



Independent National Commission on Human Rights

ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION REPORT

DECEMBER 10, 2021





Independent National Commission on Human Rights



His Excellency Dr. George M. Weah
President of the Republic of Liberia
Capitol Hill, Monrovia

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Pursuant to Article 4 (16) of the Act that created INCHR, which states among others that the Commission is *“to prepare quarterly and annual reports on the human rights situation generally and on more specific matters such as armed aggression against the Republic of Liberia, internal conflicts, crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture, and genocide,”* we therefore have the honor of submitting to you the annual Human Rights Situation Report on Liberia for the year 2021.

Your Excellency, please accept the assurances of our highest regard.



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CHAIRMAN

Cc.

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Foreword:

In four months in office as Commissioners of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), we are delighted to write the foreword of the 2021 annual report of the human rights situation in Liberia, in fulfillment of Article 4 (16) of the INCHR Act, 2005, which states among others that the Commission is ***“[t]o prepare quarterly and annual reports on the human rights situation generally and on more specific matters such as armed aggression against the Republic of Liberia, internal conflicts, crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture, and genocide; ...”***

Liberia is a post conflict Country that has enjoyed eighteen years of relative calm and stability and a historic democratic transfer of power. Though scars of the 14 year civil crisis are still visible and the scourges of the pandemics are still being endured, the promotion and the protection of human rights remain cardinal if we must sustain the gains we along with our partners are making in fostering a society of rule of law, tolerance and democratic governance.

The primary mission of INCHR is to adequately strengthen human rights promotion and protection in Liberia; hence, the systematic application of daily, weekly and monthly monitoring and reporting methods designed and applied by the INCHR is aimed at identifying violations of human rights of various categories, holding duty bearers accountable, and providing redress to victims. The overall objective is to sustain the peace while respecting the rule of law and improving the promotion and protection of human rights in Liberia.

We can safely say without any exaggeration that the findings herein are fundamental to any intervention designed to improve the protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia.

Our continuous quest for the protection and promotion of human rights is firm; INCHR will use all means available to it to achieve this goal in collaboration with duty-bearers, rights-holders, likeminded partners and stakeholders, to guarantee the fulfillment of human rights and accountability, thus ending impunity and fostering the rule of law in Liberia.

Very truly yours,



Cllr. T. Dempster Brown
CHAIRMAN

List of Acronyms and Abbreviation:

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People’s Rights
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
BCP	Bopolu Central Prison
BCR	Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CARI	Central Agriculture Research Institute
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination
CMW	Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities
COVID	Corona Virus Disease
CPR	Civil and Political Rights
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSD	Crime Services Division
DAB	Department of Administration and Budget
DHO	District Health Officer
DCIM	Department of Complaints, Investigation and Monitoring
DETI	Department of Education, Training and Information
DLMTAL	Department on Legislative Assistance, Treaty Matters and Law
DPIME	Department of Planning, Internal Monitoring and Evaluation
ESCR	Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
FCP	Fish Town Central Prison
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FPA	Front Page Africa
GANHRI	Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions
GCP	Gbarnga Central Prison
GoL	Government of Liberia
IAA	Internal Audit Agency
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross

INCHR	Independent National Commission on Human Rights
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organizations
LDEA	Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency
LGBTI	Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Intersex
LRRRC	Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
LIS	Liberia Immigration Service
LNP	Liberian National Police
MCP	Monrovia Central Prison
MICAT	Ministry of Information, Cultural Affairs and Tourism
MoH	Ministry of Health
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOGSCP	Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection
NCD	National Commission on Disability
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NSA	National Security Agency
OIC	Officer in Charge
PSU	Police Support Unit
PTP	Prime Timber Products
RIA	Roberts International Airport
RCP	Robertsport Central Prison
RK	Ritualistic Killings
SAPEC	Smallholder Agriculture Productivities and Commercialization Project
SCP	Sanniquellie Central Prison
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRC	Salala Rubber Company
TBO	Trial by Ordeal
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNMIL	United Nations Missions in Liberia
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
WACPS	Women and Children Protection Section

Profile of the INCHR:

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) was established in 2005 through an Act of the National Legislature in response to the atrocities of the 14 year civil war in Liberia. The Commission was also established in accordance with the Paris Principle of December, 1993, which gives the Commission a broader mandate to promote and protect human rights.¹ Article III (1) states as follow: “[t]he Commission shall have general competence to protect and promote human rights in the Republic of Liberia according to the provisions of this Act, the Constitution and other relevant laws of Liberia. Articles IV and V of the INCHR Act of 2005 state the functions and methods of operation of the Commission.

Consistent with Article IV (16) of the INCHR Act, the Commission is “to prepare quarterly and annual reports on the national human rights situation generally and on more specific matters such as armed aggression against the Republic, internal conflicts, and crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture and genocide.” As a national human rights institution (NHRI), the Commission has repositioned itself in providing support aimed at facilitating the effectiveness and fulfilment of human rights in Liberia. INCHR received an “A” status accreditation in April 2017 more than ten years after its establishment; this was six years of operations following its reconstitution with the appointment of a Board of Commissioners in 2010.

INCHR’s obligation to adequately strengthen human rights promotion and protection in Liberia is fostered through five departments; the Department for Complaint, Investigation and Monitoring (DCIM), responsible for INCHR’s human rights protection functions through monitoring, fact finding, documentation and reporting; the Department for Legislative Assistance, Treaty Matters and Law (DLMTAL), which bears the responsibility for implementing INCHR’s mandate to promote and support national efforts that facilitate unconditional State compliance with Liberia’s obligations under international human rights conventions, by encouraging the ratification and domestication of international human rights treaties and standards; the Department for Education, Training and Information (DETI), which leads INCHR’s efforts toward the entrenchment of human rights culture in the country and to prevent human rights violations through education, information dissemination, training and creating awareness; the Department for Administration and Budget (DAB), which supports

¹*ibid*

INCHR in the parameters of fiscal controls, human resource management, maintenance, asset management and procurement; and the Department for Planning, Internal Monitoring and Evaluation (DPIME), which supports the work of INCHR through program planning, resource mobilization and management, networking, building partnership, monitoring and evaluation, and research on various themes.

The INCHR engages the international human rights system by submitting alternative reports to the Universal Periodic Review (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 and Regional Human Rights Experts; and monitoring and promoting the implementation of relevant recommendations originating from the human rights system. The Commission's Legislative Act gives it a vertical role of monitoring or ensuring the State's compliance with its human rights obligations and to guarantee the protection of the rights of its citizens and residents in Liberia, as well as ensuring remedy for various forms of violations.

Executive Summary:

INCHR is obligated to present a picture of the human rights situation of the country, cataloging every human rights violation and advising central government on remedial actions. This is a field-based report gathered in accordance with best practices in human rights monitoring, documentation, investigation and reporting. Accordingly, the 2021 human rights situation report docketed human rights violations based on domestic and international legal instruments.

During the reporting period, the most serious human rights violations found were those connected to a lack of justice, judicial inefficiency and corruption, prolonged pretrial detention, denial of due process and harsh prison condition. Violence against women and children including rape, domestic violence and child labor are also issues of concern.

Other human rights violations include unlawful deprivation of liberty under customary laws, disappearance and killings, ritualistic killings, police brutality, harassment and intimidating of detainees, arbitrary arrests and detention, corruption, and discrimination against PwDs and mental impaired persons.

Our investigation did not uncover or find any State-sanctioned or State-sponsored commission of the above mentioned breaches or violations, however, findings of actions taken by the State to address or curb the violations reported were insufficient, half-baked, and most times reactive. Impunity remains a serious problem despite government's sporadic attempts to prosecute and correct public officials for wrongdoing, particularly on allegations of corruption. State actors in several instances are found wanting when it comes to impartially administering justice, adhering to the rule of law and ensuring equitable dispensation of justice for all.

While government has lapses in the above mentioned instances, it also ensured that citizens enjoyed some of their basic rights as provided for in the Constitution of Liberia and international protocols and conventions. While the State ensured relative freedom of expression and information, movement and assembly there were also instance of breaches of these rights.

Increased incidences of rape were reported during the reporting period; nonetheless, the LNP did affect arrests, investigated and forwarded more cases to Court. In the mind of the INCHR, the Courts are yet to adjudicate most of these cases to ensure that both the perpetrators and the victims are given the desired justice.

Prison overcrowding is pervasive in Liberia; for example, the Monrovia Central Prison (MCP) was built to accommodate 375 inmates but now regularly holds more than 1350, also Sanniquillie Central Prison (SCP) and Buchanan Central Prison (BCP) were built to accommodate 80 and 47 but now have 249 and 129 respectively. This skin creeping situation associated with over crowdedness is also obtaining in nearly all other prisons in Liberia. For example, poor sanitary condition, inadequate health care, scanty food supply with poor nutrition, inadequate accommodation thus subjecting pretrial detainees and convicts sharing the same facilities, including juvenile been placed in the same cells with adults. During the reporting period, INHCR observed that due to overcrowding of prisons, inmates have to ration sleeping time due to limited space within the facility.

