

Transitional Justice Working Group Initiative

The Road to Peace in Liberia:

Citizens Views on Transitional Justice

August-September, 2004



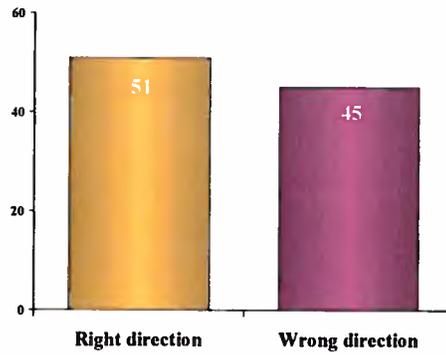
A New Liberia

“I appeal to the government that let this new Liberia be a new Liberia and what has happened should be in the past. Everybody should be given rights and let us build a new Liberia.”

- Female, Nimba County

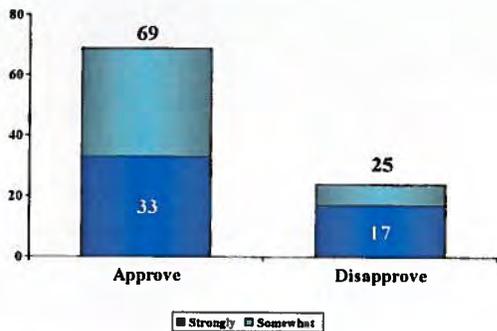
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.2

Country Direction



Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.3

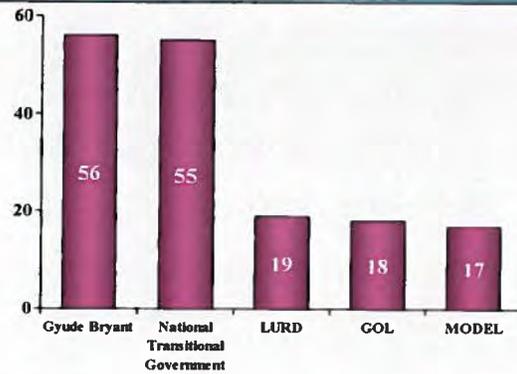
Bryant Job Approval



Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.4

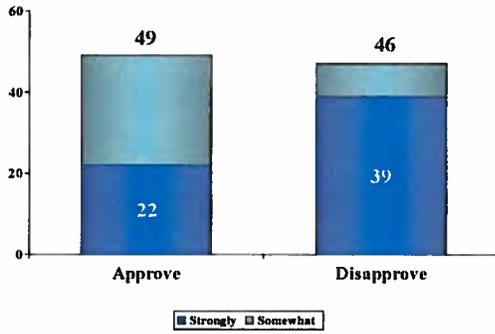
Thermometer Ratings: Government

Mean Score on a Scale from 0-100



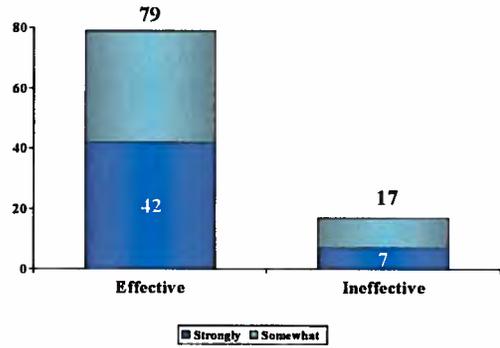
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.5

Faction Leaders in Transitional Government



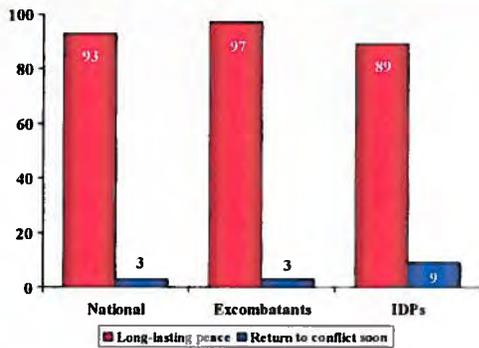
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.6

Effectiveness of DDRR



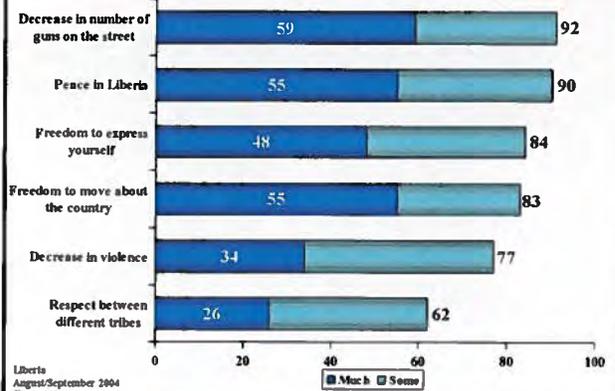
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.7

