

Chapter Four



Background on Liberia and the Conflict

GEOGRAPHY AND PEOPLES¹

Liberia is located on the Atlantic coast in West Africa and encompasses a territory of 43,000 square miles.¹ The country shares borders with Sierra Leone to the northwest, Guinea to the north, and Côte d'Ivoire to the east.² The country is rich in natural resources including iron ore, timber, diamonds, and gold, and provides a favorable environment for growing rubber trees.³

Liberia is divided into 15 counties whose territories correspond in some measure to territories claimed by particular Liberian ethnic groups.⁴ The population in 2008 was estimated to be 3,489,072.⁵ English is the official language of Liberia, although more than 20 indigenous languages and a form of English known as Liberian English are also widely used.⁶

WEST AFRICA



Although Liberia is a small country, it has an ethnically diverse population. Ethnicity in Liberia, sometimes referred to as tribal identity, is a complex and often artificial notion,⁷ just as it is in other parts of Africa and the world.⁸ At least 95 percent of the population is of indigenous African origin.⁹ A defining feature of Liberia's recent social, cultural, and political history is that a small proportion, less than five percent, of its population consists of descendants of repatriated Africans, including freed

¹ The audience for this report includes some individuals who have in-depth personal knowledge of Liberia and others who may be learning for the first time about Liberia, including its people, history, and the recent conflict. Accordingly, the following background and historical overview provides context for later sections of this report. This information is not intended as a definitive discussion of Liberian history and culture.

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slaves from the Americas and the Caribbean, free-born African-Americans, and Africans captured from slave ships on the high seas.¹⁰



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This latter group, also known as Americo-Liberians, settlers, or Congo,¹¹ forms one of the 17 generally recognized sociocultural groups in Liberia.¹² The other 16 groups include indigenous Africans based on cultural and linguistic similarities, specifically the Gbandi, Bassa, Gio, Dei, Gola, Grebo, Kissi, Kpelle, Kru, Kuwaa (Belle), Loma, Ma (Mano), Mandingo, Mende, Vai, and Krahn.¹³ According to Liberian historians, “intermarriage, modern education and westernized Christianity, Islam and other foreign influences have blurred some of the distinctions” between these sociocultural groups.¹⁴ These indigenous groups arrived in Liberia in waves beginning in 6000 B.C.E. and have cross-border ties with similar ethnic communities in other West African countries.¹⁵ The last group to arrive was the Americo-Liberian settlers in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Liberia also has a significant Lebanese community. People of Lebanese descent, and all other people of non-African descent, are not permitted to hold Liberian citizenship even if born in Liberia.¹⁷

KEY FEATURES OF LIBERIAN CULTURE

Liberia is a largely rural country, with the exception of the capital city, Monrovia.¹⁸ Most Liberians have strong ties to towns and villages outside the capital. These rural communities are generally the center of extended family, or kinship groups. Ties to an extended family network are critically important in Liberian culture and often form the foundation upon which local and national political governance is built.¹⁹

Liberian society is also characterized by veneration of elders and patriarchy. Councils of male elders generally are decision-makers in a given community.²⁰ The oldest male relative is the leader and decision-maker for the family group. Many communities, however, also seek the advice and input of councils of women elders.²¹

Leadership in Liberian communities is often expressed through membership in so-called “secret” societies. Such membership institutions exist in both the Americo-Liberian and indigenous sociocultural groups. The two most widely known indigenous secret societies are the Sande (for women) and Poro (for men). These societies, found among groups including the Vai, Gola, Dei, Mende, Gbandi, Loma and Kpelle, serve as institutions to acculturate youth and “formally carry them through the rite of passage from child to adult.”²² Poro and Sande are the most widely known because they are in fact the least secret – often all adult members of a community are initiates.²³ Other more secretive societies with clandestine membership dedicated to communication with specific types of spiritual powers also exist.²⁴ Americo-Liberians brought with them secret membership institutions, such as the Freemasons.²⁵

The existence of these institutions is tied to Liberians’ religious practices and worldview. Elders of the Poro, Sande, and the other Liberian secret societies are those who connect the human world with the powerful spirit world. Practices employed by the priests – or *zoes* – of secret societies include use of masks, dance, body markings, charms, ritual trials and punishments, animal sacrifice, and, in some cases, cannibalism.²⁶ These traditional religious practices also merge with Christianity and Islam, which are important social forces in Liberia. Many Liberians are initiates into indigenous secret societies and also practice Christianity.²⁷ Islam forbids participation in such societies, but has its own secret groups.²⁸

Apart from religious communication, dress and hairstyle are of great cultural importance in Liberia. The traditional hairstyle for Liberian men was uniformly closely cropped and reflected the hair depicted on traditional masks.²⁹ Disheveled hair, such as that worn by many of the combatant groups in Liberia, would traditionally have been a sign of “distress, bereavement, or even insanity”³⁰ and would have sent a clear message to other Liberians that this person was well outside any social and cultural boundaries.

Finally, Liberian society since the arrival of the Americo-Liberian settlers has been characterized by dual systems of education, governance, law, and cultural practice. Indigenous systems of education (such as the Poro and Sande bush schools³¹), customary law using traditional methods of trial by ordeal,³² reconciliation under the palava hut,³³ traditional punishment,³⁴ and the chieftaincy system of governance are prominent in the interior areas of Liberia. In contrast, a more Western-styled system of education, courts, and bureaucratic governance is found in Monrovia and other larger cities.³⁵

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Liberian history is contested and, as in many countries, is perceived as a political undertaking. This section seeks only to provide a general outline of certain historical events to provide the reader with context for the following report. A timeline of events during the TRC's mandate period, from 1979 to 2003, can be found at Appendix G.

Early History

Liberia's current ethnic diversity reflects the many stages of migration to what today is known as Liberia. The oldest inhabitants of the Liberian territory include the Gola, Kpelle, Loma, Gbandi, Mende, and Mano peoples, who had settled in the area by 6000 B.C.E.³⁶ Later arrivals included the Kru, Bassa, Dei, and Grebo peoples, who arrived during the sixteenth century from the west.³⁷ The seventeenth century brought the arrival of the Vai and Mandingo, migrating from the north.³⁸

Beginning in the early nineteenth century, actors within the United States began to play a part in the fortunes of the land that is now known as Liberia. As a reaction to America's own social crisis created by the use of Africans as slave labor, a group of prominent Americans began a movement to return free African-Americans to Africa.³⁹ They formed an association of abolitionists and whites who feared the growth of a free black population in the United States. This group became the American Colonization Society and ultimately selected land near the present day capital of Liberia to serve as the landing point for the first settlers.⁴⁰ Settlers officially founded the government of Liberia in 1847.⁴¹

The indigenous African inhabitants of the Liberian territory were generally antagonistic to the establishment of the Liberian nation and played no role in the decision-making around its founding principles and documents.⁴² According to Liberia scholar, Jeremy Levitt, the "Dei [the group located in the territory initially claimed by the ACS] abhorred the settlers' presence...[and] they forcefully resisted the erection of a 'colony,' 'settlement,' or 'dominion' in Cape Mesurado or at any other location on the coast."⁴³ Indeed, the colonization society settlements and indigenous tribal communities were at war over territory and trade routes throughout much of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

The settler-led government in Monrovia engaged in the process of establishing an independent nation.

Liberian settler politics from 1883 onward were dominated by a small clique of settler families and their allies who governed through the True Whig Party.⁴⁵

Indigenous African communities followed their traditional patterns of life while also attempting to adapt to settler dominance. After the turn of the century, the settlers had established a system of military and administrative control over what was known as the “hinterland,” or the interior.⁴⁶ This area consisted of the land outside of the colonization society settlements that had been recognized by the international community as under the control of the settler-led government in Monrovia.⁴⁷ The hinterland made up the vast bulk of Liberian territory, and indigenous Liberians constituted



the vast majority of the population.⁴⁸ The Liberian Frontier Force, which later became the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL),⁴⁹ was used as the primary instrument of control in the hinterland.⁵⁰

Liberia’s rich natural resources led to success in establishing international commerce from its coast. During the 1860s, however, Liberia began to face economic problems. Liberia took out high-interest loans from the United States and Europe in the 1870s, becoming economically dependent on other countries.⁵¹ Liberia signed a concession agreement with the Firestone

corporation in 1926.⁵² Under the agreement, Liberia leased one million acres of land to Firestone for 99 years at an annual cost of six cents per acre.⁵³ Rubber soon became Liberia’s biggest export. The Firestone plantation became a major driver of Liberia’s economy, employing thousands of workers.

Liberia’s relationship with Firestone led to international attention and criticism when the True Whig Party was accused of forcibly recruiting laborers to work on the Firestone plantation and elsewhere in a system known as pawning.⁵⁴ This led to an inquiry by the League of Nations, which concluded that officials of the Liberian government had pursued a policy of forcing indigenous Liberians to work in slavery-like conditions.⁵⁵ Although the president of Liberia was forced to resign, the True Whig Party remained in power.⁵⁶

The Tubman and Tolbert Eras

In 1944, William V.S. Tubman was elected President of Liberia.⁵⁷ With income from foreign

investments and the discovery of minerals, Tubman modernized Liberia's economy and developed some of Liberia's basic infrastructure.⁵⁸ During his tenure, Tubman slowly increased the access to governing structures for indigenous Liberians.⁵⁹ Tubman rewarded loyalty with public money and suppressed political opposition,⁶⁰ however. Therefore, the stratification of Liberian society between Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians persisted.

