

# **Liberia**

## **Submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Commission) to “promote national peace, security, unity, and reconciliation”. Amnesty International believes it is important for Liberia to engage in a process to overcome its painful and violent past. Liberian society must critically face the reality of past violence and violations of human rights as a means to contribute to a transition to lasting peace and the rule of law based on truth, justice, and reparation. The findings of the Commission will be one of the key building blocks in the process of transition, playing an important role in providing a full account of the human rights violations committed during the conflict, contributing to their investigation and eventual prosecution, preventing their repetition, and ensuring that victims and their relatives are granted full reparation.

The purpose of this submission is for Amnesty International to contribute to the work of the Commission. This submission will contribute to helping to establish an impartial and complete account of the historical past, provide information which will contribute to the understanding of the patterns of events, the causes and consequences of violence, as well as to the investigation of human rights violations and abuses, grave breaches and other violations of international humanitarian law, that occurred between January 1979 and 14 October 2003.

Amnesty International is submitting public documents including annual reports, urgent actions and press releases from 1977-2006. This submission is divided up into four sections. Under each section, along with a short summary of the time period in question, are a list of cases and events categorised under the human rights violations and abuses which the organization documented. The four sections include: Samuel Doe era [1979-1989], the first civil war [1990-1996], the Charles Taylor era [1997-2003] and the post war period [2004-2006].

### **I. THE SAMUEL DOE ERA 1979-1989**

Following the 1979 rice riots that took place during the William Tolbert administration, Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe took power through a military coup in 1980. Doe led the country from 1980-1990, initially under military rule, and from 1985 as president. Upon coming to power in 1980, Doe ordered the execution of 13 senior government officials from the Tolbert administration without trial. During Doe’s reign widespread and systematic practise of torture, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, imprisonment of opposition leaders, and restriction on the freedom of expression were carried out on a regular basis. During this period, ethnic tensions began to find their way into the Liberian life beginning with the targeting of members of the Mano and Gio ethnic groups. The growing ethnic tensions and an ensuing economic crisis were key factors which contributed to the war which began in 1989.

**Summary of cases and events include:**

#### **DEATH PENALTY**

- **February 1979:** Seven people including one woman were hanged in Monrovia ordered by the Tolbert Administration. They were convicted of complicity in a ritual murder in 1976. After a retrial and several appeals, Amnesty International unsuccessfully appealed to President Tolbert to grant clemency. (AI Report 1979)
- **12 April 1980:** Doe's regime ordered the arrest of officials of the former administration for rampant corruption, high treason and gross violations of human rights. On 17 April proceedings began against a first group of 14 prisoners. All denied charges of treason and were not allowed defence counsel nor could they produce evidence in their own defence. Thirteen were publicly executed on 22 April. The prisoners were tied to stakes and shot before a jeering crowd. Their bodies were riddled with machine-gun bullets. Proceeding against the remaining 100 detained officials continued throughout May, and 400 other prisoners remained in custody without charge or trial. (AI: Newsletter July 1980 Vol. X No. 7 – *Crowds Jeers as Top Liberians are Executed*)
- **March 1981:** Seven people were executed by hanging after being convicted of alleged murder. This coincided with statements by government officials suggesting that the death penalty would apply to those convicted of "illegally attempting to influence the conduct of armed and police forces and security personnel for personal benefit and against the interest of the State" or of "disorganising the nation". (AI Annual Report 1981)
- **Late January 1982:** Sergeant David Gbedeh was executed by firing-squad after being convicted of murder by the Supreme Military Tribunal. (AI Annual Report 1983)

#### **EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS; UNLAWFUL KILLINGS**

- **14 April 1979:** More than 100 people were killed and some 500 injured, according to Liberian government statements, when police clashed with, and opened fire against, demonstrators who were protesting price increases in the capital Monrovia. (AFR 34/01/80)
- **June 1981:** Fourteen lower-ranks soldiers were arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow the government and to assassinate several leading members. After a summary trial without defence counsel, 13 of the soldiers were sentenced to death. According to several reports the 13 were secretly executed in the Post Stockade prison, Monrovia. (AI Annual Report 1982)
- **3 February 1982:** Four soldiers were executed by firing-squad. They reportedly confessed during a hurried "preliminary investigation" by the military authorities to having participated in an armed robbery when three other soldiers had been killed by robbers. (AI Annual Report 1983)
- **1985:** Human rights abuses occurred on a substantial scale in the wake of the coup attempt of 12 November. In the days following its failure, AI received reports of political killings by government forces in Nimba County, the home area of the leader of the coup, Brigadier-General Thomas Quiwonkpa. The victims appeared mostly to be civilians who had not been involved in the conspiracy but who were suspected by the government of being sympathetic to Thomas Quiwonkpa.

AI was particularly concerned about a number of people unconnected with the coup who were reported to have been killed: Charles Gbenyon, a senior television journalist working for the Liberian Broadcasting System, who was killed at the official residence of Head of State Doe a few days after the coup. (AI Annual Report 1986)

### **ILLEGAL DETENTION; TORTURE OF OPPOSITION LEADERS, STUDENTS, JOURNALISTS**

- **9 April 1980:** AI deplored Liberian Government's dead or alive hunt for opposition – Opposition party leaders of the 'People's Progressive Party' and many of their supporters were arrested and AI received eyewitness statements that many of them were tortured in Post Stockade prison. AI believes that many of those rounded up were put in detention simply because of their party affiliation. (AFR 34/02/80)
- **8/9 February 1984:** Willis Knuckles, journalist for the Daily Observer newspaper and a correspondent for the BBC in Liberia was detained at Post Stockade prison. He was severely beaten on his arrest and also whipped during the following days. (AFR: 34/01/84)
- **June 1984:** Rufus Darpoh, a freelance journalist and former editor of the government-controlled *New Liberian* newspaper, was arrested and taken to Bellah Yallah, where conditions have in the past been reported as very harsh. He was not charged and was eventually released on 17 November. (AI Annual Report 1985)
- **22 August 1984:** Security forces opened fire on university students demonstrating against the arrests of 10 alleged ringleaders of a "socialist plot" to overthrow the government,<sup>1</sup> and wounded 70. Unofficial sources claimed that some students were killed and afterwards secretly buried. (AI Annual Report 1985)
- **April – October 1985:** In the months preceding the elections several leading opposition politicians and others were imprisoned. They included Dusty Wolokollie, a prominent member of the Liberian People's Party (LPP) and John Karweaye, another LPP member, after expressing doubts as to whether the elections would be fair. Both were released without charge. (AI Annual Report 1986)
- **July 1985:** Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, a leading member of the Liberian Action Party (LAP), was placed under house arrest, and a few days later she was detained and moved to Post Stockade prison. Although AI adopted her as a prisoner of conscience, she was tried before the Special Military Tribunal and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for sedition. She was released twelve days later. (AI Annual Report 1986)
- **1987:** John Vambo, a journalist, was also detained without charge in August and later released. (AI Annual Report 1988)

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<sup>1</sup> They included Dr Amos Sawyer, Chairman of the newly-formed Liberia People's Party (LPP), Major-General Nicholas Podier, who had been Co-Chairman of the ruling People's Redemption Council (PRC) until its dissolution in late July when he became Speaker of the Interim National Assembly.

- **1989:** At least 16 prisoners of conscience were detained without trial including an opposition party leader and a former Supreme Court Justice (AI Annual Report 1990)

#### **PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL, ILL TREATMENT**

- **1981:** First three months after the coup AI received several reports that detainees in Monrovia were frequently being beaten with whips and automobile fan belts. (AI Annual Report 1981)
- **1987:** Cases of unlawful arrest: Zaye Gontee a businesswomen, was arrested in May and detained incommunicado and without trial for over three months in the Post Stockade and later released. (AI Annual Report 1998)

## **II. THE FIRST CIVIL WAR 1990-1996**

The period between 1990-1996 marked Liberia's descent into a brutal civil war characterised by gross violations of human rights amounting to war crimes and crimes against humanity. Arbitrary killing along ethnic lines including massacres, political and extrajudicial executions, rape, torture, ill-treatment, recruitment of child soldiers, hostage taking and killing of humanitarian workers were carried out on a regular basis. All parties to the conflict including the government army—the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), and rebel groups including the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), United Liberation Movement and Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO)<sup>2</sup>, Liberian Peace Council (LPC), and the Lofa Defence Force (LDF) were considered to have carried out these crimes against civilians.

In 1989, the conflict started when an invasion force from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire entered in late December 1989 to overthrow the Doe government. The conflict lasted until August 1995 with the signing of the Abuja Agreement and elections in 1997. Throughout the conflict, 14 peace accords were signed. Amnesty International estimates that approximately 200,000 civilians were killed, 700,000 became refugees in neighbouring countries, and 1.4 million were internally displaced. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened to stabilize the crisis in Liberia and in August 1990 the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) was sent in to support the civilian government in Monrovia. The United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) was deployed in 1993 to monitor the ceasefire.

Throughout the conflict, attempts at peace were repeatedly made. Despite the brutality of the conflict and the level and types of human rights violations and abuses committed against civilians little effort was made to document or prevent their occurrence by the international community. UNOMIL failed to systematically document and report on the human rights situation and ECOMOG's mandate failed to protect civilians. Additionally, peace accords signed

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<sup>2</sup> ULIMO began as one faction comprised largely of members of the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic group. In 1993 ULIMO split into two factions, one of which was led by Alhaji Kromah called ULIMO-K with a composition of largely mandingos and ULIMO-J was led by Roosevelt Johnson comprised of mostly members of the Krahn ethnic group.

encouraged impunity as signatories were provided a general amnesty clause for acts committed in actual combat.

