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**‘Resource Curse or Cure? Reforming Liberia’s
governance and logging industry’**

**A policy briefing submitted by Global Witness to the UN Security
Council, 14 September 2004**

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Recommendations -

The UN Security Council (UNSC) should:

- Maintain the current embargo on the export and transport of Liberian timber, and its import into other countries. The embargo should remain in place until it can be demonstrated that the Liberian timber trade does not contribute to national and regional insecurity, and meets the requirements of Security Council Resolution 1521 (2003) for the lifting of sanctions.
- Ensure that a complete independent, retrospective and internationally verifiable audit of the Liberian logging industry and Liberian government finances is undertaken as a priority, looking to both improve accounting systems and identify the manners by which revenue was previously misappropriated.
- Consider applying restrictions to individuals or governments found to be financially or militarily supporting armed non-state actors in Liberia and the region.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) should:

- Place priority on helping the Liberian government secure control over Liberia’s lucrative natural resources, and further assess and monitor any existing and likely cross-border land, air and sea-based smuggling routes.
- Consider extending the Disarmament, Demobilisation Reintegration and Rehabilitation (DDRR) mandate, to ensure that the process is carried out to its fullest extent, successfully disarming and rehabilitating all ex-combatants.
- Coordinate with other UN peacekeeping forces and national militaries in the region, to create more effective border security and prevent the cross-border trafficking.

The international community should:

- As a matter of priority, ensure that shortfalls in the UNMIL and aid agency budgets are addressed by donors, and that those groups are provided with the financial and logistical support that they require to fulfil their mandates.
- Ensure that all countries enforce the Liberian arms embargo, and further adhere to the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Import, Export and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons.
- Mainstream environmental impact and ethical purchasing concerns into all UN, NTGL and NGO activities in Liberia.

The National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) should:

- Develop socially, economically and environmentally sustainable forest use strategies, and empower the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) and other relevant agencies to implement them.
- Ensure that the FDA is reformed to establish comprehensive and transparent accounting systems and that sufficient oversight mechanisms are put in place.
- Deploy government representatives throughout the country, staffing offices properly and providing adequate logistical, law enforcement and financial support.
- Appoint an independent monitor to monitor the logging industry and provide independent verification of the reform process’ progress.
- Monitor the relationship between the logging industry and local populations, in order to identify, prosecute and prevent future violations of domestic forest use and human rights laws, and sever any links between the Liberian logging industry and destabilising non-state actors.

Acronyms

DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Reconciliation and Reintegration programme
FDA	Forestry Development Authority
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NTGL	National Transitional Government of Liberia
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Executive Summary

The Liberian logging industry is still a threat to regional peace and security, as the Liberian government has not made any significant progress toward securing its territory or natural resources, and armed combatants maintain control over much of the interior, important timber-rich regions and key border crossing points. As Liberia is not in compliance with the requirements for lifting sanctions as set forth in Security Council Resolution 1521, timber sanctions should remain in place at the upcoming October sanctions review.

Liberia has not met key standards set by the UN for the lifting of sanctions. The NTGL has established little authority outside of Monrovia, key border crossing points are under the control of armed non-state actors, and the financial and accounting systems necessary to ensure a fully functioning, transparent and accountable government are not in place. Moreover, important natural resource-rich areas remain under armed occupation, and the necessary reforms of the Forestry Development Authority (FDA), the government agency responsible for oversight of Liberia's logging industry, have yet to be completed.

Lifting sanctions now, before such fundamental issues are resolved, would seriously jeopardise Liberia's nascent recovery and run counter to the Security Council's own aims of securing long-term peace and prosperity for the region. As Global Witness¹ and UN Panel of Expert Reports² have shown, the logging industry has historically been a source of extra-budgetary revenue and logistics that has fuelled conflict in the region. The UN Security Council imposed timber sanctions to cut off funding for warring parties, and determined that they were to be left in place until the government can ensure timber revenue is no longer be used to fuel conflict. Given the government's lack of control of key resources and inability to effectively monitor its logging industry as it exists even under UN sanctions, the logging industry still poses a threat to international peace and security and the sanctions on Liberian timber must remain in place.

