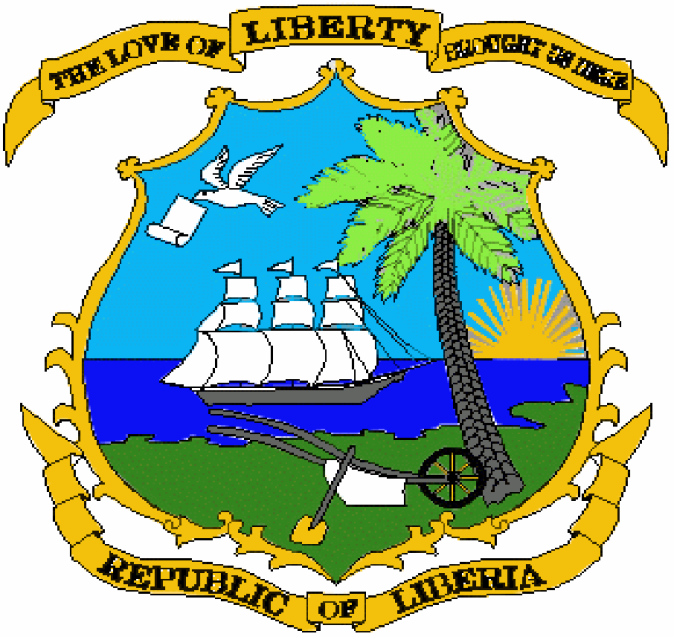


# NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY
# Of the
# REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

**JANUARY 2008**

# REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

THE PRESIDENT

**FORWARD**

The Governance Commission has produced the National Security Strategy after a year of discussions and interactions with civil society, security organizations, the leadership of the Security Committees of both Houses of the Legislature and our international partners who are attached to the Pillar on National Security. This is a document that evolved after a lengthy process of consultations not only with those named above but also with many other stakeholders in the new democratic dispensation.

After years of conflict in which the security agencies played undistinguished roles and exhibited hostility and unconscionable brutality towards the citizens, it became necessary to design a strategy that took into consideration the protection of the citizens and their participation in security related matters as a guarantee of their freedom and the enthronement of values that would underpin the operation of the rule of law.

The Government of Liberia, in its Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS), adopted the theme, "Breaking with the Past: from Conflict to Development," as a manifestation of its primary desire to usher in a new modus operandi that would address the inadequacies of the past that undermined the stability of the State. In the process of reconstruction, the stability of the State becomes paramount and thus the primary pillar in the IRPS became "National Security." In stating the argument unambiguously, the IPRS averred that: "In the past, security forces became a tool for repression and impunity that accentuated the total collapse of state apparatus. Among the problems were a lack of professionalism, absence of democratic control, lack of accountability to the rule of law, weak oversight and inadequate resources." Against the background of this realization, it became imperative to rectify the anomalies of a deformed security apparatus that contributed immeasurably to state collapse.

The National Security Strategy of Liberia identifies the causes and consequences of the collapse of the Liberian State. In order to address the pitfalls of the past, it places the citizens at the center of a new arrangement that focuses on human rights as the cardinal ingredient for National Security. It seeks to provide civilian oversight of security agencies, thus mitigating the possibility of repression and abuse as witnessed in the past.

The Government of Liberia is committed to the ideas and values outlined in the National Security Strategy. The new democratic culture that is evolving must have as its corollary institutions and structures that take as points of departure the interest and protection of the people. It is only in this way that we can face the challenges of the present and future with fortitude and certainty.

The National Security Strategy of Liberia was conceptualized and prepared by the people of Liberia and our many partners in progress. I extend to all of them my hearty thanks and appreciation. To the Governance Commission that presided over the entire process, we offer our congratulations.

My government will live up to the expectations of our people and the international community as far as the protection of their human rights and the upholding of the rule of law are concerned.

Sincerely,

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS**

| | |
|---|---|
| **AFL** | Armed Forces of Liberia |
| **AU** | Africa Union |
| **BCE** | Bureau of Custom and Excise |
| **BIN** | Bureau for Immigration and Naturalization |
| **CID** | Criminal Investigation Division |
| **DDRR** | Disarmament Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration |
| **DEA** | Drug Enforcement Agency |
| **ECOWAS** | Economic Community of West African States |
| **MCP** | Monrovia City Police |
| **MFA** | Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| **MNS** | Ministry of National Security |
| **MOD** | Ministry of Defense |
| **MOJ** | Ministry of Justice |
| **MRU** | Mano River Union |
| **NBI** | National Bureau of Investigation |
| **NFS** | National Fire Services |
| **NSA** | National Security Agency |
| **NSC** | National Security Council |
| **SSR** | Security Sector Reform |
| **SSS** | Special Security Service |
| **UNMIL** | United Nations Mission in Liberia |
| **UN** | United Nations |
| **UNDP** | United Nations Development Programme |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

Historically, security management in Liberia has always been a contentious issue and this was one of the root causes of the civil war. Fundamental issues like the activities of the security agencies, the extent of the input from civilians in defense-related matters, and the consequences of questionable rule of law, are all key problems that have historically bedevilled the security of Liberia.

The outbreak of conflict created new security challenges, further compounding these problems, due largely to actions of the perpetrators of war, the nature and magnitude of the violence and destruction, denial of justice, and the sub-regional and international interventions essential to ending it**.** In short, by 2006, when the present democratic government assumed office, it was confronted with a combination of more than a century of defective security sector governance, the legacy of a decade and half of civil war, the implications of being situated in an unstable sub-region, and the lack of a strategy as to how to reverse this situation.

This National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia (NSSRL) is designed to address this problem. The National Security Strategy comprises a historic overview of security challenges, the popular vision of national security for Liberia today, the key security issues threatening that vision and now confronting Liberia, proposals for a redesigned and legally accountable security architecture within which all the security agencies and bodies must operate to address these specific threats, and the legislative reforms required to effect the transformation. In particular, the National Security Strategy focuses on improving coordination and oversight of multi-agency security activities, the statutory instruments governing them, their accountability, sustainability, and resourcing plus their operational efficacy. The underlying tenet of the NSSRL is *human security for development*. A sustainable, coordinated architecture is the ultimate goal to meet the security needs of Liberia and Liberians as articulated in the Security Policy Statement adopted by the Government of Liberia. The NSSRL forms the substance of Pillar One of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), because without security, there can be no lasting development.

