

the Abidjan Agreement and there was a number of organisational structures designed to oversee the demobilization and disarmament of the RUF these clearly failed. The failure was not so much due to the inadequacies of the initiatives themselves, but because of the questionable commitment of the RUF to complying with them. Only a limited number of RUF fighters disarmed and this occurred spontaneously. The RUF failed to appoint its representatives for the DDR Committee. The provisions for reintegration were also poorly distributed. For example, when the NPRC was disbanded no demobilization or reintegration package was provided for its senior military officers, or its soldiers. Some of these individuals re-emerged in the coup of May 25, 1997 which overthrew the Kabbah government.

Some promising gains were made in the field of **human rights** in the peace settlement, however their implementation was cut short by the coup. Current monitoring initiatives are limited due to the ongoing fighting. Similarly, initiatives towards **economic reconstruction** were beginning to take effect with the renewed confidence in the peace process resulting in a dramatically reduced inflation rate and a gradual economic recovery until the coup occurred. The agricultural sector was improving, but it was especially hard hit as the coup occurred just as the planting season had begun. Since then the economy has been paralyzed due to the economic embargo implemented by ECOWAS.

Social Reconstruction efforts were also progressing well. At the end of January 1997 an estimated 200,000 people had returned to their areas of origins and were settling down. Programs to assist child combatants were expanding, and health services were gradually improving the overall well-being of the population by working pro-actively to prevent outbreaks of disease. All of these gains were reversed by the renewed fighting. Similarly the gains made in developing **institutional capacity** were cut short. This was particularly unfortunate given the expanding competence of government agencies in organizing the national elections and co-ordinating many of the peacebuilding projects in the months immediately following the signing of the peace accord.

Overall, the few successful peacebuilding initiatives have been overshadowed by the failure of the RUF to comply with the demobilization and disarmament provisions of the Abidjan Agreement. This in turn had severe repercussions for the rest of the peacebuilding initiatives. This in part could be considered the fault of the UN which acted slowly to plan the deployment of military observers to oversee the demobilization, but then the RUF might still have delayed its compliance with the Abidjan Agreement. The failure of the demobilization programme should not detract from the relative success of the early action initiatives and the efforts at conflict resolution, both nationally and internationally, which paved the way for the signing of the peace agreement.

It is important to note that despite intense conflict resolution initiatives leading up to the peace agreement, these gains were not cemented in the later stages of the peacebuilding process. The RUF was easily able to renege on its commitment to disarm and demobilize its fighters which then meant that attention could not be fully directed towards reform in the socio-economic sector. This lack of follow through ultimately resulted in the re-ignition of conflict. The experience of Sierra Leone would suggest that the demobilization and disarmament process must be completed before other initiatives occur, and that even in the context of a peace agreement conflict resolution initiatives must continue until this