

Recommendations contained on page I

2nd edition: This report now incorporates a study by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) of the part played by revenues generated from Liberia's shipping register.



global witness



Taylor-made

The Pivotal Role of Liberia's
Forests and Flag of Convenience
in Regional Conflict

A Report by Global Witness in conjunction with the International
Transport Workers Federation (ITF). *September 2001*



Recommendations

The UN Security Council should:

- Immediately impose a total embargo on the exportation and transportation of Liberian timber, and its importation into other countries. Such an embargo should remain in place until it can be demonstrated that the trade does not contribute to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone and armed militias in Liberia, and that it is carried out in a transparent manner (as referred to in para 49 of the *Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000) paragraph 19 in relation to Sierra Leone*).
- Conduct further investigations into the Liberian timber industry, particularly the Oriental Timber Company (OTC), to enable the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and other members of the international community to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of this industry in Charles Taylor's presidency and the conflict in Sierra Leone and, increasingly, Lofa County in Northern Liberia.
- Conduct detailed investigations into any other Liberian industries that may contribute to violence and human rights violations in West Africa.
- Impose sanctions on the Liberian shipping register, as this revenue is used directly by the Executive Mansion (i.e. under Taylor's personal control) for extra-governmental purposes that do not benefit the state and prolongs regional insecurity.

The International Community should:

- Increase humanitarian aid to Liberia, channelled through UN agencies and NGOs. Due to aid restrictions, agencies such as the World Food Programme have to allocate lower rations to, for example, Internally Displaced Persons in Liberia than to their counterparts in Sierra Leone. The sanctions should target the government, not the ordinary citizens of Liberia or the victims of regional conflict.
- Put pressure on Guinea's President Conté to bring an end to his support for cross-border attacks into Liberia (see Chapter 10. *Factors of destabilisation in the region* – page 27)

The Government of Liberia should ensure that:

- The country's timber industry is run according to best international standards of sustainable forest management, and to ensure that all timber revenues due to the state are directed to the Central Bank of Liberia, and not to the Executive Mansion.
- The timber industry benefits the lives of the Liberian population, rather than contributing to their poverty and oppression.
- Timber companies operating in Liberia do so according to the law, that they do not employ armed militias and do not engage in any activities which contribute to conflict and human rights abuses.

Preface

Through the imposition of targeted sanctions, the international community has demonstrated its concern over the threat Liberia poses to regional security. Despite recent overtures, this threat is still real: Liberia continues to support the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front, and continues to import armaments in contravention of the sanctions.

Liberia's timber and shipping register are two key sources of revenue for the Taylor regime, which is engaged in these activities. In 2000, the timber trade alone generated minimum profits of US\$100 million which did not benefit the state. It is highly unlikely that, without the lucrative revenues from these sources, Taylor could sustain his programme of regional destabilisation.

Timber related jobs in Liberia are few, seasonal and insecure, other than those provided to expatriates. Similarly, the maritime programme offers few jobs to Liberians who have very little contact with what is effectively a device to give foreign shipping companies a haven from taxes and other responsibilities.

Economic sanctions focused on these two sources of income would seriously restrict the regime's capacity to sponsor war in the region. Furthermore, such sanctions would hurt the warlord elite and a greedy industry far more than most Liberians, who live in abject poverty in a land with virtually no infrastructure. The continuation of current logging practices would be severely detrimental for the Liberian people.



Liberian newspaper documenting the logging company OTC's militias alleged human rights abuses; May 2000.

This report, by Global Witness in conjunction with the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF), is divided into two parts. Part One, focusing on the role of the Liberian logging industry, is by Global Witness and Part Two, focusing on the role of Liberia's shipping register, is by the ITF.

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List of acronyms

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
ATU	Anti-Terrorist Unit (Liberia)
BIVAC	Bureau of Inspection for Verification Assessment and Certification
CDF	Civil Defense Forces (Sierra Leone)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (Sierra Leone)
FDA	Forest Development Authority (Liberia)
GOL	Government of Liberia
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
ULIMO-K	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (under Alhaji Kromah)
ULIMO-J	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (under Roosevelt Johnson)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
SOD	Special Operations Division (of the Liberian Police)
SSS	Special Security Services (Liberia)
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
UNAMSI	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

Executive summary

THIS REPORT documents the increasingly important role played by the Liberian timber industry and shipping register in fuelling regional insecurity. The timber industry is used, by the Liberian government, to traffic arms while also being Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front's (RUF) main source of income. Revenues derived from the timber industry and shipping register also fund President Charles Taylor's notorious security forces, implicated in numerous human rights abuses. For this reason, Liberia's shipping register and ability to partake in the international timber trade means that it can also continue to prolong regional conflict and insecurity within its own borders. It is important to note that although the sanctions outlined in *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001) on Liberia** are taking effect, ties between the Liberian government and the RUF remain both strong and active. It is also important to note that the importance of the timber industry and shipping register has increased dramatically as trade in diamonds has now been formally restricted.

- Charles Taylor is still actively seeking arms supplies in contravention of UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001) on Liberia. In May he approached Libya, and Libyan arms are believed to have entered by air via Burkina Faso. With increased surveillance of air routes, arms shipments by sea are on the increase (see Chapter 3. *Links between logging, the arms trade and regional conflict* – page 7).
- At least 7 out of the 25 logging companies recorded in the Forest Development Authority's (FDA) annual and semi-annual reports have direct links with either arms supply or the funding and provision of armed militias for Taylor's military use.
- OTC and Maryland Wood Processing Industries (MWPI) both control ports where arms have entered Liberia.
- OTC, the Royal Timber Company (RTC), Liberian Wood Management Company (LWMC), United Logging Co. (ULC), FAPCO, Salami Molawi Incorporated (SMI) and Inland Logging Co. (ILC) all maintain private armed militias, and those of the RTC and ULC have made their militias available for patrols on the Sierra Leonean border. In addition, some members of these militias regularly intimidate villagers and take the law into their own hands, including illegal detention and physical abuse.

* Referred to in the remainder of this document as UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001)

How sanctions – or no sanctions – would affect the Liberian people

Little revenue derived from the Liberian logging industry and from the Liberian shipping register benefit the Liberian people. Were sanctions to be placed on the shipping register – very few Liberian jobs would be affected, while jobs held within the logging industry, an estimated 8,000, are seasonal, insecure, and in large percentage held by non-Liberians. In 5–10 years, at current logging practices, Liberia is likely to be completely commercially logged out. At this time there will be no jobs and no possibility of timber revenue for the Liberian people. The years leading up to this would be years where regional insecurity would have a steady source of revenue, where the people would continue to suffer intimidation by logging company militias, and where the illicit arms trade would be permitted to continue.

- Several people subject to the travel ban under UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001) are involved in the timber industry. These include: Gus Kouwenhoven, Demetrius Robert Taylor, Talal El Ndine, Mohammed Salami, Austin Clarke, Gabrielle Doe, Victor Haikal, Maurice and Oscar Cooper. The fact the UNSC are concerned about these individuals means, de facto, that there must be concerns over their business interests.
- In 2000 Liberia's timber production of 934,000m³ was worth a *minimum* US\$187 million at world market prices (an average of US\$200 per m³ in 2000¹), with exports worth just under US\$130 million. During the same period the Liberian government declared timber revenues of US\$6.7 million.² Given that reasonable production costs are approximately US\$86 per m³,^{3,4} this means that a minimum of US\$100 million was available to the logging companies after all their production costs and taxes had been paid. This money is available to fill their profit margin, and to pay off their political and military patrons. These figures only take into account the timber production that Global Witness knows about, both official figures and export under declarations, they do not take into account the undoubted undeclared timber flows that exit through Côte d'Ivoire and elsewhere that have escaped detailed scrutiny.
- Opposition to timber sanctions has come from both France and China, the two greatest importers of Liberian timber, and from the Liberian government. In 2000 France and China imported a minimum of 167,779m³ and 290,409m³ of Liberian timber respectively,⁵ approximately 71% of total exports and worth US\$91.5 million. In both cases, the prime exporting companies are linked to arms trafficking and use of



armed militias. French and Chinese opposition cite both the negative effects sanctions will have on the Liberian people, and that there is insufficient evidence linking the logging industry to military funding and the arms trade. However, most Liberian independent press and ordinary citizens interviewed by Global Witness regard sanctions as essential in protecting Liberia's forest resources. Furthermore, the attitude of ordinary Liberians is that, for them, the situation is as about as bad as it could get. Sanctions will hurt the elite, not the average citizen.

- Charles Taylor is still using RUF forces in Lofa County, and is forcibly recruiting men and boys over the age of fourteen. Liberia continues to provide refuge to the notorious Sam 'Mosquito' Bockarie, who, as of June 2001, divides his time between Liberia and Normo Farma, Golahun Tonkia, Sierra Leone. This report also provides proof that named RUF personnel were trained in Libya, before being returned to Liberia as refugees.
- Liberia's forests are being destroyed at an unsustainable rate, which promises long-term negative implications for the country's future. OTC's General Manager, Joseph Wong, has said privately that he expects the company to leave Liberia within three to five years. Given that OTC control approximately 43% of Liberia's forests, this one company will be responsible for the commercial extinction of just under half of this valuable resource. As the record of several of the other big loggers is little better than that of OTC, the future is bleak.
- Little has been heard internationally of conditions in Liberia's forests, or of the views of ordinary Liberians. The section entitled *The plunder of Liberia's rainforest – a Liberian perspective* (pages 19-20) was received from an anonymous author in Liberia. The facts are verifiable and the opinions are those of an informed Liberian.
- Charles Taylor's government is amassing considerable wealth from the Liberian maritime programme. While there is little evidence showing that this revenue is benefiting the Liberian people, it is a vital pillar of economic security to a regime which is using much of its funds to destabilise neighbouring countries. This industry is also cited in the UN Panel of Experts on Sierra Leone as playing a role in facilitating the trade in 'conflict diamonds' from Sierra Leone (see *Part Two: The role of the Liberian shipping register*, pages 29-36).

Left: Logging truck belonging to the Oriental Timber Company (OTC), implicated in numerous human rights abuses and arms trafficking; July 2001

Below: Ghost town. Buchanan City, one of Liberia's main port towns, showing lack of investment and devastated infrastructure; July 2001

An argument for sanctions on Liberian timber – the Liberian perspective

[Note: the contents of this section were received by fax from Liberia, from an anonymous source. It has been included in this report unedited.]

"President Taylor has confirmed publicly that the logging industry provides his government with more income than all the other revenue sources combined. Independent observers agree that logging provides Taylor with substantial revenue. Calculations based on limited export data available to us suggest that the government could be receiving well over US\$60 million annually from logging. However, one sore point of contention is whether the generated revenue is being used to better the living conditions of the Liberian people, especially the rural people who are the traditional custodians of the forest and whose livelihood depend almost entirely on the forest.

Everyone, except Taylor and his associates, believes that this is not the case. Contrary to Taylor's continual denial that he is more concerned with amassing a personal fortune and building a military, whose conduct over the years is marred by gross disregard for the rule of law, there is overwhelming evidence suggesting he is doing just that.

The unsustainable exploitation of Liberia's rainforest is now a major concern for environmentalists both within and outside Liberia, but for most Liberians, their concerns now go beyond the environment and sustaining a livelihood, but incorporate human rights abuses, the institutionalisation of lawlessness, corruption in government, and the entrenchment of a government that has proven beyond all reasonable doubt to be inefficient and insensitive to their wishes and aspirations.

However, the above concerns pale alongside fears, expressed by a cross section of the Liberian citizenry, regarding the level of sub-regional insecurity that could result from Taylor's military adventurism being funded largely by the logging industry. There is a consensus that the issues of forests destruction and all the associated ecological implications and the unequal distribution of revenue from logging, should not be allowed to divert attention from the more complex and explosive issue of President Taylor expending that revenue to build a military with the sole objective of entrenching his despotic and tyrannical regime. The potentials for igniting a conflict and plunging the sub-region into complete chaos and anarchy is too obvious for anyone to overlook.

The UNSC must consider our call for a moratorium on Liberian timber and respond positively to send a clear signal to Taylor that his military adventurism will no longer be tolerated; this would be the single most decisive blow to Taylor's evil ambitions. Temporary job losses and economic hardship is a small price to pay for sub-regional peace and security. Already, when questioned about economic difficulties that could result from such actions, most Liberians simply ask "how much more difficult can life get?" or "what benefits are we getting anyway?"

These questions are a clear manifestation of the people's.



I Introduction

IN 2001 SIERRA LEONE was declared the least developed nation by the UN, ranked at 174 in the UN Human Development Index. Its population has an average life expectancy of 25.9 years.⁶ This, in large part, is due to the stampede by various elites and factions over the past two decades for a slice the country's resources, primarily diamonds, at the expense of the rights and the livelihoods of the population. The extreme violence during the 1990's sponsored by Liberia's President, Charles Taylor, finished the job. With the imposition of targeted sanctions on Liberia, and the presence in Sierra Leone of the largest UN intervention since Cambodia, there seems to be a real chance for peace. But there is overwhelming evidence that the Liberian-backed RUF are still operational, nurtured by Taylor and his primary funders – Liberia's logging companies and shipping register. While the logging industry poses a threat to the future of Liberian forests, both pose a critical risk to national and regional security.

In December 2000, the *Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000) paragraph 19 in relation to Sierra Leone* highlighted the active role of the Liberian timber industry in regional insecurity and thus the importance of considering an embargo on Liberian timber exports.

The imposition of UN sanctions on Liberia's diamond trade has ensured that Charles Taylor is completely dependent upon the two remaining major sources of revenue: the logging industry and the Liberian ship registry, currently run by the US-based Liberian International Shipping and Corporate Register (LISCR). The UN Expert Panel on Sierra Leone referred to the importance of the timber industry both as a revenue generator for Charles Taylor, and because of its links to the arms trade. However, UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001) adopted on 7th March 2001 excludes restrictions on Liberian timber exports, despite clear signals that income generated from this industry fuels the instability seen in large parts of West Africa. Global Witness believes that the exclusion of timber exports from the sanctions compromises efforts to remove sources of income to destabilising forces in the region. The objection by France and China, the two largest importers of Liberian timber, to the imposition of timber sanctions was apparently based on the lack of information relating to the links between the logging industry and the arms trade, and to the negative effects such sanctions would have on the Liberian people.

The first section of this report will therefore focus on these links, demonstrating that elements within the Liberian timber industry not only fund the arms trade, but are actually engaged in it. Furthermore, the report will demonstrate that because of the sanctions Charles Taylor has been forced to turn to other forms of revenue generation. As revenue from the ship registry is relatively static, Taylor has had little choice but to escalate logging revenues, and confirmed it in his World Population Day message stating that his government "relies heavily on the forest which accounts for more than half of the gross national product" and concluded that "for never in our nation history have we been faced with so much pressure on our environment particularly the forest resources".⁷ This increased dependency on the logging industry since the imposition of sanctions not only allows him to maintain his corrupt and oppressive regime, but is resulting in the destruction of Liberia's forests at an alarming rate, which will almost certainly result in the commercial and environmental liquidation of this valuable natural resource.

That Taylor faces attacks by Guinean-backed rebels is not in doubt, and in the face of such aggression most sovereign nations would have the right to resort to military means to defend themselves. It was Guinea, after all, that initiated the attacks. But Taylor's sponsoring of the Sierra Leoneans of the RUF to wage

not only this war, but the war on Sierra Leone, coupled with forcible conscription of males over the age of 14 in Lofa County,⁸ undermines his case for the lifting of arms sanctions and for the credibility or justice of his cause.

Timber production in 2000 was 934,000m³, with a world market value of over US\$187 million, with 645,000m³ being exported. The sum received by the Central Bank of Liberia during the same period was just US\$6.7 million: an average of US\$7 per m³. Annual timber production in 1998 was 157,000m³, by 1999 it had doubled to just over 335,000m³,⁵ and by 2000 it had almost tripled. Minimum production in the first five months of 2001 was up by 30% of the 2000 figure.⁹ These figures amply demonstrate Taylor's reliance on timber, and the threat that this creates.

The implications are severe. When Liberia one day regains true stability, its treasury and its people will be deprived of a valuable economic resource. In addition, the negative ecological and economic impacts that result from deforestation: floods, droughts and seasonal climatic changes could well create havoc for the majority of the population that depend on agriculture to survive.

In short, the extra pressure placed upon the forests by the omission of sanctions on the timber industry not only undermines the efficacy of the current sanctions regime, but will have long-term impacts on the country. This will exacerbate the hardship of the average Liberian citizen and, eventually, will become an additional burden for the aid community.

Arguments against the imposition of timber sanctions have, in the main, come from the timber industry and the main importers of Liberian timber. Arguments for sanctions have come from governments wishing to end regional conflict, and from local and international civil society, who are attempting to break the vicious cycle underway in Taylor's Liberia and to avoid wholesale liquidation of Liberia's resources.

The timber industry provides Charles Taylor with an opportunity to develop a long-term sustainable revenue source with which he could help to rebuild Liberia's shattered infrastructure. This would require him to give up the vast state revenues that go directly to the Executive Mansion, and to assume the responsibilities of a statesman towards his people, rather than that of a warlord using the country as a private enterprise regardless of the cost to the people and state. If he chooses statesmanship, then Liberia could attract foreign aid, such as the €140 million of EC aid which is held up by negotiations around Articles 96 and 97 of the Cotonou Agreement,^{*} which relate to corruption and human rights concerns.

Liberia's maritime programme has been cited in the December 2000 Report of the UN panel of Experts on Sierra Leone as facilitating the flow of arms to guerrillas in Sierra Leone and linked to the illicit trade in diamonds. The Liberian shipping register makes Liberia, in theory, the world's second largest maritime nation. The reality is that the Liberian flag has been rented out to foreign ship owners who want to escape the regulations and taxes of their own countries. Revenue from the register provides President Charles Taylor's government with at least one third of its entire revenue from legitimate sources. Yet there is little evidence that this revenue provides much benefit to the Liberian people. What it does do is provide a key pillar of financial security to a regime which is using much of its funds to destabilise neighbouring countries.

Sanctions are necessary to deprive the Liberian government of the funds they need to purchase arms and to maintain a regime that refuses the population the freedom of expression that would allow them to truly express their support, or lack of it, for Taylor's government. They are essential to prevent the haemorrhaging of timber from Liberia, which provides little or no benefit to the country.

^{*} This agreement between the ACP states and the EU will provide €25 billion in EU funding between 2000-2007. Only articles 96 & 97 of the Cotonou Agreement can prevent EU funds being granted, when it can be demonstrated that the recipient government is failing to address human rights and corruption issues.

2 Infringements against UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001)

THE FOLLOWING is a list of violations committed by the Liberian government against UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001), adopted by the Security Council on 7th March 2001. It should be noted that Global Witness has obtained accurate and verifiable data that substantiates the information listed below. This data has also shown that the Liberian government has effected several grave violations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10th December 1948 (see *Violations Against Non-Combatants* – page 13).

In SECTION B, PARAGRAPH 2, SUBPARAGRAPH (a), it is written that the Government of Liberia must “expel all RUF members from Liberia, including such individuals as are listed by the Committee established by paragraph 14 below, and prohibit all RUF activities on its territory, provided that nothing in this paragraph shall oblige Liberia to expel its own nationals from its territory”.

- Several individuals sited in the “List of Persons Affected by Resolution 1343 (2001) on Liberia” travel-ban have acquired Sierra Leonean passports thus allowing them to surpass said UN restrictions (see *Infringements on the Travel-Ban* – page 12).
- The twenty original members of the RUF, called the “RUF VANGUARD” were, as of 19th June 2001, in Liberia. Original members of the RUF, called the “SPECIAL FORCES” are also in Liberia, fighting in Lofa County for President Charles Taylor (see *Infringements on the Travel-Ban* – page 12).

In SECTION B, PARAGRAPH 2, SUBPARAGRAPH (d), it is written that the Government of Liberia must “freeze funds or financial resources made available by its nationals or within its territory directly or indirectly for the benefit of the RUF or entities owned or controlled directly or indirectly by the RUF”.

- The Liberian logging industry is heavily involved, both directly and indirectly, in the support of the RUF. This was documented in the December 2000 *Report of the Panel of Experts appointed Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000), Paragraph 19 in Relation to Sierra Leone* and remains true today. As outlined both in this section and in *Chapter 3. Links between logging, the arms trade and regional conflict* – page 7).

