

troops in August and September is expected to bring the force up to about 16,000 allowing it to push deployment forward.

If current peace arrangements hold, urgent attention must be given to security arrangements in the diamond areas of Kono and Tongo Field. For the most part, diamonds have fuelled the war and, if the key areas of diamond concentration are not brought under control, the security of the entire country will be at risk. In the short run, the provision of security can and should be handled by UNAMSIL, but there is a pressing need to begin comprehensive planning for the longer term.

The national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process that has now restarted is an absolutely essential beginning on the road to stability and normality. Its importance cannot be overestimated. If ex-combatants do not receive the minimal support they have been promised through the DDR, the likelihood of renewed fighting is high and a collapse of the peace process could be viewed as inevitable.

A peace agreement in Sierra Leone is not enough to solve what has become a dangerous regional security problem. Fighting could continue to simmer and flare and could easily spill over into other neighbouring countries such as Côte d'Ivoire. Inattention to the regional dimensions could send the wrong signals about international tolerance for acts of terror and violence to those in and beyond the region. And if the peace process breaks down, more drastic action will be required. The war in Sierra Leone has lasted almost twice as long as the Second World War. It has taken tens of thousands more lives than the war in Kosovo. It has created more refugees and internally displaced people than almost any other conflict in the world. The current set of agreements represent probably the last best hope of a negotiated settlement. If these agreements fail, the international community and more especially Western industrialized countries - including Canada - will have to face the prospect of dealing with a wider conflagration with grave humanitarian and security implications.

The general humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone is somber and is likely to get worse before it gets better. Officially, the humanitarian community is dealing with a caseload of over 400,000 IDPs, representing only a small proportion of the total. Estimates of IDPs living on their own or with host families run as high as two million, almost half the population. With the onset of the rainy season and the possible return of more than 100,000 refugees from Guinea, the situation is likely to become much worse through 2001. In fact, the refugee situation in Guinea remains equally troubling. Côte d'Ivoire has also been affected. In mid-June 2001, some 2,000 new Liberian refugees arrived at Danane near the Liberian border forcing a revision of emergency contingency plans in that part of the region. In the short and medium term, all humanitarian agencies in the region - and their budgets - are likely to be severely tested.

The roots of Sierra Leone's tragedy lie in poor governance and all of its attendant ills: a disappearing formal economy; joblessness, especially among young people; debilitating poverty; poor education; and a weak health infrastructure. These circumstances provided the combatants for the conflict, and once it had been ignited, diamonds provided the funds to sustain it. Huge resources have been provided by the international community in support of UNAMSIL - probably in the order of about US\$3 million a day at current levels. In addition, large