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## RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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03 April 2003

**SLE41345.E**

Sierra Leone: Whether a person who did not participate in the general strike of 1997 and 1998 as decreed by the exiled Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) would be targeted by the Kamajors and, if so, protection available; areas of the country in which the Kamajors still have influence  
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

The Kamajor militias are traditional hunters who fought against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels during Sierra Leone's eleven-year armed conflict (IRIN 14 Feb. 2003; UNHCR/ACCORD 13-14 Nov. 2000), which President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah declared over on 18 January 2002 (HRW 2003). The editor of Sierra Leone Web (SLW) said, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, that the Kamajors, meaning "hunter" in Mende, are of the Mendes ethnic group and so were active in the southern and eastern regions of the country (21 Mar. 2003). The profile on Sierra Leone in the final report of the 6th European Country of Origin Information Seminar, states that the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) were a "major player" in the civil war and that, in the southern region of the country, they called themselves the Kamajors while in the north and north-east, they called themselves Tamboro (UNHCR/ACCORD 13-14 Nov. 2000, 149). The report further noted that, although the "stronghold" of the Kamajor militia was in Bo, they also had a "strong base" in the centre of the country (ibid.).

By the end of the civil war, however, Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported that the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) disarmed and demobilized approximately 48,000 combatants from the RUF, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and from pro-government CDF militias, which included the Kamajors (2003). The CIA *World Factbook 2002* states that the demobilization and disarmament of RUF and CDF combatants had been completed (United States 19 Mar. 2003). As well, the editor of SLW stated that, along with other militias, the Kamajors disarmed in 2001 and early 2002 and are "supposed" to be demobilized (21 Mar. 2003). However, in his 30 January 2003 article entitled "Peace, Security and Development Versus Truth, Reconciliation and Political Control in Sierra Leone," Ibrahim Bangoura, a senior research associate at Africa Analysis International (AAI), states that

[t]he disarmament, demobilization and re-integration process in Sierra Leone still remains loose and amorphous. Arms and ammunitions remain scattered in the country. The RUF did not surrender all of their arms and ammunitions ... [and] the SLPP [Sierra Leone People's Party] government is still maintaining some cells of their "defunct" Kamajor's militia, dominated by the Mende ethnic group. These cells are largely concentrated in their strong hold, the Eastern province.

As well, in his report on the United Nations mission in Sierra Leone, Secretary-General Kofi Annan reports that "no progress" has been made to disband CDF structures and that, instead, some CDF leaders are working towards transforming CDF into a territorial defence force (UN 17 Mar. 2003). He also made the following observation:

[T]he continued existence of Civil Defence Force structures is ... a source of concern, in spite of the commitment made earlier by the Government to complete its disbandment by the end of January

2003. The existence of the Civil Defence Force structures may undermine not only the credibility of the demobilization process, but also the long-term stability of the country. It may not be a coincidence that in the areas dominated by ex-Civil Defence Force members there is considerable resistance to full deployment of the Sierra Leone police and armed forces (ibid.).

No additional information on recent Kamajor activity in Sierra Leone, including areas in which they may still have influence, could be found among the sources consulted. However, recent references maintain that the CDF ex-combatants - including members of the Kamajors - are fighting as mercenaries with either the Liberian government or the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) (IRIN 14 Feb. 2003; HRW 2003; SLW 21 Mar. 2003).

It will be of interest to note that Samuel Hinga Norman, the former leader of the Kamajors, who is also a former deputy defence minister, was arrested in early March 2003 and will be tried by a special United Nations court for Sierra Leone on charges of crimes against humanity (BBC 19 Mar. 2003).

Information on whether a person who did not participate in the general strike of 1997 and 1998, as decreed by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), would be targeted by the Kamajors could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

#### References

BBC News. 19 March 2003. "Sierra Leone Ex-Minister on Trial."

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2862943.stm>> [Accessed 31 Mar. 2003]

Human Rights Watch (HRW). 2003. *Human Rights Watch World Report 2003*. "Sierra Leone."

<<http://www.hrw.org/wr2k3/print.cgi?africa10.html>> [Accessed 27 Mar. 2003]

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). 14 February 2003. "Liberia: Sierra Leonean Kamajors Fighting with LURD, Government Says."

<<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/a94094ac73e84191c125671c002fcbbc/a3defd67ca99628285256ccd005ea3f9?OpenDocument>> [Accessed 27 Mar. 2003]

Sierra Leone Web (SLW). 21 March 2003. Correspondence with editor.

United Nations. 17 March 2003. United Nations Security Council (UNSC). "Seventeenth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone." (S/2003/321).

<<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/b3948374503b5f6bc1256cf000511cb0?OpenDocument>> [Accessed 31 Mar. 2003]

#### Additional Sources Consulted

##### IRB Databases

NEXIS

Unsuccessful attempts to contact the International Crisis Group in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

#### **Internet sites, including:**

Africa Confidential

Africa Online

AllAfrica.com

Campaign for Good Governance

Global IDP

International Christian Concern (ICC)

International Crisis Group (ICG)

Partnership Africa Canada

Relief Web

Save the Children (International)

Sierra Leone News

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR)

World News Connection (WNC)

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