



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

**LIBERIA – Complex Emergency**

Situation Report #8, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

August 27, 2003

*Note: This Situation Report updates USAID/OFDA Liberia Situation Report #7, dated August 20, 2003.*

**BACKGROUND**

Liberia has been marked by intermittent civil war since Charles Taylor launched a rebellion against the military regime of Samuel Doe in 1989. More than 200,000 people were killed during the ongoing conflict in Liberia in the 1990s. In 1997, Taylor emerged as the dominant power, winning the 1997 presidential election. Two opposition groups, controlling between 60 and 80 percent of the country, launched attacks on Government of Liberia (GOL) forces in attempts to oust Taylor from power. Taylor resigned on August 11, 2003. The main opposition group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), which began to fight former President Taylor in 1999, has grown from a northern-based insurgent movement to a force that now controls the majority of the country. The second opposition group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), based in southern Liberia, began incursions into Liberia from Côte d'Ivoire in April 2003, resulting in large-scale population displacement. LURD now controls the north and center of the country, while MODEL controls the south and east. Years of conflict have had devastating consequences for the humanitarian situation in Liberia. The country is currently ranked 174 out of 175 by the United Nations (U.N.) World Human Development Index, which measures health and living conditions.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Internally Displaced	<b>Total : 500,000-600,000 in Liberia</b> 150,000 – IDP camps and irregular settlements in Monrovia 200,000-300,000 – Accommodated by Monrovia residents 160,000 – Outside of Monrovia	UN OCHA and NGOs, July 2003 UN OCHA and NGOs, July 2003 European Commission, July 2003
Refugees	70,000 Liberians in Guinea 53,000 Liberians in Sierra Leone 50,000 Liberians in Côte d'Ivoire 35,000 Ivoirians in Liberia 13,500 Sierra Leoneans in Liberia	UNHCR, July 2003 UNHCR, June 2003 USCR, August 2003 UNHCR, August 2003 UNHCR, August 2003

**Total FY 2003 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Liberia (To Date) ..... \$4,117,285**  
**Total FY 2003 USG Humanitarian Assistance to Liberia (To Date) ..... \$24,277,044**

**CURRENT SITUATION**

**(New information is in blue.)**

**LURD offensive in Monrovia.** On July 19, following the complete breakdown of a June 17 cease-fire agreement, LURD launched its third major offensive since June in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. Heavy fighting between LURD and GOL forces continued in and around Monrovia following the July 19 attack, as LURD gained control of strategic areas of the city, including Bushrod Island and the Free Port of Monrovia. Unconfirmed media reports estimate that this outbreak of the fighting killed approximately 1,000 people.

**ECOMIL troop deployments.** On August 4, the first Nigerians, the vanguard of the Economic Community of West Africa Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) peace-

keeping force, began to arrive at Roberts International Airport (RIA), located 50 km east of Monrovia. **To date, two battalions comprising approximately 1,500 Nigerian troops have entered Liberia. A third battalion composed of approximately 700 troops from Ghana, Mali, and Senegal is expected to deploy during the week of August 25.** A fourth battalion is expected between August 29 and September 5, for a total of approximately 3,000 ECOMIL troops. A U.N. peace-keeping force is scheduled to replace the ECOMIL force in October 2003.

**Resignation of former President Taylor.** On August 11, former President Charles Taylor resigned from office, transferred power to Moses Blah, Taylor's former Vice President, and departed the country for exile in Nigeria.

**U.S. Government troop deployment.** The U.S. Government has positioned 2,300 U.S. Marines off the coast of Liberia to assist the ECOMIL peace-keeping troops.

**Peace Negotiations.** On August 17, GOL, LURD, and MODEL participants at the peace negotiations in Accra, Ghana signed a pact on August 17 granting free and secure access throughout the country to humanitarian workers and organizations. On August 18, the three parties signed a comprehensive peace agreement allowing for an interim government headed by an independent civilian to assume power in October 2003. The agreement grants LURD and MODEL equal status in the transitional government.

**Interim Chairman and Vice-Chairman Chosen.** On August 21, Gyude Bryant, a Liberian businessman, was chosen to lead the country's next interim government which will take power in October. Wesley Johnson, an accounting lecturer, will be vice-chairman. Bryant is a member of the Liberia Action Party, and was picked from a list of three candidates proposed by 18 political parties and other civil groups attending West African brokered peace talks in Ghana. The final decision was made by the LURD, MODEL, and the administration of President Moses Blah.

