

**SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE
OUTREACH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**



Special Court Judges at Plenary in Freetown

PRESS CLIPPINGS

Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Outreach and Public Affairs Office

as at:

Wednesday, 20 May 2009

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact
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Yenga Chiefs

By John Mansaray

Chiefs of the disputed land of Yenga in the Kailahun District, east of the country, led by Regent Chief of Kissi Teng Chiefdom, Fallah Jusu, on Monday 18 May 2009 held discussions on Yenga with Members of the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Defence at the Parliamentary Lounge, Tower Hill in Freetown.

Chairman of the Defence Committee, Hon. Retired Captain Abdurrahman Kamara (APC) thanked the visiting chiefs for sparing their valuable time to brainstorm with them on the topical issue of Yenga and encouraged them to feel at home as they are representing them in

Chat With Defence Committee

parliament.

Hon. Kamara also highlighted plans by the Oversight Committee to visit and tour Yenga at a yet to be announced

date so as to get first hand information on the status of the disputed territory and its inhabitants that would put them

Contd. Page 3

Yenga Chiefs Chat With Defence Committee

From page 1

in a good stead to come up with a comprehensive report to be presented to the executive arm of government that would ensure that Yenga is returned to Sierra Leone. Hon. Dauda Dumbuya (APC) reminded the chiefs that the Yenga issue is a priority to gov-

ernment maintaining that the meeting is the beginning of better understanding and acquaintance between the two parties.

Hon. Musa Jina (SLPP), who hails from Kailahun District, in his contribution, also thanked the visiting delegation and assured

them of government's determination to redeem the people of Yenga.

Hon. Charles Kalawa, also of the APC, highlighted that Yenga is a very important issue that needs the collaboration of all stakeholders in an effort to regain the land as it is important for the consolidation of peace

and democracy in the country.

Regent Chief of Kissi Teng, who doubles as Section Chief, Fallah Jusu, in his response, expressed appreciation to the Defence Committee members for honouring them and intimated that the issue of Yenga is disheartening

to talk about due to the sufferings Sierra Leoneans are subjected to by Guinean soldiers illegally occupying the land.

He recalled the history of Yenga dating back to 1912 and asserted that he would never be satisfied until Yenga is freed and expressed delight that the Parliamentary Committee on Defence is visiting the area to au fait themselves with the current status of the area.

Chief Brima Kendor articulated that Koindu mar-

ket, which falls under Yenga, was the bread basket for revenue collection for government but lamented that since the illegal occupation of Yenga by Guinean soldiers, all economic activities have ceased as the community is subjected to harassment and intimidation, the reason why the visit of the MPs cannot be overemphasized as it would give them the chance to witness at first hand how their compatriots are abused in their own homeland.

Standard Times Online

Friday, 15 May 2009

Death Row Women In Sierra Leone Not Pardoned On Independence Day

Despite an active campaign led by the local NGO, AdvocAid, to seek pardons for 3 women currently on death row at Pademba Road Prison, Freetown, the group today announced its disappointment at the President's failure to grant any pardons to prisoners as part of the Independence Day concessions.

AdvocAid advised that it had written to the President at the start of April explaining the compelling legal and humanitarian reasons why the 3 women should be granted a pardon. But for the second year in succession the President has not pardoned any prisoners, not just those on death row. It is not clear why the President chose not to exercise this constitutional power.

Nevertheless, AdvocAid welcomes the President's Independence Day pledge to fight injustice against women. The President stated that he and his government "are resolute in fighting injustice particularly against women and we have demonstrated affirmative action by appointing a woman as Chief Justice."

In addition to the President's pledge, there are other reasons to be optimistic. The President's constitutional power to pardon prisoners may be exercised at any time of the year and is not restricted to Independence Day. Condemned prisoners are also not without rights. AdvocAid highlights that Commonwealth cases have determined that condemned prisoners have specific rights regarding requests for pardons and mercy, including rights of access to documents, and rights to make representations to the Mercy Committee. AdvocAid hope that the Government will follow these important due process rights as a demonstration of its Independence Day commitment to justice.

"We will keep fighting for justice for the 3 women", Leigh Lawrie, one of the AdvocAid directors stated. "These women were convicted having received very little legal assistance. There are strong grounds why they should be pardoned. We, therefore, ask the President, as Father of the Nation and Fountain Head of Justice, to review these women's cases and use his constitutional power to grant them a pardon on any one of the remaining days of the year."

