

The Practice of International Law in Liberia

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How to cite this paper: Williams, M. N. (2025). The Practice of International Law in Liberia. *Beijing Law Review*, 16, 273-289. <https://doi.org/10.4236/blr.2025.161013>

Received: February 17, 2025

Accepted: March 14, 2025

Published: March 17, 2025

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Abstract

Integrating local traditions with international legal frameworks poses significant challenges for post-conflict nations. Liberia, one of Africa's oldest republics, has a history of engaging with international laws to assert its sovereignty, meet compliance requirements, and support post-conflict reconstruction. From early diplomatic efforts to secure territorial recognition to active participation in international and regional organizations such as the United Nations (UN), Africa Union (AU), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Liberia has consistently relied on mechanism of international law to shape its governance and development trajectory. This study examines Liberia's interaction with international law through three primary lenses: historical context, contemporary applications, and future challenges. It explores the nation's role in regional organizations, its compliance with international treaties, and the obstacles in harmonizing global legal norms with domestic policies. The paper also highlights Liberia's legal responses to human rights issues, environmental governance, and economic constraints. Given the limited scholarly work on Liberia's engagement with international law, this research contributes to the discourse by offering insights into the country's legal landscape. It emphasizes the need for stronger legal institutions, enhanced accountability, and sustained international cooperation to ensure the effective application of international law in Liberia. By addressing these critical issues, this study provides a deeper understanding of how post-conflict states integrate global legal norms with domestic legal frameworks to rebuild governance and achieve sustainable development.

Keywords

International Law in Liberia, Sovereignty and Compliance, International & Regional Organizations, Human Rights, Legal Institutions & Governance, Post-Conflict Reconstruction

1. Introduction

International Law plays a crucial role in shaping the diplomatic, economic, and legal frameworks of nations. In Liberia, a country with a unique founding history and a prolonged period of civil unrest, the practice of international law has been instrumental in navigating issues of sovereignty, governance, and post-conflict recovery.

Following the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, which formalized European colonization in Africa, Liberia faced significant threats to its sovereignty. Although Liberia had declared its independence in 1847, partly due to encouragement from the American Colonization Society (ACS), it remained vulnerable to external pressures. To safeguard its sovereignty, Liberia engaged in diplomatic negotiations with European powers throughout the 19th century. However, in exchange for formal recognition of its independence, Liberia was compelled to cede portions of its territories to these powers (Boddy-Evans, 2024). A notable event occurred in 1885, when Britain forcibly annexed the Gallinas territory, which eventually became part of the Sierra Leone colony. In subsequent years, on September 18, 1892, Liberia signed a treaty with France, further ceding substantial portions of its northeastern territory. Additionally, in 1887, Liberia engaged in negotiations with Britain, resulting in border adjustments with Sierra Leone. Consequently, Liberia was compelled to relinquish territories in the Lofa and Mano River regions in 1885 (Dunn et al., 2001).

These territorial concessions reflect the complex dynamic challenges Liberia faced while seeking international recognition; these diplomatic efforts often came at the cost of significant land losses due to the overwhelming imperial influence exerted by European powers in West Africa.

Beyond territorial defense, Liberia has actively engaged in global and regional diplomacy. It became a founding member of the League of Nations in 1920 and later joined the United Nations in 1945, where it played a key role in advocating for African decolonization. Additionally, Liberia contributed to the formation of the Organization of Africa Unity (Heffinck, 2014).

Furthermore, Liberia has utilized international legal mechanisms to address its governance challenges. During its civil wars, the country relied on ECOWAS peace-keeping forces (ECOMOG) to help temporarily stabilize the nation (HRW, 1993).

This paper examines Liberia's engagement with international law from three key aspects: historical context, contemporary applications, and future challenges. It analyzes Liberia's participation in global treaties, its role within international institutions, and the incorporation of international legal norms into domestic law. Special attention is given to Liberia's legal responses to post-conflict justice, human rights obligations, and economic governance.

2. Research Question and Thesis Statement

Research Question:

How has Liberia's engagement with international law influenced its sovereignty, legal system, and post-conflict development?

