



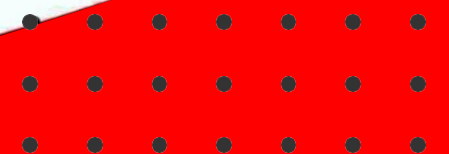
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## INDEPENDENT NATIONAL COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (INCHR)

# 2025 Human Rights Situation Report

Released July, 2026



accountability, human rights awareness, civic education, and implementation of Liberia's regional and international human rights obligations.

4. Support initiatives aimed at strengthening access to justice, combating impunity, enhancing the effectiveness of rule of law institutions, and improving the delivery of legal aid services throughout Liberia.
5. Continue supporting programmes that strengthen democratic governance, transparency, anti-corruption initiatives, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and inclusive national development.
6. Support the implementation of Liberia's National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and initiatives that promote responsible business conduct, environmental protection, and meaningful community participation in development projects.

His Excellency. Joseph Nyuma Boakai Sr.  
President of the Republic of Liberia  
Capitol Hill, Monrovia

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

Pursuant to Article 4 (16) of the Act that created the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), states among others things, 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,*” I therefore have the honor to submit to you our Human Rights Situation Report on Liberia for the year 2024.

Your Excellency, please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

  
Cllr. Mohammed E. Fahnbulleh

Acting Chairperson

Cc.:  
**Hon. Speaker of the House of Representatives**  
Capitol Hill, Monrovia  
Republic of Liberia

Hon. President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate  
Capitol Hill, Monrovia  
Republic of Liberia

The Chief Justice of the Honorable of the Supreme Court of Liberia  
Capitol Hill, Monrovia  
Republic of Liberia

9. Strengthen the implementation of the National Action Plan for Child Welfare and Protection through adequate budgetary allocations and effective inter-agency coordination.
10. Intensify national efforts to eliminate child marriage, child labor, trafficking in persons, and female genital mutilation through strengthened law enforcement, public education, and victim support services.
11. Provide the Independent National Commission on Human Rights with adequate financial, technical, logistical, and institutional support to enable it to effectively discharge its constitutional and statutory mandate, consistent with the Paris Principles.
12. Expedite the ratification and implementation of outstanding international and regional human rights instruments, including the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
13. Strengthen refugee and asylum protection mechanisms and ensure that all asylum seekers and refugees are treated in accordance with international refugee and human rights law, including through the prompt investigation of allegations of unlawful refoulement or forced return.
14. Fully implement the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights and strengthen oversight of business enterprises to ensure respect for labour rights, environmental standards, and the rights of communities affected by commercial activities.
15. Increase investment in public healthcare, education, safe drinking water, sanitation, and social protection programmes, particularly in rural and underserved communities.
16. Establish dedicated juvenile rehabilitation and correctional facilities and strengthen the administration of child justice in accordance with the Children's Law of Liberia and international juvenile justice standards.

B. To Development Partners and Other Stakeholders

The Commission recommends that development partners and other stakeholders:

1. Continue providing technical, financial, and institutional support to strengthen the capacity and independence of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights.
2. Expand support for justice sector reform, correctional services, human rights education, prison rehabilitation, and programmes aimed at protecting women, children, persons with disabilities, refugees, and other vulnerable and marginalized groups.
3. Strengthen partnerships with Government institutions, civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, academic institutions, and the Commission to promote

continued technical and financial support has significantly strengthened the Commission's work in monitoring, promoting, and protecting human rights throughout Liberia.

The Commission reaffirms its commitment to working collaboratively with the Government, the Legislature, the Judiciary, independent institutions, civil society organizations, traditional and religious leaders, development partners, and all other stakeholders to promote accountability, strengthen democratic governance, combat impunity, and ensure the protection and enjoyment of the rights and freedoms of every person in Liberia.

Recommendations

A. To the Government of Liberia

The Commission recommends that the Government of Liberia:

1. Conduct prompt, impartial, independent, and effective investigations into all allegations of unlawful killings committed by both State and non-State actors, and ensure that those responsible are prosecuted in accordance with the law.
2. Enact comprehensive legal aid legislation and strengthen legal aid services to guarantee access to legal representation for indigent and vulnerable persons.
3. Accelerate the construction and operationalization of the proposed Cheesmanburg Correctional Facility, expand the use of non-custodial measures, and review legislation relating to minor offences in order to reduce overcrowding in correctional facilities.
4. Strengthen the institutional independence and operational capacity of the Independent Civilian Complaint Review Board and the Professional Standards Division of the Liberia National Police through adequate funding, staffing, and oversight.
5. Ensure that all law enforcement agencies comply fully with the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials and that allegations of excessive or unlawful use of force are promptly investigated and appropriately sanctioned.
6. Strengthen legislative and policy measures to eliminate harmful traditional practices, including female genital mutilation, trial by ordeal, and other practices inconsistent with the Constitution and Liberia's international human rights obligations.
7. Enact legislation specifically criminalizing torture in accordance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment .
8. Strengthen measures to prevent violence, discrimination, and other human rights violations against all persons, including individuals who may be targeted because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, in accordance with Liberia's constitutional and international human rights obligations.

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In October 2025, persons with visual impairments staged a peaceful protest at the Executive Mansion, alleging mismanagement of funds by the leadership of the Liberia National Commission on Disabilities and demanding greater accountability.

The Commission also monitored student protests at the University of Liberia in September 2025, where students called for the resignation of the university president over concerns relating to leadership, student welfare, infrastructure, and academic standards. The protests resulted in vandalism of university property, which was condemned by INCHR.

In December 2025, residents of Harrisburg, Montserrado County, blocked roads and burned tires to protest the lack of electricity in their community. Police reportedly used tear gas and live ammunition to disperse the crowd, resulting in injuries.

The Commission further monitored the “Bring Back Our Data” protest held in December 2024 against internet price increases and a parallel demonstration demanding adherence to the rule of law in relation to legislative developments. The demonstrations turned confrontational after police dispersed protesters with tear gas, resulting in injuries and arrests. At least 15 individuals were subsequently charged with various public order offences.

**Conclusion & Recommendations**

**Conclusion:**

The protection and promotion of human rights remain fundamental to the consolidation of democracy, sustainable peace, good governance, and the rule of law in Liberia. While important progress was recorded during the reporting period, the findings of this report demonstrate that significant legal, institutional, and socio-economic challenges continue to impede the full realization of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights.