PART I: CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

I.1. Mysterious Disappearance and Even Death

Although the Liberia National Police Act of 2015, Section 3 (a), which seeks “.... to ensure the safety, security, protection of life and property and respect human rights” throughout the Republic of Liberia”, the prevalence of mysterious disappearances and death assumed a central stage in the social, political and economic life of Liberia. During the period under review, multiple reports highlighted myriad of cases of mysterious disappearance with some of the victims found dead. During the period under review, the INCHR monitored and documented cases of mysterious disappearance and deaths which transpired during or after the disappearance. It was also established that the GoL took a number of remedial measures, but these steps were insufficient in bringing the perpetrators to justice.

Despite the obligation of the State to ensure the safety of persons, it is not gainsaying that during the reporting period, the State failed to fulfill its obligations in some instances. For Example, on 3 August 2021, a Compliance Enforcement Officer assigned to the Real Estate Division of the Liberia Revenue Authority (LRA) and resident of the Pepper Fish Community in ELWA, reported to work and it is claimed that the Officer took important official documents to one of his colleagues, a resident of Duport Road in Paynesville City, and has since not been seen. Since his disappearance, according to family sources, nothing has been heard of his whereabouts and no official account of him has been revealed by his employer.

On 8 August 2021, a 71 year old female adult of Kebbeh Town in Grand Cape Mount County vanished mysteriously while travelling from Sweetland to Kebbeh Town. The lady had gone to visit family members and relatives in Sweetland Town, Tallah Township. Family sources informed INCHR that since her disappearance the LNP and county leadership have shown limited attempts in either investigating and/or mounting a manhunt to find the missing woman.

Predicated upon the high level of insecurity as a result of the mysterious disappearance of the woman, the residents of the town and adjacent communities now live in fear for their safety on grounds of the inaction of local authorities especially the LNP.

In Grand Gedeh, on 9 April 2021, a 3 years old boy got missing in Polar town, Gbarzon District. The Paramount Chief and the LNP commander in Jarwodee visited the area and were informed by the community that they were in search of the child.

The parents informed the LNP Commander that the missing child was playing with his friends in the center of the town and unfortunately mysteriously disappeared and is yet to be found. Also, the County Inspector visited the crime scene on 12 April 2021 and gave the citizens of Polar including the district authorities a deadline of 14 April 2021 to either produce the living body of the child or face the full weight of the law.

It is worth noting that the WACPS Commander arrested the parents of the missing child and charged them with '*Endangering the Welfare of the Child*' and were detained while four others were ordered to be arrested by the County Inspector.

Comments: *INCHR believes that the action of the WACPS commander was arbitrary for the fact that the circumstance surrounding the missing child was not established at the time of the arrest.*

Also in Grand Gedeh County, a 66-year-old male farmer and resident of Polar Town, Grand Gedeh went missing in July and has since not been found. Similarly, in the same town, a 3-year-old child went missing in July and was later found dead with parts extracted.

In September 2021, the INCHR received reports that a Township Commissioner of River Gee County went missing and has since not been found. INCHR is still monitoring to authenticate the circumstances surrounding the disappearance of a local government official.

Comments: *It is worrisome that in less than a year there were five mysterious disappearances and loss of life in a single town. As such, INCHR recommends that the LNP and local government authorities take positive actions to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the basic rights of residents.*

Suspicious deaths

On 15 September 2021, three motorcyclists commuting goods from Buchanan to Sinoe were allegedly killed along the Tarjouwon-Butaw corridor on their way to Greenville. Information reaching INCHR says that the victims were killed by unknown men and their motorcycles taken away. To date, the LNP has not yet arrested a suspect (s) in this serious crime.

On September 14, 2021, the body of a young female was found dead on 17th Street, Beach Side. Whilst the deceased was later identified as a resident of the New Matadi area, and an individual with known mental disabilities. Also, in this instant case there has been no arrest and cause of death not determined.

On September 27, 2021, a 46-year-old domestic worker and resident of Caldwell was brutally murdered at about midday. According to the family, the deceased had cooked earlier that day, left for a walk and was later found dead a few meters from her house with deep wounds under her left eyes.

Comments: The continued failure, in most cases, of the State to apprehend and bring the perpetrators of these crimes to justice, can be construed as reneging on its responsibility to protect fundamental rights of citizens and foreigners alike on the one hand, and on the other hand, promoting impunity.

Further INCHR thinks that the inaction of LNP in some cases might either be due to inadequately resources or lack of will on the part of the LNP leadership to effectively conduct the affairs of the institution. INCHR recommends that to ensure effective policing, adequate budgetary allotment should be provided with the view of enhancing manpower and logistical capacity of the LNP.

1.2. Non-Discrimination

Article 8 of the Constitution of Liberia states “*the Republic shall direct its policy towards ensuring for all citizens, without discrimination, opportunities for employment and livelihood under just and humane conditions, and towards promoting safety, health and welfare facilities in employment*”. Regardless of this major constitutional provision, persons with disabilities (PwDs) continue to forfeit the enjoyment of the rights mentioned above. During the reporting period, major urban communities, especially Monrovia and its environs, PwDs are subjected to bagging as a means livelihood. PwDs particularly with visual and hearing impairment, as well as the physically challenged with their escorts² are often spotted at dangerous street corners between vehicles, begging for either money or food. For example, they are seeing on Broad and other streets corners in Monrovia, in front of Supermarkets and other commercial centers in other cities including Buchanan Ganta Kakata and Zwedru. In some cases while on the begging spree some PwDs experience negative and harsh reactions; and even mal-handled by people from whom they seek assistance. For example, on 17 March 2021, a 12 year old female escort of a visually impaired lady told INCHR that at about 6:15 P.M. at the corner of Broad and Center

² School aged children who are assigned to commute PwDs and care for their safety and protection on a daily basis.

Streets in Monrovia, four disadvantaged youths³ (all male) attacked her and the PwD and took away a plastic bag containing money and food items they had collected for the day. She claimed that there were three police officers and some bystanders who witnessed the incident but did nothing to intervene.

Similarly, on 23 October 2021 in Central Buchanan, Grand Bassa County, a 53 year old physically challenged man alleged that he was assaulted by some residents of the Zoko Town community. According to him, residents claimed that he had constantly used profanity in the community area; an allegation which he denied. He further alleged that the community members took away his crutches as an added punishment for what they referred to as unruly behavior. He informed to INCHR that he reported the attack on his person to the LNP but no arrest was made to serve as a deterrent and ensure his safety. However, community members denied the allegation of the physically challenged man, claiming that at no time such incident have occurred in the community.

Contrary to Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which emphasize that *“countries recognize the right to an adequate standard of living and social protection; this includes public housing, services and assistance for disability-related needs, as well as assistance with disability-related expenses in case of poverty”*, the living standards of PwDs in Liberia is very appalling. For example, housing conditions and general unhygienic environment of the School for the Blind and Deaf in Mango Town, Brewerville, Group of 77th on New Port Street, Branches of Group of 77 and Christian Association of the Blind (CAB) in Buchanan City, Grand Bassa County are all in very deplorable and subhuman standards.

INCHR is also keen about not only the educational need of escorts associated with PwDs but the personal safety of these children, particularly the girl child who is vulnerable to sexual related abuses. Following the commencement of academic 2021 – 2022, INCHR notes that most of these kids are out of school. Upon interviews with some of the PwDs, INCHR is informed that there were no funds to enroll them in schools. Some of the children expressed their desire to go to school but according to them, their parents do not have the means.

During the reporting period, some PwDs informed INHCR that policies of the GoL past and present have discriminated against them in all empowerment, educational, skills and

³ Young people associated with drugs and crime who loiter major streets either begging and/or determined to rob pedestrians and commercial actors.

development programs. Some of the PwDs stressed the GoL has reneged on its responsibility to ensure that their rights are respected, protected and promoted; a situation which has reduced them to a begging and singing culture as an alternative means of livelihood.

Also, mental health in Liberia has always been treated as less priority for duty-bearers which is in gross violation of the Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and the Improvement of Mental Health Care. For instance, Principle 1(1): “*all persons have the right to the best available mental health care, which shall be part of the health and social care system*”. During the period under review, there are very limited public facilities in place to cater to the medical needs of persons with mental health challenges. In all of the counties with INCHR field presence, mental health patients are sometimes seen in communities where they are often objects of abuses and other degrading treatments. INCHR reports revealed that the status of females with mental illness is even more unsafe as they are purportedly frequent victims of sexual and physical abuses. The enjoyment of the right to food and other basic necessities that border on the right to life, are not in existence for persons with mental illness. For example, patients of mental illness heavily relied on dump sites and dust bins to fend for food and other materials for survival.

Furthermore, health care and other psychosocial support for persons with mental illness is very acute, as besides the E.S. Grant Mental Health Hospital in Monrovia, there are no such public facility anywhere in Liberia. INCHR notes that even the current facility lacks capacity to cater to the huge caseload of mental illness in the country.

Comments: INCHR asserts that issues of PwDs and persons with mental illness have and continued to be on the back burner of all policies of the GoL, which has effectively discriminated against these categories of its citizens. The corresponding negative impact of the lack of political will on the part of the GoL to live up to its national and international legal obligations in the certain cases can only be construed as gross violation of human rights, considering the pervasiveness and longevity of the State reneging on its obligations.

