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National Capacities and Residual Contamination

Liberia



Geneva, December 2014

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is an international expert organisation based in Switzerland that works to eliminate mines, explosive remnants of war and other explosive hazards. By undertaking research, developing standards and disseminating knowledge, the GICHD supports capacity development in mine-affected countries. It works with national and local authorities to help them plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate mine action programmes. The GICHD also contributes to the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other relevant instruments of international law. The GICHD follows the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ACS	American Colonisation Society
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AFRICOM	US Africa Command
AOAV	Action on Armed Violence
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
AP	Anti-personnel
AXO	Abandoned Explosive Ordnance
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
LNP	Liberia National Police
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MoD	Ministry of National Defense
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OOL	Operation Onward Liberty
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
ToT	Training of Trainers
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance

Executive Summary

Introduction

This case study forms part of a broader GICHD study on national capacities and residual contamination and is based on both desk-top research and findings from a GICHD mission to Liberia in March 2014. A full list of meetings held during that mission is available in Annex I.

The purpose of this report is to document Liberia's experience of developing national clearance capacities to address residual contamination, and to identify and present good practices and lessons learnt. National capacities and residual contamination study terms of reference are available in Annex II.

Liberia faces explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination as a result of two distinct internal conflicts:

1. The first phase, frequently referred to as the "Liberian Civil War", started in late 1989 when the head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Charles Taylor, started a rebellion against Samuel Doe's government, and ended with Taylor's victory in the 1997 elections.
2. The second phase, also known as the "Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) insurrection", started in 1999 when two rebel groups challenged Taylor's rule: the LURD from its base in Guinea in the north and the MODEL, based in Cote d'Ivoire in the east. It ended in 2003, when Taylor's government, LURD and MODEL signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

The UN Security Council established UNMIL in September 2003 through Resolution 1509.¹ The resolution mandates the mission to assist with maintaining law and order in Liberia. At its peak it consisted of up to 15,000 UN military personnel and up to 1,115 UN police officers. More specifically, the resolution mandates UNMIL to undertake a number of tasks related to Security Sector Reform (SSR), including assisting Liberia's transitional government with:

1. Monitoring and restructuring the Liberian police force, consistent with democratic policing, to develop a civilian police training programme, and to otherwise assist in the training of civilian police, in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations, and interested states.
2. Forming a new and restructured Liberian military in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations and interested states.

Since its establishment UNMIL has been responsible for responding to hazardous threats throughout Liberia, and for carrying out explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) in the management of residual contamination. EOD activities were not reflected in early versions of the transition plan, resulting in the subsequent request for UNMAS assistance. The transition plan foresees that, by 2015, UNMIL military capacity will be reduced to one engineering unit with EOD capacities, and stipulates that EOD responsibilities should be handed over by UNMIL to the AFL in June 2015.

¹ UN Security Council resolution 1509 (2003), <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Liberia%20SRes1509.pdf>

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

A 2011 internal UNMIL gap assessment identified the need to develop a national EOD capacity in Liberia, given the gradual reduction of UNMIL troops and the resulting decline in EOD capacity. On this basis, UNMIL requested support from UNMAS for transitioning the EOD response from UNMIL to national security services.

UNMAS conducted an assessment mission in 2012, looking into the feasibility of an UNMAS programme in Liberia. As a result of the assessment findings and in response to UNMIL's request, UNMAS established a project in mid-2013 with the objective of training 32 AFL members as EOD operators. UNMAS activities in Liberia supported UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2066 (2012) and 2116 (2013) and UNMIL's transition plan. This includes specific activity related to transferring EOD capacities to national entities.

Capacity development initiatives

It was only when UNMAS established its presence in Liberia in 2013 that activities related to developing national clearance capacities truly started, even though significant training which targets the AFL had been underway in Liberia for several years. The principal UNMAS objective in Liberia was to train 32 personnel from the AFL engineering unit in EOD. To achieve this, UNMAS contracted the international non-governmental organisation (NGO) Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) as an implementing partner to supply EOD trainings. After successfully completing training, a second batch of 16 intermediate level EOD-certified AFL operators graduated in March 2014, and the target of 32 qualified EOD operators was reached.

UNMAS, through AOAV, implemented training-of-trainers (ToT) courses with the Liberia National Police (LNP). This recognises the visibility and presence of the LNP in rural areas and that it regularly receives hazardous reports directly from the public. This training focused on ERW identification, reporting and risk education. The long-term plan was that these modules should be mainstreamed into the LNP training curriculum, to ensure future sustainability.

Key Findings: Good Practices, Main Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Good practices

The Liberian experience of developing national clearance capacities highlights several good practices and draws attention to a number of challenges. Good practices include:

National commitment

A certain level of national commitment is a prerequisite for any successful capacity development initiative. Liberia illustrates a high level of commitment to, and interest in, greater involvement in addressing ERW contamination on behalf of key national stakeholders, including the AFL and the LNP. It appears that both the AFL and the LNP clearly recognise their respective responsibilities for addressing residual contamination and that they are keen to take on the responsibilities, gaining new knowledge and skills to do so in the most effective manner.

Proactive response from UNMAS

The response of UNMAS to a specific issue and request and their proactive initiative to broaden the initial focus of training 32 EOD operators, exploring accompanying structures and procedures, is commendable, including the focus on reporting and developing policies and MoU. Several international and national actors in Monrovia emphasised the instrumental role that the

presence of UNMAS has had in highlighting issues related to ERW contamination and the need to develop national capacities to manage it.

National stakeholders, national ownership and sustainability

As mentioned above, UNMAS and AOAV provide capacity development support to already established national structures. The common challenge of transitioning responsibilities from a UN-managed mine action programme, to a nationally managed programme has therefore never been an issue in Liberia. In addition, the explicit effort of UNMAS to identify 'local solutions to local problems', while taking context-specific issues into account, has been underlined and is clearly appreciated by several informants.

Information management

A clear understanding of the problem at hand is a precondition for predicting what future challenges may be, and what national capacities will be needed to address them.

While there have been some challenges regarding managing EOD-related information within UNMIL, the way in which external actors recognised these and subsequently reacted in a proactive manner deserves specific mention. Identification of shortfalls in available EOD information resulted in an UNMAS decision to fund an AOAV intern to conduct further analysis of UNMIL data. Greater clarity was created on the extent, nature and geographical location of ERW contamination.

Effective collaboration

Effective collaboration between national actors (Ministry of National Defense (MoD), AFL and LNP) and international actors (UNMIL, UNMAS, AOAV and Operation Onward Liberty (OOL) etc.) as well as among international actors has clearly resulted in useful information-sharing and coordination. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on capacity development activities.

