

*INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)*



## **HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION REPORT 2017**

**Published: June 2018**

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

***Human Rights Situation Report 2017***

**Published: June 2018**

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**Forward**

The INCHR was conceptualized to address the historic human rights violations and abuses in Liberia as an outcome of the of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in Accra, Ghana on August 18, 2003 by the warring parties and other state actors including the political parties and CSOs.

Consistent with the requirements of the Paris Principles on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), the INCHR was established by an Act of Legislature on March 11, 2005 with full competence and powers to promote and protect the human rights of both citizens and residents throughout the Republic of Liberia.

Moreover, to adequately and appropriately inform the three branches of Government (Legislature, Executive and Judiciary), the local actors and international partners, the Act's obligates the Commission to prepare quarterly and annual reports on the national human rights situation generally and on more specific thematic human rights issues. This 2017 Human Rights Situation report is compiled and published to satisfy this obligation.

Consequently, this 2017 human rights situation report is divided into three parts. Part one dwells on the situation of Civil and Political Rights touching on the rights to life, liberty and basic freedoms, pre-trial detention and the administration of justice; Part two addresses issues relating to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights with focus on the right to health, education, housing, land and work; and Part three presents and explains the plights of marginalized groups and key population with emphasis on persons with disabilities, women, girls and children who, on a daily basis, suffer the scourge of discrimination, domestic, sexual and gender based violence and abuse and harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation.

This report is well researched and apparently harsh in tone and comprehensive in details, but actually its main goal is to call upon and challenge all actors especially, the government of Liberia, the duty bearer to act; not only to honor its 1986 constitution, especially chapter three, but also to respect and enforce all the international human rights instruments and conventions to which Liberia is a state party.

Finally, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners (BOC), the secretariat and partners, I do acknowledge with deep gratitude the hard work being done and the commitment exhibited during 2017 while we eagerly anticipate enhanced collaboration and increased support for 2018, so that the critical human rights violations and abuses pointed out in this report can be addressed and as a result, the human and peoples' rights of both the citizens and residents will be respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled.

**Rev. Bartholomew B. Colley (Atty.)  
Acting Chairperson  
IMCHR**

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**List of Acronyms/Abbreviation**

<b>BCR</b>	<b>Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation</b>
<b>BoC</b>	<b>Board of Commissioners</b>
<b>CDC</b>	<b>Coalition for Democratic Change</b>
<b>CPA</b>	<b>Comprehensive Peace Agreement</b>
<b>CSO</b>	<b>Civil Society Organization</b>
<b>DEA</b>	<b>Drugs Enforcement Agency</b>
<b>ECOWAS</b>	<b>Economic Community of West African States</b>
<b>FDA</b>	<b>Forestry Development Authority</b>
<b>FGM</b>	<b>Female Genital Mutilation</b>
<b>GCP</b>	<b>Gbarnga Central Prison</b>
<b>GOL</b>	<b>Government of Liberia</b>
<b>HCP</b>	<b>Harper Central Prison</b>
<b>ICCPR</b>	<b>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</b>
<b>ICRC</b>	<b>International Committee of Red Cross</b>
<b>INCHR</b>	<b>Independent National Commission on Human Rights</b>
<b>INGO</b>	<b>International Non-Governmental Organization</b>
<b>LNBA</b>	<b>Liberia National Bar Association</b>
<b>LNP</b>	<b>Liberia National Police</b>
<b>MFA</b>	<b>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</b>
<b>MGCSP</b>	<b>Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection</b>
<b>MOH</b>	<b>Ministry of Health</b>
<b>MoJ</b>	<b>Ministry of Justice</b>
<b>NCD</b>	<b>National Commission on Disability</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-governmental Organization</b>
<b>NEC</b>	<b>National Elections Commission</b>
<b>NHRI</b>	<b>National Human Rights Institution</b>
<b>NHRAP</b>	<b>National n Human</b>
<b>NTAL</b>	<b>National Teachers Association of Liberia</b>
<b>OPCAT</b>	<b>Optional Protocol on the Convention Against Torture</b>
<b>PATEL</b>	<b>Patriotic Entrepreneur of Liberia</b>
<b>RCP</b>	<b>Robertsport Central Prison</b>
<b>UNMIL</b>	<b>United Nations Mission in Liberia</b>
<b>UP</b>	<b>Unity Party</b>

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**Table of Contents**

FORWARD.....	3
LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATION .....	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	6
STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT.....	11
CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW .....	12
PART I: CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS .....	15
1.1. RIGHT TO LIFE.....	15
1.1.1. <i>Arbitrary Deprivation of Life</i> .....	15
1.1.2. <i>Enforced Disappearance</i> .....	18
1.1.3. <i>The Death Penalty</i> .....	19
1.2. TORTURE, CRUEL, INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATING OR PUNISHMENT .....	19
1.3. PROHIBITION OF SLAVERY, SLAVE-TRADE, SERVITUDE, AND FORCED LABOUR.....	20
1.4. RIGHTS TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON .....	20
1.5. PROLONGED/PRE-TRIAL DETENTION AND PRISON CONDITIONS .....	21
1.6. ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.....	23
1.7. FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, ASSEMBLY AND MOVEMENT .....	25
1.8. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE, AND RELIGION.....	26
1.9. FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION .....	26
1.10. RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS .....	27
PART II: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS .....	30
2.1. RIGHT TO HEALTH.....	30
2.2. RIGHT TO EDUCATION .....	32
2.3. RIGHT TO HOUSING AND LAND .....	33
2.3.1. <i>Housing</i> .....	33
2.3.2. <i>Land</i> .....	33
2.4. RIGHTS TO WORK.....	34
PART III. RIGHT OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS AND KEY POPULATION .....	34
3.1. RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY .....	34
3.2. WOMEN RIGHTS .....	35
3.2.1. <i>Rape</i> .....	35
3.2.2. <i>Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Abuse</i> .....	37
3.2.3. <i>Female Genital Mutilation</i> .....	37
3.3. CHILD RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND ABUSE .....	38
4.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	42
4.1. <i>Conclusion</i> .....	42
4.2. <i>Recommendation</i> .....	42

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**Executive Summary**

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) is one of the outcomes of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought permanent closure to the 14-year civil conflict of Liberia in 2003. The Commission was formally established by legislative Act of 2005 with the mandate to promote and protect human rights and prepare reports on the national human rights situation and, inter alia, feed heads of the three branches of Government (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) with such reports. This report is in fulfilment of this statutory mandate and in compliance with the Commission's international obligation and role as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI). The report is a result of collective efforts of the Board of Commissioners and Secretariat of the INCHR and its partners.

The report spotlights and describes issues of human rights abuses and violations as a result of actions and/or inactions of the State that shaped the character of the national human rights landscape in the year of 2017. Broad thematic areas covered by the report include Civil and Political Rights; Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; and Rights of Marginalized Groups and Key Population.

The specific human rights themes covered are arbitrary deprivation of life; forced disappearance; death penalty; torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; prohibition of slavery, slave-trade, servitude and forced labor; right to liberty and security of the person; prolonged/pretrial detention and prison conditions; administration of justice; independence of judges; right to association, assembly and movement; freedom of opinion and expression; rights to health, education, work, housing, amongst others.

**Arbitrary Deprivation of Life:** Two state security officers allegedly tortured a detainee to death in a police holding cell in Grand Gedeh County on August 9, 2017. Also a boy was murdered on April 3, 2017 in Lofa County with his body parts allegedly extracted. Three men were mobbed to death from January to March in Bong County. Six "Forest Rangers" fell victims to mob violence on April 17 in Sinoe County. One of them died and five were hospitalized as a result of gunshot wounds.

**Forced Disappearance:** A 36-year-old man disappeared in Senbehun Town, Grand Cape Mount County on April 5, 2017. His whereabouts remains unknown. He was reportedly last seen being investigated by local authorities on allegation of breaching the norms of a traditional secret society, the Poro. Also, a teenage girl disappeared in Grand Gedeh County amidst media reports about her alleged rape and increase public demand for prosecution of the alleged perpetrator, a then legislator of the County. The State only charged the former lawmaker with Criminal Conspiracy since the girl could not be found to prove or disprove the allegation of rape.

**The Death Penalty:** Liberia still maintains the death penalty in law and practice. Prior to the country's accession to the Second Optional Protocol and even now, the Liberia Penal Law of 1979 makes aggravated capital offenses punishable by death, and places the responsibility on the jury to consider whether mitigating factors call for leniency. The sudden increase in violence during armed robberies and the

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

resulting public outcry and demand for government action prompted the Legislature on July 16, 2008 to pass a criminal amendment of Title 26 Chapter 15 of the Panel Code. Added to the Code are Sections 15.32 and 15.34 making the crimes of armed robbery, terrorism, and hijacking punishable by death where they result in death. This law remains in force. While the death penalty remains and courts continue to pass death sentences; however, no death warrant has been signed by the President and no one has been punished by death.

**Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment:** A Correction Officer at the Harper Central Prison in Maryland County tortured a pre-trial detainee for refusing to fetch water from a nearby creek. Prison authority claimed to have investigated the incident and reprimanded the officer with one-month suspension without pay. It was the second act of torture committed by State operatives, though not authorized. In the earlier, two law-enforcement officers allegedly tortured another detainee to death at the Pennoken police withholding cell in Grand Gedeh County.

**Prohibition of Slavery, Slave-trade, Servitude and Forced Labor:** There was no report of any incident or practice of slavery or slave-trade during the period. However, trafficking of children with the motive of subjecting them to domestic servitude is commonplace in Liberia. People usually traffic kids from rural to urban Monrovia under the pretext of having them educated, but most of these children end up in domestic servitude, street peddling and sexual abuse. The government is noted for condemning this condition, but concrete and sustained action is wanting.

**Prolonged/Pre-trial Detention and Prison Conditions:** Pre-trial detention has been a disturbing factor undermining the criminal justice system of Liberia. During the reporting period, about 65% of inmates across the country were pre-trial detainees with a striking number of them staying beyond the required statutory period (two terms of court). Detainees were in most instances denied their right to bail in violation of Article 21(a) of the national Constitution and Article 9 of ICCPR. A collaborative effort of the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary and the INCHR was forged leading to the review of case files of inmates in the Monrovia and Kakata Central Prison, and recommendations have been made for the release or speedy trial of some prolonged pre-trial detainees.

**Administration of Justice:** The State has established judicial administration in all 15 counties. Yet, accessibility of justice, equal treatment before the law, and speedy trial by courts of competent jurisdiction are being restricted. The restriction of accused person's right to bail, the inability of the 33 public defenders deployed across the country to cover their assigned areas, and the inadequacy of prosecutors are among the key factors impeding justice service delivery.

**Independence of Judges:** Judicial independence is a prerequisite to the rule of law and fundamental to a fair trial, and should therefore be upheld and exemplified by judges in the dispensation of justice. However, judges often show partiality in the dispensation of justice as a result of bribery, social and political connections and in some instances, submission to influences from the echelon of state power. The lack of an independent body to vet the qualification, competency and integrity of would-

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

be judges also affects the establishment of judicial independence. To address anomalies, the justice system needs to be supported and strengthened.