In SECTION B, PARAGRAPH 2, SUBPARAGRAPH (e), it is written that the Government of Liberia must “ground all Liberia-registered aircraft operation within its jurisdiction until it updates its register of aircraft pursuant to Annex VII to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944 and provides to the Council the updated information concerning the registration and ownership of each aircraft registered in Liberia”.

- On 9th June 2001, a Liberia World Airlines (LWA) aircraft, EL-AJO, allegedly involved in illegal arms trade in both 1995 and 1996, was spotted at Ostend airport in Belgium. The LWA that was originally on the craft has been painted over. Below is a picture of EL-AJO in 2000 on its way to Croatia and a picture of the aircraft on in June 2001 in Belgium.

In SECTION B, PARAGRAPH 3, SUBPARAGRAPH (b), it is written that the Government of Liberia must “release all abductees”

- Civilians have been forcibly removed from Sierra Leone and taken to Liberia, thus adding to the amount of abductees currently in Liberia. Furthermore, Sierra Leonean refugee males over the age of 14 were being forcibly recruited into the ATU and the AFL in May 2001 (see *Violations Against Non-Combatants* – page 13)

In SECTION B, PARAGRAPH 4, it is written that “all States in the region take action to prevent armed individuals and groups from using their territory to prepare and commit attacks on neighbouring countries and refrain from any action that might contribute to further destabilization of the situation on the borders of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone”

- The Government of Liberia has been coordinating the presence of both RUF and it's own forces to be in Lofa County (see *Infringements on the Travel-Ban* – page 12) The Government of Guinea is also strengthening its military presence in the border region.

In SECTION B, PARAGRAPH 5, it is written that “all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent the sale or supply to Liberia, by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft, or arms and related materiel of all types; including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned, whether or not originating in their territories”.

- On 10th May 2001, a general cargo vessel called the Abu 1 and owned by Belize-registered Alpha Paramount, arrived at Harper Port and unloaded a cargo of weaponry. This was collected on the same day by an helicopter belonging to the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) (see *Chapter 3. Links between logging, the arms trade and regional conflict*, page 7).

Below top: Liberian aircraft EL-AJO of Liberia World Airlines (LWA) landing in Zagreb, Croatia; 18th June 2000. Note LWA livery.

Bottom: Sanctions busting. Same aircraft with livery painted out, Ostend; 9th June 2001



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Part One: The role of the Liberian timber industry

3 Links between logging, the arms trade and regional conflict

CHARLES TAYLOR'S ability to use Liberia's natural resources for his own means has been enhanced by the Strategic Commodities Act, which was introduced suddenly to the Liberian Congress in late 1999 at the behest of the Executive Mansion. Despite strong opposition, it was passed into law in February 2000 without a full and fair vote.

In Section three, the Act states that "the President of the Republic of Liberia is hereby granted the sole power to execute, negotiate and conclude all commercial contracts or agreements with any foreign or domestic investor for the exploitation of the strategic commodities of the Republic of Liberia. Such commercial agreement shall become effective and binding upon the Republic as would any treaty to which the Republic is a party, upon the sole signature and approval of the President of the Republic of Liberia."

Thus, this act effectively places all of Liberia's resources under the sole control of President Charles Taylor. This in turn enables him to purchase the arms and to fund the supporters he needs to destabilise the region and to gain control of resources across his borders.

In the recent past much of Charles Taylor's arms

supplies arrived by air from Libya, via Burkina Faso, The Gambia, and Eastern Europe,¹⁰ but with an increasingly difficult domestic political climate in Burkina Faso, and more vigilant international surveillance of Liberia's air traffic, arms imports by sea appear to be on the increase.¹¹ These arms arrive on some of the same ships that subsequently export logs. According to sources in Liberia, Taylor tried to obtain arms from Libya in mid May 2001. According to these sources, he hoped to acquire several thousand AK47 assault rifles, a substantial consignment of ammunition, and an unknown quantity of RPG-7 rocket-propelled grenades. It is not known whether or not Libya agreed to supply these weapons.¹²

Global Witness research and investigations have found that in the past year, there have been several suspicious incidents in the ports of Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire where a strong link between the Liberian logging industry and the shipment of armaments was vital for the implementation of the activities. These are listed below:

- After the imposition of the 7th May sanctions, on 10th May 2001 the *Abu 1*, a general cargo vessel owned by Belize-registered Alpha Paramount, arrived at Harper Port from Dakar, Senegal and unloaded a cargo of armaments: these armaments were collected the same day by the Anti-Terrorist Unit's (ATU) helicopter.¹³ During unloading a crewman was killed by snapped cable, and talk of the incident pervaded the town. The ship subsequently loaded with logs from MWPI, the logging company which also controls Harper Port, through its representative Hussein Fawaz. One of

The Antarctic Mariner loading logs in July 2001. Prior to this, it unloaded a mysterious cargo amid tightened security.



Logging industry individuals subject to the UN travel ban

In addition to the above, the following individuals who are subject to the travel ban under UN Resolution 1343 (2001) have interests in the logging industry.

Gus Kouwenhoven

Chairman of OTC, Managing Director of RTC and Board Member of the Forest Development Authority (FDA).

Demetrius Robert Taylor

Charles Taylor's brother and Managing Director of the FDA.

Talal El Ndine

Board member of the FDA, and RUF paymaster.

Maurice and Oscar Cooper

Joint owners of the Inland Logging Company.

Mohammed Salami

Owens Salami Molawi International logging company.

Austin Clarke

Deputy Minister of Defense Operations and owner of the LASTA logging company.

Gabrielle Doe

Adviser to Charles Taylor and connected to Cavalla Timber Company and NACA Logging Company Inc.

Victor Haikal

Karel Logging Corporation.

UPDATE ON THE ACTIVITIES OF PRESIDENT CHARLES TAYLOR AND HIS GOVERNMENT IN CONTRAVENTION OF THE U.N. REPORT PERTAINING TO DIAMONDS/ARMS ACTIVITIES.

1. Liberia continues to export Diamonds from Sierra Leone illicitly, the last such Parcel worth approximately US\$ 7,100,000 was earned by President Taylor's entourage on the 27th/28th of March 2001 to Paris where they were in transit prior to their trip to the Far East. These Diamonds were passed on in Paris to the Liberian Ambassador to Belgium as well as the Liberian Minister for Mines and were disposed of in Antwerp by The Liberian Honorary Consul to Antwerp who is in the Diamond trade.
2. The Parcel mentioned above was sent by Issa Sesay of the RUF and was handed over in Veitjana, Liberia to President Taylor's Aide de Camp to be carried to Monrovia.
3. The last supply of critical spare parts for the two Mi 37 Helicopters (which were used extensively for Logistics & Attack in Guinea & Sierra Leone) was imported by a Liberian Aviation Company called Weesaa Air Services which operates a civilian Version (Bulb) of the Military helicopter. The Spanish Consul General to Liberia is the Owner of Weesaa, and has been recently contracted to import substantial Helicopter spare parts as well as 250 kg Bombs & CS Rockets for the Helicopters. Weesaa has also been asked to source other armaments from the CIS States, in due & several other instances, Senoni Urey who is the Commissioner for Maritime Affairs for Liberia and a relation to President Taylor contracted and paid Weesaa for their services from the Maritime Program Funds.
4. Two Lebanese businessmen Talal el Ndine & a Mohamed Salame (a Liberian Ambassador to Cote d' Ivoire) close to President Taylor have also been contracted to source and purchase armaments, these arms including AK47 rifles, RPG rocket Launchers, anti-personnel mines, amongst other items make up an order of approx. 160 tons which is expected to arrive via the Ivorian Seaport of San Pedro before the 3rd week of May 2001.

These are facts that should be brought to the attention of the United Nations Security Council urgently.

24th April 2001

Above: Anonymous document received by Global Witness in April 2001 detailing a forthcoming arms shipment scheduled for May. Talal el Ndine and Mohamed Samali, both in the logging industry, are cited as the individuals "contracted to source and purchase armaments".

the main importers of Liberian timber into France, Bordeaux-based ETS F. Jammes SA, is a major purchaser of MWPI timber.

- Prior to this, on 5th April 2001, the *MV Senorita*, owned by OTC's associate company Global Star, arrived in the port of Buchanan amid heightened security, indicating possible dubious activity. Armed men of the OTC militia patrolled the port and the Loop (the former Lamco / Liminco estate in Buchanan) which hosts the company's executives, headquarters, workshop, warehouses, etc. The reason given for the extra security measure was an expected visit of Charles Taylor; however, he did not arrive as speculated.
- In early July 2001, the *Antarctic Mariner* arrived at Buchanan having left China via Singapore, and was unloaded amidst heightened security, mostly at night, by armed troops and OTC personnel, rather than by the usual stevedores. It is not known what was unloaded but numerous wooden crates were among the cargo. At the time of writing the cargo was stored in warehouses at Buchanan for transport onward. The vessel was then loaded with over 30,000m³ of OTC's logs, an enormous cargo, for shipment to China.¹⁴
- In 2000 a vessel arrived in Freetown Sierra Leone and mistakenly tried to deliver a container, but was halted when Charles Taylor contacted the

Sierra Leonean government stating that the contents of the container was destined for his wife, as a birthday gift. Honouring international norms the container was allowed to proceed to Liberia unopened. However, a Sierra Leonean present when the container was unloaded confirmed that it contained hi-tech armaments.¹⁵

- In early 2001 Global Witness received (unverified) information that an arms shipment was due to arrive at San Pedro Port, Côte d'Ivoire.¹⁶ It is not known whether such a shipment took place, but there are reasons to regard San Pedro as an ideal import point. It is a major timber exporting point for Ivorian, Liberian and Guinean timber, and the traffic on the roads between San Pedro and the Liberian border is dominated by timber trucks, many of which cross into Liberia at Toulepleu and Logatuo. Therefore, arms imports could reach Liberian soil within a day of arrival at San Pedro, carried by timber or other trucks.

In addition to the above, it is widely known in Liberia that OTC's Buchanan operation is regularly used to import arms. Of course, to prove this is difficult as the sources would be in extreme physical danger if their identities were known. However, the involvement of the Ukrainian Mafia in both arms trafficking and the timber industry is well documented.

The Russian Mafia and the links between timber and arms – a case study

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Above: Leonid Minin, purported head of the Ukrainian Mafia, photographed by the police upon his arrest in Italy in 2000.

As with much resource extraction in conflict and post conflict areas, the tropical timber trade has been the focus of criminal gangs. The Italian, Corsican and Russian Mafia have all allegedly been connected with the timber industry in West and Central Africa.

In June 2001 Leonid Minin, an Israeli citizen of Ukrainian origin, reputed head of the Ukrainian Mafia was charged by the Italian authorities with illegal arms trafficking. This followed the imposition of a two-year sentence for drugs possession following his arrest in the Hotel Europa near Milan in August 2000, when he was found to be in possession of cocaine.¹⁷ Documents that came to light when he was arrested provide an amazing insight into Minin's multifarious business deals.

Amongst a wide variety of speculative business interests, Minin is believed to be a central figure in the trafficking of arms to West Africa, and to Liberia in particular. Crucially he was/is chairman of Liberian-based Exotic Tropical Timber Enterprise (ETTE). Minin's documented links with the arms industry, the Liberian timber industry and the movements of actors in both these fields conclusively demonstrate the links between timber and arms. This company is one of the three named by the UN Expert Panel on Sierra Leone as being involved in the acquisition of "a large amount of unrecorded extra-budgetary income to President Taylor for unspecified purposes".

One of Minin's correspondents was Erkki

Above right: Contract from August 1999 between Minin-owned logging company ETTE and the Liberian government, whereby the government agrees to provide ETTE with US\$2 million. The reason for payment is not stated.

Below: Document detailing aspects of an anti-tank guided missile system, found among Minin's possessions upon his arrest.



Tammivuori of Met AS and Met Corp, a company involved in numerous arms deals with offices in Lausanne and Istanbul respectively. Correspondence in Global Witness' possession refers to negotiations to sell a Ukrainian aircraft carrier to the Turkish navy¹⁸ and to missiles (possibly Konkurs anti-tank) for US\$8,000 each.¹⁹ It appears that Tammivuori was entering into a consultancy with Minin's Limad company, according to an agreement dated 27th June 1999²⁰ (although Global Witness' copy is unsigned). The agreement seems to have centred around the supply of various goods from the Ukraine, although arms are not mentioned. However a blank 'Exclusive Frame Consultancy Agreement' of Karor Trading SA, another Tammivuori company, states that "[the]

9K113 Konkurs anti-tank guided missile system

Development

Developed by the KBP Instrument Design Bureau at Tula, the 9K113 Konkurs (Contest) anti-tank guided missile system entered service in 1977 and was given the NATO code-name of 'Spandrel'; the US designation is AT-6. The CIS missile designation is 9M113.

The 9K113 Konkurs system has been licence-produced in various countries (see below). A document dated October 1992 gave a unit price for a launcher as \$115 000, with \$13 000 for one missile.

Although production of the 9K113 Konkurs is still continuing it is intended that the replacement for the system will be the Kornet laser-guided missile system (qv).

Description

In its ground-launched form the 9M113 Konkurs missile is launched from the same 9P135M-1 launcher as the 9M111 Fagot missiles (qv). It may also be launched from various vehicle mountings for which there is a special system using a 9P148 launcher. The operational range of the missile is from 75 to 4000 m using SACLOS wire guidance.

9M113 Konkurs missiles are supplied in sealed containers which are placed directly on the launcher in the same manner as Fagot and MILAN. After launch initial propulsion is from a booster unit which falls away to leave the main sustainer motor to provide drive to the target.

The Fagot/Konkurs 9P135M1 launcher can be provided with a thermal imager for night or poor visibility conditions. When fitted the thermal imager, which weighs 13 kg, allows engagements at ranges up to 2500 m.

On target, the 9M113 Konkurs missile 135 mm diameter warhead can penetrate 750 to 800 mm of armour set at 90°. Against armour set at 60° the figure is 400 mm.

A revised version of the Konkurs is known as the 9M113M Konkurs-M. It has a tandem warhead with an extending nose probe to defeat explosive reactive armour before the main warhead initiates to penetrate 750 to 800 mm of main armour.

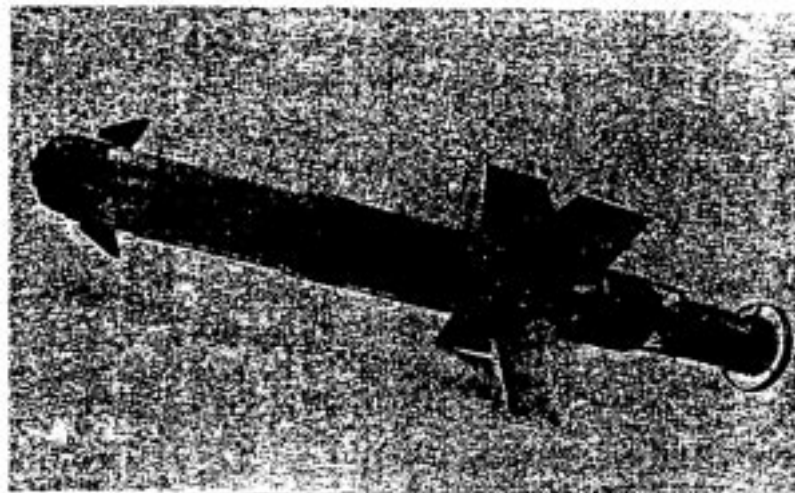
Variant

Flame

See entry under Indiv in this section for details.

Data

Operation: SACLOS, wire-guided
Weights: 22.5 kg launcher; 25.9 kg complete round; 14.58 missile; 2.7 kg warhead
Warhead diameter: 135 mm
Length, missile: with gas generator, 1.15 m
Range: 75-4000 m
Velocity: 270 m/s
Armour penetrations: 750-800 mm armour at 90°; 400 mm armour at 60°



9M113 Konkurs anti-tank guided missile

Consultant undertakes to act as advisor to Contractor in its contracts with construction and other companies...both in the defence as well as in the civilian sector...'²¹

Tammivuori spent ten days with Minin in Liberia and Ibiza some time in the first half of 1999.²² This joint visit between two known arms traders, one of whom also ran a timber company, demonstrates the integral links between these two industries in Liberia.

ETTE is still in existence despite Minin's arrest, but appears at this stage to be dormant. It sold some or all of its capital assets to the Spanish-owned Forum Liberia Corporation on 24th November 1999 for US\$5 million. US\$1.5 million of the purchase price was to be supplied as fresh-cut logs to Buchanan Port during 2000, and various instalments of this timber was indeed delivered by Forum Liberia to ETTE.

Another agreement was signed on 20th August 1999 by Minin and John Bestman, the Minister of Finance, Government of Liberia. This document confirms that the government are indebted to ETTE to the tune of US\$2 million – it does not state what services Minin rendered that cost US\$2 million. The debt was to be repaid by exempting ETTE from all due taxes related to its timber operations until the debt had been repaid. So, in two agreements, Minin received US\$1.5 million worth of timber and the wherewithal to avoid any taxes relating to it.

Minin's Swiss-based company, Limad AG, also brokered a US\$2.5 million (15,000m³) timber deal between the Liberian Cooper brothers (who run the Inland Logging Company, and the China National Aero-Technology Import & Export Corporation (CATIC)).²³ Limad was also in negotiations with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation (CASC) regarding an aerospace deal, notably the sale of Russian manufactured SS18 intercontinental ballistic missiles to China.²⁴ Limad Beijing stated that although CASC "...expressed their interest in the technology of liquid-based rocket engines. However, since this matter may have grave responsibility, nobody dare (sic) to have the final say".²⁵

Personal payments to the Taylor clan

Obviously, details of direct payments to the Taylor family are hard to document, but the Minin documents contain two direct references to such payments.

In a fax to Leonid Minin on 17th May 2000 Minin's company representative in Monrovia stated that he had offered to purchase two trucks for Bob Taylor (Robert Taylor; Charles' brother, who is head of the FDA) "...in exchange for 100% discount of the taxes on the teak and the permission to operate the forest and a new good relationship in general".²⁶ It is not clear whether these trucks were in fact purchased as the relationship between ETTE and Robert Taylor appeared to be in some trouble at around this time.²⁷

Another document faxed from Minin's company, Limad AG, on 10th March 2000 details "Expenses Liberia". The second to last item is listed simply as "15,000.00 [US\$] Taylor".

In early 2000 Minin also brokered an arms deal between former Russian test pilot Valery Cherny's Moscow-based company Aviatrend, and then President Robert Guei of Côte d'Ivoire, which included 10,500 AK47 assault rifles, RPG-26 rocket launchers, sniper rifles and over 8 million rounds of assorted ammunition.²⁸

4 Logging company militias & military control of concession areas

GLOBAL WITNESS research and investigations have found that taxes from the logging industry are deposited directly into the Executive Mansion Special Projects Accounts, which is administered by Taylor. Also a US\$0.25 and US\$1.00 sale tax placed on a gallon of gasoline and a bag of rice respectively go directly to the Executive Mansion. These revenues, especially the timber revenue, have enabled Taylor to maintain largely inefficient but brutal military and paramilitary units including the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) and the Special Operation Division (SOD). Both of these units have been directly involved in various human rights abuses, including intimidation of opposition leaders and journalists, illegal detention of private citizens at the notorious Gbartala Base (Bong County) without charge and extra-judicial killings. These human rights abuses have been documented by local and international human rights organizations, notably the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (Liberia) and Amnesty International (UK).

In addition to the links between various logging companies and arms trafficking, some logging companies recruit and arm ex-combatants, mostly from the rank of Taylor's defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), to build up private militias: some of these units are involved in military operations. OTC for instance hired Roland Duo, a notorious former general of the NPFL and now Chief of Security at the Freeport of Monrovia, as its chief of security.²⁹ He lives in Monrovia but maintains a residence in the OTC Lamco/ Liminco estate in Buchanan. Other companies who operate armed militias include RTC, LWMC, ULC, FAPCO, SMI and ILC.

