

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



Historic Freetown Kingtom Cemetery, with many graves of British and Commonwealth soldiers and sailors who died in World War I and II.

**PRESS CLIPPINGS**

**Enclosed are clippings of local and international press on the Special Court and related issues obtained by the Press and Public Affairs Office  
as at:**

Thursday, 17 August 2006

Press clips are produced Monday through Friday.  
Any omission, comment or suggestion, please contact  
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Standard Times  
Thursday, 17 August 2006

## Is Charles Taylor Already Guilty in the Eyes of the International Community

Welcome to the Fourteenth Edition of the Sierra Leone Court Monitoring Programme (SLCMP) newsletter, the Monitor. In the current edition, like the last two editions, we have focused largely on the Charles Taylor trial. This has been an eventful period in the life of the Special Court as it contributes in shaping the contours of international criminal justice. A sitting head of state (Charles Taylor) was indicted, eventually arrested and transferred into the custody of the Court; a request was made to transfer him to a third country (The Netherlands) and it was granted and then approved by the United Nations Security Council (Resolution 1688) after a third party's (Britain) decision to imprison him if he is found guilty. However, one question that was never raised, at least in the public domain, was where will Mr. Taylor go if he is acquitted and discharged of all the charges? Or is he already guilty in the eyes of the international community?

SLCMP is raising these questions by virtue of the fact that, in relocating the trial of Mr. Taylor to The Hague, the international community conducted themselves in a way that implies he can only be convicted of the charges against him. As a court monitoring programme, the SLCMP holds with unshaken conviction the centrality of the presumption of innocence and equality of arms as two fundamental and indispensable components (inter alia) of a fair trial. Given that the lack of the rule of law was one of the primary causes of the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone, and the fact that the United Nations is regarded as the epitome of the dispensation of justice; a conduct that is deemed compromising of a fair trial will not only serve as a poor precedent to the former but most importantly, undermine the credibility of the latter as the global upholder of the rule of law.

On June 20, the Special Court, with support from UN security, effected the transfer of Mr. Taylor to The Hague in The Netherlands, pursuant to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1688 adopted unanimously on June 16. In March, following the arrest and subsequent transfer of Mr. Taylor into the custody of the Special Court - after over three years of political wrangling and lobbying- the Special Court wrote a letter to the Government of The Netherlands requesting a transfer of the trial. It based its reasons for such a request largely on security implications for the sub-region if Mr. Taylor was to be tried in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The Dutch Government accepted the request but with the proviso that a third country should imprison him after the trials. The third country, Britain, agreed almost two-and-half months later, on June 15. A

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# Is Charles Taylor Already Guilty in the Eyes of the International Community?

few hours after the announcement was made, I granted an interview with a Dutch paper. One of the questions I was asked was whether we were disappointed about the appearance of a third country since we have, as a court monitoring programme, been advocating for the trials to take place here in Sierra Leone.

My response was that we were not against his imprisonment outside Sierra Leone if he is found guilty, but were against, and are still against, his trial outside Sierra Leone - for reasons we have dis-

that the issue of security has been over-exaggerated. If Mr. Taylor's supporters are going to destabilize West Africa, it will happen only if they have the capacity and not because he is in Sierra Leone. In other words, Mr. Taylor's supporters could destabilize the sub-region not because he is in custody in Sierra Leone or at The Hague, but simply because he is being tried. We have also argued before that the transfer of the trial will dilute the hybrid nature of the Court, deprive the victims of access to the trials, give cause to a cost-

ing the guilt or innocence of the accused. There is, however, a distinction between a domestic court and an international tribunal. Unlike a domestic court, which takes less account of the victims, international tribunals take into consideration the victims in making decision on the non-judicial aspects of the Court. As a matter of fact, on 17 January 2006, Pre-trial Chamber I of the International Criminal Court (ICC) rendered a decision allowing victims to be involved even at the trial stage by way of making submissions di-

society better off than when it started is a failure. Taking into consideration the views of victims in arriving at certain non-judicial decision (such as the venue of Mr. Taylor's trial) will not only enhance the legitimacy of a court but will also help achieve its objective or leaving a better society after its operations. ^

That said, I will revisit the question of whether the international community thought Mr. Taylor could only be convicted. Based on the fact that it failed to ask for another country in Europe or America to host him in an event he is proven not guilty, I am left with no option but to answer in the affirmative. Or does the international community think that if Mr. Taylor is proven innocent he will return to West Africa? If the international community wants us to believe that Mr. Taylor is free to reside wherever he chooses to if he is acquitted and discharged of all the charges against him, then this flies in the face of their much touted holy grail of his propensity to destabilize the sub-region. Therefore, there was no need to relocate his trial to The Hague. If, however, the international community thinks that he will not return to the sub-region because he can only be found guilty, it means that he has been convicted even before his actual trial. For that reason, Mr. Taylor's trial is going to be held in an already bias court, which certainly undermines the minimum standards of fair trial, including the presumption of innocence.

