



General Assembly

Distr.: General
19 August 2025

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Fiftieth session
Geneva, 3–14 November 2025

Summary of stakeholders' submissions on Liberia*

Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

I. Background

1. The present report was prepared pursuant to Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1 and 16/21, taking into consideration the periodicity of the universal periodic review and the outcome of the previous review.¹ It is a summary of 20 stakeholders' submissions² for the universal periodic review, presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints. A separate section is provided for the contribution by the national human rights institution that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles.

II. Information provided by the national human rights institution accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles

2. The Independent National Commission on Human Rights of Liberia (INCHR) highlighted that many initial and periodic reports of Liberia to treaty bodies were outstanding. INCHR recommended that Liberia strengthen its National Mechanism on Reporting and Follow-up, including its Secretariat, to ensure timely reporting and follow up on ratification and domestication of treaties.³

3. INCHR expressed concern that the Constitution still contained discriminatory and racist provisions regarding transmission of nationality, despite the referendum of 2020. INCHR recommended that Liberia remove barriers for an equal transmission of nationality and take legislative measures to ensure that citizenship is equally granted.⁴

4. INCHR highlighted the difficulties that it had faced to carry out its mandate due to lack of funding. It recommended that Liberia provide adequate budgetary support to the Commission to fulfil its mandate in conformity with the Paris Principles.⁵

5. INCHR regretted that Liberia had not abolished the death penalty, despite recommendations accepted at its third UPR. It recommended that the legislation aimed at abolishing the death penalty for all offenses be speedily submitted to the national Legislature for enactment.⁶

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



6. INCHR highlighted some concerns regarding prison conditions in Liberia, including overcrowding and insufficient health care. It recommended that Liberia proceed with the construction of proposed Cheesmanburg prison facilities to address prison overcrowding; ensure speedy and fair trial; engage in the decriminalization of petty offenses and emphasizes more on non-custodial methods.⁷

7. While acknowledging Liberia's efforts to address violence against women and appreciating the Government's intention to ensure that the law criminalizing Female Genital Mutilation, be enacted into law in 2025, INCHR was concerned that even though harmful traditional practices had been prohibited for years, local authorities had not been able to eliminate this practice.⁸ INCHR recommended that Liberia strengthen and review the Domestic Violence Act to include compensation for victims of sexual and gender-based violence and raise awareness on this issue.⁹ INCHR also recommended providing human rights training to traditional leaders, including on the administration of justice so they can have an active role in the promotion and protection of human rights.¹⁰

8. INCHR regretted that the Secretariat of the War and Economic Crimes Court for egregious crimes committed during the civil war lacked sufficient financial and logistical support. It recommended that Liberia provide adequate support to speed up the establishment of the Court and strengthen support to the remaining part of the transitional justice process.¹¹

9. INCHR was concerned about the gap in addressing the issue of trafficking in persons involving children who are often brought from rural areas to live with guardians and relatives and subjected to inhumane treatment. INCHR recommended that Liberia addresses the issue of internal trafficking and identification of victims of trafficking, including by increasing awareness on the issue of rural-to-urban trafficking, especially involving children.¹²

10. The delay in the enactment of the Public Health Law was a concern for INCHR. It recommended conducting awareness raising campaigns on sexual and reproductive health, including among religious and traditional leaders; and encouraging the participation of women and other stakeholders.¹³

11. INCHR noted with interest the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development aimed at alleviating poverty, and the initiated ARREST Agenda which intended to articulate rule of law and the fulfilment of economic, social, and cultural rights. It recommended ensuring that those agendas and the national development plans are fully resourced to address the gaps in the fulfilment of the socio-economic rights of the Liberian population; and ensure inclusion, diffusion and broader consultation.¹⁴

12. INCHR recommended that Liberia undertake a comprehensive policy framework supported by adequate financing, on a sustainable birth registration programme at all levels, including making birth registration easy and accessible to rural people.¹⁵

13. INCHR indicated that Liberia still had discriminatory legislation against LGBTIQI+ persons, and was particularly concerned that, in 2024, legislation was reintroduced in the legislature to criminalize homosexuality.¹⁶ INCHR recommended that Liberia decriminalize same-sex practices by amending section 14.74 of the Penal Code; and discourage any initiative of legislation seeking to discriminate against individuals based on sexual orientation and gender identity.¹⁷

III. Information provided by other stakeholders

A. Scope of international obligations¹⁸ and cooperation with human rights mechanisms

14. JS5 recommended that Liberia ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.¹⁹

15. JS9 was concerned at the poor reporting records of Liberia and recommended that the country fulfil its international obligations and strengthen its cooperation with treaty bodies by submitting pending reports, particularly, its initial reports.²⁰

