



Security Council

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Eighth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1561 (2004) of 17 September 2004, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 19 September 2005 and requested me to report periodically on progress in the implementation of the mandate of UNMIL. The present report covers developments since my report of 16 June 2005 (S/2005/391).

II. Major political developments

2. During the reporting period, progress continued to be made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Preparations for the elections to be held on 11 October remained on track and largely free of violence and further progress was made in the return of internally displaced persons and refugees and the extension of State authority.

3. Campaigning for the elections started on 15 August; 22 presidential and 22 vice-presidential candidates were approved by the National Elections Commission. Furthermore, 22 political parties have been registered. Eight additional parties are registered under the umbrella of two alliances and one coalition, namely, the Alliance for Peace and Democracy, the United Democratic Alliance and the Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia.

4. The National Transitional Government of Liberia took measures against a number of reported cases of corruption. On 12 July, following allegations of fraud at the Bureau of Maritime Affairs, the Chairman of the National Transitional Government, Charles Gyude Bryant, suspended the Commissioner of the Bureau and dismissed the representative of Liberia to the International Maritime Organization. The two officials, together with two others from the Bureau, are alleged to have misappropriated more than \$4 million and have been charged with "economic sabotage and fraud of the internal revenue of Liberia".

5. The investigative team dispatched to Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to look into reported cases of corruption within the Transitional Government has submitted its report to the ECOWAS Heads of State. Meanwhile, the Transitional Government and its international partners, the United

Nations, the European Commission, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Union, ECOWAS and the United States of America, continued consultations on developing a governance and economic management assistance programme for Liberia to strengthen economic governance and prevent corruption. The main objectives of the programme are to ensure that revenues due to the State are received and accounted for and disbursed only in accordance with the approved budget; expenditures are received by the intended recipients; contracts and concessions are granted in a transparent manner based on competitive bidding; and that the Government's capacity to prevent corruption is increased. Discussions on finalizing the programme are continuing and the Transitional Government has referred it to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly and the Chief Justice. Liberia's international partners, however, are deeply concerned that the Transitional Government has not yet approved the programme because of an apparent unwillingness to institute those essential reforms. Meanwhile, draft legislation has been prepared on the establishment of a Liberian anti-corruption agency.

6. The leadership crisis at the Transitional Legislative Assembly was resolved on 2 August, when the Supreme Court of Liberia issued a final ruling on the matter. The Court ruled that the Assembly's suspension of four members, including the Speaker and Deputy Speaker, did not violate the Constitution, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, or the standing rules of the Assembly and that the Assembly had followed due process. Nonetheless, the suspended Speaker has written to me, as well as to the African Union and ECOWAS seeking intervention to facilitate his reinstatement or the lifting of the restriction in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement which bars him and others who have occupied key positions in the National Transitional Government from contesting the October elections. He has however been informed that the United Nations respects the ruling of the Supreme Court and the sanctity of the legislature. In addition, the United Nations does not have the authority to modify the Peace Agreement.

7. Civil servants held further protests over the non-payment of several years of salary arrears during the administration of former President Charles Taylor. A protest action which started on 5 July was subsequently called off when the Transitional Government agreed to pay four months of those arrears. It should be noted that the Transitional Government has paid salaries regularly since it assumed office in October 2003.

8. Some Governments and human rights organizations continued to call on the Government of Nigeria to hand former President Charles Taylor over to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. On 5 July, the Liberian Minister of Justice issued a statement alleging that Mr. Taylor had been meddling in Liberian politics and calling for a review of the agreement for his asylum. The Transitional Government subsequently dissociated itself from the Minister's statement. However, on 28 July, the summit of Heads of State and Government of the Mano River Union issued a communiqué indicating that a review of the terms of the temporary stay of Mr. Taylor in Nigeria, or a referral of the matter by the Government of Nigeria to the ECOWAS Heads of State for further consideration, may be necessary. Nigeria, for its part, has reaffirmed its commitment to honour the asylum agreement and hand over Mr. Taylor only if the incoming Government of Liberia so requests.

III. Monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

9. The Implementation Monitoring Committee and the International Contact Group on Liberia continued to meet regularly. The latter held weekly meetings, chaired by the Chairman of the Transitional Government, to review progress in the peace process and to address emerging issues in a coordinated manner.

10. At the meeting of the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin, held at Niamey on 19 July, the progress and challenges in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement were discussed. The Contact Group welcomed the progress made in implementing the Agreement and consolidating security and stability in Liberia, as well as the development of the governance and economic management assistance programme. In particular, it established a working group to finalize the programme before its submission to the Security Council for endorsement. The Contact Group expressed satisfaction at the ongoing electoral preparations and called on all parties to ensure that the elections are free, fair and transparent. The Contact Group also called on the international community to assist in providing resources for the demobilization of the Armed Forces of Liberia.

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

11. As at 24 August, UNMIL troop strength stood at 14,894 (see annex). In the only significant adjustment in the Mission's deployment, troops from the UNMIL reserve battalion withdrew from the free port of Monrovia in July following the training and deployment of Liberian Seaport Police personnel. The UNMIL force continued to focus on ensuring a secure environment conducive to the preparation and conduct of the elections.

12. UNMIL, in coordination with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has developed proposals for UNMIL to assume responsibility for security to the Court after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL, which would require a temporary increase in troop strength in UNMIL of some 250 troops from 15 November to 31 March. Besides this temporary increase, it is envisaged that, following the elections and the installation of the new Government of Liberia, UNMIL troop strength would remain at the present level pending the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of the security situation in Liberia and in the subregion, with a view to developing a plan and specific benchmarks for a carefully calibrated drawdown of the Mission. The plan, which would take into account the decisions contained in Security Council resolution 1609 (2005), will be presented following the inauguration of the new Government in January 2006.