Lastly, in para 6 of the UN Security Council Resolution 1688 of 2006 allowing for the transfer of Mr. Taylor's trial to The Hague, it is expressly stated that the Special Court with assistance from the UN Secretary General should provide access to the trial proceedings to the people of the sub-region. The whole argument for the trials to take place in Sierra Leone was for the primary purpose of increasing access to the proceedings. Increased access to the trial proceedings will not only impact the Sierra Leonean legal system, but will most importantly enhance healing. Just within a few days after the UN Security Council issued Resolution 1688, the Special Court whisked Mr. Taylor to The Hague. As a court monitoring programme, we will apply similar enthusiasm in ensuring that the people of Sierra Leone and West Africa are given increased access to the trial proceedings.

On June 20, the Special Court, with support from UN security, effected the transfer of Mr. Taylor to The Hague in The Netherlands, pursuant to United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1688 adopted unanimously on June 16

ussed in the previous editions of the newsletter. I further stated that we are in fact disappointed that the British Government would only come forward now. Nevertheless, taking into consideration the central role they are playing in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Sierra Leone, we expect that they can only continue to build on their efforts.

Taking the queue from the Special Court, the UNSC in Resolution 1688 premised their decision that allows Taylor's trial to be held in The Hague, on the potential of the trial to destabilize the sub-region if it were held here. The SLCMP has argued in the past

benefit analysis of an already under funded court and will diminish the legitimacy of the Court. The last point is premised on the fact that "the legitimacy of international war crimes tribunals are most importantly enhanced by how much support they get from, and the benefit they offer to the victims and survivors". Despite all these concerns, the trial has been relocated to The Hague.

The decision to transfer the trial to The Hague is typical of what a municipal lawyer would do. Municipal lawyers claim that they are not social workers and therefore they are only interested in adjudicating a case to the extent of prov-

rectly or through counsel. As you may know, in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and even at the Special Court, victims have no independent participation. They only appear when called upon to give evidence by either the prosecution or defence. The ICC decision has created a leverage for victims to further play a central role in trials whose decisions will affect their lives the most. Additionally, it is also important to note that the Special Court is a transitional justice institution. A transitional justice institution which does not leave the

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## BBC Online

Thursday, 17 August 2006

### Ugandan rebels seek S Africa help

Lord's Resistance Army rebels have asked South Africa to help mediate in talks with Uganda's government.

LRA second-in-command Vincent Otti told the BBC that the current mediator, South Sudanese vice president, Riek Machar, was not neutral.

South Africa had more experience of resolving conflict in Africa, he said.

Earlier the Ugandan army said it had killed a junior commander and three fighters, but the LRA says it is still committed to talks resuming on Friday.

Ugandan army spokesman Maj Felix Kulayigye told the BBC that junior commander Reagan Akena and three other rebel soldiers were killed on Monday in northern Uganda.

Talks were halted at the weekend to allow the LRA to mourn the death on Saturday of the LRA's Raskia Lukwiya, who was wanted by the International Criminal Court on suspicion of war crimes.

The LRA has declared a unilateral truce but Uganda insists that a comprehensive peace agreement needs to be in place before a ceasefire can be agreed.

#### 'Concerned'

On Wednesday, Mr Otti told the BBC's Focus on Africa programme that despite the latest killing, "we are going to talk peace and we want to end this war".

He said that South Africa knew a lot about resolving conflict.

"They worked on resolving the conflict in Burundi and if possible they should come and resolve the conflict between the LRA and the government of Uganda," he said.

Peace talks between government negotiators and LRA representatives in southern Sudan were postponed at the weekend after the two sides failed to agree on an end to hostilities.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has set a 12 September deadline for thrashing out a final peace deal.

The LRA declared a unilateral truce last week but then refused to attend more talks until the government followed suit.

The government has called for a comprehensive ceasefire, which includes a demand for the rebels to provide details of their forces and deployment.



Vincent Otti says the LRA are committed to peace talks

## **Guarantee**

The government also wants a guarantee the LRA will not use the halt in fighting to reinforce its positions.

The talks, brokered by the government of south Sudan, have been greeted as the best chance of ending the 20-year war in northern Uganda.

International Criminal Court wants the LRA's top officials - including leader Joseph Kony - to face charges including murder, rape and forcibly enlisting children.

Against the wishes of the ICC, Uganda has offered amnesty to LRA leaders in exchange for peace talks.

The LRA has abducted thousands of children and forced them to fight since the conflict in the north began two decades ago.

