



# ® Imani House Inc, Liberia



**The History and Operations of Imani House, Inc. in Liberia**

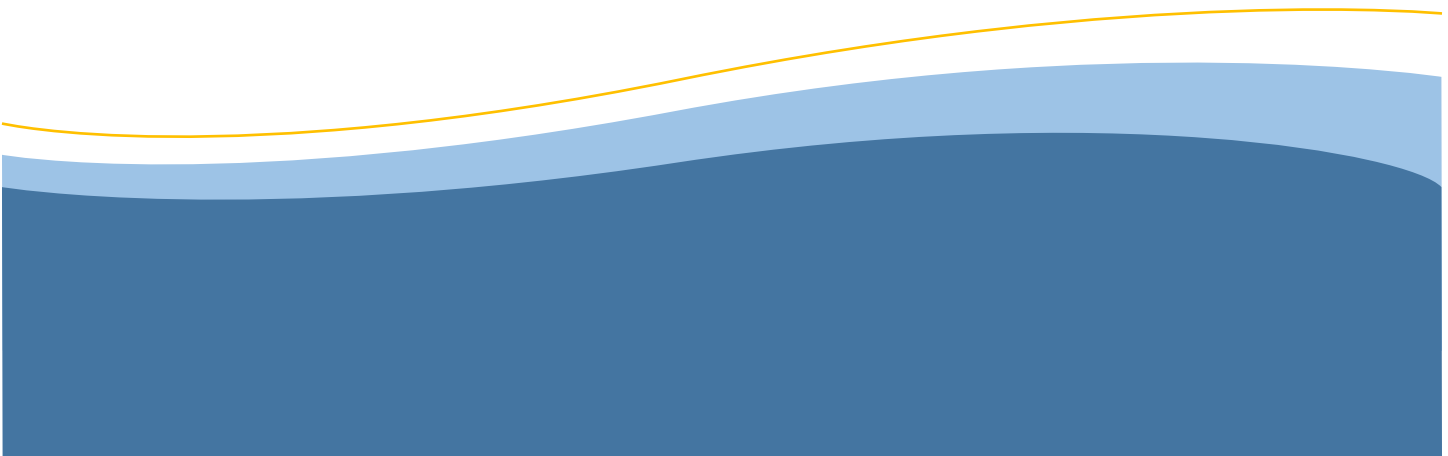
**Brewerville, Liberia**

**Brooklyn, NY**

**76A 5th Ave, Brooklyn, 11217**

**718-638-2059**

**Imanihouse.org**



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# ABOUT US:



IMANI HOUSE was started in Liberia, West Africa in the midst of civil war, by Mr. and Mrs. Mahmoud and Bisi Ideraabdullah . The Ideraabdullahs “migrated” to the small West African nation from the U.S. in 1985 with their 5 children. In 1990 when the civil war reached the capital, Monrovia, the children were sent to be with relatives in the States, while Mahmoud & Bisi stayed behind. When the situation in their area became critical, the couple decided it was too dangerous to stay any longer, and contacted the U.S. Embassy for evacuation. Because they had already received an official evacuation notice, the Embassy refused to carry out any further action to help them. Stranded, the two realized they had no choice but to stay.



# THE IMANI HOUSE MISSION STATEMENT

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" To Assist Marginalized Youth, Families & Immigrants to Create Vibrant Neighborhoods Where Residents Are Decision Makers who Take Responsibility for the Improvement of their Lives and Surroundings." We Believe that Everyone Can Succeed if They Are Motivated and Have Access to Appropriate Skills, Information and Opportunities.



## Maternal and Child Health Care Clinic

Imani House's first Clinic was opened in 1993 and was nothing more than a lean-to tent. Since then it has grown to become an actual brick and mortar facility and serves 14,000 women & children annually.

Visitors to the clinic come for a wide array of services including:

- Pre and post natal care
- Child birth
- Family planning services
- Donations of care packages for newborns
- Wound care and other first aid
- Prophylactic and other preventative measures
- Dietary guidance
- Workshops on communicable diseases and their prevention
- Treatment of malaria and other communicable diseases
- Referrals to hospitals for more advanced medical needs







The Imani House Clinic treated over 18,000 indigent Liberians in 2019, providing low-cost, top quality service to our community in Brewerville.

Over 20% of Liberians seen by our mobile clinics in September 2019 were treated for previously undiagnosed but serious illnesses like high blood pressure and diabetes.

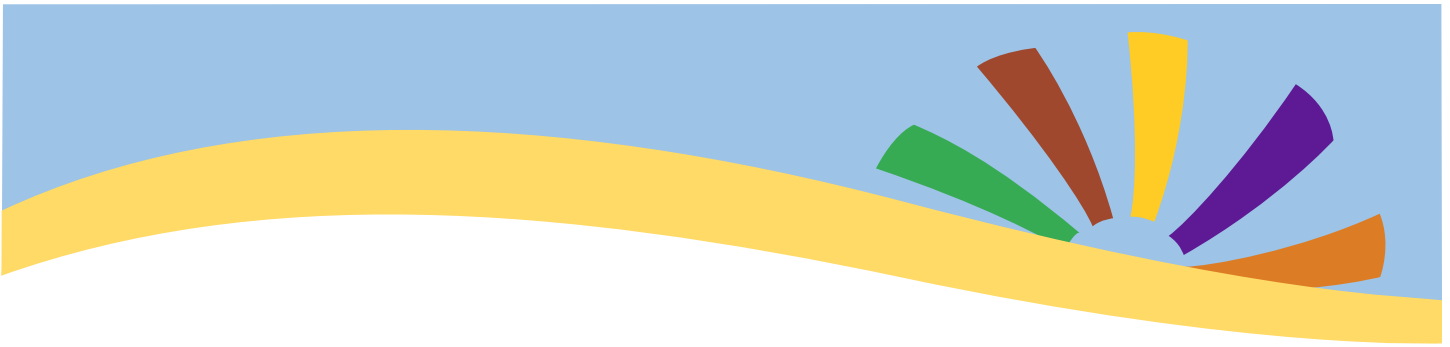


## Adult Education

The Imani House Liberia Adult Education Program provides free reading, writing, science and math classes each year to over 300 Market Women who attend our free literacy classes. Classes are held in or adjacent to some of the largest markets in the capital city, Monrovia, including Rally-Time Market and Duala Market. We also hold classes at VOA, Claratown and other locations throughout the city.

Building women's literacy skills and self-reliance is at the core of Imani House's mission. Educated women are more inclined to work to improve their lives, start or better manage their businesses and prioritize education for their children and ensure they know the importance of a good education. Educated women are also more vocal and involved in the improvement of their communities and with the election of former President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, women are more inspired to become educated and realize the importance of education to the future of the country.



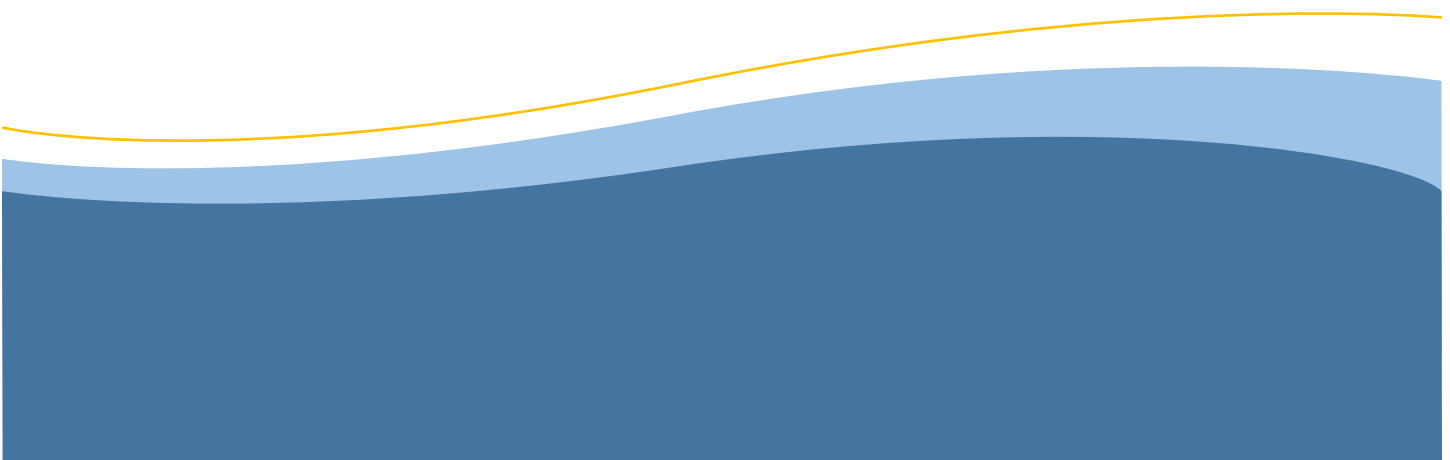


## Women's Health Education Manual Project

This project is in its 3rd year and was created with the assistance of long time partners Proliteracy and Global Giving (U.S. & U.K). In addition, the Ethelwyn Doolittle Justice & Outreach Committee has also partnered with us on this project for several years, assisting with sponsorship of the project's capacity building.