Thesis statement: Liberia's historical and contemporary engagement with international law demonstrates its reliance on global legal frameworks to strengthen governance, address human rights issues, and manage economic challenges. However, institutional weakness, political resistance, and economic constraints continue to hinder full compliance and implementation of international legal norms. To ensure the effective application of international law in law, it is essential to strengthen legal institutions, enhance accountability, and foster international cooperation.

Historical Foundations of International Law in Liberia

Liberia's legal system is shaped by its historical interactions, including its founding as a settlement for freed African Americans, which was sponsored by the American Colonization Society (ACS), as well as its international diplomacy and the coexistence of customary law and statutory law. These influences are evident in Liberia's dual legal framework, its approach to legal integration, and its engagement with international law regarding sovereignty and territorial governance. This dual framework reflects the nation's desire to harmonize its colonial heritage with indigenous traditions.

Legal Pluralism and the Dual Legal System

Liberia's legal system operates under a dual legal framework, where formal statutory laws coexist with traditional customary laws. This unique structure is explicitly recognized in Article 2 of the Liberian 1986 Constitution, which establishes the supremacy of the constitution while also acknowledging the role of customary law in the country's legal landscape ([Liberian Legal Information Institute, 1986a, Article 2](#)).

Statutory Law in Liberia is deeply rooted in Anglo-American common law, a legacy of the nation's founding by the ACS in the 19th century. The Liberian Constitution outlines that statutory law governs formal legal matters, encompassing areas such as constitutional rights, criminal justice, and commercial law.

In contrast, customary Law remains a vital component of Liberia's legal system, particularly in rural regions. Article 65, of the Liberian constitution empowers traditional chiefs and elders to adjudicate disputes based on indigenous norms and practices ([Liberian Legal Information Institute, 1986b, Article 65](#)). This system primarily addresses matters of family law, land disputes, and community conflicts, offering accessible justice to communities that may have limited access to formal judicial institutions.

Despite the presence of both legal systems, Liberia faces challenges relating to legal fragmentation. To address these issues, there have been ongoing efforts aimed at judicial reforms, institutional strengthening, and enhancing legal education to promote coherence, fairness, and wider access to justice within this dual legal framework.

To further integrate the Customary and Statutory System, Liberia has implemented several measures designed to harmonize the two frameworks. The constitution explicitly recognizes the authority of customary courts, provided that their rulings

align with legal principles and international human rights standards. Moreover, decisions rendered in customary courts are subject to appeal in statutory courts, ensuring legal oversight and consistency between the systems. Legislative reforms are also underway, with the goal of aligning customary practices with Liberia's constitutional framework, particularly in relations to women's rights, land tenure, and dispute processes.

Influence of Historical International Negotiations

Liberia has actively engaged with international law to address issues of regional stability and human rights. In 1960, Liberia, alongside Ethiopia, bought a case against South Africa before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning South West Africa (now Namibia). The plaintiffs argued that South Africa had violated its obligations under the League of Nations mandate by implementing discriminatory policies and failing to promote the well-being of the inhabitants. Although the ICJ ruled in favor of South Africa in July 1966, this legal action underscored Liberia's commitment to international legal mechanisms in challenging racial discrimination and upholding human rights (ICJ, 1966).

3. Memberships in International Organizations

Liberia's active participation in international organizations reflects its long-standing commitment to global legal standards and diplomacy. As one of the few independent African nations in the early 20th century, Liberia became a founding member of the League of Nations in 1920, positioning itself as a significant player on the global stage. This early participation provided Liberia with a platform to advocate for African sovereignty and support decolonization efforts. Later, in 1945, Liberia reaffirmed its dedication to international cooperation by becoming a founding member of the United Nations. **Figure 1** shows Gabriel L. Dennis, then Liberia's Secretary of State, signed the UN Charter on behalf of Liberia during the San Francisco Conference, marking the country's continued commitment to global governance.



Figure 1. Image from the UN Charter signing ceremony, San Francisco, April 1945 (Kuwonu, 2020).

Liberia's engagement with international legal frameworks extends beyond organizational memberships. The nation has ratified several United Nations human rights treaties, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These commitments necessitated aligning domestic policies with international standards, the CEDAW obligates Liberia to implement measures promoting gender equality and to report periodically on progress to UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women ([United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.](#)).

