

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 15 April 2016 from the Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) addressed to the President of the Security Council

The Panel of Experts on Liberia established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) has the honour to transmit herewith, in accordance with paragraph 3 (b) of Security Council resolution 2237 (2015), the final report on its work.

The present report was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia on 31 March 2016 and considered by the Committee on 11 April 2016.

I would appreciate it if the present letter and the attached report could be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) David Zounmenou



Final report of the Panel of Experts on Liberia submitted pursuant to paragraph 3 (a) of Security Council resolution 2237 (2015)

Summary

Under the current mandate of the Panel of Experts, West Africa experienced three major deadly terrorist attacks, in Bamako (November 2015), Ouagadougou (January 2016) and Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire (March 2016). Al Mourabitoun, a branch of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb claimed responsibility for all three attacks. These attacks brought to the fore the vulnerability of the region, and particularly of Liberia, at a time when the country is undergoing its security transition from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) to the Government of Liberia. Liberia has never experienced terrorist attacks before. Yet, incidents in neighbouring Côte d'Ivoire could serve to provide the Government with additional impetus to accelerate reform and consolidate the security sector ahead of the drawdown of UNMIL.

Despite recent deployments by the Government of security personnel along Liberia's porous borders, the security apparatus remains weak, undermined by operational difficulties, budgetary constraints and lack of adequate equipment. The situation in all major border areas remains a concern, as it exposes the vulnerabilities of the country, and the inability of the security agencies to effectively monitor small arms and ammunition and to secure the borders. Drugs and single-barrel rifles continue to move across those porous borders. The arrest in Ghana of an arms dealer from Burkina Faso with military-grade heavy weapons allegedly from Côte d'Ivoire is a source of serious concern, highlighting as it does the threat of the illicit movement of arms and ammunition in the region.

The border between Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire is porous and continues to experience the activities of militants, as represented by the attacks by armed individuals in Olodio in December 2015, involving nationals from both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. The Panel suspects violations of the arms embargo to be associated with these attacks in Olodio and continues to believe that threats by militants in that region remain a concern, with their networks still maintaining the capacity to recruit, train and launch deadly attacks on personnel and infrastructure of the Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire in the border area. A long-term solution will have to bring both Governments closer to the inhabitants of the border area, as partners in preserving their socioeconomic well-being.

The Government of Liberia informed the Panel that one notification for the delivery of arms and ammunition for the Liberia National Police was sent to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia during the reporting period.

In line with the requirements set out in Security Council resolution 1903 (2009), the Armed Forces of Liberia have effectively completed the marking of their weapons. At the moment, only weapons with the armed forces contingent with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali remain to be marked. The national police and the Executive Protection Service have not marked their weapons.

There is no progress within the legal framework related to the security sector. The firearms and ammunitions control act is still awaiting passage in the House of Representatives, and other pieces of legislation relevant to the security sector have not been passed.

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* The annexes are being circulated in the language of submission only and without formal editing.

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2237 (2015), adopted on 2 September 2015, the Security Council terminated the travel and financial measures set forth in paragraph 4 of resolution 1521 (2003) and paragraph 1 of resolution 1532 (2004), respectively. The Council renewed the measures on arms, previously imposed under paragraph 2 of resolution 1521 (2003) and modified under paragraphs 1 and 2 of resolution 1683 (2006), under paragraph 1 (b) of resolution 1731 (2006), under paragraphs 3 to 6 of resolution 1903 (2009), under paragraph 3 of resolution 1961 (2010) and under paragraph 2 (b) of resolution 2128 (2013), for a period of nine months from the date of adoption (2 September 2015) of resolution 2237 (2015).

2. The Security Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts for a period of 10 months to enable it to investigate and compile a final report on the implementation, and any violations, of the measures on arms including the various sources of financing for the illicit trade of arms, and on progress in the security and legal sectors with respect to the ability of the Government of Liberia to effectively monitor and exert control over arms and border issues.

3. On 25 November 2015, the Secretary-General appointed David Zounmenou (Benin) to serve on the Panel of Experts ([S/2015/911](#)). The Panel began its work on 25 January 2016 and on 5 February 2016, it briefed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia on the progress in the security sector and its workplan.

II. Methodology

4. The Panel prioritized field-based investigations throughout Liberia. It also reviewed documentary evidence provided by local, regional, national and international organizations as well as private entities. During its investigations, the Panel sought incontrovertible documentary evidence to support its findings, including physical evidence, such as markings on arms and ammunition. When such specific evidence was not available, the Panel required at least two independent and credible sources, in distinct, separate locations and on separate dates, to substantiate a finding.

5. The Panel conducted investigations in each of its mandated areas to assess potential violations of relevant Security Council resolutions. Its findings vis-à-vis member States, individuals and companies were, to the extent possible, brought to the attention of those concerned to give them an opportunity to respond. The Panel worked in close cooperation with the Government of Liberia, in particular the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Liberia National Police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, the Legislature, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire.

6. The Panel regularly consulted and exchanged information with relevant government agencies. The Panel travelled to Liberia on 25 January 2016. On 5 February 2016, it provided an update to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia on progress in the security and legal sectors with regard to the Government's ability to effectively monitor and control arms and border issues and presented its workplan.

7. In addition to government officials and UNMIL, the Panel held consultations with officials from the embassies of Côte d'Ivoire, France, the United States of America and the offices of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Monrovia. It also met with civil society organizations and religious leaders. See annex I for a list of the entities with which the Panel held meetings.

III. Context of the final report

A. Political transition and security concerns

8. Liberia is heading towards a crucial set of elections. In October 2017, Liberia will witness the first post-war transfer of power from one elected President to another. This constitutes a milestone in the trajectory of the country that has been evolving since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra in 2003. Yet, 18 months ahead of the polls, the Panel observes that the political landscape is being reconfigured and has become rather tense. Political actors within the ruling party and the opposition have begun to reposition themselves, with some seeking to cement the legacy of the outgoing President, and others, to promote a new political dispensation.¹

9. The Panel is concerned by the tensions that are building in spite of assurances from the Government of Liberia, its efforts to consolidate the progress accomplished so far, and its commitment to assuming security-related responsibilities and maintaining peace and stability in the wake of the drawdown of UNMIL.

10. During its fieldwork, the Panel observed that, as the end of the President's second term draws near, combined with the June 2016 deadline for UNMIL to hand over security responsibilities to the Government of Liberia, citizens are anxious regarding the implications of the political transition.

11. The Panel noted two main dynamics. First, there is the fear of citizens that the battle for power will affect the functioning of the Government, thereby impacting negatively on the delivery of public goods, including security. The Panel noted that general perceptions in the country reflected the fear that citizens' safety and security could not be guaranteed by or entrusted to the Government, owing to the economic and financial difficulties facing the country. A number of violent incidents have occurred recently. Citizens are concerned that basic rights are increasingly being threatened, with arrests and detention of individuals who criticize the Government's actions or inaction.

12. The Panel observed that the arrest on 23 February 2016 of civil society activist Vandalark Patricks on charges of sedition led to a violent confrontation between the Liberia National Police and protesters. Mr. Patricks had criticized the Government over the handling of the death of Harry Greaves, Jr., the former Managing Director of the Liberia Petroleum Refining Company, whose body was found at a beach in January 2016. The controversial nature of the investigation into the cause of his

¹ Some ministers and government officials are determined to pursue their presidential ambitions in the name of promoting a new political dispensation. Political parties of the opposition explained to the Panel that those "jumping ship" would not want to be associated with the failure of the current Government to improve the lives of citizens.

death and those responsible sent a confused message to the country regarding the capacity of the security forces to meet citizens' expectations as UNMIL draws down. The Panel is concerned that the security environment remains volatile.

13. Second, the Panel noted that the Government could not afford to fully finance the security sector following the President's address on the state of the nation, delivered on 25 January 2016, given the national economic situation. The President acknowledged that, owing to external and internal shocks as well as the outbreak of Ebola virus disease, Liberia's real growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in 2014, which was 0.7 per cent, was far below the figure of 5.9 per cent, which had originally been forecast. The figure dipped down further, to 0.3 per cent, in 2015, which was even further below the projected figure of 6.8 per cent for that year. The Panel notes that shrinking economic output, coupled with high levels of unemployment, poses serious challenges to national peace and stability. As almost 84 per cent of Liberians still live below the poverty threshold of US\$ 1 per day, they could be easily manipulated by the forces of opportunism for political ends or manipulated into engaging in subversive activities.² Essentially, the Panel is concerned about the Government's ability to reinforce the security agencies ahead of the 2017 elections.

14. The Panel is also concerned by the ongoing constitutional reform debate, which has now polarized the society. The debate revolves around the question of dual citizenship and the proposal to make Liberia a "Christian state". While the Government believes dual citizenship will promote the contribution of the diaspora to national development and consolidate peace, Liberians fear that it might further facilitate the plundering of national resources by Liberians in the diaspora who do not have a deep attachment to Liberia or a sense of commitment to Liberia's socioeconomic development. The Panel notes that the debate is already raising tensions between parts of the political elite and the citizens and is likely to lead to violence if not carefully handled.

