Country Advice Liberia

Liberia – LBR36800 – National Patriotic Party (NPP) – National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) – Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL)

9 June 2010

1. Deleted.

2. Please provide information about the NPP the NPFL and INPFL and their current status.

The National Patriotic Party (NPP)

The National Patriotic Party (NPP) is currently active in Liberian politics with four members in the country's House of Representatives and three in the Senate. In Presidential elections in 2005, the NPP candidate Roland Massaquoi was placed sixth with 4.1% of the vote.[1]

The NPP was the political wing of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), the rebel force led by Charles Taylor. First emerging in 1991[2], it became a legally registered political party in 1997 after the NPFL's military wing was dissolved as part of a 1996 peace pact.[3] In the Liberian elections of July 1997, the Taylor-led NPP was successful. Taylor was elected President and the (NPP) gained 21 of the 26 seats in the Senate and 49 of the 64 in the House of Representatives.[4] When Taylor departed from Liberia in August 2003 many NPP members remained loyal to him, while others decided to join other parties.[5]

The National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL)

The NPFL was officially dissolved in January 1997. The NPFL emerged in 1989 as a rebel force of 150 led by Charles Taylor in Liberia's north-eastern border region. The rebels confronted the reigning National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL) led by Samuel Doe and the Liberian Army, gaining control of rural areas and by mid-1990 were present in the capital Monrovia. Membership was largely from the Gio and Mano ethnic groups. Between 1990 and 1994 and with a maximum force of 25,000, it controlled the bulk of Liberian territory which it ruled through the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government (NPRAG), based in Gbarnga.[6]

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[1] 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p.855 – Attachment 4.

[2] Taylor attempted to register the party as early as 1991. See: 'Taylor sets up his own supreme court' 1991, *Agence France-Presse*, 19 December 1991 – Attachment 1.

[3] 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p.855 – Attachment 4.

[4] UK Home Office 1999, *Liberia Assessment*, September, p.14 – Attachment 5.

[5] 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p.855 – Attachment 4.

[6] UK Home Office 1999, *Liberia Assessment*, September, p.42 – Attachment 5; 'Country Profile: Liberia' 2010, *BBC News*, 10 March – Attachment 6; 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet,

The Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL)

The INPFL is no longer active. The INPFL emerged in February 1990 under the leadership of Prince Yormic Johnson as a major break away rebel group from the NPFL. Johnson was a former senior NPFL lieutenant. It succeeded in gaining control of central Monrovia on 23 July 1990[7] and had a maximum force of 6000.[8] Prince Johnson gave himself up to the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) and left the country in October 1992, following which many INPFL fighters rejoined the NPFL.[9] From late 1992 the INPFL was no longer active.[10]

3. Are people associated with these organisations, either personally or through family members, facing any threat or harm from the current government in Liberia?

No reports were found indicating that the current government threatens or harms people associated with the NPP, NPL, or INPFL. Current human rights and security reports on Liberia published in 2009 and 2010, including by the United Nations Human Rights Council, do not indicate that the government or its agents commit politically motivated killings, or any form of arbitrary or unlawful killings.[11] Freedom House reports that the "state protects…political opponents from arbitrary arrest".[12]

Human Rights officers from the Human Rights and Protection Section of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), stationed in field offices in each of the 15 counties across Liberia, seek to ensure comprehensive monitoring of the human rights situation. Their latest report (June 2009) gave no reference to the harm or ill-treatment of political groups by the government, indicating instead that the government continued to improve the institutional protection of human rights in the criminal justice system.[13]

The current government is led by the Unity Party's (UP) Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected female president. The government is described as composed of "technocrats drawn from among Liberia's ethnic groups and including members of the Liberian diaspora". The UP did not win control of the 64-seat bicameral legislature in the latest 2005 elections**,** where nine of the twenty registered political parties are represented. The

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and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p.855 – Attachment 4; Lehtinen, Terhi 2002, 'Liberia', *Agents, Motives and Instruments: An Atlas of African Conflicts*, Conflict Transformation Service website, p.147 http://www.conflicttransform.net/Liberia.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 7.

[7] 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p.849 – Attachment 4.

[8] Bah, Mamadou Diouma 2005, *Peace Building Through Informal Channels: A Comparative Analysis of Liberia and Mozambique*, Central New York Regional Peace Studies Consortium, p.6 http://www.peaceconsortium.org/Mamadou%20Diouma.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 8.

[9] UK Home Office 1999, *Liberia Assessment*, September, pp.40-41 – Attachment 5.

[10] Deng Deng, William 2001, '2.3 Liberia', *A Survey of Programs on the Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 30 March http://www.mofa.go.jp/POLICY/human/child/survey/profile3.html – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 9.