16. JS9 indicated that Liberia became the first African state to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, in 2004. However, twenty years later Liberia had not established a National Preventive Mechanism.²¹ JS9 recommended that Liberia establish an operational independent preventive mechanism in line with the Optional Protocol and continue working on the implementation of the recommendations issued by the Sub-Committee on the Prevention of Torture further to its last visit in 2018.²²

B. National human rights framework

1. Constitutional and legislative framework

17. Many stakeholders recommended enacting a comprehensive law that criminalizes all forms of Female Genital Mutilation.²³

2. Institutional infrastructure and policy measures

18. JS1 welcomed the fact that Liberia's National Human Rights Action Plan (2019-2014) included targeted policies for vulnerable persons and groups.²⁴

19. JS6 regretted that the Independent National Commission on Human Rights was not sufficiently funded.²⁵ JS1 and JS5 recommended that Liberia enhance the Commission, including by providing additional human and financial resources and facilitate its role to promote and protect human rights, in line with the Paris Principles.²⁶ JS5 further recommended ensuring that the Commission's members are adequately trained and equipped to monitor and regularly report on the human rights situation in the country.²⁷

C. Promotion and protection of human rights

1. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

Equality and non-discrimination

20. JS2 was concerned at discriminatory provisions in the domestic law in Liberia, and the lack of programmes and policies to address discrimination, which had resulted in restricted access to health services, security and employment for vulnerable groups.²⁸

Right to life, liberty and security of person, and freedom from torture

21. Several stakeholders regretted the persistence of death penalty in Liberia, with individuals being on death row. They recommended that, in conformity with its obligations under the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Liberia pass the bill abolishing the death penalty into law without further delay and conduct nationwide awareness raising campaigns to build public support for the abolition of the death penalty.²⁹

22. JS6 was concerned at alleged instances of enforced disappearances targeting persons considered to be opponents.³⁰ JS6 recommended that Liberia ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; ensure that allegations of enforced disappearances are thoroughly and independently investigated and that authors of such acts are adequately prosecuted and sentenced.³¹

23. According to JS9, despite ratification of the Convention against Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, Liberia lacked specific domestic legislation criminalizing this practice.³² JS9 and JS13 recommended enacting national legislation criminalizing torture, ensuring that it provides for appropriate penalties for perpetrators and redress to victims;³³ establishing without any further delay an independent

National Preventive Mechanism in conformity with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; equipping the National Preventive Mechanism adequately, with the necessary authority as well as unrestricted access to all places of deprivation of liberty; and ensuring that its recommendations are implemented.³⁴

24. According to JS9, excessive use of force by the police and the army persisted in Liberia, to force people to confess or to dissipate demonstrations.³⁵ JS6 and JS9 recommended that Liberia strengthen its efforts to prevent and combat police misconduct including by providing human rights trainings for law enforcement officers, especially the Liberia National Police, in order to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; investigate, prosecute and punish the abuses committed by law enforcement officers; establish a national programme of reparations that includes rehabilitation for victims of abuses.³⁶

25. JS6, JS9 and JS13 expressed concerns at prolonged pretrial detention and precarious prison conditions in Liberia, which were below the minimum conditions required by international standards, particularly the UN standards for the treatment of prisoners (Mandela Rules). They noted that in some prisons' facilities, inmates suffered from severe overcrowding, food and water shortages, inadequate healthcare, and unsanitary conditions.³⁷ They recommended that Liberia ensure that prison conditions in the whole territory are in line with the UN standards for the Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Mandela Rules), including by guaranteeing that all detainees have daily sufficient meals, drinking water, adequate sanitation, healthcare and bedding; implement alternatives to detention; provide additional human rights trainings for correctional officers; develop rehabilitation programmes and ensure their availability to all detainees across Liberia; and allow unannounced inspections by the Independent National Commission on Human Rights.^{38,39}

26. JS6 further recommended that Liberia ensure the respect in practice of time limits set out for custody and pre-trial detention and guarantee the fundamental rights of the person held in custody; and ensure the separation of pre-trial detainees from sentenced detainees.⁴⁰

27. JS9 recommended that Liberia introduce safeguards in the Penal Code to protect vulnerable people such as children, pregnant women, nursing mothers and persons with mental disabilities, from life imprisonment without parole.⁴¹

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

28. JS3 indicated that the justice system faced challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, insufficient staffing, and technical capacity, leading to delays and a backlog of cases.⁴²