Duration of Peace

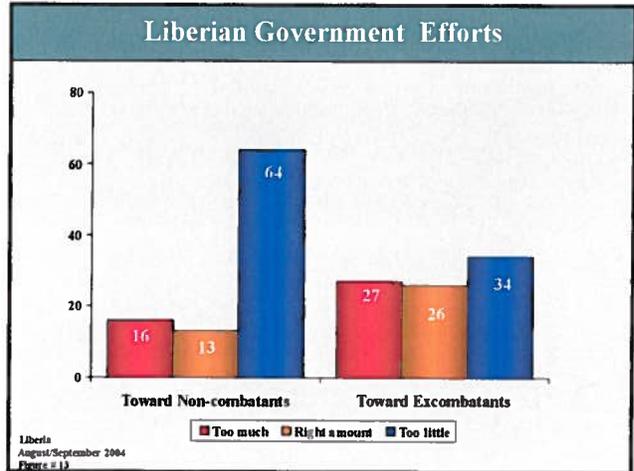
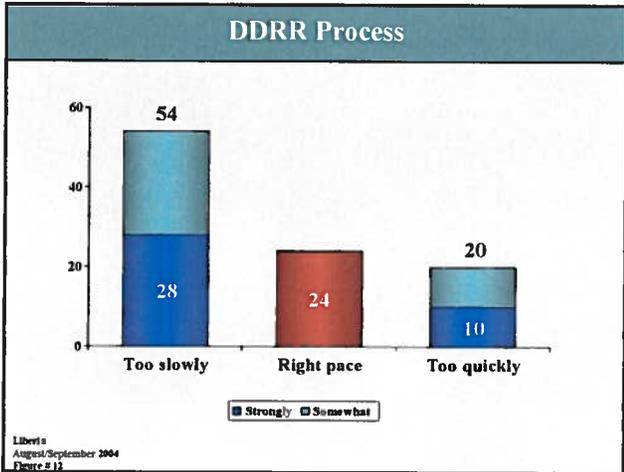
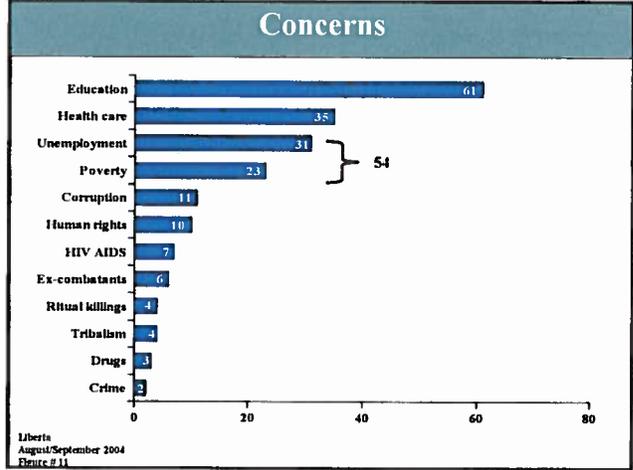
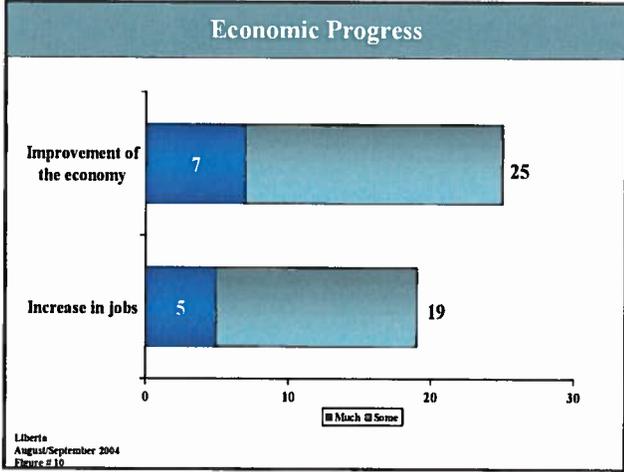


