

West Africa

In early 2012, the governments of Mali and Guinea-Bissau were overthrown in successive military coups. Both crises, as well as continued violence and illicit trafficking in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia's border region, pose serious risks to the region's delicate gains of the past several years. They also demonstrate the continuing structural weaknesses in the region, including porous borders, weak rule of law and justice systems, widespread corruption, and socioeconomic problems such as high youth unemployment. These challenges further expose the region to transnational security threats including terrorism and organized crime, all against the backdrop of a looming humanitarian crisis in the Sahel caused by a major drought (see Mission Note 4.9 for coverage on the Sahel and Mali).

The United Nations has an extensive presence in the region. In addition to a regional political office and the newly appointed Special Envoy for the Sahel, there are peacekeeping missions in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia,

and political missions in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. With the exception of Côte d'Ivoire, the countries hosting these missions are also on the UN Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

Regional organizations were also active in West Africa in 2012. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deployed a military mission to Guinea-Bissau. In response to the deteriorating security situation in the north of Mali, the UN Security Council authorized an African-led military intervention force in December. The European Union established a military support mission in Mali and a police mission in Niger.

Regional Approaches

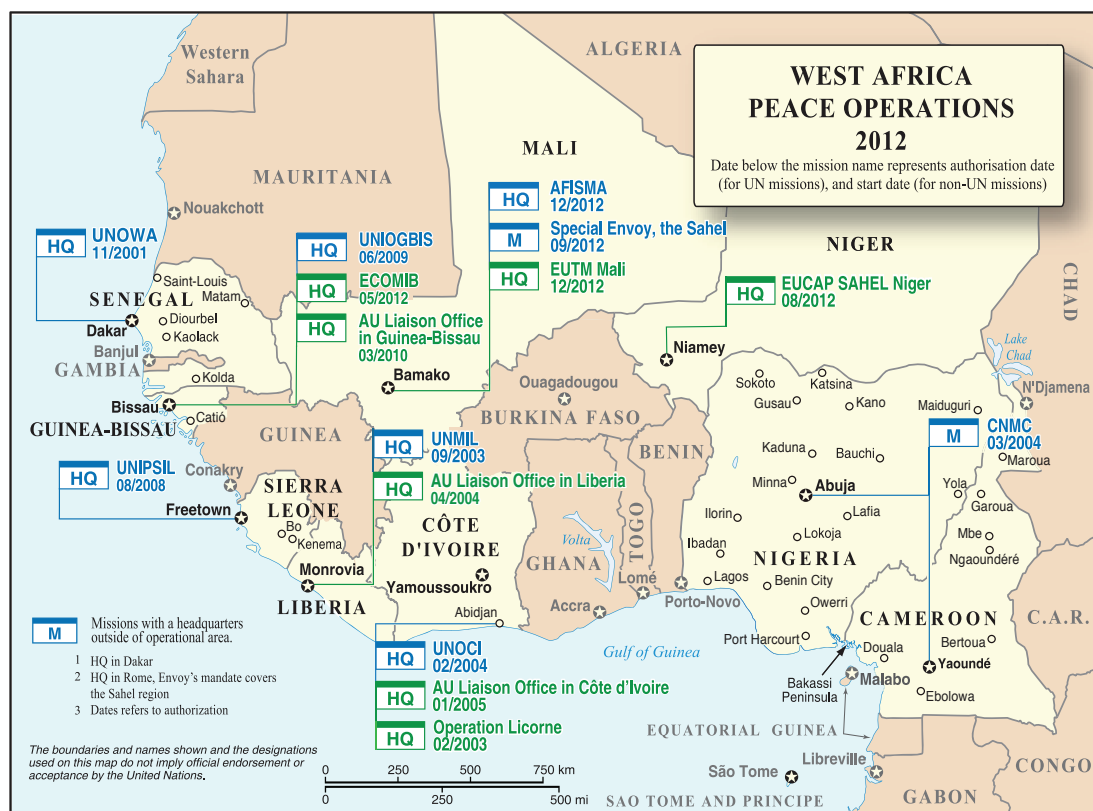
In January 2002 the UN established its first regional political office to promote an integrated subregional approach to peace and security challenges in West Africa. Covering the fifteen member states of ECOWAS and Mauritania, the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) has the broad mandate to enhance the contributions of the UN toward achieving peace and security in the region. UNOWA also supports the efforts of the Manu River Union (MRU) in this direction. Among its core functions, UNOWA carries out good offices, promotes good governance and the role of women in peace and security, and enhances regional capacities for conflict mediation, prevention, and cross-border threats. With a current mandate until December 2013, UNOWA is headed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Said Djinnit.