The Commission observed persistent concerns relating to unlawful killings, prolonged pretrial detention, overcrowded correctional facilities, sexual and gender-based violence, harmful traditional practices, discrimination against vulnerable and marginalized groups, inadequate access to justice, and weaknesses within the criminal justice system. Addressing these challenges will require sustained political commitment, stronger institutions, adequate resource allocation, and coordinated action by all branches of Government, independent institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, and local communities.

The Commission acknowledges the efforts undertaken by the Government of Liberia to strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights and recognizes that meaningful progress has been achieved in several areas. At the same time, further reforms are necessary to ensure the effective implementation of Liberia's constitutional guarantees and its obligations under regional and international human rights instruments.

The Commission expresses its sincere appreciation to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF, the European Union, the Embassy of Sweden, Plan International, ActionAid Liberia, diplomatic missions, civil society organizations, and all development partners whose

reportedly dragged from the sports facility by police officers, prompting concerns regarding the treatment of journalists carrying out their professional duties.

On January 6, 2025, the Managing Editor of the Daily Observer Newspaper and one of his reporters were summoned by a senior officer of the Liberia National Police following the publication of a report concerning the death of the General Manager of the Boulevard Palace Hotel in Monrovia. The journalists alleged that they were threatened, intimidated, and detained for several hours after pursuing inquiries into the circumstances surrounding the death. The incident raised concerns regarding interference with independent journalism and abuse of authority.

On June 30, 2025, a journalist working for Radio Lar in Nimba County was reportedly abducted by individuals believed to be associated with the Poro Society after broadcasting information relating to a government directive suspending activities of the Poro and Sande Societies. According to reports, the journalist was questioned regarding his decision to discuss the activities of the traditional society on air. The incident highlighted the risks journalists face from influential non-state actors.

On July 1, 2025, a broadcast journalist in Maryland County was arrested and detained at Harper Central Prison on allegations of criminal contempt of court. Court authorities stated that the arrest followed a radio broadcast alleging judicial misconduct and bribery involving a local magistrate. The journalist was subsequently released following interventions by INCHR, the Press Union of Liberia (PUL), and civil society organizations.

Similarly, on August 13, 2025, two journalists in Rivercess County were arrested following publications alleging that a magistrate had solicited bribes from litigants. The journalists were fined and instructed to issue written apologies and retract their allegations. However, following advocacy by INCHR, civil society organizations, and the Press Union of Liberia, the contempt charges were withdrawn on 20 August 2025.

On September 2, 2025, officers of the Monrovia City Police allegedly assaulted the Managing Editor of the New Republic Newspaper on Mechlin Street in Monrovia while he was documenting an incident involving the confiscation of a petty trader's goods. The officers reportedly seized his mobile phone and deleted photographs stored on the device. INCHR condemned the incident, noting that the unlawful seizure of journalistic equipment and deletion of information constituted an attack on press freedom and freedom of expression.

### Freedom of Assembly and Movement

During the reporting period, citizens exercised their rights including through demonstrations and public protests concerning governance, economic conditions, public services, accountability, and student welfare. While most protests were initially peaceful, several incidents resulted in confrontations with law enforcement, arrests, injuries, and allegations of excessive use of force.

Notable demonstrations included the “Enough is Enough” protest in July 2025, during which protesters marched in Monrovia to express concerns about economic hardship, insecurity, and governance issues. The Liberia National Police designated the Executive Mansion and Capitol Building as “no-go zones,” preventing protesters from accessing their intended destination for presenting a petition.

### Foreword

As we conclude another reporting cycle, albeit later than statutorily required and anticipated, it is my honor, on behalf of my colleagues at the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR), to present the **2025 Annual Human Rights Situation Report on Liberia**.

This report is prepared in fulfillment of Article 4(16) of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights Act of 2005, which mandates the Commission, among other responsibilities, "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."

Liberia remains a post-conflict nation that has enjoyed more than two decades of relative peace, stability, and a historic democratic transfer of political power. While the scars of our civil conflict remain visible and many citizens continue to endure its long-term social and economic consequences, the promotion and protection of human rights remain indispensable to sustaining the progress our nation has made. Together with our national and international partners, we continue to work toward strengthening the rule of law, promoting tolerance, and consolidating democratic governance.

The primary mandate of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights is to promote, protect, and monitor the observance of human rights throughout Liberia. In furtherance of this mandate, the Commission conducts systematic daily, weekly, and monthly monitoring of the human rights situation across the country, documents allegations of human rights abuses and violations, engages duty-bearers to ensure accountability, and facilitates appropriate remedies and redress for victims where applicable. These activities constitute the cornerstone of the Commission's work in advancing a culture of respect for human rights.

The findings presented in this report provide an evidence-based assessment of the human rights situation in Liberia during the 2025 reporting period. They are intended to inform policy formulation, legislative reforms, institutional strengthening, and programmatic interventions aimed at improving the protection and promotion of human rights while fostering peace, justice, and social cohesion.

The report further demonstrates the Commission's commitment to strengthening the capacity of duty-bearers to fulfill their constitutional and international human rights obligations, empowering rights-holders to understand and claim their rights, and encouraging development partners, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders to continue providing the technical and institutional support necessary to advance Liberia's human rights agenda.

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights remains unwavering in its commitment to protecting and promoting the fundamental rights and freedoms of every person in Liberia. Working collaboratively with government institutions, civil society, development partners, traditional and religious leaders, and citizens, the Commission will continue to utilize all lawful means to advance accountability, combat impunity, strengthen democratic institutions, and reinforce the rule of law. It is through these collective efforts that we can build a more just, peaceful, inclusive, and rights-respecting Liberia for present and future generations.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all government institutions, civil society organizations, development partners, community leaders, and individuals who contributed information, expertise, and support to the preparation of this report. We trust that its findings and recommendations will serve as a valuable resource for strengthening human rights protection and informing collective action toward a more equitable and democratic Liberia.



Cllr. Mohammed E. Fahnbulleh  
ACTING CHAIRPERSON

the Cheesemanburg facility is currently ongoing, while construction work is ongoing at the new correctional facility in Barclayville, with renovation works underway at six correctional facilities nationwide.

Technical assessments have also been conducted to support additional rehabilitation works aimed at improving humane conditions of detention. These interventions represent significant progress toward addressing longstanding infrastructure challenges.

The Ministry acknowledges the concerns raised regarding prison conditions and overcrowding. These remain among the most significant human rights challenges confronting Liberia's correctional system. Government has undertaken several important interventions to improve conditions of detention.

Recognizing the need to reduce overcrowding, His Excellency President Joseph Nyuma Boakai, Sr., exercised his constitutional power of executive clemency during the July 26, 2025 Independence Day celebrations, resulting in the release of seventy-five (75) convicted inmates from twelve (12) correctional facilities across Liberia. Similar clemency measures were undertaken during the Christmas celebrations amounting to the release of Seventy-two (72) inmates for all offenses, complementing ongoing judicial efforts to reduce prison congestion.

