

ALERT SERIES

LIBERIA

**DISINTEGRATION OF THE LIBERIAN NATION
SINCE THE 1989 CIVIL WAR**

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SUMMARY

In December 1989, a small group of Liberian rebels crossed the border from Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) into Liberia's Nimba County, sparking off a civil war that would eventually lead to the overthrow of President Samuel Kanyon Doe. Although many Liberians were glad to see Doe's repressive regime removed, no group that emerged from the civil war was powerful enough to replace the Doe government. As a result, the Republic of Liberia was plunged into a state of chaos from which it has yet to emerge.

In the meantime, Liberia has effectively ceased to exist as a nation. Despite a cease-fire agreement signed in Bamako, Mali, in 1990, the civil war never really ended, and with the escalation of violence that began in August 1992 it seemed as if even the limited peace Liberia possessed had been completely shattered. The re-emergence of overt civil war threatened to return Liberia to the state of terror and brutality that prompted Africa Watch monitors to call Liberia a "human rights disaster."¹

In July 1993, the parties involved returned to Geneva for yet another round of peace talks, resulting in the signing of a new agreement in Cotonou, Benin, on July 25, 1993. The agreement provides for a cease-fire beginning on August 1, to be followed by the formation of a transitional government in September and the holding of elections in February 1994. Thus far all the provisions of the agreement have been met, but it must be noted that there have been agreements like this before, none of which has ever managed to establish a lasting peace.²

¹ Africa Watch, *Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster*, News from Africa Watch (New York: Africa Watch, 26 October 1990), p. 1.

² Africa Faith & Justice Network, "Action Alert on Liberia," *AFJN Action* (Washington, D.C.: 20 August 1993), 2 p. "Peace, Perhaps," *The Economist* (London: Vol. 328, No. 7822, 21 July 1993), p. 36-37. "Liberia Forms Government," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 17 August 1993), p. A16.

At present the territory of Liberia is divided between three armed factions. Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, is controlled by a West African peace-keeping force, the Economic Community of West African States Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which has installed a civilian government, the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) under the leadership of a former Doe opponent, Dr. Amos Sawyer. The IGNU, having no military capacity of its own, relies on ECOMOG to enforce its policies. The rest of Liberia has been the scene of a vicious civil war between Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL, the original rebel group, composed mainly of members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, as well as some Americo-Liberians³), the Sierra Leone-based United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO, composed mainly of Krahn and Mandingoes [Malinke]), and ECOMOG, which has, for the moment, established an "alliance" of sorts with ULIMO.

To date the civil war has cost approximately 150,000 lives,⁴ and has driven 600,000 others to seek refuge in neighboring countries. Of those that are still in Liberia, approximately one million are living as internal refugees in or near Monrovia, under the protection of ECOMOG forces. The remainder of the population lives in uncertain conditions in the countryside.⁵

The abuses that have occurred in the civil war form a pattern that identifies two main "groups at risk." The first group consists of those Liberians who happen to be living in a given territory when it changes hands from one armed faction to the other. Over and over again, both ULIMO and the

³ Berkeley, Bill, "Between Repression and Slaughter," *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston: December 1992) - as reported on NEXIS database.

⁴ "Peace, Perhaps," *The Economist* (London: Vol. 328, No. 7822, 31 July 1993), p. 36-37.

⁵ U.S. Committee for Refugees, "Liberia," *World Refugee Report 1993* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, 1993), p. 65.

NPFL have demonstrated an alarming tendency to label persons in recaptured territory "collaborators," the result of such an accusation usually being the murder of the accused (e.g., the NPFL killings in Bomi County in September of 1992, the sporadic executions in ULIMO territory in March of 1993, and the massacre of both Vais and Golas carried out by both ULIMO and the NPFL in the battle over Tubmanburg in August 1992). The other group is constituted by those Liberians that are members of ethnic groups that have come to be identified as "supporters" of one of the factions. Thus far this has primarily meant that Krahn's and Mandingoes (Malinke) have been targets of NPFL violence, and Gios and Manos, as well as any other residents of Nimba County, have been the victims of ULIMO and related groups (as in the alleged AFL/ULIMO "vigilante groups" operating in Monrovia late in 1992, see p. 15, below). It should also be noted at this point that Americo-Liberians, while they have virtually vanished from the news since the late 1980's, still would be inviting targets for factions that trace their roots to the Doe tradition (i.e., the AFL and ULIMO).⁶

⁶ George, Kevin, President, Friends of Liberia, *Briefing: Country Conditions in Liberia* (Washington, D.C.: 17 June 1993). George, Kevin, *United States Policy and Liberia: Observations and Recommendations*, Written Testimony presented to Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Friends of Liberia, 9 June 1993), p. 2-4.

HISTORY OF LIBERIA UP TO THE 1989 CIVIL WAR

Liberia was founded by private interests in the United States as a means of resettling manumitted American slaves. These various interests, represented by an organization called the American Colonization Society (ACS), funded and organized the colonization of Liberia, sending over the first group of settlers in 1820. The freed slaves brought with them a constitution modeled on that of the United States, and a hostility toward the local population's ongoing involvement with the slave trade. This hostility quickly erupted into open conflict with the indigenous people in the territory, who were unwilling to halt lucrative slave trading, and equally unwilling to cede power and land to what they perceived as a colonizing force. This kind of conflict between the colonists and the indigenous people was typical of the way in which the two groups would relate for the next 150 years.⁷

In 1828, Monrovia was founded, Liberia's largest settlement and future capital. It consisted of roughly 1200 colonists (who had by this point begun to refer to themselves as Americo-Liberians) and a small number of Africans (from all over the continent) who had been freed from slave traders. In 1847, Liberia declared its independence from the United States, becoming Africa's first republic. It was not officially recognized by the United States until 1862.⁸

The Americo-Liberians quickly established themselves as the rulers of Liberia, exercising a discriminatory and authoritarian control over the indigenous peoples. Americo-Liberians generally regarded indigenous people as inferior, and although there was some interaction (mainly through

⁷ U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 2.

⁸ U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 2.

infrequent intermarriages and the practice of "warding," wherein indigenous would act as servants for Americo-Liberians in exchange for pay, care, education, etc.), the Americo-Liberians mostly kept themselves separate from the indigenous peoples, the bulk of the latter choosing to remain in the interior, outside the sphere of Americo-Liberian control. Although they made up only five percent of the population, Americo-Liberians completely dominated political, economic, and social life in the country from its inception up to the 1980 coup that brought the Doe government to power.⁹ The division of power along ethnic lines was so absolute and despotic that in 1920 the League of Nations condemned it, calling Liberia "a republic of 12,000 citizens and 1,000,000 subjects."¹⁰

From the 19th century until the 1980 Doe coup, Liberia was ruled by the monolithic True Whig Party, an organization that essentially functioned as a means of perpetuating Americo-Liberian control over Liberian society. In 1941, however, with the election of William Vacanarat Shadrach Tubman to the presidency, Liberia began to move towards the gradual enfranchisement and inclusion of the indigenous peoples. Tubman held the presidency from 1941 to 1971, and his "Unification Policy" was responsible for a substantial liberalization of the political system. Among other things, his term saw the formation of legitimate opposition parties, the extension of suffrage, and the inclusion of more indigenous Liberians in the government. His successor, however, William Richard Tolbert, chose to abandon the reformist trend of the Tubman years, and the corruption of Tolbert's administration, coupled with serious economic difficulties, led to a strong public opposition to his government. This popular unrest came to a head in the "rice riots" of 1979, when Tolbert, who had

⁹ U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 2-3.

¹⁰ U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 4.

substantial investments in rice farms, announced a mandatory increase in the price of rice on April 14, 1979, and Monroviaans staged demonstrations in protest. Tolbert ordered the police to open fire on the unarmed protestors, and in the ensuing riots forty people were killed and five hundred were seriously injured.¹¹

In little less than a year following the "rice riots" a coup staged by a group of Liberian non-commissioned officers overthrew Tolbert. Led by Master Sergeant Samuel Kanyon Doe, the coup plotters executed the entire Tolbert cabinet live on television. Tolbert himself was bayoneted to death and thrown into a mass grave with 29 of his security personnel. Over the course of the following three days, random acts of violence were responsible for the deaths of more than two hundred people.¹²

Violence notwithstanding, indigenous Liberians originally greeted the coup with enthusiasm, seeing the ascent of Doe, an indigenous Liberian, as a victory for all indigenous Liberians, one that would bring an end to over a century of Americo-Liberian rule. Enthusiasm dampened quickly, however, as Doe staffed his government primarily with fellow members of his own ethnic group, the Krahn. The new government was named the People's Redemption Council (PRC), and as one of its first actions imposed martial law (with a concomitant ban on all political activity) across all of Liberia.

