

ECOWAS meeting to discuss foreign intervention in its internal political affairs. Talks have also occurred at the operational level between Koroma and the ECOMOG commanders regarding a possible cease-fire.

The second source of conflict resolution efforts has been ECOWAS. Immediately following the coup a number of meetings took place between ECOWAS member-states as they attempted to decide on how to respond Kabbah's ouster. The result of these meetings has been the imposition of economic sanctions on Sierra Leone in the hopes of crippling the ARFC regime. Additionally, ECOWAS has established a four member Committee consisting of Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire to oversee the sanctions and conduct an assessment mission to Sierra Leone. The stated ECOWAS objectives are threefold; the reinstatement of the legitimate government, the return of peace and security, and the resolution of the issues surrounding refugees and internally displaced people.

Throughout this process ECOWAS and the UN have kept in close contact, with ECOWAS briefing the UN Security Council (UNSC) on its strategy and the Committee of Four going to New York to meet the UN Secretary General (UNSG).

Other unilateral conflict resolution efforts have occurred. Ghana, for example, independently sent a delegation to Freetown to meet with the coup makers to discuss potential avenues to peace.

#### Early Warning:

One of the primary early warning roles in the attempted resolution of the civil war was conducted by International Alert. In many cases its efforts can be considered as conflict resolution initiatives, but much of IA's work accord before any substantial conflict resolution process was underway. Initially, IA sent a special envoy to discuss with the Foreign Minister of Cote d'Ivoire, Amara Essy, the potential for peace talks between the parties. This was then followed by a series of consultations with both the Secretary-General of the OAU and the NPRC government in Sierra Leone. In early 1995 IA organized a Conflict Resolution Workshop in Senegal at which a representative of the RUF was present as well as a representative from the Commonwealth Secretariat. It also coordinated, with the ICRC, the release of hostages held by the RUF, and convened a second meeting - the Joint Action Peace Forum on Sierra Leone - which involved members of the West-African diplomatic community and NGOs.

As dialogue for peace began to gain momentum, IA facilitated communication between the RUF, the OAU, UN and Commonwealth - efforts which culminated in the first meeting of the RUF, the OAU and the UN in December 1995. While these preparatory talks were occurring Brigadier Bio gained control of the NPRC and expressed a willingness to negotiate with the RUF. Pursuing this opportunity, IA worked as a go-between among the RUF and NPRC and the various international organizations with its efforts being rewarded in late February 1996 when direct peace talks were begun in Abidjan involving all parties concerned.

IA has recently been criticized for its continued role in the Sierra Leone peacebuilding process. While the value of its early initiatives is generally accepted, IA and one of its Special Envoy to Sierra Leone have been accused of complicating the later stages of the peace process. A proposed preliminary peacekeeping deployment by the UN was rejected by Sankoh, and it is generally believed that the IA's Special Envoy advised Sankoh