## The Analyst (Monrovia)

Wednesday, 16 August 2006

### Ex-Combatants Set Conditions to Leave Guthrie

By McCarey Marshall

*Liberia's foremost devastation came to an end with the signing of a peace deal in Accra, Ghana amongst the belligerent parties and civil society organizations, taking into account the fate of the over half million fighters: to disengage, create buffer zones, disarm, demobilize, rehabilitate and reintegrate.*

*Some of these have since been adhered to while others face hiccups; for example, the turnover of the Guthrie Rubber Plantation by former fighters of the disbanded LURD rebel group. The group has insisted on disarmament benefits, resettlement and skill training -- demands which the NTGL did not honor. But the present government has dug in the sand. However, the ex-combatants are demanding that they should be given 90 days to leave the plantation plus disarmament benefits. Cub reporter McCarey Marshall was there and compiled this report.*

The government of Liberia has finally taken over the Guthrie Rubber Plantation located in Bomi County from ex-combatants who have been occupying the farm since the cessation of hostilities. The takeover ceremony which brought together a mammoth crowd of residents including local officials of Bomi County as well as officials of government, and the United Nations Mission in Liberia, (UNMIL) was held on the plantation under tight security and without a trace of officials of the belligerent group that had occupied the plantation for over three years.

As a symbol of the government takeover, an undisclosed number of UNMIL soldiers and armless officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) have been deployed on the farm to provide security for some 10,000 rather vulnerable civilian populations there.

The conspicuous absence of the former fighters, according to observers has raised more questions than answers in that they should have been given the opportunity to participate in the process as a way of giving their tacit approval.

The farm has been turned over to the Rubber Planters Association of Liberia to manage it for an unspecified time, but whether they can deliver as much convincing as possible is yet to be adjudged.

But what seemed "a careful move" was taken by the government and observers said if such plans are discretely executed it would safeguard revenue collection.

Agriculture Minister Christopher Toe who proxy for President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has mandated the management team to prepare the legal framework within two weeks to begin the sale of rubber from the farm, but fell short in saying what the team would be doing before the two-week ultimatum.

If that is done, proceeds from the sale of rubber from Guthrie is likely go to government to beef up its revenue generation, something which was not done by the ex-fighters who many said have pillaged the farm and enriched themselves.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) which is responsible for security in Liberia expressed appreciation at the takeover.

Its head, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Alan Doss described the takeover of the plantation is "a milestone in government's development drive." He said the Government has been patient with the tapers who claimed forcefully occupied the plantation, and added that it was time they cooperate with the government.

"Violence is all over, and we are here for the repossessing of the plantation. Government is now taking back what belongs to it, and we will continue to ensure law in this plantation", he stated.

Doss, as he always being saying without much action that his forces will robustly deal with acts of violence in the wake of hike in insecurity across the country, said "We will not permit any violence; the government must repossess the Guthrie plantation.

But as the government should be celebrating its takeover of the farm from the former fighters, it appears that this will be the beginning of what to come.

The former fighters are contending that much needed to done before they can completely relinquish the farm, a situation which according to observers may reinvent what government thinks it has successfully done.

They are demanding 90 days and disarmament benefits to leave the plantation and claimed that about 529 of the 60,000 ex-fighters did not were left out of the process.

According to them, they were not informed of the government takeover and threatened to use "acid" against occupiers until their grievances can be adhered to. "It is a joke, I think the government does not mean well," remarked a former fighter.

In his reaction, the head of the ex-combatants management team only identified as Sumo said the exercise was done inappropriately.

The ex-combatants exhibited their disapproval of the takeover long before the actual program. A tussle ensued between UNMIL soldiers and an ex-combatant along the highway when he (aggrieved former fighter) attempted stopping the UN boss that conveyed journalists was prevented, but remarked "leaving the plantation is impossible and there more challenges ahead of the government." In the wake of the present situation, observers said the government faces daunting task which if not handle with care and sobriety could strangulate it in the months, years ahead.

Meanwhile, reporters gathered by this paper quoted the Deputy Director of the NCDDRR as confirming the ex-fighters' claim of not receiving disarmament benefits, but said government will settle it as soon as possible.



**Government of Liberia restores state authority at Guthrie rubber plantation; UNMIL to support efforts to ensure law and order at the plantation**

*Monrovia, Liberia* – The Government of Liberia, in a move to restore state authority and the rule of law on rubber plantations that have been illegally occupied, yesterday formally re-possessed the Guthrie Rubber Plantation. This was marked by a ceremony attended by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, the Minister of Agriculture and Chairman of the Joint government of Liberia – United Nations Rubber Plantation Task Force, Dr. Chris Toe, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police (LNP), Beatrice Munah Sieh, the Deputy Executive Director of the NCDDRR, Ruth Witherspoon, and local representatives together with the UNMIL Force Commander, UN Police Commissioner and other senior UNMIL officials.



Namibian peacekeeper provides security at Guthrie Rubber Plantation

During his keynote address, Dr. Chris Toe said “today, we are taking a major step on Liberia’s path towards national recovery, development and respect of rule of law. The restoration of state authority on Guthrie marks significant progress Liberians have made in terms of building sustainable peace and addressing irregularities that have persisted from the time of our conflict.”