¹¹ From 1877 to the 1980 coup, Liberia was essentially a one-party state, with every major elected official a member of the Americo-Liberian dominated True Whig Party. Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 31, 48-50. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 4. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986), p. 14.

¹² U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 4. Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 244.

Because the Krahn (a small minority of Liberia's population) have historically had little access to education or training, Doe's government was poorly equipped to govern the country.¹³

The situation in Liberia remained essentially the same until 1984, when Doe announced that the country was ready for a return to democratic rule. The ban on political activities was lifted and elections were scheduled for 1985.¹⁴ Doe and his newly formed National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) won the election, but according to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the election ". . . was judged to have been fraudulent by virtually all independent observers."¹⁵ It was at this point that the Mandingo (Malinke) ethnic group, which constitutes most of the business/merchant class in Liberia, began to support the Doe government, a move that was to have major repercussions later.¹⁶

A month after the elections, one of Doe's lieutenants, Colonel Thomas Quiwonkpa, attempted to stage a coup. The coup failed miserably, and Quiwonkpa and his men were captured and brutally killed by soldiers of Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Since Col. Quiwonkpa and many of his men were members of the Gio ethnic group, massive reprisals were conducted against the Gios (and

¹³ Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986), p. 14.

¹⁴ U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 4. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986), p. 15-16.

¹⁵ Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986), p. 18.

¹⁶ Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 244.

the closely related Manos), most of whom live in Nimba County (although there were mass killings in Monrovia as well). Estimates of the numbers killed range from 400 to 2,000.¹⁷

The remaining four years before the civil war were much the same as the previous five characterized by harsh military rule, chaotic and spasmodic attempts by the Doe government to govern, and a very poor human rights situation.

ETHNICITY IN LIBERIA

The government of Liberia, in its 1974 census, recognized 16 indigenous ethnic groups which, along with the Americo-Liberians, the Fande (an ethnic group of Ghanaian origin) and a small number of miscellaneous groups, constitute the population of the Republic of Liberia.¹⁸ These ethnic groups are distinguished by linguistic, rather than physical characteristics, but even the linguistic distinctions have a tendency to be problematic. In the first place, the language actually spoken by a recognized ethnic group of any significant size is far from homogenous, usually consisting instead of at least five or six distinct dialects. Additionally, although most of the recognized ethnic groups do fall into geographical clusters, these areas are not necessarily unified by any common culture, sociology, religion, or political loyalty.¹⁹ Instead, the reality seems to be that the ethnic classifications

¹⁷ Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, *Liberia: A Promise Betrayed* (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, 1986), p. 21-176. Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 244. "A Deadly Grab for Power," *Maclean's* (Toronto: 25 November 1985), p. 40 - as reported on NEXIS database. "Liberia - The Coup That Failed," *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (London: 24 November 1985), p. 9 - as reported on NEXIS database. Sannah, T.K., "Liberia Seeks U.S. Help," *United Press International* (London: 22 November 1985) - as reported on NEXIS database. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 5.

¹⁸ For a breakdown of ethnic groups by percentage of the population see Appendix III.

¹⁹ Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 92.

are a fairly arbitrary system which the old Whig government used to catalogue and organize the indigenous people. Frequently in the creation of the "official" ethnic groups very different groups of people were lumped together under one classification, or fundamentally similar groups were rather capriciously separated into units that had little *de facto* meaning.

Nevertheless, the ethnic classifications as a whole are not entirely useless. Some of the divisions have more than a conventional meaning, and there are some informative generalizations that can be made about them. The peoples grouped under the labels Kru, Krahn, Bassa, and Grebo, for example, are known historically to have been hunter/gatherer cultures. Kru that live in coastal areas have historically been fishing people, and as they have urbanized they have become the dominant ethnic group working on the docks of the various ports. The Mandingoes (Malinke), the only recognized ethnic group that is geographically dispersed, are also ironically one of the most culturally, linguistically, and religiously unified of the groups. The Mandingoes (Malinke), as stated before, constitute most of the business/merchant class in Liberia.²⁰

Historically, there has been very little inter-ethnic strife in what is now Liberia. Liberians of completely different ethnic groups lived side by side for decades, and intermarriage between ethnic groups was common. Even when chiefdoms did fight with one another, it was rarely because of ethnolinguistic difference. It was not at all uncommon for chieftains of two entirely different ethnic groups to band together to fight against a chieftain whose ethnicity one of the two allies shared. With the arrival of the colonists, and the resulting dominance of Americo-Liberians in every sphere of life, tension did begin to develop, but it was more a case of "indigenous v. outsiders," than it was a

²⁰ Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 96-97, 111-115.

specific loyalty to a specific ethnic group. The abuses that occurred between the various ethnic groups during the civil war should therefore not be seen as the inevitable consequences of long-standing ethnic hatreds. Ethnic difference only became a serious problem with Doe's accession to power, his privileging of the Krahn, and his severe mistreatment of Gios and Manos.²¹

Religion has never played a major role in the strife in Liberia. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to note the various religious affiliations of the groups involved and see how they do or do not relate to the kinds of alliances that have been formed in Liberia. The Americo-Liberians were predominately evangelical Protestants (most often Methodist or Baptist), and most Liberians who became urbanized, regardless of ethnic group, also became at least nominally Protestant. The Kru are the only ethnic group with a significant number of Roman Catholics. The majority of both the Vai and the Mandingoes (Malinke) are Muslim (75% and 95%, respectively). Most of the remaining ethnic groups, including 80-95% of the Kpelle, Gio, Mano, Loma, Krahn, and Gbandi, still adhere to traditional religions.²²

CIVIL WAR, 1989-1990

The brutal reprisals taken against the Gios and Manos that followed Col. Quiwonkpa's 1985 coup attempt instilled a deep-seated hatred for the Doe government that eventually led to a civil war of appalling cruelty. The war began in December of 1989, when a force of about one hundred men

²¹ Africa Watch, *Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster*, News from Africa Watch (New York: Africa Watch, 26 October 1990), p. 3. Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 5.

²² Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 118-120.

crossed into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire and attacked an AFL position at Butuo in Nimba County (the site of the 1985 coup attempt and the reprisals that followed). The rebels were led by Charles Gankay Taylor, a one-time member of the Doe government.²³

Since the rebels were so few, AFL losses were light. Nevertheless, the AFL retaliated ferociously, slaughtering civilians and burning whole villages to the ground. Nimba County is predominately inhabited by Gios and Manos, the primary targets of the 1985 reprisals, and the effect of this new round of AFL atrocities was to drive hundreds of Gios and Manos to join the rebels. What had begun as a small incident involving a mere one hundred "fighters" turned into a full-scale civil war almost overnight. With their new-found manpower, the rebels, calling themselves the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), also began to massacre civilians. These attacks set a grim precedent for the character of the civil war as a whole, with the NPFL killing primarily Mandingoes (Malinke) and Krahn (groups seen as supporters of Doe), and the AFL killing primarily Gios and Manos (groups identified as rebel supporters).²⁴

In February 1990, Taylor's second in command, Prince Johnson, split off from the NPFL and formed the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), adding a third armed group to an already chaotic situation.²⁵

²³ Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 244-245.

²⁴ Africa Watch, *Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster*, News from Africa Watch (New York: Africa Watch, 26 October 1990), p. 2. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 5.

²⁵ Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1991-1992: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, August 1992), p. 302.

Fighting (and the killing of civilians) continued unabated through the spring of 1990, with Doe's AFL beginning to massacre Gios and Manos in Monrovia in late May. By July 1990, the rebels had advanced to within five miles of Monrovia, and panic spread throughout the capital. There were shortages of everything, looting was commonplace, and the AFL degenerated into anarchy, pillaging and killing indiscriminately. At this point, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS, a multi-national group organized to facilitate regional trade and co-operation) called a special meeting to discuss the crisis and agreed to send a multi-national force to Liberia. By mid-August 1990, ECOWAS had deployed a force made up of troops from Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Gambia, and Sierra Leone. The force was named the ECOWAS Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), and was initially charged with a peacekeeping mission, although that mission would change several times over the course of the next few months. ECOMOG and ECOWAS moved quickly, attempting to restore some stability to the region by taking control of Monrovia and appointing a prominent Liberian opposition figure, Dr. Amos Sawyer, "Interim President-in-Exile."²⁶

On September 9, 1990, Johnson's INPFL captured President Doe, and filmed his gruesome torture and execution. Doe was captured while in the custody of ECOMOG, who were supposed to be taking him to a meeting with Johnson.²⁷

With Doe out of the picture, ECOMOG turned its attention to the NPFL, which by this point had become entrenched in some of Monrovia's western suburbs. Fighting at times alongside AFL and

²⁶ Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 245. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 7.

