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Liberia–The Eye of the Storm

A Review of the Literature on
Internally Displaced, Refugees and Returnees

by
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ACRONYMS

ACF	Action Contre le Faim
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
DHA	United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EPAU	UNHCR Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
JPO	Joint Principles of Operation
LRRRC	Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MMWR	Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODL	Organization of Displaced Liberians
PPHO	Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operation
RRN	Relief and Rehabilitation Network
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SELF	Special Emergency Life Food
UDL	Union of Democratic Forces of Liberia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNSCOL	United Nations Special Coordinator's Office for Liberia
USCR	US Committee for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

PREFACE

One of the most prominent, and from a humanitarian and human rights perspective most troubling aspects of internal conflicts during recent years is the plight of the internally displaced persons, and refugees. Forced to leave their homes in search of refuge, internally displaced persons often find themselves with little protection, with unclear rights, and without safe livelihoods. While their most important support generally comes from the communities receiving them, which often have very few resources, international humanitarian organisations have not been able to agree on clear mandates with regard to who should have the overall responsibility for assisting them. Although the international community is better organised to care for those who have crossed borders and become refugees, it is still struggling to finetune and coordinate available aid instruments and to mobilize sufficient resources in order to facilitate their post-conflict return, resettlement and reintegration.

As this literature review of internally displaced persons, refugees and returnees shows in relation to Liberia, there are ongoing conflicts where we lack sufficient understanding of migration patterns and the socio-economic conditions of the displaced, an understanding which is a prerequisite for designing appropriate preventive and mitigating action. This review also highlights the severe lack of protection of civilians in Liberia, children in particular, which leads to forced recruitments to local armed groups as well as exposure to sexual violence.

It is Sida's ambition to actively learn from experiences and analyses such as those presented in this study, in order to improve the quality of its humanitarian and human rights interventions and thus, ultimately, to contribute to ensuring adequate protection for those who have been forced to leave the safety of their homes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A State of the Art Review

This report aims to give a state of the art review of the research that has been conducted to date on the refugees and internally displaced in Liberia. More specifically, the purpose is to review the literature devoted to the refugees and internally displaced within Liberia, as well as the studies focusing on the Liberians who have taken their refuge in neighbouring countries. In this report, the literature on this topic will be categorised based on some central themes. Throughout this study suggestions are made on areas that could benefit from further research. The review covers material from 1989 till 2002, with an emphasis on more recent studies. The people who have fled their homes and crossed an international border in doing so will be described as refugees, while those who remain within the borders of their home country are referred to as internally displaced persons. Returnees are refugees or internally displaced persons who have returned to their own country or community (Crisp, 2000:157).

Liberia—The Eye of the Storm

Liberia has been referred to as “The eye of the storm”, in an effort to capture the volatile situation in Liberia and the risk of yet more instability in the region of West Africa. The civil war in Liberia started in 1989 when armed forces under the command of Charles Taylor made an incursion into Liberia to try to seize power from General Samuel Doe, who had been ruling the country since the military coup in 1980 (Integrated Regional Information Network, IRIN, 2002a). The civil war was to last for seven years, and in 1996 the Abuja II peace agreement was signed. One year later the warlord Charles Taylor came to power, winning a landslide victory in the elections that followed (Adebajo, 2002b). The civil war in Liberia has resulted in approximately 150,000 people being killed, and has forced the vast majority of the total population of 3 million to flee their homes, some only for a couple of weeks while others have been displaced for many years (US Committee for Refugees, USCR, 2002b). The current situation in the West African region is far from stable with a recent military coup in Côte d’Ivoire, and warfare along the borders of Guinea and Sierra Leone, where Taylor is fighting against the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) (IRIN, 2002a; Interna-

tional Crisis Group, 2002a:5). This current conflict in Liberia has resulted in an additional number of people being displaced both within the borders of Liberia, as well as in neighbouring countries. Reportedly, 80,000 people were displaced only in the year 2001 (USCR, 2002b).

In order to understand the humanitarian crisis and the problem of displacement, it is of vital importance to take a closer look at the conflict situation in Liberia and the region of West Africa. Consequently, some sources dealing with the conflict and the regional dimension are included. A short introduction to the past and present conflict in Liberia follows below.

Past and Present Conflict in Liberia

In 1847, Liberia was declared a republic by a small group of freed American slaves who came to rule the country although they only constituted a small percentage of the population. This community was to profit at the expense of the indigenous population in Liberia. Under the presidencies of William Tubman and William Tolbert, in the period after the Second World War, the indigenous groups gained more influence, but the previous oligarchy continued to benefit from the patronage system. However, in 1980, a military coup was staged under the leadership of Samuel Doe, and for the first time the indigenous groups were in power. President Doe filled his ranks with people from his own ethnic group, the Krahns. Following a failed coup attempt against Doe in 1985, many of his Krahn soldiers burned villages and killed approximately 3,000 Gio and Mano people in Nimba county. Ethnic rivalries followed this event (Posthumus, 1999:309–310; Adebajo, 2002b:601–602).

On Christmas Eve 1989, armed forces under the leadership of Charles Taylor tried to seize power from President Samuel Doe. The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) used bases in Côte d’Ivoire as the point of departure for their attack, and as they went through Nimba County towards the capital of Monrovia, they recruited men among the Gios and Manos who had previously been attacked by the Krahns. In the violence that followed, the NPFL, now consisting of mainly Gios and Manos, killed Mandingos and Krahns, while the Krahn dominated forces of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) killed Gio and Mano people. The NPFL reached the capital Monrovia in 1990. However, the regional organization Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), decided to deploy an intervention

force, the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which became directly involved in the fighting and prevented Taylor from taking hold of the capital. Thus, ECOWAS and the ECOMOG force came to play an important role in how the conflict developed. There is a strong regional dimension to the conflict in Liberia and many of the West African countries have had their own vested interests in this conflict (Posthumus, 1999:309–310; Adebajo, 2002b:603–604). The regional dimension and the third party involvement in Liberia will be dealt with in more detail later in this report.

The initial insurgency developed shortly thereafter into large-scale gang warfare, where groups fought to control the rich natural resources of the country, such as timber, diamonds, gold, and iron ore. The warlords used these resources to enrich themselves and the continued access to the resources also enabled them to continue waging the war. There were eight main factions involved in the civil war, which came to involve intra-factional fighting and splits within several warring factions, all this adding to the complexity of this conflict. However, efforts were made to resolve the conflict, and no fewer than fourteen peace agreements were signed in the period 1990 and onwards. The Abuja II peace agreement was the fourteenth, and was to settle the conflict (Adebajo, 2002b:602–605).

Elections followed in 1997, and the former warlord Charles Taylor won over 75 percent of the votes and was elected President of Liberia. However, the period preceding the elections was fraught with uncertainty and there have been reports that people were threatened with reprisals if they did not vote for Taylor (Kamara, 1999a:8). In addition, Taylor was in control of the only media station in the country, which made it difficult for the political opposition to make its voice heard. He was also in charge of a strong army, which gave him the capacity to continue the war if he were to lose. One explanation put forward for the massive support given to Taylor in the elections, is that the people of Liberia were war-weary after seven years of civil war, and urgently seeking peace. It is perhaps telling that Taylor in his election campaign successfully used the slogan “He killed my Ma, he killed my Pa, but I will vote for him”. While the elections were reported to have been free and fair according to international observers, voices have been raised claiming that the election process was flawed, and in the post-civil war period there have been continued allegations

of Taylor sticking to his practices of warlordism (Outram, 1999:169).