Main challenges and lessons learnt

Most challenges presented below are not unique to Liberia's capacities to address residual contamination. They are broader issues that the country faces as a consequence of its long civil war. These affect the Liberian state-building process in several ways. Specific challenges in the Liberian context include:

UNMIL – missed opportunity?

UNMIL has been responsible for EOD since its establishment in 2003. Lack of detailed EOD data prior to 2012 means there is limited documentation of the nature and extent of contamination during these first eight years. Training and involving AFL and LNP in EOD-related activities was not an explicit aspect of UNMIL's mandate. Arguably, however, UNMIL missed a good opportunity to include national counterparts in EOD to a greater extent, in the interest of developing national capacities. EOD was eventually included in the UNMIL transition plan in 2013.

Information management

The LNP policy stipulates that reporting procedures and appropriate information management processes (including storage, analysis, sharing and reporting) will be important preconditions for any reporting structures to be effective. Effective information management will depend on solid collaboration and information-sharing between the key actors, including between AFL and LNP.

Reporting structures

Development of the LNP policy is an important first step; it allows for transparency and accountability regarding reporting structures, while stipulating the roles and responsibilities of the LNP and AFL. Potential future challenges relate to the actual adherence to, and implementation of, the policy. AOAV's support in developing the LNP ToT plan was planned and implemented with sustainability in mind. The extent to which it will be implemented will, however, depend on available resources, the level of commitment and an effective chain of command.

Future availability of resources

Future availability, and effective and efficient management, of equipment and resources will be decisive in enabling effective deployment of AFL EOD capacities.

Arms embargo

Future EOD activities will rely on availability of necessary equipment, including explosives for demolition activities. Given the arms embargo imposed on Liberia, necessary explosives must be procured and safely stored in compliance with sanctions committee requirements.² Some stakeholders expressed concern that it may be challenging for Liberia to do so in an effective and independent manner.

Securing funding when working with national security services

The UNMAS Liberia programme is unique in many ways, including its primary focus on capacity development of a national army. Working with security services is necessary in the transition context of Liberia, with UNMIL gradually reducing its presence and capacity. UNMAS has experienced great challenges in securing funding because it is working with the army. It perceives a great reluctance among donors to fund any activities that involve training security services. This reluctance represents a key challenge for successful implementation of similar projects in the future.

² <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1521/>

Introduction

Background to the study

This case study forms part of a broader GICHD study on national capacities and residual contamination and is based on both desk-top research and findings from a GICHD mission to Liberia in March 2014. A full list of meetings held during that mission is available in Annex I.

The purpose of this report is to document Liberia's experience of developing national clearance capacities to address residual contamination, and to identify and present good practices and lessons learnt. National capacities and residual contamination study terms of reference are available in Annex II.

Country context

Liberia is situated in western Africa, bordering Sierra Leone to the west, Guinea Conakry to the north and Cote d'Ivoire to the east. The country covers an area of 111,369 km² and has a population of about 3.7 million people.

The creation of Liberia is linked with the abolition of slavery in the West, and the rapidly increasing population of free African-Americans in the United States (US). The American Colonisation Society (ACS) was formed in the early 1800s to look into possibilities of resettling African-Americans in Africa.³ Between 1821 and 1867 an estimated 10,000 freed slaves and thousands more that had been freed from slave ships were resettled in West Africa and founded the settlement Liberia, the "land of the free". The Liberians formally declared their independence from the ACS in 1847, thereby creating the world's first black republic.⁴

Liberia's government structure was heavily influenced by the US model. The capital was named Monrovia after the fifth US president, James Monroe, who was a prominent supporter of the colonisation. *Americo-Liberians* governed Liberia as a one-party state for the next 133 years, which left a distinct mark on the society, including in political and social structures, the patronage system and the segregationist policy.⁵ Following a coup d'état by an indigenous sergeant named Samuel Doe, *Americo-Liberian* rule came to an end in 1980.

Origin, nature and scope of the mine/explosive remnants of war contamination problem

Liberia faces explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination as a result of two distinct internal conflicts:

1. The first phase, frequently referred to as the "Liberian Civil War", started in late 1989 when the head of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), Charles Taylor, started a rebellion against Doe's government, and ended with Taylor's victory in the 1997 elections.

³ Human Rights Center, University of California, *Talking Peace*, 2011, http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/HRC/Publications_Talking-Peace_06-2011.pdf

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Americo-Liberians* rarely intermarried, membership of the only recognised party was limited to them, and Liberians who couldn't prove "Congo" heritage (95% of the population) were excluded from serving in the government or military until the 1970s. Indigenous populations were not recognised as citizens until 1904.

2. The second phase, also known as the “Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) insurrection”, started in 1999 when two rebel groups challenged Taylor’s rule: the LURD from its base in Guinea in the north and the MODEL, based in Cote d’Ivoire in the east, and ended in 2003, when Taylor’s government, LURD and MODEL signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The impact of these two civil wars has been tremendous. The Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) estimates that 250,000 people were killed and that one million were displaced.⁶ The TRC has pointed out that the nature and magnitude of atrocities committed, especially against women, girls and boys, by the various warring factions, including Government forces, were of “epic proportions”.⁷

Map 1: Liberia⁸



⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia, *Volume One: Preliminary Findings and Determinations*, 2008, http://trcofliberia.org/resources/reports/final/volume-one_layout-1.pdf

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ <http://www.mapsofworld.com/liberia/liberia-political-map.html>

History of the process of developing national capacities

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

The UN Security Council established UNMIL in September 2003 through Resolution 1509.⁹ The resolution mandates the mission to assist with maintaining law and order in Liberia. It consisted of up to 15,000 UN military personnel and up to 1,115 UN police officers at its peak. More specifically, the resolution mandates UNMIL to a number of tasks related to Security Sector Reform (SSR), including assisting Liberia's transitional government with:

1. Monitoring and restructuring the Liberian police force, consistent with democratic policing, to develop a civilian police training programme, and to otherwise assist in the training of civilian police, in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations, and interested States.
2. Forming a new and restructured Liberian military in cooperation with ECOWAS, international organizations and interested states.

In August 2012, key stakeholders, including the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), UNMIL, the MoD, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and Liberia National Police (LNP), organised a conference to develop a "roadmap to transition." The resulting transition plan stipulates key activities for transitioning responsibilities from UNMIL to the Liberian government over the next three years (July 2012 – June 2015). The plan anticipates a reduction of troops from 8,000 in mid-2012 to a total of 3,500 by the end of June 2015.