# 2. BACKGROUND: POPULAR VISION FOR LIBERIA AND HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The vision of national security in Liberia today is: a country in which all the population can live without fear of repression and suppression, poverty, crime, hunger and unemployment; a society in which Liberians can freely express themselves and make decisions about the way in which their country is governed. When the freed black slaves from North America declared independence on 26 July 1847, this was based on a shared vision that the ***'love of liberty'*** had brought them back to Africa to establish Liberia. Among the significant challenges faced by Liberia at its birth were the challenges of establishing an effective internal administration, welding the diverse historical and cultural communities into a unified nation, and developing a viable and robust economy.

However, the experiences of many Liberians over the past 160 years of independence have sadly been far removed from this vision. Autocracy and authoritarian rule became prevalent. Years of single party rule and presidential domination undermined democracy. Liberian politics was characterized by political exclusion, patronage, nepotism and other flaws which undermined the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the people. The state also failed to serve as 'guardian angel' for the security of the people. Instead, regime security dominated security thinking and practices. Human rights abuses, intimidation and harassment of political opponents became prevalent. A national vision of a unified multi-cultural people evolving a sense of shared community was not articulated often enough or in sustained fashion via national structures and institutions.

Liberia's economic security also depended heavily on the extraction and export of its raw materials, including iron ore, rubber, timber, diamond, gold, coffee and cocoa. Even in this role, it has since the 1970s experienced a sharp economic decline due largely to reduced demand for most of these primary exports, set against rising costs of imports and finished products. By the time of the April 12 1980 coup d'etat, Liberia was already experiencing negative economic growth and high unemployment.

Historically also, any economic benefits derived have been enjoyed by a minority of Liberians who accrued and exercised political power for over a century. This caused a huge disparity between ordinary Liberians and those in power, and has been a lasting source of insecurity for the vast majority of the people. Liberia has long been beset by economic mismanagement and corruption and particularly, by poor natural resource management. Despite vast natural resources, growth has stagnated along with economic decline. Even at the height of growth, development was still limited.

At the regional level, intra-state conflicts have been a major problem in West Africa and the Mano River Union sub-region for more than a decade. Liberia was the epicentre of that conflict system. In addition, the region has been faced with declining and stagnating economies, declining health and educational services, high unemployment among the youth, and there has been increasing transborder crimes perpetrated by organised gangs without borders. All of these are major concerns for security in Liberia.

At the heart of Liberia's problems has been the lack of good governance systems. Fourteen years of war only exacerbated this and led to both societal and state collapse. Hundreds of thousands of Liberians went into exile and similar numbers were internally displaced, creating ethnic tensions and mistrust, resulting in thousands of young Liberians becoming fighters. The economy also suffered. The end of the civil war in 2003 offered a golden opportunity for the country to try and find a durable solution to these challenges. Key among these is the transformation of the security sector based on a new understanding of security: the ideal of human security. This is where the citizen is protected by the state as an integral part of the state and where it is recognised that without this security, there can be no sustainable development. To achieve such security, an agreed strategy is essential.

## 3. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Liberia has been developed by the Government of Liberia (GoL) as the basis for development of a coordinated, accountable, and democratic security architecture embracing all GoL agencies as required by the task of addressing security in a human and holistic fashion. As a first step GoL has sought the views of ordinary Liberians on what type of security Liberia needs. This reverses the previous trend, where the importance of engaging the population on security issues was ignored and thus the legitimacy of the law enforcement and security agencies suffered. The new GoL is committed to a participatory approach in developing a national human security policy and strategy.

This strategy first re-affirms the popular vision for Liberia, going back to the founding principles of the country. It then identifies Liberia's national security interests and the current and longer term threats, both internal and external (sub-regional, regional and global), to them. Based on this threat analysis, it provides a broad policy framework out of which will emerge the relevant institutions required to ensure future national security in a holistic sense, with strong emphasis on economic security and the rule of law. In its entirety, the strategy is a clear roadmap, from vision to implementation, for ensuring that broad developments in the security sector are managed in a coordinated way.

The GoL will ensure that this strategy is supplemented by an integrated National Security Strategy Implementation Matrix (NSS-IM). This will be a security system development plan showing how each

agency can sustainably attain the expertise and other resources required to fulfil its remit together with suggested sustainable financial commitments from the GoL and its international partners.

The primary purpose of the National Security Strategy of Liberia is to:

- Identify the key security challenges confronting Liberia based on national consultations, views of security and other agencies to determine the composition of the reformed architecture required to address these security challenges efficiently, effectively and accountably;

- Lead to the development of a nationwide security coordination mechanism at National, County and District levels to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of joint working between security agencies, and operational tasking and policy formulation support to the National Security Council (NSC);

- Establish a holistic approach to security and a working sustainable architecture of which the National Security Council (NSC), chaired by the President, shall act as the supreme security policy coordination body operating within the domestic, regional and global contexts which affect Liberia's national security agenda.

## 4. DEFINING NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE LIBERIAN CONTEXT

National security is defined as the process of 'ensuring the protection of all of Liberia's citizens, its sovereignty, its culture, its territorial integrity and its economic wellbeing'. Implicit in this are internal and external dimensions. The internal issues include the rule of law, harmonious ethnic and social relations and economic wellbeing. The external issues are threats and challenges that originate outside Liberia's borders. This broad definition means that security goes beyond the traditional focus on the military and the government, and focuses instead on the people. In short, security encompasses freedom from threats, intimidation and other pressures, that undermine basic rights, welfare and property of the people, the territorial integrity of the state or the functioning of the system of governance.

