

and other nations of the erstwhile communist eastern bloc. Under Tubman, Liberia's foreign policy was controlled and surrendered to the US and the US turned a blind eye to the excesses of Tubman who enjoyed a *carte blanche* to do whatever he wanted without second thought or question.

A vigorous national debate ensued on the state of affairs in Liberia. And the Government's response to rising demands for greater democracy and a participatory system of government was inadequate. Pressures for democratic change were met either by the offer of patronage or the threat of punishment. Both were resisted. President Tolbert struggled to mediate the demands for change by the new generation and the demands of the old guard; members of the TWP old order, to maintain the status quo founded on their fears and insecurities associated with losing their privileged status. Agitation abounded by a full range of national actors- "progressives"- which included the emerging leadership of the TWP, MOJA, PAL, Student leaders, labor leaders, young Liberian entrepreneurs and grass root organizations and professional associations like the marketing associations, teachers unions, etc. The time to shift from an oligarchy form of government to a more inclusive and democratic form of government was now.

Tolbert's ideological sense of change, reform and progressiveness conflicted not only with the unchanging position of the old guards but also on a personal level with the standing, ties and holdings of his family in business, government and national affairs which beclouded, at the time, his expressed commitment to change, reform or transparency. By 1975 the business holdings of the President and his family were enormous, visible and an issue of national debate. The President was Vice President for 19 years and long before his ascendancy to the Presidency one of his brothers was a successful entrepreneur. The Tolbert's business interest extended and was by no means limited to fisheries, poultry, heavy equipment, textiles, manufacturing, rubber plantation, rice and oil palm industries.

Beyond business, the Tolbert family had strategic holdings in government as well. Frank Tolbert, brother of the President, was President Pro Tempore of the Liberian Senate; another brother, Steve Tolbert was Minister of Finance and an astute businessman; A.B Tolbert, member of the House of Representative, son of the president; Burleigh Holder, Minister of Defense, Son-in-law of the president; Christine Norman, daughter of the president, Tonia King, deputy Immigration chief, Son-in-law to the president, etc.

By 1974, the pressure for change intensified and the government will not yield because it was against the norm for government to yield to pressure. The President had to be "strong" and not be seen as "weak". In May of 1974, the government sought to legalize gambling and a citizens' group was organized (Citizens of Liberia against Gambling – COLAG) to oppose the bill. The President and the TWP

leadership pressured the Legislature into passing the bill and it was passed into law despite stiff resistance from the people. Tolbert later vetoed the Act and members of the legislature felt betrayed by the President and publicly ridiculed by him.

In September of the same of the same year Albert Porte was sued by the President's brother, Stephen Tolbert, for daring to criticize his business practice in acquiring the Sinoe Rubber Corporation from a German investor who was close to concluding a deal with a group of Liberian entrepreneurs as unfair. In a pamphlet entitled "Gobbling business" Porte accused the president's brother of being greedy and using his family ties with the president to out stage less influential Liberians and gobble up businesses. Tolbert sued Porte for libel and a political firestorm was ignited as public opinion and support were solidly behind Albert Porte. Another citizens' group – Citizens of Liberia in Defense of Albert Porte (COLIDAP) – was formed to mobilize resources for Porte's defense. Porte lost the case, was heavily fined (US\$250,000) or be imprisoned. He announced an appeal to the Honorable Supreme Court of Liberia presided over by the father-in-law of Stephen Tolbert. The lower court's decision was very unpopular and criticized by the "REVELATION", an opposition news outlet.

In the same 1974, The National Legislature granted the President emergency powers which action was widely criticized by religious and civil societies. By January 1975, the REVELATION, by then a very popular paper, was banned by the Supreme Court for commenting on a matter pending before it, and fined US\$17,000; yet another action by the establishment which proved unpopular and seen as an attempt to shield Tolbert from public criticisms. Failing to pay the fines, the editors were detained at the Monrovia Central Prison. The legitimacy of the justice system in the eyes of the public was eroded.

On February 10, 1975 another citizens' action group was formed. The "Mothers of Monrovia" organized a rally and demonstration, which by now was becoming common place, to protest the ruling banning the news magazine and imprisoning its editors. Innocent passersby like Kona Khasu were picked up and detained; in the case of Khasu he was sent to Belle Yalla without charge or explanation. Steven Tolbert died that same year in a plane crash and the Albert Porte libel case was ended.

While the justice system under Tolbert was, at this time, questioned, two cases, when juxtaposed, bring to bear the enormity of Tolbert's challenges, contradictions inherent in his policies, and the resentment he received from the two worlds subsisting in Liberia. In 1978 Tolbert was requested, beckoned and petitioned by the establishment to grant clemency to the son of Hon. Allen Yancy (Superintendent of Maryland County and Party vice chairman of the TWP) who was found guilty of ritualistic killings along with several other citizens of Mary Land County and were

hanged at dawn till death in execution of their sentence by a court. The establishment was infuriated by Tolbert's refusal to grant clemency or pardon. In the same year, Edward Gberrie, a laborer or store boy working in the supermarket of a Lebanese businessman was choked by a Lebanese for stealing a candy he apparently saw the boy taking. To destroy evidence the boy seemingly, attempted to swallow the candy and was choked till death by his Lebanese employer. For lack of evidence, the Lebanese businessman was acquitted. One of his lawyers Cllr. James E. Pierre, was the son of the then Chief Justice, James A.A. Pierre. Again, the people were infuriated with the justice system delivery and questioned the President's avowed policies of change and equality. Public confidence in the judiciary, as guardians of rights and justice, was further eroded.

In 1977 the question of increasing the price of rice was first introduced and the Government ruled against the idea. By 1978 when average urban real income had drop to \$80.00 per month and the urban worker was spending 95% of his income on rice, a non-substitutable staple in the Liberian diet, and rent, which was also exorbitant, the Minister of Agriculture, Florence Chenoweath<sup>1</sup>, in her annual report re-introduced the subject and recommended increment in the price of rice which stood at \$22.00. This time it was considered a viable option of government and public reaction was swift, strong and negative.

Liberia's own Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs at the time documented that less than 4% of the population own more than 60% of the wealth of the nation. A parallel of two worlds then existed in Liberia with a huge disparity which Dr Amos Sawyer at the time aptly described:

*"Socially, Liberia constitutes two worlds: the one of the haves is characterized by affluence and an ostentatious life style. The symbols and trappings of wealth and the good life are brazenly flaunted. This is the world of Cadillac, jaquars, and Mercedes benzes; a world of stripped three piece suits, sprawling mansions and video recording sets. Liberians of this world are amongst the most suave, cosmopolitan and jet-setting types of Africa-more in tune with the fashions of New York, Paris, London and more comfortable with the trappings of western luxury living than any other group of socialites in Africa.*

*Existing side by side with this luxury group, and being shamelessly exploited by it, are the poor people of Liberia parched by the wretchedness of poverty, dazzled by the endless possibilities available to the affluent, languishing in the squalors of the city and the harshness and austerity of the rural village".*

By early February 1979, the mass media was awash with the issue as if preparing the public for an eventual increment in the price of rice. Public perception that any

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<sup>1</sup> The former Minister of Agriculture was recently appointed by President Johnson-Sirleaf as the new Minister of Agriculture recently appointed by president Sirleaf and refused to cooperate with the TRC

increment would benefit only the Tolberts and their associates fueled massive public discontent. Local farmers, especially the President, would benefit unfairly from a shift in consumption of the more expensive imported rice to increase consumption of cheaper locally produced rice. On the other hand, higher priced imported rice would only benefit the Tolberts since Daniel Tolbert, the President's cousin, was the major importer of rice.

The government sensing massive public discontent did very little to appease the situation by abandoning, suspending the proposed increment or in the least educating the populace on merits or demerits of its policy shifts, thereby appreciating public debate on the issue. The opposition led by the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) of G. Bacchus Mathews seized on the moment, declared the proposed increment unjustified and announced it could import the same 100lb American parboiled rice for \$9.00 when granted the permission to do so. While many felt that the position of the opposition was dishonest and impossible, the opposition movement took advantage of a volatile and explosive situation and led the government and the people on the issue rather than it being the other way round.

PAL announced at a public rally of the MOJA in March 1979 that it will stage a public demonstration to protest the impending increment in the price of rice on April 14, 1979. Government was swift to announce on public radio the banning of the demonstration and that anyone found on the streets will be shot on sight. A stalemate continued despite behind the scenes efforts at negotiations by church leaders and opinion leaders like Albert Porte who obtained guarantees from the PAL leadership that the demonstration will be called off if the government guarantees their peaceful assembly early April 14 to inform their people of the suspension of the demonstration which was planned for 3:00p.m. that day. The PAL leadership explained that word of the demonstration was widely circulated by government's public threats on public radio banning the demonstration and since they had no such access to public media to inform the people in advance, the assembly was the only forum to do so. The President, under pressure from his cabinet, not wanting to appear weak or a "softie" stiffened his stance that there will be no assembly of sort, that governments do not make compromises. Albert Porte's overtures were thwarted and on Good Friday, April 13, 1979, uncertainty loomed throughout the land; what was to come the next day was anybody's guess.

### **6.2.2. Rocking the Boat: April 14 Civil Unrest**

On the fateful morning of April 14, 1979, government security forces, including the military, were deployed on the major streets of the city. As thousands converge on the city center from Bushrod Island, and surrounding urban slum districts, PAL Offices on Gurley Street was besieged by security forces at dawn. They broke into

the offices and ordered the crowd to disburse. As more and more people thronged the office, the security forces including police and military reinforcement, were overwhelmed and the police resorted to tear gas. Frenzy broke out with angry crowds moving in all directions. Shots were heard from the Gurley Street location, Broad Street, the vicinity of the Ministry of Information near the Executive Mansion and elsewhere sporadically. A planned peaceful demonstration had gone amok even before it began at 3:00p.m. Word of the shooting and killing spread like bushfire as more and more people joined in the fray. Massive looting and vandalism was the reaction from an armless, frantic but relentless mob. It was rumored that the mob was armed but no report of death amongst the security forces was reported; compared to several hundreds of civilian fatalities including deaths.

The police under "shoot-to-kill" orders of the Minister of Justice, Oliver Bright, and the Director of Police, Varney Dempster, were vicious in dealing with armless citizens and undoubtedly responsible for the fatalities. The military, which was more sympathetic to the causes of PAL and seemingly opposed to the increase in the price of rice, stood idly by as the mob ravaged the city, and in many instances, protected the mob and themselves participating in the looting. Monrovia "stood still"! The Government lost control of the situation; no one seemed to be in charge. The Government invoked its peace pact with the Republic of Guinea and called in Guinean troops, who came in, violently put things under control, ended the disturbance and restored order. Under the pact countries could assist the other in cases of foreign aggression - this was an internal civil disorder - and the military was incensed at government's actions.

The action of the military, comprising mainly poor, wretched and down trodden members of the Liberian society, should not surprise anyone. The military in Liberia was much neglected. Before 1980, the military profession appealed to Liberians for different reasons. Some joined to avoid paying the frequent dues that government officials imposed but performed free labor for government officials. Others joined to acquire some wealth through the exploitation of the interior peoples; taking their cattle, rice, chicken, etc. Recruits of the Frontier Force were for the most part illiterate tribesmen. Their commanding officers were themselves high school graduates or dropouts. In the early days, they were trained to suppress native Liberian insurrections and expand the boundaries of the new state. They were also used to enforce law in indigenous communities; collect government taxes and government rice, chickens, and cattle. Soldiers were used to recruit labor for the construction of public roads and buildings, and laborers on plantations and the farms of government officials. The indigenous peoples endured the longest suffering and greatest humiliation at the hands of the soldiers. It was common in those days for a soldier to publicly flog a chief who could not come up with enough laborers to work freely on the farm of a government official. The Liberian frontier force later became the Armed Forces of Liberia. The situation was no different from that of the force.

Recruits were indigenous males who were illiterate or semi-literate. The army received sub-standard military and academic training. Army personnel were trained to be brutal and many of the soldiers were used as watchmen or private bodyguards of government officials. On the whole, the army was neglected, overlooked, underpaid and underestimated. The discontent and contempt of the military for the government was exasperated by the incident of April 14, 1979. Tension in the air was very high. Several opposition PAL members were arrested. Government, in a public announcement, acknowledged the deaths and declared that the corpses had buried them in a mass grave on Gurley Street where PAL had its meetings. As a consequence, the government's credibility and stability was considerably diminished.

A Presidential Commission on National Reconstruction was established to look into root causes of the civil disturbance. It was headed by Nete Sie Brownell (1894-1979) whose daughter, Mary Brownell, is the mother of Henry Boima Fahnbulleh, Jr., son of the jailed diplomat of the Tubman era. The Commission identified socio-economic disparities as the cause of the crisis and said:

“They are in real sense a culmination of more than one hundred years of a national leadership that appears to have eroded its constituents’ participation in a meaningful way. The surfacing of these problems which the events of April 14 occasioned could nevertheless be viewed as a consequence of continuing decline of the quality of the social mores and principles provided for in our constitution”.

Among the Brownell Commission's recommendations were the following:

- a. That because the Liberian people were expressing concern not only for those imprisoned in connection with the April 14 incident but also about those directly responsible for the death by shooting of unarmed citizens, the Commission “recommend that general amnesty be granted those arrested. Such a step would help tremendously to bind the nation's wounds, promote the national image, diffuse tension, and render more conducive the atmosphere for national reconstruction.”
- b. “The people have suggested that the members of the Cabinet and other officials who, through their official conduct, directly or indirectly contributed to the events of April 14, especially the Director of Police and the Ministers of Justice (Oliver Bright), Agriculture (Florence Chenoweth), Defense (Burleigh Holder, son-in-law of the President) and Finance (James T. Phillips) stand indicted in the public eye. To restore full credibility to the Executive Government, the Commission recommends that their

official conduct in relation to the causes leading to April 14 be investigated.”

- c. “With reference to serious conflict of interest involving public officials to the detriment of the struggling masses, the Commission recommends that the President appoint a committee of well-considered persons to prepare a Code of Conduct. Elements to be included in such a Code should be: That all principal government officials shall be required to declare their total property and cash assets before taking office and shall be fully audited before they are removed from office...”

Before the President’s public reaction to the Brownell Commission Report, he consulted, in a joint meeting, with his Cabinet and the Committees on Executive of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Tolbert’s substantive reaction to what he had heard was that, contrary to what some of the officials suggested, he never intended not to take appropriate action on the Report. He added: “If you have acted in service to the country, I thank you. I will react in service to the country.” He dismissed the idea of submitting the Report to another committee for study, pointing out that a draft of his own statement to the nation was in the works. He announced that he would address the nation on the Report.

True to his word, President Tolbert addressed the nation on June 22, 1979. The dramatic announcement he made was to accept the recommendation on amnesty to those in prison and held responsible for leading the planned demonstration. Accordingly, he ordered their immediate release. The palpable tension in society was considerably eased by this action. Other measures subsequently taken by the President included establishing a Code of Conduct Committee, which was headed by former Secretary of State J. Rudolph Grimes. There was a cabinet reshuffle, and an attempt to revitalize the ruling True Whig Party. Unfortunately, none of these latter moves had the impact of the amnesty and release of his youthful opponents. The amnesty made possible the holding in Monrovia in July of the 16<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Organization of African Unity.

Following the African conference, conflict in society quickly resurfaced. The Mayor of Monrovia elections were scheduled for November 1979 but had to be postponed indefinitely. Dr Amos Sawyer announced his bid for the office of Mayor of Monrovia City as an independent candidate to challenge the establishment’s candidate, Chu Chu Horton of TWP. Controversy soon brewed when the government attempted to enforce a long-standing “property clause” provision of the election laws requiring all voters to own real property to vote in any general and special elections. Two previous elections – Tolbert’s Election in 1975 and Bennie Warner’s Elections as vice president in 1977- were held without the enforcement of the property clause. Doing so after Sawyer’s candidacy announcement was popularly received, was seen as a

clear design by the Government to stifle independent candidacy and disenfranchise the majority and tightened the hegemony's hold on power. Amidst the controversy, the President on October 29, 1979 held meeting with MOJA, PAL, TWP leaders, and leaders of the religious community; announcing the postponement of mayoral elections until the property clause requirement was repealed. To date, the Mayor of Monrovia position has never been opened for elections.<sup>2</sup>

In rapid succession the following events occurred – January 8, 1980, the People's Progressive Party (PPP) was legally registered – the first political party to do so since 1955 when the Reformation and Independent True Whig Parties were banned; even after that, the Government allowed rumors to go amok that it was planning to ban the party and arrest its leaders. On March 3, 1980 the PPP staged a “mid night march” on the Executive Mansion to prevent what many termed “a right wing coup”. On March 7, 1980, the PPP issued a provocative “Declaration of Intent” statement calling on both the President and Vice President to resign. March 10 Tolbert addressed a joint session of the Legislature, hewing to a hard line against his opponents; March 28, an Act of the Legislature banned the PPP and a government dragnet was set, and a large number of officials and sympathizers of the PPP were arrested, from around the country, detained and tortured throughout March and early April.

As the first anniversary of the April 14, 1979 civil unrest drew nearer, rumors flourished that the Government intended to hold sham trials and execute 13 members of the PPP on the day of the anniversary. Against the backdrop of recent trials- Albert Porte, Edward Gberie cases, etc – the public standing of the Judiciary was very low and many did not find the rumor far-fetched. Besides, Government allowed the rumors to fester and did nothing to dispel or counter them. On April 12, 1980, two days before the anniversary of the April 14, 1979 crisis, the President was assassinated and the government overthrown in a military coup d'état that saw in its wake the subsequent execution of 13 ranking members of the oligarchy from all three branches of the TWP government; the killing and detention of several others before and during the coup ensued.

### **6.2.3. Background to a Major Political Feat**

Tolbert's political legacy of transitioning from autocracy to democracy was fraught with challenges as the case has always been in other situations. Significant political skills and good luck are essentials. These seem to have been in short supply for Tolbert. His political tolerance marked by significant dialogue with his opposition

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<sup>2</sup> Recent Supreme Court decision interpreting the Constitution to mean that mayors can be appointed by the President.



before and following the April 14<sup>th</sup> event appears to have been judged as weakness by a political culture that had come to expect decisiveness, in the form of autocratic rule, from the presidency. Nonetheless, political tolerance must count as a legacy even if its contours remain to be determined or questionable. Tolbert had exhaustive conferences, with Albert Porte, and groups that include Episcopal Bishop George Browne, Baptist Pastor E. Tormu Reeves, Amos Sawyer, Togba Nah Tipoteh, Gabriel Baccus Matthews, student leaders at the University of Liberia, etc. One captures a leader almost craving for collaboration with his interlocutors. Some were reluctant to respond because of the president's seemingly unflinching ties to the old guard politicians, though weakened, but yet not severed. Politically and otherwise vulnerable, he was brought down in the coup d'état of April 12, 1980 with far reaching implications for the future peace and stability of the nation drawing into serious question the role of Liberia's traditional partner, the United States.

Tolbert's youthful military executioners and successors accomplished a major political feat no one believed they could have done on their own. They brought down an aged autocracy with supposed close ties to the United States, and in the midst of the cold war. The nature and dynamics of the cold war environment and the centralist posture of the Liberian Government further raised additional questions about external collaborators with the Liberian soldiers. At any rate, implications and expectations were high that the coup will redress or resolve the issues that have kept Liberians at loggerheads since the founding of the state. And in this regard, the symbolism of indigenous underdogs toppling an entrenched repatriate elite establishment was overpowering.

The early 70s saw a continuation of strong US-Liberia economic and strategic relationship under Tolbert. The Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, (Firestone) 1926 agreement was procured with the support of the US Government to tap Liberia's significant rubber resources at terms very favorable to Firestone in exchange for a US\$5m loan to settle Liberia's overdue foreign debt. Liberia, under the agreement, leased a contested 1,000,000 acres of fertile, arable land for 99 years at a price of 6 cents per acre. Firestone, as a US interest, became a significant economic presence and employer in Liberia.

Besides, Liberia's other natural resources, diamonds, iron ore and timber, ensured a steady stream of US currency into Liberia until the late 70s. Major American Banks, Chase and Citi Banks, each had operations in Liberia at the time. President Jimmy Carter visited Liberia in 1978. The Liberian Government prepared a memo, "*Carter Memo*", analyzing US-Liberia relations and including proposals for US economic assistance in areas such as health and agriculture. The US subsequently estimated its economic interests in Liberia to be in excess of US\$300m in assets.

Liberia sided with the US in both world wars I and II and in 1942 signed a defense pact with the US which characterized a period of strategic developments including construction of roads, the Roberts International Airport (RIA), and the Freeport of Monrovia. Also in 1959, the US and Liberia signed a mutual defense pact, which gave Liberians the widely held belief and sense of security that the US would come to their aid in case of attack. This strategic relationship was nurtured by President Tubman till his death in 1971.

From a US perspective in the 1970s, Liberia was viewed as a longstanding politically aligned ally in West Africa as an important counterweight to the Cold War influence of the Soviet Union in Africa. In 1979 the US identified its strategic interests or assets in Liberia to include:

- i. unrestricted access to Roberts International airport;
- ii. the right to establish military installations in the Free Port of Monrovia “should they become necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security”;
- iii. Operation of a Voice of America relay station;
- iv. Operation of an area telecommunications office, providing communications for 34 US Embassies and Consulates in Africa; and
- v. Operation of an Omega navigational system ( a nautical and aeronautical navigational beacon)

Notwithstanding the US “strategic interest”, Tolbert adopted a more conciliatory policy towards non-aligned countries to indicate that Liberia was also non-aligned. Soviet, Chinese, North Korean and Cuban diplomats became stationed in Monrovia. This departure from the longstanding US-Liberia traditional relationship and political alignment was illustrated most clearly during the 1973 Yom Kippur war between Egypt, Syria and Israel when Liberia severed ties with Israel and supported the Arab side in stark contrast to the US policy and decisions. Additionally, the *Carter Memo* in 1978 indicates that *President Tolbert regarded the benefits of the US relationship with Liberia as less than adequate, stating: “one would think that a country 130 years old with a friend having means such as the United States should be far more advanced than she is today.”*

By the mid 70s, the close relationship between Liberia and the US had begun to deteriorate as social and economic conditions in the country worsened. Following the establishment of ECOWAS in 1975, Tolbert sought to renegotiate Liberia’s contract with Firestone, obviously not favorable to the US, and requested credit from

several American banks. In 1979 Tolbert refused to allow the bunkering of the US Rapid Deployment Force at Roberts International Airport. This refusal embarrassed both the CIA and the Pentagon who were now prospecting for leadership change in Liberia, lending support to Major William Jarbo, a US trained Ranger.

Tolbert, in discussions with US Officials, blamed the Soviet Union for the riots but the US was skeptical and disagreed with President Tolbert. In May 1979, the US analysis of the incident and events of April 14, 1979, concluded that the proximate cause of the riots was “the exploitation of an emotional issue, the price of rice, by an opposing group which had nothing to lose by holding an unauthorized demonstration. The inept handling of the demonstration by the security forces ... provoked the mob and led quickly to an anarchic situation with no one in control”. The US skepticism about Russia’s involvement was accompanied by its position that it was President Tolbert who steered Liberia toward the non-aligned countries, and that the US could take advantage of the current social unrest to steer Liberia back to the US sphere of influence.

One other significant development during this period was the emergence of strong and credible opposition to the government of President Tolbert. In the early 1970s, two pivotal groups emerged in Liberia. The Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA), a radical movement composed of members of the Liberian intellectual community, was founded in Liberia in 1973. Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians founded the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL), in the United States in 1975. MOJA and PAL embraced militant African nationalism and Marxism respectively. Both movements became the first formidable opposition to the True Whig Party and its policies. MOJA became particularly vociferous against Tolbert’s regime. The movement had a Pan-African agenda and was seriously opposed to Apartheid and neo-colonialism, and eventually oligarchy in Liberia. Two prominent leaders of MOJA and PAL were Dr Amos Sawyer and Bacchus Matthews, respectively.

The leadership of the True Whig Party, especially President Tolbert, did not initially take MOJA and PAL seriously. In fact, in most government circles, the movements were regarded as nothing more than irritating enclaves of starry-eyed youth, scholars and demagogues. Ironically, it was this initial governmental nonchalance that provided MOJA and PAL with the much needed space, not only to ventilate their militant message across the young and restless populations of Liberia, especially the swelling ranks of the poor, illiterate and disenfranchised, but also to cultivate the support of the disgruntled and disenchanting members of the AFL. The Marcus Garvey School in Monrovia, which was eventually shut down by the Government for “teaching socialist materials” was a place of academic training and consciousness for members of the AFL at night by volunteer teachers - members of MOJA. Coupled with this were the appalling state of infrastructure and the gruesome lack of it, in most parts of the country. Schools, electricity, safe drinking

water, healthcare and other basic amenities were simply either nonexistent or in extremely poor state in the greater part of Liberia.

### **6.3. The Military Interregnum: Highlights of the Second Republic (1980 – 1990)**

On the morning **April 12, 1980** seventeen enlisted men and non commissioned officers of the Armed Forces of Liberia<sup>3</sup> marched on the Official residence of the President, the Executive Mansion, where President Tolbert was sleeping and shot him in the head; killing several others on their forward march to the President's bedroom. The soldiers, most of who were involved with the illicit diamond trade to supplement their meager incomes, were kinsmen, friends, and students of Marcus Garvey and/or relatives of the detained politicians. They had earlier participated in the April 14 riots and charged the Tolbert government with rampant corruption, and violation of human rights, nepotism and misuse of public offices. The Constitution was suspended, about 80 prisoners were mistreated, and a backlash against Americo-Liberians led to confiscation of their properties. Under the True Whig Party more than a century rule, personal wealth became the byproduct of involvement in politics and government rather than entrepreneurship. Those outside the True Whig oligarchy or not beholden to it were prevented from acquiring an independent source of economic influence. Large business firms were almost all foreign owned and therefore, depoliticized but expected and made contributions to the party and provided jobs for politically well connected Liberians. Liberian owned businesses were either small businesses run by those without political stature or larger enterprises owned but not operated by government or party officials that profited from government preferment. By the time of Tolbert's death and the overthrow of the TWP Oligarchy 60% of the GDP was controlled by 7% of the population; all of whom were Americo-Liberian families who had ruled Liberia for over a century.