AdvocAid, a registered NGO in Sierra Leone, provides legal assistance to women in Pademba Road Prison, Freetown, Sierra Leone. It has four female directors who are legally trained. The AdvocAid project actively collaborates with Sierra Leonean NGOs, such as the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programmes, and Defence for Children. AdvocAid also regularly collaborates with individual lawyers who are willing to provide advice and/or representation to female inmates. AdvocAid can be contacted via email to Advocaid@gmail.com.

Cotton Tree News

Monday, 18 May 2009

Hard Time for Women and Juveniles in Sierra Leone Prisons

Written by Aruna Augustine Kamara

Prisons Watch Sierra Leone has launched a report on the status of women and juveniles in detention nationwide. The report contains findings on monitoring visits to prisons, police cells, approved schools and remand homes. Mambu Feika, National Coordinator of Prisons Watch Sierra Leone said the status of women and juveniles in detention in the country was appalling.

Mr. Feika said Prisons Watch Sierra Leone took exemption to such a situation and the procedures in handling juveniles in conflict with the law. He said the report also found out that there was delay in trials for people in prison on remand.

The report recommended, among other things, that government should adopt other forms of punishment for lactating mothers and pregnant women. It said government should ensure immediate investigation of cases and the speedy trials of all persons on remand and awaiting trails.

The report also recommended that Justices of the Peace must be trained to handle cases and prison officers to properly compute jail terms of prisoners.

Cocorioko

Wednesday, 20 May 2009

Delegation of Liberia war crimes advocates to meet President Obama in Ghana

Written by Cocorioko Newspaper Limited

As the group sought to draw the President's attention to justice in Liberia, it threw light on article 26g of the Act creating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, which, under the signature of its Chairman, submitted preliminary recommendations to the National Legislature for the creation of a Special Court to prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

THE ANTI-WAR ADVOCACY WING OF THE PROGRESSIVE ACTION FOR CHANGE

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A Delegation of War Crimes Court Advocates to Meet President Obama in Accra-Ghana on July 11, 2009...

Liberia's leading anti-impunity group, the Movement Forum for the Establishment of a war Crimes Court in Liberia, will travel to Accra-Ghana to meet with U.S President Barack Obama who pays a two-day visit to that sisterly country on July 10-11, 2009.

According to the non-governmental advocacy institution, a dispatch from the White House has confirmed the visit of the U.S President along with his wife, who will briefly meet with the Liberian group.

A delegation of the Liberia-based organization, headed by its National Chairman, Mr. Mulbah K. Morlu, will leave Liberia for Accra on 8th July 2009. Whilst in Ghana, the war crimes court group says it looks forward to meeting hierarchies of the Ghanaian government, and will encourage the administration of President John Atta -Mills to strongly support the establishment of a special court to prosecute all warlords bearing the greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and violation of international humanitarian law in Liberia.

The group, which has been vehemently campaigning to ensure justice for war victims, has revealed that the arrangement to meet the U.S President in Ghana was concluded as a result of its 27th January 2009 letter to Mr. Obama, in which critical national issues were raised. In that communication, the pro-democracy organization "drew Mr. Obama's attention to the need for "The arc of the moral universe" to bend towards justice in Liberia due to the widespread commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and violation of international humanitarian law, the aftermath of a 14-year senseless civil war led by Mr. Charles Taylor, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Professor Alhaji G.V. Kromah, and others."

As the group sought to draw the President's attention to justice in Liberia, it threw light on article 26g of the Act creating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, which, under the signature of its Chairman, submitted preliminary recommendations to the National Legislature for the creation of a Special Court to prosecute those bearing the greatest responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In a separate context, the unrelenting advocacy group said the reluctance of the Liberian government to endorse the TRC's recommendation, which has binding effects, has been complicated further by the reluctance of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to constitute and make functional, the Independent National

Commission on Human Rights; the group continued, “Though the Act setting up the Independent National Commission on Human Rights came into force in 2005, the Commission is not operating due to continued Government reluctance in appointing its commissioners. Of much disappointment, we assume that the President’s reluctance to set up this very vital organ of reconciliation and justice may be due to her well-documented alleged partnership with Charles Taylor in destabilizing Liberia.”

