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## Transition Tops New UN Envoy's Field Visit Agenda

**New Mandate Focuses  
on Transition**

**National Campaign  
Tackles Sexual Violence**

*Papa and Mama,  
rape is not a  
family matter,  
REPORT IT!*

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### CHIEF OF PUBLIC INFORMATION

Russell Geekie

### STAFF WRITERS

Clement Tulezi  
Eugene K. Myers

### PHOTOS

Emmanuel Tobey

### EDITOR AND HEAD OF MULTIMEDIA

Mathew Elavanalthoduka

### DESIGN & GRAPHICS

Thomas S. Bliidi  
Thomas G. Karyah

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# Message from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General



**S**ome ten months before Liberia is set to take on full responsibility for all aspects of its own security, I assumed my role as Special Representative of the Secretary-General. As the country steadily marches towards this historic milestone, I would like to reassure the Liberian public that the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) remains fully committed to support the Government with enhancing its security capacities and advancing important reform processes.

After twelve years of unbroken peace since the end of the civil conflict in 2003, it is a matter of great pride for Liberians to soon be fully able to stand on their own again.

The UN Security Council's recent extension of UNMIL's mandate for another year clearly demonstrates the international community's commitment to fully support Liberia's security transition. While renewing the mandate, the Security Council urged the Government of Liberia to intensify its efforts toward achieving progress on the transition of security responsibilities from UNMIL to the national authorities. Particularly, the Government was encouraged to prioritize and resource the critical gaps in the capacity and capability of the Liberia National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, and the justice sector.

With the current legislative session now extended to October, it is anticipated that critical security sector legislation, such as the Firearms and Ammunition Control Act, the Police Act, and the Immigration Service Act, will be enacted, providing a robust legal framework for a smooth transition. With the counties establishing their Security Councils and County Service Centres, the deconcentration process is also expected to gain momentum.

As Liberia forges ahead, it will be important to ensure that all segments of the society benefit from the peace

dividend. That will require Liberians to put the past firmly behind through genuine reconciliation, and by embracing democratic governance that upholds transparency, accountability and human rights.

The unexpected setbacks brought about by the Ebola epidemic needs urgent attention as it has severely impacted Liberia's economic growth, ravaged the health sector, and inflicted unimaginable human suffering. I would like to reaffirm the UN family's support to Liberia in its post-Ebola recovery efforts.

As Liberia readies itself to assume full responsibility for its security, UNMIL will continue with its phased drawdown as directed by the Security Council. By June 2016, there will be a reduced strength of 1,240 UNMIL military personnel and some 606 police personnel. Equally, the Mission's civilian capacity will be rationalized, in accordance with its streamlined substantive mandate.

I look forward to working with all Liberians and international partners, building on Liberia's many achievements during the past twelve years. This is primarily a national effort, however, which requires active participation of all Liberians, and with the same sense of unity and commitment that was on display in fighting back the tragic Ebola outbreak. I am strongly encouraged by my introductory interactions with H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and senior state officials, which gave me confidence that Liberia's political and institutional leaders are, indeed, committed to taking all necessary measures for a seamless implementation of the security transition process. Let's continue to work together with renewed dedication to make Liberia a true national and peacekeeping success story.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Farid Zarif'.

**FARID ZARIF**  
Special Representative of the  
Secretary-General and Coordinator of United Nations  
Operations in Liberia

# Security Transition Tops New UN Envoy's Field Visit Agenda

*The Security Council decision asking the Government of Liberia to take full charge of the country's security by the end of June next year was the major focus of the discussions between UNMIL's new head Farid Zarif and the Grand Gedeh County authorities mid-September during his first visit to the field after assuming his new role in Liberia.*

By Napoleon Viban

*Chinese Level II hospital welcomes SRSF Farid Zarif*



Photo: © UNMIL/Emmanuel Tobey

The new Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSF) was upfront with his other interlocutors as well on the issue of security transition when he met separately with the judiciary and representatives of the civil society.

At each instance and in view of next year's timelines, the Liberian officials repeatedly voiced deep concern about the capacity of security agencies in the County and Liberia at large, citing critical shortfalls in manpower and other resources.

"We doubt their capacity to fill in the gap after UNMIL leaves," Grand Gedeh Superintendent Peter L. Solo noted, recalling how recent cases of mob violence had severely challenged the strength of security forces in the county.

Solo flagged a case as recent as the eve of Zarif's visit, in which police units were stretched to breaking point as they scrambled reinforcements to contain a riot in the small and hard-to-reach gold mining



*SRSG Farid Zarif meets Ivorian refugees in Zwedru*

camp of Bateljam. Meeting little resistance, the rioters had quickly overwhelmed an under-staffed depot at the camp, seizing and lynching a young man the police were holding in custody.

Troubled by an increase in these and other security threats, County officials suggested that the current support from UNMIL stay in place until the 2017 general elections, at the very least.

But the new UN envoy reminded the officials that the decision by the Security Council to scale down the Mission was irreversible.

“The timelines are serious; they’re not there for bargaining purposes,” the SRSG cautioned. However, Zarif was not without empathy for his hosts and the enormity of the challenges Liberia was up against.

“All nations do face difficult chapters in their history; chapters they can’t traverse all alone,” he admitted, but argued that it would be way too much to expect an indefinite stay of international peacekeeping forces in Liberia.

Zarif said it was the belief of the international community that Liberia was now at a point where it could stay the course on its own. He warned against slipping into a syndrome of dependence, and challenged Liberians to show the world that they could stand on their own feet.

“Which nation, more than the first independent country in Africa, is better placed to demonstrate the true meaning of independence?” he queried. With the international community expressing positive sentiment on the country’s progress, the UN envoy insisted it was about time the authorities in Liberia took the wheel and drove the rest of the way.

Zarif nonetheless recognised the need to boost the confidence he saw in the country’s leadership. At a town hall meeting with the UN fraternity in Zwedru, he indicated that the focus of UNMIL, moving on, would be the challenges that underpin the transition.

Although he lauded the Government’s decentralisation and de-concentration policies as steps in the right direction, county

officials were less upbeat about the platform. They highlighted the lack of enough personnel, infrastructure and equipment required for successful implementation of the de-concentration and decentralization initiatives. But unfazed, Zarif urged UN support units to look out for, and report the gaps.

“The more we identify and understand these challenges, the more effective would be our response,” he reasoned.

