# Liberia ICAF UPDATE Report – March 2012

## Project facilitated and led by

Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From September 17 through October 5, 2011, an interagency team conducted *an Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)* in Liberia at the request of the US Embassy in Monrovia. The ICAF looked at and analyzed Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors. As a result of the ICAF, there were six diagnostic conclusions:

- Finding 1: Levels of existing overt conflict are relatively low. Although there are several grievances held by many different identity groups throughout Liberia, there is a low level of conflict currently in Liberia. The majority of Liberians interviewed stated that they would like to remain at peace and are not interested in inciting or participating in violence.

- Finding 2: Social networks and relationships supporting Liberian resilience exist. Many respondents stated that they rely on family, friends or small finance associations when they are in times of need. This sentiment was heard in both the rural and urban areas of Liberia.

- Finding 3: Events creating uncertainty are expected in the short-, medium- and long-term future. The October 11 election held in Liberia, the outcome of the Hague trial of former President Charles Taylor and the presidential elections in the United States all may lead to uncertainty in Liberia.

- Finding 4: Regional events have a potential impact on Liberia. The upcoming elections in Sierra Leone may lead to instability in Liberia because of their geographic proximity and because many tribes in Liberia are also located in the neighboring countries. Thus, there are familial relationships between Liberians and people from Guinea, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire. Liberians are aware of international events, and the majority of respondents stated that they listened to United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) radio and BBC radio for news. Liberians may react to an event that occurs internationally as well as events that occur domestically.

- Finding 5: Many of the current Drivers of Conflict reflect political parties and politicians as the key actors mobilizing their constituents around grievances concerning the elections. The respondents stated that a major grievance is the National Election Commission (NEC) and the question of whether it is an independent entity. The now former NEC Chairman James Fromayan, was a member of the ruling Unity Party (UP) and, at the time of the ICAF, was suspected by some Liberians to have an allegiance to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Many respondents were also concerned about the lack of voter education, and some Liberians were not educated about the mechanics of how to vote. Many thought that some Liberians would vote incorrectly, and therefore their ballots would be considered invalid. Some Liberians were also concerned about the number of political parties. Many thought that Liberia had too many political parties and it would be an easier process if the number of political parties was reduced.

- Finding 6: There are identified grievances regarding underdevelopment, impassable road networks, prices of key commodities (such as rice) and insufficient health clinics for most

towns and villages, but there is no key actor mobilizing Liberians around these grievances. The majority of the Liberians interviewed did not advocate violence or congregating to protest the conditions.

The Drivers of Conflict are related to the political process focusing on the elections held October 11, 2011. Drivers of Conflict that relate to politics are as follows: first, some political parties questioned the legitimacy of the NEC because of Chairman Fromayan. At the time of the ICAF, Fromayan was a member of the ruling UP and was perceived as being loyal and connected to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Some Liberians questioned if Chairman Fromayan would be able to deliver decisions that favor the opposition party. Second, some politicians question whether the current political process is fair. Third, some politicians and local leaders are using the history of past inter-ethnic violence to their advantage. The remaining Drivers of Conflict relate to the manner in which public officials use public funds and the citizens' lack of confidence in their local leaders' ability to effect change. In addition, some chiefs, elders, youth and women are mobilizing citizens around unexplained killings. These killings were discussed by interviewees during small group interviews in Lofa County. People did not go into detail regarding the killings and the incidents that preceded the killings. Through interviews with Liberians and expatriates working in Liberia, we were told that the unexplained killings may be related to a Secret Society culture in some parts of Liberia. The Secret Societies may serve as a conflict driving function because of their secretive nature.

There were several Mitigating Factors relating to the political process. For instance, several political parties, The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the motorcycle taxi unions and President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf made public statements reaffirming the need to have a non-violent electoral process. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by most political parties regarding the need to abide by the NEC's guidelines. The Mitigating Factors that did not relate to the election focused on security: the Liberia National Police (LNP) creating community policing initiatives in villages and towns; UNMIL being viewed by Liberians as a key actor able to resolve conflicts; quarter chiefs, town chiefs and other local leaders are also resolving community disputes; the Traditional Council and local chiefs are working with the Ministry of Justice and NGOs to formalize customary laws so that they can work more effectively with formal law; NGOs providing assistance to address Liberians' grievances and radio providing balanced information on local, national and international issues.

The ICAF report is based on data collection that relies on observations and impressions of the interviewees. This report does not attempt to evaluate the accuracy of these perceptions nor does it seek independent validation. The views are an insight into the thoughts of Liberians and their present opportunities throughout the nation. These views inform the ICAF teams' findings.

## INTRODUCTION

The Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) is a systematic and collaborative interagency assessment tool that facilitates a deeper understanding of conflict and stability dynamics in a region, country or sub-national region. This tool was created by an interagency working group and approved at the Assistant Secretary level through the National Security Council's interagency coordination process. The ICAF report is based on data collection that relies on observation and impression of the interviewees. There have been 25 ICAFs since inception in July 2008.

An ICAF was conducted in Liberia in March 2010, and the findings were an asset to Embassy Monrovia. One result was that the final report was used as a reference tool by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) officers when developing programs funded by the Mission. US Ambassador to Liberia, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, requested this follow-up ICAF with team members revisiting Bong, Lofa, Montserrado and Nimba Counties. This follow-up ICAF is the first of its kind conducted by the US Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO formerly the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization, S/CRS). This ICAF and the preliminary findings provided the Chief of Mission with potential Drivers of Conflict surrounding the Election Day. The final report will provide information to the Ambassador, senior USG officials in Liberia and the interagency on major issues in Liberia. The report provides conflict sensitive analysis focused on at-risk counties during the pre-election time period.

The Liberia ICAF was conducted September 17 through October 5, 2011. There was a Monrovia, Liberia based ICAF training on September 21 and 23 and from September 22 – 25 interview and focus groups were held in Bong, Lofa, Montserrado and Nimba Counties. The two ICAF teams conducted 250 interviews and spoke to approximately 1,000 people.

The ICAF teams were comprised of participants from the US Department of State (Embassy and DC), USAID (Liberia and DC), US Department of Defense (AFRICOM and Embassy) and Liberian nationals (locally employed staff). On each team were three people from Embassy Monrovia. The persons interviewed included tribal leaders, religious leaders, farmers, students, university leadership and educators, health care workers, motorcycle taxi drivers, youth, business community members, county, district and town officials, police officers, border guards, union leaders and representatives from concessionary companies.

On October 3, there was a day long debrief and analysis workshop at Embassy Monrovia for the ICAF teams. The participants analyzed the interviewees' responses and formulated Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors. They identified Windows of Uncertainty and made diagnostic conclusions. The ICAF findings were presented to Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield and senior Embassy and USAID leadership on October 4, 2011. There was a presentation of the ICAF findings at USAID on October 19, 2011 and a presentation to interagency experts and academics on October 26, 2011 at the United States Institute for Peace (USIP).

## FINDINGS

**Finding 1***: Levels of existing overt conflict are relatively low in Liberia*

The ICAF teams consistently heard from Liberians in rural and urban areas that they felt Liberia was currently peaceful. People overwhelming expressed their happiness that Liberia is free of violent conflict. They also said that due to freedom of movement they may access jobs in urban or rural areas of the country. Liberians contrasted current liberties with the state of affairs during the Taylor administration, when movement was limited due to the high level of violence throughout the nation. People we spoke with attributed the current peaceful atmosphere to President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's tenure. This idea of freedom of movement was heard throughout Liberia. A woman in Monrovia stated, "No gun is running behind me. We have peace which is the only thing I really want."