As part of the transition planning, relevant international and national stakeholders established a 'joint transition working group', chaired by the MoD. This group meets on a bi-weekly or monthly basis to discuss issues related to UNMIL's reduction in presence and the transition processes, and to update the transition plan, which is very much a 'living document.'

Since its establishment UNMIL has been responsible for responding to hazardous threats throughout Liberia, and for carrying out explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) in the management of residual contamination. EOD activities were not reflected in early versions of the transition plan, resulting in the subsequent request for UNMAS assistance. The transition plan foresees that, by 2015, UNMIL military capacity will be reduced to one engineering unit with EOD capacities, and stipulates that EOD responsibilities should be handed over by UNMIL to the AFL in June 2015. More information on the extent and nature of residual contamination and the EOD response will be presented below.

Security Sector Reform

The AFL and the LNP committed serious crimes against the civilian population during the 14-years of civil war, resulting in little trust in the national security services. Recognising this, key stakeholders in the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) process acknowledged the importance of reforming the security sector. This was shown by the inclusion of SSR in the August 2003 CPA.

⁹ UN Security Council resolution 1509 (2003), <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Liberia%20SRes1509.pdf>

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) defines SSR as: “*seeking to increase partner countries’ ability to meet the range of security needs within their societies in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of governance, transparency and the rule of law. SSR includes, but extends well beyond, the narrower focus of more traditional security assistance on defence, intelligence and policing.*”¹⁰

The UN refers to SSR as “*a process of assessment, review and implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation led by national authorities that has as its goal the enhancement of effective and accountable security for the State and its peoples without discrimination and with full respect for human rights and the rule of law.*”¹¹

Armed Forces of Liberia

The CPA called for a restructuring of the AFL, requesting that the US would lead the process. Following consultations with the Liberian government, a programme of dismantling and rebuilding the AFL started in 2005. UNMIL has been in charge of reforming the LNP. AFL training activities, implemented by the US through the OOL mission, is one aspect of the significant SSR process that has been implemented in Liberia for nearly a decade.

The RAND Corporation report titled *Making Liberia Safe. Transformation of the National Security Sector*¹² and commissioned by the Liberian and US governments, presented the strategic objectives and mission of the Liberian security forces.

Stakeholders in Liberia agree that the AFL is the most appropriate institutional home for Liberia’s national EOD capacity. Stakeholders highlighted several reasons for this, including AFL’s current engineering capacity and available resources, including some equipment and financial resources.

US support and Operation Onward Liberty

The US military, the US State Department and the private company DynCorp conducted an exploratory mission to Liberia in spring 2004, looking into necessary steps regarding AFL reform.¹³ The initial DynCorp proposal stipulated training 2,000 men, supplementing their training with rule-of-law and human rights components, stressing the importance of respect for international humanitarian law and the law of war, separation of army and police responsibilities and the significance of civilian control of the military.¹⁴ DynCorp subsequently won the US State Department contract to demobilise the old AFL, rehabilitate three military bases and recruit, vet, train and equip a new AFL consisting of approximately 2,000 men and women. It is believed that DynCorp won the contract because it incorporated SSR components into its proposal.¹⁵

¹⁰ www.oecd.org

¹¹ The UN, DPKO, *The UN SSR Perspective*, May, 2012,

<http://www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/pdf/securityreform.pdf>

¹² The RAND Corporation, *Making Liberia Safe. Transformation of the National Security Sector*, 2007,

http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2007/RAND_MG529.pdf

¹³ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Liberia : Uneven Progress of Security Sector Reform*, January 2009,

[http://www.observatori.org/paises/pais_67/documentos/148_liberia_uneven_progress_in_security_sector_reform.p](http://www.observatori.org/paises/pais_67/documentos/148_liberia_uneven_progress_in_security_sector_reform.pdf)

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

A principal challenge in DynCorp's initial work was demobilising the AFL and the Ministry of National Defense.¹⁶

When DynCorp's contract ended in 2009, the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), through US Marine Corps Forces Africa, established Operation Onward Liberty (OOL) to provide US military personnel for mentoring and training the AFL. The goal was to develop a professional and capable military force that could effectively provide and contribute to the overall security environment in Liberia.¹⁷

The vetting aspect of the AFL training is regarded as a success; some experts claim it is the best they have witnessed anywhere in the world.¹⁸ The US has a long-standing history with the Liberian army; more than 5,000 US troops were stationed in Liberia during the Second World War and the US has been training the Liberian military since the 1950s. The US military mentorship programme consisted of 30 people as of March 2014 and the US has reportedly spent more than USD 300 million on training the AFL from 2004 to 2014.¹⁹

The AFL became fully nationalised in February 2014 when Brigadier General Daniel Dee Ziankahn swore to defend Liberia's constitution and fulfil his duties as the first Liberian Army Chief since the end of the 14-year civil war, replacing the outgoing Nigerian Army Chief.²⁰ Many viewed the transition to a Liberian Army Chief as a key achievement in the capacity development effort.

Liberia National Police

While the US has been in charge of reforming and training the AFL, the CPA put UNMIL in charge of reforming and training the LNP. In contrast to the reform process which rebuilt the AFL from scratch, the LNP reform built on existing personnel, often from other security services. Whereas the AFL vetting process is regarded as a success and seen as a good practice internationally, UNMIL's human rights and protection unit referred to the police version as a "failure" as early as 2005.²¹

There is a general acknowledgement that the LNP lacks resources, including the most basic equipment, and that the force lacks management and strategic planning competencies and skills.

United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

A 2011 internal UNMIL gap assessment identified the need to develop a national EOD capacity in Liberia, given the gradual reduction of UNMIL troops and the resulting decline in EOD capacity. On this basis, UNMIL requested UNMAS support in transitioning the EOD response from UNMIL to national security services.

UNMAS conducted an assessment mission in 2012, looking into the feasibility of an UNMAS programme in Liberia. Reflecting the findings of the assessment and responding to UNMIL's

¹⁶ The ICG reports highlights that DynCorp's work in 2006 predominantly focused on arranging the demobilisation payment for all 13,770 AFI soldiers and more than 400 MoD employees.

¹⁷ US Africa Command Fact Sheet, *Operation Onward Liberty*, October 2012, www.africom.mil/Doc/10032

¹⁸ International Crisis Group, *ibid*,

¹⁹ Al Jazeera. *Too Small to Succeed? Liberia's New Army Comes of Age, March 4, 2014,*

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2014/3/4/too-small-to-succeedliberiasnewarmycomesofage.html>

²⁰ The Liberian Government requested that a Nigerian Army Officer served as the head of the AFL during the transitional period.

