

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: LBR33407
Country: Liberia
Date: 29 May 2008

Keywords: Liberia – Civil War – Prince Yormie Johnson

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Questions

- 1. Please provide information on General Prince Yormie Johnson including his background and activities as a rebel leader and information about any current political role as a Senator for Nimba County.**
- 2. Please provide information on any ongoing ill-treatment by government of former political adversaries and their families and opportunities for such victims to seek and obtain protection.**
- 3. Please provide a summary of the current political situation in Liberia of any opposition parties.**

RESPONSE

A request for information relating to this case was sent to DFAT, and this is provided in RRT Research Response LBR33371.

- 1. Please provide information on General Prince Yormie Johnson including his background and activities as a rebel leader and information about any current political role as a Senator for Nimba County.**

Prince Yormie (or Yeduo) Johnson (note that Prince is a common given name in Liberia and does not connote royal connections) is a member of the Gio tribe from north-eastern Liberia/western Côte d'Ivoire who in 2005 was elected as Senior Senator for Nimba County in the Liberian Senate ('National Legislative Branch' 2008, TLC Africa website http://www.tlcafrica.com/2008/Liberia_government_legislature_07.htm – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 1; Schmitt, E. 1990, 'A Foe To Be Feared: Prince Yormie Johnson', *The New York Times*, 11 September <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0CE3DB163AF932A2575AC0A9669582>

[60](#) – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 2; ‘Senate Election of 11 October 2005’ (undated), National Election Commission of Liberia <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/1/liberia/liberiasenate2005.txt> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 3).

The New York Times indicates that Prince Yormie Johnson “joined the Liberian Army in the early 1970’s and quickly rose through the ranks as a military policeman and intelligence officer, ultimately attaining the rank of captain. Mr. Johnson is believed to have received some training from American military advisers, including instruction in guerrilla warfare tactics”. In 1985 Johnson was involved in a coup attempt led by General Thomas Quiwonkpa, but when the coup failed, Johnson escaped to rejoin other exiles in the Côte d’Ivoire (Schmitt, E. 1990, ‘A Foe To Be Feared: Prince Yormie Johnson’, *The New York Times*, 11 September

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C0CE3DB163AF932A2575AC0A9669582>
[60](#) – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 2).

It was from the Côte d’Ivoire that Prince Yormie Johnson joined with Charles Taylor (who would later become President of Liberia from 1997 to 2003) and the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) to head back into Liberia during another coup attempt beginning in 1989. Sources indicate that an internal power struggle with Taylor in 1990 led Johnson to begin a separate faction called the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL). During the ensuing three-way struggle between the government’s Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), Taylor’s NPFL, and Johnson’s INPFL, Johnson’s forces managed to capture Monrovia and later captured, tortured, and killed the President of Liberia, Samuel Doe. Video footage of President Doe’s torture and death apparently show Prince Johnson sitting nearby drinking beer, and sources indicate that Johnson has also been accused of war crimes (‘Liberia – First Civil War – 1989-1996’ (undated), *Global Security* <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/liberia-1989.htm> – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 5; Dukulé, A. W. 2004, ‘Prince Y. Johnson is Back to Nigeria’, The Perspective website <http://www.theperspective.org/2004/apri/princeyjohnson.html> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 7).

In 2007 *The Gambia Echo* reported that Johnson:

...was a principal actor in the Liberian carnage that cost its people 200,000 lives and displaced over 2,000,000 in a population of 6,000,000. And around the time Doe was tortured to death [by Johnson’s forces], Johnson was documented to have personally executed a Liberian relief worker he had accused of profiteering from rice sales, calling him a “traitor”. It is further documented in that incident that after shooting the man and he crumpled on the ground, he briefly lifted his head and asked “Why, Why?” before the butcher finished him off with a bullet in the head (Sarr, Lt. Col. S. 2007, ‘Warlord Prince Johnson Visits The Gambia-Troubling Tales Abound’, *The Gambia Echo*, 12 August <http://www.thegambiaecho.com/Homepage/tabid/36/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/696/Default.aspx> – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 6).