In the case of Liberia, the key issues defining national security are ensuring:

(a) The post-war reconstruction effort leading to a democratic society, where the rule of law is supreme and society functions according to the principles of freedom, justice and democracy;

(b) A society that promotes and protects fundamental human rights, where the security apparatus protects the population according to the Constitution of Liberia and established principles of international law;

(c) Politico-economic stability and recovery from Liberia's current state of contraction and dislocation so that the fabric and the infrastructures of society are rebuilt to meet the peoples' broader security needs, thereby enabling them to enjoy their legal, social, economic and political rights under the Constitution and laws of the country;

(d) A political environment where power is exercised by a civilian-led democratically elected leadership with the security forces under effective democratic civilian control and oversight, accepting and understanding their roles and legal remits, but without political interference in their operations;

(e) Active participation of Liberians in national security issues and policy-making, so that all of society is regularly briefed about GoL actions and decisions on security issues; development of County Security Councils (CSCs), and District Security Councils (DSCs), chaired by the Superintendents and District Commissioners, respectively. Such Councils will also comprise security agencies, civil society and appropriate local government agencies;

(f) The promotion of Liberia's role in regional issues in peaceful co-existence with its MRU and ECOWAS neighbours through active involvement in regional and global peace, security and economic development fora;

(g) The promotion of national reconciliation and unity, so that harmonious inter-group relations shall form the cornerstone of national politics; support for institutions investigating allegations of human-rights abuses;

(h) The development of a professional national security architecture, police and defence forces that will provide a credible deterrent to the likely domestic and external security threats; ensuing all security agencies abide by and understand their responsibilities within the new architecture and legal framework of the new security legislation;

(i) Environmental security to guarantee the sustainability of Liberia's natural resources and the consequential benefit for the environment, population and the economy.

# 5. CONTEXTUALISING THE NATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

A number of considerations dictate Liberia's security challenges. Broadly contextualised, the security environment in which Liberia finds itself can be understood under three main headings: domestic, regional and global.

## 5.1 INTERNAL

The domestic context against which Liberia's national security strategy is being devised is one with significant constraints. Among the key issues are the following:

**a) Effects of Civil War:**

The 14-year civil war destroyed virtually all the infrastructure in the country, and left thousands dead, injured and displaced, thus requiring re-construction and reconciliation within the country's political and economic agenda. Efforts to establish and consolidate harmonious relations among different ethnic groups must be undertaken amidst attempts at infrastructural reconstruction.

**b) Nascent Democracy:**

Although this Government has won huge global recognition and respect, our democracy is still relatively young and at a very early stage of development. There is much to be imbued among all classes about how democratic values interact with security challenges and dilemmas. Consequently, issues like democratic civilian control of the security and armed forces are a new concept being embedded in our new system of democratic governance.

**c) A Dependent Economy:**

Although the war worsened the economic situation in Liberia, the country has historically been dependent on an economy dominated by the production of primary commodities for global markets. Like other primary commodity-dependent economies, the Liberian economy is vulnerable to external shocks. It has also been characterized in the past by grossly inefficient use and abuse of export earnings and of other economic resources. Compounded by dislocation of war, the Liberian economy had contracted such that by December 2006, only 15% of Liberians were formally employed although there is a huge informal sector as well. Most of the unemployed are youths.

**d) Youth Vulnerability and Exclusion:**

The lack of skills makes it difficult for many young people to find employment in the new economy. Since the end of the war, most Liberian youths have been unemployed. This is a major challenge to GoL and society, with compelling security implications.

**e) Porous National Borders:**

Liberia, like its MRU neighbours, has porous national borders, and its forces cannot yet secure them. The presence of UNMIL currently ensures reasonable border management. GoL will however establish an effective Immigration, Customs and Excise service to ensure border security. A Coast Guard is needed to guarantee maritime security with a regional liaison to be fully effective.

**f) Rebuilding of the Police Force and the Armed Forces:**

Liberia's police and armed forces are being rebuilt. The Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) are being re-established in full realization of the fact that the core leadership of all armed groups during the civil war consisted of soldiers of the AFL. International support is assisting army and police reform. The way in which the new army and police are organised, trained and equipped to fulfil their roles within the context of national security and defence policies and the overall security architecture of Liberia becomes of fundamental importance.

## 5.2 REGIONAL

**a) Regional Conflict and Insecurity:**

Over the last one and half decades, the Mano River Union has been a largely unstable sub-region with Liberia as the epicentre of this instability because the Liberian civil war extended to neighbouring Sierra Leone. Guinea is also confronting its own variance of politico-security challenges. Liberia's other immediate neighbour, Cote d'Ivoire, has suffered a bitter civil war, although ONUCI now maintains the peace after a peace settlement had been established by Ivorian leaders themselves with ECOWAS and AU mediatory support. Against this regional instability, Liberia is attempting to reform and to address wider sub-regional issues as part of a national security policy. The fragility of immediate neighbouring states poses a potentially significant problem.

**b) Regional Security and Stand-by Forces:**

It is particularly important for Liberia to be woven into regional security arrangements and for its security architecture to facilitate and enhance such cooperation and thus Liberia's own national security. The Government of Liberia will further strengthen relations with the MRU and ECOWAS because it considers the two as strategic institutional partners supporting regional stability. Liberia shall actively support the revitalisation of the MRU Security Committee to maintain sub-regional peace, security and stability. Thus the NSSRL shall be in harmony with MRU and ECOWAS strategies as wells as supporting and complementing the African Union (AU) Defence and Security Policies. Longer term, Liberia aims to develop its security and military to play a broader regional and sub-regional role, including participation in the African Union Stand-By Force (ASF) and the ECOWAS Stand-by Force (ESF).

### c) Regional Economics:

Liberia's economy is affected by the economics of the West Africa sub-region which has experienced a prolonged period of stagnation and decline over the past decades. More recently, there have been signs of potential for new growth. Currently, unemployment is high among the youth across the sub-region; access to education and health care is difficult. Slow economic integration undermines growth and development. Liberia shall commit itself to economic integration within ECOWAS, including ratification of ECOWAS trade protocols, so as to benefit from free trade to encourage internal growth, investment, jobs and development.

