) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/414563?ln=en> [accessed 06 October 2021], para. 17.

[101] The campaign continued to collapse into disarray as 200 Zambian troops sent to liberate the Kenyans were also captured. The RUF held over 500 captives and an advance on Freetown prompted the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to request a U.K.-led intervention to buttress the UNAMSIL mission. Woods and Reese, p. 61.

[102] This required additional troops to secure both the assembly area and the airport, a feat that UNAMSIL nor the SLA were adjudged capable of undertaking successfully. Interview with Richards in: Dorman, p. 79.

[103] Ibid.

to the centralisation of leadership we observed in the Malayan and Kenyan campaigns, Richard's possessed full authority concerning the NEO but more importantly regarding assistance to UNAMSIL, the SLA and the Sierra Leone government.[104]

With the NEO operation completed by 9th May, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook faced questions about British commitment to the intervention to which Cook assured opposition that 'There is no question of long-term commitment by the troops we have sent'.[105] However by 14th May, Cook was briefing that 'We expect it to be over in a month'.[106] The UN however were keen to continue to press for further engagement, with spokesperson Fred Eckhard relating that the Secretary General 'continues to stress [that] a rapid reaction force may be needed in Sierra Leone as soon as possible to assist in restoring conditions conducive to the resumption of the peace process'.[107]

British involvement subsequently deepened at pace despite Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon's reassurances that the NEO mission remained the 'primary task' and that British troops 'were not deployed in a combat role as a part of UNAMSIL'.[108] However, the level of assistance provided at this point could be considered in breach of the limited mandate of 'technical advice'.[109] For example, Richards had significantly expanded UK command and advisory positions in UNAMSIL and SLA forces beyond Freetown, and secured the assistance of various armed factions inside Freetown.[110] This rag-tag group of pro-government fighters formed the nucleus of a coalition referred to as the 'unholy alliance', and

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[104] The introduction of British combat forces from May 2000, including the Royal Marine Amphibious Group with air support, established British supremacy over all forces in Sierra Leone. Dorman, p. 79.

[105] Hansard, 8 May 2000 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmhansrd/vo000508/debtext/00508-14.htm> [accessed 10 October 2021].

[106] Mark Tran, 'No combat role for British troops, says Cook', *The Guardian*, 9 May 2000 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/may/09/sierraleone4> [11 October 2021]. BBC, *Breakfast with Frost*, 14 May 2000. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/static/audio_video/programmes/breakfast_with_frost/transcripts/cook14.may.txt> [accessed 11 October 2021].

[107] Reliefweb, 'Annan urges Sierra Leone rebels to end hostilities', UNDGC, 8 May 2000 <https://reliefweb.int/report/sierra-leone/annan-urges-sierra-leone-rebels-end-hostilities> [accessed 11 October 2021]. Human Rights Watch (HRW) were also critical of the limited NEO objectives that did nothing to alleviate the horrors of the war being felt by the civilian population. HRW, 'U.N. must not forget Sierra Leone civilians', 9 May 2000.

[108] Hansard, 15 May 2000, Vol. 350 cc23-28 <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/2000/may/15/sierra-leone#S6CV0P0_20000515_HOC_113> [accessed 11 October 2021].

[109] Ibid.

[110] Woods and Reese, p. 62.

after training and provisioning, proved to be invaluable in pushing back the RUF.[111] One troublesome faction of this coalition, the 'West Side Boys', would later present a fresh challenge to the UK's mission by taking eleven British soldiers and a number of Sierra Leoneans hostage.

The use of the coercive threat of force played an instrumental role in the intervention. Naval aircraft performed intimidating show of force exercises during *Palliser*.[112] Whilst these actions did not openly commit the British to combat, they were attuned to foster a psychological impact on the RUF and the citizenry. For the first time since the RUF's initial incursion, the situation presented against them began to take an untenable character.[113] This may help to explain the RUF decision to unsuccessfully engage with the 1 PARA element at Lungi on 17th May. Prins has observed the importance of this action, as the RUF who were so exposed to the full ferocity of British military force, did not mount a second direct offensive against British troops for the rest of the war. Indeed, it was observed that 'the psychological effect of the engagement was immense in deterring the RUF and in further enhancing the reputation of the British troops in the eyes of the UNAMSIL and Sierra Leonean forces.'[114] The RUF's political leader Foday Sankoh had fled some ten days earlier and his absence led to increasing instability within the RUF and helps to explain the 17th May attack. Prior to Sankoh's disappearance, the RUF had been hesitant to engage directly with the British, and the attack itself was poorly planned and easily repelled.

Despite such successes, the RUF remained an armed and active force, that still held UN troops as hostages. *Palliser* had achieved its limited mandate by 8th May, leaving Whitehall with the dilemma of either withdrawing in-line with the publicly stated mandate or admitting that British forces needed to commit to a concerted intervention with broader political objectives. Withdrawal at this stage would have almost certainly led to another resurgence of RUF strength and a return to the early 2000 position of the conflict. This is demonstrated by the three options that Richards offered to the UK government: firstly, escalate British combat operations and defeat the RUF militarily; withdraw combat forces and focus on buttressing the SLA; or withdraw and continue to provide technical and

[111] Ucko (2016), p. 854.
[112] Woods and Reese, p. 62.
[113] Woods and Reese, p. 63.
[114] Gwyn Prins, *The Heart of War: On Power, Conflict and Obligation in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge 2002), p. 203.

logistical support to UNAMSIL.[115] The first option was deemed politically unfeasible with British troops committed to the Balkans, and House of Commons debates reflecting public apathy. Sole reliance on the SLA was also problematic, as a half-enacted DDR programme, agreed in the 1999 Lome Accords, had rendered the SLA in disarray. The final option, while the most likely to succeed, presented challenges of 'command and control arrangements, training, equipment' and highlights a failure in 'the resolve … of some contingents to react robustly'.[116] The UN recommitted to the intervention on 19th May 2000 with Resolution 1299, that increased UNAMSIL troops in country to 13,000.[117] This pressure has been largely ignored in the British focussed historiography of the conflict, but recommitment expressed in Resolution 1299 and the expansion of UNAMSIL forces certainly influenced the release of the hostages from 16th May.[118]

With the NEO evacuations completed by 8th May and the 'unholy alliance' making good ground against the RUF in the interim, the UK mission faced a crossroads of withdrawal or escalation. This dilemma was played out in London and on 23rd May, the expansive objectives of 'sustainable peace and security, stable democratic government, the reduction of poverty, respect for human rights and the establishment of accountable armed forces' were established in line with the '4 Pillars' of UN peacekeeping. However, a contradiction emerged as the concurrent objective of devising an 'exit strategy for UK forces which does not undermine either the Government of Sierra Leone or the UN but demonstrates the ability to avoid mission creep' was issued in tandem.[119] Here we can perhaps observe a degree of naivety on the part of the counterinsurgents, as one policy sought to make wholesale changes to Sierra Leonean governance, security and society whilst simultaneously downplaying British responsibility for the protracted engagement this would require.

The disposition of government and UN forces was unfavourable: with the SLA lacked air-support or concerted artillery; and UNAMSIL was plagued by 'critical deficiencies' in communications, intelligence, and unified command.[120] What successes can be ascribed to

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[115] For a summary, see: Dorman, p. 97.

[116] 'Notes on the Security Council Retreat at Pocantico Conference Center, NY, 2-3 June 2000', p. 8 cited in: Ucko, 'Limited Intervention', p. 854.

[117] UNSC, Resolution 1299 (2000), 19 May 2000, UN Security Council <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/1299> [accessed 12 October 2021].

[118] Some credit is given to Liberian President Charles Taylor. See: UNSC, *Fourth Report*, para. 76.

[119] Interview with Gen. Richards, in: Dorman, p. 96.

[120] UNSC, *Fifth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone* (31 July 2000) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/419786?v=pdf> [accessed 12 October 2021], p. 9.

the government came primarily from the ad-hoc collection of militia groups constituting the CDF, whose opposition to the RUF came at the price of a degree of unaccountability.[121] Indeed, Adebajo and Keen note that the activities of the CDF undermined the legitimacy of the authorities and banded the splintered factions of the RUF together in fear of violence upon surrender or capture.[122]

Richards remained sceptical of UNAMSIL's commitment to 'peace enforcement' and outlined a joint-approach that saw UNAMSIL forces consolidating within former RUF territory, liberated by an aggressive, manoeuvre-based SLA.[123] This would form the nucleus of the heighted security environment, necessary to suppress insurgent activity, and is indicative of the counterinsurgency approach observed in Malaya and Kenya: with large numbers of armed troops visibly representing the return of legitimate government authority.[124] Despite warnings of 'mission creep', the UK were now playing a prominent leadership role and as Richards himself noted: 'We provided a team to pull the factions together ... we found ourselves de facto directing the SLA campaign and heavily influencing the UN's.'[125] British advisors took responsibility for increasing the SLA's strength with a Short-Term Training Team (STTT) producing two battalions by 22nd July under codename *Operation Basilica*.[126] Richards justified the extension of the British mandate by observing that *Palliser* had 'create[d] order out of Sierra Leone's chaos, put the UN back on its feet, reconstitute[d] the Sierra Leone army, give[n] the rebels a bloody nose'.[127] Similarly, Robin Cook was eager to praise the intervention whilst downplaying the continuing role of the UK.[128]

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[121] HRW, 'New Evidence of Atrocities in Sierra Leone and Guinea' (30 November 2000) <https://www.hrw.org/news/2000/11/30/new-evidence-atrocities-sierra-leone-and-guinea> [accessed 18 October 2021].

[122] Adekeye Adebajo and David Keen, 'Sierra Leone', in *United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004*, ed. by Mats Berdal and Spyros Economides, LSE Monographs in International Studies (Rev. a) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 262.

[123] Ibid, p. 98. The UNAMSIL position is understandable when considering the RUF still held UN hostages as late as July 15. UN-led operations freed the hostages by 16 July and garrisons at Kuiva and Kailahun were extracted by 11th July.

[124] UNSC, 'United Nations Security Council Resolution 1299' (19 May).

[125] David Richards, 'Expeditionary Operations: Sierra Leone - Lessons for the Future', *World Defence Systems*, 3:2 (July 2001), p. 135.

[126] Woods and Reese, pp. 63-65.

[127] For 'create[d] order', see: Richards (2001), p. 134. For 'whole process', see: Sierra Leone News (12 June 2000) in Ucko (2016).

[128] Hansard, Vol. 351 cc161-72 (6 June 2000) <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199900/cmhansard/vo000606/debext/00606-05.htm> [accessed 19 October 2021].

Cook's deferment obscured the involvement of the British STTT team and the role out of *Operation Basilica. Basilica* is the product of the British mission firstly failing to make any real impact in the six weeks Richards described beyond the NEO, and secondly smacks of a realisation by leadership in London that the politically motivated withdrawal was in haste and left the UN mission in peril.[129] The reactive implementation of the STTT also made little consideration of the true political motivations of the insurgency and prioritised expanding control over territory and restoring central authority through security sector reform. Where the US army treatise describes *Palliser* as a 'stunning success' this can only be viewed against the limited NEO objectives.[130] *Basilica,* hidden in historiography, is the ugly truth that *Palliser* and the first British intervention did little to reduce the threat of the RUF and foster measurable progress towards sustainable peace.

Operation Barras

It is a twist of irony that the most famous and celebrated aspect of the British intervention, the rescue of eleven British soldiers from the West Side Boys (WSB) splinter faction, is perhaps the best indicator of an overestimation of *Palliser's* and *Basilica's* impact. Far from signalling the death knell of the insurgency, *Operation Barras* demonstrated a failure to appreciate the political motivations of the disparate groups: namely representation in any political settlement. The capture of the British troops is itself an indicator that the security presence of the UN beyond Freetown was limited.

Barras was launched in response to the abduction of eleven Royal Irish Regiment soldiers by former 'unholy alliance' members the West Side Boys, operating in the Okra Hills area on 25th August 2000. The WSB were comprised deserters, prisoners released from the Padema Road Prison following the 1997 coup, and civilians including children. The WSB are perhaps the most well publicised sub-faction of the war partly due to their association with *Barras* and in-part due to the eclectic appearance of the group, who were often photographed wearing irregular clothing and women's wigs.[131]

[129] Gen. Richards admitted in an interview with David Ucko that *Palliser* was ended early at the bequest of London leadership and that the autumn interdiction was a result of the hasty withdrawal. See: Ucko, (2016), p. 858.

[130] Woods and Reese, p. 77.

[131] The group financed their operations with alluvial diamonds that were used to purchase modern weapons as well as heroin, marijuana and palm wine. The group was able to expand its area of operations

Despite Finance Minister James Jonah's denial that 'the government has taken the position that we are not going to negotiate', negotiations were initiated using the patrol's radio and then at a meeting on 27th August.[132] As further negotiations stalled, PM Tony Blair ordered the British Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Sir Charles Guthrie to commence planning for a rescue.[133] The events of the rescue have been well documented and do not require reproduction here.[134] The 90-minute joint-forces operation is well publicised, with one SAS trooper killed in action. 25 WSB were killed and 18 captured, including Kallay. The British hostages were freed as well as 22 Sierra Leoneans.[135]

In popular-media, *Barras* was celebrated and to a degree utilised to downplay the reality of the conflict in the autumn of 2000.[136] The usually grounded analysis of Dorman described the raid as having a 'major impact' on the course of the war, whilst Fowler goes further by defining *Barras* as a 'political act' and an 'exercise in nation-building'.[137] Several irregularities emerge from this common narrative that challenge the significance of the *Barras* raid in bringing the war to an end. Secretary of Defence Geoff Hoon argued that the psychological impact of the overwhelming force employed against the WSB, would compel the RUF to 'accept the rule of law and the authority of the democratically elected government'.[138] Hoon intimated that *Barras* was a warning to 'those who may in the future consider taking similar action against the UK Armed Forces' betraying London's belief in the

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using captured UN vehicles and extorted travellers at roadblocks. BBC News, 'Who Are the West Side Boys', 31 August 2000 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/901209.stm> [accessed 25 October 2021]. Woods and Reese, p. 65.

[132] BBC News, 'Sierra Leone hostage talks "going well"', *bbcnews.com* 4 September 2000 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/909045.stm> [accessed 25 October 2021].

[133] Fowler, p. 114.

[134] Fowler, p. 114; Woods and Reese, pp. 65-71.

[135] Fowler, pp. 141-160; Woods and Reese, pp. 70-71.

[136] Headlines such as 'Jungle rebels "drugged, drunk, and dangerous"' sought to characterise the insurgency at large as an outpouring of directionless savagery that played well against the virtue of rescuing hostages. For 'drunk, drugged, and dangerous', see: Michael Dynes, 'Jungle rebels "drunk, drugged, and dangerous"', *Independent* (Ireland) (28 August 2000) <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/jungle-rebels-drugged-drunk-and-dangerous-26112508.html> [accessed 25 October 2021].

[137] For 'major impact', see: Dorman, p. 114; 'political act', see: Fowler, p. 158. Popular British press also reflected this misperception of *Barras* as a Hollywood-esk showdown to end the war. Retrospectively, *The Guardian* presented the operation as 'the last significant event in Sierra Leone's long civil war', whilst *The Independent* similarly ascribed victory over the RUF to the defeat of the WSB. For, 'last significant event', see: Alex Renton, 'Sierra Leone: The One Place Where Tony Blair Remains An Unquestioned Hero', *The Guardian* (18 April 2010) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/apr/18/sierra-leone-international-aid-blair> [accessed 25 October 2021]; Peter Osborne, 'General John Holmes' battle to rebuild Sierra Leone 15 years after a daring rescue', *The Independent* (12 September 2015) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/general-john-holmes-battle-rebuild-sierra-leone-15-years-after-daring-rescue-10493171.html> [accessed 25 October 2021].

[138] Ibid.

utility of force as a strategic lever over the RUF.[139] There is however little to suggest a tangible connection between the RUF and the WSB, a point that has been well documented.[140] Three days after *Barras*, the RUF recommitted to an offensive near the Guinean frontier town of Pamelap; whilst in October, renewed offensives in the north reinforced the RUF's control over the Kono diamond fields.[141]

The very presence of the WSB so close to Freetown reveals the fragility of the government/UN presence outside of the capital and the major towns. That Jordanian troops were willing to trade positions with the insurgency to avoid an open confrontation demonstrates that the policy of territorial dominance was at odds with limitations on the use of force.[142] That the WSB were able to operate with impunity is damning, but also reveals the misperception that *Palliser* and *Basilica* had determinable impacts on bringing the war to an end. The very fact that the WSB were able to return to a life of violence indicates the ineffectiveness of the DDR programme; and that majority of WSB members continued to band together, demonstrated that the original social and political cleavages of the conflict still existed. *Palliser, Basilica* and *Barras* combined had done little to address what Paul Richards termed the 'crisis of a patrimonial state' and the resultant disaffection of young people that were at the heart of the war. Ignoring the core problems of the security services is understandable when considered against the British tenet of limited intervention and a desire for expeditious withdrawal.[143] Instead, *Palliser*, *Basilica* and *Barras* are indicators of the need for a political solution to the conflict and demarked how protracted the British engagement in Sierra Leone would need to be. This concern would eventually lead to the development of the ten-year Memorandum of Understanding.[144] Indeed, commander of the JTF, Gen. Jonathon Riley later criticised the naivety of the British position before *Barras*, commenting that the counterinsurgents 'had to develop a far more coherent policy' beyond

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[139] Ibid.

[140] See: Mark Malan, Phenyo Rekate and Angela McIntyre, *Peacekeeping in Sierra Leone: UNAMSIL Hits the Home Straight* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies: Pretoria 2002); Virginia Fortna, *Does Peacekeeping Work?: Shaping Belligerents Choices after Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 59.

[141] See: HRW, 'New Evidence of Atrocities in Sierra Leone and Guinea: Civilian Suffering Continues Unabated as Un Secretary-General Makes Visit' (30 November 2000) <https://www.hrw.org/news/2000/11/30/new-evidence-atrocities-sierra-leone-and-guinea> [accessed 14 January 2023].

[142] Douglas Farah, 'Internal Disputes Mar U.N. Mission; Power Struggle Cripples Troops in Sierra Leone', *Washington Post* (10 September 2000) <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/sierra/000909.htm> [accessed 15 September 2024].

[143] For 'patrimonial state', see: P. Richards, p. xvii; Peters (2011).

[144] See Chapter 6 of this thesis.

the security of Freetown as 'there was a democratically elected government ... but whose writ hardly ran outside of the capital'.[145] Thusly, on 4th September, the intervention's objectives were clarified, and a mandate was issued to enable the 'immediate freedom of access throughout Sierra Leone for UNAMSIL and government forces'.[146] This recommitment was actualised by Operation *Silkman*, the least famous phase of the intervention but perhaps most critical to any understanding of how the British intervention ushered in the end of the conflict and the currently unbroken peace.

Operation Silkman

General Richards returned to Sierra Leone in the autumn of 2000 as 'a resurgence of violence' increased concerns that 'the RUF were again on the warpath'.[147] Operation *Basilica* was expanded with fresh training teams as accusations that 'earlier limited plans to help train local soldiers were far too optimistic' rumbled on in the British press.[148] This renewed effort to improve the capacity of the army should be considered in the wider context of the precarious UNAMSIL mission.[149]

It is against this backdrop that the decision was taken to deploy 500 Royal Marine Commandos and install Gen. Alistair Duncan as Chief of Staff to coordinate military actions with UNAMSIL. The UK-MoD and SLA released the new campaign plan, *Silkman*, that identified RUF control of the diamond fields as a key enabler of the conflict. [150] The new plan adopted a national strategy to secure the Liberian border and dislodge RUF forces through conventional military action, requiring expanded SLA capacity and international efforts to disrupt RUF funding via blood diamonds. In response to UNAMSIL's weaknesses and SLA limitations, a five-phase plan was approved: building SLA confidence through supported operations, cutting RUF supply lines, gradually restoring government control, clearing key

[145] Jonathon Riley, 'The UK in Sierra Leone: A Post-conflict Operation Success?', *Heritage Lectures*, 958 (15 June 2006), pp. 1-4.
[146] Ibid.
[147] David Richards, *Taking Command* (London: Headline 2014), p. 161.
[148] Richard Norton-Taylor and Ewen MacAskill, 'Britain builds up Sierra Leone force'. *The Guardian* (11 October 2000) <https://archive.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/203-sierra-leone/39333.html> [accessed 15 September 2024].
[149] Farah (2000).
[150] Defence Headquarters (RSLAF), 'Campaign Plan for the Defeat of the RUF by Government Forces in Sierra Leone', OpPlan 1/1 (2001), pp. 2-4.

eastern regions including Kono and the Liberian border, and finally, sustaining SSR to ensure lasting government presence in former RUF areas.[151]

3000 new SLA troops were deployed in the autumn with a further 3000 undergoing training over the winter.[152] British troops did not engage with the RUF directly but British officers were embedded throughout the SLA to the extent that Richards admitted at this juncture 'We were coordinating the campaign ... [and] absolutely took it back from the Sierra Leoneans'.[153] Richards himself observed the psychological impact that British recommitment had on the insurgency, with Ucko agreeing that British support compelled the RUF to sue for peace.[154] Indeed, a mere week before *Silkman* commenced, a thirty day ceasefire was agreed on 10th November in Abuja (Nigeria). This agreement was based on the previous Lome stipulations of engagement with the DDR programme and freedom of access for UNAMSIL humanitarian workers to RUF held territory.[155]

For the RUF, Abuja represented an opportunity to reduce the strategic demands on their forces near Freetown and re-deploy for offensives to capture diamond fields along the Guinean border. Whilst Freetown was now heavily fortified, RUF focus had migrated to the diamond rich areas in Forecariah and southern Guinea in early September, almost two months before the Abuja agreements.[156] Gberie identified the link between the RUF's decision to alter strategy from September 2000 and Liberian leader Charles Taylor, who was determined to punish Guinea for its support of the anti-Taylor group, LURD.[157] In an interview with Gberie, RUF field commander Issa Sesay recalled receiving cash, weapons and supplies from Taylor in exchange for launching the Guinean offensive.[158] The attacks in Guinea triggered another

[151] Ibid.
[152] Chris McGreal, 'Britain doubles Sierra Leone force', *The Guardian* (13 November 2000) in Ucko (2016), p. 864.
[153] Ucko (2016), p. 864.
[154] D. Richards (2014), pp. 161-162; Ucko (2016), p. 864.
[155] UNSG, 'Eighth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone', S/2000/1199. 15 December 2000 < https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/429597?ln=en> [accessed 08 November 2021], p. 1.
[156] Malan, p. 12.
[157] Lansana Gberie, 'Destabilising Guinea: diamonds, Charles Taylor and the potential for wider human catastrophe', Occasional Paper 1, Partnership Africa Canada/International Peace Information Service/Network Movement for Justice and Development (2001).
[158] Ibid., p. 11.

humanitarian crisis, with 600 people killed in two months and thousands displaced into overflowing camps.[159]

The decision to attack Guinea would ultimately be the end for the RUF, as Guinean forces simultaneously beat back the RUF incursion whilst suppressing an uprising from within.[160] The RUF then found themselves trapped between two approaching fronts: the Guinean forces and an emboldened UNAMSIL/SLA offensive from the south-west. This does not however explain how the conflict in Sierra Leone came to an end. The Abuja meeting did little to end fighting, but credit can be given for the time it provided to develop the SLA. In the following sub-section, we will examine the extent to which the international community and actors beyond the British, the SLA and UNAMSIL were responsible for bringing the war to a conclusion. We will then be able to accurately adjudge the extent to which British actions were instrumental in ending the conflict and appropriately calibrate their actual contribution.

6.4 DfID, 'Security First' and the Security-Development Nexus

Today a contrasting image of security and development is presented. Firstly, Sierra Leone has now enjoyed two decades of peace, where irregular fighters equipped with AK-47s are now banished to the annals of history. The violence that characterised the civil war is now the subject of academic scrutiny rather than journalistic report. Broad-ranging SSR and DDR initiatives have dismantled irregular cadres, reconstituted the security forces, and created a national judicial structure and new intelligence and command systems.[161] Since 2002, five successful self-administered elections have taken place, with power transferring to the opposition twice without overt interference from the security services.[162] Indeed, AFRI highlighted the intervention as 'one of Africa's most successful post-conflict states'.[163]

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[159] Douglas Farah, 'For refugees, hazardous haven in Guinea' *The Washington Post* (6 November 2000a) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/11/06/for-refugees-hazardous-haven-in-guinea/f5b0d504-365f-44e2-b0fa-6c4984d301da/> [accessed 10 November 2021].

[160] See: Elizabeth Blunt, 'Civil war fears in Guinea', *BBC News* (23 October 2000) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/986375.stm> [accessed 10 November 2021].

[161] Deeney (2011), p. 275.

[162] General elections were held in 2002, 2007, 2012, 2018 and 2023.

[163] Africa Research Institute, 'Old Tricks, Young Guns: Elections and Violence in Sierra Leone' *ARI Briefing Note* 1102 (April 2011) <https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/publications/briefing-notes/old-tricks-young-guns-elections-and-violence-in-sierra-leone/> [accessed 20 February 2024] p. 1. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon similarly celebrated the outcomes of the UN/ECOWAS/UK intervention. DfID, *Building Peaceful States and Societies: A DfID Practice Paper* (Westminster, London: DfID (2010).

The second image is one of a country placing 181 of 191 on the UN HDI.[164] Males are only expected to live to 59 years of age and females 62; and on average males spend 5.8 years in full-time education while women 3.5 years. Males make on average US$1,789 per annum and females US$1,453.[165] Maternal mortality in 2023 stands at 1 in 20 and in 2021 children had a 9% chance of dying before their fifth birthday.[166]

On the 9th of March 1999, Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short addressed the Centre for Defence Studies (Kings College) and identified the vitality of SSR to addressing the economic and societal challenges that plagued unstable states. Labelled as the 'security-development nexus', international aid and assistance under the Blair-Labour government would not just focus upon the delivery of supplies and the creation of civil infrastructure, but also the reformation of a state's security services to address the grievances of personal insecurity and degraded government authority and legitimacy.[167] Support for the nexus identified linkage between professionalisation of the security services and good governance, and as Admiral Kurt Tidd explained: 'Transparent, accountable militaries and security forces help reinforce good governance by being responsive to civil authority and respectful of the rule of law'.[168]

The nexus is best understood not as a concomitant approach where SSR and development programming are enacted simultaneously, but instead as a 'security first' approach that is predicated upon a secure environment to facilitate sustained development.[169]

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[164] UNDP, '2021-2022 Human Development Index: Statistical Annex' <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI> [accessed 20 February 2024].

[165] UNDP, 'Gender Development Index – Sierra Leone' <https://hdr.undp.org/gender-development-index#/indicies/GDI> [accessed 20 February 2024].

[166] Karen Blum, 'Improving Maternal Child Care in Sierra Leone' *Hopkins Medicine* (Winter 2023) <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/articles/2023/02/improving-maternal-child-health-in-sierra-leone#:~:text=In%20Sierra%20Leone%2C%20Africa%2C%20maternal%20mortality%20is%20among,childbirth%2C%20according%20to%20the%20latest%20United%20Nations%20estimate> [accessed 20 February 2024]; Vanessa Corderio, 'Children of Sierra Leone: Realising Children's Rights' *Humanium.org* (March 2021) <https://www.humanium.org/en/sierra-leone/#:~:text=The%20infant%20mortality%20rate%20in%20Sierra%20Leone%20for,as%20well%20as%20persistently%20high%20levels%20of%20malnutrition.> [accessed 20 February 2024].

[167] Clare Short, 'Security Sector Reform and the Elimination of Poverty' (Speech, Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, London, UK, March 9, 1999).

[168] Nicole Ball, 'Reforming Security Sector Governance', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 4:3 (December 2004), p. 511; Admiral Kury Tidd, Commander of the US Southern Command 2017, quoted in: Elise Roberts, 'The Promise and Pitfalls of Security Sector Interventions: Examining the Medium-Term Impact of Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone', *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, 11:4 (2020), pp. 393-394.

[169] See: Comfort Ero, 'A Critical Assessment of Britain's Africa Policy', *Conflict, Security and Development*, 1:2 (2001), p. 56; Nicole Ball, 'Evaluation of Conflict Prevention Pools: The Security Sector Reform Strategy', DfID Evaluation Report EV 647 (March 2004)

Willan outlines how the connection between security and development has emerged as 'a response to the donor's need to quickly establish security in the aftermath of conflict and have evolved to become a major priority of post-conflict reconstruction and conflict resolution'.[170] The adoption of a 'security first' approach is predicated upon the belief that a secure environment ensures that development initiatives are more likely to succeed without disruption by conflict and that international investors will not be dissuaded by potential threats to their investments.[171]

The nexus does however present competing discourses regarding the extent to which SSR reflects a 'good governance' agenda or that of 'security first'.[172] 'Good governance' reform approaches are rooted in the acceptance that security services themselves may be significant sources of destabilisation and personal insecurity due to poor oversight, command, and control. Thusly reforms should seek to strengthen control through democratic governance and the creation of civil command and control institutions. Thusly, the prioritisation of security efficacy without consideration for good governance is likely to fail to produce desired enhancements to human security and economic, political, and social advances.[173]

Contrastingly, advocates of the 'security first' approach highlight the need for strong security services in a post-conflict environment to combat post-conflict volatility. However, as Brzoska observes: SSR planners have prioritised reforms that produce improvements in efficacy even if there is little regard for concomitant democratic reform.[174] In this way security is understood as: '[T]he conditions under which most people, most of the time, are able to go about their lives, venture onto the street, work, study, and participate in public life, without fear of being killed or injured.[175] This indicates that a 'security-first' discourse argues for broader social security provision that is experienced at the individual level. Again, economic security is certainly a prominent consideration of the 'security first' proponent as: 'It makes sense to include within basic security a certain level of economic security, because

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<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a79d712e5274a684690c7b7/ev647ssr.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2023].

[170] Susan Willet, 'New barbarians at the gate: Loosing the liberal peace in Africa', *Review of African Political Economy* (Dec. 2005), pp. 581-2.

[171] DFID, 'Poverty and the security sector' (DFID paper, London 1998), p.2; Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCCP), 'Security sector reform strategy' (DFID, FCO, MoD, London, 2004-05), p. 4.

[172] Brzoska, (2003).

[173] Ball and Hendrickson.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Amitai Etzioni, *Security First for a Muscular, Moral Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 2.

a failure to achieve this could have consequences as dire as the lack of physical security, such as if people are dying of starvation.[176] Resultantly, those championing the prioritisation of security reform in post-conflict states have argued that: 'A development-first foreign policy, like one based on democracy-first, is unrealistic in the short term and counterproductive insofar as it detracts from achieving security, which must precede development.'[177] While democratisation may be the ultimate objective of the SSR practitioner, 'security-first' approaches demand a concentration on the physical reformation of the security services. The provision of services and restoration of individual security is prioritised regardless of regard for the role that the military or police may have played as agents of destabilisation.

DfID legitimised its involvement in security reform by arguing that its main objective of poverty reduction could only be achieved by recognising 'security [as] a fundamental pre-condition for development'.[178] This is a vital distinction when considered against how funding was regulated under the International Development Act 2002, that limited spending to programmes 'likely to contribute to a reduction in poverty'.[179] Thusly, DfID needed to effectively link security reform with development to enhance the legality of funding for security-related expenditure. Poorly functioning security forces can undermine state legitimacy, drive civilians towards unregulated security alternatives, and, without proper oversight, may threaten democratic accountability or seek political power.[180] DfID's SSR strategy therefore aligns with wider perspectives on creating stability through the reformation of state security institutions. For example, Egnell and Halden outline the objectives of SSR as 'democratisation, civilian control, good governance, gender equality, transparency and accountability' of the armed forces.[181]

The SDN approach was facilitated by the UK Conflict Prevention Pool (CPP) that merged DfID, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence officials into one bureau that could more closely align development work with defence issues. The Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP, a precursor of the CPP) aligned security and development

[176] Lynn Kuok, 'Security First: The Lodestar for US Foreign Policy in Southeast Asia?' *American Behavioural Scientist* 51:9 (2008), p. 1435.
[177] Ibid.
[178] DFID, FCO and MoD, 'The Africa conflict prevention pool: The sub-Saharan Strategy for Conflict Prevention' (DFID, London 2004), p. 2.
[179] Office for Public Sector Information, 'International Development Act 2002' (2002) <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/1/contents> [accessed 12th August 2023]
[180] GCCP, 'Security sector reform strategy', p. 4. Cited in: Denney (2011), p. 281.
[181] Egnell and Halden, p. 32.

by outlining the linkage between security reform and the 'economic and financial causes of conflict'.[182] However, the priority of the ACPP was 'security first' as 'the main financial priority of the Africa Pool' was development of 'armed forces, police, rule of law, governance and [military] integration'.[183] The promotion of SSR was certainly supported by the UK FCO and DfID, as 64% of ACPP spending between 2001 and 2005 focussed on security initiatives.[184] The justification for prioritising security can be located in Clare Short's March 1999 speech at Kings College, in which she explained that:

> …[A] security sector of appropriate size, properly tasked and managed, is a key issue. We are therefore entering this new area of security sector reform in order to strengthen our contribution to development. … to address one of the principal obstacles to progress in development and poverty reduction which is the existence of bloated, secretive, repressive, undemocratic and poorly structured security sectors in many developing countries.[185]

This aligned well with wider 'cross-departmental' initiatives that characterised the Blair government's approach to international intervention, emphasising a 'joined-up' approach that combined peacebuilding, conflict prevention and SSR.[186]

After nearly a decade of brutal fighting, in part caused by the malfeasance of the security services, Sierra Leone presented a ripe opportunity to test the nexus. Reform to the security services was deemed vital firstly due to their degraded status and the negative reflection this presented of government legitimacy and authority; but also, as they themselves had been considerable sources of instability.[187] It is against this backdrop that the British counterinsurgency intervention of 2000 to 2002 and subsequent SSR programming occurred.

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[182] DFID, FCO and MoD, 'The Africa Conflict Prevention Pool', p. 4.
[183] Ibid., p. 13.
[184] Reformation of the armed forces and police received 47% whilst DDR and reintegration an additional 17%. Cited in: Denney (2011), p. 283. See also: Greg Austin, Emery Brusset, Malcolm Chalmers, and Juliet Pierce, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Synthesis Report', (DFID, London, March 2004) <https://www.oecd.org/derec/unitedkingdom/35094094.pdf> [Accessed 12 August 2023]
[185] Clare Short, 'Security sector reform and the elimination of poverty' (Speech: Centre for Defence Studies, King's College London, 3 March 1999) <https://www.clareshort.org/speeches/security-sector-reform> [accessed 14 August 2023].
[186] Chris Smith, 'Security Sector Reform: Development Breakthrough or Institutional Engineering?' *Conflict, Security and Development*, 1:1 (2001), p. 11.
[187] Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), *Truth and Reconciliation Report (TRC)* Vol. 2 Ch. 2 (Freetown, Sierra Leone: Serra Leone Government, 2004) pt. 61.

Scholastic attention has since focussed upon the implementation of SSR in Sierra Leone and the recognition of its vitality to stabilisation and reconstruction.[188] As Egnell and Halden note, while SSR literature acknowledges its challenges, these are often framed in technocratic terms: focusing on strategy, funding, political will, or technical expertise.[189] Technocratic assessments explain implemented reforms but often lack clarity on their medium- and long-term impacts. More recent evaluations cite sustained peace and uncontested elections as evidence of successful military intervention and SSR.[190] Indeed, they almost entirely ignore the micro-impacts felt daily by civilians. It is this general sense of stability that now obscures the more granular impact that SSR programming has on the society of the twenty-first century. Further, the fact that the security services have not yet usurped power, does not guarantee such risk has been banished.

This author does not seek to play the contrarian and certainly accepts that the RUF collapsed for the final time shortly after the intervention of British combat forces. Sierra Leone is currently in a state of peace. However, this binary assessment that is based upon the absence of open conflict and the provision of uncontested elections cannot provide a fully illuminated understanding of the impact of the intervention today, nor public perceptions of their new security services. This more simplistic understanding of success excludes those impacted at the micro-level by SSR, namely the people of Sierra Leone, whose perspectives and futures are influenced dramatically by the actions of the British counterinsurgency campaign and subsequent SSR programme.

6.5 Civil-Military Relations in Twentieth Century Sierra Leone

The following section is an examination of the British-led reformation of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) into the reconstituted Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF).

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[188] See: Paul Jackson and Peter Albrecht, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Westminster, London: UK Government Global Conflict Prevention Pool, 2009); Jackson and Albrecht (2011); Glba; Adrian Horn, Funmi Olonisakin and Gordon Peake, 'United Kingdom-led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone', *Civil Wars*, 8:2 (2002), pp. 109-123.

[189] Egnell and Halden, p. 47.

[190] Africa Defense Forum, 'Sierra Leone Shows the Way for Security Sector Reform', *ADF Magazine* (January 2014) <https://adf-magazine.com/2015/01/sierra-leone-shows-the-way-for-security-sector-reform/>; UN Office for West Africa, 'The SSR Experience of Sierra Leone, a Shining Model in West Africa and Beyond' *UNOWAS Magazine* 4 (August 2017) <https://unowas.unmissions.org/ssr-experience-sierra-leone-shining-model-west-africa-and-beyond>; Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Ucko (2016); Dorman (2008).

We will observe that British planners enacted a bottom-up approach to reform that improved the operational capabilities of the armed forces but failed to depoliticise the officer class. Ad-hoc and incremental reforms undertaken during wartime and in the post-conflict period should be understood as reflexive and experimental in character.

We begin by charting the pre-war politicalisation of the SLA as rulers of the one-party state sought to insulate themselves from being deposed by the armed forces. The ranks of the army were populated with loyal men and the capabilities of the army were neutered. We will also observe how worsening conditions of soldiers played a role in fostering animosity toward pollical leaders. This section then charts the British-led SSR programme and highlights the challenges created by a lack of local ownership or consultation that still plagues RSLAF today. Following this is an assessment of the extent to which British reforms have curbed the political involvement of the military and to what extent are the challenges of the pre-war army still present today. Next, we turn to the experience of the ranks in the post-conflict period. This is achieved through an appraisal of the Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) that operated as a parallel to the disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DDR) programme. In this section, serving and retired soldiers discuss their impressions of the MRP and highlight challenges created by a lack of local consultation or consideration for sustainability after withdrawal. This is followed by an assessment of the current capabilities and conditions of RSLAF and its personnel. Here we will observe a general degradation of the conditions of soldiers and a limitation on the capabilities of the army due to structural issues created during by the British intervention and reform programme.

The pre-war civil-military relationship was one characterised by a high degree of politicisation of the armed forces. This politicisation resulted in a degraded operational capability and an inability to adequately respond to the RUF insurgency. Sierra Leone's latter 20th century history is one of coup d'états and counter coups as soldiers acted as 'political entrepreneurs' who seized power and exploited it for their own enrichment.[191] As Bruneau observed, the politicisation of the army before 2001 represented a continuous threat to civil democracy and the safety of citizens, whilst its inadequacies in the face of RUF aggression presented a credible threat to the continued existence of the state.[192] Below we will observe

[191] Nuamah and Zartman, p. 2.
[192] Thomas C. Bruneau, *Who Guards the Guardians and How: Democratic Civil-Military Relations* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2006), pp. 3-4.

the historical impact of politicisation of the armed forces of Sierra Leone, and their agency as instigators of instability, as they repeatedly intervened in national politics and governance.