UNMIL forces were also viewed as having a positive impact throughout Liberia. In Nimba County, several team members met with a number of community policing members who were effectively providing security. Community policing in Nimba was established with the help of UNMIL.

In a few villages and towns, the population noted that although there is an overall peaceful atmosphere in Liberia, some instances of violence have taken place. For example, in Konia Town, Lofa County, a few respondents mentioned a potential conflict between the Mandingo people, who are predominately Muslim, and the Lorma people, who are Christian, but also practice traditional customs. To remedy the tense situation, there was an agreement reached between leaders of the Lorma people in several districts within Lofa County and several Imams. The agreement included a schedule of specific times that traditional rituals could be conducted. At the time of the ICAF interviews, there was one infraction where the Lorma people conducted a traditional ceremony outside of the agreed upon hours. This infraction was being addressed by the appropriate leadership. Ritualistic killings are a Driver of Conflict in Lofa County. There were a few people in various villages and towns worried because some children were missing and many villagers thought they were victims of ritualistic killings. They did not trust the Liberia National Police (LNP) to adequately solve the crime. This led some villagers to stop sending their children to school due to fear of their children disappearing.

**Finding 2***: Social networks and relationships supporting Liberian resilience exist*

Throughout Liberia, people mentioned that in times of struggle, and if one needed help, they relied on their family and friends. One community assistance mechanism used by women throughout Liberia is "SuSu," an alternative mechanism for credit and savings. This mechanism is in areas where there are low incidences of formal banking institutions and it is used throughout Africa. In Foya District, Lofa County, a motorcycle rider stated that the motorcycle trade unions collect money to help members in motorcycle accidents or when they need medicine. People also relied on remittances from family members in Monrovia or abroad, specifically family members in the United States, Europe or neighboring African countries. People also stated that they relied on themselves for assistance in times of hardship. The action of Gokai Town, Bong County residents is an example of self reliance: they built a primary school. Additionally, the people in

Waterfall Station Town in Bong County built their own school using their own funds and using only their labor.

**Finding 3***: Events creating uncertainty are expected in the short-, medium- and long-term future*

There are several upcoming events that may have a detrimental effect on Liberia and its fragile democracy. One event is the runoff election on November 8. The ICAF teams interviewed people and asked if they thought there would be violence during the election period. Many respondents stated that they did not think there would be violence but instead the election would be free and fair. They stated that most people were tired of violence and understood the benefits of having a peaceful, democratic election. Many stated that even if their chosen candidate did not win this election, they may win in six years. Liberians want to continue the democratic model of governance that is currently in Liberia. Some respondents stated they were fearful because select politicians were using language to incite violence. Some Liberians said they were storing extra food in their homes in case of violence. Respondents also stated they were praying to God for peace during the elections. A common phrase mentioned was "I am leaving it in God's hands." Another concern leading into the October 11 election was the lack of voter sensitization. Several respondents, in all four counties, stated that illiterate citizens and some educated citizens were not adequately informed about how to vote. There was concern that some voters would vote incorrectly and their ballots would be certified invalid. It was stated that the NEC employees only educated citizens in villages that were near main roads and they did not travel to villages further in the interior of the counties.

The majority of respondents stated that their source of news regarding the election and the election process was UNMIL radio station. The NEC used radio shows on UNMIL radio to relay important instructions regarding how to vote and when to vote. A potential issue with the use of radio for news regarding the election was the fact that in some towns and villages, the UNMIL radio programs were broadcast through community-based radio stations.

The conclusion of the Charles Taylor trial at The Hague is an upcoming event that may create uncertainty in Liberia. Yet, Charles Taylor's trial was not mentioned by many Liberians as a current issue or a trigger of violent conflict.

The current UNMIL mandate will end in September 2012. Many respondents stated they currently feel safe due to the presence of UNMIL, and they did not express confidence in the ability of the LNP to maintain security in all villages and towns. The LNP is unarmed except for the Emergency Response Unit which is a small SWAT – like unit and the Police Support Unit. The LNP is generally regarded as effective by the majority of the Liberians interviewed. Many respondents requested that additional members of the LNP be armed. This sentiment was heard in both rural and urban areas of Liberia in all four counties visited. The UNMIL drawdown may affect Liberians ability to obtain information via radio due to the elimination of the UNMIL radio station. The drawdown may also lead to a security vacuum in Liberia. Several Liberians expressed uncertainty in terms of a stable Liberia after UNMIL begins it drawdown of forces in September 2012. Many interviewees did not express confidence in the ability of the Liberian National Police to maintain peace in Liberia without the aid of UNMIL.

**Finding 4***: Regional events have potential impact on Liberia*

The ICAF teams recognized through the interviewees' responses that Liberia and its people are connected to events that occur in neighboring countries, particularly Cote d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Guinea. Several respondents mentioned they were returning refugees who lived in neighboring countries.

A refugee camp manager in Bahn, Nimba County, stated that there were mercenaries in Cote d'Ivoire living in some of the refugees' houses and stated that disarmament had not occurred in Cote d'Ivoire. The refugee camp manager did not mention if the mercenaries were from Liberia or Cote d'Ivoire. The fact that Liberian ex-combatants are not all reintegrated into society and are reportedly shunned by villagers was mentioned by a few respondents in Monrovia, Montserrado County and in Lofa County. The situation in Cote d'Ivoire may also damage the peace and stability in Liberia as law enforcement agencies have discovered caches of weapons in Liberia linked to the fighting in Cote d'Ivoire[1]. The 445 mile border between the two countries is porous, and it is common for people to easily travel back and forth.

At the height of the crisis, there were more than 180,000 Ivoirian refugees living in Liberia. Currently, the Government of Liberia (GoL) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees back to Cote d'Ivoire but they have stopped short of encouraging returns out of security concerns, particularly in western Cote d'Ivoire. One ICAF team visited the Bahn refugee camp in Nimba County, which is 15 kilometers from the town of Saclepea in north east Liberia. The team spoke to both refugees and members of the host community. It was reported that Liberians were receptive to hosting the refugees because they understood the need to flee their homeland during violent conflict. They stated that the Ivoirians had, for the most part, been welcoming to them when they fled Liberia during the civil war. Liberians also expressed a sense of pride in being able to absorb a large amount of refugees in their communities.

Another regional event that may impact Liberians is the Sierra Leone presidential election scheduled for November 17, 2012. In terms of Sierra Leone, the Mandingo and Kissi people interviewed in Lofa County stated they had relatives there and moved freely across the border. Traveling back and forth between countries occurs in terms of Guinea as well. Some people in Mavokonnedu Town, Lofa County, stated it is easier to travel to Guinea to conduct trade than it is to travel within Liberia since roads to certain towns are in poor condition. In Foya City, Lofa County, people discussed the fact that they interact with people from other countries because they are all members of the Kissi tribe. Travel to conduct trade based on agricultural production is particularly important in Lofa County, because it is considered the "breadbasket of Liberia."

