



Security Council

Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6610th meeting

Tuesday, 13 September 2011, 10 a.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Salam	(Lebanon)
<i>Members:</i>	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Dunlop
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Onanga Ndiaye
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Laher
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. DeLaurentis

Agenda

The situation in Liberia

Twenty-third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2011/497)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Liberia

Twenty-third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (S/2011/497)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Liberia to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Toga Gayewea McIntosh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Ellen Margrethe Løj, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Royal Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Jordan, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/497, which contains the twenty-third progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia.

I now give the floor to Ms. Løj.

Ms. Løj: I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to present the twenty-third progress report (S/2011/497) of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In doing so, allow me to extend my appreciation to the members of the Security Council for their support for the work of the Mission. Council members will already have had a chance to read the report itself, so I will focus my brief remarks on events and developments since it was issued last month.

All year, Liberians have been preparing for presidential and legislative elections. Liberia's now 29 political parties have been organizing themselves for the vote, negotiating alliances and nominating their candidates. Sixteen presidential candidates have been presented, including the incumbent, and over 800 legislative candidates are competing for the 88 House and Senate seats being contested.

The National Elections Commission has also been hard at work. On 23 August, Liberians voted in a national referendum to consider four proposed amendments to their Constitution. In general, the referendum went well, with no serious security incidents. With UNMIL back-up, the National Elections Commission put in place and successfully implemented an early deployment plan for material distribution, and the voting and counting processes largely went smoothly. Aside from some procedural issues, a printing error on the ballot, and relatively low voter turnout at 34 per cent, the referendum was technically a generally well-conducted electoral event. Liberians were free to express themselves through the ballot box.

Three of the proposed amendments were elections related and, had they passed, would have applied to this year's electoral process. On 31 August, however, the National Elections Commission announced that all four propositions had failed, including the proposals to move the elections from October to November, out of the rainy season, and to change the electoral system to simple majority for legislative seats. Therefore, election day will remain 11 October, and the National Elections Commission will face the exceptionally challenging task of organizing numerous run-off elections shortly thereafter. The Commission is in discussions with political parties and other stakeholders about the implications of the referendum results for the election process, and a case has been filed with the Supreme Court to discount the invalid votes. If this petition is successful, it would mean that the simple majority proposition would pass.

The referendum was a critical rehearsal for the National Elections Commission, as well as for UNMIL. Analysing what was done well and what could have been done better will be important for the coming elections. UNMIL's role continues to be focused on coordinating international assistance, filling critical logistics gaps, and employing the Mission's good

offices to ensure an environment conducive to peaceful elections. In this context, I have continued to engage with political parties to encourage them to reach consensus on modalities of the process. The Mission has also drawn up an elections security plan with national partners, including contingencies. Furthermore, inter-mission cooperation arrangements have been discussed with a view to seeking reinforcement from our sister mission in Côte d'Ivoire so that, should the electoral environment begin to threaten public order, we will not be caught unawares. This is especially important given the tendency for elections in post-conflict countries to lead to violence. The Secretary-General's suggestion in this regard will shortly be forwarded to the Council for its consideration.

These elections come at a critical time for the subregion, as they follow the Ivorian crisis. That crisis has caused an increase in security and humanitarian concerns along Liberia's borders. The movement of suspected Ivorian fighters and Liberians alleged to have participated in the Ivorian conflict poses a threat to both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia in the border areas, and authorities continue to make arrests in connection with a major weapons cache discovered in June near the border. Liberia still hosts over 170,000 refugees, and Ivoirians continue to cross the border in fear of reprisal attacks at home. A revised Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan was launched on 30 August, requesting \$166 million to cover humanitarian needs through the end of this year. Securing this assistance is critical not just to covering the needs of refugees, but also to addressing the needs of host communities that have shared their meagre resources over the past nine months.

Given increased border challenges, UNMIL has worked closely with the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire to strengthen our inter-mission cooperation, including increased coordination of border patrolling, information-sharing and joint tasking of air assets to ensure that inaccessible areas along our 700-kilometre common border are monitored as closely as possible. Within their limited capacity, Liberian security institutions have stepped up their operations along the border, and cooperation between the Ivorian and Liberian security institutions has gradually increased. But these operations have reminded all of us that Liberia's security agencies will not be fully and independently operational until mobility, communications

and other equipment needs are available and sustainable.

