

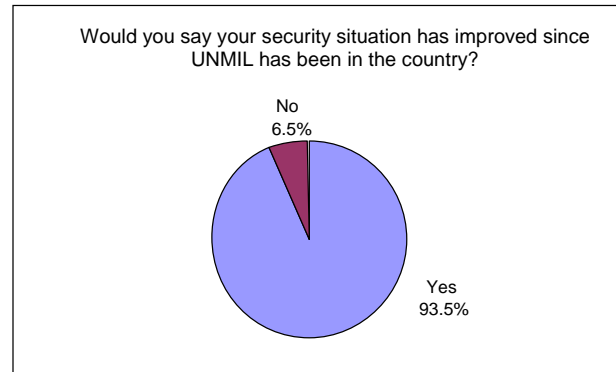


UNMIL/PIO/PR/48

Press release, 19 April 2006

Public Opinion Survey shows positive ratings for UNMIL's work in Liberia

Monrovia, Liberia – A public opinion survey, published last month on the work of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), has shown very positive ratings by Liberians for the peacekeeping mission's performance in the country. The survey, conducted in January 2006 under the direction of Dr. Jean Kranso of the City University of New York responds to a request by the Best Practices Unit of the UN's Peacekeeping Department, to assess the way in which the Liberian people view the work of the UNMIL.



The survey found that an overwhelming ninety four per cent of the respondents believe that the overall security situation in the country improved under UNMIL. The majority of the people surveyed agreed that UNMIL has done a good job in making them feel safe and in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). They also reacted positively to questions surrounding the disarmament process.

UNMIL was also highly rated for its quick impact projects and interaction with the local population as well as its role in the 2005 Elections. Liberians described how UN peacekeepers had built roads and bridges, shelters, health centers, schools, renovated buildings, and market structures.

The majority of the people surveyed felt that through such activities, the peacekeepers had fostered goodwill and trust amongst the population. However, a good number of respondents felt that not enough development work had been done by the mission. "Some respondents felt that UNMIL should be providing jobs, building infrastructure, and constructing clinics and hospitals," the survey noted.

On the issue of communication, UNMIL Radio scored highly, with 97 per cent of respondents saying that "UNMIL had done a good or very good job at getting information out to the people." Yardsticks used included people's satisfaction surrounding the civic and voter education activities conducted during the 2005 Elections.

Some concerns expressed during the survey included people's confidence in the Liberian police. Although 92 per cent stated that the training of the police by the UN was very good, many questioned the effectiveness of the Liberian 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," the survey concluded.

A serious concern raised in the survey concerned the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). "About 22 per cent of the participants (167 out of 770) reported 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.” The authors of the survey noted, however, that these responses were opinion-based rather than proven facts.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, welcomed the public opinion survey. “We are very pleased by the strong support that this survey shows for UNMIL. However, we are very conscious of the need to further strengthen our efforts to prevent and deal with sexual abuse and exploitation,” he said.

About the Report:

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 views of the United Nations. The number of people surveyed was nearly 800, covering an age range from 13 to over 65. Occupations included students, teachers, farmers, traders/sellers, market women, police officers, mechanics, electricians, school administrators, housewives, computer operators, social workers, money changers, secretaries, builders, and nurses. Of the total participants, 61 per cent were male and 39 per cent were female. Of the group that participated in the study, over 62 per cent said they were unemployed.

The full report is available at <http://unmil.org/documents/liberiosrep29march.pdf>

About the Peacekeeping Best Practices Section (PBPS) of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO):

The Peacekeeping Best Practices Section (PBPS) of DPKO assists in the planning, conduct, management and support of peacekeeping operations by learning from experience, problem solving and transferring best practices in United Nations peacekeeping.