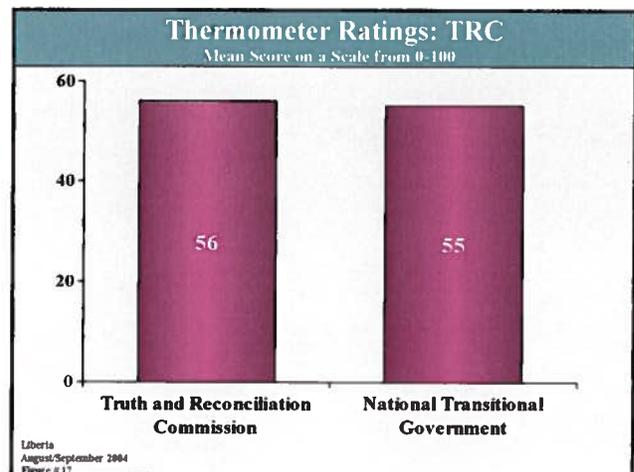
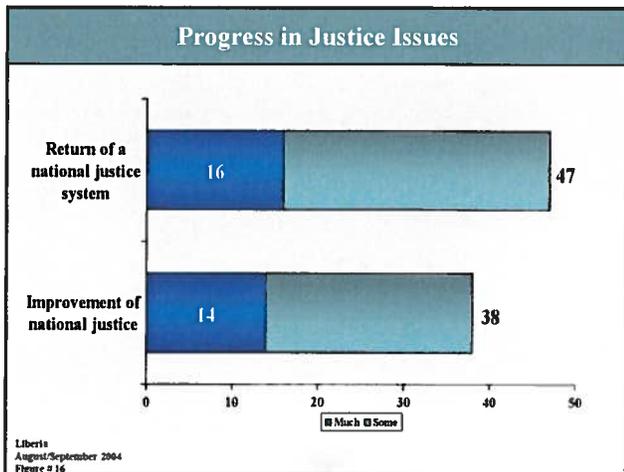
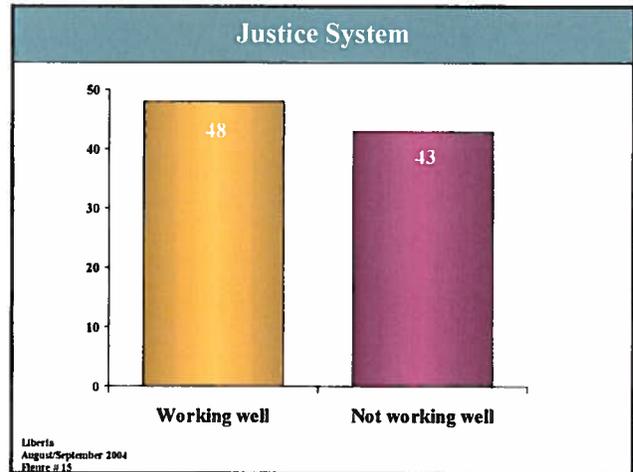
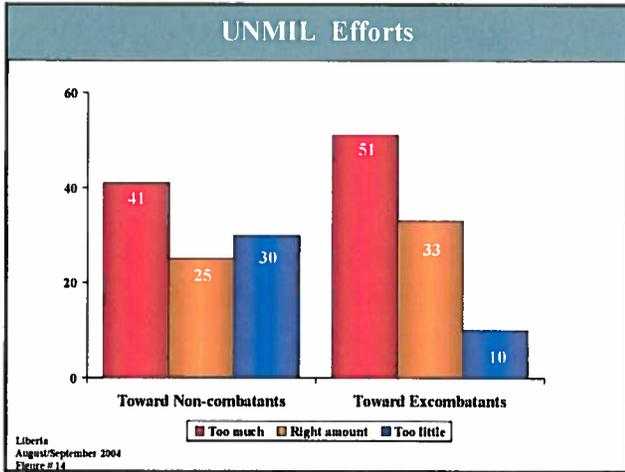
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.8

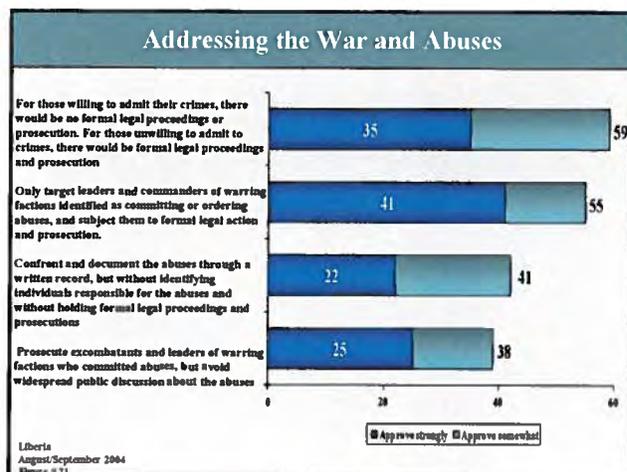
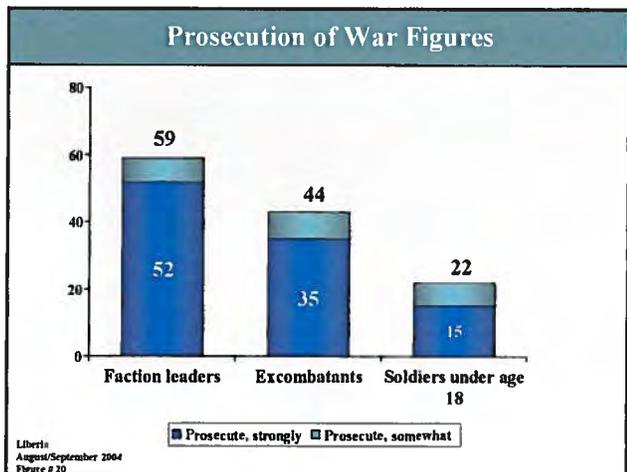
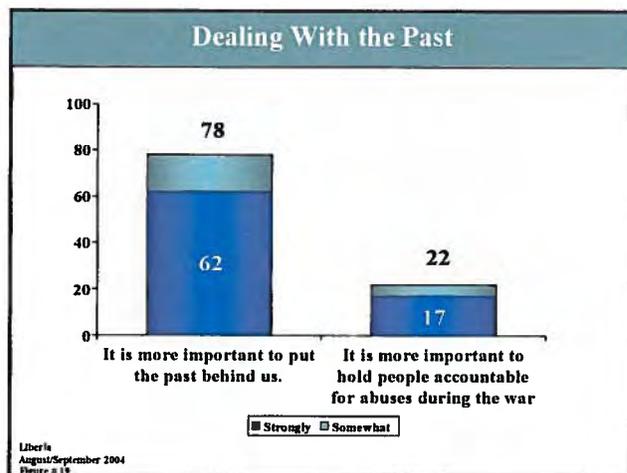
Progress Made

