

Pursuing Reconciliation after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Lessons from Sierra Leone

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In December 2009, the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) submitted its final report to the government and people of Liberia. The TRC was established in May 2005 as part of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) signed by the various warring factions after a fourteen year civil war and was codified in the TRC Act of 2005. Mandated with investigating the period from January 1979 through October 2003, the TRC received statements from 22,000 individuals and heard 500 live public testimonies in hearings that began in January 2008.

In addition to investigating the past with an eye to possible future prosecutions, a main goal of the TRC was to help “restore the human dignity of victims and promote reconciliation by providing an opportunity for victims, witnesses, and others to give an account of the violations and abuses suffered and for perpetrators to relate their experiences, in an environment conducive to constructive interchange between victims and perpetrators.”^[1]

Despite the large number of statements (about as many as the South African TRC received and almost three times the number received by the Sierra Leone TRC), the vast majority of them were not from perpetrators, who, wary of the TRC's mandate to collect evidence and make recommendations about prosecutions, chose not to participate. And the few who did testify were mostly unapologetic about their roles. Instead, most submissions were from

victims and other witnesses to atrocities.

In its final report, the commissioners admitted they had decided against providing a venue for accusers to directly confront the accused (for security reasons, among others). They conceded, “While such exchanges took place, they were limited and did not occur frequently.”^[2] Unfortunately, this kind of interchange between victims and perpetrators that the TRC prevented might, in fact, be a necessary precondition for lasting reconciliation. Narrative truth, social (“dialogical”) truth, and restorative truth are as significant, if not more significant, to reconciliation than factual (“forensic”) truth.^[3] Social or dialogical truth in particular involves discussion and debate within a community, which was mostly missing from the TRC process. Could neighboring Sierra Leone, which had concluded its own truth commission in 2004, have provided a cautionary warning about the pitfalls of not pursuing dialogical truth? I turn now to the example of Sierra Leone.

Three Levels of Reconciliation

Victim-perpetrator interaction was limited in the Sierra Leone TRC, which was established in 2002 following a decade-long civil war. At public hearings, victims expressed what had happened to them, but mostly in the absence of their actual perpetrators, who feared testifying. Those few perpetrators who testified often expressed how they were victims too, as many were abducted and forced to commit egregious acts, but they were less forthcoming in admitting their own responsibility. While it may be healing at a personal level for some individuals to talk about their suffering before a supportive audience, in effect reconciling themselves with their memories, there are two other levels of reconciliation—the interpersonal and community—which the TRC was less able to attain.

At the interpersonal level, reconciliation means renewed relationships between victim and perpetrator. At the TRC, when the commission knew that a victim was planning to name her perpetrator, the perpetrator was offered a chance to respond. This happened, albeit infrequently. In addition, the TRC mediated on occasion between individual perpetrators and their victims. The majority of statement-givers had indicated they wanted to meet with their perpetrator and/or victim, but this rarely happened due to budgetary and time constraints.

Reconciliation between individuals and their communities is often overlooked in the peace-building literature but has enormous relevance in the Sierra Leone context. Both perpetrators

and victims need to be reconciled with their communities. Mediation theorist Howard Zehr notes that perpetrators and victims alike often feel disconnected from their communities.^[4] This is especially true for child soldiers, other former combatants, raped and combatant women, all of whom have enormous difficulties returning home because of the stigma associated with their war time status.

Need for Acknowledgment

The TRC hearings in Sierra Leone began the process of storytelling and the empathetic listening that is central to reconciliation. But, during the hearings, there was little actual acknowledgment of wrongdoing. (Unfortunately, just 1 percent of all testimonies came from perpetrators.) At the district hearings in Port Loko, the TRC was unable to muster even one perpetrator to give a testimony.^[5] Even for the small number of perpetrators who testified, very few actually admitted doing anything wrong. For instance, one RUF rebel said, “I am apologizing for what the war did.”^[6]