This outline of the conflict in Liberia is not intended to be comprehensive but merely to serve as a background to the problem with displacement that has followed. For a more elaborate picture of the Liberian civil war I would like to refer to: Adebajo (2002a); Riley (1996); Alao et al. (1999); Posthumus (1999); Armon and Carl (1996); Ellis (1998; 1999); and Huband (1998). For research focusing on the causes of the conflict, see for instance: Bøås (2001); Outram (1999); and Agbango (1997). In this context I would also like to point to a bibliography concerning the civil war by Werner Korte which covers a wealth of material (Korte, 1999). Moreover, Tom Kamara has more specifically analysed the elections and the prospects for stability in the postwar period (Kamara, 1999a). A number of studies deal with the prospects for peace in Liberia in particular, see for example Carver (1994; 1996) and Drumtra (1999). Furthermore, Comfort Ero analyses politics and society in the post-war period as well as the dilemmas of accommodation and reconstruction in Liberia (Ero, 2000), while Olu Adeniji discusses mechanisms for conflict management in West Africa as a whole (Adeniji, 1997).

As mentioned above, although the civil war ended and Taylor came to power, Liberia continues to experience armed conflict. Taylor’s AFL are engaged in fighting with the rebel group LURD. LURD consists of a loose coalition of several anti-Taylor forces, of which the three main ones are the Justice Coalition of Liberia, the Organization of Displaced Liberians (ODL), and the Union of Democratic Forces of Liberia (UDL) (International Crisis Group, 2002a:4). For instance, although LURD was not formed until February 2000, the Justice Coalition of Liberia had previously made attacks into Lofa County. Charles Taylor has close links with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), the rebel force in Sierra Leone, and these rebels have been fighting alongside the AFL against the LURD. LURD have made significant progress in their attack on Taylor and in January 2002 they were not far from the capital Monrovia (International Crisis Group, 2002a:40–42).

The armed struggle has thus continued, with neighbouring countries directly or indirectly backing the different parties, and there is a more or less constant flow of new reports of displacement caused by the conflict. International Crisis Group has written an excellent and more elaborate analysis of the current conflict in Liberia, which also includes a brief description of the most central

elements of the previous civil war in Liberia (International Crisis Group, 2002a). For a more recent briefing, see International Crisis Group (2002b) where it is suggested that an attack on Monrovia would result in widespread panic and even more displacement.

The most important action taken by the international community to influence the situation in Liberia is perhaps the economic sanctions placed on Taylor and the Liberian Government. The international sanctions on the Liberian Government were renewed in May 2002 by the Security Council of the United Nations, as a result of evidence that Taylor has continued to support the RUF and other rebel groups in the region. The sanctions include an embargo on arms, travel ban on government officials and a ban on the export of diamonds from Liberia. In addition they urged the Government in Liberia to verify that any revenue from the timber industry “should be used for legitimate social, humanitarian and development purposes” (Adebajo, 2002a:72; United Nations Security Council, 2002b; 2002c; IRIN, 2002b). For a recent report by the UN Secretary-General on this topic see United Nations Security Council (2002a).

The conflict has to a large extent consisted of struggles over the natural resources in the country, with timber being one of these commodities (IRIN, 2002a). Many studies on the conflict in Liberia refer to these ample resources as important in fueling the war. One such study has been conducted by Global Witness and International Transport Workers Federation (2001), where they examine the role of the Liberian timber industry in adding to the insecurity in Liberia and elsewhere in the region (Global Witness and International Transport Workers Federation, 2001). Recently, Global Witness (2002) published yet another report about the timber industry, and reports for instance on how the revenues from this enterprise are used by Taylor in funding the conflict with the LURD (Global Witness, 2002).

The Regional Dimension

It has already been mentioned that there is a strong regional dimension to the developments in Liberia. For instance, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been warning that a “large-scale humanitarian and human rights crisis” might occur in Liberia, Guinea, and in Sierra Leone, if the conflict in Liberia prevails. The domestic developments in the countries bordering on Liberia are also of importance for the stability

in the region, where perhaps the development in Sierra Leone is the most important.

The conflict in neighbouring Sierra Leone is closely interlinked with the civil war in Liberia. This conflict erupted in 1991, when Sierra Leone was invaded by 100 fighters from RUF under the leadership of Foday Sankoh, and it has been argued that Charles Taylor was and is in control of these forces (International Crisis Group, 2002a:2). The decade-long conflict was extremely brutal with thousands of Sierra Leoneans plundered, raped, and mutilated by the RUF (International Crisis Group, 2002a:2; IRIN, 2002a). The war in Sierra Leone came to a close in May 2001, when the RUF and the Sierra Leonean Government signed the Abuja II agreement. While the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process has been initiated, the prospects for stability in Sierra Leone are also dependent on how the situation in Liberia develops (International Crisis Group, 2001:1). Elements of RUF remained armed, and are together with Taylor’s Armed Forces of Liberia engaged in fighting the LURD insurgency (International Crisis Group, 2002a:42).

Several studies emphasise the importance of regional factors, one being conducted by Emmanuel Kwesi Aning where he stresses the importance of taking a regional perspective in viewing the conflict in Liberia (Kwesi Aning, 1997). In addition, together with Gani Jones Yoroms he has analysed the West African regional security in the period after the civil war in Liberia (Yoroms and Kwesi Aning, 1997). For regional updates on the situation in Liberia and Sierra Leone, I refer to the newsletters published by the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN, 1997a; 1997b; 1998; 1999a; 1999b). While Sierra Leone has been of significance when considering the developments in Liberia, other countries have also come to play an important role in Liberia, for instance through the regional organization ECOWAS. Thus, the role of ECOWAS is discussed below.

Third Party Involvement

According to Adekeye Adebajo, the ECOMOG mission is the first example of a sub-regional organization in Africa relying on its own resources in intervening in a country’s internal affairs. The intervention was largely justified by referring to the deteriorating humanitarian situation and the threat to regional security which the conflict posed (Adebajo, 2002a:15; 2002b:605). The ECOMOG force, consisting of 3,500 troops, was deployed in

Liberia on August 7, 1990, and as the force was landing in Monrovia it faced strong resistance from Taylor and his men as they opened fire against ECOMOG. It was only after the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) a breakaway faction of the NPFL, assisted ECOMOG in dislodging the NPFL, that the sub-regional intervention force could land. Thus, ECOMOG's alignment with one of the primary parties in the conflict meant that their legitimacy and neutrality came to be questioned from the outset of the operation.

Even before the intervention force landed, there were doubts on whether ECOWAS should deploy a military force, and instead concentrate on furthering economic integration among the member states of ECOWAS. ECOWAS was divided, with particularly Burkina Faso being sceptical to the force. In contrast, Nigeria was the strongest of ECOMOG's supporters, providing the majority of men and also assisting with substantial financial resources. This strong engagement by Nigeria raised voices as to whether the country had its own vested interest in the civil war (Vogt, 1996:166–167). Allegedly, countries within ECOWAS used ECOMOG to further their own economic and political interests. The strongest support for the intervention came from Nigeria, Guinea and Sierra Leone, while Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire (and indirectly Libya) opposed the mission (Adebajo, 2002a:15, 605; International Crisis Group, 2002a:2).

The ECOMOG intervention has prompted much critique and debate both in terms of its success and failure. In an edited volume devoted to the ECOMOG mission, Magyar and Conteh-Morgan (1998) have compiled a number of works, examining various aspects of the operation. These include a discussion of lessons to be learned from this mission, as well as a piece on Liberia's internal response to ECOMOG. In addition, the role of some of the countries involved, namely Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, is examined in more detail (Magyar and Conteh-Morgan, 1998). Another comprehensive study on this topic, dealing with debate on the deployment of ECOMOG, has been edited by Margaret A. Vogt (1992). Other valuable sources dealing specifically with the ECOMOG intervention force are: Tarr, (1993); Yoroms and Kwesi Aning (1997); Sesay (1995); Levitt (2001); Ero (1995); Mortimer (1996); and Human Rights Watch (HRW, 1993).