29. According to JS12 and JS2, Liberia had not adequately fulfilled its international obligation to hold accountable those who have committed war crimes and serious human rights violations.⁴³ They recommended that Liberia develop and implement a concrete plan, consistent with international standards, to establish a war and economic crimes court to hold perpetrators of grave crimes committed during Liberia's armed conflicts to account; ensure that this plan is consistent with a victim-centred approach, including consultation with affected communities, and develop and implement a comprehensive reparations scheme for all victims of gross human rights violations and war crimes.⁴⁴ JS6 recommended providing sufficient resources to establish the framework of the Special War Crimes Court for Liberia and a National Anti-Corruption Court.⁴⁵

30. JS12 and JS2 further recommended that Liberia set out a clear timeline for the establishment of the special war crimes court and ensure transparency in the working methods of the court's office; and ensure that the court takes due account of the recommendations made in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 2009.⁴⁶

31. JS12 also recommended ensuring effective protection for victims and witnesses who testify in proceedings on crimes committed during the civil war, whether in universal jurisdiction cases or before Justice mechanisms in Liberia.⁴⁷

Fundamental freedoms and the right to participate in public and political life

32. MFWA, JS11,⁴⁸ and JS8 expressed concerns that human rights defenders continued to face significant risks, particularly those working with LGBTQI+ and extractive industry issues.⁴⁹ ICO reported alleged unlawful killings of civilians during protests at concession sites in Liberia.⁵⁰ JS8 recommended that Liberia adopt the draft Human Rights Defenders policy and implement it, to provide legal recognition to human rights defenders to and ensure their protection from threats, harassments and attacks. It also recommended that Liberia align its domestic legislation such as the Penal Code, the Public Order Act, as well as its policies, with the international human rights instruments protecting freedom of expression.⁵¹

33. According to the same organizations, journalists also continued to face threats, intimidation, arrests, detentions, and assaults which hindered their full journalistic independence. They regretted that section 11.12 of the Penal Code on sedition could still be used to suppress dissent, and regretted the political influence to which media operations are subjected, which compromised editorial independence.⁵²

34. The same stakeholders further recommended that Liberia guarantee that all instances of harassment or attacks on journalists and human rights defenders are thoroughly and impartially investigated, and those responsible prosecuted accordingly; ensure editorial independence by avoiding political influence in media ownership, and encourage the development of impartial and independent media regulatory bodies.⁵³

35. JS1, JS12, MFWA recommended that Liberia provide training for security and law enforcement personnel on media rights; enhance the operational capacity of the Independent Information Commission to ensure the effective application of the Freedom of Information Act and conduct related awareness raising campaigns.⁵⁴

36. According to JS1, access to public information remained a concern,⁵⁵ and the Independent Information Commission remained under-resourced and lacked sufficient authority to compel public agencies to release information.⁵⁶ JS11 regretted that the cost of accessing the internet continued to be a serious hindrance to freedom of expression online.⁵⁷

37. JS1 recommended that Liberia repeal all restrictive laws and provisions that criminalise speech and undermine freedom of expression, including in the Penal Code; enact a law and guidelines to provide for a clear prohibition on network disruptions and social media shutdowns; take all appropriate steps, including in rural communities to extend coverage of the internet and bridge the internet access inclusion gaps among its population.⁵⁸

38. JS1, JS11 recommended that Liberia adopt comprehensive legislation that specifically addresses freedom of expression online, including protections for journalists, activists, and ordinary citizens who express dissenting views; and prohibit the censorship of online content. They also recommended that Liberia strengthen the Implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.⁵⁹

39. According to the Carter-Center, the 2023 Liberian elections lacked clarity on several issues including candidate registration, enforcement mechanisms for campaign finance, and provisions for resolving preelection complaints.⁶⁰ It recommended that Liberia undertake a comprehensive and transparent review of the legal framework for elections, with a view to fully harmonising the New Elections Law with the Constitution; ensure that the New Elections Law is also fully in line with international law; provide for an efficient monitoring, reporting and enforcement mechanism; ensure the independence of the New Elections Committee by making a transparent process for nomination of members of the Board of Commissioners; adopt legislation to establish a mandatory gender quota; and take temporary special measures to ensure gender equality.⁶¹

Right to privacy

40. JS11 highlighted that despite the provisions in the Constitution and Penal Code recognizing the right to privacy, there was no a data protection law in Liberia.⁶² JS1 and JS11 recommended that Liberia speed up the process leading to the enactment of a comprehensive data protection and privacy law that establishes clear standards for the collection, storage, and use of personal data by both government and private actors. They also recommended that the legislation set out an independent data protection authority with the power to enforce

compliance and investigate violations; and that Liberia adopt a comprehensive cyber security law to safeguard the rights of the population online; and address digital rights violations.⁶³

