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EXTERNAL STUDY

Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL's Work in Liberia

(Conducted in January 2006)

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March 2006

This report responds to a request by the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section (PBPS) to conduct a public opinion survey in Liberia to gather the opinions of a cross section of the Liberian public regarding the work of UNMIL. The report was prepared by Dr. Jean Krasno of the City College of New York and Yale University. The study reflects the views of Dr. Krasno as a representation of the participants' responses to the survey questionnaire and does not necessarily represent the policies or views of PBPS or the United Nations.

Jean Krasno is a Fellow at International Security Studies, Yale University and is an Associate of United Nations Studies at Yale where she has taught courses on the United Nations, UN peacekeeping, and International Organization. Dr. Krasno is also an adjunct professor of International Relations at City College of New York. She was Executive Director of the Academic Council on the United Nations System from 1998 to 2003. She has also served as Deputy Director of the Yale-UN Oral History Project under James Sutterlin at Yale where she conducted a series of interviews with people who have been directly involved in crises involving UN peace operations. Dr . Krasno received her Ph.D. from the City University of New York Graduate Center in 1994 and has taught as a visiting scholar at Wesleyan University. Some of her publications include *The United Nations: Confronting the Challenges of a Global Society*, editor, (2004), Lynne Rienner Publisher*; Leveraging for Success in UN Peace Operations,* editor with Don Daniel and Bradd Hayes, (2003) Greenwood/Praeger Publishers; *The United Nations and Iraq: Defanging the Viper*, coauthored with James Sutterlin (2003), Greenwood/Praeger Publishers; "Brazil" in Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, *The Pivotal States: A New Framework for U.S. Policy in the Developing World* (1998), St. Martin's Press.

Please send your comments on this paper to PBPS by e-mail at dpko-pbpuwebmaster@un.org.

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PEACEKEEPING BEST PRACTICES

Public Opinion Survey of UNMIL's Work in Liberia

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Report on the Findings of the Public Opinion Survey: Liberia
Conducted in January 2006

Introduction and Methodology

A Public Opinion Survey was conducted in Liberia to assess views of UNMIL.

Participants were from most of the counties and all walks of life.

A public opinion survey was conducted in Liberia in January 2006, under the direction of Dr. Jean Krasno of the City College of New York at the request of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), to assess the way in which the people of Liberia view the work of the UN peacekeeping operation in Liberia, the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). Dr. Krasno and her student research assistants designed the questionnaire with input from the DPKO. An organization in Sierra Leone, the Campaign for Good Governance, which had assisted in a similar survey in Sierra Leone facilitated the interaction with two nongovernmental organizations in Liberia to disseminate the questionnaire. The Liberian organizations are: the Foundation for Democracy and Human Rights (FOHRD) and the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections (NAYMOTE). The nearly 800 questionnaires were returned to City College where the analysis took place in February and March 2006 with the assistance of CCNY students: Brad Walrond, Robert Field, Naoko Kumagai, Jeremy Marks, and Joe Macaron. Julius Powell, a professional consultant, designed and ran the data analysis.

Researchers from the two Liberian Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were dispersed throughout most of the country, covering 13 of the 15 counties where they were asked to select a random sample of the population. Some areas of Liberia were impossible to reach by car due to poor roads in the rainy season, which accounted for some of the concentration of respondents from the coastal areas. Where people did not read or write English, the researchers translated the questionnaire into the local language and then wrote the answers into the questionnaire in English. While some information may be altered somewhat in translation using this method, the advantage is that we were able to reach people from every walk of life in many of the rural areas. There are a total of nearly 800 respondents including an age range from 13-18 year olds to over 65. Occupations included students, teachers, farmers, traders/sellers, and other types including market women, police officers, mechanics, electricians, school administrators, housewives, computer operators, social workers, money changers, secretaries, builders, and nurses. Of the total participants, 61 percent were male and 39 percent female. Of the group that participated in the study, over 62 percent said they were unemployed.

SURVEY RESULTS:

Respondents rate the UN very highly in providing security but want UNMIL to stay longer.

I. Security issues:
Ninety-four percent of the respondents said the security situation has improved under UNMIL, a further 91 percent said UNMIL had done a good or very good job at making them feel safe, and an additional 91 percent said that the professional conduct of UNMIL had been good or very good. A sample response from the participants is:

- *[The]UN has made the guns silent, provided securities, mediation and has repaired roads, bridges, renovated school and provided safe drinking water to the rural areas.*

A large number of the respondents, 90 percent, stated that UNMIL had done a very good or good job of implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). They generally rated the disarmament process as going well, with 26 percent rating it very good and another 42 percent calling it good. However, the remaining 32 percent rated it only fair or poor. Some negative reasons given are as follows:

- *The worst thing UNMIL has done is not to disarm, leaving some rebels with arms in the Guthrie Plantation company; not getting the hunters from Belle forest and some people are still moving over night arms to people and places and killing them.*

A very high number, 92 percent, stated that the retraining of the police by the UN was very good or good, however, the level of confidence in the Liberian police was mixed, with only 29 percent saying they were very confident in the effectiveness of the police, 58 percent saying they were only somewhat confident in the police, and 13 percent stating they had no confidence in the effectiveness of the police. This is an area of serious concern for the future security situation inside the country as 88 percent of the participants expressed they would like UNMIL to stay longer.

Liberians are grateful to UN peacekeepers for their extensive development projects and rate Radio UNMIL highly.

II. UNMIL's Development Projects and Communication with Local Populations:
Quick Impact Projects: the Liberian people are very grateful to the UN peacekeepers for restoring peace and security and for all the reconstruction and development work they have done in most parts of the country. The examples of community development recounted in the survey are extraordinary. Liberians described how UN peacekeepers built roads and bridges, road networks, shelters, health centers, schools, renovated buildings, and built market structures. They gave out free medical care and medicine, food, and clothing. All of these efforts seem to have built good will and trust among the local population. The participants often used the phrase "quick impact projects" in describing some of the things the UN had done. Below are a few direct quotes from the responses:

- *UN soldiers have gone beyond their regular duties of providing security to help we students, our neighbors, and community as a whole to build schools, roads, and clinics.*

- *UN soldiers have gone beyond their regular duties of providing security. This includes the renovation of schools, building of bridges, etc.*
- *The quick impact project at my school is a clear example of going beyond their regular duties.*

Communication: Respondents gave very high marks to Radio UNMIL. A total of 97 percent said that Radio UNMIL had done a good or very good job at getting information out to the people. The respondents noted that it has been an important point of communication with the rest of the country and the world and they rely on Radio UNMIL for information and the truth.

Human Rights: A large majority of the respondents, 88 percent, stated that UNMIL has helped to improve human rights conditions in Liberia, by raising awareness of human rights, holding human rights seminars, and intervening on behalf of victims. Primarily, though, they said that UNMIL had improved human rights by bringing peace to Liberia through increased security, disarmament, and enabling people to have freedom of movement.

III. Criticisms of UNMIL:

Serious complaints include rape, encouraging prostitution, and an incomplete disarmament process.

Sexual exploitation and rape: About 22 percent of the participants (167 out of 770) complained that some peacekeepers had raped women and young children and had contributed to the encouragement of prostitution among young girls, leading them to drop out of school. These complaints were concentrated in certain counties (primarily Montserrado) and not others. While this is an opinion survey and not a fact-finding report, these responses indicate perception of a serious problem and a full investigation should be made into these complaints of sexual abuse and exploitation. This is not only a serious problem for peacekeeping in general but also the moral integrity of the UN.

Incomplete disarmament and other issues: While 38 percent had no complaints about UNMIL's work, 10 percent were concerned that the UN had not completed the disarmament process, that arms were still hidden, and that the UN should carry out house-to-house arms collection. Another 9 percent complained that weapons were not sufficiently collected from some of the large rubber plantations and that former fighters were being sheltered there. They were also concerned about crime.

IV. The Role of UNMIL in the 2005 Elections:

An overwhelming number of respondents expressed that the UN had done a great job in ensuring the 2005 elections were free and

A full 94 percent of the Liberian participants expressed their belief that the UN did a good or very good job in ensuring that the October and November 2005 elections in Liberia were free and fair, with 72 percent describing the work as very good. Those who were positive stated that the elections were free and fair and that UNMIL had provided security and a safe environment for the voting process. Others commended the logistical support and voter education through Radio UNMIL and other media avenues. Some responses are:

- *The election in 2005 was very peaceful, free and fair. Not only fair, but also transparent, due to UN peacekeeping forces present.*

- *UN played a neutral role in the Liberian October/November election by providing maximum security to all contestant candidates and civic education for the election.*
- *UN's role in assisting the elections in Liberia was remarkable. They provided funding, materials, logistics, and security.*

Some complaints about the elections, however, included these remarks:

- *They really helped our country with this whole election business but some areas in the interior did not vote because of the road conditions.*
- *UNMIL did well during the elections, at least it was peaceful, but logistics and funds were not enough for poll workers.*
- *October elections were very free and fair. November elections had signs of fraudulence.*

Some concluding remarks: When the survey results are taken as a whole, certain patterns come together. In general, the Liberians in the study commended UNMIL for bringing peace and making them feel safer. They rate the retraining of the police as good but express doubts about their confidence in the police to carry out their duties effectively. These Liberians seem to fear rising crime and lack of jobs and how that will affect the future stability and peace throughout the country. While there were serious complaints about sexual abuse by some peacekeepers, most of the people who participated in the study felt that the UN had done a very good job providing security and assisting the peaceful outcome of the 2005 elections. They were generally pleased with the development and quick impact projects carried out by UN peacekeepers, but also articulated some confusion about the UN mandate in Liberia. Some interviewees felt that UNMIL should be providing jobs, building infrastructure, and constructing clinics and hospitals. Strikingly, almost half the people felt that the biggest challenge to Liberia today is rehabilitation and reintegration, expressing these concerns in a very psychological manner, in terms of forgiveness, love, respect, and tolerance.

