



Security Council

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

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 1667 (2006) of 31 March 2006, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2006 and requested me to present further recommendations for a drawdown plan for UNMIL. The present report provides an update on developments since my report of 14 March 2006 (S/2006/159) and contains adjusted recommendations for an UNMIL drawdown.

II. Major political developments

2. The most significant political development that occurred during the reporting period was the transfer of the former Liberian President, Charles Taylor, to the Special Court for Sierra Leone. On 25 March, President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria officially informed President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf that pursuant to her request, and following consultations with other African leaders, the Government of Nigeria would release Mr. Taylor to the custody of the Government of Liberia. On 28 March, the Nigerian Government announced that Mr. Taylor had absconded from his official residence in Calabar, Nigeria. Mr. Taylor was subsequently apprehended by the Nigerian authorities on the following day and was immediately flown to Monrovia. In accordance with Security Council resolution 1638 (2005) of 11 November 2005, upon his arrival Mr. Taylor was promptly apprehended and detained by UNMIL and transported to Freetown, where he was handed over to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to be tried for war crimes, crimes against humanity and other serious violations of international humanitarian law in Sierra Leone.

3. Mr. Taylor's transfer to the Special Court elicited mixed reactions from the Liberian public. Some Liberians were of the view that Mr. Taylor should be tried immediately in order to send a strong message that impunity would not be tolerated. Others argued that he should have been left in Nigeria as his trial would be disruptive to the Liberian reconciliation process and could destabilize Liberia and the subregion. In an address to the nation on 30 March, President Johnson-Sirleaf expressed the hope that the Security Council would adopt a resolution that would allow Mr. Taylor's trial before the Special Court to take place in The Hague, the Netherlands. In that regard, I welcome the recent steps that have been taken by some



Member States to ensure that the trial is transferred outside of the region. In the meantime, since Mr. Taylor's transfer to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the political situation in Liberia has remained generally calm.

4. The Senate confirmation hearings for the President's nominees for positions in the Cabinet, Supreme Court and key parastatals continued to make progress during the reporting period. On 30 March, 21 cabinet ministers together with their deputy and assistant ministers, the chairman and commissioners of the National Elections Commission and the President's nominees for positions in several Government agencies and parastatals were sworn into office. The three branches of Government are now fully functioning.

5. However, the selection of county superintendents generated some controversy. While general satisfaction was expressed about the appointments made by the President in most of the counties, the residents of Grand Bassa, Lofa, Gbarpolu and Nimba counties claimed that they had not been consulted during the selection process and that the President had not taken their preferred choices into account. As of 1 June, all 15 county superintendents had been confirmed by the Senate.

6. Several issues, including the payment of benefits for legislators, created tensions in the relationship between the executive and the legislative branches of Government during the period under review. On 19 April, the Senate sentenced a minister and deputy minister to imprisonment for contempt of the Legislature, alleging that they had taken actions that impeded legislative functions. However, an associate justice of the Supreme Court ordered the release of the ministers the next day. Claims by some legislators that the President had failed to consult with the Legislature on the transfer of Mr. Taylor to the Special Court also added to the friction between the two branches of Government. In order to improve relations, the President decided to appoint a senior Government official to act as a liaison between the executive and legislative branches.

7. President Johnson-Sirleaf continued to address the issue of governance and corruption. On 6 March, she issued executive order 2, which extended the life of the Governance Reform Commission and redefined its mandate to include the preparation of an anti-corruption strategy and a code of conduct for public servants. By executive order 3, issued on 31 March, the President directed that all State revenues be deposited into the Central Bank of Liberia. She also authorized the relevant agencies to conduct a review of the tax exemptions on petroleum products and developed rules and guidelines for the sale of stockpiled iron ore and scrap metal. In addition, at the recommendation of international partners, the Government nullified the contract with Global Security Seals for the construction, operation and transfer of a container park at the Monrovia freeport owing to concerns over the non-competitive and non-transparent procedure by which the contract was awarded by the National Transitional Government of Liberia.

8. From February to May, President Johnson-Sirleaf undertook assessment visits to all 15 counties of Liberia. During the visits, county officials and traditional leaders informed her about the challenges facing their communities, including poor roads, inadequate health and education facilities and the lack of office and residential accommodation for Government officials. The President explained that her Government was taking steps to address these concerns, including by working closely with bilateral and multilateral partners to develop and implement recovery and development programmes.

III. Security situation

9. The overall security situation in Liberia has remained generally stable but fragile. In order to address the security concerns raised by the transfer of Mr. Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, UNMIL launched Operation Kilbride, under which security measures were taken to reassure the populace and send a message of the Mission's resolve to maintain peace and stability throughout the country and to deter potential spoilers. The security measures included increased robust patrolling within Monrovia, the deployment of the UNMIL Quick Reaction Force in border areas not covered by the UNMIL force and an increased UNMIL troop presence in Mr. Taylor's former strongholds.

10. However, there are still a number of potential threats to the stability of Liberia emanating mainly from several disaffected groups, including demobilized personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia who are dissatisfied with the severance and pension benefits, former members of the Anti-Terrorist Unit (a militia group formed by former President Taylor) who were demanding to be included in the armed forces demobilization programme, former combatants for whom reintegration opportunities are not yet available and those who have received training but cannot find employment, as well as deactivated members of the Special Security Service and Liberian National Police.

