

## **The effect of military operations on sense of belonging**

Effect: Positive (The Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS helped instill a sense of recognition and acceptance of one's identity and dignity in the region)

Confidence in study findings: Low (one study, low confidence)

### **Short Summary**

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervention in the Sierra Leone civil war was explored using open-ended interviews and document analysis of public records and field notes; has been widely viewed as legitimate and effective in achieving peace. The deployment of ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) troops was crucial in deterring rebel violence and establishing a secure environment. Additionally, it helped instill recognition and acceptance of one's identity and dignity while understanding others. ECOWAS facilitated disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs for former combatants, contributing to a unified national identity.

### **Long summary**

#### *The intervention*

Deployment of a peacekeeping force by the ECOWAS to Sierra Leone during the civil war (1991-2002). This force, known as the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), was tasked with restoring peace and stability in the country

#### *How is the intervention expected to work*

ECOWAS intervention was expected to work by employing various strategic processing tools, both military and non-military. The deployment of ECOMOG troops was a key component of the intervention, serving to deter rebel violence and establish a secure environment. The non-military component encompassed diplomatic efforts to negotiate peace agreements, humanitarian aid to address the needs of the population, and economic support to promote recovery.

#### *The evidence base*

There is one qualitative study assessing the effect of **Military operations on the sense of belonging in Sierra Leone**. This study is by Touray, M. (2019). *The Role of the Economic Community of West African States in Counterinsurgency and Conflict Resolution* (Doctoral dissertation, Walden University). All references are from that study.

#### *The evidence*

Diplomacy efforts to build popular support contributed to a reduction in violence, the disarmament of combatants, and the restoration of a democratically elected government. However, the challenges reported highlight the importance of accountability, respect for human rights, and sustained engagement in peacebuilding efforts.

- 1) ECOMOG's military operations against the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) were crucial in creating a more stable environment where diplomatic efforts could be effective. The presence of a robust peacekeeping force also deterred further violence and provided a sense of security

- 2) ECOWAS's role as a mediator and facilitator of peace talks between the Sierra Leone government and the RUF culminated in the signing of the Lome Peace Accord in 1999, which provided a framework for ending the conflict. The peace accord included provisions for a ceasefire, disarmament, demobilisation, and the reintegration of former combatants. The ceasefire led to a significant reduction in violence (p.104)
- 3) The organisation leveraged its regional influence and understanding of local dynamics to encourage dialogue and compromise. This included working with leaders from other West African countries to apply pressure on the RUF and the Sierra Leone government to engage in negotiations.
- 4) ECOWAS helped instil recognition and acceptance of one's identity and dignity and while understanding others. It also facilitated disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs for former combatants, contributing to a unified national identity.

#### *Confidence assessment*

Overall confidence: Low Confidence Qualitative Study (It is unclear whether the study uses an established small n approach)