In Lower Lofa, Bomi and Grand Cape Mount counties the LWMC, ULC, FAPCO and RTC companies' militias are mostly comprised of ex-combatants. The largest concentration of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) men in the region are based at the main ULC camp, known as 'ULC'. Personnel from the ULC private militia confirmed local reports that occasionally men from their unit are sent on "special assignments" with the 6th Battalion of the AFL. On 15th April 2001 men from the ULC militia and AFL officers travelling on a ULC truck to the border with Sierra Leone had an accident in which the ULC driver (known as Bukasa) and six officers of the AFL (including a Captain Dolo) lost their lives. It is not clear what their mission on the Sierra Leone border was, but this mission is indicative that Taylor's military are still involved in the insecurity there. RTC men in the Bomi Wood Camp (the RTC main camp) explain that they are officers of the AFL on assignment with the company, to provide security. Locals in Kumbor, Bomi Wood Camp and ULC Camp itself claimed that the companies' securities forces constantly harass and intimidate them.

In one high profile incident in May 2000, two employees (Foday Sannoh and Logan Nagbe) of John T. Richardson's (an associate to President Charles Taylor) JALK petroleum distribution company, were arrested and incarcerated by OTC militiamen in the OTC's private prison in Buchanan³⁰. In spite of his closeness to Taylor, attempts to get the local police involved in securing the release of his employees were unsuccessful. They were only released after the Justice Ministry "appealed to the OTC to release his workers". The case was never prosecuted.

All of these examples demonstrate the negative consequences of the present militarization of the timber industry in Liberia.

5 The case for sanctions

THE SANCTIONS against Liberia are already working, as peace is gradually coming to Sierra Leone. Around 2500 RUF troops have disarmed, thereby making way for around 5000 (pro-government) CDF soldiers to disarm also, under the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) process. This process is scheduled to be completed by the end of November 2001, although some delays are possible.³¹ However, most diplomatic observers agree that the process is extremely fragile, and it is highly likely that the RUF's best commanders and arms are still in Liberia.³² The reason the RUF are actively disarming is that they have seen their main patron, Charles Taylor, being increasingly weakened and isolated by sanctions: in addition, these forces are tired after years of fighting which has gained them nothing.

Although it can be argued that a sovereign government has the right to exploit the natural resources under its control, this argument does not apply to the current situation in Liberia, where the resources are being exploited contrary to Liberian law for the benefit of the elite, not the State or the population.

Many have cited that the loss of jobs and revenues, especially to rural Liberians, would be unbearable were Liberian timber exports to cease. Holding up rural Liberians as a human shield against sanctions is a tactic to avoid taking action. Although the effects on the economy and the loss of jobs will undoubtedly be a temporary set-back, it is far worse to destroy Liberia's forest resources for the benefit of President Charles Taylor, his inner sanctum and the foreign companies investing nothing sustainable in Liberia.

Timber sanctions can be enforced through internationally protected, independent observers at the six major points of departure for Liberian timber: the ports of Buchanan, Monrovia, Greenville and Harper, and the land routes to Côte d'Ivoire. Through monitoring and information campaigns, France and other European countries must be encouraged into complying and not purchasing

"OTC machines putting a road through: many bulldozers and trucks came, people were scared. There were trucks passing through which were very heavy with logged trees damaging the roads for local people – nobody does anything, as they were scared.

Every day trees fall down and block the roads – roads are just bulldozed through by OTC people – they scare the villagers – nobody does anything"

Villager in OTC concession; July 2001

Liberian timber smuggled via Côte d'Ivoire. If companies like OTC find profits are too low or they cannot pay their bills, and international pressure is too great, they will abandon Liberia as fast as they arrived.

In its recent announcement that it will cease to purchase timber from companies cited in the UN Expert Panel's report, following NGO pressure, Danish multi-national DLH Nordisk raised the issue of the 100,000 timber related jobs at risk in Liberia. Apart from its failure to demonstrate the veracity of this figure which is grossly exaggerated, DLH has not appreciated the criminal links of some Liberian timber companies, the fact that many of these workers endure appalling conditions; that villagers are intimidated by the armed militias hired by logging companies; that villagers' lands have been bulldozed to make way for logging roads and that logging at the current rate in the existing anarchic climate will liquidate the resource, removing forever the employment opportunities that can be afforded by a sustainably managed timber trade.

OTC logging truck en route to Buchanan; 2001



6 Liberia and the RUF – past and present links

THE SUPPORT LINKS that run from Liberia to the RUF have not been severed – neither before or after the sanctions of 7th March 2001. Violations of the sanctions have been plentiful and the lines between the two parties – as well as traditional boundaries between Liberia and its neighbours – have continued to fade. Liberia has now begun illicit logging operations in Sierra Leone,³³ reputedly with the cooperation of the RUF, who are also fighting in Lofa County. Reports have shown that RUF rebels were “sent into Lofa County to beef-up Liberian government defenses.”³⁴ Although there are several changes taking place in respect to President Charles Taylor's connection with the RUF since the 7th May 2001 sanctions, significant links remain.

Infringements on the travel-ban

Individuals cited in The List of Persons Affected by the Measures Contained in Paragraph 7 of UNSC Resolution 1343 (2001)* on the subject of travel restrictions have, as of 19th June 2001, acquired Sierra Leonean passports, making it easier for them to circumvent current restrictions placed upon them by the ban.³⁵ Several of these individuals are people who are directly linked to President Charles Taylor and to the RUF:

1. **Samuel Bockarie** (*alias Mosquito*), whose whereabouts have been indeterminate, now possesses a Sierra Leonean passport. He divides his time between Liberia and Normo Farma, Golahun Forkia, in Sierra Leone (see “RUF Vanguard” location list below). He is now an Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) senior member.
2. **Brig General Abu** – ATU Deputy Commander.
3. **Mr Akkram Basma** – Africa Motors, Monrovia, Liberia.
4. **Hassan Basma** – Businessman at Kissy Road/Sani Abacha Street.
5. **Jamal Basma** – in Freetown.
6. **Samuel Gibson** – Adviser to President Charles Taylor.
7. **Mr Keikula B Kpoto** – President Pro-Tempore of the Liberian Senate.

Sierra Leoneans have also assisted more people on the Liberia Restricted Persons List to get Sierra Leonean passports. Some of these applications are allegedly coming from the United States or the United Kingdom.

Furthermore, several of the 20 original members of the RUF, called the “RUF Vanguard” are currently in Liberia. Their names and their locations as of 19th June 2001 were:

Members of the RUF Vanguard based in Liberia (ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE RUF)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Philip Palmer | Matru Jong |
| 2. Augustine Koroma | Jimmy Bagbo [sic] |
| 3. Momo Kpaka | Gorahun,
Koya Chiefdom,
Kenema District |
| 4. O K George | Bo, Kakua Chiefdom |
| 5. Alex Koroma | Polehun,
Nongowa Chiefdom |
| 6. Siafa Massaquoi | Nomo Farma,
Kenema District |
| 7. Mohamed Njoboi | Nomo Farma,
Kenema District |
| 8. Moris Kallon | Pujehun District |
| 9. Denis Mingo
(<i>alias Superman</i>)
(rumoured killed in
action) | Pujehun District |
| 10. C O Browne | Liberian/Sierra Leonean |
| 11. C O Fattu Browne | Liberian/Sierra Leonean |
| 12. Issa Sesay
(Presently in
Sierra Leone) | Northern Province,
Sierra Leone |
| 13. Sam Bockarie
(<i>alias Mosquito</i>) | Gbandilo,
Kailahun District |
| 14. Isatu Kallon | Kailahun District |
| 15. James Jalloh | Kailahun District |
| 16. Fayia Musa | Kailahun District |
| 17. Mike Lamin | Kailahun District |
| 18. C O Lawrence | Kailahun District |
| 19. C O Allysius | Pujehun District |
| 20. C O Kargbo | Northern Province |

Original Liberian members of the RUF, called the “SPECIAL FORCES” have “returned to Liberia and are now fighting for Charles Taylor in Lofa County”. They are also referred to as “special forces from Liberia who entered Sierra Leone to fight for Foday Sankoh in Kailahun district.” Their names are :

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Sam G Tuah | James Canway |
| Thomas Randott | Sattu Major |
| Jr Nyinatti | Rebel Fast |
| Tamba Joseph | Jah Brother |
| American York | Big Daddy Cool |
| Sadam Hussein | Cooper Kollie |
| C O Barrow | Tamba |
| Jehungbe | Auscal Blesso |
| John Piwweh | Togba Njuah |
| Charles Timba | C O Dane |
| Edward Wah | Anothony Flomo |

* Referred to in the remainder of this document as “The Liberia Restricted Persons List”

ACCURATE STRENGTH AND NAMES OF EX-COMBATANT RECRUITED AND TRANSFERRED FROM LOFA TO JOIN THE ANTI-TERRORIST UNIT, FOR TRAINING IN VARIOUS MILITARY DISCIPLINE

ROSTER NAME	
TOTAL STRENGTH	(101) One Hundred and One
NUMBER OF WICK-OUT/AMAL	(16) Sixteen
NUMBER ON RUCK PASS	(1) One
NUMBER PRESENT IN BASE	(85) Eighty-five
STILL IN TRAINING	(1) One

1. Mohamed Turay	42. Musa Kromah
2. Samuel S. Kromah	43. Edward Kallon
3. Mike J. Musa	44. Leslie Williams
4. Samuel Kallie	45. Clinder T. Fagish
5. Bobah Tawehly	46. Sam Lahai
6. Mustapha Kallie	47. Jacob F. Kallie
7. Mohamed Bow	48. Mohamed A. Durro
8. Barber Kallie	49. Idriss Kromah
9. Mohamed Samah	50. Fodil P. Boima
10. Kromah Kallon	51. Ali Jamba
11. Mark Kallie	52. Lawrence Kallie
12. Musa Kallie	53. Siman Tamba
13. Abraham Turay	54. Ibrahim Tamba
14. Mohammed Samah	55. Ibrahim Kallie
15. Kallie Samah	56. Osman Kallie
16. Kallie Samah	57. Kallie Samah
17. Kallie Samah	58. Kallie Samah
18. Kallie Samah	59. Kallie Samah
19. Kallie Samah	60. Kallie Samah
20. Kallie Samah	61. Kallie Samah
21. Kallie Samah	62. Kallie Samah
22. Kallie Samah	63. Kallie Samah
23. Kallie Samah	64. Kallie Samah
24. Kallie Samah	65. Kallie Samah
25. Kallie Samah	66. Kallie Samah
26. Kallie Samah	67. Kallie Samah
27. Kallie Samah	68. Kallie Samah
28. Kallie Samah	69. Kallie Samah
29. Kallie Samah	70. Kallie Samah
30. Kallie Samah	71. Kallie Samah
31. Kallie Samah	72. Kallie Samah
32. Kallie Samah	73. Kallie Samah
33. Kallie Samah	74. Kallie Samah
34. Kallie Samah	75. Kallie Samah
35. Kallie Samah	76. Kallie Samah
36. Kallie Samah	77. Kallie Samah
37. Kallie Samah	78. Kallie Samah
38. Kallie Samah	79. Kallie Samah
39. Kallie Samah	80. Kallie Samah
40. Kallie Samah	81. Kallie Samah
41. Kallie Samah	82. Kallie Samah
42. Kallie Samah	83. Kallie Samah
43. Kallie Samah	84. Kallie Samah
44. Kallie Samah	85. Kallie Samah
45. Kallie Samah	
46. Kallie Samah	
47. Kallie Samah	

NAME OF THREE ON RUCK PASS
1. Sam Kallie

Further lists exist illustrating the connections between the RUF rebels of Sierra Leone and President Charles Taylor's personal security force, the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU). One such list, from January 2000, is shown above.

Violations against non-combatants

Fighting in Lofa County has reportedly increased and the international media is facing access-restrictions to this region. Some suspect that these restrictions are put in place by the Liberian government so that dubious activities of Liberian security forces and the RUF can be covered up. Conflict in the region has forced Sierra Leonean refugees and Liberian civilians to escape Lofa, Grand Cape Mount and Bomi counties.³⁶ Furthermore, as of May / June 2001 Sierra Leoneans living in Liberia, whether refugees or not, are "continuously being harassed by the Security. They are accused of being dissidents. Other countries that are harassed include Guinea, Nigeria and the Gambia. Some have been tortured and, possibly killed."³⁷

According to eye-witnesses, Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia are being forcibly enlisted or bribed into becoming combatants. Evidence gathered shows that this is done with cooperation between the RUF and the Liberian government. In a document detailing events at the VOA-I refugee camp, Samuel Bockarie (alias "Mosquito") is quoted as the person who was heading the enlisting campaign³⁸. He was allegedly told by the "Liberian government to recruit man power for Military service". Others named in this activity are Bernard Freeman, a former combatant who "always hosts the clandestine

meetings," and Mustapha Kallon, a former RUF combatant who is also Chief of Security at the VOA-I. In one incident on 7th October 2000, Bockarie entered the camp with two body guards that were from the Special Operations Division of the Liberian Police (SOD). One informant described how he met them in a meeting with Mosquito. The refugees, facing precarious conditions, are faced with increased pressures of insecurity: a factor that is played upon by those recruiting. In the same incident of 7th October 2000, refugees were presented with six bags of rice and money for the families of enlisted refugees that were to be taken to the warfront. The VOA-I Chairman and his Secretary hesitated from taking part in the meeting and eventually withdrew. General Mosquito returned to the camp at 10:00 pm on the same day with a jeep and truck. Eleven refugees subsequently boarded the vehicle. It is highly likely that more were taken at a time when the informant was not present.

The document also highlights that Guinean refugees are subject to similar ill-treatment.

Many refugees are faced with the problem of not having proper identification and several non-combatants are reportedly being purposefully misidentified by Liberian authorities. For example, there have been several arrests of 'Kamajors' in Lofa County, in reality innocent Sierra Leonean refugees or Liberian citizens.

One report details the procedures of these arrests as well as a specific case of false identification: "several Sierra Leonean residents and refugees living in Bong County, Grand Cape Mount County and Montserrado County have been captured – some taken to the notorious ATU Camp for torturing and possible death. The BBC also reported of a captured Kamajor who was presented to the Press in Monrovia for confession. My sources told me that he was a non-registered refugee."³⁹

It is important to note that the recent move by the Liberian government to register Sierra Leonean refugees, which does not include UNHCR-registered refugees, begs the question as to what Liberian immigration did with the refugees' initial registration. Worry has been expressed that this registration procedure is a move to arrest further so-called Kamajors who in fact are innocent in an attempt to show the international community that steps are being taken towards reform.

Sierra Leoneans are also being abducted from Sierra Leone itself. The following is a list of women who were kidnapped from their homes in Sierra Leone and taken to Liberia. The list details their town of origin and their current location.

List of women abducted from Sierra Leone and taken to Liberia; June 2001

Name	District	From Jan	County of Origin	Present Location
(1) Jack Kallon (2)	Kailahun	January (Sierra Leone)	Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone
Abraham Kallon	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	"
Samuel Kallon (2)	"	January (Sierra Leone)	"	"
Mustapha Kallon (4)	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	Sierra Leone - Kailahun
Samuel Kallon (2)	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	"
(1) Samuel Kallon (2)	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	"
Samuel Kallon	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	Sierra Leone - Kailahun
(1) Samuel Kallon	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	Sierra Leone - Kailahun
(1) Samuel Kallon	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	Sierra Leone - Kailahun
(1) Samuel Kallon	"	March (Sierra Leone)	"	Sierra Leone - Kailahun

SIERRA LEONEANS EVACUATED FROM LIBYA.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PLACE OF ORIGIN</u>	<u>ADDRESS IN LIBYA</u>	<u>PURPOSE OF VISIT</u>	<u>DURATION</u>	<u>PASSPORT No.</u>	<u>OCCUPATION</u>
1. Bindi, Koinadugu District		Gugi, Tripoli	To find better leaving	21 Months		-
2. Banda, Bombali Dist.		Tripoli	To work	2 Months		Unemployed
3. Kankawli, Bombali Dist.		Shagiyah, Tripoli	"	15 "		Painter
4. Koindu, Kailahun Dist.		Musirghah, Trip.	"	17 "		Welder
5. Sandro, Bombali Dist.		Repration Camp	Transit to Europe	5 "		Tailor
6. Mambolo, Kambia Dist.		Fella, Tripoli	"	12 "		Car Washer
7. Mambolo, Kambia Dist.		Fella, Trip.	"	5 "		Unemployed
8. Sautiar, Kambia Dist.		Gaza, Trip.	To work	12 "		Farmer Labourer
9. Lamear, Portloko Dist.		Fella, Trip.	"	"		
10. Baidu, Kailahun Dist.		Ternase, Trip.	Transit to Europe	24 "		Construction
11. Portloko West I		Farmage, Trip.	Asylum seeker	15 "		Welder
12. Rinti, Divia Chiefdom		Burnishour, Trip.	Green pastures	20 "		Mechanic
13. Kenema Town		Farmage, Trip.	"	18 "		Tiler
14. Senda, Bombali Dist.		Fella, Trip.	"	16 "		Unemployed
15. Motema, Kono Dist.		Senta, Trip.	"	5 "		Tailor
16. Tavia, Kambia Dist.		Gaza, Trip.	Transit to Europe	5 "		Marine Student
17. Makoni, Bombali Dist.		Repration, Trip.	"	3 "		Student
18. Fufajum Town		A'asna University	Studying	27 "		
19. Makoni, Bombali Dist.		Airport Road	To work	12 "		-
20. Mangar, Kenema Dist.		Santis, Trip.	Transit to Spain	"		-
21. Tonko Limba, Kambia Dist.		Ghaza, Trip.	Hauling	20 "		Farmer
22. Mokora, Kambia Dist.		Kinats, Trip.	"	5 "		Construction
23. Senda Tindara Bomb. Dist.		Salas Bengasi	To work	11 "		Builder
24. Koidu, Kono Dist.		Zanzu, Trip.	Transit to Europe	3 "		Unemployed
25. Tonibana, Bombali Dist.		Shagair, Trip.	To work	2 "		
26. Kenema Town		Anni, Trip.	Transit to Europe	5 years		Mechanic
27. Kenema Town		Gargarah, Trip.	"	"		
28. Kenema Town		Ternase, Trip.	"	13 Months		Interior Decorator
29. Manawa, Kailahun Dist.		Fella, Trip.	Hauling	5 "		Builder
30. Gbendu, Bombali Dist.		Ghema, Trip.	Missionary	4 "		
31. Freetown		Fella, Trip.	Transit to Europe	11 "		Plumber
32. Sasoia, Bo Dist.		Bengasi, Trip.	To work	25 "		Electrician
33. Magburaka, Tonkeli Dist.		Repration, Camp.	Transit to Europe	5 weeks		Unemployed
34. Freetown		Gegante, Trip.	"	5 Months		Tailor
35. Freetown		"	To work	18 "		Store Keeper
36. Kenema		"	"	18 "		Auto Electrician

In May 2001, according to eye-witnesses, Sierra Leonean refugees were being forcibly recruited by President Charles Taylor's Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU) and the Armed Forces of Liberia at the Bridge between Lofa and Bonga counties (St. Paulsville). The ATU were on one side, and the AFL were on the other. Both separated the women from men as they arrived and then recruited males over the age of 14. Close to this bridge, 15 and 16 year old boys were being trained by these forces. According to Global Witness sources, this forced recruitment was increasing.

Liberia's international links

It is important to note that the above violations exist partly because of Liberia's links to countries sympathetic to President Charles Taylor's government. Previous reports about Gaddafi training the RUF are substantiated by evidence obtained by Global Witness. In 2000 several Sierra Leoneans were taken to Libya from other countries including Nigeria, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea. All of those listed as going were either holding low positions or were unemployed and stayed anywhere from two months to 27 months in Libya. They left because Libya came to the decision that they would be deported, at which point Liberia stepped in, took them over to Liberia and gave them Liberian citizenship. While in Libya, they were reportedly given military training and subsequently ear-marked to become RUF combatants upon their arrival in Liberia. Several of them applied to return back to Sierra Leone.

This type of link to a country outside of its immediate vicinity is not new to Liberia. In a press release by the Embassy of Sierra Leone, dated 25th February 1999, it was documented that President Charles Taylor had ties with "Nico Shafer, a Columbian cocaine kingpin, formerly associated with the late Pablo Escobar of Cali, Columbia and Col Fred Rundle ... a former South African army officer who openly trains Liberians, Burkina Faso and abducted Sierra Leoneans in Liberian military camps".⁴⁰

The RUF is largely able to continue its activities because of its support from the Liberian government. The Liberian government is able to fund the RUF mainly because of the monetary value of the timber which it exports.