**Summaries of cases and events include:**

**ARBITRARY DETENTION; HOSTAGE TAKING**

**1989:** Gabriel William Kpoleh and nine other prisoners of conscience remained in prison throughout the year. It appeared they had been convicted after an unfair trial. They were reportedly held in poor conditions. (AI Annual Report 1990)

**October 1989:** Momodu Lavala and two other students were detained illegally and without charge for two weeks. (AI Annual Report 1990)

**January 1990:** The government said a number of rebels had been captured and would be brought to trial, but they appeared to include Gio and Mano civilians arrested in Monrovia. None was brought to trial and their fate is unknown. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**May 1990:** Angeline Watta Allison and two other people sentenced to life imprisonment for complicity to murder appeared to be prisoners of conscience. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**August 1990:** About 50 foreigners including Americans were detained by the NPFL. The NPFL also took prisoner at least 30 Nigerians as well as nationals of Guinea and Ghana. There were reports of widespread arrests among the Ghanaian community living in areas under the NPFL's control. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**1991:** The INPFL was reported to have held one woman at its camp throughout 1991, having taken her prisoner in November 1990, and to be holding a number of children at an orphanage within the camp to deter a possible attack by ECOWAS forces. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**February 1991:** The INPFL detained and ill-treated some seven members of the Interim Legislative Assembly for three days. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**September 1991:** After the September incursion into western Liberia from Sierra Leone, and again in December, foreign and Liberian aid workers were detained for several days by the NPFL, assaulted and accused of spying. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**April 1992:** Father Seraphino Dalpont was arrested for possessing Interim Government currency and a Roman Catholic newsletter alleged to be seditious literature. He was released after paying a large fine, but re-arrested allegedly on suspicion of espionage. He was held in a police station in Gbarnga until mid-May, when he was released and deported to Cote d'Ivoire. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**October 1992:** Two groups of foreign nationals – one mostly of aid workers, the other of missionaries – were detained for several days accused of spying for the ECOMOG forces. They were released uncharged. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**October 1992:** Up to 300 orphans and a former government official were apparently taken away by NPFL forces on about 28 October from an orphanage near Gardnersville; orphans who escaped reportedly said that the NPFL was forcing the boys to fight for them. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**November 1993:** The NPFL detained UN aid workers for several days, accusing them of spying. They were later released. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**November 1993:** After thousands of refugees had fled from fighting in Sierra Leone into Lofa County, ULIMO forces reportedly took prisoner of about 300 of them, on suspicion of being supporters of the Revolutionary United Front. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**May 1994:** The LPC reportedly detained 10 Ugandan ECOMOG soldiers, releasing them a few days later. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**May 1994:** In separate incidents Mandingo ULIMO fighters held hostage 17 UN employees delivering food aid and 16 Nigerian ECOMOG soldiers, accusing them of supporting the rival ethnic Krahn ULIMO faction. They were released after a few days. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**June 1994:** AFL soldiers detained UNOMIL staff at Scheffelin barracks near Monrovia for three days. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**June 1994:** Krahn ULIMO fighters took hostage six unarmed UNOMIL officers in Tubmanburg for two days, reportedly beating them and subjecting them to mock executions. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**June 1994:** AFL soldiers detained UNOMIL staff at Schefflin barracks near Monrovia for 3 days. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**July 1994:** The NPFL was reported to be holding about 25 ECOMOG soldiers and 30 long-term political prisoners. (AI Annual Report 1995)

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**9 September 1994:** The NPFL arrested 43 unarmed UNOMIL observers and 6 NGO workers and held them at nine different sites. 33 were released after 5 days and the rest were released by the 18 September. The UN reported that some were beaten and terrorized by their captors. (AFR 34/01/95)

**September 1994:** NPFL fighters reportedly detained 43 UNOMIL officers and six aid workers in various parts of the country for up to 10 days. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**November 1994:** LPC fighters reportedly took 10 girls captive in Sabo Wofiken, slashing their feet and forcing them to walk back to the fighters' base in Sinoe County. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**January 1996:** In the area around Tubmanburg, ULIMO-J detained 130 ECOMOG troops who had been engaged in clearing mines and held them for 10 days as a shield against attacks. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**February 1996:** 8 aid workers were held for three days by the LPC in south-eastern Liberia. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**April 1996:** During the fighting in Monrovia, members of ECOMOG and other foreign nationals were held at the Barclay training Centre military barracks by Krahn groups loyal to Roosevelt Johnson. (AI Annual Report 1997; AFR 34/01/96)

### **TORTURE, INCLUDING RAPE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

**Mid-1989:** A suspected murderer and another man sentenced to death for murder in February both died at Buchanan Central Prison reportedly as a result of harsh conditions. (AI Annual Report 1990)

**October 1989:** Henry B Walker, a murder suspect, died at Monrovia Central Prison reportedly as a result of harsh conditions. (AI Annual Report 1990)

**October 1989:** Two murder suspects died at Monrovia Central Prison, apparently as a result of torture, ill-treatment or medical neglect. Following their arrest thought to have been in April or May, they had been held illegally and incommunicado in the Post Stockade, a military detention centre where political detainees have been tortured in the past. (AI Annual Report 1990)

**January 1992:** While still formally allied to the Interim Government, the INPFL ill-treated and held two journalists – Isaac Bantu and Dan Brown – for three days in harsh conditions. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**September 1992:** Nearly 600 ECOMOG soldiers were taken prisoner some of whom were severely beaten by their NPFL captors. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**January 1993-**ECOMOG beat and injured a British Broadcasting Corporation journalist, apparently because he had criticized ECOMOG in his reports. (AI Report 1994)

**December 1993:** 800 captured NPFL fighters held by the Interim Government at Monrovia Central Prison were reported to be suffering severe malnutrition and medical neglect; five were said to have died. (AI Annual Report 1999)

**July 1994:** LPC fighters beat and detained for five days a civilian in Buchanan who resisted having his bicycle stolen. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**July 1994-** LPC fighters at Barnabo Beach in Number Four District allegedly heated machetes in a fire and branded their captives, leaving large third degree burns on their victims. (AFR 34/02/95)

**Augusts 1994:** The NPFL reportedly detained and ill-treated two chiefs in Bong County, Ruth Kollie and Willie Bestman. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** The NPFL reportedly detained and ill-treated 30 civilians from the Bassa ethnic group in Butuo, Nimba County, accused of supporting the LPC. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** Large numbers of civilians and refugees were beaten and raped and their property looted by the armed groups involved in the fighting around Gbarnga. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** LPC fighters allegedly cut off the fingers and ears of Albert Mende, a journalist. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**1995:** LPC fighters, operating with the support of the AFL, systematically swept through rural areas in southeastern Liberia, robbing, torturing and intimidating people and forcing them to take refuge in Buchanan or other places under ECOMOG control. Many of those fleeing to Buchanan in February were reported to have been bayoneted, shot or flogged by LPC fighters. At the time,

large numbers of people, perhaps as many as 6000, were reportedly being held by the LPC in the compounds of an agricultural company, where many were raped. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**April 1995:** ULIMO K set ablaze the towns of Fassama, Zuana 1 and Zuana 2. Survivors reported rapes, abductions and looting. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**April 1995:** Benjamin Wilson, a journalist with *The Eye*, was beaten by police when he refused to give them photographs he had taken of damage at a refugee compound in Monrovia. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**June 1995:** UNICEF workers in Buchanan reported that they had registered 652 cases of women who had been raped, mostly by members of the warring factions, within a period of less than 6 months. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**July 1995:** Bill Jarkloh, a journalist with *The News*, was beaten unconscious by ULIMO-J fighters. He had been interviewing Roosevelt Johnson when fighters stormed the building and he tried to photograph the incident. Three of those involved in the attack were arrested by ECOMOG and then handed over to the ULIMO-J high command. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**September 1995:** James Momoh, a journalist with *The Inquirer*, was beaten by ECOMOG soldiers when trying to photograph AFL soldiers at a check-point. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**March 1996:** NPFL officials shot two men in the legs after they were found threatening civilians. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**July 1996:** Aid workers reported that ULIMO-K was restricting the movement of civilians in a displaced persons' camp in Suehn and starving the inhabitants to cause food supplies to be diverted to their troops. ULIMO-K released some 60 starving children within a few days, but did not permit the evacuation of other inhabitants for a further two weeks. (AI Annual Report 1997)

#### **EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS; UNLAWFUL KILLING OF CIVILIANS, INCLUDING MASSACRES**

**January 1990:** Hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed by rebels and government troops in Nimba County in northeast Liberia. (AFR 34/01/90) (AI Annual Report 1990)

**January 1990:** A former prisoner of conscience, Robert Phillips, was brutally murdered at his home in Monrovia. (AFR 34/01/90)

**May 1990:** At least 30 Gio and Mano men, women and children were abducted by government soldiers from a UN compound where hundreds were seeking protection. They were then apparently executed extrajudicially. (AI Annual Report 1991) (AFR 34/04/90)

**June 1990:** A government soldier was executed by firing squad after being convicted by a court-martial of murdering a civilian. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**June 1990:** Several hundred Gio and Mano soldiers were reported to have been arrested. Some appear to have been extrajudicially executed – their bodies were found in the streets – although the government said that 150 had been released. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**July 1990:** Large-scale killings occurred when predominantly Gio and Mano rebel groups entered Monrovia. One rebel leader was said by eye-witnesses to have personally shot four people dead in cold blood, including a Red Cross worker and a woman whom he shot in the face in front of her child. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**July 1990:** About 600 defenceless people – including many women and children from the Gio and Mano communities – were extrajudicially executed by government troops who broke into a church refuge for displaced people in Monrovia. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**August 1990:** In Grand Gedeh County, the NPFL forces were responsible for indiscriminate killings of people belonging to the Krahn ethnic group. Former government minister Senator Fred J. Blay and Congressman William T. Jabbah were reportedly executed by the INPFL; they did not appear to have had any form of trial. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**October 1990:** Two Nigerian journalists detained by the NPFL, Tayo Awotunsin and Krees Imodibie, were reportedly executed extrajudicially. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**1990:** The predominantly Gio and Mano rebel forces summarily killed government officials and others considered to be supporters of President Doe's government, particularly members of the Krahn ethnic group and the Muslim Mandingo community. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**1990:** An unknown number of prisoners were executed after unfair trials before special courts set up by the rebels. At least a hundred people – government officials and members of the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups – were reportedly executed after being convicted of 'crimes against the people' or of supporting the government. (AI Annual Report 1991)