Prohibition of all forms of slavery, including trafficking in persons

41. JS3 was concerned at the persistence of trafficking in human beings in Liberia and at the lack of investigations, prosecutions, or convictions of government officials complicit in human trafficking crimes.⁶⁴ JS3 recommended that Liberia increase its effort to address trafficking in persons, including by investigating and prosecuting those responsible; and allocate additional financial support and sufficient resources to ensure that adequate shelters and support services are available for victims, especially in rural areas. It further recommended improving security in shelters to protect victims' identities and prevent further victimization; as well as increasing awareness about victims' rights to restitution and civil lawsuits.⁶⁵

42. According to JS9, structural implementation gaps persist in the protection of children, and many children are forced into hazardous work, such as mining and rubber plantations. It recommended to carry out monitory exercises at all workplaces, especially the high-risks ones, like plantations and mining, to document cases of child labour, and hold perpetrators accountable. JS9 also recommended that Liberia organize training for the Judiciary and local authorities on the rights of children and alternatives to detention.⁶⁶

Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

43. According to JS3, Liberia continued to face significant challenges in providing equal access to education and decent employment opportunities, particularly for girls and young women.⁶⁷ JS7 was concerned that salary payments were sometimes delayed, which resulted in negative impact on the daily life of workers and their families.⁶⁸

44. JS3 recommended that Liberia address decent work in a holistic way that includes transforming socio-economic constraints and challenging existing gender roles; promote a human rights-based approach to decent work; and strengthen efforts to eliminate discrimination against women in employment.⁶⁹

45. JS7 recommended that Liberia strengthen the labour market in all areas, and increase job opportunities; create internships, apprenticeships, or youth employment scheme that help people gain job experience and increase the possibility to be employed, and ensure timely payment of wages.⁷⁰

46. JS5 recommended that Liberia increase its efforts to advance women's economic empowerment, through promoting gender equality in employment by enhancing education, supporting women entrepreneurs, and improving financial access. JS5 also recommended expanding vocational training and financial inclusion by diversifying training programmes beyond agriculture for women; and increasing access to microfinance, loans, and business grants, and enforce equal pay policies.⁷¹

Right to an adequate standard of living

47. JS3 and ICO were concerned by the majority of the population in Liberia living in poverty, and at the high rate of food insecurity, mainly affecting children.⁷² ICO, JS3, JS5 highlighted that access to basic services such as electricity, clean water, sanitation, and healthcare remained limited, and only 30 per cent of the population had access to safe drinking water, while sanitation services remain inadequate, with only 17 per cent of Liberian's population having access to proper waste disposal.^{73,74,75}

48. JS5 recommended that Liberia enhance water quality by implementing rigorous treatment processes, to ensure safe drinking water; expanding clean water access and promoting hygiene education programmes for local communities; hold polluters accountable by requiring mining companies responsible for chemical spills to provide long-term healthcare for affected residents and restore contaminated water sources; strengthen environmental protections by revising the mineral development agreement to include stricter environmental and social safeguards benefiting impacted communities.⁷⁶

Right to health

49. JS3 acknowledged Liberia's efforts in the health sector, particularly those to reduce maternal mortality. However, it regretted that structural challenges persisted.⁷⁷

50. JS2 was concerned at the persistence of barriers for women to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, including access to safe abortion. It recommended increasing sustainable access to comprehensive, safe, and affordable modern contraceptives and information on family planning, and promote an inclusive curriculum on comprehensive sexual education with a human rights-based approach. JS2 also recommended that Liberia ensure efficient training for health care professionals on sexual and reproductive rights; and continue its efforts to reduce high maternal mortality rates by ensuring that women and adolescents girls can access safe abortion and services in line with Liberia's international obligations.⁷⁸

51. JS5 recommended that Liberia strengthen rural healthcare, by investing in healthcare infrastructure; provide free or subsidized maternal care; expand health education; and improve road connectivity for facilitating access.⁷⁹

52. JS7 recommended that Liberia increase financial support for the purchase of medicines; build additional medical clinics and/or hospitals, particularly in the more remote areas; establish a training programme, for health professionals, aimed at increasing their skills and improve techniques used; and improve medical equipment in schools.⁸⁰

53. JS7 was concerned about an increasing number of young people with drug addictions. It recommended that Liberia address this issue including by establishing rehabilitation centers for people with drug addiction with a human rights-based approach.⁸¹ JS3 recommended providing rehabilitation services, including counselling and vocational training, to support the recovery and reintegration of children affected by drug abuse.

