

Liberia May 2019

Ivorian refugees in Maryland go to Cote d'Ivoire to participate in a **"go and see"** visit

285 Ivorian refugees voluntarily repatriate to Cote d'Ivoire

8,923
Total number of Persons of Concern in Liberia

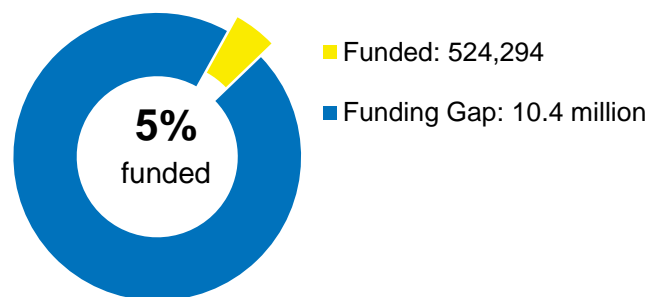
POPULATION OF CONCERN: 8,923

By country of origin

Cote d'Ivoire refugees	8,804
Various nationality refugees	77
Asylum seekers	42
TOTAL:	8,923

FUNDING (AS OF MAY 2019)

\$11 million requested for the Liberia Operation



UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS USD

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE MAJOR DONORS OF UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS

Sweden 90.4 million | Norway 44.5 million | Netherlands 37.5 million | United Kingdom 31.7 million | Germany 26.7 million | Private donors Spain 26.3 million | Denmark 24.4 million | Switzerland 15.1 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 13.8 million

Algeria | Argentina | Australia | Austria | Azerbaijan | Belgium | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Iceland | Indonesia | Kuwait | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Sri Lanka | Thailand | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Private donors

Offices

- 1 Branch Office in Monrovia
- 1 Field Office in Zwedru
- 1 Field Unit in Harper
- 1 Field Unit in Bahn

Staff

- 46 National Staff
- 8 International Staff

CONTACTS

Mbaye Diouf, UNHCR Liberia Representative a.i., diouf@unhcr.org

Ana Biurrun Ruiz, UNHCR Liberia Associate External Relations & Reporting Officer, biurrun@unhcr.org

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR works with the Government of Liberia through the **Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC)** in the provision of protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers, including gender issues, child protection and education.

UNHCR provides funding to **African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD)**. This INGO provides support in infrastructure; shelter; WASH; and livelihood activities.

CONTEXT HIGHLIGHTS

Preparations continue towards a peaceful ‘Save the State’ protest on 7 June 2019.

- On 24 May 2019, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and Head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), Dr. Mohammed Ibn Chambas, arrived in Liberia for discussions ahead of the planned protest in the country on 7 June 2019.
 - It can be recalled that the Council of Patriots (CoP), the group organizing the ‘Save the State’ protest on 7 June 2019 cites lack of accountability, corruption and insufficient access to basic services as some of the reasons behind the upcoming protest.
 - Following a closed-door meeting with the President of Liberia, H.E. George M. Weah, Dr. Chambas met with the CoP.
- In a joint statement, the UN, African Union (AU) Liaison Office in Liberia and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Commission in Liberia urged the government to allow the protest to go ahead.
- The organizers of the protest met with the President of Liberia, in the presence of the Council of Churches, UN Resident Coordinator, AU and ECOWAS Representatives.
 - During the meeting, the CoP highlighted the peaceful nature of the protest.

Government of Liberia misuse of donor funds.

- On 9 May 2019, Information Minister, Eugene Lenn Nagbe, confirmed receiving a diplomatic letter signed by nine Heads of Diplomatic Missions.
 - The signatories state that the government has carried out irregular withdrawals of donor’s project funds from the Central Bank of Liberia outside their intended purposes.
 - The signatories of the letter included: the Head of the EU Delegation to Liberia, and Ambassadors from the US, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Norway, Sweden and UK.

US\$25 million mop-up money audit concludes that \$2.37 million was not properly accounted for.

- According to a press release from the Executive Mansion, the report is under review.
- The General Auditing Commission (GAC) is the body that conducted the audit into the expenditure of US\$25 million intended to mop up excess Liberian dollars from the market.
- It can be recalled that both the Kroll Associates Incorporated report and that of the Presidential Investigative Team noted discrepancies in the handling of the mop-up exercise.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Hon. Kai G Farley, Superintendent of Grand Gedeh County, visits PTP Settlement (Grand Gedeh)

- On 13 May 2019, Hon. Kai G Farley, Superintendent of Grand Gedeh County, visited PTP Settlement to keep abreast of UNHCR Liberia operation and programme in the county.
- During a meeting with the refugee population, the Superintendent encouraged refugees to voluntarily return taking advantage of the peaceful environment in Cote d'Ivoire. Farley urged those opting for local integration to remain law abiding and stressed that the County Administration is engaged with local leaders to ensure refugees have access to farmland.
- During Hon. Farley's visit to see livelihoods activities in PTP Settlement, including two poultries and one piggery, he highlighted the positive impact of refugees' activities in the local markets.

MAIN ACTIVITIES



Protection

Monrovia (Montserrado)

- The Government of Cote d'Ivoire repeated a request to the Government of Liberia (GoL) to extradite seven refugees who have been in detention in Liberia since 2012.
 - UNHCR objects to the extradition as the refugees are protected by international law and a fair trial in Cote d'Ivoire cannot be guaranteed.
 - Moreover as the case is still in court, the refugees cannot be extradited to Cote d'Ivoire.
- UNHCR provides a monthly subsistence allowance to the seven refugees in prison and to other vulnerable individuals who lack family support and are unable to take care of their daily subsistence.

