

**Statement by Her Excellency President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
At the End of the Holy Month of Ramadan
August 8, 2013**

Happy Eid! Ramadan Kareem! My fellow Liberians:

As the holy month of Ramadan draws to an end, and all of you prepare to celebrate the Festival of Fast-breaking today, August 8, I extend, on behalf of all of us, best wishes to all our Muslim brothers and sisters, in Liberia and around the globe.

Ramadan – one of the five pillars of Islam – is, for all Muslims, a time of deep reflection and sacrifice. It is a period of intense spiritual renewal, a time when Muslims reflect upon the good decisions and directions that come with the belief, and upon the duty that all human beings have to each other, and to God.

For a whole month, as the Islamic ritual dictates, you fasted from dawn to sunset, refraining from food and drink; you offered special prayers for mercy and direction; you continued your commitment to peacekeeping and to generous giving. With family and your community, you gathered for *iftar* and prayers, sharing meals and religious studies. This increased spirituality, discipline and consciousness of God's mercy, likewise reminding you of the importance of reaching out to those less fortunate. Throughout this holy period, everybody becomes aware of their responsibility to one another and to the serenity, impartiality and self-respect for all humans.

After 30 days of fasting and praying, we mark the first day of the Islamic month of Shawwal. It is also time for the *Eid-ul-Fitr* – the festive celebration indicating a new start and the victory of a people who each day subordinated the physical realm to the spiritual, and succeeded.

Here in Liberia, Ramadan reminds us that Islam has and will always be a part of this nation's fabric, as Liberian Muslims continue to make extraordinary contributions to the peace and forward progress of our common patrimony, which is indispensable to Liberia's national renewal.

As Ramadan draws to a close, we congratulate the National Muslim Council, Muslims in Liberia and Muslims everywhere. We, of other faiths, who also believe in the one God, celebrate with you as you usher in *Eid-ul-Fitr*.

To all Muslims I say: May every year find you in good health!