Moreover, the Alternative Dispute Resolution – ADR Program, under the ministry of Justice, which uses mediation to divert cases from the court, successfully handled three-Hundred and sixty-six (366) cases in 2025, and a total of one thousand.

To address the underlying causes of overcrowding, a high-level meeting involving the Chief Justice, Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary, the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation, prosecutors, public defenders and other justice institutions was convened.

The Bureau highlighted severe overcrowding nationwide, prompting the Chief Justice to recommend elevating the matter to national level through direct engagement with the President of the Republic. Following the meeting, a comprehensive report was submitted to His Excellency the President recommending that prison overcrowding be declared a national emergency requiring coordinated Government intervention.

Stakeholders further agreed that prison construction, expansion and rehabilitation should be treated as national priorities. Subsequent consultations were held with judges of the First Judicial Circuit and other judicial officers to accelerate adjudication of criminal matters and reduce unnecessary detention.

[Freedom of the Press, Media, Opinion and Expression](#)

During the reporting period, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) documented several incidents involving harassment, intimidation, arbitrary arrest, detention, and interference with the work of journalists by both state and non-state actors.

For example, on January 25, 2025, a correspondent of BBC Liberia was allegedly manhandled by officers of the Liberia National Police (LNP) at the Samuel Kanyon Doe Sports Complex in Paynesville while attempting to cover the National County Sports Meet. The journalist was

Public Defenders, the Judiciary and other criminal justice institutions. These reports are now being used to facilitate case review, identify detainees eligible for fast-track proceedings and expedite criminal trials.

Additionally, the Office of Public Defenders successfully secured the release of almost one hundred (100) pretrial detainees through sustained legal representation and systematic case review, thereby contributing significantly to prison decongestion and improved access to justice.

The Ministry remains committed to improving legal aid services, strengthening prosecutorial capacity and reducing prolonged pretrial detention nationwide.

**Prison Over Crowdedness**

Article 21 of the Constitution of Liberia provides that ‘No person charged, arrested, restricted, detained or otherwise held in confinement shall be subject to torture or inhumane treatment; nor shall any person except military personnel, be kept or confined in any military facility; nor 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.’

Additional the Section 34.2 of the CPL provides that ‘[i]n institutions or parts of institutions supervised by the Ministry of Justice, the following groups shall be segregated from each other: (a) Female prisoners from male prisoners;(b)Prisoners under the age of twenty-one from older prisoners; (c) Persons detained for hearing or trial from prisoners under sentence of imprisonment; (d) Persons detained for hearing or trial or under sentence, from material witnesses and other persons detained under civil commitment.’

In Liberia’s criminal justice system, prison over crowdedness has become a systemic issue faced by the GoL. The Commission is concerned about the wellbeing of many other inmates at various prison facility across the country who may be experiencing similar fate due to their deteriorating health conditions. Most prison facilities lack medical supplies, equipment and personnel to cater to health need of ailing inmates in these structures.

During the period under review, the sixteen (16) prison facilities across Liberia held a total of 3,697 inmates, significantly exceeding their combined intended capacity of approximately 1,400. This indicates severe overcrowding, with several correctional facilities operating at two to three times their designed capacity. Of the total prison population, 2,469 inmates were in pretrial detention, representing approximately 66.7 percent of all persons deprived of their liberty.

On March 12, 2025, INCHR spoke with the superintendent of the Harper Central Prison who reported that prolonged pretrial detention is a major factor that has contributed to the over crowdedness of the facility. The prison Superintendent

However, the government substantially increased investment in infrastructure, including correctional facilities in 2025. Budgetary allocation of US\$600,000.00 was allocated for the assessment of Cheesemanburg (US\$200,000.00); for renovation and rehabilitation of correctional facilities across Liberia (US\$200,000.00); and the Justice Complex (US\$200,000.00). Fencing of

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                                   |
| BHR    | Business and Human Rights                                                  |
| 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                                                      |
| OHCHR  | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights                           |
| 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    | Liberia 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                                   |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                                 |
| UPR    | Universal Periodic Review                                            |
| WACPS  | Women and Children Protection Section                                |

*the next succeeding term after his arrest for an indictable offense or his appearance in court in response to a summons or notice to appear charging him with such an offense...*’

Article 7 of the ACHR protects the right to liberty and prohibits arbitrary detention. In relation to detention without trial, it states that, “Any person detained shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a **reasonable time** or to be released without prejudice to the continuation of the proceedings. His release may be subject to guarantees to assure his appearance for trial.”

The obligation to ensure speedy and fair trial is provided for both in international human rights law and domestic statutes. Article 9(3) of the ICCPR states that ‘anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial with a reasonable time or to release. Equally, the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa adopted by the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights asserts that ‘[e]very person charged with a criminal offence has the right to a trial without undue delay. b) The right to a trial without undue delay means the right to a trial which produces a final judgement and, if appropriate a sentence without undue delay.’

During the reporting period, INCHR recorded 2,123 persons serving prolonged pretrial detention, ranging from two to six years in various prison centers across the country. <sup>1</sup> These persons, including women and children accused for committing various crimes ranging from theft of property to criminal facilitation, murder, armed robbery, rape and gang rape, arson, among others.

At the Monrovia Central Prison (MCP) and the Gbarnga Central Prison, there is substantial number of inmate on pretrial detention with charges ranging from murder to armed robbery; some of whom have spent up to five years in prison without trial. Also, at the Bopolu Central Prison in Gbapolu County, a 32-year-old man has been in detention for more than 4-years without trial. The inmate is charge for illegal possession of narcotics substances.

Similarly, in Grand Bassa County, six inmates who have spent three years at the Buchanan Central Prison without trial appealed to the judicial actors to intervene in their case.

In Grand Gedeh, INCHR also recorded four inmates that have been incarcerated since 2023 without trial.

The government continues to prioritize reforms aimed at strengthening the administration of justice and reducing delays in criminal proceedings.

During the reporting period, twenty-one (21) vehicles were procured and distributed to County Attorneys across Liberia to improve prosecutorial presence, facilitate court attendance and strengthen criminal prosecutions, particularly in rural counties. To further expand the presence of the Judiciary in rural Liberia, the government initiated the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court Complex in Maryland, County in 2025. This project was completed, and recently dedicated by the President of Liberia.

The Ministry also strengthened coordination among justice sector institutions through regular preparation and circulation of updated reports on pretrial detainees to prosecutors, the Office of

<sup>1</sup> MOJ/BCR Annual Report 2025 on Prison stats. December 2025.