**June and July 1991:** AFL soldiers reportedly attacked members of the Interim Government, the Interim Legislative Assembly and others. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**July 1991:** Unconfirmed reports suggested that two civilians were executed by the NPFL. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**July 1991:** The NPFL executed four of its own men. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**September 1991:** It was reported that a number of NPFL soldiers had been extrajudicially executed after attempting to assassinate Charles Taylor. However, these reports were denied by the NPRA administration. It said that an NPFL officer had been executed after a special court-martial had convicted him of murdering five soldiers. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**1991:** The NPFL was responsible for the killings of hundreds of members of the Krahn ethnic group and members of the Mandingo community in Grand Gedeh Country, who were targeted for formerly supporting the Doe government. NPFL continued to detain torture and kill civilians in other areas under their control. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**1991:** The NPFL and INPFL killed Angeline Watta Allison. It was also reported that her husband, a former defence minister, Major-General Gray Dioh Allison, was captured and executed by the NPFL. (AI Annual Report 1992)

**January 1992:** The INPFL had executed at least three of their own soldiers at an NPFL camp near Monrovia for being in possession of new currency issued by the Interim Government. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**February 1992:** An NPFL commander was executed after being convicted by a military court for murdering an INPFL fighter. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**April 1992:** NPRAG authorities charged four senior NPFL officers with the murder of seven suspected ULIMO supporters in Buchanan. Three were later released and it was not known if the other was tried. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**May 1992:** NPFL troops seized six Senegalese members of the ECOMOG forces in Vahun and took them to Gbarnga and reportedly tortured and executed them. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**3 July 1992:** NPFL fighters allegedly killed nine forestry workers in Jenimana. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**August 1992:** When ULIMO seized NPFL-controlled territory, both NPFL and ULIMO forces were alleged to have killed civilians suspected of supporting the other side in the fighting. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**August 1992:** Several dissident NPFL soldiers were reportedly executed by the NPFL for their involvement in an attempted assassination of Charles Taylor in which a bodyguard was killed. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**October 1992:** During an attack on Monrovia, NPFL forces were reported to have deliberately killed civilians and taken other prisoners. NPFL troops reportedly abducted 50 people and killed others when they took control of Louisiana township near the capital. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**20 October 1992:** Two nuns, both US nationals, a Liberian man employed by the nuns' convent and two ECOMOG soldiers were killed in the nuns' car near Barnersville apparently by the NPFL. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**23 October 1992:** Six NPFL soldiers entered the nuns' convent in the suburb of Gardnersville, killed three other American nuns and a Lebanese businessman, and abducted the businessman's Liberian wife, two other Liberian women with their four children, and four Liberian novices. Those abducted were apparently later released. NPRAG officials denied that NPFL forces were responsible. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**Late October 1992:** the NPFL allegedly killed more than 25 people in Maryland County, apparently because they were suspected of supporting ULIMO. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**October 1992:** Civilians in Monrovia were subjected to ill-treatment, harassment and looting by AFL and ULIMO troops. At least six people were reported to have been summarily executed by these forces on suspicion of being NPFL fighters. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**November 1992:** ECOMOG forces threatened to shoot on sight any member of the armed forces who broke a night curfew imposed in Monrovia. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**November 1992:** An AFL soldier was publicly executed in Monrovia by the AFL the day after he was convicted of murder and robbery by an AFL court-martial. (AI Annual Report 1993)

**January 1993:** Two unnamed soldiers were reportedly executed in January after being convicted of looting by an AFL court martial. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**January 1993:** AFL soldiers found responsible (by who?) for extrajudicial execution of Brian Garnham, manager of a research laboratory. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**February 1993:** ULIMO reportedly executed eight of its fighters in February for looting and harassing civilians. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**February 1993:** Thirteen elders at Haindi were held responsible for the drowning of a ULIMO commander and extrajudicially executed. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**March 1993:** ULIMO summarily executed 14 young men in Zorzor suspected of supporting the NPFL. Refugees who fled to neighbouring Guinea were reportedly either forcibly returned to Liberia or executed in Guinea after perfunctory investigations by an illegal tribunal of Liberian exiles base in Macenta and apparently linked to ULIMO. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**April 1993:** When ECOMOG forces took Buchanan in April, civilians who refused to flee with the NPFL were apparently killed by NPFL soldiers. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**May 1993:** In an attack on Fasama, a town under ULIMO control, about 200 civilians were reportedly killed indiscriminately by NPFL soldiers. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**July 1993:** ULIMO was alleged to have extrajudicially executed as many as 300 members of the Lorma ethnic group in Voinjama who opposed their control of the town. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**August/September 1993:** Reports of NPFL attacks on Liberian refugees in camps close to the border in Cote d'Ivoire or as they returned to tend their crops in southeastern Liberia. Several were reportedly killed. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**September 1993:** A UN inquiry found that the AFL had been responsible for the extrajudicial executions of nearly 600 unarmed civilians – mostly women, children and elderly people – at displaced people's camps near Harbel in June.

**October 1993:** ULIMO fighters reportedly killed large numbers of people from the Kissi ethnic group in Foya district. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**October 1993:** The NPFL was accused of killing civilians in the course of conflict with ULIMO for control of Lofa and Bong Counties. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**October 1993:** Sierra Leonean Revolutionary United Front forces were reported to have killed civilians in Lofa County on suspicion of supporting opposing forces. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**October 1993:** Liberian Peace Council fighters reportedly killed civilians in Sinoe County in the southeast who refused to join them. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**December 1993:** LPC fighters killed nine church ministers in Greenville after accusing them of being 'anti-Krahn'. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**December 1993:** About 20 people were killed in attacks by ULIMO on villages suspected of supplying NPFL combatants. (AI Annual Report 1994)

**June 1994:** Mandingo ULIMO fighters reportedly killed at least four civilians and took women hostage for money when they burned and looted villages in the Tienne area. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**17 June 1994-** ULIMO fighters raided the village of Goe. They forced all the villagers to assemble at a central point and accused them of supporting a rival ULIMO group. They burnt houses and looted extensively. They also tied up the village chief in his hut and set it on fire. (AFR 34/01/95)

**19 June 1994-** An ULIMO group led by Commander Keita killed six people from the Bangorama village and burnt down the house of the local chief. (AFR 34/01/95)

**23 June 1994:** An ULIMO K group attacked the village of Ngojah and murdered two people. They were tied up and their throats slit. (AFR 34/01/95)

**July 1994:** In Barnablo Beach LPC fighters allegedly tied their victims' arms behind their backs, burned them severely with heated machetes, forced them to carry looted goods to another village and shot dead one man who had collapsed on the way. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**July 1994:** LDF fighters reportedly killed more than 70 civilians in the village of Rusie, near Zorzor, Lofa County. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**August 1994:** Mandingo ULIMO fighters allegedly killed at least 20 civilians in Gbesseh. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**August/September 1994:** An ULIMO tribunal ordered the execution by firing-squad of civilians whom it suspected to be NPFL supporters. (AFR 34/01/95)

**August/September 1994:** Mandingo ULIMO fighters reportedly killed civilians in Lofa and Bong Counties. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**August 1994-** The NPFL was reported to have executed up to 80 of its own fighters, without trial, and to have tortured and killed Lieutenant-General Nixon Gaye, an NPFL Commander, for leading a mutiny against Charles Taylor. (AFR 34/01/95)

**September 1994:** NPFL fighters tied up at least 20 men, women and children and threw them into the St John River at Bahla Bridge. (AFR 34/02/95)

**September 1994:** At least two Tanzanian ECOMOG soldiers were killed in Kakata when Krahn ULIMO fighters reportedly attacked a convoy of civilians fleeing Gbarnga, which included UNOMIL observers and aid workers. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** On 23 September armed men reportedly killed displaced civilians and medical staff at Phebe Hospital near Gbarnga; responsibility was not clear but the killings apparently occurred after NPFL forces overran the area. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** NPFL fighters reportedly shot dead some 100 people in Palala, Bong County, on suspicion of being ULIMO supporters. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** LPC fighters in Greenville were reported to have killed MarieTokpa, a girl from the Kpelle ethnic group, who resisted being raped. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** LPC fighters reportedly assembled the inhabitants of Kpolokpai, Kokoya District, Bong Country, killed 30 alleged NPFL fighters and supporters with machetes, then shot dead 15 other civilian prisoners and fired into the crowd. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**September 1994:** NPFL fighters robbed and killed civilians as they fled the Gbarnga area. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**October 1994:** From October NPFL fighters reportedly killed scores of civilians in Maryland County whom they suspected of supporting the LPC, among them Simon Gyekye, a Ghanaian school principal in Plebo. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**October 1994:** LPC fighters apparently fired on assembled civilians in Zanzaye, killing scores of them. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**November 1994:** LPC fighters allegedly killed 12 residents of Sabo Wofiken. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**December 1994:** More than 50 civilians were massacred at Paynesville. Responsibility was unclear but witnesses said the attackers were Krahn AFL soldiers. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**December 1994:** The NPFL executed six senior commanders held responsible for the fall of Gbarnga in September, apparently after a court-martial. (AI Annual Report 1995)