By the time Vice-President William Tolbert succeeded Tubman in 1971, many indigenous Liberians were frustrated with widespread poverty, lack of basic amenities, and political domination by the Americo-Liberians. As one Liberian scholar noted, a "wave of rising expectations overtook Liberians following the death of Tubman."⁶¹ In 1972, one year after Tolbert assumed the presidency, the Movement for Justice in Africa (MOJA) was organized by professors and students at the University of Liberia.⁶² In 1975, the Progressive Alliance of Liberia (PAL) was established by Liberians living in the United States, and PAL opened an office in Liberia in 1978.⁶³ Tolbert, MOJA, and PAL would become the primary antagonists in the civil unrest that many believe led to Liberia's first military coup d'état in 1980.

According to Levitt, MOJA and PAL "worked together with numerous other organizations to pressure the government to make fundamental changes in the way that it allocated resources and kept [indigenous] Liberians and poor, rural and unemployed Liberians of all descents at the periphery of decision making..."⁶⁴ MOJA and PAL took action as a result of two major historical events.⁶⁵ The first was leaked information about a government plan to increase the price of the Liberian staple food, rice.⁶⁶ Second, the government effectively barred "poor and landless Liberians" from exercising their right to vote by its invocation of "150-year-old constitutionally based property ownership rules."⁶⁷ The price increase, in particular, was perceived as an opportunity for members of the ruling elite, many of whom had significant economic stakes in Liberia's cash crops, to benefit personally.⁶⁸ The Tolbert administration stated that the price increase was designed to stimulate domestic rice production and support small farmers, to slow the rate of migration to urban areas, and to discourage rice importation.⁶⁹ Regardless of its intent, the price increase caused a widespread negative response.

In 1979, PAL applied for a permit to demonstrate against the proposed price increase and was denied.⁷⁰ PAL leaders met with Tolbert in March 1979 and were again ordered not to demonstrate.⁷¹ Despite the order, PAL called for demonstrations on April 14, 1979.⁷² Hundreds of people protested, and conflicts between police and demonstrators resulted in demonstrators being shot.⁷³ Unleashed by these Rice Riots, many people, including some soldiers, turned to looting.⁷⁴ Political tensions between Tolbert, MOJA, and PAL continued throughout 1979 and 1980.⁷⁵

Samuel K. Doe Era

On the night of April 12, 1980, a group of soldiers from the AFL staged a military coup against

President Tolbert.⁷⁶ Tolbert was assassinated during the attack on the executive mansion.⁷⁷

The military junta, or People's Redemption Council (PRC), assumed power and chose Samuel K. Doe, a member of Liberia's indigenous Krahn tribe, as PRC co-chair and head of state.⁷⁸ On August 22, 1980, 13 members of President Tolbert's cabinet were marched down to a beachside military barracks, tied to poles, stripped, and executed by firing squad.⁷⁹ Many political figures fled the country, and many others were imprisoned.⁸⁰

After several years of pressure to return to civilian rule, Doe agreed to a process of constitutional reform and elections. Elections were held in 1985 and, while numerous political parties participated, the elections were widely seen as fraudulent.⁸¹ Doe declared himself and his party, the National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), victorious. In November 1985, one month after the election, PRC co-founder Thomas Quiwonkpa returned from exile in the United States and attempted a coup to topple Doe. The rebellion was violently quashed. Doe was inaugurated as the first president of Liberia's Second Republic in January 1986.⁸²

Immediately after seizing power, and throughout his regime, Doe's government engaged in widespread human rights violations.⁸³ At the same time, Liberia was a close ally of the United States under the administrations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. During Doe's regime, Liberia received more than 400 million dollars in foreign aid.⁸⁴

Charles Taylor Era

On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor, a former bureaucrat in the Doe administration who had been educated in the United States and who had fled Liberia after being charged with embezzling government funds,⁸⁵ launched an invasion from neighboring Côte d'Ivoire.⁸⁶ Throughout 1990, Taylor and his group of fighters, who called themselves the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), began seizing control of increasing amounts of territory outside Monrovia.⁸⁷ Many Liberians, frustrated by Doe's oppressive and inept rule, initially welcomed Taylor's incursion.⁸⁸

Within six months, Taylor's NPFL had reached Monrovia and reports of human rights abuses and an impending humanitarian crisis demanded international action.⁸⁹ In response, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deployed a Cease-fire Monitoring Group peacekeeping mission, known as ECOMOG, to Monrovia in August 1990.⁹⁰ On September 9, 1990, a splinter group of the NPFL, Prince Johnson's Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL), captured and tortured Samuel Doe to death.⁹¹ The NPFL and Doe's soldiers signed a ceasefire agreement in November; a second peace agreement was signed between an interim government, the NPFL, and Doe's supporters in December.⁹² Notwithstanding the peace agreements, the fighting continued. The United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO), a rebel group composed of Doe supporters

from neighboring Guinea and Sierra Leone, was formed to oppose Taylor. ULIMO invaded Liberia in April 1991.⁹³

Although additional peace agreements were signed by the warring factions throughout 1993 and 1994, the conflict continued,⁹⁴ and other armed factions emerged. In 1995, Taylor agreed to a ceasefire and a timeline for the demobilization and disarmament of his troops. Taylor, along with five other factional leaders, became members of a collective transitional presidency.⁹⁵ Elections were held in 1997, and Taylor won the presidential election.⁹⁶

The civil unrest persisted, however. In 1999, exiled Liberians formed armed groups to oppose Taylor. Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) launched military campaigns against Taylor's government.⁹⁷

Under international pressure, Taylor stepped down in exchange for asylum in Nigeria on August 11, 2003.⁹⁸ Soon thereafter, the warring factions and an interim government signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Accra, Ghana, which provided for a transitional government until the 2006 elections.⁹⁹ Gyude Bryant was selected to lead the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL).¹⁰⁰

Post-conflict Liberia

Since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Liberia has been at the center of several historic firsts: the first election of a female president in Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the prosecutions of a former national president and his son, Charles Taylor and Chuckie Taylor.

Under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, elections were held in 2005. On November 23, 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected President of Liberia. The first democratically elected female president in Africa and a member of the Unity Party, Sirleaf suffered persecution under prior regimes.¹⁰¹ Initially an appointee in Doe's government,¹⁰² Sirleaf was later imprisoned in 1985 and 1986 for criticizing Doe's administration.¹⁰³ She initially supported Taylor's NPFL invasion but later disassociated herself from the group.¹⁰⁴



One of President Sirleaf's early acts was to inaugurate the TRC. On June 22, 2006, the TRC of Liberia was launched. Composed of nine commissioners,¹⁰⁵ the TRC was mandated to "promote national

peace, security, unity and reconciliation,” while making it possible to hold perpetrators accountable for gross human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law.¹⁰⁶ Apart from the TRC, two key prosecutions have begun to address the issue of justice for crimes by key actors in the Liberian conflict – that of Charles Taylor at the Special Court for Sierra Leone and that of Chuckie Taylor in U.S. federal court.

The United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone created the Special Court for Sierra Leone in January 2002.¹⁰⁷ The objective of the Special Court for Sierra Leone is to “prosecute persons who bear the greatest responsibility for serious violations of international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law committed in the territory of Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996.”¹⁰⁸ On March 7, 2003, the Special Court for Sierra Leone charged Charles Taylor with war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law. The charges allege that Charles Taylor is individually criminally responsible for the actions of others, specifically those under his command, given his position of executive power.¹⁰⁹ Because these criminal charges are brought by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, they do not cover Taylor’s criminal actions perpetrated against the Liberian people.

Taylor argued that he was “immune from any exercise of jurisdiction...by virtue of the fact that he was, at the time of the issuing of the indictment and warrant of arrest against him, a Head of State.”¹¹⁰ For three years, Taylor remained in exile beyond the Special Court’s reach. It was not until a request by the Liberian government that Nigerian President Obasanjo delivered Taylor to the Special Court on March 29, 2006. To preserve regional stability, Taylor’s trial was transferred to The Hague, Netherlands, where he is currently incarcerated.¹¹¹ Presentation of evidence in the Charles Taylor trial began in January 2008. The United Kingdom has agreed to incarcerate Taylor should he be convicted.

Charles Taylor’s son, Roy Belfast, Jr., a U.S. citizen known as Chuckie Taylor, was indicted in 2006 in U.S. federal court for his actions as the head of the Anti-terrorist Unit (ATU), a notorious paramilitary unit alleged to be responsible for torture and killings.¹¹² This indictment was the first in the United States under a statute criminalizing torture, 18 U.S.C. §2340A.¹¹³ The statute brings within the jurisdiction of U.S. federal courts all acts of torture committed outside of the United States when the offender is a U.S. citizen, national, or is present in the United States.¹¹⁴ On October 30, 2008, a federal jury found Chuckie Taylor guilty of torture and conspiracy¹¹⁵ and he was sentenced to 97 years in prison.¹¹⁶ Despite these prosecutions, several individuals who played important roles during the conflict were elected to public office in Liberia in 2005 and currently hold public office in Liberia.