Law of Liberia contains several provisions that establish the minimum standards for the treatment and conditions of prisoners. These provisions are found primarily in Chapter 34 (Imprisonment) and are supplemented by Chapters 41 and 42, which establish the responsibilities of the Division of Correction and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Similarly, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) are the leading international standards governing prison conditions. Although, they are not a treaty, they are widely recognized as the global benchmark for assessing whether prisons comply with international human rights standards. Rule one of the Nelson Mandela Rules emphasize on the Respect for Human Dignity. **"All prisoners shall be treated with the respect due to their inherent dignity and value as human beings."**

Monitoring visits of prison facilities across the country found the following trends: over crowdedness, unhygienic cells, lack of safe drinking water, amongst others. In Bassa, Bomi, and Nimba Counties, inmates are suffering from scabies, cough, fungus and other communicable diseases. Grand Kru County is without a prison facility and uses police withholding cell as a prison. This condition denies prisoners of basic prison related rights and immunities.

In Grand Gedeh County, a female convicted inmate is gradually losing her sight due to poor visibility within the prison. The Martha Tubman Memorial Hospital in Grand Gedeh, referred her for advance treatment on July 7, 2025. Also, on July 19, 2025, her family signed a surety note for her temporary release for treatment at the JFK Hospital but to no avail. In Greenville, Sinoe County, inmates are without sufficient foods and beddings.

The Ministry acknowledges the concerns raised regarding prison conditions and overcrowding. These remain among the most significant human rights challenges confronting Liberia's correctional system.

However, the government remains committed to ensuring that inmates enjoy the highest attainable standard of healthcare within available resources. The Ministry of Health has reaffirmed its commitment to continue providing free medical services to inmates throughout Liberia, including specialized surgical procedures where necessary.

The Ministry of Justice also convened a coordination meeting involving the entities under the Ministry of Health - John F. Kennedy Medical Center and E. S. Grant Mental Health Hospital, to review the existing Memorandum of Understanding on inmate healthcare and identify immediate interventions for inmates requiring mental health services.

Government continues to improve referral systems and medical coordination for inmates requiring specialized treatment.

### **Prolonged Pretrial detention**

Section 18.1 of the Criminal Procedure Law of Liberia provides, that *'The prosecuting attorney may, by leave of court, file a dismissal of an indictment or complaint or of a count contained therein as to either all or some of the defendants. The prosecution shall thereupon terminate to the extent indicated in the dismissal. Also, 18.2 of the said provision states that '[u]nless good cause is shown, a court shall dismiss a complaint against a defendant who is not indicted by the end of*

### **Institutional Background:**

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) was established by an Act of the National Legislature in 2005 as one of the key institutional reforms emerging from Liberia's post-conflict recovery following fourteen years of civil conflict. The establishment of the Commission reflects the Government of Liberia's commitment to preventing the recurrence of gross human rights violations and strengthening the national framework for the promotion, protection, and monitoring of human rights.

The Commission was established in accordance with the Principles Relating to the Status of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (the Paris Principles), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 1993. The Paris Principles prescribe the standards for the independence, mandate, composition, and functioning of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), requiring them to operate independently while promoting and protecting human rights in accordance with international standards.

Article III (1) of the INCHR Act of 2005 provides that:

*"The 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."*

The Commission's statutory functions and operational framework are further elaborated under Articles IV and V of the INCHR Act of 2005, which collectively empower the Commission to monitor the human rights situation, investigate complaints of human rights violations, advise the Government on human rights matters, promote public awareness and education, and monitor the implementation of national, regional, and international human rights obligations.

In accordance with Article IV (16) of the Act, the Commission is specifically mandated:

*"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, crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture and genocide."*

This Annual Human Rights Situation Report is therefore submitted in fulfillment of this statutory obligation and forms part of the Commission's broader responsibility to assess, document, and report on the state of human rights in Liberia.

As Liberia's National Human Rights Institution, the Commission has continually strengthened its institutional capacity to effectively discharge its constitutional and statutory mandate. In recognition of its compliance with the Paris Principles, the Global Alliance of National Human

Rights Institutions (GANHRI), through its Sub-Committee on Accreditation, awarded the Commission "A Status" accreditation in April 2017. This accreditation affirmed the Commission's independence and full compliance with international standards governing National Human Rights Institutions and significantly enhanced its engagement within regional and international human rights mechanisms.

The Commission carries out its mandate through a professional Secretariat, which provides technical and administrative support to the Board of Commissioners and oversees the implementation of the Commission's programmes through five specialized departments:

**Department of Complaints, Investigations and Monitoring (DCIM):** Responsible for the Commission's protection mandate through the receipt and investigation of complaints, human rights monitoring, fact-finding missions, documentation of violations, and preparation of investigative and monitoring reports.

**Department of Legislative Assistance, Treaty Matters and Law (DLTML):** Responsible for advancing Liberia's compliance with national, regional, and international human rights obligations by providing legal analysis, reviewing legislation, promoting the ratification and domestication of international human rights instruments, and supporting treaty reporting processes.

**Department of Education, Training and Information (DETI):** Leads the Commission's preventive mandate by promoting human rights awareness through civic education, public outreach, capacity-building initiatives, advocacy, and dissemination of human rights information aimed at fostering a national culture of respect for human rights.

**Department of Administration and Budget (DAB):** Provides administrative, financial, procurement, logistics, asset management, and human resource management services necessary for the effective functioning of the Commission.

**Department of Planning, Internal Monitoring and Evaluation (DPIME):** Coordinates institutional planning, programme development, monitoring and evaluation, research, partnership building, resource mobilization, and performance assessment to strengthen the Commission's operational effectiveness and strategic direction.

Beyond its domestic responsibilities, the Commission actively engages with regional and international human rights mechanisms as part of its mandate to promote accountability and ensure compliance with Liberia's international obligations. These engagements include preparing and submitting independent reports to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), United Nations Treaty Bodies, and Special Procedures; participating in sessions of the United Nations Human Rights Council and other regional and international forums; facilitating country visits by United Nations Special Rapporteurs and other independent experts; and monitoring the implementation of recommendations issued under international and regional human rights mechanisms.

Through its legislative mandate, the Commission serves as an independent oversight institution responsible for monitoring the Government's compliance with its constitutional, regional, and international human rights obligations. It works to promote accountability among duty-bearers, protect the rights and freedoms of all persons within Liberia, facilitate access to remedies for

In compliance with the provisions mentioned above, the government through the Ministry of Justice, has assigned a county attorney and city solicitors, to each county whilst the judiciary assigned public defenders across the counties to enhance access to justice.