• **The Liberian government does not have control over its natural resources.** NTGL authority does not extend from Monrovia, and the government is not yet able to control its borders or its forests due to a lack of resources and security. Former rebel fighters from the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), which control much of the southeast and border with Cote d'Ivoire, have taken control of Sapo National Park, where they are mining gold and hunting bushmeat. Former fighters from the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD),

which are in control of the north of the country and key border crossings to Guinea and Sierra Leone, have taken control of Guthrie Rubber Plantation, the country's second largest (*see Section 1. Uncontrolled Risks: How the government's lack of authority over natural resources is threatening regional security., page 6*).

- **Former MODEL and LURD fighters control key border crossing points and extort money from travellers.**

Former LURD and MODEL fighters continue to exert much control over the key border crossing points, including those to Sierra Leone, at the Mano River Bridge, and to Guinea, at Ganta, extorting money from travellers as 'customs duties'. This lack of border security makes it impossible to stem the cross-border trade in weapons, natural resources and mercenaries that has historically fuelled instability in Liberia and the region. The government has only deployed limited numbers of immigration officers to a few border crossings, but those who are deployed lack uniforms and basic transport and communication equipment (*see Section 1. Uncontrolled Risks: How the government's lack of authority over natural resources is threatening regional security., page 6*).

- **Large scale 'pit sawing' continues across the country without government oversight, with evidence suggesting some timber is being exported to Guinea in violation of UN sanctions.**

'Pit sawing', the localised felling and processing of trees using chainsaws as compared to large scale logging company machinery, continues across the country outside adequate FDA or NTGL oversight. There are continued reports that timber harvested by former LURD fighters in Lofa County is crossing the border into Guinea, in clear violation of the UN embargo on timber (*see Section 1. Uncontrolled Risks: How the government's lack of authority over natural resources is threatening regional security., page 6*).

- **The FDA still operates with inadequate transparency and accountability, with many fundamental reforms yet to be completed.**

Key reforms of finance and accounting issues within the FDA have not been completed. The European Union (EU) will not undertake a vital in-depth audit of the FDA's finances and accounting capacity, which was to lay much of the groundwork for future reforms, and an important independent concession review has been postponed indefinitely due to lack of funding and logistics. Moreover, the FDA does not have the staff to adequately monitor current industry activities, and has recently issued, and then cancelled, contracts for various logging activities through a non-transparent process. (*see Section 2. Short of the Mark: Fundamental reforms of the FDA and NTGL have yet to be completed., page 8*).

- **There is still insufficient transparency and accountability within the NTGL, with a particular lack of public disclosure regarding large natural resource deals.**

Fundamental issues of accountability, transparency and oversight remain to be addressed by the NTGL. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) to Liberia, referred to the NTGL as a 'coalition of the unwilling'³, and UN officials and relief workers have complained that, 'key ministries have been hijacked by the three former warring factions - busy helping themselves to the little money that flow into government coffers.'⁴ The lack of public disclosure regarding recent sales of natural resources is particularly worrying, and underlines the continued need for a more transparent and accountable decision-making process within the government. For example, there are questions regarding the procedures followed by the NTGL when it entered into an agreement with a Chinese company, the Qingdao Trading Group Corporation, to export 800,000 cubic metres of iron ore worth an estimated

US\$10 million⁵. A group of Liberian NGOs argue that the government did not have the right to sell the iron ore stockpile, and that any such agreement had to be agreed through the national legislature. The group first sent a formal request for clarification to the Liberian government on 23 August, but having received no reply⁶, filed a legal challenge with the Supreme Court calling for a stay on all exports until the issue could be resolved⁷. The Supreme Court responded on 27 August, ordering that there be no further shipments until a decision was made at a conference scheduled for 3 September⁸; at that conference the Supreme Court determined that the order should remain in place pending a further decision to be made by the Court in October (*see Section 3. 'Coalition of the unwilling': The NTGL's continued lack of organisation, transparency and accountability., page 9*).

- **The internal security situation remains extremely volatile.**

While the deployment of UNMIL has had an improvement on the safety of civilians in areas under its direct control, many areas are infrequently or never patrolled. There remain persistent reports of harassment of civilians by former LURD and MODEL soldiers, and many IDPs and refugees are reluctant to return to their home communities for fear of further attacks and harassment (*see Section 4. Against the Tide: How design problems and financial shortfalls are undermining the DDR process., page 10*).