## 5.3 GLOBAL

### a) War on Terror:

The global war on terror is factored into Liberia's security strategy. Terrorists have looked for weak spots and used them as a springboard – a back door to attack inaccessible frontline targets. There has been no active terrorist threat, nor act in Liberia thus far, but vigilance is a must.

### b) International Serious and Organised Crime:

Organised crime is a very real threat to national, regional and international security. International drugs and human trafficking networks span the globe, preying on conflict and post-conflict countries as transit points and new markets. Like terrorists, the traffickers frequently seek a weak spot – a backdoor route. The link between international drugs trafficking and other crimes is well established. Eliminating this market and denying transit opportunities requires regional and global security coordination, on land but also at sea. These assets must be developed.

### c) Debt Relief and The International Trade Regime:

Substantial international effort is being made to ensure debt relief to developing countries, especially those coming out of conflict, to provide increasing levels of donor assistance and buttress economic shortfalls to spawn economic growth and development. The debt burden is a potential security threat and Liberia has just been offered partial debt relief by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and other international institutions and partners. Liberia must look to capitalise on this debt relief and translate the opportunity into growth and development, looking to the sub-regional and international markets to help secure its economic security.

Similarly, Liberia will continue to work as a member of the African bloc of the South in the efforts of developing countries to obtain a more favourable international trade regime. The issue of unequal and unfair international trade regime has been identified by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as a factor that adversely affects the development initiatives of developing countries, thus constituting a national security concern. Accordingly, redressing unequal and unfair international trade arrangements will be an important element of the strategy for enhancing Liberia's economy and, therefore, its security.

# 6. IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITISING SECURITY THREATS AND DILEMMAS

The current situation in Liberia is relatively peaceful and stable, thanks largely to UNMIL's presence, but UNMIL will eventually withdraw. GoL security agencies shall in the meantime prepare to take back full security responsibility for the country by 2010. Implementation of this National Security Strategy is predicated upon meeting this deadline. The National Security Strategy identifies the main threats to Liberia's security and describes how the new security architecture must be reformed to counter these threats. Generally speaking, the primary threats are internal, although not exclusively so. Trans-national security problems exist, especially those related to organised crime. The new architecture will therefore address domestic issues and be so reformed to enable it to interface effectively with regional counterparts.

In order to identify the domestic and external threats to Liberia's national security interests, the Government mandated the Governance Commission (GC) to carry out a nation-wide consultation on security sector reform including identifying the threats to Liberia's security. From the nationwide consultations with the people and with the security professionals, the list of primary national security threats to Liberia has been identified and is placed in the priority order below. The new security architecture shall be designed to counter these threats efficiently and sustainably.

## 6.1 INTERNAL SECURITY THREATS

### (i) Lack of Respect for Rule of Law:

Liberia has suffered from lack of good governance and respect for rule of law compounded by protracted authoritarian, autocratic and other forms of anti-democratic rule. The soldiers and security agents became a law onto themselves and abused human rights of the people with impunity. During the war, the institutions of governance were destroyed and the entire state and societal structures collapsed. Hence, the promotion of good governance and respect for the rule of law is an absolutely vital basic tenet for post-war reconstruction. A deficiency in the rule of law will inhibit investor confidence in the new Liberia. This remains a major threat to Liberia's human and economic security, and from this issue flows many of the other socio-economic security threats.

### (ii) Economy, Poverty and Unemployment:

Impediments to economic development are a threat to our security, and therefore obstacles to rapid growth need to be addressed. Poverty and unemployment are two potentially serious internal threats to national security in the broader sense of the word – state and human security. These problems permeate society at all levels. Although exacerbated by the war, economic decline started at the end of the 1970s even before the war with the rising international oil prices and falling demand for the country's export products. Today, we live in an age where oil is now almost $100 a barrel, which is again impacting on the economy.

The vast majority of Liberians live on less than a dollar a day. Employment stands at just 15 per cent, minus the informal sector. Economic expansion is slow and GoL's rightsizing policy may mean more cutbacks from the public payroll. A stronger focus shall be given to improving the investment climate, encouraging alternative sources of employment and creating wealth. Development of efficient economic and financial policies to realize the country's economic and social development will be central to the security and stability for Liberia's citizens. The security architecture will also assist revenue generation, e.g. via the new Liberia National Coastguard and the Customs and Immigration service, and deter economic crime.

Development of sub-regional and African integration, based on economic reforms, shall remain a priority. The economy is central to the NSSRL because economic growth enhances Liberia's capacity to withstand other internal and external security threats. The problems that hinder development and threaten security will be addressed by the Government. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) are designed to address these inter-related security problems.

**(iii) Poor Natural Resource Management/Environment:**

The ownership, management and control of Liberia's natural resources are crucial to successful post-war reconstruction and economic security. Liberia is richly endowed with fertile land, iron ore, diamonds, gold and forests among others. Previously, only the few have benefited from the exploitation of these resources. The risk of insurrection from resource-producing regions in a country exists when people from those regions are denied part of the benefits. GoL will ensure fair returns for such regions and address the deterrent effect of protectionism on foreign investment. The National Investment Commission shall encourage a balance of continued investment while ensuring equitable returns for Liberians.

An environmental balance to conserve and protect Liberia's natural resources is also needed. Environmental protection, prudent utilization of natural resources, as well as protection of public health remain strategic security priorities in Liberia.

**(iv) Deactivated Ex-Servicemen:**

About 17,000 ex-servicemen have been retired from the army, police, Special Security Service (SSS) and other security agencies. Although GoL has made severance payments to them, some continue to demand more benefits. The issue of ex-servicemen presents a potentially serious security dilemma and society cannot afford such a group to be idle too long. Alternative employment opportunities will to be found for them to diffuse any potential unemployment and other economic security threats.

**(v) Ex-Combatants:**

Completion of **DDRR** in 2004 saw 103,019 ex-fighters demobilised. However, about 9,000 ex-fighters have not benefited from the Rehabilitation and Reintegration phase of the programme. Some reportedly went to the Ivory Coast and are still at large. They may return to Liberia or engage in any new regional conflict. Some have fought in Guinea and Sierra Leone, presenting a continuing internal and regional security threat.