11. The demobilized personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia staged several violent street demonstrations. The most serious was on 25 April, when approximately 400 ex-army personnel blockaded the three roads leading to the Ministry of National Defense. They set fire to tyres and military checkpoints in the area and used sticks, stones and petrol bombs to attack UNMIL troops, as well as personnel of the Liberian Police Support Unit who were protecting the Ministry. The situation was brought under control some two hours after the arrival of UNMIL troop and formed police unit reinforcements. During the incident, three peacekeepers were injured by rocks and other projectiles, and two UNMIL vehicles were damaged.

12. In response to the incident, the Government explained the arrangements in place for the payment of severance pay and other arrears and announced measures to deal with public disorder. These measures included the arrest and prosecution of the instigators or leaders of the attack against the Ministry, UNMIL troops and Liberian citizens, as well as those who had destroyed public and private property; a ban against a demonstration by civil servants which was to have been held on 26 April; a temporary ban on the sale of petroleum in glass bottles, which were used to make the petrol bombs; and a ban on the carrying of cutlasses and machetes in the night since those weapons were frequently used to attack citizens in their homes.

13. The situation in the rubber plantations illegally occupied by former combatants also remained a potential threat to the stability of the country. Disturbances occurred on some of the plantations as a result of illicit rubber tapping, property theft, illegal possession of firearms and aggravated assault. Some former commanders of the disbanded warring factions continue to organize the illegal exploitation of the plantations and operate criminal groups there. The recommendations made by the joint Government/UNMIL task force on rubber plantations referred to in paragraph 29, are expected to address these issues.

14. Disputes over land and other property are increasing as refugees, internally displaced persons and former combatants return to their communities of origin. A recent incident in Nimba County underscored the potential for these disputes to escalate into violence that could destabilize the countryside. On 17 May, residents of Ganta took to the streets armed with sticks and machetes, following rumours that Mandingos living in Guinea intended to return to forcibly reclaim property that they had left during the civil war, from members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups. A potentially violent situation was defused by the prompt intervention of local authorities with the support of UNMIL forces.

15. The unstable situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to present a serious threat to the stability that now prevails in Liberia. In particular, there are concerns about the possible movement of armed groups from Côte d'Ivoire into Liberia; the possible recruitment of former Liberian combatants, including children, for operations in Côte d'Ivoire; and the possible influx of Ivorians who might seek refuge in Liberia in the event of a resumption of violence in Côte d'Ivoire. To counter these potential threats, UNMIL continued to maintain a strong security presence in border areas.

IV. Status of implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia

A. Rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants

16. To date, some 66,000 out of 101,874 demobilized combatants have completed or are participating in training and education programmes funded through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-managed Trust Fund and through bilateral arrangements. Four reintegration and rehabilitation projects targeting approximately 3,000 beneficiaries were recently approved, and most of the funds required to meet the reintegration costs for the remaining 35,000 ex-combatants have been mobilized. In the meantime, President Johnson-Sirleaf has extended the mandate of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration for another year.

17. None of the 612 ex-combatants who identified themselves as foreign nationals during the disarmament and demobilization process have been officially repatriated, although some 325 have had access to reintegration assistance in Liberia. However, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has continued to facilitate the repatriation of foreign former child combatants. To date, a total of 55 (11 Ivorian, 29 Guinean and 15 Sierra Leonean) former child combatants or children associated with the fighting forces have returned to their countries of origin. ICRC has also started to repatriate Liberian children associated with the fighting forces from neighbouring countries to Liberia.

18. The Mission continued to collect and destroy residual weapons and ammunition, which were voluntarily surrendered or discovered through search operations. During the reporting period, 48 weapons, 60 rounds of small arms ammunition, 772 pieces of unexploded ordnance and 11,461 assorted spares were collected and destroyed. In the meantime, the UNDP community arms collection and development programme continued in Lofa, Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties. The programme will be extended to River Cess, Maryland and Grand Kru counties in August 2006. So far 70 guns, 126 bayonets, 7,048 rounds of ammunition and

hundreds of assorted spares in special arms collection boxes have been collected under this programme. In addition, 13 AK-47s and six rocket launchers have been retrieved.

B. Reform of the Liberian National Police

19. Steady progress continues to be made in the reform and restructuring of the Liberian National Police. To date, 1,663 Liberian National Police personnel have graduated from the National Police Academy. The target of 3,500 fully trained police personnel is expected to be reached by July 2007. In addition, some 392 Special Security Service officers and 155 Liberian Seaport Police have graduated from the National Police Academy. Currently, 377 new police personnel are undergoing field training while another 190 are undergoing basic training. The United Nations Police, in collaboration with the Liberian National Police, recently launched a further countrywide recruitment drive to increase the pool of qualified applicants.

20. The basic and specialized training programmes of the Liberian National Police are still inadequately funded. Some \$1.1 million is needed to complete basic training for 1,200 police officers, while approximately \$500,000 will be required to conduct specialized training programmes. I urge donors to generously support this programme.

21. As at 1 June, 2,022 out of a targeted 2,400 Liberian National Police officers had been deactivated. The retrenchment exercise is being funded by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Earlier, 870 Special Security Service officers were deactivated with financial assistance from the United States of America.

22. The Government recently appointed a new Director of Police and several deputy and assistant directors, leading to the redeployment of several senior police officials who had been appointed under the previous administration and trained by the United Nations police. To ensure continuity of police management, UNMIL has recommended a revision of the appointment process to ensure transparency in hiring procedures and merit-based promotions.

23. The operations of the Liberian National Police continued to be seriously hampered by the lack of basic equipment, uniforms, weapons, vehicles and communication equipment. Moreover, police facilities in Monrovia and the interior of the country are in urgent need of renovation and rehabilitation. I appeal to donors to make available the additional resources needed to effectively operationalize the National Police.