Speaking to the local authorities, Special Representative Doss thanked the members of the Rubber Plantation Task Force and all those involved, including the communities, for their joint efforts in making this day possible and noted that “this did not happen by chance; it was a result of a lot of hard work. This cooperation demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together.” Referring to this historic day, Mr. Doss said “Today, the Government of Liberia is taking back what belongs to Liberia.”

The Special Representative assured of UNMIL’s support to the LNP in ensuring that law and order was maintained on the plantation. “We have to make sure that the plantations remain safe so we can begin the task of rebuilding the plantations, including allowing for investments and aid to come in.” The SRSR also urged the community dwellers to avoid violence and work with the Government. “Help us to rebuild the community and together we will make sure that this plantation will generate jobs for you and your children,” he said.

The Joint Government of Liberia – United Nations Rubber Plantation Task Force was established in February 2006 to address ongoing tensions and significant losses of government revenue due to inefficient management of publicly owned plantations. In order to enforce the rule of law within the plantation, the LNP has deployed officers to the plantation and, with the support of the United Nations Police (UNPOL), has been undertaking regular patrols. The UNMIL Pakistani military engineers have constructed housing and office space within Guthrie.

In addition, an interim management team was also established by the Government of Liberia and the Rubber Planters’ Association of Liberia (RPAL) as a temporary mechanism to regularize employment, promote labour standards and rehabilitate facilities, until a long-term management structure is established in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations of the country. Possibilities for reintegration assistance for the ex-combatants are also being explored by the NCDDRR with the support of UNMIL and other stakeholders.

At the end of the ceremony, SRSR Doss handed over a set of keys to the LNP Inspector General for a car to be used by the LNP detachments in order to strengthen their capacity in maintaining law and order in the Guthrie Rubber Plantation.

United Nations  Nations Unies

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

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## **UNMIL Public Information Office Media Summary 16 August 2006**

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

### **International Clips on Liberia**

#### **LIBERIA: Gov't reclaims rubber plantation from former fighters**

KLAY, 16 Aug 2006 (IRIN) - The Liberian government, backed by United Nations peacekeepers, says it has repossessed Guthrie Rubber Plantation from a band of some 500 ex-rebels who have been illegally tapping the trees since the end of the war. Liberian police and UN soldiers in armoured vehicles made way for the special ceremony on Tuesday, but the former combatants said they would not leave. The former fighters, who have formed an association named the National Veterans Rehabilitation Programme, say they need about three months to fully leave the plantation.

#### **LEBANON-LIBERIA: Stranded Liberians relieved, cautious over ceasefire**

**[This report does not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations]**

BEIRUT, 15 Aug 2006 (IRIN) - After his own nation failed to evacuate him and his family during the recent Israeli bombardment of Lebanon, stranded Liberian Saide Chaar is still trying to find a way out of Beirut despite a United Nations-brokered ceasefire. "For now things are a little bit calm and we do not know how long it is going to last," said Chaar, 25, in a telephone interview. "We are just praying to God that it stays as it is today." IRIN documented the plight of Chaar and his family for two weeks through a daily diary. During that time, Chaar spoke of the family's fear, food and water shortages, lack of money, being evicted and sharing a one-bedroom apartment with 22 other people.

### **International Clips on West Africa**

#### **Sierra Leone to seek extradition of suspects in journalist's murder**

FREETOWN, Aug 16, 2006 (AFP) - The Sierra Leone government will seek the extradition from Britain of three sons of a ruling party lawmaker in connection with the death last year of a newspaper editor, judicial sources said Wednesday. High Court judge Claudia Taylor at the weekend granted a request from the attorney-general's office to apply for the extradition, one source told AFP, adding that it should be effected within the coming days. Harry Yansaneh, editor of a popular independent newspaper highly critical of government, was beaten up in May 2005, apparently for political reasons, and died of his injuries two months later. The three suspects named in the High Court petition are children of Fatmata Hassan Komeh, a ruling Sierra Leone People's Party's legislator. Bai Bureh, Ahmed and Alfred Komeh all reside in Britain.

## **Local Media – Newspaper**

### **Ex-Combatants at Guthrie Plantation Remain Defiant**

*(Daily Observer, The News, The Inquirer, The Analyst, Public Agenda, New Democrat, Heritage, The Informer, The New Liberia)*

- The ex-combatants who occupied the Guthrie Rubber Plantation prior to government taking control told correspondents yesterday that the government's move to take over the farm was unrealistic, protesting that they were not given prior notice to depart. The ex-combatants said that they needed up to 90 days to relocate. They intimated that they would resist the new management team because over 500 of them did not benefit from the Rehabilitation and Reintegration programs.

### **Special Security Services Deputy Director Suspended**

*(Daily Observer, The Analyst and National Chronicle)*

- Deputy Special Security Service Director Ashford Peal has been suspended for his inappropriate use of a gun, President Ellen Johnson was quoted as saying.

### **House Summons Central Bank Governor and Finance Minister**

*(Heritage and National Chronicle)*

- The House of Representatives yesterday ordered the Finance Minister Antoinette Sayeh and Central Bank of Liberia Governor Mills Jones to appear before it tomorrow to provide information on how government's activities are being financed since the end of the recast budget on 30 June. This followed a request from Grand Bassa County Representative, Gabriel Smith, to the House plenary session.

