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HIGHLIGHTS

- More than 13,000 refugees have returned since the beginning of 2013, the Ivorian and Liberian authorities want to continue to facilitate returns.
- The Ivorian and Guinean local authorities work together to maintain security.
- Humanitarian organizations are reorganizing their presence in the west of the country.

KEY FIGURES

Total population	21 M
HDI ranking (UNDP) (out of 187)	168
Pop. without access to safe drinking water	8 % (Urban) 33% (Rural)
Nb. of Ivorian refugees in West Africa	75,609
Nb. of refugees repatriated since Jan 2013 (UNHCR)	14,303



Mouvements de populations

More than 13,000 refugees have returned since the beginning of the year, Ivorian and Liberian authorities want to continue to facilitate returns

Since May 2011, more than 220,000 people who had fled the effects of the electoral crisis and had sought refuge in neighboring countries have returned to Côte d'Ivoire. 22,000 of them have returned as part of the voluntary repatriation organized by High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). According to the UNHCR about 55,000 Ivorian refugees are still in Liberia.

Today, efforts to facilitate their return continue.

At the end of 2013, voluntary repatriation still continues. Political leaders of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia have recently renewed their commitment to continue to work together to create favorable conditions for the return of refugees to Côte d'Ivoire.

Between 1 January and 10 October 2013, 14,303 people, 52% of which are under 18, have decided to return through the voluntary repatriation operations of UNHCR.

Most recently, a convoy of Ivorian refugees from Togo and two convoys from Liberia for an estimated total of more than 1000 people have been organized in October.

UNHCR had estimated earlier this year that 20,000 Ivorian refugees might return in 2013.

On the field, UNHCR and its partners continue to inform refugees about living conditions in Côte d'Ivoire. Those who decide to return are carried by convoys organized by UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and escorted by units of UNOCI peacekeepers. Upon arrival, refugees receive CFA 75,000 (USD 150) for adults and CFA 50,000 (USD 100) for children, as well as kitchen utensils, tarpaulins, buckets, and other objects they need to restart their lives.

They also receive food from the World Food Program (WFP). UNHCR is also working with its partners to support the socio-economic reintegration of repatriates, particularly in the areas of social cohesion, documentation, shelter rehabilitation, education, health, but also in the establishment income generating activities.



Ivorian children in a convoy of repatriation of refugees living in Liberia. More than 13,300 refugees have returned since the beginning of the year, half of whom are minors. @ UNHCR/L.PALMISANO

The "go and see" and "come and tell" programs consist in sending some representatives of refugees to their home areas in Côte d'Ivoire in order to see the realities and then return to Liberia to explain them to other refugees.

During their meeting held from 17 – 20 October 2013 in the Liberian town of Zwedru, the Ivorian president and his Liberian counterpart united their voices at the end of the first joint council of traditional leaders and communities of both countries.

Rumors of insecurity in Côte d'Ivoire are among the dissuasive elements of repatriation, as many refugees reported. Also, to fight against rumors and assist refugees make their decision, UNHCR has implemented two programs: "go and see", and "come and tell". These programs consist in sending some representatives of refugees to their home areas in Côte d'Ivoire in order to see the realities and then return to Liberia to explain them to other refugees. From 27 September to 4 October, a delegation of 18 Ivorian refugees thus visited the towns of Doké, Blolequin, Duékoué, Bangolo Danané and Zouan-Hounien as part of the "go-see" program.

Cross-border management

Ivorian and Guinean local authorities work together to maintain security

A meeting between the administrative authorities of the border areas of Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire is being prepared. Initially scheduled for 4, 5 and 6 October in Danané on the Ivorian side, it had to be postponed because of the electoral calendar in Guinea. Handling of rumors and risks of cross-border population movements are the key items on the agenda of discussions.

2013 has been characterized by many incidents along the Guinea-Côte d'Ivoire border while the region had remained calm during the last two years. In response to this situation, the respective prefectural authorities of the two countries have established continuous dialogue about border security and possible movement of populations linked to a possible deterioration of the post-election situation in Guinea.

The first cross-border incidents were recorded on 8 February when Guinean soldiers raised the flag of their country in the Ivorian village Kpéaba, 20 km from Sipilou at the border between the two countries. The incident did not degenerate thanks to discussions between the authorities of both countries.