The Armed Forces and Independence: The 1967 and 1968 Coups

The first intervention occurred in 1967 just six years after independence. The army, led by Brig. Gen. David Lansana prevented the newly elected APC party from assuming power but were defeated by military-led countercoups.[193] This revealed a high degree of political affiliation within the SLA for the incumbent SLPP. Lansana was a southerner and a member of the ethnic Mende tribe that dominated politics in the SLPP strongholds of the south and east.[194] Mende dominance over the army can be traced to post-independence British control over recruitment, organisation and promotions in the Milton Margai period.[195] By 1964, 26% of officers were Mende, 12% Temne, and 64% constituted of other ethnic groups.[196] The Albert Margai government furthered Mende dominance as the officer corps was increased to 52% Mende. Nine Temne senior officers were expelled in the wake of the foiled 1967 assassination attempt.[197]

The importance of the 1967 anti-APC coup should not be underestimated. As the *TRC Report* identified, the coup 'sowed the seeds for future military coups of successive governments'.[198] A days-later countercoup (March 23rd 1967) was led by Majors Blake and Jumu, and Col. Juxon-Smith, who were supporters of Lansana but opposed the return of the SLPP.[199] The National Reformation Council (NRC) was established, but middle-class citizens and non-commissioned soldiers opposed the officer-led junta.[200] A second countercoup was staged in April 1968 known as the 'Sergeants Coup': prompted by low pay and poor conditions for enlisted men that resulted in the establishment of the pro-APC National

[193] Christopher Allen, 'Sierra Leone Politics since Independence', *African Affairs*, 67:269 (1968), pp. 307-09; Humphrey Fisher, 'Elections and Coups in Sierra Leone, 1967', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 7:4 (1969), pp. 611-14.
[194] Thomas Cox, *Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: A Case Study of African Soldiers in Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1976), p. 119.
[195] John Keegan, *World Armies* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company (1983), pp. 517-18.
[196] Cox, p. 54.
[197] Ibid, pp. 100-06.
[198] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 61.
[199] C. Allen (1968), pp. 324-25.
[200] C. Magbaily Fyle, 'The Military and Civil Society in Sierra Leone: The 1992 Military Coup d'Etat', *African Development*, 18:2 (1994), p. 128; Jimmy Kandeh, 'Sierra Leone: Military Coups and Dictatorships', *Oxford Encyclopaedia of Politics* (August 2021), p. 8.

Interim Council (NIC). The NIC moved quickly to thwart any emergent threats and detained seventy-six pro-SLPP army officers and forty-eight police officers at Pandemba Prison (Freetown). Within ten days of the NIC assuming control, power was returned to President Siaka Stevens.[201]

Certain literature regarding the 1967-68 coups coalesces around the argument that the loyalty of the military was dependent on ethnicity and regionalism.[202] The 1967 coup was driven by senior officers fearing loss of power after the Mende-dominated SLPP's defeat. As Decalo notes that armed forces in unstable states often mirror the political and ethnic divisions of civil society.[203] Therefore, the SLA reflected the colonial and post-colonial divisions of Sierra Leone. To augment Decalo's argument, we should also consider the armed forces well placed to promote ethno-political interests of individuals, as the military uniquely possess the means to seize power and retain it.

The return of the APC and Siaka Stevens ushered in firstly a republic in 1971, and later a one-party system in 1978. Due to its role in the anti-APC coup of 1967, the SLA was politicised and operational neutered to prevent it from challenging Stevens' authority again.[204] As the *TRC Report* identified, the APC 'demonstrated a grave abandonment of the basic needs of the army' that resulted in political interference.[205] Hutchful observed that the cycle of military/civilian control produced a civilian regime that lacked experience in governing and also a sufficiently positive relationship with the army, furthering the degradation of civil society and its institutions. Resultantly, Stevens was forced to accept partial military participation in governance to prevent further coups.[206]

The SLA's disengagement from politics in 1968 did not lead to its depoliticization. The Armed Forces Commander was appointed to parliament, and the 'card system' allowed

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[201] The NIC's members were drawn from the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement (ACRM) and predominately hailed from the north. The 'Sergeants Coup' was led by a northern-born private named Morali Kamara. Stevens himself belonged to the Limba ethnic group, who are today the third largest ethnic group in Sierra Leone. Like the Temne group, the Limba people are predominantly located in the Northern Province; in districts such as Bombali, Koinadugu, Kambia and Tonkoli.

[202] Mac Dixon-Fyle, 'Reflections on the Role of the Military in Civilian Politics', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 35:2 (1989), p. 213; Fyle, p. 128; Kandeh (2021), p. 9.

[203] Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Military Rule in Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1976), pp. 7-8.

[204] Fyle, pp. 128-29. The SLA in 1991 consisted of only two infantry battalions, with limited transport and no tanks or aircraft. The official number of 3,500 personnel is questionable as no post-conflict records of the disposition of the army survived. See: Jackson and Albrecht estimated that the number of active armed forces personnel was closer to 1,500 by 1991: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 61 & fn. Ch. 3 No. 29.

[205] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 177.

[206] Eboe Hutchful, *The Military and Militarism in Africa: A Research Agenda*, CODESRIA, 1:3 (1989), p. 10.

politicians to embed loyalists throughout the army, deepening patrimonial ties.[207] Future president Gen. Joseph Momoh was appointed to parliament in 1971 and made a minister in 1974 due to loyalty to Stevens, who used him to control the army and bypass civilian oversight.[208] Dixon-Fyle referred to this approach as a 'dyarchy', where Stevens drew the military into civil politics to control them via appointments; and to suppress potential ethno-political rivals.[209] As T.S. Cox noted, by the end of 1969 the APC had arrested or retired many senior Mende officers, leaving just one Mende out of ten serving on the senior staff.[210] Thusly, senior officers were obliged to protect the regime through ethno-regional affiliation; as well as self-preservation, as their political and economic futures were tied to that of Stevens.

Further evidence of the politicisation can be observed during the 1970 APC/UDP schism.[211] As Stevens was ethnically Limba, the Temne northern APC elites did not support his presidency and formed the United Democratic Party (UDP) in 1970. Sensing a political challenge from Temne rivals, Stevens ordered the arrest of all UDP leaders.[212] With the police neutered, it fell to the SLA to carry out the arrests, angering Bangura (a Temne) and fuelling his conflict with Momoh (a Limba). Facing declining influence, Bangura led a failed coup with Mende support and was executed in June 1971. A second coup in 1973 failed, leading to

[207] Armed forces and police personnel, or civilians seeking employment in the security services, obtain a patrimonial supporter from government who was able to influence the AF Commander or IGP. The influential politician would note down a position they wished the officer to be recruited into on the back of a government issued business card and the card is used to attain promotion or induction. One senior government official admitted during interview in March 2022, that whilst the physical action of signing a card may have declined, they would not have secured such a lofty position if they did not possess sufficient influence or connections within senior government. The 'card system' is discussed further in the later appraisal of the SLP.

[208] Fyle, p. 129.

[209] Dixon-Fyle, p. 212; Keen (2005a), p. 15.

[210] Cox, p. 85. See also: Jimmy Kandeh, 'Ransoming the State: Elite Origins of Subaltern Terror in Sierra Leone' *Review of African Political Economy*, 81:26 (2007), p. 362. Both the new AFC John Bangura and the First Battalion commander Momoh were from the north, as were the general staff officers. See: Kandeh (2021), p. 9.

[211] Where the Lansana coup had solidified northern support for the APC against the Mende-dominated SLPP, once Steves rose to power, the differing ethnic groups of the north found they could not co-exist. Unlike the south, where Kissi, Vai and Sherbo speak Mende and identify readily with the Mende politically, the northern groups of the Koranko, Yalunka and Limba have their own distinct political histories and do not generally speak Temne. Unlike the south, where the linguistic commonality of Mende transferred to political alignment post-1960s, non-Temne northerners supported the APC but did not support Temne domination of it. See: Fyle, p. 130; Arthur Abraham, *Mende Government and Politics Under Colonial Rule: A Historical Study of Political Change in Sierra Leone, 1980-1937* (Freetown: Sierra Leone University Press and New York: Oxford University Press), pp. 1-3.

[212] Cox, pp. 211-12.

the execution of UDP leaders Forna, Tariq, and Lansana..[213] Resultantly, the Stevens regime achieved a degree of Limba homogeneity over the army's most senior leadership. The impact on public opinion was dramatic as people now viewed the army as 'the paramilitary wing of the ruling party' whose function was to protect the regime and its leadership from domestic opposition.[214]

The Bangura/UDP coups led to the almost total disarmament of the SLA and trusted elites were placed in charge of arms depots and key strategic barracks.[215] Coups were prevented by limiting power to trusted military personnel in the 'dyarchy' and the expansion of benefits for loyalists.[216] Stevens shrewdly deemphasised Temne dominance of the senior leadership of the army by promoting officers from northern minority groups such as the Koranko, or the more neutral Creole.[217] In such a way, Stevens and Momoh were able to prevent Temne opposition within the APC and the army from drawing enough strength to mount a challenge.

The establishment of the Internal Security Unit (ISU) further neutered the responsibilities of the armed forces as the ISU assumed presidential protection duties and supressed discontent towards the one-party regime.[218] In 1977, when the judiciary declined to prosecute Fourah Bay College protesters, the SSD broke up demonstrations and arrested lawyers.[219] Loyal officers, or those supported by a powerful patron, were offered well paid positions in the civil government.[220] Much like the army, the ISU's most senior leadership was constituted of Limba officers.[221] However, as Sesay observed, this eventually resulted in a breakdown in discipline amongst junior officers and enlisted men who did not enjoy the same lavish perks and political protection as their commanders.[222]

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[213] Kandeh (2021), p. 10.
[214] Cox, p. 208.
[215] Fyle, p. 129.
[216] For example, lucrative increases in rice allowances were granted to loyal supporters whilst those without patronage struggled to feed families on low pay and less allowances. Ibid.
[217] Ibid., pp. 129-130.
[218] The ISU were later renamed the Special Security Division or SSD in 1973) TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2 pt. 178; Albrecht and Jackson (2011), pp. 58-59; Dixon-Fyle, p. 214.
[219] Keen (2005a), p. 17 & 29.
[220] Fyle, p. 129; Cox, pp. 207-8. See also: Alfred Zack-Williams, 'Sierra Leone: the political economy of civil war, 1991-98' *Third World Quarterly*, 20:1 (2010), pp. 143-162.
[221] Cox, pp. 106-107; Victor Davies, 'Sierra Leone: Ironic Tragedy', *Journal of African Economies*, 9:3 (2000), pp. 352-53.
[222] M.A. Sesay, 'Interdependence and Dependency in the Political Economy of Sierra Leone', Ph.D. Thesis, (University of Southampton, 1993), cited in: Keen (2005a), p. 19.

At the nadir of Stevens' rule, endemic corruption and uncontrolled inflation drove increasing unemployment levels and soaring prices. As Reno observed, elites exploited state institutions to control sectors like diamonds and divert resources through private networks.[223] This was identified by the TRC as a contributor to decline of junior officers' trust towards their leaders.[224] The army and police enabled the 'shadow state' by failing to stop diamond smuggling and aiding mineral transport and security. The SSD served as a 'shadow army,' protecting regime interests while sidelining regular forces.[225]

Stevens tightened control over the army by involving it in civil politics, promoting Joseph Momoh, and sidelining other ethnic groups. Choosing Momoh as successor reflected both self-preservation and blurred civil-military lines. Momoh continued rewarding loyalty through patronage, favouring senior officers and fuelling rank-and-file discontent.[226] As we will observe, neglect of the ranks presented a further opportunity for political involvement by the armed forces.

Heroes or Villains? The 1992-National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) Coup

The collapse of the one-party system was tied to the army's decline and broader societal decay. The 1992 coup followed two decades of unrest under the 'shadow state', with IMF conditions worsening living standards and diamond smuggling draining state funds.[227] Keen noted that protests stemmed from declining living standards, corruption, youth disenfranchisement, and demands for democratic representation.[228] It is in this context that Liberian President Charles Taylor was able to recruit political and military exiles into the RUF, with the intention of destabilising the government.[229]

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[223] Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995). See also: Keen (2005a), p. 16 & 96.
[224] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2., pt. 183.
[225] Keen (2005a), pp. 20-21.
[226] Kandeh (2021) p. 11.
[227] Alfred Zach-Williams and Stephen Riley, 'Sierra Leone: The Coup and Its Consequences', *Review of African Political Economy* 56 (March 1993), p. 92. By 1991, Sierra Leone was lowest of the 160 states ranked by the UNDP Index. See: UN, *Human Development Report: 1991* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press 1991) p. 16.
[228] Ibid, p. 93; Keen (2005a), pp. 8-35.
[229] The Sierra Leonean government had been a significant partner in the anti-Taylor ECOMOG/ULIMO coalition, hosting airbases from which aircraft could attack Liberian forces. Keen indicates that the RUF in March 1991 was not only constituted of Sierra Leoneans, but was instead a mix of Liberians, Burkinabean mercenaries and Sierra Leoneans. The Sierra Leonean element consisted of both volunteers and captives. See: Keen (2005a), p. 37; Zach-Williams and Riley, p. 93.

The March 1991 RUF invasion exposed SLA weaknesses and helped trigger the 1992 NPRC coup. To rebuild manpower, 12,000 troops were recruited – many from society's margins, including the unemployed and ex-criminals.[230] New recruits were only partially screened and given short training periods; and this impacted the quality of troops as new recruits possessed limited allegiance beyond their pay.[231] Poor quality, combined with a lack of modern weapons and transport certainly constrained the SLA on the battlefield.[232]

Finally, politicians were publicly criticised for using the conflict to enrich themselves and cancelling elections under the guise of national security.[233] Citizens were enraged as they believed that the insurgency was political in nature and therefore justified by the actions of the government. This certainly facilitated civilian support for the 1992 coup.[234] The objectives of the coup and future head-of-state Capt. Valentine Strasser were to end fighting with the RUF, end corruption and hold multi-party elections. Describing the coup as a 'clean-up exercise' to defeat an 'oppressive, corrupt, exploitative, tribalistic' regime, the NPRC were supported as they sought the 'resurrection of accountability, economic and social justice, and the dignity of Sierra Leoneans'.[235]

The inequalities Strasser described were appreciated by the ranks, with Fyle describing the coup as a 'revolt by junior officers against a privileged, affluent military command … indistinguishable from the political elite, both in the perceptions of the mainstream military and the population at large.'[236] Strasser cited unpaid wages and blamed Freetown's army leadership for frontline deaths. The suspected assassination of Capt. Ben Hirsh further rallied discontented soldiers, seen as the APC silencing a reformist patriot.[237] Commissions of inquiry were held to ascertain responsibility for 'corruption, mismanagement, and indiscipline'.[238] However, the same malady of rampant corruption

[230] Kandeh (2021), p. 11.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Interview with senior RSLAF officer, conducted in Kailahun area, April 2022.
[233] These themes were expressed by several interviews in Freetown, Kenema and Kailahun, conducted March to June 2022. See also: Zach-Williams and Riley, p. 92.
[234] Kandeh (2021), p. 12; Keen (2005a), pp. 36-81.
[235] Christopher Simpson, 'Exit the Fat Man', p. 788, cited in 'The Sierra Leone Coup', *West Africa* (London: May 1992), pp. 788-89. Also: Keen (2005a), p. 94.
[236] Fyle, p. 131. Strasser for example complained that weapons issued to front line troops frequently jammed or misfired. Strasser also reflected other complaints of soldiers such as inadequate access to medical treatment and medication such as anaesthesia for wounded troops. The Momoh-government also refused to send severely wounded troops for international treatment due to the cost. See: Zack-Williams and Riley, pp. 95-95.
[237] Keen (2005a), pp. 92-93.
[238] TRC, 'Introduction', *National Report* (Freetown: Govt. Press 1996).

tarred public perceptions of the military junta and Strasser became a millionaire overnight whilst civil liberties were suppressed.[239] The NPRC eventually pledged to support multi-party democracy, and formed the National Advisory Council and Interim Electoral Commission before the 1996 elections.[240]

The NPRC coup began as a populist revolt against APC corruption, aiming to end the war, govern effectively, and hold elections – goals that initially won public support. Ultimately, however, the NPRC prioritised power and self-enrichment.[241] The NPRC repeated the extractive practices of its predecessors, failed to end the RUF conflict, and fuelled tensions to stay in power. They pursued elections only when power via the NUP seemed possible or under threat of international isolation.[242] Indeed, the NPRC presided over a significant increase in abuses of civilians, turning a popular coup into a reviled regime.[243] Ultimately, the NPRC reflected the same agendas as their predecessors, to enrich themselves and employ the power of the state to try and retain control.

Military Reengagement: The 1997-Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Coup

The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) was established fourteen months after the election of the SLPP and was constituted of underlings of the former-NPRC. Maj. Johnny Paul Koroma, awaiting trial for a previous coup attempt, was appointed head-of-state after the evacuation of President Kabbah to Guinea.[244] Koroma citied the prevention of national factionalism as justification for the coup, pledged to end the fighting and to address the declining welfare of soldiers. These justifications resonated well with the army commanders, who felt that their power, influence and opportunities for enrichment were

[239] Kandeh (2021), p. 14; Steven Riley & Max Sesay, 'Sierra Leone: The coming anarchy?', *Review of African Political Economy*, 22:63 (2007), p. 123; J.A. Opala, *Sierra Leone: The Politics of State Collapse*, SAIC Conference Paper (July/August 1998), p. 23. Citied in: Kandeh, 'Coups and Dictatorships', p. 14.
[240] Kandeh (2021), p. 15.
[241] Part of the agreement to hold elections in February 1996 included fully funded placements at American universities for senior NPRC leaders. Ibid., p. 16.
[242] New Citizen, The, 'International Community to Isolate Sierra Leone', *The New Citizen* (15 January 1996), pp. 1-2. Citied in Kandeh (2021), p. 16.
[243] Under the NPRC, troop levels increased to 13-14,000 men including Liberian refugees and some 1000 boys under the age of 15. This resulted in the further degradation of quality and professionalism. For increasing abuses of civilians by SLA troops, see: Keen, (2005a), pp. 96-99; TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 211.
[244] For an account of the coup's events, see: Keen, (2005a), pp. 208-10; Peter Penfold, *Atrocities, Diamonds and Diplomacy: The Inside Story of the Conflict in Sierra Leone* (London: Pen and Sword, 2013).

being curtailed.[245] Whilst Koroma argued that the coup was only in the best interests of the people, contemporary observer Olu Awoonor-Gordon believed that it was the result of a 'reluctance of a section of the army to give up power in the first place' and that there was little doubt that 'since the SLPP took power … sections of the military have been unrelenting in their attempts to reverse the verdict of democracy'.[246]

Within seventy-two hours the RUF were invited to join the government and Sierra Leone's leadership effectively became that of Stephen Bio, NPRC member; Omrie Golley, RUF spokesperson and legal representative; and President Charles Taylor, Liberian warlord and patron of the RUF. [247] As with the 1967 Lansana Coup, the military conspirators displayed no hesitation in deposing the democratic system, whilst civilian opposition politicians readily sided with the military if it meant they could access power and wealth.

Civil reaction to the coup was hostile and resistive, and the character of the coup may explain this. The AFRC coup was followed by intense periods of looting that were dubbed by the poorly paid and disaffected troops as 'Operation Pay Yourself'.[248] The *TRC Report* heavily criticised the AFRC for permitting the looting and complicity in human rights violations.[249] Public buildings were targeted, UN and NGO vehicles and equipment were stolen, and civilians were beaten and shot.[250] Anti-looting squads were established but these units were often constituted of some of the most notorious and vicious soldiers.[251] Resultantly, civil disobedience and passive resistance from teachers and religious leaders crippled Sierra Leone.[252]

International pressure was vital in ending the regime. A Nigerian-led ECOWAS response included economic and personal sanctions (UN Res. 1132) that led to the October 1997 Conakry Agreement.[253] Despite resistance from the AFRC/RUF, the Kabbah government was reinstalled in March 1998 by Nigerian troops.[254] Controversially, AFRC/RUF troops were allowed to withdraw fully armed, leaving almost no weapons or

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[245] Kandeh (2021), p. 17.
[246] Olu Awoonor-Gordon, 'A Nation Held Hostage', *For Di People (*12 June 1997), p. 2.
[247] Kandeh (2021), p. 18.
[248] Lansana Gberie, 'The May 25 Coup d'Etat in Sierra Leone: A Militariat Revolt?' *Africa Development*, 22:3-4 (1997), p. 153.
[249] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pts. 237-241.
[250] Kandeh (2021), p. 19.
[251] Keen (2005a), p. 209.
[252] Kandeh (2021), p. 19.
[253] Keen (2005a), pp. 215-16.
[254] Ibid., p. 216.

ammunition for the incoming democratic government's beleaguered security forces.[255] This signalled to the governments' opponents that it was starting from a position of weakness and certainly forced a reliance upon the CDF, Nigerian/UN troops and latterly the British armed forces intervention of 2000 to maintain power.

Conclusion: The Sierra Leone Army – A History of Politicisation

The history of the armed forces reflects that of a politicised institution that readily interfered in the democratic processes to enrich its most senior leaders and prevent ethnic rivals from ascending to power. In the first instance, ethno-political divisions prompted the armed forces leadership to prevent the APC from assuming power in 1967 whilst similar tensions resulted in the deposing of Lansana by the NIC in 1968.

The actions of the 'Sergeant Coup' soldiers also indicates a class division within the armed forces, with a 'militariat' of junior officers and enlisted men enraged by the opulence of their leaders and motivated by their own positions of impoverishment. The degradation of the army continued to contribute to the sense of injustice felt by soldiers. Their inability to prevent the RUF invasion highlights inadequacies. Deaths at the front from improper training, lack of experience in the senior officer corps and poor equipment and weapons also contributed to the decline of morale and the appeal of the NPRC. As we have observed, the poor treatment of the enlisted ranks and junior officers is a source of instability and a motivator for political interference.

The threat of democratic reform was also certainly a motivation for the armed forces. Whilst the NPRC did eventually cede power in 1998, remnants of this junta returned in the guise of the AFRC, claiming they acted on behalf of front-line soldiers. Indeed, it was an open secret that Kabbah wished to disband the military entirely and rely on the CDF for wider security, furthering the schism between army and government.[256] As we have observed, the lure of power was too strong for both the NPRC and the AFRC, who engaged in corruptive and extractive practices that certainly contributed to the impoverishment of the state and the desperation its people. The soldiers under their command reflected this in their own vicious

[255] Ibid., pp. 217-18.
[256] Abdel-Fatau Musah, 'A Country Under Siege: State Decay and Corporate Military Intervention in Sierra Leone', in *Mercenaries: An African Security Dilemma*, ed. by Abdel-Fatau Musah and J.K. Fayemi (London: Pluto Press, 2000), pp. 93-95.

waves of looting and atrocity. Despite overtures of democratic reform, both had to be forcibly removed through civil action and international cooperation.

6.6 RSLAF: Military Reform in Sierra Leone

In June 1999, a DfID/MoD team arrived in Freetown to assess the 'level of defence and security management needs' of the Sierra Leonean government and concluded that reforms should centre around: establishing civil control of the armed forces; stabilising the armed forces through recruitment, reintegration, reequipping and the construction of new facilities; gender equality; and professionalisation of the armed forces through training to improve civic awareness and improve relations with the public.[257] This was mirrored by the later mandate of creating a 'self-sustaining, democratically accountable and affordable task force'.[258] In the following sections we will chart the reforms enacted by the British from 1999/2000 and evaluate the extent to which this action has created an operationally capable armed force free from the issues that prompted such political interference described above.

IMATT/ISAT and the Lack of Local Ownership

By June 2000, the 'Unholy Alliance' coalition of SLA, ex-AFRC and CDF combatants had placed significant pressure upon the RUF. With 3,000 men recruited and trained under *Operation Basilica*, and 3,000 more on the way, *Operation Palliser* was terminated. The British Military Advisory Training team was replaced by the International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT), whose mandate included downsizing the armed forces; improving proficiency and professionalism through training; encouraging a non-partisan and de-politicised culture; and instigating democratic accountability to improve civil relations.[259] Despite the international nomenclature, IMATT was mainly populated by British staff who were embedded in units throughout the country.[260] *Operation Silkman* was accompanied by the signing of the 2002 MoU that was drafted in London, but the Sierra

[257] Comfort Ero, 'Sierra Leone's Security Complex', Conflict, Security and Development Group: Centre for Defence Studies (London: Kings College, University of London, 2000), pp. 35-36.
[258] Ebo, p. 487.
[259] Ebo, p. 487; Ginifer, pp. 798-99.
[260] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), pp. 74-75.

Leonean government and the embryonic SL-MoD played no substantive role in the creation of its content.[261]

The initial intervention from 2000-2002 should be characterised as short-term, as only £21.27m was allocated for three-years of military reform.[262] IMATT staff were deployed on six-month tours, which led to the assignment of achievable tasks with observable results.[263] Kellie Conteh noted that this required a degree of SL-MoD subordination to the British-led Defence Headquarters, who reported directly to the Minister of Defence, President Kabbah.[264] From 2000-2002, Kabbah and his British advisors effectively ran the war for the struggling SLA leadership. Bypassing army leadership structures was pragmatic, ensuring swift command and control during the conflict, and reflected concerns over the military's history of political interference.

The signing of the 2002 MoU signalled a protracted ten-year commitment and was couched in language of local ownership.[265] However, the degree of this ownership is debatable. The reality was a British-led 'defence, diplomatic and development effort' that employed conditionality to motivate national progress.[266] This conditional MoU was flawed, as stakeholders such as the SL-MoD were not invited to participate in its drafting and no civilian oversight was undertaken beyond Kabbah's approval as Minister of Defence.[267] Benchmarks established by the MoU were not disseminated sufficiently, with SLA officers possessing no real understanding of the requirements.[268] This was however not an important consideration for SLA leaders, as the £5m per annum lost due to a failure to meet targets was negligible, when considered against the £40m to £55m DfID SSR budget allocations of 2002-2005 and 2006-2008, of which the armed forces received a guaranteed £15-20m per year.[269]

Following the signing of the MoU, British advisors continued to occupy positions of authority and influence. The British AFC maintained a high degree of autonomy over issues

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[261] Ibid, pp. 97-98.
[262] This is in comparison to the annual IMATT budgets from 2002 to 2006 that averaged £15.84m. See: Elizabeth Skons, Wuyi Omitoogun, Catalin Perdomo and Peter Stalenheim, 'Military Expenditure' *SIPRI Yearbook 2005* (Stockholm, 2006) <https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2005/08> [accessed 15 September 2021], p. 338.
[263] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 71.
[264] Ibid., p. 72 & 76.
[265] Ibid., p. 97.
[266] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 97.
[267] Ibid., p. 98.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

such as SL-MoD personnel appointments, strategic to operational planning and the drafting of policy.[270] As the 2006 UNOISIL report indicates, Sierra Leonean officers were dissatisfied with the unilateralism of IMATT, including the dismissal of seventy officers in 2005 and British control of procurement.[271] The Military Reintegration Plan (MRP) was developed and overseen by IMATT, who maintained control over inductees, rank allocations, and dismissals. British supervisors were embedded at all levels but as one retired SLA officer observed, 'the advisors were really the ones making the decisions. They decided who to keep and who to release. If you didn't have a good connection to [President Kabbah] then you really were at their mercy'.[272] This observation is not without justification, as IMATT instigated downsizing/rightsizing reforms and latterly purged the officer class of undesirable personnel. Reforms included a mandatory retirement age of 55 years that remains in place today, and the gradual downsizing of the armed forces to its present size of 8,500 – 9,500 personnel.[273] Officers were not initially targeted for downsizing due to the MRP's inflation of the ranks, and concerns over discharging leaders who could potentially create security challenges.[274] These reforms had consequences for dismissed soldiers, and it is arguable that military reductions began after the APC's 2007 electoral win as recruitment during and immediately after the conflict had left the RSLAF's mid and senior ranks dominated by pro-SLPP officers..[275] The post-2007 RSLAF therefore represented a threat to the incoming APC, who had historical reasons to fear military interventions in political transitions.

The transition of responsibilities from IMATT to Sierra Leonean authorities from 2006-07 was accompanied by a reduction in advisors and funding. The 2006 IMATT budget

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[270] Donald Saunders, 'Taming a Tiger: Developing a Professional Army in Post-War Sierra Leone' in Lansana Gberie, *Rescuing a Failed State: Sierra Leone 2002-2008* (Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009), p. 105.

[271] UNSC, 'First report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone', S/2006/269 (April 2006) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/574275?v=pdf> [accessed 23 February 2023], p. 5.

[272] Interview conducted with senior RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema area, May 2022.

[273] 'Old Age, Disability and Survivors' *SSPTW: Africa* (Freetown, 2019), p. 234; UNSC, 'Fifth Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone', S/2007/704 (December 2007) <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/sl-s-2007-704.php> [accessed 15 September 2021].

[274] UNSC, 'First report of the Secretary-General on the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone', S/2006/269 (April 2006) <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/574275?v=pdf> [accessed 15 September 2021], p. 5; Maj. Gen. Alfred Nelson-Williams, 'Restructuring the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)', Security System Transformation Working Paper Series 1997-2007 (London: GCPP) <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/gfnssr/0017011/f_0017011_14548.pdf> [accessed 17 September 2017], pp. 8-9; Albrecht and Jackson (2011), pp. 118-119.

[275] Inequalities in the recruitment of personnel into the RSLAF and the allocation of officers ranks to SLA soldiers rather than RUF combatants are discussed below.

was cut from £13m to just £2.8m and 130 advisors were reduced to 110 in 2006, and 36 by 2012.[276] Despite this, IMATT continued to exercise influence over defence matters.[277] IMATT officially transitioned to the Integrated Security Advisory Team (ISAT) in March 2013 and was accompanied by a renewed six-year MoU (2014-2020). This new MoU instigated the 'Strengthening Security and Resilience' (SS&R) programme with an allocated budget of £9.5m.[278] To some, this transition reflected the end of a success story for SSR, where only a limited international footprint was needed to support domestic primacy.[279] However, the latest SS&R programme review (2015-19) reveals significant ongoing input by ISAT, including: funding and oversight of the Horton Military Academy; training and oversight of the Office of National Security (ONS) and police; advisory functions during elections to the security services; and gender equality work.[280] This re-focus on a wider SSR agenda is concomitant with the emergence of the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) and latterly the Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP) that impacted the breadth and depth of police reform. The broadening of ISAT's scope was met with particular concern, as it was felt that the reduction in size of IMATT would hamper sustainability and result in recidivism.[281] The result was asking ISAT to do more with less, and as we will observe, the recidivist fear may now be realised.

Curbing Patrimonialism, Politicisation and Corruption: Mission Accomplished?

The 2000 reconstitution of the SL-MoD and the 2003 Defence White Paper clarified RSLAF's structure and civil-military relations. Fearing future politicisation, planners split Defence HQ into Joint Force Command and Joint Support Command to prevent any one commander from controlling both troops and logistics. Commanders are appointed by the

[276] Nicole Ball, Piet Biesheuvel, Tom Hamilton-Baille and Funmi Olonisakin, 'Security and Justice Sector Reform Programming in Africa', *DfID Working Paper*, 23 (London: UK Gov, 2007), p. 87. Confirmed in interview with ISAT officer, conducted in Oxford, October 2023.

[277] See: Andrew Stewart, 'An Enduring Commitment: The British Military's Role in Sierra Leone' *Defence Studies*, 8:3 (2008), pp. 351-368.

[278] UK-Ministry of Defence (UK-MoD), 'Strengthening Security and Resilience in Sierra Leone and Neighbouring Countries', Programme Completion Review – Summary Sheet, MoD CSSF-03-000010 (2020).

[279] See: Lauren Twort, 'Sierra Leone: A Post-Conflict Success Story?' *RUSI Commentary* (May 2013) <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/sierra-leone-post-conflict-success-story> [accessed 17 September 2021].

[280] UK-MoD, 'Strengthening Security and Resilience in Sierra Leone and Neighbouring Countries' Annual Review – Summary Sheet (2017-18).

[281] Godwin and Heinlein, pp. 30-39.

president via the National Defence Council and with parliamentary approval.[282] The 2003 DWP aimed to democratise the military by involving civilians in discussions on past army misconduct. A Tongo community representative raised issues including political interference, poor soldier living conditions, and the army's failure to protect civilians.[283]

Rebuilding the SL-MoD HQ in Freetown marked a cautious start to institutional reform, reflecting the pre-2000 top-down approach to professionalise senior civil-military leadership.[284] This was seen as essential due to criticism of army and civilian leaders for war mismanagement, corruption, patronage, and impunity.[285] However, as early as 1999, officer recruitment was shaped by ethnicity rather than merit, with Kabbah's government favouring largely Mende-Kamajor CDF members.[286] Many combatants integrated into the army during the 1999 defence of Freetown were ex-AFRC fighters, mostly of Mende origin.[287] Indeed, Kabbah's first inclination prior to 1999 was to prioritise police reform, disband the army entirely and introduce a territorial force drawn from the CDF. SILSEP (the British SSR oversight body) opposed such action due to concerns of an SLPP-affiliated paramilitary force.[288] The 1999 Lomé Agreement resolved the issue by endorsing joint reintegration and reform of the army and non-state forces to ensure rapid, organised disarmament. The ethnic makeup of the army was left unresolved, benefiting the government by allowing recruitment of loyal personnel from aligned political and ethnic groups.[289] This decision has since affected promotion and recruitment under successive governments, undermining efforts to build an apolitical, representative army.

The SL-MoD was restructured to resemble the UK civil-military relationship, with a civilian deputy minister of defence who served as national security coordinator overseeing the National Security Council (NSC).[290] Matters of national security are considered by the NSC 'Coordinating Group' who represent the army's interests at the highest level of

[282] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 110.
[283] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022. This is supported by the findings of the *TRC Report* outlined above.
[284] Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007*, GFN-SSR Publications (Birmingham, UK: GFN-SSR, 2009), p. 28.
[285] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown area, March 2022.
[286] Interview with retired RSLAF officer, conducted in Freetown area, March 2022.
[287] Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, s/2000/186, (7th March 2000), pp. 1-2.
[288] Albrecht and Jackson (2009), p. 62.
[289] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[290] Ibid.

government.[291] Further oversight is provided by the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Defence (POC-D) and the Defence Policy Committee who report to the Office of National Security (ONS).[292] However, these committees suffer from varying degrees of manipulation due to patrimonial relationships between senior ministers, army officers and the executive.[293] This reflects the 2006 UNIOSIL report, which noted limited progress in breaking patrimonial ties between the army and politicians.[294] Today, the situation remains unchanged, with the defence minister and the chief of defence staff overseeing the POC-D; the current deputy chair is a retired RSLAF captain; and the top three civilian positions within the SL-MoD are occupied by retired officers.[295] The security coordinator is appointed by the president, and serves as the head of the ONS, straddling the leadership of both the POC-D and SL-MoD. Indeed, the Chief of Defence Staff Maj. Gen. Nelson-Williams was critical of this structure, observing that there was a need 'for retraining and reorientation of personnel in order to keep the military out of politics'.[296] Today, the security coordinator may bypass parliamentary oversight by receiving intelligence from the ONS, CISU, RSLAF, SLP, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, allowing them to advise the president directly as Minister of Defence..[297] One MoD official felt that the impartiality of the current Security Coordinator, Abdulai Caulker was a source of strength for the ONS 'due to [Mr. Caulker's] professional integrity and reputation' but warned that 'another appointee may not have the same level of integrity or experience and so may subordinate themselves to maintain favour'.[298] Indeed, Mr. Caulker has served for over two decades within the NSC as was one of its founding members, representing one of a few officers who have survived several transitions of power.

As commander-in-chief, the president retains substantial control over the army, including operational tasking and senior appointments via the security coordinator and Defence Council.[299] One explanation for this structure is rooted in war-time reforms, where the British commander's role as 'Military Advisor to the Government of Sierra Leone' (MAGOSL) created executive authority whilst bypassing the SLA chain of command and

[291] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 76.
[292] Gbla, pp. 84-88.
[293] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[294] UNSC, UNIOSIL Report (2006), p. 5.
[295] See: Season Committee List: Parliament of Sierra Leone website <https://www.parliament.gov.sl/seasonal-committee-list.html> [accessed 06 October 2023]; and SL-MoD website <https://mod.gov.sl/aboutus-staff.html> [accessed 06 October 2023]
[296] Nelson-Williams, p. 9.
[297] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 164.

civilian oversight below President Kabbah.[300] While this improved decision-making during the conflict, the 2007 transition to Sierra Leonean leadership saw the executive consolidate control over the armed forces, assuming the powers once held by MAGOSL.[301]

This centralisation of power is reinforced by President Julius Maada Bio's status as a retired Brigadier General, commanding personal loyalty from many retired soldiers, particularly in the east and south.[302] Marcus, a retired corporal and SLPP voter, felt that 'the current situation of the country demands disciplined leadership because lawlessness is prevalent in all sectors of our society' and that 'the army are providing a good service to keep our society peaceful.'[303] Concerning the potential for military coups and interference with political transitions, Marcus responded that 'there is no need for the army to do such things as [Bio] is a supporter of our armed forces and also of the democracy we have created'. Despite Bio's past opposition to democratic transition as NPRC chairman, Marcus still believed the SLPP leader would honour the outcome of any democratic election. What is perhaps more concerning is the absence of loyalty when this author asked if veterans would support a commander-in-chief who did not have a military background: 'On this, we will see' observed Marcus, 'I believe he will win [the 2023 election] and the SLPP may win the [2027/28] election but he [Bio] will not be the candidate. The government has a responsibility to help all people to survive these high costs but if it takes the army to make sure people are fed, then so be it.' This is echoed by army veteran James, who indicated he would support a civilian as president: 'Yes, I would support someone who is not from the army if they continued to support soldiers and veterans and try to improve our conditions. There is always a risk if will feel we are not being supported then we will demonstrate to make our voices heard, this is our right'.[304] Interestingly, during President Bio's terms in office, there has been relatively few veteran's demonstrations, despite poor living conditions, low wages and problems with pension payments.[305] Veterans who protest publicly are often aligned with the APC, such as

[300] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[301] Ibid.
[302] President Bio is a member of the Sherbo ethnic group that is mainly located in the South-East alongside a significant Mende demographic. The Sherbo and Mende populations are predominantly supporters of the SLPP. At the time of writing, President Bio has been returned to power in the 2023 elections.
[303] Interview conducted in Kenema area, May 2022.
[304] Interview conducted in Daru area, April 2022.
[305] Political 'mashers' are recruited by political parties before elections to draw attention to support and create disturbances that are blamed on the opposition. Mashers are drawn from many sections of society including former military personnel, retired police officers and Okada riders. Motivations include political

members of the Warriors Association, and weaponise their status to for political gains.[306] This certainly indicates a degree of retained loyalty to President Bio's government by virtue of his status as a retired general.