In his analysis of the TRC in Sierra Leone, political scientist Tim Kelsall points out there was very little “truth” or acknowledgment from perpetrators in the TRC hearings, but the ritual aspects of prostrating themselves and asking forgiveness at the weekly reconciliation ceremony seemed to have a profound effect on the crowd. His conclusions—that the verbal truth-telling aspect of truth commissions may have been inappropriate or unnecessary in Sierra Leone, and that the ritual aspect was more relevant—miss the point. Unlike many truth commissions of the past that unearthed the truth about the past that was mainly hidden—facts about the “disappeared” and torture in secret chambers—the conflict in Sierra Leone was waged in the open. Women were raped in public view, boys and girls were amputated in front of their families, and so forth. The “facts” are widely known.^[7] This does not mean, however, as Kelsall and Rosalind Shaw maintain,^[8] that vocalizing what one did, or what was done to oneself, is unimportant to people.

There is a difference between knowledge of facts and acknowledgment of deeds, as Thomas Nagel so aptly put it.^[9] People mostly had the knowledge about what happened;^[10] they are waiting for the acknowledgment. The TRC was only partially successful in promoting acknowledgment of wrong doing, due to many factors, including budgetary constraints that limited the hearings to the district towns for just five days, and the operation of the Special

Court at the same time, which confused and frightened perpetrators. These are more plausible explanations for the lack of truth telling at the TRC hearings than the cultural ones (a tradition of secrecy and obfuscation/dissimulation) posited by Shaw and Kelsall.^[12]

In the early phase of reintegration, according to researcher Laura Stovel, Disarmament Demobilization Reintegration [DDR] officials stressed that former combatants were not responsible for their actions.^[13] Certainly, this is understandable when so many were abducted and forced to commit atrocities. Claiming their lack of culpability may have facilitated their communities' willingness to accept them. However, not acknowledging their complicity may have impeded meaningful reconciliation, as perpetrators need to accept some measure of responsibility for their own personal healing, and victims long to hear a sincere acknowledgment and apology from perpetrators.

Religious and Traditional Resources for Reconciliation

Christianity and Islam^[14] provide theological underpinnings for a reconciliation process that aims at eliciting confessions (truth) from perpetrators, who in exchange would be forgiven by victims. In both religions, no one is an irredeemable devil. For Christians, the reason is the atoning death of Christ, who saves all of mankind from sin. For Muslims, the ability to accept a repentant sinner has to do with Islam's rejection of the very notion of original sin. In Islam, Christ's redemptive death was not necessary to save mankind because man is not so depraved that Christ's sacrificial death was required. Because man's original nature is one of moral innocence, he is entirely capable of be(com)ing good.^[15]

Tradition also provides a basis for the promotion of restorative justice. Along with religion, it provides a rich resource for what John and Valerie Braithwaite call "reintegrative shaming," defined as "treating the wrongdoer respectfully and empathically as a good person who has done a bad act and making special efforts to show the wrongdoer[s] how valued they are after the wrongful act has been committed."^[16] Francis Deng, who has studied indigenous methods of conflict resolution on the African continent, agrees that both modern restorative justice approaches and African tradition "prioritize the need to salvage and affirm the moral worth and dignity of everyone involved."^[17] In Sierra Leone, this view is expressed in the oft-quoted Krio expression "There is no bad bush to throw away a bad child."

Augustine Park argues that a restorative tradition that is “negotiatory, deliberative, reparative, and reconciliatory” abides in all of the ethnic cultures of Sierra Leone.^[18] For instance, peace huts (or court barrays) are an important place where community members typically gather to mediate community conflicts. There the Paramount Chief consults with the Council of Elders to resolve conflict. In many cases, a mediator is brought in, either a member of the Council of Elders or other community leader or local authority, such as a village or section chief. The victim and alleged culprit are interrogated by this respected mediator. The mediator encourages the truth from both parties, and an apology from the culprit, which is followed by restitution from the wrongdoer to the victim.

