

LIBERIA HUMANITARIAN SITUATION REPORT

No. 182



Humanitarian Coordinator's Support Office (HCSO) / UNMIL

12– 25 December 2010



HIGHLIGHTS

- **Humanitarian Response Coordination Meeting**
- **Refugee Repatriation**
- **Liberia Disaster Preparedness**

- **Humanitarian Community Discusses Refugee's Response Coordination**

As humanitarian actors, security sector and Government continue to monitor the situation in neighboring Cote d'Ivoire the Humanitarian Coordinator for Liberia convened an emergency humanitarian response coordination meeting on 21 December at the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Office in Monrovia to keep the humanitarian community abreast of the current situation. The meeting which was attended by a cross-section of humanitarian aid agencies and representative of relevant agencies of government discussed the coordination of response to Ivorian refugee in Nimba and Grand Gedeh Counties.

The Country Director of World Health Organization (WHO) who proxy for the Humanitarian Coordinator expressed sincere thanks to all partners for the initial rapid response to the humanitarian situation in communities along the Logatuo border axis in Nimba. Discussions also drew in concern for the security situation in Cote d'Ivoire as arm skirmishes between elements of the Arm Forces and Forces Nouvelles loyal to both Gbagbo and Ouattara are being reported on a daily basis. Human Rights violations are reportedly on the increase in Abidjan putting the citizens at high security risks, even though the country is still at security phase III.

As of 22 December a total of 11,368 refugees (11,267 in Nimba and 101 in Grand Gedeh) have crossed into Liberia and registered with UNHCR. Of the total figure, 55.8% represents female, 44.1% represents male while 62.4% is less than 18 years and 37.5% above 18 years. Other unconfirmed report indicates that since 18 December about 7, 000 Ivorian Nationals have crossed into Gboplay by boat after their villages were attacked by gun men. The key Sectoral Working Groups of Protection, Health & Nutrition, Water & Sanitation, Food, Shelter and Logistics provided update on their activities in terms of humanitarian response to the Ivorian refugees. UNHCR reportedly made some progress in deploying staff in the field, although,

facing some challenges which are being addressed gradually. The Health Sector has also assessed the refugee communities which could possibly face malaria and diarrhea cases and skin diseases as well. WFP is expected to deliver food in line with an MOU reached with UNHCR while UNHCR is still distributing Non-food items (NFI) to the refugees and host communities. The Government of Liberia has also provided some quantity of food and Non-food items to the refugees. A 78 Kilometer road linking Saclepea with Butuo (key route for the refugee communities) is currently under assessment. Meanwhile partners have expressed concern for an effective field level coordination, even though UNHCR is currently leading the humanitarian coordination at both the national and county levels.

- **UNHCR Repatriates Liberian Refugees**

The United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) will on 26 December repatriate sixty (60) Liberian refugees from Ghana via UNMIL shuttle flight under the current voluntary repatriation program. Additionally, a convoy containing 175 Liberian returnees is expected soon in the country through the Tabou and Maryland route. Currently about 21,000 Liberia refugees remain in Cote d'Ivoire.

- **HCSO in Phase II of County-specific Contingency Planning**

On 9 December Civil Affairs/Humanitarian Coordinator's Support Office began a second phase assessment and monitoring mission on the establishment of county disaster management committees and preparation of County-specific contingency, emergency preparedness and response plans for six counties. These field visits were a continuation of the follow-ups and awareness raising meetings that started on 22 August in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County. The meetings were intended to assess progress on the establishment of county disaster management committees and the preparation of county-specific contingency plans by county officials and local partners and to also create more awareness on the importance of disaster risk reduction. The second phase targeted six counties (Montserrado, Grand Capemount, Gbapolu, Lofa, RiverCess and Sinoe) but unfortunately the meetings with RiverCess and Sinoe Counties were indefinitely postponed due to some unforeseen circumstances.

UNMIL HCSO facilitated discussions in Bensonville, Robertsport, Bopolu, Voinjama and Foyah which brought together on average 25 participants in each location. The Team provided guidance for the establishment of county disaster management committee and the preparation contingency and preparedness plan. Participants established committees and set deadlines for the preparation of their county-specific contingency plans. The counties amongst other things cited the lack of both technical and financial resources to build the capacity of the disaster management committees for effective operations. The team encouraged the different committees to establish effective structure that would be able to mobilize resources at the local level. The team also recommended that a stakeholders' review session of the current Integrated National Contingency Plan for disaster with financial support from the Ministry of Internal Affairs be held early 2011. That the counties are fully supported (considering the huge challenge of human resource and financial capacities) technically and financially by UN Agencies, UNMIL and National Government in their efforts to reduce disaster risk.