***“Which nation, more than the first independent country in Africa, is better placed to demonstrate the true meaning of independence?”***



*Inter-mission security meeting in Grand Gedeh*

# UNMIL's New Mandate on Security Transition

By Daniel Mensah Brande

**T**he United Nations Security Council on 17 September extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2016, authorizing a reduction in its personnel, and urging the Liberian government to accelerate efforts to enhance the capacity of its security sector in preparation of the national authorities assuming all security responsibilities by 30 June next year.

The Council encouraged UN member states and multilateral organizations to continue



# Focuses

to provide financial, technical and other assistance to Liberia to enable the country assume full security responsibilities.

The Council urged the government of Liberia “to intensify its efforts towards achieving progress on the transition of security responsibilities from UNMIL to national authorities, particularly with regard to prioritizing and resourcing the critical gaps to facilitate a successful transition, improving the capacity and capability of the Liberia National Police (LNP) and Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN), as well as the justice sector.”

The Special Representative of the

Secretary-General (SRSG) in Liberia, Farid Zarif welcomed the extension of the mandate, describing it as a demonstration of “the international community’s commitment to fully support Liberia’s assumption of full security responsibilities” by mid next year.

The new SRSG, who assumed duties early September this year, expressed optimism over the commitment of the Government of Liberia to put in place the necessary structures to effectively take over security responsibilities from UNMIL.

“From my introductory interactions with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and other top government officials, I feel confident that the Liberian political and institutional leaders are firmly committed to taking all necessary measures for a seamless conclusion of the security transition process,” he noted. “Such an effort requires active participation and contribution of all Liberians,” he stressed.

UNMIL’s new mandate focuses on protection of civilians, support to the Government for reform of the justice and security institutions, promotion and protection of human rights, and protection of UN personnel.

The resolution urged the Government of Liberia to engage all Liberian stakeholders in pursuing a national reconciliation and social cohesion strategy to promote national healing, justice and reconciliation at all levels, and also to combat corruption and promote efficiency and good governance. It further called on the government to support women’s participation in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

The Council called on Liberia and neighbouring Côte d’Ivoire to continue to reinforce their cooperation, monitoring, sharing information, and coordinating and implementing shared border strategies to support the disarmament and repatriation of armed elements on both sides of the border, and voluntary return of refugees in safety and dignity. As the UN mission in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) too is downsizing, the Council called for intermission cooperation arrangements for the use of common resources to facilitate rapid response and mobility.

Deployed on 1 October 2003 with an authorized force of 15,000 troops and 1,115 police officers to monitor the ceasefire agreement after the cessation of hostilities among the warring parties, the Mission has over the years undergone adjustments in its strength. UNMIL’s strength will be reduced to 1,240 military personnel and 606 police by June 2016 with Liberian national security agencies taking full responsibility of the country’s security.

“It will be an important milestone, a demonstration of confidence that the country has turned the corner from conflict, disorder and dependence to a future of sustained peace, unity and independence,” UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon noted in his latest report on UNMIL to the Security Council.

And this is the milestone Liberians are sprinting to achieve as they mobilize resources to fully take over the security responsibility of their country in less than ten months from now.

# Women Marginalized in Liberia, Says VP Boakai

*Women and girls in Liberia face marginalization and violence in all sectors and at all levels every day, says the country's Vice President, Joseph Nyuma Boakai.*

By Eugene K. Myers

“Data on gender-based violence in the last Convention on the Elimination of

All Forms of Discrimination against Women report shows that 44 per cent of women in Liberia aged 15-49 have experienced violence since the age of 15,” Boakai said. “Still persisting are gender issues such as the

widespread practice of early marriage and polygamy, with 48 percent of Liberian girls married off by 18.”

The Vice President was speaking during the launch of the HeForShe campaign in Monrovia in June.

HeForShe is a global solidarity movement targeting men and boys to stand up and take action for the achievement of gender equality. The campaign is targeting one billion men globally.

In his keynote address, Boakai called upon all men and boys in Liberia to join efforts in advancing women's empowerment and social justice.

“Men can be great contributors to this campaign for a healthy society. I encourage everyone to mobilize as many men and boys as possible to be advocates for change,” he said.

Despite electing the first female head of state on the African continent more than ten years ago, Liberia still lags behind on gender equality and women's empowerment. Women are continuously exposed to rape, sexual exploitation and HIV/AIDS. Women in Liberia are disproportionately clustered in the least productive sectors, contributing to low productivity, meagre earnings and

*Women campaign against gender-based violence*



*Photo: © UNMIL/Emmanuel Tobey*



*Vice President Joseph Nyuma Boakai at the launch of HeForShe Campaign*

exposure to exploitation. Boakai said the recent Ebola outbreak has further exacerbated the vulnerability that has become the lot of women, including the lasting impact on their livelihoods and economic reliance.

“Women were at higher risk of Ebola infection as the primary care-givers in the family for the sick members. In the early months of the crisis, women were the main organizers of the funeral rituals, both of which require contact with potentially infected persons.”

UN Women Country Representative Awa Ndiaye Seck highlighted the impact of the 14-year civil war and recent Ebola outbreak on women. “Women suffer due to lack of formal education, access to justice and economic empowerment. This vulnerability was further worsened by civil war and the outbreak of Ebola.”

Seck lamented the attitude of Liberians towards gender equality, noting that empowering women through provision of adequate healthcare, equitable employment opportunities, access to justice and fair representation of women in decision-making are significant tenets of development.

“We have been slow to see the cycle of

poverty and despair caused by the lack of education, violence, ill-health and the lack of economic empowerment. We have been slow to see the plight of our women as a problem for all Liberians and not simply a problem for women.”

Seck said that given the crucial role of men and boys as advocates and agents of change, HeForShe campaign in Liberia will provide a platform for men to identify with issues of gender equality, which will liberate women and men from gender stereotypes.

Senator Jewel Howard-Taylor of Bong County underscored the importance of the initiative, terming it “a milestone for many years of agitation for gender equality.” The Senator said she was saddened by the absence of male members of the national legislature at the launch.

“If they do not believe that it is important to be a part of the HeForShe Campaign, then there is a lot of work to be done,” Howard-Taylor noted. “This is not a fight between men and women. It’s an important collaboration.”

She revealed that the women legislative caucus of the national Legislature will work with the UN Women and the Ministry of

Gender, Children and Social Protection to ensure that the male legislators become part of the movement.

Gender, Children and Social Protection Minister Julia Duncan-Cassell called on men to be enlisted in the campaign. “The movement for gender equality was originally conceived as a struggle led by only women. In recent years, men have begun to stand up in addressing inequality and discrimination faced by women and girls. Therefore, I call on our fathers, our husbands, our brothers, uncles, sons and nephews to be enlisted.”