Prior to the event of April 12, 1980 President Tolbert had had the unnerving experiences of security lapses that threatened his personal security. While attending a program at the E.J. Roye Building in Monrovia, the President was stuck in the elevators for a considerable while without explanation. At his home in Bentol, there was power outage for over thirty minutes without any presence or alarm from his security details and again without explanation. Whilst the Executive Mansion was being attacked by the band of young soldiers, the President's Director of Police, Wilfred Clark was on the grounds of the Executive Mansion, monitoring the situation and reporting to his superior, Christopher Minikon, by radio and did nothing else. On the very early morning of the coup, at least one eye witness' or would-be benefactor of the new establishment, account reveals that a Caucasian – "white man"- was seen "*with my own eyes, wounded and struggling coming from the*

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<sup>3</sup> The Liberia Frontier Force was transformed into the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and February 11 each year is celebrated as Armed Forces Day.

*public procurement office crossing the flower garden before the mansion where traffic lanes interchange, and I quickly drove home.” Another strong indication of foreign involvement in the 1980 coup came from the Honourable H. Boimah Fahnbulleh, Jr. the day following the coup: “I saw the American political officer standing in the mansion yard near his car and whilst taking a look on the other end, I saw the American military attaché in his gray (sic) jump suit sitting with Doe and few other guys under the hut. Thereafter, I ask Dr. Tipoteh, do you see what I am seeing, than he said yes. Nevertheless, within a moment, Dr. Tipoteh, asked the American political officer, what are you doing here? In response, he said, I am the liaison to the new government.*

The new military government of the People’s Redemption Council (PRC) was established with Master Sgt Samuel K Doe as Head of State. Libya’s Muammar Kaddafi was the first to recognize the new military government. All political prisoners released. Many, if not all, of the detainees were given government posts in the new government. Other members of PAL and MOJA not in prison were also given senior cabinet posts. The Junta’s first official speech was written on the campus of the University of Liberia by Dr Amos Sawyer, Head of MOJA, and others on request of Dr George Bolay, a member of PAL and the new Minister of State for Presidential Affairs.

As the first non Americo-Liberian Head of State, Samuel Doe initially enjoyed great popular support. The summary public execution of 13 former members of the Tolbert administration on April 22, 1980, including Tolbert’s Foreign Minister C Cecil Dennis who was denied asylum by the US, soon made it apparent, however, that the Doe regime could pose a great threat to human rights in Liberia. The new PRC Justice Minister Chea Cheapoo justified the executions saying “we had to act as the people wanted it”. Yet early years of the Doe administration represents the height of US involvement in Liberia amounting to over US\$500 million. This raised speculation further that the US had backed Doe’s coup because of Tolbert’s non-aligned policies. The US position is that it was necessary to protect their assets and counter the spread of socialism. Liberia became the highest per capita aid recipient in sub-Saharan Africa and Doe the highest recipient ever, much more than that received by all previous Liberian government administrations combined.

Initial decisions of ECOWAS to ostracize Doe and his administration over the coup and assassinations, was overcome by US diplomatic efforts and overtures to West African leaders on Doe’s behalf. New Foreign Minister Gabriel Baccus Matthews announced Liberia would suspend obligations to ECOWAS in retaliation. In August 1980 US direct assistance to Liberia was increased with the signing of two agreements committing a total of US\$17 million in that year alone. By 1985 aid to Liberia was at an all time record high which American sources attributed to the solidification of Doe’s pro-Western stance. Doe closed down the Libyan Embassy in Monrovia and reduced the staff of the Soviet Embassy by May 1981. General Thomas

Weh-Sen, Doe's Deputy and three other members of the ruling PRC were executed that same year in prison without a trial for "plotting a socialist coup to unseat Doe".

In 1982 President Doe visited President Ronald Reagan in Washington which led to continued and additional US support for the Doe Administration. The mutual defense pact between the US and Liberia was modified, reversing Tolbert and granting staging rights to the US on 24 hour notice at Liberia's sea and airports for the US Rapid Deployment Force. US military assistance also increased with training, arms supplies and reconstruction of the deplorable and shameful BTC Barracks.

The refrain heard widely that those who had perpetuated the unjust socio-political system were out of the way and Liberia now had a fighting chance to set things right, at least in the interest of the "masses", was fading with growing disgruntlement. But in political terms the coup had been executed on behalf of the political agitators that constituted a part of the opposition on the left. For this reason they felt an obligation to participate and lend leadership to a junta of inexperienced and half literate military leaders. Not approaching the military government with a common political, military, social and economic agenda, they entered the government on individual or personal considerations thus leaving their fate and that of their organizations and the nation's to chance. They clamored, and rightfully so, for change; but when change was eventually surrendered, they were unprepared. The PAL leader Gabriel Baccus Matthews was reportedly offered leadership of a new government, something he perhaps wisely declined in preference to the Minister of Foreign Affairs position. All overtures to Dr Amos Sawyer from the junta were declined, except Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Commission, which he accepted.

Issues of the politics of personalities (within MOJA and PAL) and of groups (clamoring ethnicities) soon became apparent with manifestations of cracks in the unity of the PRC itself. Elements of the political left were branded "socialist" and purged off the government just as was some members of the PRC. The military began to articulate or live a revolution of entitlement. A new political elite emerged. Its culture of politics was hardly different from the regime it had brought down. Corruption, political intolerance and human rights violations marred the public image and standing of the regime. This situation induced a realignment of the Liberian political map as the jockeying for power ensued within and outside the military. Rumors of coups and counter coups abound. Doe's much feared and respected Defense Minister and close ally, Gray D Allison, threatened Doe's power base by his sheer popularity with the military. He was framed for plotting a coup against Doe and a police officer, Joe Lesolee, was coerced to provide false testimonies against Allison which would put him away forever at the notorious Belle Yallah maximum prison where he met his fate during the Taylor's uprising.

By 1985 Doe had eliminated more than half of the 17 men who along with him upstaged the TWP Government and attempted to institutionalize an ethnic-based hegemony of his own ethnicity; crack down on his political opponents including the violent invasion of the University Campus in 1984 by the military under his infamous “move or be removed” orders to the military. With the momentary exercise of “force majeure,” military leader Samuel K. Doe hijacked the elections of 1985 and declared himself winner after handpicking a 25-man committee to recount the ballots when it became clear he was losing. The US Reagan Administration supported the outcome and validated the results as a “movement toward democracy”. Doe has won the first round. The political contest spilled into the streets on November 12, 1985 when General Thomas Quiwonkpa mounted his second bid to unseat Doe. Even though it appeared that the entire security network caved in on hearing the General’s announcement on radio, Doe had prior knowledge of the General’s adventures, commanded his loyal forces to play low why they lay in wait for the General to strike and exhaust himself. The insurgent General announced that the government had been overthrown, by the National Patriotic Forces (NPF), Doe was in hiding and surrounded without any chance of escape.

Meanwhile, the entire top brass of the Police with the knowledge of its Director, Wilfred Clarke, decided to surrender itself at the BTC to the insurgents without any evidence that the Commander-In-Chief, Samuel K Doe was captured, has surrendered or dead. Lt Col Jimmy Smith was instructed to take the officers to the BTC and proceed to the Director’s residence to pick him up. Officer Smith arrived at the Director’s and was instructed to take him, Police Director Wilfred Clarke to the Executive Mansion to meet General Quiwonkpa and “everything will be alright”. Enroute, the Minister of National Security, Christopher Minikon was picked up. To their shock and bewilderment General Smith greeted them at the entrance of the Executive Mansion and told them President Doe was on the ground floor and will receive them. Officer Smith dropped off the Director and went away only to hear on police radio that we was a traitor and was wanted for arresting the Director of Police, Wilfred Clarke. Arrested, he was taken to Director Clarke who sent him away to the Executive Mansion where he was listed for execution as part of a fourth batch of “traitors” being executed by Col Harrison Pennue and Youbo Tailey. The first three batches were executed in their presence on the grounds of the executive mansion and taken away for burial. Included in the batch of four was General Zayzay in whose interest a rescue mission by General Roudolph Kolako appeared and threatened both Tailay and Pennoh that they themselves will be executed on the spot if they shot anyone. Officer Smith was saved but remanded in prison for over nine months at the same time as Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and subsequently released but dishonorably discharged from the service of the National Police.

### 6.3.1. A failed Coup and an Ethnic Feud

The General Thomas Quiwonkpa coup had failed even before it began. The General entered Liberia through the Sierra Leonean border without his logistics officer, General Weah who was killed in cross fire at the border with Liberia leaving the General without the map of the operations and a logistics coordinator. The episode resulted in a bloody battle involving Doe loyalists and his nemesis, Quiwonkpa, during which the General was killed and his body mutilated and cannibalized. It was payback time. Ethnic Gios and Manos were direct victims of reprisals in Monrovia, Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties. Doe was inaugurated first President of the Second Republic of Liberia in January 1986. A purge against the Nimba people in the military, security forces and especially in Nimba County was led by General Charles Julu, head of Doe's Executive Mansion guard.

This reprisal against the Nimba people made Doe increasingly unpopular and isolated. His coup and ascendancy to power which was widely welcomed, not only by the indigenous people of Liberia who had languished for over a century under humiliating and excruciating social, political, cultural subjugation, but also across Africa where many saw the development as bolstering the continent's quest to rid Africa of all forms of colonial domination, became regrettable and denounced. The Americo-Liberian government, although was mainly composed by nominally Africans, it was widely regarded as somewhat colonial in nature, given its pedigree in the supremacist legacies of the American Colonial Society (ACS).

The cacophonous encomiums that heralded Samuel Doe into the Executive Mansion in 1980 soon transformed into penchant discordant tunes. Opposition to the Doe-led "democratically elected government" rapidly swelled as Doe became not only inclined towards pocketing State resources, but also literally went out on a rampage against perceived and real political opponents with vengeance. By 1988 the US was embarrassingly disenchanted with Doe's human rights records and corruption in his government. Evidence mounted that aid money was lost perpetually to corrupt officials in the Liberian government, so that aid was not getting to citizens for whom it was intended. Doe's Government did not cooperate with US accounting experts sent to assist and under the Brook's Amendment, aid to Liberia was suspended and resumed later but never up to pre-1985 levels.

Gross violations of human rights became the order of the day. Assassination of opponents became a choice tactic, while witch-hunting became a preferred method of engagement with those who did not, or were not thought to share Samuel Doe's rather abnegating vision of leadership. Samuel Doe chose to visit the inequities of Liberia's undeniably un-egalitarian past on all and sundry. Doe decided to remedy decades of neglect and exclusion by meting out dire reprisals to those who dared voice opposition to his government. He vengefully pursued the tribes of those who



were immediately connected to the government he disposed of, just as he pursued those with whom he had personal political scores to settle. In Samuel Doe's Liberia, the national treasury was transformed into a personal vault to be plundered by Doe and his accolades. In Doe's Liberia, there were no Americo-Liberians or indigenous Liberians as such; you were either for (or seen as) pro or anti Doe. There would be nothing in-between this invidious divide; only deaths, violence and psychopathic leadership.

A new conflict was joined. At its core were Doe and his largely Krahn and Mandingo allies, on one side, and on the other side were Mano and Gio (Dahn) sympathizers of the slain Quiwonkpa. Perhaps another characterization is that the majority of indigenous Liberians were incensed that a minority among them had appropriated power supposedly in the name of all of them; misusing or abusing it. Repatriate survivors of the bloody fight now stood on the political margins for opportunistic (or patriotic) engagement as the situation evolved. Opposition abroad, mainly in the US and the West African Sub region, intensified as almost all opposition politicians had fled the country. Amongst Doe's staunchest and most active political opponents in the Diaspora were Dr. Amos Sawyer and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, both victims of Doe's brutality, who, along with other exiles organized the Association For Constitutional Democracy in Liberia (ACDL) as a pressure group advocating in the corridors of Washington for a return to constitutional rule in Liberia without Doe.

A few critical pieces were soon brought together and resulted in an existential challenge to the Doe regime. The soldier-president had successfully liquidated almost the entirety of the 17-man group that staged the coup of April 12, 1980. The armed forces of Liberia had been purged of citizens from Nimba County amid a pogrom against Liberians of Mano and Dahn (Gio) ethnicities. Remnants of Liberians of Nimba provenance that fled the fight of 1985 into neighboring Cote d'Ivoire and elsewhere awaited an opportunity to consolidate in order to avenge what had befallen them. The enigmatic Charles Taylor showed up and worked his way into the leadership, combining the resentment of the dethroned TWP with the lethal fury of a vengeful Nimba people into a ferocious enemy soon to be unleashed. Tonia King, son-in-law of former President Tolbert, who played a lead role in the planning and execution of the aborted November 1985 coup, provided sanctuary in Ivory Coast for all dissidents following Doe's clamp down and Quiwonkpa's death. Archie Williams was the go-between who bankrolled Quiwonkpa's enterprise and guaranteed secured cash flow. Ivorian President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, still smarting from the brutal murder of his friend and colleague, President Tolbert, greatly facilitated the planning of the insurgency, as did the President of Burkina Faso who introduced Taylor to the Libyan leader. The latter two African Leaders participated for their own reasons. Tolbert's slayed son, Adolphus Benedict Tolbert and the Bourkinabe President, Blaise Compaore, were married to two daughters of Ivorian President Houphet-Boigny.

A pernicious insurgency had come to modern West Africa. The insurgency struck first on Christmas Eve, 1989. Before the end of 1990, Doe had been captured and tortured to death by a rebel leader from Nimba County and consequently his almost ten-year rule had ended. The ACDL which was the leading political opposition in the Diaspora was short-lived and split into two opposing views over support for Taylor's misadventure. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf led the pro Taylor elements while Dr Amos Sawyer led the opposition to any form of engagement or support to Charles Taylor. This, and all other forms of support to Taylor, would prove critical to Liberia's peace and stability as the nation remained mired in a complex civil war that lasted another 13 years. It must be pointed out, though that by the end of the first year of his rebellion, Taylor had lost popular support.

By the end of the Doe decade, rampant corruption and misuse of public office for personal gains became wanton and indistinguishable from that of the erstwhile TWP government he overthrew. Wealth was acquired not by any successful ingenious enterprise but by outright corruption and patronage. The following persons acquired wealth under suspicious circumstances. When public officials, their cronies and close relations' source of wealth become questionable and traceable to the public trust, the need for accountability arises to restore confidence, trust and integrity in public service. Samuel K Doe, Edward Slinger, William Glay, Edwin Taye, Ignatius Clay, Raleigh Seekie, Alvin Jones, Yudu Gray, Shad Kaydea, etc. became wealthy at the expense of the public treasury ...Complicity of Lebanese family business

## 7.0. THE LIBERIAN CIVIL WAR – 1990 – 2003

### 7.1. Taylor's Uprising, Human Rights violations & War Crimes (1990-1997)

Because the military regime ignored the developments of the 1970s, it erred in assuming that by the application of brute force, it would impose a new dichotomy, a Krahn hegemony (with a few politically marginal allies) against the wishes of a preponderant majority of Liberians. The brutal crushing of the Quiwonkpa coup attempt in 1985 was the ultimate in an apparent desire to ensure a Krahn hegemony. The insurgency, which came to be led by Charles Taylor, was the ultimate response, not just by Liberians of Nimba origins, but also by a population energized to resist political tyranny that sought to impose itself after supposedly liberating the country from 133 years of a perceived oligarchy drawn from descendants of repatriated Liberians. The insurgency, unfortunately, soon established an identity of its own as Liberia degenerated into a "rebellion without a cause." At one point, a seven-cornered fight as represented by seven distinct warring factions, engaged in a full-blown fratricidal civil war had gripped Liberia. When its bloody end came 14 years later, it left Liberia in ruins confronted by a dilemma – how to reconcile PEACE with JUSTICE.

On 24 December 1989, some one hundred "special forces" of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) crossed several Liberian government targets in the town of Butuo, in the Nimba County. Mostly drawn from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups of Nimba County that were persecuted under Doe's regime, they made rapid progress, overcoming initial setbacks at the hands of Doe's AFL. Responsibility for these setbacks created tensions in the movement and eventually saw the rise of a splinter INPFL.

The choice of Nimba County as a launch pad was deliberate and strategic as the NPFL ranks swelled overnight with willing and adventurous recruits seeking revenge. Charles Taylor convinced the people of Nimba that this rebellion was partly in response to their yearning. Scores of dissidents who festooned and congregated outside Liberia believed Taylor and hearkened to his call. Despite their differences, which became evident much later, they were united in one cause: eliminate Doe and his ethnic Krahn and Mandingo supporters and seize power, at any cost, which was denied them when Doe hijacked the presidential election victory of Jackson F. Doe in 1985. While pandering to this populist objective, Taylor also appealed to the deposed Americo-Liberian stock by pronouncing that his was to avenge the executions of 1980.

Early 1990, the AFL counter insurgency operation directly targeted Manos and Gios in Nimba County killing citizens en masse, burning villages and looting. Over 160,000 civilians fled to Guinea and Ivory Coast between January and May 1990.

Capt. James Chelly and Edwin Voker commanded the onslaught. At this time the United States military advisors in Monrovia were maintained and two of them were involved in the counterinsurgency but later withdrawn when protest against their presence mounted by anti-Doe Liberian elements in the US.

The deadly counterinsurgency mounted by the AFL, indiscriminately targeting mainly civilians, endeared the local population to the NPFL. A meteoric rise in the NPFL and Taylor's popularity guaranteed rapid gains as civilians not only shielded NPFL rag tag fighters posing as civilians, but also exposed the AFL strategic positions and assisted the NPFL maneuvers through strategic forest terrains and bush roads. This vital role of civilians made them palpable targets in previous wars by other factions and the NPFL itself when confronted by other factions or resistant forces.

From an initial few hundred, the NPFL rapidly grew into a vast irregular army occupying and controlling around 90 percent of the country by April 1990 (five months after the rebellion began), thereby forcing the US - backed Doe regime to collapse. A beleaguered Samuel Doe remained holed up in the Executive Mansion; the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) of Prince Johnson emerged as a splinter group of the NPFL opposed to Charles Taylor. The NPFL advanced within less than a mile from the stronghold of Doe at the Executive Mansion but the coup de grace was never to come.

At the same time, Doe's request and those of others interested in Liberia (like the Friends of Liberia –“FOL”) for the US to directly intervene was denied by the Bush Administration. A proposal which the US thought was the best for Liberia, for Doe to resign and go into exile in Togo and allow Charles Taylor to take power, was rejected by Doe. The White house did not endorse the plan. An earlier request from Doe to the US through emissaries including Winston Tubman, Emmanuel Bowier, etc to stop the war was rejected. The US no longer trusted Doe and would do nothing to stop the war. Its initial attempt at “proximity talks” failed as both parties (Doe and Taylor's representatives) insisted on direct talks. The US later conditioned its involvement on four principles which Doe must comply with in 30 days to guarantee US actions to halt Taylor: a) that Doe calls early elections in which he will not be a candidate; b) Doe establish an independent human rights commission not amendable to Doe; c) Doe lift the ban on media and newspaper entities; and d) release all political prisoners. As a show of good faith the US will organize a peace meeting in Sierra Leone at the US Embassy- a “neutral ground”. The delegation was advised that Doe was the most disliked leader in the world and at 40 years of age, he should take his money and leave Liberia otherwise “in October 1990 you will look around and you will not find him”. Doe rejected the conditions on counsel of his krahn kinsmen.

By now Taylor's three month ultimatum to Doe to quit office or his forces would over run Monrovia ended March 24, 1990 with Doe ducked in the security of the Executive Mansion. The NPFL proved incapable of dislodging Doe from his fortress. Initial expectations growing out of the NPFL rapid advances that the insurgency would end sooner rather later had dissipated; the war was stalemated as many more Liberians and supporters of the insurgency became frustrated; leading Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to publicly admonish the NPFL to end the war and sufferings, raise the mansion down and it will proverbially be rebuilt in three days.

The stalemate deepened to the disadvantage of the civilian population which lived constantly under fear, threatened, brutalized and killed. The fighting forces clearly frustrated exacted their energies on the civil and armless population trapped in their controlled territories. A humanitarian and human rights disaster was in the making. The NPFL militias, mostly ill-trained and trigger happy, were part of a band of a force less inclined to respecting the values of human rights but more inclined to blaming every individual not a member of their fighting forces for their malady. The NPFL deployed not less than 180 "special forces" into its mission and each special forces deployed, had under his command a personal army of not less than 200 men who were unleashed on the civilian population. With limited supplies, they lived off the labor and sweat of civilians in an unequal relationship that saw the population massively victimized, killed and properties looted; entire villages and towns were burnt and other times abduction, and many times forcefully displaced. Massacres, rape, torture, children recruitment into their ranks were pervasive as ethnic cleansing and ethnic profiling was standardized at every one of the hundreds of check points the NPFL operated throughout its vast controlled territories. The NPFL, clearly was operating a massive force of hoodlum, vengeful Nimba citizens, victims who joined out of fear, insecurity and protection of family members; yet, there were those who took arms to "settle old scores", loot and take advantage of a lawless institution to wield power, authority and acquire wealth. Anachronism of what became the NPFL was a cacophony in vain pursuit of power, with a single hierarchy in Charles G. Taylor who commanded his men to "pay themselves".

### **7.1.1 First Peace conference amidst worsening Human Rights & Humanitarian Crisis**

Food stock depleted as medical supplies were running out. Hunger, diseases and malnutrition combined efforts with stray bullets from skirmishes of a brutal rag tagged militia to incessantly inflict pains, sufferings, death and the most gruesome forms of abuses on a less than suspecting but, mundane population. The emergence of the INPFL very early in July 1990 did not help, but rather hurt the cause of the NPFL. The standing of the NPFL as the sole contender for power was undermined and its progress on the war front stalled since Prince Y. Johnson was much feared by the NPFL because of his exploit on the war front. INPFL forces proved much more

disciplined under the vicious leadership of Prince Y Johnson. A disciplinarian, he was intolerant of the excesses of his men. Death seemed to be the only penalty for any transgression. An entire community was victimized for the slightest suspicion of an individual and his execution style punishment with a silver pistol, (he describe it during testimonies) many times in the full glare of the public, was infamously common.

The AFL, having to contend with two opposing factions, was demoralized, frantic and paranoia, but defiant. Held up in the Barclay Training Center (BTC) and the surrounding areas of the Executive Mansion on Capitol Hill, Monrovia, The AFL took reprisals on the local population in an ethnic vendetta especially; against the Gios and Manos of Nimba County. Food and military supplies were running out as the AFL seemed resigned to its fate. Referred to as “Doe’s army”, a purged AFL had its ranks and files comprising meanly Krahn soldiers who bore the sophisticated automatic rifles and issued radio command and military instructions in the Krahn language. Secret killings and abduction by a death squad comprising George Dweh, Youboy Tailay, Jackson E. Doe and others operated without restraint of conscience, discipline or authority. The headless corpseS of unknow persons were seen in the streets as student leaders –Wuo Garbie Tappia, D. Momulu Lavela, Garlawo et al – were executed; Vanjah Richards, a sculptor, was mistaken for his brother the Rev. Walter D. Richards; Robert Phillips, once linked with the 1985 failed coup, charged with treason and released, was brutally murdered in his home at the airfield community at the end of the air strip which became a theatre of macabre killings. One of the assassins when asked by a mutual friend why they had to kill Phillips he said “you think we don’t know who we want; we could have killed you too but we know you are a native man; it’s the Congo people we want”.

Between June and August 1990, Liberia became a “butcher house” in the words of former Gambian President, Sir Dauda Jawara. Socio-economic conditions had deteriorated considerably. The trapped population was desolate; physically waned, hungry and ill. The parallel market flourished with looted goods from homes and the free port of Monrovia, all facilitated and instigated by the armed men and their bands of followers. The popular tones which heralded Taylor’s rebellion – “monkey come down” and “chucky must come”- were no longer heard, better, regretted. Family income depleted along with food stock. As more and more families were separated, ties were broken and young girls became the target of armed fighters. Women were targeted and raped, abducted as bush wives as they ventured out of their hiding places to fetch food. The younger girls with no clear sources of survival got “involved” with the fighters and prostitution became a way of life till the end of the conflict and even now in present day Liberia.

By this time Taylor was setting up deals for the exploitation of Liberia’s natural resources having being introduced to French and European interests. Dealings, illicit

in nature and character, in timber, rubber, gold and diamonds, including diamonds from neighboring Sierra Leone, would prove crucial to sustaining Taylor's war efforts and prolonging the conflict. The Secretary General of Quiwonkpa's NPFL, Moses Duopu, was killed on his return from Nigeria to Taylor's territories for claiming the Secretary General title of the new NPFL and disputing or seemingly eyeing the leadership of the NPFL; the AFL massacre 27 Gios and Manos families of the AFL in Monrovia, as 25 AFL soldiers escaped to seek refuge at the Methodist Church in Sinkor which was subsequently attacked. Also, Jackson F. Doe, David Dwayen, Justice Patrick Biddle, Cooper Teah, Gabriel Kpolleh, Photographer B.W. King, along with 80 other very prominent personalities associated with and living in NPFL- held territories were killed at the hands of NPFL "generals"; 500 ethnic Mandingoes, including an Imam, killed in Bakedu, Lofa County by the NPFL; a retaliatory killing of over 500 supposedly men, women and children from Nimba County were massacred at the St. Peters Lutheran Church by the AFL led by Youbo Tailay then under the command of Jackson E. Doe<sup>4</sup> was followed by the killing of another 250 ethnic Gios and Manos seeking refuge at the J F K Hospital killed by a group of AFL soldiers; In Buchanan and Monrovia, dogs were eating the dead bodies of human beings in the streets as men and women on the UL Fendell Campus unashamedly bathed together naked in a dirty little stale water better known as "Adam and Eve" creek.

Many, many more crossing through check points were killed at Spriggs Payne Airfield, Duport Road, Bushrod Island, Soul Clinic Mission, Old Road, Cotton Tree, Kakata, Iron Gate or God Bless You Gate, University of Liberia Fendell campus, Hende, Bong Mines, Barnesville, etc. They were killed on suspicion of belonging to one ethnic group or another; for being "an enemy", for looting; for their personal belongings including rice, cassava, snickers, cash, etc. ; membership with the NDPL, working for government of Liberia; having a pot belly, smelling or looking like a Krahn, Gio, Mano or Mandingo enemy; unable to speak any indigenous Liberian language and a host of other causes which justified Liberia being labeled a "butcher house".