With multiple crises emerging simultaneously in West Africa during 2012, the year was

UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA)

- Authorization Date 26 November 2001 (SG Letter S/2001/1128)
- Start Date 1 January 2002
- SRSG Said Djinnit (Algeria)
- Budget \$8.9 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 Military Experts on Mission: 3
International Civilian Staff: 22
National Civilian Staff: 18

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particularly challenging for the mission. SRSJ Djinnit actively engaged in international efforts to address Mali's armed rebellion and military coup as well as, in close cooperation with the UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, the deteriorating security and humanitarian crisis in the Sahel. In response to the coup in Guinea-Bissau, the SRSJ, in coordination with the head of the UN peacebuilding office in the country, supported efforts to ensure a return to civilian rule and constitutional order. SRSJ Djinnit also used his good offices function to address electoral tensions in Senegal and Togo and assisted in consolidating democratic processes and institutions ahead of the elections in Guinea.

To address the growing cross-border challenges, such as illicit movement of weapons and armed groups, UNOWA is actively engaged with the heads of UN peace operations in the region, as well as ECOWAS and the

MRU, to develop a subregional security strategy to counter these threats, building on existing initiatives.

Together with the UN Office in Central Africa, the Economic Community of Central African States, ECOWAS, and other regional entities, UNOWA is developing an anti-piracy strategy and action plan to tackle piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and is supporting ECOWAS in designing a counterterrorism strategy. UNOWA also continues to implement the West Africa Coast Initiative, aimed at combating drug trafficking. In June 2012 a decision was taken to expand the initiative to Guinea, the first country without a UN presence on the ground to be added.¹

Guinea-Bissau

In January 2010 the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS)

replaced a previous UN office initially established in 1999 to support the implementation of the peace agreement between the government and a military junta. UNIOGBIS's mandated tasks include supporting efforts by the UN Peacebuilding Commission, addressing national reconciliation, and coordinating efforts of international partners on security sector reform (SSR).

In September 2010, following the appointment of two recurring coup-makers to top army positions, the EU withdrew its SSR mission, in place since 2008, and suspended most of its aid to the country. In March 2011 the Angolan Military Mission to Guinea-Bissau (MISSANG) was deployed to assist in efforts to reform the defense and security forces based on bilateral military cooperation agreements, as well as to implement an ECOWAS–Community

of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP) roadmap for SSR.

On 21 December 2011 the UN Security Council extended UNIOGBIS's mandate until 28 February 2013, emphasizing the need for continued reform of the defense and security sectors. On 26 December, while President Malam Bacai Sanhá was hospitalized in Paris, MISSANG hindered an attempted coup by the army, after which the relationship between the two entities deteriorated rapidly.

Following President Sanhá's death on 9 January 2012, presidential elections to determine his successor were held on 18 March, with inconclusive results. The election was overshadowed by the assassination of the former head of military intelligence and accusations of vote rigging by opposition candidates, including the opposition forerunner, who announced his boycott of the runoff vote scheduled for 29 April.

Following a 31 March joint fact-finding mission, including ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN, ECOWAS, alarmed by the mission's observations, took measures to address the electoral dispute and appointed Guinean president Alpha Condé as mediator for the crisis.

On 12 April the army imprisoned the interim president and prime minister along with other senior officials. In the weeks leading up to the coup, ECOWAS and the Guinea-Bissauan prime minister in respective letters to the UN Secretary-General raised concerns about mounting tensions between the army and MISSANG² and called for the deployment of a peacekeeping force to help maintain the country's political stability.