[11] Freedom House 2010, *Countries at the Crossroads – Liberia*, 7 April, p.8 – Attachment 10; United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Liberia*, 11 March , Section 1, – Attachment 11; UN Human Rights Council 2009, *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the progress made in the situation of human rights in Liberia and activities undertaken in the country*, 27 August, A/HRC/12/42, UNHCR website http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,,LBR,,4ab0e3580,0.html – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 12; International Crisis Group (ICG) 2009*, Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, 13 January, Africa Report N°148, pp.5-6, 'Political threats' – Attachment 13.

[12] Freedom House 2010, *Countries at the Crossroads – Liberia*, 7 April, p.8 – Attachment 10.

[13] United Nations Mission in Liberia 2009, *Report on the Human Rights Situation in Liberia January – June 2009*, UNMIL website, pp. 1-2, 23 http://www.unmil.org/documents/final_biannual_report_jan_june_2009.pdf – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 14.

UP won just eight seats with Johnson-Sirleaf forming a cabinet with independents and smaller parties. Liberia's next presidential election will take place in 2011.[14]

4. **Please provide any background information about the political situation in Liberia over the past 30 years or so.**

The political situation in Liberia was relatively stable until 1980, when William Tolbert was overthrown by Sergeant Samuel Doe after food price riots. Tolbert represented an oppressive Americo-Liberian minority who had ruled since independence in 1847. Doe's regime during the 1980s was marked by violent ethnocide against those of Gio or Mano descent, as well as economic collapse. These were the catalysts for the emergence of Charles Taylor's rebel-militia and the beginning of civil war in 1989.[15]

Two civil war periods followed in 1989-1996 and 1999-2003, during which approximately 250,000 people were killed. In December 1989 Charles Taylor crossed into Liberia from neighboring Ivory Coast with an initial force of approximately 120 men. This force soon grew into 5000 men on anti-Doe resentment. The self-styled National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) attacked members of Doe's Krahn ethnic group and government forces, and overran rural areas, before entering the capital Monrovia in 1990. Doe himself was killed in August 1990 by the breakaway Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia INPFL led by Prince Yormic Johnson.[16] At this time three armed groups competed for Monrovia – the NPFL, the INPFL and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), remnants of Doe's army. Taylor established at this time a rival administration in the central town of Gbarnga.[17]

In August 1990 a peacekeeping force arranged by the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) arrived in Monrovia. A year later Ecowas and the NPFL agreed to disarm and set up an Interim Government of National Unity. The next six years were marked by failed peace agreements, ceasefires, and intense fighting between various militia groups, the government and Ecowas forces.[18] Following a peace agreement signed in 1995, African peacekeepers began a disarmament programme, to clear land mines and reopen roads, which allowed some refugees to return. Presidential and legislative elections were then held in July 1997.[19]

Charles Taylor was elected president in 1997 and the NPP secured majorities in the House of representatives and the Senate.[20] Taylor's authoritarian rule was marked by poor governance,

[14] US State Department 2010, 'Background Brief: Republic of Liberia', 19 April http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm – Accessed 3 June 2010 – Attachment 15; 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, 852 – Attachment 4.

[15] Pugel, James 2007, *What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-combatants in Liberia February-March 2006*, UN Development Programme & African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, April, p.13 http://www.lr.undp.org/UNDPwhatFightersSayLiberia_Finalv3.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 16; 'Liberia country profile' 2010, *BBC News*, 10 March http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1043500.stm – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 6.

[16] International Crisis Group (ICG) 2009, *Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, 13 January, Africa Report N°148, p.3, 'Political threats' – Attachment 13.

[17] Stead, David, 1999, 'Troubled past of Africa's first republic', *BBC News*, 12 August http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/418596.stm – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 17.

[18] 'Timeline: Liberia' 2009, *BBC News*, 18 November http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/8367358.stm – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 18; 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, pp.849-852 – Attachment 4.

[19] 'Liberia country profile' 2010, *BBC News*, 10 March http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1043500.stm – Accessed 4 June 2010 – Attachment 6.

[20] 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p. 852 – Attachment 4.

corruption, intimidation, threats, torture, terrorist acts against the population and summary executions of civilians.[21] In response two new rebel organisations emerged aimed at removing Taylor from power: in 1999, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), backed by neighbouring Guinean president Lansana Conte; and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), said to be backed by the government of the Ivory Coast. A combined LURD/MODEL offensive in April-July 2003 on Monrovia, together with international pressure on Taylor's regime, saw Taylor resign on 11 August 2003. Taylor soon fled to Nigeria. A national transitional government was formed and a UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) established in September 2003.[22] Peaceful multi-party elections occurred in November 2005, with the United Party's Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf elected President.