15. The Panel is also concerned by the growing tensions among religious leaders over the proposal to make Liberia a Christian state. Both Christians and Muslims are currently at loggerheads over the proposal, as the Muslim population fears its possible marginalization and unnecessary religious conflicts. In a communiqué published on 4 March 2016 (see annex II), the National Muslim Council of Liberia decided to suspend its participation in the Interreligious Council of Liberia. The Muslim leaders premised their decision on their Christian counterparts' alleged lack of a clear position on the proposal.

16. It is the view of the Panel that the debate needs to be handled with care, taking into account the fragile security environment of Liberia, given mainly the growing concerns over the drawdown of UNMIL and the religious radicalization gaining momentum across West African. Diplomatic sources believe those debates are pure diversions from the main socioeconomic and security problems facing Liberia. Politicians are pursuing these proposals for reasons of self-interest and not in the interest of the nation. This highlights the deep societal fissure in the country.

² See the Human Development Index contained in *Human Development Report 2015: Work for Human Development*, issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

B. Terrorist attacks in Côte d'Ivoire heighten security concerns in Liberia

17. On 13 March 2016, a group of terrorists attacked hotels in the city of Grand Bassam situated about 40 kilometres east of Abidjan and 700 kilometres from Monrovia. Nineteen people were killed in the attacks and more than 30 were left wounded. This is the third time that such an attack has occurred in the West African region: attacks occurred in Bamako in November 2015 and Ouagadougou in January 2016. The *modus operandi* in all three attacks remained similar: small but well-armed groups targeted places visited by expatriates where they engaged in indiscriminate killing. Al Mourabitoun, affiliated with Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and led by Mokhtar Belmokhtar, claimed responsibility for the Grand Bassam attacks, as it had for the Bamako and Ouagadougou attacks.

18. The Panel is of the view that the attacks in Grand Bassam brought to the fore the reality of terrorist threats in the Sahel and West Africa while exposing the vulnerability of all of the countries in the region. The Panel notes that Liberia had never witnessed a terrorist attack before. However, Liberia, which shares borders with Côte d'Ivoire, has a weak security apparatus with little control over its borders. The porosity of borders could facilitate the easy movement of illicit weapons and ammunition, while the presence of many young unemployed men continues to be a source of vulnerability for Liberia.

19. The Panel learned that in December 2015, security officers in Ghana had intercepted military-grade heavy weapons and ammunition. A 72-year-old man from Burkina Faso was arrested and confessed to officers that he had been involved in arms trafficking from Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and the Niger. At this stage, the Panel has not been able to obtain further details regarding the destination of the weapons and ammunition and is concerned that those weapons could have been brought into Liberia for use in criminal or subversive activities.

20. The Panel is concerned that radical groups, such as Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and its affiliates, have developed and maintain their capacity to inflict harm well beyond their traditional base in northern Mali. This calls for reinforced counter-terrorism initiatives in Liberia and in the region, with less emphasis on militarization and more attention to socioeconomic deprivation and an improved government presence in regions outside the capital.

21. What the various attacks reveal is that the most active brigade of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, Al-Mourabitoun, which is composed of the residual elements of the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa, Ansar Dine and other radical groups, now has a capacity to recruit anywhere in the region. The Panel is concerned that Liberia does not have any well-articulated counter-terrorism strategy in place at the moment, nor is the security sector prepared for the eventuality of a possible terrorist attack. Government officials explained to the Panel that the provisional measures taken by the Government to post two emergency response units to secure major strategic sites were not sustainable owing to the shortage of resources and manpower. To be sustainable, a coherent legal and institutional framework as well as adequate financial resources will be necessary.

22. The Panel commends the emergency meeting convened in Côte d'Ivoire a day after the attacks in Grand Bassam to reinforce regional as well as bilateral approaches to terrorism in West Africa. However, the Panel is of the view that any

efficient response to radicalization and terrorism in the region needs to be embedded in the existing regional mechanisms and strategies³ in order to make them sustainable. The Panel has repeatedly highlighted the lack of operational cooperation between the two Governments in its previous reports (see, e.g., [S/2015/558](#), para. 77).

C. Update on the security transition

23. The economic downturn has serious implications for the implementation of the security transition plan. In early January 2016, the Minister of Finance announced that the national budget would have to undergo some cuts. Initially set at about US\$ 622.7 million, the new budget was reduced by almost US\$ 70 million to about US\$ 552.8 million.

24. There has also been a significant reduction with regard to the security transition plan. For instance, the Government informed the Panel that out of the US\$ 104 million initially earmarked for its completion, only US\$ 10 million has been made available To date. The Government is expected to add another US\$ 5 million. The Panel is concerned that important benchmarks of the plan might not be met including the enactment of the firearms and ammunition control act, the new police act and the uniform code of military justice, as well the review of the Defence Act.

D. Prevalence of mob violence

25. The Panel also notes that, one of the direct consequences of the inability of the police to respond promptly and effectively to threats is mob violence, which has increased over the years. According to credible sources, there has been a sharp increase in incidents of mob justice in Liberia. From November 2014 to December 2015, 36 incidents of mob violence were documented, 21 of which resulted in fatalities. Mob violence targets police stations and private property. The Panel observed that one of the fundamental factors behind the occurrence of these incidents of mob violence and mob justice is the perception that the police or law enforcement agencies remain ineffective, corrupt and less visible in spite of the improvement of the institutions in the post-civil war period. These represent some of the challenges to the Government's ability to take full ownership of the security sector and reassure Liberian society, which remains deeply divided and distrustful of government institutions.

IV. Current measures relating to arms pursuant to Security Council resolution 2237 (2015)

A. Overview

26. By paragraph 4 of resolution 1903 (2009) the Security Council modified the arms embargo on Liberia, which was renewed by subsequent resolutions, most

³ In September 2013, Heads of State and Government adopted the ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which puts emphasis on prevention, prosecution and rehabilitation.

recently by resolution 2237 (2015), to cover the supply, sale or transfer of arms and any related materiel and the provision of any assistance, advice or training related to military activities, including financing and financial assistance, to all non-governmental entities and individuals operating in the territory of Liberia.

27. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of Security Council resolution 1903 (2009), all States are required to notify the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia, in advance of any shipment of arms and related materiel to the Government of Liberia or of any provision of training.

28. In its resolution 1903 (2009) (para. 6), the Security Council reiterated that the Government of Liberia should subsequently mark the weapons and ammunition, maintain a registry of them and formally notify the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia that those steps have been taken.

29. The Panel reviewed reports of UNMIL inspections of armories of the Government of Liberia to ascertain whether the Government had complied with measures related to the marking of arms as imposed in Security Council resolution 1903 (2009) and renewed in Council resolution 2237 (2015).

B. Notifications

30. Pursuant to paragraph 2 (b) (ii) of Security Council resolution 2128 (2013), the Government of Liberia has the primary responsibility for notifying the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia in advance of any shipment of lethal arms and related materiel to the Government of Liberia or any provision of assistance, advice or training related to military or other security sector activities.

31. On 2 March 2016, during a meeting, the National Security Adviser to the President informed the Panel of a letter sent to the Permanent Representative of Liberia to the United Nations in New York through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in which the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia was notified of a new shipment of military equipment for the security forces (Liberia National Police). The Panel has not yet been able to obtain details about the shipment. The Panel was informed that the Committee had not yet received such a notification at the time of writing. At a follow-up meeting, the National Security Adviser explained to the Panel that the delay in transmitting the letter to the Committee was due to administrative factors. It is the Panel's view that this is a recurrent challenge and that the recommendation of the Panel whose final report was issued on 24 November 2014 that there be a focal point in the Government of Liberia for sanctions issues has not been thoroughly heeded (see [S/2014/831](#), paras. 37-42).

32. On 8 February 2016, during an inspection of the Emergency Response Unit armoury, a United Nations police team identified a number of new weapons⁴ that were not included in the UNMIL records of the national police that had been imported previously. The national police informed the United Nations police that the

⁴ These include 12 Smith & Wesson pistols, 7 Carbone 15 (5.55 millimetre), 16 Mossberg (5 millimetre) from the Government of the United States and 17 Cougar launchers/tear gas from the Government of France.

weapons were donations from the Governments of France and the United States of America. France confirmed to UNMIL that a donation of non-lethal equipment had been made in November 2015 and proper documentation was transmitted to the authorities. The United States informed UNMIL that no new transfer of arms had taken place in November 2015, but that the weapons in question had been part of a transfer approved by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia in 2008. The Panel and UNMIL are seeking further clarifications from the national police.

C. Arms and weapons marking

33. In the context of compliance with the requirement that weapons be marked in Liberia, only the armed forces, the national police (the Police Support Unit and the Emergency Response Unit) and, to certain extent, the National Security Agency possess arms. The Liberia National Commission on Small Arms informed the Panel that the armed forces have almost completed the marking of all of their weapons. Among the remaining weapons are those that are with the contingent of the Armed Forces of Liberia in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The armed forces have proposed that those weapons be marked in Mali and that the Small Arms Commission should allow its marking machines to be taken to Mali. However, that proposal has met with the objection of the Small Arms Commission, which insists that, for transparency and credibility purposes, those weapons should be brought back to Liberia for marking and afterwards returned to the contingent in Mali. The Small Arms Commission also informed the Panel that the weapons of the National Security Agency have been marked.