In response to these concerns and following discussions with the AU and national stakeholders, ECOWAS on 26 April decided to deploy standby forces to Guinea-Bissau to facilitate the safe withdrawal of MISSANG, assist in securing the transitional process, and aid the implementation of the ECOWAS–CPLP SSR roadmap. Comprising over 600 soldiers and police officers from Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Togo, and Senegal, the Economic Community Mission in Bissau (ECOMIB) started joint daily patrols with the national police in July.

UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS)

- Authorization Date 26 February 1999 (SG Letter S/1999/232 [as UNOGBIS]), 26 June 2009 (UNSC Res. 1876 [as UNIOGBIS succeeding UNOGBIS])
- Start Date 1 January 2010
- SRSG Joseph Mutaboba (Rwanda)
- Budget \$19 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 Military Experts on Mission: 2
Police: 16
International Civilian Staff: 61
National Civilian Staff: 53

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ECOWAS Mission to Guinea Bissau (ECOMIB)

- Authorization Date 26 April and 3 May 2012
- Start Date 18 May 2012
- Head of Mission Colonel Gnibanga Barro and Ambassador Ansumana Ceesay
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 Troops: 630

On 18 May, the UN adopted Resolution 2048, establishing the Guinea-Bissau Sanctions Committee, which imposed a travel ban on the coup's leaders.³ Later the same month, under an agreement forged with ECOWAS, the junta ceded power to a transitional civilian government and agreed to elections within twelve months. The transitional government, however, excludes any members of the government overthrown in the April coup.

The ECOWAS agreement on the transitional arrangements has created deep divisions among national actors and the international community, hindering further progress. Stakeholders are divided between those supporting the transitional government and those who want to see a restoration of constitutional order through the return of the authorities in place prior to the April coup.

The UN has reaffirmed its support for the ECOWAS-led mediation process but has called for a consensual and inclusive solution. UNIOGBIS and the AU Liaison Office in Guinea-Bissau have taken steps to enhance the exchange of information between stakeholders and to ensure more effective coordination of international efforts toward a return to constitutional order. However, efforts to harmonize positions of the various partners in 2012 have not succeeded, and the political and security situation remained volatile, illustrated by an alleged coup attempt in October.

In an effort to forge unison, in late December the UN, EU, AU, ECOWAS, and the CPLP deployed a joint assessment mission to Guinea-Bissau to assess the political and security situation. The mission plans to recommend ways on how best these organizations can work together to assist the country in areas key to long-term stabilization, including SSR, strengthening the rule of law, combating drug trafficking, and promoting social-economic development.

In November, the transitional government, in a letter to the UN Secretary-General, reportedly requested the replacement of UNIOGBIS SRSG Mutaboba, saying that he did not serve the interest of the transition under way. In early January, the Secretary-General appointed



Police stationed with the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) coordinate with the gendarmerie in the La Maison de'Arrete et Correction prison in Abidjan, following attacks on the Youpougou and Akouedo camps.

UN photo/Patricia Esteve

former Timorese president and Nobel Peace Prize laureate José Ramos-Horta as the new head of UNIOGBIS.

Côte d'Ivoire

The UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was established by the Security Council in 2004 to assist with implementation of the peace accords that ended the 2002 civil war. France's Operation Licorne, deployed shortly after the outbreak of war, supports UNOCI militarily and assists in implementation of the peace accords and the holding of elections.

In April 2011, UNOCI and Licorne forces helped end five months of electoral violence that ensued after former president Laurent Gbagbo refused to accept the November 2010 election results in favor of Alassane Ouattara. In December 2011, legislative elections were held, fully restoring the country's constitutional order. However, attacks against civilians and security forces, including peacekeepers, and reports of coup attempts in 2012, destabilized the security situation.