**April 1995:** UNICEF representatives reported a massacre in Yosi, a village near Buchanan. They stated that at least 62 people, including women and children, had been rounded up and killed – most had been hacked to death. The UNICEF workers could not determine who was responsible for the massacre; the area had been controlled by the NPFL but was contested by the LPC. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**June 1995:** Clashes between ULIMO factions in Royesville left many civilians dead; survivors were raped and terrorized. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**August 1995:** After the peace agreement, it was reported that NPFL fighters had been responsible for the massacre of at least 75 civilians in the Tappeta area, Nimba County. Although he discounted the figure of those killed, Charles Taylor, leader of the NPFL, stated that some NPFL members had been arrested and would face court-martial for these acts. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**November 1995:** At least four LPC commanders were executed by firing-squad on the orders of a specially constituted court. According to reports, the execution followed a two-week investigation into human rights abuses. (AI Annual Report 1996) (AFR 34/04/95)

**December 1995:** UNOMIL observers commenting on the human rights situation in Tubmanburg confirmed that ULIMO-J had forced civilians out of the hospital where they had sought refuge from the fighting and had used that as ‘human shields’ to protect their positions. (AI Annual Report 1996)

**January 1996:** Reports that members of the LPC were killing, raping and harassing members of the Grebo ethnic group in southeast Liberia. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**January 1996:** The bodies of five civilians were exhumed in Tubmanburg, together with those of nine ECOMOG soldiers, allegedly killed by ULIMO-J. One of the victims had been decapitated and, according to a pathologist, another had apparently been tied up and then shot. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**February 1996:** Lieutenant Prince Musa of the NPFL was killed a few minutes after being found guilty by a court-martial of killing a civilian who refused to hand over money. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**March 1996:** At least four civilians were reportedly killed when LPC combatants in Buchanan opened fire on them after running over a pedestrian with their vehicle. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**April and May 1996:** Fighters loyal to the NPFL displayed the head of a ULIMO-J fighter who had been shot and then decapitated. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**April and May 1996:** The body of Benson Wyen, former Managing Director of the Forestry Development Agency, was found near the police academy in Paynesville. He was reportedly killed by the NPFL. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**May 1996:** Alhaji Kromah, leader of ULIMO-K, publicly stated that he would summarily execute any of these men who harassed civilians. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**May 1996:** Five bodies were found in Benson Street, Monrovia. The victims reportedly had their ears cut off or their throats cut before being shot, following fighting between ULIMO-J and the NPFL. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**September 1996:** Dozens of civilians were killed after clashes between ULIMO-J and ULIMO-K. At least 21 civilians were killed in Sinje, Cape Mount County, reportedly by ULIMO-K. One of those killed was a baby girl, whose skull had been fractured. (AI Annual Report 1997)

**1996:** An LPC official publicly stated that LPC fighters responsible for the killing of three civilians in Buchanan would be executed. (AI Annual Report 1997)

### **III. THE CHARLES TAYLOR ERA: 1997-2003**

Former president Charles Taylor was elected in 1997 and stayed in power until 2003 when he left for Nigeria as a means to end the war. During Charles Taylor's reign, which lasted from 1997-2003, no effort was made to address the human rights violations and abuses that were committed during the 1989-1996 conflict. Security forces were manned with former combatants without vetting, retraining, or any process of rehabilitation for combatants. Massacres, torture including rape, ill-treatment, and recruitment of child soldiers were regularly carried out by the security forces and the police against the civilian population. The arrest, ill treatment and killing of human rights defenders, journalists and opposition leaders were carried out on a regular basis.

In 1999 Amnesty International began reporting on human rights abuses and violations being carried out in the context of armed conflict against the civilian population by both government security forces and the Liberian United for Reconciliation and Development (LURD), an armed opposition group with bases in Guinea. The fighting and targeting of civilians led to massive displacement both in Liberia and across borders.

In 2003, a new armed opposition group, Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) emerged in the east of the country. With rebel groups controlling 70 percent of the country, civilians were denied access to both protection and humanitarian aid. Some of the worst reported destruction and death in Monrovia took place in June and July 2003 as LURD forces advanced with heavy weaponry. There are estimates that close to one thousand people died during this period. An elusive peace was established in August 2003 with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra, Ghana. Charles Taylor left for Nigeria. The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) took power in October 2003 which coincided with deployment of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and by late 2004 all 15,000 troops were fully deployed throughout the country.

#### **Summaries of cases and events:**

**EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS; UNLAWFUL KILLING OF CIVILIANS**

**September 1998:** It appeared that some of those who died during the fighting in September may have been extrajudicially executed. Some of the bodies retrieved reportedly had their hands tied behind their backs and showed evidence of bullet wounds. (AI Annual Report 1999)

**1998:** It was reported that people died when members of the security forces opened fire in one of two churches in the Camp Johnson Road area where they had sought refuge. Other victims were dragged out of ambulances despite appeals by the health personnel that they be allowed to receive the urgent medical attention they needed. (AI Annual Report 1999)

**October 1998:** A government spokesperson announced that 11 people had been killed on 22 September in what he described as a "shoot-out" between government soldiers and dissident troops trying to release their supporters from custody at the Post Stockade in Monrovia's Barclay Training Centre. The delay in making public this information and the refusal to return the bodies to the families, raised concerns that the 11 may have been extrajudicially executed. (AI Annual Report 1999)

**March 1999:** At least two people were killed, and eight houses and a mosque burned down in the town of Zowudomai, Lofa County, in one of several inter-communal clashes between members of the Lorma and Mandingo ethnic groups. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**April 1999:** The town of Voinjama was reportedly attacked by a group of armed men. A number of civilians, mostly belonging to the Mandingo ethnic group, were reportedly killed in Voinjama during and after the fighting. Some were alleged to have been deliberately killed by the Liberian security forces. Others, including children, were reportedly detained without charge or trial by the security forces in Voinjama for several weeks after the fighting. Some were reportedly beaten. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**4 August 1999:** At least one civilian was reported to have died after police reportedly belonging to the Special Operations Division attacked a group of street sellers in the red-light district in Paynesville, Monrovia. It appears that the police intervention was ordered to stop street sellers from trespassing on private land. Officers armed with guns and machine-guns were reported to have violently assaulted and in some cases beaten unarmed sellers, including women and children, and to have arrested about 15 civilians. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**May 2000:** The bodyguards of a government official reportedly beat and burned three people in Monrovia; they were suspected of stealing from the official. One of them, Gbaela Willie, died as a result of his injuries. Monrovia police reportedly arrested four bodyguards and opened an investigation into the death. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**September 2000:** An army commander said that he had personally executed Aruna Boakai, an Anti-Terrorist Unit officer, in the town of Voinjama, Lofa County, for killing a soldier in August. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**November 2000:** A Senate committee investigated allegations that a senator had ordered the security forces to detain illegally, beat and flog civilians in River Gee County, southeastern Liberia. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**June 2001:** After Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) officers entered Gilima, a town in upper Lofa County near Kolahun, they rounded up and "screened" approximately 50 people. Twenty-five were

accused of backing the rebels and taken away by the ATU. Later, fleeing civilians allegedly saw the bodies of at least 10 of those taken away by the ATU, on the side of a road near Kolahun. The victims had been blindfolded and some had their hands tied behind their backs. Eyewitnesses provided consistent accounts linking their deaths to the ATU. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**January 2002:** AFL soldiers shot dead a woman and wounded her four-year-old son at her home in Sawmill, near Tubmanburg, Bomi County. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**Mid-April 2002:** During fighting in Sawmill in mid-April, men and boys who refused to fight with government forces were summarily executed. They included Fofoe Kanneh, a Mandingo. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**May 2002:** Eleven people of Mandingo ethnic origin were killed in Gbaney and another eight in Gbeka, both close to Gbarnga, Bong County. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**May 2002:** More than a dozen boys, the youngest 15, and men were forcibly recruited in the suburbs of Monrovia; four were later summarily executed for refusing to fight. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**March 2003:** Three humanitarian workers were killed by government forces in late March and others were abducted. (AI Annual Report 2004)

**April 2003:** Government forces, including special security units such as the Anti-Terrorist Unit, and pro-Taylor militia were responsible for summary executions, rape and forced recruitment, including of children. Scores of civilians suspected of opposing President Taylor were reported to have been summarily executed, in particular by militia. Credible but unsubstantiated reports were received of killings by government forces of more than 350 civilians, including women and children, in villages in River Gee County. (AI Annual Report 2004)

**May 2003:** The circumstances of the death of Sam Bockarie, a leading member of the Sierra Leone armed opposition RUF, remained unclear. The government claimed that he had died in a confrontation with government forces but suspicions surrounding his death were compounded by the reported murder of his mother, wife and two children in Monrovia several days later. (AI Annual Report 2004)

**June 2003:** While indiscriminate shelling or stray bullets caused many civilian casualties in Monrovia, others resulted from random attacks by undisciplined government forces. (AI Annual Report 2004)

**June and July 2003:** More than a thousand civilians were killed and many others injured in Monrovia either in cross-fire or by indiscriminate shelling of areas with no obvious military targets, including those harbouring thousands of displaced people. While most shelling was attributed to the LURD, government forces were also responsible. (AI Annual Report 2004)

**June and July 2003:** Some members of militia accused of rape or caught looting were summarily executed by their commanders in Monrovia after the authorities announced that those responsible would be dealt with severely. (AI Annual Report 2004)

### **ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION, TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT**