Similarly, The Perspective website noted in 2004:

Prince Johnson collaborated with the West African peacekeeping force in the 1990s and appointed representatives to the Sawyer-led interim government (IGNU). He reigned supreme on his Caldwell base and carried out summary executions for any act of indiscipline among his fighters and civilians (Dukulé, A. W. 2004, ‘Prince Y. Johnson is Back to Nigeria’, The Perspective website <http://www.theperspective.org/2004/apri/princeyjohnson.html> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 7).

A 1995 article in *Africa Affairs* also provides details on violence during the Civil War, and makes several comments relating to Johnson:

...The INPFL was led by the psychopathic Prince Yormie Johnson, himself a Nimba County man, a former soldier in Doe's army who had fled abroad in the early 1980s and had subsequently received military training in Libya.

... Although Johnson himself was given to acts of extreme violence, particularly when he was drunk, his men were less desperate than Doe's armed forces, who felt themselves trapped, and more disciplined than Taylor's freebooters.

...On 9 September 1990, President Doe was captured by the INPFL of Prince Johnson, one of the three factions disputing control of Monrovia, when he ventured outside his Executive Mansion for a meeting with ECOMOG. The fact that he was captured while on a negotiation mission, and that it was by Johnson rather than by the NPFL, generated all manner of conspiracy theories. Already seriously wounded during his capture, President Doe was mutilated, tortured and killed by the INPFL in the presence of Prince Johnson in the early hours of the next morning. The ordeal was recorded on video, copies of which Johnson took pleasure in showing to visitors to his headquarters.

...The extreme violence of these ritualized acts is not incompatible with modernity. On the contrary, the modern technology of communication serves to strengthen and amplify the symbolic language involved. The most obvious example of this is the video made by Prince Johnson of the torture and murder of Samuel Doe in September 1990, which Johnson showed to visitors to his headquarters, no doubt calculating that it would enhance his prestige as a warrior.

...The observation that there is a 'cultic' element to violence of this type does not imply that the militias fight primarily as a form of ritual behaviour. Clearly the prime motive is to gain wealth and power through violence, with the cultic aspects being a means of spreading terror and also of psychologically strengthening fighters, using a lexicon of symbols which is widely understood (Ellis, S. 1995, 'Liberia 1989-1994 a study of ethnic and spiritual violence', *African Affairs*, vol. 94, April, pp. 165-207 – Attachment 8).

Sources indicate that Johnson briefly claimed the presidency following Doe's death in 1990. However, the growing power of Charles Taylor led to the disbandment of the INPFL in late 1992, and Prince Yormie Johnson fled to Nigeria. The First Liberian Civil War continued until 1996, and in 1997 Charles Taylor was elected president in democratic elections (UK Home Office 1999, *Liberia Assessment*, September, Section 3.9

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ERORecords/HO/415/1/ind/lib4.htm> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 9; 'Liberia – Chronology' (undated), Reconciliation Resources website <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/liberia/chronology.php#1990> – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 10; 'Liberia: Former Warlord Prince Johnson Seeks Political Career' 2003, allAfrica.com website, source: *IRIN News*, 28 July <http://allafrica.com/stories/200307280813.html> – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 11).

In 2003 Charles Taylor, under international pressure and in the midst of another civil war (the Second Liberian Civil War from 1999-2003), resigned, handing over power to his Vice-President Moses Blah who helped set up a transitional government under the Chairmanship of Gyude Bryant. In 2004 Prince Johnson returned to Liberia after 11 years of exile in Nigeria. Johnson claimed to be a born-again Christian, he apologised to the families of Samuel Doe and other Liberians for his past actions, and he stated his intention to run for a seat in the Liberian Senate ('Liberian president invites rebels into government' 2003, *CNN*,

12 August <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/africa/08/11/liberia/index.html> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 12; ‘Liberia: Former Warlord Prince Johnson Seeks Political Career’ 2003, allAfrica.com website, source: *IRIN News*, 28 July <http://allafrica.com/stories/200307280813.html> – Accessed 23 May 2008 – Attachment 11; Dukulé, A. W. 2004, ‘Prince Y. Johnson is Back to Nigeria’, The Perspective website <http://www.theperspective.org/2004/apri/princeyjohanson.html> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 7).