AU Liaison Office in Guinea-Bissau

- Authorization Date 29 March 2010 (PSC/PR/Comm. [CCXXII])
- Head of Office Ambassador Ovidio Manuel Barbosa Pequeno (Angola)
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 International Civilian Staff: 7
National Civilian Staff: 5

UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI)

- Authorization Date 27 February 2004 (UNSC Res. 1528)
- Start Date 4 April 2004
- SRSG Albert Gerard Koenders (Netherlands)
- Force Commander Major-General Muhammad Iqbal Asi (Pakistan)
- Police Commissioner Major-General Jean Marie Bourry (France)
- Budget \$575.0 million (1 July 2012–30 June 2013)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 Troops: 9,398
Military Observers: 189
Police: 1,430
International Civilian Staff: 418
National Civilian Staff: 767
UN Volunteers: 193

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Operation Licorne

- Authorization Date 4 February 2003 (UNSC Res. 1464)
- Start Date February 2003
- Force Commander Colonel Loïc Mizon (France)
- Budget \$91.0 million (1 January 2011–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 Troops: 450

well as SSR efforts. Following recommendations by the Secretary-General, Security Council Resolution 2062 (2012) endorsed a reduction of UNOCI's military component equivalent to one battalion as soon as practical. The resolution also requests the Secretary-General to undertake an assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire in a special report to be submitted no later than 31 March 2013.

The beginning of 2012 saw an increase of violent attacks on civilians, primarily in the west of the country. On 8 June, UNOCI peacekeepers were attacked and seven blue helmets from Niger were killed while responding to an attack on civilians near the Liberian border. A soldier of the national army was killed in a related attack the same day. The event underscores growing concern about the significant number of attacks on security forces, in particular in the border areas and near Abidjan, and an increasing mistrust among security elements.

Beginning in August, armed groups launched a string of attacks against military and police posts in Abidjan and the western parts of the country, causing casualties among government soldiers. These attacks took place against the backdrop of reported coup-plotting by elements loyal to Gbagbo in Liberia and Ghana. In October, the Group of Experts of the UN's Côte d'Ivoire sanctions committee reported that exiled supporters of Gbagbo had established a strategic command in Ghana from which they seek to destabilize President Ouattara's government. The report further alleges that the group sought to establish contact with extremist groups operating in northern Mali to set up operations against the Ivorian government.

The deteriorating security situation negatively affected reconciliation efforts in 2012. After the formation of a new government in March, political parties, with support from UNOCI, established a framework for ongoing dialogue to continue discussions in quarterly meetings. The first meeting took place on 21 June. Gbagbo's party refused to participate and continued to condition its participation in government and upcoming local elections.⁴

UNOCI is currently mandated until July 2013, with the priority of protecting civilians and supporting the government in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration as

Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission

In 2002 the UN established the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) at the request of the governments of Cameroon and Nigeria to assist in the implementation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling on the boundary dispute between the two nations.

The CNMC's mandate covers technical issues around border demarcation and delineation, but the commission also conducts monitoring and early warning to uphold the rights of those living in the area. The commission also supports confidence-building measures between the two countries, including joint economic ventures and cross-border cooperation. The CNMC is co-located with the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and shares the latter's Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Said Djinnit, who is also the chairman of the Follow-up Committee for the Greentree Agreement,¹ in place until 2013.

Border demarcation is the major remaining technical aspect of the CNMC's mandate. As of November 2012, over 1,825 kilometers of the estimated 2,000-kilometer land boundary had been demarcated between the two countries. It is expected that the assessment of the remaining boundary can be completed by the end of 2013 and that the outstanding areas of disagreement be settled by the end of 2014, allowing for final maps and agreement by 2015.

Though significant progress has been made with the support of the CNMC, it has been hampered by technical and

Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC)

- Authorization Date 17 March 2004 (SG Letter S/2004/298)
- Chairman Said Djinnit (Algeria)
- Budget \$8.9 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 International Civilian Staff: 9
National Civilian Staff: 2

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political challenges, including lack of adequate funding, faulty estimations of timelines, and omissions of important details in the ICJ ruling that pertain to the exact location of villages and roads along the delineated border. Political stalemates have centered on access to resources, particularly in the Bakassi peninsula, which has rich offshore oil deposits and plentiful fish stocks, but also include issues of nationality of the affected population.