This initiative is a public health literacy tool which provides public health information in a clear and concise way that Liberian communities can understand; and includes information on individual and community sanitary needs, stopping the spread of infectious diseases, basic first aid tips, preventing STDs and much more. Our agency does outreach to build interest and holds workshops to present the information in the Manual to communities at large.

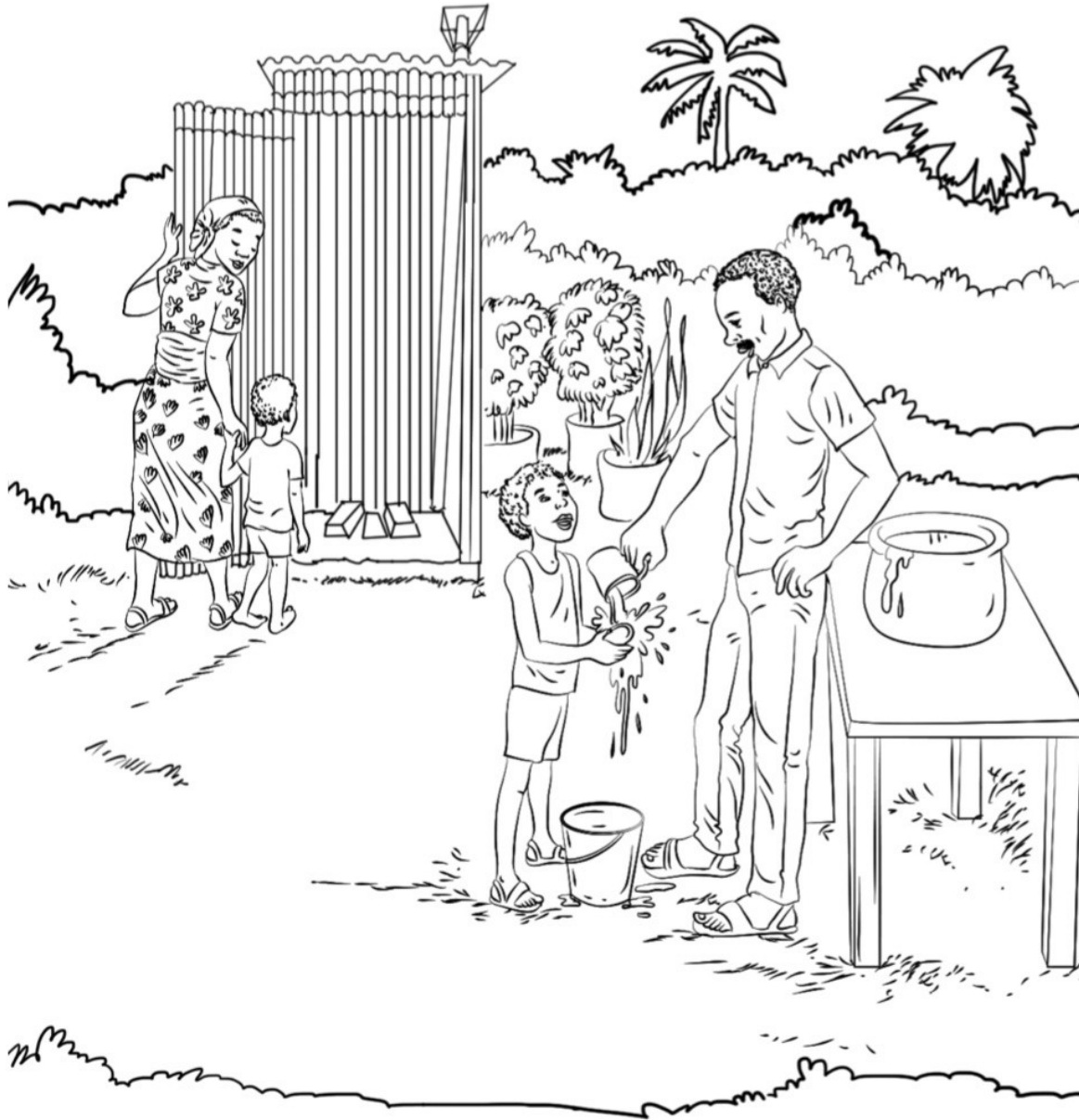
This project is closely linked with our **Teen Peer Education Project**. Imani House trains select high-school students on using the Women's Health Manual to teach others. Students then visit local high schools and present workshops to their peers.





# The Liberian Women's Health Manual

Health – Sanitation – Nutrition – Human Rights



**Our Healthy Families – Our Happy Families**





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# LIBERIA

*in focus*

Vol.11 | 2019

## Kick Off—Imani House Mobile Clinic to the Rescue

When government health workers went on strike in September because they had not been paid, Imani House, stretched our finances and took our health workers and



Health Talks about the Dangers of Diabetes  
IHI Health Workers In the Field

one of our ambulances on the road. We provided treatment, health screenings, information and referrals to our Clinic. Monrovia, the capital and it's environs is struggling with over-

population and congestion. A majority of the people are faced with poor governmental infrastructures including health, education, sanitation and other essential services. While it is a small effort, our medical staff felt they had to do something. The IHI Clinic has provided Health care services even through civil war, Ebola and turmoil.

## Won't You Support Our Mobile Health Program? Imani House Welcomes Your Contributions



## Welcome Mary Zibuo Mantor—New Program Manager

Imani House Liberia welcomes Mrs. Mary Mantor as the new Program Manager. She's retired from the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, where she served as Health Project Manager. Mrs. Mantor brings over 40 years of experience serving Liberian communities. She is a caring leader with the experience, and aptitude to support Imani House Liberia.



## Literacy Determined—Learning by Light

38 year old Massah Sonkarlay joined our literacy program two years ago. Ms. Sonkarlay says, *"My mother was a market women and I fell in her footsteps. The difference is that my mother did not make money to send me to school. But I send all my children to school because now I can add, subtract, read, write and sign my own name thanks to Imani House. I am not losing money now and my market is growing."* Massah



does her marketing during the day and attends our classes at night. One of our challenges is the provision of adequate lighting in some of our classrooms. Determined to do her lessons, Massah decided to use her cell phone light instead.



## Donate to Imani House

"IMANI HOUSE" Imani House.org

"GoFundMe"

Coming Dec.: IHI Mobile Clinic Appeal to Expand our Medical Services to Off-Road Rural and Semi-Rural Communities

"Global Giving"

IHI Health & Literacy Campaigns

## Health Education Classes - Creating Self Reliance



Since it's inception 3 years ago, our Health Manual Outreach Project has had immeasurable success reaching Liberian communities and teaching residents improved Health/Sanitation/Nutrition/Human Rights practices for healthy & harmonious living.

The Liberian Women's Health Manual  
Health - Sanitation - Nutrition - Human Rights



**Your Support is So Important and So Appreciated!**



# LIBERIA

*in focus*



For over 25 years, IHI's Health Clinic has provided comprehensive health services to over 321,000 people in the area of JahTondo Town, Brewerville, Liberia

The Imani House Adult Literacy Program has provided free literacy classes for Liberian Marketing Women in several locations for over 28 years



Mothers & Fathers Participate in Learning Better Health and Sanitation Practices as Taught Through The New IHI Liberian Womens' Health Manual

## IHI CLINIC BRINGS COMFORT AND CARE TO A MOTHER AND CHILD



Mrs. Mamie Theo, Mother



Baby Feels Better After Treatment

When Mrs. Mamie Theo brought her child in who was suffering with a high fever, vomiting and malaise to the Clinic, we asked her why she came to the Imani House clinic. She had this to say:

*"(My baby) get hard fever, whole day vomiting, and jerking. He was getting too weak. Da how my sister bring us here (she say) the people (IHI Health workers) look after her good. ...The doctor bathed him with cold water and gave him some tablet for the fever and vomiting to come down. I was happy. It make me know that my baby will be alright because the doctor here are good. Thank you again for my baby."*

The IHI Clinic turns 25 this year. Our staff treat over 14,000 mothers and children annually for malaria, dysentery, wounds, respiratory illnesses, immunization, pre and post natal care, health education and more.

There are many mothers in rural areas in need of health care that we want to reach. **\*PLEASE HELP US REACH OUR \$50,000 GOAL\***

## IMPROVING HEALTH THROUGH SELF EMPOWERMENT & LITERACY

### The Liberian Women's Health Manual

Health - Sanitation - Nutrition - Human Rights



Our Healthy Families - Our Happy Families



### Chapter 5: Healthy Eating - Good Food Prevents Sickness

- A. Pregnant Women Need Good Food
- B. Children and Babies Need Healthy Food to Grow
- C. Families Need to Eat Well



In collaboration with Proliteracy (a major U.S. based Adult Literacy Org.) Imani House created the Liberian Women's Health Manual. Its 63 pages focus on building healthy, happy families through Health, Sanitation, Nutrition and Human Rights. The manual emphasizes community engagement, self-empowerment and improved health practices. We will instruct over 500 women and girls over the next year and clean or install latrines and wells where needed.

