



**PORT ASSESSMENT REPORT**  
**At the Port of Buchanan**

Date and hour: 27.11.2003 / 1230 to 1315 LmT

**Performed by Capt. Eric F. Mora B.**  
**WFP Port Captain**



### **a) Port description**

Location: Buchanan is situated approx 90km SE of Monrovia.

General overview: Buchanan was in the past an important logs and ore export terminal. The port itself is formed by 2 breakwaters, main and secondary. The commercial berth is situated on the secondary breakwater, and the ore berth on the shore, protected by the main breakwater.

In 2001 the traffic figures were:

- Exports: 11,500,000 MT per annum
- Imports: 250,000 MT per annum

Access: The main port area can be accessed by a wide gravel road in excellent even state and a secondary narrow gravel road in regular conditions. Trucks could eventually only access by the primary road. A railroad also leads to the port and ends inside the port warehouse.

Load Line zone: Tropical.

Max size: Largest vessel handled: LOA 290m; draft 12.8m at Ore Quay.

Anchorage: Anchorage can be obtained 1.5nm W of the head of the main breakwater in a depth of approx 20m.

Anchorage can also be obtained approx 0.55nm NW of the head of the main breakwater in a depth of 16m.

The tidal range and flow is of 1.2m.

The dock density is 1020-1024.

Prevailing winds: Southwesterly.

Charts: BA 3648. Admiralty Pilot NP1.

### **b) Aids to navigation.**

The main breakwater extends 0.9nm West from the shore 1.25nm SE of Grand Bassa Point and the secondary breakwater extends South from the shore 0.5nm SE of Grand Bassa Point.

A light is exhibited from white square concrete towers standing at the heads of both breakwaters. The towers are normally floodlit at night but the working conditions were not checked due to be present during daytime.



The two floating aids (port and starboard channel buoys) of the outward fairway were not checked due to the lack of time and a marine craft to reach them. Nevertheless, late information obtained indicates that the two channel buoys are missing as well as the buoy marking shallow waters approximately in the center of the inside bay.

### **c) Obstructions, Wrecks, and other Hazards to Navigation**

A recent wreck was found approximately 90 meters southwards from the north extreme of the General Cargo / Commercial Pier. All the structure is lying underwater (no visible parts above water surface).

As per initial locals' information the vessel was apparently a trawler that was made fast alongside and due to her unmanned (abandoned) state suffered damage resulting in the sinking. Also as per their information the vessel was named "*Cavalla*".

Despite of the first spelling was given locally as correct, vessels named "*Cavalla*", "*Kavala*" and "*Kabala*" were searched in the Shipfinder database without positive results. The search was performed in order to identify the dimensions, type and owners / managers of the vessel and therefore determine the characteristics of the obstruction alongside.

Nevertheless, late information obtained indicates that the vessel was a gunboat of the Liberian Navy that was captured by the MODEL fighters. The crew was reportedly released by the fighters. As per the same source of information, the approximate LOA of the boat is 20 meters.

If the information above is accurate, the commercial pier is presently divided in two usable sections of approximately 90 meters in the northern extreme and 210 meters in the southern extreme.

Another (older) wreck, the m/v “African Star”, is reported to be lying underwater 40 to 50 meters East of the north extreme of the commercial pier.

Other three visible wrecks were observed in the inner bay, one aground in the north extreme of the port, the m/v “Coyssy IV”, and other two aground in the beach northwest from the Ore Pier. All three wrecks do not represent a hazard to navigation due to be out of the traffic zone.



#### **d) Pier Conditions**

The port is fitted with two main piers and one dedicated berth being:

- Commercial Pier: Length 320m; depth 10.15m except on the south extreme where a depth of 9 meters is reported. Used to handle all general cargo including DCNs.
- Ore Loading Pier: Length 257m, depth 13.5m, used in the past for the shipment of iron ore.
- Tanker berth: Length 126m; depth 10.15m, can accommodate vessels of up to 170m LOA. This berth is situated next to the ore loading berth, and is available for discharging vessels only.