²¹ ICG, *ibid*.

request, UNMAS established a project in mid-2013 with the objective of training 32 AFL members as EOD operators. UNMAS' activities in Liberia supported UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2066 (2012) and 2116 (2013) and UNMIL's transition plan. This includes a specific activity related to transferring EOD capacities to national entities.

It was only when UNMAS established its presence in Liberia in 2013 that activities related to developing national clearance capacities truly started, even though significant training which targets the AFL had been underway in Liberia for several years. The principal UNMAS objective in Liberia was to train 32 personnel from the AFL engineering unit in EOD. To achieve this, UNMAS contracted the international non-governmental organisation (NGO) Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) as an implementing partner to supply EOD trainings. After successfully completing training, a second batch of 16 intermediate level EOD-certified AFL operators graduated in March 2014, and the target of 32 qualified EOD operators was reached.

Recognising the visibility and presence of LNP in rural areas and that it regularly receives hazardous reports directly from the public, UNMAS, through AOAV, implemented training-of-trainers (ToT) courses with the LNP. The ToT training focused on ERW identification and reporting and risk education. Long-term these modules should be mainstreamed into the LNP training curriculum, to ensure future sustainability. This is explained in more detail below.

Liberia's SRSG informed UNMAS in August 2013 that it would not provide UNMAS with further funding after 30 June 2014. Anticipating future challenges in securing continued funding from other sources, UNMAS staff decided to broaden project activities from the initial focus on training 32 EOD operators. Adoption of a more holistic approach was rooted in a wish to strengthen AFL's capacities to safely and effectively manage residual contamination in the future. As a result, additional activities included a focus on:

- developing standard operating procedures (SOPs);
- procuring explosives;
- storing and accounting for explosives; and
- operating in an embargo context.

UNMAS programme staff underlined that OOL staff members' support and collaboration were instrumental in the smooth establishment of the capacity development project. OOL contributed by connecting UNMAS with key AFL representatives. Though OOL's mission did not focus specifically on developing AFL's EOD capacity, UNMAS/AOAV and OOL cooperated in their capacity development activities.

The desired end state of UNMAS activities in Liberia revolves around the following:²²

- sustainable national capacity exists within the AFL to safely manage ERW;
- sustainable national capacity exists within the LNP to safely identify, secure, and report ERW items for disposal;
- ERW reporting database exists and tracks recovery of items throughout Liberia; and
- a sustainable capacity is supported by government institutions through inclusion in national budgets and national strategy documents such as the National Defence Strategy and National Military Strategy.

²² UNMAS Liberia Programme website: <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/liberia>

AOAV

AOAV signed a contract with UNMAS in September 2013 to lead a nine-month project (October 2013 – June 2014).²³ Key responsibilities under this contract were to develop:

- AFL's EOD capacity (32 EOD intermediate level staff) to safely dispose of ERW; and
- LNP's ERW response and reporting capacity.

The technical EOD training focused on the safe disposal of munitions routinely used by government and rebel forces, including mortars and Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs). This reflected the nature of contamination in Liberia,

To promote sustainability of the EOD capacity, AOA V developed:

- a training management package;
- draft EOD standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the AFL;
- training guidelines; and
- an "EOD handbook", summarising key messages. The handbook was handed over to AFL upon the closure of training activities in mid-2014.

In terms of future plans, the proposal is to divide the 32 EOD-qualified personnel into five teams: two teams based in the Monrovia area and three at Gbarnga, the base for the 1st Engineering Company, in Bong County. One of the teams at Gbarnga will be responsible for training and maintaining equipment. Personnel will rotate between the two locations and be readily deployable. This plan has been shared with the Company Commander and was awaiting approval as of July 2014.

Regarding the LNP initiative, UNMAS and AOA V promoted the inclusion of a two-day course on ERW identification and reporting in LNP's staff training, taught by LNP instructors. The staff training consists of six months' training at the Police Academy in Monrovia, followed by another six months of practical field placement in the counties, ending with two weeks at the Monrovia academy, before successful students graduate. The course, which will be included in the final two-week phase, focuses on the following responsibilities:

- recognition and reporting;
- securing the site;
- sharing risk-related information with the public; and
- informing the AFL.

AOAV trained a total of nine LNP instructors in the first batch of training, and then mentored them when they in turn delivered the training to 291 new recruits and 51 in-service officers. Since then, an additional 31 instructors have been trained.

In addition, AOA V produced 1,000 copies of an ERW Awareness Aide Memoire to be distributed to every LNP depot and station. This handbook included photographs of the most commonly encountered UXO and a report template to improve identification and reporting.

²³ UNMAS extended the initial nine-month contract by two months to 31 August 2014.

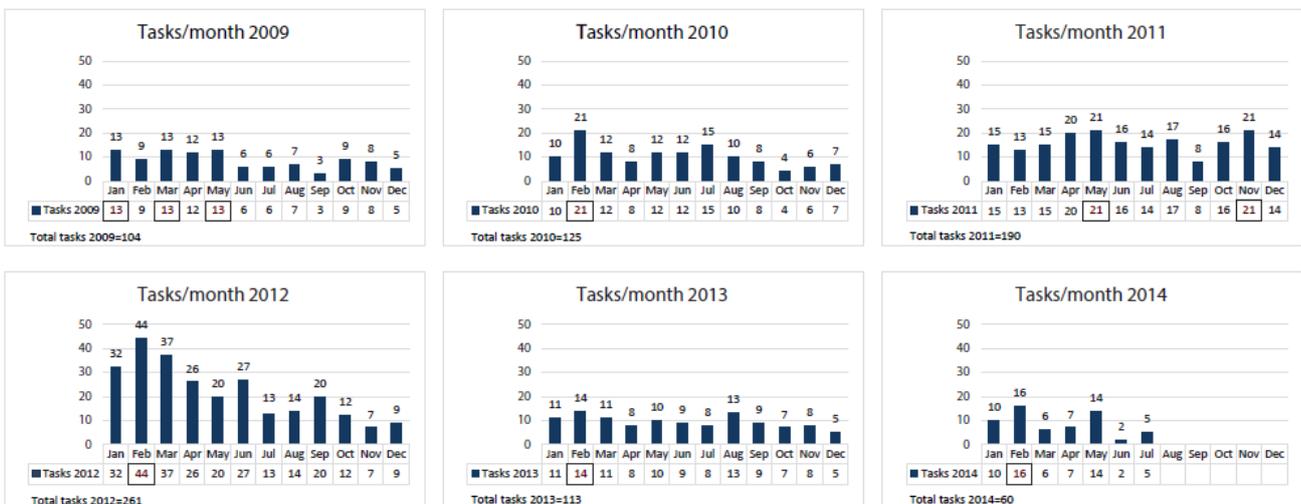
Addressing Residual Contamination

Nature and extent of residual contamination

Recognising the lack of detail in information summarising EOD activities carried out by UNMIL since its establishment in 2003, AOAV hired an intern in April 2014 to analyse UNMIL EOD statistics. Concerning the extent of residual contamination, the information reveals that UNMIL did a total of 261 “call outs” in 2012, 113 in 2013 and 60 in the first seven months of 2014.