The Extent of the Crisis

The extent of the humanitarian crisis has been immense, to establish the exact numbers of the persons displaced is, however, a very complicated task. The problem of generating reliable data is aptly captured in a quote by Gaim Kibreab, where he states that: "Precise statistics on African refugees are either not available or when available are most unreliable" (Kibreab, 1991:8). These difficulties in generating accurate and consistent data are also stressed by Jeff Crisp who in a recent report makes a critical analysis of the problem in obtaining reliable refugee statistics (Crisp, 1999). Colin Scott has also noted that the data on refugees and internally displaced is flawed and, for instance, he mentions that there are even difficulties in establishing the size of the population as the data available is based on extrapolations of birth and mortality rates (Scott, 1998:113). While recognising that this problem exists and that any figures used should be used with caution, it is still appropriate to at least try to give a picture of the severity of the displacement.

As initially mentioned, most of Liberia's 3 million people have at some point during the civil war been displaced, either as internally displaced persons or as refugees in another country. In 2001, there were 80,000 internally displaced within the borders of Liberia, while 215,000 had taken their refuge in another country in the region. Most of these were living in Côte d'Ivoire and in Guinea, with 100,000 and 90,000 Liberian refugees respectively. Furthermore, approximately 15,000 had fled to Sierra Leone, 9,000 were residing in Ghana, and more than 1,000 could be found in Nigeria (USCR, 2002a). United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has recently launched its first annual statistical yearbook, covering a global overview of forced displacement in the last decade together with disaggregated data, on for example gender and age (UNHCR, 2002b).

2. CAUSES OF THE DISPLACEMENT

The conflict in Liberia is undoubtedly the main cause of the displacement of people. Many studies acknowledge the civil war as the key factor behind the flows of refugees and internally displaced persons. However, few studies are concerned with examining in more detail how the civil war has affected the movements of displaced people. For instance, to what extent the people flee as a result

of specific targeting such as harassment and recruitment to the forces, or if there are other reasons surrounding the decision to flee, does not seem to have been the focus of many studies. There are of course many reports of human rights violations taking place, but the relationship between the civil war and the displacement needs to be explored further. There are however exceptions to this overall trend of not researching the causes of the flows of refugees and internally displaced. Hiram Ruiz (1992) has conducted a study on the civil war up till 1991 and its impact on refugees and internally displaced (Ruiz, 1992a). Furthermore, in a more recent analysis of some of the proposed causes of the massive displacement, Colin Scott (1998) claims that this displacement crisis can be viewed as a symptom of the collapse of the Liberian state and the struggle for power taking place in this context (Scott, 1998:97–98).

There are a number of factors that Scott argues are of particular importance. The first factor is the tensions between the coastal elites and the indigenous populations due to the long history of inequalities among them. Secondly, he proposes that the factionalization of the conflict has had an impact on the displacement. While the conflict has largely been taking place along ethnic lines, political and material interests have been determining the actions of these groups. According to Scott, the many shifts in who is in control of territory have worsened the conditions for the displaced. Moreover, the militarization of the society is pointed out as the third factor of importance for the displacement, and Scott stresses the many human rights violations that have been taking place in the country. Fourthly, he highlights the regional involvement in the crisis, and that the cross-border displacement has become a major political issue for the West African governments. Finally, Scott draws attention to the length of the conflict and the instability and cycle of violence that have made the conditions for the displaced increasingly difficult, especially concerning the possibilities of returning (Scott, 1998:110–112). While Scott's study covers many important aspects, these issues are not discussed at great length, and it would be interesting to examine in more detail how the civil war has caused the displacement. Thus, the relationship between armed conflict and patterns of displacement does not seem to have been researched to any great extent in the case of Liberia, and more studies on this topic would be of great value.

3. DISPLACED AND REFUGEE MOVEMENTS

In this section, the displaced and refugee movements in the region will be discussed briefly. The difficulty in acquiring accurate and consistent information regarding the total numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons in the region has already been touched upon. But, in order to give at least a sense of the amount of displacement in different regions, some references to the number of people affected will be made below. This section thus intends to give an understanding of where we can find the populations of refugees and internally displaced persons, and to what extent this geographical spread is reflected in the amount of research conducted. In some instances, the figures are from the early stages of the civil war since some of these people have been able to return home in the post-war period.

Refugees and Internally Displaced in Liberia

At the end of the civil war there were estimates by the UN of as many as 750,000 people being internally displaced, while USCR reported a somewhat smaller figure of 500,000 persons. Most of those internally displaced during the civil war fled to the capital Monrovia (Global IDP Database, 2002:26, 36). Surprisingly little research, however, seems to have focused on those internally displaced who during the civil war took their refuge in the capital and the surrounding areas, at least in comparison to the studies made regarding the refugees who crossed the borders into the neighbouring countries.

According to an estimate made in October 2002 by the World Food Programme (WFP), the number of internally displaced persons within Liberia had at that time gone down to 183,900 (WFP, 2002). Information on internally displaced persons has previously not been as easily accessible as that on refugees. However, in this context it is worth noting that there now do exist some general sources that give an excellent overview of the situation and literature on the subject, one being the Global IDP Database (2002), and another example is Gimena Sánchez-Garzoli's (2001) selected bibliography on the global crisis of internal displacement. However, the report does not only contain information on internally displaced in Liberia, but is a review of the literature worldwide (Global IDP Database, 2002; Sánchez-Garzoli, 2001). While it is encouraging that the amount of research on internally displaced persons seems to be

increasing, it is still clear that most reports are focused on refugees.

For more general information on refugees, I would like to refer to the organizations of UNHCR, USCR, and Refugees International (Refugees International, 2002; UNHCR, 2002a; USCR, 2002a). A large number of the refugees coming to Liberia have been victims of the civil war in Sierra Leone, and as late as at the end of 1998, an estimated number of 120,000 Sierra Leonean refugees resided in Liberia. Many of these refugees returned to their home country after the peace agreement was signed in Sierra Leone in 1999, but a large number of refugees have yet to return. In 2001 approximately 60,000 remained in Liberia (USCR, 2002a).

Liberian Refugees

There are a significant number of studies that have taken on a broader regional perspective and focus on neighbouring countries that have taken in Liberian refugees. Many Liberians took refuge in Guinea during the civil war, and two years after the first refugee flow, the estimate of the Liberian refugee population in Guinea was close to 400,000 people. The situation for the Liberians residing in Guinea has been the focus of a large number of studies, and many of these studies take into account the situation of both Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea. Another massive flow of refugees went to Côte d'Ivoire, and in the same count, 240,000 refugees were reported to reside in Côte d'Ivoire. However, these refugees have been the focus of far fewer studies than those in Guinea. Consequently, I strongly recommend that more research is conducted on the refugees who have taken their refuge in Côte d'Ivoire (Ruiz, 1992b:31).

Furthermore, at the same time, there were approximately 17,000 Liberians in neighbouring Sierra Leone, and these refugees have been the focus of some reports. Most of the Liberian refugees in Sierra Leone fled the country when the civil war erupted. Although everything is not only about numbers, it is interesting to note that the refugee flow to Ghana, has been rather well researched if one compares to the amount of people displaced. The estimates have been around 10,000 people being displaced. But, of course other factors than the number of people affected are of importance when initiating research. For instance, it is suggested, at least in the initial stages of the influx of refugees, that Ghana responded fairly well to the flow of refugees. This could be one reason for the research

interest in the refugees in Ghana. Finally, there are a couple of thousand refugees who have fled to Nigeria, but these seem to have been left more or less unnoticed (Ruiz, 1992a:15; 1992b:31).

