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**Liberian Corrections Officers complete 12 months of intensive training**

(*Monrovia, Liberia*) – A group of 25 Liberian corrections officers were today certificated after completion of a 12-month intensive training. The completion of this second class training cycle brings to 49 the total number of corrections officers trained by the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) Corrections Advisory Unit and the Liberia Bureau of Rehabilitation and Corrections.



The newly-trained Liberian corrections officers

Addressing the newly trained corrections officers on behalf of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Operations, Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa, head of UNMIL Corrections Advisory Unit, Ms. Marjo Callaghan, called on the newly trained officers to carry out their functions in a manner which respects and protects the human rights of prisoners.

“This will not only bring honour to you, but also to your government and your country. Human rights standards provide invaluable guidance for performance of your functions, which is vital to the good functioning of a democratic society and the maintenance of the rule of law,” Ms. Callaghan said. She then expressed UNMIL’s appreciation for joint efforts undertaken by UNMIL and the Liberian government to create a better trained, more effective and efficient Liberian Correctional Service as this will contribute to the reintegration of offenders and the protection of communities and law abiding citizens around Liberia.”

Speaking on behalf of the Liberian government, Solicitor General, Counsellor Tiawon Gongloe, expressed his government’s appreciation for the United Nations’ assistance in capacity building. He described the Corrections Service as one of those institutions of law enforcement that has greatly suffered serious setback in Liberia since the 1970s. He stressed the importance of according due human rights to those who find their liberties restrained in a confined location. He called on the newly trained corrections officers to help in the transformation of Liberian society. “For a stable order in society, those who are accused or convicted are to be given decent treatment. That is why you have been trained,” the Liberian Solicitor General pointed out.

UNMIL has been providing assistance through its Quick Impact Projects and through funding from other partners such as the United States Government, to improve conditions of prisons in the country. However, the improvement of prison facilities in the absence of trained corrections officers will still create a gap in the Corrections Service. Therefore, UNMIL is working closely with the Government of Liberia to develop the capacity of corrections personnel to staff these facilities.

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