1.3. Deprivation of Life/ Right to Life

Mysterious killing

Article 11 (a) of the Constitution of Liberia states that: “[a]ll persons are born equally free and independent and have certain natural, inherent and inalienable rights, among which are the rights to 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 qualification as provided for in this constitution.” Also, Article 20 (a) of the Constitution of Liberia states that, “[n]o person shall be deprived of life, liberty, security of the person, property, privilege or any other right except as the outcome of a hearing judgment consistent with the provisions laid down in this Constitution and in accordance with due process of law. Justice shall be done without sale, denial or delay; and in all cases not arising in courts not of record, under courts-martial and upon impeachment, the parties shall have the right to trial by jury”. Additionally, Liberia has ratified other international human rights instruments that guarantee the protection of life including Article 3 of the UDHR, Article 6 of the ICCPR, Article 4 of the ACHPR and Article 24 of the CPRD.

It’s in view of the above, the GoL should take aggressive steps aimed at preventing and protecting citizens and foreigners alike from all forms of danger including mysterious disappearances and killings. This and other human rights protection and promotion mechanisms, will enhance the fulfillment, enjoyment and full realization of the right to Life.

Despite all of the above mentioned Constitutional provisions, coupled with Liberia’s obligations to international human rights treaties; during the reporting period, there were alleged high profile killings involving two sons of two former Presidents of Republic of Liberia who were were mysteriously killed by unknown persons in Monrovia. INCHR was informed that on 22 September 2021, one of the victims 76 was found dead in a pool of blood at his Fiamah residence, while on 1 November 2021, the other 68 year old was allegedly assaulted and murdered in his apartment on the Bushrod Island in Monrovia. Similarly, an officer of the Liberia Immigration Service (LIS) was allegedly brutally murdered on 31 October 2021 at her Brewerville Residence, outside Monrovia. INCHR is concerned that besides the two suspects that were arrested in the murder of one of the deceased, the LNP is yet to effect any arrests in the other killings.

The prevalence of mob violence in communities associated with the loss of life and severe physical and external injuries; is most often aggravated by either limited police presence and/or lack of confidence in the justice system. On 28 August 2021, an adult male was mobbed to death

in the Phebe Community, on Gbarnga Highway few kilometers to the LNP Station. Eye-witnesses informed INCHR that an angry crowd led by two adult males, pursued the victim at about 2:00 am and severely brutalized him with various type instruments, including machetes, sticks, cement blocks and other blunt objects. INCHR learnt that the victim was stabbed multiple times, thus leading to his death. A 15 men Coroner juror was immediately constituted to conduct physical examination on the remains of the victim. It was revealed that the wound were sustained from the use of deadly weapon, which triggered his death.

On 14 September 2021, two men who actively participated in the mob violence action against the victim were arrested and charged with aggravated assault and murder by the LNP following investigation. In the suspects' separate statements they admitted that the victim was mistaken to be a criminal who had broken into their house and taken away some personal belongings. The accused were forwarded to the Ninth Judiciary Circuit Court for prosecution and have since been remanded at the Gbarnga Central Prison pending criminal proceedings.

Comments: These mysterious killings are instilling fear in communities and curtailing movement of people, which is hindering various kinds of rights including freedom of movement and assembly. Even though murder is a crime under the laws of Liberia but the failure of the duty-bearer to take steps in averting persistent acts of killing is of concern to the INCHR.

INCHR posits that the failure of the State to take necessary measures to investigate suspicious deaths and all killings by unknown persons and to identify and hold individuals accountable or groups responsible for violations of the right to life constitutes in itself a violation by the State of that right⁴.

INCHR notes that the victim was mobbed to death about two miles from the LNP Headquarters in Gbarnga City and if there were either active LNP presence or engagement within the community; the mob action would have been prevented. INCHR encourages the LNP and by extension the GoL to ensure more LNP presence in the counties, which will enhance law enforcement.

⁴ Gen. Comment 3, Africa Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, para-15

1.4. Prohibition Against Torture, Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading

Treatments/Punishment

Torture and inhumane treatments by law enforcement officers and/or State Agents is common in Liberia, especially during arrests, investigations and detentions as a means to attract evidence. For example, during arrests of suspected persons, the LDEA and LNP bodily throw them into the vehicles, in addition to the manner and form the accused are subjected to being seated on the floors and under plank seats of LNP and LDEA vehicles. These actions on the part of State security officers are not only degrading but dehumanizing and have psychosocial trauma on suspects. Nevertheless, provisions of Article 21 (e) of the Constitution of Liberia provides that, *“no person charged, arrested, restricted, detained or otherwise held in confinement shall be subjected to torture or inhumane treatment...”* Also, Articles 2(1) and 2(2) Convention Against Torture states that a *“State Party has an obligation to take effective measures to prevent acts of torture in any territory under its jurisdiction, including legislative, administrative, judicial or other measures”* and *“no exceptional circumstances whatsoever”* may be invoked in justification of torture respectively. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)⁵ and the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR)⁶ also expressively sanctioned all acts of torture. Notwithstanding these national and international laws, Liberia’s adherence to its own Constitution and compliance to treaty obligations, remain elusive, as State Security forces including the LNP, LDEA, Monrovia City Police and other Law Enforcement Agencies continue to beat, harass, intimidate, mal-handle and mete inhumane treatment against suspects during arrests, investigations and detentions.

For example, laws should be legally enforce, however INCHR has observed that on a daily basis some officers of the Monrovia City Police (MCP) routinely does not only harass and beat marketers at streets corners and habitually confiscate their goods and seize money as well as other personal belongings. Some petty traders informed INCHR that in some instances items

⁵ Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

⁶ Article 5: Every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. All forms of exploitation and degradation of man, particularly slavery, slave trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment shall be prohibited.

seized are only upon payment bribe based on the quantity and quality of goods. Others alleged that the items seized are never returned but diverted to the personal use of the officers. They claimed that the actions on the part of the MCP is inhumane and is either putting them out of business or creating a serious drawback on their business venture. Even though some of the traders informed the Commission that they are aware that the street peddling does not only infringe on the free movement of people but also impede traffic. They however blamed the lack of sufficient spaces in current market structures to accommodate them as reasons for street selling.

On 15 September 2021, acting upon the orders of the County Commander of Grand Gedeh County, some officers of the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency (LDEA) assigned at the Gbarbo Town Joint Security Checkpoint in Konobo, Electoral District 2, allegedly arrested and meted inhumane treatment against a 22 year old motorcyclist. The LDEA Officers severely flogged the victim to admit commuting some parcels of cocaine allegedly found in a bag belonging to a passenger. The victim was transporting a female passenger from Grand Gedeh to River Gee when he met his ordeal. INCHR was informed that the motorcyclist was ruthlessly brutalized and detained as a means of intimidating him to admit to a crime. Meanwhile, on 22 September 2021 INCHR visited the detained victim, after being informed by the county attorney. During INCHR team visit, it was observed that the motorcyclist had fresh injuries on his head, apparently sustained due to his alleged flogging and/or manhandling. Due to the severity of the injury, INCHR requested that the victim be released on medical grounds, following which he would report to the LDEA for further investigation. The officers initially declined INCHR's request. However, after series of engagements with the LDEA, he was released to seek medical care.

1.5. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention and Unethical Behavior by Justice Actors

Human Rights and Detention Facility

Juvenile Justice

The Constitution of Liberia prohibits detention of pretrial detainees with people who are already convicts within the same cell. Article 21 (e) states among other things *‘No person charged, arrested, restricted, detained or otherwise held in confinementnor shall any person be seized and kept among convicted prisoners or treated as a convict, unless such person first shall have been convicted of a crime in court of competent jurisdiction’*. Likewise, Article 37 (c) of the CRC, emphasizes among others that States Parties shall ensure that: *“every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respectIn particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest”*. Also, the Children Act, 2011, discourages detention, as to Article IX, Section 3–3.1: *“A child shall not be subjected to a pre-trial detention, including remand, unless all other measures for dealing with the child pending trial have been exhausted”*.

Despite commitment to compliance to its treaty obligations and adherence to its own laws, during the period under review, it was observed that all prison facilities within the Republic of Liberia are noncompliant to the above laws. Additionally, that there are no juvenile rehabilitation facilities in Liberia, thus children continued to languish in the same prison facilities with adults, which is a gross violation of the *“Do No Harm”* principle. Furthermore, the persistent detention of children is not only a gross violation of child rights, which also borders on the development of the child and infringes on attainment of the enjoyment of the rights to life, education, health, play and leisure, as well as all other basic rights.

During routine monitoring activities of the reporting period, about 51 children between the ages of 13 to 17 were discovered in various prisons including MCP with 28, SCP 14, BCP 3. GCP 1, NPC 3 and one each at FCP and BCP, contrary to the provision of the Children Act, 2011⁷. These children continued to live in appalling life threatening and harsh conditions without any access food with adequate nutritional values, to rest and leisure, education and health, conflicting

⁷ Article IX, Section 3 – 3.3: Imprisonment of a child shall only be in cases where there would be no other way to correct the child.

with provisions of the CRC⁽⁸⁾(⁹), thus, not only violating their rights but turning them into adults. INCHR spoke to some of the children in detention with adults who according to them committed minor offences that could be construed as children “*coming in conflict with the law*”, which otherwise should not necessitate detention. For example, on 17 March 2021, INCHR discovered a 17 year old male juvenile detained at the BCP since 2018 charged with rape.