In June 2012 the Nigerian House of Representatives passed a resolution demanding a review of the ICJ judgment ahead of the ten-year expiration of the period of revision of the ICJ's ruling on 9 October,² and called for a UN supervised plebiscite in which the people of Bakassi would exercise their right of self-determination. This was echoed by the Nigerian Senate in September. However, following intense consultation with legal experts, the government of Nigeria decided not to pursue the revision of the judgment.

Despite these risks, the commitment of the parties involved remains steadfast. The two countries signed a bilateral security pact in February to establish a transborder security committee to address additional insecurity challenges. The two countries have also agreed to joint oil exploration in the Bakassi peninsula. Further, new confidence-building measures directly aimed at supporting the affected border communities have been enacted by the government of Cameroon, and similar commitments to assess possible measures have been scheduled by Nigeria.

To facilitate the exit of the CNMC, its activities will be transferred to a bilateral commission and to other sub-regional structures. However, this will only be possible once the remaining outstanding issues have been addressed, such as placement of the final boundary pillars, the formal adoption of legally agreed maps, and the expiration of the Follow-up Committee of the Greentree Agreement in 2013.

Notes: 1. In 2006 the two parties agreed to the transfer of authority from Nigeria to Cameroon in the Bakassi peninsula under the Greentree Agreement. The process was successfully concluded in August 2008.

2. Although the judgment is final and not subject to appeal, the statute provides for circumstances under which a revision can be considered within a ten-year period from the ruling.

In February the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced that it would widen its investigation into possible war crimes to the start of the country's civil war in 2002.

The trial of former president Gbagbo at the ICC is scheduled to proceed, after the Court rejected arguments that it lacked jurisdiction and ruled Gbagbo fit to stand trial in August.

AU Liaison Office in Côte d'Ivoire

- Authorization Date 10 January 2010 (PSC/AHG/Comm.[XXII])
- Start Date March 2003
- Head of Office Ambassador Ambroise Niyonsaba (Burundi)
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 International Civilian Staff: 7
National Civilian Staff: 7

In November, the ICC also indicted Gbagbo's wife Simone, the first woman to face charges by the court, on charges including murder, rape, and persecution. In Côte d'Ivoire, the violent attacks against national security forces have led to the arrest and trial of three high-level Gbagbo supporters. On 11 October the Abidjan military court sentenced a top military ally of Gbagbo to fifteen years' imprisonment—the first conviction since the 2011 postelection violence. Four other former military officers were also sentenced in relation to the same case. Critics charge that no Ouattara ally has been arrested or credibly investigated over 2011's election violence.

To address the increasingly volatile security situation along the border area, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia reinforced the presence of their military contingents in these areas. In a joint meeting with UNOCI and the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the governments further agreed to enhance cooperation, including on judicial aspects and to promote reconciliation and development. The attacks in the east of the country led to an increase of security forces and a temporary closing of the border with Ghana, which was later reopened following an intervention by UNOCI.

UNOCI and UNMIL also increased joint activities, including coordinated border patrols and enhanced exchange of information and analysis. In September, the Security Council ordered the transfer of three armed helicopters deployed in UNMIL to UNOCI to be used for operations in the border area between Côte

d'Ivoire and Liberia. The recent increase in violence and the number of attacks in the country has prompted the mission to reexamine current threats, risks, and operational requirements for its deployment. In a letter to the Security Council in October, the Secretary-General asked the Council to defer the reduction of UNOCI's troops until the mandated assessment of the situation in Côte d'Ivoire in early 2013.

Liberia

UNMIL was deployed in October 2003 to assist in implementation of the comprehensive peace agreement that ended an internecine fourteen-year civil conflict. The mission is led by Karin Landgren, who replaced Ellen Margrethe Løj in July 2012.

In September 2012 the Security Council, through Resolution 2066, extended UNMIL's mandate for another year, with the primary tasks of supporting the government's efforts in strengthening peace and stability and protecting civilians. UNMIL is also mandated to support the government in moving forward the political process essential for peace consolidation—including national reconciliation, constitutional reform, and decentralization—and transitioning complete security responsibility to the Liberian National Police.