**February to May 1997:** ECOMOG forces undertook cordon-and-search operations to find hidden weapons. More than 70 people were arrested and held in secret detention camps on suspicion of possessing weapons. Most of them were tortured or ill-treated. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**February 1997:** An ECOMOG patrol arrested 25 suspected former combatants in Grand Cape Mount County, took them to Monrovia and held them in a secret cell at the ECOMOG base. They were reportedly beaten with electric wire. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**February 1997:** Four dock workers suspected of being former United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy Johnson branch (ULIMO-J) fighters were arrested in Sayontown and taken to the ECOMOG base in Monrovia. There, three ECOMOG soldiers reportedly beat them with wire on the back, shoulders and legs and kicked them. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**May 1997:** ECOMOG soldiers based in Fendu travelled to Grand Cape Mount County to conduct a cordon-and-search operation at Lajoy goldmine. During interrogation, six former fighters and three civilians were reportedly beaten with wooden sticks and electric wire and one civilian was reportedly slashed with razor blades. One former combatant died during the night following the beating. The other victims reportedly had swollen faces, injured eyes, slash wounds and hearing problems. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**September 1997:** Liberian police and ECOMOG soldiers assaulted a group of some 500 employees of the Firestone plantation company in Harbel, near Monrovia, who were demonstrating peacefully for the release of four colleagues held by the company's security staff. Police and soldiers reportedly beat the workers with batons and gun butts, then opened fire, injuring seven people. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**April 1999:** At least 34 people were charged with treason following the fighting in September 1998. In April, 13 of the defendants were convicted of treason, an offence carrying a sentence of death or life imprisonment. One defendant was acquitted. AI sent a delegate to observe the trial and was concerned about the competence of the court and irregularities in the trial proceedings. Some of the defendants told the delegate that they had been ill-treated before and during the trial. Some appeared to have been beaten severely, and at least two had loss of hearing and broken limbs. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**1999:** A group of military officers, nine of whom were charged with sedition, was arrested in connection with the fighting in Monrovia of September 1998 and brought to trial during 1999. Their trial was suspended several times by a Court Martial Board amid controversy about the government's reported failure to ensure adequate financial resources for the trial. By the end of 1999, the trial was suspended indefinitely. Concerns were also expressed about the perceived lack of guarantees for a fair trial and about alleged intimidation of defence lawyers. Moreover, the defendants were reportedly ill-treated and held in conditions which might have amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. They were reported to have been regularly denied food and medical care. On at least one occasion defendants fainted during the trial proceedings, reportedly because they had been denied food for several days. The prisoners were also repeatedly beaten and flogged in the early days of their detention. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**February 2000:** A court martial convicted four army officers of sedition - General Joseph Jarlee, Major Alphonso Dubar, Master Sergeant Alexander Gee and Private Okpakakpu Monger - and sentenced them to 10 years' imprisonment. Five other officers were acquitted. There were

concerns that the trial did not meet international standards for fair trial and about the alleged intimidation of defense lawyers. The defendants, who were reportedly beaten following their arrest, continued to be detained in harsh conditions at a military barracks. General Jarlee was reportedly denied adequate food or medical treatment. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**August 2000:** The Liberian government issued an arrest warrant for Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, an opposition leader in exile, to face treason charges, with 14 others, for allegedly supporting the insurgents. Of those charged, only Raleigh Seekie was arrested and was still in detention awaiting trial at the end of 2000. Several other civilians suspected of supporting the insurgents were reported to have been arrested in Monrovia and in other parts of the country. It was not known whether they had been released by the end of the year. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**December 2000:** The Supreme Court heard appeals by 13 people convicted of treason in April 1999 and by the prosecution in the same case which called for longer prison sentences. The Court increased the sentences from 10 to 20 years' imprisonment. In April 1999 the Criminal Court had given as its reason for a lenient sentence the "need for genuine reconciliation in the country". The trial had been marred by irregularities and some of the defendants had been beaten severely following their arrest. Most were former government officials serving 10-year prison sentences in the Central Prison, Monrovia, where they were reportedly harassed and denied adequate medical care. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**May 2001:** Over 100 men and boys in Bong County in northern Liberia were arrested as suspected dissidents. They were subsequently detained at Gbatata military base for periods of up to a month and reportedly tear gassed, had acid thrown at them, denied water and starved. Several reportedly died as a result. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**April and May 2001:** As many as 15,000 fleeing civilians were halted for several weeks at the St Pauls River on the border between Lofa and Bong Counties by the Liberian security forces. Civilians were subjected to violations such as torture, including rape, and forced recruitment into the security forces. There were reportedly numerous deaths from starvation, disease and unsanitary conditions. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**June 2001:** A 29-year-old man was captured by the LURD while trying to flee the fighting. His hands were tied behind his back. He was detained for several days with two other men and a woman. He reportedly witnessed the deliberate shooting and killing of the two other men on the orders of a high-ranking officer. The woman was reported to have been raped. Both the woman and the man eventually escaped. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**June and July 2001:** On several occasions ATU and police forces reportedly entered a camp for internally displaced people in Bong County, fired in the air, seized men and boys and took them to Gbatata military base where they were severely ill-treated. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**November 2001:** Two Nigerian nationals reportedly died in custody as a result of torture after being arrested on suspicion of stealing jewellery from a deputy government minister. The deputy minister and members of the security forces were subsequently arrested. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**December 2001:** A 14-year-old boy in Gbarnga, Bong County, was shot dead by police who subsequently said that he was an armed robber. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**January 2002:** A LURD commander forced several men from Kolahun, Lofa County, to carry ammunition. Two were shot in the leg for not walking fast enough, one of whom later died. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**24 February 2002:** ATU and SOD forces arrested 45 young men at a displaced people's camp in Monrovia. They were released the following day after payments by their families. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**February 2002:** In Tubmanburg, four men suspected of being "dissidents" were reportedly tortured by members of the ATU; one subsequently died. A surviving victim described his scrotum being beaten with a hammer. Arrests and ill-treatment of suspected opponents continued after the lifting of the state of emergency in September. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**June 2002:** During an attack by the LURD on a refugee camp at Sinje, Grand Cape Mount County, five nurses working with a Liberian medical relief organization were abducted and held until September. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**December 2002:** Leading members of the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia, David Kiazolu and Christopher Toe, were arrested, apparently suspected of collaborating with the LURD. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**11 December 2002:** Five members of opposition political parties were arrested in Grand Bassa County and taken to Monrovia where they remained held without charge before being released. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**14 December 2002:** Throble Suah, a journalist on *The Inquirer* newspaper, was stopped in a street in Monrovia and severely beaten by security forces, believed to be ATU members; he required urgent medical treatment. (AI Annual Report 2003)

### **RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE**

**March 1999:** Members of the military, searching for a missing man, detained and beat elders in the village of Dambala, Grand Cape Mount County. Villagers complained that the soldiers had raped several women and had looted money and goods. The alleged violations followed several hours of shooting in the village. Military authorities admitted that looting had occurred but denied the allegations of violence and rape. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**June 2001:** A 17-year-old woman was seized in Vahun district by an ATU officer, detained and gang-raped repeatedly over 10 days. When she was released, her life was threatened if she told anyone. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**February 2002:** A woman aged 23 who had fled her home was gang-raped and severely beaten by security forces in Margibi County. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**May 2002:** As thousands of civilians fled fighting around Gbarnga as many as 20 women reported that they had been raped by security forces. They included a 19 year old raped by four government-allied militia. Another woman was abducted, held for two days and repeatedly raped by an ATU member. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**August 2002:** Three women fleeing to Guinea were abducted by LURD combatants between Kotolahun and Honyahun. They were forced to carry loads and then raped. Those responsible were subsequently beaten by their commanders. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**February 2003:** B.D., aged 18, from Bomi County, was captured by LURD forces in February 2003 and forced to become the "wife" of a LURD combatant. When Amnesty International representatives met her in November 2003, she had a baby boy: *"I was captured on 4 February 2003 in Cheesemanburg market where I was selling fish. The LURD fighters were shooting between themselves and one 21-year-old boy came to take me from the market to be his 'wife'. I was forced to join him to save my life. I didn't receive any training but I was given a gun to fight. I fought in February, March and April, before World War I. By World War I my stomach was getting big so I fled to Monrovia. My 'husband' was fighting. I ran to Seighbeh camp. People pointed at me and said that I was a fighter. I was with other boy and girl fighters. I came to the camp [Plumkor] but fighting broke out again and LURD said that we should go to our villages. I went home and had my baby. There was no medical treatment in the village so I returned to the camp. People still point us out. My 'husband' was still in Monrovia and when he came to the camp they beat him severely and he ran away and hid. He came back and we were thrown out of the house because we were fighters. Now we don't have anything. I want to go back to school and have some training, like tie-dye."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**March 2003:** At a disused and dilapidated former government building in Monrovia housing several hundred former combatants with government forces and those associated with them, including women and children, several adolescent girls who had been abducted from Ganta by former government militia in March 2003 gave accounts of their ordeals; all had all been raped, including E.B., aged 14: *"I was coming from church on Sunday morning. They abducted five girls coming from church. They took us to the front line. We had to cook and carry ammunition in the bush. They treated us bad; if I didn't go [have sex] with them, they would kill me... They brought me to Monrovia and left me here. I want to go to school. I want to go back to Nimba to my people."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**March 2003:** A 14-year-old girl, Y.D., was abducted from Ganta, Nimba County by former government militia as she was on her way to school: *"I was going to school in Ganta when they captured me. I had to carry ammunition through the bush to the front line. I was treated badly. I had to steal to get food but if you were caught you were beaten and put in the sun. When we slept, the men came over and took off our underwear and abused us. Several men abused us. I want to go back home and go to school and do petty trading."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**April 2003:** T.S., aged 23, whom Amnesty International representatives met at Plumkor internally displaced people's camp, had been abducted from another internally displaced people's camp, Ricks Institute, by LURD forces in April 2003. She was taken to Bomi County, given a gun and, without any training, forced to fight. She in turn captured and abducted other girls. She described her own experience and that of other girls who had been abducted and forced to join the ranks of LURD forces: *"I captured other girls and brought them back to Bomi. They did it to me so I had the intention of paying back. I captured nine girls, beat them and tied them. I fought in Monrovia in June and July. Many of the girls died in the fighting. Some were captured and killed by government forces. During World War I, I lost six girls mainly because they were not familiar with the area and was captured by government soldiers. In World War II, I lost two girls in 'face-to-face' fighting. Some of the girls were ordered to cook and carry food to the front line and were*