By the time of the first peace meeting in Free Town, Sierra Leone, under the auspices of the ECOWAS Peace Plan, an extraction of the Inter-Faith Mediation Committee of Liberia, it became clear to ECOWAS that no one faction could boast of military advantage or victory and unless there was intervention to halt the carnage, Liberia will self-destruct as more and more innocent women and children would continue to suffer and die. Especially so, the OAU, UN and most notably the US, would have no direct involvement with Liberia, ECOWAS decided to intervene.

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<sup>4</sup> He is a serving Minister in the Johnson-Sirleaf government and a close relative to former President Samuel Doe.

The June 1990 Freetown peace meeting at the US Embassy failed because the NPFL refused to sign the ceasefire agreement which also called for the establishment of an Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU). The NPFL did not sign the agreement on advice of the US Political Officer in Monrovia who followed them to Freetown for what was dubbed "Operation Coca Cola". He told Thomas Woeweyu, NPFL Defense spokesperson, that the NPFL had the military advantage and did not have to negotiate with the Doe people. The meeting failed and the foundation was laid for a subsequent meeting in Banjul, the Gambia. Most of those attending the Free Town meeting, also later attended the Banjul Meeting, wrote Taylor a letter recognizing his military advantage and entitlement to lead the country once President Doe was out of the way.

### **7.1.2. ECOMOG Arrives under NPFL gunfire**

Emboldened by this level of support Taylor announced the formation of the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly government (NPRAG) in July and became angry that the Banjul Meeting established the IGNU in August without the NPFL notwithstanding that the NPFL was invited to attend. The NPFL claimed its delegation was held up at the airport in Banjul till the meeting was over. Gbarnga, Bong County became the seat of Taylor's *defacto* NPRAG government. Taylor avowed not to cooperate with the IGNU and resist ECOMOG's presence as an "occupation force". ECOMOG was formed as a peace keeping force of the ECOWAS.

Prince Y. Johnson who had complete control of the Bushrod Island area welcomed the arrival of ECOMOG on Liberia's Flag Day, August 24, 1990, under a barrage of missile attacks from the NPFL. It became necessary and ECOMOG assumed the posture and mandate of peace enforcement to separate the fighting forces and create a buffer between them and, a haven for the civilian population entrapped between ever changing frontlines and factional territories. ECOMOG's mandate also included enforcing a ceasefire and supporting the IGNU. Doe joined the INPFL in welcoming the ECOMOG. Both forces fast running out of supplies (Prince Johnson needed arms and Doe badly needed food) were anxious for a ceasefire and ill equipped to withstand any full scale NPFL onslaught which the NPFL had threatened and was planning.

The IGNU was formed in Banjul, Gambia, on August 30, 1990. Both Taylor and Doe rejected, but Johnson accepted it. Doe was captured at the temporary headquarters of the ECOMOG at the Free Port of Monrovia and killed along with some 70 members of his guard battalion on September 9, 1990 by Prince Johnson. A gun battle lasted for 90 minutes and Doe was seen tortured-to death- in a video documentary recorded by his assailant, Prince Y Johnson. At his death, violence spread throughout the country especially in Monrovia where his supporters went on the rampage and set fire to many buildings chanting "No Doe, No Monrovia". The



NPFL breached the holding ceasefire and attacked all AFL positions around the Executive Mansion in a bid to seize power. Over the next four days, the NPFL, INPFL, AFL and ECOMOG were involved in combat. Taylor accused the American Embassy and ECOMOG of orchestrating Doe's death. On November 21, 1990 IGNU was installed in Monrovia. A new ECOMOG Commander, Joshua Dogonyaro<sup>5</sup>, repelled the NPFL from within striking range of Monrovia, confined the AFL to the BTC Barracks and the INPFL to the remotest Caldwell Base on its Bushrod Island territory. By the time of the next peace conference in Lome, Togo in 1991, two *defacto* regimes were recognized in Liberia- IGNU of Dr Amos Sawyer and NPRAG of Mr. Charles Taylor. The US recognized none even though IGNU of Dr Amos Sawyer bore the standards of the Presidency and the Government of Liberia and represented the Republic of Liberia to the rest of the world.

### **7.1.3. Securing Peace with Additional Warring Factions**

Taylor was relentless and resistant; and unpopular. His personal agenda to become President of Liberia became very clear as was his disregard for the heavy toll on human life and suffering his ambition had on the people of Liberia. Increasingly unpopular, he lost the popular support of the Liberian people and his traditional political allies and financiers in Liberia, including Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, as the entire nation was held at ransom by Taylor and company. A marathon process of peace conferences and brokered peace agreements ensued as new warring factions emerged and became entangled in hostilities in desperate pursuit of power and wealth – hitherto monopolized by Taylor - in the name of peace and democracy for Liberia. The capture and brutal killing of Doe sent his Krahn and Mandingo followers in disarray. ECOMOG assisted hundreds of the remnants of Doe's loyalists to leave the country. Two trucks filled of native Krahn and Mandingoes convoy were captured from ECOMOG by the INPFL and apparently killed since they were never accounted for. Prominent Krahn intellectuals like Sam Todee were amongst those captured, detained in a container and killed. Languishing in Sierra Leone and Guinea, these vanquished supporters of Doe wanted revenge. A Mandingo faction, Movement For the Redemption of Muslims (MRM) founded by Alhaji Kromah and a Krahn faction, Liberia United Defense Force (LUDF) organized by a US trained Special forces officer who was also once Doe's Minister of Defense and Ambassador to Sierra Leone, Albert Karpah, together, merged into the United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) on May 29, 1991 in the Republic of Guinea. Karpah was murdered by Kromah's supporters for questioning and disputing Kromah's leadership of ULIMO.

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<sup>5</sup> A Nigerian who replaced the first ECOMOG force commander from Ghana Albert Quinoo. All subsequent force commanders were Nigerians. Nigeria provided the largest contingent of ECOMOG.

#### 7.1.4. Securing Peace: 16 Agreements Brokered and Broken

From Banjul to Bamako to Switzerland and Cotonou to Abuja, etc. peace agreements were brokered, and no sooner broken on political disagreements, as more and more factions emerged to “get a piece of the pie” which, was the political authority to access illicit wealth by corrupt means and the authority to exploit natural resources exclusively for the benefit of faction leaders. In these marathon peace negotiations, the military and ceasefire issues were normally resolved on the first day but the issues of who gets what “lucrative jobs” became intractable and the source of great conflict which prolonged peace conferences for weeks and sometimes months. A comprehensive listing of peace agreements follows:

1. Banjul Communique, ECOWAS plan, August 7, 1990
2. Bamako Ceasefire, November 28, 1990
3. Banjul Joint Statement, December 21, 1990
4. Lomé Agreement, February 13, 1991
5. Yamoussoukro I Accord, June 30, 1991
6. Yamoussoukro II Accord, July 29, 1991
7. Yamoussoukro III Accord, September 17, 1991
8. Yamoussoukro IV Accord, October 30, 1991
9. Geneva Ceasefire, July 17, 1993
10. Cotonou Agreement, July 25, 1993
11. Akosombo Agreement, September 12, 1994,
12. Acceptance and Accession to Akosombo Agreement, December 21, 1994
13. Accra Clarification of Akosombo Agreement, December 21, 1994
14. Abuja Agreement (I), August 19, 1995
15. Supplement to Abuja Agreement (II), August 17, 1996.
16. Ceasefire Agreement, June 17, 2003
17. Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement, August 18, 2003

All these agreements, except the Accra CPA (2003), were lacking in accountability mechanisms which left one warring faction after another to continue committing mass murders and gross violations of human rights including violations of humanitarian and international human rights laws and war crimes, with impunity. In fact, the Cotonou Accord sought to grant general amnesty to all combatants. The CPA was the seventeenth peace agreement since the outbreak of war in 1989. Indeed, it was comprehensive, covering a broad range of issues, and perhaps even more detailed and lengthy than previous agreements. Each new faction tended to be more vicious and callous than the one before it or the one it was established to resist. Fear,

dehumanization, rape, looting and employing children into factional ranks became acceptable norms of the war from one faction to another. Apart from the INPFL and MODEL no other faction adopted minimum standards or learned lessons from the deprecating and widely condemned actions of previous factions to militate with and mitigate the widespread and wanton abuses meted against the civilian population. Ethnic cleansing and profiling continued throughout the civil war with very brutal consequences. The Liberia Peace Council (LPC) of George Bolay in the South East, ULIMO in the Western and Southern belts and with Taylor in Central and Northern regions of Liberia, there was no escape or safety for civilians other than havens provided by ECOMOG in territories occupied by it. Overstretched, the NPFL established vigilant militias in its occupied territories to “watch its backs” and undermined community unity by pitting one community group against another. Some examples like the Lofa (the Mandingoes called it Lorma Defense Force) Defense Force (LDF), Royceville (others called it Congo Defense Force) Defense Force (RDF), Tasso Defense Force, etc.

ECOMOG became ostensibly embroiled in an intractable conflict which overstretched the resources and endurance of the regional force. Alliances and military support to smaller factions opposed to the NPFL became a strategy to undermine the capacity of the NPFL to wage war thereby compelling the NPFL to sit down and negotiate a peace with its opponents. More than a dozen peace agreements were brokered and broken when the parties returned to Liberia. All factions negotiated their interest at peace conferences/in peace agreements based on four principles: a) territorial occupation; b) lucrative positions in government; c) access to state resources and coffers; and d) unhindered access to natural resources. Whenever an occupied territory or factional position in government was threatened or altered the peace process would be threatened and derailed, and a new round of peace conference would be convened. Similarly, whenever accountability measures were adopted to limit access to natural resources, state coffers or the power, wealth and authority that comes with being in government, a new process of negotiation or renegotiation will be held only to strengthen the grip of the factions in no less measure. Against this background, the CPA granted the great majority of ministries in a transitional government to the warring factions that were just putting down their guns. All warring factions had their fair share in the spoils of government, having previously benefited from the spoils of war.

A strong desire to end the conflict and secure the peace, led the international community to consider arms embargo on Liberia and further sanctions on the export of raw materials; timber and diamond exports from Liberia. Rubber exports, especially by Firestone, continued throughout the conflict period without sanctions. The US Government made representations for the continuation of this trade during the conflict on behalf of Firestone. Firestone resumed full scale operations on January 22, 1992 pursuant to a memorandum of understanding signed January 17, 1992, with

Charles Taylor's NPFL awarding the NPFL US\$2 million annually in exchange for NPFL's protection. Firestone plantation was the launch pad for NPFL's infamous "Operation Octopus" attack on Monrovia and ECOMOG to unseat IGNU.

#### **7.1.5. Taylor's Deadly Surge for Power: Operation Octopus**

In 1992 Taylor, launched his infamous "Operation Octopus" on October 15; attacking ECOMOG positions and the suburbs of Monrovia, including the Caldwell Base of Prince Johnson who had earlier planned the operation with Taylor but later declined and called for ECOMOG's assistance when it was clear the NPFL had overwhelmingly infiltrated his base. The destruction in lives and properties in Monrovia was enormous. Prince Y Johnson was rescued by ECOMOG and resettled into exile in Nigeria. The combined efforts of ULIMO, AFL, Black Beret and ECOMOG denied a battered Taylor of victory. Taylor used the lull in hostilities after the **Yamoussoukro IV Accord** of October 30, 1991, to re-arm, reorganize and build up his armory while, requesting President Jimmy Carter to prevail on ECOMOG to reduce its heavy weapons in Liberia which was in "peace times". ECOMOG obliged to the request of President Carter. Octopus therefore, caught ECOMOG off guard without heavy weaponry and at a time when the Force Command was also changing hands. Human casualties were in the thousands, including ECOMOG's. Five American Catholic nuns with the Catholic Church in Liberia were brutally murdered by Christopher Vambo and others were amongst the notable Octopus casualties. John T Richardson, code named "General Octopus" was the mastermind behind the planning and execution of the dastardly "Operation Octopus", assisted by General John Teah, NPFL Commanding General.

By 1993 a conflict over allocation of allocated government jobs broke out in ULIMO between the Mandingo and Krahn factions. A bitter struggle ensued in Tubmanburg, Bomi County and the ULIMO faction was effectively split into ULIMO-J of Roosevelt Johnson (Krahn) and ULIMO-K of Alhaji Kromah (Mandingo). An attempt by ECOMOG to compel ULIMO-J to open the roads leading up to Bomi County proved fatal for ECOMOG and the entrapped civilian population. Scores of ECOMOG soldiers died in the battle; as did hundreds of children of starvation and they were buried on the Catholic St. Dominic Campus. As part of the NPFL's terror campaign to render IGNU and ECOMOG territories ungovernable, a June 6, 1993 attack at Harbel, Margibi County saw an infiltrating NPFL special Unit, under cover of dark, crept on innocent displaced civilians who were asleep, killing approximately 600 persons, including women and children. This attack was planned to give the impression that he AFL was responsible since Harbel, Firestone was under AFL control.

The UN Panel, the Wacco Commission, commissioned to investigate the incident, was deceived into believing AFL committed the atrocities. The TRC has determined

otherwise that the NPFL was the perpetrator of the massacre and survivors were taken to Gbarnga by NPFL forces. They were met by D. Museleng Cooper and Melvin Sogbandi amongst others, who told them, under threat of death, to implicate the AFL when asked by the international community. Charles Taylor visited the evacuated survivors pursuant to the scheme. Fellow perpetrators also admitted the NPFL responsibility and gave the TRC details on their role in the massacre and how they and others executed the mission and why. During this period, six Senegalese ECOMOG soldiers were also murdered by NPFL operatives in Vahun, Lofa County terrain.

The relationship between IGNU and NPRAG was, as to be expected, tense. Liberia was effectively divided into greater Monrovia and Greater Liberia of Charles Taylor's NPRAG. This divide was re-enforced by the introduction of new bank notes (liberty) by IGNU to counter spiraling inflation resulting from the former bank notes (JJ) being looted from commercial banks and containers which were in the hands of warlords including, Prince Johnson who was bitter and angered when possession of large amounts of the JJ bank notes could not be justified for which exchange was often denied. Although Taylor countered this by forbidding anyone in greater Liberia to use the new currency, it was soon clear that this move was hopeless as the new currency indeed triumphed in parallel and black markets.

On March 7, 1994, the IGNU was replaced by the first of three, Liberia National Transitional Governments (LNTG). The IGNU, which for many reasons, did not live up to expectations, had long survived beyond its mandated period, and the factions needed to be in Monrovia and get involved directly in government rather than by proxies. More factions were formed, the LPC, The Central Revolutionary Council of NPFL (CRC-NPFL) of Thomas Woweiyu, Samuel Dokie and Laveli Supuwood. LNTG I of Professor David Kpormakpor gave way to LNTG II of another Professor Wilton Sankawulo in August 1995 with faction leaders serving directly as members of the Council of State. Factional fighting which erupted in Monrovia on April 6, 1996, proved very destructive as Taylor, Kromah, and ECOMOG battled to subdue former ULIMO-J Leader, Roosevelt Johnson, in a power play bordering on revenge and the guise of enforcing the rule of law. The one hundred day fighting was notorious for its bloody impact, economic devastation and the resultant humanitarian disaster with over 80,000 internally displaced people seeking refuge at the US Grey Stone Compound in Mamba Point, Monrovia. The unresolved cross-factional issues of Kromah, combined with Taylor's political mischief, and miscalculation of Johnson's resistance, which, when combined with support from the LPC and the remnants of AFL soldiers in the BTC, proved most formidable for the big two and their accomplices. The untold suffering, property damage and death toll devastated Monrovia and collapse LNTG II. This was, perhaps, the worst fighting in three years. Death toll was high as all civil society activists in Monrovia went

underground to protect themselves. The prison was broken into<sup>6</sup> as newspaper offices were burned. Monrovia was massively looted by all factions and the warehouses and offices of international relief organizations and the UN were not spared. A total of 489 vehicles commandeered from the UN and other aid agencies at value put at US\$8.2 million constraining further assistance to a population desperately in need. As ECOMOG appeared ill-prepared and reluctant to intervene, initially, hostages were taken by the ULIMO-J faction and the civilians had little security for property or life. Like in all episodes of the Liberian conflict, civilians were rendered homeless; they lost homes and properties, suffered hunger and disease. ECOMOG base was a source of refuge for another 20,000 civilians who also sought refuge in offices at Mamba Point in Monrovia, relief warehouses, hospitals, etc.

The proliferation of armed factions only exacerbated the civilian sufferings and casualties. Prior to the April 6 fighting, all factions committed abuses including rape, murder, looting, assault, torture, etc. The burden carried by regional states in hosting up to 700,000 refugees from Liberia became apparent when thousands of Liberians seeking refuge in April and May on a poorly equipped vessel, the “bulk Challenge” remained trapped on high seas as no west African country would accept the vessel to dock in their waters. The US Government intervened and Ghana eventually accepted the ailing refugees, allowing the dilapidated vessel to dock.

On September 3, 1996, Madam Ruth Sando Perry was later to head LNTG III which led the country to legislative and presidential elections based on the experimental proportional representational system. Charles Taylor won and became the 21st President of Liberia on August 2, 1997.

## **7.2. Taylor Becomes President**

Far from being free and fair, as hailed by the world, the July 1997 elections which eventually saw Taylor in the Executive Mansion was held against the background of a devastating April 6 war just a year before. Also, these elections were held on the heels of a weary ECOWAS; over spent and anxious to be done with the Liberian imbroglio, and a wane population weary of war, was yearning for peace at all cost. Taylor literally threatened war if he was not elected president. “I spoiled it and it is I who will fix it”, Taylor would say. Bill boards “behind Taylor lines” in greater Liberia, Taylor’s held territories, which were not accessible to the opposition until barely months to the elections read “NO GHANGAY, NO LIBERIA”. The fear of what Taylor might do if he were to lose the election apparently played a great role in consternating many to vote for him. Perhaps the best expression of the grim paradoxes that catapulted Taylor into power was indicated by the common electoral

rendition by the teeming Liberian youths who supported Taylor: *"He killed my ma, He Killed My pa, I'll vote for him"*. Innocuous as this curt song may appear, it clearly summed up the climate of fear, trepidation and resignation that prevailed in 1997 when Taylor ran for the election that saw him into the Executive Mansion. Even though it was announced that Taylor won over 75% of all votes cast, the final results of the elections were never published.

### **7.3. A New War: Lurd – Model Insurgency: 2000 - 2003**

The reality of being President of Liberia did not dawn on President Taylor himself early enough to enable him succeed. International good will and the meekness of his people in submitting to his new status and authority were squandered. He maintained the same antics and disposition of the warlord he was eight years before. In his mindset, Monrovia was Gbarnga, and he did everything to resurrect and represent the defunct NPFL, as the national army of Liberia and the security forces in a wholesome manner to the exclusion of other armed factions. This was viewed as a major threat to the fragile peace. Perhaps the most significant public act performed by Charles Taylor within the first year of his election was to expel ECOMOG troops from Liberia in 1998. He claimed this was to enable the government control its security. Without doubt it was more in revenge for ECOMOG's stiff opposition to his military bid to take over the reins of power in Liberia by force of arms. Ex-commanders of the NPFL were given permission by the government to operate private security outfits for hire by the private sector businesses to guarantee their security. Reports of extortion, harassment and general lawlessness by these private security agents and government personnel were commonly heard without redress.

These initial acts brought the Taylor regime under immense pressure and challenges to its authority from international, regional and domestic forces. A series of governmental actions became portend of looming conflict on a national scale. Immediately preceding the elections an attempt to kill Taylor was allegedly foiled by ECOMOG. Taylor radio also claimed that LPC and ULIMO J were planning to wage another war should Taylor win the elections. President Taylor's Police Director's public display of brute force against arm robbers and journalist including, Phillip Wesseh of the Inquirer Newspaper, was unwelcoming; an opposition member of parliament, Samuel Johnson, was whipped by Taylor's Vice President security forces. On 27 November 1997 opposition member Samuel Dokie and family were killed by Taylor's SSS personnel and their charred remains were later discovered. In March 1998 Roosevelt Johnson complained that Taylor's SSS forces made attempts on his home more than once. Taylor did nothing.

By April 1998 the political climate in Liberia became tense due to a string of extra judicial killings and Taylor's intentions to control the security forces in manner and form contrary to the Abuja Accord that ended the civil war. There was a crackdown

on the press and mass media, and other civil society activists, while Taylor refused to cooperate with ECOMOG in demobilizing approximately 35,000 ex-combatants. Instead, Taylor re-armed and reintegrated many of his ex-combatants into the AFL without incorporating members from other armed factions. Without further training, they preyed on the civilian population leading to an increase in violent crimes throughout the country as the opposing LURD forces lurked on:

- a) November 28, 1997 the murder of Samuel Dokie and his family;
- b) December 16, 1997 the murder of Daniel Nyankan body found on freeway;
- c) April 1988 Mass grave discovered in Zorzor, Lofa County;
- d) July 10, 1988 Adoption and murder of Noah Flomo, a prominent market woman was taken by nine members of the SSS;
- e) September 18, 1998 Attack on Roosevelt Johnson 53 to 100 persons lost their lives;
- f) September 19, 1998 1,500 civilians executed in the aftermath of the September 18;
- g) September 19, 1998 murder of 13 krahn individuals on Shiefflin high way;
- h) August 10, 1999 massacre of 25 Quardu-Gboni individuals in Nekabozu, Lofa County;
- i) September 2, 1999 some 25 persons massacred in again in Nekabosu, Lofa County;
- j) January 2000 18 Mandingoes massacred in Bawon Town, Zorzor, Lofa County;
- k) January 2000 26 unarmed civilians killed on allegation of being LURD supporters in Gbar, Bomi County;
- l) January 2000 summary execution of 100 persons on ATU Gbatata Training Base ;
- m) Taylor sweep of the human rights community arresting journalist Hassan Bility ; human rights activist Aloysious Toe, Blamo Sieh and five others; and on April 24, 2002 human rights lawyer Tiawan Gongloe was arrested on spurious charges and severely beaten and tortured in prison; and



n) June 4, 2003 John Yormie and Isaac Vaye murdered by Benjamin Yeaten

Under these tense conditions, Roosevelt Johnson entered the country secretly with the aid of ECOMOG in Free Town and Monrovia. Taylor became frantic and increased pressures on Roosevelt Johnson when the latter declined the calls and overtures of President Taylor. On September 18, 1998, he was attacked by combined forces of specialized government security outfits to “flush” Roosevelt Johnson and his followers out of Camp Johnson Road. Roosevelt Johnson ran to the US Embassy and was flown out of Liberia. Several of his Krahn followers and kinsmen were arrested, charged with treason and subsequently convicted and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. The Supreme Court, the Gloria Scott Bench, on appeal from the defendants sustained the convictions, and in a bizarre way, increased the sentences. Taylor was generous in the use of executive clemency. A declining state of insecurity led to inflation in the city and additional hardship on ordinary people. Taylor on the other hand proved even more frantic and paranoia. He reshuffled his cabinet twice without explanation. In late February 1999 he fired his ministers of finance, state for presidential affairs and lands, mines and energy.

Taylor was keen to minimizing or eliminating all challenges to his authority. Attacks on civil society and the purging of his cabinet were common place actions of the President. On February 22, 2002, the Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Cllr. Frances Johnson Morris, was arrested at her offices and imprisoned in a criminal male cell by Police Director, Paul E. Mulbah, under the guise of “mistaken identity”, while Taylor was prostrating at a “Liberia For Jesus” public rally, surrendering Liberia to the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He authorized his Police Director, to close down two private radio stations, Radio Veritas, of the Catholic Church and Star Radio, for reporting that he was training Sierra Leone RUF fighters on his Gbatala training base. He said those two stations will never see the light of day again. Both stations are now operational. Taylor also came under keen international spotlight.

China broke relations with Liberia for its two china policy and the IMF scolded Taylor for unilaterally in a non-transparent way awarding “all previously unallocated mineral resources rights” in Liberia to a joint venture of Amelia Group of south Africa and the Liberian government known as Liberia Resources Corporation (LiberSCO). Taylor succumbed. No sooner a disagreement arose between President Taylor and ECOMOG Commander Victor Marlu over Taylor’s strategy for reconstructing the army. Marlu argued that under the peace accord it was the responsibility of ECOMOG to build the new army in an open and transparent manner. Taylor disagreed, citing sovereignty and Executive authority of his to raise the army. ECOMOG withdrew from Liberia and the international community pointed out Taylor’s support for RUF and admonished him to desist. Taylor denied

the allegations and called for proof even though it was public knowledge that RUF operatives, including Sam “Mosquito” Bockarie, had free movements in and out of Liberia and were literally operating and living in Liberia. The suspicion of the West African sub region, especially Guinea, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast was that the arms-for-illicit diamonds trade between Taylor and the RUF could further destabilize the sub region. Taylor’s intransigence led to the imposition of mandatory sanctions on Liberia and individuals involved in the illicit arms and diamond trade, including close associates of the president who stood to benefit from the illicit dealings involving the exploitation of Liberia’s natural resources. Taylor’s rule signal the continuation of authoritarian rule in Liberia leaving behind a legacy of poor governance, administrative malfeasance, corruption, intimidation and intolerance of opposition, threats, torture, terroristic acts against the population and summary executions reminiscent of his predecessor, President Samuel K Doe.

### **7.3.1. The LURD and MODEL Insurrections**

Taylor’s antics continued as president. His repressive policies at home, and the continued support for rebels in neighboring countries, soon attracted to him armed opposition from without. In 1999, incursions and skirmishes along the Liberian common border with Guinea continued. Not until 2000 that the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), a rebel group that had the support of Sierra Leone, Guinea and the US, began attacking the government of Taylor with US made weaponry. LURD mounted several deadly attacks from the northwestern front and was joined, in 2003, by the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), from the southeastern front. These two rebel groups staged a series of sustained attacks from both fronts against the Taylor government and insisted that the president should step down from the presidency.

