

# **NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY**

of the  
**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**



**MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEFENSE**

**February 11, 2014**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD .....	1-2
LIST OF ACRONYMS .....	4
PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW .....	5-6
POLICY STATEMENT .....	6-9
SECURITY ENVIRONMENT .....	10
INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES .....	11-13
EXTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES .....	13-14
ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE .....	14-16
MISSION AND ROLES OF THE AFL .....	16-18
PEACE BUILDING .....	18
RESOURCING THE AFL .....	18-19
REGIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE .....	19
INTERACTION BETWEEN MOD AND OTHER GOL ENTITIES .....	19-20
INTELLIGENCE AND INFORMATION PROCESSING .....	20-21



**Her Excellency Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**  
PRESIDENT & COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF  
ARMED FORCES OF LIBERIA



**His Excellency Joseph N. Boakai**  
VICE PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

## FORWARD

For the first time in our nation's history, a National Defense Strategy has been written, which reflects our vision and intentions, to protect and defend the territorial integrity of Liberia, as well as foster cordial relations with all of its neighbors. This National Defense Strategy (NDS) derives from the Constitution of Liberia, the National Security Strategy and The New National Defense Act, both of 2008.

After 14 years of brutal civil unrest (1989-2003) the people of Liberia embarked upon the difficult and complex task of post-war peace building, and reconstruction. While great strides have been made, Liberia's full recovery requires time and resources. The entire state and societal structures collapsed during the war. The Liberian people and other inhabitants of Liberia lacked faith in the Armed Forces of Liberia to adequately protect and defend them because of the legacy of abuse that characterized its history.

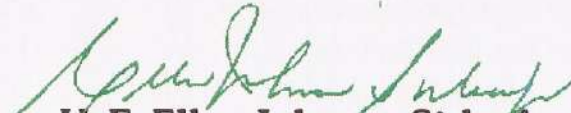
This National Defense Strategy articulates the defense policy as it relates to the interests of our people and nation. It identifies and categorizes the threats facing our nation (previously articulated in the National Security Strategy). It promulgates the need for an architecture, in this case the Armed Forces of Liberia, to be supported and prepared in protecting the nation, as well as identifies its mission and roles. It also provides policy direction in supporting the capabilities required to carry out those roles and the resource implications thereof.

Our National Defense Strategy also articulates our intentions and vision for the Armed Forces of Liberia. It is the result of a lengthy process of consultation with Branches of our Government, civil society groups, political parties, youth organizations, a broad spectrum of the Liberian society, as well as engagement with our

sub-regional, regional and international partners. Together, these steps demonstrate our commitment to strengthen our national defense; and promote national reconciliation and the national security interest of our country.

This National Defense Strategy constitutes a living document that is subject to regular review and adjustment to reflect the changing dynamics of the country's security environment and challenges as well as in accordance with the constitutional mandate of the AFL and our strategic interests. It ensures an efficient and capable military under civilian control to serve the Liberian people.

It is with the greatest pleasure and pride that I present the National Defense Strategy for the Republic of Liberia.



**H. E. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf**  
PRESIDENT  
Commander-In-Chief  
Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL)

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFL	-	Armed Forces of Liberia
ASF	-	African Union Stand-by Force
LMA	-	Liberia Maritime Authority
BIN	-	Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization
COIC	-	Command Officer-In-Charge
DDRR	-	Disarmaments, Demobilization, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
DEA	-	Drug Enforcement Agency
ESF	-	ECOWAS Stand-by Force
ERU	-	Emergency Response Unit of LNP
GOL	-	Government of Liberia
LNP	-	Liberian National Police
LSP	-	Liberia Seaport Police
MOD	-	Minister of National Defense
MoD	-	Ministry of National Defense
MRU	-	Mano River Union
NBI	-	National Bureau of Investigation
NCDDRR	-	National Commission on Disarmament, Demobilization Rehabilitation and Reintegration
NDA	-	National Defense Art of 2008
NFS	-	National Fire Service
NMRC	-	National Military Response Center
NSA	-	National Security Agency
NSS	-	National Security Strategy of 2008
PRS	-	Poverty Reduction Strategy
PSU	-	Police Support Unit
EPS	-	Executive Protection Service
UNMIL	-	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNPOL	-	United Nations Police

# NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

## 1.0 Purpose and Overview of Liberia's National Defense Strategy

1.0.1 This National Defense Strategy (NDS) provides a broad policy framework and general direction to the Armed Forces of Liberia in protecting our national security interest, supporting our young democracy through strategic partnerships, professional force development, efficient allocation of resources and equipment on a recurrent basis, and sustaining the general welfare of personnel of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL). Thus, our NDS seeks to provide strategic guidance, general and specific support to the AFL in achieving its mission under our Constitution, and upon orders of the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia.