- **The DDR process faces significant logistical and financial constraints that threaten to undermine its success.**

The UN's DDR process, which is critical to regional efforts for peace, has registered over 66,000 combatants, yet has recovered only 20,000 weapons, reinforcing fears that weapons have been stockpiled or moved into Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea. Recent changes to combat this discrepancy may in fact deny many combatants of critical education and resettlement support. UNMIL has also not adequately addressed the needs of foreign combatants, whose ultimate access to rehabilitation training or education is unclear. Slow donor payment compounds the problem, which has left the UNHCR unable to properly care for IDPs and forced the World Food Programme (WFP) to cut its food aid to 2/3 of normal levels. Such shortfalls have led in part to rioting in some areas by ex-combatants, and if not addressed may lead to further instability and undermining of the peace and reconstruction process (*see Section 4. Against the Tide: How design problems and financial shortfalls are undermining the DDR process., page 10*).

Liberians want the sanctions regime to continue.

Despite calls by some members of the NTGL for sanctions to be lifted, recent Expert Panel surveys report that the closing down of some logging companies has helped alleviate abuses against rural populations, and that the majority of Liberians who live in timber ports Buchanan, Harper and Greenville want sanctions to remain in place^a. This was also true for those living in Monrovia, which the Panel considered a more 'informed section of Liberian society' and where the majority of Liberians and non-government workers who called in to a radio debate supported the maintenance of sanctions until the DDR process was fully completed and a democratically elected government was put in place^b.

^a UN Panel of Experts on Liberia report, S/2003/396.

^b UN Panel of Experts on Liberia report, S/2004/396.

Introduction

Liberia has taken important steps toward facilitating its recovery from 14 years of civil war, and with the aid of the international community has been slowly moving to transform itself from a failed state into a stable and democratic country with an accountable government. Some governmental institutions have been reformed, civil society is rebuilding, the UN has deployed 15,000 peacekeepers as part of UNMIL, and the UN's Disarmament Demobilisation Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) process continues to take weapons out of circulation and provide important education and work opportunities to former combatants. Moreover, the presence of numerous humanitarian aid agencies has had a definite improvement on the situation, with outbreaks of fighting significantly reduced, regular UNMIL patrols allowing a freer flow of movement along major transport routes and the availability of food and medical assistance greatly improving the lives of Liberians.

Still, fundamental issues integral to ending the link between natural resources and conflict in Liberia remain to be addressed. The government is still unable to control its territory, as most areas outside of Monrovia are still under the control of armed non-state actors, and the continued lack of transparency and accountability in the Liberian government and logging industry means that it cannot be ensured that industry revenue will not further future insecurity. Moreover, there is the current problem of unregulated 'pit sawing', as logging activities are taking place across the country in the absence of contracts, FDA monitoring and a functional legal system. Combined with the control of key border crossings by former LURD and MODEL fighters, this means that non-state actors maintain their access to timber and other natural resources, as well as to the logistics with which to engage in cross-border trafficking of weapons and mercenaries. Having invested so much in the reconstruction of Liberia, and recognising that the process is both a long-term endeavour and critical to the stability of the entire region, it is vital that the UN does not move to lift sanctions prematurely, as doing so would undermine the progress toward peace made thus far in the region.

Section 1. Uncontrolled Risks: How the government's lack of authority over natural resources is threatening regional security.

Given the historical link between natural resource exploitation and conflict in Liberia and the region, control of key natural resource areas by non-state forces could quickly undermine the peace process and fuel further conflict. While the deployment of UNMIL has increased the safety of residents in areas under its direct authority, much of the country is still outside either UN or NTGL management, meaning that key natural resource-rich areas are still under the control of former MODEL and LURD fighters. When combined with their control of key border crossings, armed non-state actors maintain their capacity to traffic natural resources, weapons and mercenaries across borders.

Former MODEL and LURD fighters are in charge of key natural resource areas, including Sapo National Park and Guthrie Rubber Plantation

Despite the deployment of UNMIL, former MODEL fighters control much of the timber-rich Southeast of the country, including the border with Cote d'Ivoire, and former LURD fighters, based in the north of Liberia, still control much of the timber-rich northeast of the country, as well as the border regions with Sierra Leone and Guinea. UN officials have admitted that in some areas their presence has not stopped illegal activities, including the occupation by LURD of Lofa's diamond mines and most of the interior⁹. Therefore the recent occupations of Sapo National Park and Guthrie Rubber Plantation are not isolated instances; they are but two high

profile incidences that point to a serious underlying lack of control over the country by the NTGL and UNMIL.