13. The UNMIL civilian police strength stands at 1,090 out of the authorized total of 1,115, including 480 personnel comprising four formed police units and 18 corrections officers. In addition to deployments in Monrovia, the free port and the Roberts International and Spriggs Payne airports, UNMIL civilian police maintained a presence at 25 other locations throughout the country.

14. There are currently 510 international civilian staff in the Mission, 30 per cent of whom are women. The Mission also has 435 United Nations Volunteers, 178 of whom are working on the elections, as well as 754 national staff.

V. Security situation

15. During the reporting period, the security situation remained calm, yet fragile. The threat posed by ex-combatants awaiting reintegration opportunities diminished as the receipt of additional funding for the reintegration and rehabilitation programme allowed for the implementation of additional projects. The ex-combatants are a volatile group, however, and concerns remain about their susceptibility to manipulation by elements seeking to disrupt the October elections.

16. Implementation of programmes for the decommissioning of personnel from the Armed Forces of Liberia and other national security agencies, including the Liberian National Police, is also being delayed by funding shortfalls. There is a danger that elements disgruntled about delays in this process could add to the security threat already posed by ex-combatants awaiting reintegration. On 14 and 15 June, a large crowd of Armed Forces of Liberia personnel held a violent demonstration outside the Ministry of Defence to protest against the non-payment of salary arrears. Some soldiers also looted the Barclay Training Centre Barracks in Monrovia.

17. On 15 June, UNMIL received reports of concentrations of ex-combatants in the Kongba forest near Bopolu, in Gbarpolu County. A joint investigation team of Liberian security agencies and UNMIL subsequently determined that the Bopolu group consisted of hunters who were not originally from the area. Investigations are ongoing concerning a similar group reported to be near Vahun, in Lofa County.

18. In July and August, following the discovery of diamond deposits in Sanquin District, Sinoe County, some 20,000 people moved into the area, where they started illegal alluvial diamond-mining activities. The presence of such a large group of youths, including ex-combatants, posed a considerable security threat and, during the first week of August, an outbreak of cholera resulted in at least 29 deaths. This led to a significant exodus of people from the area.

19. In response, UNMIL, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and the Ministry of Health took measures to contain the outbreak. On 6 August, a security assessment team was dispatched to the District and recommended the immediate evacuation of the area. Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO) delivered cholera treatment kits for 10,000 people to the area.

20. Alleged cases of ritual killings also led to breakdowns of law and order in several places. On 5 and 6 July, violent civil unrest broke out in two sections of Gbarnga town, in Bong County, when a crowd of civilians took action against a person suspected of having performed ritual killings. Properties were destroyed and shots fired during the incident, which was brought under control by UNMIL. There are likely to be further allegations of ritual killings in the lead-up to the elections and UNMIL civilian police have established a task force to assist the Liberian National Police to investigate them and maintain law and order.

21. A troubling development is the formation of vigilante groups by some Liberians. On 14 July, a group of youths wielding knives was seen in Duala market in Monrovia. The group was apparently formed to counter the criminal groups that operate in the market. Reports indicate that such vigilante groups have also been established elsewhere in Liberia. Meanwhile, in Lofa County, a group calling itself "Liberians United for Exposure of Hidden Weapons" is playing a positive role by

reporting suspected cases of hidden weapons and ammunition to UNMIL and Liberian security agencies.

22. Ethnic tensions and property disputes continue to simmer in some areas, particularly as internally displaced persons and refugees return to their homes. At Voinjama, in Lofa County, the Mandingo and Lorma ethnic groups are contesting ownership of land and other property which returning Mandingos claim they left behind when they fled during the war. Similar disputes have been reported in Nimba County. UNMIL is working with traditional leaders and the local authorities on reconciliation efforts, including the establishment of property dispute committees in an effort to resolve the problems peacefully.

23. UNMIL, and the Liberian National Bureau of Investigation, National Security Agency and National Police have established a joint task force on child combatant recruitment to monitor and counteract the continuing problem of the recruitment of children to participate in conflicts in the subregion, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire.

24. The issue of election-related violence remains a concern. The claim that some electoral candidates had dual citizenship and were thus ineligible for nominations to contest the polls became a source of contention and was apparently related to an incident during which unknown persons attempted to set fire to the vehicle of the joint Chairperson of the National Elections Commission in August. UNMIL and the Liberian law enforcement agencies investigated the incident and subsequently reinforced security at the Commission. On 8 August, the International Contact Group on Liberia issued a press statement calling on all Liberians to exercise restraint and to ensure that the elections are conducted in a peaceful manner. Meanwhile, the electoral campaigning by the political parties has so far been relatively peaceful.

VI. Disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration

25. Since the formal end of disarmament and demobilization in November 2004, 343 weapons, 53,236 rounds of ammunition and 410 pieces of unexploded ordnance have been surrendered to or discovered by UNMIL. Meanwhile, the community arms collection and destruction pilot project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is expected to commence in September.

26. Five counselling and referral offices for demobilized ex-combatants are operating in Buchanan, Gbarnga, Harper, Monrovia and Zwedru, and an office is expected to open in Voinjama in September. The offices are currently focusing on registering former combatants for the coming school year and disseminating information on the availability of reintegration opportunities. As at 24 August, 37,500 demobilized ex-combatants had been placed in rehabilitation and reintegration projects funded by bilateral partners and a further 35,448 had been accommodated in projects covered by the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Rehabilitation Trust Fund managed by UNDP.