**Renewed fighting by LURD and MODEL.** During the weekend of August 23-24, both MODEL and LURD forces reportedly violated the peace agreement. According to international news reports, MODEL forces carried out attacks in Bahn, Nimba County, 250 km northeast of Monrovia; however, the GOL stated that the LURD was responsible for these attacks. Unconfirmed reports estimate that the fighting killed 100 people. News reports also indicated that LURD forces carried out an attack near the central Liberian city of Gbarnga, approximately 160 km northwest of Monrovia, and are advancing from Gbarnga towards Ganta, a town on the Guinean border. MODEL forces also attacked GOL troops near Harbel.

## **INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS**

**Renewed fighting leads to additional displacement.** According to international media reports, during the weekend of August 23-24, fighting between MODEL forces and GOL troops near RIA, half-way between Monrovia and Buchanan, led to the displacement of up to 10,000 people. The attacks by MODEL forces took place at Lloydsville, near Cotton Tree and Owensgrove villages, 50 km southeast of Monrovia, and led to mass population movements toward Harbel.

Between 8,000 to 10,000 people fled their homes over the weekend of August 23-24 after fighting between GOL and MODEL forces near Buchanan, 120 km southeast of

Monrovia. There were also reports of skirmishes between LURD and GOL forces near Gbatata, approximately 100 km northeast of Monrovia. According to the UN's Special Representative for Humanitarian Assistance, between 3,000 to 4,000 people are on the road heading from Gbatata to Salala. There are currently approximately 50,000 IDPs in three camps at Salala, Totota, and Maimu, 80 km northeast of Monrovia.

**IDPs in Montserrado County.** The number of IDPs returning to camps in Montserrado County continues to increase. According to the USAID Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), 350 refugees who had been living at the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) compound in the Mamba Point area of Monrovia were transported to the Voice of America (VOA) camp in Montserrado County on August 23.

According to the USAID DART, the U.N. World Food Program (WFP) is planning for the return of IDPs to the Montserrado camps but has expressed concern about the risk of the same irregular camp residents who caused disturbances and fraud in these camps in the past. WFP feels strongly that adequate security and protection must be in place before the IDPs return.

The USAID DART reported on August 22 that visiting European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) representative traveled to the Montserrado camps and reported an estimated population of 3,000 people in Ricks Institute, 1,000 in Plankor, 500 in Segbe, and 400 in Blamase. ECHO estimated that there are 500 people each in Wilson Corner, Voice of America, and Jar Thondo camps. According to ECHO, IDP return should be encouraged with the establishment of services in the camps and the termination of food distributions in the irregular shelters after the first 14-day ration.

### **Humanitarian organization access outside of Monrovia.**

Some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs) have begun to focus on extending activities beyond Monrovia. On August 20, USAID/OFDA implementing partner Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-Holland, and the Catholic Mission traveled in a convoy to Buchanan to assess humanitarian needs in the city and its environs. The convoy also transported relief items, including oral rehydration salts, soap, water purification tablets, and intravenous fluids. Merlin national staff in Buchanan estimated that there are 35,000 IDPs at 11 sites within Buchanan and in the surrounding area.

On August 22, a joint assessment mission composed of U.N. representatives, MSF-Holland, Merlin, InterSoS, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and the Catholic Mission traveled in a convoy to Buchanan to further assess the

condition of vulnerable populations in the area. Most IDPs interviewed by the assessment team stated that food was their primary need. Six members of CRS remained in Buchanan for 24 hours to conduct a rapid food assessment in order to determine distribution priorities.

***Negotiations to reopen the Sierra Leone-Liberia border.*** The U.N. Special Representative to Liberia has held talks with the Government of Sierra Leone to seek the reopening of the Sierra Leone-Liberia border. The opening of the border would allow for the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees and the transport of relief supplies by road to Liberia's interior.

## **COORDINATION ACTIVITIES**

***Joint coordination meetings in Monrovia.*** According to the USAID DART, U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), NGOs, and other humanitarian organizations have been holding regular coordination meetings in Monrovia. Sectoral committees have been established at the coordination meetings in the following five areas: food, health, water and sanitation, protection, and shelter and non-food items (NFI). Sectoral lead organizations are, respectively, WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the U.N. Development Program (UNDP)/Country Team, and the UNHCR/International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Lead NGOs may partner with U.N. sectoral leads.

