

# Liberia

## (DDRR, 2003-2008)

### Context

#### Transitional Justice

On 18 August 2003, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in Accra, Ghana between the government of Liberia, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and Liberia's registered political parties. The agreement stipulates the creation of an Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) to oversee fulfilment of the rights guaranteed by the agreement, the creation of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), free access for vulnerable groups to all humanitarian agencies, and the opening of a process of stationing, disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Although created in 2006, implementation of the TRC has been very slow, in part because the commission has not had the funds it requires and because support from the international community has been minimal. A budget of 1.1 million euros for the commission's operations came almost entirely from the government. This financing was exorbitant for a country with a national budget of less than 100 million euros. The TRC held its first hearing to clarify the crimes committed during 14 years of civil war in the country in January 2008. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, president of Liberia and the TRC, maintained that the commission did not aim only to achieve the reconciliation and healing of Liberian society but also to deal with the realm of justice. Public hearings will continue until the end of July 2008.

Liberian ex-President Charles Taylor is currently on trial in a Special Court for Sierra Leone at The Hague. He is accused of crimes against humanity and for having directed and financed civil war in Liberia and neighbouring Sierra Leone with the sale of so-called blood diamonds.<sup>1</sup>

#### Security Sector Reform

##### Police

Training for the Liberia National Police (LNP) began in July 2004 with help from the UN Police and Transitional Government of Liberia. An aim to train 3,700 officers, 350 of them women, was attained in July 2007. Five hundred of the officers were to constitute an Emergency Response Unit and receive additional training in 2008-09. The United States, Great Britain, Nigeria, China, the European Commission, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Ghana, Egypt, Interpol, and various UN agencies contributed to the initiative.<sup>2</sup>

##### Armed Forces

Through the DynCorp private security corporation and with \$200 million in funds, the US led a process to restructure the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). The mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) stipulates cooperation with US-led security sector reform. Nigeria, the UK, Ghana, China, and France also gave support. The goal of security sector reform was to train 2,100 soldiers. The first phase of newly trained officers graduated in November 2006, and by September 2008, the overall projected numbers had been trained.<sup>3</sup> The original reform plan also aimed to reinsert ex-combatants (see *Reinsertion and Reintegration*).

1 Adapted from School for a Culture of Peace, *Liberia*. This report draws extensively on the following sources, from which only direct quotations are cited: Alusala, "Liberia: 'DD' and 'RR'"; UN Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, "Liberia. Country Programme"; Nichols, "Disarming Liberia"; UNMIL Focus; and UNMIL website, <<http://www.unmil.org>>.

2 Momodu, "No to arms, yes to development"; Wesley, "Police training crosses target".

3 Momodu, *op. cit.*; Wesley, "Army training continues"; Agence de Presse Africaine, "Three West African military officers to command the Liberian army".

### Summary

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Type of DDR          | Multiple and massive disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) targeting various groups of combatants, with special attention paid to child soldiers and political power-sharing. |
| Groups to demobilize | Over 100,000 members of different armed groups and militias.  |
| Implementing bodies  | NCDDRR  |
| Budget               | A minimum of \$110 million  |
| Timeline             | Disarmament and demobilization from December 2003 to November 2004. Reinsertion and reintegration from November 2004 to June 2008.  |
| Status / synopsis    | The process has been long and full of difficulties involving financing, corruption, etc. Currently, it is in the last stage of reintegration.   |

### Basic facts

**Population:** 3,942,000

**Food emergencies:** Yes

**IDPs:** 91,537

**Refugee population:** 725,100,032

**GDP:** \$725,100,032

**Per capita income:** \$290

**HDI:** 0.364 (176th)

**Military expenditure:** \$6,000,000

**Military population:**

2,400 (armed forces)

**Arms embargo:** Yes, except against the Government. UN since November 1992, EU since May 2001.

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## Program Design

### Other Disarmament Initiatives

Civilian disarmament takes place under the Arms for Development program, overlooked since January 2006, following the disarmament phase of DDR, by the UNDP, with funds from Japan. UNMIL is responsible for weapons management and control. By November 2007, UNMIL had collected 500 arms and 45,000 rounds of ammunition. A total 19 community projects were also implemented, including a project to rebuild administrative buildings, hospitals, and schools. A National Commission on Small Arms, consisting of eight government secretariats, was established, while a 1956 law on firearms was under review.