C. Reform of the Armed Forces of Liberia

24. The recruitment drive for the new Armed Forces of Liberia is ongoing. As at 1 June, some 4,265 applicants had signed up to join the new army. So far, only 1,776 applicants have passed the initial screening and they will still need to undergo medical tests and a vetting process before qualifying for basic training. Engineering work to prepare firing ranges, obstacle courses and other outdoor training facilities has commenced at the proposed training site located at the former Voice of America

transmitter station in Montserrado County. In the interim, the Barclay Training Centre in central Monrovia will continue to be used for classes and accommodation. The training of the new armed forces is expected to start in July.

25. The Government of Liberia is still in the process of formulating its national security policy. A United States-funded security sector review, which was recently conducted by the RAND Corporation, has provided the Government with strategic options for the future direction and organization of the security services. The RAND report will form the basis of a national dialogue on security sector reform in the country in the coming months.

D. Restoration and consolidation of State authority

26. Some progress was made in the restoration and consolidation of State authority. As indicated above, most county Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents for Development have already been inducted and the selection of district and town commissioners is under way. The Mission and the United Nations country team have established joint county support teams to help the newly installed superintendents strengthen local coordination and set priorities for community recovery and development.

27. The Mission continued to facilitate the return of Government officials to their respective areas of responsibility. It provided transportation assistance to customs and excise and immigration and naturalization officials to enable them to monitor Government revenue collection points and border crossings. This has led to increased revenue collection and better control of cross-border traffic. Despite these positive developments, the work of many Government departments in the countryside continued to be constrained by the lack of office accommodation, logistics and qualified personnel.

28. Central Bank payment centres have been constructed in Tubmanburg, Zwedru and Voinjama, with the assistance of UNMIL quick-impact project funds. This will enable county officials stationed in those locations to more easily collect their salaries and remain at their posts. The Central Bank is currently conducting assessments in Barclayville, Greenville and Harper to determine the possibility of opening similar centres in those locations.

E. Restoration of proper management of natural resources

29. During the reporting period, the Government intensified its efforts to regain full control over the exploitation of the country's natural resources. The joint Government/United Nations task force, which was established to undertake a comprehensive assessment of Liberia's rubber plantations, including the occupation and exploitation of these plantations and labour and human rights conditions there, submitted its report to the President on 23 May. The report outlines the task force's findings and makes detailed recommendations aimed at halting the use of forced and child labour and illegal trafficking in raw rubber, including the repossession of illegally occupied plantations, the review of concession and management agreements and the establishment of interim management teams. The President welcomed the recommendations, emphasizing the urgency of their implementation,

and indicated that the lifespan of the task force would be extended with a follow-up mandate.

30. With the assistance of UNMIL, the Government has deployed mineral inspectors and agents to the diamond-mining areas; set up regional Kimberley Process Certification Scheme offices in six counties; and carried out surveillance and inspection activities in the principal diamond-mining areas. The Government is also setting up cooperatives for diamond miners with the support of UNDP. The United States has provided vehicles and equipment to enhance the capacity of the recently established Liberian Diamond Authority, while the De Beers diamond mining company has provided training to the Authority's personnel. On 22 May, a Kimberley Process Certification Scheme review mission visited Liberia to assess the measures taken by the Government to establish a transparent, effective and verifiable system of internal control in the diamond sector. The Mission provided logistical support to the Kimberley Process team.

31. The Forestry Reform Management Monitoring Committee, which was established by the President in February, has commenced operations. The Committee reviewed new proposals for the allocation of forest concessions and for the award of forest concessions management contracts to private companies. The new proposals provide for the strict application of the Public Procurement and Concession Act of 2005 and for the establishment of a forest strategic management plan aimed at mapping out areas for commercial logging and for community and conservation forestry.

32. The Forestry Development Authority finalized the new pit-sawing policy, which includes a comprehensive waybill system to control the movement of sawn timber and collect revenue. The Mission provided the Forestry Development Authority teams with transport and security during the conduct of their 12-day assessment of major pit-sawing areas throughout the country and is currently operating joint UNMIL/Authority checkpoints to ensure that the new interim policy is being observed. As a result of those actions, there has been a significant increase in Government revenue from forestry operations.

33. During the reporting period, the Policy Council and Board of Directors of the Environmental Protection Agency were finally constituted. This will enable the Agency, which operated without these two important bodies for three years, to more effectively carry out its mandate of ensuring the preservation and protection of the environment and natural resources of Liberia.

F. Promotion of human rights and the rule of law

1. Promotion of human rights

34. The Mission continued to monitor and promote human rights throughout the country. It also intensified activities aimed at building the capacity of Liberian human rights organizations, particularly in the areas of legal education and training for members of the legal and judicial system. Five workshops were conducted around the country for clerks of magisterial courts on court administration and procedures. In collaboration with ICRC, UNMIL facilitated two workshops on human rights protection, the Constitution, and the Rape Amendment Act for more than 90 community leaders and Chiefs in Nimba County. The Mission also

distributed copies of the Rape Amendment Act to judicial officers and police in the counties. Despite these activities, reported incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, particularly rape and abuses occurring within the context of traditional practices, have increased.

35. In its efforts to build human rights awareness, following a series of reported cases of illegal detentions, UNMIL conducted training for the police and security guards at concessions in Nimba County. It also provided training on human rights, gender issues and law enforcement to probationary police officers deployed in Bomi County. To create awareness among students of human rights issues, 36 human rights clubs have been established in schools around the country to address issues such as the Rape Amendment Act, national reconciliation and the universality of human rights and their place in democracy.

36. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was launched on 20 February, has begun to collect information on alleged human rights abuses and atrocities linked to the country's 14 years of civil war. However, the Commission still urgently requires some \$10 million for its two years of operations. So far, it has received \$600,000 from UNDP for its initial three-month preparatory phase, €300,000 from the European Commission for logistics and technical assistance and \$120,000 out of a total pledged amount of \$260,000 from the Liberian Government. The Government has also provided the Commission with two vehicles and promised to provide office space for the Commission.

37. The Mission is supporting the Commission's public outreach programme and has made its air assets available to enable the Commission to access remote parts of the country. In collaboration with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Centre for Transitional Justice, UNMIL provided the Commissioners with training in international humanitarian law and human rights law. UNDP, with the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, has compiled a study of the atrocities committed during the 14-year conflict, which will be made available to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

38. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights is still in the process of appointing its members. The Mission assisted the Commission with the dissemination of information and the distribution of nomination forms in the counties, and conducted radio programmes and public meetings on the work of the Commission with the support of local non-governmental organizations.

2. Support for the judicial system

39. The Government continued to face serious capacity constraints in its efforts to improve the administration of justice. In particular, the lack of court buildings in many counties and the dearth of qualified judicial and legal officers remained major impediments to the effective administration of justice. These inadequacies have contributed to the denial of due process and fair trials for many accused persons. Investigations are still not being conducted in a timely manner, resulting in the protracted detention of accused persons, often in overcrowded prison facilities. In addition, no further progress was made in the reconstruction of juvenile justice institutions, as county juvenile courts and rehabilitation facilities remained non-existent.

40. To address the acute shortage of qualified judicial officers, UNMIL is assisting the Government to engage the services of national prosecutorial consultants to help reduce the backlog of pending criminal cases. Furthermore, the Mission is supporting the Ministry of Justice and the Liberian National Bar Association in their bid to establish a law reform commission, which will strengthen the legal framework in Liberia. In the meantime, the rule of law task force, which was established to develop a strategy on rule of law reform, has submitted its final report to the Government. The report is expected to assist the Government in the coordination of legal and judicial reforms.

41. In April, the Chief Justice conducted a nationwide tour of the judicial circuits to assess the constraints being faced by the judicial system. During the tour, he reiterated his commitment to stamping out corruption in the judiciary and announced the establishment of a five-member judicial inquiry committee chaired by one of the associate justices.

3. Support for the corrections system

42. The Mission continued to assist the Bureau of Corrections in the Ministry of Justice to improve the conditions of correctional facilities in the country. Facilities in Monrovia, Buchanan, Kakata and Gbarnga are being refurbished with funds provided by the Governments of the United States and Norway, while correctional facilities in Zwedru and Harper are expected to be refurbished with funds provided by UNDP. The Mission's quick-impact project funds have helped to improve water and sanitation conditions at several facilities, and additional equipment to enhance the security of prison facilities has been procured. However, most facilities continue to rely heavily on the World Food Programme (WFP), ICRC and other partners for food, health care and other essential supplies.

43. Graduates of the first corrections officer training class have still not been absorbed into the civil service owing to budgetary constraints. In the meantime, preparations for the final phase of training for the second corrections officer training class have been completed. Funding is urgently needed for the deactivation of serving corrections officers who do not meet the required standards.

G. Economic governance

44. Progress was made in the implementation of the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme. Internationally recruited financial controllers for Liberian State-owned enterprises, including the National Port Authority, Roberts International Airport, the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company and the Forestry Development Authority, as well as a budget expert recruited for the Bureau of Budget, assumed their duties during the reporting period.

45. The Economic Governance Steering Committee, which oversees the Management Assistance Programme, continued to meet regularly to monitor progress in its implementation. On 3 May, the Steering Committee approved the memorandum of understanding between State-owned enterprises and commercial banks for the creation of consolidated accounts. It also approved the terms of reference for an independent review of contracts and concessions, which had been entered into earlier by the former National Transitional Government of Liberia, and the recruitment of an international lawyer to support the review process. In May, the

Government's Public Procurement and Concessions Committee published a framework to guide the contracts and concessions review process.

46. The Government is collaborating with international partners in the formulation of a national anti-corruption strategy. During the reporting period, the Government received a report prepared by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on corruption in the Transitional Government, as well as a European Commission-financed audit of the Bureau of Maritime Affairs. In an effort to better inform the public of the progress of the Management Assistance Programme, the Steering Committee's technical team has prepared an outreach and communication strategy.

47. A matrix was produced by UNDP that captures and monitors the capacity-building elements of the Programme to help ensure institutional strengthening and the proper transfer of knowledge and skills to Liberians. On 29 March, the Steering Committee requested its technical team to provide detailed action points on capacity-building within the Programme. Since that time, the team has been meeting with internationally recruited experts to discuss the capacity-building components of their work and their plans of action in order to provide specific recommendations on capacity-building.

48. With respect to broader governance issues, the European Commission published a report on the future of governance reform in Liberia. The report recommended that the Governance Reform Commission be renamed the Good Governance Commission, and that its responsibilities include the formulation of strategic policy frameworks for promoting good governance; the coordination of cross-cutting issues in good governance initiatives; and monitoring and evaluation of the impact of good governance initiatives.

49. Efforts to curb corruption and improve the transparency of public finances are already bearing fruit. The Government's first financial report, for the period from January to March 2006, indicated that revenues of \$26.2 million had been received, three times the amount collected for the same period in 2005. The increase in public revenues was partially a result of improvements in the collection system. The Government has instituted better controls at the freeport in Monrovia and has established a system of pre-shipment inspections of imported goods to address the undervaluation of imports, such as rice and petroleum. The Ministry of Finance also plans to publish Government accounts and agreements on the disclosure of assets.

