

## **Letters from David Ngombu to Myf Hodkin February and March 1999**

### Letter from David Ngombu to Myf Hodkin dated 15 February 1999

....It may interest you to know that the attack on the Freetown City was disastrous - lots of life and property were lost, with a lot of innocent civilians maimed and amputated. It will take a very long time before situations come back to normalcy. Other areas like Makeni (Northern Region), Kenema, Segbwema, Sefodu (Eastern region) had been under constant rebel attacks with a lot of casualties. Darn serious !

It's unfortunate you have not heard from me through the post but everything had come to a standstill again - no schools and college, as pupils and students are targets, no postal system, no medical officers on duty (except private practitioners), major roads to Freetown closed to the public, resulting in[sic] scarcity of basic goods and amenities in the provincial towns like Bo, Kenema, Makeni, Port Loko, Sefadu, etc.etc. The population in these areas are dying slow. Myf, the Sierra Leone situation is bad off. We have been reduced to zero and our future is very bleak. As you may have been informed, we are barely managing to go through life at the moment. As a result of displacement of people from the Northern and Eastern regions of the country, the population of the South, with Bo Town as its regional headquarters has swollen up disastrously. Even the displaced peoples' camps in the township have been reinstated. As a result, the township can no longer contain the population - no food, accommodation, medical facilities, and the others. In fact, if the transportation like[sic] between Bo and Freetown starts operating, more people will move into Bo as most houses in Freetown were burnt down....

### Letter from David Ngombu to Myf Hodkin dated 6 March 1999

As you may have been following, Sierra Leone has been going through turbulent periods quite unmatched in the history of the country. The dastardly and brutal attack on Freetown, perpetuated by the RUF/AFRC alliance was a real show of barbaric show (sic). A lot of people lost their lives and hundreds amputated, maimed, raped and abducted. We are grateful to God for surviving this momentous occasion which will ever remain lingering in our memories.

At the moment , we are valiantly struggling to keep our beleaguered families, properties and homes from sinking, although some have already sunk. This period is quite unique, and by far the worst, when families are striving to survive on scraps they could manage to lay hands on. The avalanche of devastation was well planned, calculated and orchestrated, resulting in total decadence. Actions of the RUF/AFRC alliance have wilfully ushered in economic, social and educational catastrophe - a situation bringing the country centuries backwards. They also slaughtered at will thousands of people, young and old, and even those unborn, many maimed, amputated and abducted and properties violently looted. At the

time I am writing this letter, the entire government machinery has come to a halt - no schools, colleges, hospitals, markets, government transport, etc. The link between Bo and Kenema is by air which is out of reach of the common people. The cost of basic items like rice (staple), palm oil, salt, sugar, milk, pepper are [?] so high that most families go with meals for days. Unimaginable !

Members of the link are scattered all over the country, trying to get to areas of safety or attempting to look for food. In areas where relatives or family members are able to make it.

As you may be aware, such situations have created fear and uncertainty in most people and as such, most of them have left for neighbouring countries like Guinea and the Gambia. More keep pulling out every day as the situation becomes hopeless.

....It's hard to believe the atrocities unleashed on poor civilians. We rely on friends to get us out of this terrible quagmire. We pray to God for an immediate end to the carnage.