



## *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council*

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Department of Political Affairs - Security Council Affairs Division  
Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch

### **The situation in Liberia**

#### **Overview**

During the period under review, the Security Council held ten meetings on the situation in Liberia, including two closed meetings with troop-contributing countries,<sup>1</sup> and adopted five resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter. At the meetings, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), as well as the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

During the meetings, the Council considered the mandate of UNMIL, which was extended twice for periods of one year.<sup>2</sup> It also considered the preparations for the presidential and legislative elections held in October 2011, and the political and security challenges facing the country.

The Council renewed the sanctions measures and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts twice. On 17 December 2010, by [resolution 1961 \(2010\)](#), the Council renewed the travel ban and arms embargo for 12 months. The mandate of the Panel of Experts was also extended for 12 months until 16 December 2011. On 14 December 2011, by [resolution 2025 \(2011\)](#), the Council again renewed the travel ban and arms

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<sup>1</sup> See [S/PV.6376](#) and [S/PV.6608](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Resolutions 1938 \(2010\)](#) and [2008 \(2011\)](#).

embargo for 12 months. The mandate of the Panel of Experts was also extended for 12 months.<sup>3</sup>

### **8 September 2010 to 13 September 2011: briefings concerning the situation in Liberia and the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)**

On 8 September 2010, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who reported that while the overall situation in Liberia was stable, it remained fragile and additional progress was needed in a number of areas to consolidate peace. She stated that the Government had requested that it be added to the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, which if realized, would offer a unique opportunity for the Council and the Commission to ensure peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts become mutually supportive. Regarding the preparations for the 2011 presidential and legislative elections, she stated that significant political progress had been achieved, including the passing of legislation that would serve as the framework for the elections. While the elections would be a critical test for Liberia on its path to democratic stability, she stated that the National Elections Commission would need further support from the international community to organize the elections successfully. She further highlighted the efforts undertaken by the Government and UNMIL for the handover of security responsibilities, noting that the Government had taken ownership of the process and had recognized the need for early planning to strengthen institutions such as the police.<sup>4</sup>

On 16 March 2011, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who reported on the preparations for the presidential and legislative elections. She noted that voter registration had been concluded with no major security incidents or prohibitive logistical challenges, as UNMIL had provided targeted

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<sup>3</sup> For more information on the sanctions measures, see part VII, sect. III, with regard to measures adopted in accordance with Article 41 of the Charter. For information on the Committee established pursuant to [resolution 1521 \(2003\)](#) concerning Liberia and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I. B.1, with regard to the Security Council committees overseeing specific sanctions measures.

<sup>4</sup> [S/PV.6379](#), pp. 3-5.

assistance and logistical support by airlifting registration materials to and from inaccessible locations. Meanwhile, she stated that the political and security environment in Liberia had become more complex due to the upcoming elections and the situation along Liberia's border with Cote d'Ivoire, which had seen a sharp increase in the number of refugees entering the country. In response, UNMIL and Government security forces had increased patrols, but ensuring coverage along the long and porous border was proving to be overwhelming, and highlighted gaps in the capacity of the security agencies.<sup>5</sup>

The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission configuration for Liberia reported on his two visits to Liberia, and stressed the need for national reconciliation, beginning with resolving the numerous land disputes in the country which had amplified the ill feelings that existed between the two principal communities in the country. In this regard, he expressed support for proposals to establish a Historical Commission as the first step towards the construction of a "national memory". He further underlined the fragility of the justice system, and called upon the Government to pursue measures to strengthen the functioning of the existing courts, as well as to consider the establishment of special courts to deal with serious economic crimes.<sup>6</sup>

The representative of Liberia emphasized that carrying out the upcoming elections successfully would test the country's commitment to democratic governance. He expressed concern over the influx of refugees from Côte d'Ivoire, and urged the international community to maintain a critical focus on the escalating humanitarian crisis, which could undermine stability in the entire West African subregion. She emphasized the urgent need for resources to enable the humanitarian community and the Government to prepare an effective response to the situation.<sup>7</sup>

On 13 September 2011, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who reported on the preparations being made for the presidential and legislative elections scheduled for 10 October 2011. She stated that a national referendum to consider four proposed amendments to the Constitution,

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<sup>5</sup> [S/PV.6495](#), pp. 2-4.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

seen as a critical rehearsal for the elections, had been conducted successfully with the support of UNMIL without any serious security incidents. She stated that the role of UNMIL continued to be focused on coordinating international assistance and employing the Mission's good offices to ensure an environment conducive to peaceful elections. In light of the increased challenges in the border area, UNMIL was also working closely with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to strengthen inter-mission cooperation, including increased coordination of border patrolling and information sharing. Meanwhile, the planning for the handover of security responsibilities from UNMIL to the Government had continued, but the process had slowed due to the challenges related to the election and the developments concerning Côte d'Ivoire. She further emphasized the need to continue building the capacity of the security sector to allow for the actual handover.<sup>8</sup>

The Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission reported on several new projects that would be financed in part by the Peacebuilding Fund, including the construction of five justice and security hubs. He noted, however, that securing the remainder of the funding remained a challenge, with the Liberian National Police, which was expected to take on the security responsibilities of UNMIL, suffering from a serious lack of resources. In this regard he called upon the international community to invest in the Liberian National Police more directly and urgently.<sup>9</sup>