**Finding 5***: Many of the current Drivers of Conflict reflect political parties and politicians as the key actors mobilizing their constituents around grievances concerning the elections*

Some political parties are mobilizing their constituents around grievances related to elections. A major grievance is the high price of essential commodities such as rice. Many Liberians stated that rice was cheaper during Charles Taylor's tenure. Respondents also stated that the cost of living is higher during the Johnson Sirleaf administration than previous administrations. A

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[1] "Liberia discovers arms cache near Ivory Coast Border" http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13807373

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railroad worker in Saniquellie, Nimba County, stated, "The problem is price control; every day prices escalate." A teacher in Garma, Bong County, stated, "We only eat dinner so our people are weak. Students do not pay attention when they are hungry." It was noted through many interviews that some Liberians assume that the high prices for goods and services are directly related to the political party in power.

There were also grievances regarding the National Election Commission (NEC). Many respondents stated that the NEC did not educate voters sufficiently on how to vote. They only educated voters in major cities and towns and did not travel to rural villages that were not connected to the main roads. Additionally, many rural citizens stated that the voter educators should be members of the local communities and not citizens from Monrovia as they do not have knowledge regarding the local communities and are not able to travel as easily to inner villages. A person in Selega Town, Lofa County, stated, "We don't understand the voting system. It is confusing for our people "x" mean "No," and that can produce an invalid ballot. We don't trust the NEC because this government formed the NEC, and we think that they will work for the benefit of the current government."

**Finding 6**: *Numerous identified grievances around development and infrastructure do not currently have a key actor mobilizing Liberians*

While interviewing respondents, many Liberians stated that infrastructure is better but it is not at the level they deem acceptable. Many commented that the road networks were bad and affected farm to market activities. In Lofa County, many respondents noted that the roads were impassable during the rainy season, but were currently functioning because President Johnson Sirleaf visited Voinjama during Independence Day celebrations in July. One impact of the poor road networks is that the LNP is not able to reach communities; thereby rendering them unable to have proper oversight. This makes it hard to fight crime.

There were also grievances regarding the lack of jobs. A gasoline salesman in Bong County stated, "The government is trying small-small but there are no jobs for the youth. Some high school graduates are driving motorcycles." Many respondents commented that they were unemployed and trying to work for themselves either by starting small businesses or working on their individual farms. This grievance was heard in both rural and urban areas throughout the four counties. Another grievance was the lack of water pumps and sanitation facilities. The lack of sanitation facilities increased the incidences of malaria during the rainy season. Additionally, many respondents said there were insufficient health clinics with limited drug supplies and very few nurses, some communities had only midwives. Another grievance held by many Liberians was that even though primary school education was free until ninth grade, many schools and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) charged a registration fee in order to cover the costs of students in grades 10-12. This registration fee was too high for many Liberians, and in turn they did not send their children to school. Additionally, many Liberians requested financial assistance from International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and International Organizations (IOs) in order to rebuild and develop their nation. In Batota Town, Bong County, people acknowledged that due to concessions, there were approximately 15,000 jobs provided, and they are hoping for more mining concessions to be granted. Although many Liberians were frustrated regarding the slow pace of development and the lack of infrastructure, these grievances were not being mobilized by any key actors.

# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT



Source: www.greece-map.net

Liberia has a turbulent history as a result of a 14 year civil war from 1989 to 2003. On August 11, 2003, Charles Taylor resigned from the presidency and went into exile in Nigeria. He lived in Nigeria until his arrest in 2006. On August 18, 2003, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPS) was signed in Accra, Ghana ending the war and beginning the transitional government. In 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected President of Liberia. She defeated George Weah in a runoff with 59.4% of the vote to Weah's 40.6%. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was inaugurated in 2006. She is the first woman president elected in Africa and the first post-conflict elected President in Liberia.

There has been major political, economic and security related progress within Liberia since 2005. In terms of political progress, the nation has remained peaceful and stable. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was formed to address human rights atrocities committed in Liberia during the two wars and a final report was released in 2009. Some respondents stated that they were upset that some recommendations were not acted upon by the current administration. One recommendation called for a ban on the president and others linked to the civil conflict from participating in public service and political activities for 30 years. In January 2011, the Supreme Court nullified this recommendation declaring it unconstitutional by denying individuals due process. Thus far, there has been no major violence associated with the non-implementation of the TRC recommendations.[2]

In terms of economic progress, the international community in 2010, erased $4.6 billion dollars of debt, and the United States cancelled nearly $30 million in debt owed to US government agencies. From 2006 to 2009, the economy grew by 9 % and in 2010 the economy grew by 4.5%. Further, Liberia agreed to more than $16 billion dollars in foreign direct investment and

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[2] "Liberians advised against using TRC report for political gains", http://allafrica.com/stories/201103060260.html

concessions. [3] The iron ore and rubber industries are attempting to replicate levels of exports held prior to the war. During the war, these industries suffered as iron ore production was halted. In late September 2011, Arcelor Mittal began to ship iron ore from Liberia. This was the first shipment in 20 years. [4] The diamond and timber industries are functioning again due to the fact that in 2006, the UN sanctions on Liberian timber were removed and in April 2007, sanctions on Liberian diamonds ended by decree from the United Nations Security Council.

In terms of security, over 100,000 ex-combatants were disarmed and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) reconstructed. Many respondents were concerned about the lack of AFL personnel providing local and border security. They did not understand that the AFL was currently in training and not in active duty. The LNP transformed through technical assistance provided by US government agencies and by the United Nations. As discussed above, the UNMIL mandate was extended until September 2012.

The election on October 11, 2011, was the first democratic election administered by Liberians instead of by the international community (UNMIL managed the 2005 elections). This ICAF was conducted in Bong, Lofa, Montserrado and Nimba Counties by two teams prior to the election. Within each county, the teams visited the county seats, towns and rural villages. In each village or town, the ICAF team, followed traditional customs including speaking first with the town chief or district commissioner prior to conducting interviews with residents. People were selected at random from the community for interviews and focus groups. In Montserrado County, the team conducted interviews in Monrovia and its suburbs.

## DRIVERS OF CONFLICT AND MITIGATING FACTORS

The ICAF analysis includes a review of background research and information collected during interviews to formulate Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors. A Core Grievance is defined as the perception by an identity group or groups in a society, that their needs for physical security, livelihood, interests or values are threatened by one or more other groups and/or social institutions. Social and Institutional Resiliencies are the perception by various identity groups that social relationships, structures and/or processes are in place and able to provide dispute resolution and meet basic needs through non–violent means. The Drivers of Conflict are the dynamic situations that result from key actors mobilizing identity groups around their Core Grievances. Mitigating Factors are the dynamic situations that arise from key actors mobilizing identity groups around Social and Institutional Resiliencies (all findings are explained in further detail in appendix 3). The ICAF teams identified key actors and then formulated Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors. Then the teams developed "nested" Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors for Liberia. The nested

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[3] "International Bank (Liberia) Limited Annual Customer Appreciation Dinner Remarks by Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield", July 22, 2011, http://monrovia.usembassy.gov/sp072211.html.

[4] "ArcelorMittal Begins Shipment of Iron Ore Rebirth of Liberia's Mining Sector". Republic of Liberia Ministry of Information, Culture & Tourism, http://www.micat.gov.lr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=227:arcelormittal-begins-shipment-of-iron-ore-rebirth-of-liberias-mining-sector-&catid=1:latest-news&Itemid=111

models can be used as a tool by decision makers to determine policies and programs in Liberia that may help to ensure peace and stability.