This is a public opinion survey and should be understood as a glimpse at what the people of Liberia are thinking at a given point in time. It therefore has some limitations. However, the survey has provided a wealth of information. We were impressed with how much the people knew about UNMIL and the conditions in the country. The survey produced a more comprehensive vision of expectations and the substance of people's concerns than might have been initially thought. These results are an indication that opinion surveys can be very useful for gaining feedback. After all, ultimately peace will depend on the people and their perceptions on conditions in Liberia; they may know best what their needs are.

Report on the Findings of the Survey
(Conducted in January 2006)

Introduction and Methodology

A public opinion survey was conducted in Liberia in January 2006 under the direction of Dr. Jean Krasno of the City College of New York. The survey was carried out at the request of the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) to assess the way in which the people of Liberia view the work of the UN peacekeeping operation, UNMIL, the United Nations Mission in Liberia. Dr. Krasno along with a group of student research assistants designed the questionnaire with input from the UN. An organization in Sierra Leone, the Campaign for Good Governance, which had assisted in a similar survey in Sierra Leone facilitated the interaction with two nongovernmental organizations in Liberia to disseminate the questionnaire. The Liberian organizations are: the Foundation for Democracy and Human Rights (FOHRD) and the National Youth Movement for Transparent Elections (NAYMOTE). The nearly 800 questionnaires were returned to City College where the analysis took place in February and March 2006 with the assistance of CCNY students: Brad Walrond, Robert Field, Naoko Kumagai, Jeremy Marks, and Joe Macaron. Julius Powell, a professional consultant, designed and ran the data analysis.

Researchers from the two Liberian NGOs were dispersed throughout much of the country, concentrating on seven of the counties, but reaching participants from 13 out of 15 counties, including the capital Monrovia. Some areas of Liberia were impossible to reach by car due to poor road conditions, which accounted for some of the concentration of respondents from the coastal areas. They were asked to select a random sample and under certain circumstances where people did not read or write English, the researchers translated the questionnaire into the local language and then wrote the answers into the questionnaire in English. While some information may be altered somewhat in translation using this method, the advantage was that we were able to reach people from every walk of life in even the farthest areas. There are a total of nearly 800 respondents including an age range of 13-18 up to over 65. Of the sample, many described themselves as students, teachers, farmers, and traders/sellers. Other occupations were market women, police officers, mechanics, electricians, school administrators, housewives, computer operators, social workers, money changers, secretaries, builders, and nurses. Of the total participants, 61 percent were male and 39 percent female. Over 62 percent said they were unemployed.

The questionnaire has 24 questions organized into two parts: in the first section, the respondent was asked to circle one of a pre-established group of answers, e.g., yes/no; very good/good/fair/poor; in the second section the respondent was asked a series of open-ended questions that were to be answered with narrative, written responses.

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Background on Liberia

Liberia is a country of about 96 thousand square kilometers on the western coast of Africa supporting a population of about three and one half million people, with about 46 percent of the population under the age of 15. Natural resources include diamonds, iron ore, gold, timber, and hydropower. Liberia's agricultural products are rubber, coffee, rice, cocoa, palm oil, casava, sugar cane, and bananas. While compared to other African countries, instances of HIV/AIDs in Liberia at about six percent is low, but other diseases and health factors impose a heavy burden on the population where infant mortality is at 129 per 1000 live births and life expectancy is only 39 years. Literacy stands at 57.5 percent with unemployment at a staggering 85 percent.[1] The country is divided into 15 administrative counties: Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Margibi, Maryland, Montserrado, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee, and Sinoe. The Capital, Monrovia, is located in the county of Montserrado on the western coast.

The ethnic configuration in the country consists of 16 tribal groups, Americo-Liberians as descendants of former slaves returning to Africa, and Congo People, descendants of immigrants from the Caribbean who had been slaves. About 40 percent of Liberians hold indigenous beliefs; another 40 percent are Christian; and the remaining 20 percent are Muslim. Contributing to Liberia's poverty, where 80 percent of the people live below the poverty line, has been the devastating civil war that ravaged the country for 14 years. The civil war, which began in late 1989, claimed some 150,000 lives, mostly civilian. As in conflict in neighboring Sierra Leone, Liberia suffered terrible human rights atrocities with mass killings, forced conscription of young boys and girls as child soldiers, rape, looting, and burning of villages.

In 1990, at the outset of the war, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) established an observer force, ECOMOG[2], to assist the Liberian government. However, as the civil war raged on unabated, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo in 1992, which was followed by the deployment in 1993 of a UN observer force, UNOMIL, to assist ECOMOG. Elections were finally held in 1997 and Charles Taylor, leader of the rebel forces, was elected president, but the violence quickly resumed. On 1 August 2003, the Security Council authorized the establishment of an ECOWAS peacekeeping mission through UN resolution 1497, and on 18 August 2003, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed, which ended the conflict and forced the resignation of Charles Taylor. Troops flown in from the neighboring UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) provided logistics support to ECOWAS, and on 19 September 2003, the Security Council adopted resolution 1509, establishing the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and authorizing the transfer of authority from ECOWAS to UNMIL.

UNMIL was established to support the implementation of the CPA and peace process to protect civilians and UN staff, assist in the training of a new police force, restructure the military, and support human rights and humanitarian activities. After two years of a transitional government, in November 2005, Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia, the first female ever elected president in Africa. As of January 2006, UNMIL had just under 15,000 troops, 205

[1] The World Fact Book, 2006, published by the United States Central Intelligence Agency: www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/li.html
[2] Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group

military observers, 1,028 police, and 549 civilian staff. There have been 68 UNMIL fatalities since the mission was established in September 2003.

SURVEY RESULTS

Demographics of the survey sample:

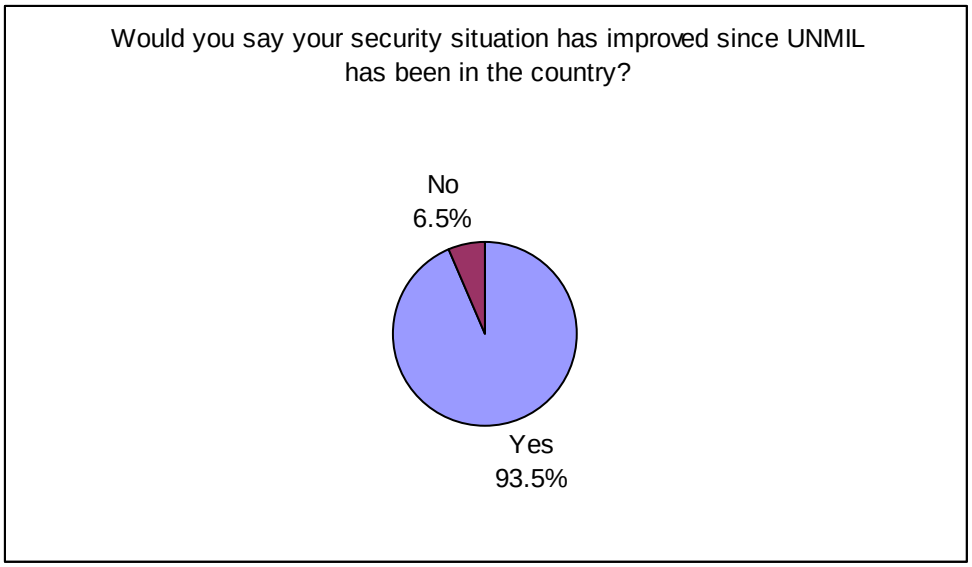
The survey established seven different age categories; the ages of the respondents were distributed across all the age-groups but clustered in the mid-range with 6 percent aged 13-18; 25 percent aged 19-25; 32 percent aged 26-35; 20 percent aged 36-45; 10 percent ages 46-55; 5 percent ages 55-65; and 2 percent over 65 years old. This roughly reflects the distribution of the adult population in Liberia, however, it must be noted that about 46 percent of the whole population, adults and children, are under the age of 15 years with a median age of 18, indicating a large youth bulge. Our survey shows that among our participants unemployment is at about 62 percent. The gender ratio of 61 percent male to 39 percent female in our sample is not representative of the general population, which is roughly equally male and female. This may be because males are more accessible for such a survey.

