

17 December 2014

# Sierra Leone: Country Profile



## Summary Indicators

Indicator	Value	Year
Population number (last census)	4,976,871	2004
Population number (projection)	6,252,960	2014
Population growth rate %	1.8	1990-2012
Population density	82.7	2012
Urban composition %	40	2011
Average household size	5.9	2008
Net migration rate %	-3.86	2012
People with disabilities %	10	2011
Age distribution (% under 15)	42	2013
Life expectancy at birth (years)	45/46	2012
<5 mortality per 1,000 live births	182	2014
Maternal mortality per 100,000 live births	1,100	2013
Malnutrition prevalence	21.1% of under-5s underweight, 44.9% stunting, 7.6% wasting	2010
HDI ranking and value	183 (0.374)	2014
Corruption perceptions index ranking (value)	119 (31)	2014
People below the poverty line (%)	70%	2012
Hunger index ranking (value)	66 (22.5)	2014
World Risk Index ranking (value)	35 (10.37)	2013
Gender Inequality Index ranking (value)	141 (0.643)	2014
Literacy rate %	59	2013

Sources: Geohive, HEWS 25/09/2012, WHO 2010, UNDP 2014, UNFPA 2012, World Bank 2013, UN Data, Transparency international 2014, CIA Factbook

Sierra Leone covers an area of 71,740 km<sup>2</sup>, approximately the size of Ireland. It borders Guinea in the north and northeast, and Liberia in the east and southeast. The Atlantic coastline stretches about 340 km. **Administratively**, the country is divided into three provinces – Northern, Southern, Eastern – and one territory, the Western Area, where the capital Freetown is located. The Northern province is the largest, at 35,000km<sup>2</sup> and the Western Area the smallest, at only 557km<sup>2</sup>, although it is the most densely populated, with 1.4 million people. Each province is divided into districts (12 in total) and each district is subdivided into chiefdoms (150 in total).

## Society and Communities

A **socio-cultural line** divides Sierra Leone between urban areas, which are Krio-dominant and influenced by Western culture, and rural areas where traditional practices predominate. Sierra Leone has the fourth-largest gap in the world between its wealthiest and poorest citizens (Foreign Policy, 10/12/2014). Sierra Leonean **households** consist of an average of 5.9 people, with a slight higher average in the Northern province. There is no difference in average household size between rural and urban households. 43% of households have orphans, or children under age 18 living in households with neither their mother nor their father present. Almost half of household members are children under 15 (Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (SLDHS), 2013).

**Ethnic or tribal groups:** There are over 20 ethnic groups, speaking more than 24 languages. 35% of the population are Temne, 31% Mende, 8% Limba, 5% Kono, 2% Kriole/Krio, 2% Mandingo and 2% Loko (SLDHS, 2013). There is some fluidity in regard to tribal identity as over time smaller tribes have merged, or partly merged, with larger ones. For many Sierra Leoneans, primary political **identification** does not lie with ethnic group or chiefdom, but with social networks tied to particular settlements and neighbourhoods (IDL group, 03/2005). English is the official language, although its regular use is limited to the literate minority. Mende is the principal vernacular languages in the south, Temne is the most used in the north. Krio is an English-based Creole, spoken by the descendants of freed Jamaican slaves who settled in the Freetown area. It is the first language for 10% of the population, mostly in Western Area, but is understood by 95% of the population (CIA Factbook).

**Religion:** 78% of the population is Muslim and 21% Christian (SLDHS, 2013). Religious plurality is extremely important to the culture of Sierra Leone. Christians and Muslims regularly pray in one another's places of worship when their own are full, and people are free to change religion.

**Gender equality:** Women experienced extremely high levels of violence during the conflict, up to 250,000 were victims of gender-based violence during the ten-year

war, which influenced their demands for greater rights afterward. During the conflict, many women became head of the household or got involved in local governance (IBIS, 2011). Women in Sierra Leone have historically had little control over their sexuality, and a premium is placed on girls' virginity, which is perceived as belonging to the family. When a woman is raped, particularly if she is virgin, it is not seen just as an individual act but a violation of the male members of her community. The legal systems in Sierra Leone are mainly administered by men (Irish Aid, 08/2007).

**Education** is compulsory from 6 to 11 years (UNESCO). An additional year of education could mean a 23% increase in a person's income in some industries (World Bank, 09/12/2014). The majority of Sierra Leoneans have no formal education; two-thirds of women aged 15-49 and half of men aged 15-49. Overall, 35.5% of women and 51.5% of men are literate. Only 3% of women and 5% of men have more than secondary education. Urban residents and people living in the Western Area have the highest levels of education (SLDHS, 2013).

**Child protection:** 37% of children between 5 and 14 are involved in child labour. Child labour is lowest in the Western Area (20%) and highest in the Eastern Region (49%). More than half of women in Sierra Leone are married by age 18. Women in the Western Area marry at a median age of 19.6 compared with 16.1 in the Northern region. Overall, one-third of women aged 15–19 are already mothers or are pregnant with their first child. Teenage childbearing is highest in the Southern region (33%) and lowest in the Western region (18%) (SLDHS, 2013).

## Historical Background

Since independence in 1961, the country has seen six general elections and five military coups.

**Ethnic tensions:** During the colonial administration, the British had favoured the Krio ethnic group, who therefore became less influential in the civil and professional services after independence. Other ethnic groups had coexisted fairly peacefully before independence. However, post-independence politicians incited ethnic differences, which then became a major contributor to state collapse in 1991 (Diplomat's Handbook, 2010).