27. Despite this progress, some 26,000 ex-combatants have still not been able to participate in the reintegration and rehabilitation programme, which faces a funding shortfall of approximately \$18.5 million. A further \$7 million is required to meet the costs of school fees and allowances for ex-combatants attending school since the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and

Rehabilitation, also comprising donor representatives, has decided to extend these payments for a further two academic years. Funding for rehabilitation and reintegration therefore remains a critical issue, despite the recent generous contribution of \$15 million from the United States and expected funding of \$9.5 million from the European Commission and \$3.4 million from Sweden.

28. In July, UNMIL and UNDP started registering ex-combatants illegally occupying the Guthrie rubber plantation for reintegration opportunities. As at 24 August, only 60 ex-combatants had registered out of the 3,200 or so estimated by the commanders of the former Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) armed faction. UNMIL is developing a separate rehabilitation and reintegration support structure for 529 other ex-combatants residing at the rubber plantation who claim that their commanders excluded them from the official disarmament and demobilization programme. Another 5,187 ex-combatants from the three former factions, LURD, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia and the former Government of Liberia, who were unarmed and therefore did not enter the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation programme, will be placed in community-based recovery programmes.

29. The repatriation of 612 foreign ex-combatants identified during the disarmament and demobilization process is continuing. However, progress has been slow because of the absence of an overall framework agreement for the repatriation, as well as continuing insecurity in Côte d'Ivoire. To date, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has assisted 50 foreign former child combatants or children associated with the factions — 11 from Côte d'Ivoire, 24 from Guinea and 15 from Sierra Leone — to return to their countries of origin.

VII. Support for security sector reform

Liberian National Police

30. The programme to establish a new Liberian police service continued to make satisfactory progress and is on target to complete the basic training of 1,800 national police in time for the elections on 11 October. As at 24 August, 756 police officers had completed the full Liberian National Police Academy programme of basic training and 300 of those officers, who will form a police support unit to deal with riot control and violent crimes, were sent to Nigeria on 22 August for a four-week specialized training programme. In addition, 703 officers have finished basic training and are deployed to field training and performance evaluation. So far, 263 Special Security Service personnel and 116 Liberian Seaport Police have graduated from training programmes. The majority of the latter are now deployed at the free port of Monrovia, where they are receiving on-site training. On 30 July, 20 senior police officers and 9 senior officers from the Special Security Service completed a senior leadership qualification course.

31. On 9 July, the Acting Director of the Liberian National Police approved the deployment of 208 more police officers to various locations in the country, bringing to 918 the number of officers redeployed to police stations in the counties. In addition, two National Police depots have been renovated with the assistance of UNMIL quick-impact projects and the National Police headquarters at Zwedru has been upgraded. On 12 July, Chairman Bryant approved a new uniforms policy and

rank structure, which was essential for the structural reorganization of the police force.

32. Since the registration programme for members of specialized security agencies commenced in December 2003, 10,335 individuals from 15 security agencies, including the Liberian National Police, have been registered, and vetting is under way. However, funding for the programme remains a serious concern.

33. A generous contribution of \$1.7 million made by the United States is expected to be made available shortly and should allow training at the Police Academy to continue for a further year. However, in order to ensure the sustainability of police restructuring efforts, additional donor support is urgently needed to rehabilitate police infrastructure and re-equip specialized units. While the Transitional Government has made laudable efforts to regularly pay increased salaries to newly-trained police officers, it has been unable to raise the \$4 million required to cover the decommissioning of personnel from the Liberian National Police and the Special Security Services who are ineligible to join the new, restructured services.

34. A crime and threat analysis of the internal security situation in Liberia has shown that the police often require firearms to deal effectively with violent incidents. UNMIL is providing firearms training to the Liberian National Police. The Transitional Government therefore intends to request the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) to consider an exception under the arms embargo to allow the import to Liberia of a limited number of sidearms for use by the newly-trained National Police officers, who would be closely mentored and monitored by UNMIL.

Armed Forces of Liberia

35. The programme for the demobilization of the irregular armed forces personnel, as part of the restructuring of the armed forces of Liberia, has made further progress. Phase I of the programme to demobilize irregular armed forces is making satisfactory progress. As at 24 August, 8,164 of the 9,086 irregular armed forces personnel had been demobilized. However, Phase II of the programme faces a funding shortfall of \$11.5 million for the demobilization of 4,095 regular personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The European Commission has pledged €1.6 million and I hope that contributions will be forthcoming from other donors.

36. UNMIL continues to support the restructuring process including by providing perimeter security for the demobilization centre at Camp Schieffelin and at banks where demobilized soldiers receive redundancy payments. UNMIL will also provide security at the Barclay Training Centre until refurbishment of a secure perimeter has been completed, and at the training site for newly-recruited soldiers on the outskirts of Monrovia.

37. The demobilization of both the regular and irregular personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia is scheduled to be completed by the end of September, following which the recruitment and training exercise for the new military will begin. Demobilized soldiers from the former Armed Forces of Liberia will be eligible to apply to join the new force through a 45-day-long recruitment exercise. Initially, the new force was intended to be 4,000 strong, but a lack of funding has forced the Government to reduce the number to 2,000 personnel. In preparation for the establishment of the new armed forces, the United States requested the Security

Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) for an exception from the arms embargo to import weapons and equipment for use in the training programme for new recruits.

38. A Defence Advisory Monitoring Committee comprising the Ministries of Defence, Finance, Information, and Planning and a representative of the Central Bank of Liberia, as well as key international partners, including UNMIL, has been established to oversee the demobilization process. Two subcommittees have also been created to secure funding for pension and redundancy schemes. UNDP is providing advice on the pension scheme.