### **New Army to Get Further Training in Ghana**

*(The Analyst and The New Liberia)*

- New recruits of the restructured Armed Forces of Liberia currently being trained at the VOA military base outside Monrovia are to undergo further training in the Republic of Ghana, Ghana's Ambassador Maj.-Gen. Francis Adu-Amanfeh told journalists in Monrovia recently following a visit to the National Defense Ministry.

## **Local Media – Radio Veritas** *(News monitored yesterday at 6:45 pm)*

### **Ex-combatants Say Takeover of Rubber Plantation Unrealistic**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Lawmakers Summon Minister to Clarify Government's Finances**

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Government Appoints Management Team for Controversial Rubber Plantation**

- Agriculture Minister Dr. Christopher Toe yesterday announced that the Government of Liberia has constituted an interim management team headed by the Rubber Planters Association to act as what he called "place-holder" of the Guthrie Rubber Plantation, until a long-term contract is signed.
- Dr. Toe charged the Association within two weeks to begin to regularize the sale of rubber, assuring the public that the government and its international partners would assist communities within the Guthrie Plantation.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Lawmaker Wants Budgetary Allotments for Rural Development Increased**

- In an interview yesterday, Grand Kru County Senator Cletus Wotorson recommended to his colleagues at the National Legislature to increase budgetary allocations for development programs in the counties.
- Senator Wotorson added that the US\$2.5 million allocated for the counties was inadequate to undertake such projects as constructing county headquarters, rehabilitating feeder roads and bridges.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Environmentalists Review Documents on Liberian Coastal Belt**

- Environmental experts meeting in Monrovia have started to review two strategic documents including the profile of Liberia's coastal belt and its national program to improve the ecosystem.
- Briefing journalists yesterday, Dr. Theodore Njama, Special Representative of the Guinea Current Large Marine Ecosystem comprising 16 countries, said that a survey has been conducted to determine the amount of fish in the Liberian waters.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **UNDP Small Arms Group Destroys Weapons in Lofa County**

- The UNDP Small Arms Control Program in collaboration with the Land Mine Action yesterday reported that it has destroyed over 800 small arms and light weapons including rifles, grenades, bombs and ammunition which the group collected from the Kissi and Quadu-Gbondy Chiefdoms in Lofa County.
- Under the UNDP Community Arms Collection for Development Program, the two Chiefdoms received certificates for being arms-free and would receive US\$40,000 to undertake their own development projects.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

### **Presidential Aspirant Disappointed in Government**

- Defeated presidential candidate Dr. Margaret Toh-Thompson yesterday told a news conference that she is disappointed in the way that the government is functioning, pinpointing that President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf failed to fulfill her campaign promises. She said the provision of electricity to Monrovia within 6 months, the rehabilitation of roads and the renovation of hospitals and other institutions pointed to the failure.

*(Also reported on ELBS and Star Radio)*

## Relief Web

8 – 15 August 2006

<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EGUA-6SQRB2?OpenDocument>

### **Liberia: UNMIL Humanitarian Situation Report No. 66**

#### Highlights

#### **Guthrie Rubber Plantation to be repossessed**

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Government of Liberia on 15 August repossessed the Guthrie Rubber Plantation in Bomi County. The repossession ceremony was attended by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, and Chairman of the Joint Government of Liberia and United Nations Task Force on publicly-owned rubber plantations, Dr. J. Chris Toe. Senior officials of UNMIL and the Government will also attend the ceremony.

The Joint Government of Liberia – United Nations Rubber Plantation Task Force was established in February 2006 to address ongoing tensions and significant losses of government revenue due to inefficient management of publicly owned plantations. In order to enforce the rule of law within the plantation, the LNP has deployed officers to the plantation and, with the support of the United Nations Police (UNPOL), has been undertaking regular patrols. The UNMIL Pakistani military engineers have constructed housing and office space within Guthrie. In addition, an interim management team was also established by the Government of Liberia and the Rubber Planters' Association of Liberia (RPAL) as a temporary mechanism to regularize employment, promote labour standards and rehabilitate facilities, until a long-term management structure is established in accordance with the relevant rules and regulations of the country. Possibilities for reintegration assistance for the ex-combatants are also being explored by the NCDDRR with the support of UNMIL and other stakeholders.

#### **A. HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES**

WFP and partners delivered a total of 347.3 metric tons of assorted food commodities targeting 17,376 beneficiaries in three feeding categories including resettlement, nutrition interventions and Food Support to Local Initiatives (FSLI).

Distribution of resettlement food packages to former IDPs ended throughout the country on 31st July as planned. Verification of a residual caseload of 15,000 IDPs is still in progress and distribution of resettlement package to this group is to begin by the end of August.