54. JS3 further recommended that Liberia increase its budgetary support for the mental health sector by providing enhanced training for health workers; and facilitate treatment and psychosocial counselling for individuals struggling with addiction.

55. ICO was concerned at barriers faced by Indigenous People to access health care. It recommended that Liberia ensure that linguistic minorities and indigenous peoples have equal access to public services, including education and healthcare.⁸²

Right to education

56. According to JS5 and Broken-Chalk, while Liberia had recorded good progress in enrolment growth since the civil war, challenges persist like teacher shortages, funding gaps, and infrastructure issues.⁸³ According to JS3, despite policies advocating for free and compulsory primary education, attendance and completion rates remained low.⁸⁴

57. Broken-Chalk and JS5 expressed concern at the high illiteracy rate in Liberia and noted that teacher qualifications remained a critical issue, and that many communities lacked sufficient schools, trained teachers, and essential learning materials.⁸⁵ They regretted that, in particular, students with disabilities and girls still faced barriers to access equal education,⁸⁶ and girls were often the most disadvantaged due to societal biases.⁸⁷

58. According to JS9, many children cannot access to education, due to excessive and unlawful fees.⁸⁸ JS9 recommended that Liberia establish an independent body at all primary level schools to ensure that primary level education is free and compulsory in line with the right to education.⁸⁹

59. JS5 recommended that Liberia increase education funding by allocating additional resources to address teacher shortages; improve salaries, and ensure that all schools have essential learning materials; invest in school infrastructure by upgrade and expand school facilities, and create a conducive learning environment; and strengthen policy implementation by enhancing monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure efficient use of funds and the successful execution of education policies nationwide.⁹⁰

60. Broken-Chalk and JS5 recommended that Liberia carry out nationwide awareness campaigns on the necessity to overcome cultural norms prioritising boys' education over

girls'; and ensure strict enforcement of laws against child marriage and gender-based violence in schools. They also recommended increasing investment in gender-responsive school infrastructure, including safe transportation for girls, separate sanitation facilities, and mentorship programmes led by female role models to encourage higher enrolment and retention rates. Furthermore, they recommended implementing nationwide adult literacy programmes; increasing its education budget to meet the recommended 20 per cent national allocation, with at least 45 percent of the funds directed toward primary education; and developing intensive teacher training and certification programmes; and offer competitive salaries and career development opportunities.⁹¹

61. JS7 recommended that Liberia develop study plans that combine theory with more active and practical methodologies, and spaces for individualized education; and increase the system of grants for access to all stages of education, including higher education.⁹²

Cultural rights

62. ICO was concerned at the limited use of minority languages in Administration and insufficient measures to preserve them. It recommended that the use of non-official languages be promoted to ensure the participation of ethnic minorities in politics and access to public services. It further recommended that Liberia adopt an Indigenous cultural protection law in line with the UNESCO guidelines.⁹³

Development, the environment, and business and human rights

63. JS5 highlighted challenges faced by Liberia to protect the environment such as Illegal logging and deforestation, limited resources, resistance to environmental regulations, lack of a solid waste management, and environmental violations by industries.⁹⁴ JS5 recommended that Liberia strengthen the Environmental Protection Agency's capacity for monitoring and enforcing environmental regulations effectively; implement stricter penalties and deterrent strategies to ensure that business companies and communities comply with environmental laws; expand community involvement by providing adequate funding for environmental protection programmes and actively engage and train local communities in conservation efforts; combat deforestation by supporting reforestation initiatives and encouraging mechanized lowland farming to protect Liberia's forests; and develop nationwide recycling initiatives to reduce plastic waste and promote sustainable waste management.⁹⁵

64. ICO recommended that Liberia require mandatory environmental and social impact assessments before granting new concessions.⁹⁶ JS8 recommended to protect environmental and corporate defenders and activists from reprisals from extractive industries.⁹⁷

2. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

65. Many stakeholders expressed concerns that despite efforts deployed by Liberia, violence against women persisted. They regretted, in particular, the persistence of Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage, especially in rural areas. They also noted that access to justice for survivors of Female Genital Mutilation remained a major challenge.⁹⁸

66. JS3 recommended that Liberia strengthen domestic legislation to criminalize sexual violence; establish a fast-track court system for all sexual gender-based violence cases; and provide prosecutors with extensive capacity-building training on court proceedings related to sexual and gender-based violence.⁹⁹