Through these memberships and treaty obligations, Liberia has demonstrated a proactive approach to integrating international legal norms into its domestic frameworks, reflecting its dedication to upholding human rights and contributing to global legal discourse.

Liberia's Role in the African Union (AU)

Liberia has played a pivotal role in promoting Pan-African legal frameworks through its active participation in continental organizations and its adherence to regional legal instruments. As a founding member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1993, Liberia was among the 32 African nations that came together with aim of fostering political and economic integration while eradicate colonialism from the continent.

With the OAU's transition to the African Union (AU) in 2001, Liberia continued to engage proactively with the new structure, embracing the legal commitments established for member states ([Africa Union](#)).

4. ECOWAS' Role in Liberia

Liberia's has been a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) since its inception in 1975. This membership has played crucial role in shaping regional legal frameworks, particularly in terms of security and conflict resolution. A notable example is the intervention by the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) during Liberia's civil wars, which set a significant precedent in regional peacekeeping under international law ([United States Trade Representative](#)).

First Liberia Civil War (1989-1996):

The civil war began in December 1989 when Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) launched an insurgency against President Samuel K. Doe's government. The resulting conflict led to a humanitarian crisis and threatened regional stability. In response, ECOWAS, invoking its Protocol on Mutual Assistance in Defense (1981), deployed ECOMOG in August 1990. This marked one of the first instances in which a regional organization intervened militarily in a member state's internal conflict. ECOMOG's mandate was to establish a ceasefire, restore law and order, and facilitate humanitarian assistance. Despite initial resistance from rebel factions, ECOMOG succeeded in securing the capital, Monrovia, and oversaw peace negotiations ([HRW, 1993](#)).

Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003):

Renewed hostilities erupted in 1999, involving President Taylor's forces and rebel groups such as the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). As the conflicts intensified, ECOWAS intervened again by deploying ECOMOG in 2003. This intervention was crucial in facilitating the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in August 2003, which mandated the following (USIP, 2003):

- The resignation and exile of President Charles Taylor.
- The establishment of the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL).
- The disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of combatants under the supervision of the United Nations.

The CPA laid the foundation for Liberia's post-wars legal and governance reforms, exemplifying ECOWAS's significant role in regional peace building.

Ratification of Laws to International Standards in Liberia

Liberia has made significant strides in aligning its legal framework with international standards by ratifying several key treaties and conventions that promote human rights, governance, and economic transparency. These reforms are essential for reinforcing the rule of law, attracting foreign investment, and enhancing the country's reputation on the global stage.

For instance, on December 29, 1987, Liberia ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, demonstrating its commitment to upholding human rights and adhering to continental legal standards. More recently, On April 20, 2024, Liberia announced its intention to ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights. This commitment includes a declaration that will permit direct access to the Court by non-governmental organizations and individuals, further solidifying the nation's dedication to promoting human rights and justice (AFCHPR, 2024).

Adoption of the Maputo Protocol: Liberia signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol) on December 16, 2003, and ratified it to December 14, 2007. This commitment obligates Liberia to implement measures promoting women's rights and eliminating gender-based violence (Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, n.d.).

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):

Liberia is a signatory member of international and regional human rights conventions and protocols that seek to protect women and girls from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Notably, the Maputo Protocol explicitly calls on members states to ban all forms of FGM through legislative measures. Liberia ratified this protocol in 2007; however, the country currently lacks a law prohibiting FGM. Nevertheless, the Liberia senate has initiated a bill that includes a ban on this practice, which is condemned under international human rights law. These initiatives highlight Liberia's commitment to aligning its domestic policies with international human rights standards, aiming to foster a society based on transparency, accountability, and respect for individual rights.