#### **Repatriation and Resettlement**

During the reporting period, a total of 3,298 former IDPs received 177.8 metric tons of food representing the second and final tranche of their resettlement food package. A part from the residual caseload of 15,000 IDPs currently under verification, this distribution marked the official end of food assistance to former IDPs.

Food distribution also took place for returning refugees. About 790 Liberian returnees from Ghana and Guinea arrived home during this period and were provided 28.4 metric tons of food as first tranche of their resettlement food package. The Vice President of Liberia Hon. Joseph N.

Boakai was among the dignitaries and representatives of UN agencies present to receive the returnees at the Free Port of Monrovia. During the same period, 1,888 returnees received food ration totaling 67.7 metric tons as second and final tranche of their resettlement food package.

As of 4th August 2006 a total of 321,634 IDPs residing in camps in Liberia were de-registered. Among these, 307,984 beneficiaries (95.75%) have received in full their four-month resettlement food packages. In the same period a total of 73,283 returnees were repatriated by UNHCR. Among these, 68,722 returnees received the first tranche of their food assistance.

### **Sea repatriation gains Momentum**

The 5th sea movement from Ghana arrived in Monrovia on 14 August 2005 with some 191 Liberian refugees. The latest arrival has brought to total 76,763 Liberian refugees to return home by land, sea and air. Of this total, 52% returned from camps in Guinea, 21% from La Cote d'Ivoire, 20% from Sierra Leone, 5% from Nigeria and a combined 2% from other countries. Meanwhile, increased effort to promote return to Liberia continues. UNHCR offices have agreed to step up Mass Information activities to include the participation of high level Liberian Government officials and prominent leaders on “go and tell” missions while refugees would be facilitated to assess first-hand the security environment and reintegration activities in expected areas of return. In addition, Liberian refugees who return by their own means will be properly identified, deregistered and given assistance. Centers to process spontaneous returnees upon arrival are being pursued.

### **Returnees Benefit from Skilled Labour Program**

UNHCR continues to attract the return of skilled Liberian refugees through its Skilled Labour Program (SLP). Medical staffs in David Selma Town of Lofa County were given construction materials to include zinc, nails and a bag of white wash to construct a staff quarters under the SLP program. The SLP scheme targets doctors and teachers to return and participate in the nation's recovery by enhancing their livelihood in return communities. In another development, shelter-partner Peace Winds Japan has commenced follow-up exercises of distributed shelter kits. The exercise is to ensure that beneficiaries use the materials for the intended purpose and also galvanize the communities' support to assist vulnerable returnees to complete their houses.

### **Emergency School Feeding (ESF)**

Preparation has began for the implementation of the school feeding programme during the next academic year, which will start next September. The Country Office is currently assessing and reviewing the capacity of present and interested school feeding partners in view of signing new Field Level Agreements (FLA). It is also reviewing the current FLA template with the aim of ensuring that the ECWs are fully incorporated in these agreements, addressing key protection issues (as recommended by the March 8-22 Protection Mission to Liberia).

### **Food Support for Local Initiatives (FSLI)**

During the reporting period, WFP and partners distributed a total of 123.4 metric tons of food to 10,473 beneficiaries in support of Food for Work and Food for Training activities. Projects benefiting included UNMIL supported road rehabilitation projects and several community based projects in six sub-offices. Additionally, 1,183 pieces of tools were also distributed to several agricultural and infrastructural projects in Bomi and Lofa Counties. Meanwhile, field data collection for the self-evaluation of the FSLI programme has been scheduled to take place from 14-27 August 2006.

## **Health & Nutrition Interventions**

UNICEF and its partners, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of Liberia and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) have released the results of the first phase of a three-phase nationwide tetanus vaccination campaign launched on 25 June in Grand Bassa County. According to the results, a total of 271,911 females between the ages of 14-49 years were vaccinated with TT vaccines during the first phase from June 26 – July 1, 2006 in Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh, Lofa, Margibi, and Nimba. The tetanus vaccination campaign, the first of its kind in Liberia, seeks to eliminate tetanus from the country by 2008. More than 800,000 females between ages of 14-49 years will be vaccinated against tetanus at the end of the three phases of the campaign. UNICEF has presented 36 kerosene refrigerators to Bomi (6), Bong (14), Gbarpolu (4), Grand Cape Mount (6), and Lofa (4) Counties. The refrigerators will be used to store vaccines for the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

In collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Ministry of Health, UNICEF conducted a 10-day training of trainers' workshop for 24 senior health workers from Bong, Lofa and Montserrado Counties in the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI). These 24 health workers will serve as IMCI trainers in their respective counties of assignment.

UNICEF participated in a press conference hosted by the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), announcing the observance of this year's World Breast Feeding Week which was marked from 1st to 7th August. This year's observance highlights the International Code of Marketing of breast milk substitutes. The Code aims to protect and promote breast-feeding by prohibiting the advertising and aggressive marketing of breast milk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats.