ROOT CAUSES OF THE CONFLICT

The mandate of the TRC of Liberia includes “[i]nvestigating the antecedents of the crises which gave rise to and impacted on the violent conflict in Liberia.”¹¹⁷ Accordingly, statement givers in the

diaspora were asked to discuss their opinions as to what they believed to be the root causes of the conflict.¹¹⁸ Overwhelmingly, Liberians in the diaspora identified three major root causes: inequities implicit in the structure of the settler-dominated Liberian state, tribalism, and greed/corruption.

Systemic inequity between the ruling elite and the majority indigenous population, tribal allegiance and intertribal conflict, and pervasive corruption were critical factors that led to the collapse of the Liberian state. Throughout the war, however, illegal personal enrichment and violent repression of opposition were perpetuated by all sides to the conflict. Those with guns became lawless, seeking to enrich themselves and targeting those against whom they had personal grudges or anyone who was perceived to have benefited from the system prior to the war. Government soldiers took money and food from civilians at checkpoints.¹¹⁹ Statement givers again and again described rebel fighters taking personal revenge during raids.¹²⁰ Some statement givers described being targeted because of “money arguments.”¹²¹ They also described how some people got “rich because they commit atrocities and they feel that warfare is...the green light or...the passage to creating wealth.”¹²² Through each regime in Liberia, and all through the conflict period, these root causes as identified by statement givers were reflected in widespread violations of basic human rights.

The Americo-Liberian/Indigenous Liberian Divide

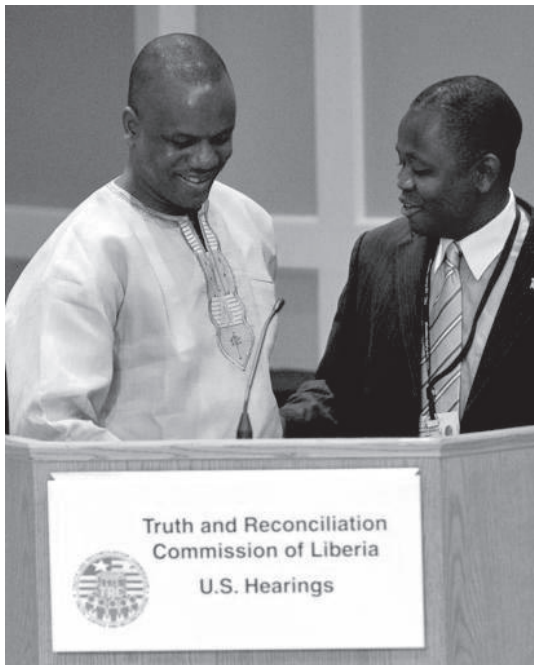
Civil war really started from the way the people in Liberia were treated by Liberians that returned to the country from America. There was no good representation for the tax payer and they did not want the indigenous to be educated. They wanted to keep the education limited so they could continue to oppress the indigenous. Over time the indigenous began to recognize the exploitation and called for a two-party system.¹²³

The systematic exclusion and marginalization of indigenous Africans from the economic, political, and social arenas during the many years of Americo-Liberian dominance is widely regarded as one of the root causes of the civil crisis. Numerous statement givers in the diaspora identified this as one of the primary causal factors.¹²⁴ Statement givers expressed the opinion that, “indigenous Liberians were treated like dirt by Americo-Liberians”¹²⁵ and “[Americo-Liberians] enriched themselves off the backs of the indigenous people, who were kept poor.”¹²⁶ One statement giver observed: “The very seal of the country says ‘The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here,’ which implies that there was no one in the country before 1822. This overemphasizes the role of the Americo-Liberians, which I believe is a fundamental and very serious problem.”¹²⁷

Tensions between indigenous Liberians and settlers existed almost from the first interaction between the two groups 130 years before the 1980 coup.¹²⁸ The new settlement, initially under the control of white ACS agents, and then under black settler rule, viewed Western culture, education, and religious

practices as superior to practices of indigenous Africans. Statement givers opined that, “[w]hen the ex-slaves arrived in Liberia from the United States, they brought with them segregation. They drew a line between themselves and the indigenous people of West Africa.”¹²⁹ Even the leadership reflected this sense of superiority, as Liberia’s first president, J.J. Roberts, reportedly called indigenous Liberians “a heathen and barbarous people.”¹³⁰

Americo-Liberians demonstrated their contempt for indigenous culture in many ways: by their reluctance to marry indigenous Liberian women with whom they had informal liaisons, by their ceaseless efforts to convert indigenous Liberians to Christianity, by ordinances against public nudity..., by efforts to replace indigenous Liberian traditional land ownership (based on use and need) with private ownership, and by de facto segregation in towns.¹³¹



This attitude set the stage for systematic exclusion and marginalization of indigenous Liberians as settlers consolidated power. While Americo-Liberians constituted only a small percentage of the population,¹³² this small minority group effectively dominated the majority indigenous Africans politically, economically, and socially for more than 100 years. Americo-Liberians were, as historian Stephen Ellis writes, “as much a social and political class, a type of aristocracy, as they were a true ethnic group.”¹³³

During the years of settler rule in Liberia, government policies focused on consolidation of power among the ruling elite in Monrovia. In addition to establishing an indirect rule system to collect taxes from the hinterland for the central government,¹³⁴ the government used the Liberian Frontier Force to “quell internative conflict, collect taxes, and enforce government mandates.”¹³⁵

Historians and statement givers alike describe violence and intimidation inflicted in the interior by the Liberian Frontier Force.¹³⁶ In the Liberian Frontier Force and its successor, the AFL, the officer corps was made up of Americo-Liberians, while the rank and file soldiers were indigenous Liberians.¹³⁷ Such a system began to provide incentives for consolidation of loyalty to the state among indigenous Liberians who gained benefits from aligning with the settler elites.

Once effective military control was established over the territory of Liberia, policies to ensure the perpetuation of the settlers' political and cultural system focused on political, economic, and social power. Liberia was a one-party state dominated by the True Whig Party, which was founded by the settlers in 1869.¹³⁸ The True Whig party ruled the country continuously from the late nineteenth century until President Tolbert's assassination in 1980.¹³⁹ Power was concentrated in the presidency, especially under Liberia's longest ruling leader, President William V.S. Tubman. An attempt at political opposition under Tubman ended in 1955, with an assassination attempt against the president and the suppression of the opposition.¹⁴⁰

Not only did Americo-Liberians dominate politics, but their leading cultural and religious institutions, such as the Freemasons and the Christian churches, were key opportunities for upward social mobility.¹⁴¹ Prior to 1980, Liberia was reportedly stratified along social and class lines so rigid that one statement giver described it as an "apartheid" approach.¹⁴² One scholar, Ayodeji Olukoju, has described Liberia's stratification in the following way:

[In the 1960s, Monrovia] was subdivided into three distinct social groups arranged in a pyramidal order. At the apex were the elite and honorables, followed by the civilized in the middle, with the tribal or uncivilized at the base of the pyramid. The civilized comprised clerks, schoolteachers, nurses, and junior officials. Drivers, mechanics, domestics, technicians, and electricians occupied the transitional zone between civilized and tribal. Outside Monrovia, this unwritten class or social differentiation... was reinforced even by the activities of formal groups known as civilized committees or civilized communities or elements, which existed to promote relations between the local elites and the central government.¹⁴³

Liberians of indigenous descent had few options for full participation in Liberian society. Other than joining the army, the best way for an indigenous Liberian to advance was through the ward system. Indigenous Liberians could gain a quality education and thus access to economic power only through attendance at schools in Monrovia. To attend such schools, indigenous children became "wards" of Americo-Liberian families.¹⁴⁴ As one statement giver described it, "[i]n the past, the only way the illiterate could go to school was through patronage."¹⁴⁵ Liberia scholar J. Gus Liebenow noted that the ward system was legally recognized in Liberia in 1838. "In return for food, clothing, shelter, and often education as well, the ward helped out with the farming and other chores. When the system was abused, it differed little from domestic slavery. In many instances, however, a ward was fully adopted into the Americo-Liberian family and permitted to bear the family name, inherit property, and enjoy the prestige of his 'father.'"¹⁴⁶

According to Levitt, "Most settler Liberians...realized that in order for the oligarchy to survive, it

would have to make concessions to its native populace.”¹⁴⁷ Tubman made some concessions through the Open Door and Unification policies.¹⁴⁸ These policies were designed to encourage foreign economic investment and to bring more indigenous Liberians into government. While the Open Door economic policy resulted in rapid economic growth in Liberia, it was growth that benefited the Monrovia elite and excluded indigenous Liberians.¹⁴⁹ Tubman’s successor, President Tolbert, went further and opened the door for a political opposition that Tubman had never allowed.¹⁵⁰ By the 1970s, a “counter-elite” was emerging of young people from indigenous backgrounds who had completed college and graduate education.¹⁵¹ The 1979 Rice Riots were an example of the efforts of the counter-elite, or student leaders, who called on their followers to demonstrate.¹⁵² The Tolbert government responded with violent suppression of the opposition.¹⁵³

Tensions between the settler elite and the indigenous population reached their apex with the assassination of President Tolbert in 1980. One of the former Tolbert government ministers who was imprisoned and narrowly escaped execution after the coup described how some imprisoned government officials were initially saved from death solely because they were considered to be of “pure” indigenous background – soldiers who were ordered to carry out the executions refused to do so because they would not kill a fellow indigenous Liberian.¹⁵⁴ After Tolbert’s execution, Liberians of indigenous descent celebrated,¹⁵⁵ danced, and sang “[n]ative woman born soldiers, soldiers killed Tolbert,” with the hope that the military junta would end the more than 133 years of Americo-Liberian rule.¹⁵⁶

Tribalism

Scholars note that although “tribal” identity and conflict in the region that became known as Liberia had been a factor since pre-settler days,¹⁵⁷ the notion that there are 16 clearly defined tribal groups in Liberia is a fiction that emerged along with the development of the modern Liberian state.¹⁵⁸ Yet “tribalism” – tribal conflict and allegiance – was identified as a root cause of the Liberian conflict by numerous statement givers in the diaspora. Many statement givers also described policies that favored one tribe over another, leading to deep divisions based on ethnic identity. Some statement givers expressed the opinion that conflict leaders used ethnic strife to fuel the war.¹⁵⁹ While members of all ethnic groups in Liberia suffered human rights abuses during the conflict, the favoritism and targeting of individuals based on identification with the Krahn, Gio, Mano, and Mandingo tribes was particularly significant.