4. LIVELIHOODS AND EXPERIENCE

Protecting the Rights of Refugees and Internally Displaced

The human rights violations committed during and after the civil war in Liberia have been extensive, and the displaced have together with other people within the country been victims of these abuses. Many reports on the human rights violations taking place in Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone have been published by different human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. But, given the extent of the abuses taking place, it is only appropriate that this topic has been the focus of a number of reports. However, in terms of other research, not so many studies have been carried out concentrating on human rights conditions for the refugees and displaced.

Thus, the literature consists almost exclusively of reports by human rights organizations. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have throughout the civil war covered the human rights situation in Liberia and in the neighbouring countries, see for instance, Amnesty International (1992; 1993; 1995) and Human Rights Watch (1993; 1994). It is reported that Taylor's men in the NPFL carried out most of the abuses, including killings and torture, which has resulted in people fleeing the country. Moreover, other forces, such as the INPFL and the AFL, (previously under Doe's command) have also committed human rights violations. Africa Watch reports of widespread human rights abuses including harassment of refugees, summary executions and torture (Africa Watch, 1990a; 1990b; 1991). In the post-war period, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have been emphasising that the Taylor government in particular needs to take human rights seriously, in order to achieve a lasting peace. In these reports, efforts toward reintegrating refugees and internally displaced persons together with a rebuilding of the state institutions in Liberia, are stressed (Amnesty International, 1997; HRW, 1997).

However, the human rights violations have continued and are now occurring in relation to the current conflict between the government forces

under Taylor, and the LURD. In a recent study by Human Rights Watch (2002) there are reports of serious human rights abuses being carried out by both the government forces of Liberia and the rebel force LURD. Taylor's Armed Forces of Liberia have made themselves guilty of widespread rape of women and girls, executions of civilians, and they have systematically looted and burned towns. The rebels of the LURD have also committed human rights violations, but not to the same extent as the government forces. The violations by the LURD involve executions of suspected government collaborators, rape and forced recruitments (HRW, 2002). This conclusion by Human Rights Watch is supported by information presented in several reports by Amnesty International (2001c; 2001d; 2002c).

Moreover, I would like to point out a number of studies that not only focus on the situation within Liberia, but report on the situation for the refugees in neighbouring Guinea and Sierra Leone (HRW, 2001; Amnesty International, 2001a; 2001b; 2002a; 2002b). Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, 2000) have also seen the problem in a broader regional context, and in an extensive study they examine the issue of protection in the Mano River Region of West Africa (MSF, 2002). The human rights situation for the refugees and internally displaced in this region is in many ways closely interlinked, which makes it valuable to use such a regional perspective. I argue that there is a need for further research exploring to what extent the armed forces have used violent tactics against civilians as a deliberate strategy in their warfare, and how this has influenced the displacement patterns in the region. One important aspect that deserves special attention concerning these human rights violations, is how widespread the use of forced recruitment by the warring parties has been.

Children and Adolescents

Children have perhaps suffered most from the civil war in Liberia. Thus, the human rights abuses discussed above are also highly relevant for children and adolescents, and one issue of particular importance for children, is the forced recruitment that has taken place during the conflict. The warring factions have used children to fight in their forces, and many children have been separated from their families and forcibly recruited into these armies. Human Rights Watch (1994) has issued an excellent report in which many aspects of this problem

are covered, such as the rationale of the warring parties for using child soldiers and also how these factions have abused the children. Most importantly Human Rights Watch discusses how these children can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities (HRW and Children's Rights Project, 1994). Other reports also deal with former child soldiers in Liberia and how these should be reintegrated into their communities, see: Doe (1998); Kelly (1998); Jenkner (1998); Legrand (1998); and Mahling Clark (1996).

Another human rights issue that refugee children and adolescents unfortunately suffer from is sexual violence and exploitation. In an extensive study, UNHCR and Save the Children UK, focus on the sexual violence directed towards refugee children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone (UNHCR and Save the Children-UK, 2002). The findings from this report have generated a considerable debate among the organizations working with refugee children on how these violations should be addressed. However, given the severity of this problem it is highly surprising that this issue has not received more attention in the literature.

During the civil war many refugee and internally displaced children have been separated from their families. In some cases they might still have a chance to be reunited with their parents and relatives, but sometimes their families have been killed in the civil war. This is of course a problem that needs to be addressed, and many valuable studies have been conducted on this topic. Ousman Kabia (2001) studies the protection of separated refugee children from Sierra Leone and Liberia in foster families in Guinea. According to Kabia, this area of research has not been the focus of any previous empirical studies. Kabia reports on an ongoing research project, and states that information will be provided both on separated refugee children who are fostered by refugees, as well as those fostered by Guinean families (Kabia, 2001). Thus, the situation for children in foster families is an issue that has not so far been examined in depth. However, some research concentrates on the protection of children in Guinea without that particular focus. For instance, Marc Sommers (1997) assesses the protection and assistance needs of children and adolescents in Guinea. The report concentrates on the refugees from Sierra Leone, but the situation of the displaced from Liberia is also touched upon (Sommers, 1997).

Maggie Brown (1995) focuses on separated children, and more specifically on tracing programmes used to trace and reunify children with

their families. Furthermore, she discusses the issue of how to prevent separation from taking place, and spontaneous and formal foster care are also dealt with in her study (Brown, 1995). In an extensive report by UNHCR (2002), the rights and protection needs of refugee children are examined. The UNHCR's activities in meeting these needs are evaluated based on extensive interviews and a number of field missions, including one to Liberia. According to the report there are some organizational issues which impede implementation of the UNHCR's efforts. They identify three main factors. Firstly, there is limited accountability resulting in a gap between theory and practice. Secondly, there exist problems with mainstreaming, since the protection of refugee children is seen too often as something separate from the main activities of the field operations. Finally, there is insufficient understanding about what child protection should entail for the UNHCR. The UNHCR also brings forward a number of recommendations in this document in order to follow up the result of this evaluation (UNHCR/Evaluation and Policy Analysis Unit, EPAU, 2002).

Another area of research is the conditions meeting children in the refugee camps, and a few studies have been conducted on this topic. In a study on Liberian children in a refugee camp in Ghana, Zonke Majodina (1991) argues that the relationship between the refugees in Ghana and their hosts has been better than that between the Liberian refugees and their hosts in Guinea and in Côte d'Ivoire (Majodina, 1991). In a more recent analysis Barbara Harrell-Bond (2000) poses the provocative question whether refugee camps are in fact good for anyone and in particular for children while drawing on examples from, for instance, West Africa (Harrell-Bond, 2000).

There are some studies on the issue of protection of children more generally. For example, Canon Burgess Carr reports about the protection of children in the Liberian conflict, and gives recommendations on how to improve the situation for these children (Carr, 1995). Some other studies on the protection of children are: Levine (1998); Otunnu (1998); and Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (1997).

In the wider context of the protection of children, issues of health and nutrition are highly relevant. An early study on the health and nutritional status of refugee children was carried out by the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), concerning Liberians in Guinea (MMWR, 1991). The Food and Nutrition Division of the Food and

Agricultural Organization carried out a study on the nutritional status of refugee children. It is based on a literature review and consultations with organizations within the UN as well as with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and in addition, field trips were made to Sudan and Liberia (FAO, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Food & Nutrition Division; MacAskill, 1996).

An issue that might be seen as especially important for children and adolescents is the limitations in educational opportunities during and after a civil war. According to Annie Foster (1995), seven out of eight refugee children have never attended school, which is an alarming finding. She gives examples of some effective programmes from a number of countries, including Liberia. Furthermore, Foster presents effective strategies for how education programmes can take into account the needs of the targeted group (Foster, 1995). The International Rescue Committee (IRC) has an education programme for Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea (IRC, 1997). Ellen Lange has examined the education programme of IRC in 1991–1998, regarding a number of different aspects, for instance how the IRC have dealt with health issues in the education (Lange, 1998).