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killed at that time. Girls from 11 years old were captured and were part of my group. Even the small girls fought. The youngest in the camp is now 13. Many of the girls were raped when they were captured but once I had my own girls, I wouldn't let it happen. The men didn't take the girls by force to rape them. They would have to ask me if there was a girl they liked and they wanted to take her. In many cases I agreed and the girls would go with them. I had 46 girls under my command." (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** K.L., a Sierra Leonean refugee with an eight-year-old daughter, was in the VOA camp in June 2003 when it was attacked first by LURD and then by government forces: "*LURD didn't give any problems; they didn't loot. But then government troops came – Charles Taylor people. There was heavy fighting, shooting. Charles Taylor people came knocking about. They threatened to kill me and asked me to follow them. They took me and my friend and put us on the floor. They had guns. Three men raped us both. I later had a discharge. I got some medical treatment but I still have problems. I am embarrassed to go back home [to Sierra Leone].*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** P.P., aged 25, from Tubmanburg, Bomi County, fled from Wilson Corner camp when government forces attacked it in June 2003: "*Government soldiers came. I was sick. They wanted to carry [abduct] me. They threatened to shoot me. I was afraid. They grabbed me and pulled me and started to beat me. They said, 'I will use [rape] you. Be my woman'. They beat me and kicked me in the stomach, then just left me. My stomach still hurts and my periods have stopped but I am not pregnant.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** M.C., aged 35, from Bomi County, but displaced to Wilson Corner camp, was raped by government forces in June 2003: "*Two men raped me. I am bleeding all the time. I haven't been to hospital. There is no medical care.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** A 27-year-old woman who had been raped in 1990 when aged 14 and again in 1994 when she was gang-raped by three different men described the circumstances of yet another rape to a Médecins Sans Frontières staff member in June 2003: "*The day before yesterday, I went to the bush to look for wood. There were three government soldiers with guns. One of them saw me and asked, 'Where are you going?' I said I was looking for wood. Then he told me, 'You are assigned to me for the day'. I was very afraid. He forced me to go far into the bush and he undressed me. Then he raped me. When I got dressed afterwards he took 50 Liberian dollars from me. I came back to the camp and yesterday I felt very sick. My stomach is very painful, but I don't have any money to go for treatment.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** A.B., a Sierra Leonean refugee, had fled to Liberia in 1991 when the internal armed conflict in Sierra Leone began. She was in the refugee camp known as VOA in Montserrado County when both former government and LURD forces attacked the camp in June 2003. (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** A father described to Amnesty International representatives in November 2003 how his elder daughter was abducted by LURD forces from their home in Duala, Monrovia: "*Government forces retreated and LURD took over; they made a patrol of the area and then came back at 10.30 and told me to open the door. They said, 'Who's there with you?' I had two children, daughters, a small one and a big one. They saw the small one and said, 'Where's the other one?' There was a lot of shouting. The older one was lying on the ground, covered. She was fully dressed, wearing trousers. Commander 'Muppet' said, 'Take this one.' I said that she was sick and my wife, who was pregnant, tried to intervene. They took my daughter. Another girl was with*

them. They went around collecting a group of girls. They tried to get into a compound and told the girls to wait outside. My daughter ran away and hid between an old building and a fence. Commander 'Alligator' told 'Muppet' to stop. I don't know what happened to the other girl." (AFR 34/017/2004)

**June 2003:** A Sierra Leonean refugee, K.K., was raped while in the VOA camp in June 2003: "*During World War I, I was raped by government troops. They came to the camp disguised as LURD rebels. They came into my house and said, 'mother-fucker, come outside'. I was then raped at gunpoint by five soldiers. My baby son was caught by a bullet and died. The soldiers took everything. I don't think that there were commanders; they were generals for themselves. I fled to Bushrod Island but the St Paul bridge was closed and there was heavy fighting. I went to a community centre and stayed there until the end of the war. There was a lot of harassment and looting there by renegade government militia. I want to return to Sierra Leone but I will need help when I get there.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**July 2003:** F.C., aged 38, a mother of four children, was at home in her village near Gbarnga, Bong County, when LURD forces attacked: "*When the fighting began, I was beaten and raped by five "dissidents" [LURD combatants]. Since then I haven't had a period. My stomach hurts when I eat. After they raped me, they forced me to go with them. Five other women were with me. They accused us of being Charles Taylor people and supporting Taylor's soldiers. I was afraid; anything they told me, I would do. I had a six-month-old baby but it got sick and died; there was no treatment. I spent two days with the soldiers. Then I escaped one day when I went to get water. I don't know where my husband is; he was not at home when the soldiers came.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**July 2003:** D.K., aged 30, from Grand Cape Mount County, but internally displaced in Perry Town camp, was raped in July 2003: "*During World War III, four government soldiers forced my door open and demanded money. I said that I didn't have any. They forced me onto the bed and cut my panties with scissors. They kicked me in the stomach and then raped me. They threatened to kill me. My stomach has hurt since then. No man wants me because of the condition I have. Because of the pain, I can't do hard work. There isn't a good clinic in the camp and I have no money for medicine.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**July 2003:** E.G., aged 40 had fled to the camp in Kakata following an attack on Gbarnga by LURD forces in July 2003: "*I heard heavy gun-fire as the rebels attacked and I ran into the bush. The rebels said, 'those who are supporting Charles Taylor government, we will deal with you people'. Two LURD rebels beat me and another one carried me into the bush and raped me. I stayed in the bush for two days and then went back to town to look for my family. My four children who had stayed behind said that their father was killed in front of them. The rebels said, 'We will kill your pa and you go tell your ma; aren't you the ones giving place to Charles Taylor? We will treat you like a dog and kill you.' I left Gbarnga with my four children and came to Kakata.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

**August 2003:** M.M., aged 38, a mother of five children, was in Gbarnga in August 2003 when LURD forces attacked the town. She fled to Kakata and had not seen her husband since the attack: "*The LURD hit Gbarnga. They raped me. Many LURD wanted to rape. Two LURD raped me. I still have pains in my stomach and in my spine. LURD took everything from the house; I escaped with my life. I walked from Gbarnga to Kakata. But then government militia took the few things that were left; they beat and looted. I arrived here with nothing.*" (AFR 34/017/2004)

A.B., a mother of three children, from Bomi County, had sought refuge in Perry Town camp: *"Charles Taylor people hurt me; they beat me and raped me. Ten people raped me. Since then I have been ill. I feel pain; all my body hurts. I have a discharge but there is no medicine."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**August and September 2003:** Internally displaced people, whom Amnesty International representatives met in camps in Kakata, Margibi County, and Totota, Bong County, described how they had fled continuing insecurity in the region around Sanoyie, Bong County in the months following the peace agreement. Their villages had been first attacked and looted by LURD forces in August and September 2003 and then, as they fled, their remaining possessions were taken by former government forces based around Sanoyie. Former government forces were continuing to loot farms and villages in the Sanoyie area, accompanied in some cases by beatings, rape, abductions and forced labour. K.C., aged 35, who had fled to E.J. Yancey camp near Totota, described what she had witnessed: *"Every day and night the soldiers came to take our food, our clothes. They beat. They could come to the market and shoot, making people run away and then take their goods. I left there yesterday because of the beating and looting. I saw one woman who had given birth in the morning and was raped in the evening. Her baby died. Girls were also raped."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

M.S., also aged 35 and from Sanoyie, provided a similar account: *"They raped one of my sisters who had just delivered a baby. She died. Rape is going on but there is a lot more beating. My husband was beaten and all my possessions were taken by government militia. Some of the soldiers were aged about 14."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

E.W., a 54-year-old mother of seven children and with five grandchildren, from Gbarnga, was at the internally displaced peoples' camp in Kakata. She described the rape of her 15-year-old granddaughter: *"The rebels came into the town and my house was hit by a rocket and burned down. My 12-year-old son was killed. I ran away but the rebels stopped me and took all my belongings. While I was running to Kakata, we stopped at Cottingham College campus. My granddaughter was raped by rebels. I begged and cried for them to stop. I became separated from her and have not seen her since."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

Amnesty International representatives met H.B., from Bomi County, a week after she had arrived in Perry Town camp: *"I was in Bomi County in World War I when government soldiers came to my house. My husband was cut and tied up. I was raped by two men in front of him – I was pregnant. I was in pain for week and later I had a difficult birth. The soldiers took everything."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

P.M. had also sought refuge in Perry Town camp: *"I was raped in front of my family by four LURD rebels during World War II. My grandmother and father were killed at the same time. The rest of the family were told to laugh."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**October and November 2003:** Amnesty International representatives visited Sagleipie in Nimba County in November 2003. Testimonies from internally displaced people described killings, beatings, abduction and rape by MODEL forces as they advanced northwards from Tapeta towards Graie and other villages during October and November 2003: *"They attacked Gblonar on 10 November [2003]. They burned it down. I don't know where my parents are. They carried people away. I don't know what MODEL are doing to them. They took one women's 18-year-old daughter; she was pregnant."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**November 2003:** A 60-year-old man, V.V., described an attack by MODEL forces on Graie on 1 November 2003: *"I was on the farm. I heard that MODEL had entered Graie. After a few days I got information that the fighting had stopped. People started to go back to Graie. MODEL had burned most of the houses in Graie. They had tied some people, beat them with cutlasses. They stripped people – both men and women."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**2003:** At the VOA camp Amnesty International representatives spoke to a number of Sierra Leonean refugees who had been caught in the escalating violence during the first six months of 2003. Among them was a 22-year-old, J.S., a mother of one child: *"LURD rebels killed my father in Cape Mount [Grand Cape Mount County]; they tied and beat and killed him. LURD forces came to this camp and four of them raped me. They told me to run away and so I fled. Since then I have been bleeding and I have pain in my stomach. I have received some treatment but I am still bleeding."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**2003:** M.H., aged 29, from Bomi County, was pregnant when former government forces raped her. Amnesty International representatives met her in Wilson Corner internally displaced people's camp: *"I was pregnant and running away from the camp near St. Paul Bridge. Three government soldiers caught me and raped me. They beat me and my unborn baby died. All my belongings were stolen."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**2003:** H.S., from Bomi County, recounted her ordeal at Wilson Corner internally displaced camp, Montserrado County: *"I came to the camp one and half years ago. My husband [a civilian] was killed by LURD forces, leaving me with five children. I am disabled so I could not run away when government soldiers attacked the camp in World War II. Two soldiers came into my house and raped me. I have had stomach pains ever since but have not had any treatment. Afterwards I left the camp. Many of those who stayed were forced to go to Tubmanburg by the LURD."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