VIII. Elections

39. Several key milestones in the organization of the elections were reached during the reporting period, including the issuance of the Writ of Election on 13 July, the publication of the electoral districts on 15 July, the nomination of candidates from 21 July to 6 August, and the commencement of the campaign period on 15 August. The voters' register was exhibited from 30 June to 2 July, followed by the determination of rejections and challenges, as well as the consequent adjustments to the register. The number of registered voters stands at 1,353,556.

40. The nomination of candidates for office closed on 6 August and the official list of candidates was published on 15 August. In all, 779 individuals filed nomination papers. Following a review of the applications, the National Elections Commission approved 22 presidential candidates, 22 vice-presidential candidates, 205 candidates for the Senate and 513 candidates for the House of Representatives. Apart from the incident mentioned in paragraph 24, the nominations process was largely incident-free.

41. On 25 July, the National Elections Commission approved regulations on complaints and appeals which establish the Commission's original jurisdiction over specified electoral offences. Campaign finance guidelines and forms were also approved, as well as directives to magistrates on their legal obligations with respect to the electoral process.

42. The National Elections Commission has also approved polling and counting procedures, as well as a number of related guidelines and regulations. The principal remaining electoral tasks to be completed include the printing of ballot papers, the recruitment and training of nearly 20,000 polling staff, the packing and distribution of electoral materials, and the finalization of polling centre locations, in addition to ongoing voter education activities.

United Nations support for the elections

43. The task of holding three elections on one day during the rainy season in a country with poor road networks presents significant operational challenges, which UNMIL and the United Nations country team are assisting the National Elections Commission to overcome.

44. UNMIL is providing a secure environment in which the National Elections Commission can plan for and run free, fair, transparent and peaceful democratic elections. To this end, the Mission is developing a security plan for the elections in

close collaboration with the Liberian security agencies and other elections partners. The UNMIL civilian police component has assisted in preparing a detailed deployment plan for the Liberian National Police and other national security agencies, including the assignment of personnel from the Special Security Services to provide close security protection for the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Furthermore, UNMIL will have a robust military presence throughout the country to guarantee freedom of movement.

45. Other UNMIL support components continue to give priority to ensuring the smooth running of the elections. A dedicated engineering and communications support system is supporting electoral offices throughout the country.

46. UNMIL and other partners, including non-governmental organizations, funded by UNDP and the European Commission, have continued to support the National Elections Commission in disseminating information on the electoral process throughout the country.

47. The UNMIL public information component has continued to provide workshops on media development with a particular focus on the role of the media in elections. UNMIL Radio programming has focused on live reporting from political rallies and conventions as well as civic education and phone-in programmes. The video unit is providing video news programmes for the three television stations in Monrovia and a civic education video has been distributed to Liberian video clubs. Work has progressed on the establishment of a media centre for the elections.

48. UNMIL civil affairs officers have received civic and voter education training and are complementing the efforts of the UNMIL Electoral Division staff in the counties. The UNMIL gender unit and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) are working with the Ministry of Gender and Development and civil society to increase the participation of women in the electoral process. Of the nominated candidates, 14 per cent were women, falling short of the goal of 30 per cent of the candidates contesting the polls being women. UNIFEM has incorporated gender awareness into the training manual for the National Elections Commission's civic and voter education material.

49. The European Commission and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) are providing direct technical assistance to the National Elections Commission. IFES has also facilitated the building of National Elections Commission county offices, education of parties and candidates on campaign finance regulations, and the training of judges on electoral dispute resolution. The International Republican Institute is assisting political parties to develop and articulate policy platforms during their campaigns, while the National Democratic Institute is working with civil society organizations on civic education and elections observation. The Carter Center, in partnership with the European Commission, is training national observers and will provide some international observers on election day. The European Union, the African Union and ECOWAS have also indicated their interest in fielding observers.

IX. Rule of law

Judicial support

50. During the reporting period, significant progress was made in support of the Liberian judicial system, with the conclusion of the nomination, vetting and appointment processes for posts for circuit court judges, specialized court judges and magistrates. UNMIL worked closely with the Liberian National Bar Association to support efforts to ensure transparency in the selection and vetting procedures. The appointment of new judges will enable most courts in the country to reopen, providing improved access to justice especially in the counties. It is also hoped that these appointments will allow UNMIL to commence its comprehensive training programmes for judges, magistrates and justices of the peace.

51. An encouraging development was the increase in the number of cases being handled by the courts currently in operation. During July alone, six criminal jury trials were concluded; this equals the total concluded during the whole of 2004. While this represents a significant improvement, serious concerns remain regarding the lack of institutional capacity, resources, and qualified prosecutors and defence counsel. To try to ease the burden on the judicial system by providing alternative options for arbitration, UNMIL has facilitated workshops on alternative dispute resolution for senior students at the University of Liberia Law School. In a positive development, the revised draft rape law was formally presented to Chairman Bryant on 27 July.

52. While progress has been made, efforts to reform the judicial sector are still hampered by an acute lack of facilities, material resources and funding. I would urge the Transitional Government and the international community to increase their efforts to secure the necessary resources to restore the rule of law throughout Liberia.

Corrections

53. UNMIL has continued to assist the Bureau of Corrections in the Ministry of Justice in improving conditions at corrections institutions in Monrovia, Gbarnga, Kakata, Bondiway, Buchanan, Voinjama and Sanniquellie. The Mission has also deployed corrections advisers to Zwedru and Harper, where courts have recently opened but where there are no detention facilities. Furthermore, during the reporting period, UNMIL quick-impact projects financed projects for water, sanitation and physical exercise in prisons in Monrovia and Gbarnga.

54. The UNMIL training programme for corrections officers is also continuing; 28 Liberian corrections officers, including seven women, are currently undergoing training at the National Police Academy.