Concerns exist regarding appointments and promotions within the SL-MoD. Civilian staff are recruited through the Public Service Commission and were previously vetted by the National Vetting Agency.[307] However, appointees today are screened by the ONS and approved by the National Security Coordinator and Director General – who are appointed by the executive.[308] As a result, attaining authoritative positions require alignment with the ruling party and appointments are based on past loyalty and promised rewards.[309] Parliament maintains almost ceremonial oversight of promotions as 'promotions and appointments [from the security leadership] are rarely opposed, while those recommended by President Bio are approved without question'.[310] A serving officer at a Forward Patrol Base noted he was given a 'hardship' posting due to lacking political connections for better roles in Freetown or other cities. He was instead saving for a master's degree to earn promotion or transfer through formal means.[311]

The impact of elections has a discernible effect on the army, as those who assume power seek to stock leadership and ranks with loyal personnel.[312] There is no current data concerning the ethnic, regional, or political composition of RSLAF, however, as a retired RSLAF officer related that there is 'no fair recruitment especially for cadets … as they need a recommendation from a party loyalist or pay [a bribe to] the recruitment officer'.[313] The SLPP have received criticism for this policy, as it reflects a return to the old practices of 'recruitment based on connections and affiliation with the government of the day.'[314] This is supported by the testimony of William, who claims he was denied entry to RSLAF on

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allegiances to both parties and individuals; but also include more base rewards such as cash. We will return to the issue of 'mashers' in the appraisal of the SLP.

[306] The 'Warriors' group can be seen marching in Sierra Leone in support of the APC party. The group consists of army veterans who are attempting to draw attention to the degraded positions of former soldiers. See: 'APC Warriors (This is all APC can offer Sierra Leone' *youtube*.com uploaded: 30 November 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEPzDWlr7XI> [accessed 04 October 2023]

[307] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 123.

[308] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

[309] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

[310] Ibid.

[311] Interview conducted in April 2022. As we will observe in the 'equipment' section below, FPBs are located in remote areas and are sparsely provisioned.

[312] Interview with SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

[313] Interview with RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema, April 2022.

[314] Interview with retired RSLAF soldier, conducted in Freetown, May 2022.

medical grounds. William hails from Makeni, is of Temne ethnic origin, and was told that he could not join 'because of a condition called hypertension [high blood pressure] but I have never been diagnosed with this condition and no doctor I have seen can confirm this.' As such, William believes that he was denied entry based upon his background, despite possessing sufficient educational requirements, as 'I am not aligned with the right people to get my name on the recommendation list, and I did not have enough money to pay a recruitment officer.'[315] This is supported by a second source, an Okada rider named Julius, who claims he was refused entry as 'I do not have any relatives who are in the army. I cannot get my name on to the recommendation list without someone to speak to the recruitment officer.'[316] This is a theme raised by several interviewees who challenge the meritocratic basis for recruitment and felt that positions were reserved for the children of current serving officers, those with political connections or the wealthy.[317] This is best summated by veteran Morie, a former-RUF officer turned RSLAF corporal who believed he had been forcibly retired in 2005 due to his political allegiance. Morie outlined that today 'officers names for recruitment are submitted before any advertisement is displayed. This will involve a payment to the recruitment officers and a note from a politician or commander instructing the recruitment to take place'. Morie concluded that the impact this has on perceptions of RSLAF is 'to convince people that things are as they were before the war. The army will protect those in power because they owe their careers to them. As an officer, they will lead comfortable lives so why would someone jeopardise that to speak out for people they do not know?'. [318]

The lack of accountability and transparency within RSLAF presents a troubling aspect that must be considered and addressed: that of sexual assaults against women. As noted above, gender equality was listed as a DfID priority, but female recruitment drives have only occurred recently, such as the 327 enlisted in 2018/19 and a current drive in 2023-24.[319] However, an unpublished CHRDI report has identified 46 acts of sexual assault between 2019 and 2020. CHRDI highlights a lack of accountability for the perpetrators nor justice for

[315] Interview conducted in Makeni, May 2022.
[316] Interview conducted in Waterloo area, March 2022.
[317] This mirrors accusations made against the recruitment process for the SLP, where new recruits are drawn from the middle-classes and barriers such as educational requirements are not the only reason why working-class citizens are denied entry. We return to this below.
[318] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022.
[319] See: Ahmed Sahid Masralla, '300 All-Female SL Army Ready to Defend the Motherland', *HVSL*.org (01 September 2019) <https://www.hvsl.org/post/300-all-female-sl-army-ready-to-defend-the-motherland> [accessed 23 October 2023]; Politico SL, 'Sierra Leone president commissions 327 female soldiers', *politicosl.com* (10 September 2019) <https://politicosl.com/articles/sierra-leone-president-commissions-327-female-soldiers> [accessed 23 October 2023].

the victims.[320] In response, a RSLAF spokesman intimated that CHRDI's accusations were baseless and without evidence.[321] However, one police officer from the Kenema area believed that 'it was crystal clear to all that corruption and sexual assaults occur within the army'. The officer illuminated the challenges that face the armed forces:

> One of the reasons why sexual assaults and other vices are not easily detected, is the army is not open to the public domain. Civil investigators such as I, are limited in our access to military personnel and they will defend one of their own if that person has rank, good connections, and money. Victims that approach the police to make an accusation may find that an officer has good connections within the army and so they will warn the accused and maybe their commanders that a problem is coming. The suspect will then be transferred. Some officers will feel that if the crime has occurred at the barracks, then it is a military matter and will advise the victim to report the incident to her commander. That commander may be cordial with the accused or may know of a connection that they have and so will not risk their own career to help the victim. In this circumstance the commander may intimidate the victim or offer an incentive to remain quiet as they will be fearful of the situation becoming public and impacting their own career.[322]

Another retired officer provided further insight into the challenges facing victims of sexual assault within the armed forces:

> Firstly, any admission by the army that a rape has occurred is embarrassing. There is a culture of silence. After the war, the army was meant to be one of the leading institutions of change but in fact it remains stuck in the past. If a woman brings an accusation against an officer, she will have to testify in front of a tribunal that is dominated by men. It is likely that the tribunal members will be cordial with the accused or their commanders, especially if they are a popular officer. These men have also been trained to

[320] Sierra Leone Telegraph, 'The military can only be safe when it becomes a rape free environment', *thesierraleonetelegraph.com* (27 January 2022) <https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/the-military-can-only-be-safe-when-it-becomes-a-rape-free-environment/> [accessed 23 October 2023]

[321] See Abdul Rashid Thomas, 'Sierra Leone 's army chief rejects allegations of corruption and sexual harassment' *the sierraleonetelegraph.com* (08 January 2022) <https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/sierra-leones-army-chiefs-reject-allegations-of-corruption-and-sexual-harassment/> [accessed 23 October 2023].

[322] Interview conducted in the Kenema area, April 2022.

> protect the culture of the army because they are afraid of what transparency will bring. Not just an end to the assaults but an end to the opportunities to advance and make money. Many officers have been promoted not just because of their connections but also because of what they know about their commanders.

When asked about the power of civilian oversight to challenge this kind of malfeasance, the same veteran responded that: 'The army is in power, the President is the army. Civilian politicians will not challenge the army by looking into its affairs too deeply and risk their own positions for a stranger'.[323]

Allegations of sexual assault are coupled with claims of corruption, including the mishandling of a 2010 US$290,000 Norwegian grant intended to address gender inequality and sexual violence.[324] The SL-MoD's gender equality programme is under investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission, along with four senior military signatories linked to the fund's access.[325] Despite the introduction of the 2008 Anti-Corruption Act, accusations of malfeasance include the illegal sale of x-ray machine parts from military hospitals and 'engine swapping'.[326]

British involvement must be understood in the context of RSLAF's formation. *Operation Basilica* aimed to quickly deploy 3,000 troops during an active conflict, with low induction standards prioritising war needs. The focus was on bottom-up reform to enhance troop quality, not top-down reform of leadership; and enacting dismissals mid-conflict was seen as potentially risky. Resultantly, the post-2001 RSLAF retained much of the existing officer cadre – whose views on professionalism remained largely unchanged. Politicisation, patrimonialism, and corruption remain persistent issues in the RSLAF. Each new government tends to fill senior SL-MoD and security roles with loyalists, a practice one official noted

[323] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022.

[324] Kabs Kanu, 'Army and CHRDI engage in war of words over alleged military sexual abuses' *cocoriko.net* (08 January 2022) <https://cocorioko.net/army-and-chrdi-engage-in-war-of-words-over-alleged-military-sexual-abuses/> [accessed 23 October 2023].

[325] Ibid.

[326] Kabs Kanu, 'Army and CHRDI engage in war of words over alleged military sexual abuses' *cocoriko.net* (08 January 2022) <https://cocorioko.net/army-and-chrdi-engage-in-war-of-words-over-alleged-military-sexual-abuses/> [accessed 23 October 2023]. See: SL-GoV, *Anti-corruption Act 2008*, (Gov. of Sierra Leone, 2008) <http://sierra-leone.org/Laws/2008-12.pdf> [accessed 26 October 2023]. The practice of 'engine swapping' involves the transfer of engines from new government vehicles into older private ones. Engine swapping' was discussed by several interviewees, but one veteran mechanic in Tongo confirmed he had conducted several swaps whilst working at a motor-pool in the Freetown area. Conducted April 2022.

undermines institutional experience through constant reshuffling.[327] Given the army's history of political interference, ongoing mistrust of former administrations' security officials is understandable. Discharges that cut off enrichment opportunities for opposition figures and military personnel remain a clear risk, as will be shown later in this chapter. This process is referred to as 'winner takes all' and creates political ties between those with power and those who owe their positions to them. Accountability suffers when those without power avoid actions that risk their access to enrichment, while patrons overlook wrongdoing in exchange for loyalty. This dynamic exists from top leadership down to recruitment, where elite children and the well-connected rely on patrons for induction. Although there may not be an intentional effort to create a Mende-dominated army, favouring relatives and allies from certain regions inevitably fosters ethnic homogeneity within RSLAF.

Entry and Exit: The Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) and Downsizing-Rightsizing RSLAF

Army reform was first codified in Article XVII of the Lome agreement and the MRP was identified as a vehicle to foster reconciliation between the factions.[328] The MRP (2001-2002) was funded in its entirety by DfID. The stated objective of the MRP was to implement a 'selection process from various ex-combatant factions' and to provide 'a credible alternative to the civilian reintegration programme and establish an apolitical, professional Armed Forces'.[329] As one SL-MoD official summated, the MRP was 'one of the most successful initiatives we had because it showed that people who used to be enemies could work together for the causes that we had all been fighting for. I think it was important because it showed the nation that we could overcome our differences and concentrate on the future as one team. In this way the new Armed Forces has become one of the greatest symbols of Sierra Leone's progress'.[330]

MRP applicants were assessed on physical and medical fitness, personal background, and military experience, with background checks by SLP and RSLAF intelligence – though their rigour is questionable. Successful candidates received permanent rank after a six-month

[327] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[328] UNSC, 'Peace Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone' (New York, NY: UN, 1999), p. 12.
[329] UNAMSIL Report (2000), pp. 1-2.
[330] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

probation.[331] Generally, serving RSLAF officers praise the impact of the MRP in fostering a sense of unity. As one officer explained:

> I think that the greatest achievement was to treat every man with respect regardless of their affiliation. They were given the same training, paid the same, worked the same hours, ate the same food, slept in the same barracks and they were all disciplined in the same way. This was important because there was no distinction [between SLA, RUF, CDF] after training and so we could start to work together'.[332]

This was echoed by a second RSLAF officer, who observed a good level of 'teamwork' between former enemies because:

> We felt that we were being asked to overcome our differences, and live and work together. Many of the men who were inducted didn't know any other life, they didn't have the social skills or training for civilian employment as many had become soldiers at a young age. I think it was important to keep them in that environment where they could adapt to the peace and learn skills for civilian life.[333]

This is supported by Jackson and Albrecht who highlight the MRP as 'one of the most viable reintegration opportunities' for those 'who wanted to pursue a military career' and that demonstrated the potential of the RSLAF 'as an army of reconciliation'.[334]

A different impression is presented by RUF-RSLAF veterans. One informant, Hassan, observed that a two-tier system emerged:

> When we had completed basic reintegration training, they [SLA and CDF men] received officer ranks that were the equivalent of their positions during the war. These ranks paid well and came with respect. We [RUF] were given enlisted ranks no higher than corporal or maybe a sergeant, and we felt this was because we were not trusted or respected in the same way. Yes, we had fought against them [SL government, SLA/AFSL/CDF] but I was a patriot just like them and that motivated me to rejoin the army rather than retire. Many of us felt this

[331] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), pp. 80-81.
[332] Interview conducted in Kailahun District, April 2022.
[333] Interview conducted in Kenema District, April 2022.
[334] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 82.

> way but the quality of life was so poor that I left after a few years.[335]

When asked whether they believed the reintegration process was a success, another retired RUF combatant, Osman, observed that:

> Yes, in a way because the objective [of the MRP] was to reduce the tension between the different factions and draw us together. This did happen during training when we were mixed into syndicates and later platoons. However, I felt that the way that we [RUF] were treated was quite bad overall because we were still seen as the enemy. I didn't think that my fellow soldiers were treating me this way, but that it was a decision made by our politicians.[336]

Osman believed RUF fighters were intentionally given remote, low-priority postings to prevent desertion and keep them from sensitive sites. However, this view overlooks the fact that the British, not the SL-MoD, controlled the MRP. Despite war-time collaboration between SLA 'sobels' and RUF fighters, one former member of ISAT indicated there was a preference to promote ex-SLA soldiers due to the perception that 'they had higher education levels, were better trained and disciplined, were respected by the people, and had mostly been loyal to the Kabbah government in 1999 so would be reliable going forward'.[337] While mixed cadres prevented all-CDF or all-RUF units, the treatment of ex-RUF personnel echoed past tactics to curb one group's influence in favour of another – undermining the MRP's reconciliatory intent.

From the start, the MRP faced unresolved challenges. Rapid integration followed the RUF's collapse after the 1999 Freetown assault and the 2000 British intervention, leading to an expanded RSLAF of around 13,000 soldiers, many with poor education and questionable human rights records.[338] Public debate on the MRP centred on reintegrating human rights abusers, but these concerns were largely overlooked for reasons of expediency and pragmatism. As one retired RSLAF officer observed that:

> The British advisors established tests for who could re-enter the army but the level to pass was not high and

[335] Interview conducted in the Kailahun District, May 2022.
[336] Ibid.
[337] Interview conducted in Oxford, October 2023.
[338] Keen (2005a), p. 284.

> so they were taking in [RUF] people, but they didn't really know who they were or what they had done in the war. Very few were screened for criminal records because there weren't any files. What was most important was to disarm them, feed, and house them consistently, and make sure that the fighting didn't start up again.[339]

This is supported by a second interviewee, who outlined the screening questions as: 'do you have a criminal record?'; and 'have you ever been to prison?' along with physical requirements and some basic written and numerical tests.[340] This problem was further exacerbated by the lack of documentation, as many government/police facilities had been targeted during the war, resulting in the destruction of criminal records. A former ISAT officer elaborated on the rationale for the lack of scrutiny undertaken:

> At the time, the main concern was disarming and housing the different groups that were coming in. There were certainly men who had committed [human rights] abuses, or general criminality but there just wasn't a way to filter them out without subjecting each fighter to an extended interview process. The army was a good place for a lot of these guys to hide out immediately after the war. It was better to keep them together, where they could receive training about professionalism, respecting human rights and maintaining the rule of law. Then we could filter them out over time rather than just turning away guys with military training, who knew how to use weapons. Lome had established the policy of reconciliation, so there wasn't a significant drive from our side or from them [SL-MoD] about identifying who had done what.[341]

While understandable in the post-conflict context, British control over recruitment undermined the SSR goal of local ownership. Civil society concerns about reintegrating human rights abusers were ignored and the minimal screenings reflected a British disregard for past internal tensions. Yet, pragmatism often drove reintegration decisions, as seen in *Operation Basilica*, where ex-AFRC troops were absorbed into the SLA. This shift altered the army's ethnic and educational constitution, with the ex-AFRC group being 38% Mende

[339] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022. This lack of screening in the recruitment process was also observable in the reformation of the SLP, where large numbers of fighters were inducted to be able to combat armed groups in the immediate post-conflict period. See Ch. 7 of this thesis.
[340] Interview conducted in Kailahun area, May 2022.
[341] Interview conducted in Oxford, October 2023.

and 27% having only a Form 2 (14/15 years) education level.[342] This caused tension between different factions within the army, as loyalist SLA troops recruited during *Basilica* felt that their AFRC counterparts were 'uneducated thugs' who had been 'looters and plunderers of the nation's resources' and who 'had fought against democracy and possessed their own political agendas that we did not share'.[343]

The short-termism of the MRP is further exposed by the provision of one-year contracts that many combatants were offered upon completion of training. This is supportive of ISAT's officer's assertion above. As ex-RUF man Jerry observed:

> I agreed to one year of service because that was all that was offered to me. When I was discharged, I felt that I didn't have any skills beyond my military training and basic education. Finding work was hard because I was a former soldier, and many people didn't trust us.'[344]

Like many, Jerry first worked as an Okada rider after leaving the army but now runs a bike repair garage with other ex-RUF and ex-SLA members. In contrast, ex-RUF child-soldier Max, found work as a part-time security guard earning around £600 a year. However, Max was clear that he did not wish to pursue a career in security after leaving the army but felt that:

> I didn't have many options but to do this work as I didn't have any other skills or work experience. I had a reference from the army to say I had been reintegrated and noted my commendations, but this didn't really help me to find a different career. I worked as a labourer, but the pay was so bad that I had to return to security work.[345]

This is contrasted against the experiences of Kashim and Mari who had served with the SLA and RSLAF, and after discharge used their letters of recommendation to secure coveted employment as security personnel at the Bank of Sierra Leone.[346]

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[342] Report of the Secretary General of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, s/2000/186, (07 March 2000), pp. 1-2.

[343] Interview with former SLA and RSLAF veteran in Kenema area, conducted April 2022.

[344] Interview conducted in Kono District, May 2022.

[345] Many former RSLAF soldiers drifted into casual labour work as they possessed construction experience from the *Operation Pebu* building programme described below. Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

[346] Interviews conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

The issue of ex-combatants receiving limited post-disarmament support and forming their own networks has been widely studied, with findings too extensive to detail here.[347] The testimonies above suggest that reintegrated RSLAF fighters faced the same lack of future planning as their DDR counterparts, reinforcing the view that the MRP was a short-term measure to disarm and contain combatants while a longer-term solution was developed.[348] A solution never fully realised. The shift of many ex-combatants into labour, agriculture, Okada riding, informal mining, or security work highlights the absence of a structured exit plan during the downsizing-rightsizing process. Current RSLAF soldiers at Wilberforce Barracks (Freetown) also expressed concern over low pay, inadequate pensions, lack of re-skilling, and uncertainty about post-service transition.[349]

Downsizing and rightsizing refers to the process of reducing a military's size to meet the requirements of a peacetime force.[350] During the conflict and Operation *Basilica*, the SLA had swelled to approximately 15,500 personnel and in late 2002 the SL-MoD approved IMATT's reduction of RSLAF to 10,500 by December 2006.[351] Gen. Nelson-Williams observes that 'past allegiances were not deemed relevant' when selecting who would be dismissed, but as we have observed above, ex-RUF recruits were only offered short-term contracts and so would be the first to leave the service.[352] Nelson-Williams notes that officers and specialist trades were largely excluded from downsizing, as wartime recruitment had skewed the balance between officers and enlisted ranks.[353] This led to more RUF members being discharged, as they were less likely to hold officer ranks or have trade skills that would secure their retention.

Retirement and resettlement programmes were developed. Those with ten or more years of service received substantial pensions and a US$850 resettlement grant, while those

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[347] Krijn Peters 'Reintegration Support for Young Ex-Combatants: A Right or a Privilege?' *International Migration*, 45:5 (December 2007), pp. 35-59; W. Andy Knight, 'Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding in Africa: An Overview' *African Security*, 1:1 (2008), pp. 40-42; Fionnula Ni Aolain, Dina Francesca Haynes and Naomi Cahn, 'Six Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Programmes', in *On the Frontlines: Gender, War and Post-Conflict Process*, ed. by Fionnula Ni Aolain, Dina Francesca Haynes and Naomi Cahn (Oxford: Oxford Academic, 2011), Ch. 6.

[348] This is further supported by the reactive character of *Operation Pebu* discussed below.

[349] This author was invited to the Officer's Mess of Wilberforce Barracks (Freetown) to engage in a casual discussion of some of the concerns of soldiers, conducted in March 2022.

[350] Nelson-Williams, p. 2.

[351] Nelson-Williams, p. 8.

[352] Ibid.

[353] Ibid.

with less than ten years got modest support and often lacked post-service skills.[354] This shortfall was attributed to a decrease in 'available resources' as the international community's commitment waivered in the post-conflict period.[355] Later assessments of RSLAF's transitional support for departing personnel have also underscored this lack of planning and consideration.[356] These concerns still linger, as one currently enlisted man Peter admitted to that 'I don't really know how to do anything else but be a soldier. I will probably have to find work as a security guard where I will make half of my current pay'.[357] Robert, a sergeant in Freetown, also owns a local bar near to his family home to supplement his income (a small wooden hut that sells a limited range of beers) but is worried that his pension and modest savings will not be enough after he leaves the service.[358] Robert's fears may be explained by comparing his annual income of 18,000,000SL (approximately £750) per year to that of the average national income of 68,000,000SL (£2,840).[359] With a monthly income of just 1,500,000SL per month, Robert struggles to pay for daily essentials such as fuel for his house generator and a 50kg bag of rice, costing 700,000-1,000,000SL per month on average. Retirement is a concern for non-commissioned officers such as Robert, who face mandatory retirement at age 55, a policy enacted by IMATT to facilitate the exit of senior officers who received hefty salaries.[360] As Robert concluded, he is concerned that 'there are not many job opportunities outside of the military and I am not sure what I will do when I do retire. My pension is not enough to support my family so I will have to look for work'. Indeed, Robert expects his pension payments to be between 160-200,000SL per month (approximately £5-£8) which is starkly contrasted against the minimum wage of 600,000SL per month. When asked what type of work he expected to find, Robert mirrored those above and said he would probably enter the private security sector or construction with other family.

Curbing corruption was raised as a further rationale downsizing-rightsizing. For example, one journalist explained that before and immediately after the war, commanders would inflate the size of their units 'to receive the pay of soldiers that did not exist or had

[354] Ibid., p. 8 & 11.
[355] UNSC, 'Twenty-seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone', S/2005/777 (Dec 2005), p. 6.
[356] Nelson-Williams, p. 11.
[357] Interview conducted in Daru area, April 2022.
[358] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[359] Salary information drawn from: World Salaries, 'Average Salary in Sierra Leone for 2024', worldsallaries.com <https://worldsalaries.com/average-salary-in-sierra-leone/> [accessed 10 October 2023].
[360] Interview with former ISAT officer, conducted in Oxford, October 2023.

been killed in the war'.[361] Other complainants described commanders taking a cut (or chop) from their wages and rice allowance.[362] The first measure to prevent such malfeasance was introducing ID cards and requiring soldiers to collect their pay in person.[363] There were concerns over this type of corruption leading to instances of insubordination, inter-troop violence and general revolts as it 'looked a lot like the things that were happening in the [1990s] where the senior officers took advantage of the ranks, took their food and their pay, and they would end up getting shot or blown up with a grenade'.[364]

Returning to the theme of denied local ownership, interviewees expressed resentment toward the British over the RSLAF downsizing. While many are grateful for the British role in ending the conflict, they also voiced frustration over army dismissals. As one retired officer noted, several colleagues were removed for failing to meet ethical standards set by IMATT. As this one serving officer observed: 'There were men who had served loyally during the war and fought bravely for their country. They were discharged because they would take rice from their men'.[365] This is supported by another serving officer, arguing that British-imposed standards clashed with long-standing cultural practices within the military. Consistently low pay and poor service conditions were highlighted as reasons why officers supplemented their incomes.[366] As with the SLP below, access to enrichment opportunities has served, and continues to serve, as motivation for officers to seek advancement. Cutting off these avenues may reduce their incentive to perform and progress and this issue stems from a lack of local input in reforms. As noted earlier, patrimonial ties still influence promotion and advancement, making it risky for individuals to challenge the system from within.

As with the SLP, informal conversations with the public reveal a broad acceptance of corruption across state institutions. This author had to adjust their own understanding of corruption to grasp what is locally deemed acceptable or not. For example, as one Sierra Leonean citizen explained: 'Everyone expects leaders, employers, and officers to take from them. If they take just enough, then it is accepted. If they try to take too much they will be resisted'.[367] Thus, British efforts to remove such individuals were rooted in a

[361] Interview conducted in Kenema area, April 2022.
[362] Interview with retired SLA and RSLAF soldier, conducted in Tongo, April 2022.
[363] Interview conducted in Tongo, April 2022.
[364] Interview with former ISAT officer, conducted in Oxford, October 2023.
[365] Interview conducted in Kailahun District, April 2022.
[366] Interview conducted in Kenema, May 2022.
[367] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

misunderstanding of local practices, leading discharged officers to feel apathetic or resentful over the premature loss of their livelihoods. More concerning is the absence of mechanisms to address such misconduct without resorting to dismissal, thereby losing trained personnel in a state with a history of military involvement in politics.

The MRP highlights key lessons about exit planning for soldiers and officers. Retaining and promoting ex-SLA personnel over former RUF fighters, and dismissing certain officers, were perilous decisions. Generous pensions and staggered releases likely prevented widespread unrest among veterans, however, the programme's medium-term failure is evident, as many discharged soldiers remain trapped in low-paid jobs without skills for advancement – a challenge current soldiers also face.

6.7 The Present Conditions and Capabilities of RSLAF and Its Soldiers

Operation Pebu: Living Conditions of Soldiers and their Families

The living conditions of soldiers were highlighted by the 2003 DWP as a potential source of instability. Citizens and the TRC expressed concerns that military degradation had contributed to the destabilisation of the country as 'these issues had undermined the previous army's ability to conduct a war' and if left unaddressed 'would badly affect their [citizens] own security' going forward.[368] Nelson-Williams also observed that 'Improving the welfare and living conditions of current and ex-servicemen would address the need to ensure that military stay out of politics'.[369] Of chief concern was the inadequate accommodation in which most soldiers resided.[370] Resultantly, Operation *Pebu* was launched in 2003 to address such deficiencies.[371] However, as we will observe, a lack of local ownership in the projects conception led to significant failures that plague RSLAF installations to this day.

Operation Pebu is best viewed as a response to inadequate planning during the MRP, rather than as a parallel programme. The MRP consolidated around fifty HQ, company, and platoon-level units into just nine locations, as military infrastructure in the east and north was severely damaged or destroyed.[372] There was significant need refurbish barracks as one 2005

[368] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 113.
[369] Nelson-Williams, p. 11.
[370] UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office, 'Fourth Report of the Secretary General on UNIOSIL' (May 2007), p. 4.
[371] 'Pebu' is a Mende word for 'house'.
[372] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 116.

UN report observed that the accommodation issue presented a 'serious problem' to ongoing stability and preventing the army from intervening in national politics.[373] Initial estimates for bespoke housing for 14,000 personnel reached US$200 million. Consequently, it was decided to refurbish existing sites and build two new barracks, allocating £3 million for reconstruction.[374] This limited expenditure issue coincided with the downsizing/rightsizing process and certainly contributed to decisions to reduce the number of personnel to 9,000.

Despite joint funding, DfID was keen to portray *Pebu* as locally owned. The Project Director was the Joint Support Commander, the Project Manager a Lt. Colonel, and sought advice from the RSLAF Engineer Regiment. A Steering Committee was established in May 2003, along with a separate 'Cell' within Joint Force HQ.[375] This presented challenges in the design phase of the project: where the British short-term designs of 3-4 year lifespan, two-room family billets, with outdoor slit-trenches were rejected and were redesigned to three-room buildings.[376] Inflationary issues prevented the Sierra Leonean government from assuming the additional cost of the upgrades entirely and an additional £1.7m was provided by DfID.[377] The resultant increase in costs certainly influenced the decision to adopt the 'hydraform' block technology that led to 'one of the most disastrous decisions made' by British planners and enforced upon the army.[378] The SL-MoD was not consulted about this decision.[379]

Several problems emerged during implementation that could have been prevented by sufficient planning and consultation.[380] Firstly, the soil required is scarce in West Africa, and untested machinery combined with unsuitable soil caused numerous block failures that weakened building structures. Soil harvesting was labour-intensive, falling mostly on army

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[373] UNMSIL, 'Twenty-sixth Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone', S/2005/596 (September 2005), p. 3.

[374] £1.9m was provided by DfID to IMATT and the Government of Sierra Leone provided £1.1m. Ibid.

[375] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 117.

[376] Aldo Gaeta, '*Operation Pebu*', *Security Systems Transformation in Sierra Leone* (GFNSSR, 2008) <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/gfnssr/0017013/f_0017013_14550.pdf> [accessed 19 October 2022], p. 3.

[377] Ibid. See also: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNMSIL), 'Twenty-first report of the Secretary - General of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone', S/2004/228 <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/sl-s2004228.php> [accessed 19 October 2022], p. 4.

[378] Ibid., p. 4. In theory, soil and cement are combined under pressure to quickly produce uniform building blocks. 'Hydraform' blocks are also referred to as 'hydroform' blocks.

[379] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 117.

[380] These problems were highlighted by two senior army commanders in the Kenema and Kailahun areas who participated in *Operation Pebu*. Interviews were conducted separately, April 2022.

personnel due to limited excavation equipment. Procurement was problematic, with upfront payments leading to premature cement deliveries that were ruined by rain. Poor machine maintenance frequently slowed or halted construction, and although each machine should produce 1,500 blocks daily, Gaeta notes actual output rarely exceeded 800.[381] Nine additional machines were purchased in February 2004 to supplement the existing six machines.[382] The purchase of additional machines furthered budgetary problems as the challenge of malfunctioning equipment and the need for replacement parts increased. One officer outlined the impact that *Pebu* had upon the soldiers:

> We felt that being ordered to build our own facilities went against what the British were trying to do in other areas, which was to create a sense of professionalism in the new army. Morale was low all the way through construction. I think it harmed our relationship [with the British] and no one wanted to tell the truth [about the hydraform machines]. No one wanted to tell them it wasn't working. By turning the men into labourers this undermined the messages about how soldiers should act and be seen by the public. It undermined the chain of command because we were the ones ordering them to make the blocks and it felt like punishment detail every day. I feel that it degraded the status of army.[383]

The hydraform block debacle certainly impacted upon Leonean impressions of British decision making. As one officer involved observed:

> [*Pebu*] was coordinated and implemented from the top down without real consultation with those who had to live and work in the buildings. We knew there were problems with the locations, but the priority was on getting the barracks built as quickly and as cheaply as possible. Everyone knew that there wasn't enough money, so we were being asked to do the building work ourselves, unlike the police who had received good funding and new stations.[384]

[381] Gaeta, pp. 4-5.
[382] Ibid, p. 6.
[383] Interview conducted in Kenema area, April 2022.
[384] This assessment is not without merit, as the SLP did indeed have new facilities built across the country by commercial contractors. Interview conducted in Kailahun area, April 2022. See: Gaeta, p. 4. As we will observe below, the SLP were identified by Kabbah as the leading organisation to foster peace through security reform.

Operation Pebu's most significant failures are the barracks at Kailahun and Pjuehun.[385] Both sites are now abandoned as uninhabitable, and siting the Kailahun base too near to the Liberian border highlighted a disregard for local knowledge.[386] Only Teko Barracks (Makeni) is referenced as an example of success from an initial nine site project.[387] The Anti-Corruption Commission found that procurement contracts were limited to few bidders and quoted prices far exceeded those of other DfID projects. Officers reported malfeasance in hydraform parts procurement, where ordered components either never arrived or were swapped for used ones.[388]

Today, the condition of barracks at sites visited by this author are generally deteriorating. This is unsurprising given that *Pebu* is generally considered to be a failure. In 2007, just one year before the abandonment of *Pebu*, one assessment noted that the 'main barracks in Freetown are overcrowded, with some families living in stores and armouries with no access to safe drinking water or proper sanitation. Similar unsatisfactory conditions exist in the military barracks in the provinces.'[389] These findings mirrored the Levit Bernstein 2004 appraisal that concluded *Pebu* could result in the 'creation of new slums', an assessment that this author agrees with following, visits to Wilberforce barracks in particular.[390]

During visits to barracks at Wilberforce, Kenema and Moa, soldiers and their families were living in poor, unsanitary conditions. Whilst each barracks was 'envisaged as a small town' with appropriate amenities: schools, places of worship and shops are all ad-hoc and provided by the residents themselves.[391] Both pre-war and hydraform block buildings are small, overcrowded, and inadequate, prompting the use of tin and wood shanties. Wilberforce and Moa barracks flood during the rainy season, displacing families and exacerbating damp conditions. Though no study of military families during COVID-19 has been conducted, the poor living conditions likely worsened disease spread and isolation. Drug use is openly observed at Wilberforce. Junior officers highlighted the lack of plumbing at Wilberforce, where waste is manually removed. Slit-latrine waste is buried or burned and at Moa, waste

[385] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), pp. 149-50.
[386] Interview with senior RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema, April 2022.
[387] Nelson-Williams, p. 12.
[388] Gaeta, p. 5.
[389] UNIPSIL, 'Fifth Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone', S/2007/704 (December 2007) <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/sl-s-2007-704.php> [accessed 19 October 2022], p. 5.
[390] Cited in Gaeta, p. 6.
[391] Ibid., p. 7.

from family areas contaminates the Moa River. One base lacked sustainable drinking water due to a broken well that has been inoperative for two years.

Sustainability of Training and Equipment

In August 2007, former IMATT commander Brig. Iain Cholerton observed that RSLAF was now 'the best trained army in Africa'.[392] He had cause to speak with confidence as the establishment of the Horton officer academy in Freetown and the infantry school at Benguema were both cited as examples of the progress achieved in six years.[393] There are however some sustainability questions regarding the ongoing participation of ISAT. At Horton for example, one interviewee observed that '[British officers] were still running things' in 2019 in terms of both occupying senior positions such as the Director of Study and exercising control over syllabuses and pedagogy.[394] British staff retained control over academy teaching appointments, reflecting a lack of trust in the officer corps to uphold standards independently.[395] Preference for attending Horton mirrored broader recruitment challenges, with officers often relying on political-patrimonial ties to secure sought-after international scholarships.[396] While the army can perform security tasks, concerns remain about maintaining standards after full transition to RSLAF. ISAT aimed to hand over Horton by March 2020, but by 2022–23, progress had stalled due to funding shortfalls.[397] The armed forces' preference for continued British oversight and international funding reflects a degree of donor dependency concerning the sustainability of officer training reforms.

Providing new weapons, equipment, and vehicles was a key IMATT priority, responding to the SLA's degraded state and its past failure to counter the RUF, which had led to military-driven political interference. Nelson-Williams supported the need for adequate

[392] Daniel Flynn, 'Britain has foreign policy fans in Sierra Leone', *Reuters.com*, 12 August 2007, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-leone-election-britain-idUSL1029100520070812> [accessed 10 November 2023].
[393] See: Glba, pp. 78-93.
[394] Interview with SL-MoD official conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[395] Interview with former ISAT officer, conducted in Oxford, October 2023.
[396] This was confirmed by officers in Kenema and Kailahun areas in interviews conducted in April and May 2022.
[397] UK-MoD, 'Strengthening Security and Resilience in Sierra Leone and Neighbouring Countries', Programme Completion Review – Summary Sheet, MoD CSSF-03-000010 (2020) <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/630263/Sierra_Leone_Security_Africa_2017.pdf> [accessed 10 November 2023]. Interview with senior SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

provisioning, stating: 'A soldier's turnout matters a great deal to him and constitutes a major factor in how he is perceived by the wider society' and that troops should be 'equipped' in such a way 'to act as an effective deterrence to groups who might resort to armed violence'.[398] SA-80 and FN-FAL rifles were issued; and mortars and machine guns were provided; along with uniforms and equipment such as radios and transportation.[399] However, RSLAF was 'plagued by continued lack of equipment' that was attributed to deliberate inaction or malfeasance on the part of the government to 'take control [of the army] … by keeping the armed forced living at a bare minimum'.[400] Corruption remains a major obstacle to sustainability, with cases including military provisioners selling uniforms on the black market and a Brigadier General indicted for stealing ammunition.[401] As detailed below, the phased withdrawal of international support has led to recidivism in the RSLAF, driven by unsustainable equipment provision.

IMATT-supplied weapons posed challenges for soldiers and procurement issues for the government. Notably, concerns were raised about the British SA-80 rifle, that had been criticised during the 1990 Gulf War for frequent jams and misfires in harsh conditions.[402] A former firing range instructor confirmed these issues, noting that the SA-80 rifle was poorly suited to Sierra Leone's terrain and climate, with little regard given to how a high-maintenance weapon designed for Europe would perform locally.[403] In contrast, the AK-47 is valued for its durability and simplicity – traits that have made it popular among forces using child soldiers. The same instructor preferred the Belgian FN-FAL, citing its reliability, greater

[398] Nelson-Williams, p. 9.
[399] Interview with former ISAT officer, conducted in Oxford, October 2023.
[400] Defence Intelligence Report, 'Sierra Leone: Assessment of Effectiveness of EX GREEN EAGLE in managing perceptions in Sierra Leone' (2006) cited in: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 152.
[401] Politico SL, 'Sierra Leone police seize 100s of military uniforms', *politicosl.com* (09 August 2021) <https://www.politicosl.com/articles/sierra-leone-police-seize-100s-military-uniforms> [accessed 15 November 2023]; SL-MoD, 'MoD/RSLAF Key Message on the Resignations of Three Senior Military Officers' *mod.gov.sl* (26 September 2019) <https://mod.gov.sl/5.%20%20KEY%20MESSAGE%20on%20the%20Resignation%20of%20Three%20Senior%20Military%20Officers.html> [accessed 15 November 2023]; AYV News, 'RSLAF Intensifies Probe into Missing Weapons', ayvnews.com (10 January 2020) <https://ayvnews.com/rslaf-intensifies-probe-into-missing-weapons/> [accessed 15 November 2023]; Sierra Express Media, 'MOD/RSLAF Conducts Three Major Arms and Ammunition Investigations' *sierraexpressmedia.com* (16 July 2018) <https://sierraexpressmedia.com/?p=84953> [accessed 15 November 2023].
[402] Chris Blackhurst, 'Troops fought in Gulf war with unreliable rifle: Report catalogues 32 defects in weapon', *independent.co.uk* (24 June 1993) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/troops-fought-in-gulf-war-with-unreliable-rifle-report-catalogues-32-defects-in-weapon-1493644.html> [accessed 15 November 2023].
[403] Interview in Tongo area, April 2022.

stopping power, and similarity in setup to the ubiquitous AK-47.[404] In terms of procurement, both the SA-80 and FN-FAL use NATO issued rounds, that cost between US$0.80-1.30 to purchase (per round) and are significantly more expensive than AK-47 ammunition that is widely available through many countries (and black markets) and costs just US$0.30-0.60 per round.[405] As ISAT handed procurement duties in 2008 to the RSLAF Defence Tender's Board, the cost and complexity of new weapons systems proved unsustainable leading to the AK-47's reinstatement as the standard infantry rifle.[406] This shift has had broader geopolitical implications, with China emerging as the primary arms supplier to RSLAF – part of a wider strategy to expand its political influence in West Africa through security and development initiatives.[407]

Further issues surround the provision of military vehicles that mirror the challenges confronting the SLP. For example, by 2008, Nelson-Williams was already highlighting the lack of forethought on the part of IMATT regarding maintenance. Mirroring a 2004 UNSC report that detailed the failure of multiple vehicles after only two years, Nelson-Williams observed that 'vehicles … are presently in dire need of spares and basic equipment' and one informed source concluded that failures were also due to a lack of training for personnel.[408] A 2004 report estimated it would cost an unfeasible US$18 million to fully equip RSLAF with vehicles for a decade. Today, the Freetown RSLAF motor pool resembles a boneyard, with numerous decaying vehicles cannibalised for spare parts.