In February 2023, Chief Zanzan Karwor, Chairperson of the National Council of Chiefs and Elders of Liberia (NACCEL), took a significant stand against FGM by declaring a ban on the practice during the International Day of Zero Tolerance against FGM. This declaration represents a crucial step forward, reflecting a growing consensus among traditional leaders on the importance of eradicating the practice. In addition to the traditional ban, there are concerted efforts to introduce comprehensive legislation aimed at criminalizing FGM across all age groups. Lawmakers are working with traditional councils to create a legal framework that would enforce severe penalties for those who perpetrate these acts while also providing protection and support for victims. Queen Juli Endee, who chairs the Taskforce on Ending FGM in Liberia, emphasized the necessity of enacting national legislation to complement the traditional ban, stating, “We now have a traditional ban, but we need a law from the national legislature to support the ban”, which highlights the need for a synergistic approach to effectively combat FGM in the country (UN Liberia, 2024).

Challenges in Combating FGM:

Combating Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) presents significant challenges, primarily due to cultural entrenchment. In many traditional societies, such as those influenced by the Sande and Poro secret societies, FGM is perceived as a crucial rite of passages of young girls. This cultural significance often leads to resistance against efforts to ban or criminalize the practice, as traditional leaders frequently advocate for its continuation, emphasizing its importance to their cultural identity.

Compounding this issue are ineffective temporary bans. For example, a three-year moratorium on FGM declared in 2018 failed to bring about meaningful change. Despite the declaration, the practice continued largely due to lack of awareness within the communities and insufficient coordinated enforcement. Many people were either unaware of the ban or chose to disregard it altogether. The absence of a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach involving various state agencies further weakened the effectiveness of these temporary prohibitions (RFI, 2021).

Another significant barrier to eradicating FGM in Liberia is the lack of explicit and comprehensive legislation that criminalizes the practice across all age groups. While there have been some executive orders and temporary bans, these measures lack the permanence and enforcement power of formal laws. This legal gap not only obstructs the prosecution of perpetrators but also undermines the protection of victims effectively.

Despite these hurdles, Liberia is making progress to addressing them. The country’s commitment to harmonizing its legal framework with customary practices reflects a proactive engagement with African Union legal mechanisms, demonstrating dedication to uphold human rights and contributing to the development of Pan-African legal standards. However, challenges remain in fully implementing these legal instruments, particularly in balancing traditional practices with the need for comprehensive laws that effectively protect women’s rights.

Economic and Legal Integration:

Liberia has signed and ratified key ECOWAS trade agreements aimed at promoting economic integration, however, the effective implementation of these frameworks has faced several challenges. The ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS), which is designed to facilitate free trade within West Africa and encourage economic integration among member states, has encountered obstacles in Liberia. The country struggles with weak border controls and customs inefficiencies, resulting in a continued reliance on import tariffs that are inconsistent with ECOWAS trade policies. This situation highlights broader challenge of achieving effective implementation across all ECOWAS member states (ETLS News & Events, 2019).

Legal Integration and Security Cooperation:

In 2006, Liberia ratified the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALWs), which includes provision regarding their ammunition and related materials, with the aim of curbing the proliferation of illicit arms in region. Despite this commitment, enforcement has been inconsistent, primarily due to challenges in border control and limited resources. The porous nature of Liberia's borders and insufficient capacity of security agencies have hindered effective monitoring and control of arms trafficking (Bankale & Uchege, 2021).

Liberia participates in ECOWAS judicial mechanisms, particularly the ECOWAS community Court of Justice (ECCJ). However, the country has seldom utilized this platform for dispute resolution, highlighting weakness in domestic legal enforcement. For instance, in 2020, the ECCJ ruled in favor of Liberian Associate Justice Kabineh Mohammed Ja'neh, who alleged unlawful impeachment, demonstrating the potential of regional courts to uphold justice. Despite such instances, Liberia's limited engagement with the ECCJ indicates a need to strengthen domestic legal institutions and enhance awareness of regional legal options (FPA, 2020).

