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[Home](#) > U.S., International Community Applauded for UNMIL's Success in Liberia

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Embassy of the Republic of Liberia in the United States,

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by Gabriel I.H. Williams

Washington, D.C. – July 19, 2018: Liberia's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Lois C. Brutus, has applauded the international community for establishing the United Nations Mission to Liberia (UNMIL), which is recorded historically as one of the most successful peacekeeping missions in the world.

According to a dispatch from the Liberian Embassy in the United States, Ambassador Brutus was speaking on July 17, 2018, at an event commemorating the 70th anniversary of UN peacekeeping in the world. The program was organized around the three former Mano River Basin peacekeeping missions of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire, whose respective mandates have successfully ended.

The event, hosted by the UN Foundation under the theme: From Fear to Freedom; Celebrating UN Peacekeeping's Success in West Africa, was held on Capitol Hill in Washington and attended by some Members of the U.S. Congress and staff, as well as other dignitaries.

Ambassador Brutus noted that because of its holistic posture, from the date of authorization on September 19, 2003 to the end of its mandate on March 30, 2018, UNMIL can, without hesitation, be recorded as one of the most successful peacekeeping missions in the history of the UN.

She stated that UNMIL became the largest peacekeeping operation in the world at the time of its deployment in 2003 with a strength of 16,000 military personnel, including police officers, a civilian component for the provision of leadership, support and expertise in the area of administration.

Ambassador Brutus recalled that UNMIL was well equipped and effective in carrying out its mandate for the protection of the civilian population, justice and security institutional reforms, human rights protection and promotion, and public information.



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Ambassador Lois Brutus speaking at the UN Foundation event

Ambassador Brutus recounted her own role beginning as an Interviewer to that of a Child Fighter Coordinator with the UN Observer Mission during the process of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation of armed combatants.

The Liberian envoy stated that UNMIL's success was possible because of the full support given the UN by the international community. She made special reference to the U.S., and Congress in particular, for not only becoming the major player in facilitating UNMIL's establishment, but most importantly, the U.S. was the single largest contributor to its funding.

Madam Ambassador pointed out that UNMIL's success "has secured for all Liberians an undisputed, uninterrupted peace for nearly two decades." She added that the atmosphere of peace and security prevailing in Liberia has created an environment for the holding of three successive democratic presidential and general elections. She also added that the first election in 2005 ushered into power the first female democratically elected president in Africa, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; and the third election witnessed for the first time in more than 70 years a peaceful transfer of power from one living President to another, as manifested by the inauguration of President George Manneh Weah in January 2018.

Speaking at the event also, Congressman Ed Royce, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said that he will push for policies and programs that will increase the number of female peacekeepers in the world.

Chairman Royce, who played a critical role regarding U.S. engagement to end Liberia's civil crises, said having more women in peacekeeping is important to ensure the success of peacekeeping missions. "Let's get 30 percent peacekeepers to be female," he said, adding: "Our goal is to push this program throughout the world in terms of enforcement of the rule of law and peacekeeping, because the role of women is critical in any successful peacekeeping mission"

Another speaker at the event was Congressman David Cicilline, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, who also has one of the largest constituencies of Liberian Americans in his district in the State of Rhode Island. Congressman Cicilline, who said he has travelled to see two peacekeeping missions in Africa, including UNMIL in 2013, said the successes in the UN peacekeeping missions in West Africa have enabled war-ravaged countries in the region to overcome strife and begin the process of rebuilding.

Both Chairman Royce and Congressman Cicilline promised to support U.S. foreign assistance, including funding for the UN.

Also in remarks, Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary General for UN Peacekeeping, expressed the need to continue to strengthen regional, sub-regional and international partnerships to ensure a successful peacekeeping mission. Mr. Lacroix lauded the U.S. for the strong support to UN peacekeeping operations around the world.

The various speakers applauded the UN Foundation, which links the UN's work with others around the world, mobilizing the energy and expertise of business and non-governmental organizations to help the UN tackle issues including climate change, global health, peace and security, women's empowerment, poverty eradication, energy access, and U.S.-UN relations.

Speaking earlier on behalf of the UN Foundation, Mr. Peter Yeo, President of Better World Campaign and Vice President of UN Foundation, lauded the UN for the successful conclusions of the three respective UN peacekeeping missions in the Mano River Basin.

He noted that the UN Foundation will continue to promote strengthen relations between the United States and the UN to ensure peace and progress around the world.

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Links

[1]

https://liberianembassyus.org/sites/default/files/photos/Ambassador_Brutus_speaking_at_the_UN_Foundation_event_2018-07-17_color_corrected.jpg

[2] https://liberianembassyus.org/sites/default/files/photos/a_cross-section_of_guests_at_the_UN_Foundation_event_2018-07-17_color_corrected.jpg

[3]

https://liberianembassyus.org/sites/default/files/photos/Ambassador_Brutus_with_other_platform_personalities_at_UN_2018-07-17_color_corrected.jpg