Additionally, the government continues to prioritize reforms aimed at strengthening the administration of justice and reducing delays in criminal proceedings.

During the reporting period, twenty-one (21) vehicles were procured and distributed to County Attorneys across Liberia to improve prosecutorial presence, facilitate court attendance and strengthen criminal prosecutions, particularly in rural counties. To further expand the presence of the Judiciary in rural Liberia, the government initiated the 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court Complex in Maryland, County in 2025. This project was completed, and recently dedicated by the President of Liberia.

The Ministry also strengthened coordination among justice sector institutions through regular preparation and circulation of updated reports on pretrial detainees to prosecutors, the Office of Public Defenders, the Judiciary and other criminal justice institutions. These reports are now being used to facilitate case review, identify detainees eligible for fast-track proceedings and expedite criminal trials.

Additionally, the Office of Public Defenders successfully secured the release of almost one hundred (100) pretrial detainees through sustained legal representation and systematic case review, thereby contributing significantly to prison decongestion and improved access to justice.

The Ministry remains committed to improving legal aid services, strengthening prosecutorial capacity and reducing prolonged pretrial detention nationwide.

Despite these interventions by the government, the Commission observed that absenteeism of justice actors in rural counties continue to be a challenge.

During the opening of the November Term of court, the county attorney of the 12<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court in Grand Kru County, was absent and did not resume his duties throughout the court's term.

### Condition of prison

Article 21 (e)) of the Constitution of Liberia detention of pretrial detainees with people who are already convicted within the same cell, Article 21 (e) reads ... *"No person charged, arrested, restricted, detained or otherwise held in confinement ... nor 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"*.

Article 9(1) of the ICCPR provides that '[e]veryone has the right to liberty and security of a person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as established by law.'

During the reporting period, conditions in prisons and detention facilities remained below the minimum required standards as provided for by the Criminal Procedure Law of Liberia and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. The Criminal Procedure

During the reporting period, the Commission documented several incidents in which domestic violence allegedly resulted in the death of women. These cases underscore the continuing prevalence of gender-based violence and highlight persistent gaps in protection, law enforcement response, and access to justice.

### Fatal Domestic Violence Cases

On **12 February 2025**, a 35-year-old woman residing in the Zazay Community, Paynesville, was allegedly beaten and repeatedly stabbed by her husband, resulting in her death. According to information gathered by the Commission, the alleged perpetrator fled immediately after the incident and remained at large at the close of the reporting period.

On **26 October 2025**, the body of a 40-year-old woman was discovered on a cocoa farm in Butuo, Nimba County, near the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border. Information obtained by the Commission indicated that the deceased had travelled to the farm with her husband earlier that day. Police investigations into the circumstances surrounding her death remained ongoing.

On **23 November 2025**, a woman was allegedly killed by her husband in Mission Town, Todee Statutory District, Montserrado County, following a domestic dispute. Community members informed the Commission that the deceased had reportedly endured repeated incidents of domestic violence prior to her death and that concerns had previously been expressed regarding her safety.

Whilst these incidents do not amount to Human rights violations, but rather human right abuses, the commission deems their occurrences as an indication of low police presence. The Commission therefore encourages increased presence of state security such as the police in the community.

### Allegations of ill treatment During Criminal Investigations

At Salem Police Station in Monrovia, a 19-year-old man alleged that he was physically assaulted by police officers following his arrest on suspicion of theft. He informed the Commission that officers allegedly used force in an attempt to obtain information regarding stolen property. The complainant displayed injuries which he attributed to the alleged assault and denied involvement in the offence.

### Access to Justice

The 1986 Constitution of Liberia sets out fundamental rights and freedoms based upon universal principles of good governance, the rule of law and due process as enshrined in major human rights treaties. Article 21 (i) guarantees that the rights to counsel in criminal proceedings and obligates “the Republic” to provide legal aid services to accused persons who are unable to afford the services of counsel to ensure the protection of rights.

Article 7 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) guarantees the right to a fair trial. This includes the right to be heard, appeal to national authorities if fundamental rights are violated, be presumed innocent until proven guilty, defend oneself, including the right to choose a lawyer, be tried by an impartial court within a reasonable time.

victims of human rights violations, and support the development of a democratic society founded on the rule of law, justice, equality, and respect for human dignity.

### Executive Summary

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) is Liberia's National Human Rights Institution, established under the Independent National Commission on Human Rights Act of 2005 with the statutory mandate to promote, protect, and monitor the observance of human rights throughout the Republic of Liberia. The Commission is also vested with the responsibility of supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), thereby contributing to national reconciliation, accountability, and sustainable peace.

Pursuant to Article III(4)(e) of the INCHR Act of 2005, the Commission is empowered to conduct free and unfettered inspections and investigations, including visits to all civil, military, and paramilitary places of detention across Liberia. Furthermore, Article IV (16) mandates the Commission to prepare quarterly and annual reports on the human rights situation in Liberia, including reports on specific issues such as armed aggression, internal conflicts, crimes against humanity, war crimes, torture, and genocide.

This Annual Human Rights Situation Report is prepared in fulfillment of that statutory obligation. It presents a comprehensive assessment of the human rights situation in Liberia during the reporting period and identifies major trends, emerging concerns, and areas requiring urgent government and stakeholder intervention. The report also provides evidence-based recommendations intended to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights and improve institutional accountability.

The findings contained in this report are based on field monitoring, complaint investigations, detention facility inspections, stakeholder consultations, and information gathered through the Commission's nationwide human rights monitoring network. The report was prepared in accordance with internationally recognized standards and best practices for human rights monitoring, documentation, investigation, and reporting. All findings have been assessed against the Constitution of Liberia, applicable domestic legislation, and Liberia's obligations under regional and international human rights instruments.

During the reporting period, the Commission identified several persistent and systemic human rights concerns. Among the most significant were limited access to justice, judicial inefficiency, corruption within elements of the criminal justice system, prolonged pretrial detention, denial of due process guarantees, and overcrowded and inadequate prison conditions. Violence against women and children – including rape, domestic violence, child abuse, and child labor - continued to present serious protection challenges requiring sustained national attention.

The Commission also documented other serious human rights concerns, including arbitrary arrest and detention, unlawful deprivation of liberty under certain customary practices, enforced disappearances, alleged ritualistic killings, police brutality and excessive use of force, intimidation

and harassment of detainees, trafficking in persons, and discrimination against vulnerable and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities, women, and other minorities. Reports of discrimination against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity also remained a matter of concern.