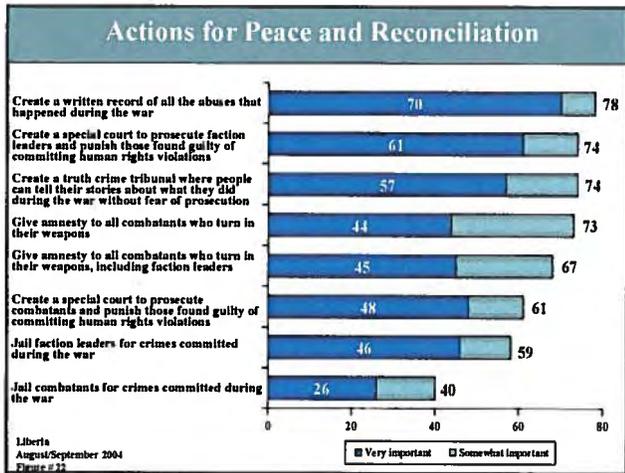


Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.9







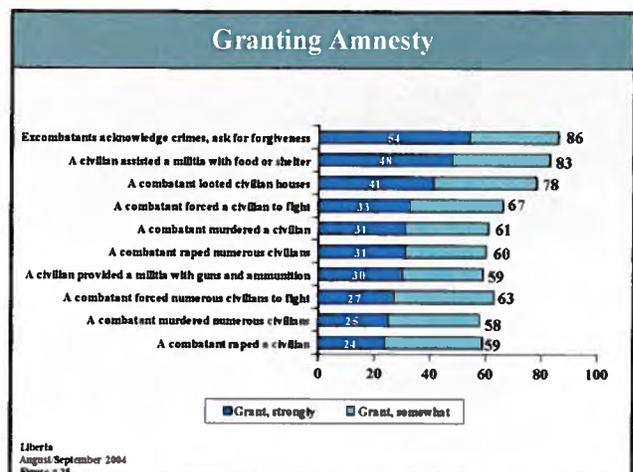
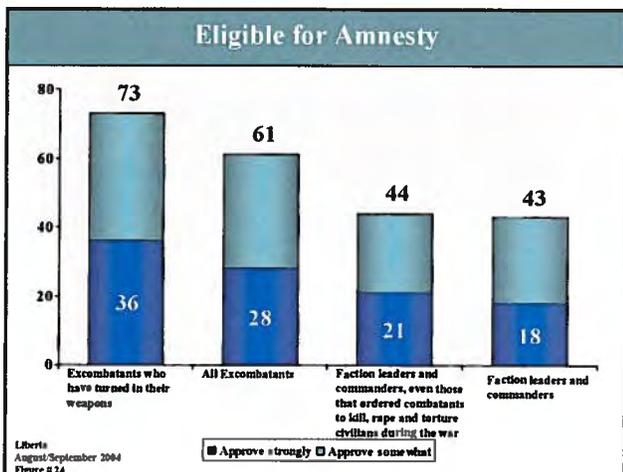