WHO Country Office is supporting the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare to develop comprehensive Blood safety programme. Assessment of the laboratories has been conducted in Monrovia, Phebe, Voinjama and Buchanan. The findings will be used for the development of blood safety guidelines, policy and strategic plan.

WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health to re-examine the 1986 National Drug Formulary with the aim of reviewing it to include new protocols such as combined for malaria, Anti-retroviral drug therapy, etc.

WHO is technically supporting the government of Liberia to carry out county level training in eight counties (Margibi, Bomi, Bong, Nimba, Lofa, Grand Bassa, Grand Gedeh and Maryland) for the implementation of the Antenatal care (ANC) HIV/AIDS survey.

## **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene**

With support from UNICEF, the local NGO Western Technology (WESTECH) constructed four new wells with hand pumps, four latrines (2 two-access and 2 four-access) and 16 family latrines for schools, communities and households in Careysburg District, Montserrado County.

In Fuamah District, Bong County, UNICEF provided support to the local NGO, New Era for the construction of eight new wells with hand pumps and eight four-access latrines for schools in the district. UNICEF local NGO partner, Lifewater has completed 10 boreholes with hand pumps for communities along the Ivorian border region of Gbehlay-Geh District.

## **The National Task Force on Avian Influenza Conducts Workshop**

The National Task Force on the Control and Prevention of Avian Influenza in Liberia held a two-day workshop (9 – 10 August 2006) in Monrovia for members of the County Task Forces on Avian Influenza.

County Superintendents, County Agriculture Officers, County Health Officers, County Surveillance Officers and UNMIL Civil Affairs Officers from seven counties including Bomi, Gbarpolu, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, Margibi, Montserrado, and Rivercess attended the workshop, which was the first in a series of three regional workshops to be conducted throughout Liberia.

The workshop objectives are to brief the County Task Force members on Avian Influenza and its prevention and control as well as to clarify their roles and responsibilities as Task Force members and other main actors.

The identification of challenges, constraints and next steps in terms of making the Task Force operational and ensuring that mechanisms are in place to prevent and control Avian Influenza in Liberia were critical issues discussed during the workshop.

The Vice President of Liberia, His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai who gave the Keynote address expressed Government's concern about the possible outbreak of Avian Influenza (Bird Flu) in Liberia.

Reasons for the government's concern, the Vice President said, are that the disease can spread very fast and the disease is primarily found in birds, ducks, chickens, and geese, which jeopardizes agriculture and food industries, and therefore threatens the livelihoods of smallholders and food security. He also expressed the need to develop comprehensive national preparedness plans, strengthen surveillance systems, and build central and regional veterinary diagnostic laboratories to deal with this threat.

The Vice President then called on Liberia's partners, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UNMIL, the World Bank, FAO, and UNICEF and WHO to provide all the needed resources to prevent and control the disease in Liberia.

Participants at the end of the workshop proposed that the National Task Force set up a team to work along with each county to develop County Contingency Plan on basis of a specific action plan detailing the activities and time frames to be developed taking into consideration, Districts, and Clans.

The establishment of a national veterinary diagnostic laboratory and regular nation-wide surveillance, among others were essential elements put forward for consideration by the National Task Force.

## **B. FIELD COORDINATION**

### **Gbarnga**

Reports from Cocopa Rubber Plantation in Nimba County confirmed disturbances involving a group of unknown persons, allegedly attempting to steal from the plantation. One (1) person was reportedly shot and wounded while 4 others were beaten with light injuries. UNMIL security, UNPOL and LNP are currently assessing the situation.



According to the Nimba County Development Superintendent, many humanitarian agencies are not attending the Sectoral Working Groups' meetings and therefore not adequately sharing information on their work. The SWGs are faced with weak leadership, lack of suitable meeting venue, and inaccessibility caused by poor roads leading to Sanniquelle, where most sectoral meetings are held. HCS leadership is required.

As part of its support to the Nimba County Support Team, UNDP will conduct several workshops to inform local authorities on the new CST approach. The first workshop will be held on August 30, 2006 in Saclepea and will include participants from local authorities and NGOs. Topics to cover will include data collection and report writing. Assessment forms have been developed to enable local authorities at the field level to gather standardized and accurate information.

UNHCR officials visited Bong and Nimba Counties to obtain an overview of protection issues and gaps in the implementation of the cluster approach. Issues highlighted in meetings with stakeholders in both counties included weakness in the judicial systems in providing redress on protection cases, lack of qualified legal personnel at the field level, understaffing in the LNP and poor infrastructure to support the provision of justice.

### **Harper**

In Grand Kru County, FAO through its implementing partner CARITAS, has started the distribution of fishing inputs (nets, lead, twines, fishing lines, ropes, fishing hooks, and floaters) to 1,441 persons (44% females) in 32 communities in Pinicess, Sasstown, Grandcess, Garraway, and other coastal towns.

