NAME: SAMSON TEYEI GANG

MATRIC NUMBER: 16/SMS10/017

COURSE: PCS 412

LECTURER: MR ARIYO ABOYADE

Sierra Leone civil war documentary

Tittle of the document: Sierra Leone civil war 1991\_2002 war for profit documentary

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Author of the document: Yonathan Efrem

Summary: death toll from the war was estimated at 50,000. 10-15,000 children were abducted and used as soldiers, 100,000 civilians were deliberately mutilated. For a country’s population of just 6 million people.

Eleven years of civil war left one of Africa’s smallest countries with a lot of scares which would be hard to heal. Leader of the RUF said “I have a vision for the people of Sierra Leone; all is to make the revolution, which is progress. Revolution is progress for the people, nothing else”

Sierra Leone is a small country in West Africa. Like many other African countries, it is rich in mineral resources which have been exploited by the colonial population during the colonial times. Sierra Leone has become one of the poorest nations of the world with the life expectancy of just 30. It’s a land rich in natural resources

The civil war started in March 1991when the RUF crossed the eastern boarder of sierra Leone from Liberia. The RUF was formed with the support of the Liberian president, Charles Taylor. The RUF was very popular because they had a way of toppling with the top government. The president had alienated many young people in the country by declaring education a privilege and not rights “I want to be the leader for the people of sierra Leone and I am the leader of the revolution”

Mike Lamin, RUF commander said “democracy that will assure education, equal opportunities to get jobs in the country, and live like a normal human beings. We needed a democracy that would elevate us from our degradation to the point where we are equal with the community of nations”

It wasn’t long before the RUF would be held responsible for some of the worst atrocities ever seen. They were notorious for cutting the limps of people they didn’t murder, particularly children. “They cut six of us. There were four rebel soldiers. They lined us up. A young boy with an axe chopped off our hands, one after the other.”

The manager of the RUF was in control of the diamonds from the country. Diamonds that fuel Sierra Leone conflict, wiping an entire generation in the process 85% of the diamonds from Liberia where smuggled out of the country mainly to Liberia.

Its estimated that the RUF has over 10,000 child soldiers many of them between the ages 7 and 12 “ who did this to me it was the RUF. I’m suffering now” “I was a fighter. I was in the front. Whenever we attacked the children were in the front, we were fearless” said some of the children.

Most of the children were told to attack the villagers and to get the diamond field from the houses. The children were used to kill their own parents as well. A child said that it was not his wish to commit such atrocities but they were forced and each time he does that, he asked god for forgiveness.

The civil was known internationally for the atrocities committed. A citizen said” I’m ready to die now. My first hand, this hand has already gone to the ground so if the rest follow it’s not going to be a problem” another said “it’s not a matter of exchanging fire in the battle field or stray bullets. They did it and they will tell you we are the people who went to the bushes to save you and we’ve come”. Another also said that they cut his arms and said that you lost your arms for the politician”

In 1991 the government doubled the size of its military. The government could not supply or pay for the army so it was disintegrated. The government’s inability to save or protect local communities led to the rise of militia in 1993 made up of traditional hunters in the south. They also comprised to child soldiers.

In 1994, communities were being attacked. “This is tragic. It is tragic because there is a whole population which is a prisoner of this situation and everything is destroyed. It is unbelievable the town of chebouema is a ghost town, villages are destroyed. Most of the population lives in dreadful conditions, they are in the bush obliged to eat raw food in order not to be spotted I think there can be between 30,000 and 50,000 totally malnourished without care whatsoever. It is tragic. All the women over 12 are pregnant or already mothers, they are skinny and don’t have money their children can’t hold heads up. It’s a terrible situation”

It was after this that the UN decided to send their soldiers for peace keeping missions in October 1999. When people became aware of the blood diamond situation, they took actions. The war ended in 2002 when and the people of Sierra Leone had moved on. What was the main reason behind the blood shed is now the source of funding for the country

Foday sankoh died in July 2003 of natural causes while waiting to be tried for war crimes. Liberian ex-president Charles Taylor was sentenced to 50 years in jail for aiding and abetting rebels in Sierra Leone in May 2012. Former senior leader of rebel revolutionary united front RUF sentenced to long jail term in April 2009. The horrific civil war ended in January 2002.

Documentary 2

Title of the document: Sierra Leone civil war documentary-TBB studios

Year uploaded: November 16, 2016/classy bassy

Author of the documentary: Sabastinian Lacobucci and Alex DeMartine

Summary:

In 1991, the country Sierra Leone located in West Africa was subjected to a violent civil war. The greedy war criminals and former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor would loot sierra Leone of its resources to mine diamonds for his own benefit. Creating and funding the RUF, civilian villages were raided, mass amount of innocent people were killed, and children were taken away to be used as soldiers.

The peace in Sierra Leone would be rapidly derailed when the revolutionary united front otherwise known as the rebels would raise terror all over the country. Coming in front the southwestern boarder of Liberia, the rebels would raid civilian villagers, destroy homes, kill him innocent and take children as young as 8yrs old away from their families to become solders. This brutal civil war left sierra Leone in a terrifying state, leaving 50,000 people death, 100,000 permanently scared, and also making it one of the poorest and economically suffering countries in the world today. While the country slowly reveals itself, there are people such as Ismael Beah, a former child soldier who were trying their best to bring more awareness to these issues.

The destruction of hundreds of villages and families by the rebels left many children wondering from village to village searching for shelter, food and the hope for survival of their loved ones. The rebels were not too far behind would easily capture the helpless boys to recruit as child soldiers. The rebels took advantage of their desperateness to ensure they are rivals to the RUF. Promising them they shelter, food and the safety that they were seeking the boys were convinced and if they refuse, they were held at gunpoint to choose if to join or die.

It is estimated that over 10,000 Sierra Leone children were forced into combat, all of which had to undergo very harsh training into a soldier. The training includes carrying heavy weapons for long distances, eating meals under a minute, killing prisoners from the opposing sides to practice etc. the boys were manipulated in many ways to keep them loyal. They were shown rainbow films to get them excited and hyped up to kill. They were drugged with cocaine and marijuana. Sometimes mixing cocaine with gunpowder, to cope with the violence. They children were reminded that the rebels killed their families to get them seeking revenge. The brain washing was enough to keep them from every questioning.

Although this was ended in 2002, children today are still suffering in other countries. UNICEF still works to save children that are still trapped in these wars to gather with Ismael. The country has however made good progress in recovery. It is also known as the war for a selfish man profit

In 2012, Charles Taylor was charged for war crimes and was sentenced to 50 years imprisonment for aiding and abating the RUF

Critiques: from these documentary, we can see that children where largely affected because they were brainwashed and also used as child soldiers. They were giving severe training that at the end of the day would make them rebellious and have a value of mankind. Some of them where even asked to kill their family member which definitely make them tough in a very wrong way.

There was also the killing of mass civilians who were not responsible in any way for the cause of the civil war. They were brutally killed and some mutilated and left without arms and limp. This is a scare that would remain throughout that entire generation. Some of the civilians wish they were dead, considering the fact that parts of their bodies are already buried.

Issue of mass rape of innocent civilians is also an area that calls for concern. This is seen as a violation of human right. The government had the duty to protect its citizen but did not act accordingly.

In the end, this civil war is caused by greed on the side of the government and rebels as well.