²⁷ Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 245. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 8.

INPFL troops, ECOMOG managed to push the NPFL out of Monrovia by October 3, 1990. This action freed Monrovia from direct armed conflict, but incidents of looting and harassment, most frequently attributed to AFL troops, continue to be reported up to the present day.²⁸

With their ejection from Monrovia, the NPFL began to open up a little more to the idea of a peaceful settlement, and in Bamako, Mali, on November 28, 1990, a cease-fire was signed by all the factions involved. Dr. Amos Sawyer was instated as Interim President and was duly recognized by the INPFL and AFL, with a grudging half-recognition from Taylor's NPFL. At this point, the ECOMOG peacekeeping force had reached a strength of 9,000 troops, and there were over 500,000 Liberian refugees living in the surrounding nations.²⁹

PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT

The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)

Made up mostly of Krahs, the AFL was essentially the personal army of President Doe during his ten years in power, and in keeping with the reputation its members set in the 1980 coup against the Tolbert government, was vicious in its dealings with the Liberian populace, particularly in its treatment of Gios and Manos. The AFL was responsible for what may have been the single

²⁸ A few sources allege that ECOMOG too has been involved in some violations of the human rights of Liberians in Monrovia, but details are few, and the sources agree that the alleged ECOMOG violations are very infrequent and much less severe than those attributed to the other warring parties. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 8. Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 245.

²⁹ Africa Watch, *Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster*, News from Africa Watch (New York: Africa Watch, 26 October 1990), p. 1. Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1990-1991: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, 1991), p. 246. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 9.

most appalling act of the entire war, the July 30, 1990 massacre of over 600 Gios and Manos at St. Peter's Church in Monrovia.³⁰

Their brutality notwithstanding, the AFL was in the process of being soundly beaten by Taylor's NPFL before ECOMOG stepped in, and is now a shadow of its former self. After the cease-fire was signed at Bamako, the AFL was restricted to Camp Schiefflin, which is just on the outskirts of Monrovia. The restrictions on its scope of operations and its decreased numbers do not seem to have impaired its ability to commit egregious human rights violations, however; there were numerous reports of AFL soldiers looting, beating, and harassing civilians in Monrovia. Although the AFL is nominally under the authority of the interim government (IGNU, see below), Amnesty International has described it as being "apparently autonomous."³¹

When Taylor's NPFL attacked Monrovia in October 1992, Camp Schiefflin was one of the first places hit, and the remains of the AFL encamped there subsequently fought alongside ECOMOG and ULIMO in the effort to repel Taylor. The AFL has since been implicated in (and censured for) several incidents of human rights abuse connected with their aid to ECOMOG, most notably their participation in the "vigilante squads" that scoured Monrovia for surrendered NPFL and INPFL fighters, killing any they could find. Civilians that were identified as being from Nimba County

³⁰ At about 2:00 a.m., thirty AFL soldiers entered St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Monrovia and opened fire on those within. St. Peter's, a designated Red Cross shelter, was serving as a refuge for approximately 2,000 people, mostly Gios and Manos. Approximately 300 people were killed in this first attack, and hundreds more were wounded. Those able to flee took refuge in a nearby compound belonging to the U.S. Agency for International Development. The AFL soldiers later entered this compound as well, taking around 350 of those there down to a nearby beach where they were all killed. The total deaths from the incident numbered higher than 600. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 7.

³¹ Amnesty International, "Liberia," *Amnesty International Report 1992* (New York: Amnesty International USA, 1992), p. 172. Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 74. (*Note: Many former members of the AFL are now members of ULIMO [see p. 23]*).

(widely perceived as Charles Taylor's base of support) were also targeted and killed by these squads.³²

At present, sources report that the AFL has inexplicably been placed in charge of providing security for the displaced person camps scattered around ECOMOG territory. The history of the AFL suggests that this arrangement could potentially result in grave human rights abuses, as may have been the case in the June 5, 1993, massacre at Harbel (see p. 36, below).³³

The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)

The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) began the civil war, and it has been the NPFL that has been the most intractable with regard to any attempts to resolve the conflict peacefully. Its leader, Charles Gankay Taylor, became politically active in the late 1970s. While studying at Bentley College (in the United States), Taylor helped to organize other Liberians in the United States into an expatriate opposition movement, protesting the government of President William Tolbert. When Tolbert was overthrown in 1980, Taylor returned to Liberia and became a part of the Doe government. In 1983, he fled Liberia after falling out with Doe, and was arrested and detained in the United States under charges that he had embezzled from the Liberian government. While

³² U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 135-136. "Further on Fighting: Spriggs Payne Still Open," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 21 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 22 October 1992, p. 39-40.

³³ George, Kevin, President, Friends of Liberia, *Briefing: Country Conditions in Liberia* (Washington, D.C.: 17 June 1993).

awaiting extradition, Taylor escaped from jail and effectively vanished from sight until he led the momentous 1989 incursion into Nimba County.³⁴

The NPFL is comprised mainly of soldiers from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups (many of these "fighters" actually no more than boys under the age of 15).³⁵ The NPFL's capacity for atrocities in the civil war has been rivaled only by that of the AFL, and throughout the war the NPFL has continually demonstrated a complete disregard for the human rights of non-combatants.

The Bamako cease-fire left the NPFL in control of every part of Liberia except for Monrovia, which was held by ECOMOG forces. "Control" is somewhat of a misnomer, however, as most of the countryside was subject to the direct authority and discretion of "fighters" over whom Taylor and the other heads of the NPFL reportedly had little effective, day-to-day control. Since the cease-fire there have been numerous reports from NPFL territory of arbitrary arrests, beatings, confiscation/destruction of property, and restrictions on the freedom of movement and expression, all carried out more or less autonomously by the NPFL's "fighters."³⁶

The cease-fire was only fully effective for four months after it was signed. On March 15, 1991, an All-Liberia Conference began that was supposed to establish mechanisms for disarmament and make preparations for elections. The NPFL delegation walked out of the conference on March 22, 1991, and the following day a Liberian force invaded Sierra Leone from NPFL-held territory.

³⁴ Noble, Kenneth B., "In Liberia's Illusory Peace, Rebel Leader Rules Empire of His Own Design," *New York Times* (New York: 14 April 1992), p. A3.

³⁵ As noted above, there are also Americo-Liberians within the NPFL. Berkeley, Bill, "Between Repression and Slaughter," *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston: December 1992) - as reported on NEXIS database.

³⁶ Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 73. Africa Watch, *Liberia: A Human Rights Disaster*, News from Africa Watch (New York: Africa Watch, 26 October 1990), p. 1.

The NPFL denied involvement, but Amnesty International reports that many were dubious of this claim.³⁷ This initial attack on Sierra Leone was apparently aimed at a group of Krahn expatriates who had formed themselves into an armed coalition called the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO, see p. 23, below). The invasion began a series of border fights between the NPFL and the Sierra Leonean army, the latter assisted by the Krahn refugees (many of whom were former members of the AFL). Fighting also broke out in Grand Gedeh County, where ULIMO fighters (possibly based in Guinea) fomented a Krahn resistance movement. In response, the NPFL began to massacre Krahns, Mandingoes (Malinke), and other related ethnic groups in Grand Gedeh County, and a whole new wave of refugees poured into Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast).³⁸ The attack on Sierra Leone also led to the formation of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), a Sierra Leonean rebel group led by Foday Sankoh and rumored to be backed by Taylor.³⁹

In November 1991, Taylor announced that the lands under the control of his fighters were now under a new government, rejecting the claim of the Interim Government ECOWAS had installed. The new government was named the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government (NPRAG), and Taylor was "elected" President of Liberia. NPRAG, based in Gbarnga in Borg County, has gone to great lengths to acquire the look and feel of a legitimate bureaucracy, but the host of lavish signs around Gbarnga direct the visitor to "Ministry Offices" that are frequently no

³⁷ Amnesty International, "Liberia," *Amnesty International Report 1992* (New York: Amnesty International USA, 1992), p. 173.

³⁸ The NPFL is also known to have operated a forced-labor camp in Grand Gedeh County around this time, conditions in which were described as being "very abusive." U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 137.