The Commercial / General Cargo Quay was visually inspected and was found in good and solid state, all 17 bollards in place, and well provided with fenders, being tractor tires fixed with chains the most of them.



The two last mentioned quays / berths were not inspected due to the short time available. (Please see port diagram for their locations). Nevertheless at long distance the Ore Pier appeared also in solid and good state, most (or all) bollards in place and well provided with fenders.

### **e) Soundings Alongside**

Soundings alongside were not performed due to the lack of a portable (handheld) echosounder or other sounding device, and therefore the depths provided in c) were not confirmed.

As per late information received, the hospital ship “Rotterdam” presently at anchorage in Monrovia Port, performed in the recent past soundings of the inner bay.

### **f) Port Cargo Handling Equipment**

The port is fitted with a 20/10 MT SWL capacity shore crane located in the Commercial / General Cargo Pier (mobile / rail mounted). Nevertheless was found in advanced state of destruction due to lack of use and maintenance, and due to most of the parts have been removed. At the time of the survey at least two persons were inside removing parts / looting.



At the southern extreme of the Commercial Pier was found a fix shore crane of unknown SWL Capacity. Due to the proximity of the loading log yard and the type of crane it is believed to be used for loading logs in vessels. Due to the abandoned condition and the massive destruction of the operation cabin high costs are estimated for its recovery.

Shore-side cargo handling equipment as forklifts, top-lifters, and others is absolutely unavailable. One tractor and one low capacity forklift in non-recoverable state were found in one small warehouse located next to the administration building. As per late information received, the most of the equipment was removed from the port by the private companies after being effective the UN resolution No. 1478 imposing sanctions to the government of Liberia for timber exports.

A log-handling payloader in apparent non-recoverable state was also found in the southern extreme of the commercial pier.



### **g) Overall Port Situation**

A visual inspection of the main port area was performed and was observed a generalized state of abandon, looting and destruction. Debris of any kind were found spread all around the area.

At the time of the survey, several persons were observed in the process of removing material belonging to the port.

The operational area next to the commercial pier was found covered by a thick and solidified layer of mud.

### **h) Port Premises**

The port premises in order from the gate to the southern end were found in the following state:

- Security / Gate Office: Medium grade of destruction. Windows broken or removed.
- Administration Building: Low grade of destruction. Only damages are windows broken or removed. All furniture including the air conditioning units were removed. Minor repairs and painting are needed.



- Administration Warehouse: Low grade of destruction. Provided with four consecutive metallic gates in apparent good state. The roof is also in apparent good state. Found with many debris inside (apparently broken solidified cement bags) and with a forklift and a tractor in scrap state. Approximate dimensions: 11 x 27 meters (abt 300 Sq.m.)
- Authorities Building: Low grade of destruction. Only damages are windows broken or removed. All furniture including the air conditioning units were removed. Minor repairs and painting are needed.
- Workshop: High grade of destruction. Roof entirely removed. Electric wiring destroyed. All machinery and tools removed.
- Workshop Offices: High grade of destruction. The roof is destroyed as well as some walls. Found with apparent structural damages. The building is probably non-recoverable or at least more expensive to recover than constructing a new one.
- Cargo Warehouse: Medium grade of destruction. The roof is in general good state just needing some minor repairs for small holes. It is provided with five gates, three facing the pier, one for the railroad access, and one for access to the annex. One of the gates facing the pier is in need of repair. The gate for the road is missing and replaced by an improvised fix wooden wall. The four ground floor, and the four first floor warehouse offices were found in messy conditions and with all furniture removed but in need only of minor repairs. In general the warehouse was found in structural regular state but in messy conditions with wires, old spare parts, wires and debris spread all around. Approximate dimensions: 60 x 34 meters (abt 2000 Sq.m.)