The children that have been displaced are a particularly vulnerable group that have experienced hardships during and after the civil war, and the conditions for children and adolescent living as refugees or internally displaced, have indeed been the focus of a number of studies. However, I have pointed out some areas of research that can benefit from more in-depth studies. For instance, the sexual violence and exploitation that children and adolescents have experienced is one such issue.

Gender

Gender is increasingly taken into account in studies on refugees and internally displaced persons. For example, as mentioned above, the UNHCR have now included gender data in their statistics (UNHCR, 2002b). According to Louise Olsson (1999:3–4): "Gender, in policy terms, means that focus is directed on women in relation to men or vice versa". She further argues that a gender perspective is not automatically obtained just by adding women to the picture (Olsson, 1999). However, as most studies on refugees and displaced have been carried out with men in focus, the emphasis here is on those studies that either

have a gender perspective or studies that explicitly concern women to some extent.

There has been some research dealing with gender aspects concerning displaced persons in Liberia, but the vast majority of the studies in this section are reports that specifically focus on women and not gender as such. In at least the early stages of the war the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children sent delegations to Liberia, Guinea, as well as Côte d'Ivoire from which they then gave reports, see for instance: Bruce (1992a; 1992b); and Swiss (1992a; 1992b). In one of these studies Swiss reports on a delegation sent to Guinea where many Liberians have taken refuge, and discusses income-generating activities for women (Swiss, 1992a). Another report of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, concentrates on the reproductive health care and services for the Liberian refugees residing in Côte d'Ivoire.

Many of the studies focusing especially on women seem to consist of reports on projects and programmes initiated by different organizations. For instance, Mary Anne Schwalbe reports on the progress made through the International Rescue Committee/the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) Family Planning Programme, and more specifically the activities of the Women's Centre operating under the auspices of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Schwalbe, 1994). Another example is a study by Naima Hasci (1994) in which she presents a project supporting Liberian women refugees in the Buduburam Refugee Camp in Ghana. The project has been initiated by UNIFEM and IRC, and emphasizes participation of women in income-generating and health education activities (Hasci 1994:20). In a more recent study of the Buduburam Refugee Camp, Linda Kreitzer (1998) examines the participation of Liberian refugee women in planning and implementation programs. She identifies factors that may either encourage or obstruct women from taking an active part in those programs, and in addition Kreitzer also presents suggestions from the women themselves, on how to enhance the conditions that are important for their active involvement (Kreitzer, 1998).

There are some reports that concern sexual violence and related issues. In an excellent study by USCR (2002), they report on the difficulties Sierra Leonean women refugees face as they return home from, for instance, Liberia or Guinea. They have interviewed some of these women, many trauma-

tized by being kidnapped and sexually abused, about their experiences and the obstacles they face as they seek to be reintegrated (USCR, 2002b). Another report dealing with the sexual violence that has occurred during and after the civil war in Liberia has been conducted by UNHCR, in which their sexual and gender-based violence programme in Liberia is presented (UNHCR/Health and Community Development Section, 2001). Moreover, in a study by the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Shana Swiss reports on sexual violence that has taken place against displaced in Liberia (Swiss, 1992b). In a report by Nana Apeadu (1991) that deals with related issues, the needs of Liberian women living in refugee camp in Ghana in 1991 are assessed, and among the factors emphasized are for instance, the need for assistance to female-headed households, measures to prevent young girls from becoming prostitutes, reproductive health care, and education on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) (Apeadu, 1991).

More studies on gender and women are increasingly being undertaken but more research is definitely needed. For example, human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have reported on grave sexual violations committed during Liberia's civil war, and these violations now continue as the conflict between Taylor's forces and LURD unravels. Some of the studies mentioned concern how these women are being assisted in being integrated into society after having experienced these sexual assaults, but there is also a need to study how women refugees are being targeted in civil wars, and in policy terms, what can be done in terms of preventive work.

Education

Only a limited number of studies deal with education, and it is good to note that some of these touch upon gender issues. For example, Ellen Lange (1998) examines the IRC refugee education programme for Liberian refugees in Ghana, and describes various ways in which health and gender issues have been addressed (Lange, 1998). Furthermore, Rebecca H. Rhodes et al. (1998) also deal with the IRC and education. They have studied the economic and social factors that are behind the dropout among Liberian refugee girls in the IRC primary schools in Guinea (Rhodes et al., 1998). In a very interesting study by Tatiana Garakani, the focus is on the role of international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) in providing

education to refugees. Garakani argues that there is an increasing participation by relief agencies in giving education to refugees, but that there still remain some problems on how the education should be carried out. She gives examples from education experiences from Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees (Garakani, 2001). Finally, the studies by Foster and the IRC have already been mentioned in the section dealing with education and children (Foster, 1995; IRC, 1997).

Socio-Economic Research

Socio-economic research seems to be an area of study that has generally been neglected. However some work on this topic has been conducted, such as Philippa Atkinson's study on the socio-economic conditions for refugees returning to Liberia from neighbouring countries (Atkinson, 1992). Other studies in this field have been carried out by Rein Dekker, who has examined some income-generating activities in the form of self-help projects among Ghanaians who, due to the civil war in Liberia, had returned home to Ghana (Dekker, 1992; 1993).

Health, Nutrition and Mortality

Wim Van Damme (1998; 1999) has written extensively on the subject of medical assistance to refugees. He focuses on those refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone in Guinea, who mostly came to self-settle among the locals in Guinea, and he describes the medical assistance in Guinea which was given to these refugees (Van Damme, 1998; 1999). In another study by Van Damme, the impact of a refugee assistance programme is assessed, more specifically by examining if the host population, namely the Guineans, had better access to hospital care during the period when these programmes were in operation. They reached this conclusion by comparing areas with high numbers with other areas that had lower numbers of refugees. Interestingly, this policy of the Guinean government has resulted in an improved health system, and the authors suggest that it can serve as an alternative to camps (Van Damme et al., 1998). Another study focusing on the health system in Guinea, which has already been mentioned above, deals with the situation of Liberian refugee children (MMWR, 1991). The studies by FAO and Mary Ann Schwalbe have also previously been discussed (Schwalbe, 1994; FAO Food & Nutrition Division; MacAskill, 1996).

Other studies concern a wide range of issues. For instance, in a case study on Liberian refugees in Nigeria, Sylvester O. Igbedioh discusses the need for better coordination among those responding to the nutrition crisis (Igbedioh, 1991). Moreover, Eyitope Ogunbenro Ogunbodede et al. (2000) describe an oral health care programme for Liberian refugees in the Buduburam refugee camp in Ghana, and suggest that such a programme is essential for the camps (Ogunbodede et al., 2000). Fox argues that integration and collaboration should exist both within and between the three groups of policy makers, health care providers, and researchers, and he draws on examples of trauma events among West African refugees (Fox, 2001). Lastly, Alfred A. Sandi and Sylvetta G. Scott (1992) have made an assessment of the food needs of Liberian refugees and internally displaced persons in Sierra Leone (Sandi et al., 1992).