**\*\*PLEASE CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING\*\***



Imani House Literacy Class—56% of Liberia's Women Cannot Read or Write



Proud Students and Their Families Celebrate their Graduation

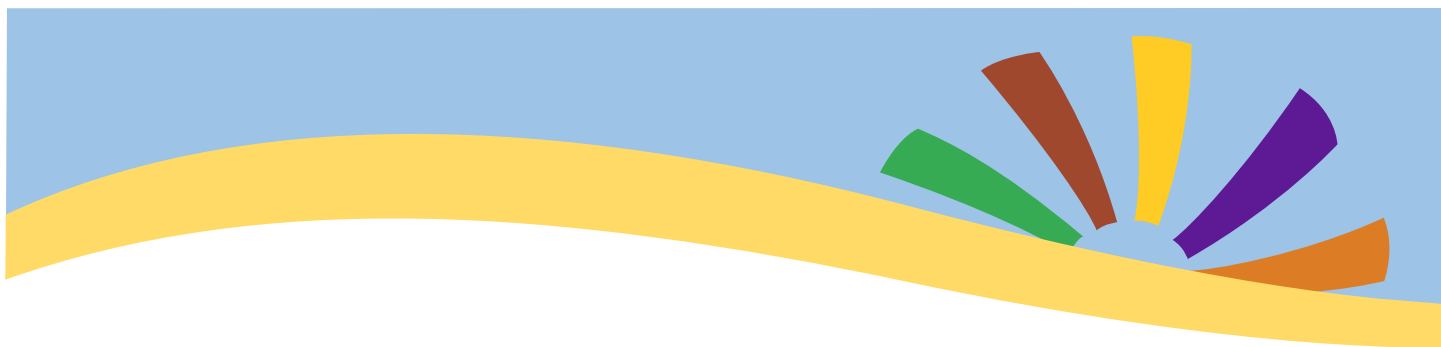
## REBECCA'S LITERACY SUCCESS STORY



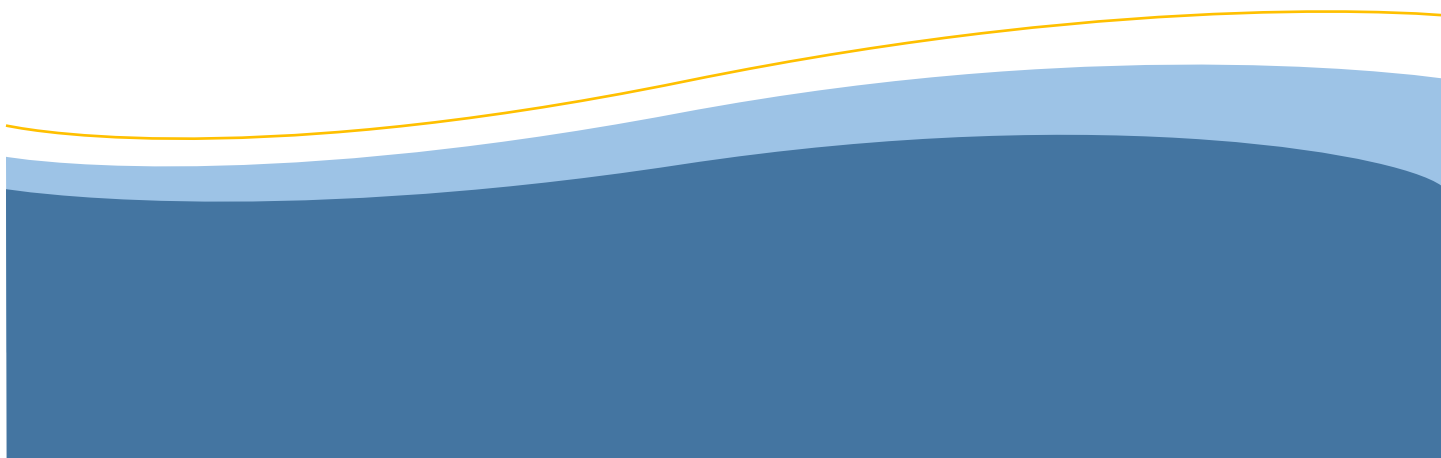
Ms. Rebecca Flor is 54 years old. She began coming to the Imani House Adult Literacy program in 2002, but had to stop several times because of family commitments, and illness. This is what Ms. Flor has to say about IHI's literacy program in Liberia:

*"I feel very happy about Imani House School, it make me to be somebody now. I can read and write something I not know before. I get plenty things from Imani House. I can now see letter and know it. Even numbers. When I carry my grandchildren to hospital, I can spell their names and even read the card number*

*...I never go to school because my father told me that my husband will take my problem. Imani House make me to know the difference between people who not go to school and people who go to school ...when you go to school, you can know wrong from right. Right now I can write my own name in my church and in community meeting and anywhere. Imani House made me happy and I will never forget about Imani House. Rebecca Flor - Level 3 Student (3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading)*



Imani House has been a staple of the Brewerville community for nearly 30 years. We are incredibly proud of our history, but it hasn't been without trials and tribulations. We continuously operated through 13 years of civil war, providing care to orphans and citizens without any other options. We continued service through the Ebola Scourge between 2014-2016, despite losing two staff members to the epidemic. We've faced kidnappings, civil unrest, disease, financial hardships and a lack of support from the international community. But we've prevailed.





The INQUIRER, Monday, September 8, 2014 Page 7

## IMANI HOUSE CLINIC REMAINS OPEN: A Positive Example Of Community Cooperation

Given the recent chaos in West Point where a group of angry community members removed people who had voluntarily signed themselves into an Ebola isolation building; and the response, where government quarantined the area with soldiers forcefully maintaining the mandate; fears of similar unrest has spread in some parts the country.

Despite the involuntary closure of most major hospitals and clinics in Monrovia and several parts of the country due to lack of capacity to effectively deal with the spread of the deadly Ebola virus, the Imani House Clinic in Jah-Tondo Town continues to provide medical care.

As a trusted member of the Jahtondo Town community, the Imani House clinic staff has brought together locals and civic leaders to plan strong outreach approaches to educate the people in the area. The executive director stated "Without the community involvement, we cannot end this unfortunate and deadly situation. Imani House will not abandon our responsibilities; our clinic worked through the war, and we will work through ending this terrible Ebola scourge," assured Mrs. Bisi Iderabdullah.

The clinic is situated about 12 miles from Monrovia, in the outskirts of Brewerville and opposite the VOA Junction. Clinic staff, who have demonstrated a tremendous level of commitment to saving lives over the years, remain resolute in treating patients who come in with less complicated needs, e.g. malaria, diarrhea, respiratory infections, pregnancy check-ups, and other regular health services.

The Head Nurse of the Clinic, Mrs. Annie Coleman, said they have not received any confirmed case of Ebola thus far. However, patients with symptoms similar to the Ebola disease are placed under surveillance until they are treated. "Treating the symptoms that come with Ebola, which include, high fever, headache, vomiting, coughing, sneezing bleeding and diarrhea can also save many lives", Mrs. Coleman said passionately.

Mrs. Coleman noted that many other illnesses share symptoms similar to Ebola, which makes it difficult for health workers to differentiate Ebola from more common viral illnesses, such as malaria. "To properly diagnose Ebola requires laboratory testing and treatment centers equipped with the requisite facilities and materials in order to accurately diagnose and treat the patients," she said.

Despite the sacrifices being made by IHI clinic staff, medical supplies, protective gears, disinfectants, as well as construction materials for the renovation of the triage center, beds and mattresses are either in short supply or unavailable.

However, some friends of Imani House have provided the clinic staff with limited personal protective gear to manage the situation.

There are still no hazmat suits for the IHI staff, but the organization is trying to provide masks for all patients who come in with a fever so no one is singled out.

The Government of Liberia has been calling for the reopening of hospitals and clinics but this is progressing slowly at the moment. Those who are falling sick are afraid to seek medical attention for fear of being stigmatized as an Ebola patient or taken to an isolation center to never return.

There is an appreciable level of national and international solidarity to help curb the Ebola outbreak within the three West African States (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) with financial support coming from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to oversee critical areas; World Bank, the Chinese Government, Canada, Nigeria, Japan, ECOWAS including UN agencies, national and International Non-governmental Organizations, local partners (Lebanese and Indians) to name a few.

The financial and technical assistance needs to be well coordinated and managed properly to reach out to local health clinics and workers who are at the frontline of defense against this disaster and they should not be marginalized.

The Ebola virus is only transmitted through direct contact with bodily fluids of the sick, such as blood, saliva, urine, sweat or semen. The current outbreak now has killed more than 1,500 people, according to the latest figures from the World Health Organization. The fatality rate in previous Ebola outbreaks has been up to 90 percent, though health officials say this time up to half of victims are surviving.

Health workers say while there is no specific treatment for Ebola patients who come to the





THE CITY SUN

## Building Bridges Between Lost Brothers Of One Nation — The Challenge Of A Brooklyn Teacher

by Tina Blalock

A Brooklyn teacher reached out some eight years ago to her African homeland hoping to reconnect with her roots and found a life-consuming passion in the needs of orphaned children and farmers torn apart by Liberia's devastating civil war.