Following recommendations of the Secretary-General, the UN Security Council agreed to reduce UNMIL's forces in three phases, from 7,952 in September 2012 to approximately 3,750 by July 2015, based on the security situation in Liberia. The first reduction phase, of 1,990 military personnel, is scheduled to take place between October 2012 and September 2013. Resolution 2066 also provides for an increase in UNMIL's police component by three formed police units or a total of 420 personnel, bringing the authorized police strength to 1,795 officers.

On 16 January 2012, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was inaugurated for a second six-year term amid heightened political tensions, following violent clashes in the lead-up to the presidential runoff in November 2011

and a boycott of the runoff by the main opposition candidate. The election highlighted the vulnerability of Liberia's institutions and persistent societal and political divisions.

UNMIL's drawdown is in large part driven by pressures from the international community after the largely successful completion of the 2011 election as well as budgetary constraints, with budget cuts of some \$29 million for fiscal year 2012–2013.

Out of a total of six benchmarks guiding UNMIL's transition, only one—the peaceful, credible conduct of accepted national elections—had been achieved by November 2012. Progress in the other five areas that relate to handing over security responsibilities to national authorities is slow.⁵ The April 2012 Secretary-General's special report on UNMIL points out that “none of the country's security institutions is operationally independent” and that they are not “able to maintain stability without the support of UNMIL.”⁶

Key reform processes and national reconciliation have stalled partly due to lack of inclusive governance. As of August 2012, only 11 out of 447 persons appointed as part of the new government were not affiliated with the ruling party.⁷ Following President Johnson Sirleaf's appointment of supporters and family members, including three of her sons, to government and cabinet positions, she was accused of nepotism, leading the opposition and factions of her own party to call for her resignation. In October the head of the government's peace and reconciliation initiative and co–Nobel laureate Laymah Gbowee quit her position over concerns that the president had failed to adequately address corruption and nepotism.

In light of outstanding progress, the government and the UN agreed on a gradual approach to handing over security responsibilities to national authorities that includes geographic and functional prioritizations.⁸ With its stronger police component and in line with its mandate, UNMIL will increase mentoring and technical support to national police. The additional formed police units

UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL)

• Authorization and Start Date	19 September 2003 (UNSC Res. 1509)
• SRSG	Karin Landgren (Sweden)
• Force Commander	Major-General Leonard Muriuki Ngondi (Kenya)
• Police Commissioner	John Nielsen (United States)
• Budget	\$496.5 million (1 July 2012–30 June 2013)
• Strength as of 31 October 2012	Troops: 7,538 Military Observers: 122 Police: 1,302 International Civilian Staff: 470 National Civilian Staff: 989 UN Volunteers: 226

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AU Liaison Office in Liberia

• Authorization Date	6 April 2004 (PSC/PR/3[IV])
• Head of Office	Ambassador H. Oluwatoyin Solaja (Nigeria)
• Strength as of 30 September 2012	International Civilian Staff: 4 National Civilian Staff: 8

will be deployed as operational support to national institutions. This increased presence also aims to alleviate concerns among the population that the mission's military drawdown could leave a security vacuum.

To address the volatile security situation along the border with Côte d'Ivoire, the Liberian police, military, and immigration agencies are engaged in the first joint security operation aimed at mitigating the threat from armed elements. While the operation led to the arrest of more than a dozen suspects, UNMIL in September expressed concern about reports of mercenary activities at refugee camps in southeastern Liberia. In addition to increasing its cooperation with UNOCI, UNMIL has also adopted a more robust

UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL)

• Authorization Date	4 August 2008 (UNSC Res. 1829)
• Start Date	1 October 2008
• ERSG	Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen (Denmark)
• Budget	\$17.7 million (1 January 2012– 31 December 2012)
• Strength as of 31 October 2012	Police: 7 International Civilian Staff: 36 National Civilian Staff: 33 UN Volunteers: 8

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posture, by increasing the frequency of air patrols and deploying two armed helicopters closer to the Ivorian border.