**Nested Models of Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors**

During the analytical workshop, the teams determined the interconnectedness of the Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors within the Liberian context. The Drivers of Conflict and the Mitigating Factors exist in a "nested" fashion at international, national and local levels. Each level intersects and/or impacts one another. The nested models assist in determining how the Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors can prevent short term acts of conflict within local, national and international levels. The local level is the village or town level. The national level is defined as the entire nation of Liberia, and the international level is where several nations and international organizations interact. This nested model framework is based in part on Maire Dugan's article "A Nested Theory of Conflict." In the theory, Dugan determines that conflict should be identified within the level it begins; for example, one must determine if conflict begins at a structural level of a system as a whole or if conflict begins at an issue-specific or relational level. The Dugan theory determines that all levels of conflict are interrelated and an action at one level affects all other levels. In the nested levels of analysis, all levels of conflict are considered interrelated. The Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors may be related in terms of patterns, actions or behaviors but operate at different levels (local, national and international). In the example below, the Drivers of Conflict relate to governance but the impact varies depending on the corresponding level of government.

**Nested Driver of Conflict***: Lack of Trust and Confidence in Governance*

**National**: Some political parties mobilize citizens around their concerns regarding the NEC's independence and legitimacy.

**County**: Centralization and misuse of county development funds by some superintendents, representatives and senators (sometimes for personal use).

**Local**: Some citizens lack confidence in their local leaders to effect change.

There are actors at the national, county and local levels that exacerbate the fact that many citizens lack confidence in their government. In terms of the national level, the key actor is the political parties that rouse citizens around the perceived lack of legitimacy of the NEC. Many respondents questioned the legitimacy of the electoral process because they felt many rural citizens were not sufficiently educated on how to vote. It was mentioned that even if NEC workers provided posters to villagers, they did not provide sufficient instruction on how to vote. This lack of voter "sensitization" was viewed by many as a tactic by the incumbent Unity Party. Additionally, prior to the election, many political parties questioned the independence of the NEC due to the former Chairman's membership in the Unity Party. Opposition parties repeatedly mentioned the former Chairman's alliance to the Unity Party as a reason why the NEC was not independent and would provide support only to the Unity Party.

At the county level, the respondents repeatedly questioned the manner in which County Development Funds were used. For instance, respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the types of projects being implemented. Local Liberians were not part of the decision making

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process that led to projects and they were not consulted during the selection process. There are standing meetings held with one or two district commissioners. An issue is that the District Commissioners do not take the message back to have a more consultative dialogue with the citizens in that district. Many respondents felt the funds should be used for projects that directly impact them. It was not understood that the funds could be used to construct local government buildings. One young man in Monrovia stated, "It is not clear what is being done with our taxpayer money. We are not sure who is paying for what, the donors or the Government of Liberia." Another person stated, "They{local leaders} come and they lie to us, our only payment is when they drive by and splash dirty water on us." There were a significant number of respondents that stated they only interacted with their Senators and Representatives during the campaign season. They did not think projects were being funded in their villages or towns. It was stated that representatives made promises during the campaign season and then did not fulfill them.

At the local level, there was a distrust of the level of impact that local leaders could have on behalf of the citizens. Liberia has a hierarchical decentralized government structure but local leaders do not have funding and are not able to solve the monetary complaints of their constituents. If there are significant issues raised by the constituents, they have to complain to higher levels of government. Additionally, many Liberians did not trust their elected representatives to represent their views. Many respondents stated their representatives only visited the local communities during campaign season. One interviewee in Sarkimpa Town Center outside of Sanniquellie, Nimba County, told the ICAF team that the national candidates only show up during election season and they [the interviewees] do not see them thereafter. Many citizens do not believe they are adequately represented in the legislature.

Significant segments of Liberia's government remain highly centralized despite recent efforts to cede some of its power to the counties. For instance, respondents in the education sector were disgruntled because necessary school supplies were not provided by the central government and they were unable to attain them. Respondents in Sosaphio, Nimba County, declared that they would like decentralization of power from the central government. There were complaints that the county government has little power to solve a problem. All decisions must come from the central government. Respondents in Sosaphio, Nimba County, stated that the only power the county government has is to go to Monrovia and ask for funding; the local government is not able to allocate funding.

**Nested Mitigating Factors**

Mitigating Factors differ from the Drivers of Conflict as they relate to the local and/or indigenous strengths in a society. During the ICAF, the teams asked participants "Why are you proud to be a Liberian?" Respondents described positive attributes of Liberian society which are the basis for the Social and Institutional Resiliencies. The Mitigating Factors are nested in order to reinforce the local, national and international players that mitigate conflict and by extension strengthen the resiliencies present in society.

*Nested Mitigating Factor: Mitigating and Resolving Conflicts*

**International**: UNMIL's perceived and actual ability to handle and resolve conflicts.

**National**: The Liberia National Police (LNP) organizing community policing efforts to mitigate crime and security issues.

**Local:** Quarter chiefs, town chiefs and other local leaders resolving community disputes.

In the four counties where interviews were conducted, respondents repeatedly stated that UNMIL was a viable force to resolve conflicts. UNMIL was mandated by Security Council Resolution 1509 in 2003 and acts under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter and assumed control from ECOWAS for peacekeeping duties on October 1, 2003. UNMIL has 7,735 troops and 133 military observers, and is headed by a UN Special Representative of the Secretary General. [5] UNMIL's mandate was extended according to Security Council Resolution 2008 in 2011 for 12 months until September 2012.

*There is a perception that when UNMIL forces become involved in an incident or conflict then the incident will be resolved quickly.* Several respondents remarked that UNMIL forces were more effective then the LNP and were able to provide more security. A respondent commented, "Thank God for UN protection." UNMIL was also viewed as trustworthy in terms of providing news, and the majority of respondents stated that they listened to UNMIL radio. Another respondent in Waterfall Station declared that, "We trust UNMIL because the UN is helping Liberia and is always there to come to Liberia's aid."

The LNP, a key actor, developed a community policing initiative to combat local crime, and the United Nations Police (UNPOL) is assisting the LNP with this effort. *The community police initiative was perceived as an effective deterrent for crime.* They provided a vehicle for the LNP to be seen in neighborhoods during the night hours. Many people interviewed in Monrovia and the county centers stated that security for burglary and theft was one of their concerns. The majority of LNP units were not viewed as effective during the night as they did not have sufficient man power or the ability to travel to most towns and villages. In terms of protection during daylight hours, the LNP was viewed as effective but several respondents noted that they were perceived as willing to accept money in order to be present at the scene of a crime. A farmer in Belefanai, Bong County, stated, "We have to pay the police to come to the crime scene." Ultimately, there is a low level of trust toward the LNP.

*In villages and towns, respondents stated that local leaders were effective in dispute resolution for non-criminal issues.* There is a structure in place; citizens go to the quarter chief to discuss an issue. If they cannot resolve it, the issue is transferred to the town chief and eventually the district commissioner. At a meeting for district commissioners in Bong County, the commissioners were proud to state they were mediators who effectively handled and resolved conflict. The local leaders, such as the commissioners and chiefs, are considered trustworthy by many Liberians to handle all conflicts. In Voinjama, Lofa County, a Muslim woman remarked, "I trust the chief. He helps solve problems. For example: if people don't pay for my charcoal, I can go to the Chief, and he will make people pay."