Geographic distribution among the group of participants is highly concentrated in the coastal areas in the counties of Montserrado with the capital Monrovia (43 percent); Grand Cape Mount (13 percent), and Bomi (13 percent). Other counties nearby the Monrovia area but more inland are Bong (13 percent) and Margibi (13 percent). The other counties included in the survey are distributed around the country with much smaller representation, ranging from one person in Sinoe county to 6-8 people in counties such as Lofa, Grand Bass, and Maryland. The local Liberian NGOs who distributed the questionnaire said that the impassable condition of the roads due to the rainy season, and the time limitations in getting the survey completed, contributed to the concentration of participants in the more accessible areas.

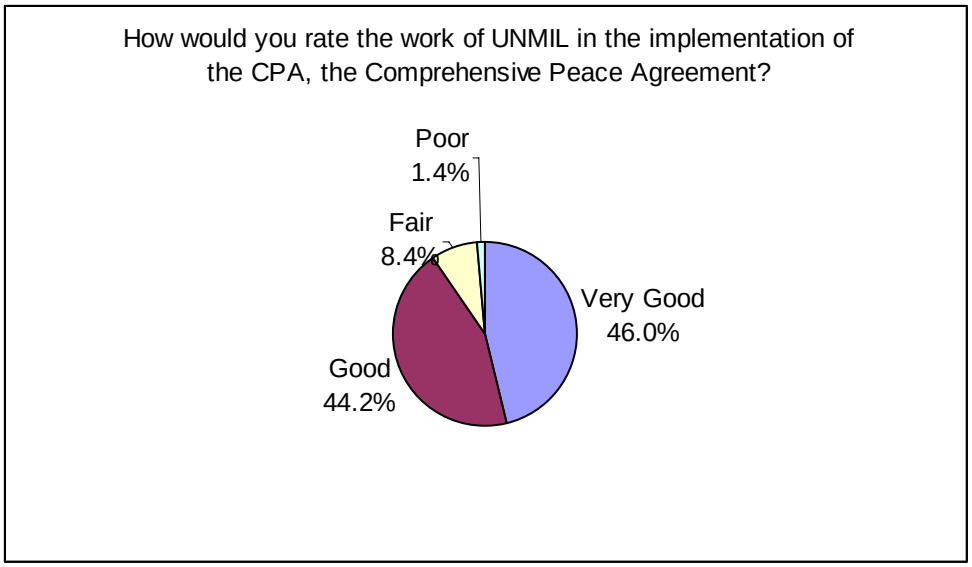
Section I: multiple choice responses

In the first section of the questionnaire we asked a number of questions with fixed multiple choice answers that the participant was asked to circle with his or her response.

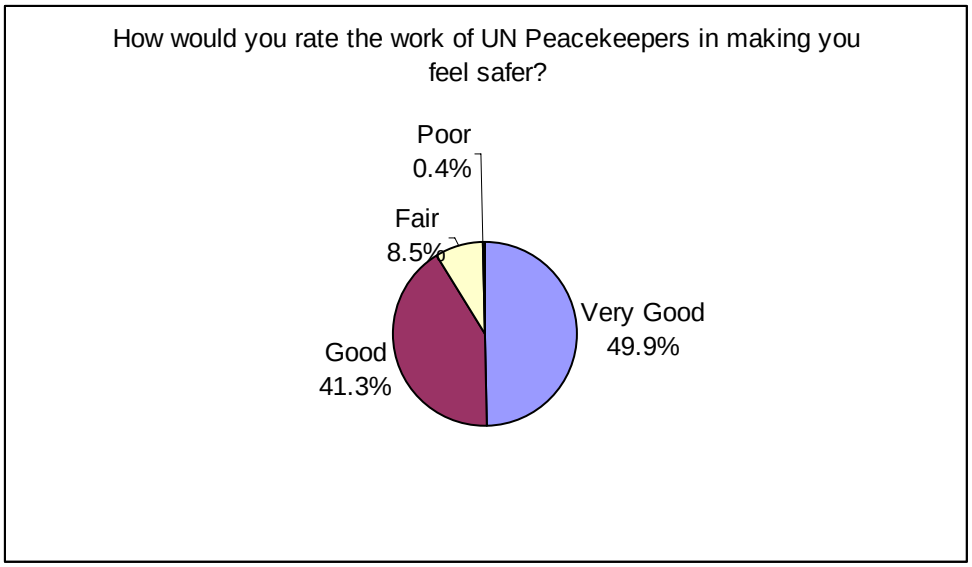
In **question one**, the participants were given the options of a yes or no answer: "Would you say your security situation has improved since UNMIL has been in the country?" An overwhelming majority, 94 percent, answered yes, that the security situation had improved with only 6 percent saying no.



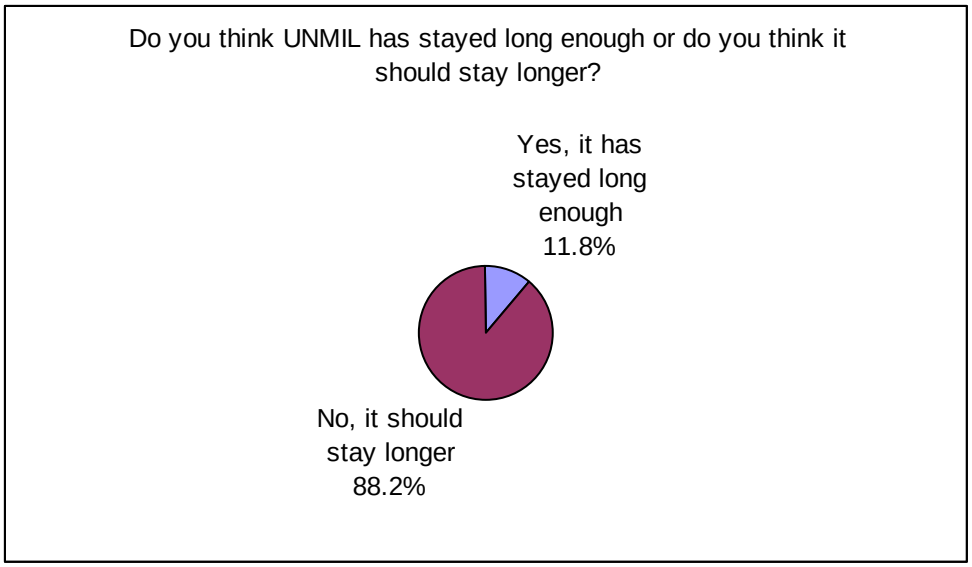
Question two asked the respondent to rate the work of UNMIL in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA); 90 percent answered very good or good, with 46 percent saying very good. Only 10 percent said that the implementation of the CPA had been only fair or poor.



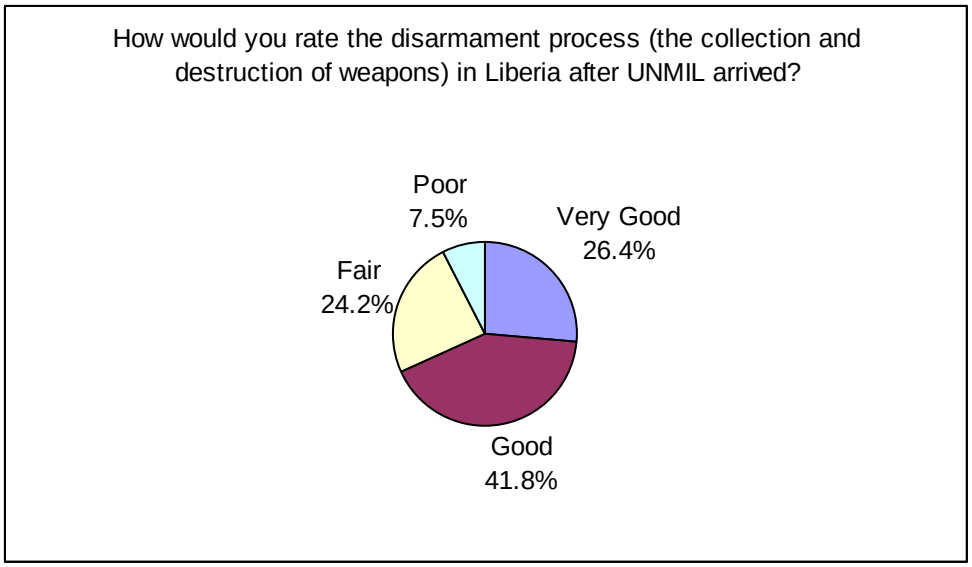
In **question three**, the participants were asked to rate the work of UN peacekeepers in making them feel safer; 91 percent stated that UNMIL had done a good or very good job in making them feel safer; with 50 percent stating that it was very good. Only 9 percent said it was fair or poor.