The government is aware that both groups constitute national and local threats where they feel marginalised and excluded. Their familiarity with firearms means they pose a continued potential threat and therefore measures are being considered to ensure that their concerns are taken care of and to enable their proper reintegration into society. The formation of the Veteran Bureau by GoL is one such effort to address the situation of ex-servicemen, while the lifespan of the National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (NCDDRR) has also been extended to address specific issues associated with the rehabilitation and reintegration of the ex-combatants.

**(vi) Crime: Corruption.**

Pervasive and endemic corruption is a major security threat. Corruption impacts on development and in Liberia it is manifested as embezzlement, extortion, fraud, nepotism, favouritism, ethnic favouritism, gender discrimination, theft of national resources, award of contracts based on kick-backs, misuse of public property, and diversion of public finances into private accounts. All of these undermine the stability and legitimacy of the state; public confidence in **GoL** and thus Liberia's national security interests. **GoL** is considering a **National Anti Corruption Policy**, a **Strategy on Anti-Corruption** and the formation of an independent **Anti-Corruption Commission** as part of a wider effort to defeat this threat and build a system of public integrity. Any such agency shall be an integral part of the new security architecture, so as to benefit from investigative capabilities of other security agencies in addition to its own and to coordinate the fight against corruption.

**(vii) Crime: Robbery.**

The impact of the increase in armed robbery in Liberia threatens individual and community security. It is linked to high unemployment among ex-combatants and ex-servicemen. Armed robbery tends to involve the use of traditional tools, in addition to firearms and poses a serious security threat. Within the context of post-conflict reconstruction, the security agencies must be capable of addressing the issue, to inspire confidence in citizens and in investors. There is a strong link between crime, unemployment, lack of investor confidence and insecurity. Hence, the training of the police and other security agencies to cooperate closely to combat crime and underpin the rule of law is a key ongoing part of GoL's efforts to improve human and economic security.

**(viii) Crime: Drug Abuse and Trafficking:**

Drug abuse is increasing in Liberia and the young unemployed are vulnerable to this with marijuana grown in the country. There are also strong indications that Liberia, like some of its West African neighbours, may be targeted particularly by south American cartels as a transit point for shipping heroine and cocaine to the US and Europe**.** The defunct security system reportedly facilitated the penetration of Liberia's coastline and the high level of young unemployed are a ready source of cheap drugs runners and mules. The lack of a functioning coastguard and weak airport, port and land border security, are also attractive to the trafficking cartels who dispose of considerable funds. Drugs are inextricably linked with other domestic crimes, posing threats to rural communities and development activities.

**(ix) Crime: Illegally-held Arms.**

The DDRR process was not as exhaustive as possible. While 103,019 fighters were disarmed and demobilised, only 27,000 weapons and 6.1 million rounds of ammunition were collected. In some areas there was no DDRR because of terrain difficulties and the concern is that there may still be weapons hidden away. Current armed robbery statistics do not however support assertions that uncollected firearms are being used for criminal activity. The UNDP ''Arms for Development" exercise addresses this issue, but further efforts shall be undertaken including restrictions on the use of firearms by security agencies, accurate logging and safe-holding of weapons and spot inspections to prevent misuse. Given the regional fragility, arms recovery is a critical and immediate security challenge.

GoL, with support of UNDP's Small Arms Disarmament Unit, is revising the outdated and ineffective 1956 Firearms Traffic Act. The revised Act, when ratified by the Liberian Legislature, will be the legal mechanism for addressing this issue. GoL is also fully committed to the ECOWAS Convention on Light

Weapons, their Ammunitions and other Related Materials. A Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, when legally constituted, will oversee this work.

**(x) Land and Property Disputes:**

Land and property issues are a sensitive security threat. There are many ways which land and property disputes pose security threats. Critical among these are the following: first, communal land and boundary disputes between ethnic and clan groups have been a historical source of inter-ethnic conflicts; second, the settler advantage in land appropriation and tenure arrangements have become increasingly disquieting to citizens of rural background and from indigenous communities; third, concession agreements awarded by government to foreign firms and multinational corporations that ignore or do not fully account for the rights of local communities, especially more recent decisions taken by such corporations to expand their areas of operation have become a hotly contested issue; fourth, growing claims by local communities over property rights in forest resources pose a potential security threat; fifth, persistent disputes and illegal occupation of private land holdings as a consequence of war-related movements of people threaten to sustain inter-personal conflicts and over-task already weak local and national conflict resolution mechanisms.

**(xi) Ethnic Hatred and Tensions:**

Liberia is populated by diverse ethnic groups that have lived in relative harmony and peace since independence. However, Liberia's recent history illustrates that one of the potential risks to national security is ethnic hatred and tension. Ethnicity can be easily politicized by the elites and this is dangerous to the stability of Liberia. The war has exacerbated the ethnic hatred, tension and mistrust. **GoL** will seek to address these issues to ensure national security and peace and this will also be a key factor bearing on the reorganisation of the security architecture.

**(xii) Citizenship:**

The issue of citizenship is closely linked to and can potentially undermine national security. Throughout the country, there are recurring references to the influx of foreigners into Liberia through illegal border entry points. **GoL** is also fully aware how the issue of *Ivoirite* triggered the Ivorian crisis with a major negative impact on national reconciliation and security there. Hence, the issue of citizenship shall be considered carefully to avoid it becoming a major security and political threat.

**(xiii) Illiteracy:**

The war adversely impacted upon access to education and thus Liberia has a high illiteracy rate. The standard of education has also been undermined by prolonged years of war. So a large sector of our population is illiterate and thus vulnerable to unscrupulous manipulation. It also means there is a class that simply lacks the skills to contribute meaningfully to the country's rebuilding. The potential isolation of this strand of the population is a threat to the national security interests of Liberia.

**(xiv) Fire Occurrences:**

Recently, Monrovia has experienced several fires causing death and the destruction of properties. The fire at the Executive Mansion on 26 July 2006 is a classic example. Most of the houses in Monrovia lack electricity and the use of candles increase the risk of fire. There is also no adequately equipped fire service. Inability to provide fire protection damages Liberia's credibility, the confidence of the people and investors. **GoL** recognises this as a real human security threat to be addressed.