Admission of guilt, forgiveness, and restitution are often followed by purification of the wrongdoer to cleanse himself from his sins, protect him from the wrath of God and the ancestors, and reunite him with society.^[19] In most of the ethnic groups (with the exception of the Creoles), secret societies exist that conduct cleansing ceremonies.^[20] In some cases, professionals conduct cleansing ceremonies, which are funded by the family of the transgressor. The purification represents new birth and allows the community to accept the offender.^[21] These ceremonies are often accompanied by the pouring of libation to appease the spirits and ancestors who otherwise would be angry at not only the perpetrator but the entire community. What is striking is how many cultural practices require the verbal acknowledgment and apology of the wrongdoer as a necessary step, contrary to Shaw’s analysis of a culture of silence. Even among the Temne—the group that Shaw observed—the culprit, joined by his family and close relatives, must “plead for pardon” once he is found culpable. This is also true for the Kissi and Loko.^[22]

Inter-Religious Council’s Reconciliation Efforts

In Post-TRC Sierra Leone there have been two prominent reconciliation initiatives, the first sponsored by the Inter-Religious Council and the second by Fambul Tok, in an effort to take up where the TRC stopped. During the final stage of the TRC, and with funding from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the TRC invited the Inter-Religious Council (IRC), the umbrella group of Christian and Muslim organizations, to initiate local reconciliation activities in the country’s fourteen districts and to set up structures that would operate beyond the time frame of the TRC. The IRC’s members trained coordinators to implement activities in all the districts, and reconciliation support committees were

established to encourage ongoing reconciliation activities. The program, which began on October 1, 2003, came to an end in August 2004.^[23]

Each district coordinator was given a motor bike in order to get around his assigned district where he met with the traditional leaders and elders in the community. Marabel Mbayo, head of Women's Programs for the IRC, explains the process: "We did not go out there to propose it to them. ... [The district coordinator] asked [the community leaders]: 'What can we do?' And so those coordinators brought different activities that people suggested. What we were able to finance, we did."^[24] First, holding a workshop and then working through the reconciliation support committee, the district coordinators were "not doing this unilaterally but were doing it in collaboration with the people on the ground," says Mbayo.^[25] What is striking about these activities—and what sets them apart from the formal transitional justice measures (both the TRC and Special Court)—is that they were determined at the grassroots level. Former director of the IRC, Moses Khanu, writes, "In every district and chiefdom, the communities proposed and implemented their own reconciliation activities."^[26]

The preliminary workshops held in November 2003 in the districts highlighted some of the challenges and lingering issues: the marginalization of women and youth in decision making, discrimination against ex-combatants, non-involvement of ex-combatants in decision making, and rejection of sexually abused women. Criticisms lodged against the TRC during the workshops were that it was too "official" and "a lot of people were unable to vent their opinions." Likewise, it was felt that perpetrators had "failed to show remorse."^[27] As Mbayo explains: "At first the TRC was not so welcome; people feared it would open up wounds. But by the time it was near the end, people were ready to come forward, but it was too late."^[28] It was also observed during the district workshops that many people only returned from the refugee camps after the statement-taking phase of the TRC, and so had not been able to share their stories.^[29]

To meet the continued need for victims and perpetrators to share their stories, the reconciliation district coordinators encouraged one or two testimonies at each reconciliation event. Activities ran the gamut from marking mass graves, reintegrating former combatants, renaming bush children, and holding cleansing ceremonies. The two major activities requested by the people were proper burial of loved ones and football matches between

former combatants and youth.^[30]

The reports from the reconciliation committees highlighted the importance to the local communities of performing memorial ceremonies for those who had died during the war in order to appease the dead. In one report, this was characterized as “reconciliation between living and dead observed.”^[31] Bush wives (those taken as “wives” by rebels) and abducted children were also cleansed to remove the stigma and to be accepted back into their communities. In one report, referring to the situation of bush wives, the outcome of cleansing ritual is described: “stigma removed, get husbands.”^[32] This refers to the impossibility for women perceived as non-virgins to find husbands.^[33]

In Sebehun, one hundred girls were initiated and “were declared clean and could marry.”^[34] The war had interfered with traditional rites of passage of boys and girls into secret societies, making them ineligible for their adult roles. In many cases, there was the renaming of children born to bush wives. In addition, the bush, which had been contaminated through bloodshed during the war, was cleansed. In Kissy, the mosque also was purified.^[35] The pouring of libation, sacrificial offering of sheep, and performance of traditional dances rounded out the reconciliation activities.