67. Many organisations recommended putting in place multi-sectoral measures to address Female Genital Mutilation, including prevention, and education; and enabling access to justice and services for survivors. They also recommended permanently suspending the issuance of Sande school licenses and ensure that those schools where Female Genital Mutilation is performed are closed across the country. Furthermore, they recommended enhancing enforcement mechanisms to ensure that perpetrators of Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage are held accountable; implement nationwide awareness campaigns, especially in rural areas, challenging traditional justifications for Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage; amend the Domestic Relations Act to set 18 as the legal marriage age

without any exceptions; engage traditional and religious leaders in community education campaigns against child marriage and Female Genital Mutilation, hold to account traditional leaders who are found to be promoting harmful practices ; and improve access to education for girls as a preventative measure of harmful practices.¹⁰⁰

68. JS5 expressed concerns at the limited availability of support services for women victims of violence.¹⁰¹ JS5 recommended that Liberia expand support services like shelters, counselling, and legal aid, reduce stigma through awareness raising campaigns, and establish specialized courts to expedite and ensure fair handling of gender-based violence cases; improve the capacity of the Judiciary to enforce laws effectively; ensuring the successful prosecution of gender-based violence cases; adequately training law enforcement officers and judicial officials in handling cases of gender-based violence; increasing the number of One-Stop Centres, particularly in rural areas, to provide safe spaces for survivors with medical care, legal aid, and counselling; and implementing programmes that provide economic opportunities for survivors, helping them rebuild their lives and achieve financial independence.¹⁰² ICO recommended that Liberia strengthen the enforcement of the Domestic Violence Act (2019).¹⁰³

69. JS1 highlighted that Liberia had made strides in gender equality and non-discrimination by repealing laws that previously restricted women's rights in nationality, property ownership, and political participation.¹⁰⁴ JS5 noted that, although the Land Rights Act allowed women to own land, only 20 percent of women have secure land tenure.¹⁰⁵

70. JS5 and JS3 recommended that Liberia actively promote women's participation in politics and business through leadership training, mentorship programs, and policy support.¹⁰⁶ ICO recommended that Liberia passes a law to mandate equal political representation by introducing a 30 percent parliamentary gender quota; and provide microfinance programmes for women entrepreneurs.¹⁰⁷

Children

71. Broken-Chalk and JS3 regretted that violence against children remains high, with persistent cases of neglect, abuse, and exploitation, harmful traditional practices, and ritualistic killings. They also noted that child labour remained widespread, often in hazardous conditions, and that many children were involved in street selling, domestic work, and manual labour.¹⁰⁸

72. JS1 and JS3 recommended that Liberia strengthen domestic legislation to criminalize violence against children and enact a specific law on the protection of children against online violence, exposure to pornography and exploitation.¹⁰⁹

73. JS3 stated that significant gaps remained between statutory laws and customary practices, particularly concerning the definition of a child, the minimum age of marriage, sexual consent, and the procedures involved in adjudicating child-related matters.¹¹⁰ JS3 indicated that Liberia had made a public commitment to end child marriage by 2030, thus aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹¹¹

74. JS3 recommended that Liberia ensure that schools are truly free from all forms of violence against children; support vulnerable families to prevent children from resorting to street life; honour its commitment to eliminate child and/or forced marriage and all forms of child labour exploitation; create awareness through the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection to ensure that children at home and in alternative care are protected against corporal punishment.¹¹²

75. JS9 recommended referring families to social services such as livelihood programmes, and school reintegration; and organize training for the Judiciary and local authorities on the rights of children and alternatives to detention.¹¹³

Persons with disabilities

76. ICO and JS2 expressed concern at persistent barriers faced by persons with disabilities to enjoy their rights, including inaccessible infrastructure and a lack of support services.¹¹⁴ JS2 recommended strengthening the National Commission on Disability; intensify awareness raising campaigns on the rights of persons with disabilities; fully implement the National

Action Plan for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Liberia (2023–2027); and ratify the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.¹¹⁵

Indigenous Peoples and minorities

77. According to ICO, Indigenous peoples, minority groups, and marginalised communities faced barriers such as geographical isolation, economic disadvantages, and cultural discrimination, which significantly hindered their access to economic, social and cultural rights, particularly education and healthcare.¹¹⁶ It also noted that minority and Indigenous peoples faced challenges in terms of social integration, political representation, and access to opportunities due to their cultural practices or linguistic differences.¹¹⁷ ICO recommended that Liberia increase availability and access to financial resources for Indigenous Peoples and marginalised groups, including through the Liberia Bank for Development and Investment (LBDI); invest in infrastructure in rural areas to mitigate economic marginalisation of minority groups and ensure access to basic public services; and ensure full implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.¹¹⁸