H. National recovery, reconstruction and development

50. Some progress was made in providing support for war-affected communities. Several communities received assistance to revive basic food production. Tools and seed rice were donated by China, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and ICRC. In addition, efforts to rehabilitate community infrastructure and repair roads were focused on areas of return and border areas. So far, more than 2,500 kilometres of mostly unpaved roads have been rehabilitated and are being regularly repaired and maintained by UNMIL engineers. The rehabilitation of feeder roads, which is being undertaken by WFP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation, has provided short-term employment for thousands of people from the local communities. Donors are encouraged to support road construction and

rehabilitation activities as they provide short-term employment and assist in opening up previously inaccessible communities.

51. The Mission and its partners continued to support the Government's efforts to implement its 150-day action plan, set up to address the most immediate basic needs of the population, such as the partial restoration of electricity, the repair of roads and the rehabilitation of Government infrastructure.

52. The Liberia Reconstruction and Development Committee, established to coordinate the country's reconstruction and development activities and to oversee the execution of key deliverables in the short and long term, is chaired by the President, who oversees four separate subcommittees, focusing on security, economic revitalization, basic services and infrastructure, and the rule of law and good governance. During the reporting period, the Committee met on four occasions to review the progress being made on the Government's 150-day action plan, the finalization of the results-focused transitional framework and preparations for the interim poverty reduction strategy paper, among other issues. The strategy paper, which is expected to follow on from the Government's 150-day action plan and which will form the basis for the country's medium-term development agenda, will be presented to international partners later this year.

V. Humanitarian activities

53. During the reporting period, the humanitarian situation in the country continued to improve. On 20 April, the resettlement of internally displaced persons was completed and all the remaining camps for internally displaced persons were formally closed. Since the start of the resettlement process in November 2004, some 312,015 internally displaced persons have been assisted to return to their places of origin. However, a small number of internally displaced persons are still living by choice in and around the camps. In addition, UNHCR continued to promote the voluntary repatriation of Liberian refugees from the subregion. As at 18 May, some 66,059 refugees had returned to their places of origin with the assistance of UNHCR, while an estimated 200,000 had returned spontaneously since the end of fighting in July 2003. Some 169,525 registered refugees remain in various countries in West Africa.

54. There are a number of humanitarian challenges that must be resolved in the communities of return. These include the provision of health care, water and sanitation, education, shelter, food and livelihood opportunities. The future peace and stability of the country is inextricably linked to the successful revitalization of these communities. The United Nations Consolidated Appeal for Liberia is seeking \$120 million to address some of the most basic needs of vulnerable Liberians in 2006. As at 22 May, pledges had been received for only 25 per cent of the required funds. I encourage members of the international community to contribute generously to this appeal.

VI. Gender

55. The Mission's Gender Unit and Gender Task Force continued to mainstream gender activities in all aspects of its work. The Unit provided training in the areas of

gender mainstreaming, promotion of women's rights and the elimination of domestic violence and gender-related sexual violence to Government entities, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and gender-based violence committees throughout the country. It also assisted in the resuscitation of the women's non-governmental organization secretariat of Liberia.

VII. HIV/AIDS

56. The office of the HIV/AIDS policy adviser continued to collaborate with the Mission's integrated mission training cell to carry out HIV/AIDS awareness-raising, training and sensitization as part of the induction training for United Nations military observers, staff officers, police and civilian peacekeepers. In collaboration with the Mission's public information component, the HIV/AIDS policy adviser's office participated in public awareness programmes on HIV/AIDS, living positively with HIV and health/treatment-seeking behaviour. More than 10,000 people attended the programmes. The office also participated in an UNMIL radio live phone-in programme discussing voluntary counselling and testing and HIV/AIDS stigmatization, denial and discrimination. The office has carried out programmes in conjunction with UNICEF, the national HIV/AIDS control programme and the Foundation for International Dignity. It also assisted the Government in developing its second HIV/AIDS national strategic plan, for the period from 2004 to 2007.

VIII. Personnel conduct and discipline

57. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/306 of 15 April 2003, the Conduct and Discipline Team, which was set up in UNMIL in October 2005, continued to focus its efforts on maintaining data on investigations into sexual exploitation and abuse, as well as related offences by humanitarian and peacekeeping personnel; recording all relevant action taken thereon; disseminating United Nations policies, procedures and guidelines throughout the Mission area; and assisting with the development of strategies to prevent, identify, report and respond effectively to all categories of misconduct through training and awareness-raising. The Team also maintains a 24-hour telephone hotline, which was set up to receive reports related to misconduct by UNMIL personnel.

58. In collaboration with relevant UNMIL components, the Team is setting up a sexual assault and rape rapid response team to assist victims of assault. In addition, it is developing a comprehensive database aimed at facilitating the systematic monitoring and reporting of misconduct cases. In the meantime, the Team has initiated a training programme in collaboration with the United Nations country team and the Mission's integrated training cell in an effort to standardize training on the implementation of United Nations standards for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for all categories of United Nations personnel.