Bisi Iderabdullah, who is the founder and executive director of Imani House Inc. (IHI), a New York- and Liberia-based humanitarian organization, began helping displaced children and farmers soon after she arrived in Liberia with her husband, Mahmoud, in 1985. Her husband is a U.N. employee stationed in Africa.

Iderabdullah, who frequently makes trips between the two countries, said she was touched by the needs of the country's children, and efforts to help them, and the country's farmers became her focal point after she arrived there with her husband and their five children.

The former teacher saw the need to create organizations, and rather than flee during the war, she became part of a network of 800 homes that provides assistance for homeless children, organized a farm-assistance group and created Imani House in 1990, a year after the internal war began. IHI also runs a home where Iderabdullah cares for 16 children, she said.

Parents who died from either gunshot wounds or starvation left behind thousands of children who had no place to go. So Iderabdullah became president of the Liberian Coalition of Homes for Children in Difficult Circumstances, presiding over 800 grass-roots homes that offer services to needy children.

"I feel responsible as an African in America to end Black-on-Black wars, particularly since African Americans are so much a part of the formation of the problem that exists in Africa; it seems as though we should be responsible for helping get it back together," she said during an interview with *The City Sun* last month. "We call ourselves African Americans, and I don't feel we have the right to do that without helping Africa in its time of need."

Liberia was established by freed African American slaves in 1822. The country's constitution was written at

the country who are peace-loving people don't have choices. They're the ones who suffer the most. They don't deserve to."

More than 60,000 innocent people have lost their lives since the start of the war, she said. Of Liberia's 2.5 million people, 1.2 million have been displaced by the war, she added.

### Reaching Out for Help

As part of her effort to ensure support for programs to help Africa's poor, Iderabdullah has contacted many Black leaders, including Ben Chavis, the new head of the National Association for the



Imani House Inc.'s founder, Bisi Iderabdullah, has accepted the challenge of linking Blacks in the United States to the issues confronting Liberian children and farmers.

Advancement of Colored People. "We are in the process of building a positive bridge over which Africans and African Americans can plan and implement strategies for improving our collective situations," she stated in a letter written to Chavis in early May.

A deep-rooted sense of commitment and faith in Liberia's future kept the Iderabdullahs in Liberia despite the war, and it was during the war that she began her trips to the United States to solicit food from relief agencies and to apprise African Americans of the situation in Liberia, and Africa in general.

### Relief Efforts

On April 15, IHI was assisted by Church World Services (CWS) in delivering a second shipment of relief donations collected from across the United States to send to Liberia. The 20-foot container of 266 boxes consisted of clothes, books, farm tools and an assortment of useful items for Liberia's children and needy. IHI's third shipment is on hold due to a lack of storage space.

IHI also is linking up with International Health Professionals Network (IHPN), who are African Americans assessing the potential to

Jan D. Wilson

JUNE 2-8-93

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## Orphanage in Liberia founded by African-Americans needs help

By J. ZAMGBA BROWNE  
*Amsterdam News Staff*

In search of an African homeland, Bisi Iderabullah and her husband, Mahmoud, both African-Americans, found they had stepped into a hotbed of unrest when they migrated to Liberia in 1985.

The Iderabullahs said they felt a need for their children to identify with Africa and its people. Liberia was selected because they felt integration would be easier due to the country's historical connection to America.

But within days after arriving with their five children in this tiny West African country, the Iderabullahs witnessed the military government's troops and tanks quelling an attempted coup. Scores of men, women and children were reportedly massacred.

As if this weren't enough, four years later the country was plunged into a civil war. The result was the death of thousands of citizens and massive loss of property. The dead left behind hundreds of children with virtually no one to care for them.

Prior to the civil conflict which began Dec. 24, 1989, Bisi, as Mrs. Iderabullah is often called, taught at an elementary school operated in Monrovia, Liberia's capital, by the United Methodist Church. But the school was forced to close at the height of the war.

With her school closed, Bisi, who was living within walking distance of a local hospital, decided to volunteer her services. She found herself coordinating and directing the cholera epidemic ward.

With no prior medical experience, her first aid knowledge in dealing with her own children came in handy to care for the

many patients and upgrade the facility.

Bisi also relied on a library of medical texts as well as assistance from a few available physicians and three student nurses. "This experience soon taught me that people supporting each other can overcome insurmountable obstacles," she declared.

Bisi now operates an orphanage she founded nearly a year ago in Monrovia. She named it Imani House in memory of her daughter, Imani, who died at birth in the U.S.

The facility, which now houses some 50 children ranging in age from infancy to 14 years, is situated in the abandoned Libtraco compound on Bushrod Island, a few miles from the heart of the

city.

All of the youngsters at Imani House were former patients at the Island Hospital, where Bisi volunteered her services. She said several of them were critically ill with cholera, kwashiorkor, malnutrition or other maladies.

At present she is in the U.S. trying to raise funds for Imani House, but she said the task hasn't been easy. "I have been knocking on a lot of doors, especially African-Americans, but the response hasn't been too encouraging," Bisi added.

For additional information about Imani House and how you can help the orphanage project undertaken by Bisi in Liberia, write to Mrs. Bisi Iderabullah, 333 Flatbush Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217, or call (718) 385-2082.



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## A HERITAGE CELEBRATION

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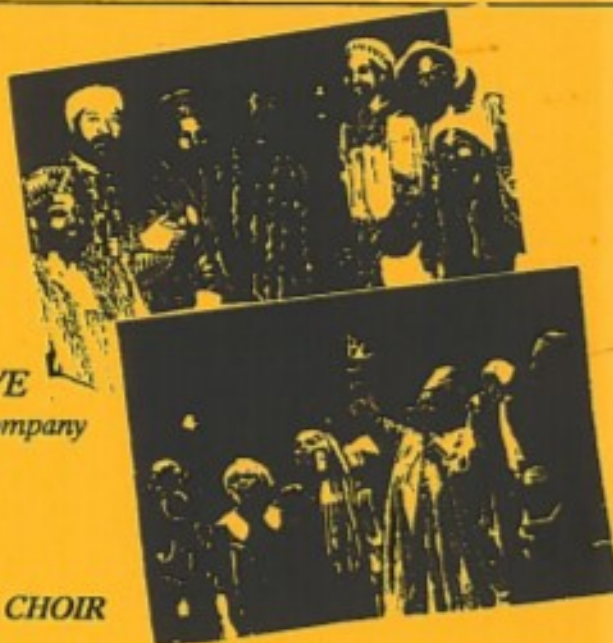
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(All Proceeds to IMANI HOUSE Liberian Children's Projects)





# Liberians describe national tragedy

By Pete Sheehan

**Plainview** — About 125 people gathered at St. Pius X Church here Nov. 3 to hear about the killing of five U.S. missionary Sisters in Liberia and the larger tragedy of that country's civil war.

"It was terrible how the Sisters died. It was totally unnecessary. The Sisters were only there to help," said Bisi Iderabdullah, who said that she knew all of the slain Adorers of the Blood of Christ Sisters, including the principal of the school her son attended.

She and the other panelists for the forum, all members of "Liberia Watch," which monitors the Liberian human rights situation, also spoke of the many civilians killed in the West African nation's civil war.

"It is very frustrating that we only hear about the war when the nuns were killed," Mrs. Iderabdullah said.

Mrs. Iderabdullah and four other Liberia Watch members spoke following a Mass offered by Father Hugh Cannon, pastor of St. Pius, and Father Gerald Twomey, associate pastor. The Mass and forum were sponsored by the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission in response to the slaying of the five Sisters.

All five speakers knew some of the Sisters killed. They also told of the wider suffering resulting from the war.

"So many are being killed who have nothing to do with the war," said Mrs. Iderabdullah, who had cared for many children who lost their parents from death or abandonment. She paused a few times while speaking as she was overcome with emotion.

## Familiar feel

Janice Cooper, who lived in Liberia from 1988 to 1990, told of her family's own experiences during the war.

The killing of the Sisters, believed to have been committed by the Na-



Janice Cooper, standing, and other members of Liberia Watch, from left, Abu Sillah, Bisi Iderabdullah, Yai Simon, Pierre Kudayah and John Singler, addressed about 125 people at St. Pius X Church, Plainview, Nov. 3. The five spoke under the sponsorship of the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission about human rights abuses and the civil war in Liberia following the recent killing of five U.S. Sisters there. (Photo by Thomas F. Moloney)

tional Patriotic Front rebel group, is a familiar one in isolated areas controlled by the NPF, said Ms. Cooper.

The war, she said, has to be understood in the historical context of Liberia, which was founded in 1822 by freed U.S. slaves with the support of the American Colonization Society and President James Monroe.

Liberia's name, from the Latin word for "liberty," its flag, which bears stars and stripes and its capital city, Monrovia, give evidence to the country's historical ties to the U.S.

The civil war began in 1989, when the NPF, led by Charles Taylor, rose up against the government headed by

Samuel Doe, who had come to power in a 1980 coup.