34. However, the Panel has learned that the national police and the Executive Protection Service have not yet marked their weapons. While the marking exercise for the weapons of the national police was set to begin in February 2016, the Panel learned that the national police is still working on its schedule and the budget. Following this, the national police will submit its plan to the Small Arms Commission. Only after this could the Small Arms Commission proceed with the marking. The Panel believes that there is no need for an additional budget to fund the marking of the weapons of the national police and that the marking machines are fully operational. As regards the Executive Protection Service, the Panel received reports of a misunderstanding and resistance subsisting between the Small Arms Commission and the Protection Service regarding the inspection and eventual marking of their weapons. Sources have informed the Panel that the Protection Service wished to mark its own weapons and denied the Small Arms Commission the mandate to inspect and proceed with the marking. In terms of the provisions of the Act to Establish the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, the Commission is mandated to formulate policies and ensure the implementation of such policies and measures aimed at addressing the problem of proliferation and illicit manufacturing, use, distribution, possession and trafficking of small arms and light weapons; and to coordinate and monitor all private and public sector efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the proliferation and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons within and across the borders of Liberia. The Commission is mandated to maintain a centralized database of registered weapons and oversee the

marking of weapons in accordance with the standards of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).⁵

35. However, the National Security Adviser to the President informed the Panel that the resistance of the Executive Protection Service is a result of administrative missteps by the Commission. He indicated that the Commission had not followed due process. However, the Commission informed the Panel that in spite of these missteps, momentum and a high level of cooperation do exist. That notwithstanding, it is not clear when the marking will begin.

36. The Commission also informed the Panel that it is in the process of developing and signing a number of memorandums of understanding with various security agencies including the armed forces, the national police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and the National Security Agency. The aim is to continue monitoring their weapons. The Panel is of the view that, if this comes into being, it would be of major assistance in monitoring the implementation of the legal framework for the management of all of the weapons and ammunition in the custody of Liberia's security services. As things currently stand, even if the firearms and ammunition control act is finally passed by the House of Representatives there is no guarantee that, it will be fully adhered to without a solid oversight structure. Currently, the Small Arms Commission is understaffed and poorly equipped and lacks adequate financial resources for carrying out all of its mandated tasks. The Small Arms Commission does not currently have basic office equipment or a full-fledged technical secretariat, nor does it have enough personnel to deploy in the counties.

37. The Small Arms Commission also provided information to the Panel regarding its project to undertake a baseline study on the presence of weapons within bordering communities. The areas of concern to the Commission include Maryland, River Gee and Grand Gedeh counties. The project was initiated by ECOWAS, funded by the European Union and implemented together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The objective is to incentivize communities outside Monrovia to bring forth any weapons and ammunition remaining from the civil war and still in their possession. This relates to the fact that, after the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra in 2003, disarmament was not thoroughly completed. In addition, at the height of the post-electoral violence in Côte d'Ivoire in late 2010 and early 2011, many Liberian fighters returned with a variety of weapons from Côte d'Ivoire. While UNMIL supported the national security agencies in their efforts to retrieve some of the weapons in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and River Gee, significant quantities are reported to have been hidden in the forest areas in Liberia. The Panel suspects that most of the weapons used in the attacks in Côte d'Ivoire came from that arsenal (see para. 80 below).

D. Armories and stockpile management

38. As the Panel was denied access to the armories of both the national police and the armed forces, it could not complete independent inspections of the armories and the stockpiles. Upon the Panel's request, the Inspector General of the Police had

⁵ See chap. IV, sect. 1, of the Act to Establish the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms, 15 August 2012.

issued an authorization granting unlimited access to the Panel. This notwithstanding, access was not granted. Nor has a request to the Ministry of Defence for unscheduled access to the armories of the armed forces been granted: in this regard, the Panel was told to send a letter to the Minister of Defence and follow the procedures. The Panel sent its request to the Deputy Minister but has not received any feedback. The Panel is concerned that this may represent a shift away from previous cooperation with the Government of Liberia and could be a sign of an increased interest in having fewer external inspections.

39. The Panel derives its observations from the review of UNMIL reports and interviews with relevant sources. Its previous assessment of the overall standards currently maintained by Liberian armories found them to be generally adequate but far from perfect (see [S/2015/558](#), para. 30). The Panel remains concerned by the insufficiency of weapons storage facilities in the leeward regions. Over the years, the Panel and UNMIL have highlighted the shortcomings relating to armories. These include the storage of arms and ammunition in the same facility; the storage of ammunition in open and relatively insecure containers; inadequate lighting; inadequate air conditioning; poor electrical wiring and persistent power outages; lack of fire extinguishers, sandbags or water buckets in case of fire; failure to consistently post security guards outside armories; and inconsistent usage of weapons logbooks. The Panel reiterates that those persisting issues are unlikely to be addressed without external oversight and assistance (see para. 36).

V. Progress in the legal and security sectors

A. Update on the legal framework

40. In paragraph 7 of resolution 2237 (2015), the Security Council urged the Government of Liberia to prioritize and expedite the adoption and implementation of appropriate arms and ammunition management legislation and take other necessary and appropriate steps to establish the necessary legal and administrative framework for combating the illicit trafficking of arms and ammunition.

41. The Panel notes that there has been no major progress with regard to the legislative framework related to arms and ammunition (i.e., the arms and ammunition control act) since the report of the Panel issued on 23 July 2015 ([S/2015/558](#)). During a meeting held on 28 January 2016, the Liberian National Commission on Small Arms informed the Panel that the Senate had endorsed the draft firearms and ammunition control act. The act was then sent to the House of Representatives for concurrence. Following its endorsement, the draft act will be sent to the President to be signed into law. The House of Representatives has not yet passed the act. The Panel observed that there is no apparent reason for the delay, as the act has been reviewed many times and there is now a consensus on the issues raised (see [S/2015/558](#), para. 21). Those issues relate to the reservations of the House of Representatives with respect to the restrictions contained in the legislation on the private acquisition of guns, whereby individual ownership is limited to a single-barrel rifle. However, senatorial as well as House sources have informed the Panel that the delay might be due to disagreements related to mining concessions and political bargaining. They were not able, however, to provide further details on the deals in question.

42. The Panel is concerned by the delay in the passage of the firearms and ammunition control act, as it hinders the Government of Liberia from controlling the illicit movement of small arms and ammunition (see [S/2014/831](#), para. 52). The Panel notes that currently there is no national law in force to regulate the manufacturing, sale, possession, transfer and use of small arms, and light weapons; however, there is the United Nations arms embargo related to Liberia, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons⁶ and the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

43. If passed into law, the firearms and ammunition control act would provide the legal basis for regulating the control and tracing of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and other related materials, the control of persons authorized to operate these materials, the control of authorized activities, the disposal of surplus small arms, and penalization of the illegal possession, manufacture, distribution, use and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and other related materials.

44. In the meantime, the National Commission on Small Arms informed the Panel that it is working with UNMIL to develop regulations and awareness-raising reference materials. Developing the regulations framework is provided for in the act. The Commission also informed the Panel that the rationale behind both initiatives is to create a conducive environment and coherent mechanisms for the effective implementation of the act once it is signed into law.

45. The Panel is also concerned by the lack of progress on the code of military discipline (also referred to as the uniform code of military justice). As observed in the final report of the previous Panel (see [S/2015/558](#), para. 23), this is an important piece of legislation which provides for the establishment of a justice system for the armed forces. The code provides for a panel of judges, which will consist of legally trained serving army officers. On 3 March 2016, the Deputy Minister of Defence informed the Panel that while the Government of Liberia is on course with respect to the transition plan, it is experiencing some challenges regarding this piece of legislation. Indeed, according to the Deputy Minister, Liberia needs but currently lacks trained military lawyers. Out of the four lawyers needed, only one is likely to graduate in 2016. Meeting the need for three more might take longer than expected. The Deputy Minister stated that this process might not be completed before the 30 June 2016 deadline.

46. The draft act on the police services and the Immigration Service Act were passed by both the House and the Senate on 17 March 2016. The new police act defines the role of the national police vis-à-vis other security agencies. As detailed in the previous report, ([S/2015/558](#), para. 25), the Panel believes that the passage of the act is important both for the coherent functioning of the national police and for its relationship with other security agencies, including the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization. Sources within the security apparatus informed the Panel that the delay in passing the act stems from a lack of prioritization and is a clear sign of a lack of genuine commitment on the part of political actors to security sector reform.

⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 729, No. 10485.

B. State of the security sector and control of illicit movements of small arms and ammunition

Absence of a coherent oversight framework and lack of national ownership

47. The Panel noted that coherent oversight mechanisms have not yet been put in place. Moreover, the Panel believes that there is a need to develop and consolidate a stronger sense of national and local ownership of the security sector. Multiple sources informed the Panel that, for many years, initiatives targeting the security sector have been the exclusive province of international partners, while the Government's focus was on the socioeconomic revival of Liberia. The Panel concurs with the conclusion of the Secretary-General in his thirty-first progress report on the United Nations Missions in Liberia ([S/2016/169](#)) that the necessary administrative systems have not yet been established and that the components of the security transition plan that focus on human security, such as oversight and accountability, justice and security delivery, have been overlooked. The Panel is of the view that this has been due mostly to the fact that attention was concentrated on recreating new security agencies in a context where civil society was fragmented, too weak and lacking the capacity to weigh in on the reform process and raise issues pertaining to the institutionalization of the oversight mechanisms, access to justice and accountability principles, which are key to successful security sector governance. Moreover, lack of understanding and adequate training on security sector governance impact negatively on engagement of civil society organizations' in the process. The Panel notes that, as a result, while the existing framework makes provision for the Senate, the House of Representatives, civil society organizations and the media to reinforce civilian oversight over the security apparatus, those institutions currently play a very marginal role because of lack of capacity and familiarity with the dynamics of the security sector governance. It is the view of the Panel that one of the key outcomes of an effective security sector transformation would be the establishment of an efficient civilian oversight of the security apparatus.