## **SECURITY**

***Ongoing security concerns.*** Despite the presence of ECOMIL, the security situation remains poor throughout Liberia, limiting humanitarian operations, particularly food and water distributions. According to the USAID DART, during the week of August 25, a European Commission (EC) representative's vehicle was hijacked. In Monrovia, residents are still apprehensive about venturing from their homes due to the continuing but largely unseen presence of armed GOL irregulars. ECOMIL peacekeeping troops have set up checkpoints on major roads into Monrovia, replacing those previously manned by LURD rebels or GOL irregular troops.

***U.N. security level.*** In some parts of the country, the U.N. is at Phase Level V, or evacuation. Monrovia remains at UN Security Level Phase IV. Phase Level IV would allow those staff members concerned with emergency or humanitarian relief activities or security matters to continue operations in Monrovia.

### ***U.N. peacekeeping activities.***

According to the USAID DART, on August 21, a 12-member U.N. team arrived in Monrovia to conduct a survey to establish the needs required to support a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Liberia, which will include between 12,000 and 14,000 troops. Sixteen additional

U.N. personnel are due to arrive in Monrovia the week of August 25 in order to supplement the assessment team that is currently on the ground.

## **REFUGEES**

***UNHCR relief supplies.*** During the weekend of August 23-24, the MV Overbeck delivered 5,600 blankets, 2,800 plastic sheets, 2,800 kitchen sets, 7,000 pieces of soap, 5,600 sleeping mats, 2,800 jerry-cans, BP5 biscuits, and 400 drums. UNHCR plans to distribute non-food items to approximately 12,000 refugees during the week of August 25.

***Repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees.*** On August 17, UNHCR resumed repatriations of Sierra Leonean refugees from Monrovia to Freetown, Sierra Leone. According to international news reports, on August 24, the UNHCR's Motor Vessel (MV) Overbeck, with approximately 150 Sierra Leonean refugees on board en route to Freetown, suffered engine failure off the West African coast and drifted between Monrovia and Sierra Leone. The WFP ship the Seabulk Martin I and the U.S. Navy's USS Carterhall responded to the MV Overbeck's request for assistance. UNHCR has chartered another vessel, the Sea Spring, from Sierra Leone, and the ship is expected to tow the MV Overbeck to Freetown where it is scheduled to arrive on August 27.

***Refugee camps in Liberia.*** During the weekend of August 23-24, between 437 and 500 Sierra Leonean refugees left the UNHCR compound in Monrovia's Mamba Point area, where they had sought refuge. Eighty-seven refugees boarded the MV Overbeck to be repatriated to Sierra Leone, and another 350 were transported to VOA camps on the outskirts of Monrovia.

***Increased flow of Liberian refugees into Côte d'Ivoire.*** UNHCR reports that an estimated 40,000 Liberian refugees have arrived in Côte d'Ivoire since May. There have also been large population movements from Liberia into Danané, a border town in Côte d'Ivoire, due to fighting between GOL and MODEL forces in Butuo and Tweh towns in Nimba County in Liberia.

## **WATER AND SANITATION**

***White Plains pumping station.*** According to the USAID DART, the EC indicated that the White Plains station began pumping water to Bushrod Island on the morning of August 21. The six water tankers in the EC fleet delivered water to various sites in the Free Port of Monrovia, to ECOMIL, and to IDP locations. The White Plains station normally provides a substantial portion of the water for tanker trucks in Monrovia through the Bushrod Island gantries.

***Paynesville Well 1.*** According to the USAID DART, with the exception of 32,000 gallons per day treated from

a surface water source at Samuel K. Doe (SKD) Stadium by MSF-France, Paynesville Well 1 has provided approximately 90 percent of the water for IDP camps and other humanitarian purposes in Monrovia during the current crisis.