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[404] The SA-80 rifle fires a NATO 5.56x45mm projectile at a lower velocity than the NATO 7.62x51mm FN-FAL projectile. The SA-80 also employs a 'bullpup' system where the magazine is located behind the grip and trigger, whereas the FN-FAL employs a frontal magazine system that is similar to the AK-47.

[405] Interview with former ISAT officer, conducted in Oxford, October 2023. Personal research.

[406] SL-MoD, '2021 Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces Equipment and Weapons', *mod.gov.sl* <https://mod.gov.sl/rslaf-equipment.html> [accessed 20 November 2023].

[407] Army-Technology, 'RSLAF receives Artillery Weapons and Ammunition from China', *Army-Technology.com* (03 May 2011) <https://www.army-technology.com/news/news117717-html/?cf-view> [accessed 15 November 2023]; Defence Web, 'Sierra Leone receives arms from China', *defenceweb.co.za* (23 May, 2011) <https://www.defenceweb.co.za/land/land-land/sierra-leone-receives-arms-from-china/> [accessed 15 November 2023]; Tom Bayes, 'China's growing security role in Africa: Views from West Africa, Implications for Europe', (Berlin: GFG, 2020); Jevans Nyabiage, 'China donates patrol boat to Sierra Leone to tackle illegal fishing and piracy of West Africa' (30 April 2023) <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3218772/china-donates-patrol-boat-sierra-leone-tackle-illegal-fishing-and-piracy-west-africa> [accessed 15 November 2023]; Samual Lovett and Simon Townsley, 'Corruption, pollution and exploitation: the fallout from China's push into Africa', *Telegraph.co.uk* (31 May 2023) <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/global-health/clIMATTTTTe-and-people/china-investment-sierra-leone-africa-mining/> [accessed 15 November 2023].

[408] Nelson-Williams, p. 10; UNSC, 'Twenty-First Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone' (2004), pt. 13; confirmed in interview with senior RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema area, April 2022.

Communications remain a challenge for RSLAF, that has a wider impact on other equipment factors. During *Operation Palliser*, British communications equipment and other office-based materials were provided but were withdrawn by 2007 without being replaced effectively.[409] As one officer observed:

> There is still a general problem with communications. In Freetown there is access to mobile phones and the internet, but this is not the case in strategically important areas close to the border. Where there is no access, we still rely on physical communications such as riders, where we should have satellite communications.[410]

This issue is especially acute for personnel stationed at Forward Operations or Patrol Bases (FOB/FPB), which are strategically positioned at key border points with Liberia and Guinea to serve as early warning and frontline defence posts. The commander of the FOB/FPB unit that this author visited summated the significance of the challenges to operational capability:

> The situation could be improved, as we are expected to patrol a large section of the border. We have radios, but we will also have to send runners to communicate with the positions along the border if they malfunction and it is difficult to get the parts we need to maintain this equipment. Written status reports and requisition orders are sent by messenger bike. If there is a raid, we will send a man to report [to HQ] but this is not an effective way to raise the alarm.[411]

As one interviewee noted, this is critical given the SLA's delayed and poorly coordinated response to the 1991 RUF incursion, largely due to inadequate communications. While border security will be discussed further below, it is worth noting that one soldier reported limited ammunition supplies, restricting live-fire training, and the absence of both anti-tank and anti-aircraft capabilities at the position.

While some hardship is expected at FOB/FPBs, visits revealed critical deficiencies stemming from poor communication systems. For instance, a medical officer at one base reported frequent failures to receive essential medicines like antibiotics and paracetamol, which were requested via hand-delivered forms.[412] The medical officer often buys medicine

[409] Interview with RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema, April 2022.
[410] Interview with RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema, April 2022.
[411] Interview with FOB/FPB RSLAF officer, conducted in Kailahun District, April 2022.
[412] FOB and FPBs visited in Kailahun District, April 2022.

from the local village using petty cash pooled by his unit. Similarly, clean water must be sourced externally, as the bore-well has been inoperative for two years. Food rations are insufficient, requiring soldiers to buy rice and meat from local markets – a common practice. Transportation is also self-financed, with soldiers paying for Okada rides to and from the base, evidenced by a semi-permanent rank of riders stationed nearby.

Capabilities of RSLAF

RSLAF currently undertakes both internal and external security duties aimed at fostering stability. Externally, it contributed to the African Union Mission in Somalia from 2012 to 2015 and has personnel serving UN forces in Abyei, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Darfur, and Mali.[413] The maritime wing has also received modest praise for its work in combatting poaching and smuggling.[414] The degree to which these are indicators of improvement is debatable, as participation in international missions for example does not necessarily negate the challenges highlighted above. As one well-placed observer noted, 'the AU mission [in Somalia] provided equipment and transport' for RSLAF, and RSLAF units were paired with Kenyan troops when conducting operations.[415] Somalia is also the only large-scale external deployment of RSLAF troops to date, with only limited numbers of personnel now embedded in international forces.[416] While irregular forces, militias, and pirate groups do not pose the same threat as a modern, well-equipped military, RSLAF's engagement in Somalia demonstrates its capability to confront irregular forces akin to the RUF.

FOB/FPB positions along the borders with Liberia and Guinea lack the firepower and logistical support needed to repel large-scale incursions. In Kailahun, these posts are lightly

[413] SL-MoD, 'Status of RSLAF in the Various AU and UN Missions' *mod.gov.sl* (26 September 2019) <http://mod.gov.sl/1.%20%20NEWS%20RELEASE%20on%20Status%20of%20RSLAF%20in%20the%20Various%20AU%20and%20UN%20Missions.html> [accessed 18 November 2023]; SL-MoD, 'RSLAFs Participation on Foreign Missions' *mod.gov.sl* (2011-2012) <https://mod.gov.sl/docs/RSLAF's_Participation_on_Foreign_Missions.pdf> [accessed 18 November 2023].

[414] S. O. Williams, 'A New Dawn in the RSLAF' *sierraexpressmedia.com* (26 March 2012) <https://sierraexpressmedia.com/?p=37362> [accessed 18 November 2023]. As observed above, the maritime wing has struggled with the same maladies of lack of parts and mechanical expertise that plague wider RSLAF transport.

[415] Interview with retired RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema area, May 2022.

[416] In 2019, only 52 personnel were embedded in international AU and UN missions. See: SL-MoD, 'Status of RSLAF in the Various AU and UN Missions', *mod.gov.sl* (26th September 2019).

staffed, undersupplied, and geographically vulnerable. Plans for new barracks in Kailahun town were abandoned partly due to their exposure to cross-border attacks. These positions appear primarily intended as early-warning outposts rather than defensive strongholds or effective border enforcement. The porous nature of the border is evident, with illegal crossings via Okada bikes costing as little as £30, facilitating ongoing smuggling activities.

RSLAF limitations are also exposed by the issue of Yenga Town (Kailahun Dist.) that is geographically Sierra Leonean but was occupied by Guinean troops during the war.[417] Yenga has remained in contention and Guinean troops occupied the town again in March 2023.[418] This has become a source of anger and shame, and as one Kailahun citizen observed 'the army could not stop them even if they wanted to'.[419] While the government has faced criticism for its lack of response to the Guinean incursion, this author argues that RSLAF reforms intentionally produced an operationally weak force – designed both to limit threats to Sierra Leone's democratic government and to avoid provoking its neighbour, Guinea.[420] One RSLAF officer explains the rationale for limiting the power of RSLAF: 'In this regard I feel that if the army had the capability to withstand Guinea, then the diplomatic situation would be very different. There have been many failed peace initiatives and times that we could have fought them, but RSLAF cannot match them. So, we are not yet at each other's throats over Yenga because we would not win the fight.'[421] The Guinean army surpasses RSLAF in logistics, manpower, and includes helicopters and three MIG-21 fighter jets.[422] The restructured RSLAF poses little threat to regional or internal stability, explaining the low

[417] BBC, 'Guinea-Sierra Leone "deal" to end Yenga dispute', *bbcnews.co.uk* (02 August 2012) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-19094001> [accessed 18 November 2023].
[418] Switsalone, 'Guinean military takes over Yenga town and built a demarcation line', *switsalone.com* (07 March 2023) <https://www.switsalone.com/44044_guinea-military-takes-over-yenga-town-and-built-a-new-demarcation-beacon/> [accessed 20 November 2023].
[419] Interview conducted via confidential email, November 2023.
[420] Abu Shaw, 'Bio Pawns Yenga to President Doumbouya as Guinean Soldiers Harass Sierra Leoneans in Yenga' *theorganiser.net* (11 March 2023) <https://theorganiser.net/sierra-leone/5757-bio-pawns-yenga-to-president-doumbouya-as-guinea-soldiers-harass-sierra-leoneans-in-yenga> [accessed 20 November 2023]. During the civil war, the RUF/SLA were in part defeated by the Guinean army. Air superiority was particularly decisive.
[421] Interview conducted via confidential email, November 2023.
[422] The Guinean military has maintained a troop level of 12-13,000 personnel between 2016-2019 including naval and air forces. See: Macro Trends, 'Guinea Military Size 1985-2023' <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/GIN/guinea/military-army-size> [accessed 21 November 2023]. For 'MIG-21', see: Craig Hoyle 'World Air Forces - 2023' *Flight International* (London: Embraer, Flight Global, 2022), p. 10.

priority given to FOB/FPB conditions. Charles Taylor's arrest and the disbandment of the Liberian army further reduced the risk of incursions from the south-east.[423]

Internally, there was almost universal agreement amongst those interviewed that the armed forces can 'can be trusted' with domestic security and is 'not violent' towards the civil population.[424] This author's observations align with public perception: RSLAF personnel largely remain on-base and avoid wearing uniforms in public. Civilians can visit barracks and speak with public relations officers. Despite degraded facilities, this author was invited to tour sites and officers demonstrated a commitment to transparency and voicing concerns over operational capabilities.

The Military Assistance to Civil Policing (and later Administration – MAC-P & A) framework 'gave much needed clarity [to RSLAF] … outlining precisely when and how the armed forces may play a role in internal security'.[425] MAC-P/A activities are delineated into *Emergency Tasks* and *Standing Tasks* where RSLAF respectively responds to emergencies where civil agencies may lack the resources to sufficiently manage; and engages in day-to-day support of police and government responsibilities.[426] Examples of *Emergency Tasks* successes include assistance with natural disasters such as flooding, the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak and the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic.[427] Undermining its successes, RSLAF often intervenes due to chronic underfunding of civil services and weak emergency coordination.[428] While it is certainly a positive that the civil population is grateful to RSLAF for its service

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[423] Mohammad Tarequl Islam 'The Dynamics of Security Sector Reform in Liberia: Challenges and Opportunities for Achieving Intended Reforms', *Journal for International Peacekeeping*, 24:1-2 (2021), pp. 115-142.

[424] The questions 'Do you trust the armed forces to keep the peace?' and 'Do the armed forces use violence on citizens?' were included in all questionnaires to Okada riders and in semi-structure interviews with Sierra Leonean citizens conducted in Freetown, Kenema District, Kailahun District and Makeni area between March 2022 and June 2022.

[425] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 153.

[426] Ibid.

[427] UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC), 'End of Mission Report: Sierra Leone Landslide and Flash Floods, 18 August – 6 September 2017' (OCHA 2017), pp. 12-14; Emma Ross, Gita Honwana Welch, and Philip Angelides, 'Sierra Leone Response to the Ebola Outbreak: Management Strategies and Key Responder Experiences', Centre on Global Health Security: Royal Institute of International Affairs (London: Chatham House 2017), p. 17; Anne-Laure Mahe and Nina Wilen, 'Deploying the Military to Manage A Public Health Crisis, Between Business As Usual and New Practices', in *Facing a Problem: African Armies and the Fight Against Covid-19*, ed. by Anne-Laure Mahe and Nina Wilen (eds.), Report No. 91, IRSEM/EGMONT (December 2001), p. 15.

[428] Samuel Boland, Dina Balabanova and Susanah Mayhew, 'The political economy of expedience: examining perspectives on military support to Sierra Leone's Ebola response', *Conflict and Health*, 17:53 (2003) <https://conflictandhealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13031-023-00553-6#citeas> [accessed 24 November 2023].

during these times of crisis, it is also troubling that the population may willingly turn to the army to combat future challenges, as they have come to believe soldiers can help them where the government cannot.

In terms of *Standing Tasks*, RSLAF can be seen engaging in daily traffic control in busy areas of Freetown, where their desert fatigues and red berets mark them out from the SLP. The authority of the 'soldier-man' is evident: while locals may harass SLP officers, they comply with RSLAF commands and avoid conflict – with streets clearing for RSLAF motorcades. Whilst conducting interviews regarding the SLP/OSD's use of force on protestors, the Executive Officer of a Freetown Okada union illustrated that: 'We know when to stop, it is when the army is called. We will speak to the unit commander, he will hear our grievances, and we will leave'.[429] In a second interview with an Okada-rights campaigner, this interviewee observed that 'once the army have heard what we have to say, we can leave in peace. This is because we know that [President Bio] will hear what we have to say'.[430] Despite its flaws, RSLAF commands public authority. However, it is concerning that military commanders regard civil disorder as a Standing Task, permitting interventions in legal protests under the guise of maintaining order.[431] Further, daily reliance on the armed forces for civil tasks draws them into the political sphere, where their public popularity can translate into political leverage for senior officers. When asked who they would call in the event of an emergency, one Okada executive officer in Kenema District responded 'the military, not the police' without pause. The executive noted regular cooperation between RSLAF and local riders on security issues. Public trust in the army, who are viewed as a protector even against the police, marks a stark shift from wartime perceptions. However, efforts to rebuild trust have blurred lines between the military, civil society, and government – creating new political entanglements.

RSLAF has been observed to effectively safeguard elections and Godwin and Haenlein note that this is an indicator of reform success.[432] Sierra Leone has undergone four successful elections and two transitions of power between the SLPP and the APC, however only 57% of one 2022 poll felt that the army could be trusted to safeguard election results.[433]

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[429] Interview conducted in Freetown area, June 2022.
[430] Interview conducted in Kenema area, May 2022.
[431] Both senior commanders who participated in this study and the senior official in the SL-MoD agreed that there was no problem with RSLAF intervening in civil policing in this way.
[432] Godwin and Haenlein, pp. 33-34.
[433] SierraPoll, 'Sierra Leone: Trust in Management Bodies', *SierraPoll* (Freetown: Embassy of Ireland, August 2022), p. 4.

This is understandable, as the SLPP's victory returned retired Julius Maada Bio to power, reducing the need for overt military interference. With 56% of the vote, SLPP supporters are less concerned about army corruption, while opponents suspect interference and divides from the one-party era persist. The real test will come in the 2027/28 elections when Bio cannot run again. If the SLPP nominates a civilian, will RSLAF still offer support, or will military ties become a prerequisite? Given the patrimonial nature of RSLAF appointments, politically connected commanders may resist relinquishing power and its benefits.

The Acid Test: the November 2023 Military Coup

On the morning of November 26, 2023, gunmen – later identified as former Presidential Guard, RSLAF, and police officers – attacked Pandemba Prison and Wilberforce Barracks to free political prisoners and overthrow President Bio. Information Minister Chernoh Bah confirmed that 'the incident was a failed coup attempt. The intention was to illegally subvert and overthrow a democratically elected government.'[434] RSLAF soldiers repelled the barracks assault, thwarting the coup at the cost of over 20 lives. Thirteen officers were arrested during the attack, with 37 total arrests in the following days, including five majors and two captains.[435] This coup attempt constituted the most serious and organised attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government since the conclusion of the conflict in 2002.

While the plotters' exact motives remain unclear, many citizens link the coup attempt to the disputed 2023 SLPP electoral victory and its impact on APC-aligned security service members.[436] As one serving police officer indicated, the recent elections may have spurred this action as 'those who were hoping to return to power, gain promotions and new titles were disappointed by the results [of the 2023 election]. When they [APC] lost the last election,

[434] BBC, 'Sierra Leone Violence: Sunday attacks were part of coup attempt – minister', *bbcnews.co.uk* (28 November 2023) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-67558078> [accessed 28 November 2023].
[435] Umara Fofana, 'Sierra Leone information minister says weekend attack was a failed coup', *reuters.com* (28 November 2023) <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sierra-leone-information-minister-says-weekend-attack-was-failed-coup-2023-11-28/> [accessed 28 November 2023]; Africa News, 'Sierra Leone: 57 arrests after attempted coup', *africanews.com* (05 December 2023) <https://www.africanews.com/2023/12/05/sierra-leone-57-arrests-after-attempted-coup/> [accessed 09 December 2023].
[436] Umara Fofana, 'Sierra Leone ruling party wins 60% of parliamentary seats in contested vote', *reuters*.com (01 July 2023) <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/sierra-leone-ruling-party-wins-60-parliamentary-seats-contested-vote-2023-07-01/> [accessed 09 December 2023].

many supporters of [former-President Ernest] Koroma lost their chance to regain their influence, access, and opportunities to make money'.[437] This assessment is matched by the perspective of a retired SLA truck driver, who observed that 'The elections are the problem. Many people think that the result was false. These men and women from the army and the police who are wanted think this and believe they have a right to overturn the result'.[438] The events surrounding the 2023 elections may explain the electoral controversy, as Afolabi Adekaiyaoja from the Centre for Democracy and Development observed:

> The President won re-election on the first ballot even though the polls and the PVT [Parallel Vote Tabulation, or exit polls] that were carried out had predicted it was much more likely that the president would need to go for a second ballot to get re-elected.[439]

A retired RSLAF officer from Tongo explained the impact of elections:

> They [elections] are always a difficult time. The new government rewards those who were loyal and settles scores with those who spoke out against them or were not active in their support. They favour certain groups for promotions and new appointments and retire those who are not aligned. We already know some who were arrested were recently retired army and police, so they are clearly not happy with being expelled and losing their bread and butter. Others are serving officers, but they are all "middlemen". They are angry that they have missed out on their chance for promotion.[440]

When asked to consider why the coup was a failure, the same informant observed: 'The coup failed because the army is loyal to the government and to defending democracy, but I think also to the man who is the President. Those soldiers at the armoury [Wilberforce] are chosen because they are loyal to [Bio] personally. The commanders served with him as a general and

[437] Statements provided via encrypted peer-to-peer platform, December 2023. Informants were asked 'why do you think the coup happened?' and 'why do you think it failed?'.
[438] Ibid.
[439] Quoted in: Mayeni Jones, 'Sierra Leone coup attempt: What may have sparked the violence', *bbcnews.co.uk* (28 November 2023) <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-67541285> [accessed 11 December 2023].
[440] Statement provided via encrypted social media platform, December 2023. 'Middlemen' is a RSLAF slang term for officers with ranks between lieutenant and major.

now protect him as president'.[441] Similarly, a police officer from the Kenema area observed that patrimonial loyalty was certainly a factor in preventing the wider army from rebelling:

> I think it was a failure because they wrongly assumed that soldiers would side with them because of their conditions, but we saw that Freetown was reinforced with Daru and Gondama forces. Yes, they were protecting the elected government, but the commanders must also protect the Party, or they will be next in line for retirement or even arrest. Now they will be rewarded for their loyalty when it should be considered a service to the country.[442]

While the November 2023 coup attempt was perhaps the most perilous, it is by no means the only example of such activities by the armed forces. Indeed, nineteen RSLAF officers were arrested in August 2023 for allegedly plotting to overthrow the government.[443] As with the November attempt, the popular explanation coalesced around election malfeasance.[444]

6.8 Armed Forces Reform Conclusion

As short-lived as it was, the November 2023 coup illuminates both the successes of army reform and the challenges that remain and are retained – challenges that were substantial causes of instability and conflict. As the *TRC Report* observed, the SLA 'acted unconstitutionally [in 1992 and 1997] by seizing power from civilian governments, thereby fuelling the conflict' and today it would appear that officers remain who believe it is their right to challenge the democratically elected government. RSLAF has shown it can resist internal coup attempts, reflecting some success of British-led reforms. However, political turmoil persists due to the reform focus on soldier-level capabilities rather than top-down restructuring of the officer class, whose corruption and patronage helped fuel past conflict.

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[441] Ibid.
[442] Ibid.
[443] VanguardGr, 'Coup in West Africa: Police arrest military officers "planning" to topple Sierra Leone government', *vanguardngr.com* (01 August 2023) <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/08/police-arrest-military-officers-in-sierra-leone-over-waves-of-coup-in-west-africa/> [accessed 11 December 2023]; The Point, '"Coup attempt": Sierra Leone police confirms arrest of 19 people, including top security officials', *thepoint.gm* (10 August 2023) <https://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/headlines/coup-attempt-sierra-leone-police-confirms-arrest-of-19-people-including-top-security-officials> [accessed 11 December 2023].
[444] Africa News, 'Sierra Leone: Police arrest many including army officers', *africanews.com* (1 August 2023) <https://www.africanews.com/2023/08/01/sierra-leone-police-arrest-many-including-army-officers/> [accessed 11 December 2023].

This has created a force loyal to both state and ruling party, with promotions tied to political power. As changes in government bring shifts in military leadership, those in power resist transitions to retain influence, while subordinates await their turn. Ironically, this system – originally designed to prevent the marginalisation of army officers – now routinely sidelines trained personnel after elections, creating new waves of discontented ex-officers.

RSLAF today has the operational capacity to handle internal security and crisis response. Through roles like traffic control, OSD support, and emergency response, it often fills gaps left by weak civil institutions. While commendable, this growing reliance boosts public confidence in the military over civilian governance. As RSLAF handles protests and crises more visibly and decisively than civil leaders, trust in elected officials erodes. In a context of poor living conditions and disillusionment with politicians, especially among youth with no memory of military rule, there is a growing risk of renewed acceptance of military power.

Externally, RSLAF lacks the capability to rival neighbouring forces such as Guinea, forcing Sierra Leone into a deferential diplomatic stance which is exemplified by the controversial surrender of Yenga. FOB/FPBs and the maritime wing remain under-resourced, and early British-led decisions such as abandoning Kailahun barracks and adopting unsuitable weapons, continue to hamper operations. While RSLAF's role in Somalia shows international acceptance, it remains the only major deployment and relied on AU funding. Military capacity is a point of national pride and frustration, with blame for decline directed at civilian leadership. Retired soldiers, quiet under President Bio due to his military ties, may not stay silent under a civilian successor lacking the same authority.

The degrading disposition of RSLAF is concerning. As the *TRC Report* observed, the Stevens-Momoh-APC governments 'demonstrated a grave abandonment of the basic needs' of the SLA due to 'a preoccupation with internal security and chose to strengthen the paramilitary wing of the police'.[445] Today, the OSD serves as a prominent armed wing of the government, offering well-paid roles with perks unavailable to RSLAF soldiers or civil police. This fuels resentment among soldiers, who feel SLP counterparts receive better treatment, equipment, and pay. One defence official also criticised pay disparities within the SL-MoD, arguing soldiers deserved higher wages due to their societal role and status.[446]

[445] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pts. 177 & 178.
[446] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

Despite some nominal investment directed by President Bio, soldier's barracks remain in poor conditions.[447] Many *Pebu*-era buildings are deteriorating or have been replaced by makeshift structures, with ad-hoc schools, shops, and worship sites emerging inside bases – creating fears of 'new slums.' This open access fuels insecurity, especially at Wilberforce. In Freetown, overcrowding has pushed both officers and NCOs into private housing, hindering emergency response.

Sierra Leone's military history shows that degradation can lead to political interference and coups, as seen with the NPRC and AFRC, both initially backed by civilians seeking better conditions for soldiers. IMATT's success in professionalizing RSLAF now clashes with sustainability issues. Soldiers, held in high regard by the public, resist any decline in status, blaming the civilian government for poor support despite their continued service. This frustration is shared by civilians, who praise President Bio for his perceived advocacy but may turn against a future leader lacking military ties. Historically, such dynamics have led to coups supported by discontented troops.

Ongoing military politicisation poses a major threat to democratic governance. Recruitment, promotion, and appointments are used by ruling parties to embed loyalists in the armed forces. Election outcomes often lead to the expulsion or sidelining of unaligned officers, undermining leadership continuity and experience within RSLAF and the SL-MoD. The November 2023 coup highlights both the resilience and risks of Sierra Leone's civil-military dynamics. The coup failed due to lack of support from the broader officer corps and ranks, with plotters mainly from the APC's elite guard reacting to electoral defeat. The real test lies ahead when we consider how the SLPP-aligned military will respond to an APC win in 2027/28 or an SLPP candidate without military ties? After a decade of SLPP rule, many officers may fear expulsion under new leadership and while the coup failed due to lack of control over key units, an SLPP-aligned RSLAF may not face the same obstacles. The true challenge will be whether long-empowered officers are willing to relinquish their gains to support ongoing democracy.

[447] SN Radio, 'Sierra Leone's President Julius Maada Bio Commissions Ultramodern Myohaung Officers' Mess, Turns Sod for the Construction of Warrant Officers' and Sergeants' Mess', *snradio.net* (25 April 2022) <https://snradio.net/sierra-leones-president-julius-maada-bio-commissions-ultramodern-myohaung-officers-mess-turns-sod-for-the-construction-of-warrant-officers-and-sergeants-mess/> [accessed 11 December 2023].

6.9 Policing in Sierra Leone

The following is an evaluation of the British-led reforms to the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and an evaluation of the extent to which they no longer pose a threat to stability. In 2004, the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* of Sierra Leone found that the SLP were in-part responsible for the eleven-years conflict as 'agents of destabilisation', who engaged in predation and political suppression against opponents of the one-party state.[448] Where the responsibility fell to the SLP to provide fair and equal security and justice to the people of Sierra Leone, they failed in this task. A second contemporary observer went as far as to regard the SLP as having a 'blatant disregard for human rights.'[449] This section seeks to ascertain the extent to which the SLP have been reformed into a 'force for good' that provides good access to security and justice to citizens; maintains a high degree of professionalism; respects the use of minimum force and wider human rights; and is politically impartial.

This section outlines the colonial and post-independence development of policing in Sierra Leone, marked by a tension between democratic reform and coercive control. It highlights how, under the one-party state, policing prioritised coerced stability. The section then examines reforms carried out during the height of the civil war and post-conflict period, noting that British efforts largely focused on building a force capable of confronting armed opposition, often at the expense of public trust. Debates around Local Needs Policing (LNP) and the arming of units like the SSD were shaped by immediate threats, resulting in ad hoc and unsustainable policies. We also consider how changes aimed at widening access to justice affected security provision, leading to the emergence of both formal and informal justice actors. Local perceptions of the police remain key to understanding their ongoing impact in Sierra Leone.

A History of Violence: Pre-War Policing

The SLP was gazetted in 1894 from the foundations of the West Africa Frontier Force and integrated into the colonial civil service in 1906.[450] British-led security reform in Sierra Leone dates back to the colonial period, balancing coercive control with efforts to build an

[448] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 61.
[449] Fakondo, p. 35
[450] SLP, 'History of the Sierra Leone Police', *SLP Website* <www.police.gov.sl/history-of-slp> [accessed 25 July 2022].

accountable, democratic police service.[451] These tensions are played out in a Colonial Office commission report, where 'friendly and frequent contacts with the public' were identified as vital to 'counteract traditional feelings of resentment towards the police as being the strong arm of the imperialist power'. [452] The report also noted that 'without an independent and impartial police force which is respected by the community, and which can rely on the citizens for information and help, no democratic system can work effectively'.[453] However, the need for coercive power was also recognised, as paramilitary police units were introduced due to fears of 'political tensions which in themselves may demand a very sudden increase in strength of the local security, of whom in most instances, the police form a greater part'.[454] As we will observe, the SLP are still grappling with attaining the correct balance between these two priorities.

Between 1945 and 1960, the SLP grew from 290 to 2,019 officers. A riot-trained Special Branch was formed in 1951 and deployed during 1955–56 tax protests and unrest in Kono, leading to a permanent riot unit presence there.[455] These units were synonymous with the use of force and their heavy-handedness was dismissed as 'a natural phase' in the emergence of a new state as 'development of mutual confidence [between civilians and police] ... would unavoidably be a gradual process'.[456] Thusly, the police force that remained after decolonisation, was one built to employ coercive force to suppress outbursts of popular discontent and maintain physical control over hinterland territory and the people residing there.

The first indigenous Police Commissioner was appointed in 1963, and the role of the SLP was defined in 1964 as 'the detection of crime and the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of Law and Order, the protection of life and property, and the due enforcement of all Laws and Regulations'.[457] Prior to the creation of the 1964 *Police Act*, the role and functions of the police were opaque but some clarity is provided by one SLP officer, who

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[451] David Anderson and David Killingray, (eds), *Policing and Decolonisation: Nationalism, Politics, and the Police* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992); Georgina Sinclair, *At the End of the Line: Colonial Policing and Imperial Endgame, 1945-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006); Krogstad, pp. 265-66.

[452] TNA, CO 885/124, 'Record of the Second Conference of Commissioners of Colonial Police Forces' (1954).

[453] Ibid.

[454] Ibid.

[455] TNA, CO 885/124; TNA, CO 554/1331 'Testimony of the Commissioner W. G. Syer to the Commission of Enquiry into Disturbances in the Provinces' (1956).

[456] TNA, CO 885124.

[457] SLP, *The Sierra Leone Police Act*, Act No. 4 of 1964 (Freetown, Sierra Leone, 1964).

described perceptions of the post-colonial SLP as 'professional but compromised because of how they acted under the colonial government. They failed in 1964 to win the trust of the people, and we have been trying to win them back ever since'.[458] Indeed, in 1967, a state of emergency was declared in Kono in response to anti-Margai government demonstrations, with police units brutally supressing public demonstrations.[459]

The 1967 coup and Siaka Stevens' exile deepened public mistrust of the security services. After his 1968 return, Stevens moved to weaken them, creating parallel forces loyal to his regime.[460] The Internal Security Unit (ISU) was one such outfit and received specialist training and support from the USSR and China, rising to prominence as Stevens' private bodyguard or 'presidential death squad' that 'was used to enforce the political decisions of the President ... and protect him from military coups'.[461] Stuart, a former RUF commander who is old enough to comment on the activities of the ISU, described them as the 'I Shoot You Crew' for their propensity to resort to deadly violence.[462] The ISU were armed and paid at the expense of the beleaguered army, further contributing to the later coup that deposed Joseph Momoh.[463]

Impartiality collapsed after the 1978 one-party state was established. The Police Commissioner had to be a ruling party member and was also made a cabinet minister and nominated MP, gaining significant control over appointments and policy.[464] Senior police officers became tied to the regime's survival, with their careers dependent on its continuity. Post-1978 clashes between the ISU and student protestors reflected efforts to defend the regime rather than uphold law and order. Little changed under Joseph Momoh: amid widespread poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment, protests in 1977 and 1985 were harshly suppressed and youth and women faced growing vulnerability and frustration.[465] Richards noted that state failure to provide services and security, especially in the hinterland, drove

[458] Interview conducted in Kenema District, April 2022.
[459] Fisher, p. 621.
[460] Musa, pp. 93-95.
[461] Morie Alpha, 'The APC Commission of Nonsense' *Sierra Express Media* (15 July 2010) in: Charley and M'Cormack, p. 12. Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Sierra Leone: Information regarding Internal Security Units (ISU)*, SLE6562 (01 July 1990). <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6ad3220.html> [accessed 08 August 2022].
[462] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[463] Ibid.
[464] Charley and M'Cormack, p. 10.
[465] Ibrihim Bangura, 'Democratically Transformed or Business as Usual: The Sierra Leone Police and Democratic Policing in Sierra Leone' *Stability, International Journal of Security & Development*, 7: 1 (2018), p. 3.

feelings of neglect, while Peters showed rural youth grievances were echoed by those in urban areas.[466] The RUF's 1991 invasion drew many marginalised youths, mainly from the south-east, who saw the conflict as liberation from neglect. Their violence targeted perceived oppressors such as elites, community leaders, and security forces – expressing a desire for revenge through attacks on state institution.[467]

The war with the RUF exposed major flaws in the military, leading to the 1992 NPRC coup. In power, the military marginalised the SLP, forcing the police to turn to forgery and extortion to compensate for lost income.[468] This furthered the already decaying image of the SLP, who mirrored the fractured legitimacy of the government.

6.10 A 'New Dawn': Reforming the SLP

Restoring Capability and Capacity in the SLP to Combat Insecurity: The Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (1996 - 2007)

The return of civilian rule in June 1996 was accompanied by the Banya Committee conclusion that a review of the SLP was needed in the wake of near total collapse of policing during the war.[469] Of the 9,300 pre-war officers only 6,600 remained at their posts in 1998 and policing in eastern areas such as Kailahun or Kono was practically non-existent.[470]

The 1996 Present and Future Challenges Committee, led by future president Alhaji Tejan Kabbah, identified the police as a major source of injustice and recommended reforms to improve professionalism, accountability, capacity, and capability.[471] Key goals included rebuilding community trust through professionalisation, decentralisation, independent

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[466] Paul Richards, *Fighting for the rain forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*, (UK: Heinemann, 1996). Krijn Peters, *War and the Crisis of Youth in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[467] Kieran Mitton, *Rebels in a Rotten State: Understanding Atrocity in the Sierra Leone Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[468] Forgery was a popular revenue stream for the NPRC who, for example, offered Sierra Leonean passports to Hong Kong citizens before the handover of 1997 to the PRC. See: Charley and M'Cormack, p. 12.

[469] 'Report of the Banya Committee on the Republic of Sierra Leone Police Force, 1996', p. i in: Horn, et. al., pp. 109-123.

[470] Bruce Baker, 'How Civil War Altered Policing in Sierra Leone and Uganda', *Commonwealth and Comparative Studies*, 45: 3 (2007a), pp. 367-387. When officers arrived by Chinook helicopter in Kono, they found that the police station was uninhabitable due to undermining by the RUF, who believed diamonds were located beneath the post. Interview with senior police officer, conducted in Kailahun District, 3rd May 2022.

[471] Charley and M'Cormack, p. 51.

oversight, streamlined ranks, higher entry standards, and better training and resources. DfID and UNDP supported this with funding, station reconstruction, and equipment for recruits.[472] These reforms became central to post-war security strategy, that aimed to restore both government authority and public trust in the SLP to ensure personal security.

These reforms were temporarily derailed by the May 1997 AFRC coup.[473] During the junta's occupation of Freetown, attacks on authority figures and institutions resumed, forcing many experienced police officers to flee or destroy their uniforms.[474] Following Kabbah's return in March 1998, the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force (CPDTF) helped draft a new Policing Charter to rebuild public trust. The SLP's new slogan captured this shift, branding it a 'force for good'.[475] DfID and President Kabbah shared concerns over the alienation of the population before the war and agreed that fair and equal access to internal law and order should be prioritised.[476] At the core of CPDTF's reform programme was the UK Local Needs Policing (LNP) doctrine that was believed to be well suited to addressing the key grievance of personal insecurity and barriers to justice by meeting 'the needs and expectations of the local community'.[477] The 1998 Police Charter marked a 'new dawn' of community policing, setting guidelines for police conduct, affirming police primacy in internal security, promoting human rights, and introducing an anti-corruption policy.[478]

British officers Keith Biddle and Adrian Horn were appointed to lead the reform, with Horn acknowledging the challenge of not only rebuilding infrastructure but also restoring public trust. Horn noted that: 'To achieve sustainable change, there had to be an alternation in the attitudes and behaviour of all police officers, together with a critical shift in the management culture of the organisation' to address the collapse of public trust and depoliticise the force.[479] A task not easily achieved as Biddle summated, as 'With corruption

[472] Ibid., pp. 52-53.
[473] For an account of the events of the AFRC *coup* and Kabbah's government in exile, see: Peter Penfold, *Atrocities, Diamonds and Diplomacy: The Inside Story of the Conflict in Sierra Leone* (London: Pen and Sword Military 2013).
[474] Interview with SLP officer, conducted in Kenema, April 2022. Approximately 900 Police Officers were killed during the ten-year war: Baker (2008a), fn. 1.
[475] 'Sierra Leone Policing Charter', cited in Charley and M'Cormack, Appendix. 1.
[476] For an account of police corruption and malfeasance leading to conflict, see: Baker (2007a), pp. 370-72.
[477] Cited in Albrecht and Jackson (2009), p. 29.
[478] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), pp. 52-53.
[479] Ibid.

and appointment of friends and colleagues came the decline of the service – skills were not sought after and officers were illiterate.'[480]

The January 1999 RUF offensive derailed these early initiatives and the CPDTF was only able to return following the signing of the July Lome peace accords. The SLP were identified at Lome as a key instrument for providing stability in the post-conflict period.[481] A major barrier was the continued insecurity in the eastern and southern regions, where the RUF remained active in 1999. With demobilisation of both RUF and government fighters expected there, a key priority was to 'restore a strong police presence to the rural areas of conflict, to establish strong security, restore the authority of the Kabbah-government and allow reconstruction to begin'.[482] As one former armed forces officer reflected:

> There was a need to demonstrate and establish the states' legitimacy as the sole provider of security within the country. Before the war, people did not believe the police were willing or able to guarantee their safety, especially as some were criminals themselves or acted as criminals would. As we [UN/SLA] were demobilising them [RUF], there were large empty spaces that were being filled up by criminal gangs, intent on exploiting the security vacuum so close to the borders [with Liberia and Guinea]. It was essential that we could show the people living in those areas that the government could ensure their security.[483]

There were immediate logistical problems to spreading visible policing to contested or newly liberated areas. Stations, equipment, and records were targeted.[484] This challenge was overcome following the CPDFT transition to the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) in early 2000 that directed funding from DfID to the SLP's

[480] Keith Biddle, *Conflict, Security and Development Group Bulletin* (2000), p. 1 cited in Baker (2007a), p. 370.
[481] Ibid, p. 55.
[482] Interview with senior SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022. See also: Albrecht and Jackson (2009), p. 34.
[483] Interview with retired RSLAF officer, conducted in Kenema, May 2022.
[484] An estimated 250 police officers were killed along with an unknown number of family and dependents. The Criminal Investigation Department Headquarters was burnt down in an effort to destroy criminal records and case files. Police equipment issued by the CPDTF was looted or vandalised. Le164m (approx. US$38,000) earmarked for police salaries was stolen. See: Freida M'Cormack, James B. M. Vincent and Joseph Charley, 'Reconciling Police Reform and Local Security Provision in Post-conflict Sierra Leone', in *Democratization and Human Security in Postwar Sierra Leone*, ed. by Joseph Bangura and Marda Mustapha (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2016), p. 65.

operational reform programme 'Operation Phoenix'.[485] As one senior police officer from the Tongo area noted, the necessity of Operation Phoenix was clear:

> We [SLP] needed to restore a sense of public confidence in the police by expanding the visibility of the force. The rebels had eroded us to the extent that we had no functional stations or vehicles in this area [Tongo] and those officers still working were doing so without pay or immediate direction from Freetown. We did not have the manpower, transport, or the communications to send officers on multiple emergency calls, and it was too dangerous to send patrols out at night. There was clearly a need to prioritise community policing as we were still fully armed and relied on the army for wider security.[486]

This assessment also matches the observations of a police officer at the time, who reflected that 'the police was considered a spent force at the time, with little or no logistical support to enhance its capability' rendering it unfit for service outside of Freetown.[487]

Leading Operation Phoenix was Keith Biddle, who was appointed Inspector General of Police (IGP) in October 1999 and would serve as reformer-in-chief of the force until June 2003.[488] As head of the CPDTF, Biddle's experience 'proved vital in a difficult environment' where he 'played a crucial role developing confidence ... and was undoubtedly aided by a strong personality and willingness to be both visible and make decisions on the ground'.[489] Biddle quickly identified the core challenges of restoring the police as:

> A lack of adequate finance, a failure to update procedures and essential equipment was hardly ever acquired. Most disastrously the force became highly politicised with the Inspector General of Police becoming a politically active cabinet member. This had the effect of transforming an excellent police force into a repressive arm of government rather than a friendly service for all.[490]

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[485] Albrecht (2010), p. 79.
[486] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022.
[487] Fakundo, (2008).
[488] For a brief biography and interview about the career of Keith Biddle see: Princeton University, 'Interview with Keith Biddle', *Innovations for Success Stories*, Princeton University (5 December 2007) <https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/keith-biddle> [accessed 3 August 2022].
[489] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 56.
[490] 'Speech given by IGP Biddle to Commonwealth Institute' (Tuesday 28 March 2000), cited in Krogstad, p. 269.