EOD activity in Liberia 2009-2014
Number of tasks dealt with by UN EOD teams per month



Information shared by UNMAS and AOAV, September 2014

In addition to UNMIL’s activities, AFL carried out one EOD task in 2013 and nine in the first four months of 2014, a clear indication of its strengthened capacity to respond to and address residual contamination.

AOAV’s analysis of Liberia’s residual contamination shows that UNMIL disposed of a total of 47,011 items of small arms and ammunition and 3,256 items of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) between early 2012 and April 2014. It is important to note that many of these were not in fact UXO, but UNMIL’s logistics disposal of unserviceable/expired items that were recorded as UXO²⁴. A further analysis of the recorded UXO shows that UNMIL disposed of a total of 109 RPGs, 576 hand grenades and 2,509 Mortar Bombs. UNMIL recorded the remaining 62 items as ‘other types.’

²⁴ IMAS 04.10, Glossary of mine action terms, definitions and abbreviations defines logistics disposal as: ‘in the context of mine action, the term refers tothe removal of munitions and explosives, from a stockpile utilising a variety of methods, (that may not necessarily involve destruction)’.IMAS 04.10, <http://www.mineactionstandards.org/fileadmin/MAS/documents/imas-international-standards/english/series-04/IMAS-04-10-Ed2-Am2.pdf>

The information further specifies the geographical locations of EOD activities, illustrating that Montserrado County (which includes the capital Monrovia) has had the highest concentration of reported hazards, with a total of 80 call outs in two and a half years.

Liberia has no known landmines contamination. Liberia's 2004 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 report states:

*...our National Defence Policy has never permitted the purchase for inclusion in our inventories, Anti Personnel Mines (APMs). We want to report, however, that during the course of the 14-year civil crisis, ECOMOG, the intervening West African Force, did employ the use of APMs to a limited extent. Regrettably, that Force did not share any information with the Ministry of National Defense on the type and deployment area of the hardware used.*²⁵

As part of its capacity development support, UNMAS assisted the MoD with drafting its Article 7 Report for 2013, in which no new AP landmines are reported.²⁶

Guiding framework

As stated above, UNMAS and AOAV supported the LNP in developing its ERW identification and reporting capacity. As part of this effort, AOAV assisted the LNP with developing a policy on *LNP Response and Reporting Procedures for Explosive Remnants of War* (the LNP policy).²⁷

A first 'policy working group' meeting took place at the end of January 2014 in Monrovia, bringing several stakeholders together. The meeting focused on developing a policy on the LNP's response and reporting of ERW. The purpose of the policy is to outline key aspects and to promote standardised and transparent procedures.

The stated aim of the LNP policy is to: *...outline the response and reporting procedures to be implemented by the LNP for the management of public safety surrounding incidents involving ERW across all counties in Liberia.*

The draft LNP policy categorises residual contamination found in Liberia into:

- UXO;
- abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO);
- cached or stockpiled ammunition; and
- explosive components of ammunition.

A dedicated department within the LNP HQ will be the focal point for ERW with the intention that the reporting process will go through the national operations centre to ensure that the ERW focal point does not replicate an already existing structure. The ERW focal point will be housed within the Office of Public Safety at the LNP HQ. This recognises the importance of available resources and links to a number of community outreach programmes (thereby providing opportunities to deliver ERW awareness training alongside other outreach programmes).

UNMAS was instrumental in promoting a series of meetings between the MoJ and the MoD in May 2014. The objective of these meetings was to develop a memorandum of understanding

²⁵ Liberia APMBC, 2004 Article 7 Report, <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/pdf/mbc/clearing-mined-areas/Art7Report-Liberia-2004.pdf>

²⁶ Liberia APMBC 2013 Article 7 Report, <http://www.apminebanconvention.org/fileadmin/APMBC/clearing-mined-areas/Article7-Liberia-2014.pdf>

²⁷ *Draft LNP Response and Reporting Procedures for Explosive Remnants of War* (shared by AOAV in June 2014)

(MoU) regarding the national response to, and reporting of, the ERW problem in Liberia. Several stakeholders, including UNMAS and AOAV, had been pushing for this move for some time, recognising the importance of securing high-level government buy-in to the process.

It is anticipated that the MoU will outline the division of responsibilities and the cooperative responsibilities between AFL and LNP.

Reporting structures

The LNP policy stipulates that the principles to be followed when responding to an ERW incident should be the same as during any other incidents managed by LNP (such as road traffic accidents, criminal activities or civil disorder), except as specifically noted in the policy. This is essential, as it clearly demonstrates the intention to mainstream residual contamination-related responsibilities into LNP's every-day roles and responsibilities.

The LNP policy also states that explicit approval/authority from command positions is not required. It further points out that LNP's first task is to assess the potential threat and danger to the public. The findings of that assessment will determine the response priority and initial resource requirements.

The policy presents three overarching principals:

- **Minimal Delay.** *Response timings, both reporting and clearance, must be based on the risk posed to the public by the item(s) of ERW. This threat must be initially assessed by the LNP first responder and first aid safety precaution taken.*
- **Accuracy in Reporting.** *Supplementary safety precautions may be advised by the AFL EOD assets prior to their arrival at the incident location. To do so will require accurate descriptive reporting of the item, as well as situational detail and ancillary hazards.*
- **Authority.** *It is implicit in the processes detailed in this policy that the LNP response to an ERW incident must be automatic in order to minimise delays in reporting and rendering safe, which would have the effect of extending an unacceptable risk to the public. This authority is vested in the first responder, through the chain of command for reporting, from the LNP HQ and allows LNP officers at all levels to enact the appropriate response. These are detailed later in this policy document.*

The policy states that the LNP, as the public's 'first defence', will serve as recipient of all public information concerning ERW. It further underlines that ERW reports to appropriate authorities should be 'accurate and timely', and that any 'delay in the reporting system might cause injury, death or property damage which in turn impairs the credibility of the LNP.'

The section below replicates the content of the LNP reporting format.

