Emergency Politics, Intervention and Military-led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone

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It has become axiomatic within the academic and policy communities to regard security and development as mutually reinforcing. Surveys such as the World Bank's *Voices of the Poor* show very clearly that security, in general terms, looms large in the lives of the most vulnerable. Most Western donor countries, including the UK and US, have also explicitly linked overseas development with increased security for the international community as well as local people, but this raises a number of questions relating to who's security? The advent of securitisation within sub-Saharan Africa is relatively recent so there are few examples available for evaluation, but one example is Sierra Leone. The UK intervention in Sierra Leone was greatly accelerated following military intervention in 2000 where a British general on the ground deliberately disobeyed a direct order not to get involved in Sierra Leone and turned an evacuation mission into a combat operation. This military-led example of emergency politics has influenced subsequent styles of intervention linking security and development and has a profound effect on the development of security sector reform as an accepted approach to linking security and development. This paper will analyse the implications of the initial involvement in Sierra Leone for the securitisation of development and the drive to develop broader security regimes within unstable environments and with a broad range of local and regional actors. The paper will address how the intertwining of development and security affected the different actors involved, particularly issues regarding the governance of security and the involvement of traditional authorities and civil society. In addition, the paper will look at the issue of how the development intervention in Sierra Leone was different in terms of the deployment of development resources. There are also questions about the contribution of development actors to the process and in particular those who had previously felt threatened by the security services. The engagement of other forms of governance, particularly local governance mechanisms has also led to a deeper and more secure environment and has allowed the state and international organisations to address issues of human security. However, there are serious questions in Sierra Leone about the sustainability of the security infrastructure and accompanying worries about whether this expensive infrastructure is designed for the security of the people of Sierra Leone or for the security of the West.