In the October 2005 Liberian elections, Prince Yormie Johnson was elected Senior Senator of Nimba County in the Liberian Senate. Little information could be found in the searches conducted on Johnson’s activities as Senator. Sources indicate that Johnson has been highly critical of the Liberian Truth and Justice Commission (TJC), a body set up by the Liberian government to seek justice for human rights abuses over the past three decades. According to an allAfrica.com report from February 2008, Johnson has stated that he will appear before the TJC provided the Commission also seeks out those who killed Liberian President Tolbert in 1980 (Sayon, M. O. G. 2008, ‘Prince Johnson Sets Condition To Appear Before TRC’, allAfrica.com website, source: *The Inquirer*, 1 February – Attachment 13; National Election Commission of Liberia (undated), ‘Senate Election of 11 October 2005’ <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/l/liberia/liberiasenate2005.txt> – Accessed 26 May 2008 – Attachment 3).

Sources also indicate that, as Senator, Johnson has sought rapprochement between the Legislative and Executive Branches of the Liberian Government. An allAfrica.com report from January 2007 noted:

Senator Johnson said, in a release issued by his Chief of Office Staff D. Wa Hne, Jr., that the recent development between the Lower House and the Executive Mansion is not only comical, but projects an un-acceptable image of Liberia to the world.

He said democracy is not about incessant confrontations and conflicts, accusations and counter accusations, it is about the demonstration of integrity, maturity, wisdom in exercising rights, soundness of mind in dealing with issues and executing citizens development platforms as well as solving complex national problems in ways that do not overheat the body polity and provoke civil unrest or confidence crisis (‘Prince Johnson Presses for Better Rapport Between Legislature & Executive Branches’ 2007, allAfrica.com website, source: *The Inquirer*, 12 January – Attachment 14).

Another allAfrica.com report from October 2006 indicated that Senator Johnson was serving as Chairman for the Security and Intelligence Committee of the Liberian Senate (Sonpon Weah II, D. 2006, ‘Prince Johnson Exposes Defaults – As Deactivation Exercise Infringes Upon Govt’s Interest’, allAfrica.com website, source: *The Analyst*, 13 October – Attachment 15).

2. Please provide information on any ongoing ill-treatment by government of former political adversaries and their families and opportunities for such victims to seek and obtain protection?

The response to this question explores [Government ill-treatment](#), and the [protection against crime](#) available to people in Liberia.

Government ill-treatment

No information could be found in the searches conducted on the ill-treatment by the government of former political adversaries and their families, and no information could be found in the searches conducted on the mistreatment of people specifically by Prince Yeomie Johnson's supporters since Johnson returned to Liberia in 2004.

A Norwegian Refugee Council report from 2006 indicates that people from the Mandingo ethnic groups may be at risk of harm in Liberia by supporters of former President Charles Taylor, and former combatants may be vulnerable for state recruitment. A UK Home Office report from 2006 also suggests that the lack of judicial infrastructure means that many perpetrators of human rights abuses have not yet been brought to justice (Norwegian Refugee Council 2006, *Liberia: Key challenge is ensuring sustainability of IDP return*, 3 August, p.58 <http://www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/44e9b3484.pdf> – Accessed 14 November 2006 – Attachment 16; UK Home Office 2006, *Country of Origin Information Report: Liberia*, April, Section 5.07-5.12 – Attachment 17).

A UN report on the security situation in Liberia noted that the country “remained generally stable but fragile”, and the potential remained “for increased ethnic tensions and disputes over property rights and land ownership as refugees, internally displaced persons and former combatants return to their communities of origin” (UN Security Council 2006, *Tenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*, 14 March, p. 9 <http://www.unhcr.org/home/RSDCOI/4459bf260.pdf> – Accessed 14 November 2006 – Attachment 18).

The 2007 US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Liberia* makes several other comments of interest with regards to human rights practices in Liberia:

The LNP [Liberia National Police] operated independently and retained arrest authority; however, UNPOL and armed UN Formed Police Units accompanied LNP officers in joint patrols around Monrovia. **LNP officers, who were unarmed, were slow to respond to criminal activities and often ineffective, which resulted in an increase in armed robberies during the year. Corruption and impunity were problems.** Police had limited logistics, communication, and forensic capabilities and did not have the capacity to adequately investigate many crimes, including murders.