Statement givers frequently attributed the rise in indigenous ethnic tension to the policies of former President Samuel K. Doe, who was reported to have favored members of his own Krahn tribe, as well as Mandingos. Statement givers who were involved in the Doe government point out that initially many of the key positions in the PRC government were held by individuals from non-Krahn ethnic groups.¹⁶⁰ The following commentary, however, is representative of the view of many statement givers:

Because most of the PRC members were of the ethnic Krahn tribe, they began practicing tribalism and nepotism, placing a premium on members of the Krahn tribe only. Most of the key government positions were filled with Krahn men and women, some of whom could neither read nor write.¹⁶¹

By most estimates, Krahns made up less than five percent of the Liberian population in the early 1980s.¹⁶² As the Doe era progressed through the 1980s, however, Krahns were appointed to a disproportionate number of positions in the government and in the AFL.¹⁶³ Statements described how Krahn employees were appointed to higher positions of authority than non-Krahn employees, regardless of their ability. One U.K. statement giver recalled:

that a key official was appointed who could not even read and write, just because he was a Krahn and the uncle of the then Head of State. A qualified person would be appointed to each Government post who could come from any tribe, but there was always a “watchdog” from the Krahn tribe appointed as well.¹⁶⁴

The perception was echoed by a statement giver from Providence, Rhode Island in her TRC statement:

When President Doe took over Liberia, he put family and those belonging to the Krahn tribe, or with connections to the Krahn tribe, into positions of power whether or not they had the skills to handle those positions. Realizing that many of those put into power would not have the requisite skills, President Doe would match those he put in positions of power with individuals who did have the necessary skills. President Doe’s people would become managers and those with the true skill would be assistant managers. My husband was one of the people with knowledge, and his boss was manager solely because of his family connections.¹⁶⁵

Mandingos, known in Liberia for their trading and economic activities, shifted their loyalty and support from the Americo-Liberian regime to Samuel K. Doe,¹⁶⁶ who rewarded them with official positions in government as well as trade privileges.¹⁶⁷ Although they have been in Liberia for generations, Mandingos have historically been viewed by other Liberian ethnic groups as foreigners.¹⁶⁸ This shifting of support to the Doe regime added to resentment against the Mandingo, particularly in Nimba County, as many of the Mandingos appointed to official positions were there.¹⁶⁹

Doe’s favoritism toward his own tribe and others whose support he hoped to gain extended to all public and private sectors of Liberian society. Many statements detail examples of government and private discrimination against non-Krahns in employment, housing, education, and other areas. One

statement giver reported how his neighbor, a Krahn, kept repeating that he was now a “first-class citizen” because he was from the same tribe as Doe.¹⁷⁰ A Mano statement giver described how he joined Doe’s army, where he excelled and became a company first platoon leader.¹⁷¹ Because of his experience and high school education, President Doe promised him a scholarship to attend West Point.¹⁷² To his disappointment, he did not receive the scholarship because, he believed, he was not Krahn.¹⁷³ A Gio statement giver described how she applied to the University of Liberia in 1980.¹⁷⁴ She passed her national exams and was accepted by the university while in the twelfth grade.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, both she and her sister were unable to enroll in the university. She believes that the university president, who was Krahn, took her name off the list because it was obviously Gio.¹⁷⁶ Later she also experienced difficulties in finding housing in the town of Kakata, in western Liberia, despite the availability of multiple units. She believes she again was denied consideration because of her name.¹⁷⁷

Subsequent events continued to deepen the ethnic divide. In the 1985 presidential election, Jackson F. Doe, a Gio from Nimba County, was widely believed to have defeated Samuel K. Doe, a Krahn.¹⁷⁸ The attempted coup by Thomas Quiwonkpa, a Gio from Nimba County and one time PRC associate of Samuel K. Doe, and Doe’s violent retaliation against residents of Nimba County escalated the tension among tribes, particularly between Gio and Krahn. Those affiliated with Nimba County and its predominant tribes, the Gio and the



Mano, were targeted in Monrovia and across Liberia. Numerous statement givers cited Doe’s revenge as engendering hatred and revenge-seeking by the Gio and Mano tribal groups against members of the Krahn tribe.¹⁷⁹ One statement giver who now lives in Atlanta told the TRC of losing her uncle in the post 1985 coup retaliation:

Doe’s soldiers had targeted people from the Mano and Gio tribes...Doe’s soldiers caught [my uncle] as he walked on the street, when they asked him in what tribe he belonged. He said, “Mano,” and Doe’s soldiers executed him there by slashing his throat...[He] was such a kind, gentle man that did not deserve to die that way...[He] would have been identifiable by his speech alone because the Mano tribe speaks a very unique way from that of the other tribes and are easy to target.¹⁸⁰

Statement givers detailed how government soldiers arrested government employees with Gio, Mano, or Nimba County affiliations. One Gio statement giver described how soldiers arrested her husband three times.¹⁸¹ Although they never provided a reason for his arrests, she believed it was because of his government role and Gio background:¹⁸²

My husband was imprisoned for nearly three months and was kept in an underground cell in Monrovia that I described as a “lion’s den.” He was tortured and beaten while kept in confinement, his whereabouts unknown to me. While I was terrified to hear about what he had gone through after he was freed, I was thankful that he was still alive...

My husband was arrested a second time, not long after his first arrest... Again, he was not told why he was being arrested... While imprisoned, he was beaten and deprived of food. I tried to visit my husband while he was in jail, but I was not allowed to see him. The food I provided was not given to him. Eventually, he was freed from jail...

My husband was arrested a third time and I did not know where he was held. After release, he recounted some gruesome stories of being tied to the back of a pickup truck and being dragged across the ground. During his imprisonment, I saw him on the television... A captive was decapitated right next to my husband. My husband was hit with the decapitated head so hard that he passed out. The soldiers soiled him with feces and urine while he was passed out.¹⁸³

Some statements described how this targeting was perpetrated against the very young as well to prevent the emergence of a future opposition. Statement givers reported accounts of Doe’s forces exacting revenge on the residents of Nimba County by taking babies and killing them, generally by drowning them in wells.¹⁸⁴ Other statement givers reported that Doe forces rounded up children in Nimba and had them buried alive so that they could not “grow up and seek revenge.”¹⁸⁵ Regardless of the truth of such reports, they persist in the Liberian consciousness. As late as the NPFL invasion in 1989, statement givers reported that Doe’s forces were drowning people in wells in Nimba in revenge for Quiwonkpa’s coup attempt and for Nimba County’s support of Taylor’s invasion.¹⁸⁶

Ethnic divisions became fundamental to the civil war when Charles Taylor’s rebel forces invaded in 1990.¹⁸⁷ TRC statements from the diaspora are replete with stories of NPFL fighters targeting Krahn and Mandingos,¹⁸⁸ while Doe’s armed forces targeted Gios and Manos.¹⁸⁹ In the case of Mandingos, who are predominantly Muslim, statement givers also reported having to change their names and attire to avoid being targeted.¹⁹⁰ Krahn, Mandingo, Gio, and Mano tribes were not the only ones

targeted. For example, people with names that sounded Americo-Liberian were also targeted.¹⁹¹ Many statement givers described witnessing persons singled out for brutal treatment at checkpoints because of their alleged tribal affiliation or the language they spoke.¹⁹²

Corruption

Both statement givers and scholars identify rampant corruption as one of the causes of 25 years of conflict in Liberia. One statement giver summarized: “[T]here is deep-rooted corruption in Liberia, which is very sad. If anyone tries to exercise integrity, they are laughed at. If you don’t steal from the government, you’re seen as stupid.”¹⁹³

Perceived government corruption¹⁹⁴ was one of the factors that led to the coup against President Tolbert in 1980. Similarly, the PRC and Doe administration’s continuation of corrupt practices can be viewed as a major cause of the subsequent 14-year civil war.¹⁹⁵ Corruption continued during the years from 1990 to 2003, and in fact was “aggravated during the years of civil war when most of the interim governments were created based on a peace formula whereby appointments in Government were based on warring faction membership and loyalty...”¹⁹⁶