1.0.2 Civilian control of the military is a Constitutional principle and this NDS reinforces its institutionalization. Our NDS also provide a clear intention for the professional development of the civilian component of the Ministry of National Defense.

This strategy articulates major threats identified in the NSS of 2008 for which a military response may be appropriate as part of an integrated security concept. It articulates the framework for developing our national defense architecture (National Military Strategy). The National Defense Architecture designed to meet those threats and describes in general terms the roles and missions of the AFL, as well as the capabilities required to respond to those threats.

1.0.3 The NDS is formulated from the perspective of human

security taking into consideration:

- A. Protection of Liberia's sovereignty and its people;
- B. Supporting the men and women of our Armed Forces;
- C. Supporting civil authority and reconstruction efforts;
- D. Promoting cooperation within the Mano River Basin and contributing to the preservation of regional and international peace and security

## 2.0 Policy Statement

2.0.1 We live in a dynamic and uncertain environment, facing countless capacity and resource constraints. These challenges are influenced largely by endogenous factors, but they are not isolated from exogenous factors that have for years influenced the internal and external dynamics of Liberia. Therefore, our NDS must be guided by the composite determination of human, physical, environmental, and institutional security arrangements for safety and security and for quality economic growth and development. Our National Defense Strategy, in keeping with the Constitution and provisions of the National Defense Act (NDA) of 2008, reaffirms that we will have a responsible system under lawful civilian control.

2.0.2 The Mission of the Armed Forces of Liberia shall be: "To protect the territorial integrity of the Republic of Liberia against both internal (armed) and external threats, respond to natural (and other) disasters, assist in the reconstruction of our country and support and participate in regional and international peace. Components required shall not be

limited to the Infantry, Coast Guard, Airlift Capability and other support elements of our Armed Forces". Our Armed Forces must have a robust rapid capability to respond to any insurgency or armed insurrection that threatens the stability of our country.

2.0.3 Our strategy seeks to liaise, work collaboratively, cooperate and support civil authorities in enhancing peace and security, as well as contributing to the welfare of the Liberian people. This strategy seeks to promote cordial civilian military relationships for the common good of our people and to provide services that reflect the AFL's responsibility to be "a force for good." Primarily, we must continue to keep our country secure through activities that promote broad-based inclusiveness and provide national reassurance of safety and security. Our strategy seeks to utilize within constraints, its meager resources to promote national reconciliation and reconstruction.

2.0.4 Liberia's NDS will continue to seek the professional and proficient development of both our civilian and uniformed personnel through training programs both at home and abroad. We shall initiate programs for their awareness, training and capacity building and seek funding and budgetary allocation for these programs.

2.0.5 Cognizant of the need for the full utilization of our national endowment for the reconstruction of our country, the NDS shall focus fiscal actions that support the reconstruction efforts of our country. It will ensure that national reconstruction and rehabilitation programs are fully supported in an environment of fiscal accountability and appropriate managerial oversight. We shall fully cooperate with relevant Defense and Security Committees of the

National Legislature in the exercise of their oversight responsibilities.

2.0.6 The NDS recognizes the flexibility inherent in National Defense and thus will develop a range of options for the Commander-in-Chief, Including means to de-escalate crisis and reduce demand on resources and forces where applicable. We shall articulate succinctly the risk inherent in and the consequences of choosing among these options and propose mitigating strategy that secures our national security interest. Further, we shall continue to promote programs for reconciliation and continuous discussions for accepting and embracing dialogue over conflict. The NDA of 2008 requires that the MoD work diligently to promote sub-regional, regional and international peace through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This approach minimizes external threat and suspicion and at the same time maximizes good neighborliness and enhances peace and security.