In conclusion the group warned that “This reluctance and the President’s decision to amend the prosecutorial powers of the Commission is intolerable and a serious national security risk. If this action is not prevented, the intents and purposes of the TRC shall be jeopardized because; Under Article X, REPORTING AND RECOMMENDATIONS, Section 46. “The Independent National Commission on Human Rights shall be seized with the responsibility to ensure that all the recommendations contained in the Report of the TRC are implemented and that civil society organizations and moral guarantors of the CPA shall have the responsibility to monitor, and campaign for the scrupulous implementation of all recommendations contained in the report...all recommendations shall be implemented.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights group has announced that upon meeting President Obama, it will highlight crucial national security and priority political issues. It hopes to have enough time with the President to discuss the following national priorities:

- the immediate formation of a special court in Liberia, consistent with the TRC’s recommendation; • high-level corruption in government, which could set the basis for conflict in Liberia and undermine peace in the sub-region;
- the illegal ‘Assets freeze’ approach, a selective method to fighting corruption, and;
- the reconstitution of the National Elections Commission, a way to a successful 2011 election, etc.
- The uncompromising local advocacy organization has revealed its plans to hold a GRAND DEMONSTRATION in Liberia after meeting with the U.S President on July 11th.

Political analysts around the country view the coming meeting as pivotal in the fight against impunity, especially when the Chairman of the war crimes court group, Mr. Mulbah K. Morlu, was also Chairman of the Obama for President Campaign in Liberia. In closing, the campaign group disclosed its regrets over the wait-and-see approach President Obama is taking on Liberia and the government of Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf.

The group believes the U.S President’s decision to visit Ghana, and not Liberia, its step-child, clearly indicates that spiraling corruption in government, warlords in power, et cetera, are undeniable challenges that need to be urgently tackled.

On behalf of the campaign group, the statement was signed by Mulbah K. Morlu, jr., National Chairman.

Voice of America

Wednesday, 20 May 2009

Liberian Calls on Visiting UN Delegation to End Travel Ban

By James Butty

The 15-member U.N. Security Council delegation which has been touring several African countries has arrived in Liberia, the final leg of its four-nation tour. It will hold talks Wednesday with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on the progress of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Liberia.

The delegation is also likely to hear from former officials and family members of former President Charles Taylor who are under a U.N.-imposed travel ban and assets freeze order.

The Security Council first mandated the restrictions in 2001 against Taylor and his government for his role in the Sierra Leone civil war. Since then, the travel ban list has been updated several times to prevent former Taylor officials and family members from using allegedly misappropriated funds to interfere with the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia.

Benoni Urey, former commissioner of maritime affairs in the Taylor government and one of those who is under the travel ban and assets freeze said the U.N. has wrongly persecuted him and other former Taylor government officials.

“For almost nine years we have been placed on a travel ban and assets freeze. We served a sentence of nine years for a crime we know we had not committed. I served my country diligently for six years. I’m I been persecuted because I served my country with distinction?” he said.

Urey said he and the others affected by the travel ban and assets freeze are not bitter against the United Nations, but that are hoping the U.N. would use reasoning in dealing with the matter.

“We’re happy that the U.N. Security Council is here and that they may interview and listen to the call of the Liberian people because I can say overwhelmingly there’s 98 percent of the Liberian people who did not comprehend why is there a travel ban on some of the most productive people this country has produced,” Urey said.

One of the reasons the Security Council imposed the travel ban and assets freeze was to prevent former Taylor officials and family members from using alleged misappropriated funds to interfere with the restoration of peace and stability in Liberia.

Urey denied he ever embezzled any funds as official in the government of former President Charles Taylor.

“First of all, did anybody ever report any money missing? Never! I speak on behalf of myself. Since I left maritime I’ve been audited six times, and pray tell me if monies were missing, six audits won’t find it? The U.N. is not stationed in Liberia; that’s why we harbor no malice against them. It’s our own brethren that had to lie and misinform these people,” he said.

One of the allegations that some have made against Urey is that as maritime commissioner, he was responsible for the purchase of helicopters which the Taylor government used to allegedly commit war crimes.

Urey denied the helicopters were ever used to commit crimes. Instead he said they were used to transport wounded people and the police.

“I did not purchase a helicopter for Mr. Taylor. I was commissioner of maritime affairs; I got instructions from the president of the Republic of Liberia Charles Ghankay Taylor through the ministry of finance to instruct the agent of Liberia LISCR (Liberia International Ship Registry) to pay \$649,000 to a company for the purchase of two helicopters. These helicopters were never military helicopters; these helicopters were used to bring wounded people, to transport the police and SSS (Special Security Service) all over the country,” he said.

Urey said he did not purchase the helicopters directly and wondered why the agents of the Liberian International Ship Registry who purchased the helicopters are not the ones on the U.N. assets freeze and travel ban.