**Freedom of Association, Assembly and Movement:** The reporting period was without a single incident of state-orchestrated restriction of freedom of movement. The Government only imposed a night-time curfew on April 6 in response to a jail break in Gbarnga, Bong County. The curfew was necessary to re-arrest over 21 alleged notorious armed robbers and murderers who escaped jail and posed a serious threat to the population. There is no evidence that this state of emergency was in compliance with article 88 of the Liberian Constitution or Article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

**Freedom of Thought, Conscience and Religion:** The government, in furtherance of Article 18 of the ICCPR and Article 14 of the Constitution of Liberia, upheld and protected the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. People freely practiced the religion of their choice without hindrance. Christianity and Islam are the leading official religions in the country with Christianity covering the majority of the population. There still remains a proposition to amend the Constitution to make Liberia a Christian State. On the other hand while there is no Christian holiday by law, there are calls from Islamic leaders for the State to pass law in support of an Islamic Holiday. Academic institutions also operated without state-imposed disruption.

**Freedom of Opinion and Expression:** Liberia has made significant gains in promoting free speech since the end of the civil wars. The Passage of the Freedom of Information Act and the establishment of the Office of the Independent Information Commissioner are remarkable achievements. However, a number steps needs to be taken to consolidate these gains. The Government needs to decriminalize defamation, and establish limits on damages available in civil defamation suits, transform the Liberian Broadcasting System into an independent public broadcaster, pass a Whistleblower and Witness Protection law.

**Rights to Participate in Public Affairs:** On October 10, 2017, Liberians exercised their rights to participate in public affairs by going to the polls to elect their President and Representatives. Of the 2,183,683 eligible registered voters, the National Elections Commission (NEC) reported that 1,641,922 registered voters went to the polls on October 10, meaning 541,761 eligible voters did not vote. In spite of these the October 2017 elections excluded many more eligible voters including absentee voters, pretrial detainees, persons turning 18 between registration and election, as well as persons in health facilities, etc. These exclusions violate the rights of citizens to vote and thus need to be addressed.

**Right to Health:** Access to health service remains a challenge in Liberia, especially in rural communities and for patients of special needs including vulnerable or marginalized groups. Health facilities are distant from many communities and road conditions have compounded the problem. Public health facilities were either lacking or short of essential drugs, medical equipment, food, beds and electricity. Many health workers, especially doctors and nurses, often demonstrated low passion

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

toward their work. The issue of low salaries and incentives seem to be a demotivating factor for health personnel.

**Right to Education:** Liberia's educational system still demonstrated want of improvement. The availability, accessibility and quality of educational institutions and programs remained at the low standard. Most public schools, if not all, experienced shortage and /or lack of textbooks, instructional materials, stationery and functional laboratories, among others. The government, in apparent repudiation of its obligation to ensure the realization of primary education for all, outsourced 93 pre-primary and primary schools to private institutions including Bridge International Academies under the Partnership Schools for Liberia Program. The National Teachers Association of Liberia (NTAL) opposed the program on grounds that it was introduced as a pilot without broad-based consultation with stakeholders in the educational sector. "It is ironic that Liberia does not have resources to meet its core obligations to provide a free primary education to every child, but it can find huge sums of money to subcontract a private company to do so on its behalf," observed Kishore Singh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.

**Right to Housing:** In April 2016 about 20,000 residents of Fendall, Montserrado County were made homeless as a result of a demolition exercise to reclaim land the University of Liberia (the state owned university) claims belong to it. The residents have collectively filed an action with the Civil Law Court claiming \$40 million in damage. The action by the State has necessitated residents to recourse to the ECOWAS Community Court in a suit for damages and other remedies.

**Right to Land:** Generally, more than 60% of Liberians who live on customary land are squatters because community or customary land belongs to Government. This situation becomes worst when customary land is given out to concessions by Government without the input of communities that have inhabited the land for centuries. A Land Rights Bill submitted to the Legislature in 2014 was passed by the House of Representatives and submitted it to the Senate for concurrence in 2017 with most of the safeguard provisions in the proposed act extracted. CSOs are calling for a reconsideration of the 2014 version to provide more protection.

**Right to Work:** Approximately 80% of the workforce in Liberia is employed in the informal sector. Although efforts have been made to produce a new labour law (Decent Work Bill), it only covers employment in the formal sector. Labourers in the informal sector remain largely unprotected and unaccounted for in the formal economy. While the new labour law of Liberia provides for the setting of a minimum wage, this was left to the determination of a Minimum Wage Board which is yet to be constituted or operationalized.

**Recommendation:**

**The Government of Liberia must improve respect and protection for the rights to life:**

1. Strengthen the criminal investigation capacity of the Liberia National Police including human resource, logistical and technical competence to locate perpetrators of mob violence/killing and ritualistic or other murder, gather

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

material evidence and work with prosecutors to charge and prosecute them;

2. The Government through the Liberia National Police must bring DEA Officer Lawrence Zeon and LNP Officer Alex Kawea to Justice on the death of Lawrence Ninneh;
3. The Government must steps up effort to locate the living body of little RB and her child and further on the prosecution of Morias Waylee or deny her existence;
4. That the Government through the Liberia National Police steps up effort in finding the body (living or dead) of Mr. Abdullai Pussah Jr. who went missing in Senbehun Town;
5. The Government should take step further in amending her criminal procedure/criminal laws to replace death sentences to life imprisonment as has been the practice in more than 30 years;
6. The Government must establishes the National Preventive Mechanism as well as strengthen other instruments including the Civilian Oversight Complaints Board of the Liberia National Police and the Liberia Immigration Service;
7. The Government must criminalize trial by ordeal;
8. The Government must improve human right training at the LNP Academy and apply human rights standards in police supervision and promotion;
9. The Government must inducts the members of the Civilian Oversight Complaint Boards and provides budgetary allocation for the operation of the structure;
10. The Government should intensify its community policing initiatives in order to enhance the community's appreciation of the role of police and the duties and responsibilities of citizens especially in maintenance of law and order;
11. The Government should improve supervision to ensure that LNP depots across the country are respecting the their constitutional obligation not to detain suspect beyond 48 hours;
12. The Government through the Judiciary ensures the protection of the rights of person deprived of their liberty including ensuring speedy trial, bail and decriminalizing petty offenses;
13. That the Government through the Judiciary establishes a framework across the country for controlling pre-trial detention and eliminating cases of prolonged pre-trial detention;
14. The Government through the Ministry of Health provide health services for inmates at prison facilities.
15. The Government monitors the performance of the defense counsels, making sure that the accused or defendant receives adequate legal representation;

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

16. The Government should take step allow persons indicted for rape access to preliminary hearings and take further steps in ensuring speedy trial;
17. The Government should take action to reinstate the Magistrate Sitting Program and rotate the mobile court to address prolonged pretrial detention.
18. The Government through the Judiciary holds prosecutors in contempt for failure to pursue prosecution
19. The Government must take action to further clarify the notification requirement for public march or demonstration;
20. The government must ensure the submission of all delayed or due reports on various treaties in fulfillment of her treaty obligation;
21. The Government should ratify and domesticate the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, which provides for additional preventive mechanisms in the prevention of torture and ill treatment;
22. The Government must establish the claims court to be accessible to persons deprived of their liberty and grant remedy for injury suffers;
23. That the Government through the National Legislature ensures the ratification and domestication of all outstanding treaties, conventions and or protocol;
24. The Government through the National Legislature improves budgetary support to health and so as to realize this rights;
25. The Government must improves budgetary support to education so as to realize this rights;
26. The Government must pass the land rights bill as was drafted through participatory consultation with stakeholders; and
27. The Government through take action to prevent children street peddling.

**Structure of the Report**

The INCHR 2017 Human Rights Situation Report seeks to present the Country's human rights situation from the perspective of the three dimensions of human rights - civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights and the rights of specialized categories or vulnerable population (i.e. women, children, disability, etc.). Hence, the report is essentially in three main parts. Part one focuses on Civil and Political Rights and covers issues of rights to life, freedom from torture and ill treatment, freedom of expression and opinion, freedom of thoughts, conscience and religion, freedom of assembly and movement amongst others. Part two focuses on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and covers issues of rights to health, education, work, housing amongst others. Part three focuses on Marginalized Groups

## **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

and Key Population and focuses on women, children and persons with disability amongst others.

The report also contains a contextual overview which elaborates conditions surrounding the human rights environment in the Country and against which this narrative of the human rights situation must be appreciated. Before this, there is an Executive Summary which précis the entire report for persons who would want to have a cursory view of the report to form a thought. Highlighted in the Executive Summary is the recommendation for a quick reference. A separate section containing recommendations emerging out of the report follows after the conclusion of the report. The recommendations come in these two sections for the purpose of emphasis.

### **Contextual Overview**

Liberia is a constitutional democracy with a republican form of government. Fundamentally, the Constitution of Liberia defines the structure and the functions of the state. Regarding the structure of the state, the Constitution anchors our democracy on three separate and coordinate branches – the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary. While functionally the Constitution empowers these three branches of Government to promote and protect human rights in Liberia,<sup>1</sup> specifically, the Constitution guarantees to all the rights to life, liberty and security, the rights to property, freedom from slavery and servitude, freedom of movement, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression, right to assemble, rights to education and right to work and employment, among others. Collectively, the three branches of Government must promote and protect these rights; guided and advised by the INCHR and other integrity institutions.

Moreover, the constitutional framework empowers the Executive to conduct the foreign affairs of the state and conclude international treaties, conventions and similar agreements with the concurrence of the Legislature.<sup>2</sup> International human rights treaties must therefore meet the approval of the Legislature through ratification and domestication.<sup>3</sup> Once they are ratified and domesticated, treaties are enforced to provide greater protection through various institutions. Judicial interpretation and application of human rights norms in human rights litigation further strengthen human rights protection. Liberia is a State Party to the nine core human rights treaties.<sup>4</sup> As a State party to these human rights treaties, Liberia is obliged to report regularly on how it has operationalized these treaties/agreements consistent with their letters. Reporting obligations are primarily purposed to appraise individual State Party's performance in terms of compliance with these treaties and conventions. However, Liberia is lagging behind in meeting its reporting obligations to the various treaty bodies as a result of varying challenges. The status of Liberia's responsiveness to her human rights reporting obligation is shown in Appendix A as at December, 2017, Liberia.

---

<sup>1</sup> [judiciary.gov.lr/constitution-of-liberia-2](http://judiciary.gov.lr/constitution-of-liberia-2)

<sup>2</sup> Article 57, Constitution of Liberia

<sup>3</sup> Article 34f, *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> Treaties name( ICCPR, CEDAW, ESCR, CRPD, etc.)

## *INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)*

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights was established in March 2005 by an Act of the National Legislature and has a broad mandate to promote and protect human rights in Liberia. The Commission was also established in accordance with the Paris Principle of December 1993.<sup>5</sup>As a national human rights institution, the Commission has repositioned itself in providing support to the state to facilitate the effectiveness and fulfilment of human rights in Liberia. The INCHR received an “A” status accreditation as a NHRI in 2017 more than 10 years after its establishment and only 6 years of operations following the appointment of a Board of Commissioners in 2010.

As an “A” status NHRI, the INCHR is more obliged to adequately strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights in Liberia working through three core departments. The Department on Complaint, Investigation and Monitoring which advances the INCHR human rights protection functions through monitoring, fact finding, documentation and reporting and also through investigation of complaints received and advancement of remedial recommendations. The Department on Legislative Assistance, Treaty Matters and Law, bears the responsibility of implementing INCHR’s mandate to promote and support national efforts that facilitate unconditional State compliance with Liberia’s obligations under international human rights laws/conventions, by encouraging the signing, ratifications and domestication of existing and potential international human rights treaties and standards. The Department on Education, Training and Information leads the INCHR efforts toward the entrenchment of human rights culture in the country and to prevent human rights violations through education, training and awareness raising among duty bearers and rights holders. Through these unique yet coordinating departments, the INCHR has actively been providing human rights promotion and protection services to citizens and residents across the 15 political subdivisions of the country as well as to the state and its functionaries.