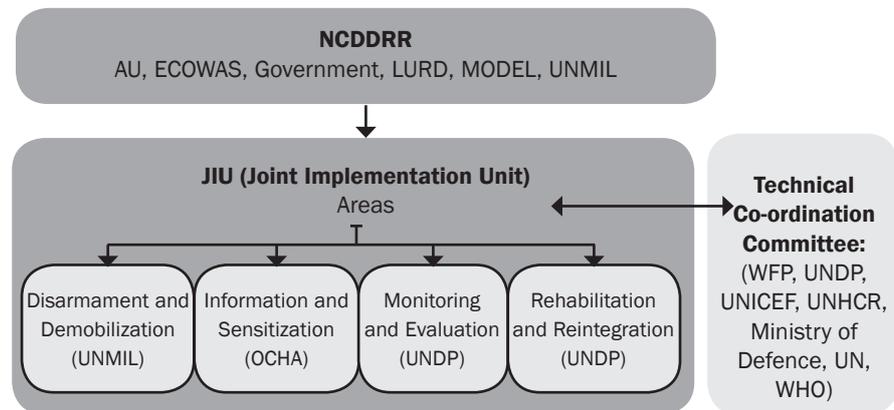
### Type and Designation of DDR

DDR in Liberia involves multiple, mass disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDRR) targeting a wide variety of combatants, with special emphasis placed on child soldiers and political power redistribution. UNMIL designates DDRR as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation. The CPA uses National Process of Cantonment, Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration (CDDRR).

A program of RRR (reintegration, rehabilitation, and recovery) is broader than DDRR or CDDRR and targets war-affected populations. Persons who have filtered through a process of disarmament and demobilization (DD) are then eligible for ex-combatant reintegration and rehabilitation (RR) programming.

### Executive Bodies

Figure 01. Bodies and functions



The National Commission for DDRR (NCDDRR) overlooks the peace process in Liberia. It has a staff of 400 individuals. The Liberian government, various armed groups, ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States), the UN, African Union, and International Contact Group for Liberia have representatives on the commission. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General said in a press conference on DDR ownership in 2004 that

“Contrary to many other countries where there are DDRR programs, this is not a government, NTGL [National Transitional Government of Liberia] ownership. The CPA [Comprehensive Peace Agreement] said clearly that the NCDDRR consists of the three factions [sic], NTGL, the United Nations, ECOWAS, and the European Union.”<sup>4</sup>

The NCDDRR established a Joint Implementation Unit (JIU) to take operational responsibility for planning and coordination. The JIU works jointly with a Technical Coordination Committee, of which many UN agencies are members. The JIU oversees four areas:

- Disarmament and demobilization, the responsibility of the DDRR Unit of UNMIL. UNMIL is responsible for disarmament, cantonment, and joint operations. Other participating organizations include the World Food Programme (provision of foodstuffs), UNDP (orientation and transport), WHO (medical examinations), UNPF (reproductive health and gender violence), UNICEF (youth), and the UNDP/Fast Intervention Telecommunications and Information Technology - FITTEST (communications).
- Information and sensitization, the responsibility of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA. The NCDDRR was also active in this area, especially in the beginning.
- Supervision and evaluation, the responsibility of the UNDP.
- Rehabilitation and reintegration, RR, was implemented by the UNDP until April 2007, when it was transferred to the NCDDRR, even though the UNDP had not completed DDRR until October 2007. RR is part of reintegration,

4 Seraydarian, *UNMIL Press Briefing*.

rehabilitation, and recovery, or RRR, and is managed by the government, UNMIL, the UN Country Team, NGOs, and other related bodies. UNICEF has administered reintegration programs for child soldiers since 2003 with collaboration from over 700 community organizations, including child welfare organizations and youth groups and clubs, and the Ministry of Education. UNFPA, the UN Population Fund, has managed reintegration projects for women and girl ex-combatants.