59. Following the publication of the report entitled "From Camp to Community: Liberia Study on Exploitation of Children" by Save the Children UK on 8 May, UNMIL took the opportunity to reiterate the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations on sexual exploitation and abuse to all UNMIL personnel. The report contains no specific cases but alleges that sexual exploitation by peacekeepers, international and national humanitarian workers and civil servants has continued in

Liberia. In response to the report, UNMIL reviewed the effectiveness of the various measures that it has in place to prevent and sanction sexual exploitation and abuse. My Special Representative also met with President Johnson-Sirleaf to discuss the contents of the Save the Children UK report. It was subsequently agreed that the Government and the United Nations would spearhead a national awareness-raising and prevention campaign.

60. In 2005, 45 cases related to sexual exploitation and abuse involving UNMIL personnel were investigated and, so far this year, a total of 18 cases have been or are being investigated.

IX. Public information

61. Apart from previously reported activities, the public information component supported other priority programmes of the Mission and United Nations agencies, including nationwide awareness campaigns on Lassa fever, avian flu, the return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin and the Rape Amendment Act. The Mission's radio station increased its programming on the activities of the Government with the introduction of a new programme called "Capitol Report", which covers the activities of the three branches of Government, and "Girl Power", an educational magazine for young women. In addition, the public information component participated in a consultative meeting of stakeholders to finalize bills on freedom of information and on establishing an independent media commission. It also facilitated a round-table discussion on the performance of the media during the 2005 elections.

X. Recommendations for the drawdown of the Mission

A. Military component

62. As at 1 June, UNMIL troop strength stood at 14,794 (see annex). In my last report (S/2006/159), I indicated that it would be appropriate to adjust the Mission's military component by withdrawing one infantry battalion in mid-2006 and another infantry battalion early in 2007. I also indicated that the troop strength of UNMIL would be reduced by 250 by 31 March, in order to bring it within the troop strength of 15,000, in keeping with Security Council resolution 1626 (2005) of 19 September 2005. In addition, I proposed that further adjustments would continue to be considered as the situation permits, without compromising the security of Liberia or the effectiveness of United Nations operations in the country.

63. Accordingly, based on the planned rotations, incoming troops from the Namibian contingent were reduced by 250 personnel in March. Moreover, given the relative stability that has prevailed since the inauguration of the new Government and based on the detailed assessment already provided in my last report, which remains valid, the first battalion referred to above will be withdrawn during the latter part of 2006, subject to the continued stability of the security situation in the country. The details of the adjustment will be provided in my next report. As proposed in my March 2006 report, further adjustments, including the withdrawal of a second infantry battalion early in 2007, will be considered as the situation permits, without compromising the security of Liberia.

64. The infantry company from the Nigerian contingent, which was temporarily redeployed to Côte d'Ivoire on 16 February in compliance with Security Council resolution 1657 (2006), returned to UNMIL on 6 May. Given the volatile security situation in western Côte d'Ivoire, UNMIL has strengthened its troop deployment in the eastern part of Liberia and its Quick Reaction Force is conducting long-range patrols utilizing air, sea and land assets. In addition, the Mission has deployed troops to Webo, a strategic crossing point into Côte d'Ivoire. Border patrols have also been intensified to effectively monitor cross-border activities, including the possible movement of natural resources into Guinea and Sierra Leone.

65. The Mission continues to provide security support to the Special Court for Sierra Leone in accordance with Security Council resolution 1626 (2005). Given the high-profile nature of the detainees at the Special Court, security protection at the Court's premises remains a top priority. The 250-strong military unit from Mongolia is responsible for guarding the Special Court compound, providing convoy protection for detainees when they are moved outside the compound and, should it become necessary, assisting with the evacuation of Special Court officials and detainees to a safe location supported by the UNMIL Quick Reaction Force. The guard force is well equipped and receives some logistical support from the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone.

B. Police component

66. As at 1 June, the Mission's police strength stood at 1,051 out of an authorized ceiling of 1,115, including 4 United Nations police immigration officers, 480 officers in four formed police units and 18 corrections officers. The newly arrived United Nations police immigration officers have been deployed to the Liberian Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization headquarters and to Roberts International Airport to assist with the security sector restructuring exercise. As priorities have shifted to institutional capacity-building and operations support, the Mission is now placing emphasis on recruiting specialist United Nations police personnel in areas such as administration, police budgeting, forensics and Interpol operations.

67. In view of the ongoing police reform and restructuring programme and the critical role played by UNMIL formed police units in supporting the efforts of the Liberian National Police to address the recurrent violent demonstrations, the prevailing situation does not permit a drawdown of the Missions' police component at this stage. However, the strength of the police component will continue to be reviewed as the reform and training programme progresses and further recommendations will be provided in my future reports as appropriate.

68. In the meantime, the deployment of an additional formed police unit, as recommended in my March report, would greatly enhance the capacity of UNMIL to respond effectively and promptly to situations of public unrest that could arise from the various retrenchment exercises currently under way, as well as the Government reform initiatives, the increase in localized criminal activities and the planned reduction in the military component later in the year. It would also provide an opportunity for the Liberian Police Support Unit to acquire the practical experience it requires to eventually take over those responsibilities from UNMIL.

XI. Benchmarks

69. In implementing the adjustments and drawdown of UNMIL proposed in paragraph 63, the paramount consideration will be to avoid the creation of a security vacuum in the country, which would place the progress made in stabilizing the country at risk. Consequently, progress in reforming and restructuring the Liberian National Police and the Armed Forces of Liberia, as well as other security agencies, will constitute the key security benchmark that should determine the pace of the drawdown process.