**Pre-war:** Prior to the outbreak of war in 1991, there were undercurrents of territorial conflict in many districts. Poor governance and the creation of a socially-excluded underclass shaped the pre-conditions for war. The chieftaincy played a key role in driving the conflict, as chiefs had power over young men in their villages (Jackson 2007). Diamonds have been seen as playing a central role in fuelling the conflict as

various parties funded their war activities through mining. Debate continues over the role that diamonds might play in the country's development path (Maconachie and Binns 2007; Smillie, Gberie & Hazleton 2000; Reno 1995) (University of Manchester, 07/2008).

**Civil war (1998–2002):** The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), an opposition group backed by Liberian Charles Taylor, invaded the Eastern region of Sierra Leone from Liberia in 1991. The RUF campaign was motivated by power and control over the diamond-rich areas of the east. The armed group's attempt to capture Freetown in January 1999 nearly destroyed the city and led to the death of at least 5,000 civilians. Six months after the invasion of Freetown, a peace agreement was signed between the Government and armed opposition in Lomé, Togo. Under the agreement, RUF leaders were given government posts and guarantees of amnesty for their actions during the war. During that period, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), deploying 17,500 peacekeepers and 400 civilian police across the country. Despite the peace agreement, the RUF continued its military campaign until UK troops assisted UNAMSIL in disarming the armed groups and helping the Government retake control over RUF areas. President Kabbah officially declared the civil war over in January 2002 (Carter Center, 17/10/2013)

**Violence against civilians:** Brutal tactics used during the civil war, including murder, torture, rape, abduction of children, amputation and mutilation of civilians, displaced 2.6 million people and resulted in at least 70,000 casualties. 30,000 civilians were deliberately maimed (Carter Center, 17/10/2013).

## Governance

**Legal system:** Three different legal systems coexist in Sierra Leone. General law, based on the British colonial-era system, is administered through a formal court system comprising the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeal, the High Court of Justice and magistrates' courts. The President appoints, and Parliament approves, justices for these courts. Customary law, consisting of unwritten traditional codes and practices, is protected in the constitution and administered by local/chieftaincy courts. An estimated 85% of the population falls under the jurisdiction of this form of law. Statutes in Islamic law concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance are also applied locally (DCAF).

**Local councils:** The councils (14 district and five city councils) are the highest political authority in the localities, and have legislative and executive powers. Each local council is led by a chairman or, in the case of city councils, a mayor, elected

by universal suffrage, who is responsible for overseeing the implementation of council decisions, for submitting an annual budget, and supervising the Local Council Chief Administrator (IBIS, 2011).

**Chieftom governance:** The power of the paramount chief is determined by the local social order and cultural beliefs. In theory, chiefs can be questioned by tribal authorities, but in practice these authorities are often co-opted through gifts or informal alliances. The ultimate oversight institution of chieftom government is Parliament, however, this mechanism is weak. Chiefs are meant to be politically neutral, supporting the current Government, but in practice chiefs mobilise local support for Freetown politicians in return for patronage, as central government grants alone are often insufficient to pay wages at chieftom levels (IBIS, 2011)

**Decentralisation:** After the war, internal and external influences pushed for more decentralised institutions. DFID, the EU, the World Bank, UNDP and other donors believed that the country's instability was due to the geographical and political marginalisation of some parts of society (Jackson 2005; Thomson 2007). In 2004, the Local Governance Act put councils as the single highest authority in the jurisdiction, and the chairman of the council as the most politically powerful. As a result, the population experienced improvements in service delivery, the health sector especially receiving more funding. Local authorities were in theory more accountable, although participation in local elections remains moderate, lower than national elections. Marginalised groups, such as women and ethnic minorities, have been the largest beneficiaries of the new space for political participation. However, chiefs still see themselves as the highest political order, especially where resources and land come into play (Srivastava and Larizza 2011; Jackson 2007). The reintroduction of the chieftaincy system in 2004 appears to have allowed the same rural elite, mainly older men, to maintain political power and control over resources (Jackson 2007; Thomson 2007; Hanlon 2005; Richards 2005). Rather than empowering local councils further, national elites seem to be following a strategy of divide and rule, preventing local councils from becoming strong enough to seriously challenge the political hegemony of the centre (World Bank, 2011).

**Security forces:** Originally established in 1894, the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) is one of the oldest police forces in West Africa. After independence, the security sector remained highly politicised and based on ethnic and patrimonial alliances. Prior to the war, the SLP was highly politicised and had been used by successive regimes to target political opponents and repress popular dissent. Inadequate and irregular remuneration have since exacerbated corruption (Smith-Hohn, *Rebuilding the security sector*). In 2008, the SLP had around 9,500 personnel, of whom 70% were unarmed. Insecurity is widespread. According to the Justice Sector Coordination

Office Report in 2010, 54% people felt safe in 2006, and only 40% agreed with that statement four years later (Fragile Assessment 05/2013).

**Military system:** After the Sierra Leone civil war ended in 2002, the military was restructured and scaled down to 8,500. The reform and restructuring of the armed forces was prioritised. As Sierra Leone has built up its military, it has looked to taking part in peacekeeping operations and has been deployed to a number of countries, including Somalia in 2013 and Sudan in 2007 (Defenceweb). The military police and the Legal Defence Unit exercise internal oversight and the Court Martial Board was re-established in 2009 (DCAF).

**Corruption:** More than 90% of Sierra Leoneans surveyed by Transparency International in 2013 said that they had to bribe police and/or judicial or government officials for all aspects of daily life, from avoiding unwarranted traffic tickets to evading false arrest (Foreign Policy, 10/12/2014).

## Political Stakeholders and Background

Sierra Leone is a constitutional republic with a directly elected president and a unicameral legislature. Each of the country's 14 districts is represented in Parliament and 112 of the 124 members are elected concurrently with the presidential elections; the remaining 12 seats are filled by Paramount Chiefs from each of the 12 rural districts.