The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia recalled the major contributions made by UNMIL since its establishment in 2003, and emphasized that the partnership between UNMIL and the Government was vital for ensuring that the elections were free and fair, transparent and credible. Daunting challenges remained, including planning for the elections and addressing the border issues with Côte d'Ivoire, and an assessment mission in early 2012 would evaluate the Government's readiness and ability to use its own security capacity. He emphasized the need for an orderly and well-paced drawdown schedule for UNMIL.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> [S/PV.6610](#), pp. 2-4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

## **15 September 2010 to 16 September 2011: extensions of the mandate of UNMIL and debate on the future drawdown**

On 15 September 2010, by [resolution 1938 \(2010\)](#), the Council extended the mandate of UNMIL for one year until 30 September 2011, and inter alia, reiterated its mandate to continue assisting the Government by providing logistical support, coordination of international electoral assistance, and support for Liberian institutions and political parties in conducting the presidential and legislative elections. The Council also recalled its endorsement of the Secretary-General's recommendation that the conduct of free, fair, and peaceful elections be a core benchmark for the future drawdown of UNMIL.

On 16 September 2011, by [resolution 2008 \(2011\)](#), the Council extended the mandate of UNMIL for one year until 30 September 2012, and inter alia, reiterated its authorization for UNMIL to continue to assist the Government with the 2011 presidential and legislative elections, by providing logistical support and coordination of international electoral assistance, as well as supporting Liberian institutions and political parties in creating an atmosphere conducive to the conduct of peaceful elections.

In the discussion following the adoption of the resolution, the Council members welcomed the progress made by Liberia, especially in the preparations for the elections, and expressed support for the extension of the mandate of UNMIL. The representatives of France, Germany, Portugal and the United Kingdom expressed support for the recommendation of the Secretary-General for a review of the mandate, configuration and personnel by 30 May 2012, and noted that this had not been reflected in the resolution adopted.<sup>11</sup> The representative of the United Kingdom expressed his disappointment that the resolution did not take up amendments put forward by several Council members to undertake the review. He emphasized his commitment to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping missions, and stated that no peacekeeping mission be exempt from regular review by the Council.<sup>12</sup> The representative of the United States stated that she was not ready to predetermine the Council's actions on such an important

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<sup>11</sup> [S/PV.6619](#), p. 2 (France); p. 3 (Germany); p. 3 (Portugal); and p. 4 (United Kingdom).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

matter as the drawdown of UNMIL, given the uncertain situation due to the upcoming elections and tensions in the region. Stressing that it was not the time to impose rigid timelines on UNMIL, she asserted that a drawdown must be determined by the facts on the ground, and not by any artificial deadlines.<sup>13</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia welcomed the extension of the mandate of UNMIL and acknowledged the significant contribution of the Mission in helping his country to address the many challenges it faced. He further pledged that the Government and people would continue the march forward towards ensuring sustainable peace and sustained development long after the withdrawal of UNMIL troops.<sup>14</sup>

### **3 March 2011: decision on the withdrawal of UNMIL support contingent from Sierra Leone**

On 3 March 2011, by [resolution 1971 \(2011\)](#), the Council, inter alia, discontinued its authorization under [resolution 1626 \(2005\)](#), for UNMIL military personnel to provide security for the Special Court for Sierra Leone. It also requested their withdrawal by 7 March 2011.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> For more information on the mandate of UNMIL, see part IX, sect. I, with regard to peacekeeping operations.

## Meetings: the situation in Liberia

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
6379 8 September 2010	Twenty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) ( <a href="#">S/2010/429</a> )		Liberia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIL	All invitees	
6383 15 September 2010	Twenty-first progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL ( <a href="#">S/2010/429</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by the United States ( <a href="#">S/2010/475</a> )	Liberia			<a href="#">Resolution 1938 (2010)</a> 15-0-0
6454 17 December 2010		Draft resolution submitted by the United States ( <a href="#">S/2010/643</a> )				<a href="#">Resolution 1961 (2010)</a> 15-0-0
6493 3 March 2011	Letter dated 11 February 2011 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2011/74</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by the United States ( <a href="#">S/2011/106</a> )	Sierra Leone			<a href="#">Resolution 1971 (2011)</a> 15-0-0
6495 16 March 2011	Twenty-second progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL ( <a href="#">S/2011/72</a> )		Liberia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	
6610 13 September 2011	Twenty-third progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL ( <a href="#">S/2011/497</a> )		Liberia (Minister for Foreign Affairs)	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
6619 16 September 2011	Twenty-third progress report of the Secretary-General on UNMIL ( <a href="#">S/2011/497</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by Gabon, India, Nigeria, South Africa, United States ( <a href="#">S/2011/576</a> )	Liberia (Minister of Foreign Affairs)		France, Germany, Liberia, Portugal, United Kingdom, and United States	<a href="#">Resolution 2008 (2011)</a> 15-0-0
6684 14 December 2011		Draft resolution submitted by the United States ( <a href="#">S/2011/769</a> )	Liberia			<a href="#">Resolution 2025 (2011)</a> 15-0-0