



**THE INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION RISK ASSESSMENT REPORT OF THE
LIBERIA NATIONAL POLICE (LNP)**

FOR THE PERIOD 2018/2019, 2019/2020 and 2020/2021

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MONROVIA, LIBERIA
October 2021

Table of Contents

1 DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
1.1 Lack of accountability of tickets in the hands of officers in the streets and at various police depot.	7
1.2 Lack of coordination between Ticketing unit and Ministry of Transport.	7
1.3 Violation of motor vehicle registration and driver’s license requirements	7
1.4 Tickets duplication	7
1.5 Unpaid traffic tickets	7
1.6 No background checks	8
1.7 Crime lab	8
1.8 Decentralization	8
1.9 Lack of security features	8
1.10 Fees charged for police clearance certificate	8
2.1 Recommendations	8
2.2 Conclusion	9
APPENDIXES	Error! Bookmark not defined.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Liberia National Police was established in 1956 by an act of the Legislature. In recent years there have been several reforms aimed at bringing the Liberia National Police in line with best practices. As a consequence of this, the police mandate was enhanced through an amendment to the Police act in 2015 which was approved and published on August 12, 2016.

Under the current Police Legislation, there are several functions of the LNP but the cardinal functions are stipulated below:

- Prevent and deter crimes, including monitoring of ex-convicts, conduct investigations, apprehend offenders, and maintain safety of persons and property;
- Protect fundamental freedoms and rights of individuals
- Gather, store and analyze information relevant to the prevention, detection and investigation or prosecution of offences.
- Respond to community security needs and promote community policing;
- Enforce the vehicle and traffic laws on the roads;

The Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA) of the Liberia National Police particularly placed a keen look at two division (s)/unit (s) at the Liberia National Police (LNP). The Identification and Record division and the Ticketing Unit. The ICRA Team therefore decided to concentrate risk assessment efforts on the operational effectiveness of the Police Ticketing System and the issuance of Police Clearance to individuals. The two are cardinal and important revenue generating functions of the Liberia National Police. These are potentially risky areas that are extremely prone to corruption based on regular interactions among several individuals daily.

The Team also visited other counties to assess the operational effectiveness of the Police Clearance system and the Ticketing Program

In the planning of the Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA), we considered Identification and Records Division and Ticketing Units internal controls over the handling and reporting on tickets booklets. Further, we look at the control deficiencies in the design or the operations of both controls over ticketing and police clearance certificates.

In our judgement, it could adversely affect the both units' revenue streams. the Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA) included an examination on a test basis of evidence supporting the compliance on the issuance of police clearance certificates. We found that clearances can be acquired within a day or two as compare to the twenty-one (21) days period. Additionally, Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA) team found that there is no background check done on applicants which heightens the possibility for police clearance certificate to land in the wrong hands. Further, the crime lab lacks ventilation and proper storage for sensitive data if there were crimes.

Moreover, the division is not decentralized which gives room for corruption and duplication of police clearance certificate since there is no security features. This is potentially risky and could deny government of the needed revenue.

Lastly, there is improper documentations over revenue collections. The Police Authority provided no

evidence that tickets issued to Traffic Police Officers are monitored and revenue generated are reported to government accounts. This has made the entire ticketing and Police Clearance chaotic and prone to corruption.

In the technical opinion of the LACC, the Police Clearance and Ticketing regime is of high risk of corruption and the Anti-graft office is requesting more investigations into operations of the division of Identification and Records and Ticketing unit at the LNP to help minimize some of the deficiencies noted which could potentially result in fraud. These deficiencies are clearly symptomatic of a larger problem of corruption in the Liberia National Police.

INTRODUCTION

Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) has as part of its many obligations under the act to implement appropriate measures and undertake programs geared toward investigating, prosecuting and preventing acts of corruption, including educating the public about ills of corruption and the benefits of its eradication.

The institutional corruption risk assessment on the Liberia National Police (LNP) was performed for the purposes of identifying threats and weaknesses in the system and control processes and review of the operational effectiveness of the LNP consistent with Part V, section 5.2K of the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) Act of 2008 which states " to conduct research, survey and related studies both (1) the dimension, manifestations, and causes and effects of corruption; and (2) the practices, procedures and systems of governance and management that need to be adopted and promoted to combat, eradicate and prevent acts of corruption".

The Identification and Record Division within the Liberia National Police is primarily responsible for conducting background checks on applicants who are desirous of obtaining police clearance certificate for work, travel etc.

Additionally, the Ticketing Unit came into active operation in 1985 following series of capacity building workshops to inculcate officers with the knowledge and skills as well as give them practical hands-on experience which qualified them to sign for ticket booklets at the Ticketing Office.

The traffic ticket is a legal document, citation paper given to any potential traffic violator(s) for wanton disregard of the Vehicle and Traffic Law of Liberia. Traffic tickets are issued to violators to achieve the following objectives: educate the driving public; discourage potential violators who knowingly violate, feel no remorse of conscience; reduce or minimize traffic hazard; and to generate revenue for the Government of Liberia.