**Political parties:** Party politics became the greatest obstacle to national cohesion and identity, as they created a de facto two-party system dominated by the All People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). The People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), which split from the SLPP in 2005, tried in vain to establish itself as a third force. While no major violent incidents were witnessed in the November 2012 polls, unlike during previous national elections, the political relationship between APC and SLPP was tense (BTI, 2014).

**Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP):** With strongholds in the Southern and Eastern regions of the country, the SLPP dominated the political landscape from the 1950s until 1967. The first Prime Minister was Mende and democratically elected with support of his ethnic group and Krio elites in 1962. This Government polarised public opinion in the country and laid the foundation for military involvement in politics. The party was in power from 1950 to 1967 and from 1996 to 2007 (BTI, 2014; Carter Center, 17/10/2013). The loss of the 2007 elections was blamed on the newly created PMDC party splitting the Mende vote, weakening the SLPP (Conciliation resources).

**All People's Congress (APC):** The APC is deeply rooted in the Northern region and among the Temne and Limba ethnic groups (BTI, 2014). In 1967, the APC won the parliamentary elections but was soon deposed by a coup. APC's leader eventually took office in 1968, then in 1971 banned all other political parties. In 1978, a one-party system was introduced through a new constitution that declared the APC the sole legal party. Political pluralism was re-established through a new constitution in 1991 (Carter Center, 17/10/2013).

**2012 elections:** Due to its 2007 and 2012 electoral victories, the APC Government of President Ernest Bai Koroma is endowed with some formal democratic legitimacy (Conciliation resources). President Koroma was re-elected in 2012 with 58.7% of the vote, ahead of his main challenger, Julius Maada Bio of the SLPP, who garnered 37.4% of the votes. Over 87% of registered voters participated in the election. The APC took 67 of 112 parliamentary seats. In contrast, the SLPP ceded significant electoral ground in the Southern and Eastern regions. The PMDC lost its ten parliamentary seats and is holding on to a single local council seat in Pujehun district (Carter Center, 17/10/2013). In 2012, ten parties contested the elections, compared to six in 2007 (Fragile Assessment 05/2013).

## Economy

The economy is very susceptible to **external shocks** because of its reliance on raw materials. The 2009 global financial crisis hit the country hard, with remittances and revenues from minerals dropping by 30% (WFP, 2010).

**Budget:** The Sierra Leonean Government only managed to generate 57% of its own budget in 2007; the remaining 43% consisted of budget support, various grants, and debt relief (IBIS, 2011). The 2013 total expenditure and lending minus repayments was more than 3.164 billion Leones, about USD 730 million (Government).

**Currency:** The currency used is the Leone. One dollar approximately equals 4,333 Leone as of 9 December (Currency Converter, 09/12/2014).

**Unemployment:** Approximately 70% of youth are underemployed or unemployed (UNDP). An estimated 800,000 young people between 15 and 25 are unemployed, unpaid, or underemployed (African Development Bank, 2011).

**Key industries:** Diamond mining; iron ore, rutile and bauxite mining; small-scale manufacturing (beverages, textiles, cigarettes, footwear); petroleum refining, small commercial ship repair (CIA factbook)

**Main export products:** Diamonds, gold, rutile, cocoa, coffee, fish, bauxite, titanium (CIA factbook).

**Main partners (exports):** China 51.1%, Belgium 18.2%, Japan 7.7%, Turkey 4.8% (CIA factbook, 2012)

**Main partners (imports):** China 16.5%, India 10.2%, South Africa 7.6%, US 6.7%, UK 6.7%, Belgium 4.6% (CIA factbook, 2012)

**Gross National Income per capita:** USD 752 in 2012 (UNDP, 2014)

**Inflation** was 10.3% in 2013. To compare, in Guinea it was 11.9% and in Côte d'Ivoire 2.6% (World Bank).

**Remittances:** The average of remittance per person stands at USD 25 per year (Economic Policy Research Institute, 03/2011). Around USD 61 million were received as remittances in Sierra Leone in 2013 (IOM).

**Extractive sectors:** The mining sector accounted for less than 6% of GDP in 2001 but increased to 12% of GDP in 2012. Coalfields are located in the Northern region, while goldfields are in the Southern and Eastern region. Diamond mining communities are not receiving major benefits from the industry.

**Services** accounts for 34% of GDP in 2012 (Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey (SLDHS), 2013).

**Agriculture:** Agriculture is the largest sector in the economy, providing employment for over 65% of the labour force and contributing about 35–47% of GDP. Agriculture's contribution to GDP ranged from 40% to 60% throughout the 1970s and 1990s. It declines from 54% in 2009 to 40% in 2013 (IFPRI, 2013).

**Food imports:** Sierra Leone remains highly dependent on food imports, and has been seriously affected by the 2008 global food price crisis. 80% of food is imported, mostly from the USA and Europe. According to ActionAid, of the 780,000 hectares of available farmland in Sierra Leone, only 15% is being used for food production (IRIN, 27/07/2007).

## Infrastructure

**Airport:** Eight airports in 2013, of which only one has paved runways (CIA factbook)

**Roadway:** 11,300km, of which 904km are paved (CIA factbook). The upper Northern and Eastern regions are not well connected with road networks. Most roads in remote areas are impassable during the rainy season. The main road leading to the far Eastern region, with the largest cocoa and coffee plantations, is unpaved. Transporting agricultural produce from and inputs to various farming communities is a huge challenge (IFPRI, 2013). The logistics cluster produced a map of road network (LogCluster, 18/09/2014).

**Ports:** Three major seaports in Freetown, Pepel, Sherbro Islands (CIA factbook)

14% of Sierra Leonean households have **electricity**, with 41% of urban households having electricity compared to less than one percent of households in rural areas (World Bank, 2013).