Planning for the elections and addressing developments along the border with Côte d'Ivoire have consumed the planning and operational capacity of Liberia's security institutions. Planning for the handover of security responsibilities from UNMIL to national institutions has continued, but the challenges of the past few months have slowed the process. The work of the joint transition planning working group will have to gain momentum again after the elections. We expect that it will provide a picture of the outstanding financial and technical gaps, as well as the progress made, in advance of the technical assessment mission in early 2012.

But planning for transition is just the first step. The Government and the international community will have to continue to build the capacity of the security sector to prepare for the actual handover of security responsibilities. After lengthy consultations, the National Security Reform and Intelligence Bill was finally enacted in August. The adoption of the legislation is an important step towards rationalizing Liberia's security agencies, and towards a more structured and affordable security sector.

The Government's prioritization of security sector reform, rule of law and national reconciliation for the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) is consistent with the need to consolidate critical gains in these areas and to better prepare the country for the UNMIL transition. The completion of the first of five planned regional justice and security hubs, in Gbarnga, is expected by the end of this year. It will begin some functions even before that with the deployment of 70 police support officers before the elections. The hubs will be a critical step in effectively decentralizing rule of law and security agencies and increasing access to justice and security in distant parts of the country. I am sure that the Chairman of the PBC country configuration for Liberia will go into greater detail about the work of the PBC in Liberia. Let me just underline the importance of donors responding positively to the need for assistance in establishing these hubs.

Elections have not been Liberia's only focus over the past few months. The country has continued to recover economically, with a number of new economic concessions approved and international investment

continuing to increase. A number of pieces of important legislation have been adopted, and the 2011-2012 national budget is almost eight times bigger than it was six years ago. While economic recovery and development are crucial to attaining long-term sustainable peace, in the coming months all eyes will be focused on Liberia's elections and the country's ability to pull off a national event of that magnitude.

Liberia has had eight years of unbroken peace. This is something Liberians can be proud of, considering that it represents the longest unbroken peace in three decades. The elections provide an opportunity to consolidate the peace that Liberian citizens cherish so much. To do so, it is critical that voters can take to the polls and express their voices free of intimidation or fear. It is equally important that the election results be respected as the basis for true reconciliation and representation, rather than discord and division.

All Liberians — political leaders, candidates, opinion leaders, civil society organizations and the general population — have a duty and responsibility to ensure that the gains made thus far are consolidated and that peace becomes truly irreversible. I am confident that Liberians will demonstrate to each other and, indeed, to the international community that they are committed to the road to sustainable peace, that they have made good use of the space the international community and the Mission have given them, and that they are conscious of the investment made over the past eight years.

I cannot underline strongly enough the importance that these elections be free, fair and peaceful. They are the second elections since the end of the conflict, but they are the first being organized and run by Liberians. However, if the elections are successful, it does not mean that the work is finished. Liberians will still require considerable assistance and support in rebuilding their lives and their country. This process will have to continue to be a joint undertaking between Liberians and the international community. Much progress has been achieved, and I trust all Liberians and international partners alike will continue to stay the course and ensure that this progress is truly irreversible.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ms. Løj for her briefing.

I now give the floor to His Highness Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini.

Prince Zeid Raad Zeid Al-Husseini (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our joy at seeing you, Sir, preside over the Council and your brotherly nation lead the work of the Council this month. We are confident of your wisdom and your talents, and we are sure that we will be able to achieve our objectives.

(*spoke in English*)

It has been almost a year since I assumed my role as Chairman of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and, after three visits there and countless discussions here, as well as in Washington, D.C., and in Brussels, and numerous meetings attended via video teleconference with colleagues in Monrovia, I wish to share my thoughts about the prospects for a non-return to the sort of violence that has marked so much of Liberia's recent history.

In other words, given what we know about the state of the State of Liberia now and the security and justice needs that remain extant, what are the prospects that Liberia will survive peacefully and flourish once the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has departed? Or, ultimately, will the time and effort invested by the United Nations peacekeepers, currently led by a remarkable and talented Special Representative of the Secretary-General operating according to mandates established by the Council, be in the end for something or for nothing?

To answer bluntly, I believe that if we as Governments had the same confidence the world of the private sector possesses, given the latter's recent preparedness to invest in the range of \$16 billion in Liberia over the next two decades or so — with almost two-thirds of the investing companies coming from eight countries presently represented on the Security Council — then Liberia will succeed, and it will succeed very well.