2.0.7 To reduce the threat of external aggression, Liberia must maintain good relations with its neighbors, lessening the risk of cross-border conflict. Nevertheless, we must remain vigilant while at the same time developing strong and long term relationships with our neighbors bilaterally and through participation in the Mano River Union, ECOWAS, the African Union, and the United Nations in order to strengthen our capacity and enable us to focus more resources on our more likely and immediate threats. MRU and ECOWAS' collective security arrangements provide credible foundation for regional peace and security which Liberia's defense strategy strongly supports.

2.0.8 Whenever possible, we must position ourselves to respond

to and reduce uncertainty by continuing to improve our understanding of trends, their interaction and the range of risks associated with their missions. The AFL must develop the relevant capabilities and capacities to prepare for uncertainties and the institutional stamina and flexibility to always plan in advance and respond effectively. The Armed Forces of Liberia must be prepared and where necessary alongside other agencies of Government, as well as with sub-regional and international partners in averting threats to national security. Over time, this may involve an upward adjustment of the size of the AFL to more effectively respond to our strategic national interest.

2.0.9 Within the constraints of our limited resources, we must learn to adapt, adjust and improvise with available resources and make do when resources are not available. Our transformation program must concentrate on being flexible while at the same time maintaining our core missions. However, we must also be flexible enough to plan for and identify future core missions in respond to regional and international challenges.

2.10 We must ensure and secure a stable and peaceful environment for quality economic growth and development to take place. Clearly, the NDS requires that we seek ways to effectively and efficiently utilize our current force based on national security priorities. To do so, we must provide the necessary policy direction for the AFL, ensure that the AFL can acquire adequate resources, maintain reliable means of transportation and communication and ensure a credible and timely information and intelligence-gathering capability as part of our transformation process. Improved communications and Intelligence-gathering will require cooperation and coordination with other agencies of

government, national security apparatuses and bilateral partners so as to provide clarity to decision and policy making.

### **3.0 The Security Environment**

3.0.1 Today, the security environment is characterized by enormous and complex challenges and threats which may or may not evolve from diverse sources. Importantly, challenges and threats may not only evolve from physical and military threats to human survival, but also non-military threats which may be transnational in character. Some are internal and may include social, economic, political, environmental. And health pandemics. Therefore, our National Defense Strategy must provide the framework for mitigating these challenges, and ensuring that our armed forces can adequately, effectively and appropriately respond and support.

3.0.2 During the years of our civil conflict, we saw a complete breakdown in the general security and social fabric of our society. The population lost trust and confidence in the security sector including the military. Citizens and foreign residents became internally displaced, and thousands of others fled and became refugees abroad. Military and security institutions were polarized by a brutal, corrupt and unjust political order and became ruthless instruments of injustice.

3.0.3 Thus, the vision for national security in Liberia today is a country in which all Liberians and residents are part of the general composite of our society and governed by the rule of law without fear of repression, disenfranchisement, marginalization and state sponsored violence. It is a society in which Liberians can freely express themselves and participate in the decision making process about how their country should be governed.

3.0.4 Our NDS supports the principle of democracy and the rule of law. It respects and supports civilian oversight of our military. The security of the state rests in the belief, attitude, support and general enchantment of the population with the government and the governance environment that generates policies to support development.

### 3.1 Internal Security Challenges

3.1.1 The legacy of our conflict has always been defined by internal social and political dynamics, leading to a feeling of disenfranchisement among some of the population. Political intolerance and lack of inclusiveness generate negative reaction. The wanton abuse of individual freedom, the lack of free expression and the absence of the rule of law generate general discontentment and alternative form of resistance including violence. When the instruments of state power are used against peaceful citizens and residents alike, governance may not be guaranteed by persuasion or policy pronouncement.

3.1.2 Protecting our national sovereignty and the people of Liberia from whom this sovereignty arises, as expressed in the Constitution, is the first goal of our National Defense Strategy. In order to achieve this goal, the following basic principles will guide our actions:

3.1.3 The MoD will seek- based on the advice of the CIC and the AFL- a high level military cooperation with sub-regional, continental and international organizations in the pursuit of regional, continental and global peace

3.1.4 MoD and the AFL shall adhere to international laws on armed conflict and to all international treaties to which Liberia is a signatory.