## Poverty

Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia, and Guinea-Bissau form a “fragile continental fringe”. Their proximity to each other means they do not have a stable growth pole to lean upon to pull them out of their current situation (African Development Bank, 2011). From 2003 to 2011, GDP per capita in Sierra Leone increased by 78%. Over the same period, the sub-Saharan average increased by 132% (World Bank, 2013).

Overall, the poverty incidence was 52.9% in 2011, a decline from 66.4% in 2003. In 2011, the lowest levels of poverty were found in Freetown. 11 of the 13 remaining districts had a poverty headcount ranging between 50% and 62%, with Bo district the lowest at 50.7% and Kenema the highest at 61.6%. The two exceptions, which showed still higher poverty levels, were Moyamba district at 70.8% and Tonkolili district at 76%. Compared to 2003, poverty declined in the Eastern region, the Northern region, and the Southern region. However, it increased in the Western Aegion (World Bank, 2013).

There is a 72% positive correlation between food poverty and total poverty. In Freetown, food poverty was higher than total poverty (World Bank, 2013).

**Food security:** In 2011, at national level, about 2.5 million people were food insecure, representing 45% of the population. Among them, about 374,000 people (6.5% of total population) were severely food insecure. Food insecurity is highest in Pujehun, Southern region, but the highest percentage of food insecure people are in the Northern region. Food insecurity increases sharply during the lean season, referred to locally as the hungry season, usually from June to August. Chronic malnutrition is a serious issue, with 35% of children under five stunted and 10% severely stunted. In Kenema and Kailahun, Eastern region, these rates were 41 and 42%, respectively (WFP, 2011).

**Livelihoods:** Two-thirds of the population are rice farmers. Rice is very important symbolically and eaten every day. Other important food crops include cassava, sweet potato, and palm oil. Cash crops include coffee and cocoa (WFP, 2009). The high levels of commodity prices since 2008 posed a great risk to the country’s food security status (WFP, 2010). 85% of households own livestock or poultry. 81% of farming households own at least one chicken (IFPRI, 2013). The practice of shifting

cultivation means that there is little primary forest left; most of the country is now covered by secondary forest or farm bush, limiting food production (WFP, 2011).

**Social protection systems:** A few programmes have been set up, heavily depending on donor funds. The Free Health Care Initiative for pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five was launched in April 2010 but difficulties obtaining medicine and care required have hampered its functioning (UNICEF, 11/2011). School feeding programmes have enhanced education. To address the problem of youth unemployment, the Government in partnership with the World Bank established the Youth Employment Support Project. A National Social Security and Investment Trust (NASSIT) in 2001. It manages a mandatory defined benefit pension system for formal public and private sector employees. The retirement age is 60 or 55 (for military and police force personnel) and requires a minimum of 180 months of contributions. The system does not provide any sickness or maternity benefits, which are expected to be provided by employers for employees and their dependents through collective agreements. Employers are also expected to be insured against any work-related injuries that may be sustained by their employees (World Bank, 14/06/2013)

## Health

For more information, please see our Briefing Note of the impact of the Ebola outbreak on Health

**Health system:** The Ministry of Health and Sanitation operates all government health facilities. The public delivery system starts at the peripheral health units, which include Community Health Centres at chiefdom headquarter towns and Community Health Posts and Maternal and Child Health Posts in other villages within chiefdoms. The next level comprises hospitals at the district headquarter towns. The third level of care is provided in hospitals at the regional headquarter towns. There are two national hospitals, both in Freetown: the Connaught Hospital and the Princess Christian Maternal Health Hospital. There are also several private clinics and hospitals spread across the country (SLDHS, 2013).

**Health expenditures:** In 2012, health expenditures stand at 15.1% of GDP (WHO). In 2008, medical professionals claimed the 2007 entry-level medical officer salary was USD 80 per month and medical specialist salary USD 110 per month, below living wages (Global Health, Daniel Kelly and Mohamed Bailor Barrie, 04/2010). There are two physicians per 100,000 people in Sierra Leone and less than 1,000 trained nurses (WHO 2006).

Among the poor in urban areas, and in most rural areas, the majority of health care comes from self-treatment or the **traditional sector**. In Sierra Leone the centrally organised National Health Service reaches only 35% of the population. **Traditional**

**midwives** are usually important political and religious figures. Health workers and midwives have their own type of legitimacy. Traditional midwives are key actors in the financing of a primary healthcare service that is only minimally funded by the central Government. (Maternal Health, War and Religious Tradition, Amara Jambai and Carol MacCormack, 06/1996).

For **health information**, the highest proportion of people to list radio as their most important source of health information was in Western Area. Only 20% of Southerners said they rely on radio for health information. In contrast, close to 70% rely on health centres, doctors or clinics (Audiencescapes).

**Vaccination:** 68% of children between 12 and 23 months received all recommended vaccines in 2013. Vaccination coverage varies by region, from only 56% fully vaccinated in the Western Area to 77% in the Eastern region (SLDH, 2013).

**Female genital mutilation:** Overall, 90% of women between 15 and 49 have been circumcised. One in six women was circumcised before age four. Female circumcision is higher in rural areas than in urban areas (94% versus 81%) (SLDHS, 2013). The Muslim Krios and 15 other ethnic groups practice FGM in the context of initiation of girls into the women's secret society known as the Bondo or Sande Society (UNICEF, 04/2008).

**HIV:** 1.5% of the population between 15 and 49 is HIV-positive. The prevalence is 1.7% for women and 1.3% for men. HIV prevalence in urban areas is twice that in rural areas, at 2.3% in urban areas compared with 1.0% in rural areas. It also varies by region, ranging from 1.1% in the Northern and Southern region to 2.7% in the Western Area (SLDHS, 2008).