There was a pattern of callous abuse and abandonment of the rights of civilian population continued. Reprisal killings on all sides, decapitation and disembowelment in the northwestern corridor of Lofa and Bomi Counties were common as the LURD forces and Government militia inflicted untold sufferings and killings on the innocent population. Black Saturday in Lofa and the Mahir bridge massacre in Bomi, were prominent features of this new war. At Mahir Bridge, in Bomi County, hundreds were loaded in pick-up backs for “transport to Monrovia” but were dumped in the river for being “supporters of LURD” by Benjamin Yeatin and Roland Duo. Black Saturday in Lofa County saw LURD massively killing residents of Voinjama City at which time the fighters compelled a lady to carry around in a wheel barrow the mutilated remains of her children, sister and husband, as meat on sale and, the local population was compelled to also purchase them. LURD fighters retained the proceeds. The atrocities included shelling of population centers, especially in Monrovia, with mortar rounds unrelentingly fired by LURD. Liberians jokingly refer to that experience as “more mortal” mocking the Guinean

who operated the equipment and the only English he is mocked to have spoken was "more mortar". In demonstrating Guinea's support for LURD he is scorned as asking members of his unit, presumably Guineans: "your mother there? A chorus "NO"; Your father there? "NO"! Then "more mortar". What became known as "world war I, II & III", referring to LURD's strike and retreat strategic attacks on Monrovia, revisited the horrors and persecution of the past on the civilian population in no less measure. Except for MODEL, which instructed its militias to only loot and not kill or rape, as a control measure, atrocities were minimized with looting as the hallmark of its engagements in the southeastern and central regions of Liberia. The scale of destruction and brutality, and the humanitarian catastrophe looming overhead, however, compelled a full involvement of the international community- UN, AU, USA, and EU - in coordination with ECOWAS - to stop the war. The International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) was created to do just that. President Charles Taylor, beleaguered and embattled without sources of fresh supplies of weapons, and slapped with a war crimes indictment and the unanimity of the international community led by US President Bush, Jr that he must leave, stepped down as President of Liberia and went to Nigeria to commence a new life of uncertainty in exile. In all of these hostilities, the suffering and persecution of the local population was always merciless. Economic hardship, rising unemployment and inflation, family break up or displacement imposed further strains on familial relationships with devastating impact on children, young girls and women. Education opportunities were lost or diminished as school closures meant lost of fees already paid and shortage of essential commodities led to price hikes and a declining living standard.

Throughout the conflict period, the traditional roles of women shifted remarkable to being major bread-winners. Men were the natural targets of advancing, occupying or resisting arm factions and, were therefore in hiding all the time. Women had to step in; performing household chores, selling or trading in consumable items across factional lines, providing food, securing shelter, medical needs and clothing for family members, maintaining the farm, bearing children and cooking for the family in the midst of war, violence and massive atrocities against the unsuspecting general population. This, not only led to, but increased their vulnerability and exposed them to all manners of violence and abuse. They were caught up in an intractable state of victimization that dehumanized them and sought to deprive them of their womanhood; in many cases the perpetrators succeeded. They were abducted and accused of being enemy spies on espionage missions because they dare venture out when no one dare to; they were raped, and compelled to be house or bush wives for the armed men and would be accused of supporting "rebels" of the opposing faction; they were also accused of being enemies for cooking for and serving the "enemy" while in captivity as servants, slaves and "infidels" or "kaffli". They were rejected by their own when liberated from captivity and returned home; husbands, children and relatives were condescending and suspicious; lacking in self-

actualization and low morale after years of abuse and a sense of inferiority, begging and prostitution become inconvenient realities; children begotten of these illicit relationships – “rebel baby”, “ECOMOG children”, “OTC Children”, “bastards”, “orphans”, “child without back or front”, were ostracized victims of stereotyping, stigma and a perfect target for recruitment into a marauding armed gang. A vicious cycle of debasement, violence, crime and human rights violations continued without notice, suspects or acknowledgement and accountability.

On 4 June 2003, the Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone issued a press statement announcing the opening of a sealed indictment of Liberian President Charles Taylor for “bearing the greatest responsibility” for atrocities in Sierra Leone since November 1996. This development excluded Charles Taylor from any other future role in the peace negotiation process as an indictee for war crimes. On June 18, 2003, the Accra Ceasefire Agreement was signed by the Government of Liberia (GOL), LURD and MODEL.

It was not until, another two months, after a massive protests from Liberian women, who stormed the conference without being invited, and the impatience of the host country and the ICGL, that on August 18, 2003, the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed; marking the cessation of hostilities in the nearly 15 years of civil war. Apart from the CPA making provisions for the new government after the expected departure of Charles Taylor from Liberia, the agreement also provided, for the first time, accountability mechanism in the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for Liberia, in an attempt to provide the opportunity for Liberians to confront the legacies of their difficult past.

The Liberian civil war would best be remembered for a long time to come, not simply for the several thousands of lives it claimed – which will surely remain one of the sordid points of the country’s checkered history – but for the carnage and the sheer brutality that characterized the war. The horrors of the Liberian war were abhorrent to the sensibilities of all and intolerable as collateral or inevitable consequence of war. According to Stephen Ellis, “the Liberian conflict topped and surpassed all other wars in form and character, in intensity, in depravity, in savagery, in barbarism and in horror”.

#### **7.4. The CPA and International Efforts to Restore Lasting Peace**

The push for a peace conference in 2003 came from civil society, the leadership of the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia which held several meetings with each of the rebel factions, including President Charles Taylor himself. A separate initiative by leading political and civil society leaders, known as the Liberia Leadership Forum, met in 2002 and called for a peace conference in 2003. ECOWAS also continued to push for the possibility of talks. All parties to the Liberian raging conflict convened in Accra,

Ghana for a peace talk along with representative of select civil society institutions, the political parties and The Inter-Religious Council<sup>7</sup> were heavily represented. Taylor's sealed indictment at the UN, USA and Great Britain backed Special Court for Sierra Leone was unsealed on June 4, 2003; charging President Taylor with several counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his support and complicity with the RUF of Sierra Leone. President Charles Taylor had to flee the Republic of Ghana and remove himself from further participation in the peace conference. As an indictee, his future role in Liberian politics was extinguished and his protégés had to continue representation of GOL at the talks.

Back home, word of his imminent arrest in Ghana reverberated in Liberia, with his supporters led by the dreadful and murderous Benjamin Yeatin threatening "military vibration", should Taylor be arrested. Liberians and Ghanaian nationals, with fresh memories of the NPFL modus of indiscriminate reprisal killings during the nineties in which citizens of West African Countries contributing troops to ECOMOG were directly targeted and killed<sup>8</sup>, became uneasy. Calm returned to Monrovia when the Ghanaian authorities refused to honor the indictment and permitted President Taylor, its guest, to return home to Liberia.

The fighting in streets of Monrovia raged on, despite the convening peace talks and the attacking armed forces demanded Taylor's resignation before a ceasefire. Taylor became increasingly vulnerable as his scrawny forces ran out of both military supplies and food. Life in Monrovia, with over a million inhabitants, was ghastly and unbearable. Two fresh supplies of Taylor's arms were seized. The Nigerian contingent at the Roberts International Airport confiscated a cache of Taylor-bound arms when it arrived at the airport. The opposition MODEL overran Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, before a shipment of another consignment of arms could dock at the Buchanan port of entry. Taylor forces in Buchanan, weary of war, and avoiding a destructive confrontation with MODEL, deliberately surrendered Buchanan to MODEL to prevent the shipment of arms from docking knowing that the consignment of arms and ammunition "was sufficient to continue the war for years to come", because the President was planning to "leave Monrovia and retreat into the interior of the country to continue his guerilla warfare".

ECOWAS presented to Taylor a list of names of potential facilitators of the Peace conference and Taylor chose General Abdusalami Abubakar, former Military Head of State of Nigeria, from the ECOWAS list to mediate the peace conference scheduled for June 2003. The conference convened on June 4, 2003 with high hopes of an early ending as the ceasefire agreement was signed June 18, 2003, allaying all fears that the war will be taken to the door steps of the Executive Mansion in a

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<sup>7</sup> (first peace plan as inter-faith mediation council)

<sup>8</sup> (two Nigerian journalists died in NPFL prison of starvation and the killings of Ghanaians from cape mount , etc)

bloody struggle for power which will only continue the war with more resistance forces emerging, thereby exacerbating the worsening humanitarian situation.

Accountability and amnesty became contestable issues at the peace conference in a way no other previous conference or agreement had addressed. The only other prior reference to these transitional issues was the Cotonou Agreement of 1993 which provided for conditional amnesty of sort. This amnesty clause which refers repeatedly to acts committed “while in actual combat,” was “clearly understood at the time not to cover war crimes such as rape or other atrocities, according to those who took part in these talks”. In addition, that amnesty was contingent on a successful ceasefire and disarmament of forces, neither of which happened. A compromise at the Accra Conference was to proceed with the business of ending the conflict thus, deferring these matters to the future through the establishment of a truth and reconciliation (TRC).

The June 18, 2003 ceasefire agreement called for a transitional government excluding Charles Taylor. The agreement was broken amid growing international and domestic pressure, even at the peace talks to end the conflict. On July 6, 2003, Charles Taylor announced he would step down and leave Liberia for exile in Nigeria. The decision to step down led to a swift move by the UN and the international community to support ECOWAS efforts to secure the peace and enforce the ceasefire. The US sent troops to protect its Embassy near Monrovia, triggering an angry demonstration over the lack of military intervention by the US. The bodies of 18 persons killed by mortar fire were placed at the front gates of the US Embassy in protest; demanding that the US do something to end the carnage.

On the eve of Liberia’s 136<sup>th</sup> independence anniversary - July 25, 2003 - US President George Bush ordered a naval amphibious force including 2,300 marines to the coast of Liberia. On August 1, 2003, the UN Security Council authorized ECOWAS to launch peacekeeping mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) as a vanguard peacekeeping force which began deployment on August 4, 2003, when the first group of Nigerian peacekeepers arrived in Liberia. A seven-man US Marine team arrived on August 5, 2003 to assess logistical needs and assist with humanitarian efforts, Taylor resigns for exile on August 11, 2003 as His vice President, Moses Blah<sup>9</sup> holds on to the reins of power until the seating of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) . Another batch of US Marines, approximately 200, landed on Liberian soil on August 14, 2003 to assist the ECOMIL peacekeepers, in securing the distribution of humanitarian supplies as the parties to the conflict – GOL, LURD, MODEL – signed the CPA establishing the NTGL on August 18, 2003.

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<sup>9</sup> replaced Enoch Dogolea who died suddenly under mysterious circumstances on June 23, 2000

Charles Gyude Bryant of the Liberia Action Party (LAP), by decision of the three warring factions, was selected from a short list of potentials including Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (obtained the highest votes of delegates) and Togba Nah Tipoteh, as Chairman of the LNTG on August 21, 2003, two days after the execution of the CPA. The US Marines withdrew on Liberia's Flag Day to warships off the Liberian Coast after eleven days on land, as an additional 650 ECOMIL forces deployed in Liberia. By September 11, 2003, ECOMIL troop level stood at approximately 3,500. On September 19, 2003, the UN Security Council unanimously approved a 15,000 peace keeping force – the largest in the world at the time - designated as the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The first batch of UNMIL troops began deployment on October 1, 2003 as the ECOMIL troops were inducted into UNMIL. C. Gyude Bryant was inducted into office at a ceremony in Monrovia as head of the new Transitional Government of Liberia on October 14, 2003. The war ended in Liberia and a period for confronting post-conflict challenges of peace-building, reconstruction and reconciliation had begun. The TRC of Liberia was established by an Act of the Legislature in June (2005), to investigate human rights abuses during the period January 1979 to October 15, 2003 and “provide a forum that will address issues of impunity, as well as an opportunity for both victims and perpetrators of human rights violations to share their experiences in order to get a clear picture of the past and to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation”.

## **8.0. CONFRONTING THE BITTER PAST: TRUTH, JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION**

### **8.1. The Work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

The work of the TRC of Liberia commenced the latter part of 2005 in October when nine Commissioners were appointed by the Head of the Transitional Government, C. Gyude Bryant following a public vetting process by a selection panel constituted pursuant to the Act establishing the TRC. The Selection Panel was headed by ECOWAS. Other members of the panel were UNMIL as Co-chair, political parties, youth, women, inter-religious council, etc. The panel received over 180 nominations and applications which necessitated public vetting, interviews, and background checks. A final short list of 15 nominees was presented to the Head of State from which the nine commissioners were appointed to reflect Liberia's diversity in regional and professional considerations.

#### **8.1.1. Background & History of the Establishment of the TRC**

Prior to the enactment of the TRC Act, a process of national dialogue, consultation and consensus building ensued. Chairman Bryant, on January 4, 2004, constituted a nine member panel of Commissioners of the TRC, with Dr. Canon Burgess Carr, as head being deputized by Gerald Coleman - a member of the initial Commission - as part of his obligations to execute the dictates of the CPA. The Commission as constituted, solely by the Chairman, lacked set objectives, mandate, jurisdiction or legal status outside the CPA. The process attracted consideration opposition which led UNMIL, acting through Raphael Abiem, Transitional Justice Advisor to engage civil society and host a dialogue with the Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) on March 18, 2004 to find a way forward.

It became clear that civil society was in disagreement with the constitution of the TRC and a mediatory role by UNMIL between civil society and the Commission itself was rejected by the TJWG so as to avoid "undue influence" over the TRC Process. Various initiatives of civil society were instituted, including technical meetings to lend legality and legitimacy to the process. The Center for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE), headed by Ezekiel Pajibo, was designated to lead civil society efforts in this drive, along with the TJWG. On April 10, 2004, a five day workshop was organized by the ICTJ and the TJWG to harmonize the divide and find the way forward. It brought together Rev Gerald Coleman of the Commission and prominent civil society activists like Samuel K Woods, Ezekiel Pajibo, Cllr. Augustine Toe, Aloysius Toe and many others. UNMIL worked with all groups to harmonize a Liberian approach to a resolution.



Another attempt was made to solicit popular opinions on the process by the National Human Rights Center of Liberia (NHRCL) headed by Cllr. Jerome J Verdier, Sr. The NHRCL and other research authorities, along with CEDE, FIND, UNMIL Human Rights Section, and USAID, conducted county assessment research in five accessible counties – Montserrado, Bomi, Margibi, Grand Cape Mount and Bong – to determine the acceptance level of a TRC process. Town hall meetings were held and the people preferred a TRC process in the immediate term over a war crimes court or another transitional justice mechanism. Thereafter, a conference of Liberian stakeholders was convened at the Corina Hotel on April 29, 2004 by CEDE and the TJWG, with support from UNMIL and UNDP, to consolidate perspectives on the TRC process and draft a TRC Act, as a proposal to the Legislature. For three consecutive days, representatives from the counties, political parties, the TRC itself, civil society and other personalities of diverse political persuasions attended, including D. Museleng Cooper, Cllr. Laveli Kobo Johnson, immediate past Chief Justice, Gloria M Scott, of the erstwhile Taylor Government. The conference was chaired by Jerome J Verdier, Sr. and assisted by Atty. Alfred Brownell of Green Advocates as deputy. Two international experts, invited by UNMIL, Yasmin Suka of the South African TRC and Priscilla Heynar of ICTJ participated in the conference. Paul Allen James from the Sierra Leone TRC also participated. Three full days of deliberations and exchange of opinions ensued and for the next two weeks the process of legislation drafting, including research, comparative analysis, proposals, review and debate ensued, solely amongst Liberians who had assessed the historical background of the country and drafted an act accordingly. The TRC law was drafted to represent the aspirations of the Liberian people and thereby, captured the aspirations and drive for the accountability mechanism reflected in the act today.

On August 13, 2004 the draft Act was presented to Chairman Bryant at a closing ceremony and the document circulated locally and worldwide for peer review. The subsequent draft was presented to Chairman Bryant to same forwarded to the National Transitional Legislative Assembly (NTLA). Realizing that the passage of the new Act would effectively cure the deficiencies of the TRC he had established and dissolve it. Chairman Bryant was reluctant to send the bill forward to the NTLA and didn't do so until another bout of activism, led him to submit the draft bill in April 2005 for its first reading. At the NTLA itself, the bill did not get passed without opposition, which was noticeably loud. It took the expert testimonies of Priscilla Heyner of ICTJ, Human rights Expert Charlotte Abarka, UNMIL, Civil Society and numerous other individuals and organizations including, Hon. Comany Wesseh, himself a participant at the drafting conference and Head of the Legislative Committee on the scrupulous implementation of the CPA. He was resolute and undaunted in defense of the draft act and lobbied his colleagues to adopt all the expert testimonies and enact the bill. The Act Establishing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia was enacted on June 9, 2005 and signed into

law by Chairman Bryant on June 10, 2005. It was published into handbill on June 22, 2005.

The next important phase in the establishment of the TRC was the selection of Commissioners. As a compromise with the Gyude Bryant Government, it was agreed - as contained in the Act – that, commissioners of the former TRC would be vetted first and those found to meet the satisfaction of the new qualification of the TRC Act would be automatically retained without further public vetting. Commissioners Gerald Coleman and Sheik Kafumba Konneh were retained by the seven-man “Selection Panel”; constituted according to the TRC Act as follows: three representatives from civil society, two from political parties, one from ECOWAS, and one from UNMIL. Nominations were solicited by the Panel following training by the ICTJ on their mandates and procedures. Nominations were made, a process of public vetting and publication ensued for three months and a shortlist of 15 was drawn by the Panel headed by ECOWAS. Out of the fifteen, seven were selected by Chairman Bryant and added on, were the two commissioners of the former TRC, making up the nine commissioners of the new TRC. The Panel completed its work and forwarded the list to Chairman Bryant on September 22, 2005; the nine commissioners were appointed on October 18, 2005 and were commissioned on February 20, 2006 by H.E. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, President of Liberia.

The Commission commenced its initial work – reviewing the enabling legislation, understanding the mandate and drafting a work plan- from a three room shabby office space provided by the government of Liberia, absent a complimentary full staff and without funding. Initial efforts to raise funding and awareness were met with serious setbacks as no one gave the Commission any chance of succeeding. These perceptual issues created an uphill struggle for the Commission and marred its early progress. Minimum awareness program were instituted at a cost-effective and sometimes at no cost to the Commission itself. Commissioners expended their personal funds to visit institutions and constituencies, holding community, groups and town hall meetings around the country; explaining the mandates, objectives and goals of the TRC.

Commissioners, amongst themselves, elected the leadership of the Commission and President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf performed the commissioning ceremonies on February 20, 2006, and the activities of the Commission were formally launched on June 22, 2006 simultaneously, throughout the country in the all 15 counties amid massive pledges of support to the work of the commission from government, international development partners, and the people of Liberia far and wide. The Commission completed a two and a half (2½)-year work plan, a US\$14 million budget adopting a comprehensive set of activities, including continued public awareness and engagement, statement-taking, staff recruitment; setting up the secretariat, inquiry and investigations departments, sound gender and children

mainstreaming, psychosocial support and witness protection, public hearings, and reports. A full range of activities included policy harmonization and training for commissioners and staff so as to ensure that the mandate of the TRC was scrupulously implemented within record time. Staff recruitment and setting up the secretariat was especially difficult considering that a tight time line was adopted, without any funding, and a rigid process to ensure that no one with known records or perception of human rights violations were hired consistent with its rules of procedures. Limited funding and material supplies, and resource inadequacies, constrained the work of the Commission throughout its mandated operational period. The initial work plan of the TRC is compared below with the actual timeline of implementation of its full mandate:

***Initial Work plan:***

TRC official launch and massive outreach program	June 2006 to December 2006
Acquire new offices and recruit core secretariat staff And statement takers	July 2006
Basic training for all staff members brought on board	August 2006
Deployment of 192 Statement takers throughout the country	September 2006 to January 2007
Reconciliation	October 2006 and December 2007
Antecedents/Historical Overview	November 2006
Public Hearings	April to December 2007
Specific Events & War Crimes and Human Rights Violations	November 2007
Finalize plans for National Conference and outline of TRC final report	January 2008
TRC First Draft Report Completed	February 2008
Last quarterly report	March 2008
Publish TRC Assets	April 2008
Commission Independent Audit of TRC	May 2008
Adopt Follow up and Assets transfer mechanisms	June 2008
National Conference on the Future of Liberia	July 2008
Finalize Preparation of Final Report	August 2008
Present Final Report to Government and publish it nationally and internationally	September 2008

**Actual Implementation Timeline of the TRC's Mandate:**

In March 2007, the Commission, after one year of existence, constituted a secretariat. Prior to that period, all nine commissioners played implementing roles in running the day-to-day activities of the Commission. When the Executive Secretary and the Director of Programs came aboard, the International Contact Group on Liberia (ICGL) intervened and requested that the Commission work with its partners to review and revise its work plan and develop a program budget, acceptable to donors and partners. TRC rules and procedures were also reviewed and revised. Under similar objectives, the TRC requested an external audit which was successfully conducted by the Bureau of General Audit of the Government of Liberia. The report was circulated to member countries of the ICGL, the Government of Liberia and donor partners. Since then, periodic audits have been conducted by USAID at the behest of either, the ICGL, the Government's General Auditing Commission (GAC) and the UNDP, in 2009, and all proved successful.

On July 18, 2007, after almost five months of meetings with the ICGL/TRC working Group, an acceptable budget was adopted and the commission undertook a two-month fast tracking process of renewed outreach activities into the fifteen counties. In July and August 2007, with funding initially sourced from UNDP and OSIWA, county offices were equipped and outreach activities of disseminating messages in preparation for statement-taking were conducted. Between the months of October and December 2007, statement taking activities were concluded in all counties and in selected countries in the Diaspora. The Commission announced in December 2007 that individual and thematic hearings in the counties would begin on January 8, 2008 in Montserrado County. Since then, the commission's work has continued uninterrupted

#### **8.1.2. Public Information, Participation and Awareness**

With the launch of the Diaspora Project on 22 June 2006, concomitantly with the national launching of the TRC, rigorous outreach efforts were exerted to market and localize the TRC to Liberians residing outside the country; beginning in the USA and then West Africa. Numerous outreach, education and sensitization events were held in several US cities where large populations of Liberians reside. Similar to national TRC activities, these activities included town hall meetings, formal presentations, speaking engagements in churches and mosques, and special events. Commissioners embarked upon a nationwide assessment and awareness visits to all counties of Liberia. The media at home and abroad was aggressively engaged and became enthusiastically involved in spreading the TRC's messages to Liberians and the general public worldwide. Several journalists from newspaper, radio and television outlets interviewed project staff and Commissioners in Liberia and abroad. The large Liberian populations living outside of Liberia suggested the need to take the TRC to the Diaspora. The TRC Diaspora objectives were to, reach out and create awareness,

share information, encourage participation and hold public hearings in the Diaspora communities in the United States, Nigeria, Ghana and Sierra Leone where feasible.

The TRC's Diaspora Project was designed to fully include the voice of the large Liberian Diaspora in the TRC processes; innovative, it was a response to some of the unique dynamics of the Liberian conflict, thus redefining the way in which truth and reconciliation commissions should operate - from local or nationally-centered bodies to global truth-seeking institutions - by conducting international hearings that included testimony and perspectives from its citizens abroad, thereby raising the bar of ingenuity in transitional justice approaches. The Diaspora Project began in Minneapolis, MN, USA, which is home to approximately five thousand of the forty thousand Liberians living in the USA, with the assistance of one of the TRC's key partners, the Advocates for Human Rights, which served as a primary implementer of the Project. The Diaspora project resulted in the collection of approximately one thousand five hundred statements from victims and alleged perpetrators of Liberia's various episodes of state chaos and conflict. The project eventually conducted activities in eleven US cities, and in Ghana, Nigeria and Sierra Leone where a significant number of Liberian refugees in West Africa reside. Community Advisory Committees comprising credible Liberians were established in each city hosting a project. Numerous outreach events were organized in collaboration with the advisory committees and were often hosted by the target communities. This approach ensured Diaspora community involvement and support for the Project. Approximately one thousand statements were collected from Liberians in West Africa.

Public sensitization and awareness were initiated during each phase of the TRC's work. The communication, sensitization and mobilization component's of the TRC's program was designed to coincide with every stage of activities. As already noted, sensitization and public outreach was a permanent feature of all TRC programs in the fifteen counties, and was carried out through music, drama, town hall meetings, workshops, visitations to churches and mosques, presentations to targeted audience, radio programs and media reports. Other specialized modes of communication, including the non-traditional and conventional, were explored to maximize the outreach capacity of the TRC. Notwithstanding these efforts and extensive strategic planning, the necessary financial support from stakeholders was not forthcoming; consequently, the TRC's outreach programs, had to be curtailed thereby, adversely affecting the Commission's work.

After receiving initial feedback about conditions in the counties during the outreach process, the TRC embarked upon a nationwide assessment of each county with the goal and objective of ascertaining first-hand, the plight of civil war rural victims and living conditions of inhabitants within rural Liberia, generally. The TRC immediately established county offices in order to decentralize its operation and

provide local residents with the opportunity to establish ownership of the TRC process.

*Civil Society:* Civil society was a major stakeholder in Liberia's various peace processes and was a part of the vanguard that advocated for the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (Accra). From the conceptualization of the TRC and the drafting and passing of the TRC legislation, to the vetting of Commissioners and senior staff, civil society representatives from various organizations (including women's groups, youth groups, the disabled community, political parties, the religious community, traditional organizations and the media) participated in the TRC process and continued to play a lead role in how the TRC implements its mandate. In 2007, the TRC entered into a memorandum of understanding with sixteen civil society organizations, further concretizing that partnership.

As early as May 2006, the TRC, through a public participatory process, launched a massive public outreach, awareness and sensitization campaign in collaboration with several civil society organizations aimed at formally introducing the Commission by explaining its mandate, educating the populace about the pivotal role it could play in healing the nation, encouraging them to participate, and garnering the support of the Liberian public and partners in the process. This public awareness campaign began in Monrovia and was subsequently expanded throughout Liberia's fifteen counties. Civil society groups at different levels were engaged by the Commission to assist in this effort; they include: the Liberian National Girls Guides Association, Boys Scouts of Liberia, Artists Association of Liberia, Liberian Crusaders for Peace, Roller Skaters Association of Liberia, Women on the Move Association, and the Traditional Women Association of Liberia. Local media, UNMIL, and other partners have also provided assistance in this area.