## Participants

The total number of combatants in Liberia has varied from 103,000 to 107,000, depending on the source. Combatants are divided amongst a variety of armed groups and militias, including 35,000 members of the LURD (Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy), 14,000 members of MODEL (Movement for Democracy in Liberia), 16,000 pro-government militia fighters or paramilitaries, and 12,000 Armed Forces soldiers. Roughly 4 percent of the population is a combatant, the second highest percentage after Eritrea of the countries studied in this report and the highest for intra-state conflicts.

## Special Needs Groups

Women and child soldiers are considered special needs groups in Liberia. The number of women and children tallied after disarmament is outlined in the following chart.

**Table 01. Demobilization, by sex and age**

|              | Men           | Women         | Total          |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| Adults       | 69,281        | 22,456        | 91,737         |
| Youth        | 8,771         | 2,511         | 11,282         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>78,052</b> | <b>24,967</b> | <b>103,019</b> |

Source: Joint Implementation Unit, *DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2 & 3*.

## Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for DDRR, a combatant must have surrendered a weapon in good condition or 150 rounds of ammunition. Women and child soldiers were excepted from this condition, and since it was not upheld strictly, a verification process complemented it, but was ineffective.

## Budget and Financing

### Summary

Budgeting for DD amounts to at least \$12.4 million.

Budgeting for RR amounts to \$68 million from the Trust Fund, at least \$8 million from parallel reintegration programs, and an additional \$20 million. Total budgeting is at least \$110 million.

Disarmament and demobilization, including a Transitional Safety Allowance, or TSA, fell under the regular budget of UNMIL. Some criticized a lack of transparency in UNMIL's management of its budget. But one thing is known, the UNDP advanced UNMIL \$12.4 million to defray disarmament and demobilization costs. UNMIL later returned \$6.4 million of this sum. (Ball 2005: 21)

The UNDP's Trust Fund for DDRR financed the bulk of reintegration.

**Table 02. DDRR Trust Fund 2004-07: Contributions in \$ millions**

|                          |           |     |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----|
| European Commission      | 22.2      | 33% |
| United States            | 19.9      | 29% |
| SIDA (Sweden)            | 6.8       | 10% |
| UNMIL (returned)         | 6.4       | 9%  |
| DFID                     | 5.4       | 8%  |
| Denmark                  | 3.5       | 5%  |
| Ireland                  | 1.2       | 2%  |
| Norway                   | 1.2       | 2%  |
| Switzerland              | 0.8       | 1%  |
| CPR-Small Arms Reduction | 0.6       | 1%  |
| Iceland                  | 0.01      | >1% |
| <b>TOTAL</b>             | <b>68</b> |     |

Source: Adapted from Pugel, *What the Fighters Say*, p. 44.

Other initiatives were funded by the European Commission, USAID, and UNICEF. The other initiatives include:

**Table 03. Other initiatives**

| Donor  | Project                        | Recipients                         | Participants (Goal / attainment) | Contributions (in millions \$) | Periodo      |
|--------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| EC     | Job training and placement     | The NGOs CESD and LOIC             | 2,940 / 1,030                    | 3.8                            | 2003-06      |
| USAID  | Contingency projects, training | DAI-LCIP, World Vision, IRC, SC-UK | 21,000 / 10,739                  |                                | 2004-present |
| UNICEF | CEIP, ALP                      |                                    | 7,000 / ?                        | 4.1                            | 2006-present |

Sources: Joint Implementation Unit, op. cit.; USAID, *USAID/Liberia Annual Report FY 2005*, p. 5; UNICEF, *UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Liberia*, p.11; Christian Children's Fund, *Revitalization of War Affected Communities*; President of Liberia, *Executive Order No. 8 Extending the Mandate of the NCDDRR*.

