

THE PBF IN SIERRA LEONE



UN Photo/Eric Kanenstein

Peacebuilding Challenges

The April 2018 election in Sierra Leone resulted in a peaceful transfer of power from former President Ernest Bai Koroma to opposition leader, Julius Maada Bio, former military Head of State. The elections are an important sign of progress since the end of the civil war in January 2002, which devastated most of the country's infrastructure, killed more than 50,000 Sierra Leoneans, and drove over two million refugees into neighboring countries.

The new government, which committed to promote national unity, cohesion and disciplined leadership, faces the challenging task of rebuilding the impoverished West African nation's economy which has been dragged down by the world's deadliest Ebola epidemic and a global slump in commodity prices. Other challenges remain, including tackling corruption, proper natural resource management, access to basic social services, youth unemployment, addressing countrywide inequality and fiscal policy, and implementing decentralized governance with a focus on border regions.

PBF INVESTMENTS IN SIERRA LEONE:

TOTAL ALLOCATION:

\$ **57.3** MILLION
invested since 2007

CURRENT PORTFOLIO:

\$ **5.8** MILLION

FOCUSING ON:



Peaceful dialogue

PARTNERS:

UNDPA, OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNWOMEN, UNDP, IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS

PBF Interventions

Since 2007, the PBF has invested over USD \$57 million in Sierra Leone. Through a series of Security Council-mandated missions and working closely with the UN Country Team (UNCT), the PBF supported a wide range of peacebuilding projects.

Between 2013 and 2015, PBF and its partners designed a series of projects to ensure a smooth transition from the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) to the UN Country Team, which took place in March 2014. The PBF also supported the launch of the Government's Agenda for Prosperity (AfP) for social and economic development for 2013-18. At the peak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic, PBSO reprogrammed its PBF projects to help respond to the peacebuilding dimensions of the epidemic.

Other projects support conflict prevention, such as encouraging peaceful dialogue and strengthening early warning and response systems. In addition, the PBF committed funds for a Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI) which aims to improve women's participation in political processes as peacebuilding ambassadors.

Impact, Catalytic Effect and Partnerships

The 2014 evaluation of PBF support in Sierra Leone showed that the Fund helped the country strengthen its recovery and rebuild its institutional framework, which in turn contributed to preventing relapse into conflict.

PBF funding is also promoting concerted approaches: UNDP is working with 7 key Sierra Leonean national institutions and four Civil Society Organisations (CSO), including the Office of National Security (ONS), the Sierra Leone Police (SLP), the Political Parties Registration Commission (PPRC), the Human Rights Commission (HRC) of Sierra Leone, the Legal Aid Board (LAB), the National Commission for Democracy (NDC), and the Judiciary. The latter project received additional funding of USD \$1,879,490 from UKAid and USD \$401,000 from Canada, showing that PBF investments can encourage commitments from other stakeholders.

The recent elections demonstrated the benefits of a joint approach. Working with the Government, Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs), international partners and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), PBF has been instrumental in resolving tensions at this very critical period.

PBC Engagement

By request of the then-Government of Sierra Leone and the UN Security Council, the PBC Organizational Committee, on 23 June 2006, selected Sierra Leone to be one of the first countries on the Commission's agenda. The former President's request emphasized three main objectives: meet the targets of the National Ebola Recovery Plan; provide support to national institutions to ensure peaceful elections; and strengthen democracy as well as the constitutional review process. The Commission also played a key role in convening a series of briefing meetings to maintain international community support for Sierra Leone as they prepared for the April 2018 elections, complementing the United Nations Office in West Africa (UNOWAS), UNCT and PBF's proactive approach to promoting political dialogue and preventing electoral violence.

Looking back, the PBC has continuously reviewed the scope of its engagement with Sierra Leone with each successful electoral process, and the country marks the first time the PBC has gradually scaled down its role in a country on its agenda in recognition of the peacebuilding progress achieved there.

About the PBF

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The PBF may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. From 2006 to 2017, the PBF has allocated \$772 million to 41 recipient countries. Since inception, 58 member states contributed to the Fund, 33 in the present 2017-2019 Business Plan. The PBF works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to political opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.



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