The Liberians have the talent and the desire to retire their country from war, not temporarily this time, but permanently. The true question for Liberia, it would seem to me, lies not entirely with them, but to some extent with us. Do we, as the representatives of Governments, acting individually or collectively here

at the United Nations, have the same confidence in Liberia that is shown by the private sector globally?

The test will come soon enough in the form of money, of course. The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), whose top donor is also a member of the Council, will finance the first of the justice and security hubs in its entirety — that located in Gbarnga. We expect to have the entire compound ready, with buildings completed by the end of the year, and we are working with specific partners in the international community to explore the possibility of having key technical personnel trained to be able to provide a creditable service out of the hub to the peoples of Bong, Lofa and Nimba.

The four other hubs and their specific locations are just being finalized now. They will be financed by the PBF at the level of \$2 million each — roughly half their cost — with the PBC mobilizing funds outside of the PBF to foot the balance. This money must be found soon if our endeavours in Liberia are to prove successful.

And that is not all. The Liberia Peacebuilding Programme contains a number of other important projects of a critical nature to the judiciary, the police and national reconciliation, agreed to by all the partners — the Liberian Government, the donor community and the United Nations — and, after some painstaking negotiations, now has a total value of almost \$72 million. Once the Government has finalized the levels of expenditure on security and justice, and knowing how much we will expect from the Peacebuilding Fund — an initial contribution of close to \$21 million — we expect to have to raise approximately \$30 to \$50 million. Some part of this may be offset by donor allocations already approved to some of the very sectors covered by the Liberia Peacebuilding Programme.

The early signs from exploratory contacts with some Member States are not promising, however, where the PBC slice is concerned. The remaining money for the hubs and indeed the Peacebuilding Programme may indeed be hard to come by.

Yet, in the meantime, it was clear to all members of the PBC delegation visiting Liberia from 12 to 17 June — and here I am very grateful to my colleagues from the United States, the United Kingdom, Nigeria and the Ukraine for their commitment — that the Liberian National Police,

notwithstanding some very notable improvements in training and infrastructure, will not be ready any time soon to cope with either a possible increase in the levels of organized crime or any sudden spasms of widespread violence unless it is more robustly supported. And, once again, we face this rather bizarre situation of having sufficient money to pay for our peacekeepers, but once our peacekeepers are withdrawn, not even a small percentage of what was previously spent on them can then be redirected to the National Police as they assume virtually all the security tasks hitherto carried out by the United Nations.

To present this point perhaps more graphically, there is something remarkable happening to common sense when we, the PBC, weave our way through the middle of Liberia, from one police station to another, in a 13-vehicle United Nations convoy carrying us, the delegation, senior Liberian officials, our colleagues from UNMIL and our security, only to discover time and again that each police station visited had barely enough fuel, if any, to keep even one vehicle on the road.

The deficit separating what the United Nations can accomplish in such critical areas as transportation and what it would hope the Liberian National Police will soon accomplish in all areas, including not only transportation but in stemming the growth of transnational organized crime, remains numbing. That we must therefore invest more in them directly and urgently is all the more obvious to those who spend time in Liberia.

Naturally, not everything needed in the three areas falling within the PBC's portfolio — rule of law, security sector reform and national reconciliation — ought to come in the form of money. Liberia's judiciary, for example, requires a court management system, with oversight to ensure the efficient conduct of trials, and the Liberians are attempting commendably to do this on their own. But here the Member States could do much to help them simply by providing some advice.

Similarly, while funding from the international community was used over the past two years to finance platforms for dialogue, falling under the general rubric of national reconciliation, following the PBC's discussions in June with the senior leadership in Liberia, including with Her Excellency the President — and prompted by the acute observations of

Ambassador Marjon Kamara — it was agreed this would end, for now at least, until a clearer strategy had been formulated.

Yet these examples of the nimble approach adopted by the PBC in addressing Liberia's needs do not vitiate the urgent need for financial support in other equally important areas. More to the point, if the investment by us, collectively, both in time and in money, could be intensified significantly in the several months following the upcoming elections, particularly where the hubs and the Liberian National Police are concerned, we — and, more importantly, they, the Liberians — will be successful. I have no doubt about this.