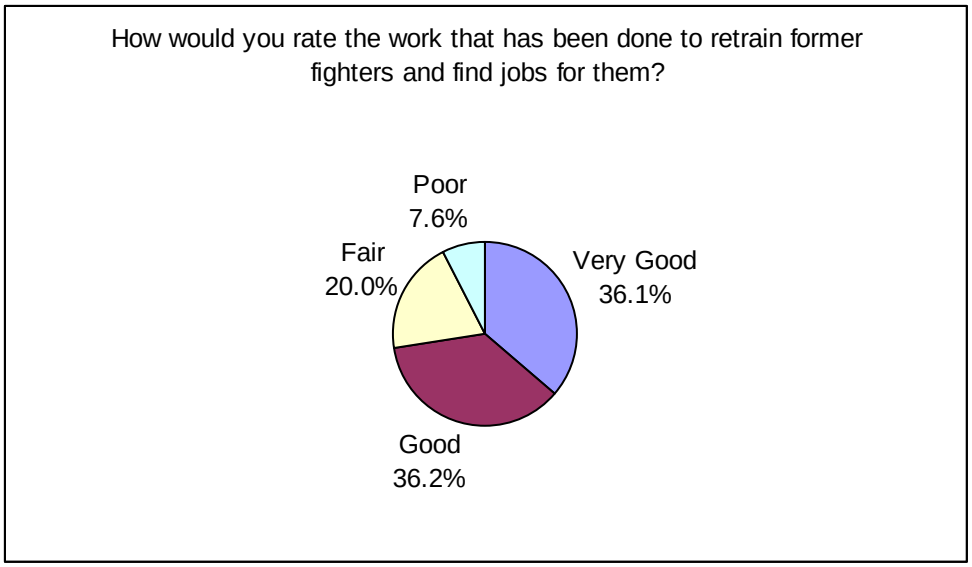
In **question four,** which asked them if they thought that UNMIL had stayed long enough, only 12 percent said that UNMIL had stayed long enough, but 88 percent felt that UNMIL should stay longer.



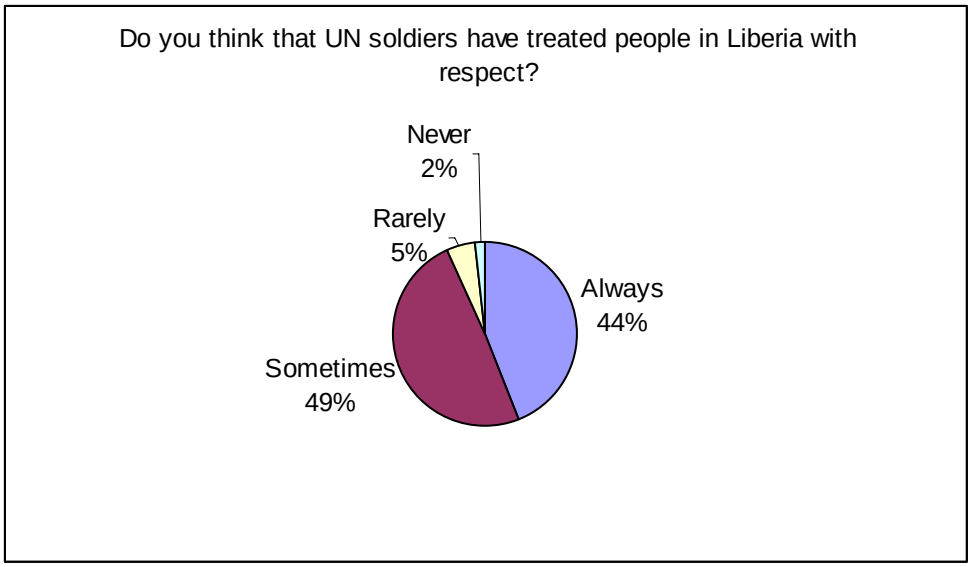
Question five asked the respondents to rate the disarmament process. Many, 26 percent, stated that UNMIL had done a very good job disarming the fighters; and another 42 percent rated the disarmament process as good. However a significant number, 32 percent, stated that the disarmament process was only fair or poor.



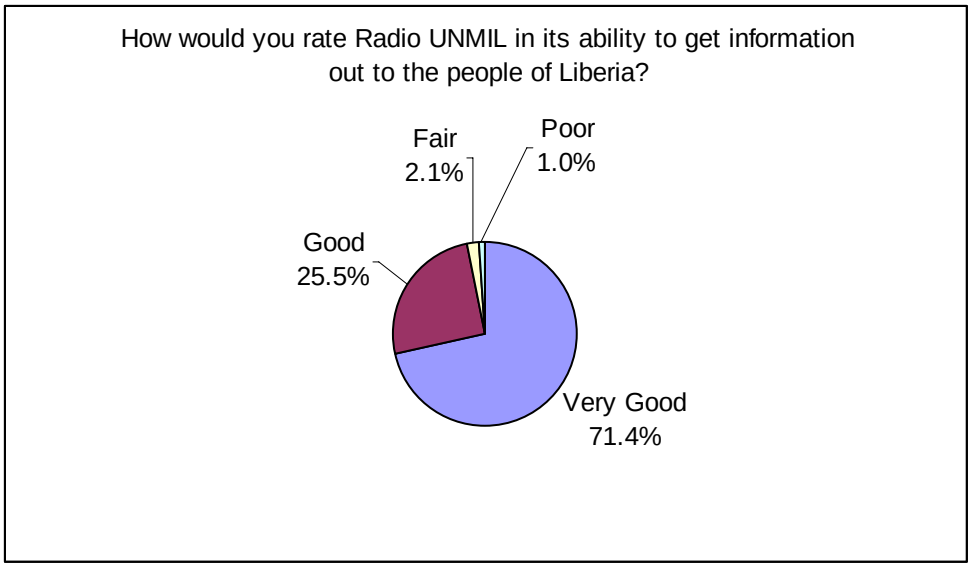
Question six asked the Liberians to rate the work of UNMIL in retraining former fighters and finding jobs for them. The responses were distributed in a more diverse pattern on this issue. Some, 36 percent, rated the retraining and finding jobs for former fighters as very good; another 36 percent said it was good; however, 20 percent said it was fair; and another 8 percent described it as poor.



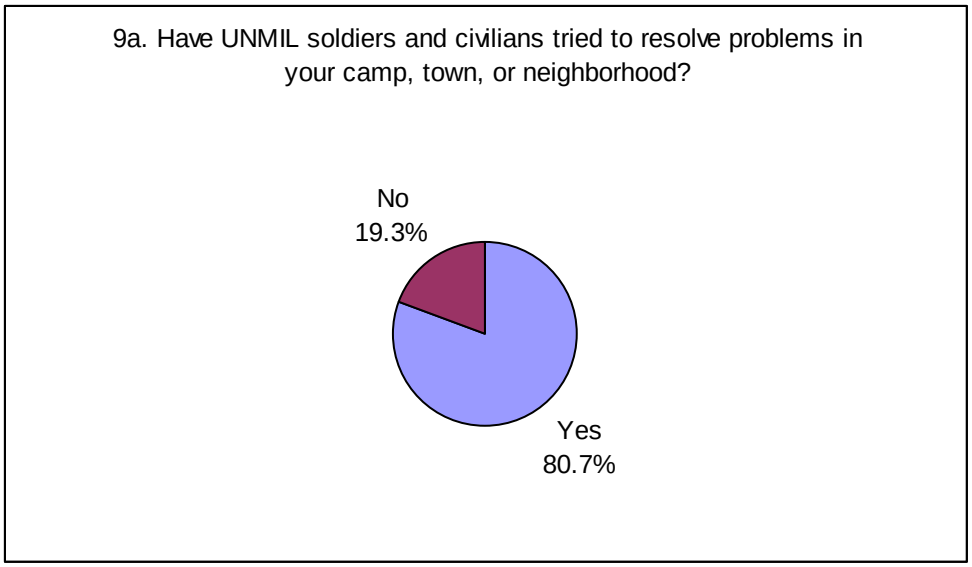
When asked in **question seven** if UN soldiers had treated the people in Liberia with respect, 44 percent of the respondents answered always; with 49 percent saying sometimes, 5 percent said rarely, and 2 percent said never. So, while UNMIL is generally seen to be respectful to the Liberian public, there appears to be room for improvement.

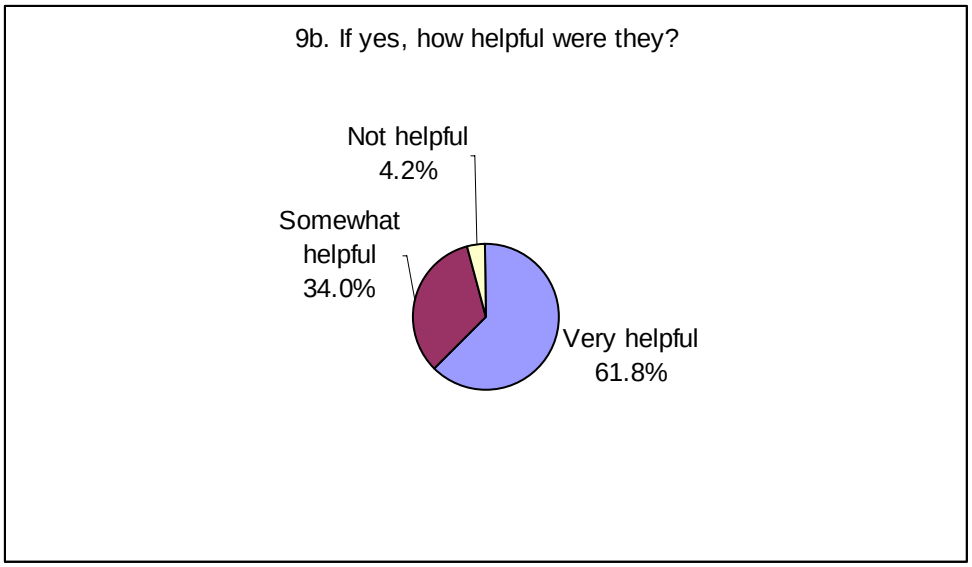


Question eight asked the Liberian participants to rate Radio UNMIL in its ability to get information out to the people of Liberia. Radio UNMIL appears to be very popular with a full 97 percent rating it good or very good. The breakdown is 71 percent very good; 26 percent good; and only 3 percent describing Radio UNMIL as fair or poor.