If an issue is criminal then it must be handled by the justice system. The majority of the respondents mentioned that they knew of a justice system but it was not fully developed. Two

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[5] "United Nations Mission in Liberia : History " , http://unmil.org/2content.asp?sub=22&main=19&pgt=2

frequent complaints were that cases were not handled in a timely fashion and that justice can be bought by wealthy defendants. A man in Monrovia, Montserrado County, remarked, "The judicial system only works for people who have money. People without money languish in jail. There are not enough courts to carry on expedient trials."

## WINDOWS OF UNCERTAINTY

An aspect of the ICAF analysis is identifying "Windows of Uncertainty." The window is an event that will occur in the next six to 24 months that may impact the sustainability of the current peace in Liberia. These windows may be moments when over-arching identities become more important than sub-groups identities. In these instances, there may be an opening for USG efforts to provide additional support to Mitigating Factors. Several Windows of Uncertainty for Liberia were discussed in the findings in the preceding section of the report. Below is a discussion of the few remaining Windows of Uncertainty.

### 1. New Executive Branch Administration

A Window of Uncertainty is the new administration that will be appointed in January by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. There will be a shuffle within her administration; this new leadership may lead to instability in segments of Liberian society.

### 2. New Liberian Policies and Agencies

The National Policy on Decentralization in Local Governance launched on January 5, 2012. The political decentralization program will be implemented in phases. During the initial phase, delivery of public services will be moved out of Monrovia to the county centers. [6] The goal is to strengthen local self-governance as well as expand citizens' participation in government affairs. Additionally, the policy will provide an opportunity for citizens to participate in development decisions in their communities. The Good Governance Commission is mandated to recommend changes to the government structure to the president for executive action or for the president to transmit to the National Legislature for action. It is an autonomous public commission that is independent from the government but submits quarterly financial statements to the Legislature and the president. [7] Changes in the government structure will impact Liberians by changing the way they relate to their local government leaders; citizens may have more direct involvement in their government. Currently, there are ongoing National Decentralization exercises throughout government ministries and agencies. These exercises will be important when functions and responsibilities are moved from the central government to local government.

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[6] " Statement by H.E. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at Official Launch of National Policy on Decentralization and Local Governance, Salala Headquarters, Salala District, Bong County , January 5, 2012".
[7] "The Liberia Decentralization Program Overview, Good Governance Commission, http://www.goodgovernanceliberia.org/prog-3.html

**3. United States Presidential Election, November 2012**

The United States presidential election in 2012 is a Window of Uncertainty because Liberians are tied to events in the United States due to a shared history. The majority of respondents understand this historical link and some even stated that Liberia is a "former colony" of the United States. A few respondents expected additional foreign aid and assistance from the United States as a result of the historical ties between the two nations. If a president is elected in the United States that does not support significant amounts of foreign aid, the monies received by Liberia may dwindle. Reduction in foreign assistance by the United States is also a possibility because of the global economic downturn.

## UPDATE TO 2010 ICAF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

There were both similarities and differences between the ICAF in March 2010 and the ICAF update in September-October 2011. Some of the Diagnostic Conclusions and Mitigating Factors were similar yet many of the Drivers of Conflict differed.

The first Driver of Conflict in 2010 covered issues of land control and ownership. Most Liberians saw access to land as the primary source of conflict between identity groups. Second, Liberians were disappointed and dissatisfied with aspects of political, economic and social life. There were unmet expectations after the end of the civil war. The dissatisfaction regards the state of the formal justice system and security sector, the slow pace of economic development and infrastructure reconstruction, lack of accountability with local and national governments, corruption and the involvement of the international community in Liberia. Third, there was expressed frustration regarding lack of employment opportunities, the lack of education opportunities, inadequate health facilities and poor infrastructure.

In 2010, there were several reports of ethnic conflict between different tribes in Liberia. Respondents did not mention ethnic or tribal issues as a major concern in September 2011. In fact, most people stated that people got along regardless of their ethnic group. During a discussion with district commissioners in Gbarnga, Bong County, there was a conversation regarding the positive relationship between members of different tribes. One commissioner mentioned that in his area there was intermarriage between different ethnic groups. In a focus group with high schools students at a local Catholic high school in Gbarnga, students stated that they do not speak their ethnic language because English is their only language.

**Similarities between Core Grievances in 2010 and Core Grievances in 2011**

One major similarity is that people are still frustrated with the lack of job and education opportunities throughout Liberia. There continues to be high unemployment throughout the country. In some mining communities, Liberians complained that jobs were given to foreign nationals as opposed to Liberians. In terms of education opportunities, there remains insufficient numbers of high schools and universities in Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties. Many students continue to board in another city to attend high school. Several high school graduates mentioned that they are unable to attend university due to tuition cost and due to the fact that the University of Liberia is the only public university in the country.

Access to health care facilities remains an issue. The roads remain poor and affect people's ability to travel to health facilities. Many NGOs have left Liberia and transitioned the running of health clinics to the Ministry of Health, which is slower in providing the necessary supplies and salaries to government health workers. Another grievance present in both 2010 and 2011 was the conflict between the Lorma people and the Mandingo people in Lofa County. This tension continues today between the Lorma and the Mandingo people but an agreement was reached, and there is now a schedule regarding the time of day that traditional customs are practiced.

In both the 2010 and 2011 ICAF, respondents thought justice was able to be purchased. One major difference was that in 2010 respondents felt that County Officials were apt to respond to issues if one could afford to pay them. This was not mentioned in the 2011 ICAF.

**Differences between Core Grievances in 2010 and Core Grievances in 2011**

The issue of land control and ownership was mentioned frequently in 2010, but not as frequently during the 2011 ICAF. Many Liberians remarked that if there was a land issue there was a process in place to mediate and resolve the conflict. The process included speaking to the town or paramount chief. If the town or paramount chief did not resolve the situation then it would be elevated for resolution by accessing the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), an international NGO. The NRC implements a dispute resolution program in Liberia, and the program has registered 3,449 land dispute cases and resolved 2,077 land dispute cases. In addition, it has provided mediation and property rights training to 8,868 beneficiaries.[8] Through listening to the interviewees it seems as if the program has been successful in certain parts of Liberia.

Additionally, in 2010, there was a perception of unfair access for certain groups such as advantages for Americo-Liberians and Liberians returning from the Diaspora. They were perceived to have greater access to jobs, education and the justice system. This grievance was rarely heard during the 2011 ICAF. A grievance mentioned in 2011 that was not mentioned in 2010 was the high price for commodities. The price for rice was highlighted repeatedly by interviewees as a major impediment to Liberians' standard of living.

**Comparison from the 2010 ICAF Resiliencies and Mitigating Factors and the 2011 ICAF**

A Social Resilience that was present in both the 2010 and 2011 ICAF was the self reliance exhibited by Liberians. In 2010, communities were rebuilding their villages, and in 2011, people were expanding their school buildings to accommodate the increase number of students due to the free primary school legislation. Liberians in 2010 formed neighborhood watch groups, and these groups continue to operate. The Motorcycle Unions were also seen as positive agents in 2010 in terms of employing ex-combatants and aiding their reintegration into society. In 2011, Motorcycle Unions continued to play an active role in society specifically pertaining to the continued reintegration of ex-combatants. Another Social Resilience that continues in 2011 is the idea of a common identity among Liberians. Ethnic groups continue to coexist, and there are incidences of intermarriage between ethnic groups.