48. During a meeting held on 3 March 2016, the Deputy Minister of Defence informed the Panel that the Government is prepared to take ownership of and responsibility for the security sector. However, the Deputy Minister also highlighted some key concerns regarding the goal of meeting all of the established benchmarks by the 30 June 2016 security transition deadline, delays in finalizing the legal framework, which required a review of the harmonization issue, and severe budgetary constraints. He also mentioned the inability of the Government to influence the actions of the legislature as one of the key challenges to be overcome. Sources in the Government expressed the wish to see UNMIL ensure the safety of Liberia at least until the 2017 elections.

49. The Panel notes that, during her address on the state of the nation before the Senate and the House of Representatives in late January 2016, the President called upon lawmakers to speed up the passing of various pending security sector-related legislation as a matter of priority. Those calls were not heeded. Sources in the Government and opposition parties indicated to the Panel that this was due to what they called a conflict of interest and lack of commitment on the part of some government authorities. Specifically, they suspected that some members of the Government were shareholders in or owners of private security companies and therefore did not exert decisive leadership or demonstrate keen interest in reforming

the national security apparatus so as to enable it to provide security to ordinary citizens.

50. The Panel reiterates the necessity of according a high priority to the passing of the pending security sector-related legislation, without which the security sector will find itself in a legal and operational vacuum.

51. The Deputy Minister also informed the Panel that, at this juncture, the Government could not afford the financial burden involved and would have to rely on the assistance of donors in implementing the security transition plan. The Panel was informed that US\$ 1.2 million had been pledged by the Government of Sweden towards the reform of the justice and security sector. While the aim is build the connection between justice and the security sector and facilitate access to justice, this will not be sufficient to fill the current budgetary gap with respect to the security transition plan. The Panel is not aware of any other pledges at the time of writing but reiterates the necessity of urgent donor mobilization to support the security sector ahead of the United Nations drawdown. Some officials have called for the holding of a round-table discussion on security to mobilize and better coordinate donor engagement in security sector governance. Such an initiative will go a long way towards facilitating a taking stock of the current shortcomings to enable the adjustment necessary to keep the transition on track.

52. The financial constraints are serious and heighten the uncertainties with regard to the capacity of the Government of Liberia to assume fully all security responsibilities in the post-UNMIL dispensation. Financial constraints also have a bearing on the setting and implementation of the administrative and institutional framework for the security sector.

Deployment of the Armed Forces of Liberia

53. The Panel notes that the armed forces have benefited from constant attention in terms of training and displays a certain level of professionalism. The participation of the armed forces in the United Nations peacekeeping operation in Mali has enabled them to gain valuable experience in terms of operating within a difficult environment and terrain. The Panel observed, however, that the two battalions of the armed forces are concentrated mainly in and around Monrovia (see annex III) with limited presence or barracks in the counties. Military sources informed the Panel of a plan to rehabilitate the barracks that had been destroyed during the civil war and deploy the armed forces in the leeward regions. Given the current budgetary constraints, it is not clear whether this plan will be operationalized in the near future.

54. During its visits to various locations outside of Monrovia, the Panel observed that there is hardly any armed forces presence outside of the capital. The Panel also notes that Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone have deployed soldiers along their borders to reinforce the capacity of the other law enforcement agencies to monitor movement and secure the borders. The Panel believes that Liberia should speed up the rehabilitation of army barracks and progressively deploy at key border areas, mainly those prone to security disturbances, including Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland counties. The fact that, in those counties, the Government presence is quite thin is of concern to the Panel.

55. If, as of late, the Government has embarked on a decentralization policy devised to bring service delivery closer to its citizens, there is a substantial investment that needs to be made in order to translate that policy into an impactful reality for the people. The Panel is of the opinion that concentrating the armed forces in Monrovia and dispatching them only in times of need could result in delays in critical interventions, while the lack of resources could compromise sustainability.

56. The Panel further notes other considerations with regard to the operational challenges of the armed forces. Senatorial sources expressed concerns regarding the loyalty of the armed forces. They indicated that partners helped to train the armed forces without local involvement. The Panel has learned that because the armed forces have been newly created through a process that did not involve the few credible Liberian professionals remaining, the armed forces seem currently disconnected from society.⁷

57. Military sources informed the Panel that while the armed forces can perform the basic tasks involved in responding to low- or medium-level threats, they might not be able to defend the country against sustained external or even domestic high-level security threats. The views expressed in the Panel report issued on 23 July 2015 regarding imminent external threats posed by attacks on Liberia by armed groups from neighbouring countries remain valid (see [S/2015/558](#), paras. 38-39).

58. However, even if conventional warfare or armed rebellion seems unlikely at the moment, West Africa is engaged in asymmetric warfare waged by radical groups and terrorist organizations, which requires that the security forces acquire a particular sets of skills, including intelligence-gathering and improvised explosive device (IED) detection. Military and UNMIL sources informed the Panel that the armed forces still need to develop and consolidate its capacity to defuse improvised explosive devices and bombs, since they do not yet possess adequate resources (e.g., explosives) and equipment.

59. The Panel also notes that the capacity of the Coast Guard remains weak, while air capacity is non-existent. Perhaps, the armed forces do not need an air force at present. However, their ability to control and monitor the coastline is a necessity if the country is to be secured. Military sources explained to the Panel that at this stage, the coast guard has only two zodiacs and could monitor only the portion between Freeport and the border with Sierra Leone. The portion between Freeport down to Harper remains open and under little surveillance. The Panel deems that the control of that maritime area is essential and urgent, since the region is becoming increasingly vulnerable to terrorism, and that terrorist groups could resort to using fishing vessels to bypass ground-security checkpoints, as was the case in the attacks on Grand Bassam, Côte d'Ivoire, on 13 March 2016.

A weak national police and law enforcement presence in leeward counties

60. The Panel notes that the national police operates under serious constraints. During its field visit to most of the leeward counties, the Panel noted that the Government is in the process of deploying additional officers to remote areas. However, this does not seem sufficient, given the needs of the regions outside

⁷ Information obtained from an interview with two senators, who insisted that Liberians should accept reality and put an end to fostering a culture of dependency on international donors.

Monrovia (see annex IV). The Inspector General of the Police informed the Panel that the national police suffers from a continuous reduction of its budget and low manpower, which affect its operations across the country. Out of the US\$ 15 million allocated to the national police, US\$ 12.5 million serves to pay salaries while the remaining US\$ 2.5 million covers its operations. This unbalanced distribution of the financial resources limits the operational ability of the national police to deliver adequate services to the citizens, particularly those living in remote areas.

61. The Inspector General of the Police also informed the Panel that the national police is currently operating far below its expected strength. According to data provided to the Panel, while the projected number of police officers for Liberia is 8,000, the total number currently available is about 2,000, the majority of whom are concentrated in Monrovia (see annex V). The Panel notes that this has implications in terms of the capacity to respond to security threats and violence. The Panel notes that officers posted in the counties complain of the lack of logistics, manpower and an overall conducive working environment.

62. The Panel observed that there are few police stations in the leeward counties, and most of them were built with the support of UNMIL quick-impact projects. As the majority of those police stations are very basic and often lack electricity and equipment, deployment of national police to those counties from Monrovia becomes highly challenging. In Tubmanburg in Grand Cape Mount County, the building serving as police headquarters is in poor shape and conditions are also poor. In those areas, as well as in areas visited by the Panel along bordering counties such as Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland, police stations do not have the most basic features such as safe drinking water, toilets, electricity, patrol vehicles and communication equipment. Moreover, lacking the necessary crowd control equipment, they depend heavily on UNMIL or the Police Support Unit in situations where tensions are high. Given past difficulties and increasing tensions, it is likely that, with the upcoming elections, those police stations will face serious crowd control issues ahead of the 2017 electoral process.

63. The Panel notes that national police officers deployed outside Monrovia face the daunting challenge of finding accommodation for themselves, as there are no police barracks or provisions for a housing allowance. Police officers informed the Panel that they have to personally cover the costs of their accommodation when they are deployed in the leeward counties. With families and homes in Monrovia, they have to meet both their own demands and those of their families, whom they cannot afford, on an average monthly salary of US\$ 120, to bring along with them. Police officers are concerned that living within the communities without proper police infrastructures exposes them to attacks when angry community members stage revolts against the police, as is often the case. Police sources informed the Panel that, because of the poor working conditions and in order to be able to survive, officers have resorted to illegal activities and have compromised themselves through complicity with criminals. The Panel is concerned that, in such circumstances, police officers may tolerate the illicit movements of arms and ammunition or other transnational criminal activities.

64. Police sources pointed to the vulnerability of officers who compromise their integrity and put at risk the safety of citizens and the security of the country. The Panel received reports of national police officers who were complicit with armed robbers. Twelve national police officers have been suspended over allegations of

armed robbery and are currently under investigation. While the fact that they could be suspended at all is already an indication of the commitment to abide by ethical principles, the problem is more systemic and requires measures that entail examination of the working and living conditions of the security forces, especially outside of Monrovia and along the borders with Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone.