5. Challenges and the Path Forward

Aligning Liberia's domestic laws with ECOWAS protocols presents several challenges:

- **Economic Constraints:** Implementing regional policies and actively participating in initiatives by the AU and ECOWAS requires significant financial and human resources. However, Liberia's legal institutions often function with limited budgets, which hinder their ability to train personnel, maintain infrastructure, and effectively execute human rights programs. To overcome these challenges, comprehensive reforms are necessary, focusing on capacity building, resource allocation, and the establishment of robust oversight mechanisms. These measures are essential for ensuring the effective implementation of regional human rights commitments in Liberia. In January 2025, the Inspector General of the Liberia National Police (LNP) expressed concerns during a press conference regarding the decline of the rule of law. He attributed this decline to a lack of public trust and legitimacy in the justice system, noting that this erosion of trust is partly due to the limited capacity of law enforcement to

uphold human rights standards effectively (*The New Dawn Liberia, 2025*).

- **Harmonization of Legal Systems:** Aligning Liberia's domestic laws with regional legal instruments require comprehensive legal reforms. This process can be complex and time consuming, often encountering resistance due to entrenched local practices and legal traditions. Liberia operates under a dual legal system, which includes formal statutory laws alongside customary laws administered by local chiefs and elders. This duality can create conflicts, particularly when attempting to align national laws with regional standards. The formal legal system, influenced by Anglo-American jurisprudence, often differs significantly from indigenous customary practices, making the harmonization process a challenging task.
- **Strengthening Legal Institutions:** To improve the practice of international law, Liberia must prioritize institutional reform. Investments in judicial training, anti-corruption measures, and legal education are essential. Strengthening the capacity of both security sector and legislature to harmonize international and domestic law will enhance compliance and enforcement. Furthermore, data shows that Liberia's foreign direct investment (FDI) net inflows were \$0.96 billion in 2022, a 79.28% increase from previous year. This suggests that improvements in governance and legal frameworks could positively influence investment trends (*Macrotrends, 1970-2025*).
- **Enhancing Accountability:** Establishing a domestic war crimes court could address ongoing issues of accountability and impunity in Liberia. By collaborating with international institutions and utilizing best practices, Liberia can ensure justice for the victims of the civil wars while promoting national reconciliation.
- **Promoting Regional and Global Cooperation:** Liberia's active participation in regional frameworks such as ECOWAS and African Union is crucial for addressing cross-border challenges. On a global level, continued engagement with the United Nations and other institutions will provide technical and financial support for Liberia's development goals.
- **Balancing Development and Sustainability:** It is important for Liberia to adopt a holistic approach to balance economic development with sustainability. Strengthening environmental governance and leveraging international partnerships can help the country meet its obligations under environmental treaties while promoting long-term growth.

6. Contemporary Application of International Law

Liberia's civil wars, which lasted from 1989 to 1996 and from 1999 to 2003, caused significantly devastation to the nation. This tumultuous period prompted the intervention of both regional and international actors, bringing international law to the forefront of Liberia's quest for peace.

The 2003 Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA): A Milestone in Conflict Resolution

On August 18, 2003, the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in

Accra, Ghana, marking a pivotal moment in Liberia's history. Facilitated by ECOWAS and supported by the United Nations, the CPA aimed to end hostilities and establish a foundation for sustainable peace. Essential provisions of the agreement included the establishment of Transitional government, mandates for disarmament, and the organization of democratic elections within two years. The CPA also called for the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address human rights violations that occurred during the conflict (*Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC), 2003*).

United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL): Ensuring Stability under Chapter VII

In response to the CPA's that called for international support, the United Nations Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in September 2003 under Resolution 1509. Operating under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows for enforcement measures to maintain or restore international peace and security, UNMIL was assigned several critical responsibilities (*UN, 2007*).

- **Monitoring Ceasefire Compliance:** Ensuring all parties adhered to the ceasefire agreement.
- **Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR):** Overseeing the disarmament of combatants and facilitating their reintegration into society.
- **Support for Humanitarian and Human Rights Activities:** Assisting in the delivery of humanitarian aid and the protection of human rights.
- **Assisting in Security Sector Reform:** Helping to restructure and train Liberia's security forces.

UNMIL's presence was instrumental in stabilizing Liberia, supporting the implementation of the CPA, and facilitating the country's transition to peace and democracy.

7. Transitional Justice and Accountability

Following the 2003 Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement, Liberia established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to address human rights violations that occurred during the civil wars. The TRC, guided by international legal standards, aimed to document atrocities, promote reconciliation, and recommend measures for accountability. In its final report released in 2009, the TRC recommended prosecuting key perpetrators, including former President Charles Taylor, who was later convicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) (*TRC, 2009*) (see *Figure 2*).