"From 1980 to 1990, the people of Liberia suffered under a terrible dictatorship," headed by Doe, said Yo Simon Pierre Kudayah, Ms. Cooper's husband.

The people initially had hopes that NPF forces would improve their situation, Mr. Kudayah said, but the resulting war has exacted a great toll on the people.

In 1990, in response to the violence, a peacekeeping force from neighboring countries entered Liberia and took over parts of the territory held by NPF forces, Ms. Cooper said.

Mr. Taylor's forces then took reprisals against people suspected of helping the peacekeeping force, Ms. Cooper said. Men were routinely executed by NPF forces, leaving many widows and their children.

During this fighting, Ms. Cooper said, she fled with her husband and son to Paynesville, a town near Monrovia, to her mother's house. They were eventually captured by NPF soldiers and taken to an NPF base.

For several days, her family was separated from her mother, and she was often told that her mother had been killed, Ms. Cooper said. They waited in fear while some of the other captives were executed.

## 'Six feet'

At one point, a soldier took her aside, Ms. Cooper said, and told her to "Give me six feet," which soldiers would routinely tell captives who were about to be executed. From a distance of six feet, she noted, the soldier would not be hit by a ricochet.

"At that point, I asked the Blessed Mother to come and help me not to  
(Continued on Page 6)

## Liberia

(Continued from Page 1)

die in a cowardly fashion," Ms. Cooper said.

Yet the soldier did not shoot her, Ms. Cooper said. Either the gun didn't work or the soldier was only threatening her.

Her family was later able to get away when someone offered to drive them to Gbarnga, from which they could flee the country, in exchange for \$200 in U.S. money. They didn't have the money, but they told him they could find it in Gbarnga.

Unable to find anyone to give them the money, Ms. Cooper said, they unexpectedly found her brother who helped them get away and eventually

leave for the U.S.

Her family has lived in the U.S. since then, but she hopes to return to Liberia someday.

"There is a lot of hopelessness about this situation," Ms. Cooper said.

Although she would not describe the U.S. as complicitous in the war in Liberia, she believes that the U.S. government has been indifferent to the tragedy.

If the deaths of the missionaries can draw attention to conditions in Liberia and help bring about a peaceful end to the conflict, Ms. Cooper suggested, "the Sisters' deaths will not be in vain."

# Caribbean Life

**FREE**

Published by Courier-Life Publications Inc. 1733 Sheephead Bay Road, Bklyn, NY 11235 • 718-615-2500 May 20, 2003

**FREE**

## Aid workers imperiled as Liberia's war continues unabated

By Charles Bailion

The interminable conflict in Liberia, though not as widely reported as a decade ago, goes on and the civilian population continues to bear the brunt of the destructive and deadly attacks. *Caribbean Life* has learned.

Sadly, support groups, set up to assist civilians who have been run out of towns and villages, are also being raided, looted and burned. And, people have been kidnapped and forced by their armed captors to carry off the booty, said Bisi Iderabdullah, executive director of the Brooklyn-based Imani House.

According to Iderabdullah, who also founded a clinic and relief operation in Liberia, in 1990 her place was raided by guerrillas fighting against the government of Charles Taylor, Liberia's president. Personnel were abducted and relief and clinic supplies were seized on April 9 in Jahnondo, a town 13 miles outside the capital Monrovia, she said.

"They didn't just attack the clinic. They chased my people down with weapons and captured them," Iderabdullah went on.

"Our microscope, which cost \$500, they took away. It took us years to get a microscope for that clinic. They took away all of the instruments from our lab," she noted, seated in her Brooklyn office on Fifth Avenue. "All of our medicines they took away," Iderabdullah continued. "And they took away our people, which is the most valuable thing."

For instance, she noted that the area where her set-up is located had several thousand internally displaced people (IDPs), "who were running from fighting in other areas they [had] fled."

"And some of these internally displaced people have been running for 13 years... Imagine a child that age knowing nothing but war, nothing but running," Iderabdullah said.

The six months of rainfall per year which, she says, force people on the run to seek shelter in lean-tos and tents plagued by malaria-causing mosquitoes, "is really [cause for] a lot of suffering going on there."

Also kidnapped was Liberian Benjamin Grant, who runs the Imani House operation in Jahnondo, as well as a nurse who assists him. Fortunately, they

escaped, Iderabdullah said. But Grant's house was looted. "He is living in my house [in Liberia] like a refugee."

This is the fourth time that Grant, a father of two elementary-school-aged children, has been forced out of his home, she said. "This is the fourth time Ben has had all of his possessions looted. Liberia is out of control."

Consequently, Iderabdullah has drawn up a petition to the Security Council of the United Nations titled in part: "Ending Liberia's Suffering - Stopping Murder and Abductions by Warring Factions..."

In the petition, she notes that "On Wed. April 9, 2003 at 2:55 p.m., the semi-rural area of Jahnondo Town, [about 13 miles west of Monrovia] was attacked by...rebels."

"The Imani House Clinic was closing for the day. Oxfam was conducting a water and sanitation training workshop in our gazbo and an emergency food distribution by the Seventh Day Adventist group, ADRA, was taking place nearby."

"There was also a large number of internally displaced people who had fled fighting in their village, as well as many residents and marketers, collecting food rations or participating in other activities when these attacks took place," she explains.

The attacks resulted in the brutal wounding and killing of several people. One victim was an elderly woman who was burned in her house, Iderabdullah notes.

Food intended for the displaced victims was seized by the attackers. And, as IDPs, workers, and civilians fled the fighting, the attackers "proceeded to hunt down, and abduct at gun point, five staff of Imani House, two teenagers, and a number of others," she wrote.

"These unwilling hostages were then forced to carry loads of looted food and materials, including those taken from ADRA, the clinic, and other surrounding facilities, into unknown destinations miles away from the capital city of Monrovia," Iderabdullah explained.

The World Food Program has asked the Liberian government to provide protection to non-government-

tal organizations (NGOs) as they distribute food, since women and children are the prime victims of such attacks, Iderabdullah noted.

So far, she writes, four Imani House members, together with many others, are still missing. Although the head nurse at the clinic escaped from the raiders, as did her driver a few days later, both have said that "they neither saw nor heard any news of the other captives' whereabouts or wellbeing."

A press statement from Oxfam, the international NGO, read: "It's getting increasingly dangerous for humanitarian workers to operate in Liberia. Raphael Sindaye, senior program manager for Oxfam, noted that Oxfam health workers were conducting a hygiene workshop when armed attackers shot rockets and opened fire on the camp. Four people died, including the elderly woman who was burned alive."

Abductions and threats to humanitarian workers have increased dramatically this Spring. The country is now so insecure that 70 percent of it has been designated as "no-go areas" for aid agencies.

In its appeal, Oxfam is urging all parties in the conflict to agree to a cease-fire, and to respect international humanitarian law by not targeting civilians, and by allowing free access for aid to people in need.

According to ADRA three of its workers were abducted in March near Toe Town. Two Liberians, Emmanuel Sharpulo and Musa Kita, were found dead. But Kaare Lund, 53, a Norwegian national and ADRA director for Norway, who was visiting Liberian projects aiding refugees and accompanied the Liberian nationals, was not found and confirmed dead until days later, said Tereza Byrne, spokesperson for ADRA. Calls to Liberia's mission to the UN, for comment, were not returned by press time.

To buttress her appeal, to boot, Bisi Iderabdullah urges those concerned to sign her petition that can be found online at [www.ImaniHouse.org](http://www.ImaniHouse.org) or by calling (718) 638-2059.

According to Iderabdullah, she is taking this course because the government of Liberia is ill-equipped to provide security to aid workers. The Security Council of the UN is the only body, in these circumstances, capable of assuming that role, she contends.





## International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

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### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Ms. Bisi IDERABDULLAH of IMANI HOUSE and Mr. Charles HAREN of PLENTY visited International Cooperation and discussed areas of collaboration between IITA and the two NGO's they represent. They are particularly interested in Soybean Utilization and vegetable production.

They were acquainted with the EEC On-farm testing of improved varieties and were given the relevant literature. They were given some soybean germplasm by GLIP for on-farm testing and were asked to keep us posted on the results, as NGO's have high potential for disseminating improved technology, and we will be interested in viable schemes of seed production that will rehabilitate the economy of Liberia.

A.P. URIYO

PROJECT COORDINATOR





## LIBERIA

## Cholera in the Time of Civil War

In the past two years, the Liberian civil war has claimed about 13,000 dead and displaced nearly 2 million people. The roots of the conflict extend back 170 years, when freed slaves from the Americas settled several regions of western Africa. This "recolonization" effort engendered conflict between indigenous people and "Americanized" blacks, or Americo-Liberians. This conflict has continued to the present day.

As in South Africa, the Americo-Liberians, though an ethnic minority, control the land and government. Integrationist policies from the 1950s onward defused some animosity, but blatant nepotism and a harsh crackdown on dissidents in the late 1970s led to a social explosion in 1980.

Samuel Doe, an army sergeant and a member of the Khran indigenous ethnic group, led a coup that overthrew and killed President Tolbert on April 12, 1980. Doe declared that things were going to be more equitably distributed among the people. Many Americo-Liberians fled the country.

