

## MEDIA ADVISORY

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## Liberia: Truth and Reconciliation Commission to Open Doors Tomorrow

*President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to Inaugurate Commission in Public Ceremony*

### WHAT:

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf will be joined by national officials, civil society representatives, and both national and international NGO leaders at a public ceremony officially launching the TRC's two-year operational mandate. This ceremony will be the first of a series of events meant to generate discussion, educate, celebrate, and inform the general public about the TRC process. Events will include a conference co-sponsored by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) on Friday, a massive community mobilization jubilee and sensitization campaign over the weekend, and knowledge-sharing sessions on Monday between representatives from former truth commissions from other countries and members of the Liberian TRC.

### BACKGROUND:

From 1989 to 2003, the Liberian people suffered extreme violence from armed conflict, mass internal and external displacement, and severe human rights abuses perpetrated by a wide range of actors during the nation's brutal civil war. On August 18, 2003, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was adopted in Accra, Ghana, formally ending this era of prolonged civil strife.

Following a period of transitional governance and extensive national dialogue, on May 12, 2005 the Act to Establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia was enacted by the National Transitional Legislative Assembly and tasked with investigating the truth around human rights violations that had occurred during the nation's civil war. In late 2005, following a widespread consultative process and nominations from the public, nine national Commissioners and three technical advisory committee members were selected to make up the TRC panel, which officially starts its work on Thursday, 22 June, 2006.

### WHO, WHEN & WHERE:

*Thursday, 22 June 2006*

10:00-12:00 PM

**TRC Inaugural Ceremony: "Truth and Reconciliation: Challenges and Prospects for a New Liberia."** (Monrovia, Centennial Memorial Pavilion)

- Introductory remarks: President of Liberia, Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

- Guest speaker: Former President of the Interim Government of National Unity, Dr. Amos C. Sawyer

***Friday, 23 June 2006***

8:30-2:00 PM

**Public Conference co-hosted by the ICTJ, the Transitional Justice Working Group, and the Liberian TRC (Monrovia City Hall)**

### **Media Contacts:**

**To speak to one of the TRC Commission members, please contact:**

- **Counselor Jerome J. Verdier**, Chairman of the Commission: 231-5-615-218 or [jverdier@trcofliberia.org](mailto:jverdier@trcofliberia.org)
- **Massa Washington**, Chairman of Media Relations and Outreach: 231-6-834-717 or [mwashington@trcofliberia.org](mailto:mwashington@trcofliberia.org)

**For more information about truth commissions or transitional justice, please contact:**

- **Priscilla Hayner, ICTJ**, Director of International Policymakers Unit and Head of the Liberia Program: 231-5-650-470 or [phayner@ictj.org](mailto:phayner@ictj.org)
- **Graeme Simpson, ICTJ**, Director of Country Programs Unit and Africa Regional Specialist: 231-5-877-802 or [gsimpson@ictj.org](mailto:gsimpson@ictj.org)

***If you experience technical difficulties reaching any of the above people, would like to schedule an interview, or need more information, please contact: Suzana Grego, ICTJ Director of Communications, at +1 (917) 637-3845 or [sgrego@ictj.org](mailto:sgrego@ictj.org).***

General Information is also available at the Liberian TRC website: [www.trcofliberia.org](http://www.trcofliberia.org) and the ICTJ website [www.ictj.org](http://www.ictj.org)