Sapo is the country's only national park, one of the world's 25 biodiversity hotspots, and has been the focus of Liberian and international conservation. Despite the park's high profile, former MODEL fighters have established a strong presence there, regulating entrance and exit to the park, engaging in gold mining and hunting bushmeat¹⁰. Worryingly, the ex-combatants have refused to vacate the park until they receive orders from their leader, who is a commander with MODEL¹¹, showing a significant breakdown of the DDRR process and the UN's ability to bring hostile forces under control.

Similarly, a large and armed contingent of over 1,000 former LURD fighters has taken control of the Guthrie rubber plantation in North-eastern Liberia, which borders Sierra Leone. The fighters have failed to hand in their weapons at the Tubmanburg DDRR demobilisation site as was expected¹², and Amnesty reports that children have been used as labourers on the plantation¹³. While LURD's embattled leader, Sekou Conneh, has called the group 'renegade soldiers'¹⁴, there has been no physical effort by LURD leadership or UNMIL to remove the fighters from the plantation.

Former LURD and MODEL fighters control key border crossings and are extorting 'customs duties' from travellers.

Combined with their control of natural resources, former fighters also control most of the frontiers between Liberia and its neighbours. The borders are notoriously porous, and given the regional dynamic of the conflict in Liberia and neighbouring states, it is critical that those borders are secured. However, the government has only deployed limited numbers of immigration officers, and some, such as those deployed to the border crossing with Guinea at Ganta (Lofa County), have no uniforms, communication equipment, vehicles or offices¹⁵. Even in areas where UNMIL troops are deployed, such as at the Mano River Bridge crossing with Sierra Leone, armed fighters continue to act as customs agents and extort money from travellers¹⁶. Such a continued lack of control makes the cross-border traffic of contraband all but impossible to stop, and fails to resolve one of the key security threats facing Liberia and the region.

Ongoing 'pit sawing' and other logging activities are taking place without proper oversight of the FDA, and with confusion between FDA representatives.

So-called 'pit sawing', done with chainsaws rather than large-scale timber harvesting equipment, is ongoing in many areas with large piles of freshly sawn timber seen along the road between Buchanan and Monrovia, and many trucks per day making the drive from Tubmanburg to Monrovia carrying sawn timber. There is much confusion regarding the legality of pit sawing and how to deal with loggers once they are found. Regional FDA representatives have issued 'transport fees' for those carrying timber away on trucks, but not for those on foot¹⁷, while the central FDA office says it does not take in taxes¹⁸. Central FDA also says that it does not issue permits for pit sawing logging, but does require loggers to present agreements stating their ability to log in special 'deeded' zones¹⁹. UNMIL has also stopped a number of vehicles carrying timber at the behest of regional FDA officials, only to find that drivers were carrying permits apparently issued by the FDA in Monrovia. While logging for domestic use is not a violation of the sanctions regime, such confusion raises justified concerns of the lack of control over the industry.

Evidence suggests continued UN timber embargo violations, with wood products being exported across the border into Guinea.

Since the imposition of timber sanctions in May 2003 by Resolution 1472 (2003), Global Witness has reported numerous incidents of sanctions-busting timber exports, primarily to Cote d'Ivoire. Recent evidence, however, suggests an increase in chainsaw-based logging in Lofa County being carried out by former members of the LURD rebel group, with timber both being used domestically and transported into Guinea in violation of the UN timber embargo. Any continued logging activity, particularly in border areas under the control of non-state actors, and without FDA oversight, is generating revenue that is not properly accounted for and may be misappropriated to fuel conflict.

The UNSC identifies logging industry as threat to peace and security: The Liberian logging industry has historically served as a source of extra-budgetary revenue and logistics by which Charles Taylor and others have fuelled conflict in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. The UN Security Council, recognising the logging industry's threat to regional security, sanctioned the timber industry through Resolution 1472, passed in June 2003. The sanctions dramatically reduced the amount of logging going on, and thus the amount of revenue and logistics available for the warring parties to exploit. Soon after the sanctions came into effect in July 2003, Charles Taylor left for exile in Nigeria, and in October 2003 the NTGL was formed.

The timber embargo was maintained via in Resolution 1521 (2003), passed in December 2003, and further continued in June 2004 at their 6-month review. Two months later, however, the Liberian logging industry poses a threat to regional security and the Liberian government is still not in compliance with the requirements for lifting sanctions and set forth in Resolution 1521 (2003).

Section 2. Short of the Mark: Fundamental reforms of the FDA and NTGL have yet to be completed.