Holding a copy of the black, white and pink colored HeForShe campaign booklet, the Vice President affirmed the government’s commitment to promoting gender equality.

“The Government will work with development partners to increase access to services such as health, education of the girl child and promote access to financial opportunities. I do hereby fully commit myself to this noble venture. This symbolizes Liberia’s firm embrace of the crusade in all its manifestation.”



Photo: © MoGDC & SP

Residents of Brewerville at SGBV rally

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# National Campaign Tackles Sexual Violence

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*Until September this year, 14-year-old Mary Jean\* lived a discreet life at an orphanage near Monrovia, having lost her parents in 2003. The visually-challenged girl now grapples with pregnancy and trauma, the aftermath of rape.*

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By Eugene K. Myers

“**T**wo men violated me. They did this severally,” she said. “They threatened to kill me if I disclosed to anyone. But soon the matrons found out I was pregnant.”

Jean currently resides at a safe home operated by a local non-governmental humanitarian organization. She hopes that her abusers will be found and brought to book.

News of the arrest of a male linked to her case reminded her of the ordeal. “I want justice. Those who took advantage of my condition need to pay.”

Gender-based violence continues to haunt many women and girls in Liberia. Despite the passing of various laws, cases of violence against women remain alarmingly high. For instance, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection reports over 380 cases of gender-based violence between April and June this year with over a half of them attributed to rape, over 20 per cent domestic violence, and sexual assault accounting for almost 15 per cent. Ironically, most of these abuses involve close relatives and friends. And half of the cases are from Montserrado County alone.

“Monrovia and its environs are marked as bleeding grounds for sexual violence,” says Siemon Kwein, Assistant Director, Ministry of Gender. “Majority of the victims and survivors are children below 18.”

The Ministry’s Gender-Based Violence Unit (GBV) has embarked on a campaign against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Montserrado County. The campaign targets Molton Corner, VOA Junction, Iron Gate, Banjor, Red Hill Field, Parker Corner and Po River communities, supported by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Women, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). The United States is providing legal support to the Sex Crime Unit through the Ministry of Justice for the trial of perpetrators. The Ministry of Gender is also collaborating with the National Children and Youth Advisory Board Liberia (NCYAB).

“UNMIL has developed a joint programme on sexual and gender-based violence with the Ministry of Gender. We are also working together in preparation for the 16-days of activism, between 25 November and 10 December to raise awareness about violence against women” says James Mugo Muriithi, Head of UNMIL’s Gender Unit. “Further, we are supporting the SGBV offices at the county level to make them functional after Ebola. The unit is also taking the campaign to schools, including awareness

materials.”

“The ministry employs musical performances, flyers and drama at open markets and entertainment centers to deliver anti-rape messages. The campaign targets youths, community leaders and petty traders,” says Henry B. Garneo, NCYAB Chair.

Rosana Schaack, the Executive Director, Touching Humanity In Need of Kindness says sexual and gender-based violence remains a major threat to the well-being of children. “This crime is shattering children’s future, negatively affecting families and undermining the government’s and our efforts.”

Recently, the Ministry of Gender took the campaign to Brewerville, Montserrado, in collaboration with Humble Youth, Banjor Women for Peace and Parker Corner Youth Association. As a result more people from the community are reporting SGBV cases and shunning practices that put children at

risk.

“People came out to listen to the messages. Everywhere we took the message was jam-packed,” says Kwein. “The community members are now taking preventive measures with regards to the movement of their children. Parents are not sending girls out in the evening. If they go to the market, isolated areas, long distances away from home, they are always accompanied, so that they will not be victims of bad guys in the community.”

“We have more indictment of rape and other gender-based violence perpetrators. Before May we only had nine cases reported. But between June and August there were 121 cases,” reveals J. Worlobah Momolu, Human Rights Director at the Ministry of Gender.

*\*Name changed to protect the subject’s identity.*

*Protest against child abuse*



*Photo: © UNMIL/ Emmanuel Tobey*

By Daniel Mensah Brande

To gain firsthand knowledge of peacebuilding priorities in Liberia in the wake of the Ebola outbreak, and as the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the country scales down its security presence, the Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Olof Skoog, visited Liberia early April this year. He toured peacebuilding initiatives and interacted with top government officials, development partners, civil society and local community leaders engaged in the peacebuilding project.

“The idea is to mobilize international support for Liberia to have peacebuilding high on the agenda as the UN Mission in Liberia [UNMIL] continue its reductions,” the PBC Chair said, pointing out the need for the international community “to cooperate and accompany Liberia to sustain its peacebuilding structures.”

The PBC is an intergovernmental advisory body that supports peace efforts in countries emerging from conflicts, mobilizing relevant actors and resources and proposing strategies for post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. Liberia and its fellow Ebola-struck neighbors Guinea and Sierra Leone, together with Guinea Bissau and the Central African Republic are the post-conflict states currently under the care of the PBC.

In Bong County, the PBC Chair saw the key propellers of Liberia’s peacebuilding



*Ambassador Olof Skoog meets President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, accompanied by other high-ranking UN officials*

# Top UN Envoy Assesses Priorities in Post-Ebola

process, the Gbarnga Regional Justice and Security Hub, the first of the five command-and-control centres conceived to devolve justice and security services to all parts of the country.

Hub Manager Hezekiah Siakor briefed Ambassador Skoog on the operations of the centre, citing the rapid deployment of the hub-based Police Support Unit to various parts of the region to quell looming tensions as a major achievement of the centre. Siakor

singled out lack of logistics, uniforms and accoutrements for security and inadequate budget as some of the challenges facing the centre.

Ambassador Skoog hailed the hub concept saying it had bridged the missing gap in the administration of justice in Liberia. “I think it’s doing an important job here, providing security and safety outside of Monrovia to the people in the counties; I believe that has been missing for many years,”



*I am even more pleased about the way you, Madam President and your Government handled the Ebola crisis...*

# ...ses Peacebuilding ...ola Liberia

he noted, adding that there remains “a lot of work to be done to make this sustainable.”

The highlight of the PBC Chair’s three-day visit was a meeting with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf during which the two shared ideas on the effective way of positioning Liberia’s post-Ebola recovery programme to complement and sustain the country’s peacebuilding efforts. Ambassador Skoog commended the Liberian President on the exceptional leadership she and her govern-

ment exhibited during the Ebola crisis.

“I am even more pleased about the way you, Madam President and your Government handled the Ebola crisis, and wish to extend sympathy and condolence on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission for the lives lost and the pains endured,” he told the Liberian leader, emphasizing the need to use the Ebola recovery process to consolidate peacebuilding in Liberia.

