

REMARKS

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

AT THE

Armed Forces of Liberia End of MINUSMA Mission Ceremony

Barclay Training Center

MONROVIA, LIBERIA

December 21, 2023

The Chief Justice and Associate Justices of the Supreme Court Here Present;

UN Country Resident Coordinator;

The Dean and Members of the Cabinet;

The Doyen, Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps;

Mr. Chief of Staff, and the Gallant Men and Women of the Armed Forces of Liberia;

Government Officials Here Present;

Members of the Fourth Estate;

**DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

I wish to thank all of you for gathering here today at this historic occasion marking 10 years of Liberia's participation in the United Nations Peace Support Operations to Mali.

Today we commemorate the successful end of the mission of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) in the UN Multidimensional Integration Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).

As you may recall, the New AFL was inducted into the Peace Support Operations on the 23rd of June 2013, as part of the African-Led International Support Mission to Mali, which later morphed into the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), on July 1, 2013 under UN Resolution 2100.

This was Liberia's first Peacekeeping operations following the end of the civil war and comes more than five decades after the country's first involvement in UN Peacekeeping in the Congo.

I am told our Armed Forces began its Mali Operations with a platoon-size, which grew in strength and capabilities over a period with additional deployments. For this, we must recognize the effort of our previous Commander-in -Chief, as well as the leadership of the AFL, past and present, for ensuring that our nation can contribute to the resolution of conflicts in our region. I must also appreciate the contributions of our partners and allies, including the United States, the United Kingdom, France and Nigeria, for helping us achieve this milestone.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

The Mali mission is a testament to the collective resolve of peace-loving Nations around the world who were willing to sacrifice material and human resources in order to put out the flames engulfing their neighbor's house.

We must therefore honor the brave and dedicated men and women of the Armed Forces of Liberia present here today, and all those helping to keep our nation safe.

It is my aspiration that the AFL will continuously be committed to this responsibility, while also ensuring International Peace. I have no doubt, following your remarkable achievement in Mali - both at the level of the troops and as Military Staff Officers - that you are on the path to greatness in international peacekeeping.

Your resilience was not only tested in the fields of harsh arid climate, but also when you withstood two waves of infectious disease outbreaks - Ebola and Covid. We are glad our contingent did not record a death during these outbreaks.

I wish to inform you that with the support of Central Government, the AFL has been gradually meeting the various logistical and operational requirements of the UN. These include among other things, Armored Personnel Carriers, assorted vehicles, and self-sustaining equipment to help the troops achieve their goals effectively.

Equally, the Government of Liberia in the National Budget for Fiscal Year 2022 approved an initial amount of Seven Hundred Thousand United States Dollars (\$700,000.00) and provided same to the Ministry of National Defense to support the troops deployed in Peace Support Operations.

Despite these interventions, there still remain some challenges for the troops in the field. It is my hope that the incoming administration will continue from where we have stopped in order to prepare the AFL for more peacekeeping operations.

Let me at this time pay special tribute to a fallen personnel,

Sergeant Ousman Sheriff, and all others who were wounded in Mali. Join me in observing a moment of silence in their honor.

To the troops present here today and all those who have participated and are still doing same in Peacekeeping Operations, the years spent in the field signifies that you have

contributed to peace, attained knowledge and experiences, especially in counter-terrorism operations, inter-operability with partners, discipline, and professionalism. For this we owe you a debt of gratitude.

You are now the beacon of hope not only for Liberia, but the region and beyond.

Continue to Be of Service.

I thank you.