55. Conditions in Liberian corrections establishments remain poor, owing to a lack of adequate facilities and personnel. Funds are urgently needed to rehabilitate physical structures and security equipment and for systems development and continued training of personnel. Prisoners continue to receive food and other supplies from the World Food Programme (WFP), ICRC and other partners.

X. Human rights and protection of civilians

56. UNMIL continued its monitoring and protection activities throughout the country, and continued to work with the Transitional Government and other partners to improve the human rights situation in Liberia. A welcome development was the signing into law, on 10 June, of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Act by the Chairman of the Transitional Government. On 14 July, the ECOWAS mediator, General Abdulsalami Abubakar, presided over the inauguration of the selection panel for the Commission. Under the Act, the panel will recommend a list of 15 candidates to the Chairman, who will select and appoint up to nine commissioners by 10 September. They will be assisted by three international technical advisers selected by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and ECOWAS. It is hoped that a similar process will be followed with respect to commissioners for the Independent National Commission on Human Rights.

57. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, visited Liberia from 9 to 13 July. Following her trip, the High Commissioner expressed the view that the weakest link in the Liberian transitional process was the justice system. She further recommended that the international community should do more to encourage the Liberian judiciary to open up to assistance from outside the country.

58. Reports of gender-based violence and abuse of minors continue to be received from all parts of the country. Regrettably, the Liberian legal system has processed only a few of the reported cases, owing in part to police inefficiency, as well as to a lack of courts and judges. Moreover, victims are often reluctant to report instances of rape and other human rights abuses for fear of being stigmatized.

59. From 21 to 23 July, UNMIL hosted a workshop on transitional justice for African peacekeeping missions, which featured a comparative analysis of best practice relating to rule of law tools for post-conflict societies that had been developed by OHCHR. The UNMIL Human Rights Protection Section has also facilitated various activities to raise awareness of human rights, including training courses on human rights for senior police officers and members of national security agencies and the creation of human rights clubs in Liberian schools.

60. UNMIL and the Transitional Government have continued to cooperate in improving the human rights situation in the rubber plantations, where ex-combatants often violate the fundamental rights of plantation residents. UNMIL is currently conducting a nationwide survey of human rights violations in the agricultural sector, focusing on rubber plantations and including a detailed study of the laws governing the exploitation of natural resources by the State, individuals and foreign companies.

XI. Public information

61. In addition to the aforementioned activities in support of the upcoming elections, the UNMIL public information component expanded its presence to Voinjama and Harper, where officers are providing regular news and information programmes to community radio stations. Furthermore, the deployment of UNMIL

Radio producers to the four UNMIL sector headquarters increased the production of weekly news and feature reporting throughout the country.

XII. Restoration and consolidation of State authority

62. Further progress was made in extending and consolidating State authority in all of the 15 counties of Liberia. In mid-July, the Chairman of the Transitional Government commissioned all 15 county superintendents. Almost 95 per cent of civil servants have returned to their duty stations in the counties and at border posts and their salaries can now be paid at offices of the Central Bank of Liberia, which have been recently constructed with UNMIL assistance in Kakata, Buchanan and Gbarnga.

63. Concerted efforts are being made to strengthen State authority at the local level. Several workshops on good governance and administrative and financial accountability have been held for local officials, and USAID is supporting the rehabilitation of administrative buildings in Nimba, Gbarpolu, Margibi, Grand Cape Mount, Bong and Grand Gedeh counties. However, such support is also urgently needed for improving State facilities in other parts of the country. Furthermore, the Transitional Government still faces serious constraints in supporting local authorities due to a lack of transport, infrastructure, communications, office equipment and qualified personnel.

XIII. Restoring proper management of natural resources

64. The Transitional Government has yet to regain full control over the exploitation of the country's natural resources. Artisanal diamond-mining activities are increasing in several areas such as in the Sanquin District, Sinoe County, resulting in security and public health risks, while uncontrolled mining is causing considerable environmental damage.

65. UNMIL continued to report to the Transitional Government the results of its aerial and ground surveillance of areas in which illegal diamond-mining is being carried out. On 28 July, the Transitional Government announced a draft action plan to meet the requirements for lifting the sanctions imposed by the Security Council on the export of rough diamonds from Liberia. The draft plan recommends an increased UNMIL presence in diamond-mining areas, as well as the lifting of the temporary ban on diamond mining in the country.

66. The report of the Forest Concession Review Committee was recently submitted to the Chairman of the Transitional Government. In the report, which was endorsed by the European Commission, the United States and UNMIL, the Committee recommended the cancellation of all 70 forestry concession agreements because they failed to meet the basic operational requirements. It also recommended the debarment of 12 companies for complicity in the country's civil war. A forest reform monitoring committee will be established to monitor the implementation of the reform programme.

67. On 17 August an operation commenced to evacuate an estimated 1,000 people who were illegally residing, mining and hunting in Sapo National Park. UNMIL assisted the Ministry of Internal Affairs in conducting the operation by providing

logistical and security support. As at 24 August, 286 people had been evacuated, while others had left on their own.

XIV. Humanitarian situation

68. United Nations agencies have continued to deliver humanitarian assistance throughout Liberia. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP, the International Organization for Migration and UNMIL have accelerated the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their counties of origin. As at 24 August, 207,746 internally displaced persons had been assisted to return. UNHCR continues to provide transportation and non-food items to returnees, while WFP contributes food rations. UNICEF, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, is supporting the provision of comprehensive integrated basic health services, including maternal care, to internally displaced persons: more than 100,000 people have benefited from the service in 2005.