Ceremonial cleansing was performed on several former combatants after they apologized to the community. In Makka village, the former militia apologized to the citizens, and the people accepted the apology and embraced the young men.^[36] Ex-combatants in Mende Town and in Loko Masama publicly apologized to those communities, and the chiefs embraced them on behalf of the people.^[37] Confessions and apologies were offered by former fighters in Bayorbor, who were consequently reconciled with the community.^[38] The military publicly apologized and begged for forgiveness in Makeni, and the chief accepted the apology on behalf of his people, which was followed by the sharing of a glass of water and kola nuts as a symbol of peace.^[39] In Matru village, CDF and RUF made confessions, which were accepted.^[40] Kamajors (of the Civil Defense Forces) apologized in Kpetewoma and were embraced by Sierra Leone Army officers.^[41] Likewise, CDF atrocities committed in Masimera Town were publicly confessed, resulting in the reintegration of former CDF fighters into the community.^[42] While the TRC failed in getting CDF fighters to confess, the local reconciliation committees were more successful. One case involved conflict of allegiance between two neighboring villages in Tonkolili

district; Rosangbel was under CDF control, while Romange was under RUF control. Following a reconciliation ceremony conducted by religious leaders and the reading of the Quran, the two communities reconciled.^[43]

One especially emotional reintegration involved a woman from Koidu town in Kono, Adama Saquee, who had been a concubine of RUF leader Foday Sankoh and was in self-imposed exile as she feared returning to Koidu town because of her wartime activities there. She had collaborated with the RUF by pointing out to rebels the location of diamond mines and was associated with atrocities carried out in the area. She requested assistance from the IRC to broker her return. The IRC first met with women's groups that included many victims from the war. At first, feelings of revenge were expressed, but the women eventually decided they would forgive her if she offered an apology. The women were encouraged to be "ambassadors of peace" and speak to others in the community. Mbayo admitted that it was difficult for the people at first. They asked, "Why is it so important we honor her when she did so many atrocities here?"^[44] Eventually the reconciliation committee was able to prepare the people to take her back. The ceremony, held in a public community hall, began with readings from the Bible and Qur'an. An elder then poured a libation of water, cola nut, and wine on to the ground and called upon the forefathers. After imploring the ancestors to remove the bad spirit, he chanted, "Please forgive and bring peace." The woman publicly apologized, noting that she had been a peaceful citizen before the war. Paramount Chief Konobundor II accepted the apology on behalf of the Kono people, saying that "reconciliation was about love and forgiveness, rather than a refresher of bitter memories."^[45] The ceremony concluded with traditional music and dancing.^[46] She lives peacefully in Koidu town today.

Sharing meals was also at the top of the list of desired activities. Mbayo explains: "When you eat together, it is a form of reconciliation, coming together once again, eating and drinking."^[47] In Lumley and Juba in the Western Area, "cleaning of garbage site" was one reconciliation activity, as was rebuilding the road in Bo, which was performed by a youth association alongside former combatants.^[48] In Mafindor Chiefdom a land dispute between Yamandu and Koindu villages was settled after the pouring of libation. "After ten years, two villages came together."^[49] All reconciliation activities were concluded with either Christian services or Muslim recitations, or both.

Reconciling Enemies through *Fambul Tok*

The IRC's reconciliation activities concluded in 2004, but there was the sense that much more needed to be done to heal the wounds of war. Human rights activist John Caulker developed *Fambul Tok*, Krio for "Family Talk," in 2008 in Sierra Leone.^[50] Caulker, who had been one of the TRC's biggest advocates, nevertheless conceded that the TRC was viewed by rural villagers as a "foreign" institution that never really reached down into the small, remote areas.^[51]

Drawing on Sierra Leone's "family talk" tradition of discussing and resolving issues within the family circle, Caulker envisioned *Fambul Tok* as a program that would work at the local level to assist people to organize an event that would include a truth-telling bonfire and a traditional cleansing ceremony—practices that many communities had not experienced since before the war—and which would be more familiar to people than had been the overly "official" TRC.^[52] Explaining the choice, Caulker says, "The TRC and Special Court did not operate at village level. ... Our people did not benefit from the TRC and Special Court and have opted for village dialogue as a means of settling their conflicts."^[53]