The appointment of a British IGP was accepted to 'avoid much of the political and tribal pressures' that had compromised the security services previously.[491] Former National Security Advisor Sheka Mansaray agreed with this assessment, explaining that 'the public wanted us to clear them out [politicised police leaders]. One of the ways to re-establish confidence with the local people was to get somebody neutral because nobody in the system could command the kind of respect and trust that the public was looking for'.[492] One survey, conducted by the CPDTF in 1997-1998 revealed the severity of the chasm of trust between the public and the police as presented in below:

Perceptions of the SLP in 1997-1998[493]

Total Number	*Is the SLP corrupt?*		*How do you view the SLP generally?*		*Do the SLP victimise people?*		*Do the SLP ask for money in police stations?*		*Should the SLP be more polite to civilians?*	
	Yes	No	Good	Bad	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
30	30	0	5	25	27	3	30	0	30	0
%	100	0	16.7	83.3	90	10	100	0	100	0

When asked about the perceptions of the SLP in 1998, one official described them as 'lacking public confidence due to the extent of corruption and criminality that characterised the entire force, especially amongst the senior ranks' while another observed that the force displayed a 'blatant disregard for human rights'.[494] Perhaps most damningly, the TRC report noted that the police were 'agents of destabilisation' and played a key role in creating the political environment in which the RUF could thrive.[495]

Biddle's appointment came with significant authority, akin to the roles of Templer and Erskine in Malaya and Kenya. Though not in overall command, with that role held by Gen.

[491] Interview with senior SL-MoD official, conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[492] Quoted in Freidman, p. 3.
[493] CPDTF, 'Operation Back to Basics' (Government of Sierra Leone 1998) p.2. Citied in Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 53.
[494] For 'public confidence': interview with senior government minister, conducted in Freetown, April 2022. For 'blatant disregard', see: Fakundo, p. 35.
[495] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, pt. 61.

Richards, Biddle's position as IGP gave him unique influence over strategy and operations.[496] Whilst this structure provided ownership to the Sierra Leonean government, Biddle retained a critical position of influence that 'shortened internal lines of communication' and 'narrowed decision making', improving responsiveness to new policy.[497] Biddle exercised authority over dismissals, and those senior officers who had reputations of 'corruption' and 'ineffectiveness' were summarily discharged.[498] The rank structure was reduced from 22 to 10 positions, sub-Inspector and Corporal ranks were removed and affected officers demoted to Sergeant and Constable.[499] Rank reforms aimed to boost communication and efficiency while removing ineffective officers. However, rising force numbers made pay a growing concern.[500]

This shortening of the rank structure did improve efficiency, as the IGP 'virtually controlled all police matters'.[501] One observer noted that Biddle was taking responsibility for 'almost every call for every little matter that happened' with little delegation to incumbent senior officers.[502] The bypassing of incumbent officers is best seen in the PEMB, composed mainly of younger officers promoted from lower ranks for their integrity and hard work, many of whom trained at the UK's Bramshill Police Staff College.[503] New oversight mechanisms, including the PCIA and JSLG, aimed to strengthen accountability and replace politically driven promotions with a merit-based system. Biddle was key to enforcing these ideals from the top down. However, after his 2003 departure, control shifted to the Vice-President's office, reintroducing party-tribal politics and undermining claims of police de-politicisation and decentralisation.[504]

Expansion continued from 2001, with approximately 8000 officers and 2000 support staff recruited by 2005.[505] Biddle initially resisted UN-backed expansion plans that saw the police as a reintegration outlet for ex-combatants. However, a January 2002 compromise allowed their entry into the SLP.[506] The rapidity of recruitment left little time for training and

[496] Biddle sat on the NSC and President's War Council, and chaired the Police Executive Management Board Friedman, p. 3.
[497] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 57.
[498] Albrecht (2010), pp. 46-47.
[499] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), pp. 56-57.
[500] M'Cormack, p. 67.
[501] Ibid.
[502] Brima Acha Kamara, 2009 interview, cited in: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 57.
[503] Ibid., p. 57.
[504] Brima Acha Kamara, 2009 interview, cited in: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 57 & 164.
[505] Baker (2007), p. 376.
[506] Baker (2008a), p. 557.

qualification, and an estimated 40% of the new inductees could not read or write.[507] Perhaps reflecting general education levels, recruits needed only a Primary School (Level 4) education but had to pass tests in Maths, English, and General Studies.[508] y 2008, the force grew to 9,500 officers, with a current cap set at around 12,500.[509] Here we can observe the roots of reversion, as SSR transitioned to Sierra Leonean control. Where Biddle and his team had planned for a relatively small yet highly professionalised force, the focus on building the capacity of security provision trumped quality of service. Where LNP doctrine called for a culture of restraint, new recruits from the armed forces were valued for their skills in the use of force and were streamlined into the ISU's replacement, the Operational Support Division (OSD).[510]

As the force expanded, challenges arose in housing, provisioning, training, and salaries, while trying to uphold existing standards. Sierra Leone's post-war economy strained reform efforts and in 2000 defence received Le20bn ($8m) while police reform only Le4.5bn ($1.8m) – less than half of what Biddle identified for meaningful reform.[511] Budget constraints limited training, equipment, and infrastructure repairs, weakening the SLP's ability to combat crime and undermining President Kabbah's message of authority and legitimacy.[512]

The limited budget kept CCSSP from tackling pre-war police corruption rooted in poverty wages: constables earned just Le41,000 ($15) a month, later raised to Le82,000 ($30) in 2000 – well below the poverty line and failing to address a key TRC finding.[513] Police wages were further increased by 2006 to Le130,000, however the cost of a bag of rice had inflated to Le60-75,000, muting the impact of this reform.[514] As a 2000 survey concluded, the

[507] Freidman, p. 2.
[508] M'Cormack, p. 67.
[509] Friedman, p. 5.
[510] M'Cormack, p. 68.
[511] Ero, pp. 56-57; Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 18.
[512] Ero, pp. 56-57.
[513] TRC, *Provisional Report*, p. 77 pt. 3a. The Le41,000 increase replaced the monthly rice allowance that each police officer lost after 2000 but was not increased to match the inflation of rice prices after the war. See: Ero, p. 57. Confirmed in interview with SLP officer conducted in Kenema, April 2022.
[514] Many use the cost of a bag of rice to adjudge whether they make a good salary or not. If a worker is able to purchase a bag of rice for their family and still have at least 60-70% of their wages remaining, they believe they are paid a good wage. This was commonly discussed by almost every interviewee encountered.

increase was still 'too low to tackle corruption, criminal activity and other key problems' within the SLP.[515]

After such a disappointing allocation, DfID took primary responsibility for police reform – using its £22–27 m budget to cover the IGP's salary and international advisors, fund recruitment and training, and supply equipment and vehicles.[516] By 2005, more than £30m had been spent by DfiD and the African Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP).[517] Questions arose about the sustainability of this top-down international funding, especially after 2001's military gains against the RUF spurred DDR and unsustainable spending to extend control of liberated areas. As Biddle noted, 'the context changed [after 2001] from maintaining law and order in Freetown to having to do it throughout the country' to improve 'responsiveness and visibility'.[518] This transition required significant investments in manpower, transport and the reconstruction of facilities. For example, £3.5m was provided for 400 vehicles but it was estimated that nearly 800 vehicles would be needed by 2006.[519] As one report observed, there was 'no government replacement plan or a budget' to repair 100 vehicles per year – and in fact less than 10 per year could be serviced.[520] One reason presented by the UN was corruption, as only 37% of the nearly £7.8m state allocation to the SLP before 2005 had been spent legitimately.[521]

Moving Away from State Security, Adopting a Holistic Approach to Justice: Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP), 2005-2012

As insecurity eased after 2004, doubts grew over the police's ability to deliver LNP: past exploitation, one-party support, and wartime absence cast doubt on communities beyond Freetown accepting a state-centred force. As the 2007 UNOISIL report observed, there were 'serious questions about the capacity of the police to manage internal security' and doubts

[515] Ero, p. 57.
[516] Marcella Macauley, 'International actors and democracy promotion in post-conflict Sierra Leone: Time for stock-taking', in *When the State Fails: Studies on Intervention in the Sierra Leone Civil War*, ed. by Tunde Zack-Williams (London: Pluto 2012), pp. 38-40; Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 19.
[517] Ball, et. al. (2007), p. 82.
[518] Keith Biddle interview, cited in Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 99; CSSP Visit Report (June 2004), p. 6.
[519] 155 off-road vehicles, 158 motor vehicles (trucks etc.), 47 medium troop carriers, 24 large carriers, 10 ambulances and 10 staff cars. See: Michael Kargbo, 'International peacebuilding in Sierra Leone: The case of the United Kingdom', in *When the State Fails: Studies on Intervention in the Sierra Leone Civil War*, ed. by Tunde Zack-Williams (London: Pluto 2012), p. 80.
[520] White, p. 111.
[521] UNOISIL report (2007), pp. 3-5.

that that the SLP could not earn 'civilian confidence' at the community level.[522] The initial CCSSP programme had not, by design, engaged with reform beyond the SLP. Resultantly, a division emerged between what CCSSP 'considered state and non-state, with the latter being more or less irrelevant to the reforms that they supported'.[523] By prioritising state security reform over more traditional security and justice apparatus, CCSSP had ostracised local level leaders and not addressed the war-time grievance of access to equitable justice mechanisms. As such, a new holistic approach was adopted by DFiD after 2005, as the CCSSP was replaced by the Justice Sector Development Programme (JSDP) and the broader theme of justice was linked to security. This sudden widening of the scope of SSR had implications for the ongoing development of the SLP. Spending allocations were for example slashed, with £25m allocated to the justice and security sector in its entirety from 2005, including the judiciary; prison service; and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Where the CCSSP had previously provided up to £27m for police reform, the SLP received only £3-4m from the JSDP.[524]

The implications for this *volte face* were not lost on one JSDP advisor who observed that a 'withdrawal of international funding inevitably leads to paralysis and degradation of service with a real danger of attrition to the *status quo ante'.*[525] The momentum of SLP reform was further undermined by Biddle's departure in early 2004 and Brima Acha Kamara's appointment as IGP, raising fears that the police might revert to their pre-war conduct of serving elite interests through coercion and illicit activities.[526] External donors likely shared this concern: international funding fell sharply after Biddle's departure, and Jackson and Albrecht noted that Kamara lacked comparable trust and support from the donor community.[527]

A key factor in this erosion of confidence was the renewed politicisation of the police hierarchy: the Police Council, chaired by the Vice-President, was elevated above the formerly independent PEMB. Although several of Biddle's PEMB protégés later served as Assistant

[522] Ibid., pp. 3-5.
[523] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 18.
[524] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 19.
[525] Anthony Howlett-Bolton, 'Aiming for Holistic Approaches to Justice Sector Development', WPS, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007*, No. 7 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham GFN-SSR 2008) <https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/wps/gfnssr/0017015/index.html> [accessed 20 October 2022], p. 8.
[526] Interview with former RUF combatant, conducted in Kailahun District, May 2022.
[527] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 101.

IGPs (and, in Francis Munu's case, as IGP in 2010), most senior appointments have favoured officers with ruling-party ties.[528] Following any election, the incumbent senior staff are often replaced with those who are loyal to the newly appointed Party and a system of allegiances is used to promote loyal attendees in a similar fashion to the pre-war patrimonial structure.[529] Although ministerial reshuffles are commonplace in democratic systems, senior police, military and civil-service leaders normally remain in post; in Sierra Leone however, frequent politically-motivated changes undermine public confidence by reinforcing the assumption that senior officers serve the ruling party.

Returning to the newly adopted JSDP holistic approach, focus shifted towards improving citizens' experience of security and justice, with the understanding that 'the needs of the poor, vulnerable and marginalised' would be met by addressing the 'lack of connection between community needs and police operations'.[530] Reforms included addressing the challenges of prison overcrowding, delays in courts and inadequate access to justice for women and young people.[531] Before 2005, non-policing justice sectors received no substantial international funding, and DfID was increasingly unwilling to back a security-first agenda that lacked community engagement.[532]

The 2008–10 Justice Sector Reform Strategy and Investment Plan (JSRSIP) formalised this shift, establishing Local Police Partnership Boards (LPPBs), recruiting Community Security Volunteers (CSVs) and reviving the Community Relations Department (CRDs), while also expanding Family Support Units (FSUs), an independent police

[528] Interview with SL-MoD official conducted in Freetown, March 2022. This is colloquially referred to as the 'card system'. Government marked business cards are dispensed to favoured associates, who are then entitled to act with a degree of borrowed authority. Individuals may also use a signed card to receive favour. A physical card may no longer be employed, but the practice remains prevalent. More powerful individuals maintain a network of associates who expect to be rewarded with favour and title upon their patron's assent. This official admitted that their assent to such a senior position would not have possible without the correct allegiances. For further details, see: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 61.

[529] This process is known colloquially as 'the winner takes all', where the victorious party rewards its supporters with well-paid positions of authority and the opportunity to progress for those who may have been marginalised due to their affiliation with the previous government's opposition. For a discussion, see: Mohammed Jallow, 'To the Victor Go the Spoils: How Winner-Takes-All Politics Undermine Democracy in Sierra Leone', *Council on Foreign Relations* (08 November 2012) <www.cfr.org/blog/victors-go-spoils-how-winner-takes-all-politics-undermine-democracy-sierra-leone> [accessed 22 August 2022].

[530] Geoff Bredemear and S. Lewis, *Justice Sector Development Program Annual Output to Purpose Review*, (2008) cited in: Peter Albrecht and Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone, 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action*, Whitehall Papers, 82:1 (2014a), p. 45.

[531] Albrecht et. al. (2014), p. 19.

[532] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 137; Ibid.

complaints mechanism, Legal Aid Boards (LABs) and judicial capacity.[533] With the war concluded, JSDP extended beyond the Freetown/Western Area, inviting community leaders to train alongside Community Relations Officers and local SLP unit commanders at the Police Training School.[534]

This transition was warmly received by civil campaigners. One representative of the National Youth Commission felt that 'the security of the state needed to be linked to the security of the individual person, with every Sierra Leonean taking responsibility for the safety of their community.'[535] This sentiment is reflected in the establishment of the LPPBs, whose membership is constituted of local traditional and religious leaders; SLP officers; business leaders; youth leaders; and women's rights representatives.[536] Although we assess LPPBs and other community mechanisms below, the JSDP marked a clear break from CCSSP's state-only reforms by addressing disparities in security and justice access – linking national governance with local institutions to standardise every citizen's experience.

Improving Inclusion and Participation: Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP), 2012-2016

To facilitate this improved access to security and justice outside of the Freetown/Western Area, a new initiative named the Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP) was implemented from 2012-2013. ASJP was designed to develop a better balance between 'the needs and demands for improved justice and security by individuals and their communities'.[537] Unlike the CCSSP and JSDP initiatives, ASJP's primary mission was to consolidate peace by engaging with 'the poor, vulnerable, and those living in remote or marginalised areas' who, as of 2012-13, had little access to 'responsive, accountable, and effective security and justice services.'[538] The intention was to promote 'transformative reforms in how justice is delivered' but also how to improve public inclusion and encourage responsibility for their own security.[539]

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[533] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 33.
[534] Albrecht et. al. (2014), p. 20.
[535] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[536] Albrecht et. al. (2014), pp. 37-42.
[537] Ibid., p. 21.
[538] DAI, 'Sierra Leone – Access to Security and Justice Programme (ASJP)' <https://www.dai.com/our-work/projects/sierra-leone-access-security-and-justice-programme-asjp> [accessed 18 March 2023].
[539] Ibid.

This shift is evident at the war's nadir, when security fell to non-state forces such as the RUF Police and CDF which yielded to locally organised informal units who filled the vacuum. This created significant post-war tension that IGP Kamara described as a 'competition about who should really be in charge of internal security' whilst '[w]e [SLP] were not able to flex our muscles [outside of Freetown]'.[540] Pre- and wartime policing was largely absent at the state level and handled by chiefs, ad hoc gangs and other local actors. The success of LPPBs lies in their inclusion of community members, who thereby legitimise state participation. This conclusion is supported by the 2010-11 Strategic Plan that encouraged engagement with communities 'to fight crime and the fear of crime in cooperation with the police' of which the 'LPPB forms part of the community policing strategy aimed at involving non-police stakeholders in security and crime prevention'[541] Citizens were expected both to report crimes and to take responsibility for their own security, which in turn influenced how many and where officers were deployed.

Moreover, doubts about the SLP's capacity for post-conflict, nationwide coverage were reinforced by concerns over their impartiality and public acceptance. As the 2011 LPPB constitution observed, their creation was in part due to necessity as the 'numerical strength of the SLP in coverage [was] smaller compared to the fast-growing population for the entire nation'.[542] Concerns about the SLP prompted the 2005 expansion of LPPBs, with community-based structures intended to offset police limitations and the rise of irregular rural security actors. A further concern was the cooperation of the Chiefs, whose power stemmed from a 'deep-seated hybrid order' of rural security and justice provision.[543] Unlike CCSSP's bypassing of traditional bodies, JSDP and ASJP integrated traditional leaders into democratic LPPBs to secure their consent while curbing their influence over security and justice.

6.11 'A Force for Good'? Policing and Justice in Sierra Leone Today

Today, the SLP is present in all five regions of Sierra Leone, with stations and smaller posts organised into divisions. Referring to the community policing strategy, informed

[540] Cited in: Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 21.
[541] SLP, *Sierra Leone Police Strategic Plan (2010-2011)* (Freetown: Sierra Leone Police, 2009), p. 2.
[542] SL-Gov, *The Sierra Leone Police Local Policing Partnership Board Constitution,* Freetown: Government of Freetown (2011) cited in: Peter Albrecht, 'The Chiefs of Community Policing in Rural Sierra Leone', Journal of Modern African Studies, 53:4 (2015), p. 619.
[543] Ibid.; Albrecht (2015), p. 618.

heavily by public polling, IG Kamara had insisted on a switch from 'a highly centralised, authoritarian structure to a decentralised, democratic approach' that promoted high visibility and accessibility of officers to rural areas.[544] Decentralisation was a key component of British reforms, with LNP placing a priority on addressing the lack of security but also access to justice that many living beyond the main towns and cities did not enjoy. As one SL-MoD official observed, 'decentralisation of police services from Freetown was the first step in restoring faith in the government, as governance and services must be visible and accessible at the community level.'[545] In support Krogstad and Baker note that decentralisation was an attempt to reverse the colonial structure inherited by the one-party state where, with regards to policing, the hinterland had been the responsibility of a devolved group of private actors such as the diamond mine security forces or the responsibility of traditional structures.[546] Police abuses under the one-party state so eroded public trust that any deployment beyond major centres was viewed with suspicion. Consequently, decentralising the police became crucial to restoring legitimacy, especially in contested rural areas of the south and east, and was intended to extend to services such as healthcare, transport infrastructure and licensing.[547] Decentralisation has proceeded incrementally and remains limited outside major urban centres, leaving a two-tier policing system in place.

Slow decentralisation has hampered the SLP's fulfilment of Kabbah's and Biddle's vision. Despite 64 stations across the Eastern Region, visible policing and emergency response remain problematic: residents of Kenema, Bo and Kailahun generally accept 10–30 minute daytime arrivals, yet overall satisfaction is low.[548] Rural residents report that police posts are not staffed 24/7, requiring officers to be summoned from home at night. In Tongo, one officer cited insufficient personnel and vehicles, and the prohibitive cost of powering multiple posts overnight.[549]

Structural obstacles undermine perceptions of police effectiveness. Sierra Leone's reliance on mobile phones, prone to poor signal, battery issues and airtime costs, hampers emergency communications. Although 019 is the official emergency number, most people instead store their local station's line (if it works) or individual officers' mobile contacts. As

[544] Acha Kamara 'Future Challenges facing the Sierra Leone Police', cited in Charley and M'Cormack (2012), p. 57.
[545] Interview with conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[546] Krogstad, pp. 265-69.
[547] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.
[548] Conducted between April and June 2022.
[549] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022.

one citizen responded when asked if they used the emergency number: 'No, I do not. It is better that I am cordial with the officers living in my area, take their private number and contact them directly if there is a problem'.[550] Of course, this method of personal contact belies the idea of universal and equal access to emergency police response, as a citizen may not be 'cordial' with officers in their area and so will not receive the same service. Not all communities have a resident officer, so service depends on each officer's professionalism – those less committed may ignore private calls. Baker's 2008 study highlighted this disparity, and my respondents agree that while 'personal connection' or 'cordiality' aids service, wealth and status ultimately ensure responsiveness.[551]

Structural deficiencies further undermine police effectiveness and public trust: by 2019, just 8 % of Sierra Leone's 11 300 km road network was paved, and decaying bridges frequently stall costly paving projects.[552] With 595 mm of rain from April to November (and under 1 mm the rest of the year), many routes flood into impassable bogs for up to three months. Motorbikes traverse unpaved trails, but all-terrain vehicles are essential during peak rains and, as noted, police vehicle maintenance was poorly planned. As one officer stationed in the Tongo area noted:

> We have two Land Cruisers attached to the HQ but one is currently not available, as the parts needed for repair have not arrived for almost a year. The second vehicle is for our senior commanders and is reserved for an emergency where they may be summoned or if they wish to go on patrol.

Indeed, many of the police stations visited for this project have a junked vehicle on the property that has been cannibalised for spare parts. When asked about how officers in his area travel to emergency call outs, the interviewee responded that:

> We are expected to use our own private transport, for which we are not always reimbursed. Many officers I know use a contact with the Okada riders, who they can call to take them. This may be a family member, or a rider of a bike owned by that officer.

[550] Interview in Kenema District, April 2022.

[551] Many interviewees refer to a personal connection or cordiality with a person of influence as 'sababu'. See: Baker, (2008a).

[552] Abdulai Salia Brima, 'Infrastructure in Sierra Leone: fixing the road to nowhere', *London School of Economics* <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2019/08/08/infrastructure-in-sierra-leone-fixing-the-road-to-nowhere/> [accessed 6 September 2022].

When asked how this transport challenge impacts on police efficacy and professionalism, the officer observed that:

> It certainly makes our jobs more difficult. I am unable to attend calls immediately, if I cannot arrange private transport. Hiring a private car and paying for the fuel costs me money that I cannot afford. This makes people think that we are uncaring when we do not respond to their calls as quickly as we would like.[553]

The comments of this officer are supported by others admitting to using public transport frequently and also members of the public confirming that officers predominately arrive for foot patrols or emergencies via Okada bike taxis.[554] There is a more sinister result of the transport challenge, where officers are forced to ask emergency callers for money on arrival to help pay for the cost of transport.[555] This cost can range from a few thousand Leones (less than 60p) for a few miles travelled, to SL60,000 (approximately £3.60) - which seems bearable unless contrasted with the 25% lowest incomes of some, who make less than £200 per month.[556]

A transport fee applies across policing: suspects from smaller posts must be transported, often by Okada, to larger towns with costs passed on to the accused or their family. Witnesses and victims must pay to travel to make reports or testify. While routine, these fees pose a significant barrier to justice, especially for rural populations living in poverty.

There are further financial impediments. Interviewees described the problem of 'report fees' that had to be paid to the desk officer and to the investigating officer when reporting a crime. This is supported by the 2022 Human Rights Commission report.[557] One member of the Kenema Bike Riders Union (BRU) complained that:

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[553] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022.

[554] This author observed a traffic stop in Kenema where the officer was using an Okada bike taxi to pull over vehicles if they failed to stop at an impromptu check point. It is common for Okada riders to not stop at informal checkpoints due to police malfeasance as we will observe below.

[555] Confirmed in several interviews conducted in Kenema, Kailahun and Tongo during April to June 2022.

[556] Salary Explorer, 'Average Salary in Sierra Leone 2022', *SalaryExplorer.com* <http://www.salaryexplorer.com/salary-survey.php?loc=195&loctype=1> [accessed 10th September 2022].

[557] USSD, '2022 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Sierra Leone' <https://www.state.gov/reports/2022-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/sierra-leone#:~:text=Significant%20human%20rights%20issues%20included,with%20the%20freedom%20of%20peaceful> [accessed 12 January 2024], p. 11.

> They [SLP] will not accept your complaint unless a report fee is paid. This fee depends on the severity of the matter raised, which is decided by the officer who will investigate the complaint or their supervisor, who will chop [take a cut from] the payment.[558]

There are implications for refusing to pay the 'report fee' as another Kenema BRU member noted:

> The money we pay to the police, when we report a crime at the station, is to get them to conduct the investigation. Without the payment, it is likely that the case will not be taken seriously and will eventually be dropped. So, you can see that someone with little money to continue an investigation must accept this outcome. Sometimes, the person under investigation can pay more [than the complainant] and so the case is dropped.[559]

Other BRU interviews confirmed this and added other complaints such as the need to pay 'administration fees' for the stationary used to record the complaint. These fees often increase if the officer must engage in an extended investigation, involve further officers, must travel as a part of the investigation, or generally requires further 'incentivising' to continue.

Further payments present barriers, including medical examination fees in hospitals following assaults. The victim is expected to report to the police initially, pay for the appropriate form, travel to the hospital, undertake the examination and then return to the station to file the paperwork and begin the investigation. This process can take a few days or weeks, with victims expected to await their hospital appointments, resulting in missed work. Many victims are forced to travel repeatedly from rural to urban areas to engage in this process, extending the costs and time of the endeavour. One female former RUF member in Makeni, who had been the victim of a non-sexual assault, admitted to giving up on her complaint as she could not afford to undertake the medical examination at the time of the report. By the time she had raised sufficient funds by taking a loan from her employer, she was told by the police and medical examiner that they would not be able to gather evidence due to the amount of time that had passed.[560]

[558] Interview conducted in Kenema, June 2022.
[559] Interview conducted in Kenema, June 2022.
[560] Interview conducted in Makeni area, June 2022.

Multiple interviewees related other facets of this extractive process, but perhaps most telling is the example of Jacob, a former RUF commander turned palm oil farmer residing in Kenema District. Following a burglary at his storehouse, Jacob notified his local police post in person after being unable to contact an officer during the night of the break in. He describes his interaction with the police:

> An officer came the next day from Kenema central station and took some pictures of the broken windows, for which I had to pay SL10,000 per photograph (£0.60) and he took four photographs. I also paid for transport and of course making the report to the first officer which cost around SL60,000 (£3.60). The officer who took the photographs was not the investigating officer, so a fee was also paid to him. I didn't hear anything from the police again for three months until I travelled into town to visit the station. At that time, I was told that the investigating officer was busy with a more important case and a junior officer had taken over. I was told that I could pay an additional fee to the original officer to resume the investigation. I dropped the matter as the cost of one of the 2.5Gal [palm oil] drums taken is the same as the fees I have paid to the police.[561]

Jacob continues to farm but he has been forced to hire a night-watchman to ensure the security of his property. Jacob has also engaged other local farmers to create a cooperative security force that can respond to criminality in their area more swiftly than an emergency call to the police. As we will observe in the assessment of informal security groups in a latter section, this is not the only example of the development of collective community securitisation due to police failings.

Interestingly, many interviewees expressed some sympathy toward the SLP regarding corruption and fees. A senior Kenema BRU official noted that such fees reflect pre-war norms, exacerbated by low wages, poor working conditions, and the rising global cost of living.[562] Indeed, a 2021 Transparency International report observed that 52% of participants admitted to bribing public officials.[563] One explanation that emerged from interviews was the

[561] Interview conducted in Kenema District, April 2022.
[562] Interview conducted in Kenema District, April 2022. The challenge of wages and conditions of service are also noted by Charley and M'Cormack, p. 58; and Bangura (2018), p. 7.
[563] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices' (2022) <Sierra Leone - United States Department of Stathttps://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/sierra-leone/e> [accessed 12 September 2022], p. 13.

stagnating economy. Indeed, salaries for police officers average at SL3.5m (£200) per month, with the lowest paid officers earning just SL1.5m (£91) per month.[564] Interestingly, a number of Okada riders who were below the age of 21 indicated that they take pride in making more money than a police officer of the equivalent age.[565] Many officers measure their income against the monthly cost of a bag of rice. A junior officer, with least experience yet most public contact, spends about one-third of their salary on rice alone. Consequently, as a Freetown sergeant acknowledged, officers are compelled to seek extra fees to supplement their inadequate income until promotion. Many now buy cheaper cracked rice, as the discontinued rice allowance has not been sufficiently replaced, though the OSD continue to receive this benefit.[566] The sergeant also highlighted pressure from senior officers to charge report fees, as these provide ongoing income for officers who have served their time and expect similar rewards to their superiors.[567] The government has acknowledged the link between corruption and low wages, but prevailing financial challenges render increases in salaries impossible.[568] The very fact that these fees are paid openly in police stations and are commonly accepted by the public indicates there is a degree of legitimacy to this process.

Young riders (aged 18–25) consistently highlighted challenges caused by police corruption, almost universally describing the police as 'corrupt'. This perception is likely influenced by the frequent interactions between Okada riders and the Road Traffic Police (RTP). During interviews, riders and the public repeatedly expressed strong contempt for the RTP, a sentiment echoed by other researchers.[569] Indeed, this author observed first-hand the actions of the RTP during road traffic stops and at police road checkpoints – and can confirm that many of the practices described by interviewees below are accurate.

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[564] An officer must provide an average of seven years' service to reach the median pay of SL3.5m. See: Salary Explorer, 'Police Officer Average Salary in Sierra Leone 2022', *SalaryExplorer.com* <http://www.salaryexplorer.com/salary-survey.php?loc=195&loctype=1&job=504&jobtype=3> [accessed 12 September 2022].

[565] Junior Okada riders can make between SL1.5m and SL3.5m per month. Many also work second jobs that fit with their schedules as Okada riders to supplement their incomes.

[566] Officers who received a 'rice allowance' have been given a SL300-400k raise as a substitute. Currently, the cheapest bag of '100% broken' rice is SL425k with SL460-500k for 'boil rice'.

[567] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.

[568] Bangura (2018), p. 7. This was further exacerbated by the 2014-16 Ebola outbreak and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that have taken a significant toll on the economy of Sierra Leone.

[569] See: Baker (2005), p. 376; Denny (2011), p. 287; Jeremy Allouche, 'Politics, exit strategy and political settlement in Sierra Leone: a critical analysis of a laboratory experiment (1991-2015), *Conflict, Security and Development*, 17:3 (2017), p. 9; Bangura (2018), p. 7.

Bribery is most common. Okada riders interviewed reported bribing RTP officers within the past year, typically during traffic stops or at checkpoints along major highways. Riders most cited paying bribes to avoid motorcycle confiscation when unable to provide licensing and registration documents. These documents, required from the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA) in Freetown, are difficult to obtain due to several barriers, as illustrated by riders' testimonies When asked 'Why did you pay a bribe to a police officer?', Okada rider David commented that:

> I didn't have my licence and registration at the time, and I was saving up to pay for it. Like many of us, I have purchased my bike using a loan and I have to start paying back the money immediately. If my bike is confiscated, I will have to pay the SL150,000 release fee as well as producing my documents with receipts. This will take time and how do I make the money if my bike is impounded? It is easier to pay the bribe and remain cordial with the officer. Next time he could charge me more if I do not cooperate.[570]

While it is difficult not to sympathise with individuals like David, it remains clear they are breaking the law. Nevertheless, many riders reported that obtaining documentation can take up to nine months, as applications are sent to Freetown in batches every three months. It is therefore 'unreasonable' relates another rider Charles 'to expect us [Okada riders] to wait, especially as it is the government's responsibility to provide these services and they have failed to solve this problem for such a long time'.[571] This practice disproportionately affects younger riders, who often lack the resources to cover application fees or pay bribes while awaiting documentation. As a result, they are more likely to ride without a licence or registration, frequently under pressure to repay loans. When asked whether 'younger riders are more exposed to corruption?', veteran rider Lamin replied:

> The younger riders do have more problems with the police as they do not have the same relationship us [older riders]. We are all accused of not having the correct equipment or a problem with our documents, but we know how to talk to the police and reach an agreement with them. Usually, it is

[570] Many Okada bike taxi riders do not own their bikes personally but either rent them or more commonly use a loan to pay for the bike and repay the lender over time with interest. Many riders will then sell the bikes to private purchasers or younger Okada riders and start the process again, possibly purchasing a better bike with a larger fuel tank.

[571] Interviews conducted in the Kailahun District, May 2022.

> an issue with documents, as the younger riders may still be waiting for their licence from Freetown. If I pay a bribe, I will pay what is fair but these younger ones who are less experienced will not know what is fair.[572]

This issue of needing cordiality or 'sababu' with the police was raised by many of the riders and it impacts on the sense of justice within their ranks. Older members receive greater leniency than younger riders who have 'not yet developed the understanding with the police to make an agreement' and as a result 'the police can ask for more, as they [younger riders] don't yet have a cordial agreement that is built over time'.[573] One rookie rider, Alusine, illustrated how bribery and predation towards younger Okada can lead to confrontations:

> At the checkpoints, we are more likely to have to pay more as we don't know the officers as well. We will often try to find ways around the checkpoints by riding off road and this leads to confrontations with those living near the roads or the police who try to stop us. If the police chase us and there is a crash, the local people will blame the police, surround them, and attack them.[574]

This response was repeated often by other younger riders who also tried to avoid the checkpoints, who described increased 'booking fees' for younger riders with low cordiality or 'sababu', particularly around the Christmas holiday.[575] Many riders admitted that fleeing from the police has become more common as they believe that officers have been quietly ordered not to give chase for fear of inciting violence in the event of a crash.[576] Other accusations of police partiality have been levelled towards officers who rent private bikes to

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[572] Interview conducted in Kailahun District, May 2022.

[573] Interview conducted in Kailahun District, May 2022.

[574] Interview conducted in Kailahun District, May 2022. Videos of impromptu altercations between the police, Okada riders and local people are shared widely on social media platforms and have certainly contributed to the negative perspectives held by many interview subjects.

[575] Interviews conducted in Kailahun and Kenema Districts, May 2022. Each BRU member pays fees for the right to work in a certain area. The BRU then pays the RTP for the use of the roads in the form of a daily 'booking fee' where the names and licences of the riders and bikes are passed along. At each checkpoint, a rider must present themselves and the 'book' is checked to ensure they have paid. Older riders do not often present themselves and ride on, where younger riders are expected to dismount, speak with an officer and often pay an additional fee, especially if they are outside of their union area. These additional fees are passed on to the passenger-customer and are a source of tension between the Okada and the community they serve.

[576] Interview with Freetown BRU executive, conducted in Freetown, June 2022. A further example of this occurred in Bo in June 2014. Whilst it appears the police were not involved in the chase, a local government minister was attacked in mistaken retribution. See: Politico SL, 'Sierra Leone minister attacked after Okada rider killed', *PolicitcoSL.com* (11 June 2015) <https://www.politicosl.com/articles/sierra-leone-minister-attacked-after-okada-rider-killed> [accessed March 2022].

Okada riders and turn a blind eye to their infractions, while punishing those working for their rivals.[577]

Accusations of misconduct also focus on the enforcement of vagrancy and loitering laws. Around 1.3 million people were displaced by the war, many still living in vagrancy, often with conflict-related disabilities, and remain highly vulnerable to police exploitation.[578] Those accused of loitering or vagrancy face up to one month in prison, but sentences often extend due to unpaid fines or bribes. Prison conditions are dire, with high risks of disease and death for detainees awaiting trial.[579] To avoid this fate, many willingly pay a bribe to officers and court officials.[580] Further to this, recent legal action was taken against the government and police over claims that sexual acts were demanded as payment from female suspects. The discriminatory nature of this action is clear, with human rights commentator Oludayo Fagbemi observing that 'it is poor, young people who get caught' and human rights lawyer Emma Thompson agreeing that the police were profiting from the 'criminalisation of poverty because the anti-loitering laws are used disproportionately against the poor and the marginalised'.[581] This exploitative practice has extended to the sex worker industry, with one investigation uncovering police demands for up to one month's wages from prostitutes. One worker, Mariatu, described her arrest for 'loitering' in an 'open space' due to her failure to pay the SL300,000 bribe, resulting in six months in prison.[582]

The testimonies reflect widespread discontent with the SLP. The LNP, an ambitious effort to ensure fair access to security and justice, has struggled due to incomplete decentralisation and chronic underfunding. In urban areas, police are visible – handling traffic, guarding businesses, and protecting elites – while residents report no major difficulty

[577] Abdul Rashid Thomas, 'The Okada menace in Sierra Leone' *The Sierra Leone Telegraph* (16 April 2016) <https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/%EF%BB%BFthe-okada-menace-in-sierra-leone> [accessed 6 July 2022].

[578] Augustine Frazier, 'Homelessness in Sierra Leone: A Brief Overview' *SSRN* (16 May 2021) <https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3847326> [accessed 06 September 2022].

[579] For a review of prison conditions see below. Also: Freetown AFP, 'Doing time in "hell": Life in Sierra Leone's run-down prisons' *France24.com* (21 October 2018) <https://www.france24.com/en/20181021-doing-time-hell-life-sierra-leones-rundown-prisons> [accessed 3 September 2022].

[580] Interview with Legal Aid Board Counsel Member, conducted in Kenema, April 2022.

[581] The Guardian, 'Bid to overturn Sierra Leone loitering laws', *TheGuardian.com* 4 May 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/may/04/bid-to-overturn-sierra-leone-loitering-laws-that-activists-claim-criminalise-poverty> [accessed 6 September 2022].

[582] Hannah Summers, '"I beg them to let me go": Sierra Leone's sex workers targeted by police'. *TheGuardian.com* (17 December 2018) <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2018/dec/17/i-beg-them-to-let-me-go-sierra-leones-sex-workers-targeted-by-police> [accessed 7 September 2022].

summoning assistance. However, both urban and rural interviewees view corruption as a major barrier to trust. In rural southern and eastern regions, police presence is limited, and many feel underserved, echoing pre-war concerns of two-tier policing. Cuts to police funding under the JSDP have strained rural operations, limiting staff, transport, and communication, and undermining the LNP's mandate.