Many of the reform programmes to be paid for and implemented by external donors have yet to be implemented, and as such there remains a lack of transparency, accountability, and comprehensive procedures within the FDA.

The FDA has managed logging contracts in a non-accountable manner, with a troubling lack of government oversight.

In addition to the current confusion regarding contracts for pit sawing, the Expert Panel noted that the FDA has managed recent log processing contracts in an unaccountable manner²⁰. According to documents obtained by the Expert Panel, in December 2003 the FDA granted a contract for processing 15,000 m³ of logs abandoned at Buchanan to Carlton Resources Inc of Liberia. A later contract, also approved by the FDA, listed Carlton Resources as subcontracting the work to a different company, Cendar Timber Company. In the second contract, however, the agreement was to process all abandoned logs anywhere in Liberia, not just those abandoned in Buchanan²¹; a significant difference. The Expert Panel noted that the Carlton/Cendar contract was at some point suspended, but that while the contract was in force the FDA failed to account for the volume of timber processed or the revenue generated, and failed to deposit revenue derived by the contract into the Central Bank of Liberia²². The Expert Panel also determined that there was insufficient oversight of FDA activities by the Central Bank of Liberia, the Ministry of Finance and the Budget Bureau²³.

The EU will not complete a critical in-depth audit of the FDA and logging industry controls.

One fundamental move toward addressing such internal insufficiencies was to be an EU-led audit of the FDA and logging industry procedures and accounting mechanisms. However, that project has recently been scaled back, and will not be a detailed, retrospective audit of finances and financial controls. This hinders both the assessment of the FDA's current systems capacity and a crucial investigation into the logging industry's previous behaviour. A full and retrospective audit is critical to learning how the industry was abused in the past by the Taylor government and others, and thus how to prevent future abuses.

The concession review has been postponed indefinitely.

Further internal FDA reforms, in particular the critical review of previous concession agreements, have also broken down. The concession review process is important to determine which companies have legal rights to land in Liberia, help decide what procedures will be followed in the future and determine what companies will be allowed to participate in any future logging activities. However, after two internal rounds of deliberations, the validity of some previous land-holding agreements are still unresolved and a number of disputes totalling millions of dollars in taxes due to the government have yet to be adjudicated. A third round of concession reviews, to be conducted by a consortium of independent Liberian and international parties, has been postponed indefinitely due to lack of financial and logistical support.

Section 3. 'Coalition of the unwilling': The NTGL's continued lack of organisation, transparency and accountability.

As described by Jacques Klein, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Liberia, the NTGL is a "coalition of the unwilling, that is a government that is quite often not interested in what we are."²⁴ Composed of the three warring parties and representatives of civil society, the NTGL has from the beginning been a difficult compromise. Representatives of civil society have expressed concern to the Security Council that corruption continues to flourish,²⁵ and UN officials and relief workers have further complained that, 'key ministries have been hijacked by the three former warring factions- busy helping themselves to the little money that flow into government coffers. Their leaders still show more interest in squabbling over the spoils of power than genuine reconstruction.'²⁶ While steps have been made towards reforming the NTGL into a fully functioning government, key reforms have not been made to the financial and legal systems to allow for the accountable and transparent governance.

There is a lack of clear procedures and public disclosure regarding the allocation of new natural resource deals.

The lack of clearly defined procedures and public information about the government's recent agreements for natural resource processing and export have raised concerns both from within and outside Liberia. The Expert Panel noted the FDA's lack of accountability with regard to the log processing contract with Carlton Resources/Cendar Timber Company in late 2003, and stated that, 'it is not possible for the Panel, much less civil society, to track revenue flows from the timber industry'²⁷. Questions have more recently been raised by civil society regarding the processes followed by the NTGL when it made an agreement with the Qingdao Trading Group Corporation to export 800,000 cubic metres of iron ore to China. The deal, worth an estimated US\$10 million²⁸, has been challenged in the courts by a coalition of Liberian legal, environmental and human rights groups, who have questioned the NTGL's authority to enter into the agreement, the procedures followed in allocating the contract, and the government's accounting of any revenue generated²⁹. The Supreme Court, in response to the civil society group's legal

challenge, ordered that 'no consignment of iron ore or any ship/vessel containing iron ore be permitted to leave the Port of Buchanan' until the situation was resolved at a conference scheduled for 3 September; the outcome of that conference was unknown at the time of printing³⁰.