Survival Strategies

Survival strategies among refugees are the topic of a report by Mats Utas. He has examined a number of different strategies for work and integration that Liberian refugees living in Côte d'Ivoire have used in order to cope with the displacement (Utas, 1997). Another study along the same lines, but with a different geographical focus, has been conducted by Shelly Dick (2002). She has focused on Liberians living in Ghana without any humanitarian assistance. In an extensive study she examines what she refers to as the "myth of dependency", which suggests that refugees receiving aid become dependent on such assistance, and subsequently lack the willingness to work and take their own initiatives. Dick argues that this has not been the case for Liberian refugees residing in Ghana, and she claims that if this statement was true these refugees would not have been able to continue with their lives in Ghana. Dick states that the refugees did not choose to return to Liberia, even though UNHCR chose to gradually reduce the aid from 1997, and later withdrew the assistance completely in 2000. The main finding from this study is that refugees do indeed take initiatives and successfully use different survival strategies. It should also be noted that the report includes many valuable references on this topic (Dick, 2002a).

5. THE NATURE AND IMPACT OF ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

The Response to the Humanitarian Crisis

The humanitarian crisis in Liberia has been immense with massive displacement and civilians experiencing severe distress in terms of starvation, different diseases, harassment from rebel groups, torture, and other hardships. The international community assisted in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in the first years mainly through UN agencies and a few INGOs. The US and the EU have been responsible for over three quarters of the aid distributed during the seven year long conflict in Liberia, totalling approximately \$100 million per year. The assistance has been channelled through the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the WFP (Goodhand and Atkinson, 2001:21–22; Atkinson and Leader, 2000:11).

The WFP has published many reports on their food assistance to the internally displaced in Liberia, and to the Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone. See for example (WFP, 1993; 1994; 1995a; 1995b; 1996; 1997). Besides the WFP, other major organizations that have been operating in Liberia are: the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Action Contre le Faim (ACF), MSF, Save the Children, and the local organization Special Emergency Life Food (SELF). Among the governments contributing with relief assistance we find Japan, the Netherlands and Sweden (Atkinson and Leader, 2000:11). An excellent overview of the development of the humanitarian assistance to Liberia, together with an analysis on how to support conflict prevention and peace building, can be found in a study by Jonathan Goodhand and Philippa Atkinson (2001).

Currently, the situation continues to deteriorate with more people being displaced due to the fighting in the north of Liberia. There are reports of grim conditions in the camps for the displaced, with people dying from malaria and diarrhoea. The human rights situation continues to be critical, with extrajudicial killings, rape and other human rights abuses by the forces of Taylor and LURD. In spite of this, there has been an overall decline in the humanitarian assistance to Liberia in recent years, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has warned of a serious humanitarian emergency if the support is not increased rapidly. In the post-war period, con-

ditionality of aid became the main policy, and in addition, several NGOs have been forced to scale down their activities, due to lack of funding (Global IDP Database, 2002; OCHA, 2002:9–11). For more information on the recent situation, see OCHA (2002) and Refugees International (2001).

Humanitarian Principles

From the outset of the conflict, the humanitarian agencies operating in Liberia had to deal with the problem of delivering aid under extremely difficult conditions (Atkinson, 1996:13). According to Fabrice Weissman, "...Liberian warlords have become masters in the art of diverting relief assistance...", for instance, by deliberately starving the population to attract aid, through the use of civilians as human shields, and by raiding agencies for food supplies that were intended for the displaced. Weissman further argues that after the end of 1991, all offensives carried out involved an almost complete looting of the aid agencies that were operating in the war-affected areas (Weissman, 1997:110–112). Thus, the humanitarian agencies have had severe problems in carrying out their activities in Liberia. For instance, the ICRC pulled out of the country in 1994 arguing that they could not carry out their work according to the principles of their organization. In late 1995 the Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operation (PPHO) were adopted as a reaction to the serious security situation and the difficulties in delivering aid (Atkinson and Leader, 2000:7–8). The principles were intended to minimise harassment and the diversion of aid by the rebel groups, and thus improve the situation for the civilians (Goodhand and Atkinson, 2001:21).

The PPHO contributed to increased co-ordination between the agencies, but the impact of these principles was limited, and more difficulties were to follow (Atkinson and Leader, 2000:7–8). In April 1996, when fighting resumed, massive looting and harassment took place by different rebel groups (Weissman, 1997: 112). Subsequently, the NGOs operating in Liberia at the time, decided to adopt the Joint Principles of Operation (JPO) in order to minimise the harmful effects of the humanitarian assistance. This meant in practice that the NGOs limited their activities to only life-saving operations (Goodhand and Atkinson, 2001:21). In a brilliant report by Philippa Atkinson and Nicholas Leader (2000), these two humanitarian principles are described in detail in the context of the civil war in Liberia. Moreover,

they analyse the impact of the PPHO and the JPO on humanitarian activities both in terms of assistance and protection, and propose some lessons to be learned (Atkinson and Leader, 2000). Other reports dealing with these humanitarian principles which developed in Liberia are: Yarsiah (1997a; 1997b; 1998); and Caritas International (1996).

The Role of NGOs

Philippa Atkinson (1996) poses the question of whether it is better to “Do No Harm or Do Some Good?” in an article with the same title. She draws on the argument made by Mary B. Anderson, who argues that humanitarian assistance needs to be delivered so that it does not cause harm. The argument falls back on the realization that the delivery of aid in the midst of an ongoing armed conflict might in fact, under certain conditions, contribute to fuelling the war. Atkinson, however, stresses that this realization should not lead us to conclude that we should abolish aid. Instead, Atkinson claims that the aid needs to be redesigned, and she emphasises the importance for NGOs not to limit themselves to the “do no harm” strategy and lose sight of also doing something good (Atkinson, 1996). Furthermore, Atkinson has analysed the mechanisms of the war economy in Liberia, and how this can be taken into account by the NGOs involved with humanitarian assistance in Liberia (Atkinson, 1997).

In another report dealing with the role of NGOs, Fabrice Weissman (1997), discusses the security conditions of NGOs working in Liberia and the issue of how to cope with the warlords (Weissman, 1997). For reports regarding NGOs and peace building in the complex political emergency of Liberia, which is also relevant for the displacement issue, see for instance: Hulme and Goodhand (2000); Atkinson (2000); Atkinson and Mulbah (2000a; 2000b); and Tokpa (2000).

Other Important Actors

There are a number of reports that review humanitarian assistance from a more general perspective, but many of these studies focus on the role of particular actors, and the reports dealing specifically with NGOs have already been mentioned. However, there are many more actors than NGOs, which to some extent have been involved in humanitarian assistance projects. Quentin Outram considers the role of ECOMOG in relation to the provision of humanitarian aid to Liberia between 1990 and

1996. He argues that even though there were an absence of consent and inadequate resources, the safe haven operation in Liberia was in fact an overall success in providing aid to the people. However, Outram also points out two major failures, first the military instability of the ECOMOG zone, and second, the too limited geographical area together with the inability to control factional activities within the zone (Outram, 1997:200–202).

Colin Scott has reviewed five years of humanitarian efforts in Liberia and analysed the relationship between ECOWAS and the UN in terms of division of labour, and the tensions between humanitarian and political-security objectives. In addition, he gives some recommendations on how humanitarian assistance should be developed (Scott, 1995). In another seminal study by the same author, the failure of international actions in addressing the problem of displacement is examined (Scott, 1998:97–98). Scott examines the international response concerning, regional organizations, the UN, and NGOs (Scott, 1998:116).

Some of the problems associated with the regional intervention by ECOMOG in the Liberian conflict in the early 1990s, were already present from the outset. The legitimacy and neutrality of the force came into question almost immediately after the operation was staged. Scott discusses these issues and other problems associated with the involvement of ECOWAS in the Liberian conflict. Concerning the UN, Scott points to the difficulties in coordination between the UNDP, United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), and United Nations Special Coordinator's Office for Liberia (UNSCOL), and concludes that there was no agency with immediate responsibility for the displaced. The NGOs were at first acting merely as implementers of the agenda of the UN, but in 1992 they became more independent, only to experience difficulties such as coordination and credibility (Scott, 1998:119–120, 130).