Not long after, tribal loyalties reasserted themselves. Doe filled the civil service with Khran, his own tribespeople. Doe refused to relinquish the government to civilian control, and his 1985 election victory is widely believed to have been stolen. Despite this, the US Government extended diplomatic recognition to Doe in 1986.

The US has a variety of interests in Liberia: a giant Voice of America transmitter that broadcasts to all of Africa, the Middle East, and the southwestern Soviet Union, and an Omega Navigation station, one of seven worldwide. US corporations also have strong interests in Liberia, especially the Firestone Corporation. During World War II, Liberia's rubber was considered a US strategic asset.

Bisi Iderabdullah is an African-American teacher who has lived in Liberia since 1985. During the civil war she ran a cholera ward and founded an orphanage. Jeremy Barth interviewed her for Links while she was on a fundraising trip to the US for Imani House, a US-Liberian organization which she founded and directs.

**Jeremy Barth:** What were your experiences in Liberia during the war?

**Bisi Iderabdullah:** I began by working in the children's ward at Island Hospital, just to help out. But the day after I started, the doctor walked out. So there I was, no IV drips, just rehydration fluid. And the treatment they were giving was horrendous. They were double-dosing the medicines for cholera — chloramphenicol and tetracycline. They were using them together

and also giving patients Flagyl, an anti-parasitic.

The physician, Dr. Amechi wouldn't give up any IV drips for the cholera patients, only for soldiers. People weren't being rehydrated, they were just dying. We had oral rehydration, but the hospital wasn't using it. They felt that it was hopeless, so why bother?

So I looked into my medical texts. Four of my five children were born at home; I took care of all their medical needs. I was a pre-med student at Brooklyn College and in a medical program at Downstate. I dropped out because I didn't like the way medicine was taught. I felt that natural cures and medicine should be better investigated, that doctors should know more about nutrition. Doctors just seemed to be high-class pharmacologists. I didn't like this, and I dropped out, but I didn't stop doing research. I've always read up on medicine and I've never let a doctor do anything to me or my children without understanding beforehand why he was doing it.

I was appalled by how they were treating people at Island Hospital. Among the books in my medical library is *Where There Is No Doctor*. It's written from the perspective of not giving too much medicine. It's full of dosage levels and warnings. It's an excellent, practical book. We used it and it saved a lot of people. For example, it clearly warns against combining chloramphenicol and tetracycline, so I couldn't understand why they were giving those two drugs together. I said to the nurses (the doctor wouldn't come into the ward): "Use your common sense. The patients are dehydrated, their blood fluid is low, and you want to give them all this heavy medicine? You're killing them!"

The doctors in the hospital were overworked. I had three student nurses. With the cholera cases, we rehydrated orally, every five minutes. I brought people to work with me but many couldn't stand it. There was poop all over your feet! I had to wear rubber boots because everyone was on the floor. And the only way to save these people was orally, which is difficult, demanding work. You have to stoop down and give them liquid and often they vomit it up. You have to keep giving them liquid, a little bit at a time. The cleaning people were help-





## **Liberia's Undeclared War - Murder, Mayhem, and Abductions The West Turns a Deaf Ear to the Appeals of Liberia's Civilians Position Statement**

(Position Statement Issued To The United Nations Security Council On April 28, 2003)

**The Perspective** Atlanta, Georgia

**May 6, 2003**

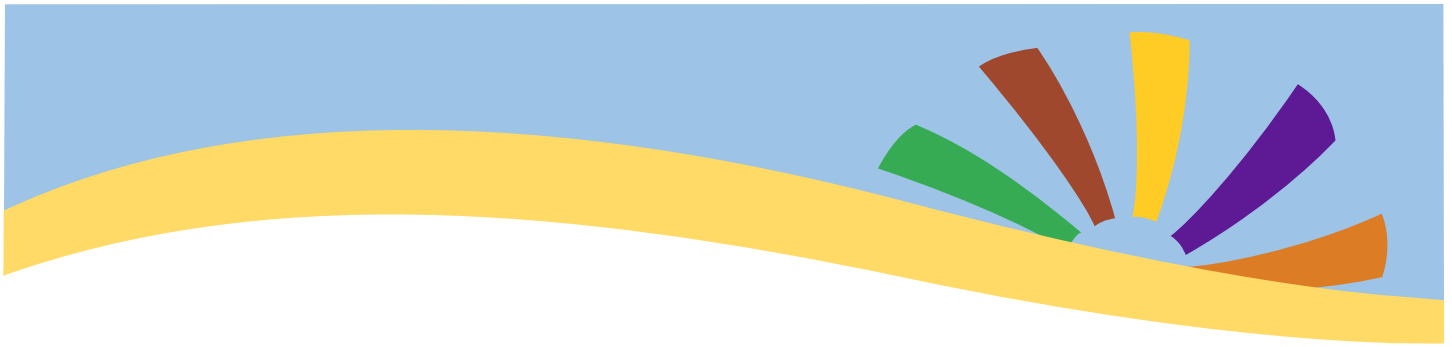
The war in Liberia, which began in 1989, officially ended in 1997. With free, internationally monitored elections, Charles Taylor, former National Patriotic Front Leader, won with an overwhelming majority. The people declared that they were tired after 7 years of war, and only wanted peace and stability returned to the country. However, 6 years have passed and there is little peace, and even less stability in Liberia than there was during the brutal and devastating civil war.

After the war ended, President Elect Taylor invited his Liberian political opponents and adversaries to return home and help rebuild the country. However, when former Deputy Speaker of the Interim Legislature (1995- 1997) and war colleague Samuel

Dokie, his wife, and members of their family were savagely murdered in 1997, many of those who had considered returning to Liberia, decided to remain in exile.

With Liberian Presidential elections scheduled for October of 2003, there are numerous candidates who have made known their desire to run for this position. But, Taylor has said that those Liberians who have not resided in Liberia within the last 10 years will not be allowed to run for office, even though the Liberian Constitution has no such mandate. Taylor's government has also muffled free speech, and infringed heavily on its citizen's human rights. There have been closures and burnings of radio stations, threats, intimidation, and arrest of media personnel, and anyone else for that matter, who appears to be willing to demand governmental accountability. As a result, many of those wishing to run for the upcoming Presidential elections have also remained outside of the country.

While it has been six years since the end of the civil war, and six years of President Taylor's leadership, the country remains crippled and crumbling. If you visit Liberia, you will find it is without running water, electricity, or many of the infrastructures common in other African countries. Several banks have gone out of business, taking local and international resident's money with them. There are large numbers of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's) who are marginally supported by international and local Non-Governmental Organizations. Schools are currently closed, educators and government workers are rarely and poorly paid,



and illiteracy is above 70% (higher for women). Over the last six years Liberia has experienced a rapid decline in health, social, and welfare services. Diamond and timber mining seem to be the major exports, with a handful of government officials and internationals holding most of the rights to these lucrative businesses, while much of the population are proclaimed to be amongst the "poorest of the poor" by UN standards.

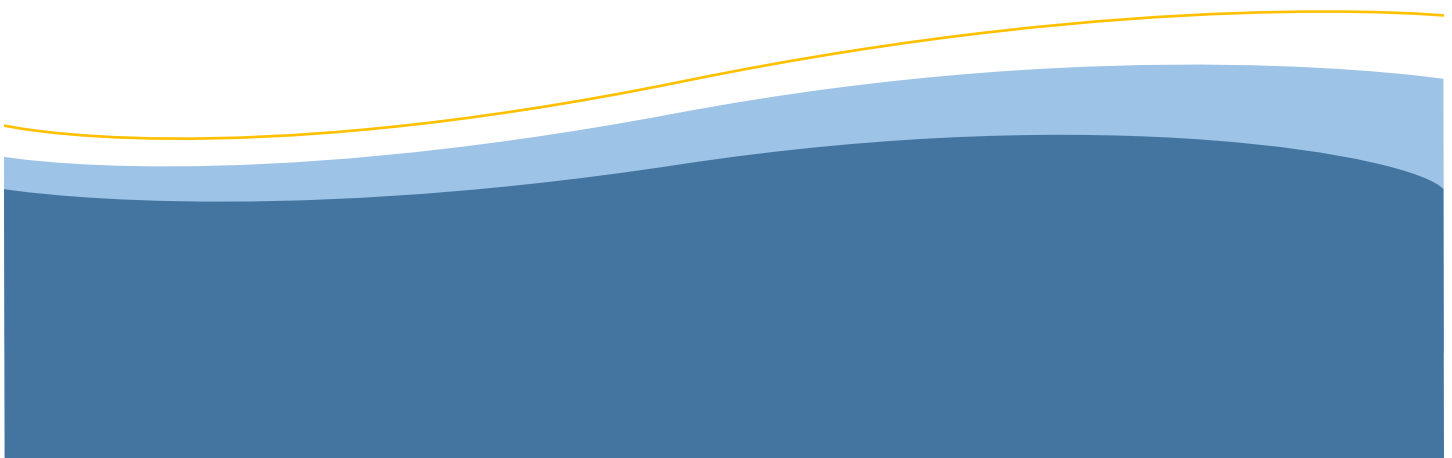
Liberia, although not officially at war, is under attack by a multi-ethnic warring faction, who call themselves, Liberians United For Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). It is reported that this small rebel group began fighting in 1999, in order to overthrow the Taylor government, and open the country to free and fair elections in 2003. It now appears however, that LURD is also victimizing and abusing innocent Liberians, and creating an atmosphere of hysteria, and fear among the civilian population - who have become weary of ever living a normal life, where they can begin to rebuild and secure a future for their children. Once again, Liberian civilians are being harassed, murdered, robbed of their meager possessions, and abducted in the name of peace.