**(xv) Prison Overcrowding and Poor Justice System:**

A key part of the security threat posed by the weak justice system is the overcrowding of the prisons and the bail system. Those least able to pay bail are often the ones remanded in custody and in many cases for minor offences, overfilling the Monrovia Prison. Serious criminals such as drugs dealers, who pose a higher threat to the community, can afford to pay bail and avoid prison custody. The apprehended criminals reappear on bail to intimidate both LNP officers and witnesses. This is deterring **LNP'**s efforts to remove hard core criminals from the streets and improve security.

**(xvi) HIV/AIDS:**

The increase in HIV/AIDS is a national security threat and is linked to lack of education and poverty**.** The actual HIV/AIDS infection rate is not accurately known. The impact of the virus spreading is potentially immense for the national work force. This endangers the institutions of Liberia and the ability of those serving in them to perform their duties. The spread of the virus to rural areas also threatens agricultural production and, therefore, economic security.

## 6.2 EXTERNAL THREATS

**(i) MRU:**

Liberia is part of the Mano River Union, a region which has seen considerable conflict and instability and still remains fragile. Although the risk of a military aggression from neighbouring states is very low, past experiences have taught that these territories could be used as staging grounds by local insurgents. Hence, the crisis in Cote d'Ivoire remains of concern because of its potential spill-over effects including the flow of arms and the attraction of young Liberians as 'soldiers of fortune'. The uncertainty over Guinea also constitutes a potential threat to Liberia, due to the potential mix of refugees and insurgents who might use Liberia as a safe haven.

**(ii) ECOWAS:**

Similarly, the rest of West Africa is going through a period of economic decline and stagnation. Although this decline is being gradually reversed, it has led to a high rate of youth unemployment throughout the region. Some of these young people have fought in the various wars in the region; they have looted natural resources; they are a source of armed robbery and related crimes and serve as conduits for the proliferation of small arms. West Africa is also facing cross border crimes such as drugs trafficking, human trafficking and money laundering, which undermine the security of the region. All of these have serious implications for security in Liberia.

## 7. IDENTIFICATION OF SECURITY INSTITUTIONS

Liberia's security institutions were established by successive governments during different periods in the history of Liberia in order to address the existing security challenges and threats of those eras. After fourteen years of war, and given the increasing complex nature of the threats and new challenges to the national security interests of Liberia, there is the urgent need to transform the country's security institutions such that they will be able to perform their duties in a legitimate, coherent, integrated and effective way. There will also be the need to reach agreement on what their duties will be. One of the weaknesses of the past was that the security institutions did not perform their duties in an integrated way to safeguard the national security interests of Liberia; they lacked coordination and performed overlapping duties. This often led more to turf battles between and among them as opposed to cooperation for the common good of the country. Importantly, the long years of political patronage and interference with the work of the security agencies by successive administrations have provided a breeding ground for inefficiency, corruption and misuse of government resources.

The graph below identifies all existing security and law enforcement agencies and their respective functions as envisaged under this National Security Strategy. This includes the Liberia National Coastguard that will be reconstituted and the anticipated Anti Corruption Commission.

| AGENCY | LAW ENFORCEMENT | INTELLI GENCE | TERRITORIAL SAFEGUARD | VIP SERVICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| LIBERIA NATIONAL POLICE (LNP) | X | X | | |
| NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) | X | X | | |
| DRUGS ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (DEA) (Note: See LNP below) | X | X | | |
| LIBERIA SEAPORT POLICE (LSP) | X | | | |
| MONROVIA CITY POLICE (MCP) | X | | | |
| ARMED FORCES OF LIBERIA (AFL) | | X | X | |
| LIBERIA NATIONAL COASTGUARD (LNCG) (Note: To be revitalised and managed as an integral element of the AFL but working with other LEAs) | X | X | X | |
| NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY (NSA) | X | X | | |
| MINISTRY of NATIONAL SECURITY | | | | |
| SPECIAL SECURITY SERVICE (SSS) | X | X | | X |
| BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION (BIN) | X | X | | |
| BUREAU OF CUSTOMS AND EXCISE | X | | | |
| THE BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS | X | | | |
| NATIONAL FIRE SERVICE (NFS) | X | | | |
| ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION (ACC) (Note: An ACC is envisaged. X indicates possible role) | X | X | | |

## 8. SPECIFIC NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES FOR LIBERIA

In order to ensure that the national security interests and values of Liberia are preserved, it is important for the country to pursue objectives that will contribute to the safeguarding of these interests and values. In this light, Liberia's national security objectives will be guided by the following principles:

- Consolidation of transition from war to peace through pursuit of democracy, good governance and human security over the past practice of regime security; safeguarding the people from violence and crime; special emphasis on protection of women and children; hunger and deprivation; ensuring their participation in decision-making;

- Development of a coordinated national security system where all security institutions coordinate in addressing domestic, sub-regional and global security needs in line with their remit and according to national intelligence requirements; ensuring the security agencies are professional, efficient and sustainable under civilian control.

- Avoidance of excessive duplication of roles and conflict of interests, without precluding collaboration and complimentarity, eg. intelligence agency support for intelligence led policing with each security agency operating to clear legally defined mission and remit;

- Establishment of a system of recruitment of new personnel that is based on transparency and robust vetting processes that reflects Liberia's diverse ethnic, and religious balance, and that emphasises merit in the selection and promotion of personnel; and ensures timely and adequate remuneration in order to promote efficiency and loyalty to the state and people of Liberia;

- Ensuring gender mainstreaming at every level of security policy making and practices. Thus, gender awareness and sensitivity should be incorporated into training curricula of security agencies.