He said President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf had asked the U.N. to end the travel ban because it does not add to her efforts to reconcile the country after 14 years of civil war.

“The President of the republic of Liberia has gone a long way in trying to reconcile the country. She has asked that this whole thing about travel ban and assets freeze be dropped because she feels that it doesn’t go anywhere in reconciling the differences in the country. In addition, she has said that as far as she is concerned, we do not pose any security threat to this nation and the sub-region,” Urey said.

Urey said he not a threat to the security of country because he has more invested in the country than most Liberians.

“If anything that I want, I want stability, I want security and I want my people to be united that we can all more this country forward,” Urey said.

UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 19 May 2009

[The media summaries and press clips do not necessarily represent the views of UNMIL.]

International Clips on Liberia

Cause Canada on Peace Building Project

Ben Samuel Turay

Concord Times, May 19, 2009 (Concord Times/All Africa Global Media via COMTEX) -- Cause Canada in collaboration with civil society organizations in Sierra Leone has commenced a two-day clinic on peace building for Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory-coast.

Cause peace building coordinator, Daniel N'bompa-Turay told participants at the Archdiocesan Pastoral center in Freetown that the aim of the workshop was to bring the three countries together to strengthen gender issues, empower women and youths in peace building process.

He said the clinic will also look at educating people about human rights issues and bring both civil society organizations and the government to work as one.

"It is important to discuss about peace building. We want peace in of West Africa," he said. He added that both Liberia and Sierra Leone have experienced brutal civil war and that it was important for the two countries to build on their peace process.

International Clips on West Africa

Mediator sees chance of Ivory Coast "turning point"

OUAGADOUGOU, May 18 (Reuters) - The African leader seeking to broker an end to Ivory Coast's six-year political gridlock hailed a new Nov. 29 election date on Monday as a real chance for the world's top cocoa grower to emerge from the stalemate.

Last week's announcement of the date met with skepticism by analysts who warned it could slip like others before it, citing what they see a lack of political will by incumbent Ivorian leaders benefiting from the political uncertainty.

But Burkina Faso's President Blaise Compaore said before a new round of mediation talks that President Laurent Gbagbo's government was committed to holding a poll aimed at reuniting a country whose north has been in the hands of rebels since a 2002-03 civil war.

Local Media – Newspaper

UN Security Council Delegation Visits Liberia – Travel Ban victims beg to be heard

(New Democrat, The Analyst, The Monitor, Heritage, the Informer and The Inquirer newspapers)

- A United Nations Security Council delegation is due to visit Liberia on Tuesday on the last stop of an eight-day, four-nation trip to Africa.
- Ambassadors and diplomats from the 15 council nations - the United States of America, France, Uganda, the United Kingdom, Russia, the People's Republic of China, Austria, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Turkey and Vietnam - are due to meet with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Cabinet Ministers, the leadership of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), senior members of the UN country team, and the International Contact Group on Liberia.
- The media expects that the delegation, led by US Ambassador Susan Rice, would reaffirm the Council's support to President Sirleaf's efforts to rebuild the country after back-to-back civil wars.

- Accordingly, the Council will also assess the UN Mission in Liberia, whose mandate expires in September, to determine whether it should be further renewed. The delegation will also assess the operational capacity and sustainability of the Liberia National Police and other security institutions.
- In another twist, a number of Liberians affected by the UN Security Council travel restrictions continued to accuse the government of being insensitive to their plight, urging the visiting UN Security Council delegation to accord them an opportunity to be heard.
- Most of the affected Liberians accused the Council of being selective in removing names from the travel ban list.
- It is widely believed in Liberia that the issue of removal was a key instrument for garnering votes in the heat of the 2005 Presidential campaign. A major Liberian online news magazine suspects that 'promises were made by some political players that they would advocate on behalf of those restricted from travel and whose assets have been frozen.'
- Recently, Jewel Howard Taylor, wife of former President Charles Taylor lamented that a promise made by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf regarding the turnover of her husband to the war crimes court for trial was not fulfilled, a pledge President Sirleaf denies in her memoir which was released a short while ago.

Suspended LTA Chairman Faces Probe

(Heritage, The News, Daily Observer)

- The suspended Chairman Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA), Albert Bropleh will submit himself for investigation based on recent audit reports. The rest of the LTA commissioners have complied with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's request to resign their posts.

Man Arrested over US\$1M Scam

(The News, Heritage, The Inquirer, Daily Observer)

- A middle-aged man identified as 'E. Jee Sirleaf', who coned the Government to cart away US\$1 million under the guise of acting on behalf of the President, is currently undergoing investigation for his alleged involvement in fraudulent acts at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL).