In a paper written in the early stages of the conflict, Hiram Ruiz argues that the US should take a lead role in the reconstruction efforts, and Ruiz also discusses what would be needed in this assistance (Ruiz, 1990). Emery Brusset studies the role of another actor, the European Commission. He has analysed the European Commission's management of rehabilitation assistance to Liberia (Brusset, 1999). Given that the US and the European Union have been the main donors, one would perhaps expect their role as donors to have been studied to a larger extent than what seems to have been the case.

In an article by John Agberagba it is argued that the UNHCR, in the case of its work concerning Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea, should focus on its primary objective, namely to give protection, and leave the provision of assistance to NGOs and governments (Agberagba, 2001). Jeremy Ockelford, when discussing the water and sanitation problems in Monrovia, touches upon the role of another UN organ, UNSCOL, whose main task was to serve with coordination of relief efforts (Ockelford, 1993). A. Essuman-Johnson has focused specifically on Ghana's response to the Liberian and Sahelian refugees, which involved implementing an IMF/World Bank programme of adjustment (Essuman-Johnson, 1994:2). The studies by UNHCR/EPAU (2002) and Dick (2002a) dealing with humanitarian assistance have already been mentioned.

Evaluations of Programmes and Projects

There have been many evaluations made of the projects and programmes that have been carried out by different agencies and organizations. Janz et al. have evaluated the experiences of the non-governmental organization World Vision, and point out what lessons that can be learned from these experiences in providing humanitarian assistance. In particular, they emphasize the security risk the NGOs face in their relief work (Janz et al., 2000). Kunder/Reali Associates have produced a report in which the implementation of the NGO Field Cooperation Protocol is assessed, together with recommendations on how to promote the protocol (Kunder/Reali Associates, 1998).

UNHCR has also been the focus of some evaluations. Tania Kaiser (2001) has examined their programme in Guinea, and comes to the conclusion that the UNHCR was operating under a number of constraints, such as underfunding, weak state structures, and lack of personnel. Kaiser makes a few recommendations on some actions that could be taken, including the collection of refugee statistics, food needs assessments, and income-generating activities (Kaiser, 2001; UNHCR, 2001). Another study by Shelly Dick, focuses on the UNHCR programme to Ghana, and in particular on how the refugees have responded to the assistance, and the implications of this programme for the refugees' ability to become self-reliant (Dick, 2002b).

Another organization which has been evaluated is the WFP. In a study by Apthorpe et al. the WFP assistance to refugees and displaced persons

during the period 1990–95 in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire, is examined. Among the aspects analysed are, for instance, effectiveness in reaching the beneficiaries, effectiveness of coordination among the organizations involved, and the relevance of the regional approach that the WFP has adopted (Apthorpe, 1996).

Raymond Apthorpe conducted a study where the evaluations themselves are in focus. He presents a critical analysis of six evaluations made of humanitarian emergency aid in the Horn of Africa, Rwanda and Liberia. These evaluations, though recognising limitations in the delivery of humanitarian relief aid, all conclude that the delivery of aid has resulted in many lives being saved. One of the interesting questions dealt with in Apthorpe's article is why this emergency relief seems to be more successful than development aid, since the latter has the advantage of considerably more time for reflection (Apthorpe, 1997).

6. IMPACT ON HOSTING AREAS

There has been a growing concern over the effect that large displaced populations might have on the environment. For instance, it is suggested that refugees might contribute to deforestation by using natural resources as fuel, and in a longer perspective, by converting forests into agricultural land. In the beginning of the 1990s there were more than 500,000 Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees who fled to Guinea, due to the civil wars in their home countries. Richard Black and Mohamed F. Sessay analyse the impact of these refugees on the environment. Based on two case studies in Senegal and Guinea, they first examine whether there are institutions at the international, national and local level that are of relevance to the natural resource use and environmental change. Secondly, it is explored how these institutions have responded to the influx of refugees, and what role the refugees have had in relation to these institutions. In accordance with their findings, local institutions have been able to adapt to the refugees and provide them with natural resources which have inhibited a negative impact on the environment (Black and Sessay, 1998; Black, 1996:2).

In another paper by Black and Sessay, they examine the impact of these refugees on land use in Guinea. More specifically, they study to what extent the refugees have been able to access land, and also use it, and whether this has had any effect

on the change in land use patterns that they have observed in the forest region of Guinea (Black and Sessay, 1997). Furthermore, Black reports on a research project on refugees' impact on the fragile environment in Senegal and Guinea. They conclude that refugees do not use resources in a more destructive way than the local populations, but they also recognise that some environmental changes have taken place. In addition, it is suggested that environmental initiatives aimed at reducing negative effects on the environment should involve refugees as well as local people (Black, 1998).

In a very interesting article by Wim Van Damme, the focus is on the displacement patterns of the refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone who came to self-settle in Guinea. He describes the different refugee waves to Guinea during the period 1990–96, and draws the conclusion that these waves differed in terms of settlement patterns. Van Damme argues that these patterns were largely determined by factors such as whether the refugees were of rural or urban origin, their ethnic links, and the availability of agricultural resources. He makes an important contribution in distinguishing between the rural and urban refugees, and how their origin determined the settlement patterns. This aspect seems to have been largely neglected in previous research on refugees from and in Liberia. These findings on displacement patterns are also included in Van Damme's major study on medical assistance to self-settled refugees in Guinea (Van Damme, 1998; 1999).

In an early study Melissa Leach focuses on the Liberian refugees who came to self-settle in Sierra Leone, and how these were accommodated within the rural Mende communities in the year following the influx in 1990–91. She examines both the impact on food security as well as the environmental consequences (Leach, 1992). While it is encouraging to see that there is an increasing amount of literature concerning the effect of refugees on the local environments, this interest seems to be limited to the Liberian and Sierra Leonean refugees who came to settle in Guinea. One exception to this overall trend is the above-mentioned study by Melissa Leach, concentrating on the Liberians arriving in Sierra Leone. Moreover, there is a need to study the displacement patterns in a similar fashion to Van Damme's study, specifically regarding the dimension of urban and rural refugees.

7. RESETTLEMENT AND REPATRIATION

After the civil war was brought to an end and Charles Taylor came to power, some refugees were

able to return home. During the period 1997–2000, an estimated 377,000 people were repatriated to Liberia, and some received assistance from UNHCR in doing so (OCHA, 2002). However, due to the fighting between the government forces and the LURD rebels, new groups within the population are being displaced, and this has impeded the prospects for refugees and internally displaced from the earlier waves to return home. Some of the Sierra Leonean refugees residing in Liberia have returned to their country of origin. At the beginning of 2002, UNHCR assisted the refugees who voluntarily wanted to repatriate to Sierra Leone, and by the end of September, close to 13,000 refugees had been repatriated. UNHCR intends to continue its work in close cooperation with the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC), which is the government institution responsible for constructing and implementing programmes for the displaced in Liberia (UNHCR, 2002c; Kamara, 1999b).

Many of the studies on the topic of resettlement and repatriation emphasise the security conditions and the importance of guaranteeing protection for the refugees. This seems to be a major concern not only throughout the conflict but also in the post-war period. In late 1992 there were reports of security problems, especially in the northern Lofa County, and as a result UNHCR and NGOs were unable to reach the Sierra Leonean refugees in that area. Moreover, although UNHCR has had a voluntary repatriation plan in place since July 1991, the ongoing fighting has prevented Liberian refugees from returning (Jesuit Refugee Service, 1993:7). According to UNHCR, the security situation improved somewhat in 1993. However, the implementation of the Cotonou agreement, which was argued to be a condition for the return of the refugees, was behind schedule (UNHCR, 1993). Furthermore, in early 1994, UNHCR was asking donors for funds regarding the voluntary repatriation of some 700,000 Liberian refugees residing in neighbouring countries at that time (Jesuit Refugee Service, 1994).