President Sirleaf said Liberia was in the

process of implementing a 5-year development plan when the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) emerged, and would be guided by the lessons from the epidemic as the country forges ahead. “We are keen on copying the elements of success from the Ebola crisis to our current development challenges,” the Liberian leader stated, noting that the three most affected countries are finalizing a Regional Recovery Plan, but Liberia had, as well worked on its own National Economic Recovery Plan that takes into account specific needs of the country.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared Liberia free of Ebola on 3 September, 2015.

The PBC Chair also met with development partners including ambassadors of the United States, Sweden, United Kingdom, France, Germany, China, Japan, European Union, and the African Union, officials of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank.

The Lofa County city of Zorzor was another important stop for the PBC Chair. Zorzor offered him the opportunity to know more about the Land Coordination Centre, a peacebuilding mechanism put in place to resolve land disputes through the alternative dispute resolution approach. It also gave him the chance to learn about tensions in the community as Zorzor was just emerging from an ethnic feud.



Photo: © UNICEF/Jallanzo

UNICEF workers share information on Ebola

# We Are Ready for Ebola, Margibi County Declares

By Clement Tulezi

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*After being declared Ebola-free in May, Liberia confirmed new cases late June and early July, reigniting fears of another epidemic. All except one of the six cases occurred in Margibi County.*

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**N**otwithstanding the news of the discovery of an Ebola vaccine, the county officials, bolstered by past lessons, are confident of containing new cases.

“In Margibi, we have developed some level of preparedness. We have been through a very severe epidemic,” says Dr. Adolphus T. Yeiah, the County Health Officer. “That traumatic experience taught us to remain prepared to handle such epidemic.”

Response is now decentralized and broken down into smaller systems, allowing for better quality control on surveillance,

case-finding, contact-tracing and overall management necessary to tackle the dreaded virus.

“The national government developed the Rapid Isolation and Treatment of Ebola [RITE] strategy which Margibi adopted. When the test results of the second outbreak came positive, all I did was to quickly assemble my RITE team. In less than twelve hours our team was on the ground. The county responded adequately even before the national government and other partners could come in with aid.”

Upon confirmation of the cause of the death of a 17-year-old boy in Nidonwin village as Ebola-related, government health officials supported by international organizations ramped up responses targeting Margibi. The rapid response team is currently involved in provision of essential strategic, technical, operational, and coordination support to all partners. It is coordinating interventions in case management, surveillance, contact-tracing, community mobilization, training, essential medicines, supplies and logistics.

“There are more than 20 players in the response, among them are international organizations like WHO, UNICEF, Global Community, Red Cross, Save the Children and the list goes on. The response team is organized in clusters such as the psychosocial, social mobilization, surveillance, and coordination among others. Partner organizations are placed in clusters relevant to their contribution,” says Dr. Yeiah.

Active daily coordination of sectors and cross-cutting responsibilities reduced overlapping activities, fostered improvements and supported areas where performance was lagging.

“During the acute phase of the first outbreak we had daily meetings. In the second phase we met twice a week. We will soon revert to pre-outbreak coordination meetings, which are once a week,” the County Health Officer says.

More than 140 people were listed as contacts, including almost 30 who were considered as high-risk. The campaign primarily targeted 16,350 people in 3,120 households in Unification Town. And unlike in the past,

the community this time was not in denial of the existence of the virus.

“The community participated from the start. The social mobilization cluster engaged the area chief to ensure that messages reach the intended community and that we were accepted. When we had challenges in messaging, we brought it to the coordination team, discussed and went back with a better approach,” says Joseph Bahemuka, Unicef Communication for Development Specialist.

Ebola is highly infectious and has a high mortality rate. Consequently, rumors, misconceptions and misinformation about the disease and how to prevent it are widespread.

“Initially, there were rumors that the rapid response team brought Ebola along and that Ebola does not exist,” says Bahemuka. “But the social mobilization team worked with influential members of the community to dispel such misinformation through targeted factual messaging.”

These messages informed individuals, families and communities, in clear practical terms, of the ways in which they can minimize the risk of contracting the disease, and how to support their family and community members safely and humanely.

“We retrained our social mobilization

team and they went into the community with new approaches and messages that were appropriate to the situation. We also engaged the County Superintendent who mobilized chiefs and traditional leaders. Therefore, chiefs, national government health structures on the ground and the county took leadership and international organizations supported the efforts. Also, the inclusion of women and youth was vital,” says Bahemuka

Currently, a strategy is being developed to outline how each cluster in the response could continue to engage the community for the next six months.

“We do not want to be reactive; respond to an outbreak, then go away and wait for another one. One key element therein is the increase in surveillance in such a way that we’ll widen the scope of suspicion,” says Dr. Yeiah.

“In the past there was very low threshold of suspicion, so many people were treated for other conditions and allowed to go home. If it occurs, we would like to test as many people as possible. If we get thousands of negative cases, we’ll be certain Ebola is not hiding around.”

Liberia was once again free of Ebola on 3 September.

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*A health worker at an ETU places heavy boots to dry in the sun*

Photo: © UNICEF/Jalanzo



# Battling Ebola-induced Stress and Stigma

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*Beyond the dead and the infected, a large number of people have been affected by the Ebola outbreak in Liberia. Survivors, families and health workers are dealing with the stress and trauma inflicted by the deadly virus unknown to West Africa until last year.*

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Photo: © UNICEF/NYHQ2014-10261/Jallanzo

UNICEF worker distributes awareness materials on Ebola

By Clement Tulezi

**M**argibi County bore the brunt of the recent outbreak which occurred late June and early July and claimed two lives. The first case after Liberia was declared Ebola-free in May was a 17-year-old male from the county's Nidonwin community. He died on 28 June. "I am disturbed whenever I think about the infection," reveals

Weah\*, an Ebola survivor from Nidonwin community. “I thought I was not going to make it.” He knew the boy who had succumbed to the disease. “I heard that he died, but then I could not go to view the body or talk to his family. I was very sick.”

Emergencies can be stressful, but there are specific reactions - mostly fueled by rumours - that are particular to an Ebola outbreak. Most victims of Ebola experience denial and self-deception. Weah was scared when he was asked to go to the Ebola treatment unit (ETU).

“I witnessed many people die during the first outbreak, so I did not want to go to the hospital. I was terrified. It was on the third day that I accepted to go. I believed I would die if I went to the ETU. Also, one of our local leaders had told me not to go.”

About 100 metres from Weah’s house lives Fatu\*. She takes care of two teens, survivors of Ebola. During the outbreak, the Psychosocial Support (PSS) group from the Rapid Response team, Margibi County, visited her to encourage her to take the children to the ETU, but it was difficult for her to accept.