65. In addition, police sources informed the Panel that there are no incentives available to the officers deployed in the counties in terms of access to further education, in-service training, career development or promotion opportunities. As a result, many officers do not want to be deployed or, when they are deployed, simply do not assume their posts or spend more time in Monrovia than in the counties. Too often, this weakens — and could further weaken — the Government's capacity to effectively monitor illicit arms movements (see [S/2013/683](#), paras. 27-30; [S/2014/831](#), paras. 57-60 and 62-64; and [S/2015/558](#), paras. 38-39).

66. The Panel also notes that, in almost all police stations visited, there is no photocopy machine, typewriter or computer to enable the police to carry out their daily tasks. All records and statistics have to be produced manually or through use of commercial services available on the street. This being the case, it is difficult for the police to keep accurate records of cases, statistics of violent incidents and a coherent filing system which reflect professionalism. In some instances, police stations do not have occurrence or case registrations books.

67. The Panel learned that, to prepare court cases, officers often make use of commercial services and impose what are known as "arrest fees" on the victims. The Panel notes that this practice could lead — and has in fact led — to abuses and corruption, which cast doubt on the commitment of the national police to promoting integrity, fairness and accountability. This has a negative impact on the relations — and hinders the building of trust — between the police and the local population, especially outside Monrovia.

68. The Police Support and Emergency Response units, which were set up to intervene in serious cases of violence, appear to have a better support system. Officers from both units appear to be better trained, relatively well equipped and well paid and enjoy certain respect and privileges. The Panel learned that the incentives available to officers in the Police Support and Emergency Response units make those units highly attractive to ordinary police officers, most of whom are confined within the ranks of "patrol officers" for decades, with little or no prospects for progression within the hierarchy. On the other hand, information gathered from Police Support and Emergency Response unit sources also point to the dire operational challenges faced by those units owing to budgetary constraints. Indeed, the Panel notes that the problem of mobility extends across all components of the Liberian police. Following the recent terrorist attacks in Grand Bassam, commanding officers of the national police have come to believe that neither the Police Support Unit nor the Emergency Response Unit has the capacity or the resources to monitor essential key points and infrastructure in Monrovia. They fear that the special units of the national police might not be able to respond to multiple incidents if these were to occur simultaneously.

Inter-agency tensions and problems of coordination

69. Furthermore, the Panel notes that, although officials describe relations within and among security agencies as cordial, a number of incidents continue to raise concerns. One such incident, which took place on 9 January 2016, involved a direct confrontation between the national police and the Executive Protection Service. The Panel received reports that the incident nearly turned violent as both the national police and Executive Protection Service officers pointed their assault rifles at each other. The confrontation occurred as the vehicle of the Inspector General of Police attempted to join the presidential convoy which was proceeding towards a memorial service for the late Ambassador of Liberia to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Rudolf P. von Ballmoos. The incident raised questions regarding the professionalism required from security services entrusted with the protection of the President. It also highlights the absence of coherence, coordination and communication among the security agencies.

70. The same lack of professionalism was observed in another shooting incident, of an unarmed citizen. On 27 February 2016, Emergency Response Unit officers on patrol in the Bright Farm rubber plantation within the Mount Barclay area (Monrovia) spotted a group of young men and tried to stop them. As one of the young men attempted to escape, the Emergency Response Unit officers opened fire, injuring him in the neck. The victim later died while undergoing treatment at the John F. Kennedy Medical Centre.

71. Information gathered by the Panel regarding this shooting incident revealed that the group was not of any immediate threat to the Emergency Response Unit. Shooting an individual without any credible evidence of his having committed an offence is therefore a matter of concern. The Panel learned that some key partners have expressed discontent with the leadership of the national police. Although the President has ordered the immediate suspension of the commanding officer of the presidential motorcade and the Inspector General, the Panel learned that the suspensions did not occur.

72. The Panel notes that this is not an isolated incident, as it forms part of a series of missteps which have dented the professionalization of the special units of the national police, including the Executive Protection Service. The Panel gathered information indicating that shootings of civilians resulting in accidental deaths have become highly pervasive and prompted a protest on 11 March 2016 whose aim was to request the extension of the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Liberia. The protest was called off at the last minute through UNMIL negotiations but the message was nonetheless delivered to the Mission by a group of representatives of political parties and civil society stressing their concerns regarding national security ahead of the UNMIL drawdown.

73. The impression remains that the police and members of law enforcement agencies need further training to enable them to better respond to and control crowds when they find themselves under pressure. Their violent reaction and indiscriminate shootings at crowds do not augur well for their relations with local communities across all of Liberia.

VI. Border security concerns and the arms embargo

A. Deployment of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization and other law enforcement agencies

74. The Panel travelled to most of Liberia's border areas and crossing points to assess the situation and the effectiveness of the border management measures in place to enable the control and monitoring of the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons as well as other threats. The Panel notes that some of the main security agencies are present at major border crossings (the national police, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the National Security Agency), with the Bureau given the primary responsibility for monitoring and securing the country's borders (see annex VI). Together with UNMIL, the officers of the Bureau conduct regular patrols whenever possible. For example, in Toe Town, Grand Gedeh County, Bureau officers informed the Panel that they were working under conditions of great personal sacrifice. They indicated that, benefiting from UNMIL logistical support, they were able to conduct their regular patrols and that when UNMIL is not available, they find it difficult to operate or to do foot patrols within short distances. Those officers face the same difficulties faced by the national police and the armed forces. The commanding officers of the Bureau in Monrovia confirmed the existence of those problems to the Panel and highlighted the fact that the Government has not been able to respond adequately.

75. The Panel notes that out of approximately 167 formal crossing points along Liberia's borders with Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, close to 60 are to some extent manned. However, there are thousands of informal crossing points that are difficult to monitor. While Liberia's neighbours have deployed their respective armed forces along their borders, there is no presence of the armed forces in most of the leeward counties visited by the Panel.

76. The Panel's observations are consistent with the findings presented in the final report issued on 23 July 2014 (see [S/2015/558](#), para. 10). At Bo Waterside, at the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Panel received information regarding the continuous increase in the illicit trade of drugs (marijuana and heroin) and illegal mining activities (at the Mano Congo mining site) involving residual former combatants. At this stage, the Panel has no credible evidence that they currently pose a threat to Liberia; but the possibility exists that they are being manipulated and that some of them are utilized for subversive activities. The Panel is concerned that border and security officers are unable to visit and inspect the areas, and that some have informed the Panel that they have been threatened and shot at by individuals engaging in illicit activities.

77. At the Yella and Yekepa border posts (on the border with Guinea), officers of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization informed the Panel of the continuous movement of single-barrel rifles used for hunting activities. The Panel gathered that these guns are allowed to cross the border and that despite recommendations that

they be registered, very few of them are recorded.⁸ The Panel discovered that there are a number of murder cases pending before the courts in which those single-barrel rifles have been used (see annex VII). The Panel stood by the roadside for an hour and saw many hunters walking with rifles (see annex VIII). Hunters interviewed indicated to the Panel that they had brought them from Guinea. The Panel believes that single-barrel rifles are not a direct threat to national security per se (see [S/2015/558](#)) but they are used in situations of localized tensions, protests against the Government and family or community disputes. Moreover, the same channel used to bring those guns into Liberia, could be used for the traffic of small arms and ammunition.

78. Like officers of the national police and the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, officers of the Drug Enforcement Agency and the National Security Agency raised concerns about their ability to effectively monitor the borders. The same logistical problems are faced by all law enforcement agencies. At the Yekepa border post (border between Guinea and Liberia, the Panel observed that the Bureau was not associated with the inspections, which were conducted by customs officers. Queried, customs officers informed the Panel that the authorities had allocated the area to them. Bureau officers complained that the Government had been made aware of this but had not taken action. Bureau officers excluded from inspection of the borders indicated that they would consequently not know what was being brought into the country.

79. It is the view of the Panel that, operating in such dire circumstances, officers might not be able to identify sophisticated transnational criminal organizations, including arms traffickers.

B. Attacks in Olodio, Côte d'Ivoire, and Liberian links

80. The Panel worked closely with UNMIL and the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire in response to the recurrent violent attacks in the border regions of western Côte d'Ivoire. It reviewed information received from UNMIL and the Group of Experts and conducted further investigations in Liberia. The Panel remains concerned that the western region of Côte d'Ivoire and the south-eastern region of Liberia remain vulnerable to recurrent attacks perpetrated by gunmen either for easy money or as an expression of the frustrations of forces opposed to the central Governments of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Sustainable solutions, however, reside fundamentally in furthering governance, reconsidering political reconciliation and effectively controlling the movement of weapons and ammunition along the borders. The fact that armed assailants can move undetected in the border areas should be seen as a serious matter of concern by both Governments.

81. On 2 December 2015, armed individuals attacked two camps of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI) in the town of Olodio, Côte d'Ivoire. Olodio is situated about 20 kilometres from the border town of Yobloken in south-eastern Liberia. On the Côte d'Ivoire side of the border, it is situated between the villages of

⁸ The now expired executive order No. 34 (2013) imposed a total ban on the ownership, possession, use, sale or manufacture of small arms and ammunitions in Liberia, with the exception of the 12-gauge "single barrel" shotgun used solely for hunting, provided that such weapons had been registered with the Ministry of Justice through the office of the superintendent in each county.