Civil society organizations buttressed the Commission's efforts by conducting sensitization and awareness campaign in all fifteen counties by distributing fifteen thousand copies of the TRC's informational questions and answers brochure, replicating and distributing ten thousand copies of the 1986 Constitution of Liberia to schools and communities for civic education, and by conducting sensitization and awareness workshops about the TRC process. The involvement of civil society in the TRC process enormously enhanced the Commission's ability to accomplish its mandate.

### **8.1.3. Statement Taking: Recruitment, Training, Deployment**

Between 2005 and 2006, approximately two hundred individuals were recruited from local communities nationwide to be statement-takers. They were trained to solicit the voluntary narratives of individuals recounting their personal experiences and accounts of conflict; either as victims, witnesses, perpetrators, or as family

members of loved ones from their communities. The statement forms were specifically designed to be gender friendly, while special forms were designed for children statement-givers. This method employed a confidential interview using probing questioning techniques to assist the statement-giver in recounting traumatic events or experiences and to provide factual accounts or evidence of events that took place.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) collected narrative statements from as many individual statement givers as possible about the violence they experienced or witnessed during the conflict. Each statement covers detailed insight into the nature of violations and experience of particular statement-givers. A quantitative analysis have been gathered which identifies patterns and trends of violations experienced or perpetrated by the statement-givers collectively. Together, the aggregate group of statements can magnify the voices of victims and provide a body of empirical data that can help in processes of acknowledgement, accountability, understanding and closure. Recommendations for how the TRC should proceed with its work and its final report were also solicited from those persons who participated in the process and the public in general. As a result of its careful statement-taking approach, the TRC generated the goodwill of the public and succeeded in obtaining over twenty thousand statements from Liberians in Liberia and in the Diaspora, including the USA and West Africa; excluding statements collected by the UNDP in a human rights violation mapping project to complement the work of the Commission.

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The internationally renowned Beneficent Technology (Benetech) supervised, managed the TRC Data coding and information management system, designing a database that provided the analysis contained in this report based on statements collected by the TRC within limits and constraints that confronted the TRC process.

The analysis presented in this report reviews the broad dimensions of data extracted from TRC statements that are available from the TRC's database. Such data included in the TRC database are basic information about the statement-givers and statements given to the TRC; analysis of the recorded acts of violence in-depth ( over time, by county, by victim characteristics, perpetrating groups and violation types) and

analysis of statement-giver responses to supplemental questions, for the country overall, as well as broken down by counties.

The data in this report only represent the data given to the TRC by individual statement-givers who elected to give a statement. These data present a considered pattern of violence which may throw light on the pattern of violence in Liberia as a whole. Reporting to the TRC (or to any organization collecting information about acts of violence) is never absolute. Some victims of violence may feel ill, fearful or intimidated; and decide not to engage the TRC or they may be in areas too remote to have been contacted, or they simply may not have come in contact with a statement-taker.

For these reasons and others, we emphasize that the statistics in this report only represent statements to the TRC and not all violence that occurred in Liberia during the TRC's mandated period. However, the TRC documented many tens of thousands of violations, indeed, the TRC documented more violations than any previous truth commission. These violations represent the experiences of approximately twenty thousand Liberians, and as such, are of great interest in their own right. The analysis of statements reflects 17,002 out of 17,416 statements entered into the TRC's database. The analysis excludes 414 statements because these statement-givers reported no violations within the TRC's mandate period, January 1979 to October 2003, or because the county or country where the statement was taken was not recorded. Even though the TRC could fill in the missing data (country, sex of statement giver, county of occurrence , etc. – as omissions or mistakes), the TRC conservatively elected to have them recorded as errors rather than filling in the missing data which could have been easily done since the uniqueness of Liberians names can clearly indicate sex without guessing, as the name may also indicate county of origin or county where the violations occurred by the name of towns or villages in the victim's narrative, and the country where the statement was taken in Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, the UK or the USA. The 17,002 statements included in the TRC analysis contain information about 86,647 victims and 163,615 total violations. Total violations here includes 124,225 violations suffered by individual victims (or 76%), 39,376 suffered by groups (or 24 %), and 14 by institutions (or a negligible 0.0%). Groups were coded when one or more victims suffered the same violation but could not be individually identified from the information provided in the statement. Information that could be used to identify an individual victim includes first or last name, sex, age or date of birth, tribe, or relationship to the statement-giver.

The number of victims in groups could be based on a specific number provided by the statement-giver (such as "four of my neighbors"), an estimate given by the statement-giver (such as "about fifty persons"), or could be unknown (such as "people on the road with me"). The number in groups is often based on subjective estimates and varies widely from one victim in certain instances up to hundreds in



others. Therefore, to be as conservative as possible, we count one victim per group in TRC analysis.

The TRC collected an additional 315 statements that are not included in the analysis due to administrative errors. The TRC Coding and Database Section also coded and entered 1,165 statements collected in the USA, Europe, Ghana, and Nigeria. A grand total of **20,560** statements were taken, and documented by the TRC.

The underlying characteristics of statement givers in the Diaspora compared to statement givers in Liberia are sufficiently different that we did not combine information from statements collected from members of the Diaspora with statements collected in Liberia. Instead, we present analysis of the Diaspora statements in separate analysis and over comparisons between the patterns of victims and violations reported in Diaspora statements with statements collected in Liberia, with common trends.

Also excluded from the analysis is the nearly 14,000 statements collected by the UNDP mapping project due to acute resource constraints, time limitations and the difficulty in verifying its reliability by the TRC, since a different set of objectives, statement forms, scope, and analytical tools or database inputs were employed. Notwithstanding, the analysis and findings from the UNDP project were sparingly used as complimentary references/resources which supported the TRC findings generally.

Table 1, gives the number of statements collected by the TRC by the county in which the statements were taken and the sex of the statement giver. This table includes all statements collected in Liberia, including those which were found to be lacking or missing information about where the statement was taken. The TRC collected and processed 17,416 statements. This figure is significant for two reasons. First, given the relative size of Liberia, particularly in comparison to truth commissions in other countries, up to 17,000 statements is a sizable number for the TRC statement takers to collect and the system to process. For example, the TRC in South Africa collected approximately 21,000 statements in a country nearly fourteen times the size of Liberia. The South African TRC had, by far, much more resources and time allowance incomparable with what the TRC of Liberia was endowed with. Second, despite the large number of statements, nearly all of the statements collected in Liberia were analyzed for inclusion in the TRC's analysis of reported human rights violations contained in this report. In actuality, the TRC collected **20,560** (see Table 1B below) statements out of which only 17,416 were processed in the data base due mainly to administrative, operational and resource constraints. Additional time and money would have been required to hire additional coding staff, and afford investigators to go in the field to fill in missing information on some unprocessed statement forms.

**Table 1: Number of Coded/Processed Statements by County**

<b>County</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Unknown Sex</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Montserrado	1894	1985	27	3906	22.4
Bong	835	756	6	1597	9.2
Nimba	819	774	4	1597	9.2
Bomi	531	672	8	1211	7
Gbarpolu	659	543	3	1205	6.9
Lofa	563	491	4	1058	6.1
Grand Bassa	489	429	4	922	5.3
Maryland	475	434	5	914	5.2
Grand Cape Mount	432	442	3	877	5
Grand Gedeh	479	384	5	868	5
Grand Kru	630	189	3	822	4.7
River Gee	416	303	2	721	4.1
Sinoe	364	264	5	633	3.6
Margibi	254	365	1	620	3.6
Rivercess	274	187	4	465	2.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>9114</b>	<b>8218</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>17416</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 1B: Aggregate of Statements Collected Including the Diaspora**

<b>Statement Classified by Source</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>Coded</b>	<b>Uncoded</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Liberia	17,416	17,160	256	90
Liberia (Adm. Error)	315		315	2
Liberia (No violations reported)	414		414	2
USA	227	227		1
Nigeria	31	31		0
Europe	8	8		0
Ghana	897		2	5
<b>Aggregate Statements Collected</b>	<b>19,308</b>	<b>17,426</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>100</b>

We observe in Table 1 that the TRC collected a significant number of statements from female statement givers. Truth commissions in other countries have often failed to include the participation of women in equal proportion to men in statement-taking. In Liberia, however, nearly fifty percent of statements have been received from female statement-givers, which helped the TRC reflect the experiences of women as well as men during the Liberian conflict. This is also another distinguishing point of the TRC process in Liberia. This data however, does not include children engaged in the TRC Process. A child friendly regiment for taking statements and holding hearings was adopted by the TRC.

***Diaspora Statement Taking Experience:*** In Liberia, statement-takers were Liberians paid by the TRC, but statement takers in the Diaspora were all unpaid volunteers recruited from *pro bono* affiliates. Most were non-Liberian, but Liberians were welcomed to the process, and several did complete the training and participated as statement takers. In addition to reviewing a 400-page training manual, all volunteers were required to complete a nine-hour in-depth training program. Volunteer trainings were held in all project locations; volunteers who were unable to attend could also complete the training by viewing video replay of the sessions which remain available on-line. Volunteer statement takers received training on the mandate of the TRC, the history of Liberia and the conflict, international human rights and humanitarian law, statement-taking protocols and policies, interviewing survivors of torture and war trauma, avoiding vicarious trauma, and cultural considerations for working with Liberians. All training sessions included a mock TRC statement interview facilitated by The Advocates' staff and a Liberian volunteer. Trainers included The Advocates' staff, Commissioners, psychologists, Liberian professionals and community leaders, as well as academics.

Statement forms and protocols were modeled after the process in Liberia with some modifications appropriate to the Diaspora context. The addition of disclosure form and resource information, as described above, was a key modification. Questions specifically relating to the experience of Liberians in flight and in the Diaspora also were added to the statement taking protocol. Diaspora forms and protocols were pilot-tested in late 2006. Volunteer statement-takers began taking statements in January 2007 in Minnesota. Project sites were added around the country and in the UK through January 2008. Statement taking continued through August 2008. The majority of TRC statements from the Diaspora were gathered during in-person interviews. In the United States and the UK, these interviews generally were one to two hours in length and took place in homes, designated statement-taking "sites," or in other locations of the statement giver's choosing. Interviews were conducted by a team of statement takers who then compiled a narrative summary of the statement giver's experiences, opinions and recommendations. As a result of an overwhelming demand from refugees in Ghana to provide statements to the TRC, interviews there

were almost exclusively taken by single interviewers in designated statement-taking sites around the settlement.

#### 8.1.4. Hearings: Victims, Thematic, Institutional, County & Diaspora

Public hearings are an essential component of the TRC work. Employed for its catalytic and revealing purposes, it provided an opportunity for individual victims and perpetrators to have their experiences officially heard by the state and recognized as part of the Liberian national experience. The opportunity was provided individuals to tell stories and expose the underlining causes and trends of the conflict. The hearings also generated state sponsored – national - empathy, and an understanding from the people and Nation, the Commissioners and policy-makers of the conflicts and its varied trends. By satisfying these objectives, the hearings stimulated national public debates and pushed issues of the conflict, repairing victims, perpetrators' accountability, impunity, root causes of the conflict, etc. squarely into the public consciousness. Lastly, the public hearings helped to build in society the capacity to distinguish the truth of the past from lies about it, which is essential to building a stable political future. The TRC hearings assumed a dynamic of its own which warranted hearings taking on varying forms, exuding different outcomes. The hearings were – In-camera or Public Hearings; Victims or perpetrators; Contemporary History of the Conflict; Thematic or Institutional Hearings; county or Diaspora Hearings. The hearings included seven months of victims' and witnesses' testimonies and, to date, four months of actors, thematic and institutional hearings, and accounts and perspectives under the broader "contemporary history of the conflict" theme. Special consideration was made to accommodate women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. To date, the TRC heard more than 800 testimonies from witnesses testifying before it, under the theme: **"Confronting Our difficult Past for a Better Future."**

##### 8.1.4.1. Types – In-camera and Public Hearings

*In-camera hearings* were held in a few cases as opposed to the overwhelming number of sittings of the Commission which were held in public, at public venues opened to the public. The Commission published its policy paper on these two types of hearings, published also in its Rules of Procedures. In camera or confidential hearings were reserved for victims and witnesses only and to a limited extent to actors upon request and at the discretion of the Commission. In the case of victims or witnesses, a request for confidential hearings was a matter of right and such right was never denied. For varying reasons of fear, stigmatization, insecurity, familial relations, community and group pressure and sometimes lack of confidence, request were made for in camera hearings and same granted upon request. Security and psychosocial support was provided at hearing venues and to individual witnesses.

After sessions of counseling, some witnesses changed their minds and submitted to public hearings and vice versa. Witnesses for these hearings were chosen based on review of individual statements made to the commission and the representative nature of the individual's experience, which when made public, would resonate with the society at large and throw light on the general impacts and trends of human rights violations on the general community, society from an individual experience.

#### **8.1.4.2. Category – Victims and Contemporary History of the Conflict**

The Commission, from the incipient stages of its work, made a conscious decision to hold hearings exclusively for victims first before any other hearing. This was a show of honor for victims and the prioritization of their issues and concerns foremost. These hearings were conducted throughout the Republic in each county beginning with the capital city, Monrovia. In contrast, the hearings on the "Contemporary History of the Conflict" focused political and military actors and perpetrators in Monrovia only.

The TRC spared no efforts in establishing contacts with all personalities it was interested in hearing based on findings of its inquiry and investigative processes, especially the allegations of victims and witnesses which many times over included perpetrators alike. Some perpetrators and actors eluded personal service of TRC citations, while others outright refused to accept citations. Others accepted citations but dishonor the appointment with the commission; several others were blatant in informing the Commission that they will not appear before the Commission or honor its processes. While the Commission has subpoena powers, it opted to use it as a matter of last recourse.

The Commission published in at least three local newspapers and on internet news outlets, including the TRC's own Website, its final notice to the public of individuals requested to appear, as perpetrators or alleged perpetrators, to answer allegations of human rights violations and war crimes or as "persons of interest" just to provide clarity or throw light on issues important to the work of the Commission. The hearings were held without incident and without the use of compulsory process. All heads of former warring factions appeared, except former president Charles Taylor who declined. Politicians of the TWP and the seventies appeared as did rights activists, political leaders and commanders of the former warring factions.

#### **8.1.4.3. Thematic and Institutional Hearings**

*Thematic and institutional hearings:* The Commission held a series of "thematic" hearings that addressed the trends, themes, and root causes of the conflict. Engendered was a public forum facilitating a national conversation and/or debate on the patterns of human rights abuses and the conflict which engendered it. These

hearings specifically looked at how the conflict uniquely effected or was affected by thematic elements of the conflict; such as motivations, inherent root causes, and the role of specific elements of our society. It provided a great opportunity for experts to lend their opinions on the roles that different components of the war played in the conflict. These experts spoke extensively about structural, historic and systemic patterns of violence; its causes and impact, on the state, victims and institutions, and sometimes international relationship. While victim hearings were personalized narratives, the thematic hearings were not about the personal experiences of the presenters, but the society as a whole. This nuanced version of history will seek to incorporate various levels of a national history that blend the stories of a diverse range of victims and perpetrators. Thematic hearings included: historical review, contemporary history of the conflict, women, children, the role of religious and traditional institutions, the media, youth, security, etc.

*Institutional hearings* were, in limited instances, held to review the current and past status of basic public institutions so as to ascertain the impact of the conflict on these institutions and the role, if any, these institutions played during the conflict. Responding to these queries will facilitate debates on these institutions, their mandates and functions and how they may be reformed in a post-conflict situation to ensure their effective performance and response to the challenges of state building, greater democracy and respect for human rights which will guarantee a non repetition of the experiences of the past.

#### **8.1.4.4. Classification – County, Monrovia & Diaspora Hearings**

Two victims who fled the country and lived on the Buduburam Liberian Refugee Camp in Buduburam, Ghana, testified in Liberia symbolically; representing the sub-regional Diaspora community. This was part of the TRC efforts to engage all Liberians in the process of healing and reconciliation. In Liberia itself, hearings, just as statement taking, was held in the capitol city of all 15 counties of Liberia, emphasizing and breaking away from the age-old practice which made Monrovia the centre of all public activities, programs and developments. In Monrovia itself, two rounds of public hearings were held. The first being one for witnesses generally from all over the country and the second was a Montserrado county hearings which focused witnesses and violation committed in Monrovia specifically.

Yet still, Monrovia was the venue for thematic and institutional hearings including the hearings on the “contemporary history of the conflict”. At each county hearing for victims, a day was reserved for institutional and thematic hearings specific to the county in which the hearings were being held.

*Diaspora hearings:* Pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding with the TRC of Liberia, The Advocates assisted the TRC by planning and conducting public

hearings in the diaspora. The Liberian TRC was the first national TRC to hold public hearings in the United States. They were held June 9-14, 2008 at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota. All eight Commissioners presided over the hearings, which centered on the theme of "Confronting Our Difficult Past for a Better Future: The Diaspora Experience." Twenty nine witnesses from ten states traveled to St. Paul to testify about the human rights abuses in Liberia that forced them to flee, their experiences in flight and in refugee camps, and the experience of resettlement in the United States. The hearings also provided Liberians in the Diaspora the opportunity to present their experiences and recommendations directly to the TRC, which is mandated to make binding recommendations to the government of Liberia. Hearings in the Diaspora and all other processes were mirrored as closely as possible to processes in Liberia.

At all of these hearings, the commission was sensitive to the needs and sensibilities of each victim or witness and as a community of people interested in the healing and reconciliation process of Liberia. Out of respect and empathy, and as a show of equality to remove any semblance of "big man, small man" dichotomy, the hearings venue and set up were neutral, friendly and free of intimidation as witnesses and Commissioners sat at the same level. The Hearings were recorded in both audio and video formats for both archival and outreach purposes. Efforts were made to ensure that television and live radio coverage of the hearings in most instances was possible.

#### **8.1.5. Inquiry – Investigations, Interviews, IT Data Base, Research, Witness Protection, Security**

In 2007, the TRC established an Inquiry Unit, inclusive of a Director and ten inquiry officers, to investigate and corroborate allegations for EDC, GHRV and SHLV emanating from statement-taking and other sources. The scope of its work included, for example, an inquiry into window cases such as the Lutheran Church, Carter Camp, Sinji, and Bakadu massacres, among others. The Inquiry Unit was also tasked with investigating what role, if any, non-state, state and international actors had in the commission of domestic and international crimes, including economic crimes. The staff of the unit rose up to 22, at some point in time, to include transcribers, inquiry officers and economic crimes investigators.

The Inquiry Unit, as a matter of TRC policy, incorporates witness protection mechanism into its work by assuring that the names and other identifying information of witnesses and victims are kept in strict confidence, and the TRC has instituted measures to protect the identity and physical person of those victims whose testimony put them at grave risk of harm.

As the Commission winds down its data gathering activities in country and in the Diaspora, a reduced number of Inquiry staff continue to provide invaluable service by analyzing the vast data collected through the thematic, actor and institutional hearings conducted in all fifteen counties. They continue to corroborate findings from witnesses or additional discoveries of sites and events in order to authenticate such findings.

#### **8.1.6. Towards Greater Democracy and the TRC Process**

A primary goal of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia has been outreach and inclusion of all Liberian Communities in its processes. This includes every Liberian, no matter where they live, in the Diaspora or at home; what tribe they belong to, or what their income level is. A struggle that the TRC has been faced with is succeeding at this goal in reaching everyone in the community, especially those who are illiterate, live outside of Monrovia, or have not been active in the reconciliation process as a way to minimally redress the historical wrong of exclusivity and exclusion from governance processes. There were grave concerns that the TRC, like other national institutions before it, would be Monrovia-biased, and as such, many Liberians at the TRC's inception, did not take active roles in the process because they did not believe in the process, do not trust national organizations, or they simply did not understand the goals of the TRC.

In order to engage every Liberian in the TRC process, and overcome negative perceptions about the TRC or its mandate, the TRC granted unhindered access to it and the opportunity for engagement was, very early on, guaranteed thus, ensuring that every Liberian truly understands what the TRC is and what the goals of the process are. As part of its broader vision for popular participation and greater democracy for Liberia, the TRC first established County Coordinating Committees (CCC) throughout the 15 political subdivision of Liberia comprising of various people that are well known and respected within each county. The members of the Committees were educated on different aspects of the TRC work and charged with engendering public inputs and interest into the TRC process. This initial structure was successful but encountered problems when the TRC fell short of resources to maintain and continue the engagement after the statement taking process. The success of the statement-taking and hearings in the counties are attributable to the honest work of our staff and the CCC.

The purpose of the County Coordinating Committees, and county structures and engagements was to reach every Liberian and afford the Commission grass root exposure. Promoting dialogue was also an objective of the CCC; believing that it is only when Liberians understand the TRC process and are involved, can reconciliation for all Liberians be achieved



*A historical need:* A culture of distrust and lack of confidence in national institutions has been formed in Liberia due to the many years of exclusion exacerbated by atrocities that people suffered during the war. This same sense of distrust may be transferred to people's views of the TRC. This is a risk the TRC was aware of and sought to avoid. There was a dire need to get the people involved with the TRC process and assist them overcome the inhibiting distrust, guilt and fears they harbor about it. Some people felt it is better to cover up the past rather than dig it up, possibly bringing up past pains that many feel should stay buried. Allowing trusted institutional and religious leaders to educate Liberians on the process helped to bridge the gap that a lot of people felt or perceived to have existed between them, the TRC and national processes. In a nation where distrust is widespread and people have learned to take care of themselves first, the way to restore trust and inspire hope in national institutions is through community leadership and participation in community and national life. Very early on the TRC realized it was important that credible community leaders and organizations enjoying the respect of the people are involved in the reconciliation and decision making processes affecting them at both the local and national levels. If these groups were able to maintain the trust of people throughout the war, their assistance to the TRC would be incredibly beneficial.

*Sense of connection, belonging and ownership:* This philosophy of community engagement guided the TRC throughout its work and led to the popular participation of the people in workshops, town hall meetings, research, county and regional consultations, and national conference. A sense of belonging and ownership of the TRC process was engendered nationally. There is a sense of belonging and moral satisfaction that is gained when people are allowed to take part in social and political activities. The goal of the TRC was to build national ownership of the process and the future of Liberia in the national consciousness beginning from the grass root, which bears the scars of historical exclusion and disenfranchisement. The TRC wants every Liberian to feel like a part of the new Liberia, by allowing ordinary survivors of the conflict to take such an active role in the TRC.

The TRC believed that a common sense of morality, duty and obligation that is generated by knowledge, participation and ownership, places citizens, communities, and institutions in the position more apt to ensuring and campaigning for the implementation of the TRC recommendations. Popular participation in governance and the affairs of society generally, after violent conflict, can serve as a catalyst in engineering or forming new values of a society and help policy makers understand and prioritize the priorities of the people in building a new safer and secured society.

#### **8.1.6.1. Democratic Participation and Prevention of Violence**

The decisions or recommendations of the TRC are important to the future of the nation and the wellbeing of the people who, as citizens should be involved in

exchanging information, identifying needs, setting priorities, making choices and building consensus on these decisions. By allowing the public to have an active role in determining what should be done, added legitimacy is accorded the TRC process and the conclusions it makes, which reduces the potential for general dissatisfaction, confusion, further polarization and violent conflict. The TRC of Liberia by democratically legitimizing its process in the wishes of the people hopes to bridge the gap between people's aspirations and TRC's conclusions. The County Coordination Committee (CCC), County Regional Consultations (CRC), and the National Conference on Reconciliation (NCR) were intended to eliminate such gap, by involving every interested Liberian in the recommendation forming process. Research has shown that "frustration and lack of trust may contribute to violent protests to express public opposition to policy choices made by politicians, policy makers and bureaucrats." Public contributions to policies can result in policies that are more responsive to public need and reduce insecurity of poor and disadvantaged communities in the policy-makers and policies, which reduce the need for these groups to resort to violence in order to have their voices heard. While the recommendations of the TRC aren't being made by politicians or policy makers, they will nonetheless be charged with its implementation, an obligation the TRC, the people of Liberia and their international partners take very seriously. Therefore, it still stands that public participation in the recommendation process will decrease frustration and increase trust in the policies that are formed and the new grounds that are broken. The TRC policy towards greater democracy is well founded on the belief that If community members are given proper information and allowed to dialogue on national issues, participate in local decision making processes as to what the recommendations of the TRC shall be, there will be less risk of unfulfilled promises and more desire for people to be part of the ongoing reconciliation process.

#### **8.1.6.2. Peoples Knowledge is Power in Democratic Settings**

Another issue the TRC endeavored to address by its popular participation and grass root engagements at the levels of the CCC, CRC, and the NCR, is massive awareness and education of the TRC process. Many Liberians have little or no formal education due to the war to understand the sophistication and complexities of the TRC in generalized terms. Or, if they are able to get information on the TRC, they don't understand the terms used and the purpose of the TRC. The CCC, the TRC county teams including statement-takers, were charged with explaining the basic terms used by the TRC, as well as the more complex ideas, in a way that every Liberian could comprehend at the very grassroots. At all TRC forums, people were allowed to speak in the language of their choice to engender free speech as a matter of TRC policy.

The TRC also believes that if people are allowed to understand the reasoning behind policies and the constraints associated with their implementation, the government or

public institutions will earn the goodwill and support of the people when policies fail or succeed. Often a decision or policy may seem unreasonable to the public, but there are justifications for making the policy reasonable or necessary that are only known to the policy-makers and not the public. At these popular TRC forums, the TRC enjoyed a unique opportunity to explain to citizens why certain things can or cannot happen, which would help people to understand something such as why was there a war in the first place; why there hadn't been any trials dealing with the war in Liberia or why was it taking so long for them to see concrete results from the TRC, or more importantly also, what would happen after the TRC.

In the Liberian society where communication infrastructures and sophistications are barely minimum, it is important to reach out and take the process to the people directly so that the people have knowledge about what is going with the policy making process, or how the process even works. Communities must be properly informed in order for them to participate adequately in decision making. One has to show respect for and be sensitive to the peoples culture and work schedule – time or season for farming, time for community meetings, market days, etc - and the proper conduct of strangers. Since there is such a lack of academic education in Liberia, and many people are confronted with subsistence it was necessary to have a very active outreach program to educate people about the TRC and its process so that they participate and have faith in the process. In a lot of cases this meant having patience and slowing beginning with the rudimentary basics about the war and the factors that precipitated it, explaining justice, reconciliation and the need for forgiveness for example. The TRC did not want to make any assumptions about knowledge that people have, since so many were forced to give up their education during the war.