Reporting Format

The LNP ERW report form is divided into three main sections:

1. Contact/dispatch detail
 - Date/time found/reported
 - Reporters (witness) name
 - Reporters contact details (address/phone numbers/coordinates/directions)
 - LNP contact details – station officer receiving the report
2. Item detail
 - Item(s) reported, including:
 - description (size/shape/colour/condition)
 - location (if different to the reporters contact details)

- Hazard assessment – local factors affecting safety. The responding LNP Officer must attempt to assess the hazard the item(s) pose to the reporter and nearby members of the public and advise them of appropriate site safety precautions to implement prior to the arrival of an EOD team. In addition to the recognition points detail regarding shape, size, colour and condition, the location in relation to sensitive or vital equipment or infrastructure and hazards external to the item, i.e. fuel/gas storage, must be assessed and passed on through the reporting chain.
- Local markings/protective measures, i.e. evacuation/barriers, undertaken
- Recognition points.

3. Tasking details

- First responder attendance at scene or remote, i.e. tele-report
- Advice passed to the witness/reporter, e.g. first aid safety advice, cordon, evacuation, etc.
- Date/time passed to LNP reporting chain
- Assessed priority and reason
- Confirmed AFL attendance/timings
- Interim ERW identification (confirmed item identification to be advised by AFL EOD)

A copy of the draft LNP ERW report form is available in Annex III.

Reporting phases

Phase I - Initial Contact

LNP first responder:

- Receives contact/item details or tasked by station/depot commander
- Notes or logs dispatch information (e.g., address/location, time, date)
- Verifies item is an ERW or suspicious, cordon the area and evacuate the public if required
- Provides initial safety assessment/advice to contact, and remove items of external hazard (e.g., fuel, gas) if necessary
- Logs information of the ERW (shape, size, colour, etc.) and passes detail to station/depot commander
- Implements additional safety requirements if advised by the AFL EOD team prior to their arrival
- Remains on the scene until the arrival of the EOD team from the AFL

Station Commander:

- Sets prioritisation and passed detail to LNP HQ (116)
- Advises district/zone HQ
- Initiates support requirements e.g. PSU/emergency services

Phase II - Region Response

District/Regional/Zone Commander:

- Provides support requirements as requested
- Confirms detail passed to LNP HQ
- Processes written incident report to LNP HQ

Phase III - LNP HQ

Office of Chief of Public Safety:

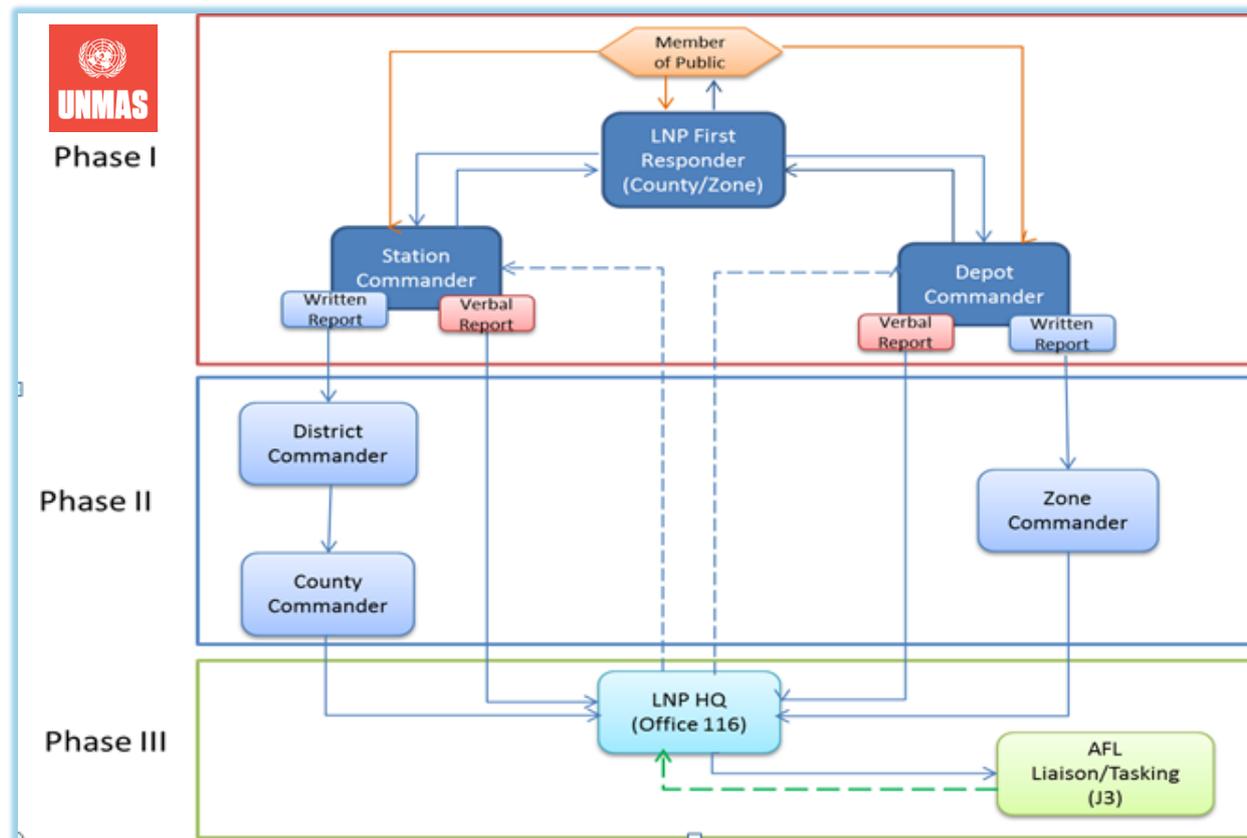
- Passes item detail and priority assessment to AFL ERW liaison
- Initiates supplementary support requirements, if requested
- Receives initial feedback from AFL, i.e. confirmed safety assessment, additional support requirements and response timeline
- Passes AFL response details/requirements to LNP incident commander
- Maintains liaison with the AFL till the incident is resolved

Reporting chain

The reporting chain, as described in LNP's policy document, builds on LNP's existing chain of command and incident management procedures. The chain begins with the first police officer who receives information from the public either by phone or in person.

This first contact by the public could also be made directly to a superior at HQs, but will in all instances result in an LNP officer on the ground being tasked to attend the reported location and verify that it is an ERW incident. This officer immediately alerts the nearest police command (zone, detachment, depot, detail). The commander in charge will deploy officers at the site, ensure public safety and inform the office of the Chief of Public Safety, which:

- promulgates priority (24hr) contact details, including alternate contact details and the use of the radio room;
- requests support from the AFL (J3 Operations);
- briefs LNP HQ operations;
- receives initial AFL feedback regarding response times and their support requirements;
- authorises direct liaison between LNP incident commander and AFL EOD team leader;
- maintains a database of all ERW incidents; and
- receives and stores all written reports.