The INCHR can effectively engage with the international human rights system including: submitting parallel or shadow reports to the UPR, Special Procedures mechanisms and Treaty Bodies Committees; making statements during debates before review bodies and the Human Rights Council; assisting, facilitating and participating in country visits by the United Nations experts; and monitoring and promoting the implementation of relevant recommendations originating from the human rights system.

In 2017, the country witnessed a historic democratic election which resulted in a sitting democratically elected President turning over the mantle of power to another elected president. The last time the country had such a transition was in 1944, about 74 years ago. More importantly, the 2017 presidential and legislative elections marked the third of free and participatory democratic elections since the advent of multiparty democracy in Liberia. The result of the October 10 poll showed that none of the 20 candidates in the presidential race had obtained the constitutionally required absolute majority votes, thus constraining the National Elections

---

<sup>5</sup>

## *INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)*

Commission (NEC) to announce a run-off election for November 7 between the two candidates who came first and second in the previous round.<sup>6</sup> However, the run-off could not proceed as scheduled because of protests and legal battles pursued by some key opposition parties along with the ruling UP, who alleged that the October poll was characterized by “massive frauds and irregularities” and therefore prayed for the Supreme Court to nullify the result of the election and authorize a rerun. The Court, having considered the merits and demerits of legal arguments and counterarguments of lawyers representing the complaining political parties and the NEC, ruled that evidence produced by the plaintiffs did not suffice to have moved the court to nullify the election result. The Court therefore authorized the NEC to proceed with the conduct of the run-off election but with a call to the body to address some of the issues raised by the parties, including the clean-up of the Final Voter Roll to ensure that the election was free, fair and credible. The run-off was eventually held on December 26, 2017 instead of November 7 consequent of the delay caused by the protracted legal process, with George M. Weah of CDC defeating his main opponent, Joseph N. Boakai of UP.

Broadly in line with its role as a NHRI the INCHR also:

- Observed the registration of candidates and political parties including, monitoring freedom of association and nondiscrimination;
- Monitored voter registration, which includes evaluating the general criteria for registration, systems of voter registration, accuracy of the voter register and its inclusiveness;
- Observed election campaign process including, freedom to campaign, campaign resources and use of public resources;
- Monitored the media - including, assessing media environment, and the legal framework for the media and media coverage of the elections; and
- Encouraged women’s participation in elections, including evaluating women’s participation as voters, candidates and electoral representatives.<sup>7</sup>

Further, the year in review marked Liberia’s celebration of fourteen years of peace, stability and democratic governance. The level of maturity and sense of tolerance demonstrated by political actors, their supporters and Liberians in general in the face of peace-threatening challenges during the electoral process is indicative of Liberians’ determination and resolve to keep on the path of sustainable peace, reconciliation and democratic governance as catalysts for social, economic and political growth and development. Yet, the end of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and its eventual departure from the country, generated a mixed reactions with some people wondering as to whether the Government has developed the necessary capacity to fill the security vacuum left by UNMIL and proceed with the facilitation and consolidation of peace in post-UNMIL Liberia. This concern finds genuineness in the reality of the myriad challenges faced by the security sector in an effort of curbing the escalating incidence of crimes across the

---

<sup>6</sup> George M. Weah of the Congress for Democratic Change (CDC) and Joseph N. Boakai of the Unity Party (UP)

<sup>7</sup> A comprehensive report on the entire 2017 Elections Process will be submitted to the NEC and Government shortly.

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

country, including inadequate logistics, limited numerical strength resulting in lack of and/or negligible security presence in many parts of the country, coupled with poor relationship between law enforcement actors and local communities.

Liberia's response to human rights is basically gravitated towards civil and political rights. This is expressed in the State first National Human Rights Action Plan (NHRAP) which runs from 2013 to 2018. The Issues of economic, social and cultural rights are not being treated and elevated to a point of equal relevance and respect. However, there are discussions underway for the drafting of the successor NHRAP which would take into consideration the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

**Part I: Civil and Political Rights**

In September 2004, Liberia became a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 2 of the Covenant enjoins a State Party to undertake steps to the maximum of its available resources to achieve progressively the full realization of the rights in the treaty. The Covenant covers a range of rights and freedoms including the rights to life, liberty and security, freedom from slavery and servitude, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of association and assembly, freedom of movement. The Government of Liberia has endeavoured to ensure its commitment to meeting the core minimum standards in the realization of the rights under the treaty, despite enormous challenges. This section attempts to provide the current situation with respect to the promotion, protection, respect, and realization of the civil and political rights.

**1.1. Right to Life**

The current Constitution of Liberia guarantees the right to life contained in Article 11 (a) as follows: "All persons are born free and independent and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights, among which are the rights of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of pursuing and maintaining the security of the person and of acquiring, possessing and protecting property, subject to such qualifications as provided for in this Constitution." The constitutional provision is concurrent with Article 6 of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) that states: "Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life." During the period of 2017 the Commission recorded incidents of arbitrary deprivation of life and disappearance of individuals. In addition, death penalty still applies in our Penal Code without any expressed intention and determination to amend and harmonize the Penal Code with Liberia's treaty obligation under the Second Optional Protocol of the ICCPR<sup>8</sup>.

**1.1.1. Arbitrary Deprivation of Life**

State parties, are required to take measures not only to prevent and punish deprivation of life by criminal acts, but also to prevent arbitrary killing by their own

---

<sup>8</sup> Liberia acceded to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Optional Protocol in 2004

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

security forces. Though not sanctioned by the state, arbitrary deprivation of life was allegedly perpetrated by state security forces during the period. Also, for various reasons the State has failed to adequately respond to the arbitrary deprivation of life perpetrated by third party. As a principle of human rights law, the negative obligations of the State Party include abstinence from actions that lead to the violation of human rights, for example extra-judicial killings; while positive obligations oblige the state party to engage in any activity to secure the effective enjoyment of fundamental rights which include the right to life. During the period, arbitrary deprivation of lives by third party were observed to be perpetrated through two equally gruesome manifestations – ritualistic killing and mob-violence.

a. Deprivation of Life by State Security Forces

The Human Rights Committee has stated that the right to life imposes upon states the duty to "prevent arbitrary killing by their own security forces." The Committee also reasons that "the deprivation of life by the authorities of the State is a matter of utmost gravity."<sup>9</sup> This call has been echoed by the African Commission on Human and People's Rights in its Resolution 375 when the Commission enjoins state parties to establish mechanisms to ensure that a prompt, impartial and effective investigation is conducted into potentially unlawful death or enforced disappearance in jurisdiction of state party.

On 9 August 2017, Lawson Ninneh, a detainee at the Putu Pennoken Police withholding cell in Grand Gedeh County, was allegedly tortured to death by Lawrence Zeon of the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and Alex Kawea of the Liberia National Police (LNP). The two alleged perpetrators reportedly entered the cell where the victim had been held and committed the act. The motives behind Lawson's murder are unclear. However, there are unconfirmed reports that an altercation had previously ensued between Lawson's wife and the DEA Agent's, over the deceased's alleged involvement in an extra-marital affair with the Agent's wife. The two accused officers have since been reassigned to different locations without an investigation, let alone a charge in spite of disenchantments and protest of citizens and relatives who have been demanding justice. Officer Zeon was reassigned by the DEA to Bartley Jam Gold Camp in Cavalla Administrative District, under the guise that he faced potential attacks from the deceased's family and community residents.

b. Deprivation of Life by Ritualistic Killing

The killing of people, including children, with parts of their bodies extracted seemingly for ritualistic purposes, is commonplace. The wave of such ghastly acts usually escalates during electioneering periods, which forms the basis of a long-held general belief or perception that politicians with the mindset that they can win elections by means of supernatural powers that come with the use of human blood and parts, are behind most of the ritualistic killings. Several cases of ritualistic killing were reported in 2017.

---

<sup>9</sup> General Comment No. 6

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

On 3rd April 2017, a boy identified as Junior Bukin was reported murdered in Donkin Town, Lofa County. The flesh around the victim's eye was extracted, and his left foot, a testicle and left ear severed. The police arrested ten suspects but subsequently freed four of them, including a Town Chief and three women leaders. The Town Chief was released from detention and placed into the custody of prominent persons in the community due to the lack of evidence to prosecute. Three other suspects who were said to be on the run, were declared wanted persons by the police. However, the Zorzor Magisterial Court eventually nullified the case for lack of sufficient evidence to proceed with prosecution, citing 18.1 of the Criminal Procedural Law of the Country as its reliance.<sup>10</sup>

As articulated by Article 11 (a) of the Liberian Constitution and buttressed by Article 6 of the ICCPR, the Government of Liberia is under obligation to take appropriate safeguard measures to protect the life of all persons within its territorial confines, including prisoners and detainees. Where a person is arbitrarily deprived of his or her life, the State is required to conduct investigation for the purpose of identifying and holding accountable any perpetrator(s) through the due process of law. But the conduct of thorough and conclusive security investigation into and speedy court trial of murder cases seem an exception than the rule. In most instances, murder suspects are set free for "lack of sufficient evidence" to prosecute them, while scores of other suspects are held in prolonged pretrial detention. There have been occasions where human rights lawyers and institutions have compelled the State to unconditionally release murder suspects held in prolonged pretrial detention because of failure of the State to have them tried in a court of competent jurisdiction within the legally required timeframe. Some of these pretrial detainees sometimes go scot-free through "Executive Clemency" granted by the President of Liberia. The collectivity of these and other factors has showcased the weakness of the country's justice system, and has served as a cause of impunity and underpinned the progressive erosion of public confidence in the criminal justice system.

c. Deprivation of Life by Mob Violence

Apparently, as a result of the perennial ineffectiveness of the justice system, the country continues to witness an unacceptable surge in the incidence of arbitrary deprivation of life with mob killings looming higher in frequency. The period in review was characterized by some incidents of mob violence that resulted into death. From January to March 2017, Bong County alone had witnessed the death of three persons as a result of mob violence. On 31st January, Emmanuel Yarkpawolo, a notorious criminal, was attacked and severely beaten to death by an angry mob in the People Street Community of Gbarnga City. A week later, on 7 February, Siafa Fumbah was brutally murdered in Far East Community, in Gbarnga. Then, on 24

---

<sup>10</sup>Subsection 8.1. (Dismissal by prosecuting attorney) provides that "the prosecuting attorney may by leave of court file a dismissal of an indictment or complaint or of a count contained therein as to either or all of the defendants. The prosecution shall thereupon terminate to the extent indicated in the dismissal."

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

February, Charles Tokpah another high profile criminal met his untimely demise in the David Dean Town Community, Kokoya-Bong County.

The three persons mobbed to death were “notorious criminals”, who had, in the past, been arrested, charged and forwarded to court for trial for various crimes. However, they resurfaced in their respective communities to the annoyance of the public. The situation points to a serious lapse in the criminal justice system and citizens’ lack of confidence in the legal and justice system’s ability to conduct proper investigations and punish culprits according to the law. As of the time of writing this report, not a single arrest had been made in connection with the deaths of those three persons.