Tipoto and Soklodogba. Attacks have been recurrent in that area since January 2015 (see [S/2014/831](#), para. 62; and [S/2015/558](#), paras. 41-42).

82. In the December 2015 attacks, 11 people were killed, including seven FRCI soldiers and four assailants. The attacks also left 10 FRCI soldiers wounded, with 4 in critical condition. After almost an hour of fighting, the Forces were able to regain control of the situation with the support of the United Nations Operations in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI). Security forces arrested eight of the assailants, including Sunday Scott, a Liberian national. The Panel ascertained that Mr. Scott was a former combatant. He had fought within the ranks of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia. During the post-electoral crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, he was also involved with forces supporting the former President of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo.

83. According to the testimonies of witnesses obtained by the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire, these attacks were planned and executed by both Ivorian and Liberian nationals. The Panel learned that, since 2014, the assailants have been training in Kiti Island, one of the islands situated between Tiboto and Seklodogba. Ahead of the attacks, a number of Liberian nationals took part in the training, including A-One, Paul Bey, Mama Vex, Nathanael and Bongoleh. During the Panel's investigation in Grand Gedeh and Maryland, mercenary sources formally identified these former "generals". Some of them had participated in previous attacks, in Fete and Grabo, in 2014 (see [S/2014/831](#), para. 62; and [S/2015/558](#), paras. 62-64). For example, sources informed the Panel that A-One, also known as Neah Nemely, is a former Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) general, who was wounded during his involvement in the attacks in Fete and Grabo in 2014.

84. This demonstrates that the links between former Liberian "generals" and those seeking to destabilize Côte d'Ivoire still exist. The Panel learned that nationals of Côte d'Ivoire, known as Lakota and Koudou, recruited combatants from Liberia and offered them financial incentives. The assailants left Liberia and crossed into Côte d'Ivoire by canoe through the Cavalla River (see annex X). Upon their arrival, they organized themselves into two groups led by Lakota and Koudou. Following the Panel's investigation, no arrests were made in Liberia in connection with those attacks and there has not been any government investigation.

85. The Panel maintains that cross-border attacks cannot be completely eradicated unless the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia extend state authority beyond the military bases to bordering communities. Credible sources informed the Panel that the area remains a potential recruitment ground for forces still seeking to destabilize Côte d'Ivoire.

C. Potential violations of the arms embargo against non-state actors

86. The Panel gathered information indicating that each of the assailants entered Côte d'Ivoire with AK-47 rifles and grenades. They did not, however, use the grenades during the above-mentioned attacks. After the attacks, the assailants fled with two assault rifles, an unspecified number of AK-47s, 4X4 vehicles and a number of FRCI uniforms.

87. To obtain further details, the Panel met two "generals" who had taken part in the training before the attacks, but who said they did not participate in the attacks. Sources informed the Panel that some of the assailants returned to Liberia with their

weapons. While the Panel's attempts to trace the weapons and physically identify them have not been conclusive, the Panel suspects that those who returned to Liberia returned with weapons that potentially were in violation of the arms embargo. The Panel, is concerned that those weapons could be used either to prepare new attacks or for criminal activities, and might need to conduct a follow-up investigation.

88. Lakota, one of the leaders of the attacks in Olodio, has already been mentioned in the previous Panel's final report (see [S/2015/558](#), para. 62). Lakota is allegedly a member of the Liberian-Ivorian Military Association, an elusive organization suspected to be based in Vye Island. Its members, who are estimated to number between 187 and 200, might have been responsible for some of the cross-border attacks. Further investigation into the group is necessary in order to identify its leadership structure, its sources of financing and its current capacity.

D. Former mercenaries used as a “border security unit”

89. In its previous report, the Panel documented extensively the practice of paying to discourage cross-border attacks on Côte d'Ivoire (see [S/2015/___](#), para. 75-77, and annex IX to the present report). The Panel documented the leadership and the structure as well as identified the officials involved in such initiatives. It also traced the sources of funding to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and warned against the potential consequences for both Governments (*ibid.*).

90. The Panel followed up on the matter and held discussions with former mercenaries. They confirmed to the Panel that the practice continues and provided the Panel with the identities of the members of the “border security unit” (see annex XI). During a meeting on 14 March 2016, the National Security Adviser to the President confirmed to the Panel that the Government of Liberia is aware of the unit and is surveying its members through the National Security Agency.

91. During the field investigation in Grand Gedeh, police sources informed the Panel that most of the members are former combatants involved in cross-border attacks who were arrested in 2013-2014 following attacks in Côte d'Ivoire (see annex XII). They were briefly detained in Grand Gedeh before being transferred to Monrovia. Police sources informed the Panel that the group was released within days, causing those who had arrested them to become concerned for their safety.

92. The Panel met with some members of the unit and learned that they are paid US\$ 75 per month while General Isaac Sheyou Chegbo aka Bob Marley received US\$ 100 to “keep him within the ranks”. Members of the unit told the Panel about nascent disagreements over payment, which are leading to dissension and the creation of new group of “generals” suspected to be undergoing training for cross-border armed activities (see annex XIII). The Panel has not found any evidence thus far but does not exclude the likelihood of such an eventuality. It is also alleged that the leader of the unit does not give a fair share to its members.

93. The Panel reiterates its concerns that the practice will breed a culture of war entrepreneurs, which could become a destabilizing factor for both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, mainly within the context of the UNMIL drawdown but also within the context of the 2017 general elections. The Panel invites the Government of Liberia in this regard to seek to deepen bilateral cooperation and reinforce the capacity of

its law enforcement agencies (the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the National Security Agency the Drug Enforcement Agency and the armed forces) to ensure the effective control of the borders.

VII. Recommendations

94. The Panel recommends that the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia consider undertaking a visit to Liberia to engage with the Government on some of the key challenges that the country is facing, including budgetary constraints and the time frame for the completion of the tasks related to the transition plan.

95. The Panel recommends that, with the support of UNMIL and its international partners, the Government of Liberia:

(a) Complete the marking of all weapons in government armories and develop a centralized national database to monitor them;

(b) Accord priority to the passage of the firearms and ammunition control act, the police act and the uniform code of military justice. In the short term, and in order to address the legal vacuum created as a result of the delays in passing key security sector-related legislation, the Panel recommends that the Government issue a new executive order banning the importation and possession of arms and ammunition by non-governmental entities and individuals;

(c) Conduct, with the support of UNMIL a comprehensive and updated needs-based assessment in order to take stock of the overall needs of all national security agencies, particularly those deployed outside Monrovia and responsible for border security. This is important, as Liberia is progressively moving towards fully assuming security responsibilities from UNMIL;

(d) Improve or build new, adequate storage facilities for weapons and ammunition in the leeward counties;

(e) Improve budgetary allocations so as to provide security agencies with the basic equipment necessary to maintain law and order both in Monrovia and in all the counties of Liberia;

(f) As a matter of critical importance, develop the investigative capacity of the national police, both overall and among individual officers. The Panel urges the UNMIL police component to increase its mentoring of the national police with regard to forensics, criminal investigations and transnational crime, including through strengthening links between law enforcement investigations and evidence collection so that such evidence can be used more effectively in a court of law;

(g) Accord priority to reinforcing the capacity of the security services, in particular the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, the Drug Enforcement Agency and the Liberian National Police, especially in relation to the persistent armed attacks along the border with Côte d'Ivoire;

(h) Provide the Liberia National Commission on Small Arms with adequate financial, logistical and political support to render it fully operational, which will reinforce the authority of the Commission and enable it to better coordinate and

monitor small arms and ammunition movements inside Liberia as well across its borders;

96. The Panel recommends that government partners:

(a) Provide additional training to the legislature, the media and civil society organizations to consolidate civilian oversight over the security apparatus;