**Cholera:** Cholera is a recurrent disease, although no cases were officially reported in Sierra Leone from 2009 to 2011. January 2012, saw the beginning of the worst outbreak since 1995, and the Government declared a national emergency in July (OCHA, 17/09/2012). Cases occurred in 12 districts. As of October 2012, more than 20,700 cases and 280 deaths had been reported (WHO, 08/10/2012).

**Lassa fever:** Lassa fever is endemic in Sierra Leone. The peak season for Lassa fever in West Africa is in November and every year it infects from 100,000 to 300,000 people, killing up to 5,000 in Sierra Leone. Such estimates are crude, because surveillance is not uniform. In some areas of Sierra Leone, 10–16% of people admitted to hospitals every year have Lassa fever. Lassa fever can be cured but only when the disease has been laboratory confirmed; rapid tests are not widely available (CDC; BBC, 03/11/2014).

## WASH

**Water supply:** In 2013, 60.6% of households have access to improved source of drinking water; 89% in urban areas and 47.5% in rural areas. The burden of going for water often falls disproportionately on female members of the household (SLDHS, 2013; Wateraid, 2012). Water supply sources are no longer able to meet demand: water is rationed to many areas in Freetown with almost no customers getting 24-hour supply. In the peri-urban areas and the densely populated poor urban central areas, customers receive supplies once a month or none at all (UNDP, 2009). Seasonality is a major problem, with up to 40% of in-use points providing insufficient water during the dry season. This is generally due to insufficiently deep wells or an inappropriate choice of water point location (Ministry of Energy and Water resources, 26/06/2012). Floods overwhelm existing systems, contaminating drinking water and creating sewage overflows (Wateraid, 2012). It is estimated that about 1.7 million people will still be without access to water supply services by 2015 (UNDP, 2009).

**Water pollution:** Water is increasingly polluted as a result of contamination by human and industrial activities (UNDP, 2009). The nation has 160 cubic kilometres of renewable water resource, with 89% used for farming and 4% for industrial purposes (Nationencyclopedia).

**Sanitation:** Only 10% of households use an improved toilet facility that is not shared with other households. 28.1% of households in rural areas have no access to toilet facilities at all, compared to 6.8% in urban areas (SLDHS, 2013). About 2.2 million Sierra Leoneans will be without proper sanitation facilities by 2015 (UNDP, 2009).

**Waste management:** The nation's cities produce about 0.3 million metric tons of solid waste per year. In 2010, the total daily waste generated in Freetown was estimated at about 800 metric tons. The capital suffers from increasing waste and very little – and deteriorating – management. Rapid urbanisation in the last decade has exacerbated the situation (local media, 21/06/2012). There is an urgent need to deal with the solid waste accumulating in streets and drains, and to ensure the proper disposal of faecal sludge. Low-lying slums are particularly vulnerable to flooding due to poor drainage, with contaminated water contributing to the spread of waterborne diseases, including cholera (Overseas Development Institute, 01/2014).

## Media and Communication

**Ownership:** 55% of households in Sierra Leone own a radio. 28% of urban households and 1% of rural households own a television. About 60% of households in urban areas own a mobile phone compared with 10% of rural households (SLDHS, 2008). Household access is highest in Western Area and Southern region, where approximately half of households have a phone. It is lowest in Eastern region, where only around one in four have a phone (Audiencescapes).

**TV:** In 2007, there was one government-owned TV station, one private TV station and a pay TV-service (CIA factbook). 84% of Sierra Leoneans have never watched a television programme (Mamaye, 30/09/2011)

**Radio:** In 2007, there was one government-owned national radio station and dozens of private radio stations, primarily in major cities, where transmissions of several international broadcasters are available (CIA factbook). The level of penetration of radio varies between districts, from 96% in the urban part of Western Area, to 65% in Kailahun, and is higher in urban than rural areas. Results of a 2007 BBC survey indicated that radio was by far the most trusted media in Sierra Leone. All major cities in the country run their own radio stations and there are many local commercial radio stations (Search for Common Ground, 05/2012).

**Internet:** By 2014 there were 92,000 internet users (Internetlivestats, 2014), about 1.7% of the population (ITU).

**Newsprint:** By the end of 2009, 58 newspapers were registered with the Independent Media Commission (IMC) (Audiencescapes).

The Independent Media Commission (IMC), created in 2000, oversees licensing of radio channels. However, local media practitioners still suffer from corruption, self-censorship, and politicised and inaccurate reporting. Criminal libel law, including the Seditious Libel Law of 1965, can be used to control what is published in the media. Imprisonment and violence have been employed by the political establishment against journalists (Search for Common Ground, 05/2012).

## Foreign Relations

**ECOWAS:** During the early years of the civil war, ECOWAS played the main role in the attempt to end the conflict. ECOWAS pushed for an end to the civil war through the active promotion of peace negotiations as well as providing regional military

forces in efforts to maintain control of Freetown. ECOWAS also played a critical role in peace talks (Diplomat's Handbook, 2010).

**UK:** Since 2000, the UK has remained the main donor, providing support for elections, the development of civil society, independent media, as well as security sector and judiciary sector reforms. UK assistance to the security sector has been critical in securing peace. UK military advisers have been integrated into government forces (Diplomat's Handbook, 2010). DFID plans were to spend an average of USD 108.4 million per year in Sierra Leone until 2015 (Conciliation resources).

**UN:** On 22 October 1999, the Security Council established UNAMSIL to implement the Lomé Peace Agreement and assist with disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. UNAMSIL's strategy was revised in 2000 to include promotion of dialogue with the RUF as well as increased military enforcement, which led to UNAMSIL taking a much more pro-active approach in Sierra Leone. The US and Japan, being the largest financial contributors to the UN's assessed and voluntary contributions, have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars to UN activities in Sierra Leone (Diplomat's Handbook, 2010). In December 2005, a new UN mission, UNIOSIL, was created to help consolidate peace in the country. In 2008, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone took over and transferred its responsibilities to the UN country team in April 2014 (UNIPSIL).