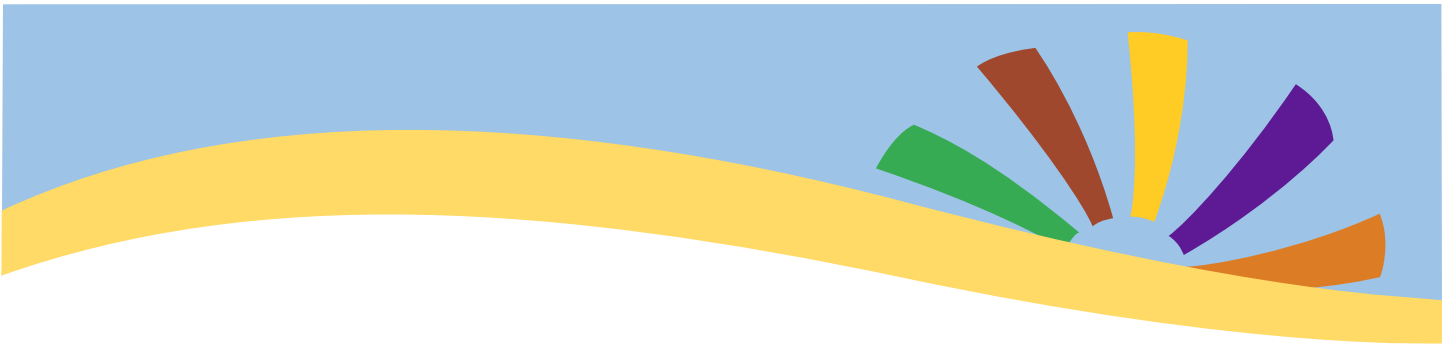
On Wednesday April 9, 2003 at 2:55 pm, the semi-rural area of Jahtondo Town, (about 13 miles West of the capital city of Monrovia) was attacked by LURD rebels. The IMANI HOUSE clinic was closing for the day, OXFAM was conducting a water and sanitation training workshop in our gazebo, and an emergency food distribution by the Seven Day Adventist group,

ADRA was taking place nearby. There were also a large number of Internally Displaced People (IDP's) who had fled fighting in their villages, as well as many residents, and marketers, collecting food rations or participating in other activities when these attacks took place.

This LURD attack was especially brutal, killing and wounding several people, reportedly burning an elderly person in their home, and stealing the food that was intended for the displaced. As IDPs, aid workers and civilians fled the fighting, LURD troops proceeded to hunt down, and abduct at gunpoint, five staff of IMANI HOUSE, two visiting teenagers, and a number of others. These unwilling hostages, were then forced to carry loads of looted food and materials, including those taken from ADRA, the clinic and other surrounding facilities, into unknown destinations miles away from the capital city of Monrovia. In April, The World Food Program (WFP) asked the Liberian Government to offer protection to NGO's who distribute food in Liberia because several other attacks by LURD had taken place, with very similar results, and little resistance by government forces. These attacks are especially tragic given the poor condition of many IDP's who are mostly women and children.

To date four IMANI HOUSE members, as well as many others are still missing. Although, the head nurse at the clinic escaped from LURD soldiers, as did her driver a few days later, both have said that they neither saw, or heard any news of the other captives whereabouts or well being.





It is not clear why LURD has begun kidnapping civilians. What is clear however is that LURD, a warring faction that claims to be fighting for the rights of the Liberian populace, has become a serious threat to the human and civil rights of the people (both local and international) of Liberia. They must discontinue their aggressive activities which are further destroying what little stability the majority of Liberians have.

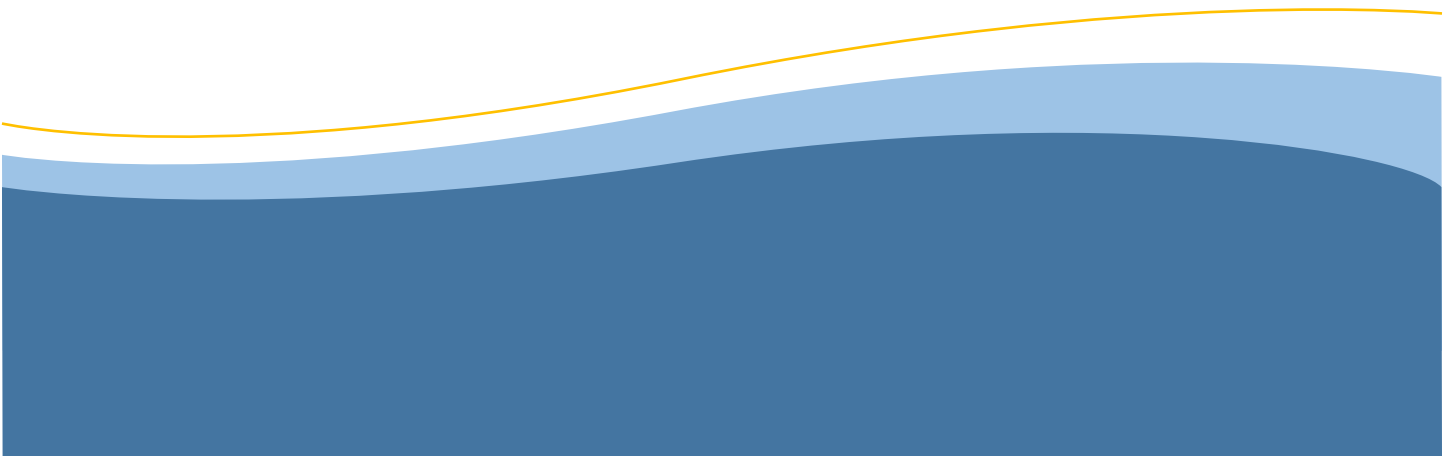
It must be noted here that, LURD forces, and those who took part in this attack and other assaults on civilians or aid workers, are in direct violation of International Humanitarian Law. Under Additional Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions [1] ratified by Liberia in 1988, which aims to protect victims of non-international armed conflict, "taking of hostages" (article 4.2.a), and stealing of "food-stuffs" (article 14) are strictly prohibited.

Additionally, medical units, medical personnel and innocent civilians not taking a direct part in hostilities, should under no conditions be the object of attack (articles 11.1, 13.2, and 13.3). Consequently, each soldier in breach of any of these legal instruments can be persecuted and convicted for their offences "on the basis of individual penal responsibility." Clearly, international humanitarian law will be upheld in all circumstances and doubters should pay close attention to the fate of members of rebel and government forces who have been indicted through the war crimes tribunal in neighboring Sierra Leone.

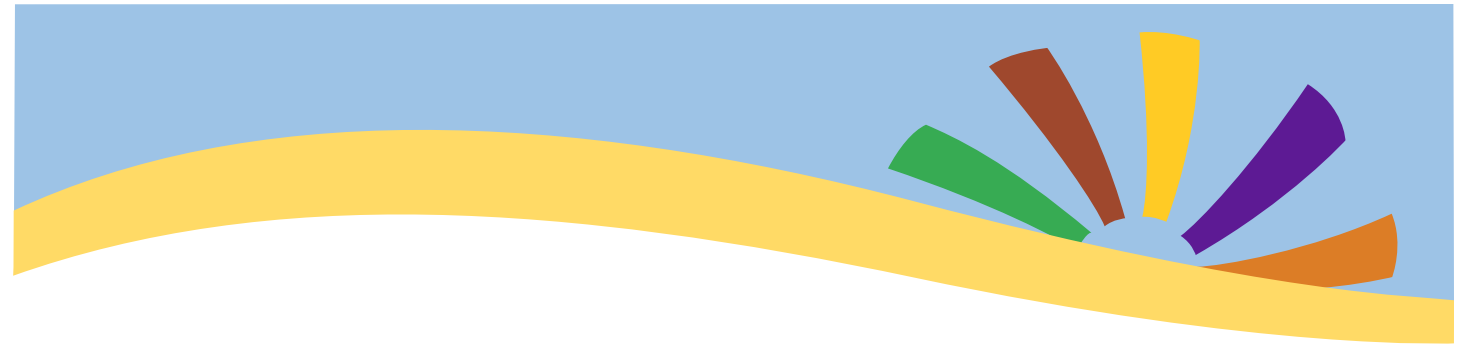
IMANI HOUSE, Inc., and Concerned Citizens, have prepared this Action Statement to ask that the situation in Liberia be given your URGENT ATTENTION. We are calling on the Liberian Government, the U.S. Embassy and other Embassies in Liberia, The U.S. State Department, the United Nations Security Council, those who have diplomatic or business ties with Liberia, and individuals and organizations who care about human rights and the dignity of life, to speak out against the actions of this Undeclared War On Our Citizens.