“Many people asked me to take Johnson\* to the hospital. I was crying throughout because I thought my son would not come back from the ETU. A few days later, his sister was also admitted to the ETU. I was traumatized.”

“The psychosocial team at times spends hours or days to convince the suspects to go to the ETU,” says Sam B. Taylor, Supervisor, PSS, Margibi County. “I recall a suspect who did not want to go to the ETU. It took almost a whole day before he accepted to go. His fear was that the ETU has a spray that causes death. Today, he’s healthy and back in the community. His family is safe.”

Margibi County Health Officer Dr. Adolphus T. Yeiah says psychosocial support is not only vital to ensure the well-being of the affected population, but also to counteract the threats to public health and safety caused by fear, stigmatization and misconception. Furthermore, everybody involved in the response is working under unusually stressful conditions.

Psychosocial support was identified

Photo: © UNICEF/INYHQ2014/J. Gallanzo



*A health worker prepares at an Ebola Treatment Unit*

during the previous outbreak as a priority in the response to the disease. The current support is concentrated in four communities of Charlesville, Jungle Farm, One Man Camp and Nidonwin.

“There is a psychosocial cluster in the response team to handle the affected; that is, those who were infected and those that are living with them in the community. The team deals with diverse issues that arise on a daily basis. As issues arise the team devises ways in which to appropriately address them,” reveals Dr. Yeiah.

As a result of social stigma, affected families suffer from social rejection and diminished quality of life. Liberia is currently free of Ebola, but survivors are at times victimized.

“People were afraid of us. Friends would not come close even after the children were discharged. No one called us on phone. We were ostracized,” says Fatu.

The response team in Margibi says they are encouraging people to welcome

survivors of Ebola back into their communities and to offer them support. Community members now carry the responsibility of supporting survivors.

“We now have a survivors’ network that advocate against stigmatization and present survivors as persons that should be treated like other people in the society. The network is very vibrant. UNICEF is also in the psychosocial business. It has developed a community based psychosocial approach,” says the County Health Officer.

The psychosocial support team says their members are adequately trained to deal with emerging psychological issues. “We follow up those who come out of ETU and give them basic therapy so that they can gain hope. We have a survivor in the team. Her testimony is usually handy,” says T. Nekey Peal Jr., a social worker on the rapid response team.

**\*Names changed to protect the subjects’ identity.**

# Ebola Survivors Battle Financial Hardships

By Eugene K. Myers

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*Donwon Dahn, 36, was discharged in December 2014 along with his two little daughters, aged six and eight, after nearly a month at an Ebola Treatment Unit (ETU) in Monrovia. He lives in Fiahmah, a suburb of the capital, Monrovia.*

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Prior to the Ebola outbreak, Dahn had minimal financial struggles. Income from the second-hand clothes business was enough to sustain his family of seven. Admission to the ETU handed a big blow to his business. His financial streams dried up. He had no money to restock his business, buy food and send his children to school when he left the ETU.

“The World Food Programme gave me 85 US dollars every month for three months after I was discharged. I also received 200 US dollars from the International Commit-

tee of the Red Cross.”

Ebola is spread by contact with the bodily fluids of infected people, whether directly or through soiled clothing or items they have touched. Therefore, medical staff burned all Dahn’s clothes upon discharge from hospital.

“The money I earned in the three months helped me to buy new clothes. I invested some in a second-hand clothing business and generated enough to pay arrears for my children’s tuition.”

During the Ebola outbreak over 20 Ebola Treatment Units were built in Liberia to



Photo: © UNMIL/Eugene K. Myers

isolate suspected, probable or confirmed cases. At the peak of the epidemic, there was a desperate shortage of available beds at ETUs in Monrovia and many died. “Anxiety dominated the ETU,” he says. “I was not sure I would come through it. But as I recovered, my major worry was how to make ends meet. People who would lend me money had succumbed to Ebola. I was almost hopeless. Education for my children seemed impossible.”

The World Food Programme is supporting recovery of local economies; and building government's and partners' capacity in emergency preparedness and response. It's currently providing food to people living in former Ebola hotspots in Liberia. Defense for Children Liberia (DCI-Liberia), a local organization, is complementing the efforts of the international organizations. It is rolling out a programme on education, psychosocial counseling and healthcare support. It is giving cash to locals whose spouses died and providing essential needs to children

from his wife.

"I thought it was malaria while I cared for her. The children slept with us in the same room. Then she started to vomit and had diarrhoea. Days later she died. Her mother, father and sister also died," he recalls. "Fear gripped me. In a matter of days my children and I started feeling sick. I lay hungry, weak and helpless, the children besides. Then the Ebola emergency team came for us."

Upon recovery, Dahn and his children returned home. They were welcomed by

still experiences some health complications, which would require financial provision. "I feel weak all the time. I cannot do prolonged physical exercise or hard labour anymore. And regularly, I experience fever, headache and other complications that I am not able to explain."

"I went to PREVAIL [a medical research program investigating the long-term health consequences of Ebola on survivors] at JFK [John F. Kennedy medical center] and did blood and eye tests. I was issued with an ID card. I am currently treated at PREVAIL at



*Survivors and their care-givers in Fiahmah*

who lost parents to Ebola.

"DCI-Liberia is paying tuition for over 200 orphans in Montserrado, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount. Dahn's children are among those we support," says Foday M.Kawah, the Executive Director. "We are targeting over 150 households in the livelihood programme."

Dahn's wife augmented his income. The burden was lighter. But his wife did not survive the outbreak. He contracted the disease

family and friends and shown a lot of love, but only for a while.

"When I was discharged many people visited regularly. They supported me. But when I ventured out, the visits ceased," he says. "I now stay by myself. No one gives me financial aid. It also affects me psychologically because when I am lonely I keep remembering the horrible experience I had at the ETU."

Although Ebola-free, Dahn reveals he

no cost," Dahn narrates his post-Ebola life.

Like Dahn, there are several thousands of people in Liberia, including many children, whose lives have been turned upside down by the Ebola epidemic that jolted the country. Although Liberia was declared Ebola free early September, they are still desperate for financial support.



Photo: © UNMIL/Eugene K. Myers

Students wash their hands using chlorinated water

# Hygiene Protocols Keep

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*When Ebola appeared in Liberia in 2014 there were fears that schools, often brimming with children, would be among those hard hit. But, a visit to one school, Williamae C. Jones Academy in the capital Monrovia, reveals a sense of buoyancy among students and staff.*

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**By Clement Tulezi**

**L**earning has continued undisrupted after the re-opening of the school in February this year following six months of nationwide closure during the peak of the epidemic.