Comments: INCHR thinks that the absence of a juvenile rehabilitation facilities in the entire country that would serve as correctional facility for children who come in conflict with the law is one of the underlying factors for the continuous detention of children in adult facilities. Also, INCHR is of the view that the lack of specialized training for justice actors, including the LNP, Judges and Prison Officials in handling cases of juveniles is further making children more vulnerable in the justice system.

Prison over crowdedness

In the Liberia criminal justice system, prison over crowdedness has become a systemic issue faced by the Ministry of Justice and the Judiciary by extension the GoL. For example, MCP was constructed to accommodate 375 inmates. For decades now it continues to host over 1,350 inmates. During the period under review, MCP accounts for more than 83% of pre-trial detainees, including juveniles. Similarly, other prisons like BCP and SCP were built to accommodate 47 and 80 inmates but now frequently have over 129 and 249 respectively.

Despite the provision under Article 21 (f), of the Constitution of Liberia, which states that “*Every person arrested or detained shall be formally charged and presented before a court of competent jurisdiction within forty-eight hours. Should the court determine the existence of a prima facie case against the accused, it shall issue a formal writ of arrest setting out the charge or charges and shall provide for a speedy trial. There shall be no preventive detention.*” During the reporting period, INCHR noted breaches of this major Constitutional provisions at several detention facilities in Liberia. For example, at the Buchanan Central Prison, a 27 year old male

⁸ Article 31: 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

⁹Article 28: 1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity.....

has been in detention for over 925 days without trial, far beyond the statutory period of terms of court.

The over-crowdedness of these central prisons violates article 10 of the ICCPR which states that, “*All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.* Also, Article 10.2 A, states that, “*Accused persons shall save in exceptional circumstances be segregated from convicted persons and shall be subject to separate treatment appropriate to the status as non-convicted persons.*”

Unlawful and Inhumane Acts by State Security Officers

Liberia enacted into law a National Code of Conduct as a mean of discouraging unethical transgression. In Section 1.3 of above mentioned document, *bribery is highlighted and defined as any reward or inducement paid to a Public Official or Employee of Government for doing or forbearing to do anything in respect of any matter or transaction within the scope of their official duties. It is anything promised, offered, given, accepted or received by a Public Official and Employee of Government for or on account of favor given or to be given in the exercise of his or her official duties, and includes what is known widely in local terminology as “cold water” or “eating”.* Despite provisions of the National Code of Conduct stated above, during the reporting period, an act identical to the above mentioned definition of bribery was allegedly committed by some public officials.

For example, it was alleged that the Public Defender in Grand Cape Mount County was involved with unethical transgression. It can be recalled that during a monitoring visit at the Robertsport Central Prison on the 3 August 2021, few pretrial detainees were interviewed. The interviewees accused the public defender of soliciting funds from them as a mean of pleading their cases to secure their releases. One of the inmates, a Sierra Leonean national, who was arrested and charged for drug trafficking, alleged that she transferred L\$41,000 via a mobile money platform, after bargaining with the public defender to secure her release. However, the INCHR investigated the matter and validated the veracity of the allegation. INCHR spoke with the business man who transferred the money from his mobile money platform and he agreed to testify in the alleged claim by the inmate once called upon. Meanwhile, when contacted by

INCHR, the public defender denied the allegation and challenged the inmate to provide evidence of her claim.

On July 12, 2021, INCHR Bong County team, along with the Joint Security Team received an official complaint from an adult male and a resident of Ganta City, who accused an employee of the State for unethical act. The complainant alleged that on the aforementioned date, he encountered a LDEA Aid¹⁰ at the Joint Security Check Point in Belefana, where he was arrested for being in possession of a single-barrel rounds. He alleged that the LDEA Aid forcibly took his personal belongings to include L\$30,000.00 and 42 grams of raw gold. According to the complainant, he was handcuffed and detained by the LDEA Aid for about two hours. The complaint further that the officer, having realized the gravity of his action, prepared a fake turnover note in which he forcibly inserted his (victim) thumb print as evidence of receipt of items, even though the items were never returned. Besides his alleged harassment and extortion of money from a peaceful citizen, the LDEA Aid also prevented the movement of a citizen, thus violating Article 13 (A) of the Constitution of the Republic of Liberia and which reads *“Every person lawfully within the Republic shall have the right to move freely throughout Liberia, to reside in any part thereof and to leave therefrom subject however to the safeguarding of public security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others.*

Actions of the State Actor, also violate Article 5 of the ACHPR, which states that *“Every individual shall have the right to the respect of the dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition of his legal status. All forms of exploitation and degradation of man particularly slavery, slave trade, torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment shall be prohibited”*.

The Constitution of Republic of Liberia also guarantees under Article 21(h) Presumption of innocence: that *“Everyone shall be presumed innocent until proved guilty before the Court in accordance with the applicable law”*. Even if the accused was guilty of an act it was not within the preview of the LDEA officers to ascribe a penalty by beating him.

Similarly, on 3 July 2021 an adult male resident of James S. Flomo Town, Jorquelleh District #3 Bong County, filed a complaint to the LNP against the town chief for ordering his arrest and

¹⁰ Individuals who exercise authority of the State without gainful employment status but their actions are sanctioned by the authorized State Agent, in case the LDEA.

inhumane detention. The complainant alleged that he was arrested by the Community Watch Officers and placed on foot cuff and a chain tied down his waist. He informed the LNP that a woman to be identified complained him of stealing sixty pieces of rubber cups valued at L\$600.00. The victim informed INCHR that during the process of his torture, one of his testicles dislocated. However, the District Commissioner took seize of the matter, further intimidated the victim and compromised the case. Notwithstanding, INCHR encouraged the victim to pursue legal action against the local leaders as a means of ending impunity in the local governance structure of Liberia.

Also, on 28 June 2021, some residents of Brewerville Community filed a complaint against the Zone Six LNP Commander, alleging unprofessional conducts in handling a complaint filed with the LNP. According to the family, on the morning of 21 June 2021, they woke up to the news of the death of their daughter, who was allegedly murdered by her boyfriend. According to family, upon arrival at the scene, the suspect has dug a grave in preparation to bury the victim without medical examination to determine cause of death. The family member who spoke with INCHR, noted that the action of the accused to bury the dead without their involvement and/or medical examination became suspicious. Accordingly, the LNP was informed and the accused was arrested and incarcerated on the 22 June 2021 at the LNP Headquarters. Hence, a medical examination was conducted at the City Laboratory and Clinic in Virginia, Brewerville City, where it was revealed that the deceased died either from fracture or broken neck and internal bleeding. Despite circumstances surrounding the death of a person, coupled with a medical examination establishing doubt as to natural death, the LNP commander coerced the family to sign a waiver to a potential murder case in the wake of overwhelming evidence that was available to him. The murder case was compromised by the released of the accused.

Comments: INHCR sees the action of the LNP Zone Six Commander as not only arbitrary but unethical and total disregard to the rule of law. Further, INCHR thinks that justice was tempered with, as such, encouraged authorizes of the LNP to take measures that will ensure accountability.

1.6. Rights of Persons Deprived of their Liberty to be treated with Dignity

During a regular human rights monitoring in Parker's Town, Gbarpolu County, it was established that the town chief is continuously involved in inhumanely punishing his citizens. On 13 July 2021, INCHR noticed a 29 year old man tied in rope and placed in the sun, on orders of the town chief. The victim was arrested by a messenger upon receipt of a complaint filed against him by a woman who alleged that she paid the victim L\$4,000.00 to brush a parcel of land, which she claimed he failed perform the contracture agreement. However, according to the accused he completed about 80% of the work. Nevertheless, in the thinking of the Town Chief, the victim was found guilty, even though he did not have jurisdiction in such matters.

On 22 August 2021, INCHR observed an epilepsy patient detained with 22 others at the Fishtown Central Prison (FCP) in River Gee County. According to his other inmates, whenever he was attacked with the epilepsy, he urinated on his colleagues due to the limited space in cell. Detainees feared they could be infected with the ailment and as such informed the prison authorities to relocate their colleague to another cell. But the authorities rejected their call on grounds that there were not an available cell to accommodate the epilepsy inmate. This action of prison authorities put other harms-way of contacting a contagious disease.

1.7. Right to Legal Counsel

Despite provision of Article 21 (i) of the Constitution of Liberia, which states among other that *"in all trials, hearings, interrogatories and other proceedings where a person is accused of a criminal offense, the accused shall have the right to counsel of his choice; and where the accused is unable to secure such representation, the Republic shall make available legal aid services to ensure the protection of his rights"*. During the reporting period, the Commission take note that in most of the counties, public defenders (PDs) who are charged to guarantee this constitutional provision, are only present during the opening and closure of the term of courts and are often not in court to discharged their duties. Some inmates intimated to INCHR that even if they are in the counties, PDs request huge sums of money from defendants before representing them in court. For instance, in Rivercess County, two inmates at the CCP informed INCHR that the public defender have requested from them huge amounts of money before representing their legal interest.

Likewise, in Grand Cape Mount County, the PD is reportedly noted for requesting money from indigents before representing their interest. An adult female complained that a PD requested her to pay him over L\$50,000 before he took up her case. Also in Grand Bassa County, two female inmates who have been incarcerated for over 425 days. They informed the Commission that they have paid huge amount in cash to the PD but their case have not been heard.