The NCDDRR says an additional \$18 million is needed to reintegrate 23,000 "residual" ex-combatants. Finally, a final phase of rehabilitation and reintegration for 9,000 ex-combatants began in January 2008 and was funded with a \$20 million contribution from Norway.<sup>5</sup>

## Schedule

After more than four years in Liberia (December 2003 - June 2007), the peacekeeping operation was extended an additional year by a presidential decree, bringing the operation's total lifespan to 55 months.<sup>6</sup>

The peacekeeping operation was administered in two phases: DD lasting from December 2003 to November 2004 and RR lasting from November 2004 to June 2008. The last phase of RR began in January 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Government of Liberia, *Vice President Launches Final Phase of DDRR Program*; Agence de Presse Africaine, "Liberia launches final phase of reintegration of ex-combatants".

<sup>6</sup> President of Liberia, op. cit.; Government of Liberia, op. cit.; Sonpon, "Ex-combatants want DDRR implemented in full".

## Phases

A Draft Interim Secretariat comprised of the UNDP, UNMIL, World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, UNHCR, OCHA, and World Vision targeted 38,000 combatants for demobilization in three phases over five months, planning to reintegrate them as well within three years. In the end, the secretariat spent a year disarming and demobilizing more than double the original projected number and extended reintegration to four years.

## Disarmament and Demobilization

The first phase of DD was a pilot project and began on December 7, 2003 in Monrovia. Due to logistical and infrastructural problems, the project was halted temporarily on December 27 and redesigned. Many more ex-combatants than projected rendered to be disarmed and demobilized, resulting in rioting and nine deaths caused by individuals not immediately given a \$150 initial allowance as promised.<sup>7</sup>

The second phase began on April 15, 2004, following an information campaign begun in January and run by UNMIL. The phase ended on September 14 after the construction of four cantonments near Monrovia. The third phase began on August 17 and ended in late November, after the construction of four more remote cantonments.

Aspects of the verification process were criticized, including UNMIL's poor preparation and execution; the inappropriateness of eligibility criteria (see Eligibility); the use of non-standard verification criteria, allowing some commanders to manipulate lists and wrongfully including ineligible and excluding eligible persons; in addition to other program distortions. Critics said as many as 40,000 persons who failed to comply with eligibility requirements participated in disarmament and demobilization programming. If this is true, it raises the question of who these participants were and who was excluded from DD. The high incidence of combatants without verifiable affiliation to an armed group, approximately a fourth (see

Table 02), suggests civilians may have gotten hold of guns to qualify for DD programming. Nichols says many women and children not qualifying as combatants because they were unable to furnish a weapon, nevertheless benefited from the lax criteria of being simply linked to an armed group. At the same time, Amnesty International and Specht<sup>8</sup> argued that manipulated lists and a lack of early information disproportionately harmed women combatants, most of whom were excluded from programming. Nichols also says male soldiers were excluded from programming because, quite possibly, they did not go along with the corruption of their unit commanders. A study by UNDP/JIU claimed 12 percent of combatants were excluded from programming. This figure does not seem anomalous.<sup>9</sup>

Final figures given by UNMIL and NCDDRR/UNDP on disarmament and demobilization vary only slightly. NCDDRR's disarmament figures were as follows:

**Table 04. Disarmed combatants, by group**

| Group                 | Phase 1       | Phase 2       | Phase 3       | TOTAL          |
|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| AFL                   | 4,164         | 6,830         | 1,260         | 12,254         |
| LURD                  | 48            | 19,721        | 14,504        | 34,273         |
| MODEL                 | 11            | 2,854         | 10,283        | 13,148         |
| Government / militias | 12            | 5,107         | 10,476        | 15,595         |
| Other                 | 8,890         | 16,957        | 1,902         | 27,749         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>13,125</b> | <b>51,469</b> | <b>38,425</b> | <b>103,019</b> |

Source: Joint Implementation Unit, *DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2 & 3*.