**China:** Since the 1970s, China has invested in sectors such as agriculture, health care, infrastructure and education in Sierra Leone. In 2010, bilateral trade reached USD 109 million and total Chinese direct investment was USD 51.2 million (ELDIS, 2013).

## Humanitarian and Development Stakeholders

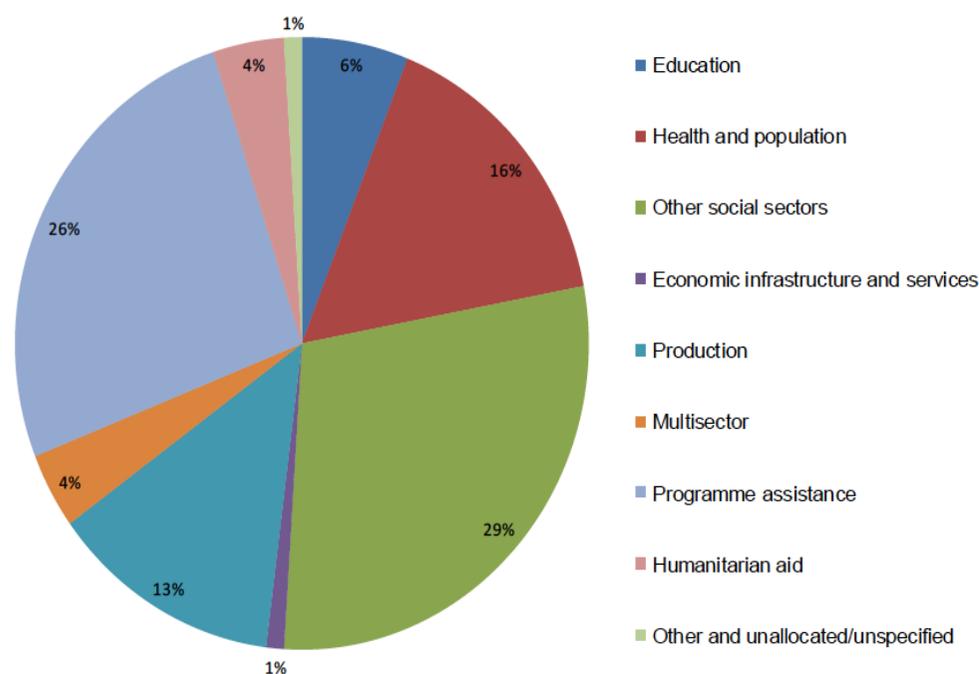
The international community has been present in the country, especially Freetown, for the last 13 years. In 2011, more than 95 INGOs were registered in the country, and 17 UN bodies. Although there are many actors, only five donors were responsible for 90% of all aid, namely DFID, WB, ADB, EC, and USAID (IBIS, 2011). Main sectors were peacebuilding, DDR, youth employment, and gender equality.

Many programmes were taking place without much coordination, increasing both administration and transaction costs. The relationship between the Government and international development agencies has been characterised by lack of trust. This has only had further negative implications and impact on the fragmentation of development aid across sectors (IBIS, 2011). The relationship between the UN leadership and the humanitarian community between 1997 to 2000 was tense; the

UN was accused of blocking humanitarian assistance from reaching Sierra Leone (Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 03/2003).

**Perceptions:** According to a study from Tufts University in mid-2005, local communities were more concerned that aid was delivered, and less concerned about who delivered it. When assistance was needed, it did not much matter whether it was provided by military personnel or civilians. Yet local people distinguished between international institutions, making clear distinctions between the various UNAMSIL contingents (between Pakistani, Nigerian and Ukrainian troops) (Humanitarian exchange magazine, 12/2005).

### Bilateral ODA by sector 2010-2011



Source: Institute of Development Studies, 2014

## Key Documents

- Daniel Kelly and Mohamed Bailor Barrie (04/2010) [Global Health](#)
- Irish Aid (08/2007) [Addressing gender-based violence in Sierra Leone](#)
- IBIS (02/2011) [Citizen's rights and responsibilities in Governance programme in Sierra Leone](#)
- DCAF (2010) [Rebuilding the security sector](#)
- Amara Jambai and Carol MacCormack (06/1996) [Maternal Health, War and Religious Tradition](#),
- IDL group (03/2005) [Sierra Leone Drivers of Change](#)
- Multiple agencies (2013) [Sierra Leone Demographic and Health Survey](#)
- University of Manchester (07/2008) [Diamond mining, governance initiatives and post-conflict development in Sierra Leone](#)
- The Carter Center (17/10/2013) [Observing Sierra Leone's November 2012 National Elections](#)
- World Bank (2011) [Decentralization in postconflict Sierra Leone: The genie is out of the bottle](#)
- Government (03/2013) [Fragility Assessment](#)
- BTI (2014) [Sierra Leone Country report](#)
- Conciliation resources, [Profiles Sierra Leone](#)
- IFPRI (2013) [West African Agriculture and Climate Change](#)
- IRIN (27/07/2007) [Imported food a threat to domestic agriculture?](#)
- Africa Development Bank (2011) [Infrastructure and Growth in Sierra Leone](#)
- World Bank (14/06/2013) [Sierra Leone Social Protection Assessment](#)
- UNDP (07/2009) [Governance, Advocacy and Leadership for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene](#)
- Ministry of Energy and Water Resources (26/06/2012) [Sierra Leone Waterpoint report](#)
- Overseas Development Institute (01/2014) [Adaptation to Climate Change in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene](#)
- Search for Common Ground (04/2012) [Media, Youth and Conflict prevention in Sierra Leone](#)
- Diplomat's Handbook (2010) [Sierra Leone](#)
- ELDIS (08/2013) [China's silent storm in Sierra Leone](#)
- Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (03/2003) [The interaction between political and humanitarian action in Sierra Leone 1995 to 2002](#)
- Institute of Development Studies (11/2013) [Is the right time for the international community to exit Sierra Leone?](#)
- WFP (2011) [The state of Food security and nutrition in Sierra Leone](#)
- International Crisis Group (31/07/2008) [A new era of reform?](#)
- Chatham House (30/09/2008) [Sierra Leone, a year after the elections](#)
- African Economic Outlook (2014) [Sierra Leone](#)
- DCAF, [Sierra Leone](#)