But the region has since then been the theater of frequent rumors. For example, in July 2013, there were rumors of the presence of 2,000 Guinean Forestry officers at the Ivorian-Guinean border to carry out the demarcation of the border. Other recurring rumors have since then reported movements of armed people along the common border. These rumors rapidly create high tensions if they are not quickly denied.

A first cross-border meeting was held on 09 and 10 July in Guinea between the prefectural authorities of Sipilou (Côte d'Ivoire) and those of Lola and Nzérékoré (Guinea). It helped to bring together the prefectural authorities of the two countries, thus contributing to the appeasement of the people.

This cross-border dialogue and cooperation process is essential to prevent uncontrolled movements of populations who would then be in a humanitarian crisis and exposed to violations of their rights. Pending the final settlement of electoral disputes in Guinea, humanitarian actors and prefectural authorities continue to monitor the situation along the Ivorian-Guinean border.



Humanitarian Transition:

Humanitarian organizations reorganize their presence in the west of the country

Thanks to the gradual improvement of the humanitarian situation, humanitarian organizations operating in Côte d'Ivoire are reassessing their operations. Following the example of UN agencies, international NGOs and other organizations are gradually transferring their actions to the national authorities and partners. For these organizations, the transition process is reflected in Côte d'Ivoire by the adaptation of their respective strategies, which often requires major restructuring. This is the case for the NGO Handicap International which is applying a withdrawal strategy, or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is considering a geographical reorganization of its presence on the field.

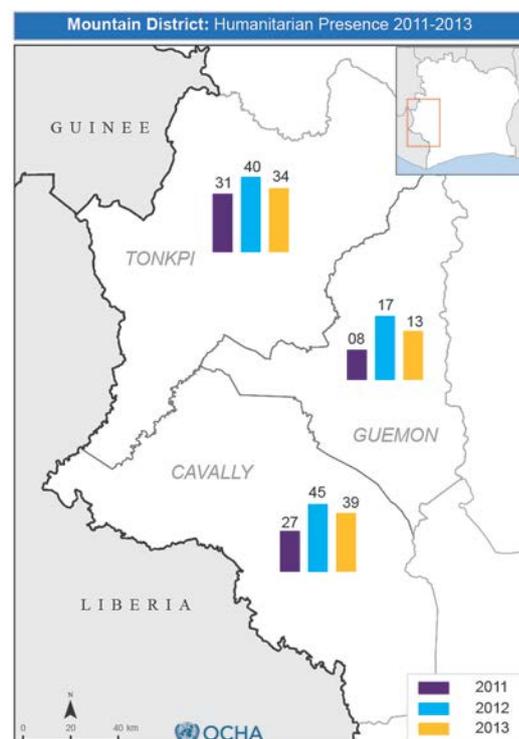
Transition between emergency assistance and development activities is in reality a continuum.

According to its Emergency Action Division, Handicap International's mission in Côte d'Ivoire is ending with the completion of a project implemented in 40 villages in the prefectures of Toulepleu, Bolequin and Guiglo in the west of the country. Funded by ECHO, the project was titled "Protecting people affected by the crisis and supporting social cohesion in the west of Côte d'Ivoire – Partnership for Transition." Following a previous emergency response program also funded by ECHO, the objectives of this project, in a logics of transition, involved psychosocial support for people most vulnerable to post-crisis trauma, supporting the communities in reviving the dynamics of social cohesion (particularly to facilitate the management of community conflicts and tensions) and the implementation of individual action plans for the disabled. The program also provided sensitization and training on disability and inclusion.

Handicap International will have ceased its operations before the end of the year. The relay mechanisms and the continuity of the actions undertaken by Handicap have been driven and monitored throughout its operations, especially with the local authorities and NGOs working in the area. Thus, partners such as the French Red Cross (FRC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), through their activities, will continue to support these communities.

In parallel, but in a different perspective, ICRC is planning to reduce its structures in the western area of Côte d'Ivoire, closing the sub-delegation of Man by December 2013. All ICRC activities will then be covered from the current sub-delegation of Guiglo. Moreover, in Man, the local committee of the Red Cross Côte d'Ivoire will have its structure enhanced by a new building, built with the support of ICRC, to better meet the needs of vulnerable populations in this area.