“We established our own special health team, fully equipped with personal protective equipment [PPE], to monitor and ensure that no one in the school bypasses the set protocols,” says Principal Amos Diakpah. “We detected high temperature early, isolated such people, and if high temperatures persisted, we called the rapid response team.”

The protocols, developed by UNICEF and its partners, include taking the tem-



Photo: © UNMIL/Eugene K. Myers

A vacation class in session at Williamae C. Jones Academy

# Ebola Out of Schools

perature of students and staff at the school gate and installing hand-washing stations. The children's agency is also involved in the distribution of bars of soap, chlorine, buckets and thermometers; training of teachers and administrators on the protocols and provision of psychosocial support to schools across the country.

There have been no reported cases of a student or teacher infected in Willimae C. Jones Academy. Ebola is spread through direct contact with bodily fluids and therefore authorities had to take precaution to minimize the potential spread.

"The washing of hands was very effective. We know now that Ebola transmission can be stopped easily by having students wash their hands regularly," says Richard K. Duana, Specialist, Infection Prevention and Control, Ministry of Health. "The temperature-check is merely to double-check in cases where a student has ignored the rules and may be infected."

"The school administration is on high alert. If a student refuses to follow the rules, he or she is dismissed. We take all preventive measures seriously," says Augustus W. Meneh, a teacher at the school.

The closure of schools had negative effect on Liberia's education system, which already had poor school enrollment. Before Ebola, 34 per cent of children attended primary school in Liberia according to UNICEF. Therefore, adherence to the protocols was necessary for students to remain in class.

"We are not allowed to be in groups or exchange spoons, books, chairs and anything else while in school. We are punished for not obeying the protocols," says Blessing Togbah, a sixth grade student.

Despite Liberia being declared free of Ebola again early September, the re-emergence of Ebola infection in June and July this year was a wake-up call to Liberia for long-term, sustainable public health infrastructure and education to communities to

prevent future outbreaks.

"The hygiene or wash facilities must be maintained in schools after Ebola because other infectious diseases will be controlled too, such as diarrhoea," says Duana.

In a recent statement, UNICEF said it is working to ensure the Ebola-prevention protocols remain in place when the new term begins in September after the recess, while supporting efforts to make education systems more resilient. The organization is addressing issues such as low enrollment, shortages of quality teachers, and access to safe water. Only 45 per cent of primary schools have access to clean water in Liberia. Maintaining safe hygiene practices and standards will also be important in protecting children from other illnesses.

"As we battle to get to zero cases, we also must think of the future. Major investments are needed to ensure that schools have basic water and sanitation infrastructure," says Sheldon Yett, UNICEF Representative in Liberia.

# UNDP Offers Livelihood Support to Ebola-Affected Families

Photo: © UNDP



*Esther makes soap for the local market*

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*Esther Flomo's daughter was breast-feeding her child, Annie, when Ebola struck her village outside Gbarnga, 15 miles from the border with Guinea.*

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**By Augusta Pshorr**

**F**lomo's daughter and son-in-law were taken to the main hospital in the capital Monrovia after testing positive for Ebola in September last year. But their treatment came too late and neither of them returned home. Now Esther, 48, is looking after seven grand-daughters ranging

# Support families

from two-year-old Annie to the eldest, who is 11.

“It is really hard to lose your only daughter and at the same time you have to look after little ones under your feet,” she says, “The burden is all on me.”

Flomo sells locally-made soap in the market to make ends meet. She mixes caustic soda and palm oil to make the soap, commonly known as ‘Iron Soap’. The process is labour-intensive. And caustic soda is corrosive, so she has to use plastic bags and cover her hands with thick socks, secured with rubber bands to avoid burns.

Amidst this woeful existence, Flomo has found some support.

The three-year Social Cash Transfer programme, implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, with support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Bank, is designed to help families affected by Ebola to cope with the economic and psychological consequences of the outbreak.

Every household will receive US\$50 every month in the next one year. Esther intends to use her first monthly stipend to fix her leaking roof. Later, she plans to invest more cash from the stipend into business and include footwear. She hopes to make enough money to send at least some of her grandchildren to school.

In Bong County, one of the worst regions hit by the virus, 3,000 people living in extreme poverty, as well as those with disabilities and whose sources of income were affected by the Ebola epidemic, are due to benefit from cash transfers. They will also receive literacy and numeracy training. In addition, community volunteers will be trained to provide psychological support to

affected families to help them cope with the loss of their members.

Joseph Yallah is Flomo’s neighbor. He lost his wife, son and two daughters to Ebola. Yallah says it all started when his wife was admitted to Phebe hospital suffering from high blood pressure. She was put in a room with a woman who had come to Bong from Lofa County. Lofa was where the first case of Ebola was identified in Liberia. No one realized at the time that this woman had brought the virus with her. Yallah’s wife was later discharged and was looked after by members of the family; then signs of Ebola started to manifest.

Junior Pewee is Yallah’s son-in-law. He lost his wife to the disease. Pewee’s wife worked as a seamstress and made the biggest contribution to the family’s income. He is now the sole breadwinner for 14 people. Five close family members succumbed to Ebola.

Pewee is struggling as the auto shop he runs in Gbarnga city is getting less business than before. Most people fear that he may be contagious. He plans to use the money from UNDP’s Social Safety Net Cash Transfer Programme to buy a welding machine to supplement his regular work as a mechanic-driver. He will use the machine to fix gates and other metal goods.

Meanwhile, UNDP and its partners recently organized a high-level consultation forum in Gbarnga, Bong County aimed at strengthening coordination processes to jumpstart the programme. Speaking at the forum, Liberia’s National Social Protection Coordinator Gabriel Fernandez commended efforts by partners who are assisting the Government of Liberia in the fight against poverty. He said that the government-led programme was part of the Agenda for Transformation, stressing the seriousness of the government in poverty reduction.

The UNDP Social Safety Net Cash Transfers Project Manager, Dr. Augustine Lansana, called for efficiency so that the money reaches those who are needy as he revealed that the organization plans to initiate other ventures to improve communities. “UNDP has a dream to complement the efforts of the government to improve the lives of the Liberian people, and I will be on the ground to see how the project will be implemented,” he said.

Anthony Sheriff, Bong County Assistant Superintendent for Development, said the programme is a big step towards the improvement of the lives of the suffering masses. Like Flomo and Pewee, several people who have been affected by the dreaded disease now have a flicker of hope to lead better lives.