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[8] "Norwegian Refugee Council -Liberia-NRC's Country Programme in Liberia", http://www.nrc.no/?did=9167938

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In the 2010 report, interfaith dialogues were a Mitigating Factor, as they assisted with the community reconciliation process. Communities were solving their own issues without aid from outsiders and assisting citizens with community improvement. In 2011, respondents did not mention interfaith dialogues. A Mitigating Factor present in the 2010 and 2011 ICAF was the role of radio stations. Radio was seen as a vehicle to obtain news throughout the nation. In 2010, radio was used to disseminate conflict – mitigating information and in 2011, they were used by the NEC to provide voters with election information.

In both 2010 and 2011, respondents mentioned the use of the traditional justice system. A difference is that in 2011, there seems to be a deliberate connection between the traditional justice system and the formal justice system. It is understood by the majority of Liberians that certain issues, such as criminal cases, are addressed by the formal justice system and not the traditional system. People understand the roles of both systems. In both the 2010 and 2011, respondents seemed to exhibit war fatigue and the desire to maintain peace. The respondents stated that they are still tired from the war and do not want to run anymore. The majority of the respondents in 2011 were pleased with the security situation since the election in 2005 of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

**Windows of Uncertainty 2010**

In terms of the Windows of Uncertainty highlighted in the 2010 ICAF, many of the events listed as potentially inciting violence were completed and peace remained in Liberia. For example, a Referendum was held in August 2011 on four measures including one regarding residency requirements for presidential candidates. One measure eventually passed after Supreme Court review, and there were no incidences of violence after the NEC announced results. The Sime Darby Expansion in Grand Cape Mount County occurred, but there has been a call by local leaders to halt the expansion due to villagers being removed from their ancestral lands and the land being provided to Sime Darby through concession.[9]

ArcelorMittal, a mining company with Iron Ore mines in Nimba County, did negotiate a concessions deal with the Government of Liberia (GoL). Respondents in 2011 did not mention that the concessions led to violence. It was mentioned by respondents in Yekepa, Nimba County, that the mine dominates the town. The concessions were seen as both positive and negative as the company provides free or low cost housing, schools and health care. Many respondents desire for the company to hire more local people. It was hoped that after the election, ArcelorMittal will hire more people and increase employment in town. One negative aspect of the ArcelorMittal mines operating in Nimba County was the perception by some respondents that too many foreigners were being hired as opposed to local workers. One person in Yekepa stated, "I am angry that foreigners get the benefit from Liberia's resources."

The other Windows of Uncertainty listed in 2010 were the presidential and legislative elections in 2011 and the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations. In terms of the election, there was minimal evidence of violence except for an incident prior to the runoff election in November 2011. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its recommendations in 2009, and there were no acts of violence.

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[9] "Liberia: Halt Sime Darby Plantation Expansion", allafrica.com, http://allafrica.com/stories/201107141082.html

There are a few Windows of Uncertainty that remain the same. The Charles Taylor verdict in The Hague has not been announced. It is unknown if the verdict will lead to violence. In 2011, respondents did not mention the trial of Charles Taylor as a major concern or issue. Additionally, UNMIL's mandate has been extended to September 2012. It is unknown if their potential withdrawal in 2012 will result in instability in Liberia. Many respondents commented they feel safe due to UNMIL's presence, and they do not want them to leave.

## CONCLUSIONS AND EPILOGUE

The Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors described in this report may affect the dynamics in Liberia's future. It is important to recognize that a very low level of overt conflict exists in Liberia. This is important in terms of maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the nation. It is also important that Liberians continue to be proud of their nation. They view their nation as developing and think that in five years Liberia could be as developed as neighboring countries such as Ghana or Nigeria. Eventually, they hope to be as developed as the United States. One man in Voinjama, Lofa County, stated, "We are born here, our property is here, and we have freedom that we cannot have anywhere else."

Finally, our overall conclusions are that the level of existing overt conflict is relatively low as there are social networks and relationships that support Liberians resilience. Regional events may have a potential impact on Liberia such as the upcoming elections in Sierra Leone. Ultimately, many of the current Drivers of Conflict reflect political parties and politicians as the key actors mobilizing their constituents around grievances concerning the elections. Yet, many of the identified grievances around development and infrastructure do not currently have a key actor mobilizing Liberians.

**Epilogue**

The ICAF interviews, analysis and preliminary presentation ended in early October 2011, prior to the election. The ICAF team closely followed the October 11 election and the subsequent runoff election on November 8, 2011, and a summary of the election findings is provided in Appendix 4. The election period was considered free and fair by international observers, and there was no major incident of violence. The results of the elections mirror the findings of the 2011 ICAF update as there were low levels of election related violence. A Window of Uncertainty, the return of Charles Taylor to Liberia, was addressed during the election period. Charles Taylor was determined to not be welcomed back to Liberia by President Johnson Sirleaf. Liberia continues to be a nation with low levels of violence, and there are no major actors to incite widespread violence.

Appendix 1 - ICAF 2011 Field Participants List
Appendix 2 - Nested Model of Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors
Appendix 3 - Drivers of Conflict, Mitigating Factors Liberia
Appendix 4 - Election Findings, October and November 2011

## Appendix 1: Liberia ICAF 2011 Field Participants List

1) Nicole Goodrich, US Department of State, CSO, ICAF Team Lead
2) Steven Andersson, US Department of Justice, Civilian Response Corps Active
3) Tim Bove, US Department of Defense
4) Daniel Bovel Jr, Foreign Service National, US Department of State Embassy Monrovia
5) Danijel Dasic, US Agency for International Development, Mission Liberia
6) Michael Deluca, US Department of Defense
7) Louise Fahnbulleh, US Agency for International Development, Foreign Service National, Mission Liberia
8) Joe-Hoover Gbadyu, US Agency for International Development, Foreign Service National, Mission Liberia
9) Afiya McLaughlin-Johnson, US Department of State, CSO
10) Robin Rohlf, US Department of Defense
11) George Sarmiento, US Department of State, Foreign Service Officer, Embassy Monrovia
12) Andrew Sweet, US Agency for International Development, Civilian Response Corp-Standby
13) Elizabeth Wewerka, US Department of State, Foreign Service Officer, Embassy Monrovia
14) Eric Flahn, Locally Employed Staff, US Embassy Monrovia
15) Jonathan Kanneh, Locally Employed Staff, US Embassy Monrovia
16) Henry Yillah, Locally Employed Staff, US Embassy Monrovia
17) Bondo Norris, Locally Employed Staff, US Embassy Monrovia
18) Valentine Plackie, Locally Employed Staff, US Embassy Monrovia

## **Appendix 2: Core Grievances, Social and Institutional Resiliencies, Drivers of Conflict and Mitigating Factors**

### **Core Grievances**

- Some Liberians are concerned about the independence of the National Election Commission and its relationship to the ruling party.

- Some Liberians in urban areas and most in rural areas are concerned by the lack of voter education.

- Liberians are frustrated with the proliferation of political parties.

- Liberians lament their limited and unequal access to available government services.

- Liberians lament inadequate economic and infrastructure development.

- Liberians do not feel that rural development is fair and balanced as compared to urban areas like Monrovia.

- Liberians are concerned about high prices of essential commodities and services and the perception of the government's inability to control them.

- Liberians lament the lack of health facilities with adequate supplies of medicine and their cost, trained staff and equipment.