On April 27, 2017, a forest ranger, Friday Pyne, of the Liberia Forestry Development Authority (FDA) was severely beaten and tortured to death. The Ranger, who was only performing his duties, met his demise when locals involved in illegal hunting and mining activities in the Sapo National Park (a reserved forest) attacked him and other rangers in apparent retaliation for the arrests of twenty of their kins caught red-handed hunting endangered species. Five other Rangers who sustained gunshot wounds were hospitalized. The matter was investigated by the Police in Sinoe County with those suspected of carrying out these attacks transferred to the Third Judicial Circuit Court in Greenville for trial.

1.1.2. Enforced Disappearance

**There has been no commission of arbitrary and enforced disappearance for the period.** However, the INCHR documented the inaction of the State to adequately pursue the allegation of rape against Grand Gedeh District #2 former representative Morias Waylee. It is alleged that the victim of statutory rape, a 13 year old child only identified as RB, gave birth to a baby as a result and both the mother and the child are yet to be found. Due to the absence of this material evidence, the state has limited its prosecutions to actions of criminal conspiracy. The apparent failure of the state to find the bodies of the baby and the teenage mother undermines their rights to life.

Also on April 5, 2017, an incident involving the mysterious disappearance of a 36-year old man identified as Abdullai Pussah Jr. was reported in Senbehun Town, Grand Cape Mount County. The missing man is said to have no link to any political activities. According to family sources, the missing man traveled from Robertsport to Senbehun to visit some relatives but has not been seen since the day of his trip. Some family members alleged that local authorities including the Town Chief and the Liberia National Police (LNP) are not exerting considerable efforts aimed at launching a man hunt to find the missing person. The where about of Mr. Pussah remains unknown up to now with many fearing that he may have been murdered. According to the accounts of eye witnesses who testified before the Ministry of Internal Affairs Investigation Team, Mr. Pussah Jr. was last seen being investigated by local authorities in Senbehun Town, on allegation of breaching the cultural norms of the Poro society<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>11</sup> The Poro Society is a traditional male fraternity in Liberia

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

1.1.3. The Death Penalty

**Liberia still maintains the death penalty in law and practice.** Prior to Liberia accession to the Second Optional Protocol and even now, the Liberia Penal Law of 1979 makes aggravated capital offenses punishable by death, and places the responsibility on the jury to consider whether mitigating factors call for leniency. The court may however deliver a lesser sentence even if the jury recommends a death sentence. Due to a sudden increase in violence during armed robberies, and public outcry and demand for government action, the Legislature, on July 16, 2008, passed a criminal amendment of Title 26 Chapter 15 of the Penal Code adding thereto, sections 15.32 and 15.34 making the crimes of armed robbery, terrorism, and hijacking, punishable by death when they result in death.

In its national report to the Africa Commission on Human and People's Rights in 2012, Liberia recognized that the accession of the Protocol "obligates each state party to ensure that no one within its territory is executed and to take all necessary measures to abolish the death penalty in its jurisdiction." It also indicated that since the accession, the President had commuted all death sentences to life imprisonment. It stopped short, however, of acknowledging an obligation to instruct courts to cease issuing death sentences, or of mentioning any efforts to remove capital punishment from national laws. Since Liberia "reintroduced" the death penalty in 2008, domestic courts have not ceased the passing of death sentences for accused persons. This might be because the relevant amendment has not been made in Penal Code and in addition, most Judges are not well versed in the nuances of applying treaty laws in their judgment. .

At Liberia's 2010 Universal Periodic Review, the Human Rights Council recommended that the country amend or repeal the 2008 capital punishment amendment, adhere to its international treaty obligations, establish a moratorium on the death penalty, abolish capital punishment, and commute death sentences to life imprisonment. Liberia "neither accepted nor rejected" the recommendations. The 2008 law prescribing the death penalty still remains in force.

## **1.2. Torture, Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treating or Punishment**

The protection of citizens against torture, inhumane and degrading treatment is not sufficiently guaranteed by the State. Freedom from torture and ill treatment as guaranteed by article 7 of the ICCPR require state parties to afford everyone protection through legislative and other measures against torture and ill treatment. Liberia Constitution provides that no one shall be subject to torture or inhumane treatment and mandates the Legislature to make laws criminalizing torture and providing for civil remedy. The Legislature is yet to promulgate appropriate law to criminalize torture and ill treatments and provide adequate care and remedy for victims. In the absence of domesticating the provisions of the CAT and instituting the enforcement mechanism, the establishment of a zero torture regime remains a tall order in Liberia.

## **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

Efforts to establish National Preventive Mechanism on Torture as required by the OPCAT, have been dormant during the entire period of 2017. The Liberia National Police and Liberia Immigration Service Act of 2015 established the Civilian Oversight Complaint Board which is yet to be operational. Though meetings of statutory members to the Board have been convened there has been no further action in terms of formal induction by the President and budgetary allocation for the operation of the Board.

The INCHR monitoring of prisons and detention facilities established semblance of torture. On 15 August 2017, a pretrial detainee identified as Eric Pah was reportedly flogged at the Harper Central Prison (HCP) by one Correction officer identified as Nelson Fah for refusing to fetch water at a nearby creek. According to the victim, he was severely beaten by the Correction Officer while in detention. The Prison Authority claimed to have conducted a full scale investigation which resulted into the one-month suspension of Nelson Fah with no pay. It is not clear whether the victim received any kind of reparation for the injury sustained.

### **1.3. Prohibition of Slavery, Slave-trade, Servitude, and Forced Labour**

Article 8 of the ICCPR prohibits slavery, trading in slave, servitude and force and compulsory labor. This provision is supported by Article 12 of the Liberian Constitution which prohibits slavery, slave trade, force labor, debt bondage or peonage within the Republic. While there are yet to be discovery of any practice of slavery or slave trade in Liberia, servitude is a commonplace practice. Children are usually trafficked from rural to urban Liberia under the pretext of giving them a better life but most end up in domestic servitude, street peddling and sexual abuse and exploitation.

### **1.4. Rights to Liberty and Security of the Person**

Article 9 of the ICCPR protects the rights to liberty and security of the persons. “Liberty of person concerns freedom from confinement of the body while security of person means freedom from injury to the body and mind or bodily or mental integrity.<sup>12</sup> The article therefore prohibits arbitrary and unlawful deprivation of liberty including unlawful arrest and detention, unauthorized confinement of prisoners beyond the length of their sentence or extension or other forms of detention. Accordingly, Article 21(f) of the Constitution of Liberia conforms to Article 9 of the ICCPR.

However, arbitrary arrest and detention remains a challenge for the Liberia National Police and other law enforcement agencies in spite of the ongoing reform efforts. At a minimum, providing accused persons their rights under the Constitution when deprived of their liberty remains a challenge.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it has been observed that

---

<sup>12</sup> General Comment No. 35

<sup>13</sup> Article 21 (c) – “Every person suspected or accused of committing a crime shall immediately upon arrest be informed in detail of the charges, of the right to remain silent and of the fact that any statement made could be used against him in a court of law. Such person shall be entitled to counsel at every stage of the investigation and shall have the right not to be interrogated except in the presence of counsel.”

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

police often arrest and detain individuals on complaints bordered on non-criminal offenses, for example action of debt and breach of contracts. The LNP in conjunction with state prosecutors are making progress in formally charging and forwarding persons arrested before a judicial tribunal within the constitutionally required 48 hours as prescribed by law. There is one county attorney assigned in each of the 15 counties. Prison records across the country show regular pattern of overcrowdings more than 35% on aggregate beyond prison capacity. The record shows that a significant percentage of inmates are deprived of their right to liberty including detention for other petty crimes and civil offences.

**1.5. Prolonged/Pre-trial Detention and Prison Conditions**

About 65% of inmates across the Country were held in pre-trial detention with a significant number staying beyond the required statutory period (two terms of court). The delay in the trial of accused persons undermines the principle of the presumption of innocence. Human rights awareness amongst correction authority, and the deployment of public defenders in the counties contributed to the release of prolonged pre-trial detainees. In 2017, more than 35 persons held in prolonged pre-trial detention were released across the country as a result of INCHR intervention. However, additional efforts are needed to ensure zero prolonged pre-trial detention across Liberia while we address prison congestion. In November of 2017, collaboration between the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary and the Independent National Commission on Human Rights piloted an intervention to review case files of inmates in both the Monrovia and Kakata Central Prisons. The review of files shows that inmates are being denied their rights to bail and speedy trial.

The INCHR observed in many instances that the state demonstrated lack of urgency in processing cases involving pretrial detainees to court. Slowness in handling cases awaiting trial violates the accused right to a speedy trial, presumption of innocence and contributes to impunity, Given that justice delayed is justice denied, the perpetrators ironically become victims of the denial of justice.

As of the time of compiling this report, the total number of persons detained in Liberia was 2,168 with 1,456 representing the total number of pretrial detainees and 711 for those convicted and duly sentenced.<sup>14</sup> Most of these pretrial detainees had been held behind bars for more than a year without the opportunity to face their accuser(s) in a court of law or benefit from non-custodial alternatives (e.g. bail) to imprisonment.

The Gbarnga, Harper, Monrovia, Saniquellie, Voinjama, and Zwedru Central Prisons all reported overcrowding, severe food shortage and the lack of medical supplies to treat sick prisoners, etc. The Gbarnga Central Prison (GCP), for instance, originally built to accommodate one hundred and fifty persons had an approximate prison population of 200 at the time of a major jail break on 5 April 2017. The prison break led to the escape of 20 notorious criminals most of whom were subsequently rearrested and incarcerated.

---

<sup>14</sup>Bureau of Correction and Rehabilitation Statistics

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

In June 2017, the Barclayville withholding cell in Grand Kru County also reported the lack of adequate space to accommodate detainees for onward transfer to the Harper Central Prison due to the lack of standard prison facility in Grand Kru County. At the moment, the Barclayville withholding cell is heavily dependent on the Harper Central Prison (HCP) in Maryland County to host convicted prisoners.

Meanwhile, the Barclayville withholding cell and the Cestos Central Prison in Rivercess County for example, have been without electricity supply since these facilities were built in 2008 and 2013 under the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Quick Impact Project (QIP). In addition to the lack of electricity, these prisons and many others across Liberia have been operating without befitting sanitary facilities for proper waste management. Essential items such as beds and mosquito nets are also not available notwithstanding the fact that the Government of Liberia (GOL) through the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR), the Red Cross Society and Other International non-governmental Organizations has occasionally been providing support to prisons in Liberia.

In April and June 2017, INCHR monitors observed and reported to relevant authorities the appalling health condition of detainees at the Gbarnga, Robertsport, and Tubmanburg Central Prisons respectively but very little or nothing significant was done to address the problems. At the GCP for example, three detainees have been chronically ill of a hernia for more than four months while four inmates at the Robertsport Central Prison (RCP) are suffering from illnesses such as scabies and blurred visions. In spite of the deplorable condition of these prisoners, they have not been treated or transferred to suitable medical facilities to get help. All of the conditions mentioned above are typical examples of the appalling and sometimes harsh prison conditions which detainees across the country are subjected to without alternative remedy.