78. ICO indicated that many Indigenous communities relied on agriculture. However, a number of these Indigenous communities had been affected by the extractive activities of private mining companies, on the land that they have ancestrally inhabited.¹¹⁹ ICO recommended that Liberia fully enforce the Land Rights Act (2018), recognise customary land ownership and protect indigenous lands from illegal acquisitions; ensure that private commercial projects operating on indigenous land require the free, prior, and informed consent from the communities; and ratify ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention.¹²⁰

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

79. JS2, JS10 and ICO highlighted that LGBTIQ+ persons in Liberia faced systematic human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests, physical violence, discrimination accessing essential services, and social exclusion. They were concerned that, in 2024, a bill was introduced in the Liberian House of Representatives criminalizing same-sex sexual practices.¹²¹

80. They recommended that Liberia repeal any discriminatory provision from the Penal Code and align it with Liberia's international obligations; ensure the protection of LGBTIQ+ persons from all forms of violence and discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity; effectively investigate homophobic, trans-phobic violence and ill-treatment; reject bills aiming to further criminalize LGBTIQ+ people and provide training for law enforcement officers, the Judiciary, and health care personnel, on the human rights of persons of diverse sexual orientation and gender identity.¹²²

Notes

¹ A/HRC/46/6, A/HRC/46/6Add.1, and A/HRC/46/113.

² The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org (one asterisk denotes a national human rights institution with A status).

Civil society

Individual submissions:

Broken-Chalk	The Stichting Broken Chalk, Amsterdam (Netherlands);
ICO	International Communities Organisation, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa, Accra (Ghana);
SGJ	Sonke Gender Justice, Cape Town (South Africa);
Carter-Center	The Carter Centre, Atlanta (United States of America).

Joint submissions:

JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) (Kampala, Uganda);
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JS2	Joint submission 2 submitted by: Civil Society Human Rights Advocacy Platform of Liberia and Swedish Federation for Sexuality Education, Monrovia (Liberia);
JS3	Joint submission 3 submitted by: Defence for Children International-Liberia (DCI-Liberia), Plan International-Liberia, and Community Health Care Initiative, Monrovia (Liberia);
JS4	Joint submission 4 submitted by: Equality Now (New York, NY, United States of America);
JS5	Joint submission 5 submitted by: Edmund Rice International and VIVAT International, Geneva (Switzerland);
JS6	Joint submission 6 submitted by: Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture and The International Federation of ACATs, (Paris, France);
JS7	Joint submission 7 submitted by: Marist International Solidarity Foundation (FMSI) and Solidaridad, Educación y Desarrollo (SED), Rome (Italy);
JS8	Joint submission 8 submitted by: International Service for Human Rights and Liberia Coalition of Human Rights, Geneva (Switzerland);
JS9	Joint submission 9 submitted by: Rescue Alternatives Liberia and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture victims (IRCT)
JS10	Joint submission 10 submitted by: PAN AFRICA ILGA (PAI) and Liberia Initiative for the Promotion of Rights Identity, Diversity and Equality (LIPRIDE), Johannesburg (South Africa);
JS11	Joint submission 11 submitted by: Center for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP-Liberia), The Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) and Small Media, London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);
JS12	Joint submission 12 submitted by: The Advocates for Human Rights (AHR), CSO Platform – Liberia, Justice and Research Project (JRP), Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA), CIVITAS MAXIMA, Global Justice Center (GJC) and Human Rights Watch (HRW);
JS13	Joint submission 13 submitted by: Rescue Alternatives Liberia, The World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (WCADP) and The Advocates for Human Rights, (United States of America).

National human rights institution:

INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights (Monrovia, Liberia).
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³ INCHR, paras. 8–13.

⁴ INCHR, paras.13–17.

⁵ INCHR, paras. 48–50.

⁶ INCHR, paras.43–44.

⁷ INCHR, paras.18–21.

⁸ INCHR, para.39.

⁹ INCHR, paras.28–31, 39–42.

¹⁰ INCHR, para.42.

¹¹ INCHR, paras.22–24.

¹² INCHR, paras.36–38.

¹³ INCHR, paras.25–27.

¹⁴ INCHR, paras.45–47.

¹⁵ INCHR, paras.33–34.

¹⁶ INCHR, paras.13–17.

¹⁷ INCHR, paras.13–17.