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*Junior Pewee at the auto shop*



Photo: © UNDP

# Trade Comes Alive in Bahn



Carvings at Bahn Refugee Camp

By Diana Diaz Rodriguez

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*For refugees in Bahn, Nimba County, petty trade is second nature. Beneath the façade of humble dwellings that dot the camp, business is thriving.*

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**T**here is an evident economic relationship between refugees and local residents in Bahn. Refugees have been gradually embedded in local structures with their daily production activities playing a crucial role in contributing to the economic lives of the host community.

“Smell the fragrance of my soaps. Only 15 dollars,” Abou\*, an Ivorian refugee calls from a tent-like shop. “How many are you buying?”

Not too far away are three women selling

# n Refugee Camp



Photo: © UNHCR /Diana Rodriguez

white aubergines and small hot peppers that refugees grow in their small farms. “How much for a bag of peppers,” asks a prospective buyer. “We have 5 dollar and 10 US dollar bags. Which one will you take?” replies \*Fatima, wearing a broad smile.

Soon animals of the wild - butterflies, giraffes, elephants, gorillas, and even human beings - emerge in all shapes and sizes tagged at prices ranging from USD 5 to 20.

“This is an ‘angel’ and the ‘devil’ and this is a mother carrying her baby on her back and fruits on her head,” explains Abou

pointing at a wood carving.

Besides the local community, buyers come from far and wide. Those not lucky to find whatever they are interested in place orders. “I wanted a medium-sized giraffe. It’s out of stock. I’ll pick the carving in three weeks,” says Ioli Kimyaci, UNHCR Liberia Acting Representative.

Since 2014 UNHCR, in partnership with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), has supported refugees with livelihood and self-reliance activities. The project ‘Protection and Assistance of

Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Liberia, Livelihoods and Environment Protection’ aim to transition refugees from aid dependency to sustainability.

“Creating opportunities will improve the quality of life of refugees. UNHCR has funding constraints. We cannot sufficiently address all of the needs of the refugees,” explains Kimyaci. “Refugees who choose to return home need skills that will ensure income generation in their home country. Those who stay need the opportunity of integrating into the community.”

Refugees go through vocational skills-training based on their interests. The most common areas of training are agriculture, soap and chlora (chlorine) production, tailoring, tie-dye, carving and catering. In addition, refugees are also taught how to access markets, manage small businesses and secure small credit, among the severe challenges that refugees experience in their ventures.

“We undertook a rapid assessment to understand the refugees’ needs. We used this information to prioritise initial activities aimed at a more sustainable process,” explains Reuel Nettey, UNHCR Programme Officer.

According to ADRA, income from small business has cushioned households. Beneficiaries earned over US\$19,000 between September and December 2014 from livelihood activities, including vocational ventures and agriculture. Farm produce is sufficient for households and surplus is sold in the local market.

“We are organized in eight business establishments,” says Abou. “I make up to one thousand two hundred US dollars a month. I am very proud of my achievement.”

Bahn currently holds about 40,000 refugees in three camps. Voluntary repatriation started last year but was suspended as a preventive measure during the Ebola outbreak. When conditions are favourable, thousands of Ivoirians hope to return home.

*\*Names changed to protect the subjects’ identity.*

# Togolese Refugee Finds New Home in Liberia

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*Refugees in Liberia are building their lives in many ways. Some have incredible stories of the twists and turns in their lives, but above all is their determination to build a new life.*

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By Diana Diaz Rodriguez

One such refugee is Paul Gbedji, a Togolese construction worker in Monrovia. Standing sheltered under an umbrella from the pouring rain at a construction site, he tells his story.

“I am a civil engineer, that’s my profession,” discloses Gbedji. “I have worked in construction for 8 years, assigned to 24th street and I have done a good job.”

Gbedji had a tranquil life in his home town in Togo, often criss-crossing construction sites in between Togo and Ghana. “I lived a good life in Togo. I worked in my brother’s construction company. I could design and create projects. Ghana was under construction. So, I would secure contracts there, implement and go back home.”

But life changed for Gbedji as a result of the political conflict in Togo that started in the early 1990s. The 1998 presidential election was divisive. “There were many political parties. If one ran against the tide, he or she may have died.”



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Paul Gbedji, the Togolese refugee



Photo: © UNHCR /Diana Rodriguez

Paul Gbedji at a construction site in Monrovia

“I was captured by one of the parties. My feet were tied. I thought I would die. That war, it’s difficult to explain,” reflects Gbedji.

During the election campaign period, Togo experienced systematic human rights abuses, varying from persecution of opposition leaders, torture, murders, arbitrary shootings, forced disappearances, to arbitrary arrests amongst others, causing massive displacement of Togolese nationals within and through international borders.

“I lost my family. My father, brother and sisters all died. I was the only one who survived,” Gbedji recalls.

After weeks of torture, Gbedji managed to escape. He moved from one country to another, and finally reached the border of Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia. Unfortunately, Liberia was also in the middle of civil war. Gbedji encountered new life-threatening challenges in Liberia while trying to rebuild his life.

“There was fighting in Lofa. I was arrested. The fighters wanted to know my identity and why I was in Liberia. After two days I was sent to a military base,” Gbedji recounts. Nevertheless, a meeting with UNMIL officials in the middle of the night

changed things for him. “UNMIL officials were friendly. They gave me food then contacted UNHCR. UNHCR responded and picked me.”

In the midst of the conflict in Liberia, Gbedji was still determined to improve his life. Weeks later he received his refugee identification card. “When I got my refugee status I went to Paynesville Community School in Monrovia where I started teaching basic French from 1st to 9th grade. But the pay was meagre.” He supplemented his income by selling tea during the nights in a small shop.

Years passed and finally Liberia signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003. “The war was over; the first elections took place and with the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, peace was restored,” recalls Gbedji. “I started lending a hand at construction sites. I told other labourers who I was and my qualification. Then they started to try me small small [sic].”

Thereafter he landed the first contract. But he had no paper to show the contractor for his qualification. “I was a refugee and had no document. The only document I had was the refugee status ID. He believed me

and employed me until today.”

After numerous life-threatening encounters Gbedji has a place to sleep, a car to drive and a secure job. He lives a quiet life like he did in Togo. “I thank God for Liberia. I dream of becoming a millionaire one day, a money man. I will invest in Liberia and help others. In West Africa we say, anywhere you find life comfortable, that’s your home.”

Gbedji hopes to acquire standard traveling document so he can move freely between countries.