The Commission's investigations did not establish evidence of a deliberate State policy or systematic State-sponsored commission of these violations. The Government was, for the first time, given the opportunity to officially respond to the many reported violations captured herein. We found improvement considerably in some situation. As opposed to 2024, this report captured zero incident of enforced disappearance; zero incident killing resulting from use of excess force by state security; zero incidents of death in custody of the authority and trafficking in person. Also, we documented a decline in perceived ritualistic killing from twelve (12) to three (3) cases. While we increased incidents of mob violence, that is from three (3) to eleven (11). Domestic death from zero to three; unexplained death from zero to five incidents.

Although the Government undertook measures to investigate and prosecute certain cases, particularly allegations involving public corruption and official misconduct, these efforts were often constrained by institutional weaknesses and inconsistent enforcement of the rule of law.

Despite these challenges, the Government continued to uphold several constitutionally protected rights and freedoms. Throughout the reporting period, citizens generally exercised their rights to freedom of expression, freedom of the press, peaceful assembly, association, movement, and access to information. The Government also continued efforts to improve access to education and healthcare, although disparities in service delivery persisted across the country.

Gender-based violence remained one of the most pressing human rights concerns. During the reporting period, the Commission documented ninety (90) reported cases of rape. The Liberia National Police investigated and referred the majority of these cases for prosecution. However, significant delays in the judicial process continued to impede access to justice for survivors. Many sexual and gender-based violence cases remained pending before the courts, resulting in prolonged uncertainty for victims and undermining public confidence in the administration of justice.

Conditions within Liberia's correctional facilities remained deeply concerning. Chronic prison overcrowding, inadequate sanitation, limited healthcare services, insufficient nutrition, and prolonged detention of pretrial detainees continued to violate minimum international standards for the treatment of persons deprived of their liberty. Monrovia Central Prison, designed to accommodate approximately 375 inmates, continued to house more than 1,600 detainees during the reporting period. Similar conditions were observed in several correctional facilities across the country.

The Commission further observed that several longstanding human rights concerns remained largely unresolved. These include:

- Police brutality and excessive use of force, in some instances resulting in serious bodily injury, and in the past, death occurred
- Prolonged pretrial detention and delays in criminal proceedings;

by the Commission, the victims were blamed for the deaths of a woman and her two children. They were reportedly beaten, tortured, and buried in a pit. The attack was allegedly orchestrated by a community leader who fled the area following the incident. No arrests had been made at the conclusion of the reporting period.

These incidents illustrate the continuing danger posed by harmful traditional beliefs and underscore the urgent need for sustained public education and stronger law enforcement interventions.

### **Mob Violence Against Persons Accused of Theft**

The Commission documented several incidents in which individuals accused of theft were killed by mobs before any lawful investigation or judicial determination of guilt.

On **15 October 2025**, a man believed to be in his twenties was killed in the Cooper Farm Community along the Kakata-Monrovia Highway after being accused of stealing a motorcycle. According to information obtained by the Commission, a group of commercial motorcyclists pursued and assaulted the victim, resulting in his death.

Likewise, on **12 October 2025**, an unidentified man was beaten to death in the New Israel Community, Johnsonville, Montserrado County, after allegations that he had stolen a motorcycle. Police investigations confirmed that the victim was attacked by a group of individuals.

On **29 April 2025**, a Sierra Leonean national was attacked and killed by residents of Weala Township, Margibi County, following allegations of theft. Two suspects were arrested and remanded pending trial.

On **3 August 2025**, a man believed to be in his late twenties was beaten to death in the Chicken Farm Community, Paynesville, after he and several others were accused of stealing mobile phones. Two suspects were arrested, formally charged, and forwarded to court.

### **Mob Violence Against Criminal Suspects**

On **19 March 2025**, two men accused of killing a fourteen-month-old child were attacked and killed by residents of the LPRC Community in Ganta, Nimba County, while being transported by law enforcement officers for investigation. The attack also resulted in injuries to several officers of the Liberia National Police and the Liberia Drug Enforcement Agency and temporarily disrupted public order within the community.

### [Domestic Violence Resulting in Death](#)

Domestic violence remains a pervasive human rights concern in Liberia and continues to threaten the rights to life, dignity, security of the person, and freedom from violence. Women remain disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic abuse, which frequently escalate because of inadequate prevention, protection, and accountability mechanisms.

The incidents documented during the reporting period demonstrate that killings perpetrated by non-State actors continue to occur in a variety of contexts, including domestic disputes, harmful traditional practices, and situations involving untreated mental health conditions. Although arrests were made in several cases, concerns remain regarding the effectiveness, consistency, and timeliness of criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The Commission reiterates that the Government of Liberia has a positive obligation to exercise due diligence by preventing foreseeable acts of violence, conducting prompt, impartial, and effective investigations, prosecuting perpetrators in accordance with due process, and ensuring access to justice and effective remedies for victims and their families.

The Commission further recommends strengthening public education initiatives aimed at combating violence associated with accusations of witchcraft, expanding access to mental health services nationwide, and enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary to investigate and prosecute unlawful killings committed by private individuals.

[Mob Violence](#)

Mob violence remains one of the most persistent human rights challenges in Liberia and continues to pose a grave threat to the rights to life, liberty, security of the person, due process, and equal protection of the law. Such incidents occur when individuals or groups assume the role of law enforcement by inflicting punishment without judicial process, thereby undermining the rule of law and the authority of the criminal justice system.

The persistence of mob violence reflects several underlying factors, including diminished public confidence in the justice system, delays in criminal investigations and prosecutions, misinformation, and the continued influence of harmful traditional beliefs, particularly accusations of witchcraft.

During the reporting period, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights documented several incidents of mob violence across the country that collectively resulted in at least ten (10) deaths. The victims were accused of offences ranging from theft to witchcraft and other alleged criminal conduct. Although arrests were affected in some cases, numerous investigations remained pending at the close of the reporting period.

**Mob Violence Arising from Accusations of Witchcraft**

On **8 August 2025**, a 77-year-old woman from Gbaken Town, Pleebo-Sodoken District, Maryland County, was allegedly tortured and killed by members of her community after being accused of practicing witchcraft. Information gathered by the Commission indicates that a self-proclaimed witchfinder, together with several community leaders, conducted a traditional process during which the victim was accused of causing deaths within the community through supernatural means. She was reportedly subjected to a traditional cleansing ritual before being violently attacked and killed. Five suspects were subsequently arrested by the Liberia National Police.