³⁹ "More Armed Factions Compromise Peace Plan," *Le Monde* (Paris: 11 September 1992), p. 6 - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 20 October 1992, p. 36-39. "Liberia: Slain President Samuel Doe's Army Splits," *InterPress Service* (London: 25 January 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

more than one-room shacks. NPRAG has placed severe limitations on the freedoms of movement, assembly, and expression in its territory and has at best maintained an adversarial relationship with the Interim Government in Monrovia.⁴⁰

Reliable reports suggest that the human rights of civilians in NPRAG/NPFL territory are far less thoroughly protected than those of Liberians in Monrovia. The NPRAG/NPFL leadership reportedly lives in perpetual fear of ULIMO infiltration, and arbitrary arrests, detentions, harassments, and (sometimes) executions of suspected ULIMO spies are commonplace occurrences. Civilians are without any effective recourse. Additionally, there are reports that the NPFL, during its occupation of Monrovia's suburbs in late 1992, abducted an unknown number of Monroviaans that it suspected of being ULIMO sympathizers. The recent discovery of over 3,000 bodies in territory recaptured from the NPFL suggests that a great many of those abducted may have been killed (see p. 32 below).⁴¹

The Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL)

The Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) played a limited but significant role in the conflict in Liberia. Led by Prince Johnson, Taylor's former second in command, the INPFL was the group that finally captured and killed Doe. Following that, however, the relatively small

⁴⁰ Noble, Kenneth B., "In Liberia's Illusory Peace, Rebel Leader Rules Empire of His Own Design," *New York Times* (New York: 14 April 1992), p. A3. Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1991-1992: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, August 1992), p. 304. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 12.

⁴¹ Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), p. 21. U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 136-137. "Macabre Discovery," *West Africa* (London: No. 3946, 10-16 May 1993), p. 788.

INPFL functioned less as a political force than simply as a dangerous and unpredictable group of armed men. Seemingly without any definite political agenda, Johnson led his INPFL in a manner that was described by the U.S. Committee for Refugees as "erratic, mentally unstable, and psychotic."⁴²

After the Bamako cease-fire in November 1990, the INPFL located themselves in the community of Caldwell (a suburb of Monrovia), where, like the AFL, they technically observed the cease-fire, but in fact continued to commit acts of violence. Johnson's sporadic executions of members of his own forces (presumably for treason) led to a falling out with the Interim Government that resulted in Johnson's withdrawal from the peace process. On January 21, 1992, the INPFL reestablished ties with the Interim Government, only to abduct some of the Government's officials a month later and brutally mistreat them. ECOMOG cordoned off Caldwell, and there were calls from some of Monrovia's political parties for Johnson's arrest, but ECOMOG had been either unable or unwilling to move against Johnson for some time.⁴³

On October 27, 1992, following the full renewal of the civil war, Caldwell was attacked by ECOMOG (Johnson had collaborated with the NPFL, and had covertly funnelled a large number of NPFL fighters into Caldwell). The base changed hands several times, finally ending up in the

⁴² U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 10.

⁴³ Amnesty International suggests that this incapacity may have been related to the possibility that the INPFL were holding children in Caldwell as "human shields." *Letter from Bill Freidlander, Liberia Coordinator, Amnesty International to Lorraine Eide, Resource Information Officer, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Resource Information Service*, Washington, D.C., 15 September 1993, p. 1-2. Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 74. "Parties Urge ECOMOG, Government to End 'Chaos,'" *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 26 June 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 29 June 1992, p. 36-37. "Sawyer Welcomes INPFL's Rejoining Government," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 21 January 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 3 February 1992, p. 26. U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1992), p. 201.

possession of ECOMOG/ULIMO/AFL (these three groups were by this point fighting together to keep Taylor's NPFL out of Monrovia). The INPFL itself dissolved, and Prince Johnson surrendered to ECOMOG. The rest of the INPFL split, approximately half of the soldiers surrendering to ECOMOG, the remainder going back to the NPFL.⁴⁴

Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG)

ECOMOG is a multi-national peacekeeping force organized and sent by ECOWAS to restore peace in Liberia and to protect non-Liberian West Africans trapped in Monrovia by the civil war. Since the cease-fire, ECOMOG has been operating out of Monrovia, trying to implement the various agreements that have been signed by the warring factions. For all intents and purposes this has meant attempting to facilitate the demobilization of Taylor's NPFL, the continued belligerence of which has been the biggest stumbling block to the return of peace. By April 30, 1992, ECOMOG had managed to get Taylor to sign an agreement under which he would permit them to begin disarming and encamping his forces so that elections could be organized. The NPFL turned out to be far from cooperative, however, and by June 9, 1992, six ECOMOG soldiers had been killed in an armed clash with NPFL fighters.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ "Fighting at Caldwell Reported," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 27 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 27 October 1992, p. 42-43. "Liberian Rebel Leader Surrenders as Crisis Continues," *United Press International* (London: 21 October 1992) - as reported on NEXIS database. U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 135.

⁴⁵ It was later reported by some sources that these soldiers were in fact captured and executed by the NPFL after the actual firefight. Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), p. 22. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 8. "Peacekeeping Troops Begin NPFL Deployment," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 30 April 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1 May 1992, p. 24. "Taylor Said to Confirm Death of Soldiers," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 9 June 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 10 June 1992, p. 42.

Up until the point at which it switched to a more offensive military posture in 1993, ECOMOG had been noteworthy for having managed to remain virtually untarnished by accusations of human rights abuses. Only a very few reliable reports implicated individual ECOMOG soldiers in alleged human rights violations, mostly isolated incidents of extortion or physical abuse. Since its switch to an offensive posture in 1993, however, ECOMOG has been accused of impeding relief efforts directed at Liberians in the interior, as well as of conducting attacks against non-combatant, neutral targets (particularly medical facilities) in NPFL territory. ECOMOG has also been harshly criticized for allying itself with the AFL and ULIMO, groups known to have been responsible for grave human rights violations, without making adequate efforts to control the behavior of its "allies."⁴⁶

The Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU)

The Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) was formed in April 1991, when Dr. Amos Sawyer (who had previously been serving as Interim President-in-Exile) was elected President of the Interim Government at the All-Liberia Conference. The NPFL has refused to recognize him, since Taylor regards himself as the legitimate President of Liberia. Although technically the IGNU should be able to command the AFL troops at Camp Schiefflin, it in fact does not, and has no military power with which to enforce its rule, other than that provided by ECOMOG. At times, Sawyer can get ECOMOG to cooperate with him, as in the case of the embargo laid on NPFL territory in late January 1992, while at other times, as in the attempt (mentioned above) to have INPFL leader Prince

⁴⁶The best sources are U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 136-137. Africa Watch, *Liberia: Waging War to Keep the Peace: The ECOMOG Intervention and Human Rights* (New York: Africa Watch, June 1993), 34 p.

Johnson arrested, he cannot. More than anything else, the IGNU has served as base of operations for Dr. Sawyer, who has tried to mediate between the various factions and facilitate the peace process. By the terms of the agreement that created the IGNU, Dr. Sawyer is ineligible for public office (should national elections ever actually be held), a fact which has earned him a degree of trust and respect from most of the parties to the conflict.⁴⁷

Monrovia, inasmuch as it is under IGNU and ECOMOG control, is probably the safest place in Liberia. It has been the scene of several military conflicts, most recently in Taylor's assault on the city in late 1992,⁴⁸ but at present it seems to be removed from the main areas of fighting, and aside from occasional incidents of abuse at the hands of renegades (and the problems posed by severe overcrowding), life in Monrovia is relatively peaceful. IGNU/ECOMOG seem to have a healthy respect for human rights, and a commendable willingness to safeguard them (inasmuch as they are able). There are disturbing reports, however, of beatings and of forced confessions being extracted by the Monrovia police.⁴⁹ Monrovia, preparing for the hoped-for national elections, are very politically active, with a myriad of political parties (including Doe's old National Democratic Party of Liberia [NDPL]) involved in the affairs of the capital.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1991), p. 75. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 10-26.

⁴⁸ This assault is discussed in greater detail on p. 29, below.

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 137.

⁵⁰ Freedom House, "Liberia," *Freedom in the World 1991-1992: Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (New York: Freedom House, August 1992), p. 303.