69. UNHCR continues to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from the subregion. By 26 July, an estimated 150,000 refugees had returned spontaneously since the end of the fighting in July 2003, while 37,464 had returned with UNHCR assistance as at 16 August. To encourage the speedy return of refugees, UNHCR implemented the first “go-and-tell” visit from Bong County to Guinea in July: a group of district authority officials and returnees visited Liberians in refugee camps in Guinea to inform them of conditions in their home county and to dispel security concerns. Similar visits are planned for groups from Lofa and Nimba counties.

70. WFP currently delivers 7,000 tons of food to 708,000 beneficiaries each month, including 425,000 school children through emergency school feeding programmes and 142,000 internally displaced persons residing in camps. An additional fourth-month resettlement package totalling 4,416 tons of food commodities was provided to 195 eligible resettled internally displaced persons and 33,000 returnees.

71. Current resources can only cover the needs of 250,000 of the 314,000 internally displaced persons eligible for return assistance, which may delay returns. The international community should give urgent consideration to the requests of the Humanitarian Coordinator for funds to procure the outstanding non-food items needed to facilitate returns.

72. A related issue concerns the possible disenfranchisement of internally displaced persons who remain in camps and are unable to return to their counties of origin prior to the October elections. As the election law provides that internally displaced persons who have registered to vote in a given county must be physically present in that county to vote, an unknown number of internally displaced persons may be unable to participate in the October elections.

73. In the education sector, as at mid-August, UNICEF had provided educational materials to over 1 million children and its education programme for girls has assisted almost 1,000 classroom instructors, including more than 600 women, to complete their primary school teaching credentials. The UNICEF Accelerated Learning Programme has been implemented in more than 125 community schools in seven counties. To date, 3,751 children have participated in the Community

Education Investment Programme and 1,736 more are receiving skills training. More than 1,100 teachers have been trained to provide psychosocial services to children associated with the fighting forces. The Ministry of Health's measles vaccination campaign, supported by UNICEF, has reached approximately 1.5 million children throughout Liberia.

XV. National recovery, reconstruction and development

74. During the reporting period, the Mission's Relief, Recovery and Rehabilitation Section facilitated the development of a comprehensive national recovery strategy to guide the reintegration of ex-combatants, internally displaced persons and refugees. The Transitional Government and the United Nations country team have also been consulting on the establishment of a national recovery forum.

75. UNMIL is collaborating on road rehabilitation with WFP, UNHCR, UNDP and local stakeholders and is also focusing on the recovery of the agriculture sector and the revitalization of the market system. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is operating in 14 counties and has distributed seed rice and agricultural tools to 13,000 farmers to increase rice production. FAO is also working with some 1,700 fishermen to improve fishing and fish-processing techniques.

76. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has established a Centre for Academic Development at the University of Liberia. This facility will provide instructional aid to over 200 University faculty and Teachers College trainees. It will also provide Internet access to over 12,000 university students and staff.

XVI. HIV/AIDS

77. The UNMIL Office of the HIV/AIDS Adviser continued to provide awareness training and sensitization to UNMIL personnel. The Office is operating two voluntary HIV counselling and testing centres for UNMIL staff. It has organized broadcasts on UNMIL Radio to raise awareness among the local population about the need to promote HIV prevention, care and support. Furthermore, in collaboration with the public information component, the Office has produced posters with educational messages on HIV/AIDS.

78. The Office has also actively supported a number of HIV/AIDS-related initiatives throughout Liberia. These have included assisting the Transitional Government in developing a national action plan for orphans and vulnerable children; supporting the filming of a documentary on combating HIV/AIDS in Liberia; and conducting a workshop for students and media practitioners on HIV/AIDS and health rights issues in collaboration with the Liberian Women Media Action Committee.

79. WHO is coordinating a technical group, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Health, non-governmental organizations, UNDP, UNICEF and USAID, to develop project proposals on HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and the health system. The United Nations Population Fund, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, has been running HIV/AIDS awareness-raising

programmes among internally displaced persons in Lofa, Bong, Margibi, River Cess and Grand Cape Mount counties; providing adolescent reproductive health information and livelihood skills; and, through the Ministry of Labour, supporting HIV/AIDS prevention in the workplace.

XVII. Gender

80. The UNMIL Office of the Gender Adviser continued to promote gender mainstreaming in the Mission's activities. It concluded the first part of a training-of-trainers programme on gender and sexual exploitation and abuse for UNMIL force Sector Commanders. It continued its training for newly arrived military observers and a gender focal point for the UNMIL force has been established.

81. The Office assisted UNMIL civilian police and UNICEF in establishing the Women and Children's Unit of the Liberian National Police to deal with cases of violence against those vulnerable groups. It has also secured funding to work with UNMIL civilian police on police community outreach programmes to disseminate information on the protection of women's rights.

82. In that context, the Office, in collaboration with other UNMIL partners, key Ministries and non-governmental organizations, launched a one-year national campaign to fight violence against women and girls. UNDP has committed funds for the Ministry of Justice to hire and train five prosecutors specifically to prosecute rape cases. The Office is also conducting women's rights training in communities in the districts.

XVIII. Sexual exploitation and abuse

83. A network on sexual exploitation and abuse has been established in the international community in Liberia which brings together focal points from UNMIL, United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and ICRC. The network meets regularly and serves as the primary body for coordination and oversight on the prevention of and response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

84. In UNMIL, the Office of the Gender Adviser continued to provide briefings on the prevention on sexual exploitation and abuse to all incoming staff. A first round of train-the-trainers briefings for all military units has been completed and will now be extended to officers of incoming contingents. During the reporting period, UNMIL launched investigations into 16 more cases of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving civilian, police and military personnel. Investigations relating to three civilian personnel have been completed and the cases are under review by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; the remaining 13 investigations are ongoing.