Similarly, on **21 May 2025**, six individuals accused of practicing witchcraft were attacked by residents of Sanquen Village, Yarnee District, Sinoe County. According to information received

- The persistent prevalence of rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against children;
- Delays in the adjudication of cases due to judicial inefficiency, limited judicial presence in some counties, and case backlogs;
- The continued practice of harmful traditional practices, including trial by ordeal, ritual killings, forced initiation into traditional societies, and female genital mutilation (FGM).

The Commission notes that these challenges are symptomatic of broader structural weaknesses within Liberia's criminal justice system. Persistent corruption, inadequate financial and logistical resources, shortages of qualified personnel, poor record management systems, and limited institutional capacity continue to undermine the effectiveness of key rule of law institutions, including the Liberia National Police, the Judiciary, and the Bureau of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

This report therefore presents the Commission's principal findings on the state of human rights in Liberia and offers practical recommendations to the Government of Liberia, independent constitutional bodies, development partners, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. The Commission believes that the effective implementation of these recommendations will strengthen accountability, improve access to justice, enhance institutional performance, and promote greater respect for the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Constitution of Liberia and international human rights law.

The Independent National Commission on Human Rights remains steadfast in its commitment to working collaboratively with all stakeholders to promote a culture of respect for human rights, strengthen democratic governance, combat impunity, and ensure that every person in Liberia enjoys the full protection of the law without discrimination.

## Objective of the Report

This report presents an overview of the human rights situation in Liberia during the period January to December 2025. It aims to:

- Highlight key human rights trends, challenges, and developments during the reporting period;
- Document and analyze reported human rights violations and abuses;
- Assess progress made by the Government of Liberia and other stakeholders in addressing human rights concerns and fulfilling their human rights obligations;
- Provide recommendations to strengthen the protection, promotion, and fulfilment of human rights in Liberia.

## Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based on human rights monitoring, documentation, and investigations conducted by the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) across Liberia's fifteen (15) counties during the reporting period.

The report is informed by both primary and secondary sources of information collected through the Commission's nationwide human rights monitoring framework. Primary data were gathered through regular field monitoring missions, fact-finding investigations, and interviews with victims, survivors, witnesses, community members, traditional leaders, government officials, and other relevant stakeholders. Additional information was obtained through formal complaints submitted to the Commission, referrals from partner institutions, media monitoring, and reports received through established reporting mechanisms.

Throughout the reporting period, INCHR Human Rights Monitors undertook regular monitoring visits to prisons, correctional facilities, police stations, courts, health facilities, schools, orphanages, concession areas, and other public institutions. These visits enabled the Commission to assess compliance with national and international human rights standards while documenting alleged violations and identifying emerging protection concerns.

Particular attention was devoted to issues relating to access to justice, the administration of justice, conditions of detention, the rights of women and children, labor rights, business and human rights,

suspected mental health conditions. While law enforcement authorities effected arrests in several cases, the Commission remains concerned about delays in investigations, inconsistencies in prosecutions, and broader challenges affecting the administration of criminal justice.

## Killings Involving Children

On **11 July 2025**, the Liberia National Police arrested a 30-year-old man in Harper District, Maryland County, in connection with the death of a three-year-old boy in Weah Village. According to police reports, the child sustained fatal injuries allegedly inflicted with a sharp object. Information received by the Commission indicated that concerns were subsequently raised regarding the suspect's mental health condition, and the suspect was reportedly released by the police pending further action.

This case illustrates the need for a coordinated criminal justice and mental health response where serious criminal offences involve individuals with suspected mental illnesses. It also highlights the importance of ensuring that criminal accountability and access to mental health care are addressed in accordance with the law and applicable human rights standards.

## Family-Related Killings and Accusations of Witchcraft

On **2 February 2025**, a 52-year-old woman was allegedly killed by her 57-year-old sister following accusations that the victim practiced witchcraft. Information gathered by the Commission indicated that the deceased suffered from epilepsy, a medical condition which the accused reportedly attributed to supernatural causes. The suspect was arrested by the Liberia National Police and forwarded to court for prosecution.

The Commission observes that this incident reflects the continuing influence of harmful traditional beliefs, misinformation, and stigma surrounding certain medical conditions. Violence arising from accusations of witchcraft remains a persistent human rights concern requiring sustained public education and community engagement.

## Killings Associated with Mental Health Concerns

On **28 September 2025**, a 22-year-old man was allegedly killed by his 36-year-old cousin in the Danluopa Community of Sanniquellie City, Nimba County, following a domestic dispute that reportedly escalated into a violent confrontation.

Family members informed the Commission that the accused had a history of mental health challenges, while the deceased reportedly suffered from epilepsy. Police investigators advised the Commission that the suspect had been charged with murder and forwarded to court. However, some family members appealed for leniency, citing concerns regarding the accused's mental capacity.

The Commission notes that this case illustrates the broader challenges associated with the limited availability of community-based mental health services and the absence of adequate support systems for persons living with mental illnesses.

On **24 January 2025**, the lifeless body of a teenage girl was discovered in an unfinished building behind the Lott Carey Community in Brewerville, Montserrado County, one day after she had reportedly gone missing. Police disclosed that the deceased was approximately three months pregnant. Preliminary investigations suggested that relationship disputes between the victim and her boyfriend may have contributed to the killing. The principal suspect reportedly admitted involvement in the crime but alleged that other individuals also participated. Criminal investigations remained ongoing.

On **26 January 2025**, the remains of an eight-year-old girl, who had previously been reported missing, were discovered in Voinjama, Lofa County. The circumstances surrounding her death had not been established by the end of the reporting period, and police investigations continued.

On **19 April 2025**, skeletal remains believed to belong to an adult male were discovered on a farm in Dogomai, Voinjama District, Lofa County. The matter was reported to the Liberia National Police for investigation. No arrests had been made at the time of reporting.

The Commission also monitored the disappearance of a two-and-a-half-year-old boy who reportedly went missing on **15 May 2025** while accompanying his parents to a farm located between Boi and Konia in Zorzor District, Lofa County. Despite extensive community search efforts, the child had not been located by the end of the reporting period.

In another case, a 28-year-old woman who had reportedly travelled to her farm in Foya District, Lofa County, was found dead on **26 June 2025**. Following investigations, the Liberia National Police arrested eight individuals and charged them with offences including murder, criminal conspiracy, false statements to law enforcement officers, felonious restraint, and interference with criminal investigations. The accused persons were remanded to prison pending trial.

On **7 July 2025**, the body of an adult male was discovered in the Sugar Hill Community of J.B. Waterside, Bong County. Police identified the deceased as a resident of Monrovia; however, the cause and circumstances of his death remained undetermined. At the close of the reporting period, no arrests had been made.