Above: List of Sierra Leoneans allegedly given military training in Libya to fight for the RUF in Liberia; 2000

Below: Travel document of one of the deportees en route to Liberia; 2000

EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
211, Rue de France - Tel. 00225 20 10 10 10
TOURIST - LIBERIA

COPIES OF THE CHIEF OF MISSIONS

Date: 25/02/2000 10/02/2000

EMERGENCY TRAVEL CERTIFICATE

The Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Republic, Libya, is the one of the only country, all which it may concern to allow the entry of Sierra Leoneans whose photograph is affixed below, starting from 25/02/2000 to 25/02/2000. Should pass freely without let or hindrance and to afford every facility of which he might stand in need.



Place of Birth: Sierra Leone
Date of Birth: 25/02/2000
Occupation: Student
Marital Status: Single
Religion: Christian
Colour of Eyes: Brown
Colour of Hair: Black

Signature of holder: [Signature]

Based at the Consular Section of the Embassy of the Republic of Liberia, Tripoli, Libya, on the 25/02/2000 day February 2000.

(The Validity of this Travel Certificate is up to Three Months)



7 The real value of Liberia's forestry sector

THE OFFICIAL FIGURES pertaining to Liberia's timber production, exports and revenue generation comprise those produced by the FDA in their annual and semi-annual reports, the annual reports of the Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank of Liberia and from international trade statistics. The following analysis has drawn on all of these sources. However, the FDA 2000 Annual Report has not yet been published – it should have been available in the first quarter of 2001 – which means that total figures are not available at a time when they most deserve scrutiny. Figures for 2001 are drawn from import data and documentation by Global Witness (*see table below*).

The Ministry of Finance annual report for 2000 states that timber production was 802,249m³, and that this generated US\$6.6 million for the budget. The Central Bank of Liberia in its report for 2000 records production of 934,006m³, and states that this contributed 'about' \$6.7 million. Thus the two relevant organs of the state record similar revenues, but display a 132,000m³ discrepancy in production. These two institutions use differing methods to arrive at their figures. The Central Bank reviews the paperwork of each logging company's production; the Ministry of Finance derives its data from Bureau of Inspection for Verification Assessment and Certification (BIVAC), the government's tax collecting agency. It seems likely that the higher production figure is more accurate as it was based on actual paperwork.

A reasonable minimum estimate of available timber revenue can be arrived by subtracting the average timber production cost from the world market value of the timber; typically about US\$200 per m³. If timber production costs are on average US\$86 per m³,^{3,4} then, once sold, there is US\$114 per m³ remaining both to provide profits for the logging companies and to provide Charles Taylor with the revenues he needs to support his lifestyle, patronage

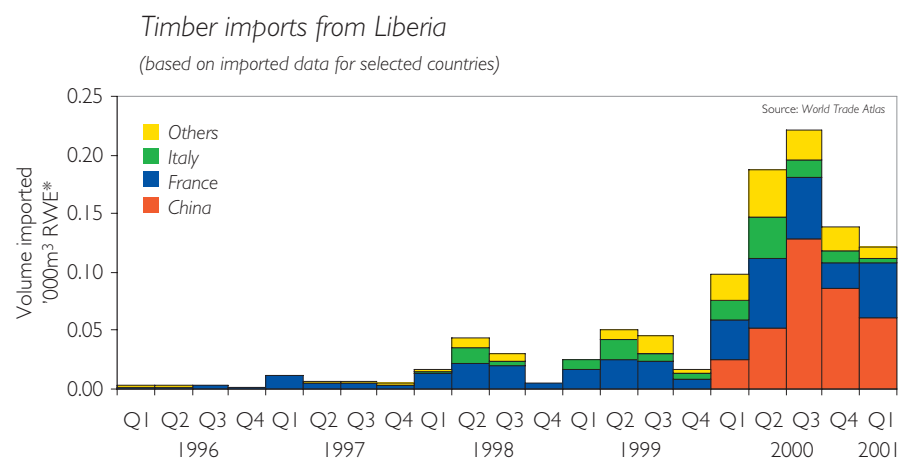
system and armed support. In 2000 this remaining sum is likely to have totalled US\$106 million, or approximately US\$100 million after the US\$6.6 million in taxes had been paid. However, this is not the whole story. There are numerous methods of executing timber fraud, some of which are indicated below:

- In the first six months of 2000 Liberia log exports to Europe were under-declared by 75,327m³. *Value US\$8.6 million (at US\$114/m³).*
- OTC processes logs in its sawmill, but does not declare any sawn production. *Value unknown.*
- There are numerous reports of undeclared exports via Côte d'Ivoire. Global Witness photographed Liberian logs at San Pedro port, although log exports are illegal from Côte d'Ivoire. [Log exports from Côte d'Ivoire were more or less zero in 1998, 10,000m³ in 1999 and 20,000m³ in 2000;⁵ the FDA indicate 36,000m³ were exported from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire (primarily overland) in the first half of 2000]. *Value unknown.*

Furthermore, on 1st July 2000 the Liberian government issued Executive Order No. 4, "restricting the Ministry of Finance to the collection of 50% of all Land Rental Fees and 98% of all stumpage fees", and mandating the FDA to "collect the balance, 50% and 2% respectively for the support and maintenance of the Forest land of Liberia" (replanting).⁴¹ However, the FDA did not receive this money. In early July 2001 the President of the Timber Association, a timber trade body, stated that "...we see nothing being done by the FDA in the area of reforestation."⁴² The Deputy Managing Director of the FDA, Wayne Bryant, admitted that reforestation fees were being redirected. At the same meeting he also refused to comment on whether reserve forests were being misused, stating that "it is too political."

Thus in 2000 there was a minimum of US\$108 million available to Liberia's elite. In addition, many of the logging company militias' salaries would come from timber production costs. Given that these militias engage in military operations, this is additional support for Taylor's military aims. Furthermore, the IMF noted that 80% of the National Budget is used by the Executive Mansion for expenses authorised directly by the president.⁴³

Note the downward trend at the end of each year reflects the wet season when logging slows down.





Logs aboard the BBC Australia, unloading Liberian logs for F. Jammes in Bassens, Bordeaux; March 2001.

Exports compared with imports (m³)

Note: Export figures are Liberia's declared exports; Import figures are those recorded by importing countries. There are large discrepancies between the two.

	1999		2000		
	Exports	Imports	(first 6 months only)	(12 months)	Imports
China	14,762		144,419	77,318	290,409
Indonesia	11,988		6,784	9,391	13,401
Turkey	28,620	2,632	11,316	2,469	3,998
Belgium			1,115	0	2,083
France	70,411	74,813	56,300	92,540	167,779
Germany	5,155	6,189	7,690	9,284	12,364
Greece	1,420	2,204	9,333	13,837	23,513
Italy	36,408	35,756	29,052	52,512	78,800
Netherlands	1,301	1,274	6,324	10,517	21,677
Portugal	5,978	8,847	2,682	7,719	13,171
Spain	6,267	7,487	9,029	8,375	15,238
UK			1,336	1,899	3,108
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>182,310</i>	<i>139,201</i>	<i>285,380</i>	<i>285,861</i>	<i>645,541</i>
India			6,485		
Korea			11,584		
Thailand	3,069		2,951		
Tunisia			1,504		
Senegal			1,294		
Libya	2,935				
Côte d'Ivoire	1,101		35,843		
Gambia	526				
<i>Total</i>	<i>189,941</i>	<i>139,201</i>	<i>345,041</i>	<i>285,861</i>	<i>645,541</i>

Sources

Exports 1999: FDA Annual Report (January–December 2000)
 Exports H1 2000: FDA Semi-annual Report (January–June 2000)
 Imports: World Trade Atlas

Note: There will be a time lag between the exporting of cargo from Liberia and its subsequent importation. Source data from neither the Forestry Development Authority nor the Central Bank of Liberia provide monthly export quantities. Roughly three quarters of annual production takes place during the first six months of each year. Consequently, it may be reasonable to assume that the great majority of timber produced for export in a given year will be received by the importing country during the same calendar year.

Some buyers of Liberian timber in 2001¹¹

Please note, this list is far from exhaustive.

Buyer	Supplier	Log supplier arms links?
Global Star (Asia) Trading Ltd c/o Natura Holdings 27-15 International Plaza 10 Anson Road, Singapore	OTC	✓
DLH Nordisk A/S Skagensgade 66 DK-2630 Taastrup Denmark	MWPI	✓
Timber Trade Service Italy	OTC	✓
Messrs. Bonomi Prefabbricati ILL Sri Via San Vigilio 81 38088 Spiazio (TN) Italy	OTC	✓
HBT Holzhandel GMBH Germany	OTC	✓
TREEMEX Niederfeldweg D-32361 Preussisch Oldendorf Germany	OTC	✓
SIBA Rocade Fann Bel Air BP 2470 Dakar, Senegal	OTC	✓
TECNOALP Italy	OTC	✓
General Wood Ltd c/o Cofid 6 Albermarle Street Piccadilly London W1X 3HF	OTC	✓
Simla Trade India	OTC	✓
Sumas Trading PTE Ltd	RTC	✓
World Best Trading PO Box 4838 Deira Dubai UAE	OTC	✓

8 The roles of France and China

OF ALL COUNTRIES, France and China have the largest financial interests in Liberia's timber sector. France and China led the effort to remove timber from the proposed sanctions on Liberia in early 2001.

The reasons given were:

China: The “humanitarian impact of sanctions on Liberian people. Of course we also import timber from Liberia, but that is not our concern; we just want to find a proper balance between humanitarian issues and the possible link between natural resources and arms”.⁴⁴

France: The lack of a link between timber and arms, but: “Nous sommes complètement ouverts à imposer des sanctions sur le bois et le chaouchou si le lien avec les armes soit établi”. (“We are completely open to imposing sanctions on timber (and rubber) if the link with arms is proved”).⁴⁵

France enjoys extensive trade in West Africa and may be unwilling to be perceived as a threat by African governments. Furthermore, as the recent ‘Angolagate’⁴⁶ scandal exemplifies, several senior French politicians and their close business contacts are implicated in African resource and arms-based corruption deals. It is highly likely that further research can draw some links between what has happened in Angola, and what has happened in Liberia.

The trade argument is probably also true of China. Whilst China undoubtedly values Liberian logs, it is also likely that they are keen to woo Taylor away from his close alliance with Taiwan.

Historically, France has been a major importer of Liberian

timber regardless of the supplier. In 1991, for example, during the war when the NPLF was in control of nearly all of Liberia's territory and controlled nearly all its timber exports, France imported 94,400 m³ of round logs from Liberia,⁴⁷ worth approximately US\$19 million at current prices.

The 1999 FDA Annual Report states that France imported over 70,000 m³ of Liberian round logs, or 37% of Liberia's official 1999 timber exports. Although this percentage was reduced to 26% in 2000, the volume increased by around 150% to just under 168,000m³. France's imports therefore contributed a minimum of US\$19 million to the ‘parallel’ timber budget. Some French distributors have friends in high places. For example, in March 2001 Pinault, a company that bears the name of one of France's richest men, said it had never heard of RTC,⁴⁸ but had RTC logs in its Nantes Yard – an interesting inconsistency.

France imports further Liberian timber that is taken by road to south-west Côte d'Ivoire for milling and export. No reliable figures are available on the volumes or value of this timber, however the FDA Semi-Annual Report for 2000 reported exporting 35,000m³ by land to Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, France's shipping industry is a major player in log and timber imports from West Africa. For example, Bolloré and Delmas are a major shipper from Côte d'Ivoire.

China declared imports of just over 290,000m³ of logs from Liberia in 2000, therefore contributing a minimum of US\$33 million to the parallel timber budget. However, the FDA Semi-Annual Report for the first half of 2000 puts China's round log imports at 144,400m³, against China's declared imports of 77,000m³, a 100% discrepancy. Although some of this discrepancy could be explained by exports in the second six months of the year, it is likely that China is under-reporting imports.

In conclusion, by blocking timber sanctions France and China have protected their tropical timber imports from Liberia, permitting companies like OTC and RTC to continue their human rights and environmental abuses, to import arms, and to support implicitly and financially Taylor's regional war and abuses of the economy, state and people.

RTC logs in La Pallice, France; March 2001





The following table details recent shipping activity. It is evident from this information that OTC, directly linked to the sustenance of the RUF and arms shipments, is the main supplier of Liberian timber to the international community.

Above: Logs in French company Pinault's depot in Nantes, supplied by the Inland Logging Company (ILC), whose private militia is implicated in several human rights abuses; March 2001.

Below: Document detailing logs exported from NPFL-held territory for French logger Rougier at height of civil war in 1992.

Ships plying the Liberian log trade in 2001

Vessel Name	Destination / Ports	Supplier	Buyer
Abu I		OTC	
Liski	Amsterdam	OTC	DLH
Geortina	Derince, Italy	OTC	Theodor
Calypso "N"	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Antarctic Mariner	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Baru II	Salerno, Italy & Dakar, Senegal	OTC	DLH & SIBA
Atlas Sea	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Thelita	Ravena, Italy		
Abou I	Dakar, Senegal		
Kamilla	Sete, France		
Aris		OTC	
Zini	Ancona, Italy	OTC	TTS
Geortina	Kalamaki, Greece	OTC	DLH
Broadgate	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Abou I	Dakar, Senegal		
CEC Hunter	Sete, France		
Dutch Sea	Sete, France		
BBC Australia	Sete, France		
Louise	Sete, France		
Aron	Ravena, Italy		
SpringWood	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Geortina	Derince	OTC	DLH
Anna Maria	Vasto / Ancona, Italy	OTC	DLH
Anna Maria	Vasto / Ancona, Italy	OTC	TTS
Achilles	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
ZINI	Ancona, Italy	OTC	TTS
Jedi Knight	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Aron	Sete, France	OTC	DLH
Melte B	Sete, France		
Sernorita	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
ZINI	Ancona, Italy	OTC	TTS
ZINI	Ancona, Italy	OTC	Bonomi
ZINI	Greece	OTC	DLH
Atlantic Mercado	Sete, France	MWPI	DLH
Atlantic Mercado	Italy	FAPCO, RTC, ULC	DLH
Samsun Earnest	Penglai & Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
CEC Blue	Vasto & Ravena, Italy	MWPI	
African Trader	Nordenham, Germany	OTC	HBT
African Trader	Sfax, Tunisia	OTC, RTC, MGC, Tutex	DLH
Socoff Lake	La Pallice, France	OTC	HBT
Socoff Lake	Nordenham, Germany	OTC	Treemex
Socoff Lake	Nordenham, Germany	OTC	HBT
Socoff Lake	UK (Via Nordenham, Germany)	OTC	DLH
Arktis Crystal	Dakar, Senegal	OTC	SIBA
Express	Bordeaux, France	MWPI	
Rony	Ancona & Mon Falcone, Italy	OTC	
CEC Pride	Segunto, Spain	MWPI	
Posen	Hull, UK & Villa Garcia, Spain	MWPI	
Corn Racer	Penglai / Chiwan, China	OTC	Global Star
Panormos Pride	Penglai / Chiwan, China & Indonesia	OTC	Global Star
Geortina	Lefkandi, Greece	OTC	HBT
Geortina	Lefkandi, Greece	OTC	Theodor
Altis	Kemaman, Malaysia	RTC	Sumas Trading Pte
Georgios	Nordenham & La Pallice, France	HBT	
Georgios	Nordenham, Germany		Treemex
Abu I	Dakar, Senegal	OTC	SIBA
Shi Koku Pride	Mangalore	OTC	World Best Trading
Shi Koku Pride	India	OTC	SIMLA Trade
Liski	Sete, France	OTC	DLH
Antartic Mariner	Penglai & China Port, China	OTC	Global Star





The plunder of Liberia's rainforest – a Liberian's perspective

[The following section has been shortened but is otherwise unaltered from the original received from Liberia]

"Dear Sir/madam:

I have followed with interest your activities, reference the reckless and unsustainable forest exploitation by logging companies in Liberia and the misappropriation of national revenue, from the industry, for the benefit of an elite few. It is worth mentioning here that I find them not only crucial to the ongoing national and international efforts to protect the last remaining significant forest block in West Africa, and also one of the world's critical biodiversity hotspots, but detailed and extremely exhaustive.

Attached, are findings of a personal investigation of the industry, which forms the basis for the recommendations I have advanced in this letter. I also hope you will find some of the points, most of which you might already be aware of, useful in the preparation of future reports on Liberia.

Considering the fact that I can not publish this article locally, due to safety and security concerns - not only for myself, but also my immediate family members and associates, the omission of my name should not in any way deter you from using the materials. The information provided have been deliberately void of sweeping allegations to enable you verify or cross check incidents highlighted with other sources inside Liberia. This I believe would nullify any suggestion, that this paper is simply the "ranting of another Taylor hater".

Grateful if you could consider the below recommendations when preparing future reports on Liberia:

1. A UNSC endorsed and enforced moratorium on Liberian timber until a full-scale investigation of the logging industry can be conducted to prove or disprove that Taylor is using timber revenue to fund destabilizing military activities in the sub-region;

2. An independent environmental impact assessment to ascertain the level of threat and damage to the Liberian rainforest;
3. The GOL be pressured to lift its 'siege' on information about the logging industry to enable independent observers gather information without fear of being intimidated, harassed or targeted;
4. The GOL to address the continued illegal importation of arms by the OTC and other logging companies, into the country, in violation of the UN arms embargo and advise the UNSC accordingly. This would enable the UNSC to take appropriate measures to discourage future violations of the arms embargo on Liberia. The GOL should also address the proliferation of militias organized by logging companies and prosecute those that have been involved in organizing illegal militias and importing arms for their private use;
5. Allegations against logging companies be investigated by an independent environmental and human rights organization and cases involving murder be prosecuted in a competent court of law; and
6. Aggrieved communities and individuals be compensated by the guilty logging companies for damages done to communal and private properties, including bulldozing through communal forests, farms, lost of lives in road accidents, etc.

The moratorium would remain in effect until all the conditions listed above are met in their entirety.

Kindly accept my congratulations and best wishes for the success of your campaign.

Sincerely yours..."

Liberia's forest estate

Liberia's forest is under intense pressure primarily from logging companies. Almost every national forest reserve or proposed national park has been granted as concessions to logging companies. Logging companies are also encroaching upon the few national forest reserves not granted as concessions. Logging operations have reached an unprecedented proportion, with about 60% of the country's rainforest now severely degraded. The country's bio-diversity is also threatened because deforestation has effectively separated the northern and south-eastern portions of the forest.

The government of Liberia and regional stability

Despite Liberian government denials, the Panel of Experts, however, "found unequivocal and overwhelming evidence that Liberia has been actively supporting the RUF at all levels, in providing training, weapons and related *matériel*, logistical support, a staging ground for attacks and a safe haven for retreat and recuperation."⁴⁹ The report also stated that "Roads built and maintained for timber extraction are also conveniently used for weapons movement within Liberia, and for the onward shipment of weapons to Sierra Leone."⁵⁰ And that "the principals in Liberia's timber industry are involved in a variety of illicit activities, and large amounts of the proceeds are used to pay for extra-budgetary activities, including the acquisition of weapons."⁵¹

Logging – a source of conflict in Liberia

The rainforest in Liberia is under intense pressure from mostly unregulated logging activities by logging companies. These companies who are the single most destructive force and agents of deforestation in Liberia are also guilty of wide spread abuses against locals and residents of indigenous communities. Evidence of houses and farms (cash crops) being destroyed, traditional and sacred forests being desecrated, large tracts of forest being cleared and with it medicinal herbs, etc abound.

Logging companies, in Liberia, show no respect for traditional and cultural practices and beliefs in areas where they operate. From logging in communal forest reserves, where tribes conduct

"Traditional Schools" for the youths to felling trees of cultural significance, the disappearance of medicinal herbs and trees with curative values are issues of concern to the rural communities. Some communities complain of loggers violating their tradition by invading scared [sacred] sites, thereby bringing their cultural practices and beliefs into ridicule.

In Kokoyah district, Bong County, residents filed a complaint against the ETTE for logging in their scared [sacred] forest at a time when their "Traditional School" was in session, a complaint also made by residents of Bopolu district, Lower Lofa (now Gbarpolu County) against companies operating in the region. None of these complaints were investigated by local government officials, let alone prosecuted.

Also, the torture of 10 villagers, by OTC militiamen in Rivercess County,⁵² is one of the most recent cases. To date the culprits have not been apprehended nor prosecuted.

There are several other cases, mostly unreported incidents of harassment and intimidation of locals, environmentalist investigating logging operations, outspoken critics of logging companies, etc. These incidents serve to discourage investigation of the industry and silence environmentalist who are aware of the misconduct of logging companies - but only speak in private of the pending ecological calamity.