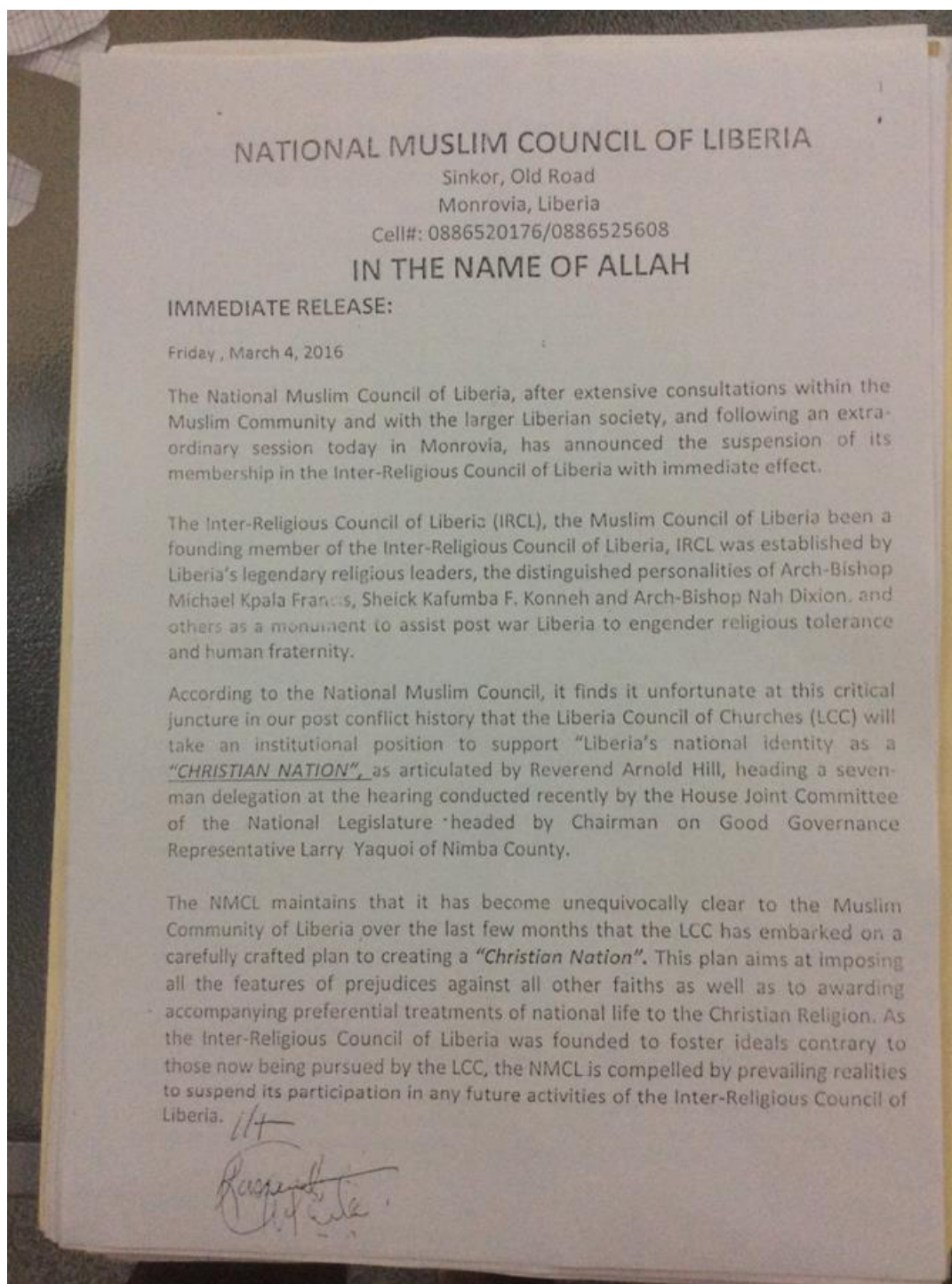
(b) Consider the proposal of holding the national security dialogue with a view to elaborating an integrated approach and developing a strategy for resource mobilization and coordination so as to accelerate the completion of the security transition.

Annex I

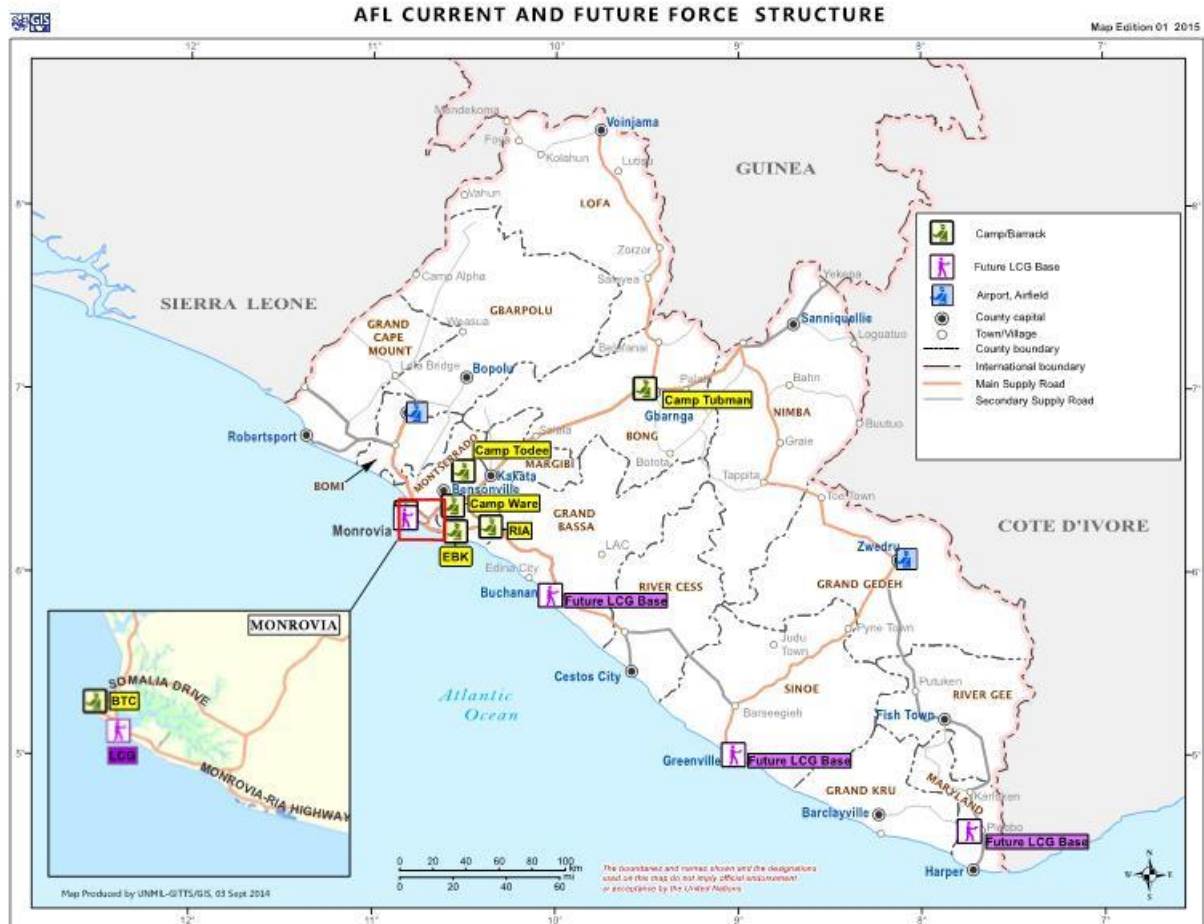
List of entities with which the Panel held meetings

Liberia

African Union
Armed Forces of Liberia
Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
Drug Enforcement Agency
Economic Community of West African States
Emergency Response Unit
Executive Protection Service
Liberia National Commission on Small Arms
Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
Liberian National Police
Ministry of Defence
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Justice
Ministry of State/Office of the President
National Security Agency
Police Support Unit
United Nations Development Programme
United Nations Mission in Liberia
United Nations police
Embassy of Côte d'Ivoire
Embassy of France
Embassy of the United States of America

Annex II**Communiqué issued by the National Muslim Council of Liberia**

Current and future locations of the armed forces



Annex IV

Current deployment status of the national police

Deployment plan

COUNTY	CURRENT STRENGTH	PROPOSED STRENGTH	DIFFERENCE	2016	2017	2018	TOTAL
BOMI	66	161	95	38	38	19	161
BONG	135	509	374	150	150	75	509
GBARPOLU	57	141	84	34	34	17	141
G/BASSA	128	350	222	89	89	44	350
G/CAPE MOUNT	66	200	134	54	54	27	200
G/GEDEH	158	349	191	76	76	38	349
G/KRU	25	109	84	34	34	17	109
LOFA	136	438	302	121	121	60	438
MARGIBI	149	269	120	48	48	24	269
MARYLAND	81	264	183	73	73	37	264
MONTSERRADO	2426	3983	1557	623	623	311	3983
NIMBA	274	731	457	183	183	91	731
RIVERCESS	27	113	86	34	34	17	113
RIVER GEE	43	175	132	53	53	26	175
SINOE	84	208	124	50	50	25	208
TOTAL	3855	8000	4145	1658	1658	829	8000

Source: Liberia National Police headquarters.

Annex V

Logistics status of the national police

LNP Logistics Capability

The LNP who is operating with a low budgetary allotment is functioning with high constrain in term of Logistic support. The institution is out of uniforms and accessories for its officers. The LNP is currently operating with the following Logistics as stated below:

Chart 1. The LNP Logistics Capability

#.	ITEM DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY
1.	Vehicles	77 pcs
2.	Motorcycles	153 pcs
3.	Laptop computer	29 pcs
4.	Desktop computer	30 pcs
5.	Printer	35 pcs
6.	Projector	4 pcs
7.	Digital	6 pcs
8.	Video camera	1 pc
#.	DEFENSIVE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	QUANTITY
1.	Expendable baton	1900 pcs
2.	Stun gun/electric baton	400 pcs
3.	Paper spray	500 pcs
4.	Handcuffs	2000 pcs
5.	Aerosol grenade	500 pcs
6.	Electric shield	100 pcs
7.	Flash light	190 pcs

Source: Liberia National Police headquarters, Monrovia.