Liberia’s extensive corruption is generally attributed to several factors. According to the Government of Liberia’s own Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy (IPRS) “over-concentration of power” in the hands of the urban Americo-Liberian ruling elite led to corruption, “restricted access to the decision-making process, and limited the space for civil society participation in governance processes.”¹⁹⁷ A second factor is the traditional dominance of the Executive Branch – and within the Executive, the overwhelming dominance of the President – over the other constitutionally equal branches of government.¹⁹⁸ The President not only controlled the Armed Forces but also had disproportionate influence over the national budget, particularly appropriations and disbursements.¹⁹⁹ After an attempted coup in 1955, Tubman further consolidated power in the presidency and began developing a network of civilian spies and specialized security personnel for protection.²⁰⁰

Third, “the limited state of civil service rules and policies in Liberia [furthered a system] whereby the president...influenced or made appointments to key civil service positions below the directorial level.”²⁰¹ A report commissioned by Transparency International notes that, as a result of the President’s extraordinary power over public sector employment, Liberian presidents for decades influenced decisions regarding the recipients of almost “every public contract, permit, license, etc.”²⁰² This, according to the report, “...led to poor governance, inefficient management, and limited accountability in the public sector, which caused and/or contributed to many acts of corruption, including abuse of functions, trading in influences, and bribery.”²⁰³

These problems were further compounded by problems inherent in the justice system. Judges in

Liberia have always been subject to “political, social, familial, and financial pressures”²⁰⁴ because the judiciary has never been adequately compensated. As one statement giver noted, “they should pay the



civil servants better. They need to restructure the government and give the civil servants something to feed the children. If the government does not feed the children, the corruption will be there. The country’s legal system needs to be stronger.”²⁰⁵

Low wages and unattractive conditions of service meant that many lawyers were not willing to work in the Liberian judicial system.²⁰⁶ This contributes to the struggles of the justice system, including the infrastructure and corruption problems.²⁰⁷ At the lower levels of the courts, corruption was due in large part to the meager salaries paid to Justices of the Peace and magistrates.²⁰⁸ Such an environment led to corruption and allowed people with money to act with impunity.²⁰⁹

Corrupt practices resulting in illicit enrichment of public officials appear to have been widespread both before and during the time period under examination by the TRC. Even in 2006 – three years after Charles Taylor went into exile – “...a substantial percentage of all the private wealth in Liberia [was] held by current or former government

officials.”²¹⁰ Corruption in “state-owned enterprises, regulatory agencies and parastatal enterprises”²¹¹ was of particular concern.

Illicit enrichment during the period of Americo-Liberian rule is well documented. During the True Whig Party’s administration, a few state officials held a cumulative wealth that was greater than Liberia’s total budget; the government at times borrowed money from these officials.²¹² The U.S. Department of State also noted in 1980, that “[c]orruption was rampant among high officials including the President and his family.”²¹³ Information provided by one statement giver was typical of perceptions of illicit enrichment of high-ranking government officials: “In the 1970s, President Tolbert used money to build two housing projects that were supposed to be for low-income people, but he built big houses that were lived in by the government ministers.”²¹⁴

A long history of corrupt practices exists in the armed forces, particularly related to soldiers abusing their position to obtain material goods. One statement giver described President Tubman sending soldiers to capture the statement giver’s father in 1955.²¹⁵ The soldiers came into the village, “grabbing

chickens, food, animals, and things.”²¹⁶ At least one scholar has noted a clear progression from the breakdown in discipline among the AFL to the fighting factions during the 1990s that in many cases were nothing more than armed gangs.²¹⁷ When the AFL changed its recruiting practices in the 1960s, it began to recruit from Monrovia’s urban poor:

[L]acking property rights in both indigenous and “Western-oriented” societies, members of this group could become easily mobilized for plunder of both rural villages and for mayhem in cities. It was members of the lumpen military and others from the same social pool...that constituted the core of not only the security forces of the Doe regime but also those of Charles Taylor and other armed groups in the Liberian conflict.²¹⁸

Following the 1980 coup, problems with illicit enrichment of public employees continued.²¹⁹ Shortly after the PRC took power, “government employment expanded rapidly, apparently far in excess of any reasonable projection of the demand for public services.”²²⁰ Those who obtained these government jobs did relatively well. Lower level government workers earned approximately four times the national per capita income.²²¹ Those who worked for government-owned corporations also enjoyed substantial benefits.²²²

Doe used both government and private companies to divert funds for personal use.²²³ This widespread government corruption led to the departure of several foreign companies from Liberia in the latter half of the 1980s.²²⁴ Doe then turned to more surreptitious commercial activities by eschewing the more regulated foreign firms in favor of preexisting personal connections and trade in commodities (such as timber, rubber, gold and diamonds) that could be easily masked.²²⁵ Thus, use of more discrete channels of trade made state oversight of commerce increasingly difficult.²²⁶

Statement givers shared their personal experiences with regard to the corrupt practices. A statement giver reported that in the 1990s he witnessed corruption as a driver for an American company. The project was supposed to pay them \$450 in U.S. currency per month. But he and his coworkers were only paid \$35 per month. His coworker discovered financial statements showing that the company claimed to pay workers \$350 in salary and \$100 per diem, but the decimal point had been moved so they only needed to pay them \$35.²²⁷ Another statement giver reported depositing money into a Liberian bank and expecting \$50,000 in U.S. currency to be transferred to his account in New York.²²⁸ The money was not wired on time, and calls to the bank went unanswered.²²⁹ Eventually, 50,000 Liberian dollars was transferred into his account several months later.²³⁰

One of the most highly publicized incidents of corruption under Doe involved his eventual successor, Charles Taylor, who fled to the United States after being accused of embezzlement. A witness from Minnesota told the TRC that she worked with Taylor when he was responsible for

government purchasing as Director of General Services Administration in the Doe government. As an administrative assistant to the Deputy Director for Administration, she helped negotiate a lucrative contract for spare parts with a local supplier. She stated that Taylor refused to sign the contract, however, and directed that the parts be purchased from another entity. When the parts failed to arrive, she conducted an investigation and discovered the deal was a sham, the entity did not exist, and the funds had been sent to a Swiss bank account.²³¹

Once Taylor won the presidency his efforts at personal enrichment were often aided by the majority support he enjoyed in Parliament that allowed him to take over functions and divert resources from other branches of government.²³² For example, in 1999, Taylor appropriated the Forestry Department's revenues from Liberian timber exports.²³³ Another practice was to increase the price of staples and take part of the rate increase for himself.²³⁴ A 2002 report aptly summarized the extent of Taylor's corrupt management:

The system was started in the National Patriotic Front of Liberia territory in 1990 and merely extended to Monrovia when Taylor won the presidency. It might be described as appropriating the entire tradable economy into a single firm, with Charles Taylor as Chief Executive Officer and majority shareholder. Industries are parceled out to the small group of businessmen in Taylor's inner circle – fellow shareholders in "Liberia Inc."²³⁵

One major development under Taylor was the re-designation of the Liberian Maritime Registry administrator, which thereby increased government control over the shipping industry. Under its 50-year administration, the Liberian Maritime Registry remitted around \$700 million to the Liberian Government.²³⁶ The previous administrator, the U.S.-based International Registries, Inc., was viewed as a well run and highly efficient registry, in part because its management of the registry was completely independent of the Liberian Government.²³⁷ In 1999, however, the Liberian government signed an agreement to transfer administration of the registry from International Registries, Inc. to the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry, run by Taylor associates.²³⁸

This change allowed Taylor to divert millions of dollars from the shipping industry. Although the Minister of Finance was to have exclusive control over the registry revenue,²³⁹ he acknowledged a "significant diversion of the maritime funds for extra-budgetary uses by the Executive Mansion."²⁴⁰ In addition to providing funds to Taylor, the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry directly or indirectly aided Taylor and the civil war by agreeing to send registry revenue to non-governmental bank accounts.²⁴¹ The U.N. Panel of Experts found that this money was used for the delivery of weapons, including submachine guns, which were smuggled into Liberia from Uganda.²⁴²

Taylor also entered into contracts that granted him lucrative interests. For example, the American

televangelist Pat Robertson's Freedom Gold Ltd. signed an agreement with Taylor in 1999, so as to gain development rights to diamonds and gold in Liberia.²⁴³ Despite the Liberian government's refusal to ratify the agreement, Freedom Gold started a diamond mining venture in southeastern Liberia in 2000. Subsequently, it became known that Taylor had a ten percent ownership interest in Freedom Gold.²⁴⁴

As described by statement givers, Taylor's illicit economic activity aggravated an already unstable situation and contributed to the rise of armed groups aiming to oust him during the second Liberian civil war.²⁴⁵