Assistance to the health sector in Grand Kru County included the following:

- Donation of one ambulance to the Grand Kru County Health Team by the African Development Bank, in collaboration with UNDP.
- The ambulance will help to ease the constraints faced by health authorities in transporting critically ill patients to the J. J. Dossen hospital in Harper.
- Supply of 3 solar panel freezers by UNICEF to 3 health centres in Garraway and River Cess.

US\$ 3,500 worth of drugs provided by Ministry of Health to the County for distribution to Feloken, Pinicess and Gbanken clinics. These clinics had previously been closed due to the lack of drugs. ICRC in collaboration with the local office of the Ministry of Rural Development is constructing 120 latrines and rehabilitating and/or constructing 110 hand pumps in Grand Kru County.

Education authorities in Grand Kru County have started the distribution of 2,500 textbooks, received last June from the Saudi Prince's donation to 8 districts.

IBIS completed its ALP school year on 16 July and graduated 438 out of 1,997 students to level two. The remainder students would attend remedial classes during the vacation in order to qualify for promotion.

### **Tubmanburg**

On 11th August rising tide and water level led to flooding, which destroyed 3 houses along the coast of Robertsport, Cape Mount County and threatened communities along the banks of Lake Piso. Following discussions with Civil Affairs, County authorities and victims of the flood, it was

agreed that people along the shores should be moved to higher ground, and that a longer-term solution to the problem of erosion along the seacoast should be addressed.

In Gbarpolu County, flooding and deplorable road condition is also preventing the County health teams (CHT) from reaching the clinic in Weasua, a town across the Lofa Juah River. Samaritan's Purse also cannot reach the area to provide water filters to the communities that do not have hand pumps. As a temporary measure, the Development Superintendent is leading efforts by the community to construct palm log bridges over the smaller streams and river.

Discussions are ongoing between HCS and the authorities of Gbarpolu County on possible ways of preventing the total collapse of the Bamboo Town Clinic, and avoid a possible gap in healthcare delivery in the area. The clinic building is crumbling, and there are no water or latrine facilities.

The Ministry of Health in Bomi reported that henceforth the CHT would be responsible for the distribution of malaria drugs to all the clinics in the County.

UNICEF has provided kerosene freezers for vaccine storage to the CHTs in Gbarpolu and Bomi Counties. There are also plans to provide solar refrigerators to clinics in these areas by October 2006.

The SRSG, the Liberia Minister of Defense, and the UNMIL Deputy Force Commander visited the Mano River Union Bridge in Bo Waterside, Grand Cape Mount County on August 8, 2006. They discussed means of enhancing the level of individual and joint security operations and patrols along the Liberia-Sierra Leone border.

UNHCR/CCF on 8th August turned over several completed community projects in various communities of Gbarpolu County.

### **Voinjama**

Due to lack of improvement in the performance of every Protection sub-cluster (Rule of Law, Human Rights, SGBV, Child Protection and Property), the Protection Core Group chairperson has recommended the adoption of a new system that would be more proactive in tackling protection issues. One suggestion would be to appoint a focal person for each sub-cluster, who would collect specific records to be reported to the Superintendent at the CST meetings and to the focal point in Monrovia.

River blindness, respiratory infections, malaria and worms are reported by International Medical Corps to be the most common health problems in Vahun district, Lofa County. And the updated Cholera Contingency Plan has been distributed to all WATSAN stakeholders in Lofa County.

UNHCR assisted the return of 676 refugees from Guinea on August 10. Since February 2005, UNHCR has assisted the repatriation of 46,552 refugees in 145 convoys.

According to GTZ, heavy rains have damaged 2 bridges and made the Foya – Solomba road currently impassable, thereby hampering the repatriation of refugees by road. Monitoring of the level of the Makona River in midst of the heavy rains is also being done.

### **Zwedru**

In Grand Gedeh County, the roads leading to Zai Town and Jarzon on the Ganta-Harper highway are reported to be deplorable. In addition, 2 damaged bridges along the Zai Town road need

urgent attention, in order to avoid the road being impassable. In response to the road and bridge condition, UNDP and UNHCR have put aside some resources to assist in minor road repair work. The Chinese Engineering contingent shall continue with temporary road repairs pending a response from Monrovia on the way forward in addressing the medium term needs in road and bridges rehabilitation.

The Government of Liberia has provided 2,256 pieces of agricultural tools and 8,500 kg of seed rice to the FAO and UNMIL Civil Affairs Zwedru offices, for distribution to farmers in River Gee County. These agricultural inputs were donated by the Government of China, and included cutlasses, regular hoes, diggers, shovels, files, axes, rakes and scratching hoes.

The County Health Team in collaboration with MERLIN fielded a mission to Sennewhen and Janzon, Gbarzon District, Grand Gedeh County to address the outbreak of whooping cough in the area. MERLIN has reiterated calls for collaborative sensitization of communities on the free delivery of health care at all health services in the county. In Sinoe County, an organized criminal group known locally as Issakaba boys is reported to be responsible for 2 crime incidents in Morrisville and Lexington. The group is engaged in petty crimes and extortion.