

Sierra Leone

The information below is based on [Prosecutor v. Issa Hassan Sesay, Morris Kallon and Augustine Gbao \(the RUF accused\) \(Trial Judgement\), Case No. SCLSL-04-15-T, Special Court for Sierra Leone, issued on 2 March 2009](#)¹

1207. TF1-192 and 20 other civilians were captured in Bomboafuidu at the beginning of the 1998 rainy season, by about 50 armed men mostly in combat uniform.² The civilians were ordered to undress. Male and female captives were paired up and ordered to have sex with each other.³

1208. The sexual violence was combined with sexual mutilations, with the rebels slitting the private parts of several male and female civilians with a knife.⁴ The men also inserted a pistol into the vagina of one of the female captives where it remained overnight.⁵

The information below is based on the [Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone, Volume 3B \(Chapter 4: Children and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone\), issued on October 2004](#)⁶

90. Sierra Leone also does not have a law that specifically makes incest a crime. In addition, the laws relating to sexual offences in most instances refer to girls. Sexual assaults against boys are not expressly provided for in the same way as sexual assaults against girls.

SEXUAL VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN (RAPE, SEXUAL SLAVERY AND SEXUAL ABUSE)

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

TORTURE

183. Children were tortured when caught and detained. In those instances when their parents were detained, they were detained with them. They also suffered torture whilst in detention. A child described his experiences in detention to the Commission: "...We were all captured, by the RUF and were taken to Congo Bridge. I was stripped naked, tied up and put into their "detention container". We were there for two days, naked and without food. I was beaten severely with the butts of guns by three men... I managed to escape...but I was again caught... I was then beaten even more severely..."⁷

The information below is based on the [Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone, Volume 3B, \(Chapter 3: Women and the Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone\), issued on October 2004](#)⁸

205. Another victim recounted the experience that led to the death of her son:

¹ Full text available [here](#)

² Transcript of 1 February 2005, TF1-192, pp. 57-61.

³ Transcript of 1 February 2005, TF1-192, pp. 62-64.

⁴ Transcript of 1 February 2005, TF1-192, p. 65.

⁵ Transcript of 1 February 2005, TF1-192, p. 68.

⁶ Full text available [here](#)

⁷ TRC confidential statement recorded in Koidu Town, Kono; 12 December 2002.

⁸ Full text available [here](#)

“We hid and left the town and reached a village called Fabu where we rested. We took the route to Senehun, a town on Bo highway, to get transport for Bo town. Upon reaching the town, we saw a crowd of people standing in a line: everyone was asked to dance. Sons-in-law were to dance with their mothers-in-law and sons with their mothers, so my son and I started dancing. The instruction was we should hold each other’s private parts and ask it how it was doing. There was a song for this exercise. My son, being shocked and filled with shame, couldn’t follow the instructions properly. I danced properly so that the rebels won’t take notice of my son’s stubbornness and kill him. However, after the dancing exercise my son was slaughtered right in front of me. They gave me his head, which I refused to hold. At this point I fled with other people and the rebels started shooting behind us, but as God could have it we managed to cross the river.”⁹

207. Testimonies before the Commission confirmed that all the major armed groups in the conflict perpetrated violations against women. Government security forces, civil militia and opposing armed factions were all at different times in the conflict responsible for violations against women.¹⁰ A female health worker shared this experience of the conflict with the Commission:

“It was in 1991 in Golahun Tunkia, Tunkia Chiefdom, Kenema district... when RUF rebels attacked the town in the morning. The RUF rebels went purposely for me; they came to take me as a commander’s wife, because the boy I was working with had told them I was a beautiful woman for their commando... The inhabitants of that town escaped with me through the bush to a town called Baoma Koya... On hearing about me, my husband hired a vehicle to bring me to Kenema with my three children... On my way to Kenema, there was a checkpoint called Teoma between Kenema and Gofor... I was stripped naked with my husband... Then in 1993, I was posted to Nongowa chiefdom, Kenema district. I was there for a year when combat uniformed men again attacked the village... In 1997 during the junta rule, we were threatened that we were informants. And on 8February 1998 during “Operation Pay Yourself” the Kamajors entered the house and took our belongings, money and everything and they went away. Three sets of factions wearing combats came to our house the very day. They took off the door from the house and the house was left opened... we lost everything. Kamajors also threatened to kill us. They stole a generator from the Merlin hospital and put it in front of my house. We begged them to return it but they refused, so my husband reported them to the ECOMOG. This made the Kamajors threaten us for several nights. There was no one to be trusted.”¹¹

⁹ TRC confidential statement recorded in Bo District, 24 March 2003.

¹⁰ See, for example, Tity Koroma, TRC statement, Bonthe Town, 13 December, 2002; TRC confidential statement from a female victim, recorded in Gbangbatoke, 5 February 2003; and Mariama Sam, TRC statement, Ngordohun Gbameh, Kono, 27 February 2003.

¹¹ TRC confidential statement recorded in Kenema District, 7 December 2002.