Notes

- 1 AYODEJI OLUKOJU, *CULTURE AND CUSTOMS OF LIBERIA* 2 (2006).
- 2 U.N. Dep't of Peacekeeping Operations, Map of Liberia No. 3775 (2004), <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/liberia.pdf>.
- 3 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 3, 7.
- 4 D. ELWOOD DUNN, AMOS J. BEYAN & CARL PATRICK BURROWES, *HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF LIBERIA* Map 1: Languages and Ethnic Groups, 43-44, 146-48, 216, 221-22, 235, 251, 279, 302 (2d ed. 2001).
- 5 Rep. of Liberia, 2008 National Population and Housing Census: Preliminary Results (Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services June 2008), http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/census_2008provisionalresults.pdf.
- 6 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 4.
- 7 See JEREMY I. LEVITT, 'THE EVOLUTION OF DEADLY CONFLICT IN LIBERIA: FROM 'PATERNALTARIANISM' TO STATE COLLAPSE 17-18 (2005).
- 8 See generally MARY H. MORAN, *LIBERIA: THE VIOLENCE OF DEMOCRACY* 15-17 (2006) (discussing the fallacy of the New Barbarism hypothesis in the context of so-called "tribal" conflicts in Africa).
- 9 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 261. See also Sandra Yin, Population Reference Bureau, *Liberia Takes its First Census in 24 Years*, Apr. 2008, <http://www.prb.org/Articles/2008/liberia.aspx> (noting that Liberia's first census since 1984 was conducted in March 2008).
- 10 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 4; see DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 261.
- 11 The terms Americo-Liberian and Congo have distinct meanings; Americo-Liberian refers to free blacks who migrated from the United States to Liberia and Congo refers to blacks from slave ships that were intercepted on the open ocean and who were then sent to Liberia. Over time these terms have come to be used interchangeably to refer to individuals of African—but not indigenous Liberian—descent who were settled in Liberia. These terms are used interchangeably in this report.
- 12 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 3-4; DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 261.
- 13 *Id.*
- 14 *Id.* See also OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 91.
- 15 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 3. See also STEPHEN ELLIS, *THE MASK OF ANARCHY: THE DESTRUCTION OF LIBERIA AND THE RELIGIOUS DIMENSION OF AN AFRICAN CIVIL WAR* 35-43 (1999).
- 16 See ROBIN DUNN-MARCOS ET AL., *LIBERIANS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THEIR HISTORY AND CULTURE* 5-7 (Donald A. Ranard ed., Center for Applied Linguistics 2005), http://www.cal.org/co/liberians/liberian_050406_1.pdf.
- 17 Jonathan Paye-Layleh, *Lebanese Demand Liberia Poll Rights*, BBC NEWS, July 22, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4703029.stm>.
- 18 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 5-6.
- 19 See ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 51, 56. See generally AMOS SAWYER, *BEYOND PLUNDER: TOWARD DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN LIBERIA* 23-25 (2005) [hereinafter SAWYER, *BEYOND PLUNDER*] (explaining that soldiers' lack of community ties enabled them to indiscriminately victimize rural villages).
- 20 See OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 91-104.
- 21 See AMOS SAWYER, *THE EMERGENCE OF AUTOCRACY IN LIBERIA* 51 (1992) [hereinafter SAWYER, *EMERGENCE OF AUTOCRACY*].
- 22 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 268, 288.
- 23 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 228-29.
- 24 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 234-37 (describing the Leopard society and others).
- 25 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 112.
- 26 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 230-33; OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 22-27.
- 27 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 22-27.
- 28 SAWYER, *EMERGENCE OF AUTOCRACY*, *supra* note 21, at 50-51.
- 29 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 89.
- 30 *Id.* at 88.
- 31 The Poro and Sande societies are indigenous organizations that facilitate young Liberians' passage into adulthood. Elders of these societies also serve as intermediaries between the world of the living and the ancestors and serve as arbiters of conflict in communities. The Poro is for men and the Sande is for women.
- 32 In some parts of Liberia, trial by ordeal may include use of a hot knife against the skin to determine guilt or innocence, for example.

- 33 The palava hut is a traditional structure in communities used for group gatherings and the mediation of disputes. It is generally built in the form of a circle with low walls and a thatched roof.
- 34 Traditional punishments would generally involve payment of compensation and damages to the victim and the victim's family, as well as specific rituals for healing and reconciliation.
- 35 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 109, 116-117.
- 36 *Id.* at 3.
- 37 *Id.*
- 38 *Id.* at 4.
- 39 Henry Noble Sherwood, *The Formation of the American Colonization Society*, 2 J. NEGRO HIST. 209, 221-22 (1917) (listing Francis Scott Key, Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, Andrew Jackson, Bushrod Washington, and James Blake, among others, as officers and founders of the American Colonization Society).
- 40 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 60; Sherwood, *supra* note 39, at 217-22.
- 41 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at xxiv .
- 42 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 121-23.
- 43 *Id.* at 41.
- 44 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at xxiv-xxvi; LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 31, 121-23, 132-35.
- 45 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 264 (noting that while the True Whig Party dominated, other parties regularly challenged and lost); OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 111.
- 46 *See* LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 137-38.
- 47 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 164-65.
- 48 *See* LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at x-xi; DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 164-65.
- 49 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 24-25.
- 50 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 140-41.
- 51 *See* DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 215-16.
- 52 WILLIAM RENO, *WARLORD POLITICS AND AFRICAN STATES* 84 (1998).
- 53 *Id.* (citations omitted).
- 54 *The 1930 Enquiry Commission to Liberia*, 30 J. ROYAL AFR. SOC'Y 277, 277, 283-84 (1931).
- 55 *Id.* at 279-280.
- 56 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 178, 183.
- 57 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 337.
- 58 *Id.*
- 59 *See, e.g.*, LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 187 (describing the fact that, in 1946, universal suffrage was granted “to native hut owners who paid taxes,” whereas previously local chiefs voted for the entire community).
- 60 SAWYER, *BEYOND PLUNDER*, *supra* note 19, at 15-16.
- 61 *Id.* at 91-92.
- 62 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 193; DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at xxx.
- 63 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 272-73.
- 64 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 193.
- 65 *Id.* at 195.
- 66 Bishop Bennie D. Warner, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 26 (June 10, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with the author); *see also* LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 195; ADEKEYE ADEBAJO, *LIBERIA'S CIVIL WAR: NIGERIA, ECOMOG, AND REGIONAL SECURITY IN WEST AFRICA* 23 (2002).
- 67 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 195; *see also* DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 273 (describing the “property clause controversy”).
- 68 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 195; Bishop Bennie D. Warner, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 26 (June 10, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with the author); Miamen Wopea, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia (June 14, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with the author).
- 69 *See* ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 50.
- 70 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 195.
- 71 *Id.* *See also* Bishop Bennie D. Warner, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 65-66 (June 10, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with the author) (noting that there was a difference of opinion within the Tolbert government as to whether PAL should be allowed to go ahead with its protest).
- 72 ADEBAJO, *supra* note 66, at 23.
- 73 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 196. *See* Chapter 5 for additional information about the Rice Riots.

- 74 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 50. See Chapter 5 for additional information about the Rice Riots.
- 75 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 196-97.
- 76 RENO, *supra* note 52, at 80.
- 77 ADEBAJO, *supra* note 66, at 24-25.
- 78 *Id.* at 22-25.
- 79 Leon Dash, *Liberian Soldiers Taunt, Shoot 13 Former Leaders*, WASH. POST, April 23, 1980, at A1; RENO, *supra* note 52, at 80.
- 80 See ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 53.
- 81 *Id.* at 58.
- 82 ADEBAJO, *supra* note 66, at 28-29.
- 83 See generally LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, LIBERIA: A PROMISE BETRAYED 7-9 (1986) (providing a summary of human rights violations during the Doe era).
- 84 *Id.* at 166.
- 85 RENO, *supra* note 52, at 91-92.
- 86 Human Rights Watch, *Waging War to Keep the Peace: The ECOMOG Intervention and Human Rights*, June 1, 1993, <http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/1993/06/01/waging-war-keep-peace-ecomog-intervention-and-human-rights>.
- 87 *Id.*
- 88 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 83; see RENO, *supra* note 52, at 92.
- 89 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 79-80.
- 90 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 15-16; RENO, *supra* note 52, at 93.
- 91 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 9-11.
- 92 Conciliation Resources, Liberia: Chronology (describing the Bamako Ceasefire signed in Nov. 1990), <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/liberia/chronology.php> (last visited Nov. 11, 2008); Charles Abiodun Alao, *Commentary on the accords*, ACCORD 1 THE LIBERIAN PEACE PROCESS: 1990-1996 (1996), <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/liberia/commentary.php>.
- 93 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 16.
- 94 See Priscilla Hayner, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, *Negotiating Peace in Liberia: Preserving the Possibility for Justice* 6 (2007), <http://www.ictj.org/static/Africa/Liberia/HaynerLiberia1207.eng.pdf>; OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 15.
- 95 See OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 15-16.
- 96 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 270.
- 97 *Id.* at 217-18, 218-25.
- 98 *Id.* at 273.
- 99 Comprehensive Peace Agreement Between the Government of Liberia and the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) and Political Parties, Aug. 18, 2003, http://www.usip.org/library/pa/liberia/liberia_08182003_toc.html.
- 100 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 274.
- 101 *Profile: Liberia's 'Iron Lady'*, BBC NEWS, Nov. 23, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4395978.stm>.
- 102 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 303.
- 103 LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *supra* note 83, at 90, 103-4.
- 104 Thijs Bouwknegt, *Liberian president apologises for backing Charles Taylor*, RADIO NETHERLANDS WORLDWIDE, Feb. 13, 2009, <http://www.rnw.nl/internationaljustice/specials/Truthandreconciliation/090213-sirleaf>.
- 105 See appendix A for biographical information about the commissioners.
- 106 An Act to Establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia art. IV, § 4 (enacted by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, May 12, 2005), <https://www.trcofliberia.org/about/trc-mandate>.
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- 109 Indictment of Charles Ghankay Taylor at 5, *Prosecutor v. Charles Ghankay Taylor*, Case No. SCSL-03-01-I (Mar. 7, 2003).
- 110 Summary of Decision on Immunity from Jurisdiction, *Prosecutor v. Charles Ghankay Taylor*, Case No. SCSL-2003-01-I (May 31, 2004).
- 111 *Q&A: Trying Charles Taylor*, BBC NEWS, Jan. 7, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4848938.stm>. The President of the Special Court requested Taylor's trial be moved to The Hague because of concerns over stability in the region. Human Rights Watch, *Questions and Answers on Charles Taylor's Trial Before the*