- Creation of a system of County and District Security Councils – CSCs and DSCs as part of the peace-building effort to ensure security and peace coordination at County and District levels, coordinated with local government, civil society and other stakeholders. These Councils will also act as a focal mechanism for disaster and crisis management response;

- Creation of democratic civilian oversight mechanisms to ensure that the law enforcement and security agencies adhere to the legislation governing their activities; establishment of a complaints procedure to enable complaints about illicit activities by the agencies to be properly and independently pursued;

- Safeguarding of the integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Liberia's land, sea and airspace and the resources therein; showing similar respect for other countries, especially in the sub-region;

- Promotion of global peace and security through bilateral and multilateral cooperation and institutions to meet the trans-national security threats and challenges requiring international collaboration;

- Full participation of Liberia's new armed forces in international peace and security arrangements including, the ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), African Union Standby Force (ASF), UN Peacekeeping and others to contribute to global peace and security;

- Support for economic security and poverty reduction via policies with strong public-private partnerships; ensuring the people of Liberia direct the PRSP, encouraging free trade and incentives for investment alongside sound natural resource management ensuring local inhabitants benefit from exploitation of resources in their communities.

- The development of health and environmental security so the country's fragile environment is sustained because its preservation is integral to economic security and resource management.

All of the above objectives are crucial to the safeguarding of the national security interests of Liberia and must be carefully considered in the construction of specific institutions and in the effort to ensure that a coherent and efficient set of institutions are established. Towards this end, the Government has begun to carry out a reform of the security sector in order to ensure that the country's new security architecture will reflect and have the capacity to respond to the existing post-conflict challenges.

## 9. TOWARDS A NEW SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Because of the domestic, sub-regional and global nature of existing and potential threats to Liberia's national security interests, the new security architecture for the country must be constructed on the basis of promoting state, human and societal security. In this light, the referents for national security will not be limited to the state and the regimes, but will also include the people of Liberia including individuals, communities, ethnic and religious groups.

Importantly, the new and evolving security institutions will be constructed around and reflect the following security services required to meet the full range of Liberia's security needs: protection of the people and sovereignty of Liberia; law enforcement and border security; protection of state officials, properties and documentation; intelligence; and the promotion of human security. This means that the achievement of the national security goals of Liberia will not only rest upon the shoulders of those institutions that provide physical and military security, but also upon those that are non-military in nature but without whom there can be no national stability, peace and security.

### 9.1 Security and Intelligence Coordination and Policy-Making:

There shall continue to be a National Security Council (NSC) chaired by the President and comprising all the Ministers of Government as defined in the *Amendment to the Act To Establish the National Security Council of the Republic of Liberia (2000).* The NSC shall continue to be the highest security coordinating body in the country with sole responsibility for national security policy issues. In view of the significant coordination role in national security policy-making to be played by the NSC, the office of the National Security Advisor who coordinates the work of the Council shall be strengthened. There shall also be developed a county and district based security mechanism across the country to provide effective and accountable security coordination, implementation of the rule of law and joint working with local government as well as civil society, and traditional leaders in the interest of the wellbeing of all the people of Liberia.

## 9.2 Intelligence and Security:

Liberia's national intelligence capabilities will become robust, to provide the requisite timely intelligence and counter-intelligence necessary for policy-makers. Currently, these suffer from analytical deficiencies. They are bloated, poorly managed, fragmented and lack credibility in safeguarding the state. The Government is fully aware that given the complex nature of the country's security and intelligence challenges, no one agency can possibly address them. The country requires an appropriate security and intelligence structure that will adequately deal with such challenges. Against such backdrop, the intelligence and counter-intelligence responsibility vested in the National Security Agency (NSA) shall not be exercised to preclude the assignment of intelligence and counter-intelligence management responsibilities to other agencies to complement the efforts of the NSA in order to give Government the opportunity to make sound and informed decisions. This National Security Strategy particularly encourages the assignment of political and economic intelligence and counter-intelligence responsibilities to an intelligence unit in the Liberia National Police (LNP**)** with coordination responsibilities to be vested in the Ministry of Justice. The establishment of an Intelligence Unit in the LNP will lead to the corroboration of intelligence findings that will enable the Government to make informed policies and decisions on broader national issues. The political and historical context of Liberia as well as the infancy of the country's democratic governance practices substantiates the need for this arrangement.

## 9.3 Defense:

On defence matters, there shall be a thorough Defence Review and a Defence Policy and Strategy that will, among others, clarify and determine the mission, doctrine, character, appropriate size, functions and duties of the Armed Forces of Liberia; and provide direction for the development of the military. The restructuring of the Armed Forces of Liberia will also always reflect the need to ensure that it is a viable and sustainable force that can address the threats posed to Liberia's national security. All of its functions and duties will be consistent with the Constitution of Liberia: to defend the territorial integrity of Liberia against external aggression and assist in response to natural disasters.

The new AFL shall also be trained to support civil duties and be subjected to civilian control. All deployment of the military in support of the civil administration will be regulated by clear and legally accepted principles to ensure clear lines of command and control.

The **Liberia Coastguard** will be revitalised and designed to ensure the security of Liberia's maritime borders and the natural resources therein. This will constitute a significant contribution on the part of the military to revenue generation and protection of the country's economy. It will work within an integrated regional maritime security network.

## 9.4 Police Services:

The Liberia National Police shall be the primary operational agency responsible for internal security. It shall be restructured to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency. It shall continue to carry out its main function of protecting life and property within the confines of rule of law. The LNP will be deployed throughout the length and breadth of Liberia in order to ensure security for the vast majority of the people of Liberia. After a police review, the relationship between the Police and other agencies, particularly, paramilitary bodies such as the Monrovia City Police and National Seaport Police shall be clearly defined and regulated by a new legislation. An Intelligence Unit shall be established in the LNP that will be charged with the responsibilities of conducting political and economic intelligence, and counter-intelligence functions that will complement the work of the NSA and also corroborate

intelligence findings that will enable Government to make informed policies and decisions on broader national issues.

The GoL shall seek the support of countries within ECOWAS and the African Union, as well as UNMIL and other international partners, to ensure that the Liberia National Police (LNP) becomes a functioning part of the greater sub-regional law enforcement effort. Like defense, there shall be a Police Review process as part of the overall Security Sector Reform agenda.