Urban and rural residents alike identified corruption as their main grievance with the police, citing widespread bribery and exploitative fees – felt most by private transport workers. Many agreed that income and status heavily influence police treatment, with the wealthy receiving preferential service. In contrast, marginalised groups such as the homeless, sex workers, and Okada riders face regular intimidation and extortion, with little recourse. Younger individuals in these groups appear particularly vulnerable. As the next section will show, such abuses increasingly spark public protests and violent clashes with police

Coercion and Acquiescence: Force and the SLP

The SLP and the paramilitary ISU were key instruments of political suppression during the one-party regime. As the *TRC Report* concluded, governance in the one-party state was a collapse into 'corruption' and 'nepotism', characterised by the widespread use of violent force by the police against political opponents.[583] This perspective is commonly held within the specialist literature.[584] Jackson and Albrecht noted that modern policing reforms were shaped by the conflict's end and the urgent need for security, often prioritising control over concerns about force and accountability – potentially weakening the government's legitimacy.[585] As such, the question this author seeks to answer is whether sufficient respect for minimum force and wider human rights is displayed today by the SLP, now that it is no longer on a war footing?

Central to this discussion is the continued promotion of armed policing despite commitments to the LNP. DfID's decision to fund and expand the SSD from 1998–99 was controversial, given its origins as the ISU and as Stevens' personal enforcers. The SSD avoided dissolution partly due to its role in defending Freetown in January 1999.[586] The

[583] TRC, *TRC Report*, Vol. 2 Ch. 2, p. 13, 37 & 449.
[584] Horn, et. al., pp. 109-123; Gbla, pp. 78-93; Albrecht and Jackson (2011), pp. 52-59; Krogstad, p. 270; Denney (2011), p. 287; Allouche, p. 9; Bangura (2018), p. 7.
[585] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 58.
[586] Ibid., pp. 274-275.

attempted coup of 1999 furthered the argument for the total disbandment of the SLA, who would be replaced by an expanded police constabulary complete with an armed paramilitary element.[587] Support grew after March 1999 as ECOMOG withdrew and internal security shifted to Sierra Leonean forces. With battlefield gains and peace agreed at Lomé, many fighters self-demobilised into urban areas. Police reforms were introduced in this context to address pre-2001 patterns of violence. As Keith Biddle discussed:

> Pre-January 1999 we started a community policing project based on this Local Needs Policing theory, so we'd already decided that the basic policing had to be face-to-face with the communities, with the communities being able to have some say ... but that failed. Community policing will fail if the rest of the structure doesn't support it.[588]

As Krogstad observed, the 'rest of the structure' was firstly developing the capabilities of the police to safely move into and remain within contested areas and secondly, present sufficient coercive capabilities to counter armed violence and dissuade civil unrest.[589] This required manpower, and resources to accomplish. Before January 2002, only paramilitary elements such as the SSD or CDF were capable of such tasking. Biddle himself explained the rationale behind promoting armed policing and established the practice of suppressing uprisings with armed force: 'What happens if we have riots? ... What are we going to do without armed police? … I mean everybody except the police was carrying a [expletive] gun, so how do you get policemen to maintain law and order?'.[590] Whilst Biddle was discussing the immediate post-war environment that he was working in, today we can observe a continuation of this coercive method of policing designed to match force with force and dissuade those considering similar action in the future.

The OECD SSR guide reveals the contrasting nature of police reform, where paramilitary units were viewed as a necessary element of stabilisation and were encouraged to 'engage in partnership: working and forging links with public accountability institutions, other security and justice providers and, in particular, local accountability structures'.[591] O'Neill also made similar observations, commenting that reforms should be seen as 'supporting simultaneously more effective and respectful policing' that in turn inculcates a

[587] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 59.
[588] Interview, Keith Biddle, conducted in Crewe, October 2009, quoted in: Krogstad, p. 272.
[589] Krogstad, p. 272.
[590] Ibid.
[591] OECD, 'OECD Handbook', p. 71.

sense that 'democratic policing is not weak policing'.[592] This period reveals a gap between theory and practice: armed officers were needed to contain violence, yet also expected to support democratic policing, where lethal force is often counterproductive. Unarmed officers frequently refused duties like patrol or crowd control, leaving such tasks to paramilitary units with limited community policing experience.[593] Today, the experience of renewed policing is no different in this aspect, where the use of force acts as a coercive deterrent to public protest. Biddle later defended this choice of strategy, asking whether peace could have been secured 'without armed police?' as the 'army was unreliable, [and] therefore from a Government point of view, the SSD was the protection' from uprisings that might challenge their authority.[594]

Arming the SSD was controversial but driven by security concerns after the January 1999 Freetown attack. Though DfID had taken a cautious stance, Clare Short's intervention enabled UK MoD funding to proceed with rearming, bypassing direct DfID involvement.[595] This allowed DfID to avoid claims of arming potential rights abusers under a development banner. Joint MoD-DfID involvement later expanded with the ACPP, which deployed British military and police advisors through IMATT.[596] This linkage of police reform to defence from renewed uprisings conflicted with the LNP agenda, as DfID maintained a stance of community police reform in support of development, whilst in-country planners viewed the solution as security-based. This is summated in a report authored by the consultant Ray England who questioned the propriety of LNP:

> [T]he Metropolitan Police (and UK forces) are not appropriate for the security situation in Sierra Leone. Any serious riot will involve violent attacks on the Police, requiring baton rounds and CS [tear] gas to be used, and invariably the widespread use of firearms. The Metropolitan Police have no experience of this type of situation, and their tactics would result in the killing and wounding of many unarmed officers.[597]

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[592] O'Neill, p. 3.
[593] Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 57.
[594] Interview with Keith Biddle, UK, 2008, cited in: Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 59.
[595] Krogstad, pp. 274-75.
[596] UK-Gov, 'Recovery and Development in Sierra Leone and Libera - International Development Committee: 2. DfID Spending', *Parliament.uk* <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmintdev/247/24705.htm#:~:text=Following%20the%20civil%20war%20the%20UK%20Government%27s%20key,%28IMATT%29%20funded%20by%20DFID%20through%20the%20Conflict%20Pool.> [accessed 8 June 2023].
[597] Quoted in Krogstad, p. 276.

England suggested the Northern Ireland police model as more suitable, integrating armed response units within the regular police. This approach is reflected in the OSD, which replaced the SSD and includes a Quick Reaction Force and riot control units equipped with tear gas, shields, batons, and live rounds.

Clashes between the SLP, OSD, and the Okada rider community are common, with many riders reporting brutality and victimisation. Social media amplifies tensions by circulating videos of these incidents. Interviewees widely supported improved fitness and de-escalation training for 'blue uniform' officers as a key solution.[598] This request stems from perceptions of regular officers as physically 'weak,' increasing the risk of challenges and crowd escalation. In contrast, OSD officers often inflame tensions through excessive force, as seen in the 10th September 2018 Mile 91 incident, where a joint RTP/OSD raid led to one death and several injuries.[599] The raid aimed to seize unlicensed Okada bikes that had previously evaded impoundment due to community protest. Given the prevalence of non-licensing, the operation appeared focused on reasserting police authority in Mile 91. Similar incidents include a case in Louma, where mistaken identity by an officer sparked a mass brawl with local youths, prompting the police post's relocation ten miles away. Civil security there is now managed by local citizens under village elders.[600]

Violent clashes between police and the Okada community often arise from spontaneous protests. Notable examples include the bans on Okada taxis from Freetown's Central Business District in May 2016 and September 2020. Aimed at easing traffic in the capital's busiest area, the bans significantly reduced riders' incomes.[601] The resultant clashes

[598] The term 'blue uniforms' is how members of the public refer to general police officers in contrast with the paramilitary fatigues worn by the OSD.

[599] Abdul Rashid Thomas, 'Police shot a young man dead in Sierra Leone', *TheSierraLeoneTelegraph.com* 10 September 2018 <https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/police-shot-a-young-man-dead-in-sierra-leone> [accessed 19 August 2022].

[600] Interview with Sierra Leonean citizen, conducted in Koinadugu District, May 2022. Interviews were conducted approximately two months after the incident discussed above. When preparing to travel to Louma, this author was approached by 'SLP intelligence officers' in Tongo who wanted to learn of the purpose of the trip. The trip was approved by the local police commander in the days before the encounter, and it appeared that these officers were working independently of the local station. Upon returning to Tongo I discussed the matter with the local police commander, who stated that any such further interactions should be reported directly to him. It would appear there is some tension regarding jurisdiction between local commanders and that of state level intelligence services.

[601] Awoko, 'To Maintain sanity in Freetown… Okadas banned from CBD', *AwokoPublications* (21 May 2016) <https://awokonewspaper.sl/sierra-leone-news-to-maintain-sanity-in-freetownokadas-banned-from-cbd> [accessed 19 August 2022]; Francis Murray, 'Police resumes enforcement of Okada movement restrictions', *politicosl.com* (21 September 2020) <https://politicosl.com/articles/police-resumes-enforcement-okada-movement-restrictions> [accessed 19 August 2022].

between police and protestors continued for two days and ended with the deaths of several riders and the wounding of many more.[602] The coercive impact of deadly police responses is not lost on one senior BRU executive in Freetown, who commented that 'The police shoot us and beat us to keep us down. When we apply for a protest permit, it is denied or takes too long to arrive. We will still protest, because it is our right, but after you have been beaten and lost friends and family, who would not say "why should I try?"'.[603] Indeed, the 2022 HRC Report supports this executive's testimony, concluding that requests for protests which are critical of the government are routinely denied or ignored.[604] A second Freetown Okada executive echoed a similar sentiment of resignation, illustrating why he had called for Okada riders to avoid participation in the May 2022 Freetown cost of living protests: 'We had suffered badly in the clashes with the police in 2016 and 2020, people got killed and arrested. The police will not issue permits to protest against them. Any gathering is illegal, we are labelled "criminals" and arrested. I called for our riders to stay out of the protests [in May] because when we fight with the police, people just think we are violent and so should be beaten and killed.'[605]

Violent clashes with police are not however exclusive to the Okada community. One 2016 incident, this time in Kabala Town (Northern Region), saw several young people shot and killed by police during a protest over the relocation of a US$200m proposed community centre to a neighbouring district.[606] Yirah Thoronka recounted the death of his brother at the Kabala protest and illustrates the high degree of force used by the police:

> My brother was shot at close range. That is why the bullet did not stay in his head. I have frequent nightmares, about how he was brutally murdered in cold blood. I can hear the gunshot ringing in my head like a bell.[607]

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[602] Kabs Kanu, 'Freetown tense as Police and Okada riders in bloody running battles on the streets', *cocorioko.net* (24 April 2021) <https://cocorioko.net/freetown-tense-as-police-and-okada-riders-in-bloody-running-battles-on-the-streets> [accessed 19 August 2022].

[603] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.

[604] USSD, 'Siera Leone Country Reports 2022', p. 10.

[605] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.

[606] Abdul Rashid Thomas, 'Several young protestors gunned down by police in northern Sierra Leone', *TheSierraLeoneTelegraph.com* (16 August 2016) < https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/several-young-protesters-gunned-down-by-police-in-northern-sierra-leone> [accessed 19 August 2022].

[607] Mohamed Jalloh, 'Violence Erupts in Freetown as Police and Okada Fight' *switsalone.com* (23 April 2021) <https://www.switsalone.com/38961_breaking-news-violence-erupts-in-freetown-as-police-and-okada-riders-fight> [accessed 19 August 2022].

Yirah's loss reflects that of many other victims of police brutality but also the sense of injustice that is left in the wake of such incidents:

> This is not the first time that police have killed innocent people. Nothing seems to come out of the numerous investigations that follow. This leaves victims and families without answers. I do not trust the police anymore. If these things continue to happen, peace will suffer, and the potential for reprisals and conflict will thrive.[608]

A CHRDI press release denounced the 'double standards' of 'police brutality and misconduct' and that 'the ease with which police officers use live bullets to disperse unarmed protestors is a very worrying sign for peace and tranquillity and the country's political future'.[609]

Other examples include violent clashes between armed police and students in March 2017 at Njala University (Bo), following protests over the government's failure to pay lecturers.[610] One student was killed by armed police and two wounded by shooting, with dozens beaten and arrested, prompting one citizen to link the actions of the police 'who fire bullets to kill harmless civilians' to government ministers 'sitting behind high walls' who will eventually 'have to face up to the consequences of their desperation to maintain a system that feeds on innocent blood'.[611] Police actions in Bo prompted stern condemnation from AI, who concluded that: 'This bloodshed and loss of young life is a tragedy and suggests a heavy handed response by the security forces to a student protest' and recommended that the police should refrain from 'committing human rights violations and instead allow the students to safely exercise their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly'.[612]

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[608] Ibid.
[609] Ibid.
[610] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights' (2020) <Sierra Leone - United States Departmehttps://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/sierra-leone/nt of State> [accessed 14 September 2022], p. 2.
[611] Abdul Rashid Thomas, 'Sierra Leone district of Bo under siege – one student shot dead', *Sierra Leone Telegraph* (23 March 2017) <https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/breaking-news-sierra-leone-district-of-bo-under-siege-as-police-and-students-stage-standoff> [accessed 04 May 2023]
[612] Amnesty International, 'Sierra Leone: One dead, two seriously injured as security forces open fire on protesting students', *AmnestyInternational.org* (23 March 2017) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2017/03/sierra-leone-one-dead-two-seriously-injured-as-security-forces-open-fire-on-protesting-students-2/> [accessed 6 May 2023].

More recent examples of police brutality have drawn significant criticism from the HRC in 2020, who concluded that the police had committed unlawful or arbitrary killings.[613] The report highlights two key incidents: the April 2020 Pandemba Prison riot, where 30 inmates were shot dead after a correctional officer was killed, and the July Makeni protest, where six civilians, including a 15-year-old boy, were killed over the removal of a local generator.[614] In both examples, the HRC concluded that the 'security forces used excessive force to manage civil protests' and that 'impunity remained a significant problem' despite the existence of the Independent Police Complaints Board.[615]

The 2022 HRC Report found the SLP responsible for: 'Arbitrary deprivation of life and other unlawful or politically motivated killings' in response to the August shootings of 30 protestors in Freetown, Makeni and Kamakwie. The Commission restated its findings of police 'arbitrary or unlawful killings' and 'impunity' and observed that the subsequent independent investigation was mired in controversy as appointees had strong ties to the government/police or had already publicly condemned the protestors actions.[616] Where previous editions of the HRC report had called for training in crowd control, restrictions of the use of deadly force and respect for human rights, the 2022 report simply noted that there was a 'continuing lack' of consideration for these potential improvements.

The 2022 HRC Report also concluded that the police 'committed cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment' against civilians, including the public shaving of musician Alhaji Amadu Bah's dreadlocks in July.[617] Several musicians, entertainers and radio broadcasters that this author spoke with confirmed that they had endured intimidation from the police when releasing/playing songs or performing skits that were critical of the government.

Citizens often face arbitrary arrest for criticising the government. On 2nd July 2022, women's rights campaigners Femi Cole and Dennis Bright were arrested for planning the 4th July 'Women's Protest'.[618] Mohammed Khan, Chairman of the teachers Solidarity Sierra Leone organisation was arrested on 28th April 2022 for criticising the Government's

[613] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights' (2021) <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SIERRA-LEONE-2020-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2022], p. 1.
[614] Ibid., p. 2.
[615] Ibid., pp. 1-2.
[616] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', p. 2.
[617] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', p. 2.
[618] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', p. 10.

educational policy on live television.[619] One year earlier, outspoken APC politician Emmanuel Conteh was arrested with three compatriots and held for almost two months without trial.[620] Between May and August 2020, APC former minister Sylvia Blyden was arrested repeatedly on charges of libel against the Government.[621] One prominent journalist from Kenema described his arrest and six-months imprisonment to this author, after complaining on his radio show about the indiscriminate use of tear gas near a school.[622] A Google news search confirms a number of journalist arrests in 2022 alone.[623]

Where the constitution and law prohibit such arrests and provide the right to challenge the unlawfulness of arrest and detention in court, the HRC found that 'The Government generally did not observe these requirements.'[624] Arrests without warrants are common and suspects are held in jails and prisons beyond the mandated 72 hours without being informed of the charge. In 2021, one individual was found to have been awaiting trial since 2007 and an average of three to five years wait is common.[625] The bail system is applied inconsistently, with accused asked to pay excessive bond fees.[626] Legal representation for inmates varies, with only military personnel guaranteed MoD-funded lawyers. In 2022, the Director of Public Prosecutions estimated 70% had legal counsel, while Amnesty International reported just 30%[627] In 2022, there were only fifty public defenders in Sierra Leone, the majority of whom live and work in Freetown, only work serious criminal cases, and are described as 'overburdened' and 'poorly paid'.[628]

Conditions of detention are also significant sources of coercion. As of August 2022, Sierra Leone's 21 prisons held 4,801 prisoners in facilities designed for 2,494 inmates.

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[619] Abdul Rashid Thomas, 'Chairman of Teachers Solidarity in Sierra Leone arrested for speaking out on national television' (28 April 2022) <https://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/chairman-of-teachers-solidarity-in-sierra-leone-arrested-for-speaking-out-on-national-television/#:~:text=Arrest%20and%20detention%20of%20four,Times%20Newspaper%2D%20in%20Freetown%20on> [accessed 12 May 2023]

[620] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2021 Country Reports', pp. 6-7.

[621] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2020 Country Reports', p. 7.

[622] Interview conducted in Kenema District, June 2022.

[623] Committee to Project Journalists, 'Sierra Leonean police detain journalist Soloman Joe', *SPJ.org* (24 February 2022) <https://cpj.org/2022/02/sierra-leonean-police-detain-journalist-solomon-maada-joe-overnight/> [accessed 12 May 2022]; 'Sierra Leone journalist Sorie Saio Sesay detained for 6 days' (14 June 2022) <https://cpj.org/2022/06/sierra-leone-journalist-sorie-saio-sesay-detained-for-6-days/> [accessed 12 May 2023]

[624] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', p. 5.

[625] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2021 Country Reports', p. 3; USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', p. 7.

[626] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2021 Country Reports' p. 6.

[627] Ibid.

[628] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', p. 6.

Freetown Male Correctional Centre for example has a maximum capacity of 324 inmates but has a population of 1,820 people.[629] 54% of those interned are awaiting trial.[630] Prison conditions range from harsh to life-threatening, marked by severe overcrowding (nine men in two-person cells), lack of food, water, medical care, poor sanitation, limited sunlight, and physical abuse.[631] When asked why the most significant cause of prisoner mistreatment was overcrowding, one representative of Kenema prison concluded that it was due to 'the numbers of people that the police are arresting for petty crimes' as well as 'those awaiting a court appearance who cannot afford the release fee'. The same official also observed that 'convicted prisoners are held alongside those waiting for trial so the chances of them being institutionalised and reoffending is much higher'. This official blamed a lack of resources including funding for police and correctional officer training, improvements to the existing prisons, and a lack of government interest in building more prisons to alleviate overcrowding.[632]

6.12 Approved and Non-Approved Community Security and Justice Provision

In the wake of severe police failings, several approved and non-approved community security and justice apparatus have emerged to fill the security vacuum left by partially realised decentralisation and malfeasance.

Local Police Partnership Boards and Customary Structures

LPPBs are perhaps the most successful reform of the post-conflict period and play a significant role in fostering cooperation and improving overall access of citizens to security and justice.[633] Instituted under the CCSSP in 2002, LPPBs operated under an informal set of guidelines and limited international funding, until the *LPPB Constitution* was adopted in 2011. This incorporated LPPBs into the wider security structures of the state.[634]

[629] Ibid., p. 2.
[630] USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2021 Country Reports', p. 7.
[631] Between August 2017 and 2022, 71 inmates died from malaria, respiratory and skin infections, and typhoid. USSD, 'Sierra Leone 2022 Country Reports', reports 2019-2022, 'Prison and Detention Center Conditions: Physical Conditions'.
[632] Interview conducted in Kenema Town, April 2022.
[633] See: Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 7 & 36; Jackson and Albrecht (2011), p. 53.
[634] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 32.

The decision to promote incorporate is indicative of DfID's JSDP/ASJP policy shift towards simultaneous security and justice provision that required 'an increasing need for the involvement of citizens in policing' to overcome police limitations and foster community inclusion and consent.[635] Despite their establishment in 2002 and codification in 2011, the legislative and historical roots of LPPBs are located in the 1960 Chiefdom Police Act, that established the Chiefdom Police to assist with revenue collection, enforce traditional laws, and deliver summons or accused to court in cooperation with the state police. Customary Chiefdom courts today consider matters involving familial disagreements, petty crime, debts, inheritance, and land disputes including evictions.[636] Chiefs sit as advisory members of the LPPBs and do have a varying degree of influence over policy, arbitration, and executive branch selections. As such, LPPBs represent a continuation of a hybrid system of local and state security/justice which Jackson and Albrecht believe to be a strong explanation for their success.[637] LPPBs also represent a concerted effort to democratise security and justice, as the membership of the boards is drawn from a wide background of community actors with vested interests in improving community safety. As one Tongo citizen observed, 'Before the war, the police would only speak with the local leaders because they knew we hated them [SLP]. Now, they work in partnership with us through the LPPBs, where we can bring our grievances to other community members as well as the police. This way our concerns are taken more seriously'.[638]

At the local level LPPBs perform three distinct functions. Firstly, they support regular policing activities such as bringing suspects of serious crimes to the police; and investigate and resolve minor disagreements between parties. The intention is to free the SLP from entanglements in low-level disagreements, releasing resources for regular duties, improving perceptions of impartiality and to reduce the number of people awaiting court appearances and serving prison sentences for minor offences. This assists in combatting the challenge of prison overcrowding and the dearth in state justice provision that results in delayed prosecutions. Secondly, LPPBs work with the SLP on strategic issues such as officer

[635] DIIS, 'Fifteen Years of Community Policing Reform: Community Policing and Local Police Partnership Boards, *DIIS Police Brief January 2015* (2015), p. 2. <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/187852/community_policing_in_sierra_leone_web_final.pdf> [accessed 26 March 2023].

[636] Baker (2007), p. 380.

[637] Albrecht and Jackson (2011), p. 108.

[638] Interview conducted in Tongo area, April 2022.

deployments; whilst thirdly supporting preventative measures such as volunteer patrols.[639] With so few officers deployed in rural areas relative to the urban centres, points two and three are vital as they depend on cooperation between the SLP and LPPBs to fill the security vacuum created by partial decentralisation. There are however further challenges presented by relying on untrained volunteers from the community to fill such vacuums, as there is a risk that empowered citizens will engage in practices more closely resembling vigilantism. The LPPBs seek to overcome this obstacle by incorporating citizen-led security into the wider security structures of the state.

LPPBs have impacted on what is defined as community leadership in Sierra Leone. Where previously communities were led by traditional leaders, the introduction of the LPPBs has seen a diffusion of power to a range of community actors with vested interests in safety and security. These include business leaders, women's rights leaders, youth leaders, and religious/traditional leaders.[640] Where previously security/justice power was centralised around the Chiefs, the mainstreaming of LPPBs has resulted in greater power sharing, certainly in more urban areas where there is a greater concentration of interested parties. As we will see below with the case of the stolen goats, Chiefs still play a role in the provision of justice in rural areas, but the fact remains that in theory they must now operate within a defined structure and share responsibilities.

LPPBs are broadly responsible for coordinating civil security endeavours, addressing minor crimes such as petty theft and settling trivial disagreements between parties. LPPBs will 'mediate a resolution' over civil cases 'that will be acceptable to both parties, that is both members of the community and the local police'.[641] Community level instruments include the Family Support Units; resolution meetings between aggrieved parties, LPPB members and community legal representatives such as the Legal Aid Board; and hearings at traditional courts. This is contrasted against so-called 'blood crimes' such as murder, severe assault and rape that are not legally within the purview of the LPPBs and are reported to the police Criminal Investigation Department. However, it became evident during field interviews that there is a lack of clarity regarding when local jurisdiction applies and when crimes should be reported to the SLP. For example, one former RUF combatant praised their local LLPBs deference to the SLP regarding serious 'blood crimes' during interviews in Kailahun District.

[639] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 51.
[640] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), pp. 35-40.
[641] Interview with SLP officer, conducted in Kenema District, April 2022.

There is evidence of a lack of clarity regarding the jurisdiction of LPPBs and their relationships with Chiefs. While blood crimes are the responsibility of the police, several interviewees commented that that accusations of domestic violence were often dealt with at the local level without informing the SLP as these were 'matters between a husband and his wife'.[642] Further to this, as one journalist who has reported on domestic violence in Sierra Leone for several years observed:

> In the case of a domestic violence accusation, the LPPB will firstly view it as a family matter and so it is under the jurisdiction of the traditional court. It does not matter that the woman was beaten or raped, only that she was attacked by a member of her family. The police will be a part of the process, as they are on the LPPB and may be informed of the decision, but this is to make sure they do not feel excluded or disrespected.[643]

Many interviewees also commented that there is a financial motivation for Chiefs to continue to involve themselves in justice, as those who hear cases are compensated for their time. Worryingly, several interviewees agreed independently that matters of domestic violence are often resolved through payment of money or goods to the victim's family by the perpetrator or their family – with the sitting Chief taking a cut (or chop). This of course negates the victim's sense of justice and restitution, as the perpetrator is only materially punished. Often the victims of domestic violence are forced to return to the marital home and continue to live with their abuser, who is emboldened by a lack of consequences and angered by the shame of the accusation.[644] Revealingly, that the police will tacitly permit by their presence on the LPPB cases such as this to pass to traditional courts, but not be a part of the investigation, does indicate a degree of acceptance by the SLP that power sharing is the reality for Sierra Leone's communities with regard to justice.

Many interviewees as well as those who spoke with this author informally agreed that LPPB adjudications were not universal and were often impacted by the 'sababu' or cordiality that members maintained within the community. LPPB members are often volunteers or receive a small stipend, and so the acceptance of bungs to influence decisions is not

[642] Interview conducted in Kenema District, April 2022.
[643] Interview conducted in Kenema District, April 2022.
[644] There are support systems in place for vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone, such as the Sisterland and GlobalGiving shelters however these are located in the major urban centres. The cost of transport and the poor road network are barriers to women accessing these services.

uncommon – as well as the expectation that a gratuity fee should be paid to the adjudicating LPPB members. However, restitution by the LPPBs is also not standardised, and those found guilty of a minor offence can expect punishments including fines (paid to both the victim and the LPPB member); public humiliation; manual labour; and banishment. The case of Francis is illustrative, and when asked 'why did you go to the LPPB and what happened' he replied:

> Over the course of about two weeks, I had several goats stolen from my compound. A neighbour came to me and identified a local boy who they had seen taking some goats to the butcher. The boy does not normally keep goats, so this raised suspicions in the village. I spoke with the butcher, and they confirmed that they had purchased goats from him. I spoke with the boy's uncle, who I am good friends with, but he refused to accept that his nephew could be responsible. So, I took my case to the LPPB member who lives in my village. He arranged for an interview of the boy by an FSU officer, and I escorted the boy to the station. After interviewing the boy, the FSU officer then arranged an audience with the local Chief, who is a member of the LPPB. After hearing my case, the Chief summoned the boy and his uncle to the Court Barry and asked them about the matter. The boy refused to admit to the thefts, but he was given a punishment of labour to improve the security of my compound.

Q: *Were you satisfied with the outcome?*

> Yes, I felt that the punishment was sufficient. The boy is not from our village but is a guest, so the Chief could have sent him away. Of course, I had to pay the Chief for hearing the case and compensate the LPPB member who had arranged the meeting. I also had to pay transport and report fees to the [FSU] officer. I did not receive any compensation for the goats, but I did feel the outcome was correct as the boy will learn his lesson without taking up court time or going to the juvenile detention centre. It would have cost me more to go to court, so this outcome is best for myself, the boy, and his uncle.[645]

As we can observe from the experience of Francis, the police and the more traditional forms of justice are cooperating to provide justice to citizens without resorting to the expected investigation, arrest and detention of a suspect, a process that uses up valuable resources in a resource-poor environment. Indeed, Francis engaged in his own personal investigation and

[645] Interview conducted in Kenema District, May 2022.

only went to the LPPB member once he felt he had gathered sufficient evidence. When asked why he did not phone the police immediately, Francis commented that 'they would not be interested in such a minor case as this and it would have taken a lot of money to incentivise an investigation'.[646] While Francis did not receive any financial restitution, and indeed ended up spending more money to receive justice, he was happy with the outcome even though it did not result in criminal prosecution. It is also revealing that even though the boy did not admit guilt, he accepted the punishment of labour over expulsion and his uncle did not contest the ruling. If arrested and charged, the boy almost certainly faced the hardship and deprivation of detention, which would be prolonged by the failings of the court system. He may very well have been guilty (as some young people are of silly mistakes), but it also reveals that the rural Chiefs do still maintain a good degree of authority. It is illustrative that Francis did not phone the police upon realising a crime had been committed but instead chose to engage with a local justice provider who could deliver an outcome in the shortest time possible. The involvement of the police in this matter is certainly secondary to that of the LPPB member, and the local Chief, who were ultimately the providers of recourse for Francis. Alarmingly, when asked whether the boy should have had legal representation from a youth worker, Francis said that the FSU officer was sufficient to fulfil the boy's rights. It is also particularly striking that the boy was essentially found guilty without an investigation because Francis possessed a good reputation within his community, and cordiality with the LPPB member, the Chief and the FSU Officer.

The example of Francis' goats is indicative of many interviewees' descriptions of their own experiences and is certainly revealing in terms of citizens preference for local justice that is relatively swift and cheap against state justice that is expensive and time consuming. Francis had, to a certain degree, taken matters into his own hands to ensure the process of receiving justice would begin. He also had to apprehend the suspect, a relatively easy matter in this case but more difficult in the case of other interviewees' experiences.[647] It is also telling that Francis felt satisfied with the result and he certainly felt that he would receive justice more promptly through the local system than engaging with state systems. Indeed, as one Freetown based researcher observed, 'the state court system is unreliable as justices can take significant time to reach verdicts, are susceptible to corruption and intimidation and may

[646] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2022.
[647] During my time in the field, I met several individuals who have engaged nationally in tracking, apprehending, and returning to the police, criminals who had personally wronged them or a family/friend.

rule in favour of personal connections over evidence'.[648] This is compounded by the rural/urban divide of Sierra Leone, meaning citizens in the countryside must await the arrival of a circuit judge or travel to the nearest town magistrate, incurring significant transport and accommodation costs as well as paying court fees and associated incentivisation.

Community Safety Volunteers and Youth Security Groups

At the heart of community led policing are the Community Safety Volunteers (CSVs). CSVs are not codified in the LPPB Constitution, nor are they represented directly on LPPBs. At the release of the 2014 *DIIS Report,* CSVs were limited to the Western area and Freetown but today can be found (in theory at-least) in almost every community, as a part of the LPPB structure. CSVs act as a force multiplier for the SLP, engage in night patrols, respond to calls for help from their communities, and apprehend suspects. Generally, CSVs are selected by LPPBs and in the immediate post-conflict period, were recruited from demobilised members of the CDF, RUF, SLA and retired SLP.[649] As one retired SLP officer who has volunteered as a CSV in Freetown for a number of years observed:

> Our main function is to provide safety to our community by combatting crime and lawlessness in areas that the police could not patrol or get to quickly. They [SLP] rely on us to be their eyes and ears in our communities but also to sensitise people to the activities of the police'.[650]

Indeed, the 2014 *DIIS Report* noted that contemporary observers in the Freetown area felt that CSVs had directly contributed to the decline of crime rates.[651] This was supported by interviewees that this author encountered in Freetown, who agreed that in principle the CSV programme has improved their community's safety.

CSVs are however struggling to maintain their duties, particularly in less developed areas beyond Freetown. In the immediate post-conflict period, recruitment was relatively easy as there was an abundance of demobilised younger men who were experienced in the use of force and possessed the confidence to engage in security activities. These CSVs were paid an allowance of Le2000 per day (approximately £1), were provided with basic training

[648] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.
[649] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), pp. 42-43.
[650] Interview conducted in Freetown, May 2022.
[651] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 42.

and equipment, and were supported readily by SLP HQ in Freetown.[652] Today however, CSVs receive no state-organised financing and rely on the generosity of the communities in which they work. They do not receive any substantial training or safety equipment and must rely on personal funds or charity.

A further concern is the political affiliations of CSVs and their employment during election periods. CSVs are often retained at the discretion of LPPB members and as such owe a degree of political allegiance. During elections, CSV ranks are swelled under the guise of public safety, but multiple interviewees reported that CSVs act in much the same way as political 'mashers' or youth groups who support varying political campaigners.[653] They will stir up trouble to generate negative publicity for political opponents as well as supressing the activities of rival campaigns and coercing voters. Many of the CSVs and mashers that this author spoke with agreed that a primary motivation was money from their patrimonial connections and then personal politics.

Today, there are only limited numbers of CSVs working in the rural Eastern LCU and these groups are generally formed of unemployed youth relying on the charity of the local community. They receive little or no pay directly from the police and often rely on donations of money, food and equipment from the communities they protect. Their ability to patrol is impacted by their personal circumstances (family and ad-hoc employment commitments), terrain, weather, transport and communications links. More than one CSV observed that even basic support such as meat and hot tea to drink at night was in short supply as the cost-of-living crisis has deepened throughout the country resulting in some disaffection and an unwillingness to patrol. The motivation of the CSVs is further impacted by a lacklustre promotion programme that theoretically grants them priority consideration for police recruitment. Many interviewees admitted that the opportunity to join the police or private security company was a significant motivation for working as a CSV but felt that this was not adequately supported by the SLP.[654]

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[652] Albrecht, et. al. (2014), p. 43.

[653] For wider examinations of youth involvement in political violence during elections, see: Mats Utas and Maya Christensen, 'The Gift of Violence: Ex-militias and Ambiguous Debt Relations during Post-War Elections in Sierra Leone' *African Conflict and Peacebuilding Review*, 6:2 (2016), pp. 23-47; Luisa Enria, 'Love and Betrayal: The Political Economy of Youth Violence in Post-War Sierra Leone', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 53:4, 2015, pp. 637-660.

[654] Many CSVs felt that they were overlooked during SLP recruitment drives because they did not possess the correct 'sababo' or personal/political connection. Education levels of CSVs are also generally low which has an additional impact upon their application success.

This lack of support has translated into a decline in the numbers and efficacy of CSVs in rural communities that this author visited. Whilst the 2014 *DIIS Report* extolls the successes of CSVs in Freetown and other Western Area communities, rural areas have partly relied on the wider 'youth' community to provide security, safety and sometimes justice in the absence of SLP and other state-approved systems.[655]

Firstly, it should be noted the pre-war status of the Chief's Native Authority Police (NAP) has diminished greatly since the end of the war. In several of the villages that this author visited in the Kenema and Kailahun districts, there are only a handful of NAP enforcing customary laws such as collecting fees and taxes or bringing accused to traditional court to answer for petty crimes. They are paid an irregular steepened, have no weapons, identification or uniforms and are recruited from a local Chief's family or friends. This form of traditional provision is certainly in decline as many Chiefs have had their authority undermined by their respective roles in the war and the decline of their enforcement arm appears to be the most acute symptom of this. The failure of the certain Chiefs and their agents to protect people, along with their role in enforcing the pre-war patrimonial structure has resulted in a loss of prestige.[656] The LPPB system has also certainly contributed to the decline of the NAP, as power has been diffused towards the SLP, approved community security actors, and non-approved actors (see below). As inclusivity and consent has improved with regards to state approved security, it seems that older structures such as the NAP, that reflect exclusivity and entitlement, are falling from favour.

Supplementing approved systems, 'youth' in communities like Louma and Tongo are playing a role to self-regulate their peers. The Tongo diamond fields for example attracts large numbers of transient workers, often below the age of 25. As such, Tongo possesses a blend of local permanent residents, transient workers and artisanal miners that creates a tense atmosphere in the entertainment areas of the town square at night. To combat this insecurity, local actors such as Martin have formed 'taskforces' to tackle anti-social behaviour and work with the police to prevent lawlessness. Jacob' s taskforce comprises of eight to ten residents, all under the age of 32, who are generally unemployed, patrol mainly at night and receive

[655] Albrecht et. al. (2014), pp. 40-41. The term 'youth' in Sierra Leone does not refer just to the physical age of an individual but also their place in society's hierarchy. This is dictated by several factors including possessing stable employment, owning property, and raising a family. The economic condition of Sierra Leone has however prevented a significant swathe of the population from achieving these goals and so there are many 'youths' present in rural areas.

[656] Baker (2007), p. 380-81.

moderate compensation for their time from the local community they protect. Martin described his role as a 'problem solver and peace maker' and was especially proud of his group's work to prevent public drug and alcohol misuse. Chief Braima of Tongo expressed his support for youth groups that 'work alongside the police to keep us safe at night' but also discussed the empowerment of 'youth' and the reproachment it has fostered: 'After the war there was mistrust for the youth. They have grown up but they are still here so we must trust them to help us keep the peace. We must learn to trust the next generation'.[657] Similarly, an LPPB member in Kenema expressed support for groups like Martin's but cautioned that 'sometimes these groups can take matters into their own hands and will give beatings to people they suspect but do not have proof. We encourage them to be active in our community's safety, but they should also respect the rule of law and work with us'.[658]

There is however a more troubling outcome of reliance on 'youth' to provide informal security. Where a small number of generally younger individuals are empowered, they can diffuse this power to others, creating a micro-patrimonial structure of their own. Groups such as this then have the potential to leverage community empowerment into authority over others, particularly for financial gain. One such example is Thomas who does not engage in activities such as patrolling at an individual level. Thomas instead offers protection to the residences and businesses in his area who provide money and resources that are used to pay (or bribe) other youths into cooperating. However, perhaps more troublingly, when asked how he and his colleagues deal with a criminal he responded that: 'It depends on the crime. We will always report a burglary to the police, but we may punish him [the criminal] to make sure he doesn't threaten our community again'.[659] Of course, with residents and businesses paying for protection, he is referring to a threat to his income as well. This is certainly concerning to one Kenema police officer who observed that 'this is challenging as we [SLP] don't know who is being brought in to patrol communities and businesses. We haven't done the background checks and we can't hold them to account when something goes wrong' but admitted that 'as long as communities want to buy into this type of neighbourhood watch, there is not much we can do about it'.[660]

[657] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2023.
[658] Interview conducted in Tongo area, May 2023.
[659] Interview conducted in Kenema, April 2022.
[660] Interview conducted in Kenema, April 2022.

Commercial Security Associations

Commercial security associations are a further example of self-securitisation in the wake of SLP failings. Larger commercial security companies provide unarmed security personnel to guard larger businesses; centres of manufacturing; mining operations; NGO property and personnel; and private customers. One study of private commercial security indicated that there are between 3,000 and 5,000 people employed in the private security sector, not including those from the SLP/OSD who moonlight as private security contractors.[661] Many of those employed by private security companies are former combatants or retired army/police, with screening and in-house training conducted only by the larger providers.[662] Several challenges have been highlighted regarding private security officers, including the illegality of the companies themselves, their compliance with national work conditions regulations, standardised training and wages. Most troublingly is the observed lack of respect for human rights demonstrated by larger firms.[663]

The security situation in Freetown is worthy of scrutiny here. Business owners that this author spoke to in the affluent Lumley area welcomed a visible police presence. As one Freetown business owner noted 'This is a very safe area to be a tourist in, the police make sure that thieves cannot work here, and you can see that there is a busy market, so people do feel safe to come here and shop. The police make sure the Okada parks are kept in order and they patrol the market. Officers can be seen engaging in foot patrols and routine community policing in these more upmarket shopping areas, as well as assisting with directing traffic. These activities are often supported by RSLAF troops who are engaged in civil assistance under the MAC-P and MAC-A initiatives. Such a heavy police presence in the Lumley area is understandable, as there is a major police station at Lumley Junction; some of the largest businesses and banks are located in the area; the Lumley shopping areas are often frequented by the cities wealthier residents, who reside in the adjacent Aberdeen and embassy areas; and,

[661] Rita Abrahamsen and Michael Williams, 'The Globalisation of Private Security - Country Report: Sierra Leone' *New Security Challenges Series* (Aberystwyth University, 2019) <https://users.aber.ac.uk/rbh/privatesecurity/country%20report-sierra%20leone.pdf> [accessed 17 April 2023], p. 7.