THE OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL CORRUPTION RISK ASSESSMENT

To assess whether Liberia National Police (LNP) through the Identification and Records Division and Ticketing Units have an effective institutional framework for preventing corruption at all levels of the institution especially with the fashion and manner in which it conducts itself with the public in handling the motor vehicles and traffic violations and issuance of police clearance certificate and the controls over revenue generation. The institutional corruption risk assessment particularly looked at the last three years (2018-2021).

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTIONS

The approach for the institutional corruption risk assessment covers a division and a unit under the Liberia National Police (LNP)-The Identification and Records division and the Ticketing Unit. The team interviewed the officers of both the division of Identification and Records and Ticketing Unit and submitted questionnaires to each Units/division heads at the LNP and reviewed documents. Further, the team visited five (5) counties namely; Rivercess, Bong, Nimba, Margibi and host Montserrado and talked to several key stakeholders including Police commanders and those responsible for ticketing and Clearance Certificate at the Liberia National Police. The Team also requested any available information or documentation about Police Clearance and ticketing services including revenue receipts that payments have been made to government revenue.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Liberia National Police Force was established by an act of the legislature in 1956 but became factionalized during the Liberian civil war. After the Second Liberian Civil War, rebuilding the police began in 2004. The Police component of UNMIL (UNPOL) registered 5,000 people who claimed to be members of the LNP. They had survived mostly from extracting bribes from the public. Only the traffic division had smart uniforms and could be seen on duty, as their position made it easier to impose spurious fines on motorists.

According to Friedman (2011), UNPOL and Liberian police leaders, through the Rule of Law Implementation Committee, then "recruited and deployed an initial interim force of 400 former local police officers to work alongside UNPOL in its efforts to drive out former combatants and reclaim police stations in Monrovia. They also implemented UN Quick Impact Projects which included the reopening of police sub-stations, taking over roadblocks, and constructing new mini-stations.

The International Crisis Group wrote in 2011 that 'Over 4,000 officers have been trained, including the armed Emergency Response Unit (ERU) and the specialized Police Support Unit (PSU). Fifteen percent (15%) of these officers were women. At a ratio to population of 1:850 and with 65-70 per cent deployed in Montserrado county alone, there were clearly not enough officers to cover the whole country. The ERU, set up in 2008 to combat spiraling armed robbery, was functional and appeared efficient, though based on revised needs assessments, it had only 344 officers instead of the originally targeted 500. The PSU was meant to have 600 members by December of that year.

STRUCTURE OF THE LIBERIA NATIONAL POLICE

The LNP is made up of four Departments: Administration; Operations; Training. & Manpower Development and Crime Services and Professional Standards. The Liberian Criminal Justice System site says that the Administration and Operations consists of The Public Affair Division – Board of Investigation, Band Unit, Chaplain & Court Liaison, Logistics, Communication, Planning & Research-Central, Statistics Unit and Drafting.

Operations is the largest and the most important section, and consists of i. Patrol ii. Criminal Investigation Division iii. Criminal Intelligence Unit iv. Interpol v. Public Safety vi. Motor Vehicle. Emergency Response Unit viii. Police Support Unit ix. Women and Children Protection Unit

For policing purposes, Liberia is divided into five geographic areas. They are:

- 1) **Region one (1)** – Montserrado, Margibi, and Grand Bassa Counties
- 2) **Region two (2)** – Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, and Gbarpolu Counties
- 3) **Region three (3)** – Bong, Nimba, and Lofa counties
- 4) **Region four (4)** – Sinoe, Grand Gedeh, and Rivercess Counties
- 5) **Region five (5)** – River Gee, Maryland, Grand Kru Counties.

INTERPOL states that "With more than 4,100 police officers in 151 police stations across the country, the Liberian National Police (LNP) has responsibility for Liberian internal security and criminal investigations". The Liberian National Police had 844 officers spread across 33 stations in Montserrado County, which contains the capital Monrovia, as of October 2007.

TRAINING

The National Police Training Academy (LNPTA) is in Montserrado County in Paynesville City. It is headed by a Commander with three deputy commanders: 1. Administration 2. Training and Research 3. Curriculum Development

The Training Academy trains all members of the Liberia National Police in various phases of law enforcement and crime prevention and investigation. It is also responsible to train members of the other law enforcement agencies such as Special Security Service, Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization, National Fire Service, Drugs Enforcement Agency, etc.

1 DETAILED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 Lack of accountability of tickets in the hands of officers in the streets and at various police depot.

1.1.1.1 There are variations between policy instruments and actual institutional practices. Accountability mechanisms contained in the policy manual of the Unit have strong internal controls but are being circumvented by ticketing officers. For example, in adherence to the manual, no ticketing officer should have the authority to issue and cancel ticket issued to a traffic violator, but in actual practice, it was observed that this is possible, thereby giving too much discretion to ticketing officers, which provides likelihood for the occurrence of corruption.