Abdi and Tinstman discuss voluntary repatriation to Liberia, and they too argue that the security situation in Liberia is precarious and that there is a need to ensure that the refugees are protected (Abdi and Tinstman, 1995). Paul Stromberg reports that, in late 1997, the UNHCR shifted its policy of facilitating repatriation to a more active policy of promoting repatriation, but progress has been slow. The problems have been several, for instance, the cross border insurgencies, together

with the lack of interest from the international donors which have resulted in lack in funding (Stromberg, 1998).

In a paper by Tom Kamara, several aspects concerning returnees and repatriation are discussed. Kamara argues that security issues, as well as the economic environment, make the conditions for repatriation and reintegration difficult (Kamara, 1999b). Along the same lines, Philippa Atkinson has conducted a study of the political and socio-economic conditions facing the Liberian refugees as they returned from neighbouring countries to Liberia. She analyses a number of different factors, including shelter, food aid, income distribution, and employment (Atkinson, 1992). In a more recent study on economic opportunities for those returning home, Rein Dekker studies a group of Ghanaians who moved to Liberia, but due to the war returned to resettle in their home country. The government of Ghana and international agencies were focusing on the Liberian refugees while Ghanaian refugees were left to fend for themselves. However, loan schemes were offered by an NGO, and it is this scheme which Dekker evaluates in her study. Dekker examines the factors that determined whether the refugees were successful in making use of this economic opportunity and able to repay their loans (Dekker, 1995).

Jeff Crisp reports on the discussion from a lessons-learned workshop dealing with repatriation and reintegration of refugees. The purpose of the workshop was to learn from the experiences obtained from working in Liberia, in order to enhance UNHCR's ability to plan, program and implement similar operations (Crisp, 2001). A research project on the topic of returnees is currently under way, focusing on migration, return and development in West Africa. Lisa D'Onofrio reports on a workshop taking place in the early stages of the so-called Transrede Research Project (D'Onofrio and Project, 2001). The first paper published within that project is a study by Savina Ammassari and Richard Black, where they review the literature regarding migration, return and development, and apply this to the region of West Africa (Ammassari and Black, 2001).

8. INTEGRATION AND REINTEGRATION

After having discussed resettlement and repatriation it is of relevance to touch upon two related issues, namely integration and reintegration. The

process of integration takes place when displaced people, after having fled to another country, or being resettled, try to integrate into a new environment, while reintegration refers to the displaced who, voluntarily or not, have repatriated to a community in which they previously lived.

The extent and conditions under which displaced people are able to integrate into the host-community are of course important. Hiram A. Ruiz argues that the Liberian refugees who fled to the neighbouring countries of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire were met with hospitality and came to be welcomed by the host populations. According to a relief worker, "The Liberians were received as brothers, not as refugees". The refugees were cohabitating with the local people instead of staying in refugee camps, but Ruiz suggests that tensions have arisen between the refugees and the locals (Ruiz, 1992b). This relationship between the refugees and the hosts that Ruiz describes is the focus of a number of studies.

Melissa Leach's work on how the Liberian refugees were accommodated in the Mende communities in Sierra Leone was discussed above in the section on the impact of refugees on host areas (Leach, 1992). Mats Utas' study on Liberian refugees residing in Danane in Côte d'Ivoire, mentioned earlier, partly deals with strategies of integration (Utas, 1997). In a report by Tom Kuhlman, the focus is also on the integration of Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, and he suggests some lessons to be learned concerning how to create local integration as a durable solution. The Liberian refugees entering Côte d'Ivoire have mostly self-settled close to the Liberian border, and it was only in 1995 that a refugee camp was set up by UNHCR. Kuhlman argues that the prospects for a successful integration were, in fact, present at the outset, but UNHCR failed to seize this opportunity. In particular, he claims that the UNHCR should have acted differently regarding two issues. Firstly, the economic integration was not supported sufficiently until it was already too late and funds were running out. Secondly, instead of integrating the refugees into society, UNHCR established a parallel system to take care of the education of the refugees (Kuhlman, 2002:3). Finally, Wim Van Damme's comprehensive study has already been mentioned in which he argues that self-settlement and integration can contribute to refugees becoming self-reliant (Van Damme, 1998; 1999).

In a report by Human Rights Watch, published shortly after Taylor won the elections, the importance of providing assistance to the refugees and

internally displaced returning home is stressed. They argue that since the communities are shattered from the devastation of the war, people are likely to find their homes looted and destroyed, or in some instances occupied by former faction fighters or other displaced people. Among the aspects discussed we find, for instance, living conditions, protection issues, and the role of LRRRC (HRW, 1997). In a report published three years after the civil war, the reintegration efforts of UNDP are in focus. UNDP evaluates its role in 15 reintegration programmes, of which one programme can be found in Liberia. They specifically focus on the evolution, adequacy and the timing of these interventions, and in addition they cover aspects such as the cooperation between UNDP and the governments and partner agencies. A number of recommendations on how to improve their work are presented, for example, it is argued that the reintegration of refugees, internally displaced and ex-combatants, can best be accomplished by working at the community level, and it is also suggested that more cooperation with different NGOs is needed (Barnes et al., 2000).

How to reintegrate refugees, internally displaced and ex-combatants into their home communities, is of course of vital importance when rebuilding a society after civil war. However, this issue does not seem to have been given proper attention. Most studies deal with the integration of displaced into their host-communities, and not with how to reintegrate those returning home. There are some research studies dealing with issues of repatriation, which were discussed previously, but these studies are more concerned with the process of the return of refugees, and not the reintegration of these refugees after the repatriation has taken place.

9. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The situation of the displaced has been and continues to be a major problem that needs to be addressed. At the outset of this paper, the extent of the crisis was touched upon, and it was shown that approximately 300,000 Liberians remain displaced within or outside the borders of the country (USCR, 2002a). In spite of its relevance, the issue of refugees and internally displaced from and in Liberia is not very well researched, which makes it difficult to point out certain areas where more studies are needed. Further research would be of great value on any of the aspects concerning the

displaced which are touched upon in this review. However, there are some areas that could benefit particularly from further research.

Firstly the causes of the displacement patterns could be explored in more detail. In particular, the behaviour of the warring parties and their effect on the different waves of refugees and internally displaced should receive more attention. In this context the issue of forced recruitment could be interesting to examine in more detail. In addition, the displacement patterns of the urban and rural refugees should be analysed further. For instance, during the civil war many internally displaced persons took their refuge in the capital Monrovia, but the conditions surrounding these waves of refugees have been largely neglected.

Overall, the conditions of the internally displaced persons in Liberia have been overlooked and should be explored further. Of the research conducted on the Liberian refugees fleeing to the other countries in the West African region, Côte d'Ivoire is the country which has received the least attention seen in relation to the large numbers of refugees. Thus, research on the Liberian refugee flow to Côte d'Ivoire should be encouraged.

Moreover, the severity of the sexual exploitation and sexual violence that have taken place has been unprecedented, and there is a pressing need to see how especially children and women have been affected by this. I have already stressed the need to explore forced recruitment, and this issue is especially relevant for the protection of children, since the use of child soldiers by the warring parties has been common practice in Liberia. Furthermore, the socio-economic conditions of the refugees are something in need of further research. This is also relevant when considering the future prospects for those refugees and displaced persons who have returned home. The conditions of the repatriated populations and how the reintegration process can be enhanced are of crucial importance, and would benefit from more attention.

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