The militarization of the logging industry

Not only does logging companies wield considerable political and economic sway over top government officials, their continued recruitment and arming of notorious ex-combatants, is not only illegal, but has become a major cause of concern for ordinary Liberians. The OTC, RTC, SMI, ILC, and other logging companies have recruited and armed hundreds of ex-combatants to serve in their militias. These militias mount illegal checkpoints and extort money and food items from locals. They are also constantly engaged in running gun battles over disputed concession boundaries.

Left page: OTC's concession, an indicator of what awaits Liberia's forests in 5-10 years if current logging practices continue.

Right: Tractor belonging to OTC, Buchanan; July 2001



9 The logging companies

The global timber market and Taylor

The worldwide tropical timber industry traditionally approaches leaders of countries with large forest resources and weak institutions. Abiding by “local business practices”, it negotiates deals to extract raw materials as cheaply as possible. This mode of doing business suits the warlord economy extremely well. Predatory transnational companies have no allegiance to a given country, nor do they abide by local laws and regulations unless obliged by their hosts. Their ability to operate relies on direct deals with the ruling elite and the continued demand for their end products: plywood, chipboard and hardwoods, in this case by consumers unconcerned with, or ignorant of, the source of their goods. In this way the global market for logs and wood products plays into the hands of warlord leaders like Taylor. Taylor is responding to market opportunities; he is not creating them.

Oriental Timber Company (OTC)

c/o Natura Holdings PTE Ltd, 27-15 International Plaza, 10 Anson Road, Singapore 079903. Tel: 65-2250030; Fax: 65-2225968.

OTC, also known also as ‘Old Taylor’s Children’ or ‘Only Taylor Chops’, remains the most notorious logging company in the country. The company’s militiamen bear arms including assault rifles and machine guns. The expatriate trailer drivers carry AK-47 rifles in their trucks at all times. The company imports arms into Liberia for use by its militia, however, it is widely believed that some of these arms are brought in for the government.²³

There have been numerous rumours as to how much money OTC paid to Charles Taylor to obtain its concession. One reliable source stated that sometime between August and October 1999 the Ministry of Finance received a letter from Charles Taylor ordering them to sign a paper confirming receipt of US\$3 million from OTC. This caused major problems for the Ministry as they had not received a cent of this money, it presumably having gone directly to the Executive Mansion. Other sources suggest that as much as US\$5 million was paid.

What is known is that on 28th July 1999, a standard Liberian forestry concession agreement was signed between Gus Kouwenhoven of the Liberian Forest Development Company

“Many roads heading into the bush, yellow machines going into the forests for operations, the drivers and workmen never talk to us (villagers). They spent four months in the bush, using many machines. Only a few boys from the village were employed in their (OTC) work for a short time. The loggers’ machines ruined the roads, and crucially a bridge, for the villagers – there was no way to pass. When confronted, drivers said to villagers that they should go complain to President Taylor or OTC. As the locals were scared, they sent a letter to the local superintendent, but received no reply. Superintendent never came to inspect the damage to the village and its roads, and never sent anybody to clear up the mess made in the rainy season.

The ground now wasted, and there is nothing left for the villagers in the bush – our roots have gone...”

Second villager in OTC concession; July 2001

(LFDC) and the Government of Liberia to log the largest concession in Liberia’s history, 1.24 million hectares, made up of pre-existing concessions in the south-east forest block that Kouwenhoven “acquired” during the war. To be legally valid, a concession agreement needs to be ratified by the Liberian Congress, which never happened in this case. Beginning in October 1999 the LFDC, then calling itself the Liberian-Malaysian Timber Company (LMTTC), began a stated investment of US\$100 million in logging equipment and operations, renovations of Buchanan port and road building. Soon thereafter the LFDC/LMTTC began operating under the name Oriental Timber Company, which it still uses today. Following complaints by OTC that its initial 1.24 million hectares did not contain enough high quality timber, in early 2000 further areas in upper Grand Gedeh County were seized and added to OTC’s concession, bringing OTC’s total holdings to approximately 1.6 million ha. According to official FDA figures, this represents about 42% of Liberia’s total productive forests.

OTC is linked to Hong Kong-based Global Star holdings, which is the main buyer of its production, and operator of many of the ships which transport it. It is also possibly linked to the Indonesian Djan Djanti Corporation, with offices in Singapore and Hong Kong and major processing installations in Indonesia and China. The frequent changes in name and the multiple offices in different cities in South-East Asia help to obscure the source of the investment, the producer and destination(s) of the wood and tax liabilities.



OTC logging road,
Gebia Town; July
2001

OTC's background and links

Those purchasing logs from the OTC are asked to pay Singapore-based Natura Holdings, a company with a dubious history. It was established under another name in 1988 yet its returns for the period to February 2000 state that it had never traded. On 30th March 2000, Dennis Myles Coe (American, Company Director with address in Singapore) and Widyanty Bte Mohd Yusope (Singaporean, Company Director) took over as the only Directors while the company was taken over by British Virgin Islands-based Extra Mile Investments. The following is information on Natura Holdings including a list of people involved, a chronology of the company's history, and questions that should be considered as to the nature of the company.

Chronology of the Natura Holdings

23th November 1988 The company was formed (number 04270/1988-K also expressed as 198804270) as importers of rice, fruit and canned goods. The formation agents were: Ng Aik Soon (Management Consultant) and Peh Thong Leong (Merchant) both based in Singapore. Ng Aik Soon was appointed Manager. The authorised capital for the company was \$1,000,000 of which 2 shares were issued and held by promoters

14th July 1989 Chareon Laothamatas and Amnuay Oerareemitr (both Thai Citizens described as merchants) subscribed for one share each and became Directors. The company was then owned and controlled by the four directors

7th August 1990 The issued share capital was increased from \$4 to \$10,000 as each shareholder put in \$2,499

26th August 1995 Soon, Leong, Laothamatis and Oerareemitr were removed from their roles as Directors and Heng Hang Seng and Heng Hui Kheng were appointed in their place. Both were Singaporean. Ng Aik Soon was also removed as Manager: no one was appointed in his place. On the same day, share capital was acquired with 9,999 shares by Heng Hui Kheng and one share by Heng Hang Seng. The Registered office moved from 101 Thomson Road, 23-05 United Square Singapore 307591 to 112 Robinson Road, 12-00, DBS Finance Building in Singapore. The company claimed exemption, as a small company, from filing accounts

13th August 1998 The company's objectives were changed to investment and property

24th July 1998 The name was changed to Pennywise Investment PTE LTD

30th March 2000 Dennis Myles Coe and Widyanty Bte Mohd Yusope took over as the only Directors of the company. On the same date, the whole of the share capital was acquired by Extra Mile Investments Limited of the British Virgin Islands, the registered office moved to 10 Anson Road. For the first time accounts were filed for the period to 29th February 2000. These stated that the company had never traded but that \$10,000 for shares had been spent

7th April 2000 An Indonesian by the name of Rubyanto Argonadi Hamidjojo joined the board. He is described as a Company Director and resigns on 30th June 2000

12th May 2000 The authorized share capital was increased to \$10,000,000 consisting of 10,000,000 shares of \$1 each. On the same day, Extra Mile subscribes \$6,270,000 for 6,270,000 new shares bringing its holding to 6,280,000 shares. The corporate representative of Extra Mile was Ho Kui Hing

3th May 2000 The company became known as Natura Holdings PTE LTD

27th July 2000 The company raised a US\$10,000,000 facility from Fleet National Bank of Singapore and granted a charge in favour of the bank as security. Accordingly the company should or did have funding available to it by way of the subscription for shares of some \$6,270,000 and the credit facility of US\$10,000,000

NB: Unless expressed to be US\$, all currency is assumed to be Singaporean Dollars

Natura Holdings Pte Ltd

Formerly Pennywise Investment Pte Ltd

Originally Asthai (Singapore) Pte Ltd

Dramatis personae

Ng Aik Soon
Promoter and Manager

Peh Thong Leong
Promoter

Chareon Laothamatas
Thai trader

Amnuay Oerareemitr
Thai trader

Heng Hang Seng
acquired the company

Heng Hui Kheng
acquired the company

Dennis Myles Coe
American, present Director

Widyanty Bte Mohd Yusope
present Director

Extra Mile Investments Limited
holding company based in the British Virgin Islands

Rubyanto Argonadi Hamidjojo
recent short term Director

Ho Kui Hing
representative of Extra Mile

Fleet National Bank
provider of US\$10million facility

The following issues need to be addressed with regard to the nature and operations of Natura Holdings:

● The company, which has existed since 1988, states that it has never traded. The only existing documented activity being change of ownership, directorship and the proposed business of the company

● In 1995, two new directors were put in place when they decide to invest in the company. Again, nothing happened until 2000 other than a change of name and the proposed business of the company

● The reasons for Mr. Coe and his colleague to buy such a company when they could have formed one as cheaply and without the need for due diligence – i.e. the need to obtain the warranties, indemnities and audits that go with taking over an existing entity, raise suspicions as to their objectives

● It is evident that Mr. Coe has influence that permits him to acquire the US\$10 million facility which would no doubt require a track record and additional security

OTC's President, Gus Kouwenhoven, is a controversial figure in Liberia. He is one of the people targeted by the UN travel ban and is, according to the *Report of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000) paragraph 19 in relation to Sierra Leone*, "responsible for the logistical aspects of many of the arms deals [with the RUF]. Through his interests in a Malaysian timber project in Liberia, he organises the transfer of weaponry from Monrovia into Sierra Leone. Roads built and maintained for timber extraction are also conveniently used for weapons movement within Liberia, and for the onward shipment of weapons to Sierra Leone"⁵³. This has been confirmed by scores of eye witnesses in the port of Buchanan and along roads leading to Lofa County, as well as by people involved in Monrovia.

His shady business dealings go back a long time – from former President Samuel Doe, to the interim governments and warlords of the 1990s and now Taylor. In his country of origin, the Netherlands, Gus Kouwenhoven was one of the suspects in the 'Tass'-an investigation on organised crime and large-scale drugs trafficking. The gang he was involved in, also consisting of some of his employees at his Hotel Africa and a Dutchman acting as the Honourary Consul of Côte d'Ivoire to Liberia, allegedly smuggled over a hundred tons of hashish from Monrovia⁵⁴.

Gus Kouwenhoven operated his former logging company, TIMCO, behind NPFL lines during the Liberian civil war, using the port of Buchanan for export. When then rebel leader Charles Taylor arrived in Monrovia their ties were strengthened and he accompanied Taylor on most of his campaign trips during the election period.* As stated earlier, Gus also operates the Royal Timber Corporation (RTC) in the northwest of Liberia, strategically located on the border with Sierra Leone. Presently men are being drawn from the rank of the OTC militia to fight in Lofa, while those unwilling to fight abandon their jobs ahead of conscription.

OTC has eight operational camps spread out in Grand Bassa, Rivercess, Grand Gedeh, Sinoe and Nimba counties, and have constructed several dozens of roads crisscrossing the forests in the south-east to connect their camps, completely without impact studies, consultations, or compensation for damage to property or life. Each camp maintains its own database of log production; Km 85 has three computers while CD has two computers. A network of High Frequency Radios, manned by radio operators throughout the day, links all the camps and HQ in Buchanan and closely monitors logistics and personnel movements. The HQ in Buchanan is kept informed of all operations, activities and emergencies in the camp.

One observer on the road from Buchanan to Km 85 (about 1hr 45mins. drive), counted 37 trailers[†] en route to Buchanan to deliver logs. An average of 105 (+/-7) trailers deliver logs to Buchanan daily between the hours of 07:00 to 19:00 daily. Logs from the other camps are delivered to Km 85 where they are sorted

* To fully understand Gus Kouwenhoven and President Charles Taylor's relationship, one also has to investigate their dealings during the Liberian crisis, including Gus Kouwenhoven's role in the trade of timber for arms, which provided the NPFL bulk of its military hardware.

† Each trailer carries about 8pcs of logs, some as much as 10pcs, while few carry two or three extra large pieces. The average volume per trailer can be estimated at a minimum of 24,000m³.



OTC's unfinished plywood mill, Buchanan; July 2001

(scaled) and then transported to Buchanan.

Some OTC letterheads bear Gus' villa address at Hotel Africa (Villa # 1), where the RTC offices are also located. The OTC General Manager Joseph Wong lives in the same compound (River View) as the Representative of the United Nations Secretary General and other top United Nations officials in Monrovia.

For its first year of operation, OTC imported "skilled" labour from Indonesia (600-800 workers). Due to health problems, however, most Asian labourers were subsequently sent home but a significant number of them remain, driving trailers and bulldozers and occupying the managerial positions in the field and at the port of Buchanan. Although there was no training as promised and publicised, Liberians now constitute the majority of the OTC casual workers but a lesser percentage of its skilled workforce. OTC maintains armed guards to keep everyone else out of its logging sites and the port of Buchanan. FDA officials complain that they are required to provide the necessary hammer marks and approvals off-site without ever inspecting OTC's logging operations.

The extent and impact of OTC logging operations

In its first year of operations, OTC began with the capacity to log up to 80,000 m³ per month, a target it met most months of the 1999-2000 dry season when it logged in Grand Bassa, River Cess and Grand Gedeh Counties (confirmed in the 2000 FDA Semi-Annual Report). In the 2000-2001 dry season, based upon the number of trucks operating, the number of logging sites, and the distances between logging sites, the main loading station (kilometre 85 from Buchanan) and the port, OTC's theoretical logging capacity is just in excess 100,000m³ per month. Assuming OTC is removing all marketable trees when it logs an area, this felling rate would consume up to 5000-10,000 hectares of undisturbed forest per month. Given the size of OTC's total concession, this rate of logging is within FDA regulations (a concessionaire must not log in more than 4% of its concession in a year).

However OTC has not respected FDA regulations for preparing forest inventories and management



Gus Kouwenhoven, executive in both OTC and RTC, making promises he hasn't kept, Buchanan; 1999

OTC providing employment?

At the launching of the OTC in 1999, Gus Kouwenhoven (on video available at request) announced that his company would employ at least 4,000 Liberians by the year 2000 and that electricity would be restored to Buchanan by the end of the year. He also promised that the OTC would build a plywood factory that would employ hundreds of Liberians and construct durable bridges since they would be in the country for at least 20 years.

Few of these promises have so far been fulfilled. The plywood factory is still under construction and jobs promised to locals have come in the form of casual labour. Indonesian and Malaysian trailer drivers brought into the country since 1999 to 'train' locals are still actively driving while few Liberians have been hired. Other Indonesians and Malaysians work as spotters and overseers in the bush camps. Liberian staff rarely have a written contractual agreement with the company's management and few are on full time employment. The company hires and fires without any regard for labour laws. Those working in hazardous jobs have no insurance and so far no relative of those that have died in operation has received any form of compensation. In early May, OTC recruited about 200 people (some as young as 13 years old) in the port and in other bush camps.

Not only OTC made fabulous promises when it arrived, most logging companies did on their creation or when they moved to new areas. This situation led to a wave of protests across the country in April 2001. Citizens of Sinoe County conducted a public meeting to petition the government to return some of the revenue generated from logging in the county to self-help development initiatives and to protest the wave of harassment by logging companies' militiamen. After the Sinoe gathering, the protest spread throughout the south-east. Following these protests a crackdown ensued; local government officials who expressed sympathy with the citizens were dismissed and replaced and individual critics silenced.⁵⁵

In March 2001, journalists at the local *Radio Atlantic* FM station in Buchanan (Grand Bassa County) were ordered by OTC executives to retract a news item about a fatal road accident involving an OTC trailer and a vehicle carrying an American missionary to the south-east. When the station manager refused, armed men from the OTC stormed the station and disrupted the evening news bulletin. Despite several complaints to the local police and the County Superintendent Mrs. Ellen Janjay Natt, the culprits were never arrested.

These incidents have been documented both by local and foreign environmentalists and journalists.⁵⁶

plans, nor has it adhered to its reporting obligations as specified in its (invalid) concession agreement. It has operated in flagrant violation of the FDA and its contractual regulations concerning environmental impacts of its roads and extraction methods. It has blatantly flouted FDA rules and Liberian law concerning minimum diameters for logs,* consultation and reimbursement for damage to private property (bulldozing through villages, farms and plantations, logging in sacred forest groves), employee safety and employment preferences for Liberians. OTC has invaded neighbouring concessions without permission or compensation including LAC/Forum Africa, University of Liberia Forest, Rivercess Logging Company/Inland Logging Company. Its trucks have caused numerous road deaths to OTC employees, local Liberians and foreigners alike. OTC has made many public declarations, and has been asked by the government, to rehabilitate or construct a major saw mill in the port of Buchanan. For this it bulldozed the site in May 2000 and has now completed construction of a building but as of August 2001 no machinery of any kind had been installed. In addition OTC has a sawmill outside Buchanan, the production from which does not appear in any FDA figures.

OTC has established a nursery for reforestation which contains both native and fast growing exotic species. It is assumed that this is merely a public relations exercise, given that the nursery only has the capacity to reforest about 80-100 ha per year, compared to the 5,000-10,000 ha per month it is destroying.

Impressed by its efficiency by Liberian standards, and perhaps frightened that OTC could abandon him, Taylor has deepened economic relations with the company. In addition to logging operations, OTC has upgraded the Liberian road network nationally and become involved in importing and shipping goods domestically. Government contracts, including those financed by international donors like the UN and the EC, now use OTC as an importing agent.

Traditionally, Liberia exported logs mostly to Europe where the quality demanded was very high. Regardless of the logging practices used, only very large, straight logs were sought. Thus the market forced selective practices on producers which helped to reduce over-harvesting. Trees for local timber needs were harvested in salvage areas, not causing excessive forest fragmentation, or they were the lower-grade logs felled alongside better grade logs. With the arrival of OTC, the nature of the demand has dramatically changed. In addition to logs for European buyers, OTC is supplying factories making plywood and other processed wood products for South-East Asian markets. Cheap timber of indiscriminate quality is sought for this so the incentives for selective logging are lost. In these ways

* In the 2000-2001 dry season, OTC seems to have reduced its felling of undersized logs compared to its first season. This was reportedly for two reasons. First, in their first year they logged in the concessions nearest to Buchanan which had already been logged and often lacked significant quantities of mature trees. Second, OTC had great difficulties in attracting European buyers for its timber since it was not generally of the standard or species demanded by Europeans. As explained earlier, the areas nearest to Buchanan are poorer in the high-value hardwoods sought by Europeans than the forests further inland. In the 2000-2001 season, OTC has concentrated much of its logging in these inland forests. Thus the shift to legal-sized logs probably represents OTC logging in the mature, little disturbed forests of River Cess, Sinoe and Grand Gedeh counties and a greater emphasis on exporting high-value logs to European buyers.



OTC log yard, Buchanan; 2001.

OTC is much more destructive than any previous logging operation Liberia has seen.

Public outcry against OTC has been widespread, both in national and international media.

^{57,58,59,60,61,62,63} However Taylor has defended OTC, declaring it his “pepperbush”, a Liberian term for something very near and dear that no one is permitted to interfere with. He has responded to criticism with harsh measures such as removing people from office, police intimidation and arrests on the grounds of threats to national security.

When OTC set up operations in late 1999 Taylor warned “officials not to harass investors”. By this he meant that the customary ways that middle- and lower-level FDA staff augmented their income – petty graft in the forms of “service charges” for preparing papers, providing hammer stamps or issuing permits – would not be tolerated. The arrival of OTC with its total presidential protection has in effect rendered an enormous portion of the forests of the south-east off limits. Local FDA staff therefore are turning to remaining forest areas to seek whatever rents or products they can get.

No evidence has surfaced that OTC is paying to FDA or the National Treasury the required industrialisation, severance, conservation and reforestation fees or the export tax. OTC paid US\$3 million in 1999, probably directly to the Executive Mansion, for its concession fee for the first three years of operations, and for the Bureau Veritas inspection tax, although Bureau Veritas does not regularly inspect logs exports at Buchanan port.