A post-conflict Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR) process involving all former waring groups started in late 2003 and was officially closed in July 2009. The DDRR successfully disarmed and demobilized more than 101,000 ex-combatants, and provided reintegration assistance to more than 90,000 former combatants.[23] The UN maintains around 8,000 soldiers in Liberia. Their mandate under UNMIL extends to September 2010 to assist with the forthcoming 2011 presidential and legislative elections.[24]

Attachments

1. 'Taylor sets up his own supreme court' 1991, *Agence France-Presse*, 19 December 1991. (FACTIVA)

2. Deleted.

3. Deleted.

4. 'Liberia' in Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press.

5. UK Home Office 1999, *Liberia Assessment*, September.

6. Country Profile: Liberia' 2010, *BBC News*, 10 March.

7. Lehtinen, Terhi 2002, 'Liberia', *Agents, Motives and Instruments: An Atlas of African Conflicts*, Conflict Transformation Service website, p.147 http://www.conflicttransform.net/Liberia.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009.

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[21] Pugel, James 2007, *What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-combatants in Liberia February-March 2006*, UN Development Programme & African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, April, pp.13-14 http://www.lr.undp.org/UNDPwhatFightersSayLiberia_Finalv3.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 16.

[22] 'Liberia' in: Arthur S. Banks, Thomas C. Muller, William R. Overstreet, and Judith F. Isacoff eds. 2010, *Political Handbook of the World 2010*, Washington: CQ Press, p.852 – Attachment 4.; Pugel, James 2007, *What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-combatants in Liberia February-March 2006*, UN Development Programme & African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, April, pp.13-14 http://www.lr.undp.org/UNDPwhatFightersSayLiberia_Finalv3.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009 – Attachment 16.

[23] United Nations Security Council 2009, *Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*, 10 August, S/2009/411, pp.3-4 http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4a8e5da12.pdf – Accessed 18 September 2009 – Attachment 19.

[24] UN Security Council 2009, *Resolution 1885 (2009)*, 15 September, S/RES/1885(2009), p.4 http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4ab34abd0.pdf – Accessed 17 September 2009 – Attachment 20; and 'LIBERIA: Mixed reaction to UNMIL extension' 2009, *IRIN News*, 17 September http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=86193 – Accessed 17 September 2009 – Attachment 21.

8. Bah, Mamadou Diouma 2005, *Peace Building Through Informal Channels:A Comparative Analysis of Liberia and Mozambique*, Central New York Regional Peace Studies Consortium, p.6 http://www.peaceconsortium.org/Mamadou%20Diouma.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009.

9. Deng Deng, William 2001, '2.3 Liberia', *A Survey of Programs on the Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers*, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 30 March http://www.mofa.go.jp/POLICY/human/child/survey/profile3.html – Accessed 1 April 2009.

10. Freedom House 2010, *Countries at the Crossroads – Liberia*, 7 April.

11. United States Department of State 2010, *2009 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Liberia*, 11 March.

12. UN Human Rights Council 2009, *Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the progress made in the situation of human rights in Liberia and activities undertaken in the country*, 27 August, A/HRC/12/42, UNHCR website http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,,LBR,,4ab0e3580,0.html – Accessed 4 June 2010.

13. International Crisis Group (ICG) 2009*, Liberia: Uneven Progress in Security Sector Reform*, 13 January, Africa Report N°148.

14. United Nations Mission in Liberia 2009, *Report on the Human Rights Situation in Liberia January – June 2009*, UNMIL website http://www.unmil.org/documents/final_biannual_report_jan_june_2009.pdf – Accessed 4 June 2010.

15. US State Department 2010, 'Background Brief: Republic of Liberia', 19 April http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm – Accessed 3 June 2010.

16. Pugel, James 2007, *What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-combatants in Liberia February-March 2006*, UN Development Programme & African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, April, p.13 http://www.lr.undp.org/UNDPwhatFightersSayLiberia_Finalv3.pdf – Accessed 1 April 2009.

17. Stead, David, 1999, 'Troubled past of Africa's first republic', *BBC News*, 12 August http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/418596.stm – Accessed 1 April 2009.

18. 'Timeline: Liberia' 2009, *BBC News*, 18 November http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/8367358.stm – Accessed 4 June 2010.

19. United Nations Security Council 2009, *Nineteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*, 10 August, S/2009/411, pp.3-4 http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4a8e5da12.pdf – Accessed 18 September 2009.

20. UN Security Council 2009, *Resolution 1885 (2009)*, 15 September, S/RES/1885(2009) http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/4ab34abd0.pdf – Accessed 17 September 2009.

21. 'LIBERIA: Mixed reaction to UNMIL extension' 2009, *IRIN News*, 17 September http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=86193 – Accessed 17 September 2009.