- Special Court for Sierra Leone*, <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/05/31/sierra16027.htm#4> (last visited Feb. 27, 2009).
- 112 Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Justice, Roy Belfast Jr. aka Chuckie Taylor Indicted on Torture Charges: Justice Department Brings First-Ever Torture Charges (Dec. 6, 2006), http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2006/December/06_crm_813.html.
- 113 *Id.*
- 114 18 U.S.C. § 2340A(b) (2006).
- 115 Yolanne Almanzar, *Son of Ex-President of Liberia Is Convicted of Torture*, N.Y. TIMES, Oct. 30, 2008, at A16.
- 116 *Taylor's Son Jailed for 97 Years*, BBC NEWS, Jan. 9, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/7820069.stm>.
- 117 An Act to Establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia art. IV, § 4(c) (enacted by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, May 12, 2005), <https://www.trcofliberia.org/about/trc-mandate>.
- 118 Diaspora statement takers were trained to record statements in the diaspora in the third person. Thus, most diaspora statements were recorded in the third person. In this section and throughout this report, however, quotes from these third-person statements have been presented in the first person to better represent the stories of the statement givers as experienced by them. These quotes have been changed where necessary to reflect this policy; any other changes to statement quotes have been indicated in brackets.
- 119 *See, e.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 1303 and 1481 (“the purpose of checkpoints was to collect money”).
- 120 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1508 (“Some of the envy had to do with material wealth, but in other cases, it stemmed from inconsequential and petty grudges that people used to justify telling lies about other people.”). *See also* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 489, 1279, 1361, 1368, 1380, 1384, 1438, 1443, 1563, 1566, 1585.
- 121 TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 1443, 1563.
- 122 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1489. *See also* TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1376 (war caused by “people looking out for only themselves”).
- 123 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1103.
- 124 *See, e.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 15, 26, 34, 183, 187, 460, 823, 1103, 1302, 1347, 1555, 1612. *See also* Telee Brown, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia 6-7 (June 14, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (noting that Liberians on Staten Island expressed the view that “the national pie was not being distributed equally” and that another cause was “the excessive force used by regimes of the past to suppress people who came up with opposing views”) (transcript on file with author); Dr. Emmanuel Dolo, Comment at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia (June 10, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author); Dr. Augustine Konneh, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia (June 10, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author); Dr. Patricia Jabbeh Wesley Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia (June 13, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author); Liberian Organization of the Piedmont, Recommendations to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Liberia 4-6 (June 11, 2008) (on file with the author).
- 125 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 460.
- 126 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1302.
- 127 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 15.
- 128 *E.g.*, LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 93 (describing the Bassa-Government War of 1851-52, the Kru-Government War of 1855, the Grebo-Maryland War of 1856-57, and the Gebebo Reunited Kingdom Revolution of 1875-76).
- 129 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 40.
- 130 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 82.
- 131 DUNN-MARCOS ET AL., *supra* note 16, at 3.
- 132 The figure is generally recognized at less than 5 percent. *Id.* (putting the figure at 3 percent); DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 261 (putting the figure at 2.2 percent based on a 1984 census).
- 133 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 43. *See also* LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 193 n.41.
- 134 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 170 (describing the Liberians Frontier Force’s role in enforcing the hut tax); LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 138-39.
- 135 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 146.
- 136 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 46; LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at

- 146; TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1641 (describing Frontier Force members using a torture tactic to force the statement giver's grandmother to pay the hut taxes of a neighbor); TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1598.
- 137 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 46; LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 145-46.
- 138 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 332.
- 139 *Id.* at 335. Historical references to the year when True Whig party domination began vary depending on the source. *See, e.g., id.* (noting that the True Whig Party ruled the country continuously beginning in 1881); Varney A. Yengbeh, Jr., *Liberia's Security and Foreign Policy Dilemma*, 1 AFR. POL'Y J. 58, 60 (2006) (noting that the True Whig Party dominated the political sphere from Anthony D. Gardner's election in 1877); Fred van der Kraaij, President William R. Tolbert, Jr. (1971-1980): The Preacher-President, <http://www.liberiapastandpresent.org/WilliamTolbert.htm> (last visited Dec. 2, 2008) (noting that the True Whig Party had taken power in 1870, barring a short gap after 1871); ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 43 (stating that the True Whig Party "governed Liberia for all but six years between 1870 and 1980").
- 140 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 190; TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1641 (describing soldiers searching for statement giver's father because he had been a supporter of the political opposition).
- 141 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 45.
- 142 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1598. Numerous statement givers described discrimination and social stratification during this period. *See, e.g.,* TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 187 (describing how a cousin had to begin using an Americo-Liberian name in order to get a scholarship). *See also* Samuel Kalongo Luo, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia (June 11, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 143 OLUKOJU, *supra* note 1, at 112.
- 144 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 48. Several statement givers described experiences with the ward system. *See, e.g.,* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 34, 187; *see also* Bishop Bennie D. Warner, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 9 (June 10, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 145 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 183.
- 146 J. GUS LIEBENOW, LIBERIA: THE EVOLUTION OF PRIVILEGE 16 (1969); *see also* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 34 and 187 (describing changing an indigenous name to an Americo-Liberian one).
- 147 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 187.
- 148 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 254, 340-41.
- 149 Rep. of Liberia, Poverty Reduction Strategy 14 (April 2008); U.S. DEP'T OF STATE, REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTRY CONDITIONS FOR 1980 143 (1981).
- 150 LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, *supra* note 83, at 13.
- 151 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 49-50.
- 152 *See supra* text associated with nn. 63, 70-75; *see also, e.g.,* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 786, 1322 (opining that Liberians who went abroad brought back ideas that led to the conflict).
- 153 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 196 (describing Tolbert's invocation of a mutual defense clause with Guinea to help the AFL suppress the rioting). *See* Chapter 5 for more information about the Rice Riots.
- 154 M. BURLEIGH HOLDER, THE HAND OF GOD 139 (2006). Mr. Holder submitted his entire autobiography, THE HAND OF GOD, to the TRC as an official statement.
- 155 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 54.
- 156 *Id.* at 51. Statement givers described similar opinions. *E.g.,* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 823, 1444; *see also* TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 23 (describing Krahn people singing this refrain every year on the anniversary of the coup).
- 157 LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 27. Tribes engaged in warfare to protect trade routes and territory. One role of the Frontier Force was, in fact, to suppress intertribal conflicts throughout the interior of Liberia. *Id.*
- 158 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 31-32; *see also* LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 28.
- 159 *See, e.g.,* TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1478; *see also* Bai Gbala, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia (June 12, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author); Kerper Dwanyen, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia (June 14, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 160 Interview with Patrick Kugmeh, former Presidential