Although the law offers special consideration for the release of inmates who are suffering from illness, such release was rare during the reporting period given that the GOL is yet to put in place a policy framework to guide in the application of the law. In this regard, the absence of standardized policy to implement the law on granting of a compassionate release of sick prisoners means they are left to the mercy of prison authorities who exercise discretionary powers regarding whether or not to grant temporary request for the release of detainees who are sick. This situation means inmates run the risk of dying in prison whenever their sick request is not granted in time to allow them to seek medical attention.

Lengthy detention of non-convicts in criminal cases without trial and limited access to available non-custodial alternatives to incarceration expose detainees to harsh prison conditions and abuses at the Monrovia, Saniquellie and Gbarnga Central prisons amongst others. It is worth stating that the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation (BCR) has got very little or nothing to do with the influx daily admission to its detention facilities nationwide.

The INCHR also observed that most prison facilities are not in compliance with provision of Chapter 34 of the Criminal Procedure Law of Liberia. Specifically,

## **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

during the month of February, prisons in Saniquellie, Tubmanburg, and Fish Town, were without enough food and essential medical supplies, pure drinking water, beds and proper ventilation, etc.<sup>15</sup> Some International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) including International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) responded by providing mattresses to some prisons. The INCHR monitoring report documented efforts by some prison facilities especially Gbarnga and Zwedru to contribute to food security by engaging in food crops cultivation.

The incidence of pretrial detention, a latent form of human right violations in Liberia, does not only affect inmates but undermines the rule of law as well. *Article 21(f) of the Constitution of Liberia clearly states that when an accused person is arrested and incarcerated, s/he must be appropriately charged, and brought to court or be released within 48 hours to avoid further violation of their human rights.* But the INCHR monitoring report documented more than five hundred (500) suspects arrested and detained indefinitely across the country, without being brought before a court of competent jurisdiction.

In cases of miscarriage of justice, the right to compensation for prolonged pretrial detainees is not protected. Victims of prolonged pretrial detention do not have immediate remedy at law for lack of domestic specialized legislation and a specialize court. Although articles 26 and 34(e) of the Constitution of Liberia provide for the setting up of the Claims Court which shall hear claims and petition of all persons injured by an act of Government or persons acting under its authority, no such court has been established to date. Remedy for violation of human rights is a key principle internationally recognized. Under UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International human rights law, States are encouraged to provide adequate, effective and prompt reparation for harm suffered as well as access to relevant information concerning violations and reparation mechanisms. The Government failure to establish a Claims Court is an apparent abdication of the rights to judicial remedy for human rights violation perpetrated by the State.

### **1.6. Administration of Justice**

The State has made significant gains in establishing judicial administration in all of the 15 Counties across Liberia to ensure citizens' access to justice. However, there remain challenges in ensuring that all have equal treatment before the law and fair trial by courts of competent jurisdiction. The rights to counsel is not adequately available for accused persons. The public defenders (defense counsel) assigned to the 15 counties do not have the capacity to cover their area of assignment, particularly rural communities where traditional justice is often applied by local authority to decide serious human rights cases. There are a total of 33 public defenders covering the entire country. Similarly, the inadequacy of prosecutors has been responsible for the undue delay in bringing accused persons to trial. This situation coupled with poor infrastructure (i.e. road) and the late opening of some courts across the country and irresponsiveness of courts in granting bail and the

---

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 34.8 and 34.10 of Criminal Procedure Law of

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

complicated nature of accessing bond result to overcrowding of prisons, and situation of prolonged/pretrial detention.

**Independence of Judges.** Judicial independence is a prerequisite to the rule of law and fundamental to a fair trial. Judicial independence (individual and institutional) shall be upheld and exemplified by judges in the dispensation of justice. However, there is no independent body established to vet the competency, integrity and qualification of would be judges in Liberia. In rare cases, the Liberia National Bar Association (LNBA) selects from amongst its members a list of individuals, submits same to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court who then forward to the President for nomination to judgeship follow by confirmation by the Legislature. Constitutionally the responsibility of appointing judges is charged to the President of Liberia with the consent of the Senate to serve until retirement.<sup>16</sup> However, Article 71 provides that “the Judges of subordinate courts of record shall hold office during good behavior. They may be removed upon impeachment and conviction by the Legislature based on proved misconduct, gross breach of duty, inability to perform the functions of their office, or conviction in a court of law for treason, bribery or other infamous crimes”.

The judiciary law of Liberia provides that

*“no person shall be appointed or hold office as judge of a Circuit Court who has not been a citizen of Liberia for at least five years immediately prior to his appointment, who shall not have attained the age of twenty-five years, who is not an attorney licensed to practice and who has not engaged in the active practice of law for at least five years next preceding his appointment, and except for the persons appointed as relieving judges, who is not a resident of the county in which the Circuit Court to which he is appointed, is located. Active practice of law, as used herein is not limited to the direct practice of law, but includes judicial service; governmental service and the teaching of law”<sup>17</sup>*

In addition to the Constitutional and Statutory requirements for appointment to the judgeship, any lawyer who is selected for appointment to serve as judge of the court of law shall have knowledge of the law and shall have successfully completed the Bar examination and shall have integrity. No person should be asked or selected for appointment who does not meet the requirements such as; a citizen of Liberia and of good moral character; and an Attorney at Law who has practiced for at least 3 years, or a counselor of the Supreme Court Bar.

---

<sup>16</sup>Article 69 of the Constitution states: “the President shall and with the consent of the Senate, appoint and commission Circuit Judges, of whom shall be resident Judges, one for each circuit, and two of whom shall be relieving judges. They shall hold office during good behavior.”

<sup>17</sup> Section 3.7 of the Judiciary Law of Liberia (1972)

## **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

The Chief Justice of Liberia has the discretionary power of assigning Judges. The Judiciary Law of Liberia states that, “the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court shall assign, on a rotating system, a Circuit Judge to each quarterly session of the various circuits and if all business before a circuit court is disposed of before the expiration of a quarterly session, the Chief Justice shall have the power to reassign the Circuit Judge assigned thereto to sit for the balance of the quarterly session in any other circuit in addition to the Circuit Judge currently assigned there, if he deems such reassignment will aid the prompt disposition of judicial business.”<sup>18</sup>

The Judicial Inquiry Commission is a body responsible to ensure that judges maintain integrity and transparency it has the authority to recommend the suspension of a judge to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court after inquiry into complaint against a judge for ethical misconduct. Further, a judge can be suspended by Supreme Court based on a recommendation from the Judiciary Inquiry Commission. All judges must be lawyer and all lawyers must be licensed to practice law in Liberia.

The Chief Justice appoints members of the Commission with an Associate Justice as Chairman and the Chairman of the Grievance and Ethics Committee as Secretary. As amended in 2017, the current composition of the JIC is two (2) Associate Justices, three (3) Judges of court of records, two (2) Lawyers and two (2) members of Civil Society Organizations. As a qualification all members of the Commission must meet requirements to membership of the institutions/profession as indicated for representation on the commission.<sup>19</sup>

The Constitution provides that Judges of the Supreme Court and all other judges receive such salaries, allowances and benefits as shall be established by law. In addition Supreme Court and judges of subordinate courts salaries and allowances may by law be increased but may not be diminished except.<sup>20</sup>

### **1.7. Freedom of Association, Assembly and Movement**

There were no reported case of restriction of freedom of association, assembly and movement in 2017. Nevertheless, on 6 April 2017, the government of Liberia imposed a night-time curfew in Gbarnga, Bong County, after a jailbreak resulted in the escape of more than twenty-one (21) alleged notorious armed robbers, murderers. Although the state of emergency restricted people’s freedom of movement, it was necessary to enable state security personnel rear rests the escapees whose presence posed serious security risks to Gbarnga and its environs. Apart from Gbarnga, no other part of the country reported an incident that curtailed people’s movement during the reporting period.

Article 17 of the Constitution of Liberia provides for the right to assemble in a peaceful and orderly manner. Section 22.86(a) (maintenance of public order) of the Liberia National Police Act of 2015 requires that persons desiring to hold any

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid section 3.9

<sup>19</sup> See Judicial Canon 40 as amended 2017

<sup>20</sup> See Article 72 of the Constitution of Liberia

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

special event in the form of demonstration, march or similar event in any public place to notify the county attorney not less than 7 days prior. For Montserrado County, the notification must be served on the Minister of Justice with consultation of the Inspector General. There is however, no clear regulation on the standards to be applied in evaluating the notification to avoid wide discretion and abuse of power. The law is unclear what happens if there is spontaneous demonstration, march or other similar assembly.

**1.8. Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion**

Article 18 of the ICCPR protects the rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. It is further protected by the general provision of Article 4 of the ICCPR as a right that cannot be derogated from even in time of public emergency. However, while the Constitution of Liberia protects this right, it seems to suggest that it can be derogated from. The Constitution provides that a person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of the rights as may be required by law to protect public safety, order, health, or moral of the fundamental rights and freedom of others.

Notwithstanding, every academic institution in Liberia functioned freely without any hindrance during the period covered by this report. Also, there was no report indicating that the government of Liberia imposed a restriction on religious freedom. People were encouraged and allowed to practice the religion of their choice freely.

Howbeit, a segment of the population with support from members of the National Legislature including then Bong County Senator and now Vice President made calls for the Christianization of Liberia. During the same period, the Muslim community made separate petitions to the Legislature and the President to declare a Muslim Holiday. No actions were taken regarding these requests and the Vice President has since apologize for her stance.

**1.9. Freedom of Opinion and Expression**

Freedom of speech, though guarantee by the Liberian Constitution and several other international human rights instruments is occasionally restricted by government in some specific instances. One typical example of government restriction on free speech came to the fore on 8 April 2017 when the government of Liberia openly criticized and threatened members of the Patriotic Entrepreneur of Liberia (PATEL), a local Trade Union, through a press release to desist from a planned protest action. To further harass and intimidate PATEL members, the government deployed well-armed police officers at strategic business locations across Monrovia and Paynesville and threatened them with court actions for breaching the peace and disrupting normal activities.

There is no law on cybercrime or regulations governing the use of internet. Accordingly, the Government has not prosecuted or imposed any sanction on anyone for the abuse of the internet. Notwithstanding, the Minister of Education, George Werner was called to the National Legislature to apologize over his August 17, 2017 Facebook post that education and debate was not necessary for leadership. The Legislature subsequently cast a vote of no confidence in Minister Werner on August 31, 2017. However, the Minister was not removed or replaced by the President.

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**1.10. Rights to Participate in Public Affairs**

Liberia conducted her third successive post conflicts Presidential and Legislative elections on October 10, 2017. This election premised Liberia's transition from one democratically elected administration to another. INCHR Observers accredited by the National Elections Commission monitored the participation of Liberians in the electoral process throughout the country. The INCHR partnered with officials of the National Human Rights Action Plan (NAHRAP) and a group of civil society organizations based in the counties, to observe the electoral process. Although the process was generally peaceful, however several issues were observed. Paramount among these was the exclusion of certain segments of the society from the electoral process. These limitations and gaps are punctuated by geographic or physical barriers, accessibility, laws, tradition, health condition, confinement, illiteracy, physical impairment, poor preparation of election workers etc.

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes and protects the rights of every citizen to vote and to be elected<sup>21</sup>. Liberia as a State has promulgated laws and regulations and taken measures necessary to guarantee these rights for all her citizens. The Liberian Constitution provides that every citizen not less than 18 years of age and with sound mind shall have the right to be registered as a voter and to vote in public elections. The Elections commission is mandated to conduct all of such elections including the 2017 elections.