## Seasonal and Critical Events Calendar

Key seasonal data	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average rainfall precipitation 1990-2009 (mm)	6.1	13.8	35.8	91.8	193.6	303.1	460.8	104.8	533.5	417.1	86.1	18
Average temperature 1990-2009 (Celsius)	25.7	27.3	28	27.7	27.2	26.3	25.2	25.1	25.7	26.1	26.4	25.9
School year												
Rainy season					Main rainy season							
Lean season	Land preparation					Lean season			Rice harvest			
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Critical events	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Elections (presidential & parliamentary)					2002			2007			2012	
Floods							2005 / 2007 / 2009					
Measles*											2009	
Lassa fever*		2003 / 2005		2004	2001		2006		2013	2010		
Cholera*	2012											
Yellow fever*			2011				2012	2003				2008
Chikungunya*							2012					
	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec

\* Epidemics: month of the start of the outbreak

## Timeline of Major Events

**1961**  
Independence

**1991**  
Military coup in September. President Joseph Momoh overthrown by Captain Valentine Strasser

**1996**  
Ahmad Tejan Kabbah elected President in February. Peace accord with Sankoh in November.

**1997**  
In October, the UN Security Council imposes sanctions, barring the supply of arms and petroleum products to Sierra Leone.

**1999**  
In January, RUF seize parts of Freetown. Fighting leaves 5,000 dead. Ceasefire signed in May.

**2001**  
Disarmament of opposition begins.

**2004**  
War crime trials begin.

**2007**  
Ernest Bai Koroma wins the presidency.

**2012**  
Koroma wins a second term.

**1991**  
Start of civil war. Corporal Foday Sankoh and his Revolutionary United Front vs. President

**1996**  
Military coup. Strasser ousted by his defence minister, Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

**1997**  
President Kabbah deposed by army in May. Major Johny Paul Koroma leads the military junta (the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council).

**1998**  
In February, Nigerian-led West African intervention force ECOMOG in Freetown. In March, former President Kabbah returns from Guinea.

**2000**  
In April-May, UN forces, who arrived late 1999, are attacked. Several hundred UN troops are abducted. In May, UK troops arrive.

**2002**  
War declared over in January. In May, Kabbah is elected President. In July, UK troops leave Sierra Leone.

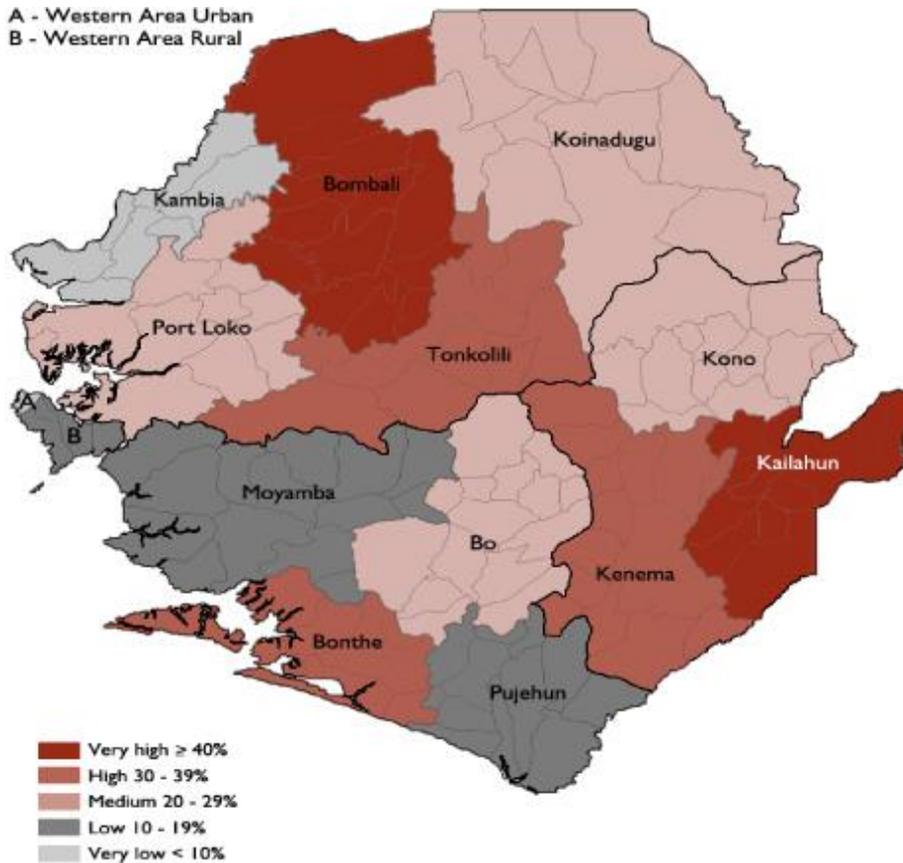
**2006**  
UN mission in Sierra Leone follows departure of peacekeepers