- Press Secretary to Samuel K. Doe, in Minneapolis, Minn., at 24-25 (Aug. 11, 2008). *See also infra* Chapter 5. Military Rule Under the People’s Redemption Council (describing the fact that many of the ministers in Doe’s first cabinet had held positions in the Tolbert administration).
- 161 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 786. *See also* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 121 (“Doe was no different from the dictator before, and...he simply sent more money to Doe’s small Krahn tribe at the expense of other tribes.”) and 1444 (“every Krahn man is Doe”).
- 162 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 31; LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 201. Another source states that 3.8 percent of the population was Krahn in 1984. DUNN-MARCOS ET AL., *supra* note 16, at 2.
- 163 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 56 (noting that “Doe systematically promoted Krahn from selected clans to sensitive posts in the government and army...”); LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 201 (noting that Doe openly favored the Krahn).
- 164 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1039.
- 165 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1353. *See also* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 1444 (describing Krahn domination of civil service jobs) and 122 (describing discrimination in employment, housing, education and other basic needs because they were not Krahn); Miamen Wopea, Sr., Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia (June 14, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 166 Paul Richards et al., The World Bank, *Community Cohesion in Liberia: A Post-War Rapid Social Assessment* 56, 2005.
- 167 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 61.
- 168 *See, e.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 833, 437 (describing being told “Why don’t you go back to Guinea?”) and 1460 (reporting a Mandingo man being told “Just because you can speak our language and just because you learned our culture doesn’t mean you are one of us”); Ali Sylla, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia (June 13, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author). Contrary to the concept of Mandingos as outsiders, Mandingo people began migrating to Liberia as early as the 18th century and were well-settled in the country by 1800. Augustine Konneh, Mandingo Economic and Political Contributions to Modern-day Liberia 2-3 (unpublished manuscript presented at the African Studies Association Conf., Nov. 15-18, 2001) (on file with author).
- 169 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 61. *See also, e.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1552 (expressing the opinion that Mandingos were targeted because they controlled businesses and obtained government concessions).
- 170 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 64.
- 171 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 63.
- 172 *Id.*
- 173 *Id.*
- 174 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 122.
- 175 *Id.*
- 176 *Id.*
- 177 *Id.*
- 178 ELLIS, *supra* note 15, at 59.
- 179 *See, e.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 352, 740, 823, 1293, 1489.
- 180 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 469.
- 181 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 124.
- 182 *Id.*
- 183 *Id.*
- 184 *E.g.* TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 1551, 16 and 42 (“Doe had instructed soldiers to go after the Nimba people because the Nimbos had orchestrated the coup against Doe. Doe’s soldiers brutally murdered many, many women and children. They threw live people into wells.”)
- 185 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1441. *See also* TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1293.
- 186 *E.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 41 and 1102 (relating stories from others of entire families being placed in wells, into which grenades were then thrown. Statement giver identified Charles Julu as the person responsible for throwing grenades into wells).
- 187 *See infra* Chapter 7 for more information about Taylor’s NPFL invasion of Liberia.
- 188 *See, e.g.*, TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 182, 187, 740, 1347, 1352, 1475, 1338 (describing rebels saying they would “kill anyone who belonged to Krahn”) and 1502 (describing how Foulay/The Black Killer made a man accused of being Mandingo sing and

- dance like a puppet before killing him); Ali Sylla, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia (June 13, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author) (“I heard of so many Mandingos being killed and targeted and harassed and humiliated [by the rebels].”).
- 189 See, e.g., TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 105 (witnessing murder of neighbor whose wife was “from Doe’s side”), 406 (describing a Doe soldier saying to a child “Don’t go over there, Gio dog” before killing her), 469, 1352, 1551 (describing how his brother was killed because he was Mano); Miamen Wopea, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia (June 14, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 190 See, e.g., TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 1004 (describing taking on an Americo-Liberian name to escape to Sierra Leone), 1412 (describing how entire village stopped calling a child “Mohammed” to protect him and his family), 1489 (“I personally had to change my name from Hassan to Sam because Hassan is a Muslim name and if I said I was Hassan, then you would not be speaking to me today. I would have been a dead man, you know, back then.”).
- 191 See, e.g., TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 406 (“Everyone with fair skin was assumed to be Congo American and was killed.”) and 575 (describing how if someone had no dialect because they were Americo-Liberian, rebels would slash their tongue and cut their stomach.).
- 192 See, e.g., TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1475 (reporting how rebels lined them up to ask about tribal affiliations).
- 193 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 180. See also, e.g., TRC Diaspora Statement Recs. 15, 32, 111, 123, 1254, 1435, 1464, 1738.
- 194 Corruption means “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain [including] both financial or material gain and non-material gain, such as the furtherance of political or professional ambitions.” Transparency Int’l, *Global Corruption Report 2007*, at xxi (Diana Rodriguez & Linda Ehrichs eds., 2007), http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr/download_gcr/download_gcr_2007.
- 195 T. Negbalee Warner, Transparency Int’l, *Legal and Practical Challenges in Liberia to the Domestication of International Anti-Corruption Conventions* 8, June 2006, <http://www.transparency.org/content/download/18022/244077>.
- 196 *Id.* at 9.
- 197 Rep. of Liberia, Poverty Reduction Strategy, *supra* note 149, at 14.
- 198 U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 1989: LIBERIA 189 (1990) (noting that the Liberian “legislature is subject to inordinate executive influence and lacks the assertiveness, resources, and political will to play its constitutionally mandated role of coequal in governance”); Kerper Dwanyen, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm’n of Liberia 6 (June 14, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 199 Warner, *supra* note 195, at 9.
- 200 DUNN ET AL., *supra* note 4, at 273-74 (describing Tubman’s public relations officers); LEVITT, *supra* note 7, at 190.
- 201 Warner, *supra* note 195, at 9.
- 202 *Id.*
- 203 *Id.*
- 204 U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 1999: LIBERIA 291 (2000).
- 205 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 44.
- 206 Int’l Crisis Group, *Liberia: Resurrecting the Justice System* 20, Apr. 6, 2006, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4061&l=1>.
- 207 See generally *id.*
- 208 *Id.* at 20.
- 209 *Id.* at 20; U.N. Mission in Liberia, Quarterly Report on the Human Rights Situation in Liberia August 2006 – October 2006, at 24 (February 2007), http://unmil.org/documents/hr_report_aug_oct_2006_1.pdf, (“Poor salaries...may have encouraged corruption.”).
- 210 Warner, *supra* note 195, at 22.
- 211 Rep. of Liberia, Poverty Reduction Strategy, *supra* note 149, at 74.
- 212 Warner, *supra* note 195, at 22.
- 213 U.S. DEP’T OF STATE, COUNTRY REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES FOR 1980: LIBERIA 143 (1981);

- see also Herman J. Cohen, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 38-39 (June 12, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 214 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 15.
- 215 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1339.
- 216 *Id.*
- 217 SAWYER, BEYOND PLUNDER, *supra* note 19, at 23-25.
- 218 *Id.* at 24.
- 219 Herman J. Cohen, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 38-39 (June 12, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with author).
- 220 David L. Lindauer et al., *Government Wage Policy in Africa: Some Findings and Policy Issues*, 3 WORLD BANK RES. OBSERVER 1, 19-20 (1988).
- 221 *Id.* at 5.
- 222 *Id.* at 16.
- 223 RENO, *supra* note 52, at 85-86.
- 224 The Liberian American Mining Company, the National Iron Ore Company, and Bong Mining Company departed Liberia in 1989, 1985, and 1988, respectively. *Id.* at 86.
- 225 *Id.*
- 226 *Id.*
- 227 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1352.
- 228 TRC Diaspora Statement Rec. 1437.
- 229 *Id.*
- 230 *Id.*
- 231 Marie Y. Hayes, Testimony at the Diaspora Public Hearings of the Truth & Reconciliation Comm'n of Liberia 16-21, 50 (June 12, 2008, St. Paul, Minn., U.S.A.) (transcript on file with the author).
- 232 For example, the Parliament passed the 2000 Strategic Commodities Act, which gave the President the sole power to execute all commercial contracts for commodities, including diamonds and timber, merely legalized what was already taking place. See Int'l Crisis Group, *Liberia: The Key to Ending Regional Instability* 17, Apr. 24, 2002, [hereinafter *Ending Regional Instability*] <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=1533>. Under the proportional representation system, when Charles Taylor won 75 percent of the vote in the 1997 election, his party also won 75 percent of the seats in the legislature. Stephanie Kodish, *Balancing Representation: Special Representation Mechanisms Addressing the Imbalance of Marginalized Voices in African Legislatures*, 30 SUFFOLK TRANSNAT'L L. REV. 1, 39 (2006).
- 233 Tim Weiner, *Ex-Leader Stole \$100 Million from Liberia, Records Show*, N.Y. TIMES, Sept. 18, 2003, at A3.
- 234 *Ending Regional Instability*, *supra* note 232, at 17.
- 235 *Ending Regional Instability*, *supra* note 232, at 17.
- 236 Tom Baldwin, *Who's in Charge Here?*, J. COMMERCE, Jan. 15, 1999, at 1B.
- 237 *Id.*
- 238 Lester Hyman, the founder of LISCR, was a close friend of Taylor and former chairman of the Democratic Party in Massachusetts. U.N. Sec. Council, *Report of the Panel of Experts pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001), paragraph 19, concerning Liberia*, ¶ 396, U.N. Doc. S/2001/1015 (Oct. 17, 2001); Tom Baldwin, *Who's in Charge Here?*, J. COMMERCE, Jan. 15, 1999, at 1B.
- 239 *See id.* ¶ 420.
- 240 *Id.* ¶ 421.
- 241 The U.N. Panel of Experts obtained bank transfer details for two transfers from LISCR's bank account in New York to a San Air General Trading Account at the Standard Chartered Bank in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. *Id.* ¶ 412. The first transfer was for \$525,000 on June 21, 2000 and the second was for \$400,000 on July 7, 2000. *Id.*
- 242 *Id.* ¶ 437.
- 243 See Lansana Gberie, *Diamonds Without Maps: Liberia, the UN, Sanctions, Diamonds, and the Kimberly Process* 7, June 16, 2004, http://www.business-humanrights.org/Links/Repository/443970/link_page_view.
- 244 *Id.* at 8. Robertson was furious with Bush for calling on Taylor to step down as President of Liberia. Robertson was quoted as saying "[s]o we're undermining a Christian, Baptist president to bring in Muslim rebels to take over the country." *Pat Robertson Slams Bush on Liberia*, CBS NEWS, July 11, 2003, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/07/11/national/main562915.shtml>.
- 245 See Chapter 8 for more information on the dynamics of the second Liberian civil war.