Proposal for a War and Economic Crimes Court:

- Civil society organization and international partners have advocated for the establishment of a court to prosecute corruption related to war crimes. On May 2, 2024, Liberian President Joseph Boakai signed Executive Order No. 131, which established the Office of the War and Economic Crimes Court. This significant action is aimed at addressing the atrocities committed during Liberia's

civil wars from 1989 to 2003. The executive order followed a joint resolution by the Liberian legislature, reflecting a committed effort to achieve justice and accountability for past human rights violations (Dubawa, 2024).



Figure 2. Image of Liberia's former President Charles Taylor, who was later convicted by the special court for Sierra Leone. Source: (Cable News Network, 2012).

Challenges in Attaining Justice for War Victims: As of February 2025, the court has not yet begun operations. Several challenges, including securing adequate funding, appointing qualified personnel, and ensuring political support have contributed to delays in its implementation. The Liberian government, in collaboration with international stakeholders, is actively working to operationalize the court to deliver long-awaited justice to the victims of the wars.

- **Political Resistance:** Political obstacles often hinder the implementation of international legal norms. For instance, over the years, there have been multiple citizen-led marches advocating for the implementation of the 2009 TRC recommendations and the establishment of the war and economic crimes court. However, these efforts have faced significant resistance from political elites who fear retribution or loss of power (see Figure 3). This resistance undermines Liberia's commitment to accountability and justice.



Figure 3. Citizens marching in protest, demanding the implementation of the TRC recommendations and the establishment of the War and Economic Crimes Courts in Liberia. Source: (Modern Ghana, 2018).

Some perpetrators of the Liberian civil wars have ascended to positions of power, making it difficult for victims to seek justice. One notable figure is Prince Y. Johnson, who, despite his death, previously used his influence as a senator to oppose the establishment of a war crimes court. Similarly, George Boley, another former warlord, was elected to parliament in 2017, further complicating efforts to hold perpetrators accountable. Their political influence has contributed to delays in justice and has hindered attempts to address past human rights violations (Reyes Milk, 2024).

8. The Fight Against Corruption

Liberia has made significant strides in its anti-corruption efforts through various legal and policy measures, although challenges remain in enforcement. Established in 2008, the Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC) serves as the principal institution to combat corruption in the country. With a mandate to investigate, prosecute, and prevent corrupt practices, the LACC also focuses on educating the public on anti-corruption initiatives. Notably, between August and December 2021, the Commission investigated 50 corruption cases and collaborated with the Ministry of Justice on several prosecutions, successfully recovering approximately LRD 32.8 million in misappropriated funds from public officials (Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission (LACC), 2024).

In a bold move to enhance transparency and accountability, the government implemented asset declaration enforcement, requiring public officials to disclose their income. In February 2025, President Joseph Boakai suspended 457 government officials for failing to declare their assets on time. This suspension, which lasted for one month or until compliance is achieved, underscores the administration's commitment to reinforcing these principles within the public sector (AP News, 2025).

Additionally, efforts are underway to develop a comprehensive national anti-corruption policy and strategy. This initiative is designed to tackle systemic issues by identifying the underlying factors that contribute to corruption and implementing appropriate remedies (UNDP, 2021).

Challenges in Addressing Corruption:

Addressing Corruption in Liberia presents significant challenges, primarily due to its entrenched nature within various sectors of society. Corruption is deeply rooted, affecting the legislature, judiciary, and executive branches, ultimately undermining governance and eroding public trust. This pervasive issue is highlighted by Liberia's ranking of 145th out of 180 countries in the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index, which underscores the severity of the problem (GNN Liberia, 2025).

Moreover, the country grapples with weak enforcement mechanism. Although anti-corruption laws exist, along with the establishment of the LACC, enforcement remains inadequate. The legal frameworks in place are often insufficiently robust, leading to an inconsistent application of anti-corruption laws. This inconsistency

hampers effective efforts to combat corruption. Additionally, the LACC and other integrity institutions struggle with chronic underfunding, which severely limits their capacity to investigate and prosecute corruption cases efficiently. Budgetary constraints represent a significant barrier to executing their initiatives and activities as intended (LACC, 2024).

