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Security Council Practices and Charter Research Branch

2. The situation in Liberia

Overview

During the period under review, the Council held nine meetings in connection with the situation in Liberia, including two closed meetings with troop-contributing countries,¹ and adopted four resolutions all under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Council heard three briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), and the Chair of the Liberia country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

During the meetings, the Council considered the phased drawdown of the military strength of UNMIL and extended the mandate of UNMIL² twice for periods of one year respectively.³ By resolutions [2079 \(2012\)](#) and [2128 \(2013\)](#), the Council renewed the travel ban and arms embargo, imposed by resolution [1521 \(2003\)](#), for 12 months respectively. The mandate of the Panel of Experts was also extended for 12 months respectively by the same resolutions.⁴

In May 2012, the Council visited Liberia among other countries during the Security Council mission to West Africa.⁵

¹ See [S/PV.6828](#) and [S/PV.7021](#).

² For more information on the mandate of UNMIL, see part X, sect. I with regard to peacekeeping operations.

³ Resolutions [2066 \(2012\)](#) and [2116 \(2013\)](#).

⁴ For more information on the sanction measures concerning Liberia, see part VII, sect. III with regard to measures in accordance with Article 41. For more information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1521 \(2003\)](#) concerning Liberia and the mandate of the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. B with regard to committees established under Chapter VII of the Charter.

⁵ For more information on the Security Council mission to West Africa, see sect. 34 of the present part, with regard to Security Council missions.

The table below lists the meetings held in consideration of the situation in Liberia, as well as related information, including invitees, speakers and decisions adopted.

Briefings on the situation in Liberia and UNMIL

On 11 September 2012, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who reported that since 2003 Liberia had made significant progress in institutional rebuilding as well as consolidation of its democratic processes and was very close to becoming “a true success story”. She stressed that improvement of the security situation and creation of lasting stability in Liberia were not only contingent upon security sector reform, which UNMIL was providing, but that the country also needed to enhance national reconciliation and implement structural political changes which would require both political commitment and financial resources. With regard to the constitutional reform and national reconciliation, she shared her view that any comprehensive constitutional reform revision must be endorsed by referendum, which implied a high degree of public awareness. Given the large responsibility the police would bear as UNMIL transitioned, she stated that considerable attention should be given to increasing police professionalism, logistics capacity and recruitment efforts. Concerning the security situation along the border with Côte d’Ivoire, she stated that UNMIL and the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) had strengthened their inter-mission cooperation on border issues, and encouraged further cooperation between Liberia and Côte d’Ivoire.⁶

In his briefing to the Council, the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission emphasized that national reconciliation should be at the centre of the peace process. He added that it was featured as a core peacebuilding priority in the Statement of Mutual Commitments of the compact between the Commission and the Government of Liberia, and that it was linked to processes of constitutional review, decentralization and election reform. Concerning capacity-building of the Liberia national police, he said that the Commission, having received the request from the President of Liberia, facilitated consultations on how to strengthen and coordinate training support to the national police. He also added that the Commission was

⁶ [S/PV.6830](#), pp. 2-4.

finalizing a resource mobilization strategy and corresponding work plan, working closely with the Government and UNMIL.⁷

The representative of Liberia expressed her concerns for the security situation along the border of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire and stressed that the matter required close attention because of its potential risks to national and regional security. While commending actions that UNMIL and UNOCI were taking to support the national forces, she underlined the need of cooperation and collaboration between national and international forces on both sides of the border. She also reaffirmed the intention of the Government to honour its commitments made in the Statement of Mutual Commitments with the Peacebuilding Commission. In that regard, she stated that Liberia was seeking to promote justice, security, participation for its people and the effective management and use of the national resources. She also expressed her Government's disappointment that a few assertions in the report of the Secretary-General were not entirely accurate and stated that the relatively open and constructive relationship between her Government and UNMIL over the years should allow the Government the right to jointly vet and verify assertions that upon publication could influence the views of international community, including Liberia's potential investors.⁸

On 25 March 2013, in her briefing to the Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of UNMIL reported that the first phase of the security transition of UNMIL responsibilities to the Government had started in October 2012 and had been relatively successful. She added that UNMIL had begun its next military drawdown phase in accordance with resolution [2066 \(2012\)](#). Therefore, for the first time since 2005, military personnel of UNMIL were not deployed in every one of the 15 counties in Liberia. On developments in the country, she underlined some positive steps such as the launch of the National Vision 2030 conference as a long-term political and economic agenda including a fair political system, security, rule of law and national reconciliation. She also highlighted the launch of Liberia's first justice and security hub with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. While noting some progress in the area of accountability, she stressed that the issues of corruption and tensions between

⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-6.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 6-8.

branches of the Government had remained. Concerning the situation on the Liberian border with Côte d'Ivoire, she said that UNMIL and UNOCI continued their inter-mission cooperation at all levels and were working with both Governments to encourage the development of a common border strategy.⁹