In all, 28,314 arms, 33,604 projectiles and explosives, and 6.5 million rounds of ammunition were collected. The ratio of arms surrendered to combatants was very low, just a little more than one arm for every four combatants or associated individuals.

**Table 05. Disarmed combatants, by phase**

| Phase 1      | 11,805         |
|--------------|----------------|
| Phase 2      | 51,341         |
| Phase 3      | 38,349         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>101,495</b> |

Source: Joint Implementation Unit, *DDRR Consolidated Report Phase 1, 2 & 3*.

The final figures for demobilized individuals were slightly less. UNMIL said 101,495 combatants had been demobilized by February 15, 2005. In addition to this count, 612 foreign combatants, mainly from Sierra Leone and Guinea, 127 of them child soldiers, and 379 other combatants, demobilized after 2005.

In cantonments, disarmed combatants received basic orientation, food, training in peace and human rights, and a medical examination. Each demobilized individual also received a Transitional Safety Allowance of \$300, paid out in two instalments.

Women and child soldiers were always separated from men, in particular from commanders who could abuse them,<sup>10</sup> and their demobilization, occurring in just three days, was given priority. Although programming was streamlined to provide for women and children, in practice both UNMIL and JIU were criticized for a lack of will in incorporating a gender dimension into their work. This was reflected in women's lack of participation in planning and implementation. Amnesty International and Specht said little information was given to prospective participants of the DD phase and that integration in the RR phase lacked flexibility.

## Reinsertion and Reintegration

According to NCDDRR statistics, the median participant age was 26 and the majority of participants were between the ages of 18 and 34. The level of education of participants was very low. Most participants had no education or only elementary education. 38 percent of participants had families of their own and almost all had some access to farmland.

RR was done irregularly and stagnated due to a lack of funding. Critics said 40,000 or more ex-combatants were left unattended and 60-70 percent abandoned programming.

<sup>8</sup> Specht, *Red Shoes*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>9</sup> Pugel, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Specht, op. cit., p. 14, argues that it was not always in the best interests of women and child soldiers to be separated from unit commanders. Some felt this might increase their vulnerability.

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, *Liberia: A Flawed Process Discriminates Against Women and Girls*, p. 24; Liberia Needs Assessment; Nichols, op. cit., p. 113.

In April 2007, due to recommendations by the NCDDRR and Concerned Ex-combatants Union of Liberia (CECUL), President Johnson-Sirleaf extended the reintegration period by an executive decree in order to accommodate a "residual quantity" of approximately 22,000 demobilized individuals. Programming to deal with this residual quantity ended with 9,000 ex-combatants remaining unattended. They were targeted subsequently by the latest phase of RR. Reintegration began in June 2004. As part of RR, ex-combatants were given \$30 a month over 6-8 months covering the length of the training period. Demobilized combatants were offered the following training opportunities:

1. Formal education 40 %
2. Vocational training
  - Automobile mechanics 14 %
  - "Generic" skills 11 %
  - Driving 7 %
  - Tailoring 7 %
  - Bricklaying 3 %
3. Agriculture 4 %

A UNMIL survey conducted in December 2006 revealed that some 23 percent of ex-combatants worked in agriculture, 19 percent were unemployed, and only 17 percent were students. One ex-combatant said the \$30 per month allowance over the training period was equivalent to only one or two weeks of salary in a rubber plantation. It is believed many reinsertion kits were resold. According to the UNDDR, 30,000 ex-combatants enrolled in formal education in 2006. The students were given an allowance for two years and help with uniform and registration expenses. A variety of vocational training opportunities were offered by organizations after approval from the JIU. Many remain active. Approximately two thirds of ex-combatants participated in DDDR Trust Fund programming. The remaining third participated in projects administered by the European Commission, USAID, and UNICEF.