#### **8.1.6.3. Credible dissemination of Information helps**

Training, awareness, and sensitization were incorporated into the TRC strategy to educate the people on all aspects of the Commission's work. Such broad and comprehensive information facilitates direct face-to-face dissemination of information from one person to another, an effective medium of education for communities, organizations and institutions on the work of the TRC. Community members were sensitized on the history of the TRC, Statement Taking Process, Expectations, Confidentiality, Security, Human Rights, Amnesty, Prosecution, Reparation, & Reconciliation. Other areas were Hearings, Psychosocial Support services, community outreach strategy, Goals of the TRC, the CCC and events like the CRC, NCR, research projects, etc. Such goals, if always emphasized, are meant to educate the Liberian people on the TRC, gather support and inputs from the people, inform the TRC report and recommendation generating processes, make sure that community members would use their knowledge, influence and standing to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations, ensuring that the work of

the TRC in peace building, and reconciliation, is continued after the Commission's mandate is formally over.

#### **8.1.6.4. Composition of County teams**

In each of the 15 counties in Liberia, the TRC had a County Coordinator, field officer or general mobilizer along with other auxiliary staff, including TRC first line of important contact, the statement-takers, to drive through the work of the TRC in the county, making sure it succeeds. The coordinators hailed from their county of assignment and were well known and respected by their people. The TRC tried to ensure also, that all other staff were also citizens or residents of the county, culturally sensitive and communicates well with the people in all respect, including their spoken language. Other personalities and officials affiliated with, and contributing to the work of the commission, are the various county superintendents, city mayors, district and township commissioners, traditional and religious leaders, community leaders – youth, women, - Child Protection agencies, pro democracy and human rights organizations, district representatives, and civic organizations, education institutions and authorities, the county oversight Commissioner of the TRC, the program Department and the TRC Chairman; all constituted county structures.

*Criteria:* As a matter of criteria, everyone affiliated with the TRC process were legitimate institutions and personalities not known to have a track record of human rights violation, or any other type of misconduct, whether within Liberia or not that might have impugned the integrity of the Commission. Members, affiliates, employees or agents of the TRC were expected to be extremely committed to the TRC process and demonstrate a willing interest to work along side the TRC and within the TRC's Act, and Rules and Procedures. Everyone affiliated with the TRC was presumed not to be in any way a member or supporter of any armed faction or violence-related institution or illegal entity, whether or not within Liberia, in the past or present and also not an active member of any political party.

*Grand Recommendations:* At the end of it all-the TRC process – National Conference on Reconciliation (NCR) was conceived as the crowning event, the last engagement of the TRC with the public, where all recommendations would be harnessed for inclusion into the TRC report. All stakeholders were brought together and given the chance to present their recommendations for the TRC to leaders of the TRC. On June 15 - 20, 2009, almost a year later than was previously planned, the NCR was convened by the commission in partnership with several stakeholders including the Governance Reform Commission, represented by Commissioner Elizabeth Mulbah who co-chaired the conference and its Steering Committee along with TRC Chairman, Jerome J Verdier, Sr.

*Working Groups:* The eleven sub-thematic issues were broken up into working groups for the purpose of small group discussions which allowed everyone present the chance to voice their concerns and issues that they wanted to see approached by the TRC in its final report and recommendations. Group representations were then presented to plenary for vetting and further inputs, by comments and further recommendations, and sharing additional perspectives beyond the group deliberations and presentations. The Report from the Diaspora was also received by the Conference from the representatives of Advocates for Human Rights, headed by Jim O’neal. Ahmed Sirleaf, also of the Advocates for Human rights, and Anthony Kessely, President of the Union of Liberian Association in the Diaspora were also part of the Diaspora delegation. NGO’s, the international community and TRC Commissioners and Staff, also attended the Conference. The TRC took into consideration and in many instances adopted the recommendations of the Conference and incorporated them into its final work product constituting the body of recommendations contained in this report.

#### **8.1.6.5. Last Word on Greater Democracy**

The goal of the TRC was to learn from the mistakes of the past which led the country to conflict, and find a way towards reconciling all Liberians. In order for this research to be comprehensive, every Liberian had an opportunity to be present and participate in all of the works of the TRC which were opened to the public. The TRC spared no efforts in ensuring that everyone was reached and given a chance to take part – if they wanted to - thus making a major shift from previous practices where the rural population was isolated from matters of public policy and decision making and “Monrovia became Liberia”. There were many challenges to this goal including lack of infrastructures, low levels of literacy, and overwhelming public processes and the authorities overseeing them. By educating community leaders about the TRC and asking them to reach out to their community members, the Commission was able to bridge the gap that exists between citizens and the TRC, and complete its work of seeking truth, justice and reconciliation for Liberia in a holistic and comprehensive manner, that enhances the credibility, legitimacy and popular acceptance of the process.

#### **8.1.7. Preliminary and Final Consolidated Reports**

Sections 43 and 44 of Article IV of the TRC Act commands the TRC to submit a “final report” containing recommendations “at the end of its tenure”, to the National Legislature [and the Head of State], detailing “all aspects of the TRC’s work, investigations, hearings, findings and recommendations for prosecution”. Elsewhere in Article X, Sections 5 and 6 of the Act, the TRC is allowed tenure of “two year life span” to carry on its operations with a further three months to wrap up its activities and write its report. The National Legislature, it is provided may extend by

“resolution” the tenure of the TRC upon request by the TRC for three months “at a time” but in no case shall it be “given for more than four times”.

The initial tenure of the TRC was determined to expire September 22, 2008 and the TRC, having assessed the volume of work outstanding, requested of the National Legislature an extension of nine full months, meaning three consecutive extensions to run contemporaneously (October 2008 - June 2009). In the wisdom of the TRC, a three month extension will serve no meaningful purpose and since the National Legislature was scheduled to retire for its six month annual break (October 2008 – March 2009), a contemporaneous extension became necessary.

The National Legislature granted the extension request of the TRC by joint resolution on September 22, 2008, extending the tenure of the TRC from September 22, 2008 to June 30, 2009. On this basis, the TRC continued its work and did not have to present its final report on September 22, 2008. Notwithstanding the actions of the National Legislature, the TRC opted to submit a preliminary report to that august body and the President of Liberia, of work already done and in further rationalization of the need for an extension of the TRC tenure, without negating the statutory obligation to publish a “Final Report”.

Hence, on December 20, 2009, the TRC Preliminary Report contained in Volume I of the Final Report was presented to the Honorable National Legislature. And, the TRC would present a further Consolidated Report in Volume II of its final Report. The Consolidated Volume contains the full complement of the TRC Report, incorporating Volume I (Preliminary Report), Volume III (Appendixes) and Volume IV (County Reports from the 15 counties).

The reports of the TRC are forthright responses of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC) to its core mandate; to investigate and determine responsibility for “egregious” domestic crimes, “gross” violations of human rights and “serious” humanitarian law violations; to examine the root causes of Liberia’s various episodes of state breakdown and deadly conflict; and to recommend measures to ensure that truth, justice and reconciliation become permanent features of Liberia’s socio-political, economic, legal and cultural landscape.

While the Preliminary Report sought to provide the Liberian people, the Government of Liberia, and the Liberian Legislature with a substantive prelude of the TRC’s work at the time, the Final Consolidated Report (Volume II), this volume, is conclusive on the TRC work. The central rationale for issuing the Preliminary Report also, was to preserve the legal record and the Commission’s determinations and recommendations to date which are presented herein incorporating recommendations emanating from subsequent processes like the extended public hearings, the county regional consultations, the conflict mapping project, the

Diaspora report, additional research findings, the National Conference on Reconciliation, etc.

#### **8.1.8. Benetech**

Benetech was commissioned by the TRC to develop a data collection and analysis process to address key questions about human rights violations and the nature of the conflict in Liberia. Specifically, Benetech was involved in establishing analytical objectives, to give meaning, and logical and technical understanding of the huge data collected by the TRC. The task of Benetech also included designing and implementing an information management system, conducting statistical analysis and integrating quantitative findings based on methods of large scale data collection and quantitative analysis of statements and other data about human rights violations.

Benetech's report and analyses to the TRC also included descriptive analysis by year, county, victim characteristics, perpetrating groups and types of violations. The Benetech report also considered supplemental questions to statement givers concerning, reconciliation, peace building economic impact of the conflict and reparation.

Benetech worked with TRC staff and participated in training programs for TRC staff of the Data Coding and Information Technology department. The partnership with Benetech helped to build the capacity of the TRC in order to undertake the task at hand, of managing a complex human rights information management system so that it could accurately and defensibly quantify and report information about human rights violations in Liberia.

#### **8.1.9. The Diaspora Experience**

Giving effect to the Diaspora project, The Advocates' staff and volunteers met with hundreds of Liberians in the United States, the UK, and the Buduburam Refugee Settlement in Ghana. TRC Commissioners also consulted and held meetings, and dialogues with Liberians refugees who fled the conflict to Guinea, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Nigeria. The Commission did not succeed in taking statements from Liberians in Guinea and Sierra Leone. Although not all Diaspora Liberians who gave statements fled as a result of the conflict, the general impression of many individuals is that there is not a single Liberian anywhere who was not affected by the Liberian conflict.

### 8.1.10. Conflict Mapping

The TRC commissioned a conflict mapping project which was implemented with technical assistance from the European Union to *'map current and looming conflicts in order to ameliorate the potential for future violent conflict and civil unrest'*. The objectives of the project was to make conflict sensitive policy recommendations including measures to improve the effectiveness of policy and programme initiatives in contributing to conflict prevention and reduction in Liberia.

The project inquiry included identifying the predominant causes and/or sources of looming conflict and unrest in Liberian. The project identified four main conflict issues as major sources of potential conflict looming and in need of urgent redress:

1. Voice and accountability in local governance and decision-making processes
2. Land and property related disputes
3. Identity conflicts
4. Youth dimension (emerged as theme in each of the three main conflict themes)

#### **Voice and Accountability:**

- a. Widespread dissatisfaction with structures and processes of communication between citizens and local government;
- b. Concerns that state/citizen interaction is dominated by a "narrow channel" of Traditional Authorities and elders;
- c. There is a prevailing concern about a lack of accountability and transparency in the management of resources and information;
- d. There are common allegations of resource misappropriation and distortion of information;
- e. Attentions focus on the management of funds allocated for development; and
- f. Youth the most prominent group expressing concerns.



### **Land and property-related disputes:**

- a. Boundary disputes; the predominant conflict issue in each of the 46 Districts surveyed;
- b. Land disputes in border Counties of Nimba, Lofa and Bong overlie a volatile context of inter-communal divisions, and constitute a threat to national and regional security;
- c. Land-related inter-generational tensions are common. Security of tenure, rather than access to land, is the problem, and tensions are increasing; and
- d. Allegations of fraud in relation to surveys, land deeds and land sales.

### **Identity conflicts:**

- a. Generally negative discourse encompasses 'ethnic', 'tribal', 'religious', 'cultural' conflicts, and the invariable distinctions between "the natives", or those deemed to "belong to Liberia", and "those who do not belong", typically "Americo-Liberians" and "the Mandingos";
- b. These categorizations are a diversion from the underlying problem; the formation of the Liberian state preceded any meaningful development of a Liberian nation, or sense of nationhood;
- c. This problem was compounded by 160 years of constitutional dualism that afforded different degrees of rights to "aboriginals" and "settlers"; and
- d. The effects continue to be felt today; public discourse is characterized by focus on what separates Liberians, as opposed to what unifies them.

### **Youth dimensions:**

- a. A thread running through the findings is the prominence of young people's views on, and engagement with (both positive and negative) the key issues. The war has unquestionably altered a social order that was previously characterized by:

It was an order, which, it appears, had to change;

- b. The implication is clear; this generation of young people, many of who have borne arms, must be given the opportunity to participate in

reforming the social and institutional arrangements that have failed them in the past; and

- c. If this general condition is not met, there will remain a strong likelihood of a reversion to violence.

## 8.2. Catalogue of Deadly Conflicts, Violations and Atrocities (1821-1979; 1980-2003)

Liberia’s long experience with violence did not begin in 1979 as many may tend to believe or as implied by the temporal mandate of the TRC. The TRC Act mandated it investigate and document human rights violations dating from January 1979 to December 2003.

To the contrary, a historical review by the TRC of Liberia’s conflict and state building past reveal a legacy of violence and deadly conflicts over issues of land tenure and ownership, trade, independence and interdependence, voice, participation and inclusion, etc. In establishing the root causes of our current conflict, its antecedent and historical causes become desirable. A catalogue of violent conflicts and wars which have underpinned unity and reconciliation in Liberia are presented herein. Also are human rights violations publicly documented by human rights institutions in Liberia and around the world, the worldwide mass media as well as local and international non-governmental organizations (NGO). Generally, these violations are not included in the TRC Data Base and are therefore considered supplementary and historical in nature which contributes to the TRC’s mandate to investigate and document human rights violations that occurred between 1979 and 2003.

### 8.2.1. Deadly conflicts between 1822–1915 (mainly over land snatching from the natives)

Conflicts	Years
Dei- British/Settler “Water Battle”	1822
Dei- Settler War	1822
Dei- Gola- Settler War	1832
Bassa- Settler War	1835
Kru- Settler “Fish” Conflict	1838
Vai – Settler Battles	1839- 1840
Bassa- Government War	1851 – 1852
Kru – Government War	1855

Grebo – Maryland War	1856 – 1857
Gedebo –Reunited Kingdom Revolution	1875 -1876
Grebo- Government War	1893
Kru – Government Battles	1909
Grebo – Government War	1910
Kru – Government Conflict	1912
Kru – Confederacy – Government War	1915

### 8.2.2. Nature of Human rights violations in the First Republic 1847 to 1980

<b>Period/ Regime</b>	<b>Type of Violation committed</b>	<b>Perpetrator(s)</b>	<b>summary</b>	<b>Victim(s)</b>
<b>1847-1904</b>	Discrimination, marginalization and violation of fundamental human rights	Various governments of the first republic	The natives were not recognized as citizens in their own land. They were considered backward and uncivilized	natives
<b>1847-1948</b>	Discrimination and marginalization, violation of fundamental human rights	The various governments of the first republic	Women were not accorded their rights in the first republic. It was under Tubman that they were given suffrage	women
<b>1871</b>	Constitutional violation, arbitrary action	The legislature	President E.J Roye was overthrown from office through a manifesto adopted by the legislature because they claimed the process of impeachment was too slow	President E. J Roye
<b>1930</b>	Forced labor and forced recruitment, violations of human rights	The Liberian government and the Liberian Frontier Force	The natives were forcibly recruited and coerced to work under inhumane conditions in swampy fields in Fernando Po	The indigenous Liberians
<b>1932</b>	Human rights violations, massacres, looting	The Liberian Frontier Force under the command of President Edwin Barclay	After the release of the League Of Nations report, the government launched a series of reprisal attacks against the Kru for testifying enmasse before the commission. This led to several deaths and wanton looting and destruction by the LFF	The Kru people of Sasstown, Wolokri and its environs
<b>1951</b>	Constitutional violation	William Tubman and the True Whig Party	The True Whig machinery during the 1951 elections harassed the opposition party under the leadership of Didho Twe till he went into exile and could therefore not participate in the elections. The end result was Tubman ran uncontested. This denied liberia multi party	Didho Twe and the Reformation party.

			democracy.	
<b>1955</b>	Human rights violation, constitutional violation	Saydee Totaye of the LFF	David Coleman and son were gunned down and killed and their bodies were displayed at the Barclay Training Center. They were accused of plotting to overthrow the government of Tubman	David Coleman and his son
<b>1955</b>	Constitutional violation, human rights violations	The True Whig Party and President Tubman	During the 1955 elections, the opposition party made up of a coalition of the Independent True Whig Party and the Reformation Party under the leadership of Edwin Barclay faced harassment from the True Whig Party. Several of Barclay's supporters in government were jailed or dismissed and others were harassed across the country. Tubman subsequently won the elections.	Independent True Whig Party, Reformation Party, Edwin Barclay and the supporters
<b>1963</b>	Constitutional violation, violation of fundamental human rights	President Tubman	In 1963, the government of Tubman discovered an "alleged attempt" to overthrow the president by the force of arms. The victim was court-martialled and subsequently incarcerated at the Belle Yallah prison.	Colonel David Y. Thompson of the AFL
<b>1968</b>	Constitutional violation, arbitrary detention	William Tubman	Henry Fahnbulleh, who was an ambassador at the time was accused of treason and jailed for life without the due process of law as stipulated in the constitution	Henry B. Fahnbulleh, Sr.
<b>Tubman Era</b>	Constitutional violation	William Tubman and the True Whig Party	Old Kru Town was declared a public domain and eventually razed down without due compensation to the original inhabitants of the land.	The inhabitants of Old Kru Town
<b>April 14, 1979</b>	Constitutional violation	President Tolbert and the members of the Armed Forces of Liberia and Guinean Troops	The people of Liberia under the leadership of the PAL organized a peaceful street protest against the increase in the price of rice. This turned violent when the army was ordered to dispel the crowd. Several lives were lost and properties damaged	The PAL and the citizens of Liberia.
<b>April 14<sup>th</sup> 1979</b>	Constitutional violation*		The offices of the PAL were ransacked because they were the organizers of the peaceful protest against the government	The Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL)
<b>April 15,- June 26, 1979</b>	Illegal arrest and detention	Government of the True Whig party	After the protests, the leadership of the PAL and their sympathizers were arrested and detained without due process	The PAL leadership and sympathizers
<b>March,</b>	Illegal arrest and	The True Whig	The Progressive People's Party	The PPP

<b>1980</b>	detention	Party	(PPP) staged a midnight march demanding the resignation of President Tolbert. The leadership of the party were arrested and imprisoned and the party banned	
<b>April 12, 1980</b>	Constitutional violation, military takeover and violation of human rights	The Armed Forces of Liberia	On the 12 of April, 1980, seventeen enlisted men of the AFL staged a military coup, overthrew the government and murdered the president in cold blood	President William Tolbert and some security personnel
<b>April 22, 1980</b>	Human rights violation, constitutional violation	The People Redemption Council under Doe	Thirteen officials of the Tolbert government were executed at a Monrovia beach after the military takeover	Frank Tolbert, Cyril Bright, James A.A Pierre, Richard Henries, Frank Stewart, Cecil Dennis et al

### 8.2.3. Catalogue of Selected Human Rights Violations over the period 1979 – 2003 mostly documented by none TRC sources

**February, 1979:** Seven people including one woman (Allen Yancy et al) convicted and hanged in Monrovia for ritual (Gboyo) killings in 1976.

**April 14, 1979:** Brutal suppression by Government security of a pending mass demonstration over planned increase in the price of rice. More than 100 people were killed and some 500 injured, according to Liberian Government statements.

**March 1980:** A Major crackdown and arrest of Bacchus Matthews and opposition leaders and supporters by Tolbert government. Hundreds were rounded up around the country, beaten, tortured and dehumanized whilst in prison “awaiting trial”.

**April 9, 1980:** Government issued a “wanted dead or alive” hunt for members of the opposition. Many arrested, detained and tortured at the military facility of Post Stockade because of their political beliefs.

**April 12, 1980:** Samuel Doe’s bloody overthrow of the TWP Government of William Tolbert. Scores were killed during the takeover on charges of corruption and human rights violations. On 17 April shadow trials without due process proceeded against 14 members of the government. 13 were publicly executed on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The prisoners were tied to stakes and shot in public view. Proceedings against another 10 detained former officials continued throughout May, and 400 other prisoners including, family members of the deposed president, remained in custody without charge or trial for a prolonged period.

**March, 1981:** Seven people were executed by hanging after being summarily convicted of alleged murder and conspiracy in influencing the conduct of armed men.

**June, 1981:** 14 lower-ranks soldiers were arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow the government and to assassinate several leading members. After a summary trial without defense counsel, 13 of the soldiers were sentenced to death and allegedly secretly executed in the Post Stockade prison, Monrovia.

**Late January 1982:** Sergeant David Gbedeh was executed by firing-squad after being convicted of murder by the Supreme Military Tribunal.

**February 3, 1982:** Four soldiers executed by firing-squad without trial. They allegedly confessed during a hurried "preliminary investigation" by the military authorities to having participated in an armed robbery in which three other soldiers died.

**1983:** The Nimba Raid by supporters of Thomas Quiwonkpa in Yekepka, LAMCO Mining Company and government offices left many injured and rights violated.

**February 8/9, 1984:** Willis Knuckles, journalist for the Daily Observer Newspaper and a correspondent for the BBC in Liberia was detained at Post Stockade prison. He was severally beaten upon his arrest and also whipped during the following days.

**June, 1984:** Rufus Darpoh, a freelance journalist and former editor of the government controlled New Liberian Newspaper, was arrested and taken to maximum prison Belleh Yallah, under harsh conditions and released in November without charge.

**April - October, 1985:** In the months preceding the elections several leading opposition politicians and others were imprisoned. They included Dusty Wolokollie, a prominent member of the Liberian People's Party (LPP) and John Karweaye, another LPP member, after expressing doubts as to whether the elections would be fair. Both were released without charge.

**July, 1985:** Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a leading member of the Liberian Action Party (LAP), was placed under house arrest, and a few days later she was detained and moved to the Post Stockade prison. Tried before the Special Military Tribunal and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for sedition, released twelve (12) days later.

**November 1985:** Random Campaign of terror in Nimba and other counties against the people of Nimba suspected of supporting the failed coup attempt of General Thomas Quiwonkpa on November 12. General Charles Julu of the Executive Mansion Guard Battalion (EMG) led the purge against the Nimba people. Human

rights abuses including killings occurred on a substantial scale the days following the failed coup. The victims appeared mostly to be civilians who had not been involved in the conspiracy but who were suspected by the government of being sympathetic towards Thomas Quiwonkpa. A number of people unconnected were killed including Charles Gbenyon, a senior television journalist working for the Liberian Broadcasting System, who was killed a few days after the coup at the Executive Mansion, official residence of Head of State Doe.

**1987:** John Vambo, a journalist, was also detained without charge in August and later released.

**1987:** Zaye Gontee a businesswoman, was arrested in May and detained incommunicado and without trial for over three months in the Post Stockade and later released.

**1989:** Gabriel William Kpoleh and nine other prisoners of conscience remained in prison throughout the year. They were convicted without due process and imprisoned under poor conditions.

**October, 1989:** Momodu Lavala and two other students including Benedict Garlawolo were detained illegally and without charge for two weeks and eventually killed in early 1990.

**January, 1990:** The government said a number of rebels had been captured and would be brought to trial, but they appeared to include Gio and Mano civilians arrested in Monrovia. None was brought to trial and their fate is unknown. Meanwhile a counterinsurgency by the AFL against people mainly of Nimba origin led to killings, burning of villages and looting. This forced 160,000 civilians in Nimba County to flee into Guinea and Ivory Coast from January to May. Massacres in May were led by Capt. James Chelly and Edwin Voker.

**May, 1990:** Angeline Watta Allison and two others sentenced to life imprisonment for complicity to murder but appeared to be prisoners of conscience.

**June 1990:** Murder of Moses Duopu by Benjmin Yeatin for questioning the leadership status of Charles Taylor of the NPFL.

**June 1990** Massacre of 27 Gio and Mano family members of the AFL by Moses Thomas, Moses Wright, James Chelly and George Dweh; reportedly under orders of Samuel Doe.

**Between June and August 1990:** Killing of prominent Liberians including Jackson F. Doe, Cooper Teah, Gabriel Kpolleh and up to 80 others associated with the NPFL in

a purge allegedly authorized by Charles Taylor. Paul Vaye, Henry Kerdiah, George Mansuo and George Karsua effected the arrest in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. Jackson F Doe was murdered in Zorgowee, Nimba County.

**Early July 1990:** Bakadu, Lofa County massacre of 500 ethnic Mandingoes by NPFL. An Imam was beheaded.

**July 29, 1990:** Massacre of over 500 men, women and children mainly of Gio and Mano ethnicity seeking refuge at the St. Peters Lutheran Church in Monrovia as reprisal for the Bakedu Massacre.

**August 2, 1990:** Massacre of 250 Gios and Manos seeking refuge at the JFK Hospital in Monrovia; allegedly led by George Dweh.

**August, 1990:** About 50 foreigners including Americans were detained by the NPFL. The NPFL also took prisoner, at least 30 Nigerians as well as nationals of Guinea and Ghana, as part of attacks on ECOWAS citizens whose countries were contributing troops to ECOMOG. There were reports of widespread arrests among the Ghanaian community living in areas under the NPFL's control in response to ECOWAS decision to deploy ECOMOG.

**1991:** The INPFL reportedly held one woman at its camp throughout 1991, having taken her prisoner in November 1990, and to be holding a number of children at an orphanage within the camp as human shield to deter a possible attack by ECOWAS forces.

**February, 1991:** The INPFL detained and ill-treated some seven members of the Interim Legislative Assembly for three days.

**September, 1991:** After the September (ULIMO) incursion into western Liberia from Sierra Leone, and again in December, foreign and Liberian aid workers were detained for several days by the NPFL, assaulted and accused for spying.

**June 1, 2002:** Ambassador Albert Karpah killed on June 1, 2002 by forces loyal to Alhaji Kromah over power struggle within the ULIMO movement.

**April, 1992:** Father Seraphino Dalpont was arrested by NPFL for possessing Interim Government currency and a Roman Catholic newsletter alleged to be seditious literature. He was released after paying a large fine, but re-arrested allegedly on suspicion of espionage. He was held in a police station in Gbarnga until mid-May, when he was released and deported to Cote d'Ivoire.



**October 1992:** Operation Octopus was the NPFL unprovoked attack on ECOMOG and Monrovia, left scores of civilians dead, paralyzed the city and created a humanitarian disaster.

**October, 1992:** Up to 300 orphans and a former government official were apparently taken away by NPFL forces on about 28 October from an orphanage near Gardnersville; orphans who escaped reportedly said that the NPFL was forcing the boys to fight for them.

**October 1992:** Five Catholic nuns were slain in Gardnersville, Monrovia during the Octopus attack, by Christopher Vambo and Edward Wowah of the NPFL .

