

Liberia Police News

Jul 14, 2008 AFP. In the past week the capital of Liberia has been hit by a crime wave that has left inhabitants fearing for their lives while the government admits the security situation is deteriorating. In the past eight days at least 160 homes in Monrovia were attacked by armed robbers, according to figures collected by AFP, demanding money or valuables and raping. "When they came they kicked the door open, put the entire family under gun point and began to demand money," Marie Myers, a resident of central Monrovia told AFP in tears.

"When they could not get what they expected, they decided to beat my husband with machetes. When I pleaded for him, that's the time they started to beat me like this," she said, showing extensive wounds on her back. President Johnson-Sirleaf admitted that the security situation in the capital had deteriorated. She even said that some of the crimes were carried out by police officers assigned to protect the population. "The general security situation is bad. The reason is that our own security for several reasons has not been effective. Certain police officers have just been arrested as the result of their own participation in some of these crimes," she said on Liberian radio. "It has become a serious nightmare. We don't close our eyes any more during the night." Arthur Glehn, resident of Paynesville, a northern suburb of Monrovia told AFP. Observers say most of the robbers are former fighters who fought in the civil war. Many have kept their weapons and find it hard to find and keep regular jobs in a country plagued by over 80 percent unemployment. Monrovia and its suburbs are the main targets of the robbers because it is the most affluent city in Liberia. Two weeks ago a senior legal advisor to the president said all Liberians and foreign residents should keep a self-imposed curfew. The move drew criticism from the public and politicians who say the comments would drive away desperately needed foreign investors. However, with the security situation as it is most residents keep to such a self-imposed curfew.