The National Elections Commission recorded a total number of 2,183,683 eligible registered voters during voters' registration in 2017. Of this number 1,641,922 registered voters participated in the voting exercises on October 10, 2017 by actually casting their ballots. The INCHR observation and other reports show that the invalid votes were largely due to inadequate civic voters' education. A total number of 541,761 eligible voters did not participate in the elections. Given the number of registered voters, it means that over half a million persons who were eligible according to the National Statistics from Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services did not have the opportunity to register not to mention vote. While some of these eligible voters voluntarily chose to forfeit their rights to vote, most of them were disenfranchised by other conditions such as their inability to vote by absentee ballot, age, distance and error by voter registrars during the voters' registration process, etc. For instance, an estimated 2000 pretrial detainees in all the detention centers around the country, including police holding cells were denied the opportunity to register and participate in the elections. The rights of these detainees to participate in public affairs were grossly violated.

**Every Eligible Voter has the Right to Vote:** Article 25 of the ICCPR and General Comment #25 gave every citizen 18 years and above the right to participate in public affairs (take part in elections) either as a voter and/or as a candidate. National laws

---

<sup>21</sup> The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes the rights of every citizen to vote and be voted and mandates states to take all measures to ensure that every eligible voter is able to exercise these rights.

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

including the Constitutions and the New Elections Law of Liberia have also incorporated these provisions<sup>22</sup>.

**The right to absentee voting is being denied:** The right for every eligible voter (who may not be in the country or who may be absent from the constituency where s/he registered at the time of elections) to exercise his/her right to vote is also enshrined in National Laws including the Constitution (the Organic Law of Liberia) and the New Elections Law of 1986.

On Absentee voting, Article 80(c) of the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia states:

“Every Liberian citizen shall have the right to be registered in a constituency, and to vote in public elections only in the constituency where registered, either in person or **by absentee ballot**; provided that such citizen shall have the right to change his voting constituency as may be prescribed by the Legislature.” Section 5.5 of the New Elections Law (which was omitted in 2004) reads: “A registered voter who is absent from the country during an election and wishes to vote shall request the Commission [by] registered mail for an absentee ballot forty-five (45) days before an election. Absentia votes shall be directed directly to the Commission by registered mail for inclusion into the result of the elections”.

Since the suspension of certain provisions of the Constitution of Liberia and Amending specific sections of the New Elections Law of 1986 and Approving New Provisions relating to the Budget Appropriations of the National Elections Commission approved December 17, 2004 to enable the conduct of elections for a smooth transition from the interim arrangements during the crisis period to a peaceful and democratically elected government in 2005, Section 5.5 of the New Elections Law on Absentee Voting has not been activated, though the Constitution itself has since been restored.

**Right of Detainees to Exercise their Franchise was denied:** Pretrial detainees and inmates convicted and sentenced for crimes which do not warrant disenfranchisement were denied their rights to register and vote in the elections. Also persons declared incompetent or of unsound mind because of conviction for an offense thus disenfranchising them as voters who have since been restored to citizenship, should have had their names added to the Registration Roll by re-registering or by making claim in accordance with the requisite provisions of the New Elections Law. General comments 25 count 5 of the ICCPR says: “Persons who are deprived of liberty but who have not been convicted should not be excluded from exercising the right to vote”.

**Special Preference for People with Disabilities, Pregnant Women, Breast-feeding Mothers, and the Elderly were visible, but most polling places were not**

---

<sup>22</sup> Except for those judicially declared incompetent to take part in elections, both the Constitution and the New Elections Law of Liberia give every citizen eighteen (18) years and above and with sound mind the right to participate in elections.

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**disable friendly:** Though Special preferential treatment were accorded people with disabilities, pregnant women, lactating mothers and the elderly during elections, most polling places were not disabled friendly. According to Chapter 4 Subsection 4.2 sub-subsection 1 (a) and (b) of the New Elections Law, (a) “Polling Officers shall give preference to persons with disabilities at the Polling Places”. (b) The location and arrangement of the Polling Places shall, to the extent which is reasonably and practicably possible, be accessible to persons with disabilities.”

For the visually impaired, tact-tile ballots were made available during the October 10, 2017 elections to ensure that they vote independently. Unfortunately, most visually impaired did not have prior information as to the availability of these ballots and consequently had no orientation on the use of the ballots.

**Distance between Polling Places, physical topography and weather condition posed barriers/difficulties to the right to participate:** The farther away the polling places are from each other, the more difficulty it poses for the elderly, breast feeding mothers and pregnant women to exercise their franchise to vote. It takes several days, if not a little more than a month to carry out voters’ registration, but election is conducted only in one day if not in 12 hours’ time. Distance and the lack of financial and physical capabilities will definitely pose extreme difficulties for these vulnerable people to cast their votes. General Comment # 25 count 3 of the ICCPR states: “States must take effective measures to ensure that **all persons** entitled to vote are able to exercise that right.

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**Part II: Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

In September 2004, Liberia became a State Party to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Article 2 of the Covenant enjoins State Party to ‘undertake steps to the maximum of its available resources to achieve progressively the full realization of the rights in the treaty. The Covenant covers arrange of rights and freedoms including the rights to health, education, work and housing. The Government of Liberia has endeavoured to meet the core minimum standards in the realization of the rights under the treaty, despite enormous challenges. This section attempts to provide the current situation with respect to the promotion, protection, respect, and realization of the civil and political rights.

**2.1. Right to Health**

Article 12 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social Rights provides that ‘[t]he States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.’ The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has recognized that health is a fundamental rights indispensable for the exercise of other rights. In that light, the Committee has acknowledged that Article 25 (1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights did not only speak of right to health but link such right to include food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services. The State obligation in the realization of the right to health falls within three obligations: protect, respect and fulfill.

In 2011 the Country inaugurated a 10 year National Health Policy and Plan (2011-2021) focused on reforming and effectively managing the health sector, to deliver efficient, comprehensive and quality health services that are equitable, accessible and sustainable for all. In addition there are very good policies in place including National Drug Policy, Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy, Nutrition Policy, Health Promotion Policy, National Child Survival Policy, etc. Nevertheless, in spite of this clear roadmap and policy frameworks and operational plans, the realization of the rights to health in Liberia remains a tall order. Until today key aspects regarding the rights to health that meet basic universal standards: availability, affordability, acceptability and dignity, quality, non-discrimination, transparency, participation and accountability still remain a challenge. ‘The human right to health care means that hospitals, clinics, medicines, and doctors’ services must be accessible, available, acceptable, and of good quality for everyone, on an equitable basis, where and when needed.’ National budgetary allocation to health remains relatively low. In the 2014/2015 Fiscal Budget the health sector received a total allocation of US\$78,728,754 constituting about 11.92% of the total budget of US\$ 660,236,000.00; while for Fiscal Year 2015/2016 the health sector was allocated a total US\$72,618,517.00 about 11.66% of the total budget of US\$622,743,420.00. In the 2016.2017 Fiscal Budget out of total revenue envelop of 600,204,076.00, the sector received 12.89% a total of US\$77,407,841.00. It is not clear whether or not the sector did receive the total allocation projected for each of the fiscal period considering budget shortfall. According to CIA World Factbook updated January 20, 2018, Infant and maternal mortality rate 52.2 deaths/1,000 live births - with male 56.7 deaths/1,000 live births and female 47.6 deaths/1,000 live births (2017 estimate). In 2015, maternal mortality ratio for Liberia was 725 deaths per 100,000 live births. Between 1996 and 2015, maternal mortality ratio of Liberia was

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

declining at a moderating rate to shrink from 1,630 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1996 to 725 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015(cf. World Data Atlas on Liberia Health)Of every 10 babies born in Liberia, at least one dies before reaching one year old. While there is some progress, Liberia has a high burden of maternal deaths. In spite of this clear roadmap the realization of the rights to health in Liberia remains a tall order.

The State remains far from developing any non-contributory scheme to provide benefits or assistance for person of age especially those not covered by the civil service pension or the National Social Security scheme which are moribund and undergoing reforms. Both the Civil Service Standing Order and the Decent Work Acts put the retirement age at 60 irrespective of occupation and ability of the elderly.

Access to health service remains a challenge in Liberia especially in rural communities and for patients of special needs including vulnerable or marginalized groups. Health facilities are still a distance away from many communities and road conditions have further compounded the problem. Essential drugs are sparingly available or in short supply. Health facilities are short of necessary medical personnel including medical doctors and equipment which generally undermine the delivery of quality health services across the country. Health personnel training curriculum does not include any module on human rights and health.

G.W Harley Hospital, one of the biggest government referral hospital in Nimba has not been able to provide requisite medical treatment to patients due to the unavailability of basic laboratory testing materials used to diagnose patients' conditions like test kits and reagents. There is also a problem of insufficient supply of essential drugs and most patients are asked to procure their medication at local pharmacies.

Patients admitted at the Fish Town Hospital in River Gee County sometimes went without food for as long as four days. According to a whistle blower patient, he had been hungry for four days. The hospital had not received food supplies for more than 5 months. The situation led to complication in the administering of drugs to some patients whose families could not afford to feed their patients. The issue of inadequate staffing at the hospital is a major constraint. Whereas, a minimum of thirty six staff are required to effectively run the facility, the manpower at the hospital stood at 14 during the first quarter of 2017 with 8 nurses, 5 midwives and 1laboratory technician.

Inadequate staff, lack of utility vehicle, and insufficient drugs for patients as well as gasoline for the daily operation of the hospital were amongst myriad of problem also identified at the CH Rennie hospital in Margibi County during the second quarter of 2017.Patients were sent away without being attended to due to insufficiency of beds at the hospital. CH Rennie is the only government hospital in Margibi County and has eighty eight beds. Similarly, the current capacity of the G. W. Harley hospital in Ganta, current capacity cannot accommodate all of the patients they receive on a daily basis. As a result the hospital is facing serious over crowdedness and many patients are left unattended due to lack of equipment in the laboratory. The absence

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

of these materials has made doctors or lab technician unable to diagnosed patients illnesses.

**2.2. Right to Education**

The right to education has been recognized as a human right in a number of international conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognizes a right to free, compulsory primary education for all, an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education, as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education. Liberia is a party to the Covenant. The right to education also includes a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. In addition to the access to education provisions, the right to education encompasses the obligation to avoid discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum standards and to improve the quality of education.

However, for Liberia as at 2017, there remain huge challenges with respect to the availability, accessibility and quality of educational institutions and programs in Liberia. While the State is obligated to ensure the realization of free primary education for all, 93 pre-primary and primary schools were outsourced to the private institutions including Bridge International Academies under the partnership schools for Liberia program. The program which is being piloted was introduced with limited consultation resulting into an opposition to the program from the National Teachers Association of Liberia.

The Government of Liberia is providing budgetary support to these privatized institutions which reduces the number of public institutions and displaces pupils who could not be absorbed in their former primary schools due to new student per class quota. Primary education is a core minimum human rights obligation of the State and it must be compulsory and free for all. Privatization clearly undermines the realization of primary education for all where subvention to strengthen public education is being directed at subsidizing private education.

In February 2017 however, the Minister of Education announced 100 new Partnership Schools for Liberia (PSL) would open in Year Two of the PSL in September 2017. This became a concern to PSL advisers to the government, who have warned against a decision to scale up before evidence from the evaluation is released in August 2017.