- Some Liberians are dissatisfied with the performance and capabilities of the Liberia National Police.

- Most Liberia National Police officers lament the lack of adequate equipment, the lack of staff, and facilities and low salaries. In the interior, some Liberia National Police lament the lack of follow-on training, medical benefits and additional pay.

- Liberians are frustrated by an ineffective court system.

- Some Liberians perceive the Armed Forces of Liberia as unable to provide security and other services they expect.

- Some Liberians are concerned that corruption has not been adequately addressed.

- Some Liberians do not trust the information they receive.

- Liberians are frustrated by the lack of jobs and anticipated job opportunities.

## Social and Institutional Resiliencies

- Desire to maintain peace - "We are tired of running."

- Self reliance - relying on themselves and/or the community.

- Society's hierarchical structure to address grievances.

- The ability to debate and freedom of speech.

- Unity - proud of our togetherness.

- Strong community based organizations and civil society organizations.

- Ability to adapt to complex situations.

- Religious values - "Leave it to God."

- Pride of place - "I was born here, my mother was born here and my father was born here."

- Liberians have established government systems.

- A strong desire to obtain an education.

- Strong expectation of foreign investment and international aid to provide assistance.

- Freedom of movement – people's ability to travel and move around the country.

- Richness of natural resources.

- Determination to maintain recent progress (infrastructure and development).

- A mindset focused on a positive future for themselves and their children.


## Drivers of Conflict

- Some politicians mobilize citizens around perceived unfairness in the electoral process.

- Some political parties are mobilizing citizens who are inadequately informed about public policy issues.

- Some politicians and local leaders are using the history of past inter-ethnic violence to their advantage.

- Some political parties mobilize citizens around their concern of the independence and legitimacy of the NEC.

- Centralization and misuse of county development funds by some superintendents, representatives and senators (sometimes for personal use).

- Some citizens lack confidence in local leaders to affect change.

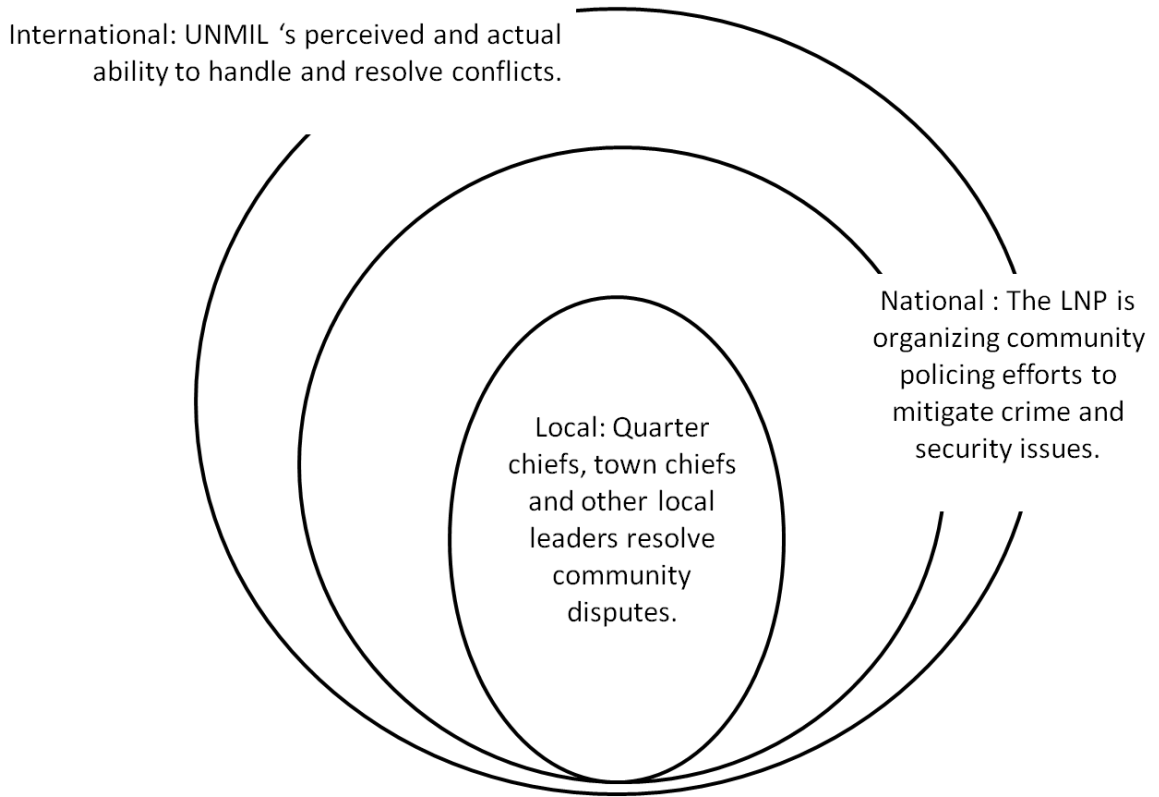- Some chiefs, elders, youth and women are mobilizing citizens around mysterious killings.


**Mitigating Factors**

- The president, most political parties, ECOWAS and some Motorcycle Unions made public statements about their commitment to non-violence during the electoral process.

- The international community is perceived as a guarantor of free and fair elections.

- Most political parties have signed an MOU to abide by NEC guidelines (Notable exceptions are Congress for Democratic Change and Liberty Party).

- Head of the Traditional Council made pronouncements in the media to keep the peace and asked local chiefs to submit the same peace message in local dialects.

- The Liberia National Police is organizing community policing efforts to mitigate crime and security issues.

- The Traditional Council and local chiefs are working with the Ministry of Justice and NGOs to formalize customary law so it can work more effectively with formal law.

- NGOs provide various assistance to address Liberians' grievances.

- Radio (UNMIL and Community) provides balanced information on current affairs and local, national and international issues.

- UNMIL's perceived and actual ability to handle and resolve conflicts.