...**There were no reports of political prisoners or detainees.**

...There is an independent civil law court in Monrovia, but circuit courts in each county function as both criminal and civil courts. Specialty courts, such as the tax court, probate court, and labor court, also address civil matters. **There is no court to address lawsuits seeking damages for human rights violations. As with criminal courts, specialized courts were inefficient and corrupt.** Administrative and judicial remedies were available to settle alleged wrongs. There were no problems enforcing domestic court orders. NGOs and the government continued to establish mediation centers that worked on reducing the judicial caseload.

...**Generally individuals can criticize the government publicly or privately without reprisal and the government did not attempt to impede criticism**

...**The constitution provides for the right of association, and the government generally respected this right in practice.**

...The law provides citizens with the right to change their government peacefully, and citizens exercised this right in practice through generally free and fair elections based on universal suffrage.

...A number of domestic and international human rights groups operated without government restriction, investigating and publishing their findings on human rights cases. Government officials were generally cooperative and responsive to their views (US Department of State 2008, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for Liberia – 2007*, 11 March, Sections 1.d, 1.e, 2.b, 3, and 4 – Attachment 19).

Protection against crime

When people have been targeted for ill-treatment sources generally indicate that there is little protection available. The justice system in Liberia is redeveloping after two long civil wars, government and police corruption and impunity are seen as problems, and many victims are forced to live alongside their attackers, as the following reports explain.

A UN Commission on Human Rights report from 2006 noted:

Courts at all levels, particularly outside Monrovia, do not operate in accordance with the law. Many courts are either not operational or face severe operational problems, or are staffed by unqualified and unsupervised personnel, with the consequence that suspects and victims alike are exposed to extortion and abuses. All the courts in Tubmanburg, namely the circuit, magistrate, traffic and revenue courts, are located in a decrepit building. All judicial personnel, including judges, magistrates, clerks and support staff are accommodated in the only two available rooms...[T]he only two tables in the courts were provided by the Office of the United National High Commissioner for Refugees, while the rental of the building was paid by UNMIL Legal and Judicial Support Services Division. Basic materials, such as the laws of Liberia, are not available, and owing to lack of accommodation, judges and attorneys are forced to commute from Monrovia. There were no Defence Counsels to assist litigants in court. They were reluctant to deploy to Bomi because their security was not guaranteed. (UN Commission on Human Rights 2006, 'Situation of human rights in Liberia' *Report of the independent expert on technical cooperation and advisory services in Liberia*, 6 February, p. 7 – Attachment 20).

The 2007 Human Rights Watch *World Report* also commented on judicial difficulties in Liberia:

Despite the deployment of UN peacekeepers and some 1,000 civilian police, violent crime increased including hijacking, armed robbery, and murder. This was indicative of weaknesses in the Liberian National Police, including very poor logistic and transport facilities and low deployment outside the capital. UN police increased patrols in high crime areas but, in a worrying development, the justice minister called on Liberians to form vigilante groups. Numerous individuals accused of common crimes were beaten to death by mobs.

Several violent demonstrations took place by demobilized personnel from the Armed Forces of Liberia, Anti-Terrorist Unit, and Special Security Service, demanding severance benefits.

The newly trained Liberian police continued to engage in unprofessional and sometimes criminal behavior including extortion, excessive use of force, and sexual harassment. Concerns remain regarding the vetting of past human rights abusers in a 2004-05 screening and selection exercise administered by UNMIL. Problems with the process included lack of clear criteria for the elimination of potential human rights abusers, failure to allocate adequate human resources to conduct thorough and systematic background checks on applicants, and

inadequate involvement of Liberian human rights groups and the general population. (Human Rights Watch 2007, *World Report 2007: Liberia – Events of 2006* Attachment 21).