The United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO)

Composed mostly of expatriate Krahn and Mandingoes (Malinke), many of whom are veterans of Doe's AFL, ULIMO has been Charles Taylor's principal rival since the November 1990 Bamako cease-fire. Based officially in the United States, ULIMO has a regional headquarters in Freetown, Sierra Leone, and an unofficial "base" in Conakry, Guinea which it shares with its sister faction, the Movement for the Redemption of Muslims in Liberia (MRM, an organization predominately made up of Mandingoes [Malinke]).⁵¹

Fighting between ULIMO and the NPFL broke out in March 1991, when armed Liberians (presumably Taylor's NPFL) attacked ULIMO camps in Sierra Leone. The fighting has continued, with brief and intermittent pauses, since. By March 12, 1992, ULIMO had captured a significant portion of Liberia, and was expressing a complete unwillingness to allow any other faction onto their territory. IGNU called for a halt to the hostilities, fearing (rightly) that they were sabotaging the peace process, but the call was ignored. Meanwhile, there were reports from all over NPFL territory of civilians being executed by the NPFL under suspicion of collaborating with ULIMO.⁵²

In August 1992, the temporary reunification of the civilian branch of ULIMO (headed by Raleigh Seekie) and the military branch (headed by Alhaji Kromah) under the leadership of Seekie, led to a renewed ULIMO offensive. The division between the two wings had apparently done a great

⁵¹ "More Armed Factions Compromise Peace Plan," *Le Monde* (Paris: 11 September 1992), p. 6 - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 20 October 1992, p. 36-9.

⁵² "ULIMO Issues Advisory on `Liberated Areas,'" *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 12 March 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 16 March 1992, p. 27. "President Sawyer Holds News Conference 26 March: Urges ULIMO To Stop Conflict," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 27 March 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 27 March 1992, p. 28. "Citizens Demonstrate Against NPFL Executions," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 26 March 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1 April 1992, p. 39.

deal to undermine ULIMO's effectiveness; the reunification was closely followed by an August 24, 1992 attack on a strategic NPFL base in Tubmanburg (Bomi County). Reports of the battle were accompanied by reports of the slaughtering of unarmed civilians, this time Vais and Golas, who were apparently accused by each side of collaborating with the other. By the end of the fighting, most reports (later mostly confirmed by ECOMOG) described the outcome as a ULIMO victory, crediting ULIMO with the capture of Grand Cape Mount County, Bomi County, three quarters of Lofa County, and a part of Margibi County. ULIMO was also said to have captured the Po River Bridge, only 15 miles from Monrovia, although they were quick to announce that they had no plans to move on either the nearby INPFL base at Caldwell or Monrovia.⁵³

The Nimba Redemption Council of Liberia (NRCL)

⁵³ "Rebels Report Attempted Assassination of Taylor," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 13 August 1992) -as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 13 August 1992, p. 28. "Taylor Refuses to Renounce Control of Presidency," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 17 August 1992) -as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 18 August 1992, p. 29-30. "ULIMO Factions Reportedly Reunite Under Seekie," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 14 August 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 17 August 1992, p. 25. "Fighting Reported Between ULIMO, NPFL: Tubmanburg Besieged," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 21 August 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 24 August 1992, p. 20-21. "Fighting Reported Between ULIMO, NPFL: Taylor Says 1,500 Killed," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 22 August 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 24 August 1992, p. 21. "Bomi Hills, Cape Mount Captured," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 26 August 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 27 August 1992, p. 20-21. "ULIMO Offensive Against NPFL Reported: Po River Bridge Taken," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 24 August 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 25 August 1992, p. 8-9. "ULIMO Has 'No Intention' To Capture Monrovia," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 25 August 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 26 August 1992, p. 25-26.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees has estimated the number of refugees abroad (as of June 1993) at 600,000 persons, while Human Rights Watch has estimated that the number is higher, at 750,000 people. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 1. Human Rights Watch, *Human Rights Watch World Report 1992* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992), p. 74.

Nimba County, inhabited mostly by members of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, is in many ways *the* most significant region of Liberia. Economically, Nimba County's fertile soil, (relatively) prosperous local economy, and proximity to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea make it one of the hubs of Liberian commerce. Politically it has an even greater significance; it was Nimba County that Charles Taylor picked as the starting point for his revolution, correctly discerning that Nimbans were the Liberians most likely to support an attempt to overthrow Samuel Doe.⁵⁴ As the civil war dragged on, Taylor recruited heavily from Nimba County, playing on the deep hatred many Nimbans feel for Krahn and Mandingoes, and Nimba has since been routinely identified as Taylor's strongest area of support.

Recently however, a new group entered into the fray that has called into question Taylor's control even in Nimba County, where his popularity is supposed to be greatest. Calling itself the Nimba Redemption Council of Liberia (NRCL), the group, headed by Karpeh Dwanyen, has announced that its goal is the driving of Taylor and his forces out of Nimba County. Dwanyen claims that Nimbans are not the wholehearted Taylor partisans they are made out to be, pointing to the execution of many leading Nimban politicians by the NPFL as one example of the ways in which Taylor has turned Nimba County against him (Dwanyen's father, David Dwanyen, was one of these murdered politicians). Dwanyen claims that his group is armed and willing to fight Taylor, but refuses to say from where the arms came, or from whom his NRCL is receiving support.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Because of the 1985 reprisals following Col. Quiwonkpa's failed coup. See p. 8 above.

⁵⁵ "The Nimban Equation," *West Africa* (London: No. 3936, 1-7 March 1993), p. 325. "Nimba Redemption Council Leader Discusses Organization," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 16 February 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 17 February 1993, p. 25-26. "Dwanyen Speaks Out," *West Africa* (London: No. 3939, 22-28 March 1993), p. 477-478.

Eyewitnesses fleeing from Nimba County report that the NRCL is made up of about 1,000 fighters. They state that the organization has already attacked several NPFL posts, "not sparing civilians in the process."⁵⁶

THE PEACE PROCESS

Following the November 1990 cease-fire agreement signed in Bamako, Mali, a series of meetings, conferences, and summits were held in Banjul, the Gambia; Yamassoukro, Côte d'Ivoire; and (later) Geneva, Switzerland. Such meetings have made some genuine progress (e.g., the appointment of Sawyer as Interim President of Liberia), and agreements have been reached on various aspects of the cease-fire, the demobilization of the warring factions, the composition of the ECOMOG force, and the logistics of the planned elections. However, initial high hopes for a peaceful settlement have given way to disappointment as deadlines for disarmament passed unmet and conditions agreed upon as being necessary to hold elections were never established.⁵⁷

In July 1993, the warring factions (i.e., the IGNU, the NPFL, and ULIMO⁵⁸) signed a peace agreement that could (if it is upheld) prove to be a leap forward for Liberia. According to the provisions of the agreement, which was signed on July 25, 1993 in Cotonou, Benin, a cease-fire was to begin on August 1, 1993, after which a provisional government was to be established by the end

⁵⁶ "New Influx of Liberian Refugees to Ivory Coast and Guinea," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 14 March 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

⁵⁷ "The Road to Peace," *West Africa* (London: 10-16 August 1992), p. 1339. "NPFL's Taylor Responds to ECOWAS 'Ultimatum,'" *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 30 July 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 31 July 1992, p. 35.

⁵⁸ ECOMOG, strictly speaking, is not a *Liberian* faction, and its compliance with any peace agreement is tied to the recognition of the latter by ECOWAS, which was in fact granted. The AFL is considered to be under the joint authority of the IGNU and ECOMOG, and so has not been treated as a separate "party" for the purposes of this agreement.

of September 1993. Elections are scheduled for 1994. The deadline for the cease-fire was in fact met, and on August 17 the *Washington Post* reported that a provisional government consisting of a five-member executive council, had been established. The council members are described as "noncontroversial figures removed from the atrocities of Liberia's civil war."⁵⁹

Opinions on the prospects of this agreement vary, but the general attitude seems to be a guarded optimism, and many factors do seem to militate in favor of the new agreement. Most importantly, the NPFL, which was primarily responsible for scuttling the previous agreements, is in a greatly weakened position; the loss of territory and a series of embargoes imposed by the UN and ECOWAS have each taken their toll. Additionally, the UN has agreed to take an active role in the implementation of this agreement, and there are plans to expand the ECOMOG peace-keeping force by including troops from non-West African countries. It is important to stress, however, that peace has not been conclusively established. As recently as September 15, the *Reuters* wire service was reporting that ECOMOG was redeploying troops in Monrovia in response to rumors that the NPFL might attack the city again. As noted above, there have been several previous agreements, all of which failed to accomplish anything of lasting value. Additionally the current and persistent threat of unrest and instability in Nigeria poses a danger to the stability of the entire region, including Liberia.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Africa Faith & Justice Network, "Action Alert on Liberia," *AFJN Action* (Washington, D.C.: 20 August 1993), 2 p. "Liberia Forms Government," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 17 August 1993), p. A16. "Peace, Perhaps," *The Economist* (London: Vol. 328, No. 7822, 31 July 1993), p. 36-37.