Royal Timber Company (RTC)

Kouwenhoven also has logging interests in Lofa and Bomi counties in addition to the ones in the south-east that were converted to OTC concessions. The size of the concession is unknown although it is the largest in the north-west. Initially OTC was referred to as the LMTC when they first arrived in Liberia. It is in fact difficult to distinguish between the OTC and the RTC since Kouwenhoven is an executive in both companies. It appears to be changing names regularly, or operating under several names, possibly in order to avoid being tracked or to have its timber production and exports appear too large. FDA reports that in 1999 and in the first six months of 2000, RTC produced just over 30,000m³ of round logs in each period. These numbers probably vastly underestimate production, however, since RTC had over 400,000 ha of forest officially approved by FDA

for logging, representing over 10% of Liberia's most mature and most economically valuable forest. RTC logs were observed and photographed in French ports in early 2001.

With the increasing hostility in Lofa County between the RUF, Sierra Leonean forces, anti-Taylor insurgents, the Guinean army and Taylor's army, only those companies with significant fire-power and military backing have been able to maintain forestry activities there. RTC and its derivatives are primary among them. The specific arrangements between RTC and the Executive Mansion concerning finances, protection, trans-shipment of arms, etc. are not known but with Kouwenhoven as managing director, it is highly likely that RTC's involvement in regional destabilisation is similar to OTC's since Kouwenhoven is also OTC's President.

Inland Logging Company (ILC)

Maurice and Oscar Cooper, who own and manage the company are long-time associates of President Taylor. They are the brothers of Liberian ‘Diplomat’ Gerald Cooper, who was declared *persona non grata* by the UK Foreign Office in 1999, ostensibly because he shipped a jeep with gun mountings to Liberia from the US, via Britain, in violation of the UN arms embargo on the country.⁶⁴ The company's logging activities go back to the early 1990s during the war, when they extracted and exported logs from ‘greater Liberia’; the parts of Liberia then occupied by the NPFL.

The ILC has a private militia in Sinoe County, which harasses and intimidates the locals regularly. The ILC manages the port of Greenville under the direct supervision of Oscar and Maurice. A row between the company's executives and locals developed at a citizens meeting in Greenville on 14th March 2001, which resulted in a visit to the region by Liberia's Vice President, Rtd. General Moses Blah, Attorney General, Cllr. Edington Varmah and Internal Affairs Minister Richard Flomo, on the orders of Charles Taylor, to deal with the rising tension. The meeting had been called by locals to discuss the conduct of logging companies in the county and was attended by a senior local official, Superintendent Solomon Kun, and Presidential Media Advisor Milton Teahjay.* Several complaints

* Milton Teahjay is a native of the county and a member of the opposition United Peoples' Party (UPP). He was offered the cabinet post of deputy Information Minister by President Taylor following his election, but was later moved to the Executive Mansion to serve as President Taylor's personal advisor on the media.

were brought against logging companies (mainly the ILC) in the county, ranging from harassment and intimidation of peaceful citizens to wanton destruction of the forest. A demonstration was planned for early April to present a formal list of complaints to the government through Superintendent Kun.

On his return to Monrovia, Teahjay held a press conference and severely criticized the companies, following which President Taylor immediately dismissed him “for engaging in acts inimical to the security of the state”. The demonstration was foiled and Solomon Kun was dismissed from his post as Superintendent. Following intimidation by police, Teahjay attempted to leave the country a few days later but was denied exit by immigration officials at the border (Dulay crossing point) with Côte d’Ivoire. He subsequently escaped the country and is in exile in the US.

Since this episode tension remains high in Sinoe, especially in Greenville, which is also reported to be another port of entry for arms coming into Liberia.

In its maiden (and final) edition, *The Journalist* newspaper (17th April 2001) detailed citizens complaints against the ILC. The paper, reflecting popular opinion, asserted that “the economic and political powers which logging companies seemingly wield in the country are reaching nerve-breaking proportions nowadays.” The Ministry of Information closed the paper before its second issue, citing internal managerial squabble as the reason for its intervention.

Salami Molawi Incorporated (SMI)

General Coccoo Dennis is a major shareholder in the company and is largely responsible for managing it. SMI operates mainly in Grand Gedeh County, where residents (including Superintendent Ruth Milton) complain that SMI militiamen regularly harass and intimidate locals. General Dennis, or ‘general quick-to-fire’, a nickname he still bears from his NPFL days when he ran the notorious child soldiers unit, was

responsible for arranging accommodation and transportation for Burkinabe mercenaries en route to Liberia through the Côte d’Ivoire during the war. He maintained an operational base, for these activities and later for SMI operations, in the border town of Danane throughout the war and only dismantled it recently during the political disturbances and change of government in the Côte d’Ivoire. He commanded one of the most notorious units [‘Sabebo’]* of the NPFL. He is presently leading units of the SMI militia in northern Lofa County fighting alongside government forces^{65,66} believed to be responsible for serious human rights violations. He is a very influential confidante of President Taylor.

Furthermore, an anonymous fax received by Global Witness in early 2000 alleged that SMI’s owner, Mohammed Salami, was implicated in arms trafficking via San Pedro port in Côte d’Ivoire.

Bureaux Ivoirian Ngorian (BIN)

BIN operate a sawmill in Liberia, near to the Ivoirian border town of Toulepleu: much of the company’s product is exported from the port of San Pedro. The company has received criticism for primarily employing Ivoirians rather than native Liberians, despite a pledge from Vice President Blah who, in June 2001, announced that 143 Liberians would soon be employed by BIN. Those Liberians that are employed have complained that they do not have safe drinking water and latrines in the wooden camp constructed by the company. Furthermore, local citizens do not even benefit from the scraps from the sawmill⁶⁷

This is an example that the timber industry not only provides little revenue to Liberia, but little in the way of benefits to the people.

*The ‘Sabebo’ or ‘no safe’ unit (a reference to their trigger-happy attitude) committed some of the most brutal atrocities of the Liberian war. It had its base (called SABEBO) at LAC outside Buchanan and safe passage through the area during the NPFL operation Octopus was considered “a great blessing”. The name was taken from the documentary film, (Escape from Sabebo).

Sawn timber supplied by BIN whose practices have had negative impacts on Liberians, San Pedro; August 2001.



10 Factors of destabilisation in the region

LIBERIA'S ROLE in the destabilisation of Sierra Leone is well known. Guinean dissidents would provide an easy route for Taylor to replicate a similar scheme in Guinea.

Tension is rising and opposition hardening this month in Guinea with the talks of the referendum that may or may not allow President Lansana Conté to present himself for a third term. Poverty is on the increase as the Guinean population does not benefit as it should from the redistribution of the country's resources which are mainly used to cover large security expenses or benefit a few individuals.

Sidya Touré, an opposition figure and ex-Prime Minister, estimated that 90% of the State's budget officially goes to security expenditure. Whether this figure is accurate or somewhat exaggerated, the fact is that defence consumes colossal revenues in Guinea, and that national security can provide an ideal shell for embezzlement. Key people from both the governments of Guinea and Liberia can personally benefit from the border conflict. The President of Guinea is also the Defence Minister, giving him relative freedom in his decision making and budget control. Official figures spent on the army are far from actual figures; Guinea does not currently have the resources to sustain a prolonged war.

In a bid to increase its revenue and presumably to support the long-lasting militarisation of the border, Guinea has recently struck a deal with a Malaysian logging company which is cutting timber at an alarming rate. A large quantity of wood from Guinea transits via Côte d'Ivoire. In the past, timber and diamond revenues failed to appear in the State's official revenue⁶⁸, so it is likely that the profits will be mainly used for national security. There are conflicting views on whether Guinea would want to take advantage of Taylor's weakening control to expand its frontiers, but whether it has sufficient means to do so is another issue.

Dissident forces, however, could be an ideal target for Charles Taylor to use the divide and conquer technique he has already put to the test in neighbouring Sierra Leone, and there is a serious risk that the border region becomes a permanent rogue area. Poverty and disillusionment in Guinea mean that arms, prolific in the region despite demilitarisation projects, are in danger of becoming easier to obtain than food so that border fighting could spread to the rest of the country.

A multitude of groups are present in the region, increasing chances of regional destabilisation. Close to Charles Taylor are Ukrainians, who crew and supply most aircraft in the region. The Ukrainian Mafia has long been present in Liberia. Naturalised Ivorians, Gambians, Burkinabe and South African mercenaries are also currently available to Taylor. Ongoing disarmament in Sierra Leone and the imminent trial of RUF and Civil Defence Forces (CDF) leaders will incite some of them to seek similar positions across borders. The Demobilization, and

Reintegration Program (DDR) appeals to many fighters but some have or will choose the quicker way of continuing their warring way of life, by joining other existing groups. Those will not need to travel far given the vast quantity of factions present in Guinea and Liberia. Many combatants do not consider borders as an issue, when fighting elsewhere offers them the means to further their careers.

Other potential recruits are the numerous refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone, vulnerable to forced conscription or voluntary enrolment. A minimum estimate for refugees in Guinea is 100,000 of whom 40,000 are from Liberia.

Several allegations highlight the fragility of the region's stability:

- Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), an anti-Taylor movement fighting in Liberia, receives equipment from Guinea.⁶⁹
- Guinea rejected a US\$500,000 'gift' from Colonel Gaddafi,⁷⁰ illustrating Libyan attempts to influence regional politics.
- Guinea has given support to Alhaji Kromah, leader of ULIMO-K, an enemy of Charles Taylor. Kromah established training camps in Guinea.
- The son of ex-Guinean President Sekou Touré, Ahmed, was seen by UN peacekeeping forces in Kono, in Sierra Leone, trying to recruit RUF fighters to go into Guinea. Ahmed Touré has reportedly been based in Liberia under Taylor's protection.⁷¹

With mounting international pressure on Liberia, Charles Taylor is being pulled in two directions:

On the one hand, he has several interests in keeping pressure on the border. An old personal feud between President Conté and Taylor fuels the border conflict. Guinea initiated the border attacks and no peace has been re-established since on either side, despite the apparent will of the local populations, fed up with repeated looting from all warring parties involved. The foreign ministers of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone also recently met in Monrovia to discuss a possible summit between their presidents aimed at ending continuing conflict on their common borders⁷². These meetings may give some cause for optimism, but given Taylor's duplicity with regard to the presence of the RUF in Liberia, action will have to speak louder than words. Guinean President Lansana Conté has to date refused to meet Charles Taylor. Mount Nimba's iron ore, in Guinea, also offers an attractive source of revenue for Charles Taylor given the current dents in his income sources.

On the other hand, Liberia is involved in a public relations exercise to regain some credibility in the eyes of the international community. The Embassy of Liberia in Washington, DC, recently stressed: "We wish to make it emphatically clear that Liberia seeks nothing other than peaceful co-existence with its neighbors, and is committed to remaining a responsible member of the international community."





The effects of war: an amputee and war-wounded camp in Sierra Leone. According to OCHA there are 500,000 Sierra Leonean internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 450,000 Sierra Leonean refugees (the largest refugee caseload in Africa according to UNHCR).

Also, in the same declaration, The Embassy puts the blame on Guinea: “While we plead for your sympathy and understanding as the process of reconciliation and political tolerance take root in the country, it must be noted that despite Liberia’s commitment to regional peace and stability, its borders are still being transgressed by attacks from Guinea by dissident forces.”

The relationship between Liberia and another neighbour, Côte d’Ivoire has dampened since General Guéi was overthrown, due to his links with Liberian mercenaries. President Laurent Gbagbo is deploying efforts to improve diplomatic relations on the international scene and shows little support of Charles Taylor. Côte d’Ivoire has been facing problems of its own with a collapsing economy and violent political clashes. Previously enjoying wealth, a strong relationship with France and relative stability, the country has been shaken by the exodus of many expatriates occupying key posts in business and the administration, and by ethnic divisions intertwined with the pursuit of legitimate elections or illegitimate power. Côte d’Ivoire has opened its frontiers to Liberian refugees and prepared integration programmes, to the discontent of Charles Taylor. Despite this cooling between the Ivorian Presidency and Charles Taylor, there remain strong business links between the two countries, as shown by the Global Witness investigation on the trade of Liberian wood in the port of San Pedro and at the frontier.

Burkina Faso, also once an ally of Taylor during his rise to power in the 1990s, has also diminished its support in relation to internal problems and pressure of the international community. The arms movement between Burkina Faso and Liberia, previously very important, diminished in favour of sea traffic with other partners.

The regional trend might go towards pacification, motivated by the disarmament process in Sierra Leone, general fatigue of wars only profiting a handful, and international pressure. The fragility of the stability of the region must, however, be a matter of serious consideration for all stakeholders. Should Taylor’s shortage of cash lead him to lose his troops, they will logically look for a faction to join or another leader. There seems to be no current emerging leader in Liberia, but there are numbers of groups led by ruthless individuals. For example the LURD, one opposition group in Liberia, include figures like Charles Julu whose campaign of terror in Nimba County in 1985 and 1990⁷³ under Doe, must not be forgotten, or the Taylor era would be only be replicated. Lack of leadership could lead to increased tension in the region. In Sierra Leone, the DDR process is still fragile as the diamond areas have not been disarmed and the most lethal weapons have yet to be handed back. The possibility of a renewed offensive organised from Liberia, including ex-RUF, possibly CDF and other factions supported by cornered Taylor should not be dismissed.



The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)

The International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) brings together almost 600 unions in more than 136 countries in every part of the world, and represents over 5 million trade union members in every branch of transport.

For over 50 years, the ITF has operated a worldwide campaign against maritime “flags of convenience” (FoCs). The campaign acts politically – lobbying government and international bodies to make flag states responsible for their ships; and industrially – using trade union action to protect seafarers on FoC ships and ensure that they are covered by union agreements offering minimum international standards. As part of this campaign the ITF maintains a network of 120 union inspectors in ports around the world who board Flag of Convenience ships to check on the conditions of the crew. Their reports reveal a catalogue of abuse of seafarers, including unpaid wages, poor living conditions, lack of medical attention, fatigue, and inadequate safety training. During 2000 industrial action was taken at ports in 29 countries in support of crews in FoC ships. In the same period the ITF and its inspectors obtained over \$23 million in back pay for crews from shipowners.

As well as improving conditions for transport workers around the world the ITF's constitution commits it “to support the work of the UN, its agencies, other intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in those activities promoting peace based on social justice and economic progress.”

Part Two: The role of the Liberian shipping register

by the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF)

Blood on the Flag

CHARLES TAYLOR, the President of Liberia, has discovered an easy way of making money – renting out the country's flag to foreign shipowners. Liberia, of course is not a serious maritime nation. At most only a handful of ships from this huge fleet ever goes near Monrovia, but the hard currency revenue which flows to Taylor's government from the flag is impressive by any standards and even more so for such a poverty stricken country. It amounts to at least a third of the country's officially declared income, perhaps much more in reality.

There are two reasons why this has happened. The first is the operation of the ‘flag of convenience’ (FoC) system itself which enables a state to rent out its flag without accepting any real responsibility for what happens on board its ships. This system allows shipowners to choose their own regulators and to operate free from real control and is increasingly open to question within the shipping community. In theory any state, whether or not it has a coast, can open a shipping register and ignore the international requirement for there to be a genuine link between the ship and the flag. In recent years, many have done so and have attracted the most unscrupulous and dodgy shipowners.

But Liberia has a separate advantage. It was one of the first countries to operate a flag of convenience (or ‘open register, as its defenders called it). In the 1940s, a number of leading shipowners who wanted to escape from tax and union rules in the US and other maritime nations, with backing from individuals in the US government decided to create and expand a Liberian shipping fleet. One of the stated intentions was to boost Liberian exports to the US, but shipowners soon realized the advantages of being governed by laws which they effectively wrote

themselves. At the time Liberia (the only African country settled by freed American slaves) was an American colony in everything but name. Its government did anything the US told it to and the country's currency was the US dollar.

Until the mid 1980s Liberia (together with Panama and a couple of other nations) dominated the market for ‘flag of convenience’ registers. In fact Liberia was something like an American ‘second register’. Being heavily influenced by the US government, Liberia's flag was, from the beginning, run by an American company. Many US oil majors chose to make use of the flag, with the support of US government interests so reducing their liability to pay US taxes and, more importantly, the obligation to employ seafarers under US conditions.

For many years, including the decade long civil war which ended with Charles Taylor's elevation to the Presidency, the flag continued to operate free from any interference from Liberia. During the years when there was actually a government, it received some modest revenues, but most of them stayed with the operating company, International Registries Incorporated (IRI) which was based in Reston Virginia. IRI used it to support a register which, although more lightly regulated than most genuine national flags, was more tightly run than many of its flag of convenience competitors.

When Taylor came to power in 1997, he soon realised the potential profits which could be made from what had become the world's biggest shipping register. With help from some lawyer friends, he launched court action against IRI and, at the end of 1999, cancelled their 40 years old contract and gave it to a new company, established with help from his lawyers, Liberian International Ship and Corporate Register (LISCR). They took over the files, procedures, and most of the staff employed by IRI but agreed to transfer more money to Monrovia. The legal action ended with an agreed settlement, but court proceedings about this are still going on. The Liberian maritime programme is now a major contributor to the Taylor regime's coffers.

What is a 'Flag of Convenience' (FoC)?

Under international law every ship must sail under a national flag, and the ship carries the nationality of the flag it flies. A ship's flag provides it the protection of a government while on the high seas. At the same time flag states are responsible for exercising effective jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical and social matters over the ships flying their flag (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1982, Article 94). They are responsible for ensuring safety, training and maritime pollution standards and minimum social conditions on board their ships. They can also raise revenue by imposing taxes on ship owners.

Traditionally, most flag states had strict nationality rules both for the shipowners and for the crews. However, since the second world war, a number of countries began the practice of effectively renting their country's flag to shipowners of any nationality, guaranteeing the absolute minimum of rules, regulations and taxes. These are called "Flags of Convenience" (FoCs), also known as open registers.

As long ago as 1958, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defined Flags of Convenience as "the flags of such countries as Panama, Liberia, Honduras and Costa Rica whose laws allow – and indeed, make it easy for – ships owned by foreign nationals or companies to fly these flags. This is in contrast to the practice in the maritime countries (and in many others) where the right to fly the national flag is subject to stringent conditions and involves far reaching obligations". In 1958, the ITF organised a worldwide boycott against so called PanLibHonCo ships which developed into its present day campaign against the FoC system.

Flags of Convenience do not sit easily with current international maritime law. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982 is acknowledged as the pre-eminent international convention within the UN system concerning oceans and seas. It provides the framework for the more detailed international minimum standards adopted by other UN agencies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). Article 91 of the Convention provides that there should be a "genuine link between the State and the ship." An attempt to establish a better definition of what this means in practice was made by the adoption of a further UN Convention on the Registration of Ships in 1986. Lobbying by shipowning interests resulted in a text which was virtually meaningless and this Convention has remained largely unratified and its adoption was accompanied by a rush of new entrant states into the FoC 'market'.

The existence of a "genuine link" is essential if the flag State is to be able to meet requirements of UNCLOS, especially those contained in Article 94 (Duties of the flag State) and Article 217 (Enforcement by flag States). The continued relevance of the "genuine link" is illustrated by the fact that the United Nations General Assembly in A/RES/54/32 "Calls upon the International Maritime Organization, in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, regional fisheries management organizations and arrangements and other relevant international organizations, and in consultation with States and entities, to define the concept of the genuine link between the fishing vessel and the State in order to assist in the implementation of the Agreement."



The Liberian ship registry funding a pariah state

The ITF believes that the minimum acceptable definition of a "genuine link" is that there is within the flag state a substantial entity which can be made responsible for the actions of the ship, so that the flag state can have real influence over the behaviour of the owner. The best way of ensuring a "genuine link" is if the shipowner is incorporated in the same country and has assets in the same jurisdiction as the flag of the ship. Under the FoC system, the registered owner of most ships is a 'shell' company set up for the sole purpose of owning that ship. That registered owner is often, in turn, owned by another company which may itself be registered in a country with very liberal company laws. It is hard (deliberately so) to identify and hold accountable the real owner.

Behind this web of companies there is always a real owner who benefits financially from the operation. This individual or company, the beneficial owner has ultimate control over what happens to the ship, including which flag it is registered under. For the ITF it is the beneficial owner, not the registered owner, who counts.

The secrecy and lack of transparency of the FoC system allows owners to ignore their responsibilities and cut their operating costs. As well as lax company laws, FoCs offer cheap registration fees, low or no taxes, and freedom to employ cheap labour from any country. As a result shipowners have increasingly found there were big savings to be made by using an FoC. It has been estimated by the OECD (which was a supporter of the FoC system) that the cost advantages of using an FoC rather than a genuine national flag ship was up to \$1 million a year even if all international safety and social standards were scrupulously observed. For shipowners prepared to use the system to the full and take the chance of getting caught by port state authorities, the advantages can be even greater.