XIX. Mission support

85. Administrative support for the Mission has expanded considerably throughout the country. The major support challenges include the provision of critical infrastructure to sustain UNMIL and support the electoral process. With the rainy

season under way, the maintenance of the main supply routes and the provision of UNMIL air assets to resupply premises in the sectors have been key priorities.

86. Over the coming months, the logistical effort will focus on the consolidation of force sustainment, including the provision of hardwall accommodation, installation of a microwave network to Sectors two and three, improving utility services, facilitating new force deployments and supporting the elections. In line with the joint civilian/military concept of the support plan, work continues on the establishment of a forward logistics base at Gbarnga and the completion of accommodation for staff officers.

XX. Regional aspects

87. The fragile peace process in Côte d'Ivoire is affecting UNMIL efforts to stabilize Liberia. UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) are continuing to share information. These efforts will be stepped up when the disarmament and demobilization exercise commences in Côte d'Ivoire, as Liberian ex-combatants may cross the border in the hope of benefiting financially from the Ivorian disarmament and demobilization programme.

88. UNMIL continues to monitor the situation in the Guinée Forestière region of Guinea, where there is a concentration of refugees from neighbouring countries. Guinean armed forces are deployed in strength along the border with Liberia, following an incident on 14 July in which an armed element from Côte d'Ivoire who had reportedly strayed into Guinean territory was shot dead. Cross-border liaison between UNMIL and UNAMSIL is also continuing.

89. UNAMSIL, UNMIL and UNOCI, in consultation with the United Nations Office for West Africa, continued to make considerable progress in strengthening inter-mission cooperation, particularly through ensuring efficient use of logistical and administrative resources. In addition to cooperation between the three forces, expertise and information are being shared regarding civilian police activities, disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation, elections, humanitarian operations, public information and human rights. UNMIL is developing joint operational concepts with UNAMSIL and UNOCI. A joint early warning initiative has been put in place by the military components of the three missions. On 5 July, the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and West Africa, and the Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, met in Dakar to discuss issues related to inter-mission cooperation.

XXI. Provision of security for the Special Court for Sierra Leone

90. Further to the addendum of 28 July to my twenty-fifth report on UNAMSIL (S/2005/273/Add.2), and in accordance with Security Council resolution 1610 (2005), UNMIL, in coordination with UNAMSIL and the Special Court for Sierra Leone, has developed proposals for the continued provision of security to the Court after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL, including command and control and contingency planning for enhanced security in case of crisis.

91. At present, the Special Court is secured by a Nigerian company-size force provided by UNAMSIL, whose logistics needs are met by its parent contingent and by support components of UNAMSIL. It is proposed that a company-size force of up to 250 military personnel from UNMIL be deployed at the Special Court by 15 November. On 1 December, UNMIL would take over command and security responsibility for the security of the Court. Logistics support for the company would be provided by both UNMIL and the United Nations integrated office in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, UNMIL would designate a standby mechanized company, based in Liberia, to serve as a rescue or evacuation force for the company in Sierra Leone and the Court's staff, in case of a serious security crisis. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations is currently consulting with potential troop-contributing countries regarding the provision of the contingent to provide security to the Special Court.

92. In order to facilitate command and control of that company, UNMIL would deploy a forward tactical headquarters of approximately 10 military personnel (included within the 250 maximum) to Freetown comprising operational, logistical and administrative elements. The tactical headquarters would report to UNMIL. While the UNMIL Force Commander would have overall command of the troops deployed in Sierra Leone to provide security for the Special Court, the head of the United Nations integrated office in Sierra Leone would provide political direction, as needed and appropriate, to the contingent.

93. The company deployed at the Special Court will operate only within the premises and immediate surroundings of the Court and will have no operational tasks outside the Court except internee extraction, if required, and escort duties. The company would continue to perform the same guard tasks as those being carried out by the company currently stationed at the Court. The company therefore would not have the capacity to react to security situations beyond the Court perimeter which would remain the responsibility of the Sierra Leone police. In the event of attack, however, the company would have the capability to mount a robust defence and/or evacuate the internees.

94. This proposal would therefore require a temporary increase in troop strength in UNMIL of some 250 troops from 15 November to 31 March. This would allow UNMIL to provide security both at the Special Court in Freetown and throughout Liberia in the sensitive period following the October elections and the inauguration of the newly elected Government of Liberia, scheduled for January 2006. I hope that the Security Council will be in a position to give this proposal early and positive consideration so that the necessary arrangements can be concluded in a timely manner to ensure continuity in the provision of security to the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

XXII. Financial implications

95. By its resolution 59/305 of 22 June 2005, the General Assembly appropriated the amount of \$760,567,400 (gross), equivalent to \$63,380,616 per month, for UNMIL for the period from 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006. The assessment of these amounts is subject to the decision of the Security Council to extend the mandate of the Mission. By the same resolution, the General Assembly decided to apportion among Member States the amount of \$166,902,291 (gross) already appropriated for

the maintenance of the Mission for the period from 1 July to 19 September 2005 under the terms of its resolution 58/256. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMIL beyond 19 September 2005, the cost of maintaining the Mission until 30 June 2006 would be limited to the monthly amounts approved by the General Assembly.

96. As at 30 June 2005, unpaid assessed contributions to the UNMIL Special Account amounted to \$3.2 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to \$1,729 million.

XXIII. Observations

97. The steady progress in the preparations for the October national elections in Liberia has been most encouraging. I commend the Liberian people for their determination to participate in the polls, as demonstrated by the large numbers who have registered to vote, and also the peaceful manner in which the electoral process has been conducted so far. The National Elections Commission should also be commended for its role in ensuring that the process has remained on track. The technical and material support provided by the international partners has been vital in ensuring the effective functioning of the Commission. The political parties, the candidates and their supporters now need to ensure that the electoral campaigns are conducted peaceably and freely in all areas of the country, and that the voters can participate in credible polls that are conducted without any threat of violence.

