

HIGHLIGHT OF THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY ACTIVITIES

Wednesday, February 11, 2015

- President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, also Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) participated in programs marking the 58th Armed Forces Day celebration at the Barclay Training Center in Monrovia. The Day was celebrated under the theme: *“Enhancing the Capabilities of the Armed Forces of Liberia to Conduct Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief Operations.”*

She paid homage to the late Nigerian who served as Command Officer-in-Charge and Head of the ECOWAS Advisory Team of the AFL, Major General Suraj Alao Abdurrahman who passed away recently in New York, USA. Major General Abdurrahman served the AFL from June 2007 to February 2014.

Speaking earlier, Defense Minister Brownie Samukai said the professional development and capacity building of the AFL remains on track. He appealed for additional financial support to continue and complete the Todee housing project in order to decongest the military barracks, as well as provide additional educational classrooms for eligible dependents of military personnel.

Delivering this year's Keynote Address, former Public Works Minister Samuel Kofi Woods called for more financial and moral support and the cooperation between military and civilian leaders to ensure a new professionalized Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) that will enable them to contribute to the nation building process.

Mr. Woods, who is the former founding National Director of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Liberia, said there was a need for our men and women in arms to be trained as medical doctors, nurses, engineers, policy analysts, teachers amongst other professions as a nation cannot have abled-bodied men and women waste away while it continues to make claim that it is without skilled personnel. He suggested that military barracks be transformed into citadels of learning and excellence.

Speaking further, Mr. Woods called on the new AFL to increase local interaction with various communities as a way to seek redemption and reconciliation with citizens especially with those who reside in the West Point community. Since the shooting of little Shaki Kamara and another minor at the height of the Ebola crisis, relations with the AFL and the West Point community have been strained.

During the ceremony several personalities were decorated with Distinguished Service Orders of the Armed Forces of Liberia including the Head of Mission, Africa Union Support o Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (ASEOWA), Major General Dr. Julius Facki Oketta; Mentor and Liaison Officer between the AFL and the Nigerian Defense Academy (NDA), Lieutenant Colonel Kennedy Chukwuemeka Okoro; Mentor and Liaison between the AFL and the Ghana Armed Forces, Lieutenant Colonel Abubakri Sadique Mohammed, and the Armed Forces of Liberia.

Others were the Adjutant General and Director of Military and Veterans Affairs for the State of Michigan, Major General Gregory Vadnais; Commander of the Joint Task Force, Operation United Assistance (JTF-OUA), Major General Gary Volesky and Major General Darryl A. Williams. Maj. Gen. Volesky received the medals on behalf of his colleagues.