**June 6, 1993:** Massacre of 600 displaced persons at a Harbel Camp within Firestone Plantation. The UN Wacco Commission placed responsibility at the door steps of the AFL; observers and TRC findings hold the NPFL responsible for the massacre in which the victims were burned on the outskirts of the camp.

**November, 1993:** The NPFL detained UN aid workers for several days accusing them of spying. They were later released.

**November, 1993:** After thousands of refugees had fled from the fighting in Sierra Leone into Lofa County, ULIMO forces reportedly took about 300 persons as prisoner, on suspicion of being supporters of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).

**1993:** Murder of six Senegalese ECOMOG soldiers by Oliver Varnie, Timothy Mulbah and Joe Doe in Valhun on orders of Charles Taylor and defense Minister Thomas Woeweyu. The bodies were dumped in a Vahun Valley.

**May, 1994:** The LPC reportedly detained 10 Ugandan UNOMIL soldiers, releasing them a few days later.

**May, 1994:** In separate incidents Mandingo ULIMO fighters held hostage 17 UN employees delivering food aid and 16 Nigerian ECOMOG soldiers, accusing them of supporting the rival ethnic Krahn ULIMO faction. They were released after a few days.

**June, 1994:** AFL soldiers detained UNOMIL staff at Scheffelin barracks near Monrovia for three days.

**June, 1994:** Krahn ULIMO fighters took hostage six unarmed UNOMIL officers in Tubmanburg for two days, reportedly beating them and subjecting them to mock executions.

**July, 1994:** The NPFL was reported to be holding about 25 ECOMOG soldiers and 30 long-term political prisoners.

**September 9, 1994:** The NPFL arrested 43 unarmed UMOMIL observers and 6 NGO workers and held them at nine different sites. 33 were released after 5 days and the rest were released by 18 September. The UN reported that some were beaten and terrorized by their captors.

**September, 1994:** NPFL fighters reportedly detained 43 UNOMIL officers and six aid workers in various parts of the country for up to 10 days.

**September, 1994** Massacre of 100 persons hospitalized at Phebe Hospital. They were mostly fleeing hostilities between NPFL and ULIMO K.

**November, 1994:** LPC fighters reportedly took 10 girls captive in Sabo Wofiken, slashing their feet and forcing them to walk back to the fighters' base in Sinoe County.

**December 15, 1994:** Cow Field massacre of 48 civilians, while they were asleep, on Duport Road, Monrovia by the NPFL.

**January 1995:** LPC fighters killed 18 civilians in Grand Kru County.

**January, 1996:** In the area around Tubmanburg, ULIMO-J detained 130 ECOMOG troops who had been engaged in clearing mines and held them for 10 days as a shield against attacks.

**February, 1996:** Eight (8) aid workers were held for three days by the LPC in southeastern Liberia.

**April 6, 1996:** Monrovia fighting to arrest Roosevelt Johnson, in a combined NPFL/ULIMO operation with support of ECOMOG devastated the City, imposed economic and financial hardships and caused deaths. During the fighting in Monrovia, members of ECOMOG and other foreign nationals were held at the Barclay Training Centre Military barracks by Krahn troops loyal to Roosevelt Johnson.

**April 18, 1996** Murder of 12 persons in Zuanna Town and Bloun Town, Bomi County. Group of fighters stormed the displace camp and burned it down along with Karmo Town.

## Torture, Including Rape and Ill-treatment

**Mid-1989:** A suspected murderer and another man sentenced to death for murder in February both died at Buchanan Central Prison reportedly as a result of harsh conditions.

**October, 1989:** Henry B. Walker, a murder suspect, died at the Monrovia Central Prison reportedly as a result of harsh conditions.

**October, 1989:** Two murder suspects died at Monrovia Central Prison, apparently as a result of torture, ill-treatment or medical neglect. Following their arrest thought to have been in April or May, they had been held illegally and incommunicado in the Post Stockade, a military detention facility where political detainees have been tortured in the past.

**January, 1992:** While still formally allied to the Interim Government, the INPFL ill-treated and held two journalists - Isaac Bantu and Dan Brown - for three days under harsh conditions.

**September, 1992:** Nearly 600 ECOMOG soldiers were taken prisoner; some of whom were severely beaten by their NPFL captors.

**January, 1993:** ECOMOG beat and injured a British Broadcasting Corporation journalist, apparently because he had criticized ECOMOG in his reports.

**December, 1993:** 800 captured NPFL fighters held by the Interim Government at Monrovia Central Prison were reported to be suffering severe malnutrition and medical neglect; five were said to have died.

**July, 1994:** LPC fighters beat and detained, for five days, a civilian in Buchanan who resisted having his bicycle stolen.

**July, 1994:** LPC fighters at Barnabo Beach in Number Four District allegedly heated machetes in a fire and branded their captives, leaving large third degree burns on their victims.

**September, 1994:** The NPFL reportedly detained and ill-treated 30 civilians from the Bassa ethnic group in Butuo, Nimba County, accused of supporting the LPC.

**September, 1994:** Large numbers of civilians and refugees were beaten and raped and their property looted by the armed groups involved in the fighting around Gbarnga.

**September, 1994:** LPC fighters allegedly cut off the fingers and ears of Albert Mende, a journalist.

**1995:** LPC fighters, operating with the support of the AFL, systematically swept through rural areas in southeastern Liberia, robbing, torturing and intimidating people and forcing them to take refuge in Buchanan or other places under ECOMOG control. Many of those fleeing to Buchanan in February were reported to have been bayoneted, shot or flogged by LPC fighters. At the time, large numbers of people, perhaps as many as 6000, were reportedly being held by the LPC in the compounds of an agriculture company, where many were raped.

**April, 1995:** ULIMO-K set ablaze the towns of Fassama, Zuanna 1 and Zuanna 2. Survivors reported rapes, abductions and looting.

**April, 1995:** Benjamin Wilson, a journalist with "The Eye", was beaten by police when he refused to give them photographs he had taken of damages at a refugee compound in Monrovia.

**June, 1995:** UNICEF workers in Buchanan reported that they had registered 652 cases of women who had been raped, mostly by members of the warring factions, within a period less than 6 months.

**July, 1995:** Bill Jarkloh, a journalist with "The News", was beaten unconscious by ULIMO-J fighters. He had been interviewing Roosevelt Johnson when fighters stormed the building and he tried to photograph the incident. Three of those involved in the attack were arrested by ECOMOG and then handed over to the ULIMO-J high command.

**September, 1995:** James Momoh, a journalist with "The Inquirer" was beaten by ECOMOG soldiers when trying to photograph AFL soldiers at a check-point.

**March, 1996:** NPFL officials shot two men in the legs after they were found threatening civilians.

**Additional Extrajudicial Executions; Unlawful killing of civilians including massacres**

**1990:** The predominantly Gio and Mano rebel forces summarily killed government officials and others considered to be supporters of President Doe's government, particularly members of the Krahn ethnic group and the Muslim Mandingo community.

**1990:** An unknown number of prisoners were executed after unfair trials before special courts set up by the rebels. At least a hundred people – government officials and members of the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups – were reportedly executed after being convicted of “crimes against the people” or of supporting the government.

**January, 1990:** Hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed by rebels and government troops in Nimba County in northeast Liberia.

**January, 1990:** A former prisoner of conscience, Robert Philips, was brutally murdered at his home in Monrovia by an AFL Death squad.

**May, 1990:** At least 30 Gio and Mano men, women and children were abducted by government soldiers from a UN compound where hundreds were seeking protection. They were then apparently executed extra judicially by the AFL.

**June, 1990:** A government soldier was executed by firing squad after being convicted by a court-martial of murdering a civilian.

**June, 1990:** Several hundred Gio and Mano soldiers were reported to have been arrested. Some appear to have been extra judicially executed - their bodies were found in the streets, although the government said that 150 had been released.

**July, 1990:** Large-scale killings occurred when predominantly Gio and Mano rebel groups entered Monrovia. One rebel leader was said, by eye-witnesses, to have personally shot four people dead in cold blood, including a Red Cross worker and a woman whom he shot in the face in front of her child.

**August, 1990:** In Grand Gedeh County, the NPFL forces were responsible for indiscriminate killings of people belonging to the Krahn ethnic group. Former government minister, Senator Fred J. Blay and Congressman William T. Jabbah were reportedly executed by the INPFL; they did not appear to have had any form of trial.

**September 10, 1990:** The assassination of Liberian President Samuel Doe by Prince Yormie Johnson, leader of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), after being captured the day before at the temporary headquarters of the ECOMOG.

**October, 1990:** Two Nigerian journalists detained by the NPFL, Tayo Awotunsin and Krees Imodibie, were reportedly executed extra judicially. TRC findings revealed that they were executed by food deprivation; they were allowed to starve till death in NPFL Prison.

**1991:** Accord between Charles Taylor and Firestone. The management at Firestone had an arrangement with factional leadership during the war to organize protection and export of their product. Firestone reportedly paid the NPFL \$2million annually for protection. NPFL's "G-2" security forces compelled rubber workers to continue work in exchange for use of Firestone communications equipment and a base for Operation Octopus that began in October, 1992.

**1991:** The NPFL was responsible for the killings of hundreds of members of the Krahn ethnic group and members of the Mandingo community in Grand Gedeh County, who were targeted for formerly supporting the Doe government. NPFL continued to detain, torture, and kill civilians in other areas under their control.

**1991:** The INPFL or NPFL killed Angeline Watta Allison. It was also reported that her husband, a former defense minister, Major-General Gray Dioh Allison, was captured and executed by the NPFL.

**September, 1991:** It was reported that a number of NPFL soldiers had been extra judicially executed after attempting to assassinate Charles Taylor. However, these reports were denied by the NPRAG administration. It said that an NPFL officer had been executed after a special court-martial had convicted him of murdering five soldiers.

**October 20, 1991:** Arrest of Jackson F. Doe. Paul Vaye, Henry Kerdiah, George Mansuo, and George Karsuo arrested Jackson Doe in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, on the orders of Charles Taylor and murdered him in the town of Zorgowee in Nimba County.

**January, 1992:** The INPFL had executed at least three of their own soldiers at an NPFL camp near Monrovia for being in possession of new currency issued by the Interim Government.

**April, 1992:** NPRAG authorities charged four senior NPFL officers with the murder of seven suspected ULIMO supporters in Buchanan. Three were later released and it was not known if the other was tried.

**July 3, 1992:** NPFL fighters allegedly killed nine forestry workers in Jenimana.

**August, 1992:** When ULIMO seized NPFL-controlled territory, both NPFL and ULIMO forces were alleged to have killed civilians suspected of supporting the other side in the fighting.

**August, 1992:** Several dissident NPFL soldiers were reportedly executed by the NPFL for their involvement in an attempted assassination of Charles Taylor in which a bodyguard was killed.

**October, 1992:** During the Octopus attack on Monrovia, NPFL forces were reported to have deliberately killed civilians and taken other prisoners. NPFL troops reportedly abducted 50 people and killed others when they took control of Louisiana Township near the capital.

**October 20, 1992:** Two nuns, both US nationals, a Liberian man employed by the nuns' convent and two ECOMOG soldiers were killed in the nuns' car near Barnersville apparently by the NPFL.

**October 23, 1992:** Six NPFL soldiers entered the nuns' convent in the suburb of Gardnersville, killed three other American nuns and a Lebanese businessman, and abducted the businessman's Liberian wife, two other Liberian women with their four children, and four Liberian novices. Those abducted were apparently later released. NPRAG officials denied that NPFL forces were responsible.

**Late October, 1992:** The NPFL allegedly killed more than 25 people in Maryland County, apparently because they were suspected of supporting ULIMO.

**October, 1992:** Civilians in Monrovia were subjected to ill-treatment, harassment and looting by AFL and ULIMO troops. At least six people were reported to have been summarily executed by these forces on suspicion of being NPFL fighters.

**November, 1992:** ECOMOG forces threatened to shoot on sight any member of the armed forces who broke a night curfew imposed in Monrovia.

**January, 1993:** Two unnamed soldiers were reportedly executed in January after being convicted of looting by an AFL court martial.

**January, 1993:** AFL soldiers found responsible for extrajudicial execution of Brian Garnham, manager of a research laboratory.

**February, 1993:** ULIMO reportedly executed eight of its fighters in February for looting and harassing civilians.

**February, 1993:** 13 elders at Hende were held responsible for the drowning of a ULIMO commander when his canoe capsized. They were executed.

**March, 1993:** ULIMO summarily executed 114 young men in Zorzor suspected of supporting the NPFL. Refugees who fled to neighboring Guinea were reportedly

either forcibly returned to Liberia or executed in Guinea after perfunctory investigations by an illegal tribunal of Liberia exiles base in Macenta and apparently linked to ULIMO.

**April, 1993:** When ECOMOG forces took Buchanan in April, civilians who refused to flee with the NPFL were apparently killed by NPFL soldiers.

**May, 1993:** In an attack on Fasama, a town under ULIMO control, about 200 civilians were reportedly killed indiscriminately by NPFL soldiers.

**July, 1993:** ULIMO was alleged to have extra judicially executed as many as 300 members of the Lorma ethnic group in Voinjama who opposed their control of the town.

**August/September, 1993:** Reports of NPFL attacks on Liberian refugees in camps close to the border in Cote d'Ivoire or as they returned to tend their crops in south-eastern Liberia. Several were reportedly killed.

**September, 1993:** A UN inquiry found that the AFL had been responsible for the extra judicial executions of nearly 600 unarmed civilians- mostly women, children and elderly people- at displaced people's camps near Harbel in June. This report by the WACCO Commission is disputed by findings of the TRC to the effect that NPFL committed the atrocities.

**October, 1993:** ULIMO fighters reportedly killed large numbers of people from the Kissi ethnic group in Foya district.

**October, 1993:** Hundreds of civilians died or were deliberately killed during ULIMO takeover of Lofa and Bong Counties and the NPFL recapture of Bong County. Countless civilians who remained after the recapture were killed by the NPFL.

**October, 1993:** Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front forces were reported to have killed civilians in Lofa County on suspicion of supporting opposing forces.

**October, 1993:** Liberian Peace Council fighters reportedly killed civilians who refused to join them in Sinoe County in the southeast.

**December, 1993:** LPC fighters killed nine church ministers in Greenville after accusing them of being "anti-Krahn".

**June, 1994:** Mandingo ULIMO fighters reportedly killed at least four civilians and took women hostage for money when they burned and looted villages in the Tienne area.



**June 17, 1994:** ULIMO fighters raided the village of Goe. They forced all the villagers to assemble at a central point and accused them of supporting a rival ULIMO group. They burnt houses and looted extensively. They also tied up the village chief in his hut and set it on fire.

**June 19, 1994:** An ULIMO group led by commander Keita killed six people from the Bangorama village and burnt down the house of the local chief.

**June 23, 1994:** An ULIMO-K group attacked the village of Ngojah and murdered two people. They were tied up and their throats slit.

**July, 1994:** In Barnablo Beach, LPC fighters allegedly tied the victims' arms behind their backs, burned them severely with heated machetes, forced them to carry looted goods to another village and shot dead one man who had collapsed on the way.

**July, 1994:** LDF fighters reportedly killed more than 70 civilians in the village of Rusie, near Zorzor, Lofa County.

**August, 1994:** Mandingo ULIMO fighters allegedly killed at least 20 civilians in Gbesseh, Lofa County.

**August/September, 1994:** An ULIMO tribunal ordered the execution by firing-squad of civilians whom it suspected to be NPFL supporters.

**August/September, 1994:** Mandingo ULIMO fighters reportedly killed civilians in Lofa and Bong Counties.

**August, 1994:** The NPFL was reportedly to have executed up to 80 of its own fighters, without trial, and to have tortured and killed Lieutenant-General Nixon Gaye, an NPFL Commander, for leading a mutiny against Charles Taylor.

**September, 1994:** The massacre of over 100 persons who were hospitalized and/or seeking shelter at the Phebe Hospital. Those killed were fleeing fighting between ULIMO-K and NPFL. The NPFL is alleged to have committed the crime.

**September, 1994:** NPFL fighters tied up at least 20 men, women and children and threw them into the St. John River at Bahla Bridge.

**September, 1994:** At least two Tanzanian UNOMIL soldiers were killed in Kakata when Krahn ULIMO fighters reportedly attacked a convoy of civilians fleeing Gbarnga, which included UNOMIL observers and aid workers.

**September, 1994:** On 23 September armed men reportedly killed displaced civilians and medical staff at Phebe Hospital near Gbarnga; responsibility was not clear but the killings apparently occurred after NPFL forces overran the area.

**September, 1994:** NPFL fighters reportedly shot dead some 100 people in Palala, Bong County, on suspicion of being ULIMO supporters.

**September, 1994:** LPC fighters in Greenville were reported to have killed Marie Tokpa, a girl from the Kpelle ethnic group, who resisted being raped.

**September, 1994:** LPC fighters reportedly assembled the inhabitants of Kpolokpai, Kokoya District, Bong County, killed 30 alleged NPFL fighters and supporters with machetes, then shot dead 15 other civilians prisoners and fired into the crowd. TRC investigations confirmed.

**September, 1994:** NPFL fighters robbed and killed civilians as they fled fighting for the control of Gbarnga with ULIMO.

**October, 1994:** From October NPFL fighters reportedly killed scores of civilians in Maryland County whom they suspected of supporting the LPC, among them Simon Gyekye, a Ghanaian school principal in Pleebo.

**October, 1994:** LPC fighters apparently fired on assembled civilians in Zanzaye, killing scores of them.

**November, 1994:** LPC fighters allegedly killed 12 residents of Sabo Wofiken.

**December, 1994:** More than 50 civilians were massacred at Paynesville. Responsibility was unclear but witnesses said the attackers were Krahn AFL soldiers.

**December, 1994:** The NPFL executed six (6) senior commanders held responsible for the fall of Gbarnga in September, apparently after a court-martial.

**December 15, 1994:** The massacre of 48 civilians at Cow Field, Duport Road, Montserrado County. The civilians were murdered and burned by Paul Vaye, Sam Lartoe and other soldiers from the NPFL while they were asleep in their homes.

**January 1995:** Liberian Peace Council (LPC) fighters killed eighteen (18) citizens in Grand Kru County.

**April, 1995:** UNICEF representatives reported a massacre in Yourcee, a village near Buchanan. They stated that at least 62 people, including women and children, had

been rounded up and killed – most had been hacked to death. The UNICEF workers could not determine who was responsible for the massacre; the area had been controlled by the NPFL but was contested by the LPC.

**June, 1995:** Clashes between ULIMO factions in Royesville left many civilians dead; survivors were raped and terrorized.

**August, 1995:** After the peace agreement, it was reported that NPFL fighters had been responsible for the massacre of at least 75 civilians in the Tappita area, Nimba County. Although he discounted the figure of those killed, Charles Taylor, leader of the NPFL, stated that some NPFL members had been arrested and would face court-martial for these acts.

**November, 1995:** At least four LPC commanders were executed by firing-squad on the orders of a specially constituted court. According to reports, the execution followed a two-week investigation into human rights abuses.

**December, 1995:** UNOMIL observers commenting on the human rights situation in Tubmanburg confirmed that ULIMO-J had forced civilians out of the hospital where they had sought refuge from the fighting and had used them as “human shields” to protect their positions.

**January, 1996:** Members of the LPC killed, raped, and harassed members of the Grebo ethnic group in southeast Liberia.

**January, 1996:** The buried remains of five civilians were exhumed in Tubmanburg, together with those of nine ECOMOG soldiers, allegedly killed by ULIMO-J. One of the victims had been decapitated and, according to a pathologist, another had apparently been tied up and then shot.

**February, 1996:** Lieutenant Prince Musa of the NPFL was killed a few minutes after being found guilty by a court-martial of killing a civilian who refused to hand over money.

**March, 1996:** At least four (4) civilians were reportedly killed when LPC combatants in Buchanan opened fire on them after running over a pedestrian with their vehicle.

**April 6, 1996:** The attempted arrest of Roosevelt Johnson by the NPFL and ULIMO-K with ECOMOG support. The attempt led to the third battle for Monrovia, in which the US government supported the beleaguered ULIMO-J troops.

**April 18, 1996:** The murder of twelve (12) persons in Zuanna Town and Bloun Town, Bomi County. A group of fighters stormed the area and burned down the displacement camp and Karmo Town.

**April & May, 1996:** Fighters loyal to the NPFL publicly displayed the head of a ULIMO-J fighter who had been shot and then decapitated.

**April & May, 1996:** The body of Benson Wyen, former Managing Director of the Forestry Development Agency, was found near the police academy in Paynesville. He was reportedly killed by the NPFL.

**May, 1996:** Five (5) bodies were found on Benson Street, Monrovia. The victims reportedly had their ears cut off or their throats cut before being shot, following fighting between ULIMO-J and the NPFL.

**July, 1996:** Aid workers reported that ULIMO-K was restricting the movement of civilians in a displaced camp in Suehn and starving the inhabitants to cause food supplies to be diverted to their troops. ULIMO-K released some 60 starving children within a few days but did not permit the evacuation of other inhabitants for a further two weeks.

**September, 1996:** Dozens of civilians were killed after clashes between ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K. At least 21 civilians were killed in Sinje, Cape Mount County, reportedly by ULIMO-K. One of those killed was a baby girl, whose skull had been fractured.

**September 28, 1996:** The massacre of about seventeen citizens in Sinje, Grand Cape Mount County according to a UN press release issued by the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Amb. Anthony B. Nyakyi.

**1996:** An LPC official publicly stated that LPC fighters responsible for the killing of three civilians in Buchanan would be executed.

### **The Charles Taylor Era (1997-2003)**

**November 28, 1997:** The murder of Samuel Dokie, a former ally of Taylor, was allegedly murdered by Taylor's special security forces after defecting to found the Central Revolutionary Council (CRC). Dokie was arrested with his family at a checkpoint in Gbarnga. The Special Security Services (SSS), a government force within Liberia dedicated to the protection of the president, ordered the arrest and killing. Benjamin Yeatin is linked.

**December 16, 1997:** The murder of Daniel Nyankan. Nyankan was found dead somewhere near Freeport, Monrovia with bruises all over his body.

**April, 1998:** The discovery of a mass grave in Zorzor, Lofa County. The NPFL has been implicated. The victims, including pregnant women, were bound at the hands and legs before being buried alive in shallow graves.

**July 10, 1998:** The abduction of Nowai Flomo, a prominent market woman, was taken by nine members of the SSS. She was allegedly abducted from her house at about 11:00 a.m.

**September 18, 1998:** The attack on Roosevelt Johnson on Camp Johnson Road. The attack claimed the lives of between 53 to 100 people. Johnson and others fled to the US Embassy for protection and were later evacuated to Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

**September 19, 1998:** The execution of 1,500 Liberian civilians at dawn. The execution took place pursuant to President Taylor's order that Roosevelt Johnson be evicted from his residence. The operation was spearheaded by Col. Junior Fania, Leo Jebo, Saar Gbollie, Joe Tuah, General Eric Sway, Arthur Saah and Benedict Mentee.

**September 19, 1998:** The murder of thirteen (13) Krahn individuals on Shiefflin highway by Mark Guahn.

**August 10, 1999:** The massacre of about 25 Quardu-Gboni individuals. The massacre took place in Nekabozu, Lofa County by militia men.

**September 2, 1999:** The massacre of about 25 persons in Nikagbozu, Lofa County. The massacre was blamed on the Defense Minister, Daniel Chea.

**September 28, 1999:** The murder of Papa George. Henrique Cassell, the Deputy Commissioner of Immigration and brother-in-law of President Taylor, shot Mr. George, a taxi driver, for overtaking him on a road. Cassell moves around freely without any published knowledge of how he got released from prison.

**October 10, 1999:** The massacre of about twenty (20) civilians by Siafa Norman.

**2000:** The summary execution of more than 100 persons at the Gbatala ATU Training Base in Bong County by Charles Taylor, Jr. Some of the victims were trainees charged with failing to follow instructions.

**January, 2000:** The massacre of eighteen (18) Mandingo persons in Bawon Town, Zorzor District, Lofa County.

**January, 2000:** The massacre of 26 unarmed civilians in Gbar, Bomi County. The civilians were accused of being supporters of LURD and were killed on the orders of Melvin Sogbandi.

**May, 2000:** The summary execution of 42 captives in Voinjama by Joe Gbala. The victims were presumed to be Government of Liberia (GOL) soldiers who had surrendered in a battle between John Town and Zorzor.

**June, 2000:** The murder of Enoch Dogolea. Dogolea was a vice president when he died.

**September, 2000:** The attacks by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) on Guinea. The RUF was accompanied by Liberian fighters and Guinean dissidents including General Zoumanigui. The RUF eventually captured Gueckedou and Macenta at a high cost of human lives.

**March, 2001:** The summary execution of fourteen (14) persons in Kornia, Lofa County on the orders of Momo Jibba. Jibba ordered the executions after the GOL recaptured the town from the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). He also planned and executed the death of Francois Massaquoi, the Youth and Sports Minister at the time.

**May, 2001:** The massacre of seven (7) Mandingo individuals by Daniel Gweh and Tony Gonyor of GOL forces in Saclepea, Nimba County.

**June 9, 2002:** The massacre of 110 young men and women in Bopolu, Gbarpolu County by LURD combatant Oforie Diah (a.k.a Iron Jacket). The victims were accused of being GOL sympathizers.

**July 20, 2002:** The massacre of 175 persons on the orders of Benjamin Yeaten at Mahir River Bridge, Tubmanburg, Bomi County. The victims were accused of being LURD sympathizers.

**September 18, 2002:** The summary execution of Isaac Gono in Congo Town, Monrovia on the orders of Charles Taylor, Jr. He ordered the death of Gono, his driver, because he hit a dog with the car.

**October 21, 2002:** The incursion by Benjamin Yeaten, Joe Tuah, Edwad Zamay, Joe Walloe, Osebeo Dehmin, and Matthew Karn into the Ivory Coast on the mandate of Charles Taylor. The purpose of the incursion was to act as mercenaries for Philip Doh. A number of people died in the operation including those who refused to sign on.

**2003:** The abuses against Kissi civilians in Lofa County by LURD members were widely reported.

**February 28, 2003:** The murder of Kara Lund, Emmanuel Sharpolor, and Muse Keita of the Adventist Development Relief Agency by Gbor Vaye in Toe's Town, Grand Gedeh County.