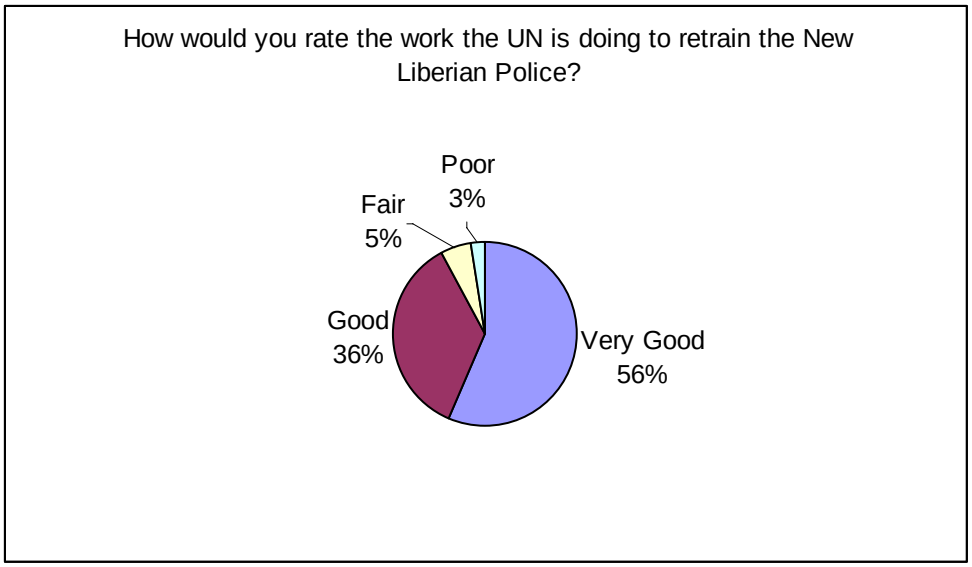


When they were asked in **question 9a and 9b** if UN peacekeepers had tried to resolve local problems in their town or community, 81 percent said, yes, they had tried to do so, and of those who said yes, 62 percent said the UN had been very helpful, 34 percent said somewhat helpful, and 4 percent said they had not been helpful.

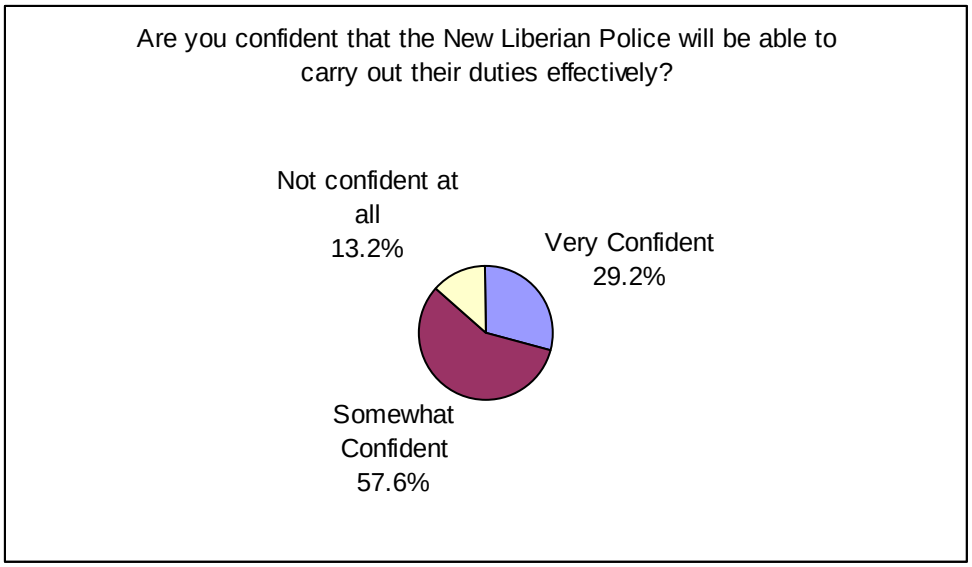




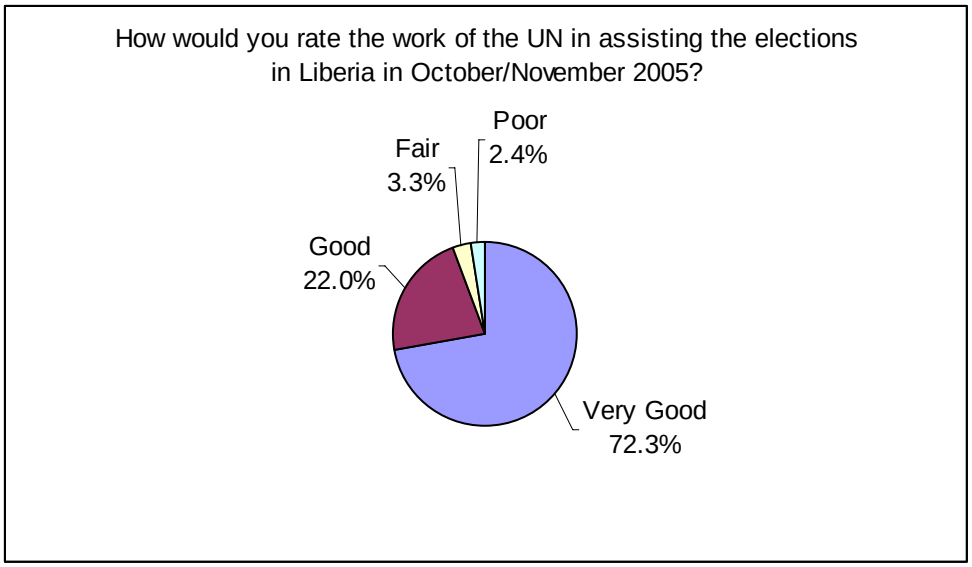
Question 10 asks the participants to rate the work that the UN is doing to retrain the New Liberian Police; a large 92 percent said the work was either good or very good, with 56 percent rating the work as very good; and only 8 percent found it fair or poor.



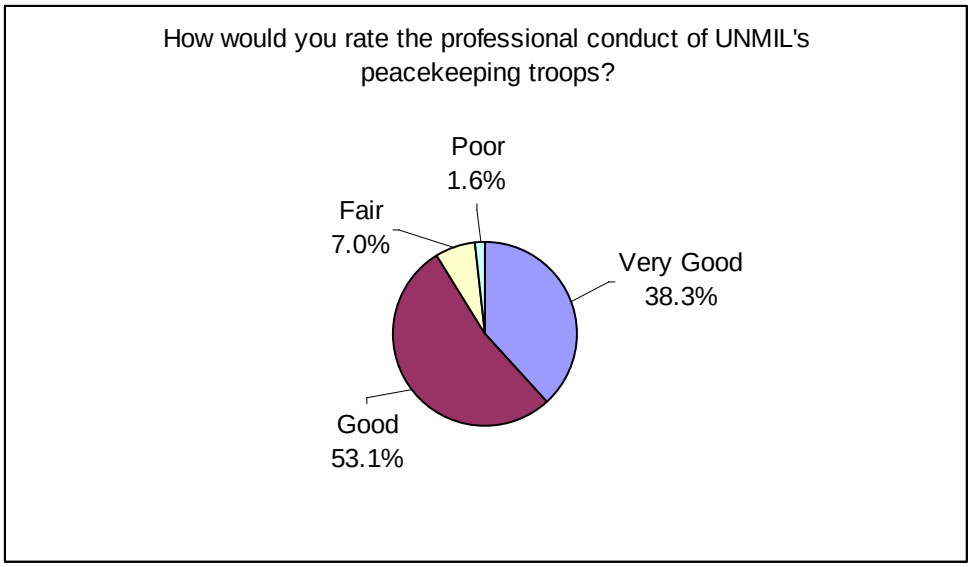
Question 11 is a follow-up to question 10; it asks the Liberians if they are confident that the New Liberian Police will be able to carry out their duties effectively. The answers are somewhat less positive than to the previous question about the retraining of the police. Only 29 percent were very confident; 58 percent were somewhat confident, and 13 percent were not confident at all. Building confidence in the police is an important step in preparing Liberia to handle its future security and UNMIL will need to do more to assist confidence-building.