In the same meeting, the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission reported on his visit to Liberia and Sierra Leone in February 2013; which allowed him to consult with the Government on how to accelerate progress on security sector reform, rule of law, and national reconciliation. He informed that the first regional justice and security hub had been inaugurated in Gbarnga during the visit and encouraged the Government to make the appropriate provisions, including planning and budget allocations for recurrent costs and delivery of justice and security services.¹⁰

On 10 September 2013, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General welcomed the work of the Constitutional Review Committee for preparing the national consultations and the launch of the National Reconciliation Road Map by President Johnson-Sirleaf in June. Warning that many potential causes of conflict still needed to be addressed through long-term reforms, she expressed concern over the mismanagement of natural resources and corruption that was affecting the work of national institutions and economic development. On UNMIL's three-phase military drawdown, she reported that while the first phase was concluded successfully and the Government and UNMIL were able to develop effective joint transition planning mechanisms, the Liberian security forces had been unable to scale up their operational effectiveness to assume increased security responsibilities and remained constrained by weak mobility, resources and administration. She stressed that Liberia required continued support from the international community for the challenges the country would be facing.¹¹

The Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission regretted that only limited progress had been made with regard to national reconciliation in Liberia. While the National Reconciliation Road Map had been launched, implementation had been delayed and the

⁹ [S/PV.6941](#), pp. 2-4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹¹ [S/PV.7029](#), pp. 2-4.

funds had not been released by the Government, he added. On security sector reform and the rule of law, he noted that lack of Liberian police capacity, mobility, professional management and limited resources delayed the transition of UNMIL. Acknowledging that the progress in reforming and strengthening the judiciary had been slow, he encouraged the Government to step up their work in areas related to reforms, implementation, allocation of resources and timely disbursement of funds. These efforts, he added, would allow the PBC to better support the Government in marshalling resources for justice and security. He noted that the second and third justice and security hubs were planned to be inaugurated in the second quarter of 2014, though, as he reported the first hub launched in February 2013 was still not fully operational. He also expressed concerns over corruption related to land and natural resources and suggested that the international community increase its support to Liberia in this area.¹²

The Liberian Defence Minister noted that the Liberia National Police had taken over responsibility for security from UNMIL in some areas; however some personnel, logistic and budgetary challenges remained. He reiterated that notwithstanding these setbacks, the Government of Liberia remained firmly committed to the road map as agreed. In that regard, he emphasized that UNMIL's transition plan had been carefully calibrated to account the capabilities and remaining challenges in Liberia, and warned that any effort to accelerate the transition process could destabilize the situation or undermine the gains achieved.¹³

Decisions related to the phased drawdown of the military strength of UNMIL

On 17 September 2012, by resolution [2066 \(2012\)](#), the Council extended the mandate of UNMIL for one year until 30 September 2013, and endorsed the recommendation of the Secretary-General¹⁴ to decrease the military component of UNMIL from seven to three infantry battalions, totalling approximately 4,200 personnel, in three phases between August 2012 and July 2015. As a result of the reduction, the military strength of UNMIL would total approximately 3,750 personnel by July 2015. The resolution also authorized the Secretary-

¹² Ibid., pp. 5-7.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 7-9.

¹⁴ See [S/2012/230](#) and [S/2012/641](#).

General to implement the first phase of reducing the military component by 1,990 personnel between October 2012 and September 2013.

On 18 September 2013, by resolution [2116 \(2013\)](#), the Council extended the mandate of UNMIL for a further year until 30 September 2014 and authorized the Secretary-General to implement the second phase of the military drawdown, reducing the military component of UNMIL by 1,129 personnel between October 2013 and September 2014.

In both resolutions the Council also stressed that the primary tasks of UNMIL are to continue to support the Government to solidify peace and stability and to protect civilians.

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>
S/PV.6830 11 September 2012	Twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2012/641)		Liberia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of UNMIL, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	
S/PV.6834 17 September 2012	Twenty-fourth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2012/641)	Draft resolution submitted by France, the United Kingdom and the United States (S/2012/707)				Resolution 2066 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6884 12 December 2012	Letter dated 3 December 2012 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2012/901)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2012/918)				Resolution 2079 (2012) 15-0-0
S/PV.6941 25 March 2013	Twenty-fifth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2013/124)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All invitees	
S/PV.7029 10 September 2013	Twenty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (S/2013/479)		Liberia (Minister of National Defence)	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the	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>
				Peacebuilding Commission		
S/PV.7033 18 September 2013	Twenty-sixth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) (S/2013/479)	Draft resolution submitted by France, Morocco, Rwanda, Togo, the United Kingdom and the United States (S/2013/556)				Resolution 2116 (2013) 15-0-0
S/PV.7077 10 December 2013	Letter dated 19 November 2013 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/683)	Draft resolution submitted by Rwanda, Togo and the United States (S/2013/725)				Resolution 2128 (2013) 15-0-0