**June 4, 2003:** The murder of John Yormie and Isaac Vaye on the orders of Benjamin Yeaten in Paynesville, Montserrado County. Yormie, the Deputy Minister for National Security, and Vaye, the Deputy Minister for Public Works, were arrested by a group of armed men acting under the command of one "Banana" of the SSS who was acting on the orders of Benjamin Yeaten. They were brought to Monrovia and interrogated before they were killed. Their bodies were dumped on the train tracks but have not been found.

**May 6, 2003:** The massacre of Samuel Bokarie, his wife, mother, and two children in Nimba County by Adolphus Sampson, Gola Red, Alphonso Nyanay and Marcus High Grade on the orders of Benjamin Yeaten.

**May 26, 2003:** The murder of a family of five at the railroad bridge near Gbarn, Nimba County by Adolphus Sampson. Sampson, the Special Bodyguard to Benjamin Yeaten, murdered the family upon seeing them with 75,000 Liberian Dollar and two pieces of diamonds.

**May, 2003:** The murder of 24 persons on Lofa Bridge by General Sekou Kromah of the LURD and his men.

**June 9, 2003:** The murder of eighteen (18) persons at the Stockton Creek Bridge in Monrovia by Charles Taylor, Jr. The victims were POWs arrested by General Roland Duo's men.

**June/July, 2003:** The murder of 42 persons on the Johnson Street Bridge in Monrovia by Lomax and Marcus High Grade. Lomax was the artillery crew commander of the Wild Geese. High Grade was the bodyguard to Yeaten and Nyenay. The victims were accused of looting and summarily executed.

**July, 2003:** The murder of 78 wounded soldiers by Marcus High Grade and Gola Red on the instruction of Benjamin Yeaten at Combat Camp. The soldiers, who had demanded payment from Charles Taylor, were transported from Monrovia to the camp under the pretense that they were going to be paid.

**July, 2003:** The summary execution of 26 persons in Klay by General Abbas of LURD. The victims were arrested on Bushrod Island as POWs.

**September 8-20, 2003:** The feeding of 26 living persons to Charles Taylor's lions by Zeezah Mazah at Tubman Farm, Bong County. This was the prescribed punishment for crimes.

**October 11-26, 2003:** The execution of over 26 persons on the Po-River, Tubmanburg highway on the orders of General Wasue Donzo of the LURD. Some of the bodies were dumped in the Po River. Nineteen (19) mass graves were discovered by researchers for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Lofa County. Locals attributed the dumping to Marine Chief of Staff, Roland Duo.

### **Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, Torture and Ill-treatment**

**February – May, 1997:** ECOMOG forces undertook cordon-and-search operations to find hidden weapons. More than 70 people were arrested and held in secret detention camps on suspicion of possessing weapons. Most of them were tortured or ill-treated.

**February, 1997:** An ECOMOG patrol arrested 25 suspected former combatants in Grand Cape Mount County, took them to Monrovia and held them in a secret cell at the ECOMOG base. They were reportedly beaten with electric wire.

**February, 1997:** Four dock workers suspected of being former United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy-Johnson branch (ULIMO-J) fighters were arrested in Sayon Town and taken to the ECOMOG base in Monrovia. There, three ECOMOG soldiers reportedly beat them with wire on their backs, shoulders and legs and kicked them.

**May, 1997:** ECOMOG soldiers based in Fendell traveled to grand Cape Mount County to conduct a cordon-and-search operation at Lajoy goldmine. During interrogation, six former fighters and three civilians were reportedly slashed with razor blades. One former combatant died during the night following the beating. The other victims reportedly had swollen faces, inured eyes, slashed wounds and hearing problems.

**September, 1997:** Liberian police and ECOMOG soldiers assaulted a group of some 500 employees of the Firestone Plantations Company in Harbel, near Monrovia, who were demonstrating peacefully for the release of four colleagues held by the company's security staff. Police and soldiers reportedly beat the workers with batons and gun butts, and then opened fire, injuring seven people.

**April, 1999:** At least 34, people mainly of Krahn ethnicity were charged with treason following fighting in September 1998. In April, 13 of the defendants were acquitted. Observers at the trial expressed concerns about the competence of the court and



irregularities in the trial proceedings. Some of the defendants complained that they had been ill-treated before and during the trial. Some appeared to have been beaten severely, and at least two had loss of hearing and broken limbs.

**1999:** A group of military officers, nine of whom were charged with sedition, was arrested in connection with the fighting in Monrovia of September 1998 and brought to trial during 1999. Their trial was suspended several times by a Court Martial Board amid controversy about the government's reported failure to ensure adequate financial resources for the trial. By the end of 1999, the trial was suspended indefinitely. Concerns were also expressed about the perceived lack of guarantees for a fair trial and about alleged intimidation of defense lawyers. Moreover, the defendants were reportedly ill-treated and held in conditions which might have amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. They were reported to have been regularly denied food and medical care. On at least one occasion defendants fainted during the trial proceedings, reportedly because they had been denied food for several days. The prisoners were also repeatedly beaten and flogged in the early days of their detention.

**February, 2000:** A court martial convicted four army officers of sedition - General Joseph Jarlee, Major Alphonso Dubar, Master Sergeant Alexander Gee and Private Okpakakpu Mongar - and sentenced them to 10 years' imprisonment. Five other officers were acquitted. There were concerns that the trial did not meet international standards for fair trial and about the alleged intimidation of defense lawyers. The defendants, who were reportedly beaten following their arrest, continued to be detained in harsh conditions at a military barracks. General Jarlee was reportedly denied adequate food or medical treatment.

**August, 2000:** The Liberian government issued an arrest warrant for Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, an opposition leader in exile, to face treason charges, with 14 others, for allegedly supporting the insurgents. Of those charged, only Raleigh Seekie was still in detention awaiting trial at the end of 2000. Several other civilians suspected of supporting the insurgents were reported to have been arrested in Monrovia and in other parts of the country. It was not known whether they had been released by the end of the year.

**December, 2000:** The Supreme Court heard appeals by 13 people convicted of treason in April, 1999 and by the prosecution in the same case which called for longer prison sentences. The Court increased the sentences from 10 to 20 years' imprisonment. In April 1999, the Criminal Court had given as its reason for a lenient sentence the "need for genuine reconciliation in the country". The trial had been marred by irregularities and some of the defendants had been beaten severely following their arrest. Most were former government officials serving 10-year prison

sentences in the Central Prison, Monrovia, where they were reportedly harassed and denied adequate medical care.

**May, 2001:** Over 100 men and boys in Bong County in northern Liberia were arrested as suspected dissidents. They were subsequently detained at Gbatala military base for periods of up to a month and reportedly tear gassed, had acid thrown at them, denied water and starved. Several reportedly died as a result.

**April, 2001:** As many as 15,000 fleeing civilians were halted for several weeks at the St. Paul River on the border between Lofa and Bong Counties by the Liberian security forces. Civilians were subjected to violations such as torture, including rape and forced recruitment into the security forces. There were reportedly numerous deaths from starvation, disease and unsanitary conditions.

**June, 2001:** A 29-year-old man was captured by the LURD while trying to flee the fighting. His hands were tied behind his back. He was detained for several days with two other men and a woman. He reportedly witnessed the deliberate shooting and killing of the two other men on the orders of a high-ranking officer. The woman was reported to have been raped. Both the woman and the man eventually escaped.

**June & July, 2001:** On several occasions ATU and police forces reportedly entered a camp for internally displaced people in Bong County, fired in the air, seized men and boys and took them to Gbatala military base where they were severely ill-treated.

**November, 2001:** Two Nigerian nationals reportedly died in custody as a result of torture after being arrested on suspicion of stealing jewellery from a deputy government minister, Bedell Fahn. The deputy minister and members of the security forces were subsequently arrested, tried and convicted.

**December, 2001:** A 14-year-old boy in Gbarnga, Bong County, was shot dead for participating in a student demonstration by police who subsequently said that he was an armed robber.

**January, 2002:** A LURD commander forced several men from Kolahun, Lofa County, to carry ammunition. Two were shot in the leg for not walking fast enough, one of whom later died.

**February 24, 2002:** ATU and SOD forces arrested 45 young men at a displaced people's camp in Monrovia. They were released the following day after payments by their families.

**February, 2002:** In Tubmanburg, four men suspected for being “dissidents” were reportedly tortured by members of the ATU; one subsequently died. A surviving victim described his scrotum being beaten with a hammer. Arrest and ill-treatment of suspected opponents continued after the lifting of the state of emergency in September.

**June, 2002:** During an attack by the LURD on a refugee camp at Sinje, Grand Cape Mount County, five nurses working with a Liberian medical relief organization were abducted and held until September.

**December, 2002:** Leading members of the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, David Kiazolu and Christopher Toe, were arrested, apparently suspected of collaborating with the LURD.

**December 11, 2002:** Five members of opposition political parties were arrested in Grand Bassa County and taken to Monrovia where they remained held without charge before being released.

**December 14, 2002:** Throble Suah, a journalist on The Inquirer Newspaper, was stopped in the street of Monrovia and severely beaten by security forces, believed to be ATU members; he required urgent medical treatment.

### **Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence**

**March, 1999:** Members of the military, searching for a missing man, detained and beat elders in the village of Dambala, Grand Cape Mount County. Villagers complained that the soldiers had raped several women and had looted money and goods. The alleged violations followed several hours of shooting in the village. Military authorities admitted that looting had occurred but denied the allegations of violence and rape.

**June, 2001:** A 17-year-old woman was seized in Vahun district by an ATU officer, detained and gang-raped repeatedly over 10 days. When she was released, her life was threatened if she told anyone.

**February, 2002:** A woman aged 23 who had fled her home was gang-raped and severely beaten by security forces in Margibi County.

**May, 2002:** As thousands of civilians fled fighting around Gbarnga as many as 20 women reported that they had been raped by security forces. They included a 19 year old raped by four government militia. Another woman was abducted, held for two days and reportedly raped by an ATU member.

**August, 2002:** Three women fleeing to Guinea were abducted by LURD combatants between Kotolahun and Honyahun. They were forced to carry loads and then raped. Those responsible were subsequently beaten by their commanders.

**February, 2003:** B.D., aged 18, from Bomi County, was captured by LURD forces in February, 2003 and forced to become the “wife” of a LURD combatant. A child was begotten out of the illicit relationship.

**November, 2003:** Persistent reports of killings, beatings, abduction and rape by MODEL forces were received. A 60-year-old man, narrated to Amnesty International how MODEL forces attacked Graie on November 1, 2003 burning most of the houses in Graie, Nimba county. Tied some people, beat them with cutlasses and stripped people-both men and women.

**April, 2003:** Abduction of civilians from displaced peoples camps by LURD forces.

### **Repression on Human Rights defenders; Opposition Leaders**

**July, 1997:** During the election campaign, there were numerous reports of intimidation and harassment by former combatants, particularly in the north and the southeast of the country and by former members of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Both were accused of threatening civilians and some returning refugees.

**September, 1997:** Philip Wesseh, managing director of an independent newspaper, The Inquirer, questioned police methods in dealing with alleged armed robbers. He was arrested and interrogated for several hours.

**November, 1997:** Samuel Dokie, former deputy speaker of the recently dissolved Transitional Legislative Assembly and a former Minister of Internal Affairs, his wife, Janet Dokie, and two other relatives were arrested by officials of the Special Security Service. In early December their bodies were found in a burned car; Samuel Dokie had reportedly been beheaded.

**December, 1997:** Seven journalists with The Inquirer Newspaper were taken to the President’s residence, the Executive Mansion, in connection with an article about the killing of Samuel Dokie. They were questioned for two hours by members of the Special Security Services, who reportedly told them that some journalists might be killed if they did not improve their work.

**December, 1997:** Alex Redd, a journalist with Radio Ducor, was abducted by plainclothes security officials, apparently in connection with interviews he had carried out while covering Samuel Dokie’s funeral. He was abducted some 150

kilometres outside the capital, Monrovia, but was found two days later in police custody in the city. He had reportedly been beaten and bore knife wounds. His captors had apparently abandoned him in the capital with his arms still tied behind his back and he had been handed over to the police. He was held for questioning and charged with treason but after six days in formal police custody the charges were reduced to felony and he was released on bail.

**January, 1999:** A journalist was arrested and detained in January for four days, apparently because of his investigative work on the involvement of Liberia in the Sierra Leonean conflict. He was allegedly beaten and held naked. He was accused of treason and espionage, but no formal charges were brought against him. The police authorities denied his arrest. His fiancée was briefly detained when she tried to locate him. A few weeks later, he was again seized by plainclothes security officers, and released only after the intercession of senior officials and foreign representatives. He had previously been arrested and reportedly tortured in August 1998.

**March, 1999:** Police briefly detained Isaac Menyongi of the Heritage newspaper for refusing to disclose the source of his article about a South African businessman's ties to Liberian officials.

**March, 1999:** Philip Moore, a reporter with the independent newspaper The News, was arrested on charges of 'criminal malevolence'. He was released a day later after intervention from the Press Union of Liberia and the JPC.

**December, 1999:** Police arrested the news editor of the Concord Times newspaper, Sarkilay Kantan, and a reporter on similar charges, following their articles about corruption in government and state-run companies. Four other journalists were also sought for arrest.

**December, 1999:** Police arrested James Torh, the executive director of FOCUS, on charges of sedition in connection with comments he had made in a speech at a high school. James Torh had a record of speaking out about human rights concerns in Liberia and had publicly criticized President Taylor over the issue of a truth commission to investigate past abuses. He was released on bail after three days.

**March, 2000:** Suah Deddeh, President of the Liberian Press Union, was arrested and questioned by security officers after criticizing the closure of two privately owned radio stations, Star Radio and Radio Veritas, by the authorities. He was released the next day without charge. After protest, Radio Veritas was allowed to reopen but Star Radio remained banned.

**March, 2000:** James Torh, a prominent human rights activist, fled the country after Anti-Terrorist Unit officers twice came looking for him at his home at night. In December 1999, he had been briefly detained and charged with sedition for allegedly making remarks critical of the government. When he did not appear at a court hearing in April, the authorities ordered his re-arrest.

**August, 2000:** Four journalists working for Channel 4, a UK television station, Sorious Samura, Gugulakhe Radebe, David Barrie and Timothy John Lambon - were detained for several days in Monrovia and accused of spying. The four were beaten following their arrest and one of them was threatened with death. They were released unconditionally after widespread protests.

**September, 2000:** Staff members of the independent New Democrat, including its editor Charles Jackson, fled Liberia following death threats, intimidation and harassment by the security forces.

**November, 2000:** Armed men believed to be civil war veterans, who reportedly included a senior armed forces officer, attacked members of a non-governmental organization, the Centre for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE), in Monrovia. They stabbed and wounded Conmany Wesseh, and physically assaulted Amos Sawyer, formerly head of the Liberian Interim Government during the civil war and CEDE Chairman, and other staff. The armed forces officer and seven others were subsequently charged with aggravated assault and released on bail to await trial. However, others believed to be also responsible for the attack were not known to have been investigated by police. Local human rights activists called for an independent inquiry. Suspects arrested in connection with a 1999 attack on the home of Conmany Wesseh and death threats against his family had been released without charge or trial despite evidence against them.

**February, 2001:** Joseph Bartuah, Abdullah Dukuly, Jerome Dalieh and Bobby Tapson, four journalists from the privately owned newspaper The News, were arrested and charged with espionage after publication of a report criticizing the delayed payment of civil servants salaries.

**March, 2001:** Dozens of university students and professors were whipped and severally beaten by the security forces during a peaceful protest in Monrovia against the arrests of more than 40 students. Some were released shortly afterwards without charge, with visible marks of beatings, and at least seven women students were reported to have been raped repeatedly in detention. At least 17 were released over the next three weeks after widespread public protests. In April the university suspended student leaders; most of whom fled the country.

**April, 2001:** Veteran politician Togba-Nah Tipoteh said that he and other politicians had received threats for criticizing the international community for giving financial assistance to the government.

**April, 2001:** Francois Massaquoi, Minister of Youth and Sports and former leader of the Lofa Defense Force, an armed group active in the civil war, was killed in unexplained circumstances in Lofa County. Reports suggested that he might have been killed because his political influence with government forces in the area was perceived to be a threat to the government.

**September, 2001:** Thompson Ade-Bayer, head of Liberia Watch for Human Rights, was illegally detained without charge or trial for 10 days after criticizing the security forces in a published article. The Liberian police reportedly paid fellow inmates to hang him by his feet and beat him.

**October, 2001:** Emmanuel Wureh, president of the National Bar Association, was imprisoned for a week after he was found in contempt of court for alleged insulting remarks during court proceedings. Leading Bar Association members Marcus Jones and Ismail Campbel announced a lawyers' boycott in protest and were themselves arrested. The House of Representatives subsequently asked the Minister of Justice to charge them with contempt of the Legislature and to detain them until they apologized to the House and retracted their protest. The legal basis for this process and their detention was unclear. Emmanuel Wureh was released in November and the other lawyers in December.

**2001:** Raleigh Seekie, an opposition leader, charged with treason along with 14 others in August 2000, was still in prison awaiting trial at the end of 2001. Others charged with him had not been arrested.

**February, 2002:** Frances Johnson-Morris, former Chief Justice and head of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, was arrested after publicly questioning the constitutional legality of the state of emergency. She was detained briefly with male detainees before the Minister of Justice ordered her release without charge.

**March 20, 2002:** Henry Cooper, a member of an opposition political party in Bong County, was reportedly arrested by police; his bullet-ridden body was found later.

**April, 2002:** Tiawon Gongloe, a human rights lawyer, was arrested and tortured in police custody, requiring hospital treatment for his injuries. He was initially prevented from leaving the country and was briefly detained again in May.

**June, 2002:** Hassan Bility, a journalist with The Analyst newspaper, was arrested with two associates, following articles condemning human rights violations. Sheikh

Sackor, Executive Director of Humanist Watch, was arrested the following month. Both were held incommunicado and tortured. The government accused them of belonging to the LURD and announced that they would be tried by a military court.

**October, 2002:** Aloysius Toe, a leading human rights activist, went into hiding in late October after police raided his home and briefly detained his wife and three other human rights activists. These arrests followed the launch of a campaign by the Liberia Coalition of Human Rights Defenders to secure the release of Hassan Bility and Sheikh Sackor.

#### 8.2.4 Recorded Massacres in Liberia (1979 – 2003)

Below is a synoptic presentation of massacres that occurred in Liberia between 1989 and 2003. To date the TRC has recorded more than 100 different mass graves containing the remains of massacre victims estimated in excess of 8000 persons.

Case #	Date of incidence	Violations	Place of Occurrence	Source / Witness	Victims / Perpetrators
1	1994	massacre	Nyounde Town, lower Bomi County	Eye Witness Account	83 Zoes from the surrounding towns and villages were massacred by the ULIMO-K led by Col. Donzo
2	October 29, 2002	House raided	Gardnerville Monrovia, Mont	Human Rights Activist/ Journalist	Police raided the home of Human rights Activist Aloysius Toe after Toe announced a week of solidarity for Hassan Bility and other detainees. Government officials said that e-mail documents were found in Toe's home that linked him with LURD rebels.
3	1990	Killing	Caldwell, Monrovia	Family Members	Tecumsey Roberts was killed by Gen. Prince Y. Johnson at his Caldwell Base in 1990.
4	October 28, 2002	Arrested and detained	Monrovia, Liberia	Human Rights Activist/Journalist	Police arrested Blamoh Sieh, Director, National Human Rights Center and three staff members from the Center for protection of Human Rights



5	November 2, 1992	Massacre	Camp two, Harbel, Margibi County	Witness	During a football match, ECOMOG bomb fell on the playing pitch and killed about 150 persons and wounded about 86 persons
6	March 7, 2002	Arrested and detained	Monrovia, Liberia	Human Rights Activist/ Journalist	Police arrested and detained five Human Rights Activists Tunny Zeogar, Peter Nicholson, John Okai, Sam Nimely and Aloysius Toe for protesting the arrest of New Deal Movement Chairman Nigba Wiaplah.
7	1993	Massacre	Greenville, Sinoe County	Mr. David Sewen (Acting Hospital Administrator) & The National Newspaper, December 19, 1996- Vol. 1# 62	More than 100 human skeletons were discovered at the Francis J. Grant Hospital in Greenville, Sinoe County. According to Mr. David Swen, the acting hospital administrator at the time, skeletons of people taken captive By LPC in 1993. They were discovered when the hospital staff went in to access their facilities after ECOMOG was deployed 1996
8	January 15, 1994	Massacre	Neeswen Town, Rivercess County	Returnees from the county/Monrovia Daily News Newspaper Vol. 3 # 24	NPFL fighters killed 32 persons after they were accused of been supporters of the LPC. The NPFL fighters were said to have entered the town about 3:00 a.m. and began slaughtering occupants of houses marked by the LPC.
9	June 19, 1994	Massacre	Moulton Corner Browerville, Montserrado County	Charles Bryant, Benjamin Brown, Marilyn Wright/The INQUIRER Newspaper June 23, 1994 Vol. 4#111	Nine persons including an entire family were slaughtered in the area that was controlled by Mandingo fighters who captured in from Krahn fighters.
10	August 1996	Massacre	Barclay training center {BTC} beach Central Monrovia, Montserrado County	Chief Pathologist Dr. Isaac Moses/The National Chronicle, August 29, 30 1996, Vol. 1#31  Vol. 5#62:& the	A team of medical doctors and health practitioners involved in the exhuming and reburial of the dead bodies revealed that over 500 bodies that were exhumed at the BTC beach and reburied at the center street cemetery. Some of the people died from bullets or blunt

				News, Vol. 7#	objects while some were beheaded civilians were killed and many injured while about 1000 civilians were bloodbath.
11	November 18, 1994	Massacre & Destructions	Dior. Jolorh District. Grand Kru County	Residents of the town	Liberia Peace Council {LPC} massacred 35-person. The 35 persons were massacred by the LPC forces opened. Suppressive firing into the town on the pretend that enemy were advancing on the town. All those got killed were all farmer that were returning from the farmer that evening and they also burned down 14 houses
12	April 14, 1994	Massacre	Sogbeh - Bo. Grand Kru County Picinness District	Residents of the town	The Liberia Peace Council {LPC} massacred 45 - persons in Sugbeh-Bo., without reason.
13	August 18, 1994	Massacre & Human Rights Violations	Barclayville, Grand Kru County	Residents of the town	The NPFL massacred five persons in Barclayville, because the men were of the Krahn ethnic group other Human violations was carried on by this group, such as sexual slavery, forced labour and looting/ extortion properties
14	Nov 18, 1994	Massacre	Saa town beach jeriod District, Grand Kru County	Residents of the town	The Liberia Peace Council {LPC} massacre 25- persons in Sasstown because of the alleged involvement in witchcrafts deeds.
15	Nov. 18, 1994	Massacre & Destructions	Dior, Jolorh District, Grand Kru County	Resident of the town	Liberia Peace Council {LPC} massacred 35-persons. The 35 persons were massacred by the LPC forces opened suppressive firing into the town pretended that enemies were advancing. All those got killed where all farmer that were returning from the farm that evening and they also burned down 14 houses
16	November 1996	Murder	Maryland County	Residents of Pleebo and Harper City, Maryland	The later Samuel Kwah Mensah who once served as Superintendent from 1992-1994 for Maryland County was

				County	accused of conniving with LPC and was beating for about four hours and later killed by a group of soldier under the commanded of General Toe who is presently serving as Deputy Minister of Defense in the NTGL government, Sumo and Compare (Gambian) all of the NPFL
17	2003	Looting & extortion	Maryland County	Residents of Maryland County	The Seaport of Maryland county and the four Major Industrials kor companies were finally looted by the MODEL faction.
18	1994-1995	Looting and extortion	Maryland county	Residents Maryland County	The Liberia Peace council also looted the Cavalla Rubber Plantation (CRC) and Décor company equipment and materials.
19	During the period kof, 2001-2002-3	Forced Laboure & other HR-Violations	Fassama and Bopolu Gbarpolu County	Resident of Fassama and Bopolu	During the period from 2001-2003, about 750-1000 civilians, comprising of pregnant women, children, of 12-18 years old, elderly people were taken from their hidden places (bushes) villages, Town and forest by LURD soldiers and forced to carry ammunition on their heads from Fassama to Mascenta and Bopolu. These civilians were not allowed to go further into Guinea, but some brave ones would escape. While many were killed whenever they complained about hunger or tireless while in enrooted. The content of consignment of goods and ammunition which weight about 50-75kg Another women and girls were used as domestic slaves to pound rice and cooked while other were sexual abused
20	July 28, 1996	Massacre	Gbarma town, Gbarpolu County	Residents of Gbarma	Government forces massacred 24-civilians in the house where they sought refuge/safety from the fighting between LURD and the Government

					forces (Counter attacked) at Gbarma Town which lasted for about three hours (6:10 am)
21	September 1990-1994	Looting & Extortion	Maryland County	Residents of Maryland County	The four major Industrials Plank or Companies in Maryland County, equipment and other voluble materials were looted by General Moses Z. Blah, former vice President and later served as the President of the Republic of Liberia in the year 2003, Generals Sumo and Toe, all of NPFL
22	1994	Murder	Karblaka, Border with Ivory Coast Maryland County	Residents of Pleebo and Harper City, Maryland County	The late John Hilary Tubman was a top businessman and prominent citizen of Maryland County. All his Money and other properties were taken from him and was later killed by Jack the Rebel of the NPFL would escape. While many were killed wherever they complained about hunger or tireless while in enrooted. The content of consignment of goods and ammunition which weight about 50-75kg Another women and girls were used as domestic slaves to pound rice and cooked while other were sexual abused.
23	Dec. 28. 1996	Massacre	Trumansburg Bomi County	Residents of Trumansburg	After December 28. 1996 after ECOMOG abandoned their Based in Trumansburg, Bomi County ULIMO-J entered the based where about 27000 civilians sought refuge and massacred over 1000 displaced persons in cold blood.
24	May, 2002-3	Massacre	Gbarma Town Gbarpolu County	Residents of Gbarma	Massacre of 110-persons in Gbarma by General Oforie Diah of LURD. Who is presently serving as chief Security as the National Port Authority in the NTGL
25	2003	Massacre	Shefflin High Way	Witness	About 50 ex- combatants mostly handicaps were massacred by the NPFL Government led by Gen.