Corrections Officer Justifies Jailbreaks

(The Monitor)

- [Sic:] An official of the Corrections and Rehabilitation at the Ministry of Justice has attributed the wave of jailbreaks in the country to neglect of the correction system by the Liberian Government. 'Correction officers in the country are still operating in primitive days, we walk with prisoners from various detention or prison centers to court; there are no vehicles for corrections officers,' said Victoria Freeman.

Local Media – Star Radio (News monitored today at 09:00 am)

High-Power UN Security Council Delegation in Monrovia for Assessment

(Also reported on Sky F.M., and ELBC)

US Ambassador Renews Commitment to Assist in Liberia's Recovery

- In an interview, U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas Greenfield expressed her government's re-newed commitment to supporting Liberia in its recovery programme.
- Ambassador Greenfield said the U.S. was interested in investing in all sectors of the country but said her Government was particularly interested in infrastructure development, security, health and education.
- Meanwhile, the U.S. Ambassador to Liberia has administered the oath of service to six additional Peace Corps volunteers in Monrovia.
- She said the Peace Corps volunteers programme represent a viable and visible symbol of America's contribution to efforts of world peace.

(Also reported on Sky F.M., and ELBC)

Former President Pro-temp Differs on Proposal to Cut Salaries of Senior Public Officials

- Former President Pro-tempore of the Liberian Senate, Isaac Nyenabo says salaries of certain Government officials cannot be reduced unless constitutional amendments are made.

- According to him, the constitution protects the salaries of the President, Vice President, Chief Justice and the Supreme Court Justices.
- Senator Nyenabo said it was totally wrong for a lawmaker to propose salary deductions for certain government officials.
- His statement was in reaction to a proposal by Montserrado Representative Rufus Neufville for a reduction in the salaries of top government officials.
- Representative Neufville proposed the reduction to ensure that the salaries of civil servants are increased to a minimum of US\$150.

Supreme Court Summons Central Bank Governor in Connection with Controversial US\$508,200

- Chambers Justice Francis Kporpor has cited the Central Bank Governor, Mills Jones to a conference in connection with the "controversial" half a million dollars seized from a Nigeria in 2006 and used by Government.
- Justice Minister, Philip Banks and lawyers representing the Nigerian will also attend the conference scheduled for Wednesday.
- The conference is in line with the recent rate of mandamus filed against Justice Minter Banks and CBL Governor Dr. Mills Jones.
- The government's spending of the over US\$500,000 on National Security sparked the petition from a local human rights lawyer.



UNMIL Public Information

Media Monitoring & Development Unit

Daily Media Report

Tuesday, 19 May 2009

Security:

New Democrat, The Monitor, The Analyst, Heritage, The News, Daily Observer

High-Power UN Security Council Delegation in Monrovia for Assessment

The media reports that a high power United Nations Security Council delegation has arrived in the country. The delegation headed by U.S. Permanent Representative to the UN, Susan Rice will today hold talks with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. According to the Executive Mansion the talks will focus on the progress of the U.N. Peacekeeping Mission's operations in Liberia. The delegation will also assess the operational capacity and sustainability of the Liberia National Police and other security institution. The delegation consists of ten Permanent Representatives and five Deputy Permanent Representatives or senior officers of member states on the Security Council. In another twist, a number of Liberians affected by the UN Security Council travel restrictions continued to accuse the government of being insensitive to their plight, urging the visiting UN Security Council delegation to accord them an opportunity to be heard. Most of the affected Liberians accused the Council of being selective in removing names from the travel ban list.

National Chronicle, The News, Daily Observer, Heritage

Suspended LTA Chairman Faces Probe...As Other Commissioners Tender Their Resignation

The Daily Observer and Heritage newspapers report that all the commissioners of the Liberia Telecommunications Authority (LTA) have complied with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's request to resign their posts. The News quoting Presidential Press Secretary, Cyrus Badio said the suspended LTA Chairman Albert Bropleh will submit himself for investigation based on recent audit reports. Mr. Badio said if it is established that Mr. Bropleh is guilty as is contained in a General Auditing Commission (GAC) audit he will be prosecuted in keeping with the law. Meanwhile, the media reports that the resignation of the LTA Commissioners will afford the President the opportunity to reconstitute the board of commissioners of the entity.

