

## Polity IV Country Report 2010: Sierra Leone

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Polity:</b></td> <td>7</td> <td>7</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Democ:</b></td> <td>8</td> <td>8</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Autoc:</b></td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Durable:</b></td> <td></td> <td>8</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Tentative:</b></td> <td></td> <td>Yes</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	<b>Polity:</b>	7	7	0	<b>Democ:</b>	8	8	0	<b>Autoc:</b>	1	1	0	<b>Durable:</b>		8		<b>Tentative:</b>		Yes		
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SCODE	<b>SIE</b>	CCODE	<b>451</b>	Date of Report	<b>1 June 2011</b>																				
<b>Polity IV Component Variables</b>																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
3	3	4	6	3	4																				
<b>Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)</b>																									
End Date			Begin Date																						
25 May 1997			12 July 2002																						
<b>Polity Fragmentation: No</b>																									
<b>Constitution</b>	1991 (with subsequent amendments)																								
<b>Executive(s)</b>	President Ernest Bai Koroma (APC); elected 11 August and 8 September 2007 in runoff, 50.6%																								
<b>Legislature</b>	Unicameral: House of Representatives (124 seats; 112 proportionally elected, 12 reserved for locally elected "paramount chiefs;" most recent elections, 11 August 2007) All People's Congress (APC): 59 Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP): 43 People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC): 10																								
<b>Judiciary</b>	Supreme Court																								

### Narrative Description:<sup>1</sup>

#### **Executive Recruitment: Competitive Elections (8)**

Due to the protracted civil conflict in Sierra Leone that killed over 50,000 citizens during the 1990s, the elected central government was unable to extend its political authority over much of the country between 1997 and 2001. However, the successful negotiation of a cease-fire agreement between the government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in November 2000, and the initiation of its disarmament clause in May 2001, marked the tenuous return of peace and stability to this poor West African state. Despite this unexpected turn of events, the security situation in Sierra Leone remains shaky and political stability uncertain.

<sup>1</sup> The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

Eleven political parties, including the RUF, contested the most recent presidential polls of 10 May 2002. President Kabbah won the contest for chief executive with seventy percent of the vote while his party, the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party (SLPP), won a majority of seats in the National Assembly. Foday Sankoh, leader of the RUF, was declared ineligible and did not contest this position. Hailed by international observers as generally free and fair, this election, held under the watchful eye of 17,000 UN military forces, marked a promising sign for this war-ravaged country. President Kabbah was constitutionally barred from seeking another term in 2007. On 11 August 2007 the first round of elections for the presidency were held, resulting in a run-off between Ernest Bai Koroma of the All People's Congress (APC) and Solomon Berewa of the ruling SLPP. Koroma won the second round of voting with fifty-four percent of the vote, and was inaugurated on 17 September 2007.

**Executive Constraints: Near Parity (6)**

The executive branch remains the dominant branch of government within Sierra Leone. The landslide victory of President Kabbah's SLPP in the May 2002 legislative elections only reaffirmed his dominance over the policy-making instruments of this country. Corruption and illiteracy continue to limit the political efficacy of Sierra Leone's citizens to restrain the actions of the political elite within this society. The judiciary, while demonstrating some independence, remains weak and subject to corruption. It remains to be seen whether the newly elected President Ernest Bai Koroma will face additional limitations.

**Political Participation: Political Liberalization: Persistent Overt Coercion (8)**

Sierra Leone has a long history of acute political instability in the post-colonial era. The civil war had its roots in the deep inequalities, endemic corruption and intense competition over the country's vast diamond reserves. Additionally, Sierra Leone has witnessed seven military coups since it obtained independence in 1961, the most recent in 1997. President Kabbah, who was elected in 1996, was reinstated to his post after the intervention of Nigeria-led regional peace forces (ECOMOG) in 1998. Despite the reinstatement of democratically elected officials in Sierra Leone in 1998, the intervention of ECOMOG forces failed to bring an end to the civil war as widespread lawlessness persisted throughout the country. Bolstering President Kabbah's fragile political authority in the country was the 12,000-strong UN peacekeeping contingent (UNAMSIL) that was sent to the country in November 1999 and a small contingent of British troops.

Regional commentators maintained that President Kabbah's "writ hardly extended beyond the capital" in 2000. Rebels were reported to have committed atrocities against civilians in areas less than forty kilometers from the capital and less than one kilometer from checkpoints manned by international troops. As the result, up to 500,000 refugees were internally displaced or taking shelter in the neighboring Guinea. The RUF rebels enjoyed a "cozy" relationship with the regime of President Charles Taylor in the neighboring Liberia, who was accused of supporting the civil war in Sierra Leone and facilitating the sale of diamonds taken illegally from the country. Until the end of 2001, the rebels continued to control the key diamond-producing areas in the eastern districts (close to Liberia).

The military capacity of the RUF rapidly disintegrated at the end of 2000 after the capture of its leader, Foday Sankoh, allowing the the government to extend its authority throughout the country. By May of 2001 government forces reported a string of military successes against the rebels. For the first time in this ten-year civil war, government forces moved into rebel-held towns in the north of the country where UN peace-keeping forces have been implementing cease-fire and disarmament accords. By June 2001, over 1,000 rebels and 2,200 pro-government militias had handed in their weapons. The disarmament of RUF-controlled regions in 2001 and 2002 gave the international community hope that Sierra Leone was finally emerging from its long decade of violence and despair. By the end of 2001 most of the country was once again under government control and presidential and parliamentary elections were held in the spring of 2002. By February 2004 the disarmament and rehabilitation of more than 70,000 civil war combatants was "officially completed". In 2005 the UN peacekeeping mission concluded its mission but, as a result of over a decade of civil war, the government is reported to remain heavily cash-strapped, is unable to accommodate displaced refugees and has encountered difficulties in performing administration duties. Internal order across the country is maintained, in addition to the government's law enforcement structures, by independent militias led by "paramount chiefs" (traditional leaders with administrative and judicial powers). Consequently, UN peacekeepers remained in the country through the 2007 presidential elections.

Furthermore, democratic politics in Sierra Leone continues to be plagued by factional rivalries. There are currently twenty-two political parties operating in Sierra Leone, however, personality struggles

and a lack of training and funding have slowed efforts to convert the RUF into an effective political party. Moreover, there exists a potentially dangerous division between the army and civilian government with the majority of the security forces voting for opposition parties and candidates. Kabbah's party swept votes across the South and East while its main rival, the All People's Congress party, maintained its stronghold in the North. Moreover, President Kabbah has done very little to establish a cabinet that is either ethnically or regionally broad-based in composition. Regional divisions were the order of the day in the 2007 presidential elections, reflecting the regionally divided factional politics of the country. In the fall of 2010 the UN Security Council lifted the last remaining sanction against Sierra Leone, eight years after the end of the bloody civil war. The council noted that the government had fully re-established control over its territory and that it had effectively disarmed and demobilized all former rebel fighters. Nonetheless, the council extended its peacekeeping mandate in Sierra Leone for another year as the country prepares for elections in 2012.