**2003:** A.S., from Bomi County, who was in Perry Town internally displaced camp in Montserrado County, had been raped on two separate occasions by former government forces. She was clearly traumatized and felt deep shame, fearing the reaction of others in the camp if they became aware of what had happened to her: *"During World War I was in Klay [Bomi County] but in World War II I fled into the bush with my four-year-old son. Three soldiers caught me and two other women and forced us to go with them. I had to cook for the soldiers. They hit me on my side with a gun. I put down my son and then two men raped me. Then I came to Perry Town but when World War III broke out, I ran away to Blamasee [an internally displaced people's camp]. I was sleeping behind a school building when two soldiers came and raped me. I couldn't fight. Since then my stomach hurts. I have seen a doctor and told them what happened and I was given some medicine."* (AFR 34/017/2004)

### **RECRUITMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS**

**February 2003:** B.D., aged 18 years, from Bomi County, was captured by LURD forces in February 2003 and forced to become the "wife" of a LURD combatant. When Amnesty International representatives met her, she had a two-month-old baby boy: *"I was captured on 4 February 2003 in Cheesemanburg market where I was selling fish. The LURD fighters were shooting between themselves and one 21-year-old boy came to take me from the market to be his 'wife'. I was forced to join him to save my life. I didn't receive any training but I was given a gun*

*to fight. I fought in February, March and April, before World War I. By World War I my stomach was getting big so I fled to Monrovia. My 'husband' was fighting. I ran to Seighbeh camp. People pointed at me and said that I was a fighter. I was with other boy and girl fighters. I came to the camp [Plumkor] but fighting broke out again and LURD said that we should go to our villages. I went home and had my baby. There was no medical treatment in the village so I returned to the camp. People still point us out. My 'husband' was still in Monrovia and when he came to the camp they beat him severely and he ran away and hid. He came back and we were thrown out of the house because we were fighters. Now we don't have anything. I want to go back to school and have some training, like tie-dye." (AFR 34/006/2004)*

At the "Titanic" several adolescent girls recounted how they had been abducted from Ganta, Nimba County, by former government militia in March 2003; they had all been raped, including E.B., aged 14 years: *"I was coming from church on Sunday morning. They abducted five girls coming from church. They took us to the front line. We had to cook and carry ammunition in the bush. They treated us bad; if I didn't go with them, they would kill me...They brought me to Monrovia and left me here. I want to go to school. I want to go back to Nimba to my people." (AFR 34/006/2004)*

Another 14-year-old girl, Y.D., was also abducted from Ganta in March 2003 by former government militia: *"I was going to school in Ganta when they captured me. I had to carry ammunition through the bush to the front line. I was treated badly. I had to steal to get food but if you were caught you were beaten and put in the sun. When we slept, the men came over and took off our underwear and abused us. Several men abused us. I want to go back home and go to school and do petty trading." (AFR 34/006/2004)*

A.B., now aged nine years, described how he had become separated from his parents in Lofa County after an attack on his village in late 1999. He followed LURD combatants simply in order to survive and, aged seven years, was given a gun: *"To hold guns is not good for children. You cannot sleep good, you cannot eat good food...Now I see that I will have a good future by going to school." (AFR 34/006/2004)*

P.K., now 13 years old, from Zorzor, Lofa County, was first captured by former government forces in 2002. Amnesty International representatives spoke to him at the "Titanic": *"Government soldiers came and forced me and my father to join them. My father refused so they cut his throat. They beat me and tied me and forced me to join the fighters. First, I carried ammunition but then they gave me a gun and said that I should join the 'Small Boys Unit'. There were more than 10 small boys with me but there were 50 adults. I was sometimes beaten for misbehaving. While I was fighting, the LURD captured me in Lofa. They tied me and cut my foot to mark me in case I ran away. I had to fight with the LURD but while I was fighting I saw a friend with the soldiers so I ran back to the government side. I went to Gbarnga and fought in a village behind Gbatata. My commander brought captured LURD fighters and told me to kill them. I tied them and cut their throats or shot them. I killed more than seven people. I came to Monrovia with my commander during World War I. Then I heard that ECOMIL were disarming people. My commander took my weapon and I came to this camp. My mother is still in the village. I want to go home and do business selling goods." (AFR 34/006/2004)*

A 10-year-old boy, E.G., from Bong County, who had been recruited by former government forces, described to Amnesty International representatives in November 2003 how he had been caught up

in the conflict: *"I don't know where my parents are; I am with my aunt. I was in my village when armed men came. They tied my mother and my father and put them in the sun. I got angry and decided to join the fighters. I fought for one year with government forces. I was shown how to fire a gun and how to take cover. There were more than 20 small boys with me, from seven to 20. There were more adults than children. I used to beat people, tie people and kill people. I fought in Lofa. After that Commander Benjamin Yeaten brought me to Monrovia. I want to go back to school and learn a trade."* (AFR 34/006/2004)

**February 2003:** A young woman, M.M., described to Amnesty International representatives in November 2003 how she and her 11-year-old son were abducted by LURD forces from Cheesemanburg, Bomi County, in February 2003: *"I was selling doughnuts in the market on 4 February 2003 when I was captured by the LURD. My son was conscripted by LURD. I was taken to Bomi by LURD. I had a one-month-old baby who later died in Bomi. I had to do cooking and other chores for the fighters, including drawing water. LURD also captured other boys and girls and some died on the road. I am afraid to return to Bomi to get my son."* (AFR 34/006/2004)

A 12-year-old boy, R.J., from Gbarnga, Bong County, described to Amnesty International representatives his abduction with other boys by former government forces in May 2002 and his involvement in the three successive attacks by LURD forces on Monrovia in June and July 2003, termed World Wars I, II and III by the inhabitants of Monrovia and Montserrado County: *"I was playing football outside with some other young boys. Government soldiers came and said rebels had reached Lofa bridge. Commander Fasou [phonetic] was in charge of the group and they picked up 24 young boys. We were tied and put in a truck and carried to Lofa highway. I was taught how to shoot an AK 47. I fired a gun but I am not sure if I hit anyone. Some of my friends went to fight; some were wounded and some died. I was a 'Small Boys Unit' deputy commander. I wasn't beaten or ill-treated but soldiers harassed civilians, beat them and looted their things. The commander told the small boys not to do this but those behind the commander were doing it. During World War I, we came to Monrovia. While I was fighting, I saw my aunt, who was displaced, running. I asked where my mother was and she said that she had gone to Buchanan. I asked my commander for permission to take my aunt to the displaced camp. Then, I returned and fought in World War II. During World War III we ran out of ammunition. People were saying Charles Taylor should leave. We were not receiving any new supplies. I asked my commander if I could go to find my aunt and look for my mother. Then ECOMIL came and Taylor left. In September my commander let me go and I came with my aunt to 'Titanic'. We are suffering here with no toilet, no safe drinking water or a hand pump. I want to go back to school."* (AFR 34/006/2004)

**April 2003:** A 23-year-old woman, T.S., whom Amnesty International representatives met at Plumkor internally displaced people's camp, near Brewerville, Montserrado County, on 16 November 2003, described how she had been abducted from another internally displaced people's camp, Ricks Institute, by LURD forces in April 2003. She was taken to Bomi County, given a gun and, without any training, forced to fight. She described her own experience and that of other girls who had been abducted and forced to join the ranks of LURD forces: *"I captured other girls and brought them back to Bomi. They did it to me so I had the intention of paying back. I captured nine girls, beat them and tied them. I fought in Monrovia in June and July. Many of the girls died in the fighting. Some were captured and killed by government forces. During World War I, I lost six girls mainly because they were not familiar with the area and were captured by government soldiers. In World War II I lost two girls in 'face-to-face' fighting. Some of the girls were ordered*

to cook and carry food to the front line and were killed at that time. Girls from 11 years old were captured and were part of my group. Even the small girls fought. The youngest in the camp is now 13. Many of the girls were raped when they were captured but once I had my own girls, I wouldn't let it happen. The men didn't take the girls by force to rape them. They would have to ask me if there was a girl they liked and they wanted to take her. In many cases I agreed and the girls would go with them. I had 46 girls under my command." (AFR 34/006/2004)

A.K., now aged 15 years, described in December 2003 how he had joined the LURD two years earlier: "I was in a refugee camp in Macenta [Guinea] when they came. They gave me a gun to fight for my country because Taylor was against Mandingo people." (AFR 34/006/2004)

**June 2003:** J.K., a boy aged 14 years, from Bong County, was captured by former government forces in June 2003. An Amnesty International representative spoke to him at the "Titanic" on 16 November 2003: "I was working on the farm and heard that soldiers were coming, so my father told me to hide. But I was caught. The soldiers tied me and beat me and took me to a barracks in Lofa County. There were many small boys in Lofa, more than the adults. Many were killed by bullets and rockets. They gave me an arm and told me how to use it... I used an AK 47; the adults used RPGs and other bigger weapons. I fired the gun but am not sure if I killed people. On the road enemy soldiers came and I tried to run away but a rocket hit my leg. Four people were wounded and some others died in the attack. Government soldiers came and took me to Phebe hospital. After a week and two days an ambulance from JFK hospital came to pick me up. At JFK they amputated my leg. The soldiers gave me a little money while I was in hospital so I paid my way to come to 'Titanic' from JFK. I want to go to school and start a small business." (AFR 34/006/2004)

