

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: LBR23755
Country: Liberia
Date: 24 October 2005

Keywords: Liberia – Kru tribe – Ethnic Kru – Kru language – Prince Johnson – Independent National Patriotic Forces of Liberia (INPFL) – Independent Democratic Party (IDP) – Civil war

This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

- 1. Is the Kru tribe a minority in Liberia?**
- 2. Are the Kru a subgroup of any other language/ethnic group?**
- 3. Did the Kru support Prince Johnson or any other politician/faction?**

RESPONSE

- 1. Is the Kru tribe a minority in Liberia?**

The Kru tribe is one of 16 indigenous ethnic minorities in Liberia and comprises about 7% of the population (see attachments 1-6).

- 2. Are the Kru a subgroup of any other language/ethnic group?**

The Kru (or Kruan) language belongs to the Niger-Congo language family and is itself a family of languages that is comprised of several ethno-linguistic subgroups. Kru is spoken by several of the 16 ethnic groups currently residing in Liberia (see attachments 7-11).

- 3. Did the Kru support Prince Johnson or any other politician/faction?**

After extensive searches of the sources listed above, no evidence could be found that the Kru supported Prince Johnson, his faction, the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) or any other politician or faction. All evidence appears to suggest, albeit indirectly, that Johnson's supporters were comprised predominantly of members of his own Gio tribe and perhaps some Mano peoples who came from Nimba County (see attachments 12-16). It should be noted that Johnson went into exile in Nigeria as early as 1992 and did not return to Liberia until September 2004 as a 'born-again Christian' evangelist, preaching reconciliation between

the warring tribal factions. Johnson stood as a senatorial candidate for Nimba County in the October 2005 Liberian general elections which are yet to be decided (see attachments 17-19).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Google search engine www.google.com
 Copernic 2001 Personal Agent search engines
 Africa Confidential www.blackwell-synergy.com
 AllAfrica.com www.allafrica.com
 Kidon Media Link www.kidon.com/media-link/liberia.shtml
 US Department of State website www.state.gov
 CIA World Factbook www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook
 Wikipedia Encyclopaedia www.wikipedia.org
 Ethnologue: Languages of the world www.ethnologue.com

Databases:		
Public	<i>FACTIVA</i>	Reuters Business Briefing
DIMIA	<i>BACIS</i>	Country Information
RRT	<i>ISYS</i>	RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State <i>Country Reports on Human Rights Practices</i>
RRT Library	<i>FIRST</i>	RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. 'Kru', *Wikipedia website*, 16 October 2005.
(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kru> - Accessed 19 October 2005)
2. Olson, James S 1996, *The Peoples of Africa: An Ethnohistorical Dictionary*, Greenwood Press, London, p.308. (Melbourne Library)
3. 'Background Note: Liberia' *U.S. Department of State website*, September 2005.
(<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/6618.htm> - Accessed 19 October 2005)
4. *World Directory Of Minorities* 1997, Minority Rights Group (ed.), London, pp.425-429. (Melbourne Library)
5. Liebenow, J. Gus 1997, *Liberia: The Quest for Democracy*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, p.37. (Melbourne Library)
6. Map of Liberian ethnic groups in 'Cross-border crisis', *Africa Confidential*, 21 July 2000, Vol. 41, No.15, p.2.
7. 'Kru languages', *Wikipedia website*, 19 September 2005.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kru_languages - Accessed 19 October 2005)
8. 'Ethnologue report for Kru: Language Family Trees', *Ethnologue website*, 2005.

- (http://www.ethnologue.com/show_family.asp?subid=89957 – Accessed 18 October 2005)
9. 'Ethnologue report for Kru: Languages of Liberia', *Ethnologue website*, 2005.
(http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=Liberia – Accessed 18 October 2005)
 10. 'Ethnologue maps: Liberia Language Families', *Ethnologue website*, 2005.
(http://www.ethnologue.com/show_map.asp?name=LR&seq=10 – Accessed 18 October 2005)
 11. RRT Country Research 1997, *Research Response LBR11836*, 24 January, p.4.
 12. 'Armed Conflict Events Data - Liberian Civil War 1989-1995', *OnWar.com website*.
(<http://www.onwar.com/aced/nation/lay/liberia/fliberia1989.htm> - Accessed 19 October 2005)
 13. Amnesty International 1991, *Amnesty International Report 1991*, London, pp.145-146.
(Melbourne Library)
 14. RRT Country Research 1996, *Research Response LBR11552*, 27 September, pp.12-13.
 15. Banks, A S, Day, A J, & Muller, T C (eds), 1993. *Political Handbook of the World 1993*, CSA Publications, New York, p.484. (Melbourne Library)
 16. 'Liberia – Insurgency 1999+', *African Hot Spots website*.
(<http://users.chariot.net.au/~marcof/africahot.htm> - Accessed 24 October 2005)
 17. 'Former Warlord Prince Johnson Seeks Political Career', *allAfrica.com website*, 28 July 2003.
(<http://allafrica.com/stories/200307280813.html> - Accessed 20 October 2005)
 18. 'Prince Johnson Cautions Liberians Against Tribalism' *allAfrica.com website*, 30 September 2004.
(<http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200409300577.html> - Accessed 20 October 2005)
 19. 'Ex-warlords hope for Liberian votes', *CNN.com website*, 13 October 2005.
(<http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/africa/10/13/liberia.warlords.reut/index.html> - Accessed 24 October 2005)