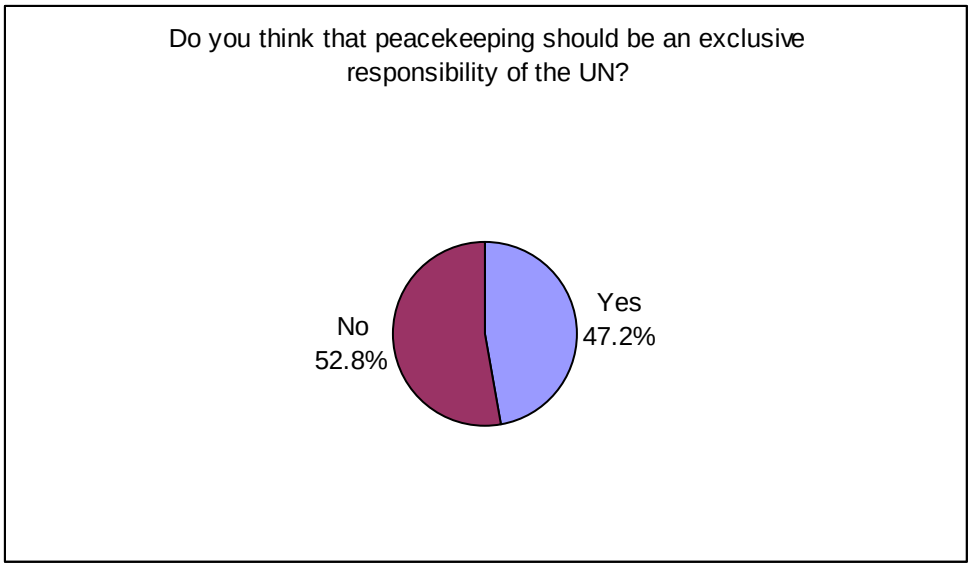
In **question 12**, the Liberian participants were asked to rate the work of the UN in assisting the elections in Liberia in October/November 2005. An overwhelming number, 94 percent, said that the UN had done a good or very good job assisting the elections, with a large 72 percent describing it as very good. Only 6 percent said it was fair or poor.



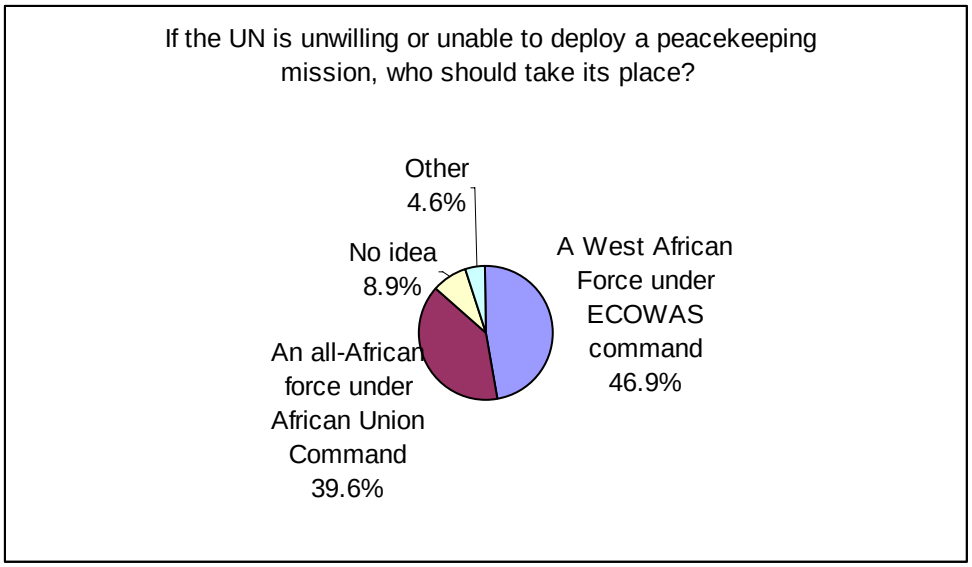
In **question number 13**, 91 percent said that the professional conduct of UN peacekeepers was either good or very good, with only 9 percent rating it as fair or poor. This favorable assessment of the conduct of peacekeepers is quite interesting when it is compared to later criticisms of their behavior taken up in the open-ended question number 22, where a number of serious derogatory comments are made. It may mean that our sample of Liberians believe that most peacekeepers conduct themselves very professionally, but that those who do not behave very badly. However, this is only one of a number of possible explanations.



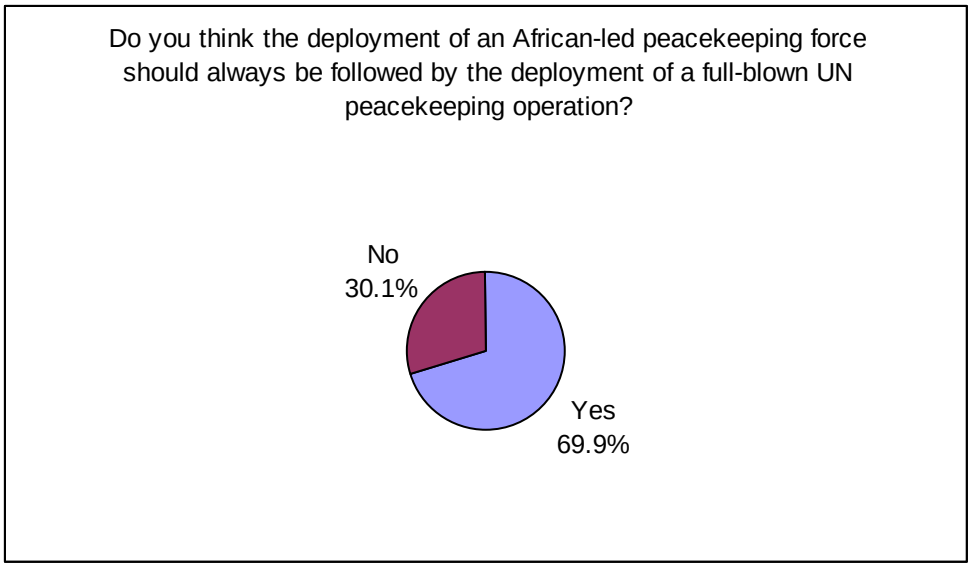
In response to **question 14**, people seemed about equally split when asked whether peacekeeping should be the exclusive responsibility of the UN, with 47 percent saying yes, and 53 percent answering no.



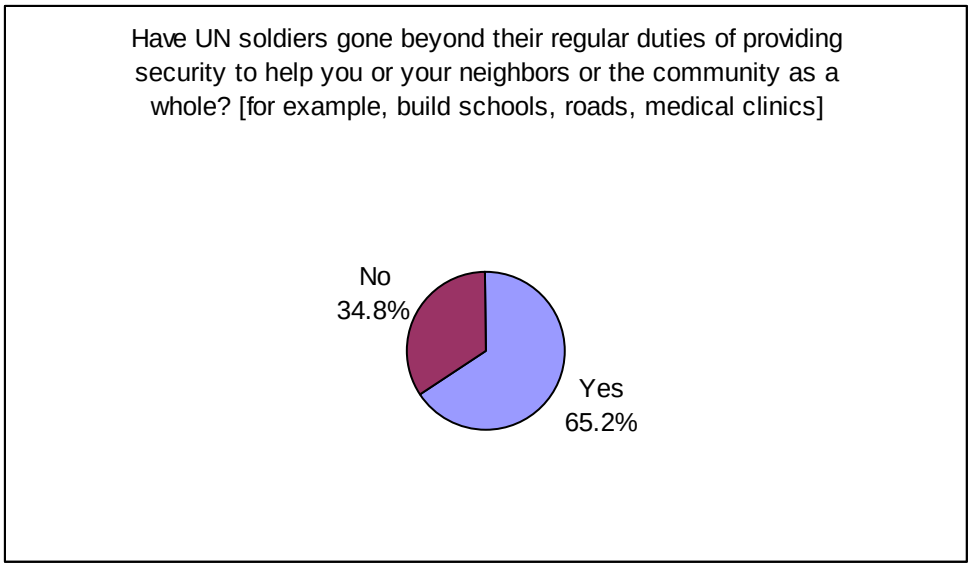
As a follow-up question in **number 15**, we asked if the UN were not able or willing to deploy a peacekeeping mission, who should take its place. Of the participants, 47 percent answered that it should be a West African force under ECOWAS command; 40 percent said it should be an all-African force under the African Union; 9 percent said they had no idea. However, about 4 percent had some other suggestions to make. These suggestions include: the EU, NATO, anyone willing, the international community, troops from geographically nearby countries; and another option was to continue to appeal to the UN.



The next question, **number 16**, then asked if an African-led peacekeeping force should always be followed by the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force; 70 percent of the respondents said that, yes, a UN force should always follow an African-led mission and 30 percent said no.



Question 17 had two parts. The first, **17a**, simply asked a yes or no question, inquiring if UN soldiers had gone beyond their normal duties to help communities by doing things like build roads or schools. A significant majority, 65 percent, answered yes, that UNMIL soldiers had gone beyond their regular duties to help the community, while 35 percent said they had not.



The second part of the question, **17b**, asked them to describe the work the UN had done; these answers will be covered in the narrative section below. We wanted to assess the level of voluntary rebuilding that peacekeeping contingents had done in different areas around the countryside and how the public viewed these efforts. This form of work that peacekeepers often undertake on their own in every UN operation is very underreported.