### 9.5 Border Security and Management :

The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN) shall be restructured to ensure effective boder security and management throughout Liberia's porus borders. It shall develop the capacity to intercept, disrupt, and deny undesirable aliens entry into Liberia. There shall be strengthened access control at all recgonised points of entry to and from Liberia. This shall be accomplished through a rigorous transformation of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. The BIN shall work in close collaboration with the Bureau of Customs and Excise and the Coast Guard, when revitalised, in carrying out the duties of border security and management. The Government shall seek bilateral arrangements to modernize ports of entry, in order to safeguard the state against all trans-national and global threats.

### 9.6 VIP Service:

The Special Security Service (SSS) shall be renamed as the Executive Protection Service (EPS). The EPS shall have the responsibility primarily to protect the Head of State, key GoL officials and other VIPs. It shall develop a professional close Protection capacity that shall interface closely with other intelligence and law enforcement bodies to support the overall security coordination efforts.

### 9.7 National Fire Service:

The National Fire Service (NFS) will continue to oversee the operations of fire fighting organizations and adopt measures for fire prevention and control; assist the Police in arson investigations; set up fire control units throughout the country; keep accurate records of fire occurrences; and perform all other fire related duties.

### 9.8 Anti-Corruption Strategy:

As enshrined in the proposed Act, Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) shall be established with law enforcment and intelligence functions. When established, the LACC shall constitute an integral part of Liberia's security architecture.

### 9.9 Non-Military Security Issues:

In view of the fact that some of the national security threats are non-military in nature, non-military institutions like the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Health, Finance, Planning and Economic Affairs, Education, Justice, Internal Affairs, Defense, National Security and other relevant agencies shall, from time to time, have an important role to play in promoting Liberia's national security interests and values.

Against the backdrop of the above, while the institutions so established should be affordable, concerns about their costs should not compromise their ability and capacity to address the threats to Liberia's national security interests. There must, therefore, be a balance between the principle of affordability and the principle of ensuring effective capacity to appropriately address national security threats.

## 10. CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT AND DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

Civilian democratic management and oversight of the security sector has been weak in Liberia, especially over the last quarter-century. Thus, all new security legislation will take this weakness fully into account. The transformed institutions must and will be fully subjected to civilian management and oversight, especially legislative oversight. This is essential because of the prolonged years of war and the role of security agencies, which rendered the sector factionalized and dysfunctional; thereby, undermining their image and public confidence. Hence, for the purpose of confidence building and in order to be seen and considered to be legitimate, these security institutions will have to be subjected to democratic civilian management and oversight. Moreover, the Constitution of Liberia requires legislative oversight of security institutions.

Accordingly, the legislative committees on defence and security will play their roles in this direction. The judiciary also has a crucial role to play in making sure that there is respect for the rule of law throughout the length and breadth of Liberia. Ultimately, all of the security institutions must be subjected to public scrutiny when significant public and national interests are involved. Hence, civil society has a significant role to play in this respect.

## 11. CONCLUSION.

This National Security Strategy benefits from the lessons of the past and has been designed to ensure security as the foundation for advancing peace, security and the development of Liberia. Accordingly, this National Security Strategy conceives security from the broader perspective to include state, military and human security.

The NSSRL is designed as the broad roadmap to a coordinated and accountable security apparatus of the future designed to preserve the stability of Liberia, harmonious inter-group relations and the liberty and justice which were the founding precepts of the nation.

## 12. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE MATRIX

The implementation Schedule is indicated in the matrix below:

| Key Actions | | Timeline |
|---|---|---|
| **Strategy Completion** | | |
| Step 1 | Completion of the National Security Policy and Strategy with a complimentary architecture outline | 31 December 2007 |
| **Implementation Framework** | | |
| Step 2 | Adoption of National Security Strategy and Implementation Timeline by the National Security Council (NSC) | 31 January 2008 |
| Step 3 | Development of the NSSRL - Implementation Matrix (NSSRL-IM) with agreed and prioritized actions for each security sector institution to undertake to achieve implementation of the NSSRL.<br><br>As per international best practice, other sector strategies eg. Defense and institutional reviews to be included within the NSSRL-IM as priority actions comprising part of the implementation process.<br>International best practice workshop<br><br>Implementation of NSSRL-IM commences consistent with PRS Cycle and including annual validation exercises. | January – 31 March 2008<br><br>May 2008<br>PRS Cycle<br>April 2008 – 2010 |
| Step 4 | Completion of a 'medium term 3-5 year security sector budget' for provision of resources to meet logistical and equipment needs in line with Steps 2 and 3. | August 2008 |
| **Strategic and Statutory Issues** | | |
| Step 5 | Repeal and Amendment of Statutory provisions of streamlined security agencies and that of host agencies in line with the NSSRL and National Security Architecture. Also to be undertaken as priority action elements of the NSSRL-IM. | April – December 2008 |
| Step 6 | Completion of Standard Operating Procedures for the new architecture. | April – November 2008 |
| Step 7 | Development to begin of a County based security mechanism to coordinate and promote local management of peace and security and including civilian and local government participation in security governance. | July – December 2008 |
| **Capacity Building** | | |
| Step 8 | Satisfactory completion of basic training for all the various security agencies. | April 2008 –December 2010 |
| Step 9 | Comprehensive deployment of national security officers through out Liberia | 2008-2010 |
| Step 10 | Reinforced initiative to realize 20% women participation in the military and various security agencies. | 2008-2010 |
| Step 11 | Effective execution and monitoring of the Concept of Operation (Con-Ops) of national security agencies, including national security exercises. | 2008 – 2010 |
| Step 12 | Review of NSSRL and NSSRL-IM in line with end of 3 year PRS period | 2010 |
| **FINAL GOAL** | | |
| Step 13 | Regular situational and national security exercises to prepare for the take over of security responsibilities by the Government of Liberia from the United Nations Mission (UNMIL) in Liberia to enable successful achievement of the UNMIL CDW process. | 2008 – May 2010 |
| Step 14 | Rigorous enforcement of Human Rights Laws through out Liberia by all the security agencies, | 2008 -2010 |