Specifically, we are calling on the aforementioned institutions to demand:

- That LURD discontinue attacks and abductions of innocent civilians
- That those abducted be safely released immediately
- That media in all developed countries begin to publicize these atrocities
- That the United Nations intervene in Peace Keeping efforts and hold the Government of Liberia and LURD accountable for their abuses of international humanitarian law regarding the treatment of civilians and other non-combatants
- That LURD and the Liberian Government come to the negotiation table and cease all hostilities in the country







- That President Charles Taylor restore civil liberties to Liberia, follow the Liberian Constitution, and allow all Liberian nationals, who desire, the right to run for public office including the Presidency

- That free and fair elections be held as scheduled in Liberia, in October of 2003.

We are also asking those who care about the dignity, future, and the rights of all people to pursue peaceful fulfilling lives, to write to their local and national political representatives, sign our petition (on our website: [WWW.IMANIHOUSE.ORG](http://WWW.IMANIHOUSE.ORG)), and create an awareness campaign among your community and friends, regarding the tragic situation in Liberia.

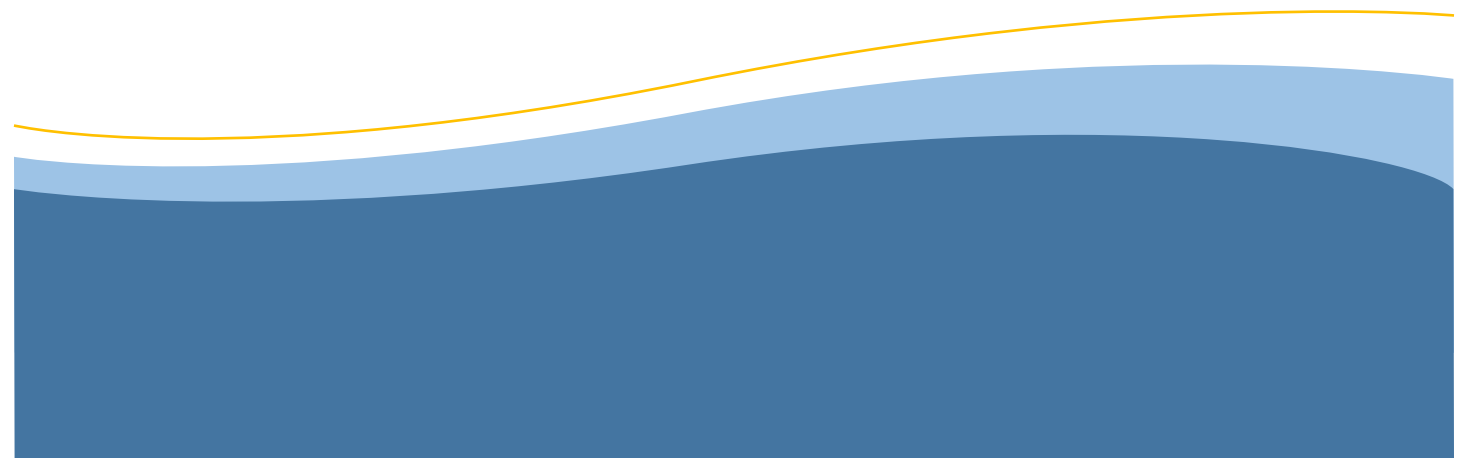
Respectfully submitted:

Bisi Iderabdullah (Mrs.) Executive Director and Founder of IMANI HOUSE, Inc.,

Rajesh Panjabi(Mr.) Human Rights Activist

*Information About IMANI HOUSE: IMANI HOUSE, Inc. was founded in 1986 in Liberia West Africa. We support programs in Liberia and Brooklyn New York that offer low-income people the skills needed to determine their destinies and live fulfilling lives. The IMANI HOUSE clinic in Liberia opened in 1994, and has served tens of thousand of displaced Liberians as well as the local population. Other programs in Liberia include an adult literacy program for women, sewing classes, and an agricultural*

*demonstration farm. In 1990 IMANI HOUSE was in the forefront of relief and redevelopment efforts, offering training in construction, well and latrine installation, adult literacy, soybean growth and utilization programs, supporting abandoned children's shelters as well as health care and education. When Liberians faced famine because of the war, we shipped containers of essential relief materials. IMANI HOUSE New York also manages a number of human development programs. Please visit our website for further information at [WWW.IMANIHOUSE.ORG](http://WWW.IMANIHOUSE.ORG).*





## IMANI HOUSE, Inc. (IHI)®

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### Program Overview – 2019

#### Who is IMANI HOUSE, Inc. (IHI)?

IMANI HOUSE is an award-winning tax-exempt non-profit known for its free innovative youth and family development support services. **The agency's Brooklyn office was founded in 1990** as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. The Mission of Imani House is "To Assist Marginalized Youth, Families, and Immigrants to create sustainable neighborhoods where residents are decision makers who take responsibility for the improvement of their lives and surroundings." IHI offers a variety of free programs that serve up to 18,000 people in underserved communities in Liberia, West Africa and Brooklyn, New York. **Imani means Faith.**

Our programs in Brooklyn, NY consist of:

- **Youth After-School Programs/Summer Camps and Walk to Live Walkathon** - Since 1999, IHI has been offering enriching programs and activities for at-risk youth in grades Pre-K to 5th that fosters academic, physical, social and emotional development. Our trained staff provides homework assistance and tutoring, performance arts and athletics, leadership development and more. We provide classes and skill building in areas that low income children do not usually have access to including archery, dance (African, Tap, Step, Salsa), karate, drumming, Steel Pan band, field trips, arts and crafts, as well as parent workshops, an obesity prevention Walkathon Picnic "Walk to Live" and more. This year our free after-school and summer camps served over 400 children.
- **Adult Education Program** - Imani House's Free Adult Ed program started in 1997. It offers one-on-one and small group classes of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Basic Ed, GED prep, math tutoring and more. IHI trains, certifies and places over 125 neighborhood volunteers who tutor upwards of 100, mostly immigrant, students.
- **Information & Referral Services** - IMANI HOUSE has developed a wide network of collaborating agencies that offer unduplicated or similar services, including legal, immigration, domestic violence, HIV assistance, housing, continuing education, social services and other assistance. In 2016, IHI offered referrals to over 3,500 individuals who walked in, called, were referred to or emailed our office.
- **Women of Color Writers Workshop** - The WOC Writers Workshop was created in 1999 to provide a supportive creative environment where women of color from many different backgrounds and cultures are able to hone their writing skills, create new works, participate in readings, submit work for publication and join hands in support of each other. This project is supported by the NY State Council for the Arts and directly serves about 200 women each year. WOC newest publication "Boundaries & Borders" is expected to be completed in 2018.

#### Our programs in Liberia, West Africa serve approximately 14,000 annually and consist of:

- **Maternal and Child Health Facility** - Our Clinic opened in 1993 during the Liberian Civil War. We Provide vaccinations, treatment, pre and post-natal care, ambulance services, deliveries and other medical services. The clinic remained open and was instrumental in the fight against the deadly Ebola virus providing community outreach and education, protective gear and disinfectant distributions through the communities we serve.
- **Adult Education** - This program began in 1986. It provides free basic literacy, math, and civic engagement classes to market women in several locations throughout Monrovia and its rural areas. Over 56% of Liberian women do not read nor write.
- **Public Health Education Initiative - Liberian Women's Health Manual** - This Imani House publication was created in 2017. Its aim is to provide education in the areas of improved Health, Sanitation, Nutrition and Human Right to mostly rural low literacy level women. Our staff train and build the skills of village level women who become experts and facilitators in classroom peers. We hope to expand this important program across Liberia.

#### Awards and Media Coverage:

IMANI HOUSE has been featured on NY1 and News 12 Brooklyn, received honorable mention in the New York Daily News and has had articles published in many online and print publications including: BrooklynInk.com, Parkslope Patch, Caribbean Life and The Park Slope Gazette and Courier. In addition, the agency has received proclamations from former Brooklyn and Manhattan Borough Presidents and Eric Adams as well as Mayor Bloomberg and Mayor DiBlasio. Awards include A Union Square Award, the Proliteracy's Family Literacy Award of Excellence and the Ann C. Michel International Women in Literacy Award, and many other commendations [in Liberia and the New York

#### Supporters of Imani House:

The Department of Youth and Community Development, Global Giving, American Jewish World Services, M & T Bank, Brooklyn Hospital, FDNY, Kings County Hospital, Kingsbrook Jewish Medical Center, the New York State Council of the Arts, the Offices of City Council members Laurie Cumbo and Brad Landers, Plenty International, Proliteracy, the Vessel Foundation, Fish and Richardson, The Community Church of New York, Con Edison, DBNA, the Community of Color Sustainability Grant, Skadden, Arps, et al LLP, Fifth Avenue Committee, Google, BNY Mellon, State Farm and others.



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