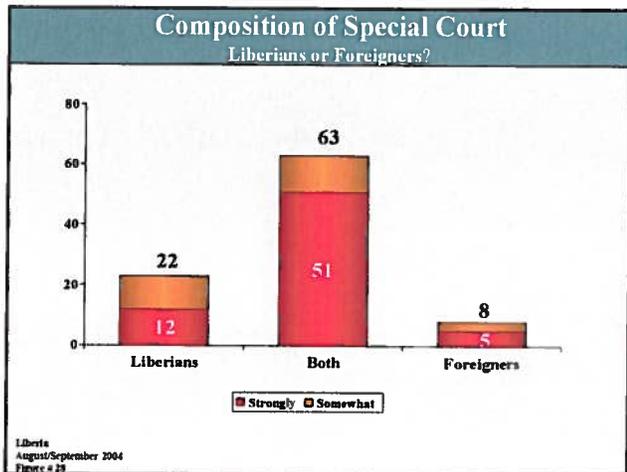
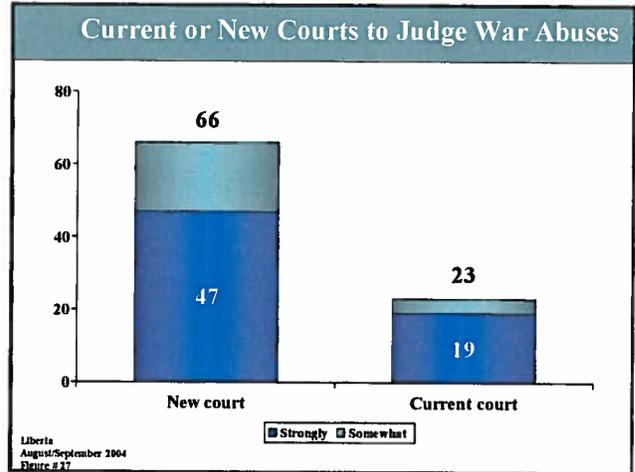
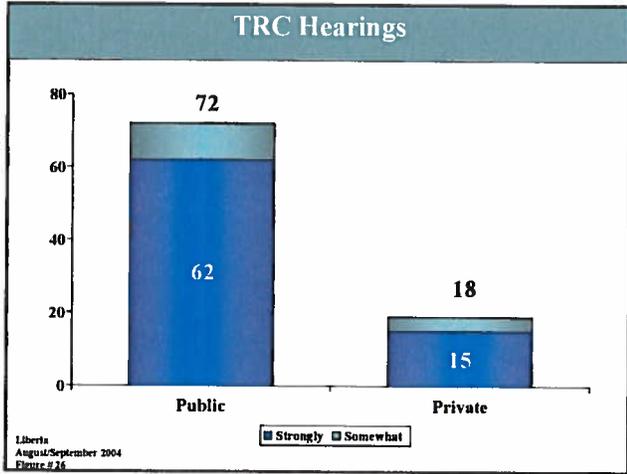
Written Record Quote

“If there is no record, no advice will be given and I will continue to do it [crimes]. So at least if we can forgive we shouldn’t forget our records, so when it has been written and documented, you know what is wrong and can’t do it in the future.”

- Female, Bong County

Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.23



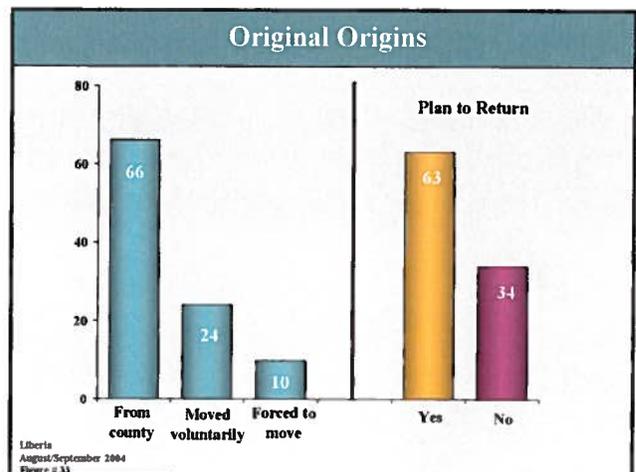
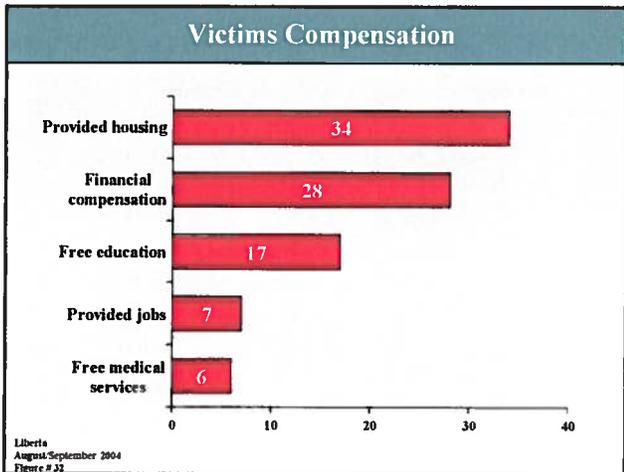
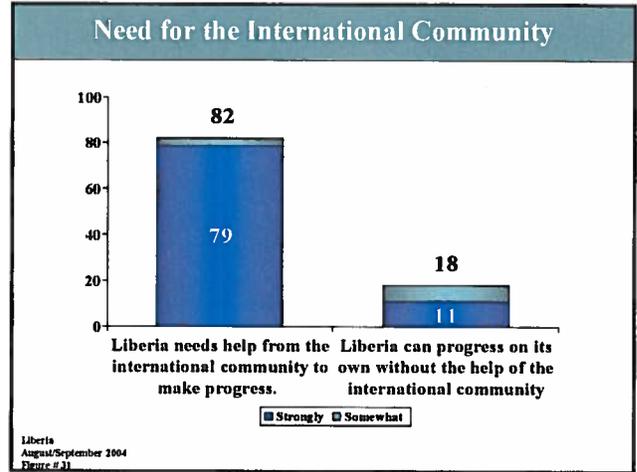
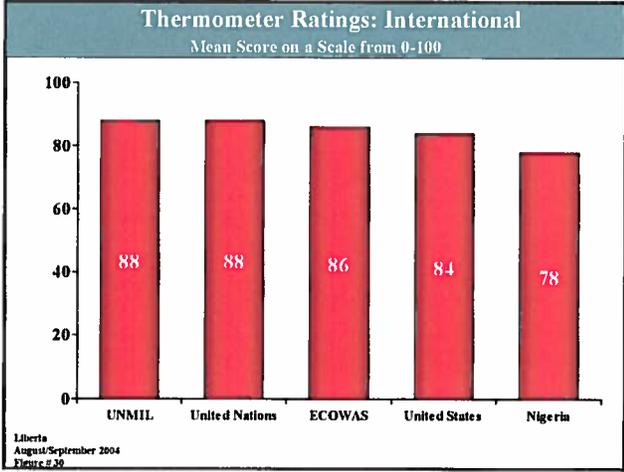