**i) National Port Authority (NPA)**

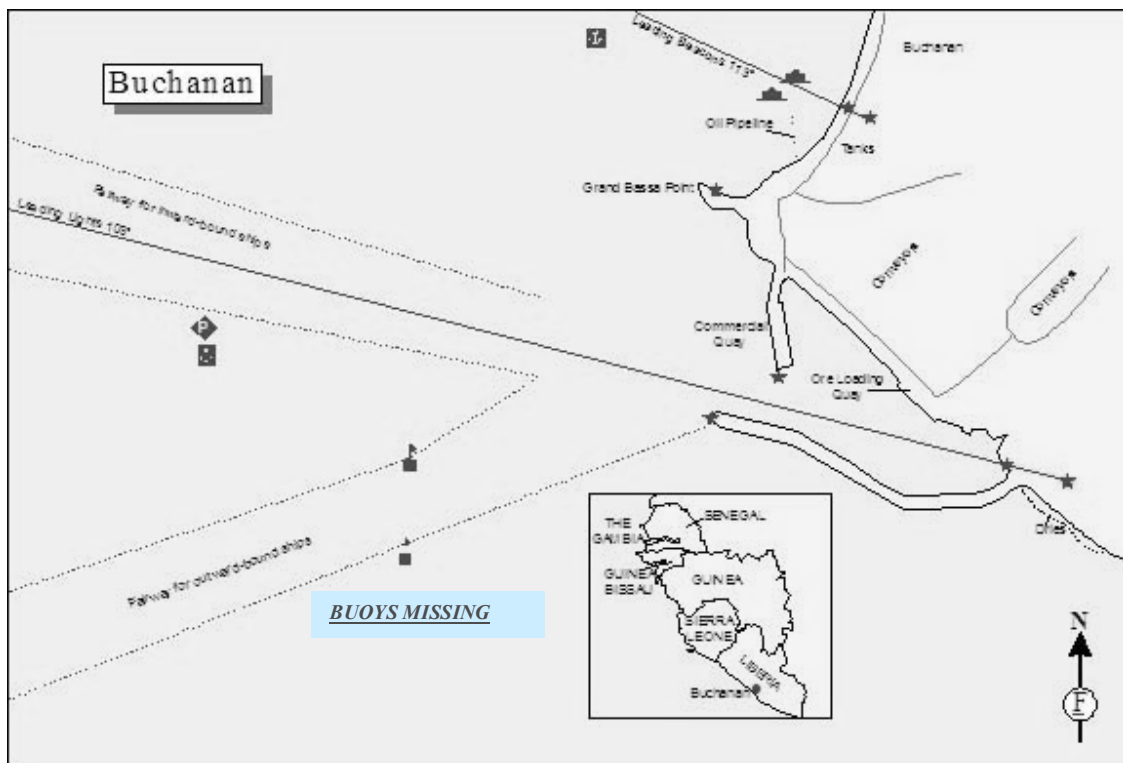
No port authorities were contacted during the assessment except for a MODEL commander in charge of the port area but unaware of details about it.

**j) Marine Services**

When in normal operation, the pilot is compulsory for vessels over 100 dwt. At present time Pilotage is not available but upon request to the pilot office in Monrovia.

There were 2 tugs available before, of 1,640 hp and 3,280 hp respectively. At the time of the survey they were not observed in the port or inner bay. Late information provided indicates that the two tugboats were removed from the port by the owners before the war-break.

**k) Port Diagram**



**1) Vicinity Warehousing**

Three large warehouses were found in the abandoned plywood factory located approximately 300 meters north of the port main gate.

Each of the warehouses is of approximately 120 x 45 meters (abt 5000 Sq.m.) and were found with the wooden structure intact. Nevertheless the most of the zinc plating that constituted the roof and the walls was removed, most probably looted.

The warehouse area is fenced and provided with a gate.



Different types of heavy work machinery were found in the center warehouse and in the surroundings.

The plywood factory was closed after the UN Resolution No.1478 entered into force.

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***Capt. Eric F. Mora B.***  
**WFP Port Captain**

**29<sup>th</sup> of November, 2003**  
**At the Freeport of Monrovia, Liberia**