From 1979 to 2003, more than 1.5 million Liberians were forced from their homes to escape from the violence and destruction of a protracted civil conflict. Because of the historical connection between the two countries, many Liberians eventually made their way to the United States in their flight from war, including some 30,000 who settled in Minnesota. Most of their stories have never been told.

The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the body charged by the Liberian government with determining the facts of the human rights violations that occurred during the civil war, will meet in St. Paul, Minnesota, marking the first time any nation has ever conducted such hearings in the United States. The hearings are set for June 10th through June 14th and will focus on the experience of Liberians in Diaspora. All eight members of the TRC will preside over the hearings.

“To fulfill our charter and our mission, we need to hear the stories of our citizens who fled their homes and ultimately their country,” said Jerome J. Verdier, Sr, chairman of the Liberian TRC. “Many, many thousand Liberians suffered terrible violence and then suffered again through long and arduous travels and then suffered a third time as they arrived in new communities with little more than the clothes on their backs. Their experience is a part of what happened to our country at war with itself; understanding and sharing those experiences is an important part of our healing.”

This historic event takes place at Hamline University’s Sundin Music Hall at 1536 Hewitt Avenue, Saint Paul, MN. Commission hearings begin at 9:30 a.m. (Central) each day and conclude each afternoon at approximately 5:00 pm. The Liberian TRC is being assisted in the conduct of the hearing by its U.S. implementing partner, The Advocates for Human Rights.

For More Information Contact:
The Advocates for Human Rights
612-341-3302, ext. 113
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http://liberiatrc.mnadvocates.org

Welcomes you to the Opening Ceremonies of TRC U.S. Public Hearings June 10, 2008

Confronting Our Difficult Past for a Better Future: The Diaspora Experience
Liberian National Anthem

All Hail, Liberia Hail
All Hail, Liberia Hail
This glorious land of liberty shall long be ours
Though new her name green be her fame
And mighty be her power
In joy and gladness with our hearts united
We'll shout the freedom of a race benighted
A home of glorious liberty by God's command

All Hail, Liberia Hail
All Hail, Liberia Hail
In union strong, success is sure
We cannot fail
With God above our rights to prove
We will over all prevail
With hearts and hands, our country's cause defending
We'll meet the foe with valor unpretending

Program

Official Welcome
Dan Loritz, Vice President for University Relations, Hamline University

Remarks
Robin Phillips, Executive Director, The Advocates for Human Rights
Emmanuel S. Wettee, President, Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas
Kerper Dwanyen, President, Organization of Liberians in Minnesota
Hon. Alex Gbayee, Consul General
Recognition of Special Guests and TRC Partners

TRC Peace Song
Produced by Liberian Cultural Amb. Juli Endee & Crusaders for Peace

Address
Cllr. Jerome J. Verdier, Sr., Chairman, TRC of Liberia

National Anthems
Liberia
USA

Commencement of Hearings
Cllr. Jerome J. Verdier, Sr.