*During the election campaign period, Togo experienced systematic human rights abuses...*

# Ex-combatant's Inspiring Reintegration

By Eugene K. Myers

*When the guns went silent in Liberia in 2003 after the 14-year of civil conflict, economic opportunities for the ex-combatants were slim.*

The Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) programme initiated by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) offered a helpline to a sizeable number of former fighters. John Doe\*, now 38, was among those who grabbed the opportunity in

2004. He gave up his gun to the UN Peacekeepers in exchange for a small amount of cash and also joined a vocational training programme.

“My life is better now,” he says. “I had no other skill. I used the gun as the only means of survival. Today, I’m skilled in furniture making. I am earning and live happy



Photo: © UNMIL/Eugene K. Myers



Photo: © UNMIL/Eugene K. Myers

in the city.”

Doe received US\$300 cash through the DDRR programme. He then enrolled in a nine-month carpentry training.

The rehabilitation and reintegration component of DDRR was implemented through the Joint Implementation Unit, consisting of UNMIL, the UN Development Programme and national counterparts. The programme implemented numerous reintegration projects in agriculture, vocational training and formal education through 550 implementing

# Story of

furniture to that produced locally, says Doe. “The imported furniture is flashy but not durable compared to ours that are made of raw wood. If I could access a grant, I would buy equipment that can help me make flashy

explains, revealing his determination to gain education.

Over 32,500 former combatants were involved in various skills training programs. More than 11,800 were targeted for formal education programmes. UNICEF oversaw the formal education aspects through the Community Education Investment Program (CEIP), where participating schools were assisted with educational materials and sanitation support in exchange for enrolling students.

Doe regrets being part of the rebel group that was known for committing atrocities, including indiscriminate killing, raping of women and girls and the use of child soldiers. He says the turning point was when he narrowly escaped death when fighting broke out amongst rival rebel groups in Buchanan.

“We were pushed all the way to St. Farmington River, but I escaped to Harbel, Margibi County. Since then I never fought again,” Doe recalls.

“I am really sorry for the people who were affected by my actions. I should not have done all that,” he said. “When I gave my AK-47 away to UNMIL peacekeepers at the SKD Sports Stadium, Monrovia, I was relieved.”

While UNMIL peacekeepers took the lead to disarm and demobilise ex-combatants, the UN Development Programme guided the rehabilitation and reintegration process, managing and administering the UNDP DDDR Trust Fund.

“Apart from the initial cash which I received in two installments, I got US\$30 every month during my training. But sometimes I think I did not deserve the cash. I hurt many people. Nevertheless, that is how things were resolved, so I am grateful. I see some old time friends who did not take advantage of the opportunity like I did. They regret that to this day. They usually ask me money for upkeep. I give them at times. They need to reform,” he says.

*\* Name changed to protect the subject's identity.*



*Former combatants have found new livelihood sources*

partners. Other initiatives supported by the European Commission (EC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), among other donors, were also rolled out to give ex-combatants a new beginning.

Among the implementing partners is Center for Training Liberian Youth, the furniture shop in Monrovia which also serves as a training centre for youth.

A major challenge in the furniture business is that many people prefer imported

ones using local materials. I can't access a bank loan. It will come with many conditions,” he says.

During the disarmament period from late 2003 through late 2004, UNMIL and its partners demobilized more than 101,000 former fighters including women and children and collected 28,000 weapons and 33,000 heavy munitions.

“I saved money and went back to school. I am currently a 10th grade student. I am waiting for the schools to reopen,” Doe

# Is Liberia Ready for



**Abraham S. Kromah**  
Gardnersville

The current security condition of Liberia does not give me confidence to say UNMIL should leave. Although we do not see people carrying arms around, our state is still fragile. The strength of the army is about 2,000 soldiers. We still need to build the capacity of our police and change their mentality into modern policing



**Alvin W. Yealloway**  
SKD Boulevard, Paynesville city

Looking at our country in its totality - politics, economy, education - it's not prepared for UNMIL departure. We have not strengthened our institutions. We have few police and military personnel. Who do we depend on in 2017 elections in terms of security? UNMIL has to transition us from a fragile democracy to a more mature democracy.



**Zado D. Dwanahr**  
Resident of Paynesville city

I do not see any heightened insecurity. Nevertheless, UNMIL needs to stay a little longer because we do not have confidence in our national security yet. We are going to elections and our transition from one government to another has not always been easy. So, I want UNMIL to stay for three more years.



**Angielance L. Gbozee**  
Resident, Resident of Du-Port Road

Yes, Liberia is ready for UNMIL to go. I believe the process of growth has to do with trial and error. You've got to try to know your abilities. So, if we keep UNMIL here, we might not know our limitations. The police, the army, the immigration may have their own faults, but I think they are doing their best. I believe the process of growth is step by step.



**Damawah M. Jallah**  
Resident of RIA, Margibi County

Liberia is ready for UNMIL to leave because our country is stable. Before UNMIL came, we had no peace. We appreciate all the good work UNMIL has done over the years. Even though there are still many challenges, I am confident that the government and citizens can handle these challenges

# r UNMIL Departure?



**Jethro W. Brooks, Jr**  
Resident, ELWA, Paynesville City

I cannot say yes or no. UNMIL came here for a purpose. And we are aware that one day they will leave whether now or in the future. I say no because the rule of law does not prevail. But on the other hand, we do understand and accept the reality that we are the owners of Liberia. We must grow and be responsible.



**Timphena N. Jah**  
Roberts Field Highway, Margibi County

Liberia is not ready for UNMIL to leave. We still need a lot of protection and we do not have the security personnel to do that. We still need a well-trained army, police, immigration and others to defend us against internal and external threat. Only UNMIL can help us right now.



**Kamara Mohammed M.M**  
Chairman, Crown Hill Community

Liberia is not ready for UNMIL to leave. We have not achieved the key components of security and the economy. We lack a professional military to protect lives and property. We lack a well-trained police force. UNMIL should also train the military to look after the Liberian people before it leaves.



**Kadiatu S. Kaba**  
Benson Street, Monrovia

UNMIL should not go now because our country is still in a tense situation. The 2017 elections will heighten this tension even more. We still need more training of our armed forces, our police and others. We still need to bridge the gaps the Ebola crisis suddenly brought to us; so the time is not yet ripe.



**Luthrisah S. Mulbah**  
72nd Community, Paynesville City

Liberia is not ready for UNMIL departure. The country is not stable in a real sense. There is limited respect for human rights, police and army personnel. If UNMIL leaves, it will be a big disaster. It should stay a little longer, at least until our next elections in 2017.



FOODSHEETS  
AND CAUSED  
THEY DON'T  
JUST HAPPEN  
BE CAREFUL  
BE AWARE  
BE SAFE