[662] Baker (2007), p. 380.

[663] Ibid.; Rima Turay, 'Fourteen Security Companies Operating Illegally', *Premier Media* (27 August 2019) <premiernews140.medium.com/sierra-leone-newsfourteen-security-companies-operating-illegally-653e35a78b2e> [accessed 17 April 2023].

as this author experienced on several occasions, there is ample opportunity to extort money from the Okada and KK taxi riders who work in the area.[664]

However, after a short walk to the Lumley and Aberdeen beach areas, the security situation reverts to that of commercial private agreements, where local businesses and street/beach merchants contribute to a collective security fund. Smaller business owners pay for private security officers to maintain order and prevent petty crime, while larger hotels, shops and banks employ private security companies and moonlighting OSD officers. Sarah, a beach merchant, whose brother is employed as a beach security officer, observed that 'before we paid for the security [officers], the crime here was so bad that we had few customers and many of the main businesses closed. Now they are slowly returning, and the beach has become very popular again, but this is not thanks to the police, it is due to our work'.[665] A second business owner, Charles, also discussed the impact of community action in improving the safety of Lumley and Aberdeen beaches: 'There was a big problem with people being robbed at the Lumley end of the beach. Thieves would beat people up in the area where there are no lights and then jump over the wall into the golf course to escape. So, we paid money to have new lights installed in that area and to have the wall raised to twice the size. We all still pay to keep the lights on in that area as we know people will not come here if they do not feel safe to walk around at night'.[666] One or two officers can be observed at the main junctions of the five-mile stretch, but the officers do not patrol the beach area. They instead operate from checkpoints where they inspect arriving and departing vehicles for infractions such as drink driving; not wearing seatbelts; or poorly maintained safety equipment/broken lights. This occurs particularly at night when people are leaving nightclubs and so may be more vulnerable to the predations of the police.[667]

Armed OSD officers are stationed outside almost all major businesses and banks throughout Freetown and their presence is paid for by the individual business owners or

[664] Okada bike taxi and KK tricycle taxi riders are often subjected to impromptu safety checks at SLP checkpoints where minor infractions such as older fire extinguishers or no helmets for passengers can result in high fines. Riders are also expected to pay daily 'booking fees' through the BRU to work in certain areas. Riders from the East Side for example will not work beyond Congo Cross as they have not paid the correct Union fees or booking fee to the police.

[665] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

[666] Interview conducted in Freetown, March 2022.

[667] This author and his driver/research assistant were stopped at such a checkpoint when leaving the Lumley Beach area on a June evening. The driver was accused of operating the vehicle while under the influence of alcohol. After a short conversation with the officer outside of the vehicle, where money was paid, the driver was allowed to pass without undertaking any form of sobriety test.

corporations through a coordinator at the OSD HQ. This is replicated across Sierra Leone, with armed OSD officers engaging in private security activities such as close protection, driving wealthy individuals, and guarding commercial interests. OSD officers carry state issued arms and wear police uniforms. OSD guards are paid a significantly higher wage than those employed by private security companies, that reflects both their level of training and the fact that they are armed and empowered by the state.[668] However, the very fact that each OSD officer is paid for privately, indicates that officers serving in this way face a quandary over their responsibility to uphold the laws such as the use of minimum force and serving their paymaster. This juxtaposition was discussed by several interviewees who raised the issue of OSD violence against thieves in Blama, who were beaten badly and driven out of town rather than handed over to the police for arrest and prosecution.

In several markets in the rural eastern region that this author visited, business owners engage in associations or committees that regulate security and attempt to deter crime. These associations are often closely linked to other private groups including the Okada BRU and the Motor Drivers' and General Transport Workers' Union that work alongside the marketers.[669] Market security provision ranges from ad-hoc provision in smaller towns and villages to large-scale professional services in larger areas such as Kenema and Freetown.

Smaller village markets may employ local men with security experience who, along with some 'youth' deputies, monitor both the conduct of the venders and that of the customers. They remain vigilant for thefts or misconduct such as smoking cannabis. It is also not uncommon for youths associated with local Chiefs to take responsibility for market security as a part of their wider tasking of overall security in a smaller settlement. Disputes such as debts or violent behaviour are mediated by the market committee, of which the local Chief may have a chair, who have the power to ban venders or customers.[670] Disputes may also be settled independently by customary court structures, with parties expected to accept the Chief's ruling or face expulsion from the marketplace. While this author did not observe market security officers acting violently, other research authors have observed that public beatings are not uncommon for thieves.[671]

[668] Abrahamsen and Williams, p. 12.
[669] Baker (2007), p. 379.
[670] Interview with Sierra Leone citizen, conducted in Kenema, April 2022.
[671] Baker (2007), p. 379.

In this structure, the SLP are largely absent, with this author not observing a visible police presence in many of the markets visited. Gloria, a shop owner in Freetown remarked that their absence was 'a good thing' as their presence is viewed with suspicion. As Gloria related:

> They [SLP] only come here for one thing, and that is to extort us. They are never here just to patrol. They pressure shop owners into paying them for protection through patrol fees, but when we take criminals to them, they let them go!'.[672]

Market customers indicated that they preferred to have the market authorities take responsibility for security. As John, a Kenema market-stall owner observed:

> They [the market authorities] know who is there to make trouble or steal. They know that if pickpockets are stealing from their customers, they will lose their business. So, it is in their interest to catch and punish thieves. The police do not care about these petty crimes so the sellers must make sure their businesses are protected'.[673]

Informal discussions with business owners indicate that it is possible to pay for police protection, but the cost is too high for many market traders who instead rely on cheaper private security. Employing private security officers also provides business owners with a further layer of protection as the officers and larger providers can be 'held accountable to pay for damages or losses due to security lapses' whereas such recourse from the SLP is unlikely.

The Motor Drivers' and General Transport Workers' Union are also representative of self-policing in the wake of SLP failings. With an alleged membership of over 70,000 nation-wide, the Union manage many transport parks and take responsibility for monitoring the vehicles passing through. However, one purpose of the Union is to ensure its members are not exposed to police predation through self-regulation. For example, in Waterloo that adjoins Freetown and the Western Area, the Union checks vehicles for safety equipment and roadworthiness; inspects licences and insurance documents; provides workers to load goods (without fear of theft) and protects passengers from criminal activity. However, as a representative of the Waterloo Park Transport Union explained: 'The Union takes responsibility for the conduct of the drivers and ensures that the correct regulations are followed' because the Union wants 'to make sure that we are not exposed to the police at the

[672] Interview conducted in Freetown, April 2022.
[673] Interview conducted in Kenema, May 2022.

checkpoints when they conduct their own searches. If our drivers or vehicles are operating illegally then the police will come here and impose heavy fines on us, search vehicles and demand money'.[674] Ali a professional driver from Kenema was also concerned over attracting police attention, relating that 'we will deal with drivers who drink or drive dangerously ourselves, because if the police catch them, they will accuse all of us to force us to pay money to pass a test at every checkpoint. It is the same if we smuggle, they will inspect every vehicle and expect money. If they come to the main parking area, they will issue citations for vehicle defects.'[675] The fear of being arrested and arbitrarily held for up to seventy-two hours for resisting was discussed as a genuine concern by several drivers, as their failure to deliver goods on time, or deliver spoiled goods, could result in the loss of secure employment.

A further example of such self-regulation can be observed in the Okada BRU who also maintain a strict code of conduct for its members and frown upon those who work independently. This code is posted in the executive office of every BRU location, and a log is compiled of various infractions and fines that riders have committed and paid. Infractions range from riding without licences or insurance, altercations with other members, dangerous or drunk riding or public nuisance. As with the Drivers and Transport Union, an Okada union representative stated that the rules are there to 'prevent our riders from getting into serious trouble with the police. If a rider does not have the correct documents or equipment, we will not allow them to work. That rider may lose some money that day or that week but it will prevent them from being arrested or having their bike confiscated – both of which will result in a much larger fine than we ask for'.[676] As noted above, this system is imperfect, as a number of riders that this author travelled with were stopped (sometimes repeatedly) by the police and were force to pay to continue the journey. Indeed, as we have observed, one of the sources of violent protest is the Okada rider's response to predation and restriction by the authorities.

Perhaps most revealingly, the BRU's desire to self-regulate to protect its members has culminated in the creation of the Okada BRU School, located in Waterloo. Currently under construction, this four-story building and adjoining grounds will house training and hospitality facilities for BRU recruits and existing members. According to the national public relations representative, the school will train new riders how to safely use their bikes,

[674] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.
[675] Interview conducted in Kenema, May 2022.
[676] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.

familiarise them with the rules of the road, acquaint them with how to obtain and maintain valid documentation from the SLRSA, teach basic maths and English lessons and provide sensitisation lessons on how to interact with the police. The school will also contain accommodation, washing, and cooking facilities for the riders to use. Currently the school's planners are assuming that it will work independently of state regulation but hopes that recognition by the central government, along with financial support, will help to alleviate some of the hostility that exists between the authorities and the Okada community. As the representative explains:

> This new project will certainly help to build a sense of professionalism within our riders and earn greater respect from the people. By training them correctly, we will insure them against the current problems we are having with the police and ensure that the public continue to see us a contributing partner in our society. Our riders will operate with a greater appreciation for the law and be able to resolve disagreements with the police without resorting to violence. Eventually I hope that the police will come to the school to work alongside us on this project.'[677]

One of the key challenges faced by the some-100k strong national Okada community is the lack of professionalism that renders their appearance as more of a collection of gangs than an organisation. The escalation of violent protest by Okada's after the arrest/injury of one of their riders has become a source of instability and criticism across the nation. As such, training to professionalise the rider cadre will serve to both reduce public apprehension towards them and minimise opportunities for police predation. Indeed, by providing such a simple solution as basic shelter to the large number of homeless Okada in Freetown, the school will eliminate the core grievance of vagrancy levelled against the city-based riders.[678]

As we have observed, the partiality of decentralisation, problems with sustainability and a decrease in the professionalism of the police has led to the emergence of several approved and non-approved actors that are empowered by the state or otherwise. What is certainly most significant is that each of the systems of security and justice described above are generally preferred by citizens to that of the SLP or the state courts. Also of significance

[677] Interview conducted in Freetown, June 2022.

[678] Many Okada riders are not from Freetown but are instead economic migrants who travelled to the city in the post-conflict period in search of better employment. Indeed, one Okada rider observed that he could make more in one month riding in the city than six months as a rural farm worker.

is that the police and the state justice mechanisms readily embrace these alternative systems, not only to benefit from them as is the case with police payoffs, but also to alleviate the strain placed on the state's agents due to chronic underfunding and degradation.

6.13 Police Reform Conclusion

As we have observed, British reforms to the SLP in the latter days of the war and the post-conflict period were responsive and ad-hoc, with a priority placed on improving the capabilities and capacity of a spent force. Spending on manpower, equipment, arms and vehicles reflected a need to develop local needs policing in the contested areas of the country and instil a renewed sense of government legitimacy and authority. As predatory policing was certainly a component of the grievances fuelling the war LNP was certainly a tonic worthy of exploring. With the end of the conflict in 2000, primarily accomplished through martial efforts, this was achievable but the decision under JSDP and ASJP to focus on wider justice reform created a sustainability problem that impacts the police to this day. This has impacted upon citizens' abilities to access equal and fair security and justice. Firstly, decentralisation was only partially realised, and state policing is still mainly centred around urban areas. Even then, as is the case of Lumley and the East Side, policing is diverted to more wealthy areas of the city. Secondly, the funding to maintain the levels of reform initiated by Biddle is simply not available and the force is deteriorating as a result. This has created a significant problem of professionalism for the SLP as officers struggle to provide a service with what means they have. More worryingly, the police have returned to older practices of extorting the population and preying upon its most vulnerable members in the wake of stagnating wages. Recruitment is a significant challenge, as those brought into the force at the lowest ranks are not subjected to high standards of education or training in civil policing for example.

Faith in the SLP has been further undermined by political partiality on the part of senior leadership. With the Vice-President serving as the head of the Police Council, all decisions are subject to his veto and appointments are made at his discretion. This certainly impacted upon the willingness of international donor to continue to fund reforms to the SLP when the outcomes were questionable at best. The 'winner takes it all' system ensures that experienced senior officers do not remain in post for protracted periods and are often replaced by attendees who benefit from the 'card system'. This politicisation is often linked to police violence by the population who believe the police carry out the political whims of the ruling

party to supress criticism or popular discontent. Where the paramilitary elements of the police were maintained and augmented under Biddle to supress uprisings in the post-conflict period, they now supress popular criticism and discontent towards the government – or so people believe. Where authority was sought through force at the start of the 21st century for fear of an existential crisis, now authority is sought through force to maintain the status quo. What is clear is that respect for the use of minimum force by the SLP is partial at best. Deadly force, arbitrary arrest and lengthy detentions without trial all serve as deterrents to protest and demand acquiescence from the people.

Resultantly, we have observed the emergence of several approved and non-approved actors that augment efficacy or have replaced the police entirely. In the case of approved actors such as the LPPBs and the CSVs, significant progress has been made to foster inclusivity and consent from the public regarding security. LPPB membership represents a broad swathe of society, from business leaders and religious leaders to vested interest leaders; while CSVs provide visible security that is accepted, as the volunteers are drawn from communities. LPPBs and CSVs also represent better inclusivity and access to justice, as petty crimes and disagreements can be settled outside of court, reducing the burden on the state system, and providing far swifter recourse. LPPBs and CSVs do still face challenges regarding overreach of authority and partiality, which are barriers to trust within the community.

It would also appear that citizens living in more remote areas have returned to a hybrid approach to security and justice, asking traditional leaders to provide as access to state systems is limited and rife with barriers. Where the power of traditional Chief's was curtailed in the wake of the *TRC Report*, this author concludes that they still play a significant role in security and justice provision as they both empower local youths to patrol; and preside over important adjudications within the community that impact day to day life. The fact that several interviewees described the Chiefs as presiding over matters as important as thefts and domestic violence shows they still have sway over their populations, who readily seek and accept their rulings. As with LPPB adjudication, the police are involved in the process of justice provision but only out of respect for their authority. As we observed with Francis' goats, the FSU officer was happy to hand responsibility to the Chief to settle the matter within the community.

Young people are also taking responsibility for safety and security in their own communities. Whether they are empowered by the state through the LPPBs/CSVs, through traditional power such as the Chiefs or through self-empowerment such as ‘taskforces’, youth feel responsible for security and are taking action to fill the void left by the police. It is however reprehensible that they are also, at times, taking responsibility for justice as well.

Commercial interests are also responding to the failures of the SLP with larger businesses and corporations investing heavily in private security. As is noted, it is not uncommon to observe a privately hired OSD officer guarding a larger business or bank day and night, wearing their state issued uniform and carrying arms. Where smaller businesses are unable to afford the luxury of armed security, they are engaging in collectivisation to improve their security situation. Farmers such as Jacob, beach sellers and marketeers are all engaging in collective security structures to offset the lack of general security they receive from the state. Indeed, in every town and village in Sierra Leone, small businesses are manufacturing large steel gates and fences for private residences. Further to this, commercial driving unions are also engaging in reforms of their own to combat the police by mandating union rules that protect drivers from extortion or predation. The Okada School in Waterloo for example is an organic response to the challenges riders face daily from the police.

Ultimately, these approved and non-approved systems are necessary, as the police (and their associated bureaus) now fail to adequately provide fair and equal security and justice while preying upon the very people they are empowered to protect. However perhaps more importantly these systems are preferred by the people to the police and courts, and this indicates a failure to reform the SLP into a ‘force for good’ that has obtained consent from its citizens. The SLP remain, as the *TRC Report* observes, ‘agents of destabilisation’ but the communities they are meant to serve are adapting to overcome their failings.

6.14 Conclusion

The British intervention in Sierra Leone demonstrates a clear and sustained prioritisation of SSR as foundational elements of its counterinsurgency strategy. From the outset, the deployment of British forces was shaped by the imperative to rapidly stabilise a collapsing security environment, and this imperative evolved into a broader project of institutional reconstruction during active conflict. Security was not conceived as a post-conflict dividend but as the operational prerequisite for restoring state authority, suppressing

insurgency, and enabling externally driven governance reform. SSR, particularly the rapid professionalisation of the armed forces under IMATT, was embedded within the strategic logic of control rather than inclusion, reflecting an enduring British preference for technocratic order over participatory transformation. This emphasis on institutional dominance that was achieved through sequenced military reform and selective police restructuring enshrined a security-first model of peacebuilding that foregrounded stability, often at the expense of democratic deepening and civic trust.

We turn now to the research questions that have informed the whole thesis, with a view to critically assessing how the Sierra Leone case enables a deeper understanding of SSR's purpose and function within stabilisation frameworks. In doing so, the chapter reflects on the extent to which SSR has operated not merely as a technical process of post-conflict recovery, but as a political instrument deployed during conflict to shape state institutions, reassert authority, and delimit the boundaries of democratic transition.

1. To what extent did British counterinsurgency prioritise security and security sector reform in the Sierra Leone military intervention?

British counterinsurgency during the Sierra Leone intervention consistently prioritised security and SSR as central tenets of its operational logic, reflecting a broader continuity in British approaches to stabilisation across colonial and post-colonial contexts. In common with the earlier case studies, the intervention in Sierra Leone engaged in reforms to the security sector to produce stabilisation not merely as a post-conflict reconstruction measure but as a core component of counterinsurgency itself. The case demonstrates how SSR was strategically sequenced to reassert state authority and suppress insurgent activity, with reform initiatives launched prior to the formal cessation of hostilities.

From the outset, the British military presence was reactive in nature, responding to the imminent collapse of UNAMSIL and the threat of renewed RUF advances on Freetown. This urgent security context necessitated immediate stabilisation and precipitated the rapid escalation of British involvement – in the immediacy to support the NEO operation, then to prevent the collapse of the Kabbah government and later as a part of a wider state-building mandate. While formally distinct in structure the four operations collectively constituted a

coherent strategy aimed at asserting military dominance, reinforcing institutions, and exercising political leverage. While often presented in public discourse as a model of rapid success, the intervention's reliance on overwhelming force in the form of British military superiority and later SLA numerical advantages reveals deeper continuities with British practice in Malaya and Kenya, where institutional reform was often shaped by coercive logic and centralised control.

This relationship between security and counterinsurgency reflects a longstanding strategic logic within British military doctrine, wherein the provision of security is not merely a supporting function but a constitutive element of counterinsurgency itself. As demonstrated in the Malayan and Kenyan campaigns, British COIN strategies have consistently embedded SSR within the operational phase, using it as both an instrument of pacification and a vehicle for consolidating central authority. In Sierra Leone, this logic re-emerged through the implementation of SSS during active conflict, reinforcing the notion that restoring physical order is a prerequisite for any broader political settlement. Within this framework, security is constructed not as the product of peacebuilding, but as its structural precondition that is engineered to enable governance reform while simultaneously delineating its limits. This, however, often curtails the scope for inclusive, democratic transformation.

Moreover, this convergence of security provision and institutional restructuring reveals the inherently political character of COIN, even when couched in ostensibly technical or humanitarian terms. The professionalisation but limitation of RSLAF capabilities, the embedding of watchful IMATT/ISAT advisors, and the strategic reconstitution and decentralisation of a partly-paramilitarised SLP all illustrate how British interventions have sought to shape the post-conflict security environment in ways that reflect their own priorities for control, accountability, and legitimacy. Rather than marking a break with colonial COIN practice, the Sierra Leone case underscores how security operates as a vector of external authority, enabling the reconstitution of state institutions along prescribed lines. By front-loading reform during conflict, British COIN blurs the boundary between stabilisation and transformation, raising critical questions about the long-term implications of privileging order over inclusion in the architecture of peace.

Security sector reform in Sierra Leone was particularly focused on the armed forces. The tutelage of IMATT enabled the rapid professionalisation of RSLAF, producing one of the most visible institutional successes of the intervention. However, this reform trajectory

privileged military capacity over democratic accountability and, as in Malaya, reflected a technocratic mode of institutional design aimed at ensuring order rather than fostering inclusive governance. SSR in this context functioned as a mechanism of external control, consolidating elite power through centralised and depoliticised force structures.

Conversely, police and justice sector reform yielded more uneven outcomes. While efforts were made to restructure the SLP and expand access to justice, these reforms were often donor-driven, inadequately resourced, and lacked meaningful community engagement. As revealed through fieldwork, public trust in the police remains low, with persistent perceptions of political bias, coercive behaviour, and impunity – issues that SSR tenets aim to resolve but which, in practice, often remain unaddressed. This asymmetry between military and civilian reform echoes the Kenyan experience, where COIN-era structures were maintained into independence with limited transformation of internal accountability or civic trust. In both cases, policing remained a site of public mistrust and coercive practice, undermining the legitimacy of state institutions despite apparent gains in operational effectiveness.

This dynamic is best understood through the analytical framework developed in this thesis: the 'security–democratic governance nexus'. The Sierra Leone intervention exemplifies how efforts to stabilise conflict-affected states frequently embed security-first logics that both enable and constrain democratic transition. Although military reform contributed to the reestablishment of territorial control and a reduction in direct violence, it did so in ways that entrenched a form of negative peace, defined as the mere absence of violence, without substantively addressing the structural injustices and political exclusions that underpinned the conflict. In marginalised communities, personal security remains unevenly distributed, and the broader grievances of corruption, inequality and exclusion that animated civil conflict remain insufficiently redressed. The reforms restored order but did not necessarily secure democratic governance.

This critique also extends to the broader liberal peacebuilding paradigm within which the intervention was framed. Despite rhetorical commitments to local ownership and democratic transformation, SSR was executed through a heavily centralised and externally governed process. This mirrors the strategic habits identified in Malaya, where colonial officials pursued administrative control under the guise of technocratic reform, and in Kenya, where reform was subordinated to settler and metropolitan priorities. In each case, the

practical effect was the consolidation of state authority through elite accommodation and coercive stabilisation, rather than participatory or emancipatory transformation. The language of ‘minimum force’ and ‘hearts and minds’ functioned more as legitimising discourse than genuine policy restraint, enabling the institutionalisation of hierarchical security practices under the veneer of liberal governance.

To conclude, British counterinsurgency in Sierra Leone prioritised security and SSR to a significant degree, deploying institutional reform as a primary instrument of control during both the conflict and post-conflict phases. This prioritisation succeeded in restoring negative peace and re-establishing a functioning state apparatus, particularly through military reform. However, it did so at the cost of more inclusive, accountable, and democratically grounded governance. As with Malaya and Kenya, the Sierra Leone case demonstrates how British interventions, despite their differing contexts and narratives, consistently reflect a strategic preference for stabilisation through security reform, reinforcing state-centric authority while leaving deeper grievances unresolved. The Sierra Leone intervention thus stands not as a departure from earlier British COIN practice, but as its post-colonial continuation that is characterised by the persistence of coercive logics, technocratic control, and a narrowed political space for democratic transformation.

2. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what were the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector reform on armed insurgency and restoring stability in the Sierra Leone intervention?

It is certainly true that the British intervention is primarily characterised by the cessation of large-scale violence, the reassertion of state authority, and the restoration of a functioning security architecture. Operationally grounded in the logic of SSS, the intervention sought to suppress insurgency and stabilise the state through the restructuring of military and police forces. These efforts were largely successful in neutralising the RUF, securing Freetown, and enabling the broader peace process to take root. As we have observed, strategic errors on the part of the RUF and the wider international context of limiting the smuggling of blood diamonds certainly contributed to the insurgencies collapse. The deployments of British troops during *Operation Palliser* allowed for the strategic use of

military force to halt the insurgency and protect key urban centres. *Operation Basilica* improved on initial stabilisation efforts to reconstitute the SLA and commence kinetic operations against the RUF with UN support. *Barras*, the most celebrated component of the intervention, reflected the nature of British overwhelming military superiority – that when deployed against their lesser foes was irresistible. This certain helps to formulate a more accurate characterisation of force as 'appropriate' and not 'minimum'. *Silkman*, while envisioned to facilitate the final blow to the insurgency, became the representation of British commitment to wider reform following the cessation of violence. The four operations constituted a coherent strategy aimed at achieving territorial control and operational dominance: the prioritisation of security yielded immediate tactical successes, providing a framework for disarmament and creating the conditions under which ceasefire negotiations and UN peacekeeping operations could proceed effectively.

The reconstitution of RSLAF, overseen by IMATT, represented a cornerstone of early SSR. These reforms enhanced the professionalism and coherence of the military, which rapidly regained its capacity to operate under civilian command. However, while these gains were institutionally significant, they were also heavily shaped by external agendas and donor benchmarks, often at the expense of local participation and long-term sustainability. In contrast, police reform purposefully lagged behind. Despite rhetorical commitments to democratic policing, efforts to reform the SLP were hindered by a bifurcated strategy that simultaneously undertook community-based reform and paramilitary reform; under-resourcing; fragmented leadership; and persistent political interference. Fieldwork data revealed deep-seated public mistrust of the police, with perceptions of coercion, corruption, and impunity particularly acute in marginalised communities. These experiences underscore a crucial asymmetry in the SSR process: while military stabilisation progressed swiftly under external guidance, civilian policing remained mired in inefficiency and public disengagement.

These experiences underscore a crucial asymmetry in the SSR process: while military stabilisation progressed swiftly under external guidance – benefiting from sustained British oversight, clear institutional mandates, and concentrated funding – the reform of civilian policing remained mired in inefficiency, fragmented leadership, and chronic underinvestment. Unlike RSLAF, which was restructured through a coherent IMATT-supervised programme, the SLP lacked a comparable framework of support and coordination. Police reform initiatives were often short-term, situational, donor-driven, and poorly aligned with local

expectations of justice and accountability. As a result, the SLP failed to evolve into a community-oriented institution, and its continued reliance on coercive tactics exacerbated public disengagement. This disparity not only limited the reach of state legitimacy beyond militarised centres of control but also reinforced the perception that SSR was primarily concerned with regime security rather than citizen protection.

Moreover, the securitisation of reform processes during the intervention entrenched exclusionary practices. The emphasis on institutional control and elite cohesion marginalised civil society actors and sidelined the political grievances that had fuelled conflict. As with earlier British COIN operations in Malaya and Kenya, security was achieved through coercive logic disguised as liberal interventionism. The language of 'minimum force' and 'hearts and minds' served more to legitimise control than to realise inclusive governance. The intervention also provides a critical vantage point from which to reassess the COIN tenet of 'hearts and minds', which emphasises the need to secure legitimacy through civilian protection, public service provision, and participatory governance. In practice however, such rhetoric often masked a more instrumental approach, wherein public consent was presumed to follow from the restoration of order rather than being actively cultivated through inclusive governance. Fieldwork interviews revealed that while some segments of the population appreciated the return of basic security and services, many perceived the reforms as externally driven and insufficiently attuned to local needs or priorities. As in earlier British COIN campaigns, the 'hearts' were expected to follow once the 'minds' had been subdued - a logic that prioritised control over consent and placed the burden of adjustment on communities rather than institutions.

A key element of the immediate-term impact of reform relates to the COIN principle of personal security, which posits that the protection of civilians is fundamental to winning legitimacy and restoring state authority. While the British-led intervention succeeded in reducing battlefield violence and stabilising major urban centres, the immediate benefits to personal security were experienced unevenly across the population. Military reform under IMATT improved the state's capacity to defend territory and institutions, eventually fulfilling its objective of contesting the RUF. In parallel, the SLP were tasked with filling security vacuums in areas cleared of rebel presence – a role for which they were initially ill-equipped. This expectation, arising in a context still marked by armed threat and instability, contributed to a preference for forceful and paramilitarised approaches to policing. Rather than functioning as a civilian service grounded in community-based duties, the police (and the

OSD in particular) were reconstituted to align with regime protection and the restoration of central authority than public safety. The failure to deliver meaningful improvements in personal security during the early reform phase not only limited public confidence in the process but also weakened the perceived legitimacy of the post-conflict state.

The conceptual framing of the 'security–democratic governance nexus' assists in understanding these dynamics. While short-term stability and the suppression of large-scale violence initially produced a form of negative peace, these security gains nonetheless created the essential conditions under which democratic governance could be reintroduced. The reassertion of state control and the rebuilding of security institutions enabled the conduct of elections, the reopening of civic space, and the resumption of basic governmental functions. Field interviews revealed that while many citizens – particularly in rural areas, among ex-combatants, and within youth demographics – remained sceptical of state institutions, the visible restoration of order contributed to a renewed, if cautious, public engagement with the political process. In this way, security reform, though uneven and at times coercive, played a foundational role in facilitating the return to constitutional rule and the re-legitimation of state authority.

In parallel, the intervention also offers a revealing lens through which to evaluate the COIN principle of addressing root grievances, where the resolution of political, social, and economic drivers of conflict is essential for sustainable stability. However, the immediate focus on security and institutional coherence meant that broader grievance resolution was often deferred or selectively addressed. DDR and MRP programmes operated within a narrow, externally framed mandate that prioritised order over transformation. Fieldwork evidence and post-conflict assessments reveal that many of the structural drivers of conflict such as corruption, youth exclusion, unequal access to justice, and regional marginalisation remained largely intact in the immediate aftermath of stabilisation. This gap between doctrine and implementation reinforces the critique that while COIN strategies may formally acknowledge the importance of addressing grievances, they often default to security-first logics that treat grievance resolution as a secondary or long-term concern. This is understandable as a prescriptive approach to reforming security may be viewed as easier than understanding and addressing deep rooted ethnic, social, economic and political grievances. The Sierra Leone case thereby underscores the tension between the rhetoric of comprehensive COIN and the reality of stabilisation practice in fragile states.

Similarly, a reassessment of the principle of ‘minimum force’ is required. While British forces were praised for their professionalism and restraint in comparison to colonial-era campaigns, the operational context was one of embedded coercion as a tool of state reconstruction. The doctrine of ‘minimum force’ functioned less as a constraint on the use of power than as a legitimating discourse for controlled violence, particularly in the early stabilisation phase – thusly leading to a more appropriate rebranding of ‘appropriate force’. The deployment of armed units in urban centres and the militarised posture of police reform initiatives suggest that the boundary between restraint and repression remained ambiguous. Rather than preventing the institutionalisation of coercive practices, the language of ‘minimum force’ facilitated their normalisation under the rubric of technocratic reform.

In practice, the initial prioritisation of security embedded institutional logics that have proven resistant to subsequent democratic reform. Security institutions developed during this phase privileged hierarchy, centralisation, and regime protection over transparency and accountability. As donor attention waned and funding diminished, these institutions began to revert to patterns of predation, political manipulation, and public disengagement.

In conclusion, the prioritisation of security and SSR in Sierra Leone achieved immediate-term objectives by halting insurgency, reasserting state control, and rebuilding core military structures. However, these gains were accompanied by the institutionalisation of coercive practices and the marginalisation of democratic participation. The stabilisation process privileged elite bargains and external benchmarks over locally legitimate governance, producing a fragile peace that remains vulnerable to reversal. As we have observed, the pursuit of short-term order through SSS may restore stability, but it also risks entrenching the very dynamics of exclusion and authoritarianism that post-conflict reform efforts are meant to overcome.

3. If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what are the medium-term impacts or legacies of prioritising security and security sector reform for users and democratic governance in post-conflict Sierra Leone?

The medium-term legacies of prioritising security and SSR in post-conflict Sierra Leone reveal complex and often contradictory impacts for citizen-users and the provision of democratic governance. While the British-led intervention succeeded in restoring formal state authority and suppressing large-scale violence, the durability and inclusivity of these gains have proven fragile. Fieldwork reveals that SSR shaped post-conflict experiences of protection, trust, and political participation are today at odds with the normative goals of democratic consolidation.

Initial gains in military professionalisation through IMATT provided the foundation for an apolitical, civilian-controlled RSLAF. These reforms helped sustain a post-conflict absence of overt violence and bolstered state capacity to project order. However, deeper analysis shows that these reforms occurred within a technocratic and externally driven framework, which privileged elite bargains and operational functionality over local ownership or political transformation. The staffing of senior oversight positions by former military officers and the political entanglements of figures like President Bio illustrate the persistence of blurred civil–military boundaries, raising concerns about the long-term insulation of security institutions from political manipulation. There are further concerns about the sustainability of British-led reforms for armed forces professionalism, as the equipment and facilities that were created for them twenty years ago are today stagnating. This is troubling as one of the main causes of military interference in politics during the twentieth century was the degraded status of the army and its soldiers. Similarly, any reforms or political divergences that result in a loss of power for army leaders may trigger a return to political interference.

The police sector has also suffered from chronic stagnation that may be attributed to immediate-term planning errors. While early reform efforts such as the CCSSP LNP programme sought to rebuild trust and decentralise service provision, these initiatives were undermined by persistent corruption, politicisation, and strategic divergences such as adopting the wider justice-reform approaches of ASJP and JSDP. Paramilitary policing units such as the OSD were not dismantled but instead reoriented toward the suppression of political dissent under the guise of maintaining order in security vacuums. This continuity of coercion reflects a failure to transition from regime security to citizen security, reinforcing public perceptions that the police remain a tool of elite control. These outcomes contravene the counterinsurgency principle of personal security, which assert that durable peace depends not only on territorial control but also on the capacity of the state to safeguard civilian well-

being and physical integrity. While the armed forces were professionalised, the failure to achieve meaningful reform of the police leaves communities exposed to predation and mistrust, undermining the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of its citizens. As donor funding declined, the re-emergence of coercive practices and patronage networks signalled a regression to pre-reform norms. Users, particularly in rural areas and among marginalised youth, continue to report experiences of arbitrary arrest, extortion, and slow access to justice. This has contributed to enduring mistrust and the proliferation of non-state and hybrid security providers, whose coexistence with formal institutions reflects a fragmented and uneven security landscape. The proliferation of hybrid security arrangements, from LPPBs to traditional chiefs and youth taskforces, reveals both the adaptability of communities and the limits of state legitimacy. While these actors can improve local responsiveness and fill gaps in state provision, their prominence also signals the failure of SSR to construct a universal, rights-based security apparatus. In many areas, non-state providers have greater legitimacy and accessibility than formal police, further entrenching state–society disconnection.

These outcomes underscore a fundamental disjuncture between the rhetorical commitments to democratic governance and the realities of implementation. The failure to institutionalise robust mechanisms of civilian oversight, transparency, and accountability has meant that SSR has fallen short of transforming security institutions into democratic agents. Instead, the reform process reinforced existing hierarchies and enabled selective service provision, often aligned with ruling party interests and regime defence. Civil society and community actors remain marginalised in decision-making, and grievance resolution was episodic rather than systemic. This stands in contrast to counterinsurgency doctrine, which identifies the resolution of political, economic, and social grievances as central to undermining insurgent appeal and restoring legitimacy. This characterises Sierra Leone as a Galtungian ‘negative peace’ where the absence of open violence and even elections is not enough to demark a transformative peacebuilding success. The prioritisation of order over transformation meant that many of the structural drivers of conflict such as corruption, exclusion, and impunity remain unresolved in the medium term. Though British SSR policy rhetorically adhered to the principle of ‘minimum force’, in practice this doctrine functioned more as a legitimating discourse than a constraint on coercive behaviour. Field evidence suggests that excessive force, arbitrary detention, and the use of paramilitary tactics persisted throughout the post-conflict period. The deployment of armed units in urban centres and the militarised posture of police reform initiatives indicate that the boundary between restraint

and repression remain ambiguous. Rather than preventing the institutionalisation of coercive practices, the language of ‘minimum force’ facilitated their normalisation under the guise of professionalisation.

The medium-term trajectory of SSR reveals the limitations of short-termism and donor dependency. Reform initiatives were structured around short planning cycles, with six-month advisory rotations and limited continuity in technical support. The creation of MoUs should be commended as these are reflections of growing understanding within British leadership that a protracted engagement was requited to produce substantial change. In practice, the impact of MoUs was limited as they were externally driven and lacked local participation such as armed forces consultation. Many were poorly enforced, lacked follow-up, or were undermined by overlapping mandates, a lack of local knowledge or engagement and weak monitoring capacity. While symbolically important, MoUs often failed to generate meaningful accountability or shift power dynamics within the security sector. Their limited implementation reflects the broader tendency of SSR in Sierra Leone to prioritise procedural form over substantive transformation. These factors, coupled with the tendency to prioritise externally verifiable outputs over local institutional resilience, undermined reform sustainability. As external incentives waned, institutional behaviours reverted to entrenched norms, exposing the superficiality of certain procedural reforms.

Viewed through the lens of the ‘security–democratic governance nexus’, Sierra Leonean SSR reflects the enduring influence of security-first logic. This approach restored a negative peace, defined by the absence of open conflict, but did not generate the conditions for a sustainable, positive peace anchored in justice and political inclusion. While elections are held and formal democratic procedures practiced, these developments occur within a political context marked by elite dominance and weak institutional resilience. Field interviews highlighted a persistent sense of disconnection between ordinary citizens and security providers, revealing that while the state was stabilised, the state–society relationship remains fundamentally fractured.

In conclusion, the medium-term impacts of prioritising security and SSR in Sierra Leone are characterised by partial institutional success, limited public trust, and an incomplete democratic transition. The re-establishment of order and reduction in violence were critical achievements, yet these were not matched by corresponding advances in legitimacy, inclusivity, or rights-based governance. The legacies of security-first stabilisation

include an entrenched coercive culture within the police, elite-driven governance, and unresolved structural grievances. The Sierra Leone case thus exemplifies the central dilemma at the heart of the 'security–democratic governance nexus': that efforts to stabilise conflict-affected states through coercive reform can produce institutional order without generating the participatory legitimacy upon which durable peace depends.

Taken together, the Malayan Emergency, Kenyan Emergency, and Sierra Leone intervention illustrate a coherent strategic tradition in British counterinsurgency: one that systematically prioritises security and security sector reform as tools of institutional consolidation and political control. Across these cases, SSR has functioned less as a pathway to inclusive, democratic governance and more as a mechanism for stabilisation through state-centric authority. This enduring logic, repackaged in a post-colonial setting, suggests that the British approach to counterinsurgency is one of coercive security-based continuity. The final chapter now draws these threads together, offering a summative analysis of how these interventions illuminate the broader relationship between security, governance, and the politics of post-conflict order.

Chapter 7: Analysis, Future Research and Conclusion

This chapter concludes the thesis by critically evaluating the impact of British counterinsurgency practices on security prioritisation and SSR in the case study examples of the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency, and the Sierra Leone military intervention. This thesis has evaluated the immediate and medium-term consequences of prioritising security over structural reform, highlighting patterns of continuity and adaptation in British approaches to stabilisation and governance in fragile and conflict-affected states. Drawing upon contemporary SSR frameworks, counterinsurgency doctrines, and the conceptual distinctions between negative and positive peace, the chapter explores how the initial emphasis on SSS has shaped the trajectory of post-conflict democratic governance. Particular focus is applied to the ways in which security imperatives constrained broader efforts to foster inclusive political settlements and sustainable peace.