Foreigners in New Court Quote

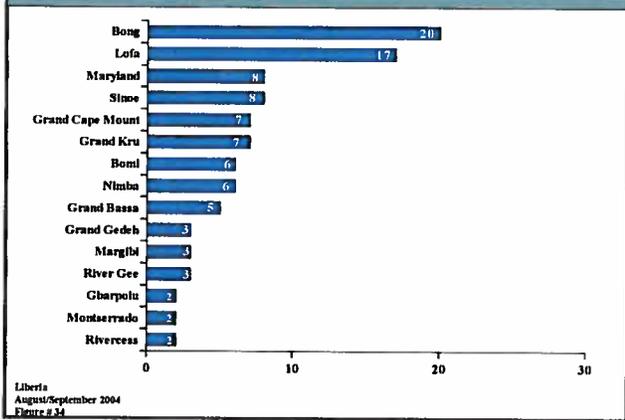
“It is going to be Liberians who face the courts. If the judges are Liberians, they will want to back each other, but if a foreigner comes in the truth will be unveiled.”

- Female, Bong County

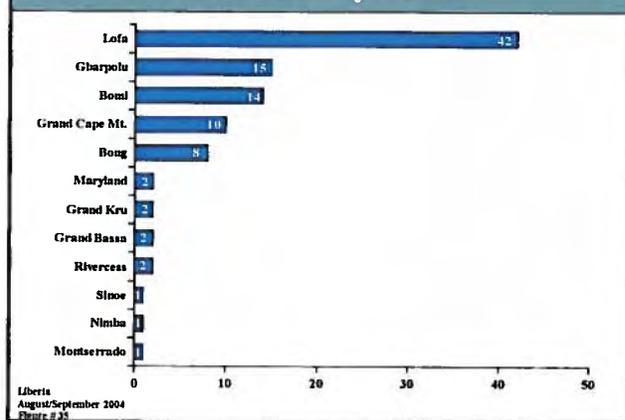
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure # 29



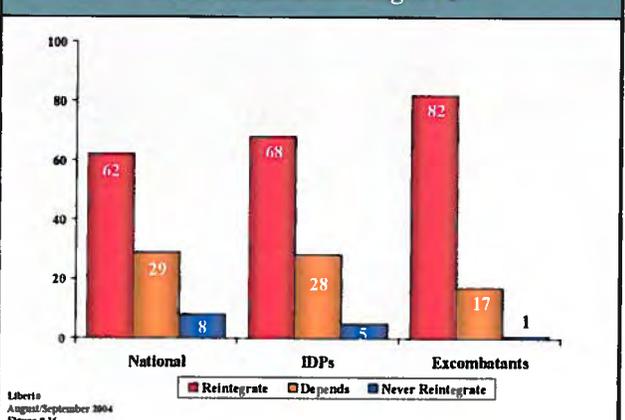
Home County – Those that Moved



Home County - IDPs



Excombatant Reintegration



Reintegration Quote

“They should be accepted because we are talking about forgiveness, healing, we are talking about being patriots and so we should accept them in the community .”

- Male Community Leader, Monrovia

Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 2.37

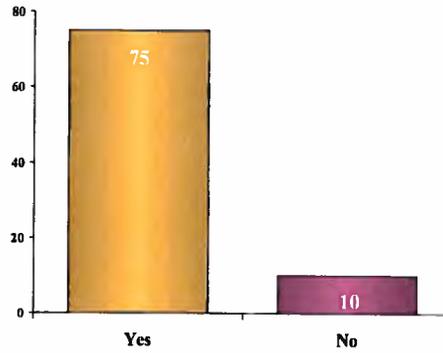
Reintegration Quote

“If I am not welcome, I will come back and ask you to carry me so as to talk to my people to forgive me because as we are talking about peace, everybody needs to forgive each other.”