Of concern has also been the government's reluctance to welcome independent research. When Action Aid and Education International commissioned the University of Wisconsin to conduct complementary research, the Ministry of Education refused to grant access to schools. Citing concerns on a lack of objectivity due to Action Aid and Education International's work on public-private-

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

partnerships, the Ministry however has welcomed the assessments released by PSL providers themselves.<sup>23</sup>

Results from the first year of a three year evaluation of partnership-schools for Liberia reveal that even though the level of student learning has increased, this model poses far greater challenges. The costs involved in running the schools are high. Additionally, it was found that performance of the schools is not uniform; varying among various contractors. The nature of the contracts emerged questionable with Bridge International Academies, the largest contractor, being allowed to push out excess students or under-performing teachers. In Liberia, Bridge academies achieved limited learning gains despite the fact that they spent much greater sums of money than any other contractors. “it is ironic that Liberia does not have resources to meet its core obligations to provide a free primary education to every child, but it can find huge sums of money to subcontract a private company to do so on its behalf”- Kishore Singh, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education.

### **2.3. Right to Housing and Land**

#### **2.3.1. Housing**

In April 2016 about 20,000 residents of Fend all, Montserrado County were made homeless as a result of a demolition exercise to reclaim land the University of Liberia (the State owned)claims belong to it. The residents have collectively filed an action with the Civil Law Court claiming \$40 million in damage. The demolition exercise has rendered thousands of residents homeless. Residents of the community claimed that they have lived in the community for more than fifty years with valid deeds but the Government chose to demolish their homes without due process. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "[e]very one has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. Additionally, The Africa Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights expounding on Article 16 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in the case, *SERAC v. Nigeria*, stated that ‘the right to property, and the protection accorded to the family forbids the wanton destruction of shelter because when housing is destroyed, property, health, and family life are adversely affected.’<sup>24</sup> The action by the State has necessitated residents to recourse to the ECOWAS Court in a suit for damages and other remedies.

#### **2.3.2. Land**

Majority of Liberians who live in rural parts of the country do not have right to land. Generally, more than 60% of Liberians who live on customary land are squatters

---

<sup>23</sup> The Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Review on Education Privatization in Liberia

<sup>24</sup>*Social and Economic Rights Action Center and the Center for Economic and Social Rights V. Nigeria*

## **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

because community or customary land belongs to Government. This situation becomes worst when customary land is given out to concessions by Government without the input of communities that have inhabited the land for centuries. Traditional leaders, civil society, government representatives, law makers and the cabinet of Liberia, at a National Conference called by the President in 2013, validated the Land Rights Policy which was translated into A Land Rights Bill and submitted to the Legislature to address these and other and tenure issues. However, since 2014, the Act languished in the National Legislature until 2017. Civil society organizations and the international community have repeatedly called on the Legislature for the passage of the law. The House of Representatives finally passed the bill and submitted it to the Senate for concurrence in 2017. However, most of the safeguard provisions in the proposed act were extracted. CSOs are calling for a reconsideration of the 2017 version to provide more protection. Land is not a mere commodity, but an essential element for the realization of many human rights. For many people, land is a source of livelihood, and is central to economic rights. Land is also often linked to peoples' identities, and therefore tied to social and cultural rights.

### **2.4. Rights to Work**

Approximately 70% of the workforce in Liberia is employed in the informal sector. Although efforts have been made to produce a new labour law (Decent Work Law), it only covers employment in the formal sector. Labourers in the informal sector remain largely unprotected and unaccounted for in the formal economy. While the new labour law of Liberia provides for the setting of a minimum wage, this was left to the determination of a Minimum Wage Board which is yet to be constituted or operationalized.

## **Part III. Right of Marginalized Groups and Key Population**

### **3.1. Rights of Persons with Disability**

Discrimination against persons with disabilities is illegal but widespread, especially in the countryside. Most public buildings are inaccessible to disabled people, and there is no law requiring them to be accessible. There is a National Commission on Disabilities but it is not effective at protecting disabled people's rights.

The laws of Liberia frown on discrimination against individuals with mental and physical disabilities, the visually impaired and those with hearing impairment among others. However, such individuals never had equal access to governmental services as those without disabilities. The law does not make it mandatory for everyone to have access to public buildings, able or disable.

On 3 March 2017, members of the disabled community in Lofa County launched a formal complaint to the Human Rights and Protection Section of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), that the community college classes and restrooms were not disabled friendly. The complaint was verified and communicated to the college administrator who acknowledged the concerns of the complaint and promised to address the problem in time. But, nothing substantial has been done beyond the promise.

## **INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

In Monrovia, a conglomerate of disable organizations particularly visually impaired petitioned the University of Liberia to include means through which persons with visual impairment can be admitted to the University. The University has since said that it does not have the capacity to admit persons of such. There are students with other disabilities but there is no one enrolled with visual impairment up to present.

Various agencies of government including Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) and the National Commission on Disabilities (NCD) are charged with the responsibilities of promoting and protecting the rights of people with disabilities, but they did not do their work well. Nevertheless, awareness raising was conducted on persons with disabilities by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and the National Commission on Disabilities. NGOs were very so generous and provided the disable people number services.

### **3.2. Women Rights**

#### **3.2.1. Rape**

As of January 2017, INCHR monitors received, reported on, and followed rape cases in almost every county of Liberia than other criminal cases. Rape was reported virtually every week of the month of March from across the fifteen political subdivisions of Liberia, with Lofa, Bong, Nimba and Grand Cape Mount Counties primarily affected by the incidence.

In 2005, Liberia legislated a new law that expanded the definitions of rape to include gang rape which carries a maximum sentence upon conviction of life imprisonment depending on the gravity of the offense. It was the framers of the law anticipation that prescribing life imprisonment would serve as a deterrent, but this is yet to be realized. Surprisingly, marital rape is not considered unlawful under the new rape law of Liberia.

Though rape is an offense punishable under the Penal Law of Liberia, the Liberian government does not always apply the law, and the abuse continues to present far-reaching consequences for the Country due to the lackadaisical attitude of justice actors, particularly the Police.

For example, in the latter part of 2016, a legislator of Liberia, Hon Morias Waylee allegedly raped, sexually abused and impregnated his thirteen year old niece while under his guardianship. In May of 2017, the teenager reportedly gave birth at the Konobo Health Center in Grand Gedeh County and was forced into hiding along with her baby to conceal the crime. Up till now, the wellbeing and security of the newborn and the teenage mother are at serious risks with the Government of Liberia demonstrating reluctance to get involved in the matter. At the moment, no formal charge(s) related to sexual offense(s) have been brought against the Honorable man. Although in July 2017, the accused and his wife were arrested, but were charged with kidnapping, conspiracy to commit a crime and forwarded to court. It is worth noting that to date, citizens who have taken keen interest in the case are frustrated due to the slow pace of the trial which is still at the magisterial court level. The Police in what appears to be an apparent attempt to shield the accused failed to make

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

initial Court appearance to present evidence against the accused on 19 July 2017 as required by law.

From January to March 2017, INCHR monitors across the fifteen political subdivision of Liberia received complaints and did follow up investigations on several rape cases. The monitors found that the humiliation associated with rape mostly gave rise to parties (perpetrator(s) and survivor(s)) reaching a compromise in certain instances. Also, because of unreasonable delays in prosecuting alleged perpetrators of rape, a number of survivors at times stopped cooperating with State prosecutors. This uncooperative posture adopted by some rape survivors provoked the State in some instances not to proceed with the prosecution of criminal defendants. A few cases for reference took place recently in Tubmanburg, Bomi County between 17-30 March 2017, in which the court released seven (7) accused persons including three rape suspects who have overstayed in detention due to the lack of substantial evidence to prosecute.

A well-known fact is that the states have all the justice apparatus to its disposal. Its failure to proceed with her case against an accused person for more than two terms of the court is solid ground for the dismissal of such a case in Liberia. However, the release of these detainees send mixed messages – the lack of access to justice for survivor(s) and impunity for the offender(s). The inclusion of the three alleged rapist among those released from detention has prompted a group of Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in Bomi County to cry foul. The CSOs are now demanding answers from the County Attorney's Office as to why rape suspects (felons) were excluded from prosecution for more than two terms when in fact they should be prioritizing their case.

In another instance, on 5 June 2017, a 51 years old (Oldpa Thompson), allegedly raped a 14 years old in Varguay Town, Gola Korneh District, Grand Cape Mount County. The victim was taken to the Government Hospital in Tubmanburg, Bomi County for a medical checkup. According to the hospital sources, the victim suffered fresh Laceration and bruise in the virginal area. The victim is likely to suffer from trauma and other psychological consequences which have negative implications for the youthful population of Liberia. The matter has since been referred to the LNP in Lofa Bridge area who in turn referred the matter to Court while the accused guilty plea is awaiting a Court trial.

Rape as a form of sexual violence can have an emotional, psychological and physical impact on survivors. These effects are not always easy to cope with, but with the right kind of support and response, be it legal, health and psychosocial, they can be adequately managed and prevented. So, tackling rape in Liberia requires law enforcement agents of government and various other justice actors mustering the courage to confront the issue heads on by thoroughly investigating, prosecuting and appropriately sentencing the perpetrators to serve as deterrent. This is a Herculean task, but it can be done once the will is there to do better than worse things about rape in Liberia.

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

**3.2.2. Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence and Abuse**

Domestic violence abuse including wife battering continued to be prevalent in most Liberian homes despite the fact that the act has become a criminal offense. Worse of all, the government has failed to enforce the law in light of the penalty prescribed by statute. The government of Liberia, the police in particular, failed to deal with violence against women as a serious criminal offense. Instead, wife beating for example which carries with it maximum sentence of six months once reported was treated either as simple or aggravated assault depending on the severity of the harm done.

**3.2.3. Female Genital Mutilation**

Female Genital Mutilation or FGM a harmful traditional practice is mainly conducted on teenage girls and women. The practice has to do with the mutilation of female genital using unsterilized objects. The practice of FGM has serious health and human right implications for girls. It is mainly performed on women and girls between the age of four (4) and Forty-five (45). On many occasions, females experienced harassment, intimidation and various forms of torture from traditional people including family members.

The force used to compel mainly teenage girls and women not wanting to undergo FGM become so irresistible that some women had to occasionally flee from their hometown to get away from the practice. The horrifying thing about FGM is that it continues unabated due to the government of Liberia lackadaisical stance on making the practice illegal. Because of Liberia's reluctance to eradicate the practice, it continues to devastate the lives of women and children. One case for reference is the recent negligent homicide case involving Zale Doe.

On 25 March 2017, Zale Doe of Finlay Town, Nimba County, was pronounced dead while en-route to the Tapita Hospital to get medical help for an unspecified illness she contracted in the Sande Bush. Her death raised serious concerns about the kind of health risks posed by FGM. According to family sources, Zale was forcefully initiated (circumcised) into the Sande Society in the later part of December 2016, as a disciplinary measure for committing perjury.

This case also raised series of questions about police ability to protect citizens from involuntary female circumcision or FGM. Though FGM has been restricted by government in most parts of Liberia, especially during the time when schools are in session, there is no law banning the practice at the moment. The lack of FGM ban in Liberia especially during the administration of Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa's first female president since 2005 means Liberian Law has miserably failed the women and girls. President Johnson-Sirleaf who continuously called on other World Leaders to ban the practice, failed to do so in her own Country. The nation is heading for a missed opportunity to end this harmful traditional practice with Johnson-Sirleaf's term over.