Comments: INCHR thinks that the lack of commitment on the part of PDs in the discharge of their duties that is motivated by corruption, and either the refusal or the financial incapability on the part of inmates are major causes that are keeping suspects on minor offences in prison beyond the statutory period. For example, there are citizens and foreigners alike in many of the prisons visited on minor offenses such as theft of property (for less than L\$500), simple assault, action of debt without any legal representation, thus contributing to the already overcrowded prison facilities.

1.8. Freedom of Press, Media, Opinion and Expression

During the period under review, inflammatory language and hate speech, both on electronic and print media, as well as, social media platforms, continued to target opposition, government official, inter/intra political parties' activities, individuals and communities based on their perceived or real beliefs or political views. Hate speech, sometimes marked with political rhetoric, has fueled a climate of mistrust, fear and violence among different communities, government and political parties. Although under human rights and national laws, incitement to hatred may justify the exceptional use of restrictions on freedom of expression, in Liberia, exceptional measures often failed to comply with international standards of legality, necessity and proportionality.

Government institutions and actors, especially the LNP have often invoked 'hate speech' as the basis for imposing restrictions, such as closure of radio stations and newspapers that were critical of the Government and its officials, which actions most often do not meet the threshold of incitement to violence and/or with the intent to cause instability.

1.11. Freedom of Assembly and Movement

Freedom of Assembly and Movement are fundamental rights that should be upheld at all times, which is why Article 13 (a) of the Constitution of Liberia guarantees that *“Every person lawfully*

within the Republic shall have the right to move freely throughout Liberia, to reside in any part thereof and to leave therefrom subject however to the safeguarding of public security, public order, public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others’. Additionally, the ICCPR also reinforces the tenets of Freedom of Movement, Article 12 of the ICCPR states: *“Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and”*. However, on 16 July 2021, the Cross Border Women Trade Union in Bo Water Side registered their disenchantment to the INCHR and international partners, that their freedom of movement was been hindered by illegal actions of State Actors, which include the LNP, Liberia Immigration Service (LIS), National Security Agency (NSA) and Customs Officers assigned at Bo Water Side Crossing Point, which borders Liberia and Sierra Leone. In verbal complaint to INCHR, they alleged various forms of violence and harassments, including sexual and gender based violence, assaults, sexual harassment, extortion of money, arbitrary arrest, torture, prolong detention and inhumane treatment on some of their members and citizens of the area who tried to intervene.

The President of the Union of Liberia also stressed that the action of the State Actors has not only infringed on their freedom of movement but has discouraged many women to either abandon their choice of business thus depriving them of livelihood. According to them, the actions of the State Actors aforementioned has also compelled them to find alternative route to commute, which has become drawback on commerce and trade.

1.12. Right to Protection of Family, Women, Children and the Disabled

Worst Form of child Labor

Article 3 – Section 20:20.1 of the Children Act, 2011 states: *“every child shall have the right to be protected from work and other practices that may threaten her and his health, educational, spiritual, physical and moral development”* and Article 32 section 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) states that *“States parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development”*’. Despite these local and international laws, on 12 July 2021, upon a tour by INCHR of the operational areas of Cavalla Rubber

Corporation (CRC), in Maryland County, observed 17 children between the ages 13 to 17 year engaged in physical works including brushing overgrowth under the rubber trees and commuting raw rubber latex on their heads.

Considering the hazardous conditions under which these children were subjected to hard labor, contravened the Children Act, 2011¹¹, INCHR immediately requested a conference with the management of the rubber plantation to discuss the plight of the children. The Management apparently not wanting to take responsibility for their action, referred INCHR to the Head of the Workers Union, who at the time of the visit was absent.

INCHR observed that most of these children are self-supported and this is the only mean available to them for livelihood. Two of the children 14 and 17 mentioned to INCHR that their respective parents are deceased and that they are self-supported students, who pay their rents from money earned at the end of contracts with the company.

PART II: ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

2.1: Right to Health; i.e., Accessibility and Affordability, Water and Sanitation

Right to Health

Article 16: 1 and 2 of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights read respectively "*Every individual shall have the right to enjoy the best attainable state of physical and mental health*" and 2. "*States parties to the present Charter shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick*".

Even though these standards have been set but issues of treatment for survivors of HIV/AIDS in Sinoe County is non-existence due to the Ministry of Health's failure to supply the needed antiretroviral drugs. Some patients who usually receive medication at the F.J. Grant Memorial Hospital in Greenville City, requested anonymity, complained to INCHR that since January

¹¹ Article VI, Section 9 – 9.1, children Act, 2011: No person shall employ a child in work that is inappropriate for the child's age or that may be hazardous to the child's health, educational, emotional or physical development. This prohibition applies to all work undertaken by children, regardless of whether the work is under a contractual relationship, and regardless of whether the work is for payment or other reward.

2021, they are yet to receive their supplies. According to them, the prolonged gaps in treatment will further worsen their health conditions and exposed them to other illnesses associated with the disease.

Access to affordable health care delivery is in compliance with Article 12 (1) of the ICESCR and Article 16 (2) of the African Chapter on Human and People’s Rights respectively read, *“Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health”* and *“ States parties to the present Charter shall take the necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick”*. However, these obligations of the GoL, on 29 August 2021, Henry’s Town Health Clinic, Gbarpolu County was non-functional due to the shortage/lack of medical and nonmedical supplies. During a visit and tour of the facility, INCHR observed that normal health care activities were not being conducted. It was observed that patients were unattended to by nurses and health workers who had reported to work. One of the patients informed NCHR that he has brought his daughter who was suffering from severe headache and cold but for over two hours, no nurse has attended to her. According to him, most of the patients have left the facilities in disappointment.

INCHR also interviewed few healthcare workers to ascertain as to why the facility was not operational. On condition of anonymity some of the health workers asserted that it was their duty to report to work but in the absence of drugs and other medical supplies, they could not provide the required health care services. They claimed that the facility has not been supplied with essential drugs and supplies for a period of four months.

2.2: Right to Education

Article 13: 1 & 2 of the ICESCR says *“[t]he States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all the full persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace”*. 2. *“[t]he States Parties to the present Covenant recognize that, with a view to achieving the full realization of this right”*: Primary

education shall be compulsory and available free to all; (b) Secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational secondary education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education;

In Rivercess, the Commission was informed that the Parmah Elementary Public School located in Zarflan District with a population of over 100 students has been closed due to the absence of teachers. The only enlisted GoL assigned teacher was pensioned in June 2021 which has resulted into the closure of the school, thus leaving pupils with no access to education. INCHR was also informed that due to this circumstance some of the students have now reverted to working in Gold Mining Camps as an option to education. Similarly, the Wehgar Town Public Elementary School, in Zoday Clan was also compelled to close due to the retirement of two GoL assigned teachers. Some community members informed the Commission that the retirement of these teachers, have affected the school system, thus hindering access to education by hundreds of school going pupils.

It can be recalled that during the month of July, a forum was organized aimed at conducting TBO on July 21, 2021 in Klaygbae, Henryville Township, Rockcess, Sambgarlor Administrative District, Rivercess County, allegedly by local county authority (See below **(2.4: Harmful Traditional Practices (c))**). The 13 year old boy who was victim of the confession, is currently being abandoned by his family members, as well as being discriminated against by community members of being a witch. INCHR is particularly concerned about his right to access education, which are been violated. He is a third grade dropped-out whose chance of going to school is likely impossible with the high degree of stigmatization that he has been subjected to.

2.3: Harmful Traditional Practices

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) can be categorized in three types in Liberia to include Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Ritualistic Killing (RK) and Trial by Ordeal (TBO) (Sassywood). Besides Trial by Ordeal that is generally practice, FGM is regionally practiced and have ethnic linkages. For example, FGM is traditional and cultural practice that was inherited by persons dearly hold this belief to be sacred. It is mainly practiced in North and Central, Western and South including parts of Rural and Urban Montserrado.

INCHR emphasizes that not all killings constitute Ritualistic killing (RK) as there are elements both physical and internal, as well as, the manner in which the killing was done that gives a clue for claims of RK. For example, when a dead body is found aside from drowning where soft issues might be removed by marine life, with private parts, the sole of the feet and hand, tongue, fingers extracted, these are elements that draw conclusions of not only tempering with but foul play is alleged.

The outlined practices are not only in violation of Laws of Liberia but totally violate major international human rights instruments that Liberia has ratified. In fact, the administrating of TBO as a means of obtaining evidence has been outlawed by some rulings of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia.

2.4: Ritualistic Killing

On 13 October 2021, the LNP in Bong County received a complaint of a missing woman. The complainant reported that his 21 year old fiancée of Butesu Town, Jorquelleh District, left for Gbarnga City and after seven days, there are no indications of her whereabouts. A search operation was immediately launched, which led to the discovery of her lifeless body. However, she was found without private parts extracted, which is believed to be associated with ritualistic killing. Upon the discovery of the deceased, the boyfriend immediately disappeared and up to the time of the writing of this report he has not been seen. Meanwhile, he has been labeled as the prime suspect in the case.