Annex VI

Deployment status of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization

	Deployments	Current Strength	Projected FY2014/2015	Projected FY2015/2016	Projected FY2016/2017
1	BIN HQ	722	788	788	788
2	BPU	132	154	204	249
3	Bong County	114	124	159	194
4	Bomi	37	40	51	62
5	Grand Cape Mount	64	70	90	110
6	Barpolu	47	51	65	79
7	Margibi	28	30	38	46
8	Grand Bassa	46	50	64	78
9	Lofa	135	147	188	229
10	Nimba	207	226	290	353
11	Grand Gedeh	86	94	121	147
12	River Gee	31	34	44	54
13	Grand Kru	38	41	52	63
14	Maryland	43	47	60	73
15	Sinoe	40	44	56	68
16	Rivercess	22	24	31	38
17	RIA	47	51	65	79
18	Marshall	10	11	14	17
19	Westpoint	17	18	23	28
20	Mount Barclay	19	20	26	32
21	Harbel	25	27	35	43
22	Spriggs	11	12	15	18
23	Red Light	43	47	60	73
24	Freeport	50	54	65	79
25	Iron Gate	15	16	21	26
26	Landscape	7	8	10	12
27	Hub 1 (Gbarnga)	45	45	45	45
28	Hub 2	-	45	45	45
29	Hub 3	-	45	45	45
30	Hub 4	-	45	45	45
31	Hub 5	-	45	45	45
32	Training Academy	-	50	65	70
Total		2081	2503	2925	3347

Foot Note:
While the above represents BIN Manpower needs projection for three years in FY 2016/2017, approximately 600 officers of these officers are expected to be deactivated over the corresponding period. Plan is on to decongest BIN HQ and send officers within Montserrado County for enforcement duties

Source: Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization headquarters, Monrovia.

Annex VII

Single-barrel rifles in murder cases pending before the court



Annex VIII

Hunter with a single-barrel rifle, Yekepa (Liberia-Guinea)



Annex IX

Hunter with a single-barrel rifle, Yella (Liberia-Guinea)



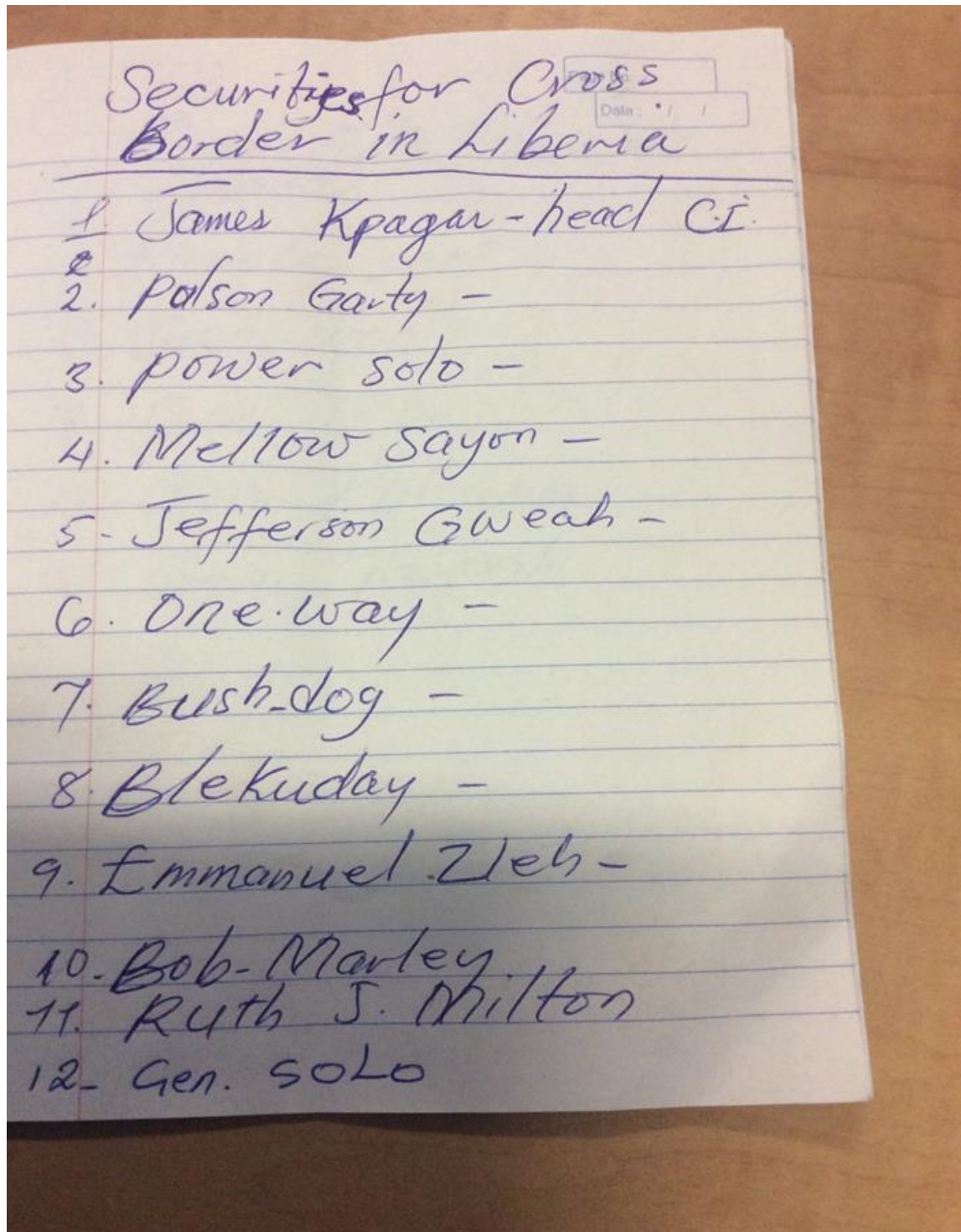
Annex X

Cavalla border crossing (Grand Gedeh) from Liberia into Côte d'Ivoire



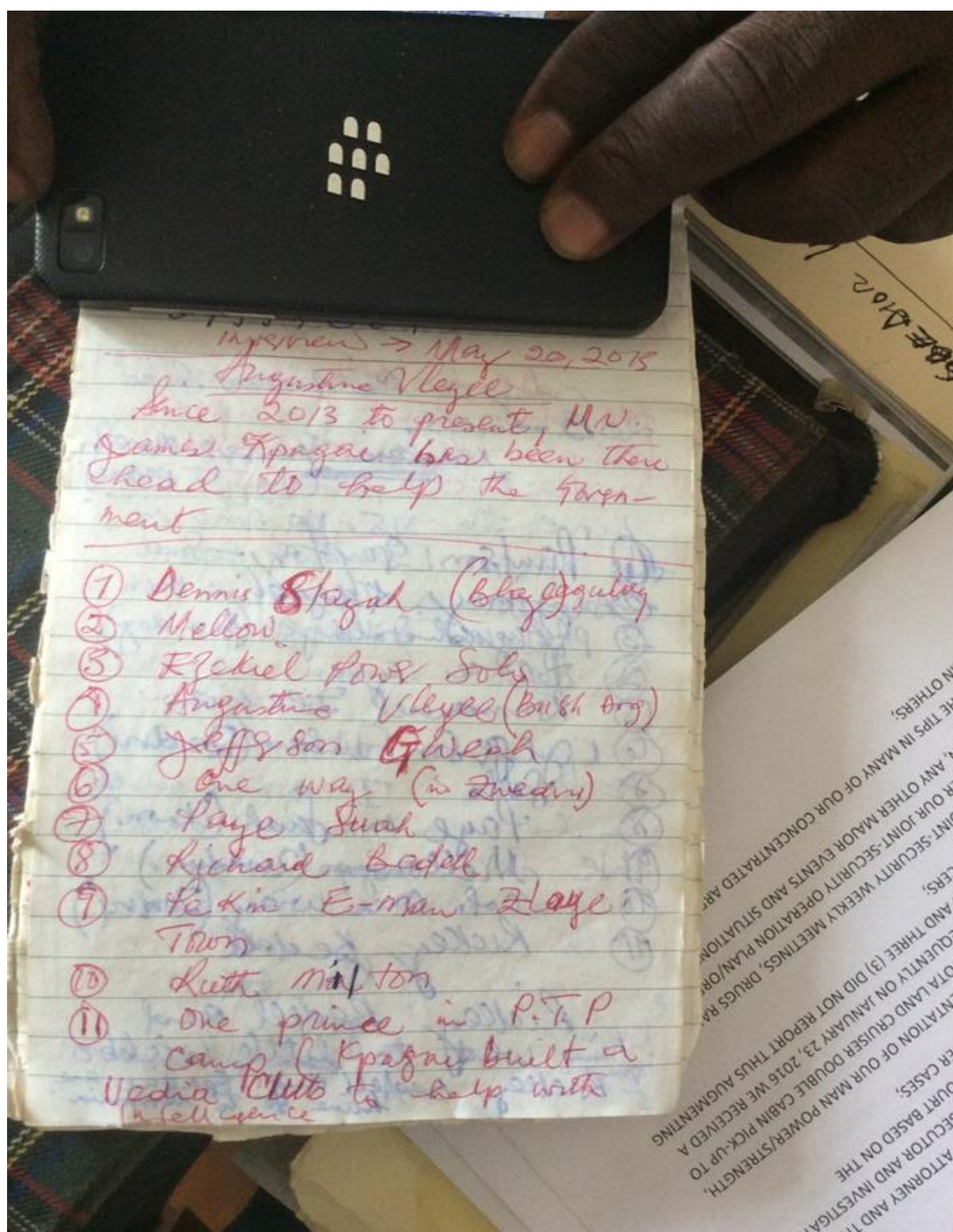
Annex XI

List of paid members ("generals") of the border security unit



Annex XII

Handwritten names of some of the members (“generals”) of the border security unit arrested following attacks in Côte d’Ivoire in 2013-2014



Annex XIII

List of suspected “generals” still involved in training for cross-border armed activities