Consultations were held from December 2007 through March 2008 in all twelve districts in the provinces, and were attended by victims, ex-combatants, women, youth, religious leaders, elders, cultural leaders, and local officials in order to assess people's readiness for reconciliation. From the consultations, it was evident that people continued to experience traumas from the war and to have difficulties living side by side with unrepentant perpetrators. It was clear also that local cultural traditions, dormant since the war, could be reawakened for social healing.^[54] Explaining the tense situation for villagers, Caulker explained that former soldiers live alongside the women they raped or whose husbands they killed or amputated. "They didn't apologize, didn't acknowledge the past. They just moved back in."^[55]

Following nationwide consultations, *Fambul Tok* rolled out a pilot phase in Kailahun in March 2008. "The choice of Kailahun District is significant," said Caulker. "This was where the war began in March 23, 1991, when rebels of the Revolutionary United Front crossed into Sierra Leone from Liberia."^[56] At the first ceremony in Bormaru, on the seventeenth anniversary of the start of the war, where the first shots of the war were fired, perpetrators initially remained silent. In time, the town chief, himself a former RUF fighter, made the

first confession. Heartfelt apologies followed late into the night and early morning by former combatants who confessed to committing atrocities against their neighbors.^[57]

In one village in Kailahun, the Fambul Tok ceremony marked the first time that perpetrators met face to face with victims to apologize for the offenses they committed during the conflict. “At last they have acknowledged their crimes,” cried one man on crutches from his wartime injuries.^[58] Explaining the importance of the verbal confessions, Caulker says: “People will not forgive if someone does not come forward to them in person to acknowledge what they did. ... Someone has to acknowledge that this person was hurt. That restores dignity to the victims.”^[59] Also, in Kailahun, in the village of Daabu, a woman had lived in distress just one house away from the man who killed her seven-year-old daughter. Never speaking, they avoided each other until Fambul Tok arranged a reconciliation ceremony in which the killer apologized for his deed.^[60] The killer now looks for ways to assist his neighbor.

Each village, or cluster of villages called a “section,” carries out the activities in its own way, though the framework is similar, involving a truth-telling bonfire in the evening during which victims and offenders share their stories before the community, followed by cleansing ceremonies the following day. The cleansing ceremonies draw upon the particular traditions of the community and include communicating with the spirits and offering libations. According to Fambul Tok co-founder Libby Hoffman, each Fambul Tok process has these ingredients: “truth-telling, individuals taking responsibility and apologizing for offenses committed, forgiveness from victims, and collective activities aimed at drawing participants together into a reassertion of ... their collective humanity.”^[61] Rooted not in Western traditions of crime and punishment but on African sensibilities that emphasize the need for communities to become whole, Fambul Tok is designed to address the roots of conflict at the local level and facilitate reconciliation.^[62]

In March 2009, in a Fambul Tok ceremony in Mokaikono village in the Moyamba district, former CDF fighters begged for forgiveness for previously unacknowledged crimes. A man whose wife was killed by a member of the Civil Defense Forces, recounted how on one occasion he asked the soldier whether he could remember him, but the soldier refused to acknowledge it. “But since Fambul Tok stresses forgiveness, I am ready to forgive those that wronged me.” A woman in the village, who lost all her belongings to a CDF fighter,

said she kept away from him “because any time I saw him my heart pounded like a pestle in a mortar. The most unfortunate thing was that there was no forum to explain my ordeal. Fambul Tok has made it possible.”^[63]

To date, Fambul Tok has held ceremonies in Kailahun and Kono districts in the east, Moyamba district in the south, and Koinadugu and Bombali districts in the north, five of Sierra Leone’s twelve provincial districts. Fambul Tok ceremonies have been followed by group activities, including radio-listening clubs, football games, and village-initiated community farms, where former enemies play and work side by side, and learn to resolve conflicts as they arise.

The reconciliation events initially sponsored by the Inter-Religious Council and later by Fambul Tok point to the importance to local communities of verbal acknowledgment, along with rituals, for effective reconciliation among enemies. Ritual is important as it “captures the sense of divine intervention that is part of the African healing process,”^[64] but it must be preceded by verbal acknowledgment of wrongdoing. In their article in the *Journal of Human Rights*, Brandon Hamber and Richard Wilson argue for a “diversity of memory processes outside of national commissions.”^[65] I agree with this assessment, but not with the conclusion that acknowledging guilt can be bypassed in the pursuit of reconciliation.