Government control does not extend beyond Monrovia

While UNMIL has deployed to interior areas like Zwedru, Buchanan, and Tapeta, all those areas have since experienced serious security breaches in the form of riots by ex-combatants³¹. While the deployment of UNMIL troops has certainly helped the situation in those areas where they maintain a significant and ongoing presence, much of the interior remains under the control of armed ex-combatants, preventing the deployment of government representatives and preventing critical oversight of natural resources and security. Until there is a significant improvement in security and increase in operational capabilities, these regional representatives will have little impact or control over the areas in their remit.

Liberia's law enforcement, including the police and judiciary, are inadequately staffed, trained and supplied.

Fundamental to the restoration of law and order is an impartial and functional judiciary. While Liberia's courts and legal system are still undergoing reform, they suffer from a serious lack of funding, trained lawyers, judges and basic facilities. Moreover, the Liberian police force remains inadequately prepared, lacking staff, funds and basic equipment. A training programme for 400 police officers began in January 2004³², but it will take some time for there to be enough staff to adequately cover the country, and while UNMIL's Civilian Police (Civpol) unit has begun patrolling Monrovia and other parts of the country alongside its Liberian counterparts, Civpol does not have the mandate to substitute the national police nor does it have the authority to make arrests. UNMIL has also taken criticism for not being proactive and aggressive enough in protecting civilians, even when harassment is occurring in close proximity to UNMIL troops³³.

Section 4. Against the Tide: How design problems and financial shortfalls are undermining the DDRR process.

A successful DDRR process is central to Liberia's, and the region's, chances of establishing lasting peace. In-built shortcomings and the lack of funding for key programmes are undermining the progress made thus far and, unless addressed, could ultimately jeopardise the success of the UN's peacekeeping and rebuilding efforts.

There is a large discrepancy between the number of registrants and weapons collected.

The number of ex-combatants to have registered for the process reached more than 66,400 by mid August³⁴, well over initial planning estimates of 38,000³⁵, and over 20,000 guns, 20,000 pieces of bombs and explosives and five million rounds of ammunition had been collected by UNMIL thus far³⁶. However, the high number of individuals registered for DDRR must be contrasted with the relatively low number of weapons collected. The UN itself has noted that reported that the overall the number of weapons handed was lower than expected³⁷, with only one in three of those disarmed so far have actually handed in a weapon³⁸. While it is common for fighters to share weapons³⁹, the ratio of one in three is unexpectedly high, and there are worrying signs that few heavy weapons have been handed in and may have been hidden or moved into neighbouring countries. To ensure that all combatants are registered and as many weapons as possible are handed over, the UN should consider extending the Disarmament and Demobilisation phase of the process past its December deadline.

Moves to rectify the registrant to combatant weapons ratio may ultimately undermine the DDRR process's effectiveness

This discrepancy between the number of ex-combatants and the number of weapons has, in part, led to a changing of requirements for the DDRR, as new registrants are asked to hand in a weapon⁴⁰. Unfortunately, this policy change may prevent some combatants, who either shared weapons or had their weapons taken from them by commanders, from receiving important disarmament payments and rehabilitative training; this will disproportionately affect child soldiers, who are much more likely to have had their weapons taken by their commanders or other adults.

Funding shortfalls and delayed implementation have led to further unrest and combatant re-recruitment.

While DDRR registration is due to end in December 2004, many ex-combatants are waiting for the critical Rehabilitation and Reintegration projects to begin in full. The Security Council has expressed its concern that the majority of resources have thus far been devoted to disarmament and demobilisation, and that reintegration and rehabilitation is inadequately planned and under-resourced⁴¹. Ex-combatants have been promised jobs and training upon graduation from a disarmament camp; however, the jobs have failed to materialise. Furthermore, conditions in cantonment sites across the country have been criticised and been cited as a cause for growing discontent amongst ex-combatants.⁴² Meanwhile, a lack of funds has reduced UNHCR support and forced the World Food Programme to cut its food rations for nearly 740,000 Liberians to just 2/3 of the normal level. On a few occasions this discontent has erupted into full scale rioting and looting by former combatants, who were rioting both in frustration at the slow pace of DDRR, and at their perceived neglect by their leaders now living off well-funded government salaries in Monrovia.