Information management

EOD-related UNMIL information prior to 2009 is not available in a central data base. Five years' worth of data is not, therefore, available for future analysis and reference.

One issue in the UNMIL database post-2012 is that it does not differentiate between UXO, AXO and explosive ordnance (EO). As highlighted above, UNMIL has reported the logistics disposal²⁹ of its own expired/unserviceable EO as UXO which results in flawed data, as those items are not actual UXO. There are also examples of UNMIL assisting AFL with logistics disposal of its expired/unservicable stockpiled items, and then recording them as UXO.³⁰ UNMAS and AOA identified these problems, and gained some clarity through analysing UNMIL's database.

UNMAS noted that it has focused on the importance of making the distinction between range clearance and UXO on civilian property clear to AFL.

AOAV's information analysis initiative as outlined above has resulted in some interesting findings regarding the extent and nature of residual contamination. AOA indicated that it will share all statistics with the MoD to allow the continued updating of information related to AFL's EOD

²⁸ As presented in the LNP Policy

³⁰ One such example shared with the GICHD dates back to early 2013, when AFL requested UNMIL to assist with destroying several thousand gas canisters. UNMIL reported these items as UXO when in reality the AFL had asked UNMIL to remove an ammunition stockpile problem.

activities. As part of its training activities, AOA V has also focused on training the AFL EOD teams in reporting procedures, emphasising the importance of accurate and clear information.

Sustainability

Given that Liberia does not have a national mine action centre (MAC) or national mine action authority (NMAA), capacity development efforts have focused on existing structures that already have a budget line for EOD training/work. The MoD annual budget includes resources required for the EOD teams. Also, the Liberian National Defence Strategy incorporates EOD activities. Importantly, the MoD has confirmed that funding for logistical support to the EOD capacity is included in their 2015 draft budget; a clear indication of the national commitment to addressing residual contamination.³¹

Liberia's situation is distinct from most conventional mine/ERW action programmes, where MACs/NMAAs are established, frequently resulting in inflated structures that often face challenges in transitioning to national ownership.

³¹ UNMAS Liberia Programme website, <http://www.mineaction.org/programmes/liberia>

Key Findings: Good Practices, Main Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Good practices

The Liberian experience of developing national clearance capacities highlights several good practices and draws attention to a number of challenges. Good practices include:

National commitment

A certain level of national commitment is a prerequisite for any successful capacity development initiative. Liberia illustrates a high level of commitment to, and interest in, greater involvement in addressing ERW contamination on behalf of key national stakeholders, including the AFL and the LNP. It appears that both the AFL and the LNP clearly recognise their respective responsibilities for addressing residual contamination and that they are keen to take on the responsibilities, gaining new knowledge and skills to do so in the most effective manner.

Proactive response from UNMAS

The response of UNMAS to a specific issue and request and their proactive initiative to broaden the initial focus of training 32 EOD operators, exploring accompanying structures and procedures, is commendable, including the focus on reporting and developing policies and MoU. Several international and national actors in Monrovia emphasised the instrumental role that the presence of UNMAS has had in highlighting issues related to ERW contamination and the need to develop national capacities to manage it.

National stakeholders, national ownership and sustainability

As mentioned above, UNMAS and AOV provide capacity development support to already established national structures. The common challenge of transitioning responsibilities from a UN-managed mine action programme, to a nationally managed programme has therefore never been an issue in Liberia. In addition, the explicit effort of UNMAS to identify 'local solutions to local problems', while taking context-specific issues into account, has been underlined and is clearly appreciated by several informants.

Information management

A clear understanding of the problem at hand is a precondition for predicting what future challenges may be, and what national capacities will be needed to address them.

While there have been some challenges regarding managing EOD-related information within UNMIL, the way in which external actors recognised these and subsequently reacted in a proactive manner deserves specific mention. Identification of shortfalls in available EOD information resulted in an UNMAS decision to fund an AOV intern to conduct further analysis of UNMIL data. Greater clarity was created on the extent, nature and geographical location of ERW contamination.

Effective collaboration

Effective collaboration between national actors (MoD), AFL and LNP) and international actors (UNMIL, UNMAS, AOA and Operation Onward Liberty (OOL) etc.) as well as among international actors has clearly resulted in useful information-sharing and coordination. This, in turn, has had a positive impact on capacity development activities.

Main challenges and lessons learnt

Most challenges presented below are not unique to Liberia's capacities to address residual contamination. They are broader issues that the country faces as a consequence of its long civil war, affecting the Liberian state-building process in several ways. Specific challenges in the Liberian context include:

UNMIL – missed opportunity?

UNMIL has been responsible for EOD since its establishment in 2003. Lack of detailed EOD data prior to 2012 means there is limited documentation of the nature and extent of contamination during these first eight years. Training and involving AFL and LNP in EOD-related activities was not an explicit aspect of UNMIL's mandate. Arguably, however,, UNMIL missed a good opportunity to include national counterparts in EOD to a greater extent, in the interest of developing national capacities. EOD was eventually included in the UNMIL transition plan in 2013.

Information management

The LNP policy stipulates that reporting procedures and appropriate information management processes (including storage, analysis, sharing and reporting) will be important preconditions for any reporting structures to be effective. Effective information management will depend on solid collaboration and information-sharing between the key actors, including between AFL and LNP.

Reporting structures

Development of the LNP policy is an important first step; it allows for transparency and accountability regarding reporting structures, while stipulating the roles and responsibilities of the LNP and AFL. Potential future challenges relate to the actual adherence to, and implementation of, the policy. AOA's support in developing the LNP ToT plan was planned and implemented with sustainability in mind. The extent to which it will be implemented will, however, depend on available resources, the level of commitment and an effective chain of command.

Future availability of resources

Future availability, and effective and efficient management, of equipment and resources will be decisive in enabling effective deployment of AFL EOD capacities.

Arms embargo

Future EOD activities will rely on availability of necessary equipment, including explosives for demolition activities. Given the arms embargo imposed on Liberia, necessary explosives must be procured and safely stored in compliance with sanctions committee requirements.³² Some stakeholders expressed concern that it may be challenging for Liberia to do so in an effective and independent manner.

Securing funding when working with national security services

The UNMAS Liberia programme is unique in many ways, including its primary focus on capacity development of a national army. Working with security services is necessary in the transition context of Liberia, with UNMIL gradually reducing its presence and capacity. UNMAS has experienced great challenges in securing funding because it is working with the army. It perceives a great reluctance among donors to fund any activities that involve training security services. This reluctance represents a key challenge for successful implementation of similar projects in the future.