- Quarter chiefs, town chiefs and other local leaders resolve community disputes.
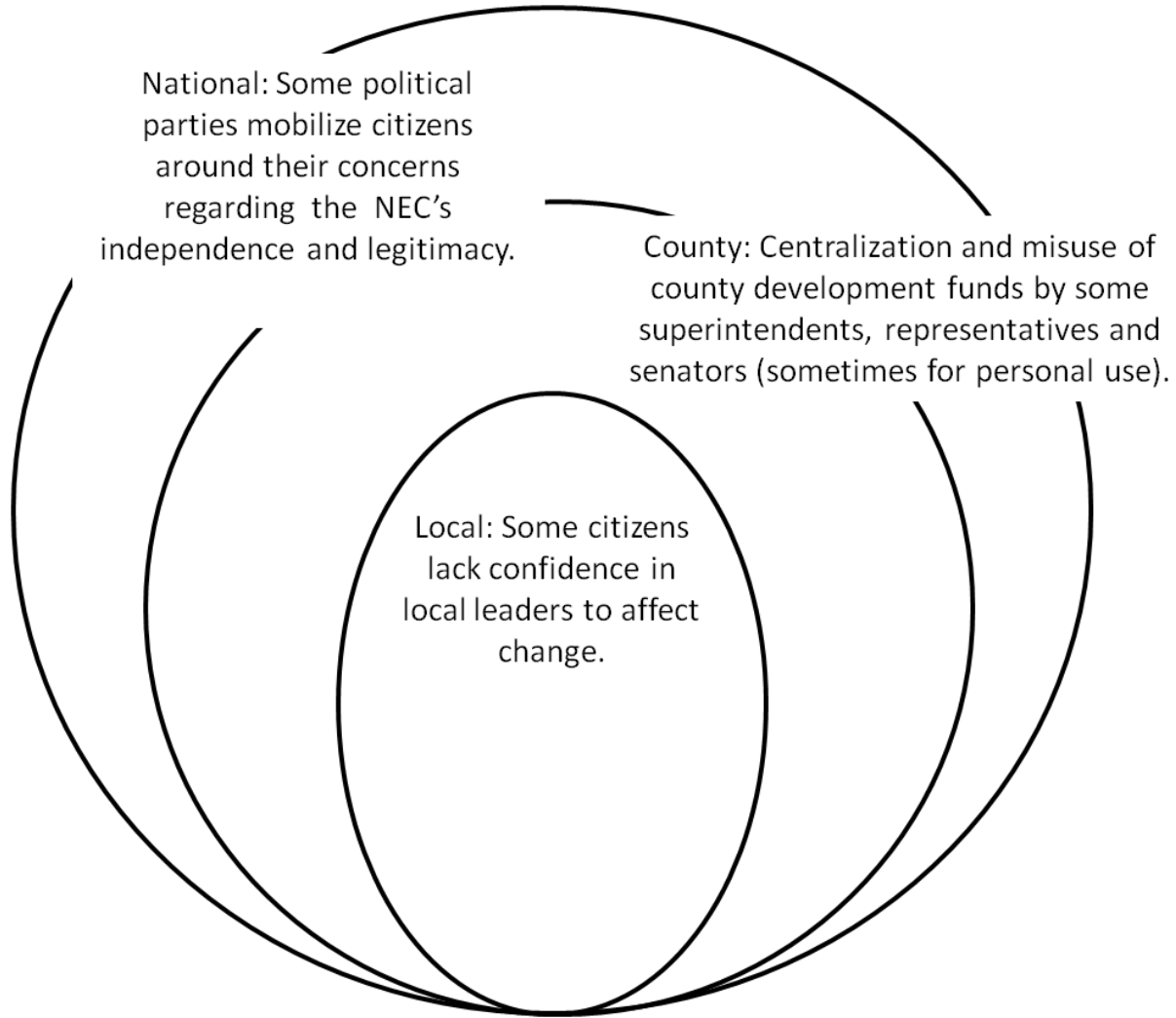
## Appendix 3: Nested Models – Mitigating Factors and Drivers of Conflict

**Nested Mitigating Factors: Mitigating and Resolving Conflicts**

International: UNMIL 's perceived and actual ability to handle and resolve conflicts.

National : The LNP is organizing community policing efforts to mitigate crime and security issues.

Local: Quarter chiefs, town chiefs and other local leaders resolve community disputes.

**Nested Drivers of Conflict: Lack of Trust and Confidence in Governance**

National: Some political parties mobilize citizens around their concerns regarding the NEC's independence and legitimacy.

County: Centralization and misuse of county development funds by some superintendents, representatives and senators (sometimes for personal use).

Local: Some citizens lack confidence in local leaders to affect change.

## Appendix 4: Election Findings

The presidential and legislative elections were held on October 11, 2011. The final results were announced by the NEC on October 25 and are as follows; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Unity Party (UP), 43.9% (530,020 votes), Counselor Winston Tubman, Congress for Democratic Change (CDC), 32.7% (394,370 votes) and Prince Yormie Johnson, National Union for Democratic Progress (NUDP), 11.6% (139,786) votes.[10] On October 18, Prince Johnson officially announced that he would support President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. This is important because he has a strong support base in Nimba County where he is a Senior Senator, and Nimba County has the second highest number of voters after Montserrado County, which seats the capital, Monrovia. There were reports that President Johnson Sirleaf accepted employment and financial demands from Mr. Johnson in exchange for his support. President Johnson Sirleaf rejected these claims.

There was a runoff election on November 8 between President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Winston Tubman because none of the 16 presidential candidates had an absolute majority (50% plus one vote) in the October 11 race. The Carter Center Elections Observation Mission in Liberia stated that the process was transparent, and there was no evidence of systematic fraud or manipulation of results.[11] The view of the Carter Center is held by the majority of the international observers present during the election. The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) published a white paper that discussed how the elections were determined to be orderly, transparent and peaceful.[12]

There was a call to boycott the November 8 runoff election by the CDC because of alleged fraud in the October 11 election. The CDC announced they would officially boycott the runoff election until select demands were met by the NEC. The demands included the removal of the NEC Chairman James Fromayan, international representation to be "monitors" and not only "observers" and 50-50 representation by both the CDC and the Unity Party as Ad-Hoc NEC Commissioners. Lastly, they wanted UNMIL to provide security for the election materials to prevent tampering.

On Sunday, October 30, Chairman Fromayan announced his resignation as Chairman of the NEC. Mr. Fromayan stated in his resignation letter, "I am resigning to give way to peace. I do not want to be the obstacle to the holding of the runoff election on November 8."[13] The United States Government (USG) through US Department of State issued a press release on November 5 stating that the elections were free, fair and transparent, and opposition parties' claims regarding a fraudulent election were unsubstantiated. The USG was supportive of the runoff election as it is a fundamental part of democracy in Liberia. Many international actors condemned the CDC's plan to boycott the election.

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[10] "Liberia 2011 Presidential and Legislative Elections, National Tally", http://www.necliberia.org/results2011

[11] "No evidence of systematic fraud, manipulation of elections results " Daily Observer, October 26,2011

[12] "" Elections in Liberia November 8 Presidential Run-Off Election, Frequently Asked Questions", IFES, htters/2011/~/media/Files/Publications/White%20PaperReport/2011/Liberia_November_2011_Run_Off_FAQ.pdf

CDC presidential candidate Winston Tubman officially withdrew from the race on November 5 and the runoff election was held on November 8, 2011. There was lingering political tension because of a violent clash on November 7 between supporters of the CDC outside of their headquarters in Monrovia and the LNP. Approximately 85 people were arrested. It was confirmed by Liberian Police Chief, Marc Amblard that live bullets were used to fire on opposition protestors on the eve of the election. There is a dispute regarding the number of people killed, but it is estimated that one person was killed.[14] The LNP stated that force was needed in order to control the crowd. Additionally, prior to the election, three radio stations that supported the CDC were closed by the government because it was believed they were inciting violence. The radio stations were reopened on November 15. Winston Tubman suggested he would consider a legal challenge to annul the runoff election results. The NEC announced their election results on November 15, 2011, with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf winning with 90.8% of the vote and Winston Tubman receiving 9% of the vote. It was stated by many news sources that voter turnout was low due to violence the day before.[15]

An ICAF finding was that the Charles Taylor trail may be an event that could cause uncertainty in Liberia. After the ICAF was concluded, there were newspaper articles regarding Winston Tubman, the CDC presidential candidate, stating that if he wins the presidency then Charles Taylor would be welcome in Liberia and he will be free to enter the political arena. As the incumbent president was reelected, it is unlikely that Charles Taylor will return to Liberia if he is cleared of charges at The Hague.

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[15] "Liberia Tense as Presidential Runoff Vote Starts", http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/09/world/africa/liberia-tense-as-presidential-runoff-vote-starts.html