Today there are at least 30 states which are classified by the ITF as offering Flag of Convenience facilities. More are trying to join the market all the time, even offering the chance to register your ship via the Internet with no questions asked. FoCs account for nearly half of the world's merchant shipping fleet, including the bulk of large tankers, bulk carriers and cruise ships. Countries with traditionally large national merchant fleets have seen these shrink dramatically as their vessels were "flagged out" to FoCs. The FoC system, by offering shipowners from industrialized countries access to cheap labour and liberal laws, has actively discouraged the growth of domestically owned shipping industries in most developing countries.



Shipping companies protected by secrecy

Selling Secrecy

What Liberia offers shipowners is a *Flag of Convenience* (FoC). This term, which was coined by the ITF and strongly disliked by shipowners, has become generally used in shipping and elsewhere. It means what it says. Shipowners have the convenience of choosing their flag and the laws they will obey. If they don't like the laws, they choose another flag. IRI, which had the contract to run Liberia's flag from the beginning, understood that its target was the quality end of the shipping industry. The registry traditionally charged higher fees than most of its competitors, and administered above average technical standards. In common with the rest of the FoC market, however, it has paid special attention to offering a very high level of corporate secrecy.

Registering a company in Liberia is extremely quick and easy. It takes on average 48 hours and does not require disclosure of share ownership or the names of directors. Liberian offshore companies (which are always used to register ships) are not required to submit any form of annual return or audited accounts. There are also no requirements to maintain even a symbolic presence in Liberia, or any residence rules for directors, company secretary or holding company meetings in Liberia. Not surprisingly there is no requirement to pay tax.

The benefits of secrecy allowed by Liberian laws can extend even to ships registered under other flags of convenience. In December 1999 a ship called the *Erika* sank off the French coast spilling its cargo of oil into the sea and onto the French beaches. The ship was registered in Malta, another Flag of Convenience. The Maltese registry does not allow directors and shareholders of shipping companies to remain unidentified but there are ways round this in which Liberia featured heavily. The Maltese company set up to own the ship had two shareholders, both

Liberian companies, and Liberian law guarantees secrecy for directors and shareholders. Despite a massive investigation by the French government and the European Commission, as well as the frenetic and well resourced efforts of the French media to find the real owners of the *Erika*, it was not possible to penetrate the veil of secrecy guaranteed by the Liberian law or system. (The mystery was only resolved after some weeks, when the real owners voluntarily came forward.)

Ship owners from all over the world have registered their vessels in Liberia rather than under their own national flag (see table 1). 60% of the fleet on the Liberian register is owned by American, German, Greek, Japanese and Norwegian shipping companies. With around 1,557 vessels registered under its flag, Liberia, one of the poorest countries in the world, currently has the world's second largest maritime fleet in shipping tonnage (52 million gross tonnes). Notably absent from the nationality list of vessels on the Liberian register are any Liberian-owned ships. There are almost no Liberian seafarers on these ships.

For many years the Liberian register had the largest shipping fleet in the world in terms of tonnage. The bad publicity generated by the civil war led some owners to decide to transfer to another FoC. But even then Liberia only slipped to number two (Panama, which faces its own corruption problems, now has first place). The Taylor government, however, has vowed to restore the register to its former level.

The register traditionally has a high proportion of tanker tonnage. In January 2001 Liberia accounted in tonnage for 35% of all the world's oil tankers. There are also a large number of bulk carriers, as well as a number of Liberian registered cruise ships.

Funding a pariah State

Liberia's traditional status at the quality end of the shipping market has meant that foreign shipping companies are prepared to pay relatively high fees for the benefits of the flag. As an example, the cost for registering a Liberian company is USD 4,200. Non-resident companies pay zero tax.

Faced with shipowners' increasing concerns about the register in the aftermath of the change in management contract, a price war with other registers has been launched. A new scale of fees was introduced for ships entering the register after 1 July 2000 and all initial registration fees are waived from then until the end of 2001.

Initial registration fees (worth up to about \$13,000 per ship)

- USD 0.10 / net ton, up to a maximum of USD 3,900, plus lump sum of USD 1,500
- Administrative fee USD 6,500
- Certification fee, approx. USD 800
- Mortgage fee (if necessary) USD 475

Annual tonnage tax

- USD 0.10 / net ton
- Lump sum of USD 3,800
- IMO charges of USD 0.3 / net ton plus lump sum of USD 2,000
- Inspection charge of USD 1,200

These fees are collected by the US company administering the register. By the year 2000 the Liberian registry was netting an average of some \$15 – 20 million per year for Charles Taylor's government. Such a regular and automatic flow of income takes a lot of pressure from the government even though Liberia's domestic economy is near total collapse. Analysing government budget figures is never easy, and with a pariah State like Liberia it is even harder, but it has been estimated that between 50 – 75% (and at times 90%) of the entire national revenue of Liberia, from legitimate sources, comes from its ship registry. Even the government has admitted to the ITF that at least 30% comes from the register. It is well known that additional sums come from diamond and timber exports, but these are not so easy to identify.

The Taylor government is funded by the international shipping industry and its most important tax collector is LISCR. The company's contract with the government signed on 31 December 1999 appoints it as "the exclusive agent of government" to perform "Collection of Annual Tonnage Taxes" and ship registration fees. There is little evidence that this money is being used to benefit the people of Liberia.

Conflict and atrocities

Flags of Convenience like Liberia are frequently used by shipowners to avoid national tax, safety and social rules. Although some international rules have been established which all ships are in theory bound by, enforcement of these rules is usually by the port States where the ships call. If a flag state gets tough, it loses business. Faced with the proliferation of FoC

registers and the unwillingness of states to take their responsibilities seriously, there is a growing move to tighten up the rules on how flag states work. Liberia is, of course, only one of at least 30 countries which offer FoC facilities to the shipping industry, and it is run by a US company. So why should the Liberian ship register cause particular concern?

The fact that Liberia is regarded as a "pariah state" by the international community, and is currently subject to UN sanctions and that fact that it gets a substantial share of its hard currency income from its maritime flag, shows clearly the hypocrisy of the system. When Liberia wants to distance itself from the register, it claims it is a private US business. But whenever national political influence is needed, it is suddenly a sovereign flag.

On 21 May 2001, because of the Taylor government's active destabilisation of its neighbour Sierra Leone, Liberia became one of the few countries subject to international United Nations sanctions. The war in Sierra Leone has been marked by particular brutality including the hacking off of limbs of women and children. Shipping companies cannot claim the sovereign protection of the State when it suits them, and then dissociate themselves from everything the State does in practice.

The UN Security Council stated on 7 March 2001, "that the active support provided by the government of Liberia for armed rebel groups in neighbouring countries, and in particular its support for the RUF in Sierra Leone, constitutes a threat to international peace and stability in the region..." (S/RES/1343 2001)

The Liberian ship registry is a key source of earnings for the government. The United Nations accuses the Taylor government of providing funds to the RUF guerrillas in Sierra Leone. In December 2000 a Report of the UN panel of Experts on Sierra Leone cited the Liberian Maritime Programme as facilitating the flow of arms to guerrillas in Sierra Leone. It is hard to believe that such a major source of income does not have an influence on such funding.

This subject came to unexpected public attention in May 2001 when the old register company IRI sued the new company LISCR in New York. While the writ they issued mainly deals with the commercial side of the settlement agreement between them, it also alleges that LISCR 'is a major source of Liberia's income for such activities (financial and military aid to rebels) and a handy honeypot for lining the pockets of Liberia's current dictator, Charles Taylor.'

IRI also alleges that "Up to one third of all the cash from the flag goes straight into the pockets of president Charles Taylor... Much of the money is diverted to financial and military aid to rebels intent on overthrowing the government of Sierra Leone".

LISCR strongly denies these allegations, which come from a commercial rival. Yet there will be few people with more inside knowledge of the Liberian register than IRI. According to the respected shipping journal *Lloyds List* (16 May 2000) western intelligence sources say that "the balance of probabilities is that IRI's claims do stack up".

It is perhaps not surprising that when the United Nations issued a travel ban under Security Council Resolution 1343 (2001) against named Liberian nationals earlier this year, these include several key figures concerned with its maritime affairs. On the list is:

Gerald Cooper, Liberian Maritime Registry Liaison to IMO;

Wisseh Denis, Consultant to Commissioner of the Bureau of Maritime Affairs;

Samir Nasr, *alias Sanjivan Ruprah*, Deputy Commander of Maritime Affairs;

Agnes Reeves-Taylor, Ex-wife of President Taylor and Liberian Permanent Representative to the IMO, Senior member, Government of Liberia;

Benoni Urey, Commissioner of Maritime Affairs. Cooper was also declared *persona non grata* by the UK government after his refusal to answer questions concerning his involvement in an alleged infringement of the UN arms embargo against Liberia.

There may even be other aspects of the Liberian maritime infrastructure which have helped Taylor in his campaign to overthrow the Sierra Leone government. The UN experts panel on Sierra Leone accuses the Liberian ship registry of using its secrecy rules to facilitate the operation of shell companies used to trade in notorious “conflict diamonds”.

Reflagging is easy

It is time for shipowners who believe that the Liberian flag has nothing to do with the Liberian government to think again. From being a quality flag, Liberia has now become a major embarrassment. No shipowner is obliged to use the Liberian flag or owes any loyalty to the government. In fact the system's primary selling point is the convenience with which flags can be changed. Any owner who feels himself part of the international community should cut links with Liberia as soon as possible.

This would be in line with the sentiments expressed in the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Organs of

Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (A/RES/53/144), which was adopted at the 53rd session of the General Assembly and provides, in Article 18, “Individuals, groups, institutions and non-governmental organizations have an important role to play and a responsibility in safeguarding democracy, promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and contributing to the promotion and advancement of democratic societies, institutions and processes.”

Reflagging is easy and can be completed without disrupting business or prejudicing the crew. There are plenty of alternatives available and a growing number of genuine national flags which are introducing measures making them more attractive to shipowners. The weakening or disappearance of the Liberian flag from the world's oceans will have no impact on international trade but will show simply that governments have a responsibility for ‘their’ ships and that this cuts both ways. It will also deprive Charles Taylor of a substantial supply of cash and make his interference in Sierra Leone much harder.

Of course for some owners, changing the register would mean some extra trouble and expense. Where there is a mortgage on the ship, some legal fees may be needed. Most other shipping registers already charge lower fees than Liberia, and those which are recognized in the industry as aiming for quality shipowners have already started offering special deals to shipowners wanting to transfer. Certainly moving from the Liberian register will also not have any significant impact on the seafarers concerned. It will have the positive benefit of putting the seafarers under the jurisdiction of a flag state, which has a functioning judiciary and which is not classed as a ‘pariah state’ It is likely that any short term costs for owners will be substantially offset by the long term benefits of breaking connections with the murderous regime of Charles Taylor.

Liberia has the world's second largest shipping fleet



Conflict Diamonds and the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry

“Taking note of the findings of the Panel of Experts that diamonds represent a major and primary source of income for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), that the bulk of RUF diamonds leave Sierra Leone through Liberia, and that such illicit trade cannot be conducted without the permission and involvement of Liberian Government officials at the highest levels, and expressing its deep concern at the unequivocal and overwhelming evidence presented by the report of the Panel of Experts that the Government of Liberia is actively supporting the RUF at all levels...”

United Nations Security Council Resolution, S/2001/1343 Imposing Sanctions Against Liberia, March 7, 2001

At the heart of the bloody strife in Liberia's neighbour Sierra Leone is an illicit trade in diamonds. So much does this trade fuel the war by providing the funds for arms that the UN labels these as “conflict diamonds”. The rebel army of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) controls diamond producing areas in Sierra Leone. The UN believes that the RUF is effectively controlled by Charles Taylor. According to a UN Security Council mission to Sierra Leone in October 2000: “Most of the Mission's interlocutors, including those at the most senior levels, had no doubt that President Taylor exercised strong influence, even direct control over the RUF. In the assessment of many, the main objective of the RUF was to maintain control of the diamond producing areas...” (page 5 of the Report of the Security Council Mission to Sierra Leone S/2000/992, October 16, 2000). Diamonds were able to fund both the Taylor government's “interest in profits from diamonds mined in Sierra Leone” and arms for the RUF.

UN investigators believe that diamonds are taken from RUF controlled areas of Sierra Leone to Liberia and then traded on the international markets as though they were from Liberia. Antwerp is the world centre for rough diamonds. The figures for diamond imports to Belgium from Liberia far outstrip the entire diamond production capacity of Liberia. The highest estimates of current Liberian production capacity do not exceed 150,000 carats per year. According to Belgian diamond trade records an average of over 6 million carats per year is being imported from Liberia.

According to the UN expert panel on Sierra Leone, Liberia's ship registry plays a direct role in facilitating this illicit trade. After Charles Taylor came to power in 1997 a new company, Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registries (LISCR), was set up to run the registry. This meant the canceling of the contract of the company, which had been administering the registry up until then, International Registries Inc (IRI).

In January 2000 LISCR took over the registry from IRI. This put the Liberian ship registry directly into the hands of close associates of Charles Taylor. One of these is a US lawyer called Lester Hyman. According to reports in the maritime press Hyman was instrumental in clearing Taylor's long standing arrest warrant stemming from his 1985 escape from a Massachusetts jail while facing

extradition to Liberia on a \$1 million embezzlement charge (Lloyds List 16.5.01). A colleague of Hyman's, Yoram Cohen, is the current chief Executive of LISCR.

LISCR claims it is a private company “completely independent of the Liberian government”. Yet it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the main reason for the change in contracts was to put the registry more effectively under Liberian government control. Ella Dodson, a partner in the New York law firm Baer Marks and Upham LLP wrote an article published in the trade journal *The Baltic* in May 1999, under the heading “Liberia's new clothes”. In her opinion: “Based on the contract between LISCR and the Government of Liberia (GOL) and based on recent legislative actions, it is clear that the professional, independent management of Liberia's corporate and maritime programmes will be replaced by a LISCR administration under the effective and complete control of the GOL. Even a cursory review of the contract between LISCR and GOL reveals the relative weakening of the administrative agent's position and the GOL's assertion of substantial control over the day to day administration of the corporate and maritime programmes, as well as their long-term direction. Through the use of a newly-created position, the deputy commissioner of financial affairs, GOL controls the purse-strings.”

This view is echoed in the writ issued by IRI against LISCR in May 2001, which alleges, among other things, that LISCR, while nominally owned by Lester Hyman and a group of friends and operated by Yoram Cohen, is in fact controlled by Charles Taylor. According to the writ “Taylor's oversight is so tight that he acts in effect as one of LISCR's senior partners and is intimately involved in all aspects of its management, personnel assignments, distribution of funds, salaries and foreign offices.”

It was soon after these changes that the ship registry allegedly became a link in the illicit diamond trade, which brings huge amounts of money for arms to the RUF in defiance of a UN embargo. When the UN expert panel on Sierra Leone checked the invoices of companies which purported to be Liberian diamond companies exporting to Belgium, they found that: “A physical check of the Monrovia street addresses given by most of these firms revealed that there were no such companies, and no such addresses. Courier firms in Monrovia, however, have in the past been instructed to route correspondence for these addresses to the International Trust Company, (ITC) which in January 2000 changed its name to the International Bank of Liberia Ltd. Since then, mail addressed to the companies in question has been forwarded to the newly-established Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry (LISCR) which now handles the Liberian maritime registry. This means that if the companies in question are more than shells, they are not physically present in Liberia, and none of the diamonds in question were either mined in, or passed through Liberia. It also means, however, that there is an intimate Liberian connection with these deceptive diamond transactions.” (Report of the Panel of Experts Appointed Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1306 (2000), Paragraph 19, in Relation to Sierra Leone S/2000/1195, December 20, 2000).

The panel's report also names Sanjivan Ruprah, described as a well known arms dealer, who travels using a Liberian diplomatic passport in the name of Samir M Nasr and “carries additional authorisation from the Liberian International Ship and Corporate Registry”. The UN Panel report condemns the Taylor government for “the improper use of its maritime registry” (our emphasis).

Unprotected crews

The Liberian register allows shipping companies to fly the Liberian flag irrespective of where the vessel is owned, with minimal formalities, and to operate their ships with crew members of any nationality and under any conditions of employment. This means that shipowners can shop around the world for the cheapest labour. The bulk of the crew come from countries such as the Philippines, China, Ukraine and India. 34 per cent of crew members on Liberian registered ships are from the Philippines. This is a major cost saving for the shipping companies.

There are currently an estimated 40,000 seafarers from more than 40 countries working on board Liberian registered ships. It is hard to track down a Liberian seafarer on board any of the ships on the Liberian register.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, UNCLOS (1982) ships flying the Liberian flag are part of Liberian territory. The Liberian government is responsible for ensuring the welfare and rights of all the 40,000 crew members of all nationalities working on board ships on the Liberian register. Article 94 of the Convention states that the flag state "shall effectively exercise its jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical and social matters over ships flying its flag".

Seafarers, working at sea away from home and out of sight of any regulatory authorities, are particularly vulnerable to abuse by employers. The International Commission on Shipping, chaired by Peter Morris former

Australian shipping minister produced a report last year which concluded that "Life at sea for many seafarers involves much abuse. Physical abuses include beatings and sexual assault, inadequate medical treatment, substandard accommodation, and inadequate food.... Non payment of wages, delays in paying entitlements to families and even abandonment are additional abuses...." (ICONS, *Inquiry into Ship Safety: Ships Slaves and Competition*, 2000).

Seafarers living and working on board Liberian-flagged ships - effectively Liberian territory - are, according to international law, dependant upon the protection of the Liberian courts against shipowners for injury or negligence, breaking of an employment contract, physical abuse, or other similar issues concerning their basic social rights.

Such protection is non-existent in Liberia. The Liberian court system simply does not function. According to a report by the US State Department in February 2001, "All levels of the court system in Monrovia, including the Supreme Court, functioned sporadically". The same report noted, "The judicial system, hampered by political influence, economic pressure, inefficiency, corruption, lack of resources, was unable to ensure citizens rights to due process and fair trial".

The ugly human rights record of the Taylor regime would inspire little enough confidence in the availability of justice for foreign seafarers. Nevertheless the fact is that the state with the world's second largest merchant fleet has no properly functioning court system to protect the tens of thousands of seafarers under its responsibility in accordance with international law.

Filipino crew members of the Maria SJ a ship registered in Liberia who sought assistance from the ITF in the port of Copenhagen after they had been on board the ship for 14 months receiving wages well below what the ITF regards as an acceptable minimum standard. As a result of action from Danish dockworkers, the owner was forced to pay \$413,791 owed to the 19 crew members. The ITF repatriated the crew back to the Philippines. The ITF maintains a worldwide network of inspectors who check on conditions for seafarers on board flag of convenience ships.



Time to lower the flag

LISCR and the Liberian Shipowners Council (based in New York) have responded to the attention focussed on the Liberian shipping register with rather predictable claims that the ship register should not be punished for the transgressions of the Liberian government. Yoram Cohen chief executive of LISCR complains that LISCR “is completely independent of the Liberian government.” (Journal of Commerce, US, 23.7.01). Yet, as we have seen it is the appointed agent of the government, and its main tax collector. As one shipping journalist has pointed out the connection between the flag State operations and the country is fictitious then what is Liberia doing at the table in the International Maritime Organisation?

A number of shipping companies have become increasingly concerned at the alleged links between the Liberian shipping register and the funding of guerrilla atrocities in Sierra Leone. The leading shipping journal *Lloyds List* noted on 16 May this year, reporting on the allegations against LISCR, that: “never has the proposition that shipowners bear no moral responsibility for what flag States get up to looked so flimsy”.

The ITF believes that, when there is so much blood on the flag, it is time to lower the flag. Although operated from the territory of the United States, the Liberian shipping registry has become a major source of revenue for a government which is subject to strong UN sanctions for its violation of international law.

The ITF believes that there is strong evidence and cause for concern that:

- The revenues obtained through the lawful business of the Liberian ship registry provide a significant and consistent source of funds to the Taylor regime, which is accused by the UN of using its revenues to fund the RUF guerrillas in Sierra Leone in defiance of a UN arms embargo.
- The UN panel on Sierra Leone further alleges that those aspects of the ship registry which facilitate the operation of shell companies may have been used in the illicit export of “conflict diamonds” from Sierra Leone through Liberia.