98. The strides made towards reforming the security sector, in particular the training of the new police service, are also encouraging. The Transitional Government has made a significant contribution to this programme by ensuring regular and improved salary payments for the police officers and for approving the new rank structure and uniforms policy. The Government should, however, redouble its efforts to raise the requisite funds for the demobilization of security personnel who are not eligible to join the restructured services and for the decommissioning of the former Armed Forces of Liberia personnel. I would urge donors to give urgent consideration to assisting the Transitional Government to ensure that progress can be made in this very important area. The Government also needs urgent support from its international partners to equip the new police service and to rebuild the police infrastructure in the counties so that progress in strengthening the police force continues to be made.

99. The reintegration programme for ex-combatants still faces a significant funding shortfall. The completion of an effective reintegration programme is vital to combat the serious problems of re-recruitment of fighters, illegal exploitation of natural resources and the widespread and high incidence of violent crime. In addition, it is an essential element in ensuring that the vicious cycle of conflict is finally broken so that durable stability can be restored both in Liberia and within the wider West African subregion. I would therefore appeal to the donor community to assist in closing the funding gap of approximately \$18.5 million for reintegration and also to provide the additional \$7 million needed so that those ex-combatants who have opted for formal education can continue with their schooling for two further academic years.

100. Improving economic governance is essential for consolidating peace and ensuring sustainable development in Liberia. Regrettably, protracted delays have

been encountered in the process of consultations between the Transitional Government and the international partners on the proposed governance and economic management assistance programme. It is important that this document be finalized as soon as possible. The programme represents an important tool for strengthening Liberia's national sovereignty by ensuring that the Government has control over its revenues and expenditures and a means to create a long-term revenue-generating base for the development of the country. The effective implementation of the programme would thus greatly contribute to Liberia's national recovery efforts and would help Liberia to meet the requirements for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Liberia by the Security Council in resolution 1521 (2003). Furthermore, this would also ensure that the country retains the confidence of donors who have already been generous in their provision of assistance. I would therefore strongly urge the Transitional Government to work closely with the international partners with a view to reaching an early agreement on the programme so that it could be presented for the consideration of the Security Council and put into operation with the minimum delay.

101. The transitional process prescribed by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Liberian parties in Accra in August 2003 comes to a conclusion with the inauguration of the newly elected Government in January 2006. Liberians are faced with a unique opportunity to build on the gains made so far during the transition and move towards a new era of sustained stability, national reconstruction and recovery in the country. The success of this process will depend largely on the Liberian people and their leaders. It will also depend on the full and sustained engagement of donors.

102. Although Liberia has made great steps in consolidating peace and in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in August 2003, the peace process still faces many challenges. UNMIL is now moving towards a new phase of its operations which will focus on the conduct of free and fair elections in October, as well as the provision of security during elections and in the run-up to the installation of the new Government in January 2006. The Mission will continue to work towards the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants; the restoration of State administration nationwide; the strengthening of rule of law institutions and the restructuring of the security sector; and the promotion of recovery and reconstruction. In the light of the above I would recommend that the mandate of UNMIL be extended for a period of 12 months, until 19 September 2006.

103. In conclusion, I would like to welcome my new Special Representative for Liberia, Alan Doss, who recently arrived in Liberia to assume his responsibilities. I would also like to commend my Deputy Special Representatives, Abou Moussa and Steinar Bjornsson, who were Officers-in-Charge of UNMIL pending the arrival of Mr. Doss, and the civilian and military staff of UNMIL for their contribution to the progress made during the period under review. I would like to express my gratitude to the countries that are contributing troops and police personnel to the Mission, as well as to ECOWAS, the African Union, the International Contact Group on Liberia, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and humanitarian organizations, as well as the numerous bilateral donors and international and local non-governmental organizations, for their steadfast and continuing efforts to return peace to Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 24 August 2005

Country	Military component			Total	Civilian police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops		
Argentina				0	2
Bangladesh	17	11	3 186	3 214	30
Benin	2	1		3	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina				0	12
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	2			2	
China	5	9	558	572	25
Croatia		3		3	
Czech Republic	3			3	3
Denmark	1			1	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
El Salvador	3			3	
Ethiopia	17	8	2 541	2 566	
Egypt	8			8	
Fiji				0	29
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5			5	30
Germany			15	15	2
Ghana	11	6	850	867	40
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		6	422	428	
Jamaica				0	10
Jordan	7	9	115	131	140
Kenya	3	4		7	24
Kyrgyzstan	3			3	3
Malawi		2		2	20
Mali	4	2		6	
Moldova	3	1		4	
Malaysia	10			10	
Namibia	3	4	853	860	6
Nepal	3	2	40	45	251
Niger	3			3	3

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military component</i>				<i>Civilian police</i>
	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>	<i>Total</i>	
Nigeria	19	16	1 950	1 985	156
Norway				0	6
Pakistan	16	11	2 739	2 766	20
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	3	2		5	
Philippines	3	5	167	175	31
Poland	2			2	3
Portugal				0	
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	20
Samoa				0	18
Senegal	3	3	600	606	10
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	8
South Africa				0	
Sri Lanka				0	11
Sweden		4	229	233	10
Togo	2	1		3	
Turkey				0	31
Uganda				0	20
United Kingdom		3		3	
Ukraine	3	1	299	303	11
Uruguay				0	2
United States of America	7	6		13	39
Yemen				0	4
Zambia	3			3	28
Zimbabwe				0	32
Total	202	128	14 564	14 894	1 090