Sierra Leone

The UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) was established in 2008 as a follow-on to a UN office in place since 2005. As one of the first fully integrated offices, UNIPSIL is headed by an Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) who is also double-hatted as the Resident UN Coordinator.

UN member states viewed a successful outcome of the November 2012 presidential, parliamentary, and local council elections (the first elections conducted entirely by the government) as a key benchmark for peace consolidation in the country, on which also hinges the future transition of UNIPSIL into a UN Country Team presence. In advance of the elections, the Security Council asked the Secretary-General to deploy an interagency technical assessment mission to review progress made on UNIPSIL's mandate and to provide details on a transition, drawdown, and exit strategy for UNIPSIL by 15 February 2013.

In September 2012, through Resolution 2065, the Security Council extended

UNIPSIL's mandate for six months until 31 March 2013, with a focus on providing assistance in the preparation and conduct of the elections. Resolution 2065 also mandated UNIPSIL to provide assistance for conflict prevention and mitigation efforts and support genuine and inclusive dialogue among political parties.

In February 2012 the UN Secretary-General withdrew his long-standing ERSG, Michael von der Schulenburg, amid heightened political tensions. The withdrawal took place at the request of the Sierra Leone government, which reportedly questioned Schulenburg's impartiality. In March, Jens Anders Toyberg-Frandzen was appointed as the new ERSG for UNIPSIL.

Since March, incidents of political violence have decreased. In May, as an outcome of a meeting co-organized by UNIPSIL, key political players and relevant institutions adopted a declaration reaffirming their commitment to political tolerance and nonviolence. The meeting also decided on a follow-up mechanism to ensure implementation of the declaration.

In preparation for the November 2012 elections, UNIPSIL helped train judges, prosecutors, police investigators, and other paralegal staff for the newly established Electoral Offenses Courts, and assisted in training 10,500 general-duty police and 2,224 personnel of the police's Operations Support Division on election-specific issues and public order management.⁹

According to international observers, the 17 November elections were held in a peaceful and orderly manner amid a high voter turnout. Despite efforts to increase the role of women in politics, including by UNIPSIL, only 38 women ran for seats in parliament, compared to 538 men.¹⁰ The incumbent president Ernest Bai Koroma won with more than 57 percent of the votes and was sworn into office on 23 November. His party, the All People's Congress (APC), won the majority in parliament with 67 seats, while the opposition

Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) came in second with 42 seats.

Following the announcement of the election result, SLPP presidential candidate Julius Maada Bio stated that he believed the election process was fraudulent, prompting EU election observers to voice concern about post-election unrest. Shortly after, the SLPP called on its deputies in parliament to boycott proceedings, citing the unwillingness of the National Electoral Commission to address their concerns about electoral irregularities. However, following talks between Bio and President Koroma, the SLPP called off its

boycott in early December, enabling the political activities to commence.

Conclusion

West Africa's diverse challenges and precarious security situation call for increased coordination and cooperation between all relevant actors, including the UN system, regional organizations, and bilateral actors. As developments in the region throughout 2012 have shown, hard-won gains in peace and development are delicate and easily undone.

Notes

1. The other member states of the West Africa Coast Initiative are Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

2. MISSANG was reportedly ordered to withdraw by the head of the armed forces, General Antonio Indjai.

3. Six further individuals were added to the Sanctions Committee on 18 July 2012.

4. These demands include the release of Gbagbo and associates from detention, the lifting of arrest warrants against those in exile, and the unblocking of frozen assets.

5. For more on the transition benchmarks, see United Nations, *Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*, UN Doc. S/2012/230, 16 April 2012, para. 29.

6. *Ibid.*, paras. 46 and 35.

7. United Nations, *Twenty-fourth Progress Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Liberia*, UN Doc. S/2012/641, 15 August 2012, para. 4.

8. A first security handover took place in Robertsport, western Liberia, in October 2012.

9. United Nations, *Ninth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone*, UN Doc. S/2012/679, 31 August 2012, para. 4.

10. "Landmark Sierra Leone Election Sees High Turnout," *CBC News*, 17 November 2012, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/world/story/2012/11/17/sierra-leone-election.html>.