This transition between emergency assistance and development activities is actually a continuum. Many of the international organizations involved in the humanitarian response are also involved in activities whose impact is meant to be sustainable. Regarding UN agencies, the impact of the emergency actions of UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF is immediate, but it must also be sustainable in the sense that the response must enable the beneficiary individuals, families and communities to restart their life to come back to self-



sufficiency. These activities also serve as a starting point for new development programs, alongside the authorities and these communities.

Portrait of the national NGO APDF

The NGO APDF (Action pour le Développement et la Protection de la Famille) works in the West of Côte d'Ivoire.

Its mission is "to work for the welfare of the most vulnerable social classes in general, and women and children in particular."

The NGO promotes "a society in which women, children and other vulnerable people benefit from the actions of a credible organization that cares about the respect for human rights"

Established on 6 August 2008 in Man, the NGO APDF operates in the areas of education, fight against sexually transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, protection and social cohesion.

With a manpower of 32 people, and the financial and material support from international (UNICEF, Save the Children, IRC, PRSF, SFCG) and national (CARITAS ODAFEM, CEFEM) partners, the activities of the NGOs cover the regions of Tonkpi, Guémon and Cavally (West).

The NGO APDF particularly carries out activities of bridging classes, literacy, STI/HIV/AIDS sensitization, voluntary HIV testing, care and support for people living with HIV and orphans and vulnerable children due to HIV, the fight against gender-based violence and care and support for malnourished children.

Thus in 2012, APDF organized, with the support of UNICEF, sessions of sensitization and voluntary and outreach mass voluntary testing on STI/HIV/AIDS in the areas of Man, Guiglo and Facobly. This action reached 961 people. The NGO has also organized sensitization sessions on social cohesion in the villages of Kassiapleu and Bogouiné (Department of Man), regular visits and donations to prisoners at the prison of Man.

As an example of high-impact project, we could mention the campaign to mobilize the community and education stakeholders for the enrollment, retention and success of vulnerable children in school. This project supported by Save the Children aims to contribute to the enrollment, retention and academic success of children in difficult circumstances in general and especially girl mothers and disabled children in the region of Tonkpi. This project was submitted to the partners in order to respond to the numerous cases of girl mothers, dropout children and disabled children as a result of the sociopolitical crisis in Côte d'Ivoire since 2002. This project is expected to provide access to quality education for at least 300 girls and other vulnerable children, sensitize the community around the education of children in difficult circumstances, girl mothers and disabled children and to set up a learning and capacity-building space for in difficult circumstances in general and particularly girls mothers and disabled children in the Tonkpi region.

At the end of the project conducted in the towns of Man Sangouiné, Douélé, Biakalé, Bogouiné (West), it appears that all the 153 (i.e. 79% of expected girl mothers) girls mothers who have received hygiene kits are aware of hygiene concepts and 3/4 put into practice these concepts through constant washing of utensils after use, hand washing



2012 in Man, happy teenage mothers receive hygiene kits provided by the NGO APDF and its partners to improve the hygienic conditions of their households. (© APDF/ Agnès Doh)

"The NGO APDF particularly carries out activities of bridging classes, literacy, STI/HIV/AIDS sensitization, voluntary HIV testing, care and support for people living with HIV and orphans and vulnerable children because of HIV, the fight against gender-based violence and care and support for malnourished children "

before and after meals. 2/3 of children inserted in schools continue their education. The children, men and women who attended the sensitization sessions on the topic of hygiene talk about cleanliness in their daily lives. Also, 28 of 44 girl mothers still continue to learn a profession in the workshop providing training in mechanics, joinery, refrigeration, welding.

Despite implementation constraints related to the cases of dropouts, difficulties of installation of trainees due to lack of financial and material resources, non-involvement of school teachers and principals at project sites, difficult access to certain project sites due to bad road conditions, the project was able to obtain positive results that should be capitalized on and extended to the western area, because much remains to be done. So far, several other children affected directly or indirectly by the crisis are waiting for help. It is therefore necessary to multiply or to restart the project in favor of these children.

The NGO ADPF is planning to open a vocational training center for girl mothers and a voluntary testing center in Man. The NGO is also planning to expand its activities throughout the country but is sorely lacking operational resources (vehicles, computers, office supplies...).

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