The Monitor

Corrections Officer Justifies Jailbreaks

[Sic:] An official of the Corrections and Rehabilitation at the Ministry of Justice has attributed the wave of jailbreaks in the country to neglect of the correction system by the Liberian Government. 'Correction officers in the country are still operating in primitive days, we walk with prisoners from various detention or prison centers to court; there are no vehicles for corrections officers,' said Victoria Freeman.

Governance & Rule of Law:

Daily Observer, The Inquirer, The News, New Democrat, Heritage

US\$1M Con Man Arrested

A middle-aged man identified as 'E. Jee Sirleaf', who coned the Government to cart away US\$1 million under the guise of acting on behalf of the President, is currently undergoing investigation for his alleged involvement in fraudulent acts at the Central Bank of Liberia (CBL). He was caught using the name of the President to transfer more than one million United States dollars into an Ecobank account that he has earlier opened with US\$10. The con man was apprehended at the Central Bank while attempting to withdraw US\$800,000 from the accounts of the Liberia Petroleum Refinery Company at the CBL.

Infrastructure & Basic Social Services:

The Informer

US Ambassador Renews Commitment to Assist in Liberia's Recovery

In an interview, U.S. Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas Greenfield expressed her government's re-new commitment to supporting Liberia in its recovery programme. Ambassador Greenfield said the U.S. was interested in investing in all sectors of the country but said her Government was particularly interested in infrastructure development, security, health and education. Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador to Liberia has administered the oath of service to six additional Peace Corps volunteers in Monrovia. She said the Peace Corps volunteers programme represent a viable and visible symbol of America's contribution to world peace efforts.

The Informer (Liberia)

Monday, 18 May 2009

Liberia: UN Envoy Hails Critical Role of Unmil

UN Envoy Ellen Margrethe Løj, has assured Liberians that the UN Mission in Liberia - UNMIL - and other partners in the UN System would continue to work harder to enable Liberia to regain its place in the community of nations - a place where peace, security, freedom and prosperity reign. Ms. Løj made this statement when she awarded 115 Jordanian military medical corps serving UNMIL with UN peacekeeping medals for their contribution to the peace and stability of Liberia.

Noting the progress made and mindful of the challenges that remain, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) said: "We have to continue to work with the Liberian security forces to ensure that they are strengthened to deal with both internal and external security threats". UN Envoy Løj expressed confidence that with perseverance and determination, "the peace and stability we have achieved over the years will be sustained, and Liberia can move ahead in its recovery, rehabilitation and development drive".

The SRSG commended the Jordanian medical contingent for their efforts, dedication and sacrifice aimed at ensuring that UNMIL peacekeepers are fit to support and maintain the hard-won peace and security in Liberia. She described their role as critical and indispensable, adding, "although the nature of the Jordanian medical team entails operating behind the scenes and out of the limelight, we cannot overemphasize the critical and indispensable role you continue to play to support UNMIL". Ms. Løj paid tribute to the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan on behalf of the UN Secretary-General and recounted the long standing and substantial contributions made by Jordan to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Reminding the Jordanians of the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), the SRSG emphasized: "Sexual Exploitation and Abuse should never, and must never be accepted among us; we must work individually and collectively to guard against it". She pointed out that the United Nations is in Liberia to assist the Government and the people to move on from the years of trauma, fear and pain into a new era of peace, security and development. "Peacekeepers must, therefore, perform their duties with the utmost respect for the people and communities they serve," Ms. Løj concluded.

The Commander of the Jordanian Contingent, Col. Abduljaleel al-Shawabkah said that Jordan's contribution to peacekeeping missions is a direct implementation of the vision of His Majesty King Abdullah II, who has, time after time and in every international forum emphasized the principles of world peace and the right of welfare as a basic right for all nations.

Relevant Links

The 115 officers of the Jordanian medical team honoured are based at UNMIL Level III Hospital located in Monrovia and provide around-the-clock medical treatment and services to military and civilian peacekeepers in UNMIL. To date, there are a total of 370 Jordanians serving in UNMIL: 115 medical corps, 240 Formed Police Unit officers and 15 Military Observers and Staff Officers. Since 1989, Jordan has contributed peacekeepers to 25 missions in different countries.

Attending the medal award ceremony were Deputy SRSG for the Rule of Law, Ms. Henrietta Mensa-Bonsu; UNMIL Force Commander, Lt.-Gen. ATM Zahirul Alam; Director of Mission Support, Mr. Stephen Lieberman; Deputy Force Commander, Maj.-Gen. Carl Modey; Military Chief of Staff, Brig.-Gen. Paul Boroh, and other UNMIL senior military offers.