- Bomi excombatant

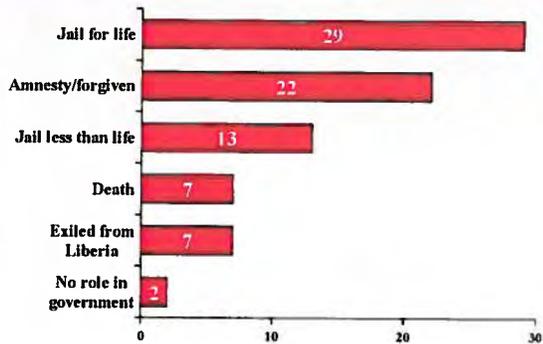
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 23

Charles Taylor Committed War Crimes



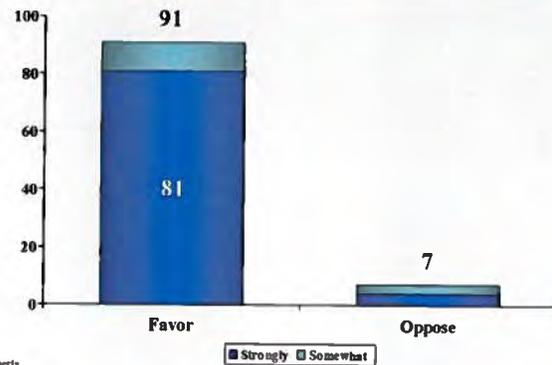
Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 23

Taylor Punishment



Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 24

October 2005 Elections



Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure 24

Key Findings

- Liberians are optimistic about the future of Liberia and have seen progress made in many areas, but more needs to be done, especially in terms of economic conditions, education and the justice system.
- Liberians also feel that the government is doing too little, particularly in respect to non-combatants.
- While Liberians want to put the past behind them, this does not mean they want to forget about the past.
- Liberians are strongly in favor of having a written record. But a written record alone will not suffice.

Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure # 41

Key Findings

- Holding truth crime tribunals where excombatants can publicly admit their wrongs without fear of retribution is the most approved manner to address the war. This was also strongly approved by excombatants, so would be the best mechanism to bring excombatants into the justice system.
- While most Liberians do not want to prosecute excombatants, there is a strong desire to prosecute faction leaders and commanders and hold them accountable.
- Liberians do not think the current court system can handle the prosecutions of war crimes and desire a special court comprised of both Liberians and foreigners.

Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure # 42

Key Findings

- Liberians think they can not go it alone and need assistance from the international community.
- There is also a strong desire to reintegrate excombatants back into their communities.

Liberia
August/September 2004
Figure # 44

Transitional Justice Survey Results Presented in Liberia

“I appeal to the government to let this new Liberia be a new Liberia, and what has happened should be in the past. Everybody should be given rights and let us build a new Liberia.”

These words, spoken by a woman from Nimba County, in central Liberia, exemplify two things: that most Liberians believe they should focus on the future even as they contemplate how to deal with the effects of 14 years of civil war, and that the very means by which their view is known suggests there is hope for the country’s future.

More than 1,000 citizens responded to a recent nationwide survey—the first for the west African nation—about their views of the conflict that gripped Liberia for a decade and a half, until peace talks in 2003 led to the formation of a transitional government.

A coalition of 23 civil-society and human-rights organizations in Liberia conducted the survey in August and September 2004, and presented their findings, as part of the OTI-funded Liberian Transition Initiative.

The survey, which used focus groups and individual interviews, reflects the opinions of citizens on a range of issues tied to the peace process, such as justice, governance and the peace process; the results will be used to guide future work of the coalition, known as the Transitional Justice Working Group. Among the survey’s key findings: Most Liberians favor the creation of a truth commission to deal with the abuses that occurred during the civil war. A majority also favors the prosecution of commanders found guilty of abuses but opposes prosecuting rank-and-file combatants.

The survey also shows that Liberians are overwhelmingly satisfied with the peace accord that ended the fighting and are confident that peace will endure. They are also grateful for the restoration of basic freedoms, but nevertheless see little economic progress.

Liberians are mostly optimistic about the future of their country, with 51 percent of survey respondents saying it is headed in “the right direction.” A total of 69 percent of respondents said they approve of the job performance of Liberia’s interim leader, Gyude Bryant.

The findings also will be used by international donors such as USAID for guidance on potential assistance, such as in the area of social services. Access to education was named by 61 percent of those surveyed as the No. 1 concern for the future.

However, Liberians also believe the transitional government is doing too much to address the needs of ex-combatants, including their reintegration into society, but not enough for noncombatants.

The survey was designed and carried out by Subah-Bellah Associates, a Liberian opinion-research firm, and the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research Inc. It

LTI, a task order managed by Creative Associates under USAID’s Support Which Implements Fast Transitions, or SWIFT, program, aims to promote good governance and an independent media, strengthen key civil society organizations, support activities in human rights and transitional development, and provide accelerated learning and life-skills training to war-affected youth.

About the Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG)

The Transitional Justice Working Group (TJWG) is a coalition of human rights, pro-democracy and peacebuilding organizations created in November 2003. In addition to learning, debating and strategizing together about justice and accountability, the founding members seek to stimulate and influence public discussion about transitional justice in Liberia. Key objectives for this collective initiative include:

- To educate members about the range of mechanisms available to address impunity for human rights abuses;
- To develop an analysis concerning transitional justice within the context of Liberian history and traditions;
- To develop and implement strategies for influencing work around transitional justice in Liberia, i.e. through research, policy recommendations, advocacy, sensitization/outreach, and other means to encourage broad public debate.
- Work to inform public policy around issues of judicial reform, and security sector reform
- Work for the elimination of a culture of impunity that is so pervasive in the country.
- Work to assist in efforts that would ensure that Liberian civil society organizations play an active and responsible role in the activities of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission thereby assuring national ownership.
- Work to serve as a resource to the TRC and/or lobby the TRC to include issues of concern to the TJWG within its work.