**2008**  
In August, local elections are marred by violence between the supporters of the two main parties.

**2014**  
In July, Sierra Leone declares a state of emergency to tackle the Ebola outbreak

## Levels of Poverty by Districts in 2003–2004

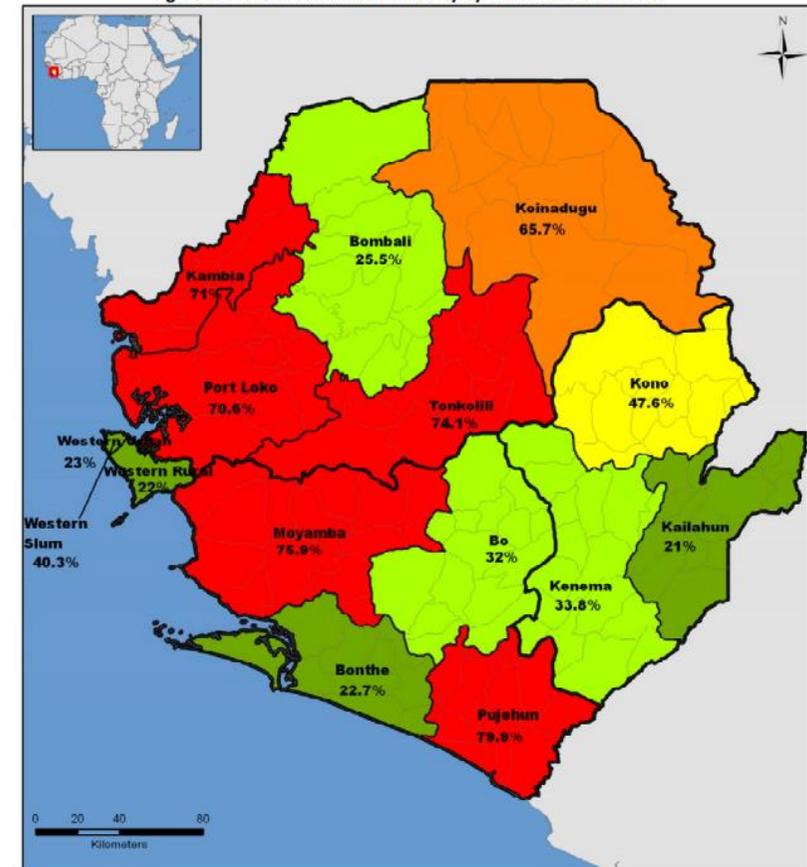
A - Western Area Urban  
B - Western Area Rural



Source: Woldt et al, 2009, FAO

## Prevalence of Food Insecurity by Districts 2011

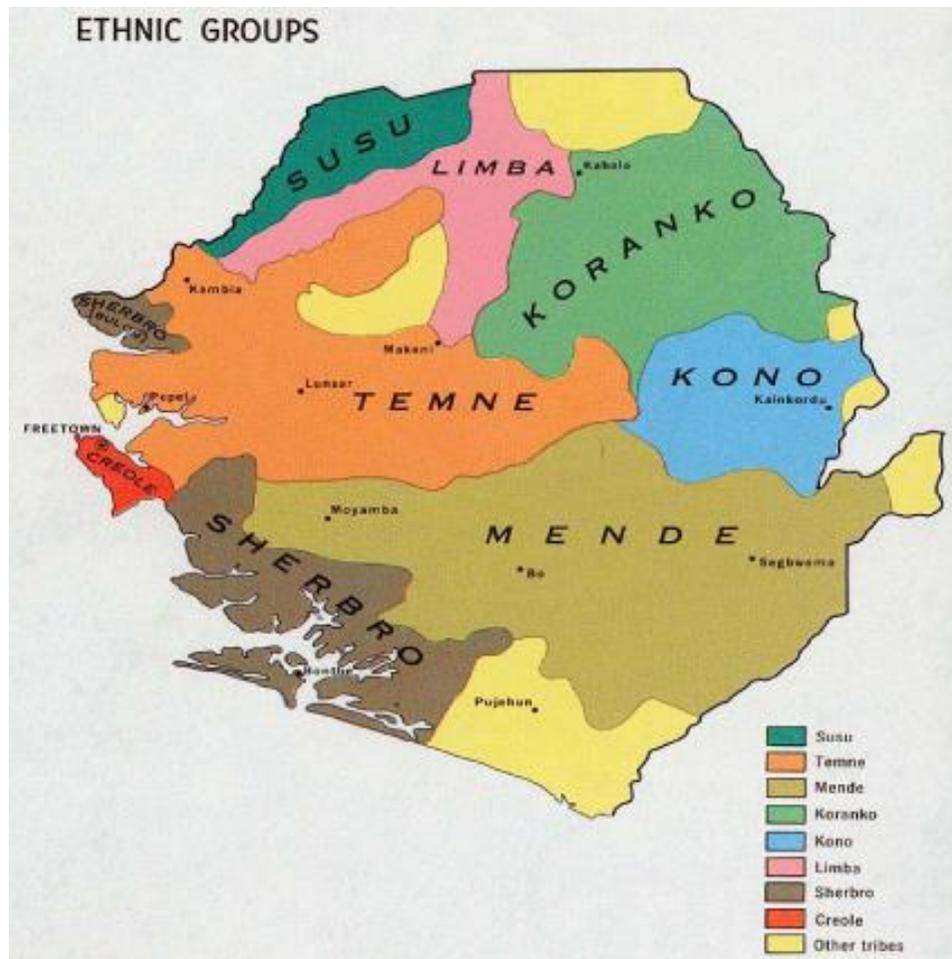
Figure 2: Prevalence of Food Insecurity by District in Sierra Leone



Source: WFP 2011

Source: WFP, 2011

## Ethnic Groups



Source: Woldt et al, 2009, FAO