70. Other broad benchmarks include completing the reintegration of former combatants, facilitating political and ethnic reconciliation, consolidating State authority throughout the country and restoring effective Government control over the country's natural and mineral resources. The Mission's responsibilities regarding the security protection of the Special Court for Sierra Leone; the prevailing regional security conditions and socio-economic indicators of progress, including the provision of quick and effective deliverables; and the establishment of a long-term recovery programme will also need to be taken into account in conjunction with the above benchmarks in determining how the drawdown could be effected. A more detailed elaboration of these benchmarks will be provided in my subsequent reports to the Council.

XII. Observations

71. The progress made in the short time since the Government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf assumed office is very encouraging. The resettlement of internally displaced persons has been completed, more Liberian refugees are returning home, implementation of the Governance and Economic Assistance Programme is making progress, measures to fight corruption are already yielding increased, albeit still small revenues for the State, efforts to meet the goals set out in the Government's 150-day action plan are ongoing and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun its work. In addition, the bold decision concerning the transfer of Charles Taylor to the Special Court for Sierra Leone was a significant development, which sent a strong message to other warlords in the region.

72. The country's relative stability has allowed increased freedom of movement, facilitated the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and aided the gradual resurgence of economic activity. It has also permitted the Government to concentrate on its national reform agenda. However, there is a continuing need to carefully manage the internal threats to stability in the country. The serious disturbances created by former personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia on 25 April, and by residents of Nimba County on 17 May, underline the fragility of peace in the country. The relative stability continues to be overwhelmingly anchored on the presence of UNMIL, as Liberia does not yet have its own army and the new police force is still in the formative stages. The continued presence of UNMIL, therefore, will remain indispensable to the consolidation of peace in the country. I would like to reiterate my strong recommendation for the deployment of an additional formed police unit for the reasons outlined in paragraph 68.

73. The reintegration of ex-combatants is a critical component of the peace process that must be completed as soon as possible. In order to ensure peace and

stability in Liberia and in the wider subregion, these former combatants must be fully reintegrated and given the opportunity of viable employment. At the same time, there is also an urgent need to provide youth and the unskilled labour force with employment opportunities in the short to medium term. Pending the development of viable long-term national programmes, public works programmes will be needed to address this pressing issue. Such programmes can have an immediate and productive impact, especially when used to rehabilitate infrastructure and roads, as well as for agricultural projects. I therefore strongly encourage donors to generously assist in the creation of public works programmes.

74. It is extremely satisfying to note that thousands of Liberians who were displaced by the war are returning home to rebuild their communities. However, the precarious social situation in many areas of the country, some of which are only now becoming easily accessible to humanitarian agencies, remains a matter of concern. I therefore encourage donors to maintain their support for humanitarian action in areas where people are returning and to generously support the 2006 Consolidated Appeal for Liberia.

75. The steps taken by the Government to reform the judiciary and enhance the rule of law are encouraging. However, much more needs to be done to address the long-standing structural challenges facing the justice sector in the country. This will require a comprehensive approach and far-reaching reforms, including a major overhaul of the corrections system, which should be carried out as a matter of urgency to alleviate unnecessary suffering of prisoners.

76. Although the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has begun, it remains a source of concern that it is still not adequately funded. The Commission will need urgent financial assistance to perform its work effectively and within the stipulated time frame. While appealing for donor support I also urge the Government of Liberia to provide the funds that it has pledged to the Commission.

77. The friction that emerged between the legislative and executive branches of Government remains a source of concern. The tension between these two branches must not be allowed to disrupt the stability and progress achieved to date. While respecting the separation of powers, the three branches of Government must work together to ensure that good governance is maintained in the country. Liberia has gone through much turbulence and the people of Liberia deserve peace, stability and security to rebuild their lives. I appeal therefore to the leadership of all three branches of Government to constructively engage with each other for the betterment of Liberia and its people.

78. The situation in the subregion, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, remains fragile. Without stability in that country it will be difficult to safeguard the achievements in Liberia. It is therefore important for the international community to support the promising dialogue that has recently been opened among the conflicting parties and encourage them to sustain the momentum. I commend ECOWAS and the African Union for their initiatives and encourage them to continue resolutely to support the process of dialogue.

79. During this period of national recovery, peace consolidation and reconciliation, non-governmental organizations will continue to play a key role, in collaboration with the Government, the donors and United Nations agencies, in providing a very broad range of essential services. National non-governmental

organizations have served as important knowledge brokers, bringing with them local know-how and institutional memory, while international non-governmental organizations bring expertise and experience in areas such as the return and protection of vulnerable populations, ex-combatant training programmes and infrastructure rehabilitation projects. It is hoped that in the coming months, non-governmental organizations and donors will join us in refocusing attention on community-based recovery efforts, especially in those areas where significant numbers of returnees are placing additional strain on already limited resources.