Also, on 24 September 2021, a 44 year old man was discovered dead in Slongbe's Town Community with body parts extracted. The victim was found along the road leading to a creek (waterside), where community members and residents usually fetch water for domestic use.

During a physical examination of the corpse by medical practitioners, it was observed that he had huge cut at the back of his neck and his tongue removed.

In an effort to ascertain fact and circumstances surrounding his death and extraction of body parts, INCHR spoke with some community leaders and family members. According to a woman who requested anonymity, during a wake-keeping event on 23 September 2021, a group of women from the town asked the victim to accompany them to the next town on ground that they

were afraid as women to travel at night. She explained that the victim accompanied them and while on his way back, he was allegedly attacked by unknown men, resulting to his death demise.

Consequently, as a result these real and or perceived RK, fear and apprehension have restricted movement of persons, goods and services, and by extension curtailed the enjoyment of other basic al human rights. The inability of GoL to expeditiously act to revert these activities also denies victims and their families' access to justice.

Trial by Ordeal (Sassywood)

Article 21 (h) of the Constitution of Liberia provides that a person “*shall not be compelled to furnish evidence against himself and he shall be presumed innocent until the contrary is proved beyond a reasonable doubt*”, while a Supreme Court ruling¹² as far back as 1916 outlawed the practice of TBO.

On July 24 2021, in Gaye Town, Gbarzon District, Grand Gedeh County, a 50 year-old-woman who was subjected to sassywood, died as a result of practice. The victim was accused of been a witch and was coerced to undergo the practice to proof her innocence. The sassywood was administer under the supervision of the Town Chief who along with three other were arrested by the LNP and charged with negligent homicide.

As a consequence of the disappearance of a 76 year old male resident of Klaygbae Town, in Grand Gedeh County and the subsequent failure to discover him dead or alive for over two months by a search team, on 19 June 2021, the community leaders declared the conduct of sassywood. As such, they invited a witch-finder/herbalist from the Ivory Coast to conduct TBO to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the perpetual disappearance of their kinsman. The witch-finder upon administrating the Sassywood, accused six persons. The six victims without due process, were beaten and tortured by community members.

Comments: ***Regardless of Liberia’s treaty obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other domestic laws, issues of TBO continued to persist. INCHR thinks that even though TBO is a traditional practice which residents***

¹² ***Liberian Supreme Court in the case Jedah v Horace (1916) 2 LLR 63)***

particularly in rural parts inherited from their forefather and still hold dear to them, but limited law enforcement presence, in addition to lack of interest in the judiciary process is a further incentive for the prevalence of the practice.

Further, INCHR reasons that the application or ordinance of TBO is worrisome and there is a need for the relevant duty-bearers to be more proactive in averting this practice. INCHR, on its part, will continue to monitor and create awareness against such practice.

INCHR observed that during the period under review there were no substantive cases of reported FGM. However, the Commission is not overruling the fact that the practice did not occur, as there are chances that it was either unreported and/or not captured.

PART III: RAPE, SEXUAL ABUSED AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

3.1. Rape

The Government of Liberia, having experienced high prevalence of rape cases and its associated war year styles of the use of other objects and body parts, passed into law a punitive rape law aimed at minimizing or curbing its recurrence. The new rape law, which was enacted in 2005, defines rape as *any penetration on an opening of the body of (male or female) with a foreign object, without the victim's consent; or the intentional penetration of the vagina another person or anus of another person with a foreign object or with any other part of the body (other than the penis), without the victim's consent. "The maximum sentence for first-degree rape shall be life imprisonment, and for the purposes of bail it shall be treated as per capital offenses under section 13.1.1: Capital Offenses of the Criminal Procedure Law."* Despite the passage of the aforesaid rape law, rape has taken center stage by the frequency of reported cases, number of cases on court dockets and number of detainees nationwide on allegation of rape. During the reporting period, there were estimated 500 inmates held in detention on allegation of rape in Liberia. For example, of this number the MCP has the highest with 325, while NCP has 79, RCP and SCP have 5 each, RCP 33, Nimba 27, BCP 2 and GCP 10.

On 26 August 2021, a girl 14 was allegedly raped by male aged 25 on his farm in Gbunja Town, Garwula District, Grand Cape Mount County. The accused invited the victim to help him process farina (Gari), which situation was exploited to commit the alleged crime. The victim

informed INCHR that the perpetrator provided L\$500.00 to silence her an amount she rejected and reported case to the LNP. She was immediately taken to the Sinje Health Center for medical examination.

On 3 October 2021, a girl 15 was allegedly raped by a man 45 at Bo Waterside, a bordering town between Liberia and Sierra Leone. This incident came to the attention of the public and INHCR following the deteriorating health condition of the victim. On 10 October 2021, the victim was taken to a local health facility to seek medical care and the examination revealed penetration due to laceration.

All of the victims mentioned above underwent medical examinations at various health facilities where medical reports showed that there were penetrations and lacerations. It is important to note that, even though all of the perpetrators were arrested and forwarded to court, INCHR is concerned that one of the alleged perpetrators surreptitiously escaped from the custody of the Madina Magisterial Court and still at-large.

Comments: There exist a Standard Operating Procedures for One Stop Centres in Liberia which provide a referral pathway for Rape and SGBV cases. INCHR notes with concern that during the year under review, victims of reported rape cases did not have access to a One-Stop-Center, which is a major requirement for psychosocial support and medical services.

PART IV: SUBSTANTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

4.1. Challenges

The INCHR has and continued to face many challenges that have hampered its smooth and effective operations. Some of the challenges are as below:¹³

Article 19(1) of the INCHR Act, stresses that “*in order to enhance the operational efficiency and independence of the Commission, the Government of the Republic of Liberia shall ensure its adequately resources to the Commission following consultations with the Legislature...*” Also, the Paris Principles provide for adequate funding of national human rights institutions to enhance

¹³ The Paris Principles are international minimum standards for effective, credible national human rights institutions. The Principle also required broad mandate and adequate resources.

their independence. Notwithstanding, Article 19(3) of the INCHR Act¹⁴, the INCHR Act, 2005 squarely obligates the Government of the Republic of Liberia to financially and materially support the works of the Commission. In spite of the provision above, the Commission receives very minimal budgetary support, which has rendered the INCHR incapable of fully functioning. For example, there is low visibility of field presence. Inadequate support to the Commission has resulted into rationing electricity, sharing of vehicles, lack of logistics, retaining of qualified staffs, all of which corresponding effect is hampering the INCHR from its core functions.

Article 9(1) INCHR Act, 2005 states among others that the “Commission shall comprise of a Chairperson and six other Commissions. Despite this major provision, on 5 August 2021, the President of Republic of Liberia appointed a new Board of Commissioners; consisting of a Chairperson and four Commissioners, contrary to the intent and spirit of the Act establishing the Commission. INCHR encourages the GoL to complete appointment of the Commission so as to be in compliance with the Act.

4.2. Opportunities

There are enormous opportunities that the INCHR can tap on to enhance its capacities in guaranteeing the protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia, including the below:

- Availability of donor support that needs to be properly leveraged;
- International training must be identified and utilized to build capacity and enhance performance;
- Competent staff in the secretariat must be motivated to improve performance in the conduct of its affairs;
- Need for fund raising strategy that will assist in augmenting the financial base of the INCHR.

4.3. How to Strengthen the INCHR

¹⁴ The Commission may request, make proposal and obtain external findings from private, international, non-governmental organization or inter-governmental agencies, individual, and Corporate donors home or abroad.
.....

Consideration should be given the below in an effort to strengthening the capacity of the INCHR to ensure that it discharges its statutory obligations:

- The INCHR financial autonomy should be strengthened to address critical needs ranging from recruitment, logistics, training, and compensation;
- Identifying multiple sources of support could be one surest way to strengthen the Commission, in addition to budgetary support from GoL;
- Revise obsolete policy and formulate new ones that are applicable;
- Provide a better compensation for staff to attract and retain professional;
- INCHR should have its own headquarters which should be human rights friendly demonstrates GoL's interest in the sustained protection and promotion of human rights in Liberia; and at the same time save the Commission of money remitted for lease of office.

PART V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

The respect for human rights should at all times be protected, promoted and fulfilled; and upheld to guarantee rule of law. It is not gainsaying that human rights are basic rights including economic, social and cultural rights, as well as political rights, which is why all such rights should be protected within the framework of the law. It is against this backdrop that to ensure the respect for human rights, the duty-bearer and the right-holders should fulfill their obligations and claim their rights respectively.

During the period under review, it was revealed that there is an increase in human rights violations in Liberia as compared to 2020. This increase informed the INCHR that more needs to be done in the areas of engagement of duty-bearers to fulfill their obligations, strengthening the capacity of rights-holders to claim the rights and network with stakeholders and all parties to elevate issues of human rights thus preventing violations.

On an optimistic note, the GoL on 5 August 2021 appointed five of seven members of the Board of Commissioners of the INCHR. It is worth noting that the INCHR remains incomplete

throughout the period. This incompleteness of the Board of Commissioners does not meet the requirement of the INCHR Act.

During the reporting period, and for the past five years consecutively year (2017-2021), INCHR maintained its status as an “A” national human rights institution. This status serves as an enforcer for the maintenance of the Commission’s enduring ties with other regional and international bodies. However, this brings responsibility to bear on the Commission to do more in working with local and international partners and its network of field monitors and civil society organizations on local lobbying and advocacy campaign on human rights promotion and protection.