A 2006 *Global Report* on Liberia by UNHCR commented on the denial of justice for victims:

The human rights situation has improved significantly since the end of the war. However, State institutions remained handicapped by the effects of long-term conflict; this frequently resulted in the denial of justice for victims of crime (UN Commission on Human Rights 2007, 'UNHCR Global Report 2006 – Liberia', *UNHCR Fundraising Reports*, 1 June <http://www.unhcr.org/home/PUBL/4666d2450.pdf> – Accessed 27 May 2008 – Attachment 22).

A 2006 report by the International Crisis Group also noted that justice reform was vital:

Liberia will not have lasting peace and stability unless it drastically overhauls its failed justice system. The culture of impunity marked by the lack of impartial institutions was a primary catalyst for the wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Côte d'Ivoire. **There is a crisis of confidence in the Liberian justice system because powerful individuals have used it as a political tool through which to exercise and legitimise their power.**

Rebuilding Liberia is like transforming a large block of wood into a sturdy table. Although the raw material is rich, each of the four legs must be solid and stable or the entire table could collapse. In Liberia, the four legs are good elections, economic governance reform, a restructured military and justice reform. **Liberia has achieved transparent elections and is working at reform of economic governance and the military but it is only now being recognised that justice reform is so vital that failure to move on it could sabotage the other three** (International Crisis Group 2006, *Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System*, 'Africa Report No.107', 6 April, p. 12 http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/africa/west_africa/107_liberia_resurrecting_the_justice_system_web.doc – Accessed 13 November 2006 – Attachment 23).

The government has established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in an attempt to bring perpetrators of past human rights abuses to justice. Amnesty International provided an outline of the TRC in 2006:

The TRC has been established to investigate gross human rights violations and abuses and violations of international humanitarian law that occurred in Liberia between January 1979 and 14 October 2003. These include massacres, rapes, unlawful killings and economic crimes. It is to determine those believed to be responsible for these violations and their motives. It is also to analyse the circumstances, context, preceding events and other relevant factors relating to the violations, whether they were the result of deliberate planning, and their impact on victims. The TRC's functions also include ensuring accountability for human rights violations, promoting community and national reconciliation and establishing a historical record (Amnesty International 2006, *Liberia: A brief guide to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, AFR 34/007/2006, 1 November <http://archive.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR340072006?open&of=ENG-LBR> – Accessed 27 May 2008 – Attachment 24).

However, Amnesty International has also argued that the TRC is not doing enough to bring people to justice:

Amnesty International admitted that there are both political and practical challenges in addressing impunity in Liberia, with **some current Members of Parliament alleged to have committed human rights abuses themselves and the challenge of operating in a climate of post-war economic difficulties.**

...little effort has been made to investigate and document the rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated during the years of armed conflict. **As a result, there is no effective basis for eventual prosecution of the alleged perpetrators of those crimes. Many women are forced to live near their attackers -- passing them on the streets and in the markets -- fearing that their abusers will never be brought to justice** (Amnesty International 2007, 'Liberia: Government doing little to ease pain of haunted past', News Service No: 028, AFR 34/003/2007, 15 February <http://archive.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR340032007?open&of=ENG-LBR> – Accessed 27 May 2008 – Attachment 25).

3. Please provide a summary of the current political situation in Liberia of any opposition parties (if such exist) would be helpful.

Sources indicate that about 11 political parties/coalitions, plus seven independents, are represented in the Liberian House of Representatives, and 9 political parties/coalitions, plus three independents, are represented in the Liberian Senate, following national elections held on 11 October 2005. Whilst George Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change received the most votes in the primary round of the Presidential Elections (28.3%), he did not receive enough to secure the Presidency, and in the run-off with Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of the Unity Party (who secured 19.8% in the primary round), Johnson-Sirleaf secured the Presidency with 59% of the votes (Republic of Liberia National Elections Commission 2005, 'National Tally Center Results Report', 23 November <http://www.necliberia.org/results/PDFs/NationalProgressiveresultsReport.pdf> – Accessed 27 May 2008 – Attachment 26; 'Liberia's "Iron Lady" claims win' 2005, *BBC News*, 11 November <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4421866.stm> – Accessed 28 May 2008 – Attachment 27).