Nevertheless, there are still discussions led by the INCHR and civil society organizations to curb the menace using an act of the legislature. A bill on Gender

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

Based Violence was submitted with the clause but was removed thus sparking renewed efforts from anti FGM advocates.

### **3.3. Child Rights Violations and Abuse**

Child rights were hardly protected in Liberia during the reporting period January to March 2017. However, the government in 2011 instituted some measures concerning justice for minors but enforcing these laws and legal procedures relating to the protection of delinquent juvenile continued to be defective. The police often failed to conduct a proper investigation in rape cases involving teenage girls and boys thus letting those culpable of severe crime (rape) off the hook.

A significant number of rape cases monitored by the INCHR involving accused male juveniles went mostly unprocessed at police depots under the pretext that the court may not penalize the minors because they are immature. For example, in Kolahum Lofa County, on 21 March 2017, a rape case involving two juveniles (Yoko Konneh 7 years and Yama Kpehe 13 years) referred to the Women and Children Protection Section (WACPS) of the Liberian National Police (LNP) was never properly investigated nor forwarded to the court in conformity with the law. Instead, the police without any legal justification released the accused into the custody of his parents on the ground that he was a minor. The INCHR took serious exception to their release and informed the County Attorney about such lapse in the justice system. It is still unknown whether the case will be processed up to the Circuit Court level.

Child labor was very much prevalent in Liberia especially in Monrovia and its environs due to poverty. Abject poverty increased the unlikelihood for children in the rural parts of Liberia to pursue education, and so, teenagers were engaged in street vending, panhandling, and working on rubber tree plantations.

On 9 March 2017, INCHR monitors visited and observed a significant number of children crushing rocks on the Congo Town Back Road, and GSA Road Communities to enable them to earn a living. The parent(s) or guardian(s) of teenagers actively involve with rock crushing for daily sustenance, informed INCHR monitors, during an interactive discussion that their children were not directly involved in the actual rock breaking process but mainly assisted in separating the crushed rocks into different categories. On the contrary, the children were seen playing similar roles as their parents. Other parents confirmed that their children were allowed to crush rocks to enable them to contribute to the income generation of the family due to the high cost of living, the lack of finances to pay children school fees and meet other household needs. Children were also seen moving crushed rocks over to vehicles for uploading when buyers came to purchase rocks.

On 10 March 2017, in the Red Light Market, the INCHR monitors saw a scene of rampant street vending and pan peddling by children between the ages of Ten (10) and fifteen (15). Some of these kids informed the INCHR that they were sent to Monrovia by parents to live with family in order to go to school but ended up selling pure water and other commodities to make ends meet.

***INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)***

The government of Liberia has outlawed employing children that are below sixteen (16) years during school hours and exposing them to dangerous working conditions. But these laws are seldom respected by the public and enforced by the government. The government of Liberia needs to muster the courage to implement international laws on child protection and take its international obligations seriously to promote and protect children rights in Liberia.

However, Child labor was the most prevalent form of Forced labor taking place mainly in the informal sector. Child labor in the formal sector have been significantly addressed and brought under control. In the informal labor sector, for example, teenage children purportedly between the ages of 5 and 12 were taken from their homes in the interior part of the Country to perform domestic tasks for families other than their own in urban areas such as Monrovia and Paynesville etc. In many instances, these children are brought from the hinterland of Liberia and send to do street peddling and hawking in the commercial districts of Liberia for survival.

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsible Duty Bearer</b>
<b>The Government of Liberia must improve respect and protection for the rights to life:</b>	
1. Strengthen the criminal investigation capacity of the Liberia National Police including human resource, logistical and technical competence to locate perpetrators of mob violence/killing and ritualistic or other murder, gather material evidence and work with prosecutors to charge and prosecute them	<b>MoJ, LNP</b>
2. The Government through the Liberia National Police must bring DEA Officer Lawrence Zeon and LNP Officer Alex Kawea to Justice on the death of Lawrence Ninneh.	<b>LNP, MoJ</b>
3. The Government must steps up effort to locate the living body of little RB and her child and further on the prosecution of Morias Waylee or deny her existence.	<b>MoJ/LNP</b>
4. That the Government through the Liberia National Police steps up effort in finding the body (living or dead) of Mr. Abdullai Pussah Jr. who went missing in Senbehun Town	<b>MoJ/LNP</b>
5. The Government should take step further in amending her criminal procedure/criminal laws to replace death sentences to life imprisonment as has been the practice in more than 30 years	<b>MoJ, LRC, Legislature</b>
<b>Freedom from torture and ill treatment</b>	
6. The Government is encouraged to establish the National Preventive Mechanism as well as strengthen other instruments including the Civilian Oversight Complaints Board of the Liberia National Police and the Liberia Immigration Service.	<b>MoJ, Legislature</b>
7. The Government must criminalize trial by ordeal	<b>MoJ, Legislature</b>
<b>Rights of persons deprived of their liberty</b>	
8. The Government must improve human right training at the LNP Academy and apply human rights standards in police supervision and promotion.	<b>MoJ/LNP</b>
9. The Government must inducts the members of the Civilian Oversight Complaint Boards and provides budgetary allocation for the operation of the structure.	<b>MoJ</b>
10. The Government should intensify its community policing initiatives in order to enhance the community's appreciation of the role of police and the duties and responsibilities of citizens especially in maintenance of law and order	<b>LNP</b>
11. The Government should improve supervision to ensure that LNP depots across the country are respecting their constitutional obligation not to detain suspect beyond 48 hours.	<b>LNP</b>
12. The Government through the Judiciary ensures the protection of the rights of person deprived of their liberty including ensuring speedy trial, bail and	<b>Judiciary, MoJ, Legislature</b>

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

decriminalizing petty offenses.	
13. That the Government through the Judiciary establishes a framework across the country for controlling pre-trial detention and eliminating cases of prolonged pre-trial detention.	<b>Judiciary, MoJ</b>
14. The Government through the Ministry of Health provide health services for inmates at prison facilities.	<b>MoJ, MoH</b>
<b>Administration of Justice</b>	
15. The Government monitors the performance of the defense counsels, making sure that the accused or defendant receives adequate legal representation.	<b>Judiciary</b>
16. The Government should take step allow persons indicted for rape access to preliminary hearings and take further steps in ensuring speedy trial	<b>Judiciary</b>
17. The Government should take action to reinstate the Magistrate Sitting Program and rotate the mobile court to address prolonged pretrial detention.	<b>Judiciary</b>
18. The Government through the Judiciary holds prosecutors in contempt for failure to pursue prosecution	<b>Judiciary</b>
<b>Freedom of Movement</b>	
19. The Government must take action to further clarify the notification requirement for public march or demonstration;	<b>MoJ</b>
<b>Treaty and Reporting Obligation</b>	
20. The government must ensure the submission of all delayed or due reports on various treaties in fulfillment of her treaty obligation	<b>MoJ, MFA, MoS</b>
21. The Government should ratify and domesticate the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, which provides for additional preventive mechanisms in the prevention of torture and ill treatment	<b>Legislature. MoJ</b>
22. The Government must establish the claims court to be accessible to persons deprived of their liberty and grant remedy for injury suffers.	<b>Legislature. MoJ</b>
23. That the Government through the National Legislature ensures the ratification and domestication of all outstanding treaties, conventions and or protocol	<b>Legislature. MoJ</b>
<b>Rights to Health</b>	
24. The Government through the National Legislature improves budgetary support to health and so as to realize this rights.	<b>Legislature</b>
<b>Right to Education</b>	
25. The Government must improves budgetary support to education so as to realize this rights.	<b>Legislature</b>
<b>Rights to Land</b>	
26. The Government must pass the land rights bill as was drafted through participatory consultation with	<b>Legislature</b>

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS  
(INCHR)**

stakeholders.	
<b>Rights of the Child</b>	
27. The Government through take action to prevent children street peddling.	<b>LNP, MGCSP</b>

**4.0. Conclusion and Recommendation**

4.1. Conclusion

The year 2017 marked the beginning of a new political era for Liberia’s emerging democracy. Exactly 20 years after the first post conflict elections in Liberia, the Country witness yet another historic elections in 2017. Contrastingly, while the peace keeping mission in 1997 was force to exit prematurely, 2017 was greeted with the satisfactory closure of UNMIL celebrating 13 years of maintaining the peace and stability of the Country. The departure of UNMIL has certainly left a significant gap in every area of service. These gaps cannot be ignored by the State particularly where peace and security is at issue.

The violation of human rights was the singular factor exploited by the warlords as a pretext for the two Liberian civil crises. Obviously to avert any future occurrence of civil wars, and to maintain the peace and security, human rights must be a centripetal force. Of course, the singular function of the Liberian Government, as defined by the Constitution, is to promote and protect human rights of all. The INCHR therefore stands as a partner to support the State in ensuring the realization of human rights for all.

While this report is not exhaustive of the human rights situation in Liberia, it lays the basis for further engagement and collective action from state and non-state actors. State agencies particularly, must collaborate with the INCHR in the designs, delivery and measurement of their various services to ensure that they meet human rights targets.

The report presents a number of recommendations emerging out of trending human rights issues gleaned during the period. These recommendations are meant to address pressing human rights challenges facing the State. Therefore, it is the intention of the INCHR to remain engaged in a dialogue with the duty bearers mentioned in the recommendations on the issues flagged in this report. It is expected that the INCHR and the Government can adopt a concerted approach in the realization of human rights in Liberia.

4.2. Recommendation

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

**Appendix A: Treaty Reporting Schedule**

<b>TREATY</b>	<b>SIGNED</b>	<b>RATIFIED</b>	<b>PERIODIC REPORT</b>	<b>LAST REPORT</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>
<b>International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1969</b>	Nov. 5, 1976(a)		every two years	N/A	N/A
<b>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</b>	Apr. 18, 1967	Sept. 22, 2004	every four years	Dec. 9, 2016	
<b>Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1976</b>	2004	NA	every four years	Not yet	Not yet
<b>Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty</b>	Sept. 2005(a)	NA	every four years	Not yet	Not yet
<b>International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</b>	Apr. 18, 1967	Sept. 22, 2004	every five years	N/A	JUNE 30, 2017
<b>Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights</b>	NA	NA	every five years	N/A	N/A
<b>Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</b>	Sept 22, 2004(a)	Not yet	every four years	N/A	OCT. 22, 2005
<b>Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</b>	Sept 22, 2004(a)	Not yet	every four years	Not yet	Not yet
<b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>	Apr. 26, 1990	Jun, 4, 1993	every five years	Nov.9 2011	JAN.3, 2018
<b>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict</b>	2004	Not yet	Report included in CRC report	Not yet	Not yet
<b>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography</b>	Sept. 22, 2004	Not yet	Report included in CRC report	Not yet	Not yet
<b>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure</b>	Sept. 22, 2004	Not yet	Report included in	N/A	N/A

**INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)**

<b>TREATY</b>	<b>SIGNED</b>	<b>RATIFIED</b>	<b>PERIODIC REPORT</b>	<b>LAST REPORT</b>	<b>DATE DUE</b>
			CRC report		
<b>International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families</b>	Sept. 22, 2004	Not yet	every five years	Not yet	Not yet
<b>International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance</b>	NA	Not yet		Not yet	Not yet
<b>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</b>	Mar. 30, 2007	Jul, 2012	Every four years.	Not yet	AUG. 26, 2014
<b>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</b>	Jul. 1984(a)	17, N/A	every four years	April 10, 2014	
<b>Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</b>	2004	N/A	every four years		