5.2. Recommendations

Following analysis of all of the violations and the corresponding conclusions, INCHR wishes to recommend as follows:

a) For the GoL

1. GoL should adhere to the financial autonomy of INCHR so that it will effectively discharge its statutory responsibilities by protecting and promoting human right in Liberia;
2. GoL should take aggressive steps to depopulate the already congested prisons in Liberia by engaging and/or capacitating relevant criminal justice actors, particularly the judiciary, to expeditiously dispose of cases in line with the law. Additionally, INCHR encourages the GoL to introduce the non-custodial approach aimed at decongesting prisons.
3. GoL should take steps in ending impunity and other forms of violations outlined in this report which will eventually improve the human rights situation in Liberia;

4. GoL should promptly appoint the remaining members of the Board of Commissioners of INCHR to fulfill compliance with the Act establishing the Commission.

b) For the INCHR

4. INCHR should engage duty-bearers to enhance its capacity so that it become proactive in its obligation in protecting, promoting and fulfilling the rights of duty-bearers, thus improving human rights situation in Liberia;
5. INCHR should increase visibility in its field presence by providing logistics, training and deployment of field staff throughout Liberia, which will enhance effective monitoring and reporting of the human rights situation in Liberia;
6. INCHR should work with GoL and relevant stakeholders to initiate its proposed headquarters construction project, which will set a basis for a permanent address and at the same time reduce the heavy financial burden of rent;
7. INCHR should provide adequate awareness and technical assistance on issues of PwDs and mental illness, so as to engage the GoL on interventions to ensure that the dignity of these categories of persons is respected.

c) For the Partners/Stakeholders

8. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), especially the GANHRI, UNDP, Swedish Embassy and other partners should provide adequate technical assistance and other support to the programs of the INCHR;
9. Partners/Stakeholders should accelerate positive engagements with the GoL, INCHR, Civic Society Organizations and other relevant human rights institutions, aimed at building their respective capacities to protect, promote and defend human rights in Liberia.

Appendix:

A. Speeches of the Chairman, INCHR

A Policy statement delivered by the chairperson of the
Independent National Commission on Human Rights
On the occasion of the formal seating of the Board of Commissioners

September 1, 2021

Delivered by Cllr. T. Dempster Brown (Chairman)

Distinguish guests
Ladies and gentlemen
All protocols observe

We welcome you in the premises of the Independent National Commission on Human rights on the occasion marking the formal seating of the board of commissioners.

This commission was established in 1997 with the name: Liberia Commission on Human Rights with limited powers.

In order to prevent the violation of human rights in Liberia, the act was amended in 2005 with the nomenclature, “the independent national commission on human rights” with quasi-judicial functions to hear complaints brought before it by victims concerning human rights violations, their representatives, third parties, non-governmental organizations and other representative organizations.

Therefore, article vi of the act gives the commission statutory powers to issue summons and subpoena for the enforcement of attendance of witnesses or their examination on oath, the receiving of evidence on affidavit and the receiving of any public record or copy from and court or office; the commission will therefore conduct public hearing into complaints brought before it with magnitude reference to human rights violation through due process of law.

The commission has the statutory power to require any person subject to any privilege which he or she may claim under the law to furnish information of matter pending before it as in the opinion of the commission that may be useful.

Therefore, all complaints should be addressed to the chairman of the commission and upon receipt of the complaint from a victim, the complaint will be forwarded to the complaints department and the commission who has oversight responsibility of all complaints will order the hearing officer for the issuance of a summon with a copy of the complaint to be served on the accused or respondent by the ministerial officer of the commission to answer to the complaint or make a formal appearance before the commission for hearing and that upon the refusal of the respondent of the accused person to appear, the commission will apply to any court in Liberia for a writ of arrest using the sheriff of the court to bring forth with the accused before the commission for inquiry or investigation.

During investigation where it is established that the violation was due to the negligence of the state or any of its functionaries or public servant, the commission will inform the respondent of the accused to compensate the victim and thereafter the commission will communicate with the state or any of its functionaries where the accused is from to initiate criminal proceeding against the accused or respondent if the violation has a criminal nature to prevent the human rights violation in Liberia. Appeal from the

hearing officer by the accused or the respondent will go before the board of commissioners of the commission, therefrom if the accused is not satisfied, he or she can appeal to the Supreme Court for judicial review.

The commission will ensure that the rights of the Liberia people and foreign residents are protected especially the rights of women and children including the disabled. The discrimination of disabled will be prevented because the disabled has rights to life which include job opportunities. The commission is also concerned about the gender based violence, rape and sexual harassment in every sector of our society including workplaces and schools. The attention of the commission is being drawn to the disappearances and mysterious deaths of our peaceful citizens including brutality of our peaceful citizens by state security. Last week, we received information from grand Cape Mount County about the disappearance of one Hawa and Mulbah Kunyou, and up to present their whereabouts are still unknown. The commission also received information from LRA about the disappearance of one Sayon Moore two weeks ago and up to present, his whereabouts is still not known.

We also observed that in the past and present, the state security are conducting investigation about these incidents, yet no findings; therefore, the commission will engage its international partners for funding for the training of our monitors to enable them to conduct transparent investigation, where there is an occurrence of human rights violation which has criminal nature for immediate findings to be presented to the government of Liberia for the prosecution of the perpetrators.

Our monitors report revealed that human rights violation is in every sector of our society because the disrespect for the rule of law, therefore, the commission will also engage its international partners for funding to conduct civic education workshop in the fifteen counties to educate our citizens to know their rights and the rights of their children especially the negative effects of early childhood marriage which is associated with rape, child labor, child trafficking and the negative effects of the compromising of rape cases based on cultural practices.

The commission will also seek for funding to conduct training workshops for police and other members of the state security, including judicial officials, magistrates and state prosecutors to know the rights of all accused persons. We will also engage the national legislature to pass into law an act to abolish death penalty based upon conventions, international treaties and protocols signed by the Liberian government in the past and ratified.

We are determined to work with civil society organizations and local human rights organizations to ensure that the rights of our citizens and foreign residents are protected.

Distinguished guest and ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming.

A Special Statement
Delivered by the Chairperson of INCHR
At a one-day stakeholder Forum
For the ratification of the protocol to the
African Charter on Human and People's Rights
On the Rights of older Persons in Africa

October 1, 2021

Fellow participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our presence here today will form an impressive record in the history of Liberia. Liberia is a member of the African Union (AU) that adopted the protocol to the African Charter in Human and People's Rights of the older persons in Africa in its 26th ordinary session held in Addis Ababa.

Only Lesotho and Benin signed and ratified the protocol, but Liberia, one of the founding members of the AU never signed the protocol.

Liberia, the oldest African Republic should attach importance to the protection of the elderly. Beside Benin and Lesotho that signed and ratified the protocol, Central African Republic, Chad, Cameroon, Gabon,, Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Togo and Zambia signed the protocol but never ratify it. The need for African Governments to ratify the protocol is more urgent because Africa is the home of over 68 million older person constituting 7.1 percent of the globe.

Many African older men and women are experiencing systematic inequality in economic and social humiliation.

Older persons, especially in our society are discriminated; discrimination based on age and promoting the dignity of older person is fundamental to ensure that all Africans including the over 180,000 older persons in Liberia enjoy a life of fulfillment, health, security and active participation in their societies.

Today all in the streets there are elderly persons, sitting on the sidewalk; therefore, the care for older people in Liberia should be manifested by the establishment of residential homes for older people by the government for their social welfare. Social welfare workers should be trained by relevant government institution to provide adequate care for her elderly including access to health care and food, water, shelter and clothing. Attention should also be paid to elderly women, therefore to adequately address these situation, we hereby recommend the following:

1. Liberia should follow the footsteps of Lesotho and Benin to sign the protocol and ratify it
2. A bill should be introduced in the house of legislature for the creation of a National Commission for the Older People.

PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Liberia's INCHR Resolves Major Property Dispute Between the government of Liberia and residence of King Gray/ELWA community, avoiding a Major Hurdle to Road Construction along the Robertsfield Highway.

Monrovia (October 15, 2021)-The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) on Thursday, October 14, 2021 summon the Acting Minister of Public Works Madam Ruth Coker Collins to resolve a dispute with regards to the demolition of properties that fall within a 13 feet radius along the Robertsfield Highway. The complaints was filed against the Ministry of Public Works/GOL by residence dwelling on the stretched of property along the King Gray/Old Zone 8 Police Station.

The residence in their communication to the INCHR alleged that the government of Liberia threatened to demolish properties within the remaining 13 feet radius that they had not paid for. City ordinance provides for a 75 feet radius space/allowance from all roads.

According to the residence, the government had paid for properties within 62 feet of the 75 feet radius and would come back at a later date to pay for properties remaining within the balance 13 feet radius before carrying out demolition.

INCHR narrow down the residence complaint in two key issues in its mediation. These issues were:

1. That the government was attempting to demolish properties within the 13 feet radius that they had not paid for and
2. That the government did not give them sufficient notice to leave the areas that have been earmarked for demolition.