7.1 Analysis

> Research Question 1: *To what extent did British counterinsurgency prioritise security and security sector reform in the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone military intervention?*

This thesis has considered how British counterinsurgency operations during the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency, and the Sierra Leone intervention approached the prioritisation of security and the implementation of security sector reform. Across these cases, a clear pattern emerges: the immediate focus of intervention was the reassertion of state authority, primarily through processes best characterised as security sector stabilisation. British efforts centred on strengthening or reconstructing military, police and intelligence services to suppress insurgency and restore order. While the contexts of the conflicts differed (colonial emergencies in Malaya and Kenya, and a post-colonial humanitarian intervention in Sierra Leone) the underlying logic of prioritising security as a prerequisite for political control remained largely consistent. This conclusion reflects on the extent to which security was prioritised over structural reform, the variations in the design and implementation of SSR, and the broader implications for the relationship between security, development, and democratic governance in fragile and conflict-affected states.

An examination of the three cases illustrates both the consistency of British efforts to stabilise security institutions as an immediate priority, and the considerable variation in how, and to what extent, security sector reform was subsequently pursued to support broader governance objectives. British counterinsurgency strategy across the three case studies consistently prioritised security during the early phases of intervention. Stabilisation was not pursued as a temporary measure pending reform, but rather as a strategy aimed at restoring order through institutionally entrenched means. While Sierra Leone differed in its post-colonial, multilateral framing, the initial intervention followed a comparable trajectory: the stabilisation of Freetown and surrounding areas was achieved through targeted deployments and support to the Sierra Leone Army (SLA), forming the foundation for subsequent British-led SSR. Across all three contexts, the prioritisation of SSS illustrates that British counterinsurgency has treated security as both the precondition for and mechanism of institutional control, often preceding and constraining the scope of political or democratic transformation.

The extent to which SSR was subsequently pursued varied considerably across the cases. In Malaya, institutional changes were largely instrumental and geared towards increasing operational effectiveness, rather than embedding democratic oversight or participatory governance. Reform centred primarily on the expansion of the police and intelligence services, particularly the Special Branch, to better monitor and control the population. Political reform, while publicly emphasised, remained secondary to the overriding priority of defeating the insurgency. Measures to regulate political activity were designed less to empower democratic participation than to stabilise governance structures under tight administrative control. Although Malaya moved towards formal independence with functioning state institutions, these were shaped by the securitised practices of the Emergency, embedding a model of governance in which security concerns routinely overrode broader political inclusion. Kenya provides a clearer example of the limitations of British-led SSR: reform efforts were largely absent, and the coercive security architecture created during the Emergency was inherited by the postcolonial state. These structures were later used to suppress opposition and consolidate executive power, undermining democratic transition and recreating public perceptions of regime defence. In contrast, Sierra Leone saw the most deliberate effort to implement SSR as a sustained post-conflict strategy. Military reform was comparatively successful, leading to improved professionalism and civilian oversight of the armed forces. However, police and justice reform proved far more challenging. British-led

efforts to depoliticise and professionalise the SLP often lacked sufficient local ownership and legitimacy. Reform processes were highly technocratic, shaped around donor benchmarks and external timelines, and frequently failed to engage meaningfully with the political roots of insecurity or historical grievances. Attempts to reorientate to a more reformative agenda in areas such as justice provision produced jarring redirections of strategy and undermined efforts that were already underway. For example, the redirection of funds away from police reform and to wider justice reform have severely hampered police improvements. SSR, where it occurred, was often implemented to facilitate regime stability and international withdrawal, rather than to fundamentally transform state–society relations.

These differences also reflect important temporal variations. In Malaya and Kenya, security restructuring was undertaken during the conflict as part of wartime counterinsurgency operations, primarily to enhance immediate state control. In Sierra Leone, by contrast, SSR evolved into a longer-term, internationally supported project aimed at post-conflict reconstruction, albeit still framed heavily around the need for state stability. Despite the apparent evolution in language and international normative frameworks, British approaches to SSR across these cases reveal significant continuities. While doctrine increasingly emphasised the importance of legitimacy, local ownership and political reform, in practice, security imperatives consistently dominated, subordinating broader democratisation goals to the requirements of order, elite accommodation and regime consolidation. This gap between doctrine and implementation illustrates the persistent tension between the ideals of liberal peacebuilding and the strategic habits inherited from earlier counterinsurgency practice.

A deeper tension is revealed within British counterinsurgency strategy, between the commonly referenced *security–development nexus* and what may be more accurately described as a *security–democratic governance nexus*. While the former assumes a linear progression from security to development, the latter captures the competing imperatives of restoring order and fostering accountable governance. In all three case studies, security certainly led to the holding of democratic elections and contributes to the ongoing defence of democratic government and its norms and institutions. Across all three case studies, SSR was deployed in ways that emphasised the reassertion of authority and the containment of threat, often at the expense of local participation or the redress of structural grievances. This dynamic is especially visible when viewed through Galtung's conceptual distinction between negative and positive peace. British counterinsurgency efforts consistently achieved negative

peace that is defined by the absence of widespread violence; but often fell short of achieving the conditions necessary for positive peace, characterised by social justice, political inclusivity, and institutional legitimacy. In Malaya and Kenya, emergency-era institutions laid the groundwork for postcolonial regimes that prioritised and continue to prioritise control over democratic accountability. In Sierra Leone, SSR contributed to some improvements in institutional capacity but left deeper political and social grievances unresolved, creating an uneven and fragile peace.

Taken together, these cases illustrate both adaptation and continuity in British interventionism. While the discourse of SSR has evolved over time, the underlying strategic logic of prioritising security, stability and regime durability over participatory democratic transformation remains evident. The prioritisation of SSS across all three cases was clear and consistent; the prioritisation of SSR was highly variable: minimal and instrumental in Kenya, modest and tactical in Malaya, and more deliberate, though externally led, in Sierra Leone. In each case, security sector reform was framed less as an intrinsic good than as a mechanism to enable external exit strategies and consolidate incumbent power. The persistence of such approaches challenges prevailing narratives of British counterinsurgency success and underscores the inherent limitations of externally driven SSR initiatives that privilege state-centric stability over citizen-centred governance. Ultimately, these findings highlight the critical need to reassess how contemporary interventions conceptualise the relationship between security, reform, and democratic consolidation in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Having established that British counterinsurgency operations consistently prioritised security as a central organising principle, it is now necessary to consider the immediate-term impacts of this approach. The following section examines how the emphasis on security and security sector stabilisation influenced the suppression of armed insurgency and the restoration of stability during the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency, and the Sierra Leone intervention.

Research Question 2: *If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what were the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and security sector reform on armed insurgency and restoring stability in the Malayan Emergency, the Kenyan Emergency and the Sierra Leone intervention?*

The second objective of this thesis was to critically examine the immediate-term impacts of prioritising security and SSR within the three British counterinsurgency case study examples. Using a comparative historical framework, this analysis has explored how the prioritisation of security fundamentally shaped both the suppression of insurgency and the restoration of formal state stability. The UK/NATO Allied Joint Doctrine for Counter-Insurgency (AJP-3.27) and the US Army Counterinsurgency Handbook have provided critical insight into the interplay between immediate tactical imperatives and the broader political, social, and institutional consequences of security-led stabilisation efforts.

Across the three case studies, British COIN strategies consistently reflected a pattern of security sector stabilisation that emerged as a fundamental prerequisite for reasserting state authority and suppressing insurgencies. Immediate tactical achievements were frequently notable, often realised through coercive measures. Although effective in rapidly reasserting territorial control and dismantling insurgent networks, these approaches inherently constrained the potential for comprehensive and democratic institutional reforms aligned with normative SSR principles.

In the Malayan context, immediate stabilisation was executed through forced population relocations, substantial expansion and empowerment of the regular military and paramilitary police, and strict enforcement of emergency legislation. These coercive measures significantly disrupted the operational capabilities of the MCP/MNLA, facilitating the restoration of governmental control. The reality of a security-first approach in Malaya challenges the principles of the doctrinal manuals and this study highlights that in practice, the provision of personal security was superficial and strategically/politically motivated. Similarly, immediate order was prioritised over genuine grievance redress. The direction of the war remained the responsibility of the British Military Authority throughout, with only limited reform to include citizens in governance and oversight at the nadir of the conflict. These coercive tactics starkly conflicted with normative SSR principles emphasising civilian

oversight, transparency, and respect for human rights, ultimately marginalising meaningful political participation, entrenching ethnic divisions, and severely limiting opportunities for genuine security sector accountability and inclusive governance.

In Kenya, coercive stabilisation strategies, epitomised by mass detentions, forced relocations, and militarised policing successfully dismantled the Mau Mau insurgency's operational structures. As in Malaya, the British maintained control over all aspects of the conflict and Kenyan society with little attempt to foster local governance. Despite this tactical success, such strategies profoundly violated normative SSR principles of accountability, justice, and inclusivity, thus exacerbating rather than addressing underlying grievances. The extreme brutality, including extrajudicial killings, executions, torture, and collective punishments, significantly eroded colonial legitimacy, amplified societal divisions, and deeply compromised subsequent SSR processes aimed at fostering democratic governance and accountable security institutions.

In Sierra Leone, the British intervention similarly prioritised rapid operational control to stabilise Freetown and halt the RUF’s advances. While these immediate actions restored essential personal security by ending overt violence, deeper grievances related to corruption, heavy-handed policing tactics, and inefficient judicial systems were inadequately addressed. Such persistent issues underscored an incomplete adherence to normative SSR principles, demonstrating the inherent difficulties in transitioning from short-term stabilisation to comprehensive reform aimed at addressing root grievances and fostering inclusive governance.

A critical analytical distinction made within this thesis between SSS and broader SSR highlights the complex and often problematic interplay between immediate operational imperatives and long-term normative objectives. SSS, as outlined within this investigation, refers to the short-term enhancement of security capabilities with an overriding focus on the restoration of order and suppression of insurgency, prioritising tactical and operational effectiveness over adherence to democratic governance norms. By contrast, normative SSR, as articulated through frameworks such as the DCAF 2006 and 2019 principles, demands a holistic and long-term transformative process aimed at building security institutions grounded in accountability, civilian oversight, transparency, human rights, professionalisation, and inclusivity. This thesis finds that immediate-term stabilisation efforts across the Malayan, Kenyan, and Sierra Leonean cases consistently entrenched institutional behaviours

fundamentally at odds with these normative aspirations. Rather than laying the groundwork for sustainable democratic security governance, SSS practices reinforced coercive behaviours, fostered cultures of impunity within security forces, and perpetuated structural inequalities based on ethnicity, political affiliation, and socio-economic status. The prioritisation of immediate personal security without meaningful engagement with fundamental political and social grievances perpetuated structural violence, diminished state legitimacy, and undermined the sustainability of peace. The prioritisation of short-term control and suppression mechanisms often created self-reinforcing institutional logics that resisted subsequent reform efforts. Security forces conditioned to operate with unchecked authority and minimal accountability during stabilisation phases proved resistant to transformation, undermining the prospects for embedding principles of transparency, rights protection, and public trust.

Moreover, the failure to address underlying grievances and foster local ownership during SSS initiatives compounded the challenge. By sidelining inclusive, participatory processes in favour of externally-driven, elite-centric security arrangements, British interventions often entrenched social divisions and institutionalised exclusionary governance practices. This not only constrained the scope for post-conflict SSR but also ensured that a negative peace, that is defined by the cessation of violence and perhaps uncontested democratic elections, was not translated into positive peace that is characterised by justice, equity, and participatory governance. Thus, the legacy of SSS as practised in these cases was to privilege immediate security at the expense of long-term institutional resilience, societal trust, and political legitimacy, posing enduring challenges to peacebuilding and democratic consolidation.

The holding of elections during or following stabilisation efforts has often been cited as a key indicator of success. However, this thesis demonstrates that elections alone are insufficient to assess the restoration of legitimate governance or societal reconciliation. In Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, elections occurred within heavily securitised environments, often following extensive coercive campaigns. While elections provided a veneer of restored normality, they did not inherently signify genuine democratic consolidation or address the deep structural grievances that fuelled insurgency. Elections, when held without concurrent reforms to ensure civil liberties, inclusivity, and genuine political competition, risk becoming procedural markers rather than substantive indicators of

positive peace. As such, electoral events must be critically assessed within the broader context of governance practices, civil rights, and the inclusiveness of political processes.

Incorporating detailed user-level perspectives provides critical insights into the immediate impacts of prioritising security. In Malaya and Kenya, security forces were predominantly perceived by local populations as oppressive agents of state control rather than legitimate protectors, generating enduring mistrust and resentment towards state institutions. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, despite initial improvements in personal security, continued concerns over the extent and sustainability of reforms, police misconduct, systemic corruption, and judicial inadequacies revealed considerable shortcomings in addressing civilian needs, thereby complicating subsequent normative SSR efforts.

Turning to the COIN frameworks highlighted in the literature review, we previously observed the value placed upon securing personal safety for civilian populations, addressing legitimate political, economic, and social grievances, and building popular legitimacy for government institutions. The findings of this research suggest that whilst British COIN campaigns in the case studies achieved established tactical security objectives, they often failed to fully embody these doctrinal ideals. In Malaya, although population resettlement and the strengthening of the Malayan Police enhanced short-term security, the deep grievances of the ethnic Chinese community regarding land, political representation, and discrimination were insufficiently addressed. This limited the government's ability to transform tactical military successes into durable legitimacy gains. Similarly, in Kenya, the excessive use of force and widespread human rights abuses fundamentally contradicted COIN principles advocating minimum force and the protection of civilians. British operations focused on dismantling the Mau Mau military threat but neglected to resolve land grievances, political disenfranchisement, and economic marginalisation, which continued to fester and erode trust in colonial and post-colonial institutions alike. In Sierra Leone, while the British-led intervention quickly restored physical security, broader grievances related to governance failure, economic exclusion, and judicial inefficiency remained inadequately addressed during the initial stabilisation phase. Although the later transition to peacebuilding frameworks partly sought to integrate COIN principles concerning political reform and reconciliation, the early emphasis on security imperatives limited the depth and inclusivity of these efforts.

We may therefore observe a persistent gap between COIN doctrinal principles and operational practice in these cases. Personal security was prioritised, but was often narrowly interpreted as physical protection from insurgent violence, rather than a holistic approach encompassing freedom from coercion, equitable access to justice, and political enfranchisement. Indeed, ensuring personal security in each of the cases was motivated more by political and strategic objectives such as severing support for insurgency rather than from a place of care for the people. Similarly, the need to address the root causes of insurgency, central to modern COIN thinking, was subordinated to immediate military objectives. Applying COIN principles retrospectively reveals that while British operations were effective in delivering negative peace through the suppression of violence, they frequently failed to build the foundations for positive peace. True adherence to COIN doctrine would have required not only defeating insurgencies militarily but also meaningfully transforming the political and social environments that had enabled them to emerge. Recognising this disjuncture between doctrine and practice provides critical lessons for contemporary and future interventions. Tactical security gains, while necessary, must be embedded within broader strategies that genuinely address underlying grievances, foster inclusive governance, and build legitimacy from the bottom up, in line with both COIN and SSR normative frameworks.

Building on these insights, it becomes evident that there is a significant and under-explored overlap between COIN objectives, SSS practices, and the challenges encountered in achieving sustainable SSR. While COIN doctrine advocates for addressing grievances and securing popular legitimacy, in practice, SSS tends to prioritise short-term operational control often at the expense of these broader objectives. The ‘security-first’ logic to immediately stabilise often results in reinforcing coercive practices and hierarchical command structures within security institutions, creating significant obstacles for subsequent SSR efforts aiming to instil principles such as civilian oversight, transparency, and accountability. Thus, the transitional pathway from SSS to SSR is fraught with tension: the practices and cultures entrenched during SSS phases frequently persist into the post-conflict period, undermining attempts to transform security institutions in line with democratic norms. The experience in Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone demonstrates that unless SSS is consciously designed with future SSR imperatives in mind, the stabilisation process risks entrenching precisely the kinds of institutional structures, beliefs and practices that SSR is meant to overcome. This overlap reveals that COIN, SSS, and SSR cannot be treated as entirely separate phases but must be

conceptualised as a continuous spectrum. Immediate stabilisation measures must be planned with an explicit view towards enabling subsequent democratic reforms, ensuring that short-term security does not preclude long-term governance and human security goals. Integrating COIN operational success with normative SSR frameworks requires a shift from seeing security solely as a precondition for reform, to understanding it as an evolving process that must be aligned with principles of accountability, participation, and justice from the outset.

Drawing upon the SSR principles discussed in the literature review, we may further refine our assessment of SSS and broader SSR. As we have observed, the principles emphasise a normative framework centred on good governance, rule of law, accountability, transparency, local ownership, inclusivity, and the primacy of human rights. These principles offer a critical lens through which the examined cases can be reinterpreted. The experience of SSS in Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone shows a systematic failure to adhere to these contemporary SSR standards. In each instance, the priority accorded to rapid operational control over building inclusive, transparent, and accountable security structures diverged markedly from the DCAF's emphasis on human security and democratic governance. The DCAF framework also highlights the necessity of addressing root causes of insecurity and embedding reforms within broader political and societal transformations. Yet, British interventions often neglected the social and political grievances that underpinned conflict, focusing narrowly on tactical suppression. This neglect inhibited the formation of resilient, legitimate security institutions. In Sierra Leone, while efforts to professionalise the military achieved partial success, the police are plagued by corruption and public mistrust. SSR principles also highlight the importance of local ownership and in the cases studied, reforms were largely externally driven and elite-focused, with limited engagement of local communities or insurgent constituencies. This top-down approach undermined the long-term legitimacy and sustainability of security sector institutions, reinforcing patterns of exclusion and marginalisation that the DCAF framework seeks to dismantle. Thus, applying SSR principles retrospectively demonstrates that while SSS secured short-term stability, it often sowed the seeds of future fragility by neglecting the foundational elements necessary for legitimate, accountable, and inclusive security governance. Future interventions should be more deliberately aligned with such normative frameworks, ensuring that immediate security gains are underpinned by durable, participatory reforms capable of fostering sustainable peace and democratic resilience.

In conclusion, this thesis demonstrates that immediate stabilisation through prioritising security was undeniably effective in short-term insurgency suppression and restored governmental authority; however, these immediate successes came at substantial long-term costs. Future interventions must consciously reconcile immediate security imperatives with normative SSR principles, explicitly integrating long-term institutional accountability, inclusivity, and legitimacy. Such an integrated approach is essential for achieving sustainable positive peace, underpinned by genuine political reconciliation, social justice, and robust democratic governance.

> Research Question 3: *If indeed British counterinsurgency prioritised security and security sector reform, what are the medium-term impacts or legacies of prioritising security and security sector reform for users and democratic governance in post-conflict Malaysia, Kenya and Sierra Leone?*

The third objective of this thesis was to assess the medium-term impacts of prioritising security and SSR on users and democratic governance in post-conflict Malaysia, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. Building upon the immediate-term analysis of security prioritisation and its institutional consequences, we have observed how the approaches of British COIN and SSS have shaped the quality of post-conflict governance and the experiences of civilian populations. In doing so, we may now observe the broader lessons regarding the interrelationship between COIN, SSS, and SSR processes, particularly when assessed against normative SSR standards. Central to this analysis is the security–democratic governance nexus, whereby the quality of security provision after conflict is intimately linked to the type of political order that emerges. Where security institutions are accountable and rights-respecting, they can reinforce trust and participation; where they are coercive and opaque, they perpetuate exclusion and authoritarianism.

In Malaysia, the Emergency period's emphasis on coercive control, population management, and security-driven governance left a durable imprint on post-conflict democratic development. Although Malaysia transitioned to formal independence and has maintained strong political stability, the security structures and practices institutionalised during the Emergency persisted well into the post-colonial era. Emergency regulations, broad policing powers, and a deeply entrenched surveillance apparatus have constrained political

freedoms and civil liberties since independence; and for the civilian population, personal security from insurgent violence was achieved, but at the cost of a restricted political space. Different segments of society experienced these impacts unevenly: urban elites generally benefited from the stability provided, while rural communities, ethnic minorities, and political dissidents continued and continue to face surveillance, discrimination, and exclusion. This trajectory revealed a fundamental failure to embed SSR principles of accountability, transparency, and local ownership within security institutions. Elections, although regular, operate in an environment that limits genuine contestation, illustrating how procedural democracy was not matched by substantive political inclusion. Comparatively, Malaysia managed to maintain stronger state stability and institutional coherence than the other cases, but at the expense of deeply embedded democratic limitations. One plausible explanation for such ongoing stability is Malaysia's relationship with other strong democratic systems such as the UK and Australia. The security services of Malayasia have certainly benefitted from this ongoing relationship. The Emergency-era security architecture provided a durable framework for regime stability and economic growth; however, it also entrenched negative practices that remain pervasive. The regularity of elections and the absence of major internal conflict gave the impression of democratic normalcy at the end of the Emergency, yet in practice, significant barriers to political pluralism, press freedom, and civil society participation have endured. This paradox, of institutional resilience coexisting with constrained democratic space, highlights the complex legacy of security-first counterinsurgency approaches and underscores the tension between maintaining immediate state authority and fostering the conditions necessary for genuine democratic governance over the medium term. This outcome illustrates how security-first strategies that ensure order but constrain freedoms create a shallow form of democratic governance: electoral processes exist, but the deeper foundations of accountability, participation, and civil liberties remain undermined.

In Kenya, the medium-term impacts of Emergency-era security practices proved deeply damaging to democratic governance. The use of mass detention, collective punishment, and systemic violence against the wider Kikuyu population during the Mau Mau rebellion generated enduring societal grievances and entrenched patterns of authoritarian governance. Following independence, security institutions were harnessed by post-colonial elites to suppress political dissent and maintain control. For users, particularly among historically marginalised ethnic communities, interactions with the security sector continued

to be marked by fear, coercion, and a profound lack of trust. The everyday experience of security for ordinary citizens, especially rural Kikuyu and opposition activists, was characterised throughout the latter twentieth century by arbitrary detention, harassment, and political exclusion. Democratic governance structures nominally existed but were hollowed by practices of electoral manipulation, repression, and a culture of impunity within security forces. The failure to uphold human rights, foster civilian oversight, and develop inclusive security structures are antithetical to SSR tenets, and meant that security institutions remained sources of insecurity rather than protectors of democratic order. Elections offered symbolic legitimacy but concealed underlying authoritarian practices. The absence of meaningful accountability mechanisms, such as independent police oversight and judicial independence, has perpetuated a fragile democratic veneer that excludes broad segments of society from political participation. Compared to Malaysia and Sierra Leone, Kenya demonstrated the most severe authoritarian entrenchment, where the security-first ethos of the Emergency period fundamentally undermined the possibilities for genuine democratic reform. The systematic use of violence, detention without trial, and the suppression of political opposition created a security apparatus that was seamlessly adapted by post-independence elites to entrench executive dominance. As a result, the post-colonial Kenyan state was characterised by a concentration of power in the presidency, a securitised approach to governance, and limited space for opposition or civil society engagement. Efforts at political liberalisation were repeatedly undercut by the resilience of security institutions, who are accustomed to operating outside civilian oversight – rendering meaningful democratic reform exceptionally difficult. This enduring legacy of authoritarian practices illustrates the profound long-term consequences of counterinsurgency strategies that prioritised control over accountability and inclusivity. Thus, the security-democratic governance nexus in Kenya was particularly distorted: security institutions, far from underpinning legitimate political authority, became instruments of exclusion and repression, systematically undermining democratic consolidation.

In Sierra Leone, British intervention succeeded in halting large-scale violence and re-establishing state authority, but the medium-term trajectory of democratic governance and security provision remained deeply problematic. While the armed forces appear to exist in an apolitical state, the truth is more complex. The twice election of President Bio is the most overt example of military infiltration of politics, but the staffing of senior civilian oversight positions by ex-military commanders is common practice. As noted, this author is concerned

with the reliability of RSLAF to remain outside of politics if the leadership of the country becomes less hospitable due to their status as civilians. While the restructuring of RSLAF achieved some professionalisation, the SLP remain plagued by corruption, inefficiency, and public mistrust. Users experience a narrow form of personal security, marked by the absence of overt warfare but undermined by persistent police abuses, arbitrary arrests, and slow judicial processes. Rural communities, youth populations, and former combatants were particularly vulnerable to these abuses, perpetuating cycles of exclusion and mistrust. Partial service to these groups highlights the consequences of failed decentralisation and attempts to create a universal service. Moreover, sustainability challenges increasingly undermined initial reform efforts. Without consistent funding, adequate salaries, or improvements to the living and service conditions of security personnel, there is a marked risk of reversion to pre-reform practices. As financial support waned and donor attention has shifted, the incentives for professional behaviour are diminishing, and patterns of corruption, abuse, and political manipulation within the police are re-emerging. This dynamic highlighted a critical vulnerability in SSR processes: without embedding reforms within resilient political and economic structures, gains achieved during initial stabilisation efforts are likely to prove fragile and susceptible to reversal. Politically, although elections were restored, democratic participation remained shallow, with power concentrated among elites who often continued practices of patronage and exclusion. The failure to integrate SSR reforms fully with broader governance reforms has undermined the broader peacebuilding process and the consolidation of positive peace. Compared to Malaysia and Kenya, Sierra Leone demonstrates significant fragility, where initial international support produced visible short-term reforms that are proving to be unsustainable without enduring political and societal transformation. Although the intervention rapidly restored formal security structures, these gains lacked depth and resilience. Critical areas such as judicial reform, police accountability, and the development of effective civilian oversight mechanisms were either inadequately addressed or left dependent on external technical assistance. As external funding diminished, the structural weaknesses of Sierra Leone's institutions have been laid bare, revealing an over-reliance on donor-driven reforms rather than domestically embedded change. Furthermore, societal divisions rooted in the conflict remain largely unresolved, and governance continues to be dominated by a narrow elite, limiting broad-based political participation and reinforcing cycles of exclusion and disillusionment. This acute fragility highlights the fundamental limitations of short-term, externally supported stabilisation efforts when not paired with comprehensive, locally owned, and politically inclusive state-building strategies.

Taken together, these cases reveal important lessons about the medium-term consequences of prioritising security during COIN and stability operations. First, they demonstrate that stabilisation strategies, when overly focused on coercive control and rapid restoration of order, create institutional path dependencies that are resistant to later reform. The security cultures of coercion, impunity, and executive dominance – established during conflict – persist into the post-conflict period, making the goals of SSR much harder to achieve. Efforts to democratise security provision and governance are constrained by the very practices and structures that enabled initial stabilisation, a dynamic made more difficult when local ownership and civic participation are marginalised in favour of elite- or internationally-driven governance.

The conceptual lens of the security–democratic governance nexus offers a vital framework for understanding the long-term consequences of security reform during COIN operations. This nexus holds that the nature of security provision directly shapes the quality of democratic governance: where security institutions are rights-respecting, transparent, and accountable, they can foster political legitimacy, participation, and trust in the state. Conversely, where security forces are coercive, opaque, and politically manipulated, they reinforce exclusion, impunity, and authoritarianism. In Malaysia, Kenya, and Sierra Leone, the failure to embed democratic principles within the architecture of post-conflict security provision consistently undermined broader efforts at democratic consolidation. Understanding SSR through the security–democratic governance nexus highlights that reforming security institutions is not simply about enhancing operational capacity but fundamentally about reconstituting the relationship between the state and its citizens. This framework makes clear that sustainable peace and democratic resilience depend not merely on restoring order but on transforming security governance itself into a foundation for inclusive, accountable, and participatory political life

Second, as noted in the observations of immediate impacts: these cases highlight the inadequacy of viewing COIN, SSS, and SSR as discrete phases. Instead, there is a critical continuity between immediate security measures and long-term political development. When COIN operations and SSS initiatives neglect to embed principles of accountability, inclusivity, transparency, and rule of law from the outset, they sow the seeds of future governance challenges. SSR, therefore, cannot simply be an afterthought to successful stabilisation as it must be anticipated and incorporated into the design of initial interventions if durable democratic governance is to be achieved. Critically, elections alone cannot be

treated as sufficient indicators of democratic success if they are not underpinned by genuine security sector reform, civic participation, and protections for political rights.

Third, these findings underline the gap between achieving negative peace and positive peace. Although COIN and SSS strategies succeeded in suppressing insurgencies and restoring order, they often entrenched patterns of exclusion, authoritarianism, and insecurity for users. Without deliberate and sustained efforts to reform security institutions, address historical grievances, and broaden political participation in line normative SSR principles, the legacy of security prioritisation risks perpetuating instability and undermining public trust in governance. The sustainability of reform efforts is further jeopardised when external funding diminishes and domestic political will falters, allowing security forces to revert to coercive practices that undermine democratic consolidation.

These findings emphasise the importance of framing stabilisation not merely as a technical or security-driven process, but as an inherently political undertaking. The prioritisation of immediate security objectives, while essential to restoring order, must be consciously balanced with a commitment to democratic norms, human rights, and inclusive governance from the earliest phases of intervention. Stabilisation strategies must therefore integrate political, social, and economic dimensions alongside security operations, recognising that sustainable peace requires more than the cessation of violence; it demands the creation of resilient, legitimate institutions rooted in public trust. The medium-term impacts observed across Malaysia, Kenya, and Sierra Leone further reveal that SSR cannot be compartmentalised or delayed until after stabilisation is achieved. Rather, SSR must be understood as a continuum that begins during initial SSS efforts, with reforms deliberately embedded into the practices and structures established at the outset. This integrated approach requires aligning operational security priorities with long-term democratic governance goals, ensuring that the seeds of accountability, civilian oversight, inclusivity, and rule of law are planted early and nurtured consistently.

Ultimately, the experience of these three cases underlines that interventions which prioritise security without a parallel focus on political transformation risk entrenching authoritarian practices, exacerbating societal divisions, and undermining the very foundations of democratic governance. A security- or stabilisation-first logic that fails to engage deeply with questions of justice, legitimacy, and participation may not produce sustainable peace as there are certainly consequences of the estrangement of certain sections of society. This may

not initially take the form of the return of open conflict, but manifests as social unrest, deviance and perhaps terrorism. Instead, future intervention strategies must consciously embed the principles of positive peace within the architecture of stabilisation itself, ensuring that security serves as a bridge to inclusive and accountable state-building rather than as an obstacle to it.

7.2 Future Research

This study has demonstrated the persistent tensions between security-first stabilisation and the achievement of positive peace and democratic governance. However, important questions remain that future research could address. Firstly, further comparative research could explore how different external actors beyond Britain, such as France, the United States, or multilateral organisations like the UN – have conceptualised and operationalised the relationship between stabilisation, SSR, and democratic governance in post-conflict environments. Such studies would help to establish whether the patterns identified here are specific to British interventionism or more widely characteristic of international peacebuilding efforts. Secondly, longitudinal research could investigate the sustainability of SSR outcomes in Sierra Leone and comparable cases over an even longer timeframe, particularly as external donor funding continues to decline. Future studies could examine how security institutions evolve once external oversight diminishes, assessing whether earlier reforms persist, regress, or transform under renewed domestic political pressures. Thirdly, future research could place greater emphasis on subnational variation within post-conflict states. This thesis has largely approached each case at the national level; however, regional disparities in security provision, governance quality, and public trust may reveal important patterns of uneven SSR success and failures, especially between urban centres and rural areas. Fourthly, there is scope for more granular research focusing specifically on the police sector within SSR, particularly regarding public trust, everyday practices of security provision, and the lived experiences of marginalised groups. As this study has shown, policing reforms often lag behind military reforms, yet everyday policing is central to state legitimacy and citizen security. Fifthly, future scholarship could develop more integrated analytical frameworks that link immediate stabilisation strategies with long-term SSR outcomes. Further conceptual work could refine models of intervention that deliberately embed accountability, inclusivity, and human rights norms into early stabilisation planning,

rather than treating them as separate post-conflict phases. Finally, given the increasing emphasis on 'local ownership' in contemporary SSR discourse, future studies could critically examine how local political dynamics, societal trust, and informal security networks interact with externally driven reforms. In particular, investigating how local actors adapt, resist, or co-opt SSR initiatives would provide a more nuanced understanding of why externally-led reforms often fall short of their normative ambitions.

7.3 Conclusion

This thesis has demonstrated that British counterinsurgency practices, across both colonial and post-colonial contexts, has consistently shaped SSR through a logic of security-first stabilisation. While these approaches were often effective in suppressing insurgency and reasserting state authority, they did so at the expense of structural reform, local participation, and the long-term transformation of state-society relations. The interventions in Malaya, Kenya, and Sierra Leone reveal a pattern in which stabilisation efforts, although restoring order, entrenched coercive practices and constrained the development of democratic governance. The resulting peace was frequently defined more by the absence of violence than by the presence of justice, inclusivity, or legitimacy.

By tracing this trajectory from the late colonial period to the early twenty-first century, this thesis contributes both empirically and conceptually to the fields of counterinsurgency, SSR, and peacebuilding. Through the integration of archival research with original fieldwork in Sierra Leone, it offers a rare methodological synthesis that brought together long-term institutional analysis and user-centred perspectives. This approach enabled a grounded understanding of how strategic habits, operational doctrines, and institutional frameworks persisted, and in some cases adapted, across different geopolitical and historical settings. In doing so, the study bridged the gap between the normative aspirations found in SSR and COIN doctrine and the empirical realities of implementation and reception on the ground.

Conceptually, the thesis introduced the *security-democratic governance nexus* as a framework for understanding how security provision during and after conflict does not

merely precede democratic governance but fundamentally shapes its form and limits. The findings showed that a predominant focus on operational control during stabilisation frequently undermined the broader goals of democratic accountability and institutional inclusivity. This challenged the assumptions of liberal peacebuilding, which often posit a linear transition from order to reform and from negative peace to positive peace.

From a policy perspective, the thesis underscored the limitations of externally driven SSR models that treat stabilisation, reform, and democratisation as distinct and sequential phases. Instead, a more integrated approach must be employed, whereby principles of local legitimacy, human rights, and democratic accountability are embedded from the outset of intervention. Particular attention was drawn to the enduring influence of decisions made in the early stages of crisis, especially regarding the design, empowerment, and oversight of security institutions. These formative choices often outlasted external engagement and continued to shape post-conflict governance in ways that were difficult to reverse.

More broadly, the study served as a cautionary reflection on the long-term consequences of privileging control over reform and security over participation. While the pursuit of short-term stability may be politically expedient and operationally necessary, it must not obscure the imperative of building inclusive, responsive, and accountable governance structures. The legacy of British counterinsurgency revealed how initial decisions about security governance became embedded in political settlements and warned against repeating such patterns in contemporary peacebuilding under the language of reform.

Ultimately, this thesis provided a historically grounded, empirically detailed, and conceptually original contribution to the study of counterinsurgency, security reform, and post-conflict governance. It argued that peace is not achieved through military victory or institutional design alone, but through the construction of governance systems that reflect the rights, needs, and aspirations of the communities they serve. As international actors continue to engage in fragile and conflict-affected states, the critical question remains not simply how order is restored, but whose order is being established—and at what cost. Only by placing such questions at the centre of intervention strategy can the aspiration for a more inclusive, durable, and just peace be meaningfully realised.

Glossary

Batang Kail Massacre – A town in the Hulu Selangor District of Malaysia. 24 unarmed Chinese civilians were killed by the Scots Guards on 12th December 1948.

Civil Defence Force (CDF) – A collection of informal and ad-hoc groups established by civilians in Sierra Leone to defend communities against attack. CDF groups were later incorporated into the wider structures of the Sierra Leone security forces.

Counterinsurgency (COIN) – A military or political action taken to supress the activities of guerillas or revolutionaries.

Department for International Development (DfID) – A UK ministerial department (1997-2020) that was responsible for administering foreign aid and promoting development.

Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) – The Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) military intervention.

Executive Outcomes (EO) – A South African mercenary company, contracted by the Sierra Leone government in the 1990s.

Family Support Unit (FSU) – A branch of the Sierra Leone Police that provides access to justice for citizens.

Forward Operating Base/Forward Patrol Base (FOB/FPB) – Military outposts located along the Guinean and Liberian borders with Sierra Leone. These outposts maintain border integrity and provide an early warning against cross-border incursions.

Hearts and Minds – A counterinsurgency approach that employs the concomitant application of force; and addressing political grievances and developmental concerns to win popular support and defeat armed insurgency.

Internal Security Unit (ISU) – The paramilitary wing of the Sierra Leone Police in the Stevens/Momoh one-party state. Latterly renamed the Special Security Division.

International Military Assistance Training Team (IMATT) – The predominantly British international assistance mission to support the reformation of the Sierra Leone Army.

International Security Advisory Team (ISAT) – The later version of IMATT that supported wider security sector and justice reform in Sierra Leone.

Kamajor – A sub-faction of the CDF that employed traditional hunting skills, brutal discipline and mysticism to combat the RUF.

Local Needs Policing (LNP) – A policing doctrine that emphasises community-orientated services; and the provision of personal security and access to justice through decentralisation of the police force.

Local Police Partnership Board (LPPB) – Cooperative boards that are responsible for community-level security in settlements across Sierra Leone.

Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) – A predominantly Chinese resistance group founded in Malaya during World War II to combat the Japanese occupation of 1941-1945.

Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) – the military wing of the Malayan Communist Party insurgency.

Memorandum of Understanding – A series of agreements between the British and Sierra Leonean governments that codified commitments to reform the security sector.

Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) – The programme responsible for identifying and reintegrating soldiers from CDF and RUF factions into the SLA.

Nyumba Kumi – The Kenyan 'ten households' safety and security programme. Citizens are expected to maintain relationships with nine of the households in their community and report any suspicious activities or the presence of strangers to the police.

Okada – A bike taxi rider. They are found throughout Sierra Leone and riders are drawn from a range of societal backgrounds.

Operation Barras – The joint-British Army/SLA operation to free hostages from the West Side Boys splinter group.

Operation Basilica – The reconstruction of the SLA; and recruitment and training of soldiers under IMATT to counter the RUF.

Operation Palliser – The popular title of the British military intervention in Sierra Leone in response to the UN request for support in 2000.

Operation Pebu – The operation to reconstruct SLA buildings and barracks.

Operation Silkman – The final operation to defeat the RUF that is characterised by its contribution to the post-conflict counterinsurgency campaign.

Operational Support Division (OSD) – The paramilitary wing of the Sierra Leone Police today. Formally titled the Internal Security Unit (ISU) and later the Special Security Division (SSD).

Orang Asli – An aboriginal ethnic group living in the jungles of northern Malaya/Malaysia.

Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) – The reformed and reconstituted SLA that encompasses the Army, Navy and Air Force branches.

Revolutionary United Front (RUF) – A rebel group that attempted to seize control of the Sierra Leone government between 1991 and 2002. Today the RUF exist as a minority political party in Sierra Leone (RUFP).

Security-Development Nexus – The concomitant provision of national/personal security and justice reform; and developmental initiatives intended to improve the quality of life of citizens in post-conflict states.

Security First – The provision of national/personal security and justice reform as a precondition to development.

Security Sector Reform (SSR) – The reformation and professionalisation of a states security forces/services.

Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) – One of the two major political parties in Sierra Leone.

Special Air Service – The British Army's special forces unit.

Squatters – A community of Chinese-Malay civilians who resided along the fringes of jungles in ad-hoc and temporary settlements.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) – A commission established at the end of the Sierra Leone civil war to document the causes and consequences of the conflict. Their findings were published as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (2004).

United Nations Assistance Mission to Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) – The UN peacekeeping mission to Sierra Leone.

United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) – The UN integrated office to support post-conflict stability and development in Sierra Leone.

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