3.1.5 Our NDS seeks to strengthen regional and international efforts aimed at preventing conflicts, the proliferation of small arms, and weapons of mass destruction.

3.1.6 In Liberia today, the challenges of unemployment, underemployment, limited and or lack of technical skills among our majority youthful population remains daunting. We have former combatants whose skills level and educational qualification pose challenges for daily survival. The reform of our security sector, including the military has led to a tangible pool of potentially dissatisfied former military and security personnel, in an environment where employment opportunities are challenging and limited. Others who were mercenaries during the period of conflict in the Mano River Union acquired residual "skills" set on the use of weapons. Those within the category of disenfranchised former combatants who are unable to fend for themselves and their families remain a potential pool of security concern to our fledgling democracy.

3.1.7 Although the thousands of former combatants and deactivated security and military personnel may be seen as a potential internal threat, it is actually the pressure of "providing for themselves, their needs and for their families and dependents", that constitute a major challenge which must be addressed. With peace and security, and with foreign capital investments accruing, job creation in all sectors will be the major panacea for addressing this form of internal threat. Programs that provide for vocational and technical training, as well as better agricultural skills to this pool of Liberians will enhance the chances for employment and better utilization of our soil for food and crop production; thus minimizing the likelihood of discontentment against the State.



3.1.8 Internal Insurgency, for whatever purpose, must never be allowed to be an instrument to abrogate our constitutional form of government nor should it be the alternative to the change of government. Our NDS must clearly distinguish between civilian expression of frustration through different forms of protest from those wishing to violently dislodge “...the Center of Gravity....” of our emerging democracy. Insurgency, by whatever means and by whoever remains a major internal threat, for which our Armed Forces must be appropriately trained, adequately equipped and prepared to counter and decisively defeat. Counter- insurgency may not necessarily rely on the use of force alone to defeat, but as part of a broad range of options available to the Commander In-Chief to respond to and defeat.

3.1.9 Other challenges and threats to our national security interest can also originate from natural disasters, health pandemics and by non-conventional means. Members of our armed forces must be trained, equipped and prepared to support ,respond and assist in managing and relieving these challenges.

## **3.2 External Security Challenges**

3.2.1 Liberia is a founding member of the Mano River Union, and a member of ECOWAS. We benefited from the ultimate sacrifice made by our neighbors to bring lasting peace to our war torn country. We must maintain good neighborliness and promote credible exchange programs that will lead to an enabling environment of confidence, security and free flow of goods and services between our neighbors and ourselves.

3.2.2 In Her 2006 Inaugural Address, The Commander-In-Chief of

the Armed Forces of Liberia said: “...Not one inch of Liberia’s territory will be used to destabilize our neighbors....” This principle statement has been incorporated in the kind of bilateral relations our Armed Forces has with our counterparts in the region and elsewhere.

3.2.3 We shall support cordial relations with all of our neighbors and remain engaged through mutually beneficial activities to minimize and avoid conflict along our borders and in our external relations. We shall remain supportive of ECOWAS decisions as well as those of the Mano River Union, of which we are one of the founding members. In this light, we shall cooperate with our neighbors in the pursuit of the collective security interests of our region because security is indivisible; what affects one country can have impact on the rest.

3.2.4 We shall remain cognizant that terrorism and extremism feed into social and political discontentment and thus remain national security threats. Narco-trafficking and transnational crimes pose major threats to our national security and therefore, our Armed Forces must be better trained, equipped and resourced to counter these threats. Illegal actions against our marine resources will be challenged and defeated by our robust Coast Guard. We shall cooperate with regional and international organizations and with our bilateral partners in countering terrorism, extremism, international trafficking of narcotics and other dangerous substances.

## **3.3 Assessment and Response**

3.3.1. All of these threats can harm the people of Liberia, expose them to violence, and deprive them of life, liberty or

property. But not all threats may be or should be countered by military action. Effective law enforcement and the broader processes of peace building, good governance, economic development and access to basic services, taken together, are the best defense against internal instability, insecurity and insurrection. Where a military response is appropriate and necessary, it must be under taken in strict conformity with our Constitution and laws, under the expressed direction of the Commander-in-Chief.