Should we not be able to pull together the resources and resolve to do this decisively, including by urging the Liberian authorities to devote more funding to their justice and security sectors, the Council will have had, in UNMIL, a successful peacekeeping operation, yes, but one that would likely depart a still very crippled country. The possible, maybe even probable, onset of widespread organized crime and the ensuing violence it would bring would overwhelm Liberia soon enough. In such a scenario, we would all, but especially the people of Liberia, bitterly lament the end of UNMIL — a terrible outcome in view of the extraordinary services rendered by the tens of thousands of United Nations peacekeepers who have lived with, and have worked for, the Liberian people. I sincerely hope that this will not come to be. It can be avoided.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I now give the floor to Mr. Toga Gayewea McIntosh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia.

Mr. McIntosh (Liberia): It is an honour to be here and to participate in this very important review of the Secretary-General's report (S/2011/497) on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), including the comprehensive update provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, our sister Her Excellency Ms. Ellen Margerethe Løj. I must thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to make a few remarks.

Let me begin by commending members of the Council for remaining engaged in a strong and positive manner with the Liberian situation. We are grateful and deeply indebted to the troop- and police-contributing countries, international civil servants, agencies of the

United Nations system and international partners for the continuous support to Liberia during these difficult years. Our special appreciation and gratitude go to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and her staff for the demonstration of strong leadership and commitment.

As we were told a few minutes ago, there have now been eight years of unbroken peace in Liberia. The country has moved progressively from an environment once characterized by violence, chaos and heavy indebtedness and lacking every semblance of social progress to a stage where growth and development can now be pursued. These positive developments substantiate the outstanding contributions that UNMIL has made since 2003.

UNMIL's achievements have ranged from keeping the peace to building the capacity of State institutions. It has played a key role in the coordination of international assistance and in filling critical logistical and infrastructural gaps. UNMIL has provided basic and specialized training to more than 4,000 police officers, including at least 700 women. These are but a few of the important benefits of UNMIL's presence.

Nurturing the fragile peace and ensuring that Liberia does not return to conflict remain major challenges. Capacity gaps still exist in many areas. The capacities of national security institutions still need to be strengthened. The Liberia Peacebuilding Programme, approved under the Liberian configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, is supporting this critical effort by establishing regional justice and security hubs. The first of these has been established in Gbarnga, one of our country's central cities. Four others are to follow in the other provinces.

I must use this public forum to commend the strong commitment of the Chair of that configuration, Prince Zeid, for his strong commitment to the achievement of this noble objective. All of this requires urgent attention and concrete actions as UNMIL strategizes its drawdown approach.

Today, Liberia is at a critical juncture. On 11 October, precisely 28 days from today, Liberians will go to the polls to elect their President and legislative representatives. It will also be a test of the will and determination of the Liberian people to conduct themselves in a peaceful manner, void of election violence and any action that undermines the

hard-earned peace. The process leading to this important national event has so far been generally peaceful.

We are pleased to report that UNMIL has been a significant partner in the process, providing security, dialoguing with political parties and other stakeholders and assisting the National Elections Commission in providing logistical preparedness and delivering electoral materials. This partnership between UNMIL and the Government of Liberia is vital. It is vital for ensuring that elections are free and fair, transparent and credible. The Government is unreservedly committed to this objective and hereby invites the international community to join in observing the process.

As has been rightly emphasized by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, planning for the elections and addressing developments along our borders with Côte d'Ivoire remain daunting challenges. The recent mini-summit of heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, held in Abuja just a few days ago, commended the role that is being played by the United Nations missions to stabilize the security situations in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. They urged the United Nations to intensify joint UNMIL-United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire monitoring and control of the common border zone between the two countries.

They also called for the creation of the requisite environment for the conduct of peaceful, free, fair and credible elections. We are heartened that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has underscored the same sentiments.

The anticipated United Nations assessment mission to Liberia in early 2012 will be critical for Liberia. It will judge Liberia's readiness and ability to build on the gains made over the years using its own security capacity. The assessment mission will also be critical to the Security Council, as it will determine the nature and scope of its future engagement in Liberia.

It is our view that an orderly and well-paced drawdown schedule will serve the mutual interests of both the Council and Liberia. That is why we humbly embrace and support the Secretary-General's recommendation to this body for a 12-month extension of UNMIL's mandate. The Government and people of Liberia are appreciative of the general support and endorsement that all the members of the Council will give to the Secretary-General's recommendation.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.