A task force established by the government and UNMIL in 2006, offered solutions to the question of rubber plantations occupied illegally by ex-combatants. The strategy proposed enabling the state to repossess the plantations, avoiding a loss of public revenue, in conjunction with ex-combatant reintegration. UNICEF offered specialized programming, such

as CEIP for youth. CEIP provided basic primary education, vocational training, and psychosocial counselling. Vocational training courses lasted for six to nine months. Specializations included cosmetics, bricklaying, carpentry, and bread making. A toolbox was given to each student. A training program was developed for teachers to be able to give psychosocial support to youth.<sup>11</sup> UNDDR said 60,000 persons had participated in reintegration programming by late 2006. Half had already completed their programming of choice.

**Table 06. Reintegration programming participants, October 2006**

|              | Men           | Women         | Total         |
|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Completed    | 25,597        | 7,279         | 32,876        |
| Underway     | 21,238        | 5,717         | 26,955        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>46,835</b> | <b>12,996</b> | <b>59,831</b> |

Inter-Agency Working Group on DDR, "Liberia. Country Programme".

UNMIL claimed in August 2007 that at least 78,000 ex-combatants participated in some way or other in RR. According to a survey conducted in 2006 by Pugel, a quarter of ex-combatants said they had work. This was considered a good proportion given that 80 percent of Liberians are unemployed. The economic situation for most ex-combatants, nevertheless, was poor, so that more than half approached or were under the poverty line. The same survey indicated 94 percent of ex-combatants experienced no difficulties reintegrating socially into their host communities, which in 58 percent of cases was the ex-combatant's home community.

Some complained DDDR focussed on rapid disarmament and that psychosocial assistance was not sufficiently taken into account. Problems with HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, sexual violence, and general aggression have resulted from this lack of attention. Some observers also linked insufficient work reintegration to a rise in crime. An article in *The Analyst*, published in Monrovia, directly connected the failure of RR to a decision to reintroduce the death penalty in cases of armed robbery or rape. According to the article,

The short-circuiting of the DDDR programme on the alibi of donor fatigue, according to observers, saw the spiraling upsurge in armed robbery, rape, and bushwhacking.... This must have forced the Sirleaf administration to amend the New Penal Laws of Liberia making rape and armed robbery punishable by death.... The reintroduction of [the] death penalty was wrong because neither the government nor the UN did anything to rehabilitate and reintegrate some 39,000 ex-fighters who were lured into demobilization and disarmament without adequate compensation and/or training to prepare them for civilian life. A USIP survey confirmed a lack of work and employment solutions as the main reason for ex-combatants, especially women, contemplating rearming themselves. The survey recommended better management of the social and economic expectations of ex-combatants.<sup>16</sup>

For the final phase of RR, the UNDP signed contracts with 25 agencies offering vocational training, psychosocial and employment counselling, education in human rights, and sensitization around HIV/AIDS. The final phase takes in all 15 counties of Liberia and incorporates women associated with armed groups who were excluded from earlier programming (approximately a third of the total). Employment and psychosocial counselling for 7,200 ex-combatants over three weeks was managed in summer 2008 by the YMCA. Vocational training targeted a variety of mixed groups of a few hundred ex-combatants. In Monrovia, for example, the IOM ran a program for 200 residual ex-combatants, CEP in Paynesville trained a hundred or so in tailoring, and the Landmine Action NGO offered agricultural training to approximately 400 persons. RR also involved UNICEF attention to youth. UNMIL said "almost all" 10,000 demobilized child soldiers were reunited with family. CICR repatriated 55 of the youth.

11 Scott, "Skills training for former child soldiers".

12 Chea-Annan, "UNMIL to draw down troops in 2008".

13 Op. cit., pp. 64ff.

14 "Mental health problems breed violence", IRIN News; Mbadlanyana, "Crime on the increase as Liberia prepares to celebrate its 161st Anniversary".

15 "Death penalty under fire".

16 Hill, Taylor and Temin, *Would You Fight Again?*

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## **Glossary**

JIU: Joint Implementation Unit

LURD: Liberians United for Reconciliation and Development

MODEL: Movement for Democracy in Liberia

NCDDRR: National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration

NTGL: National Transitional Government of Liberia

TSA: Transitional Safety Allowance