1.1.1.2 It was observed that the head of the Ticketing Section could not provide the actual number of ticket booklets with officers in the public. Moreover, ticket booklets assigned to officers in and around Monrovia are not retrieved in time thereby causing the government to lose much needed revenue to corruption through compromises from officers handling the ticket booklets.

1.2 Lack of coordination between Ticketing unit and the Ministry of Transport

1.2.1.1 During our interactions with head of the ticketing unit at the Liberia National Police, it was observed that the ticketing unit doesn't have the database of vehicles that are registered and plying the streets. Additionally, there are vehicles plying the streets that have license plates that have been issued to other vehicles thereby making it difficult during traffic offenses.

1.3 Violation of vehicle registration and driver's license requirements

1.3.1.1 Motor vehicle registration are done annually, while drivers' licenses are renewed biennially. During the Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA) and interactions with both officers of the LNP and commercial drivers plying the streets, it was observed that most vehicles plying the streets do not meet the minimum requirements to be used for commercial purposes. On a daily basis these vehicles are on the streets for commercial purposes in the presence of traffic officers and they are not pullover for violation by using those vehicles that are not meant to be commercialized. In most instances, traffic officers compromise with drivers thereby depriving government of the needed revenues.

1.4 Tickets duplication

1.4.1.1 It was observed during the Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA) that the LNP tickets lack security features thereby making it easy for duplication. Additionally, we also noticed improper handling of tickets booklets by assigned officers in the streets.

1.5 Unpaid traffic tickets

1.5.1.1 The police raises revenue for government through traffic related offenses. During the review of documentations, we observed that there is no mechanism in place for violators who do not pay on due dates.

1.6 No background checks

1.6.1.1 During our interaction with officers of the crime lab section, it was observed that additional background checks are not done in communities once there is a letter from a nearby police station. Moreover, nearby police depots do not verify application letter coming from community chairmen. Moreover, we observed that clarences can be obtained within a day or two (2) as compare to the twenty-one (21) days period.

1.7 Crime lab

1.7.1.1 It was observed during our interaction that the crime lab used at LNP for obtaining police clarence is manual instead of being biometric. Additionally, finger prints are not kept in any system if there was a future crime elsewhere.

1.8 Decentralization

1.8.1.1 During the Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA), it was observed that the records and identification division has one office since its establishment. It also shows that one can obtain police clarence with ease if he or she commits a crime in other parts of the country and come down to the capital. There is absolutely nothing in place to track criminals or murderers applying for police clarence.

1.9 Lack of security features

1.9.1.1 It was observed that the police clarence certificate can easily be duplicated and land in wrong hands because it lacks security features. Moreover, from our interactions during the interview, there is no mechanism put in place to curtail the duplication of police clearance

1.10 Fees charge for police clarence certificate

1.10.1.1 It was observed that fees charged for police clarence certificate are not categorized. The Records and Identification Division charges the same fees for citizens, alien and foreigners. Additionally, there are improper documentation to account for fees paid on police clarence certificate.

1.11 Recommendations

1.11.1.1 The LNP Management should ensure that tickets issued to officers in and around Monrovia are reported on a daily basis and tickets issued to officers outside of Monrovia are reported weekly.

1.11.1.2 We recommend that MoT share her motor vehicle registration database with the LNP to enable the both entities have a smooth working relationship.

1.11.1.3 Ticketing Unit should ensure that all vehicles plying the streets are road worthy and meet all of the standards and requirements on the books for commercial and private purposes.

1.11.1.4 Ticketing unit should ensure that tickets issued to LNP officers for issuance to traffic violators should have security features so that it minimizes the risk of being duplicated.

1.11.1.5 Failure to pay on due date or failure to appear in court to contest a traffic ticket, the driver's

license should be suspended for a period consistent with vehicle and traffic laws of Liberia.

1.11.1.6 We recommend a follow up in the community through the community leaders on individuals applying for police clarence.

1.11.1.7 We recommend an automated biometric finger print machine at the crime lab.

1.11.1.8 The Management of the LNP should ensure that the Records and Identification Division is decentralized to help minimize criminals from obtaining police clarence.

1.11.1.9 The Records and Identification Division should ensure that police clarence certificate issued to applicants carries security features so that it minimizes the risk of being duplicated.

1.11.1.10 We recommend separate fees be charged for each of the categories applying for police clarence certificate (citizens, alien and foreigners).

1.12 Conclusion

1.12.1.1 During the course of the Institutional Corruption Risk Assessment (ICRA), several weaknesses, deficiencies and irregularities at both Identification and Records Division and Ticketing Unit at the Liberia National Police (LNP) were observed and are hampering or depriving the government of much needed revenue. Notable among these were:

- Lack of accountability of tickets in the hands of officers in the sheets and at various police depot.
- Lack of coordination between Ticketing unit and Ministry of Transport.
- Violation of vehicle registration and driver's license requirements
- Tickets duplication
- Unpaid traffic tickets
- No background checks
- A highly centralized Crime lab
- Lack of Decentralization
- Lack of security features
- Lack of categorization of fees charge for police clarence certificate.