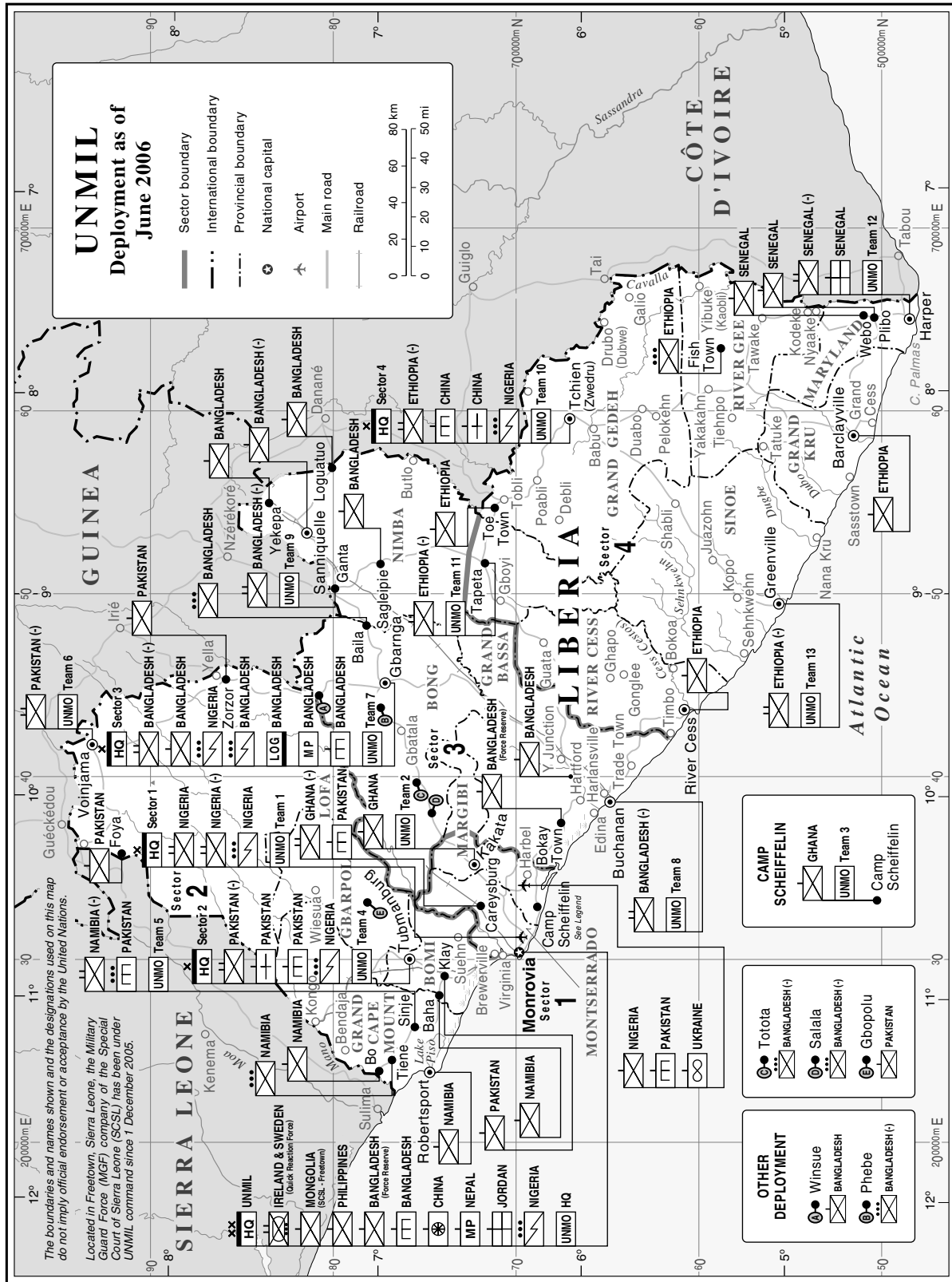
80. In conclusion, I would like to commend the people and Government of Liberia, my Special Representative and all UNMIL military and civilian personnel for the progress accomplished during the reporting period. I would also like to thank all troop- and police-contributing countries, ECOWAS, the African Union, the International Contact Group on the Mano River Basin, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, humanitarian organizations, multilateral and bilateral donors and international and local non-governmental organizations for their unwavering support for the peace process in Liberia.

Annex

United Nations Mission in Liberia: military and civilian police strength as at 1 June 2006

Country	Military			Total	Police
	Military observers	Staff officers	Troops		Civilian police
Argentina					
Bangladesh	17	11	3 188	3 216	19
Benin	4			4	
Bolivia	3	1		4	
Bosnia and Herzegovina					19
Brazil		1		1	
Bulgaria	1			1	
China	5	8	558	571	25
Croatia	3	3		6	
Czech Republic	3			3	5
Denmark	2			2	
Ecuador	3	1		4	
El Salvador	3			3	2
Ethiopia	16	8	2 548	2 572	
Egypt	8			8	
Fiji					
Finland		2		2	
France		1		1	
Gambia	5			5	30
Germany			11	11	5
Ghana	12	6	849	867	40
Indonesia	3			3	
Ireland		3	328	331	
Jamaica					12
Jordan	7	8	118	133	140
Kenya	3	4		7	27
Kyrgyzstan	4			4	3
Malawi		2		2	18
Mali	4	1		5	
Mongolia		2	248	250	
Malaysia	6	0		6	
Namibia	3	4	609	616	6
Nepal	3	2	40	45	256
Niger	3			3	

<i>Country</i>	<i>Military</i>			<i>Total</i>	<i>Police</i>
	<i>Military observers</i>	<i>Staff officers</i>	<i>Troops</i>		<i>Civilian police</i>
Nigeria	14	10	1 949	1 973	166
Norway					10
Pakistan	16	10	2 737	2 763	22
Paraguay	3	1		4	
Peru	3	2		5	
Philippines	3	5	164	172	29
Poland	2			2	3
Republic of Korea	1	1		2	
Republic of Moldova	3	1		4	
Romania	3			3	
Russian Federation	6			6	16
Rwanda					15
Samoa					17
Senegal	3	3	596	602	
Serbia and Montenegro	6			6	4
Sri Lanka					11
Sweden		3	233	236	12
Togo	2	1		3	
Turkey					27
Uganda					21
Ukraine	3	1	305	309	7
United Kingdom		3		3	
United States of America	7	5		12	26
Yemen					4
Zambia	3			3	27
Zimbabwe					27
Total	199	114	14 481	14 794	1 051



Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

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