Section II: Open-ended Narrative Questions

Questions 17b through 24 asked the participants to explain in narrative format the answers to a number of open-ended questions. We designed this portion of the questionnaire to probe for more complex reflections on the part of Liberians and to discover issues that we might not have anticipated. The results were extremely rich.

In question 17b, we asked the respondents to describe some of the contributions that UN peacekeepers had made to rebuild their communities. The examples of community development done by the peacekeepers and described by the people in the study are extraordinary. Liberians explained that UN peacekeepers had built roads and bridges, road networks, shelters, health centers, schools, and market structures. They gave out free medical care and medicine, food, and clothing. They built quality water wells, built and rehabilitated buildings. They often used the phrase "quick impact projects" in describing some of the work the UN had accomplished. Below are a few direct quotes from the responses:

- *UN soldiers have gone beyond their regular duties of providing security to help we students, our neighbors, and community as a whole to build schools, roads, and clinics.*
- *UN soldiers have gone beyond their regular duties of providing security. This includes the renovation of schools, building of bridges, etc.*
- *The quick impact project at my school is a clear example of going beyond their regular duties.*
- *Yes, they have carried out many development projects, such as renovating schools, markets, buildings, etc.*

Question 18 asks: *According to the information you have, what are the tasks that UNMIL is supposed to carry out in Liberia?* In this question, we were trying to determine whether the Liberian people have understood the tasks given to UNMIL in its Security Council mandate. In past peacekeeping operations there has been some confusion among the population in a host country as to the exact tasks of the UN peacekeeping operation. In many cases, expectations have exceeded the UN mandate causing disappointment and frustration. In Liberia, while some understood the actual mandate of UNMIL, many still thought it was supposed to do things beyond the mandate's scope such as providing jobs. Those who understood the mandate, in fact the largest group, listed tasks such as peacekeeping, peace making, providing security, disarmament, training the police and military, and overseeing elections. Yet others listed building roads and schools, clinics and hospitals, providing electricity, and creating jobs and employment.

- *UNMIL is to help us Liberians to rebuild our country. It is also supposed to improve our security situation.*
- *UNMIL supposed to keep peace, protect lives and properties and also help build schools, roads, medical clinics, etc.*

Question 19 asks: *In your opinion, what tasks* ***should*** *UNMIL be carrying out?* We asked this question as a follow-up to the previous question to see whether the participants saw any discrepancy between what the mandate of UNMIL was and what they thought it *should* be doing. The responses to this question demonstrated that people generally agreed with the mandated goals of UNMIL, listing security, peace, peacekeeping and peacemaking, disarmament, and training the police and military. But they also added development projects like building schools and roads, clinics and hospitals, reconstruction in general, and providing jobs and employment opportunities. The overlap between what people think UNMIL **should** be doing and what the mandate is causes expectations of the UN that often cannot be met even though peacekeeping contingents are

frequently carrying out this kind of quick impact construction. The really sensitive issue in a country with 80 percent of the population unemployed is the expectation that the UN is going to provide jobs. The following are some comments by the Liberian respondents:

- *UNMIL should provide maximum peace and security and complete the process of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-fighters.*
- *UNMIL should carry out the reconstruction of clinics, roads and schools. They should also carry out developmental projects such as electricity and running water.*
- *Peace awareness programs in various communities. Help in job creation.*
- *Help build infrastructure of Liberia/build capacity of government/train our financial managers.*
- *UNMIL should also be trying to bring job facilities.*

Question 20 asks: *What do you think are the biggest challenges to peace and security in Liberia*? The responses indicated that peace and security were the greatest challenges in Liberia. Within the calculations of what constitutes security, many stated that disarmament was a major challenge. Others, 22 percent, listed training the national police and military. Yet, a larger percent, 26 percent, gave justice as the main challenge to peace in Liberia. People listed more than one problem, but nearly half said that rehabilitation and reintegration were the largest challenges. They said that it was important to integrate former fighters into society and bring peace between tribal groups and warring factions. They expressed this by using such psychological words as forgiveness, love, respect, and tolerance. Further frequent concerns were development issues, such as job opportunities, construction projects like schools, roads, bridges, salary increases for civil servants, and educational improvements. In all, the underlying concern is for peace and security. The need for development, transparency, reduced corruption, and training of the army and police, all relate to security issues. Some direct responses regarding the biggest challenges in Liberia are as follows:

- *The biggest challenge to peace and security has to do with the qualifications of the security apparatus, their loyalty to Liberia and the love they have for the Liberians.*
- *The failure of UNMIL to collect all the arms from those bandits and failing to clear the Guthrie rubber plantation in Grand Cape Mount county occupied by the rebel movement LURD.*
- *The biggest challenge to peace and security is to put the former combatants to work, so as to enable them to make a useful contribution to the country.*
- *Love for each other and forgiveness.*
- *If they do not clear all of the arms we would continue to live in fear and be violated by armed bandits.*

Question 21 reads: *What would you say is the best thing UNMIL has done*? The most frequent answer was the restoration and maintenance of peace, with almost half the people stating that the most important thing UNMIL had accomplished was maintaining the cease-fire. Disarmament was a close second with about one third claiming that the UN had done a good job disarming the former fighters. The third most frequent response was the work that the UN had done to bring about peaceful, free and fair elections in 2005. Others mentioned the reconstruction and development projects carried out by the peacekeepers like the building of schools, roads, health clinics, etc. Many also mentioned Radio UNMIL and its capacity to disseminate information and communication. Specific comments were:

- *UN has made the guns silent, provided securities, mediation, and has repaired roads, bridges, renovated school, provided safe drinking water to the rural areas.*
- *By keeping the peace in the country and making sure that we have a peaceful and general election.*
- *One of the best things UNMIL has done is the construction of the radio station to have people informed about the happenings.*

In **question 22**, we asked: *What would you say is the worst thing UNMIL has done*? This gave an opportunity for the respondents to register any complaints and bring up issues we may not have thought of. Of the total number of respondents, 38 percent said that UNMIL had done nothing wrong and about 2 percent had no response. The remaining 60 percent cited a number of mixed problems and complaints, perhaps the most shocking were those regarding rape. "Rape", which was mentioned in 114 responses, was the most frequently mentioned specific complaint. People were very explicit about who had been raped, the ages of the children, and the nationality of the peacekeepers who had allegedly perpetrated these crimes. In addition to the specific reports of rape, 53 respondents also stated that peacekeepers had encouraged prostitution in young girls, and had carried out harassment and sexual abuse. The Nigerian contingent was repeatedly blamed specifically for the increase in prostitution by the respondents in Montserrado county. Other complaints were regarding disarmament, stating that arms were still being hidden and that UNMIL had failed to carry out a house-to-house search for weapons. There were frequent complaints also that arms were being stashed at the rubber plantations and that UNMIL had not disarmed these areas. Some direct quotes from the survey are:

- *Raping a three-year-old and a nine-year-old girl and children. To specify, a Nigerian soldier. [Margibi county]*
- *Having sex with our children that are under age. [Bong county]*
- *When a Nigerian UNMIL soldier raped a three-year-old girl. [Montserrado county]*
- *The worst thing UNMIL has done is not to disarm, leaving some rebels in arms in the Guthrie Plantation company; not getting the hunters from Belle forest and some people are still moving over night arms to people and places and killing them. [Montserrado county]*
- *The worst thing UNMIL has done is leaving fighters in Bomi Hill rubber plantation armed and up to the present has planned nothing to take the arms from them. [Montserrado county]*

The issue of sexual exploitation and rape must be taken very seriously and addressed immediately by the UN. It is also important to note that while many respondents did have serious criticisms of UNMIL, they appeared to put that in perspective as they described the many good things the UN had done throughout the country. This is illustrated in the very next question where they went on to describe all the work the UN has done to improve human rights in Liberia.

In **question 23 a and b** we asked: *Has UNMIL helped to improve the human rights conditions in Liberia? If so, how?* About 88 percent answered affirmatively, that UNMIL had improved the human rights conditions in the country and this response was consistent across the different counties. The people mentioned specifically that the UN had provided human rights awareness and assistance. However, many simply described how the work of UNMIL in bringing peace and security and undertaking the disarmament process has created an environment in which they could have freedom of movement, could go out without fear of being attacked, and could speak freely. About 40 percent stated that the court system and basic rights of citizens was improved. Nevertheless, among the 12 percent who thought human rights had not improved, about 50

percent talked about abuse and sexual harassment, 47 percent saying that UNMIL had not taken action against these crimes. Some examples are:

- *UNMIL helped justice prevail.*
- *UNMIL has carried out public sensitization programs geared towards educating citizens on mob justice and other human rights violations.*
- *They have improved human rights in Liberia greatly, in that the training they have given the Liberia police has helped to improve things greatly. I will commend them for that.*
- *UNMIL has to make sure that the Liberian National Police don't keep people in jail for more than two days to enable people to have their day in court.*
- *UNMIL has not helped to improve human right conditions because they are the same people who were involved in ritualistic killings, to be specific, the Nigerians.*

The last question of the survey, **number 24**, asks: *What comments do you have on the UN's role in assisting the elections in Liberia in October/November 2005, what worked well, and what did not?* An overwhelming majority, 90 percent (702 out of 770), were very positive about the manner in which the UN had assisted in the 2005 elections. Of these, many said that the elections were free and fair; others emphasized the manner in which UNMIL had provided a peaceful and secure environment for the elections; and some pointed to the successful logistical arrangements of monitoring and providing transportation and manpower. They praised Radio UNMIL and the other methods used to educate people about the elections.