Walter Fisher reminds us that humankind is essentially homo narrans.^[66] Narrative is an impulse that is “international, transhistorical, transcultural.”^[67] According to Hayden White: “So natural is the impulse to narrate, so inevitable is the form of narrative for any report on the way things really happened, that narrativity could appear problematical only in a culture in which it was absent or ... programmatically refused.”^[68] The process of telling and observing one’s story being heard allows survivors to become subjects again.^[69] This is especially so when the act of telling one's story invites a response. A caveat is in order: storytelling as a means of reconciliation is best done at the local level. For anthropologist Chris Coulter, “There is a great difference between telling one's story in a circle of friends and family, within a particular storytelling tradition, and telling one's story in the formal venues provided by the demobilization programmes, the TRC, and the Special Court, all of which operate within a very different 'storytelling tradition.’”^[70]

The IRC’s reconciliation events, and later the Fambul Tok ceremonies, are doing much to bring individuals together locally to share their stories. This can be empowering for victims who are pointing at perpetrators and demanding an apology. Those who used the

war to settle old scores are taking the opportunity now to confess and be absolved. Sierra Leoneans' traditional and religious resources are making this a reality so that people don't get stuck in the past with unrepentant or unforgiving hearts. On the importance of genuine remorse, David Keen wrote: "If people can be encouraged to feel and acknowledge a genuine sense of shame or guilt or remorse at what they have done, this holds the potential for making violence less likely."^[71]

Lessons for Liberia

It would behoove Liberians to learn from the recent example from neighboring Sierra Leone whose own truth commission was equally fraught with problems, including difficulties in eliciting perpetrator cooperation. Sierra Leone has proved more successful in its post-TRC efforts than in the official TRC proceedings, and this may be the case for Liberia as well.

Benetech, the nonprofit technology development organization that supplied the data management for the Liberian TRC, found that 60 percent of respondents did not want prosecution of perpetrators. (The TRC recommended prosecution of over 120 individuals, exempting those who had admitted wrong doing.). They also determined that between 50 and 70 percent of respondents were willing to meet with the perpetrator who caused their suffering, which bodes well for the success of future reconciliation initiatives. It is reasonable to assume that a more restorative, rather than punitive, approach bringing perpetrators and victims together would be welcome.

Along with the recommendation for prosecutions, the Liberian TRC recommended the establishment of a National Palava Hut forum under the aegis of the Human Rights Commission to operate Palaver Hut committees in all sixty-four districts. Through these local committees, perpetrators would be encouraged to confess to their victims and experience "community-based atonement."^[72] Hopefully, through these and other local efforts, Liberians will take reconciliation into their own hands, surpassing the limited accomplishments of the official TRC.

1. 1. Government of Liberia, "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia Mandate," article vii, section 26(f), 2005.
2. 2. Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Final Report, vol. 1 (Monrovia,

Liberia: Government of Liberia, 2009), 29.

3. 3. For an analysis of the four truths that the South African TRC highlighted in its report, see Alex Boraine, *A Country Unmasked* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 2000).
4. 4. Howard Zehr, *Changing Lenses: A New Focus for Crime and Justice* (Waterloo, Ontario: Herald Press, 1990.)
5. 5. Rosalind Shaw, "Rethinking Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Lessons from Sierra Leone," *USIP Special Report* 130 (February 2005), 4.
6. 6. *Witness to Truth: Report of the Sierra Leone Truth & Reconciliation Commission*, vol. 3B (2004), 464.
7. 7. According to Human Rights commissioner Jamesina King, "Most people already knew what happened." Interview, July 13, 2007.
8. 8. See Tim Kelsall, "Truth, Lies, Ritual: Preliminary Reflections on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone," *Human Rights Quarterly* 27 (2005). See also Rosalind Shaw, "Rethinking Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Lessons from Sierra Leone," *USIP Special Report* 130, February 2005.
9. 9. Cited in Andre du Toit, "The Moral Foundations of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Truth as Acknowledgment and Justification as Recognition," in *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*, edited by Robert I. Rotberg and Dennis Thompson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 132.
10. 10. In some instances there was confusion about who was committing the offenses, as soldiers often masqueraded as rebels and vice versa.
11. 11. The Special Court for Sierra Leone, established in 2002 to try persons who bear the greatest responsibility for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of humanitarian law committed after November 30, 1996, prosecuted thirteen leaders from the RUF, AFRC, CDF, and Charles Taylor.
12. 12. Anthropologists refer to the Krio adage *tok haf lef haf* ("talk half, leave half") as a cultural justification for withholding information.
13. 13. Laura Stovel, "Long Way Home: Building Reconciliation and Trust in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone" (Ph.D. dissertation, Simon Fraser University, 2006), 17.
14. 14. Sixty percent of the population is Muslim, 30 percent is Christian, and 10 percent practices traditional religion.