The INCHR, following its mediatory intervention was able to get the contending parties to agree to the following:

1. That the Government of Liberia would pay for properties within the 13 feet radius provided the residence file in their claims according to the procedure laid down by the Ministry of Public works (MPW)
2. That the Government of Liberia would give the residence a notice of five days to leave areas targeted for demolition.

This commission's intervention prevented a standoff that would have impeded the construction of a major road along the Robertsfield highway and protected the rights of the residence.

Signed:

The Chairman
The Independent National Commission on Human Rights

B. Brief Profile of Commissioners and Oversight



Chairman, T. Dempster Brown is a senior Counselor-At-Law with the Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia and a pioneer promoter and campaigner for human rights and justice in Liberia. He is best known for speaking truth to power and engaging authorities in administrative offices, Courts, and Prison Centers for the attainment of social justice and the protection of human rights. Cllr. Brown is the former Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission of Liberia (now Independent National Commission on Human Rights) from 2000 to 2005.

He holds a Bachelor of Law degree from the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law of the University of Liberia in 1989 and subsequently obtained his Certificate of Admission as Counselor-At-Law with the Supreme Court of the Republic of Liberia. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education from the William V. S. Tubman Teachers College of the University of Liberia and also Teaching Certificates in Secondary Education from two of the Nation's Teacher Training Institutes. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he was a teacher and later a principal of a public school.

As a human rights and justice advocate, Cllr. Brown contributed to the drafting of legal documents for human rights organizations and institutions in Liberia. Along with other lawyers and the Ministry of Justice, Cllr. Brown co-drafted the Act creating the 'Liberia Commission on Human Rights' in 1997 and the 'Rape Law' of Liberia in 2006. He also helped in organizing and steering some of Liberia major human rights organizations and institutions that are still relevant today. He is the founder and Executive Director for Center for the Protection of Human Rights; former Vice Chairman of the National Human Rights Center of Liberia from 1992 to 2003; and former Chairman of Liberia Human Rights Defenders from 1989 to 1992.



Vice Chairman, Charles Kear Harris is a Counsellor-at-Law of the Honourable Supreme Court of Liberia. He holds a master of laws (LLM) degree from Loyola University Chicago School of Law, Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from the University of Liberia, Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law and Bachelor of Business of Administration (BBA) degree from the University of Liberia. He is a trained Judicial Affairs Officer and has been in private practice of law with Jones and Jones Law Firm with experience in trial advocacy, conciliation, counseling in cases of human rights abuses and violations and active pro bono practice.

He served as Executive Director at the Law Reform Commission. Cllr Harris has more than 10 years of work experience with United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in the area of rule of law and human rights. His work in post conflict and development setting in Liberia with the UNMIL has included assignments which gave him the privilege to interact with national partners on justice, legal, human rights and security issues in the bid to strengthen the rule of law. His responsibilities have covered a broad range of justice sector reform activities, including justice system assessment, development of justice reform strategies on human rights base approach, development of donor project proposals for Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), court administration and ensuring improved compliance with due process, fair trial standards and access to effective remedies by victims and protection of witnesses.

Cllr. Harris is also an accountant and had been responsible for the supervision and control of all financial and budgetary related activities within reporting entities. Prior to joining the reporting industry, he served with a certified public accounting (CPA) firm where he provided auditing and accounting services for entities within the clientele portfolio of the CPA firm. After the civil war, he successfully participated with Coopers and Lybrand in the production of the statement of affairs for select public corporations and produced reports for the respective board of directors. Cllr. Charles K. Harris is the Vice Chairperson of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights with oversight responsibilities on the Department of Administration, Budget and Finance.



Commission, Pela Boker-Wilson is an Assistant Professor of Law and Legal Practitioner admitted to the Liberian National Bar. She completed her LLM Fellowship in Leadership and Advocacy for Women in Africa from the Georgetown University Law Center and holds an LLB, first place honours, from the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, Liberia. She is also a Fellow of the United Nations Public International Law Fellowship Program- The Hague Academy of International Law, Netherlands. Boker-Wilson has a background in Women and Human Rights, International Criminal Law and various aspects of Liberian law.

She has more than twelve (12) years of accumulative legal, administrative and programmatic experience working with governmental, intergovernmental and international institutions. She has made meaningful contributions to creating accountability for Sexual and GenderBased Violence in Liberia through her work as National Legal Advisor for the International Development Law Organization(IDLO). At the IDLO, she coordinated capacity building activities and roundtables for judges and court users with an aim to improve the transparency, accountability and overall efficiency of the National Sexual Offence Court. She also served as a Prosecuting Attorney for the Ministry of Justice, where she pursued accountability for crimes like rape, murder and human trafficking. Currently, Pela Boker-Wilson serves as Assistant Professor of Law at the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law and Chief Legal Counsel for the National Investment Commission of Liberia (LNIC) where she, inter alias, prepares and negotiates Concessions intended to promote and establish investment opportunities in Liberia. At the LNIC, she uses her expertise in women and human rights to ensure that the rights of the vulnerable in affected communities are considered. Pela Boker-Wilson is a Contributor to the William & Mary Journal of Race, Gender and Social Justice- Volume 27, Issue 3. In this Edition, she used her experience on SGBV in Liberia to author the Article, Increasing Accountability for Rape in Liberia: The Need for a Forensic System to Increase the Success Rates of Prosecution. Passionate about women's rights, Boker-Wilson renders pro bono services to indigent Liberian women in the areas of domestic violence, divorce, child custody and property rights



Commissioner Mohammed E. Fahnbulleh A Liberian lawyer with seventeen years of professional experience both in the Private and Public sector.

Has Master degree in Public Sector Administration, LLB in Law, and BSc in Economics.

Atty. Fahnbulleh has worked with several institutions including the United Nations Department Program, Liberia Country office where he served for eight years. At UNDP, he was the Programme Associates in the Justice and Security program that provided technical support to the Judiciary system. Also, he served earlier as Human Rights and Gender Assistant in Human Rights and Gender unit. He actively participated in the drafting of the National Gender policy; the implementation of the Gender Equality, Women's Economic Empowerment and the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

He served as the first Program manager of the Project Management Unit at the Independent National Human Rights Commission. Under his stewardship, control mechanisms was put in place for assets management; Human resources policy was developed, the Commission's Road map was being developed.

In 2005, he served as Election magistrate. His last place of work is the at the Liberian Anti-corruption Commission where he served as Executive director for five years. At the Commission, he led the secretariat that organized the country's first Anti-corruption conference. He led the drafting of several Bill's including the whistleblower and Witness protection as part of the reform to strengthen corruption fight.

He has passion for social justice, accountability and transparency. He is a former Student leader and activist.



Commissioner Pindarous Allison is a Liberian and a development work practitioner with emphasis in advocacy and communication. He holds a Master degree in international relations from the University of Liberia and also a third-year student of the Louis Arthur Grimes School of Law, University of Liberia. Pindarous is a Transitional Justice (TJ) Fellow of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) Fellowship Program of Cape Town, South Africa; and also, a trained Security Sector Reform (SSR) practitioner from the Folke Bernadotte

Academy (FBA) in Sunsvall, Sando, Sweden. He is a United Nations Development Program (UNDP) of Liberia's trained human rights advocate and trainer, and, a Publish What You Pay (PWYP) trained campaigner in natural resource management.

He has been in the corridor of non-governmental development work in Liberia since the early two thousand (2000), beginning as a youth volunteer and advocate, onwards to a national youth leader (Secretary General of the Federation of Liberian Youth-FLY); human rights promoter, and founding member of various Civil Society platforms. Throughout these times, he was opportune to have worked with different groupings: Youth and Students, Women, Children, Physically Challenged, Old Folks, Labor Unions, security agencies, internally displaced persons, prisoners, and Interest and Pressure Groups. He also worked on different thematic areas: Youth Development, Women Empowerment, Human Rights promotion and protection, Children Protection, Sexual Gender Based Violence, Security Sector Reform, Land Reform, Natural Resource Management, Social and Economic Justice, Access to Justice, and Transitional Justice amongst others.

Along with other actors in the Civil Society of Liberia, Pindarous contributed to the conception, influencing, and establishment or rejuvenation of land mark human rights and civil society platforms, coalitions, and movements that are still active today in Liberia: Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), Liberia NGO Network (LINK), National Civil Society Council of Liberia (NCSCL), Human Rights and Protection Forum (HRPF) of Liberia, Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Working Group of Liberia, Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) of Liberia, Publish What You Pay and Receive (PWYPR) Liberia Chapter, Concession Working Group (CWG) of Liberia, Liberia Action Network on Small Arms (LANSA), etc.

Pindarous' contribution to the endeavor for inclusive and participatory governance, rule of law, justice, enjoyment of human rights, and structural reforms for peace and stability in post conflict Liberia witnessed amongst other things the establishment of or reforms in the following national institutions and laws: **Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**, **Governance Commission (GC)**, **Commission for the Disable and Physically Challenged, Liberia Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (LEITI)**, **Liberia National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons**, and laws which include but not limited to the **Rape Law of Liberia**, **Children Law of Liberia**, and the establishment of the **Criminal Court E** to trial only sexual violence against women. Pindarous envisages a Liberia that is inclusive, stable, sensitive to the rule of law and protective of peoples' and human's right, ensuring that Liberia belongs to and enjoyed by all.