Liberia

**Field presence**
Human Rights Component in the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)
Operation established in 2003

**Engagement with the human rights mechanisms**
See overview table on page 128

**Visits by special procedures in the past five years**
None

**Pending visit requests by special procedures**
Special Rapporteurs on freedom of opinion and expression; extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; torture; the independence of judges and lawyers; extreme poverty; and internally displaced persons
Independent Expert on foreign debt

With substantial international support, Liberia has made significant progress in the 10 years since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Two national elections have been held and the overall security situation remains peaceful, although localized flashpoints do still emerge. Insecurity in the subregion continues to have an impact and Liberia continues to host over 55,000 refugees from Côte d'Ivoire (including 31,354 females). Since 2011, the Government has engaged in consultations to develop two key strategic documents. Vision 2030 aims at ensuring that Liberia achieves middle-income status on the basis of national reconciliation, cohesion and the rule of law. The Agenda for Transformation focuses medium-term development goals on peace, security and the rule of law; economic transformation; human development; governance and public institutions; and cross-cutting issues, including human rights.

Liberia is classified as a low income country by the World Bank and ranked 174 out of 187 countries on the 2013 UNDP Human Development Index with 83.8 per cent living below the international poverty line. Large segments of the population remain marginalized and highly vulnerable: Liberia’s Inequality Index is 0.251 and its Gender Inequality Index is 0.658. Adult literacy is 60.8 per cent with rural female literacy at only 26 per cent: 8 per cent of women complete secondary school compared to 19 per cent of men.

The constitutional reform process started in 2013. The Government remains highly centralized, although a National Policy on Decentralization and a Local Governance Act were approved in 2012. The President retains considerable powers of nomination, appointment or removal from central to local levels and across all branches of the State. The justice system is widely inaccessible; pre-trial detainees constitute over 80 per cent of the prison population and coordination between justice system actors is weak. Access to basic services remains inadequate. An Independent National Commission on Human Rights was established in 2010 and is making progress, though it lacks a countrywide presence. A national human rights action plan was validated in September 2013.

The United Nations Mission in Liberia was established in 2003. The Human Rights and Protection Section has field teams of one or two staff members in all 15 counties, as well as staff in headquarters. UNMIL is an integrated mission. The current One Programme runs from 2013-2017. Liberia was officially added to the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission in 2010.

**Thematic priorities**

- Strengthening the effectiveness of international human rights mechanisms with a focus on: ratifications and establishment of a national participatory body for reporting and implementing the recommendations of human rights mechanisms.
- Integrating human rights in development and the economic sphere with a focus on: business and human rights; public policies and budget processes and integration of recommendations from human rights mechanisms and a human rights-based approach in United Nations work.
- Enhancing equality and countering discrimination with a focus on: women; racial and religious discrimination, persons with disabilities; indigenous peoples and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons.
- Widening the democratic space with a focus on: “public freedoms” (freedom of expression, assembly and association and incitement to hatred); human rights education, with a focus on: youth; NHRI established and/or working in compliance with international standards (Paris Principles).
- Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law with a focus on: human rights in the administration of justice; transitional justice; legislation and policies on torture and deprivation of liberty, and death penalty.
- Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity with a focus on: investigations, monitoring and reporting; sexual and gender-based violence; UN responsive to situations of violence and insecurity.
### OHCHR expected contribution

#### ALL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL IN LIBERIA

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<th><strong>RIGHTS-HOLDERS</strong></th>
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| **[EA5]** | **[EA1]** | Constitutional amendments provide greater protection for human rights, strengthen protection against discrimination and foster genuine equity.  
- Improvements in the administration of justice include: availability of remedies for violations; juvenile justice facilities and abolition of the death penalty for children; effective oversight mechanisms; periodic impact assessments; human rights mainstreamed into the core curricula of justice sector actors; and implementation of criminal justice reform priorities.  
- Human rights mainstreamed in judicial training curriculum, especially with regard to non-discrimination and equality standards.  
- National Human Rights Commission increases its compliance with international human rights standards.  
- Effective SGBV and female genital mutilation prevention strategy with impact assessment tools is in place.  
- The reform of the traditional justice system ensures its full compliance with human rights (bans discriminatory practices and limits exercise of ‘jurisdiction’). |
|  | **[EA3]** | Business and Human Rights (BHR) Forum effectively functioning throughout Liberia and increased compliance with the BHR Framework. A BHR policy validated, adopted and under implementation. A Decent Work Act passed and disseminated, implementation plan and resources approved and monitoring and protection mechanisms established.  
- A compliant transitional justice process developed and implemented: increased recognition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. |
|  | **[EA6]** | Establishment and functioning of a national body to coordinate human rights treaty body reporting. Identify and invite special procedures mandate-holders and ensure systematic follow-up of treaty and UPR recommendations. |

**[EA11]** One Programme periodic and final reviews indicate that human rights have been mainstreamed in the majority of UN programmes and are based on a human rights friendly monitoring and evaluation framework.  
Substantial integration of human rights into the work of all UNMIL components.

By 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to the achievement of the results outlined on the table above, in support of national efforts in the different thematic priority areas (colour scheme). OHCHR will pursue these behavioural, institutional and legislative changes in cooperation with relevant partners, using the different strategic tools at its disposal – monitoring and reporting, capacity-building and advisory services, advocacy and awareness-raising (see chapter one) – on the basis of an assessment of the specific context. It is expected that if achieved, these results will contribute to improving the duty-bearers’ compliance with their international human rights obligations and to the rights-holders’ ability to claim their rights and thereby to the enjoyment of all rights for all in Liberia.