All locations

- With the support of the LNP (Liberia National Police), UNHCR conducted a training for Community Watch Teams (CWT), comprised of refugees in the three settlements -PTP (Grand Gedeh), Bahn (Nimba) and Little Wlebo (Maryland) -, and Liberians from the host communities. Participants received certificates of participation and equipment, including raincoats, rain boots, safety vests, torches, batteries and whistles.



Participants of the Community Watch Teams training showing their certificates. © UNHCR.

Harper (Maryland)

- From 16 to 22 May 2019, UNHCR and LRRRC concluded the verification exercise in host communities of Maryland and River Gee counties.
 - 17 per cent of the targeted population were verified, while 83 per cent did not show up.
 - UNHCR and LRRRC reminded refugees of the two durable solutions available to them: local integration in Liberia or voluntary repatriation to Cote d'Ivoire.
 - Out of the 220 individuals (74 families) verified in Maryland and River Gee host communities, 170 individuals (45 families) are opting for repatriation.



SOCIAL PROTECTION

Zwedru (Grand Gedeh)

- The SGBV Women Committee and block chairladies led the second quarterly distribution of sanitary pads, soap and underwear to women and girls of reproductive age (11-49 years), reaching 1,197 female refugees.
- Some 4,477 refugees received soap covering the remaining 6 months of 2019.

Harper (Maryland)

- On 13 May 2019, Little Wlebo Settlement (LWS) SGBV Working Group carried out sensitization sessions in which 50 refugees participated.
- UNHCR and LRRRC distributed sanitary napkins to 188 women and girls of reproductive age. The distributed items aim to cover nine months.



VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION

Zwedru (Grand Gedeh)

- In May 2019, 285 Ivorian refugees voluntarily repatriated to Cote d'Ivoire.
 - On 7 May 2019, 177 refugees from host communities left Liberia; on 21 May 2019, 43 refugees from PTP Settlement and 65 from host communities returned home.
 - In 2019, 483 Ivorian refugees (157 from the settlements, 326 from host communities) have returned home. Registration of candidates continues in all locations.



Ivorian refugees in PTP Settlement get on the convoys to return to Cote d'Ivoire. © UNHCR.

Harper (Maryland)

“Go and see” visit: a delegation travelled to Cote d’Ivoire for a “go and see” visit.

- The delegation, comprised of four refugees from LWC, LRRRC and UNHCR, visited several locations in Cote d’Ivoire, including Tabou, Grabo, Gbapet and Gnato.
 - The mission met with local government officials, Ivorian citizens and returnees who described the situation in the country as calm and peaceful.
 - On 15 May 2019, the four refugees held a briefing session with LWC population. The mission addressed security, health, education and property restitution procedures and concluded that it was safe to return to Cote d’Ivoire.
- **Challenges and gaps:** Ivorian returnees living in Tabou claim that Ivorian authorities do not support them to retrieve their properties, especially land for farming.



Education

Zwedru (Grand Gedeh)

- In May 2019, an average of 236 (117 F, 119 M) primary students, 14 (6 F, 8 M) Junior High and 69 (33 F, 36 M) kindergarten students attended class.
- **Challenges and gaps:** Tchien Public School Principal, teachers and the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) held a meeting to address the low school attendance. The school principal links the low attendance to the discontinuation of the World Food Programme (WFP) School Feeding Programme (SFP) since June 2018.
 - Grand Gedeh County Education Officer (CEO) has been working with the Education Ministry at Monrovia level and Save the Children in Zwedru for the inclusion of the school into WFP SFP. Follow up continues.



HEALTH

■ Zwedru (Grand Gedeh County)

- UNHCR donated 100 boxes of soap (8,000 pieces) to Martha Tubman Memorial Hospital.



UNHCR highlighted the support to the County Health system, including payment of salaries to staff of the Kanaan Clinic, donation of medical drugs and an ambulance. UNHCR will continue to provide fuel and maintenance support to the ambulance. © UNHCR.



Local integration - Livelihoods

Zwedru (Grand Gedeh)

- Through mentoring, refugees are increasing the ownership of their businesses. Some 45 cases who are running five poultries, six piggeries and six fishponds finalized detailed plans and visited several markets, analysing demand and prices.
- UNHCR and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) finalized the calculation of the agriculture support (seeds) needed for the 316 refugee farmers involved in activities within and outside PTP Settlement.
 - The strong collaboration with the MoA ensures that the agriculture activities are fully aligned with the national standards in terms of seeds support. MoA and UNHCR will continue to provide joint technical support to refugees and monitoring the management of the land parcels.

Nimba County

- AIRD carried out its regular mentoring visits to 189 households (161 refugees, 28 from host community) involved in the process. These households represent 56 per cent of the total number of families currently opting for local integration (335).
- Key findings of UNHCR Liberia livelihoods process include:
 - Cases involved in the process for ten months (44 cases):
 - Families achieving a monthly gross income above the standard have increased from 50 per cent after six months to 65 per cent. Reinvestments into the businesses have increased from 9 per cent, after six months into the process, to 35 per cent.
 - Cases involved in the process for six months (50 cases):
 - 88 per cent of these cases reached the standard monthly income, established at LD\$15,000 (US\$100) and have an average of 18 per cent of reinvestment into their business. These types of activities (goods-retail businesses) generate an income more rapidly in comparison with other type of business (production and services). This percentage is expected to decrease during the rainy season.
 - All cases taking part in the livelihoods process are involved in some saving activity, mostly due to a well-established practice among refugees and host community members to save on a general basis.
 - For those cases involved in the process for ten months, the percentage of gross income allocated into savings has increased from 8 per cent to 15 per cent in the tenth month.
- In May 2019, AIRD distributed 300 bundles (50 sticks per bundle) of cassava sticks as part of the process of promoting agriculture as an Income Generating Activity (IGA) and for own consumption. The activity involved 107 refugees living and farming in Bahn Settlement.