ACTIVITIES

The TJWG has participated in several radio programs including: "One Step Beyond", "Woman", and "The JPC Forum". TJWG members have made numerous appearances on UNMIL Radio, ELBC, and King Radio stations as well as on Clar TV to discuss issues related to transitional justice and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The TJWG recently released findings from a national survey on transitional justice - a comprehensive research report will be released to the public shortly. Members of the TJWG were instrumental in assisting to draft a TRC Law for Liberia. The draft law has since been submitted to the National Transitional Government of Liberia for passage. The TJWG has conducted workshop of leaders of Liberia civil society organizations on transitional justice issues. The TJWG meets weekly and is managed by a Coordinating Team of three organizations which are: **Center for Democratic Empowerment (CEDE)**, **Foundation for International Dignity (FIND)** and **Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy (FOHRD)**.

MEMBERS

The Membership of the TJWG is open.

1. Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia
2. Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
3. Center for Democratic Empowerment
4. Flomo Theater
5. Fore-Runners of Children Universal Rights for Survival Growth and Development
6. Forum for African Women Educationalists
7. Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy
8. Foundation for International Dignity
9. Humanist Watch Liberia
10. Liberia Democracy Institute
11. Liberia Democracy Watch
12. Liberia Girls' Guide Association
13. Movement for Democracy and Human Rights
14. National Human Rights Center of Liberia
15. Oxfam GB
16. Pentecostal Church of God Action for Development and Peace
17. True Witness
18. West Africa Peacebuilding Network
19. Search for Common Ground

For more information please feel free to contact

Ezekiel Pajibo (CEDE) Tel. 231 6 534 604; Email: obiejap@yahoo.com

Sam Hare (FIND) Tel. 231 6 510 058 Email: serashare@yahoo.com

Aloysius Toe (FOHRD) Tel. 231 6 515 158 aloysiustoe@yahoo.com

Overview of
The Transitional Justice Research Project
Presented
By
S. Tornorlah Varpilah
Transitional Justice Working Group

November 10, 2004
USA



Rebuilding A New Liberian Society
On
Justice, Truth, Mercy And Peace



Background of TJWG

- Date of formation: November 2003
- Mission: Help rebuild a new Liberian society based on truth, justice, mercy and peace.



TJWG MEMBERSHIP

1. Association of Female Lawyers in Liberia
2. Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
3. Center for Democratic Empowerment
4. Flomo Theater
5. Fore-Runners of Children Universal Rights for Survival Growth and Development
6. Forum for African Women Educationalists
7. Foundation for Human Rights and Democracy
8. Foundation for International Dignity
9. Humanist Watch Liberia
10. Liberia Democracy Institute
11. Liberia Democracy Watch
12. Liberia Girls' Guide Association
13. Movement for Democracy and Human Rights
14. National Human Rights Center of Liberia
15. Oxfam GB
16. Pentecostal Church of God Action for Development and Peace
17. True Witness
18. West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
19. Search for Common GroundSFCG/TDS



AIM OF THE TJWG

- Provide the forum for members to learn, debate, strategize together about justice and accountability, and stimulate and influence public discussions about transitional justice in the Liberian context.



TJWG Objectives

- Educate members;
- Develop an analysis concerning transitional justice;
- Develop & implement strategies
- Elimination of a culture of impunity
- Ensure the CSO participation
- Serve as a resource to the TRC; and
- Lobby the TRC



ACTIVITIES OF TJWG

- **Research and publication-draft TRC Law for Liberia and transitional justice research**
- **Capacity building for members and CSOs-training on transitional justice mechanism-TRC, special courts & tribunals.**
- **Media and advocacy-radio debates, TV and community discussions and forum theatre to create public awareness on transitional justice issues**



Why the Transitional Justice Research Project

- Address concerns on rebuilding the society
- Concerns on human rights violations
- Concerns on reconciliation and healing
- Concerns on needs of victims
- Find answers to transitional justice issues



Stakeholders of the research

- Transitional Justice Working Group
- The United States Agency for International Development Office of Transition Initiative
- Creative Associates International Inc.
- Greeberg Quinlan Rosner
- Subah Belleh Associations



Uniqueness of the study

- First national study on transitional justice in Liberia
- Reliable results
- Answer all of the concerns and questions
- Conduct during the transitional period
- Opportunity to influence transitional Justice process



How will the results be used?

- Transitional justice mechanism or model
- Influencing policy framework & legislation



BEGINNING THE DIALOGUE

- Work with NGOs, civil groups
- Engage decision and policy makers for policy change
- Conduct community consultations throughout Liberia
- Design programs for reconciliation and healing