⁶⁰ Africa Faith & Justice Network, "Action Alert on Liberia," *AFJN Alert* (Washington, D.C.: 20 August 1993), 2 p. "ECOMOG Braced for Fighting in Liberia," *Reuters* (London: 15 September 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. "Nigeria's Interim Leadership Threatened by National Strikes," *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, Massachusetts: 30 August 1993) p. 3.

RECENT EVENTS: THE SECOND CIVIL WAR

Once the fighting between ULIMO and the NPFL began again in earnest (in August 1992), a new stream of refugees headed from the scenes of battle to Monrovia. On September 27, 1992, approximately 450 of these refugees were killed in Bomi County by NPFL fighters. Survivors stated that NPFL fighters had accused the whole group of spying for ULIMO, after which they proceeded to shoot most of them down where they stood.⁶¹

The situation continued to degenerate over the following month. The NPFL escalated its attacks on civilians, as attested to by further killings at Klay and in Bomi County in September, and by the looting and abduction that took place in various towns near the battle lines in early October 1992. Fighting continued around Monrovia, reaching to within five miles of the city limits, and ECOMOG and NPFL troops had their first full scale armed clash since 1990.⁶²

On October 15, 1992, the NPFL attacked Monrovia, marking the beginning of what Liberians call the Second Civil War. NPFL fighters simultaneously attacked AFL troops interred at Camp Schiefflin and the outlying ECOMOG posts in Monrovia, beginning with an artillery assault and finishing with an infantry attack. The infantry attack was repulsed, but in one day the whole character of the Liberian situation changed drastically. Suddenly ECOMOG was no longer a passive observer,

⁶¹ The Bomi County massacre was reported and corroborated by several reliable sources, the best are: "Over 370 Civilians Killed in Fresh Rebel Assaults in Liberia," *Xinhua General News Service* (Beijing: 28 September 1992) - as reported on NEXIS database. "NPFL Massacre," *West Africa* (London: No. 3916, 5-11 October 1992), p. 1682. "NPFL Forces Reportedly Massacres [sic] Civilians," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 27 September 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 28 September 1992, p. 39.

⁶² "Unidentified Soldiers Said En Route To Join Fight," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 3 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 6 October 1992, p. 26-27. "NPFL Attacks Settlement, Loots Towns," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 14 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 14 October 1992, p. 44. "Three ECOMOG Soldiers Killed," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 4 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 6 October 1992, p. 26.

Monrovia no longer an island of safety. By November 1, 1992, ECOMOG and the NPFL were engaged in open combat, ECOMOG assisted by AFL, ULIMO, and newly arrived Black Beret troops.⁶³ The INPFL's base at Caldwell was overrun by the NPFL, taken by ECOMOG, retaken by the NPFL, and then retaken again by ECOMOG and ULIMO. The INPFL has ceased to exist, all of its former members either having surrendered to ECOMOG, deserted, been killed, or rejoined the NPFL. Prince Johnson himself has surrendered to ECOMOG.⁶⁴

Fighting continued through most of December and January, with the NPFL managing to advance to within three miles of the city's center, but eventually being pushed out of the city altogether by ECOMOG, ULIMO, and the others. The NPFL continued to withdraw, pursued by ULIMO, which in late January underwent another internal struggle. Having reunified just a few months before, the two branches (the civilian, headed by Raleigh Seekie, and the military, headed by Gen. Alhaji Kromah) split once again. This time Kromah seems to have been able to make his assumption of command stick (although Seekie refuses to acknowledge it). Gen. Joe Harris, the ULIMO field commander, has stated that as far as he is concerned Gen. Kromah is in charge of ULIMO now. The split seems to have been made along religious and ethnic lines; Kromah's faction

⁶³ These "Black Beret" troops appeared in Monrovia in October 1992, and are something of a mystery. Recent reports from some sources suggest that they were organized, armed, and trained by the IGNU as a "Special Anti-Terrorist Unit." Human Rights Watch, "Liberia," *Human Rights Watch World Report 1993* (New York: Human Rights Watch, December 1992), p. 23. U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 136.

⁶⁴ "Monrovia Outskirts, Army Camp Come Under Attack," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 15 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 16 October 1992, p. 26. "Reportage on NPFL Attack on Monrovia: ECOMOG Statement," *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 17 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 20 October 1992, p. 33-34. "Further on Fighting: Spriggs Payne Still Open," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 21 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 22 October 1992, p. 39-40. "Fighting at Caldwell Reported," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 27 October 1992) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 27 October 1992, p. 42-43. "Liberian Rebel Leader Surrenders as Crisis Continues," *United Press International* (London: 21 October 1992) - as reported on NEXIS database.

is almost completely Muslim, and predominately Mandingo (Malinke), while Seekie's is mainly Krahn and non-Muslim.⁶⁵

By the end of February 1993, ECOMOG and ULIMO apparently had the NPFL in retreat. Roberts Airfield, Kakata, and Harbel, which had all been NPFL strongholds for the past three years, fell to ULIMO troops, and Buchanan (NPRAG's seaport) and Gbarnga (NPRAG's capital) were described by some eyewitnesses as "ghost towns." Both IGNU and ULIMO announced that the NPFL was on the "verge of collapse" and that a ULIMO assault on Gbarnga was "imminent." The NPFL for its part continued to fall back farther into eastern Liberia. Some sources reported that a large number of NPRAG officials were fleeing Liberia for Côte d'Ivoire or the United States, and that Charles Taylor himself had gone into hiding (an allegation the NPFL denied).⁶⁶

On February 25, ECOMOG chief General Olurin announced a general amnesty for any and all NPFL "fighters" that surrendered to ECOMOG. This amnesty produced a significant number of NPFL deserters, although exact numbers are not available.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ "Liberia: Slain President Samuel Doe's Army Splits," *InterPress Service* (London: 25 January 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. "NPFL Rebels Retreat," *West Africa* (London: No. 3935, 22-28 February 1993), p. 283. George, Kevin, President, Friends of Liberia, *Briefing: Country Conditions in Liberia* (Washington, D.C.: 17 June 1993).

⁶⁶ "Liberian Leader Admits Losing Stronghold," *United Press International* (London: 26 February 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. "Liberia: Main Warring Faction in Disarray," *InterPress Service* (London: 5 March 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. "Is the Game Really Over?" *West Africa* (London: No. 3937, 8-14 March 1993), p. 369. "Patriotic Front Denies Taylor 'Gone Into Hiding,'" *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 12 March 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 16 March 1993, p. 26. "Final Assault," *West Africa* (London, No. 3938, 15-21 March 1993), p. 432. "ULIMO Claims Successes, Final Gbarnga Assault 'Imminent,'" *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 8 March 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 8 March 1993, p. 26-27.

⁶⁷ "Surrendering NPFL Soldiers Will 'Not Be Prosecuted,'" *Radio Nigeria* (Lagos, Nigeria: 25 February 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 26 February 1993, p. 28. "800 More Liberian Rebels Surrender to ECOMOG," *Xinhua General News Service* (Beijing: 22 March 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

The outbreak of the Second Civil War brought with it a reawakening of the refugee problem, as hundreds more were driven from their homes in search of shelter. Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Monrovia all received new waves of displaced Liberians, fleeing either the NPFL, ULIMO, or ECOMOG bombing raids, which have (albeit probably not intentionally) hit some civilian targets such as hospitals and schools.⁶⁸

ECOMOG made substantial advances, capturing Buchanan (Liberia's second largest city) and moving northwards into Kakata and the surrounding area. As a result, ECOMOG, in conjunction with members of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Monrovia City Corporation, discovered over 3,000 bodies of people apparently executed by Charles Taylor's NPFL forces either during or after the latter's assault on Monrovia in October-November 1992.⁶⁹

The current situation in Liberia is extremely complicated and difficult to evaluate. At present, ULIMO controls about a third of the country, claiming Bomi, Cape Mount and most of Lofa Counties as its own. There are also ULIMO troops in and around Monrovia, but these have reportedly been disarmed by ECOMOG.⁷⁰ ECOMOG at present controls Monrovia and an indeterminate amount of the territory surrounding the capital city. ECOMOG also holds the seaport of Buchanan, in Grand Bassa County. The AFL is apparently restricted to operating within

⁶⁸ "New Influx of Liberian Refugees to Ivory Coast and Guinea," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 14 March 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. Maier, Karl, "Liberians Flee 'Peace-Keeping' Offensive," *The Independent* (London: 25 March 1993), p. 13 - as reported on NEXIS database. Maier, Karl, "Air Raids on Liberia Intensify; Civilians Flee Strikes by West African Force," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 4 April 1993), p. A40.

