

Confronting the Terror...

It is always astonishing to witness a juxtaposition of good and evil.

A recent example, now etched into Americana, is September 11th. Streams of rescue workers raced towards the WTC to assist people, knowing full well that their courage would likely cost them their lives. This heroism was in response to the willful murder of thousands of civilians.

Sept. 11 defined one day, in the United States, where heroism directly confronted terror. 1991-2001 defines a ten-year period, in Sierra Leone, where heroism and terror have constantly battled.

The United States faced one day of terror- for the people of Sierra Leone, the terror has lasted for over ten years.

The terror has been systematic: rebel forces consisting of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) utilized and perfected methods of rape, torture, mutilation and murder. Rebels routinely conscripted boys and men as soldiers, and girls and women as sexual slaves, in their efforts to achieve power. Two million, in a nation of 5 million, have been displaced. Tens of thousands more have been murdered, mutilated and raped.



Rebels called their campaign "Operation No Living Thing." Amnesty International (AI) reports "Groups of armed men arrived in their villages, claiming that they had come to liberate the villagers... Forced out of their

homes, [villagers] realized the troops [were rebels]... Civilians were rounded up... and then taken individually to a pounding block in the village where ... [they] were cut with a machete... [Many] were stripped naked. Men were ordered to rape members of their own family. If they refused, their arms were cut off and rebel forces raped the women... Victims... reported women and children being rounded up and [burnt]..."

The heroes of Sierra Leone were not silent during this time. When rebels moved into Kambia in February 1999 and destroyed the Kambia Hospital, the District Medical Officer of the hospital crept back into the town, while rebels still patrolled, rescued the Land Rover Ambulance and drove it safely across the border into Guinea. The ambulance was

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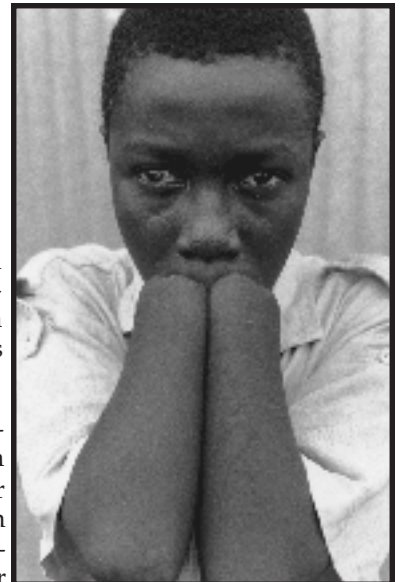
brought back from Guinea shortly afterwards, and has been invaluable in ferrying patients between Kambia and the Freetown.

Mr. Ahmed Sheriff, President of the Cotton Tree Association of Sierra Leone, Pittsburgh, worked with the Brother's Brother Foundation to raise \$3.5 million in humanitarian aid for his Sierra Leone brethren.

According to AI, one 19-year-old woman from Magburaka, whose sister and husband were both murdered by rebels, managed to escape and save her sister's infant. She salvaged life from death.

And, like her, in the face of 10 years of unspeakable terror, the people of Sierra Leone have displayed unbelievable courage and resiliency. Currently, disarmament of the rebels has commenced and there is much hope for lasting peace and justice. The scars are deep though, and there is much healing that must be done.

The heroes of Sierra Leone need help confronting the terror of the past, and the challenges of the future. You are invited to do both:



**Confronting the Terror:
The Human Rights Crisis in Sierra Leone
Feb 25th, 7pm, McConomy Auditorium**

Speakers:

President - Cotton Tree Association of Sierra Leone, Pittsburgh: Mr. Ahmed Sheriff
President - International Peace Operations Association: Mr. Doug Hoosier
CMU History Professor: Dr. Edda Fields

*by: Assem Garg, President
CMU Amnesty*

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