The ITF believes that a number of immediate actions can be taken by companies and by governments, in support of the United Nations, to ensure that there is no chance that the threat to regional stability posed by the Taylor regime is being sustained by the Liberian ship registry:

- Shipowners should break all links with the Liberian flag as soon as practicable
- The United Nations travel ban should be extended to any Liberian national connected to its maritime affairs, including all their personnel based at the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in London.
- The United Nations Security Council should extend sanctions against Liberia to include its shipping register and give notice after which all member States of the UN should deny entry to their ports to all vessels flying the Liberian flag.

The Liberian shipping register

State	Number of ships	Percentage of Liberia Registered ships
Argentina	16	0.9
Austria	13	0.8
Belgium	13	0.8
Brazil	13	0.8
Chile	17	1.0
China	76	4.4
Croatia	10	0.6
Denmark	15	0.9
Germany	335	19.6
Greece	172	10.1
Hong Kong	91	5.3
Japan	140	8.2
Latvia	20	1.2
Liberia	0	0.0
Monaco	18	1.1
Norway	141	8.3
Russia	65	3.8
Saudi Arabia	25	1.5
Singapore	34	2.0
Sweden	23	1.3
Switzerland	13	0.8
Taiwan	20	1.2
UAE	10	0.6
UK	45	2.6
USA	247	14.5
Other	88	5.1
Missing / unknown	49	2.9
TOTAL	1,709	100

(Lloyds Annual Statistics 2000)

Conclusion

CHARLES TAYLOR has come under intense international pressure through the UN Sanctions regime, and is trapped by the patronage system he has built around himself and is now virtually entirely dependent on the revenues from logging and the shipping register. Even if UN sanctions are extended to these remaining income sources it is likely that Taylor will still enjoy the support of various powerful friends, such as Libya's Colonel Gaddafi. However, the extension of sanctions to include Liberian timber and shipping registry, will provide the Sierra Leonean peace process with the breathing space it needs to ensure that the RUF achieve total disarmament. Currently the RUF's best weapons and commanders remain in Liberia, waiting to see which way the wind blows. If they perceive Taylor's position to be deteriorating then they are more likely to desert him. Furthermore, sanctions will deny Taylor the funds he requires to control regional resource extraction, and they will deny him the international credibility he craves. The blame for Liberia's pariah status can be laid at Taylor's door.

Taylor can, of course, help himself. If he genuinely addresses the concerns of the UNSC then sanctions will be removed. If he addresses the issues of human rights abuses and corruption, then Liberia will be in line for €140 million of EU development aid. In short, if his governance improves, then he could become a positive force in Liberia, rather than

be remembered as the man who not only failed to bring any development at all since he came to power, but destroyed one of the country's most valuable natural resources and most valuable natural heritage. Most observers do not believe that Taylor can or will reform, but the choice is his.

However, to act impartially, the international community must also put pressure on Guinea's President Conté to bring an end to his support for the cross border attacks into Liberia. This would hasten regional peace and remove Taylor's argument that he needs arms to repel these attacks. In addition to control of resources, the personal animosity between the two leaders is a significant reason for this conflict and all efforts must be made to place regional peace above warlord politics.

As discussed in this report, by exploiting the country's natural resources Taylor is responding to international demand and is being facilitated, and used, by the logging industry; OTC in particular. In fact, ironically, Taylor is himself being exploited by forces more manipulative than he. Like other international logging companies, when they have exhausted the forest, OTC will move on elsewhere and will continue to prosper at the expense of another country and another people. Liberia will be the poorer for it, and Taylor's personal wealth will not buy him a safe haven either in Liberia, or in exile: he has made too many enemies for that.

As Taylor is unlikely to come to this same conclusion, only international pressure can prevent him from fuelling regional conflict, and the extension of the sanctions regime to cover timber exports and the Shipping Registry is the best method to achieve these aims.

OTC logs, Italy; mid-2001



Appendices

Logging companies in Liberia & timber production by company, January-June 2000

Company	Production	(m ³)
OTC	Oriental Timber Corporation	384,562.253
MWPI	Maryland Wood Processing Industries	40,250.516
MGC	Mohammed Group of Companies	37,302.544
BIN	BIN Liberia	32,981.595
ULC	United Logging Company	31,491.309
RTC	Royal Timber Corp	30,833.744
FORUM		21,324.308
ILC	INLAND Logging Company	17,613.746
LWMC	Liberian Wood Mgt. Corp.	12,810.062
LLWPC	Liberian Logging and Wood Processing Corp.	12,002.720
DLWPC	DABA Logging & Wood Processing Corp.	10,181.494
ILFC	IBERIC Liberian Forestry Corp.	9,451.946
TTC	Togba Timber Company	9,035.015
XL	Xoanon Liberian Ltd.	5,737.165
CTC	Cavalla Timber Company	4,890.100
CTC	Cestos Timber Company	3,999.016
YLI	Yekepa Logging Ind.	3,026.809
FHC	Forest Hill Corp.	2,926.844
RLC	Rivercess Logging Company/STI	2,354.339
ATI	AKKARI Timber Inc.	2,280.114
AWPC	American Wood Processing Company	1,558.850
NELCO		1,124.094
FAPCO		950.425
RETCO		312.416
LLWPS/WARCO		250.952
Total		679,352.376

Source FDA Semi-Annual report, January-June 2000.

Importers of Liberian timber by value (cif), 1996-2000 (US\$ millions)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
China	0	0	0	0	34
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	2
Turkey	0	0	2	4	4
Belgium	0	0	0	0	0
France	3	7	18	18	33
Germany	0	0	1	1	2
Greece	0	0	1	1	
Italy	0	0	4	9	16
Netherlands	0	0	0	0	2
Portugal	0	1	1	2	3
Spain	0	0	2	1	3
UK	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Total</i>	4	9	29	36	106

Importers of Liberian timber by volume, 1996-2000 ('000m³ RWE)

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
China	0	0	0	0	290
Indonesia	0	0	0	0	13
Turkey	0	0	1	3	0.4
Belgium	0	0		0	2
France	9	26	61	75	168
Germany	1	0	5	6	12
Greece	0	0	3	2	24
Italy	0	1	16	36	79
Netherlands	0	0	0	1	22
Portugal	1	4	3	9	13
Spain	0	0	7	7	15
UK	0	0	0	0	3
<i>Total</i>	11	30	97	139	646

Source World Trade Atlas.



United Nations Security Council

Distr.: General 7 March 2001

Resolution 1343 (2001)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 4287th meeting, on 7 March 2001

The Security Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1132 (1997) of 8 October 1997, 1171 (1998) of 5 June 1998, 1306 (2000) of 5 July 2000 and its other resolutions and statements of its President on the situation in Sierra Leone and the region,

Welcoming General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/56 of 1 December 2000, in particular its call for measures engaging all concerned parties including diamond producing, processing, exporting and importing countries as well as the diamond industry to break the link between diamonds and armed conflict, and its call upon all States to implement fully Security Council measures targeting the link between the trade in conflict diamonds and the supply to rebel movements of weapons, fuel or other prohibited materiel,

Taking note of the report of the United Nations Panel of Experts established pursuant to paragraph 19 of resolution 1306 (2000) in relation to Sierra Leone (S/2000/1195),

Taking note of the findings of the Panel of Experts that diamonds represent a major and primary source of income for the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), that the bulk of RUF diamonds leave Sierra Leone through Liberia, and that such illicit trade cannot be conducted without the permission and involvement of Liberian government officials at the highest levels, and expressing its deep concern at the unequivocal and overwhelming evidence presented by the report of the Panel of Experts that the Government of Liberia is actively supporting the RUF at all levels,

Recalling the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa adopted in Abuja on 31 October 1998 (S/1998/1194, annex),

Taking note of the measures announced by the Government of Liberia since the publication of the report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000), and welcoming the intention of ECOWAS to monitor their implementation in close cooperation with the United Nations and to report thereon after a period of two months,

Recalling its concern already expressed in resolution 1306 (2000) at the role played by the illicit diamond trade in fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone and at reports that such diamonds transit neighbouring countries, including Liberia,

Reiterating its call made in the statement of its President of 21 December 2000 (S/PRST/2000/41) on all States in West Africa, particularly Liberia, immediately to cease military support for armed groups in neighbouring countries and prevent armed individuals from using their national territory to prepare and commit attacks in neighbouring countries,

Determining that the active support provided by the Government of Liberia for armed rebel groups in neighbouring countries, and in particular its support for the RUF in Sierra Leone, constitutes a threat to international peace and security in the region,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

A

Recalling its resolutions 788 (1992) of 19 November 1992 and 985 (1995) of 13 April 1995,

Noting that the conflict in Liberia has been resolved, that national elections have taken place within the framework of the Yamoussoukro IV Agreement of 30 October 1991 (S/24815, annex) and that the Final Communiqué of the informal consultative group meeting of ECOWAS Committee of Five on Liberia issued in Geneva on 7 April 1992 (S/23863) has been implemented, and determining therefore that the embargo imposed by paragraph 8 of resolution 788 (1992) should be terminated,

1. *Decides* to terminate the prohibitions imposed by paragraph 8 of resolution 788 (1992) and to dissolve the Committee established under resolution 985 (1995);

B

2. *Demands* that the Government of Liberia immediately cease its support for the RUF in Sierra Leone and for other armed rebel groups in the region, and in particular take the following concrete steps:

(a) expel all RUF members from Liberia, including such individuals as are listed by the Committee established by paragraph 14 below, and prohibit all RUF activities on its territory, provided that nothing in this paragraph shall oblige Liberia to expel its own nationals from its territory;

(b) cease all financial and, in accordance with resolution 1171 (1998), military support to the RUF, including all transfers of arms and ammunition, all military

training and the provision of logistical and communications support, and take steps to ensure that no such support is provided from the territory of Liberia or by its nationals;

(c) cease all direct or indirect import of Sierra Leone rough diamonds which are not controlled through the Certificate of Origin regime of the Government of Sierra Leone, in accordance with resolution 1306 (2000);

(d) freeze funds or financial resources or assets that are made available by its nationals or within its territory directly or indirectly for the benefit of the RUF or entities owned or controlled directly or indirectly by the RUF;

(e) ground all Liberia-registered aircraft operating within its jurisdiction until it updates its register of aircraft pursuant to Annex VII to the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation of 1944 and provides to the Council the updated information concerning the registration and ownership of each aircraft registered in Liberia;

3. *Stresses* that the demands in paragraph 2 above are intended to lead to further progress in the peace process in Sierra Leone, and, in that regard, calls upon the President of Liberia to help ensure that the RUF meet the following objectives:

(a) allow the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) free access throughout Sierra Leone;

(b) release all abductees;

(c) enter their fighters in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process;

(d) return all weapons and other equipment seized from UNAMSIL;

4. *Demands* that all States in the region take action to prevent armed individuals and groups from using their territory to prepare and commit attacks on neighbouring countries and refrain from any action that might contribute to further destabilization of the situation on the borders between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone;

5. (a) *Decides* that all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent the sale or supply to Liberia, by their nationals or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related materiel of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment and spare parts for the aforementioned, whether or not originating in their territories;

(b) *Decides* that all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent any provision to Liberia by their nationals or from their territories of technical training or assistance related to the provision, manufacture, maintenance or use of the items in subparagraph (a) above;

(c) *Decides* that the measures imposed by subparagraphs (a) and (b) above shall not apply to supplies of non-lethal military equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use, and related technical assistance or training, as approved in advance by the Committee established by paragraph 14 below;

(d) *Affirms* that the measures imposed by subparagraph (a) above do not apply to protective clothing, including flak jackets and military helmets, temporarily exported to Liberia by United Nations personnel, representatives of the media and humanitarian and development workers and associated personnel, for their personal use only;

6. *Decides further* that all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Liberia, whether or not such diamonds originated in Liberia;

7. (a) *Decides* also that all States shall take the necessary measures to prevent the entry into or transit through their territories of senior members of the Government of Liberia and its armed forces and their spouses and any other individuals providing financial and military support to armed rebel groups in countries neighbouring Liberia, in particular the RUF in Sierra Leone, as designated by the Committee established by paragraph 14 below, provided that nothing in this paragraph shall oblige a State to refuse entry into its territory to its own nationals, and provided that nothing in this paragraph shall impede the transit of representatives of the Government of Liberia to United Nations Headquarters to conduct United Nations business or the participation of the Government of Liberia in the official meetings of the Mano River Union, ECOWAS and the Organization of African Unity;

(b) *Decides* that the measures imposed by subparagraph (a) above shall not apply where the Committee established by paragraph 14 below determines that such travel is justified on the grounds of humanitarian need, including religious obligation, or where the Committee concludes that exemption would otherwise promote Liberian compliance with the demands of the Council, or assist in the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the subregion;

8. *Further decides* that the measures imposed by paragraphs 6 and 7 above shall come into force at 00.01 Eastern Daylight Time two months after the date of adoption of this resolution, unless the Security Council determines before that date that Liberia has complied with the demands in paragraph 2 above, taking into account the report of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 12 below, inputs from ECOWAS, relevant information provided by the Committee established by paragraph 14 below and the Committee established pursuant to

resolution 1132 (1997) and any other relevant information;

9. *Decides* that the measures imposed by paragraph 5 are established for 14 months and that, at the end of the period, the Council will decide whether the Government of Liberia has complied with the demands in paragraph 2 above, and, accordingly, whether to extend these measures for a further period with the same conditions;

10. *Decides further* that the measures imposed by paragraphs 6 and 7 above are established for a period of 12 months, and that at the end of this period the Council will decide whether the Government of Liberia has complied with the demands in paragraph 2 above, and, accordingly, whether to extend these measures for a further period with the same conditions;

11. *Decides* also that the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above shall be terminated immediately if the Council, taking into account, inter alia, the reports of the Panel of Experts referred to in paragraph 19 below and of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 12 below, inputs from ECOWAS, any relevant information provided by the Committee established by paragraph 14 below and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) and any other relevant information, determines that the Government of Liberia has complied with the demands in paragraph 2 above;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a first report to the Council by 30 April 2001 and thereafter at 6-month intervals from that date, drawing on information from all relevant sources, including the United Nations Office in Liberia, UNAMSIL and ECOWAS, on whether Liberia has complied with the demands in paragraph 2 above and on any progress made towards the objectives set out in paragraph 3 above, and calls on the Government of Liberia to support United Nations efforts to verify all information on compliance which is brought to the United Nations notice;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to the Council six months from the date of the adoption of this resolution:

(a) a preliminary assessment of the potential economic, humanitarian and social impact on the Liberian population of possible follow-up action by the Council in the areas of investigation indicated in paragraph 19 (c) below;

(b) a report on the steps taken by the Government of Liberia to improve its capacity in air traffic control and surveillance in accordance with the recommendations of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000) and any advice which may be provided by ICAO;

14. *Decides* to establish, in accordance with rule 28 of its provisional rules of procedure, a Committee of the Security Council, consisting of all the members of the Council, to undertake the following tasks and to report on its work to the Council with its observations and recommendations:

(a) to seek from all States information regarding the actions taken by them to implement effectively the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above, and thereafter to request from them whatever further information it may consider necessary;

(b) to consider, and to take appropriate action on, information brought to its attention by States concerning alleged violations of the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above, identifying where possible persons or entities, including vessels or aircraft, reported to be engaged in such violations, and to make periodic reports to the Council;

(c) to promulgate expeditiously such guidelines as may be necessary to facilitate the implementation of the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above;

(d) to give consideration to and decide upon requests for the exemptions set out in paragraphs 5 (c) and 7 (b) above;

(e) to designate the individuals subject to the measures imposed by paragraph 7 above, and to update this list regularly;

(f) to make information it considers relevant, including the list referred to in subparagraph (e) above, publicly available through appropriate media, including through the improved use of information technology;

(g) to make recommendations to the Council on ways of increasing the effectiveness of the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above and on ways to limit unintended effects, if any, of these measures on the Liberian population;

(h) to cooperate with other relevant Security Council Sanctions Committees, in particular that established pursuant to resolution 1132 (1997) and that established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993);

(i) to establish a list of RUF members present in Liberia as referred to in paragraph 2 (a) above;

15. *Calls upon* the Government of Liberia to establish an effective Certificate of Origin regime for trade in rough diamonds that is transparent and internationally verifiable and has been approved by the Committee established by paragraph 14 above, to come into operation after the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above have been terminated in accordance with this resolution;

16. *Urges* all diamond exporting countries in West Africa to establish Certificate of Origin regimes for the trade in rough diamonds similar to that adopted by the

Government of Sierra Leone, as recommended by the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000), and *calls upon* States, relevant international organizations and other bodies in a position to do so to offer assistance to those Governments to that end;

17. *Calls upon* the international community to provide the necessary assistance to reinforce the fight against the proliferation and illicit trafficking of light weapons in West Africa, in particular the implementation of the ECOWAS Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa, and to improve air traffic control in the West African subregion;

18. *Requests* all States to report to the Committee established by paragraph 14 above, within 30 days of the promulgation of the list referred to in paragraph 14 (c) above, on the actions they have taken to implement the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General to establish, within one month from the date of adoption of this resolution, in consultation with the Committee established by paragraph 14 above, a Panel of Experts for a period of six months consisting of no more than five members, drawing, as much as possible and as appropriate, on the expertise of the members of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000), with the following mandate:

(a) to investigate any violations of the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above;

(b) to collect any information on the compliance by the Government of Liberia with the demands in paragraph 2 above, including any violations by the Government of Liberia of the measures imposed by paragraph 2 of resolution 1171 (1998) and paragraph 1 of resolution 1306 (2000);

(c) to further investigate possible links between the exploitation of natural resources and other forms of economic activity in Liberia, and the fuelling of conflict in Sierra Leone and neighbouring countries, in particular those areas highlighted by the report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000);

(d) to collect any information linked to the illegal activities of the individuals referred to in paragraph 21 below and to any other alleged violations of this resolution;

(e) to report to the Council through the Committee established by paragraph 14 above no later than six months from the date of adoption of this resolution with observations and recommendations in the areas set out in subparagraphs (a) to (d) above;

(f) to keep the Committee established by paragraph 14 above updated on their activities as appropriate; and *further requests* the Secretary-General to provide the necessary resources;

20. *Requests* the Panel of Experts referred to in paragraph 19 above, as far as possible, to bring any relevant information collected in the course of its investigations conducted in accordance with its mandate to the attention of the States concerned for prompt and thorough investigation and, where appropriate, corrective action, and to allow them the right of reply;

21. *Calls upon* all States to take appropriate measures to ensure that individuals and companies in their jurisdiction, in particular those referred to in the report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1306 (2000), act in conformity with United Nations embargoes, in particular those established by resolutions 1171 (1998), 1306 (2000) and this resolution, and, as appropriate, take the necessary judicial and administrative action to end any illegal activities by those individuals and companies;

22. *Calls upon* all States and all relevant international and regional organizations to act strictly in accordance with the provisions of this resolution notwithstanding the existence of any rights or obligations entered into or any licence or permit granted prior to the date of adoption of this resolution;

23. *Decides* to conduct reviews of the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above not more than sixty days after the adoption of this resolution, and every six months thereafter;

24. *Urges* all States, relevant United Nations bodies and, as appropriate, other organizations and interested parties to cooperate fully with the Committee established by paragraph 14 above and the Panel of Experts referred to in paragraph 19 above, including by supplying information on possible violations of the measures imposed by paragraphs 5 to 7 above;

25. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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Global Witness Ltd
P O Box 6042, London N19 5WP, United Kingdom
telephone: + 44 (0)20 7272 6731
fax: + 44 (0)20 7272 9425
e-mail: mail@globalwitness.org
<http://www.globalwitness.org/>



International Transport Workers Federation
ITF House, 49-60 Borough Road, London SE1 1DS, United Kingdom
telephone: +44 (0) 20 7403 2733
fax: +44 (0) 20 7357 7871
e-mail: mail@itf.org.uk
<http://www.itf.org.uk>

"To save this country, I think we need an embargo on timber export. This is immoral. We are destroying our country and making a desert land for the future. And what benefits are we really getting? Even if we were this is obscene. This will denude the whole country."

*Archbishop Michael Francis of
Liberia's Roman Catholic Church*



**Blackboard jungle. A Monrovia avoids press censorship:
"UN sanctions bomb hangs over timber. Says S. Leone rebel[s] (RUF)
still chopping. Who is worrying? Timber families worry."**



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