

May. The first communiqué, between the GOSL, the RUF and UNAMSIL (Annex 2), agreed to a resumption of the DDR process with simultaneous disarmament of the RUF and the CDF on an unspecified timetable throughout the country. It was agreed that concurrently UNAMSIL would deploy throughout the country and would undertake 'cordon and search' operations after the disarmament had been completed. This was intended to seize any un-surrendered weapons. A monitoring mechanism was also agreed upon. The RUF requested the release of its members currently detained by the GOSL and the government reaffirmed its commitment to consider the request.

The second agreement (Annex 3) was signed on behalf of the CDF by Chief Hinga Norman and for the RUF by Omrie Golley, Chairman of the Political and Peace Council,\* and by UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Oluyemi Adeniji. It undertook to "ensure the cessation of all hostilities" between the RUF and the CDF, and to allow "the unimpeded movement of persons, goods and services throughout the country."

Disarmament began immediately with almost 2500 RUF and CDF fighters handing in their weapons in the Kambia-Port Loko area within a matter of hours (see below). In the days and weeks following the agreements, however, fighting between the RUF and the CDF continued in areas that were important to the RUF's access to Liberia.

Three major questions arise from the current security situation: first, *why has the RUF sought a peace agreement now?* Secondly, *is their desire for peace genuine?* And third, *is it likely that the peace will hold?*

#### ***Why has the RUF sought a peace agreement now?***

The official RUF position is that the time has come for peace. They contend the war can't be won without great loss on both sides. By transforming itself into a political movement, the RUF says it can explain itself to Sierra Leoneans. The notion now being expressed by many RUF leaders is that it will be better able to influence events by ballots rather than bullets. The realities of the situation suggest that the RUF may have other reasons for suing for peace.

Other explanations include the possibility that:

- the RUF was seriously weakened in the Guinea operation and may have simply lost the will to fight; \*\*
- with the consolidation of UNAMSIL and the willingness of the UK to take robust military action as required, it had become obvious to the RUF that they could never again reach Freetown. Consequently, they faced the prospect of little more than a protracted guerrilla operation that they could well lose;

---

\* Omrie Golley was a spokesman for the RUF until fired by Foday Sankoh early in 2000. He has returned to Sierra Leone and has helped the RUF articulate a political position. While regarded as "helpful" by some, many suspect Golley's motives and it remains to be seen whether this RUF political agenda will have any attraction for the average Sierra Leonean voter.

\*\* RUF Spokesman Gibril Massaquoi was quoted in the Concord Times (May 28) as acknowledging the death of senior RUF Col. Komba Gbudema in a battle with Donsos.