On a more positive note, President Joseph Boakai has shown a commitment to transparency by publicly declaring his assets shortly after taking office in February 2024. This action aligns with Article 2, Section 10.2(h) of Liberia's 2014 Code of Conduct, which mandates all public officials declare their assets upon assuming and leaving office. Despite this decisive step, concerns regarding selective compliance persist. Critics argue that, while there have been high-profile suspensions, not all officials are held accountable consistently. This inconsistency has led to perceptions of partiality in the enforcement of anti-corruption measures, ultimately undermining public trust in the administration's ability to combat corruption effectively (FPA, 2025).

Specific Legal Reforms Stemming from Regional Participation:

Liberia has undertaken specific legal reforms that are significantly influenced by regional partnerships, particularly with the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), and ECOWAS. One of the foremost initiatives focuses on strengthening judicial services and improving access to justice across the country. These efforts aim to bolster legal frameworks, promote judicial independence, and especially enhance access for marginalized communities. Such collaborations align Liberia's legal reforms with international human rights standards (FPA, 2024).

Liberia's educational sector has undergone significant reforms with support from ECOWAS. These reforms focus on policy harmonization, quality assurance, technical and vocational education, digital learning, and post-war recovery. ECOWAS has played a crucial role in aligning Liberia's education system with regional standards, improving access to quality education, and enhancing workforce development. For example, Liberia is an active member of the West African Examination Council (WACE), which standardizes secondary school examinations across West Africa (WACE Liberia, Website).

Additionally, through its partnership with ECOWAS, Liberia has established and implemented an early warning and response system. The ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), has been integrated into Liberia's national security strategy. This robust system monitors forty-two event types and fifty-five predefined indicators to proactively address potential conflicts, thereby contributing to national security and stability. This proactive approach has led Liberia to enact new national security policies that include provisions for community-based policing and regional intelligence sharing. A notable milestone in this effort was the inauguration of the National Coordination Center for Early Warning and Response Mechanism (NCCRM) in February 2018. This center positioned Liberia as the second ECOWAS member state, following Mali, to establish such an institution. The NCCRM plays a crucial role in monitoring and mitigating potential conflicts and security threats within the nation. Additionally, it operates seamlessly

with ECOWARN to facilitate the exchange of information and strategies between Liberia and other West African neighbors (*West Africa Wire*, 2024).

Moreover, Liberia's commitment to adhering to regional human rights protocols has necessitated significant legal and institutional reforms. By aligning its domestic legal framework with regional human rights instruments, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), adopted in 1981, Liberia seeks to ensure compliance with international obligations. This emphasis on human rights reflects Liberia's dedication to promoting civil liberties, social justice, and legal protection in accordance with regional agreements (ACHPR, 1981).

9. Conclusion

Liberia's interaction with international law highlights its ongoing efforts to balance sovereignty, governance, and development. From the challenges faced in the early post-independence period to the turbulence of civil conflict and subsequent rebuilding efforts, international legal frameworks have played a vital role in shaping the country's trajectory.

Despite the significant progress made by its leaders in the post-independence era, Liberia continues to confront challenges related to institutional weakness, political resistance, and economic constraints. During its civil wars, international law became an essential tool for pursuing peace, justice, and reconstruction. For instance, international legal principles were invoked to facilitate peace agreements, support human rights, and hold perpetrators of war crimes accountable through the truth and reconciliation initiatives. By Strengthening legal institutions, embracing accountability, and fostering regional and global cooperation, Liberia can fully leverage the potential of international law to promote peace, justice, and sustainable development.

In the post-conflict period, Liberia continues to engage with international law as part of its development and governance strategies. It collaborates with global and regional institutions like the UN, ECOWAS, and the AU to strengthen its legal system, ensure compliance with international human rights standards, and integrate global norms into domestic policies. This engagement demonstrates how Liberia utilizes international law not only to address its internal challenges but also to contribute to broader global and regional cooperation.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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