15. 15. Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and Peacebuilding in Islam: Theory and Practice* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 2003), 27.
16. 16. John and Valerie Braithwaite, "Shame, Shame Management and Regulation," in *Shame Management through Reintegration*, edited by Eliza Ahmed, Nathan Harris, John Braithwaite and Valerie Braithwaite (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), cited by David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey, 2005), 301.
17. 17. Cited by Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Walk With Us and Listen: Political Reconciliation in Africa* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2009), 140.
18. 18. Augustine S.J. Park, "Restorative Approaches to Justice: Strategies for Peace in Sierra Leone," Issue Paper No. 2 (May 2007), Canberra, Australia, Center for International Governance and Justice, 4.
19. 19. Manifesto 99, "Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution/Resolution of Possible Complementary Value to the Proposed Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission," (2002), 21.
20. 20. In the Madingo, Soso, and Fullah ethnic groups, the secret societies structures are weak.
21. 21. Augustine S.J. Park, "Restorative Approaches to Justice: Strategies for Peace in Sierra Leone," Issue Paper No. 2 (May 2007), Canberra, Australia, Center for International Governance and Justice, 3.
22. 22. Manifesto 99, "Traditional Methods of Conflict Resolution/Resolution of Possible Complementary Value to the Proposed Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission," (2002), 29.
23. 23. All of the district reconciliation officers recommended the continuation of the program since a number of activities were left undone. See "Report of the Programme Coordinator to the Second biennial general assembly held on 29th-30th November, 2005, at YWCA Old Hall, Brookfields, Freetown," n.d.
24. 24. Marabel Mbayo, interview, 13 July 2007.
25. 25. Mbayo, interview, 13 July 2007.
26. 26. Moses Benson Khanu, "The Role of the Inter-Religious Council in the Sierra Leone Peace Process (1977-2003) (M. Phil. Thesis, Fourah Bay College, 2005), 105.
27. 27. "Summary of the Reports of the District Reconciliation Workshops," Appendix II, November 2003, IRC, 5.

28. 28. Mbayo, interview, 13 July 2007.
29. 29. Appendix II, 9, n.d.
30. 30. Mbayo, interview, 13 July 2007.
31. 31. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Koinadugu district, n.d.
32. 32. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Port Loko district , n.d.
33. 33. Chris Coulter, *Being a Bush Wife: Women's Lives Through War and Peace in Northern Sierra Leone* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2006), 355-357.
34. 34. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Moyamba district, n.d.
35. 35. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Western Area, n.d.
36. 36. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Kenema district, n.d.
37. 37. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Kenema district; Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Port Loko district, n.d.
38. 38. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Bonthe district, n.d.
39. 39. Inter- Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Bombali district, n.d.
40. 40. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Bonthe district, n.d.
41. 41. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Bo district, n.d.
42. 42. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Port Loko district, n.d.
43. 43. Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Tonkolili district, n.d.
44. 44. Mbayo, interview, 13 July 2007.
45. 45. *Standard Times*, 31 August 2004.
46. 46. Khanu, interview, 17 July 2007.

47. 47. Mbayo, interview, 13 July 2007.
48. 48. See Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, Community Based Reconciliation Project, Final Report: Western Area; Final Report: Bo, n.d.
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