⁶⁹ "Macabre Discovery," *West Africa* (London: No. 3946, 10-16 May 1993), p. 788. "ECOMOG Uncovers Grave," *West Africa* (London: No. 3940, 29 March-4 April 1993), p. 521. "ECOMOG Pushing NPFL Beyond Buchanan," *British Broadcasting Corporation* (London: 6 May 1993) - as reported in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 7 May 1993, p. 24.

⁷⁰ "ECOMOG Completes Dismantling of ULIMO in Monrovia," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 7 April 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

ECOMOG territory; providing protection and security at displaced persons camps seems to be its main function at the moment. The rest of the country belongs to the NPFL. Providing for additional confusion, two additional armed groups are "operating" in some sense within Liberia: the mysterious "Black Berets" who are in Monrovia, and Karpeh Dwanyen's NRCL, based in Nimba County.

LIBERIAN REFUGEES ABROAD

Following the outbreak of the 1989 civil war, Liberia began producing large numbers of refugees. Many of these were internal refugees, fleeing from the outlying parts of Liberia to Monrovia. Many more, however, fled the country altogether, and continue to do so sporadically as conditions change in the Liberian countryside.

The latest reliable sources estimate the Liberian refugee population in West Africa as follows: 450,000 people in Guinea; 195,000 in Côte d'Ivoire; 7,600 in Sierra Leone; 10,000 in Ghana; and 1,600 in Nigeria and various other African countries.⁷¹ There were originally many more refugees in Sierra Leone, but the vast majority of these fled to Guinea (along with a large number of Sierra Leoneans) after the outbreak of fighting between the RUF and the Sierra Leonean army.

In Guinea, as in Côte d'Ivoire (the two countries hosting the largest numbers of Liberian refugees), most of the refugees were resettled via "cohabitation" as opposed to placement in refugee camps. When the refugees first began pouring across the borders to these two countries, they were welcomed into the villages and homes of the Guineans and Ivorians. This remains the case at present,

⁷¹ These figures are taken from U.S. Committee for Refugees, "Liberia," *World Refugee Report 1993* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, 1992), p. 65. Most other sources report numbers that are approximately the same (see, for example, U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* [Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993], p. 124).

although significant tensions have developed between hosts and refugees, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, where the cultural and linguistic differences are more striking. Nevertheless both countries have maintained their commitments to the Liberian refugees, although neither country is tendering the refugees any explicit offer of permanent resettlement. Guinea lacks any formal legislation on this issue, and has essentially operated on the basis of international refugee conventions, adhering to the principle of refusing to repatriate persons into situations where they would be at risk (non-refoulement). The Guinean government has offered Guinean citizenship to any refugees with Guinean roots who wish to take it, but the bulk of the refugees are expected to repatriate once the situation in Liberia has stabilized.⁷²

Côte d'Ivoire's borders are essentially open to any citizens of ECOWAS nations, but the Ivorian government requires that any who wish to be granted official refugee status (and thus be eligible for Ivorian/U.N.H.C.R. aid) must go through a screening process, in which it is determined whether the applicant is a political refugee or an economic migrant. Côte d'Ivoire has given the U.N.H.C.R. the authority to conduct this screening, and about 50.4% of applicants are reportedly approved to receive refugee assistance. Refugees in Côte d'Ivoire are not subject to forced repatriation, and are eligible to receive 1-year temporary resident visas every year for their first five years in the country. After the fifth year they may apply for permanent residency. While the Ivorian government expects the vast majority of the Liberians to eventually repatriate, it has allowed some

⁷² U.S. Department of State, "Guinea," *World Refugee Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1992), p. 30.

refugees to establish "income generating projects, loan funds, and expanded agricultural programs in areas refugees are likely to settle."⁷³

Sierra Leone also lacks any legislation specifically dealing with the issue of refugees. Sierra Leone is, however, signatory to the 1951 U.N. Convention, the 1967 U.N. Protocol, and the 1969 OAU Convention on the rights and treatment of refugees. All Liberian asylum seekers are granted refugee status, which includes the right to work, and the right to exit and return if necessary (emergency travel documents are issued for this purpose). Official refugees are required to remain in the Waterloo Refugee Camp, just outside of the capital, Freetown. There are approximately 5,600 refugees at the Waterloo Camp, and as many as 2,000 more "unofficial" (i.e., without status) refugees in various other parts of the country. Sierra Leone has given no indication of the position it will eventually take on the question of the permanent resettlement of these refugees.⁷⁴

Most of the refugees in Ghana are restricted to a refugee camp in Buduburam, about 20 miles from Accra. There have been no instances of forced repatriation, but no offer of firm resettlement either.⁷⁵

⁷³ U.S. Department of State, "Côte d'Ivoire," *World Refugee Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1992), p. 24. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 18. U.S. Committee for Refugees, "Côte d'Ivoire," *World Refugee Report 1993* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, 1993), p. 59.

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Sierra Leone," *World Refugee Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1992), p. 44. U.S. Committee for Refugees, *Uprooted Liberians: Casualties of a Brutal War* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, February 1992), p. 15. *Letter from Scott Busby, Associate Legal Counselor, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to Lorraine Eide, Resource Information Officer, U.S.I.N.S. Resource Information Center* (Washington, D.C.: 13 April 1993), p. 1-2. U.S. Committee for Refugees, "Sierra Leone," *World Refugee Report 1993* (Washington, D.C.: American Council for Nationalities Service, 1993), p. 69.

⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Ghana," *World Refugee Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1992), p. 29.

Nigeria, like Côte d'Ivoire, requires prospective refugees to go through a screening process. Those who are approved are (along with their families) entitled to refugee status, with all the rights described in the U.N. Convention and Protocol. Nigerian law states that no refugee (who has officially been recognized as such) can be compelled to leave Nigeria unless a country of third asylum is immediately available to her or him,⁷⁶ but the Federal Commissioner for Refugees may revoke refugee status (on an individual by individual basis) at any time. This decision is subject to an appeal process.⁷⁷

CONCLUSIONS

The Harbel Massacre

Late on the night of June 5, 1993, an unknown group of soldiers entered a displaced persons camp in Harbel, Montserrado County and killed an estimated 600 people. Survivors report that the soldiers came into the camp looking for food, the day after the UN had distributed rice to those in the camp. After they had received the rice, the soldiers went on a killing spree, murdering at least 547, and injuring at least 755 more. The camp was behind ECOMOG lines, and was supposed to be guarded by soldiers of the AFL. The AFL commander explained his troops' failure to come to the aid of the victims by stating that he and his men had been distracted by gunfire in a different part of the compound.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Refugees that present a threat to the national security of Nigeria are excepted from this restriction.

⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Nigeria," *World Refugee Report* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, June 1992), p. 41.

⁷⁸ George, Kevin, President, Friends of Liberia, *Briefing: Country Conditions in Liberia* (Washington, D.C.: 17 June 1993). "300 Liberians are Reported Slain," *New York Times* (New York: 7 June 1993), p. A6. "Liberian Rebels Deny Attack in Which 300 Died," *New York Times* (New York: 8 June 1993), p. A12. "Toll in Liberian Massacre Doubles; U.N.

It was not clear at the time who was responsible for the massacre. Many groups were blamed, the most popular theories fingering the NPFL; a UN-ordered inquiry has since concluded that the massacre was in fact committed by the AFL,⁷⁹ but the initial doubt was very significant. It was well within the realm of possibility that any of the Liberian armed groups may have been responsible;⁸⁰ the histories of the AFL, the NPFL, and ULIMO all testify to the fact that these groups are capable of committing a wide variety of human rights abuses, ranging from relatively "small" incidents involving 20-30 people to larger-scale atrocities like the one at Harbel.

The Harbel massacre is an example of the risks Liberians face on a daily basis. The abuses that have occurred in the civil war form a pattern that identifies two main "groups at risk." The first group consists of those Liberians who happen to be living in a given territory when it changes hands from one armed faction to the other. Over and over again, both ULIMO and the NPFL have labeled persons in recaptured territory "collaborators," the result of such an accusation usually being the murder of the accused (e.g., the NPFL killings in Bomi County in September of 1992, the sporadic executions in ULIMO territory in March of 1993, and the massacre of both Vais and Golas carried out by both ULIMO and the NPFL in the battle over Tubmanburg in August 1992). The other group is constituted by those Liberians that are members of ethnic groups that have come to be identified as "supporters" of one of the factions. Thus far this has primarily meant that Krahn and Mandingoes

Opens Investigation," *New York Times* (New York: 11 June 1993), p. A8. U.S. Committee for Refugees, "Massacre of Up to 400 Displaced Liberians Demands International Response," *News from the U.S. Committee for Refugees* (Washington, D.C.: 9 June 1993), p. 1.

