



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA

EXECUTIVE MANSION

MONROVIA, LIBERIA

Office of the Press Secretary to the President

Cell: 0886-580034/0777580034

Email: jpiiah@emansion.gov.lr

Jeromapiiah@yahoo.com

**As Part of 52nd Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, President Sirleaf Commissions
Two Defender Boats, Named for Two Liberian Women, to Patrol Nation's Territorial Waters**

(MONROVIA, LIBERIA – Monday, February 10, 2014) The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, has commissioned two Defender boats to be used by the Liberian Coast Guard. The commissioning ceremony is part activities marking the 57th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day.

According to an Executive Mansion release, the two boats, donated by the United States Government, have been named in honor of two eminent Liberian women – Madam Ruth Sando Perry, and Dr. Mary Antoinette Brown Sherman.

Madam Perry was former Chairman of the erstwhile Council of State that led Liberia to its first post-war election in 1997; while Dr. Brown Sherman was the first and only female President of the University of Liberia.

In brief remarks at the Liberian Coast Guard Headquarters on Bushrod Island, President Sirleaf thanked the U.S. Government and attributed a large portion of the AFL reconstruction to U.S. assistance, which she said it is the result of great partnership between the two countries.

“Let me say how pleased we are with the partnership that Liberia enjoys with the United States; the peace that we have today can in large measure be attributed to this partnership that has helped us to produce an army of which we are all proud because of their professionalism, commitment and what they do to preserve the peace in our country,” the Liberian leader said joyously.

Cutting the ribbon to the boathouse, the Commander-in-Chief said she had no doubt that the Coast Guard will increase its performance, with the commissioning of the two additional boats, in patrolling the country's territorial waters.

She recalled that when the Liberia-Ivorian border became fragile as a result of rebel activities in the area, and Liberia closed its border with Côte d'Ivoire, the Coast Guard patrolled the area to ensure that Liberia was safe.

President Sirleaf used the occasion to pay special tribute to the mentors who she said have helped make the new AFL the best ever in the history of Liberia.

On the two women in whose honor the boats were named, President Sirleaf said there would have never been an appropriate way to remember their works than naming after them equipment intended to defend the nation's territorial integrity. She was very pleased, the President said, about two Liberian women being honored by the commissioning the boats in their names – very strong committed women of Liberia whose footprints remain with us today.

Speaking earlier, United States Ambassador Deborah Malac renewed her government's commitment to the partnership that has brought the two countries together. She promised her

country's continuous support to the upkeep of the Liberian Army, including training and logistics, among others.

Through U.S. support, said Ambassador Malac, the Liberian Coast Guard has completed comprehensive training to become a fully operational force. "Since 2008, the Coast Guard has conducted numerous patrols along Liberia's territorial waters, conducted search and rescue operations, and has seized vessels illegally fishing in Liberian waters," she recalled.

As part of the ceremony, Ambassador Malac also turned over a new boathouse, two new trucks, and two 4x4 utility vehicles to the Coast Guard.

The presentation of the equipment and structure was followed by a boat ride conducted by the Coast Guard. President Sirleaf boarded the "Ruth Perry" 33-foot Defender boat to patrol the waters. The ride afforded the AFL Commander-in-Chief the opportunity to get first-hand information on how the boats operate.

Witnessing the ceremony were: National Defense Minister Brownie Samukai; the outgoing AFL Command-Officer-in-Charge, Major General Suraj Abdurrahman; the AFL Chief of Staff-designate, General Daniel Ziankhan; and the Deputy Chief of Staff-designate, Colonel Eric Dennis, among others.

Mr. Jerolinmek Matthew Piah

Presidential Press Secretary/Office of the President

Department of Public Affairs

Republic of Liberia

email: jpiah@emansion.gov.lr/jeromapiah@yahoo.com

web: www.emansion.gov.lr