The 2006 UK Home Office Country of Origin Information Report provided extracts from a range of sources in describing the political situation in Liberia. Extracts from the Economist Intelligence Unit's 2006 Country Report on Liberia noted:

The fractured nature of Liberia's politics is reflected in the newly elected parliament, which contains 11 different parties, none of which has a majority. Although this may make it difficult for Mrs Johnson-Sirleaf to implement a strong programme, it does avoid the situation that has arisen in the past, where the dominance of one party caused political tensions, which led to instability (UK Home Office 2006, *Country of Origin Information Report on Liberia*, April, Section 5. 10 – Attachment 17).

Sources also indicate that Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has sought to include the opposition parties in governance. An *IRIN News* report from January 2006 commented on the non-partisan appointment of some Cabinet Ministers by President Johnson-Sirleaf:

Newly inaugurated President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has announced the first ministers to join her 22-member peacetime government.

The key positions of Finance and Defence were among the first nine released by statement from the president's office, late on Monday, and both were non-partisan appointments based on professional criteria.

...Only one opposition figure has made it into the cabinet so far.

Joseph Korto, one of the original 22 candidates who ran for the presidency along with Sirleaf, will use his decades of experience in teaching at the helm of the education ('Sirleaf unveils

first members of new peacetime government' 2006, *IRIN News*, 17 January <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=57835> – Accessed 28 May 2008 – Attachment 28).

A report, possibly issued by the Liberian government, appearing on the allAfrica.com website in July 2007 also commented on consultative meetings between President Sirleaf and opposition parties:

The second round of Consultative meetings between President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and opposition political parties has taken place in Monrovia, with a call by opposition parties for more of such meetings.

During the meeting characterized by the frank exchange of views on issues of national concern, the opposition politicians discussed several issues including government's Interim Poverty Reduction, the current national draft budget; the economy, education, security, as well as government's fight against corruption.

The parties, according to an Executive Mansion release, welcomed government's Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy as an essential roadmap in government's development drive, but observed that the current budget did not include adequate budget lines in addressing poverty reduction. The parties regretted that the current budget debate in the House was focused more on trivial matters rather than the more substantive budget issues.

...The President who earlier briefed the politicians on government programs aimed at addressing the challenges, thanked the Opposition politicians for their observations.

Tuesday's Executive Consultations with the political parties is part of discussions taking place between President Johnson Sirleaf and National Stake Holders. 'We may not agree on everything but there may be some areas of convergence, where we can find a common ground, as we move forward in revising some of our policies,' President Johnson Sirleaf added.

The Liberia Destiny Party; Union of Liberian Democrats; Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia; National Vision Party of Liberia; National Reformation Party; the Liberia National Union and the Progressive Democratic Party, attended Tuesday's Consultative Meeting ('President Sirleaf Meets Second Group of Opposition Politicians' 2007, allAfrica.com website, 11 July – Attachment 29).

No information could be found in the searches conducted of opposition parties being responsible for inciting violence in Liberia. Instead, an allAfrica.com report from July 2007 argues that time is healing old wounds in Liberia:

Undoubtedly time heals and it does its scrubbing of memories in an imperceptible manner that no trace of past bad-blood is ever more evident even between previous foes.

...Dr. Tipoteh [a 2005 Presidential candidate from the Alliance for Peace and Democracy] stressed that the Civil War in Liberia clearly and convincingly showed that fighting cannot help Liberia to become a better place. So, the only way left for Liberians is talking, he pointed out.

By undertaking this reconciliatory gesture, many observers are of the view that the old man has resumed his historic and sagacious mission for total conflict resolution which he feels many Liberians are far-away from achieving and which is necessary to consolidating the hard won peace.

He specifically made reference to the lessons from the history of Liberia, saying that it tells us clearly and convincingly that talking is good and fighting is bad for the country ('2005 Bad Blood Vanished?' 2007, allAfrica.com website, source: *The Analyst*, 17 July – Attachment 4).

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Government Information & Reports

Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada <http://www.irb.gc.ca/>
UK Home Office <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk>
US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/>

Non-Government Organisations

Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/>
Human Rights Watch <http://www.hrw.org/>

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