The Government of Liberia was offered the opportunity in the spirit of transparency, fairness to response to these incidents and below are what the government said:

**Killings by Non-State Actors**

The right to life imposes both negative and positive obligations upon the State. In addition to refraining from the arbitrary deprivation of life, the State is required to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and provide effective remedies for unlawful killings committed by private individuals or groups. This obligation includes adopting appropriate legislative, administrative, and judicial measures to ensure accountability and prevent impunity.

During the reporting period, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) documented several killings allegedly perpetrated by non-State actors. These incidents involved children and adults and arose from a range of circumstances, including violent criminal acts, domestic and family disputes, harmful traditional beliefs, and situations involving persons with

child labor, land and concession-related grievances, and the protection of vulnerable and marginalized populations.

In addition to its field monitoring activities, the Commission actively participated in national and county-level coordination mechanisms, including Protection Working Groups, Child Protection Networks, Gender-Based Violence coordination forums, and other multi-sectoral platforms. These engagements facilitated information sharing, strengthened collaboration among stakeholders, and supported coordinated responses to emerging human rights concerns.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of its findings, the Commission sought, wherever possible, to verify reported incidents through multiple independent sources, corroborative interviews, documentary review, and direct observation. Allegations that could not be independently verified were treated accordingly and distinguished from substantiated findings.

The findings contained in this report are intended to provide an objective assessment of the human rights situation in Liberia and to inform public policy, legislative reforms, institutional strengthening, advocacy initiatives, and programmatic interventions aimed at enhancing accountability, protecting fundamental rights, and promoting respect for the rule of law.

During the reporting period, the Commission monitored, documented, and investigated allegations and verified cases involving, among others:

- Violations of the right to life;
- Torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment;
- Arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention;
- Enforced disappearances;
- Police brutality and excessive use of force;
- Violations of due process and fair trial guarantees;
- Sexual and gender-based violence, including rape and domestic violence;
- Violence against women and children;
- Child abuse, child labor, and child exploitation;
- Human trafficking;
- Violations of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, association, religion, and movement;
- Mob violence and vigilante justice;
- Discrimination against vulnerable and marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities and other minority populations.

**Structure of the Report**

This report is prepared pursuant to Article IV (16) of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights Act of 2005, which mandates the Commission to prepare quarterly and annual reports on the general human rights situation in Liberia and on specific human rights concerns.

The **2025 Annual Human Rights Situation Report** presents an assessment of the state of human rights in Liberia through the three broad categories of internationally recognized human rights: **civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; and the rights of vulnerable**

**and marginalized groups.** It also examines the institutional and socio-political context within which these rights are exercised and protected.

For ease of reference, the report is organized as follow: the provides a contextual overview of Liberia's political, economic, social, and legal environment during the reporting period. This section highlights significant national developments that influenced the enjoyment, promotion, and protection of human rights and provides the broader context within which the Commission's findings should be understood.

The presents the Commission's conclusions and recommendations. Drawing upon the findings of this report, it offers practical recommendations directed to the Government of Liberia, , development partners, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. These recommendations are intended to strengthen institutional accountability, improve the protection and promotion of human rights, and support Liberia's continued commitment to the rule of law, democratic governance, and sustainable development.

## CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

### Right to life

The right to life is recognized as the supreme and non-derogable human right under both international and domestic law. Article 6 of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**, to which Liberia is a State Party, provides that every human being has the inherent right to life and that no person shall be arbitrarily deprived of life. Similarly, Article 20(a) of the **1986 Constitution of Liberia** guarantees every person the right to life, liberty, security of the person, and property, while requiring that no individual be deprived of these rights except in accordance with due process of law.

The **Liberia National Police Act of 2015** further places a statutory obligation on the Liberia National Police (LNP) to protect life and property, prevent crime, investigate criminal offences, and uphold the fundamental rights and freedoms of all persons.

In fulfillment of its mandate, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) monitored and documented a number of incidents during the reporting period involving alleged violations of the right to life. These included suspected murders, alleged ritualistic killings, unexplained deaths, disappearances, and the discovery of human remains under suspicious circumstances. The Commission also monitored the responses of law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system to determine whether investigations were conducted promptly, independently, and effectively.

### Suspicious Deaths and Alleged Ritualistic Killings

The Commission documented several suspicious deaths that generated widespread public concern and allegations of ritualistic killings. Although investigations remained ongoing in most instances,

the circumstances surrounding these deaths heightened fear within affected communities and underscored the continuing need for prompt, transparent, and impartial criminal investigations.

On **13 December 2025**, the body of a 51-year-old woman was discovered in a bush near the Conqueror Community in Suakoko District, Bong County, three days after she had been reported missing by her family. Although a coroner's jury reportedly found no visible evidence of foul play, relatives informed the Commission that the deceased was found partially undressed and bore visible scratches on her body. These observations fueled community concerns regarding the circumstances of her death and prompted calls for further investigation.

Similarly, on **17 May 2025**, the body of a mother of six was found near the site of a community feast in Haindi Town, Bong County. Community members alleged that the k illing may have been ritualistic and identified the deceased's former partner as a person of interest. At the close of the reporting period, no arrests had been made, and investigations remained ongoing.

Another case of public concern occurred on **20 June 2025**, when the charred body of a 45-year-old Liberian-Canadian woman was discovered inside her residence in Ben Town, Marshall, Lower Margibi County, following a fire outbreak. Community members questioned whether the victim had been attacked prior to the fire. According to information obtained from the Liberia National Police, five individuals were arrested in connection with the incident, and criminal investigations were ongoing at the time of reporting.

### Murders Associated with Criminal Activity

The Commission documented several homicides linked to criminal activity, particularly involving motorcycle thefts, a pattern that continues to pose significant security concerns in several parts of the country.

On **23 August 2025**, a commercial motorcyclist was allegedly murdered in the God Bless You Hill Community, Harlandsville Township, Grand Bassa County, by individuals who reportedly stole his motorcycle after killing him. The Liberia National Police arrested two suspects, who were subsequently charged with murder, theft of property, and criminal conspiracy. Both defendants later pleaded guilty before the court and, on **1 December 2025**, were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Similarly, on **3 September 2025**, a 20-year-old commercial motorcyclist was allegedly murdered along the CMC Road in Saclepea, Nimba County, by two acquaintances who reportedly attempted to steal his motorcycle. The suspects were apprehended by members of the community, handed over to the Liberia National Police, formally charged with murder, and forwarded to court for prosecution.

### Unexplained Deaths, Missing Persons and Discovery of Human Remains

Throughout the reporting period, the Commission monitored several incidents involving unexplained deaths, disappearances, and the discovery of human remains, many of which remained under active police investigation.