Examples of strong positive responses are:

- *The UN role in the election was well in place. They did well in that they provided security, helped monitor the election, and provided logistics for the election.*
- *I must congratulate the UN for the timely and fruitful job they did in Liberia in order to have a peaceful nation like any other country. They have done the best that humans can do.*

Some conditional positive responses are:

- *UN played a major role in assisting the elections in Liberia in October/November 2005 by providing logistics and funds for the election. What I have a problem with is the underpayment of poll workers.*
- *They really helped our country with this whole election business but some areas in the interior did not vote because of the road conditions.*

Some more negative responses are:

- *The October election was free and fair but the November election was full of cheating which the UN failed to speak of.*
- *October elections were very free and fair. November elections had signs of fraudulence.*

CONCLUSION:

The nearly 800 Liberians who participated in this survey come from all walks of life, represent a majority of counties in the country, and have a broad age range. Nearly all, 94 percent, said the security situation has improved under UNMIL; 91 percent stated that they feel safer now; and 90 percent believe that UNMIL has done a good or very good job implementing the CPA. The disarmament process had a mixed response with a majority rating it good while others expressed serious concerns. A similar mixed response was expressed when participants were asked how much confidence they had in the New Liberian Police. Respondents gave very high marks to Radio UNMIL and to the professional conduct of most peacekeepers. On the whole though, most felt that UNMIL's job was not over; and, in a post-conflict election context, 88 percent felt UNMIL should remain longer.

When asked if peacekeepers treated people with respect, again the answers were varied, leaving the impression that the UN mission could work on improving treatment of local people. When asked what African-led missions they would approve, participants said about equally that either missions under ECOWAS or under the African Union would be acceptable, and a small number had other suggestions. Yet, some three quarters added that the UN should always follow an African-led mission.

In the open-ended narrative questions, a number of patterns appeared. A majority of people are very grateful to the UN peacekeepers for restoring peace and security, for all the reconstruction and development work undertaken by the UN mission, and specifically for the successful organization of elections in 2005. Many practical examples of community development projects carried out by UN peacekeepers were given. These projects build good will and trust with the local population. Building roads, schools, and other development projects enables people to strengthen their own capacities to be productive and return to normal life, ultimately contributing to peace. At the same time, many were concerned that UNMIL should stay on until complete security has been achieved and the Liberia military and police have been properly trained and supported with the necessary logistics.

While most of the respondents had no criticisms of UNMIL, a frequent complaint was that some peacekeepers had committed rape and had contributed to the encouragement of prostitution among young girls, leading them to drop out of school. They were also concerned about the full completion of the disarmament process. Yet, immediately following this question, the respondents went on to say that UNMIL had done a good job in raising awareness of human rights, improving the court system, and providing a peaceful environment so Liberians could have freedom of movement. They also gave very high marks to Radio UNMIL, and many mentioned that Radio UNMIL had contributed to human rights awareness.

When the survey results are taken as a whole, certain themes emerged. In general, the Liberians represented in this survey are appreciative of the peace that UNMIL has brought to Liberia, but seem to fear how issues such as the continued presence of weapons and lack of jobs will affect the future stability and peace of the country. While there were serious complaints about sexual abuse by some peacekeepers, most of the people who participated in the study felt that the UN had done a very good job providing security and assisting the peaceful outcome of the 2005 elections. They were generally pleased with the development and quick impact projects carried out by UN peacekeepers, but articulated some confusion about the obligations of the UN mandate in Liberia. Some interviewees felt that UNMIL should be providing jobs, building infrastructure, and constructing clinics and hospitals. Strikingly, almost half the people felt that the biggest challenge

to Liberia today is rehabilitation and reintegration, expressing these concerns in a very psychological manner, in terms of forgiveness, love, respect, and tolerance.

In conclusion, this is a public opinion survey and should be understood only as a glimpse at what a group of people in Liberia are thinking at a given point in time. However, the survey has provided a wealth of information, particularly within the qualitative answers to the open-ended questions. We were impressed with how much the people knew about UNMIL and the conditions in the country; even the farmers and market traders in the outlying districts seemed well informed. Also, their understanding and expectations were reasonable and balanced. The survey produced a more comprehensive vision of expectations and substance to people's concerns than might have been initially thought. These results are an indication that opinion surveys can prove to be very helpful for gaining feedback for the UN as it engages in its peacekeeping mandate in a given country. After all, ultimately peace depends on the people and they may know best what their needs are.

ANNEX I: Questionnaire

Personal data:

Age (Check One): ☐ 13 – 18 Years ☐ 46 – 55 Years ☐ 19 – 25 Years ☐ 55 - 65 Years ☐ 26 – 35 Years ☐ Over 65 Years ☐ 36 – 45 Years	**Gender:** ☐ Male ☐ Female
Location – Town/County Capital (Check One): ☐ Barclyville ☐ Bopolu ☐ Buchanan ☐ Fish Town ☐ Gbarnga ☐ Greenville ☐ Harper ☐ Kakata ☐ Monrovia ☐ River Cess ☐ Robertsport ☐ Sanguellie ☐ Tchien ☐ Tubmanburg ☐ Voinjama **Other Town:** _____	**County**(Check One): ☐ Bong ☐ Gbarpolu ☐ Grand Bassa ☐ Grand Cape Mount ☐ Grand Gedeh ☐ Grand Kru ☐ Lofa ☐ Margibi ☐ Maryland ☐ Montserrado ☐ Nimba ☐ Bomi ☐ River Cess ☐ River Gee ☐ Sinoe
Occupation: (describe your job) _____ _____ _____	
Are you currently employed? ☐ Yes ☐No	Are you a Student? ☐ Yes ☐ No

<u>Questions: Please check your answer:</u>

1.Would you say your security situation has improved since UNMIL has been in the country? ☐ Yes ☐ No

2. How would you rate the work of UNMIL in the implementation of the CPA, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement?

☐Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

PEACEKEEPING BEST PRACTICES

3. How would you rate the work of UN Peacekeepers in making you feel safer?

☐Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

4. Do you think UNMIL has stayed long enough or do you think it should stay longer?

☐Yes, it has stayed long enough ☐ No, it should stay longer

5. How would you rate the disarmament process (the collection and destruction of weapons) in Liberia after UNMIL arrived?

☐Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

6. How would you rate the work that has been done to retrain former fighters and find jobs for them?

☐Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

7. Do you think that UN soldiers have treated people in Liberia with respect?

☐Always ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never

8. How would you rate Radio UNMIL in its ability to get information out to the people of Liberia?

☐Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

9(a). Have UNMIL soldiers and civilians tried to resolve problems in your camp, town, or neighborhood? ☐ Yes ☐No

9(b). If y*es*, how helpful were they?

☐Very helpful ☐ somewhat helpful ☐ not helpful

10. How would you rate the work the UN is doing to retrain the New Liberian Police?

☐Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

11. Are you confident that the New Liberian Police will be able to carry out their duties effectively?

☐Very confident ☐ somewhat confident ☐ not confident at all

12. How would you rate the work of the UN in assisting the elections in Liberia in October/November 2005?

☐ Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

13. How would you rate the professional conduct of UNMIL's peacekeeping troops?

☐ Very good ☐ good ☐ fair ☐ poor

14. Do you think that peacekeeping should be an exclusive responsibility of the UN?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. If the UN is unwilling or unable to deploy a peacekeeping mission, who should take its place?

☐ a) A West African force under ECOWAS command
☐ b) An all-African force under African Union command
☐ c) No idea
☐ d) Other _____

16. Do you think the deployment of an African-led peacekeeping force should always be followed by the deployment of a full-blown UN peacekeeping operation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

<u>Additional open-ended questions: Please write in your comments</u>

17. Have UN soldiers gone beyond their regular duties of providing security to help you or your neighbors or the community as a whole? [for example, build schools, roads, medical clinics]

(a): ☐ Yes ☐ No

(b): Please explain:

_____
_____
_____

18. According to the information you have, what are the tasks that UNMIL is supposed to carry out in Liberia?

_____
_____
_____
_____

19. In your opinion, what tasks *should* UNMIL be carrying out?

_____
_____
_____
_____

20. What do you think are the biggest challenges to peace and security in Liberia?

_____
_____
_____
_____

21. What would you say is the best thing UNMIL has done?

_____
_____
_____

22. What would you say is the worst thing UNMIL has done?

_____
_____
_____

23(a). Has UNMIL helped to improve human rights conditions in Liberia? ☐ Yes ☐ No

23(b). Please explain:

_____
_____
_____

24. What comments do you have on the UN's role in assisting the elections in Liberia in October/November 2005, what worked well, and what did not?

_____
_____
_____

☺ **Thank you for completing the survey**

ANNEX II: Map of Liberia

ANNEX III: Deployment Map of UNMIL

PEACEKEEPING BEST PRACTICES