### **REPRESSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS; OPPOSITION LEADERS**

**July 1997:** During the election campaign, there were numerous reports of intimidation and harassment by former combatants, particularly in the north and the southeast of the country and by former members of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Both were accused of threatening civilians and some returning refugees. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**September 1997:** Philip Wesseh, managing director of an independent newspaper, *The Inquirer*, questioned police methods in dealing with alleged armed robbers. He was arrested and interrogated for several hours. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**November 1997:** Samuel Dokie, former deputy speaker of the recently dissolved transitional legislative assembly and a former minister of Internal Affairs, his wife, Janet Dokie, and two other relatives were arrested by officials of the Special Security Service. In early December their bodies were found in a burned car; Samuel Dokie had reportedly been beheaded. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**December 1997:** Seven journalists with *The Inquirer* were taken to the President's residence, the Executive Mansion, in connection with an article about the killing of Samuel Dokie (see below). They were questioned for two hours by members of the Special Security Services, who reportedly told them that some journalists might be killed if they did not improve their work. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**December 1997:** Alex Redd, a journalist with *Radio Ducor*, was abducted by plainclothes security officials, apparently in connection with interviews he had carried out while covering Samuel Dokie's funeral. He was abducted some 150 kilometres outside the capital, Monrovia, but was found two days later in police custody in the city. He had reportedly been beaten and bore knife wounds. His captors had apparently abandoned him in the capital with his arms still tied behind his back and he had been handed over to the police. He was held for questioning and charged with treason, but after six days in formal police custody the charges were reduced to felony and he was released on bail. (AI Annual Report 1998)

**January 1999:** A journalist was arrested and detained in January for four days, apparently because of his investigative work on the involvement of Liberia in the Sierra Leonean conflict. He was allegedly beaten and held naked. He was accused of treason and espionage, but no formal charges were brought against him. The police authorities denied his arrest. His fiancée was briefly detained when she tried to locate him. A few weeks later, he was again seized by plainclothes security officers, and released only after the intercession of senior officials and foreign representatives. He had previously been arrested and reportedly tortured in August 1998. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**March 1999:** Police briefly detained Isaac Menyongi of the *Heritage* newspaper for refusing to disclose the source of his article about a South African businessman's ties to Liberian officials.

**March 1999:** Philip Moore, a reporter with the independent newspaper *The News*, was arrested on charges of "criminal malevolence". He was released a day later after intervention from the Press Union of Liberia and the JPC. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**December 1999:** Police arrested the news editor of the *Concord Times* newspaper, Sarkilay Kantan, and a reporter on similar charges, following their articles about corruption in government and state-run companies. Four other journalists were also sought for arrest. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**December 1999:** Police arrested James Torh, the executive director of FOCUS, on charges of sedition in connection with comments he had made in a speech at a high school. James Torh had a record of speaking out about human rights concerns in Liberia and had publicly criticized President Taylor over the issue of a truth commission to investigate past abuses. He was released on bail after three days. (AI Annual Report 2000)

**March 2000:** Suah Deddeh, Chair of the Liberian Press Union, was arrested and questioned by security officers after criticizing the closure of two privately owned radio stations, Star Radio and Radio Veritas, by the authorities. He was released the next day without charge. After protests, Radio Veritas was allowed to reopen but Star Radio remained banned. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**March 2000:** James Torh, a prominent human rights activist, fled the country after Anti-Terrorist Unit officers twice came looking for him at his home at night. In December 1999 he had been briefly detained and charged with sedition for allegedly making remarks critical of the government. When he did not appear at a court hearing in April, the authorities ordered his rearrest. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**August 2000:** Four journalists working for *Channel 4*, a UK television station - Sorious Samura, Gugulakhe Radebe, David Barrie and Timothy John Lambon - were detained for several days in Monrovia and accused of spying. The four were beaten following their arrest and one of them was

threatened with death. They were released unconditionally after widespread protests. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**September 2000:** Staff members of the independent *New Democrat*, including its editor Charles Jackson, fled Liberia following death threats, intimidation and harassment by the security forces. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**November 2000:** Armed men believed to be civil war veterans, who reportedly included a senior armed forces officer, attacked members of a non-governmental organization, the Centre for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE), in Monrovia. They stabbed and wounded Conmany Wesseh, and physically assaulted Amos Sawyer, formerly head of the Liberian interim government during the civil war and CEDE Chairman, and other staff. The armed forces officer and seven others were subsequently charged with aggravated assault and released on bail to await trial. However, others believed to be also responsible for the attack were not known to have been investigated by police. Local human rights activists called for an independent inquiry. Suspects arrested in connection with a 1999 attack on the home of Conmany Wesseh and death threats against his family had been released without charge or trial despite evidence against them. (AI Annual Report 2001)

**February 2001:** Joseph Bartuah, Abdullah Dukuly, Jerome Dalieh and Bobby Tapson, four journalists from the privately-owned newspaper *The News*, were arrested and charged with espionage after publication of a report criticizing the delayed payment of civil service salaries. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**March 2001:** Dozens of university students and professors were whipped and severely beaten by the security forces during a peaceful protest in Monrovia against the arrests. More than 40 students were arrested. Some were released shortly afterwards without charge, with visible marks of beatings, and at least seven women students were reported to have been raped repeatedly in detention. At least 17 were released over the next three weeks after widespread public protests. In April the university suspended student leaders; most of them fled the country. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**April 2001:** Veteran politician Togba-Nah Tipoteh said that he and other politicians had received threats for criticizing the international community for giving financial assistance to the government. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**April 2001:** Francis Massaquoi, Minister of Youth and Sports and former leader of the Lofa Defense Force, an armed group active in the civil war, was killed in unexplained circumstances in Lofa County. Reports suggested that he might have been killed because his political influence with government forces in the area was perceived to be a threat to the government. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**September 2001:** Thompson Ade-Bayer, head of Liberia Watch for Human Rights, was illegally detained without charge or trial for 10 days after criticizing the security forces in a published article. The Liberian police reportedly paid fellow inmates to hang him by his feet and beat him. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**October 2001:** Emmanuel Wureh, president of the National Bar Association, was imprisoned for a week after he was found in contempt of court for alleged insulting remarks during court proceedings. Leading Bar Association members Marcus Jones and Ismail Campbell announced a lawyers' boycott in protest and were themselves arrested. The House of Representatives

subsequently asked the Minister of Justice to charge them with contempt of the Legislature and to detain them until they apologized to the House and retracted their protest. The legal basis for this process and their detention was unclear. Emmanuel Wureh was released in November and the other lawyers in December. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**2001:** Raleigh Seekie, an opposition leader charged with treason with 14 others in August 2000, was still in prison awaiting trial at the end of 2001. Others charged with him had not been arrested. (AI Annual Report 2002)

**February 2002:** Frances Johnson-Morris, former Chief Justice and head of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, was arrested after publicly questioning the constitutional legality of the state of emergency. She was detained briefly with male detainees before the Minister of Justice ordered her release without charge. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**20 March 2002:** Henry Cooper, a member of an opposition political party in Bong County, was reportedly arrested by police; his bullet-ridden body was found later. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**April 2002:** Tiawan Gongloe, a human rights lawyer, was arrested and tortured in police custody, requiring hospital treatment for his injuries. He was initially prevented from leaving the country and was briefly detained again in May. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**June 2002:** Hassan Bility, a journalist with *The Analyst* newspaper, was arrested with two associates, following articles condemning human rights violations. Sheikh Sackor, Executive Director of Humanist Watch, was arrested the following month. Both were held incommunicado and tortured. The government accused them of belonging to the LURD and announced that they would be tried by a military court. No charges were brought against them. Although the government said in October that they would be released, Hassan Bility was held until December when he was handed over to US Embassy officials and flown out of the country. Sheikh Sackor remained held at the end of 2002. (AI Annual Report 2003)

**October 2002:** Aloysius Toe, a leading human rights activist, went into hiding in late October after police raided his home and briefly detained his wife and three other human rights activists. These arrests followed the launch of a campaign by the Liberia Coalition of Human Rights Defenders to secure the release of Hassan Bility and Sheikh Sackor. Aloysius Toe was arrested and charged with treason when he emerged from hiding. The charge was based solely on a widely available LURD document which he was alleged to have received by e-mail. He remained in the Central Prison, Monrovia but was later released in 2004. (AI Annual Report 2003)

#### **IV. THE POST CONFLICT PERIOD 2004-2006**

The temporal jurisdiction of the Commission does not extend beyond 2003. However, research was carried out in late 2003 and 2004 documenting previous cases that were committed in the course of the war. The focus of these reports includes both rape and sexual violence of women and girls as well as the recruitment of children into fighting forces. These reports provide both information and recommendations as to what should be done in the post conflict period with regard to both justice and rehabilitation for the victims.

#### **Rape and Sexual Violence by all parties to the conflict**

Women and girls were subjected to widespread and systematic rape throughout the country. It highlights that women were repeatedly raped and/or gang raped, threatened with death, subjected to sexual slavery, and abducted, and highlights the overall lack of protection of women and girls in the conflict. It provides recommendations to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of the needs for greater protection for women and girls in the process. (14 December 2004, Liberia: No impunity for rape- a crime against humanity and a war crime AFR 34/017/2004)

**Recruitment of child soldiers**

Amnesty International estimates that 21,000 children are believed to have been recruited to fight in the conflict that lasted from 1999-2003. Amnesty International highlights the manner and the widespread and systematic nature of the recruitment of children by all parties to the conflict highlighting increases in June and July 2003. Recommendations are made to both the Government of Liberia and the international community for the importance of focussing on reintegration. (17 May 2004 Liberia: The promise of peace for 21,000 child soldiers AFR 34/006/2004)