3.3.2 Liberians today still have fresh memories of bad governance, disenfranchisement, exclusionary politics and uneven access to the benefits of economic development that led to our devastating conflict and state collapse. Unfortunately, instruments of state power were implicit in victimizing those whom they swore to protect.

3.3.3 As a result, internal reform of our military and security services became an integral component of Liberia's National Security Strategy and in line with that, this National Defense Strategy puts emphasis on the continuing transformation of the Armed Forces of Liberia. The defenders of the nation should never again degenerate into predatory elements of state repression or become the makers of coups. The Armed Forces of Liberia must never be used to settle or intervene in political conflict.

3.3.4 We remain very mindful of our historical legacy. Therefore, our National Defense Strategy must confront the brutality and far reaching implications of an insurgency; define the appropriate range of options, and the role of the AFL in internal security in collaboration with other security agencies. The Armed Forces of Liberia, when required and ordered, must respond rapidly, robustly, and decisively to defeat any

insurgency, and/or armed threat to the stability of our country.

3.3.5 Under emergency circumstances, at the request of the Minister of Justice to the Minister of National Defense, the President may direct the AFL to assist law enforcement agencies and in extremis, may order the AFL to respond with wide range of options in major internal security situation "as a last resort", when the threat exceeds the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to respond ." (NDA 2008, Section 2.3[e])

3.3.6 Clear channels of communication and command and control procedures must be established (within the National Military Command Center) among the security agencies, so that internal security threats may be countered effectively and swiftly. We are mindful that clear lines of functions and missions between law enforcement response to violent civil unrest or armed gangs and military response to insurgents who take up arms, seeking to control territory and overthrow the constitutional order may be difficult to discern in the heat of a rapidly deteriorating crisis. However, it is a line that is fundamental to this NDS and that the AFL must not and will not assume the functions of the police or other law enforcement agencies during such collaboration. The AFL will develop appropriate capabilities to defeat any insurgency and external aggression, whether from state or non-state actors and cooperate with other agencies as part of a broader strategy to deal with such threats.

3.3.7 The AFL must position itself to respond to cross-border incursions and threats to our territorial integrity when ordered to do so. Such posture will involve the development of a rapid-reaction force, the forward-deployment of the AFL in the border areas, the

development of long-range patrol capabilities, aerial surveillance or combination of these or other approaches. Initially, the immediate focus will be on improving intelligence in the border regions, collaborating with other security and intelligence agencies and exchanging information with other Mano River Union security services.

#### **4.0 Mission and Roles of the Armed Forces of Liberia**

4.1.1 The Mission of the Armed Forces of Liberia (*New National Defense Act, 2008*) is: **“To protect the territorial integrity of Liberia from internal and external threats, respond to natural (and man-made) disasters; support the reconstruction of Liberia and contribute to regional and internal peace and security....”**. The security and prosperity of Liberia require the development and continued support of an inclusive, accountable and effective armed forces. The role of the Armed Forces of Liberia is to ensure that the mission as prescribed by Law and upon the Orders of the President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia is successfully carried out with- out prejudice. All AFL personnel must conduct themselves through prescribed training and regimentation and ascribe to the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) as well as adhere to the values of “Citizens Solider – “A force for good – Dare to Defend”. Personnel of the AFL must uphold and respect human rights and subject themselves to civilian authority as prescribed by law and within the Chain of Command.

4.1.2 Our Armed Forces must be trained and develop the robust capability and capacity to defend the nation. The goal is for the AFL to be able to conduct two kinds of operations simultaneously to support our national strategic interest:

Internal Defense and Reconstruction activities, and Regional and International Peace Support Operations (PSO) when ordered to do so by the Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces. Our Armed Forces, through its Coast Guard must be able to provide protection and reassurance that our maritime borders and economic zones of interest are protected against all forms of illegal activities and serving our strategic interest. We must acquire the requisite airlift capability to respond to and employ and deploy to safeguard and protect our citizens and our national security interest.

4.1.3 The MoD must ensure that its recurrent budgetary allocations and program budgets fully support the mission of the AFL, and all of its organic units with emphasis on the welfare of our AFL Personnel along with their families.