³² <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1521/>

Annexes

Annex I: Individuals interviewed

Name	Title	Organisation
Seeye Abraha Hagos	SSR Advisor	UNDP
Lindsay Harkness	Programme Officer	UNMAS
Sheila Black	Programme Manager	UNMAS
James M. Fromayan	Chairman	Liberia National Commission on Small Arms (LiNCSA)
Benietta Jarbo	Coordinator	
Saint Jerome Larbelee	Deputy Minister, Operations	Ministry of National Defense
Kris Kwam	Major	Operation Onward Liberty
Jed Bauch	Major	US Mission in Liberia
Michael Page	SSR Advisor	UNMIL
Timo Rusanen	Senior Force ATO	UNMIL
Muchiri Murenga	UNMIL Transition	OSRSG/UNMIL
Col Prince Johnson	Brigade Commander	AFL
Bart Laan	Senior Reform Advisor	UNMIL
Miguel Gonzalez	UNPOL Team Leader	
Cesar Hawthorne R. Binag	Deputy Police Commissioner	
Christopher Robert	Deputy Commander	Protection Support Unit, Liberia National Police
Joyce G Cassell - Frankfort	Programme Manager	Justice and Security Joint Programme, Ministry of Justice
Brig. General Daniel D.	Chief of Staff	Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)

Ziankhan		
Col Eric Dennis	Deputy Chief of Staff	
Kamil K. Kamaluddeen	Country Director	UNDP
Fredrick Amplah	Advisor on Compliance and Partnership	
John Balding	EOD Project Manager	Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)
Samuel Opoku-Agyakwa	OiC Legal Policy reform Section and Ministry of Justice Advisor	UNMIL

Annex II: National Capacities and Residual Contamination Study TOR

National capacities & residual contamination study

Background

National ownership is a central principle in the global mine action approach, and is reflected in international conventions and standards. As an increasing number of mine/ERW affected countries are approaching the “completion” stage of clearing all known contaminated areas, the issue of national ownership and that of developing sustainable capacities to deal with residual contamination becomes more central.

This project will examine the topic of national capacities and residual contamination through documenting processes, providing recommendations and offering targeted, country specific guidance on the development of sustainable capacities to deal with residual contamination.

Objectives and deliverables

Desired outcomes

The anticipated outcomes of the project are:

1. Relevant national and international stakeholders have a better understanding of good practices and key challenges related to sustainable capacities to deal with residual contamination
2. Relevant stakeholders’ capabilities to develop sustainable capacities to deal with residual contamination are strengthened
3. Greater understanding of the role of national security services in dealing with residual contamination.

Research objectives

The sustainable national capacities and residual contamination study missions will be conducted in 2013 – 2014. Findings from these missions will be used to produce country case studies and a guide. The purpose of the guide will be to present key issues and to provide clear guidance on the development of sustainable national capacities to deal with residual contamination. The specific objectives of the guide will be to:

- Review the different types and phases of the development of sustainable, national capacities to deal with residual contamination;
- Document processes and examples from a selected number of countries, to highlight lessons learnt, specific challenges and good practices;
- Document examples from countries that are currently in the process of developing national capacities to address residual contamination, to highlight what works, identify possible gaps, and make recommendations for improvement;
- Assess what has/has not worked well, key factors to consider and lessons learned;
- Identify the key steps in planning for, and developing, national capacities;
- Based on the case study findings, formulate conclusions and recommendations in the form of practical, user-friendly guidance on the topic.

Study products

The project will have the following study outputs:

- Country case studies
- A Guide on National Capacities to Address the Residual Contamination

Target audience

The research products will specifically target: NMAAs/MACs, national security services, relevant ministries, international and national organisations, relevant UN agencies and donors.

Key issues to be explored in country case studies

1. Introduction and Overview of the country context

- Brief introduction to the country
- Origin, nature and scope of the ERW contamination problem.
- Brief background to the establishment of the UN mission.
- Current structure and status of EOD activities
 - level of national ownership
 - responsible actors (UNMIL, line ministries, national security services)?
 - Which international and national actors are involved in the clearance activities?
 - External support?

2. History of the process of developing national capacities

Describe the process of developing the national capacity to address residual contamination

- What stakeholders are/were involved (national and international)?
 - Ministries?
 - Donors?
 - National and international operators?
 - Commercial companies?
 - Relevant UN agencies?
- Key milestones
- Is/Was the process part of a broader Security Sector Reform (SSR) process?
- Do/Did specific plans/strategies/policies guide the process?
- Do/Did a capacity development plan/strategy guide the process?

3. Addressing residual contamination (for countries that have reached a “residual state”)

Explore the following key issues:

- Reporting channels (top-down: from community to security services)
- Responsible actors? If more than one, describe the nature of the partnership
- Nature of the residual contamination (items, depth, expected distribution)
- The process of moving from a proactive to reactive/reactive/responsive phase
- The scope of the responsibility of the national actor/s (does it include Armed Violence Reduction (AVR), Small Arms Light Weapons (SALW) and Physical Security and Stockpile Management (PSSM))?
- Key aspects of the national risk management approach (if relevant)
- Financial arrangements
- Sustainability aspects
- Are operations guided by any standards?
- Responsiveness
- Information management
 - a. Reporting structures and reporting flows (from whom to whom?)
 - b. Information database (where is it stored)
 - c. Means of information sharing and dissemination (who has access to it?)

4. Key findings: Good practices, main challenges and lessons learnt

- Critically review the process of developing national capacities. Present and elaborate on key findings, good practices (success stories), and list challenges and issues that have been problematic (lessons learnt).

Annex III: LNP ERW Report Form

LNP ERW Report Form			
Dispatch Details:			
Depot/Station:		Date Reported:	
Zone/County:		Time Reported:	
Incident Type:			
Reporting Persons Details:	Name:	Address:	
	Tele No:		
ERW Item Details:			
Item Description: (as per Reporting Person)			
Item Location: (If different from above)			
Item Description: (shape/size/dimensions/etc):			
Hazards Identified:			
Preliminary Actions Taken (cordon/evacuation/emergency services/etc):			
Tasking Details:			
LNP First Responder (Name/Rank/No):			
Safety Considerations Taken:			
Interim Item Identification:			
Assessed Priority:		Confirmed Priority:	
Verbal Report Initiated (time/to):			
AFL Response:			
Arrival Time at Location:		Action Taken by AFL:	
Time Departed Location:		Confirmed ID by AFL:	