If the process is not carried out successfully, the chances of re-recruitment of soldiers for conflicts in neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire, and potentially Guinea, will grow, and Amnesty International has already reported that boys in Buchanan are being recruited to fight in Cote d'Ivoire for US\$500⁴³. Should such a scenario become more widespread, and should ex-combatants not be returned to productive and non-violent lives in their local communities, the DDRR process will have failed and the chances for lasting and active peace in Liberia and the region will be much more difficult to achieve.

Conclusion

Liberia is still at the beginning of what must be a fundamental reconstruction of its political, economic and social environment. Fourteen years of conflict, in which the government and armed non-state actors exploited the country's people and natural resources to fund their war, has taken a severe toll on the country's infrastructure. While the introduction of 15,000 UN peacekeepers and millions in donor aid has greatly improved the situation, many reforms remain to be completed.

This is especially true for the country's natural resource sectors. The Security Council placed an embargo on Liberian timber because the industry posed a threat to Liberia and the region, and the requirements as set forth in Resolution 1521 (2003) for the lifting of sanctions make clear that the Liberian government must exercise control over its territory and must have in place the proper accounting and governance mechanisms to ensure that revenue is not used to fuel conflict.

While progress has been made to this end, the logging industry still poses a threat to regional security, as the government does not maintain control over much of its territory, its presence outside Monrovia is minimal and armed non-state actors control

large swathes of the interior. Moreover, former LURD and MODEL fighters maintain control over key border crossing points, keeping the cross-border trade in weapons, natural resources and mercenaries that fuelled conflict previously a potential source of destabilisation. The FDA, charged with overseeing the forestry sector, has not completed the necessary management and financial reforms to make it a transparent and accountable agency, has granted and then rescinded contracts for various logging activities without clear procedures, and has not yet been able to establish a credible presence outside of Monrovia. Given these shortcomings, the Security Council must remain steadfast in its decision to keep sanctions in place until its requirements have been met in full. Rushing to lift sanctions on Liberia's logging exports would only open up the industry to continued abuses, and undermine Liberia's tenuous peace and prospects of a full recovery.

¹ 'Liberia: Back to the Future – What is the future of Liberia's forests and its effects on regional peace?', *Global Witness*, May 2004; 'Against the People, For the Resources: The need for stronger enforcement of UN timber sanctions and prevention of plunder', *Global Witness*, August 2004; 'The Usual Suspects: Liberia's weapons and mercenaries in Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone, Why it's still possible, how it works and how to break the trend', *Global Witness*, March 2003; 'Logging Off: How the Liberian timber industry fuels Liberia's humanitarian disaster and threatens Sierra Leone', *Global Witness*, September 2002; 'Taylor-made: The pivotal role of Liberia's forests and flag of convenience in regional conflict', *Global Witness*, September 2001.

² UN Panel of Experts on Liberia reports S/2004/396, S/2003/937, S/2003/779, S/2003/498, S/2002/470, S/2001/1015; UN Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone report S/2001/1195.

³ 'A shattered nation on a long road to recovery', *Irinnews.org*, 17 August 2004.

⁴ 'Liberia: A shattered nation on a long road to recovery', *Irinnews.org*, 17 August 2004.

⁵ Moses M. Zanger, Jr., 'Liberia, China strike US\$10m deal, 50,000 metric tons ore shipped out', *The News (Monrovia)*, 2 July 2004.

⁶ GW conversation with representative of Green Advocates, 3 September 2004.

⁷ GW conversation with representative of Green Advocates, 3 September 2004.

⁸ 'Chinese ship escapes with iron ore', *The Analyst (Monrovia)*, 30 August 2004.

⁹ 'Security fears and poor infrastructure will limit repatriation of refugees', *Irinnews.org*, 4 August 2004.

¹⁰ 'Sapo National Park Under Threat, Anybody Listening?', *The Inquirer (Monrovia)*, 17 August 2004.

¹¹ 'Sapo Park Under Destruction, Green Advocates Alarm', *The News (Monrovia)*, 18 August 2004.

¹² 'Rebels dig in at rubber plantation', *Irinnews.org*, 10 August 2004.

¹³ 'Liberia: One year after Accra – immense human rights challenges remain', *Amnesty International*, August 2004.

¹⁴ 'Rebels dig in at rubber plantation', *Irinnews.org*, 10 August 2004.

¹⁵ 'Gov't has to enhance border control', *The News (Monrovia)*, 11 August 2004.

¹⁶ 'Immigration officers, militias appear alike at Liberia-Guinea border', *The News (Monrovia)*, 11 August 2004.

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