⁷⁹ "U.N.-Ordered Inquiry Links Liberia Massacre to AFL," *Reuters* (London: 17 September 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

⁸⁰ It should be noted here that it is extremely unlikely that ECOMOG was intentionally responsible in any way for the massacre at Harbel, and the phrase "any of the armed groups" (and similar expressions) is not, in the context of these concluding remarks, intended to include ECOMOG as one of its referents.

(Malinke) have been targets of NPFL violence, and Gios and Manos, as well as any other residents of Nimba County, have been the victims of ULIMO and related groups (as in the alleged AFL/ULIMO "vigilante groups" operating in Monrovia late in 1992, see p. 15, above). Other ethnic groups with linguistic or religious ties to those mentioned could also become victims of such attacks. It should also be noted that although Americo-Liberians have virtually vanished from the news since the late 1980's, they might still be targets of ethnic hostility. The AFL and ULIMO, both of which include former supporters of the Doe government, have traditionally been hostile to Americo-Liberians, and continue to be implicated in human rights abuses. Additionally, the leadership of Charles Taylor's NPFL includes many Americo-Liberians, a circumstance which could jeopardize the safety of Americo-Liberians who do not support Taylor or receive protection from him.⁸¹

Although the NPFL has been the biggest stumbling block to the reconstruction of a stable, peaceful Liberian state, reports coming out of territory controlled by ULIMO indicate that ULIMO is engaged in equally widespread and serious human rights abuse. Many members of ULIMO were formerly members of Doe's AFL, a group which was infamous for its appalling acts of brutality in the 1989 civil war. Reports describe the executions in late March 1993 of approximately 30 civilians in various parts of Lofa County suspected by ULIMO of being NPFL supporters. According to eyewitnesses, the victims were singled out by ULIMO soldiers on the basis of ethnicity. Other reports allege that ULIMO has set fire to at least seven "localities" in Lofa County, and still others describe a "special court" set up in Guinea that is executing refugees fleeing there from Lofa

⁸¹ George, Kevin, President, Friends of Liberia, *Briefing: Country Conditions in Liberia* (Washington, D.C.: 17 June 1993). George, Kevin, *United States Policy and Liberia: Observations and Recommendations*, Written Testimony presented to Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs (Washington, D.C.: Friends of Liberia, 9 June 1993), p. 2-4. Goodman, Anthony, "U.N.-Ordered Inquiry Links Massacre to Doe Faction," *Reuters* (London: 17 September 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. Berkeley, Bill, "Between Repression and Slaughter," *Atlantic Monthly* (Boston: December 1992) - as reported on NEXIS database.

County.⁸² Additionally, Liberians, refugees, and human rights/relief workers are vocal about their fears concerning "what might happen" should ULIMO reach Nimba County before ECOMOG does.⁸³

The IGNU has announced that it will extend its administration to include all areas "liberated" from the NPFL, but it is unclear just what this might mean, and it is very unclear at this point under what conditions (if any) ULIMO would be willing to turn over control of the territory it has captured to IGNU. The recent announcement that ULIMO has joined the IGNU does not really clarify the situation, since the announcement was made by Raleigh Seekie who, to all appearances, has no real authority over ULIMO troops any more (see p. 30, above).⁸⁴

The Cotonou Agreement

In July 1993, the warring factions (i.e., the IGNU, the NPFL, and ULIMO⁸⁵) signed a peace agreement that could (if it is upheld) prove to be a leap forward for Liberia. According to the provisions of the agreement, which was signed on July 25, 1993, in Cotonou, Benin, a cease-fire was

⁸² This court is reportedly headed by Gen. Alfred Gayflor, the chairman of Doe's old military tribunal. According to eyewitnesses any Liberian male seeking to flee to Guinea from Lofa County is sentenced to death by this court. "ULIMO Reportedly Carries Out Mass Executions," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 24 March 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 25 March 1993, p. 40-41.

⁸³ "New Influx of Liberian Refugees to Ivory Coast and Guinea," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 14 March 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. George, Kevin, President, Friends of Liberia, *Briefing: Country Conditions in Liberia* (Washington, D.C.: 27 June 1993).

⁸⁴ "ULIMO Reportedly Carries Out Mass Executions," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 24 March 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 25 March 1993, p. 40-41. "IGNU to Expand Administration to `Liberated Areas,'" *Radio ELBC* (Monrovia, Liberia: 15 March 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 16 March 1993, p. 26-27. "ULIMO Accepts Sawyer Invitation to Join Government," *Agence-France Presse* (Paris: 25 March 1993) - as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Sub-Saharan Africa*, 26 March 1993, p. 39.

⁸⁵ ECOMOG, strictly speaking, is not a *Liberian* faction, and its compliance with any peace agreement is tied to the recognition of the latter by ECOWAS, which was in fact granted. The AFL is considered to be under the joint authority of the IGNU and ECOMOG, and so has not been treated as a separate "party" for the purposes of this agreement.

to begin on August 1, 1993, after which a provisional government was to be established by the end of September 1993. Elections are scheduled for 1994. The deadline for the cease-fire was in fact met, and on August 17, 1993 the *Washington Post* reported that a provisional government consisting of a five-member executive council, had been established. The council members are described as "noncontroversial figures removed from the atrocities of Liberia's civil war."⁸⁶

Opinions on the prospects of this agreement vary, but the general attitude seems to be a guarded optimism, and many factors do seem to militate in favor of the new agreement. Most importantly, the NPFL, which was primarily responsible for scuttling the previous agreements, is in a greatly weakened position; the loss of territory and a series of embargoes imposed by the UN and ECOWAS have each taken their toll. Additionally, the UN has agreed to take an active role in the implementation of this agreement, and there are plans to expand the ECOMOG peace-keeping force by including troops from non-West African countries. It is important to stress, however, that peace has not been conclusively established. As recently as September 15, 1993, the *Reuters* wire service was reporting that ECOMOG was redeploying troops in Monrovia in response to rumors that the NPFL might attack the city again. As noted above, there have been several previous agreements, all of which failed to accomplish anything of lasting value. Additionally the current and persistent threat of unrest and instability in Nigeria poses a danger to the stability of the entire region, including Liberia.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Africa Faith & Justice Network, "Action Alert on Liberia," *AFJN Action* (Washington, D.C.: 20 August 1993), 2 p. "Liberia Forms Government," *Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.: 17 August 1993), p. A16. "Peace, Perhaps," *The Economist* (London: Vol. 328, No. 7822, 31 July 1993), p. 36-37.

⁸⁷ Africa Faith & Justice Network, "Action Alert on Liberia," *AFJN Alert* (Washington, D.C.: 20 August 1993), 2 p. "ECOMOG Braced for Fighting in Liberia," *Reuters* (London: 15 September 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. "Nigeria's Interim Leadership Threatened by National Strikes," *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston, Massachusetts: 30 August 1993) p. 3.

Even if a lasting peace is achieved, there remain grave doubts about the future of Liberia. Barring extensive international human rights monitoring and involvement in the rebuilding process, there is no reason to believe that any persons coming to power would suddenly embrace the principle of respect for human rights, or make a solid commitment to their protection. Liberia has never been a truly egalitarian society in which the rights of all citizens were adequately safeguarded, and none of the possible "victors" in the Liberian civil war have managed to emerge from the conflict untarnished by accusations of gross violations of the rights of the Liberian citizens each group professes to be fighting for. It is to be hoped that the appropriate international organizations will take concrete steps to ensure that a legitimate constitutional government is established in Liberia, but regardless of which way the war concludes, Liberian history suggests that the victors will in all likelihood undertake to "punish" the persons and ethnic groups that they have come to perceive as "enemies."

Should more detailed information, not included or insufficiently treated in this document, be required, please consult the bibliography to this Alert, bound separately under the listing AL/LBR/94.002.

APPENDIX I
Republic of Liberia: Political Map⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. xx-xxi.

APPENDIX II
Republic of Liberia: Demographic Map⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 93.

APPENDIX III
Population by Ethnolinguistic Category, 1974 ⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 89.

APPENDIX IV
Linguistic Affiliations of Officially Recognized Ethnolinguistic Categories ⁹¹

⁹¹ Nelson, Harold D., ed., *Liberia: A Country Study*, Area Handbook Series (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1984), p. 292.

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- Abduction *see* Disappearance
- ACS *see* American Colonization Society (ACS)
- AFL *see* Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)
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