



Coup Attempt in Sierra Leone

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Why in News?

In the wake of an **unsuccessful coup attempt in Sierra Leone**, the West African nation finds itself at the **crossroads of political turmoil and economic crisis**.

- Sierra Leone is a member country of the [Economic Community of West African States \(ECOWAS\)](#) and hence if any security concern arises in the future, ECOWAS and the member countries will step in to maintain constitutional order.

What are the Factors Contributing to Unrest in Sierra Leone?

- **Political Instability:** The President's re-election in June 2023 triggered political unrest. The opposing party contested the results, alleging manipulation. Opposition contestation led to a **parliamentary boycott** until October 2023.
- **Economic Instability:** High cost of living and **severe poverty** contribute to the crisis.
 - The President's economic policies worsened the situation, leading to protests and demands for the resignation of the President.
- **Police Aggression:** The government's use of force, including live ammunition, in handling protests and prison riots has fueled resentment.

What are the Key Facts About Sierra Leone?

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- Sierra Leone is located between **Liberia and Guinea**, bordering the **North Atlantic Ocean**. The country is situated on the **southwest coast of West Africa**.
- **Capital:** Freetown.
- **Languages:** English, Krio.
- **Mount Bintumani** (also known as Loma Mansa) is the highest peak in Sierra Leone.
- A **tropical climate** is found in Sierra Leone.
- Sierra Leone's terrain is characterized by mountains in the eastern region, an upland plateau, a wooded hill country, and a coastal belt of mangrove swamps.
- Sierra Leone is one of the members of the [International Solar Alliance](#).
- India was among the first countries to contribute to the [UN Mission in Sierra Leone \(UNAMSIL\)](#) with the deployment of 4000 strong Indian Military contingent.

Other Recent Upheavals in Africa

- [Coup in Niger \(2023\)](#).
- [Crisis in Sudan \(2023 and 2021\)](#).
- [Burkina Faso Coup \(2022\)](#).
- [Military Coup in Mali \(2021, 2020\)](#).

What is Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)?

- Established in 1975 through the Lagos Treaty, the **ECOWAS (CEDEAO in French)** is a **regional intergovernmental organization** promoting economic integration and cooperation among West African nations.
 - **Headquarters: Abuja, Nigeria.**
- ECOWAS consists of 15 member states: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d' Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal, and Togo.
- It aims to achieve **economic integration, free movement of people and goods**, and regional cooperation across sectors. Additionally, it seeks to establish a borderless region governed by democratic principles and address security challenges through collaborative conflict resolution.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Prelims

Q. In the recent years Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan caught international attention for which one of the following reasons is common to all of them? (2023)

- (a) Discovery of rich deposits of rare earth elements
- (b) Establishment of Chinese military bases
- (c) Southward expansion of Sahara Desert
- (d) Successful coups

Ans: (d)

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