#### **4.3 Peace Building**

4.3.1 The underlying principle of the NSS is human security for development. Our NDS also relies on this principle. This requires that we must build a sustainable, coordinated architecture and ensure that we adhere to high standards, professional conduct and ethical behavior. Our actions must reflect national unity and foster harmonious relations.

4.3.2 our National Defense Strategy supports GoLs ‘Agenda for Transformation’ to the fullest extent possible, through performances of organic units of the AFL, without eroding the essential capabilities of its mission.

#### **4.4 Resourcing the AFL**

4.4.1 Funding levels for development of the AFL shall be determined by the force structure and capabilities needed to respond to national security threat level. Such determination must be made through:

- A) The National Budget process and cost recovery operations resulting from interdiction of illegal vessels within Liberia's territorial waters.
- B) The expansion of the Commander-In-Chief's mandate for the AFL to participate in Peace Keeping Operations along with our organic equipment.
- C) Bilateral and multilateral training and equipment acquisition resulting from any partnership that the AFL might otherwise enter into. In addition to funding by the GoL, we may also seek assistance from bilateral partners as well as technical assistance from regional and continental bodies and international organizations.

4.4.2 No matter what its size, the AFL must be well trained and properly supported also ensuring an adequate quality of life of the men and women serving in the AFL and their families must be a bedrock principle. For the foreseeable future, the AFL's emphasis will necessarily be on quality rather than quantity

4.4.3 Greater transparency in budget and expenditures is paramount to the successful implementation of the NDS.

## **5.0 Regional Training Initiative**

Our National Defense Strategy seeks to position facilities of

the MoD(AFL) to conduct specialized training not only to the benefit of Liberia but also other military personnel in the region. Such training should reflect regional and international concerns and specific capacities predominantly under the control of our armed forces. Specifically the engineering company (prospective battalion of the AFL) must develop capacities in disarming and diffusing Unexploded Ordnances. This expertise will enable other countries that experience civil conflicts to benefit.

## **6.0 Interactions between MoD and other GoL Ministries and Agencies**

6.0.1 Liberia needs a stable environment in which its major systems (economic, political, and security) can function effectively. The NDS requires the MoD and, as appropriate, the AFL to liaise, work cooperatively, collaborate with and support civil authorities in enhancing peace, security and contribute to the welfare of the Liberian people.

6.0.2 The MoD must understand the interdependencies of GoL ministries and agencies. A critical tool in this effort is the newly established National Military Response Center (NMRC), mandated in the National Defense Act. Over time the NMRC has the potential to develop into an important center for improved coordination and information sharing among the different stakeholders

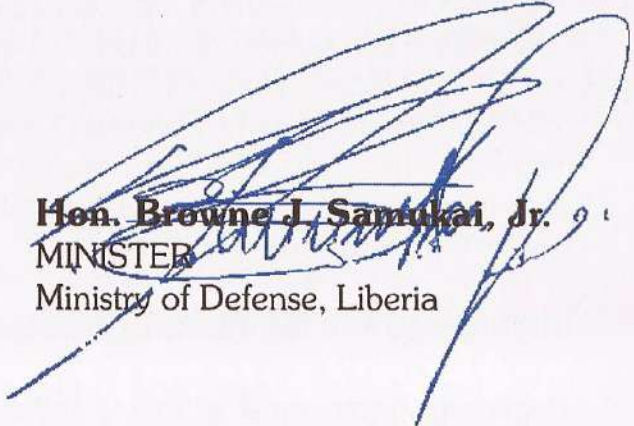
## **7.0 Intelligence and Information Processing**

7.0.1 The security sector must be able to gather information from various sources, process it for integration and dissemination to other agencies in order to share a common operating

framework

7.0.2 The MoD and AFL are non-political; they are entirely subject to the control and oversight of the duly elected and appointed civilian authorities. In non-military roles, the MoD supports the Armed Forces of Liberia in:

- A. Providing command, communications, logistical, medical, transportation and humanitarian support to the civil authority in the event of a natural or man-made disaster; outbreak of disease or epidemic.
- B. Assisting civil authorities in search, rescues and lifesaving on land, sea, or air.
- C. MoD and AFL interaction with civil society is to reassure the Liberian people that the new AFL is a “force for good”.



**Hon. Browne J. Samukai, Jr.**  
MINISTER  
Ministry of Defense, Liberia