¹⁸ The following abbreviations are used in UPR documents:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

- ¹⁹ JS5, para.54.
²⁰ JS9, page 6.
²¹ JS9, page 6.
²² JS9, page 7.
²³ JS2, pages 8 and 9, JS4, para.25, SGJ, page 3, JS5, para.38, ICO, para.5,20.
²⁴ JS1, para.8.
²⁵ JS6, para 33.
²⁶ JS1, para. 26, ICO, JS8 page 5, JS5, para.33.
²⁷ JS5, para.33.
²⁸ JS2, page 5.
²⁹ JS2, pages 2 and 4; JS5, para.51 and 52 ; JS6, page 4, JS9 pages 3 and 4.
³⁰ JS6, para.10.
³¹ JS6, par.12.
³² JS9, page 4.
³³ JS9, page 6, JS13, para.14.
³⁴ JS6, para.28.
³⁵ JS9, page 7.
³⁶ JS6, page 6, JS9, page 8.
³⁷ JS9, page 9 and 10 ; JS13, 20–26.
³⁸ JS9, page 10.
³⁹ JS6, para.26.
⁴⁰ JS6, para.21.
⁴¹ JS9, page 4.
⁴² JS3, page 10.
⁴³ JS12, paras. 5 and 6, and JS2 p. 5.
⁴⁴ JS12, para. 19, JS2, page 5.
⁴⁵ JS6, page 6.
⁴⁶ JS12, para. 19, JS2, page 5.
⁴⁷ JS12, para.19.
⁴⁸ MFWA, para.19.
⁴⁹ JS8, para.2 and 7.
⁵⁰ ICO, para.20.
⁵¹ JS8, page 6.
⁵² JS1, para.9 and 10, JS11, para.11–15, MFWA, paras.19 and 20.
⁵³ MFWA, paras. 33–39, JS12, para.19, JS1, paras.20–32.
⁵⁴ MFWA, paras. 33–39, JS12, para.19, JS1, paras.20–32.
⁵⁵ JS1, para.12.
⁵⁶ JS1, para. 13 and 14.
⁵⁷ JS11, para.29.
⁵⁸ JS1, paras.20–32.
⁵⁹ JS1, paras.20–32, pages 8 and 9.
⁶⁰ CC, para.12.
⁶¹ CC, para. 14, 17, 18 and 19.

- 62 JS11, para.23.
- 63 JS1, paras.20–32, JS11, pages 8 and 9.
- 64 JS3, page 17.
- 65 JS3, page 18.
- 66 JS9, page 11.
- 67 JS3 page 13.
- 68 JS7, para.34.
- 69 JS3 page 14.
- 70 JS7, para.36.
- 71 JS5, para.38.
- 72 JS3, page 5, ICO, para.8.
- 73 JS3 page 5.
- 74 ICO, para.8.
- 75 JS5, para.25.
- 76 JS5, para.28.
- 77 JS3, page 6.
- 78 JS2, pages 8 and 9.
- 79 JS5, para.38.
- 80 JS7, para.30.
- 81 JS7, para.30.
- 82 ICO, para.19.
- 83 JS5, para.7, Broken-Chalk paras. 11–13.
- 84 JS3, page 5.
- 85 Broken-Chalk, para.20 and 29, JS5, para.15–18.
- 86 Broken-Chalk para. 14.
- 87 Broken-Chalk, para.18.
- 88 JS9, page 10.
- 89 JS9, page 11.
- 90 JS5, para.20.
- 91 Broken-Chalk, paras. 32–40.
- 92 JS7, para. 24.
- 93 ICO, para.12.
- 94 JS5, para.32.
- 95 JS5, para.33.
- 96 ICO, para.15.
- 97 JS8 page 5.
- 98 JS4, para.22, 7. 8, 16, 25; JS2, pages 8 and 9 ; SGJ, page 3 ; JS5, para.38 ; ICO, paras.5 and 20.
- 99 JS3, page 11.
- 100 JS4, para.22, 7. 8, 16, 25; JS2, pages 8 and 9 ; SGJ, page 3 ; JS5, para.38 ; ICO, paras.5 and 20.
- 101 JS5, para.45.
- 102 JS5, para.47.
- 103 ICO, para.20.
- 104 JS1, para.8.
- 105 JS5, para.37.
- 106 JS3 page 14, JS5, para.38.
- 107 ICO, para.20.
- 108 JS3, page 4 and 5; Broken.Chalk, para.14.
- 109 JS1, para.34, JS3, page 11.
- 110 JS3, page 11.
- 111 JS3 page 12.
- 112 JS13, para. 19.
- 113 JS9, page 11.
- 114 ICO, para.5.
- 115 ICO, para.5.
- 116 ICO, para.16.
- 117 ICO, para.11.
- 118 ICO, paras. 10 and 12.
- 119 ICO, para.13
- 120 ICO, para.15.
- 121 JS2 pages 6 and 7, JS10 paras.36–45, JS10, paras. 14 and 15, 19, ICO, para.5, 20–25.
- 122 JS2 pages 6 and 7, JS10 paras.36–45, ICO, para.20.