**Solid waste removal in Monrovia.** According to the USAID DART, solid waste removal has begun in Monrovia. Since the beginning of the most recent hostilities, 687 tons of solid waste per day have been accumulating in Monrovia. USAID partner Oxfam, with the assistance of the Monrovia City Corporation, is the lead agency handling this waste removal program that is expected to continue for three months.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

**Responses to cholera.** The USAID DART indicated on August 25 that the number of reported cholera cases seems to be sharply increasing. According to the DART, WHO reports that in people five years of age and older, there have been 6,353 reported cases of cholera since early June. According to the DART, in mid-July, there were approximately 900 cases of cholera per week, and at the end of July, reported cases fell to 400 per week. The DART indicated on August 25 that there were 1,203 cases of cholera treated during the previous week.

MSF-France and MSF-Belgium reported at an August 22 health coordination meeting that the number of cholera cases at their three cholera treatment centers increased from 165 two weeks ago to 308 last week.

**Responses to measles.** According to the USAID DART, at the August 22 health coordination meeting, the Director of the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) from the Liberian Ministry of Health (MoH) encouraged participants to coordinate mass vaccination campaigns with the MoH. The National Drug Service central cold chain store has more than 360,000 doses of measles vaccine, and most organizations offering measles vaccinations in Liberia have obtained drugs from this source. Save the Children–U.K. and USAID partner, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) are planning to identify IDP settlements to target for mass measles immunization.

## FOOD

**WFP and USAID/FFP operations.** WFP indicated that on August 15 it began food distributions in several areas of Monrovia. WFP reported that it currently has 10,000 metric tons (MTs) of food commodities on reserve for Liberia in the region, and 7,000 MTs at sea due to arrive by the end of August.

WFP distributions have continued in Monrovia. Since August 22, 541.2 MTs of maize meal have been distributed to 76,801 beneficiaries. According to the

USAID DART, port operations are being rehabilitated and the port is prepared for the August 26 arrival of the SKYBIRD, which is carrying non-cereal commodities.

USAID Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) reported that 15,700 MTs of USAID/FFP food commodities are scheduled to arrive in the region at the end of August. These commodities are donated to WFP for the West Africa Coastal Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) that includes Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia.

## NUTRITION

**MSF-Holland screenings.** The USAID DART reported on August 20 that MSF-Holland completed a nutritional screening of all children between 6 and 59 months of age at the Greystone Compound and the Masonic Temple. At Greystone, 627 children were screened and 11 percent determined to be moderately malnourished, and 1.8 percent severely malnourished. At the Masonic Temple, 362 children were screened and 19.1 percent of those screened determined to be moderately malnourished and 4.1 percent severely malnourished.

## PROTECTION

**Child protection activities.** According to the USAID DART, UNICEF has identified the lack of access to children in Liberia as UNICEF's primary concern. UNICEF reported that child soldiers comprise 70 percent of the fighting forces in Liberia, and these children lack access to humanitarian services.

UNICEF hosted a meeting of children protection partners on August 15 to identify key partners in the child protection sector and to develop strategies for child protection as well as prevention of child abuse. UNICEF plans to begin child tracing and family reintegration activities.

ICRC reported on August 18 that in one month it has reunited approximately 50 children with their parents after they became separated during the fighting.

Save the Children Fund-UK (SCF) indicated on August 20 that SCF teams are continuing to identify separated children and, in collaboration with the Bureau of Social Welfare, arranging rapid registration and foster care for them.

According to the USAID DART, during the first protection meeting hosted by the U.N. Humanitarian Coordination Office, the widespread rape of women, girls, and boys was identified as a major problem.

## **USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

**(New information is in blue.)**

### ***Non-food Assistance***

In FY 2003 to date, USAID/OFDA has approved more than \$4.4 million to support humanitarian needs in Liberia. USAID/OFDA provided more than \$517,000 to ACF in support of emergency nutrition needs in Monrovia and approved more than \$751,000 in funding to Merlin to address emergency health and water and sanitation needs throughout Liberia. USAID/OFDA approved more than \$616,000 in funding to IRC to support water and sanitation activities and the provision of non-food items to IDPs in Monrovia. USAID/OFDA approved more than \$330,000 in funding to Oxfam to support multi-sector IDP response activities in Monrovia. USAID/OFDA has approved funding for more than \$320,000 to UN OCHA to support coordination and protection of IDPs. USAID/OFDA also approved \$310,000 in funding to UN OCHA for a Humanitarian Information Center. Additional information may be obtained at <http://www.humanitariainfo.org/liberia>. USAID/OFDA approved \$500,000 in funding to WFP for a Joint Logistics Center. Additional information may be obtained at <http://www.unjlc.org>. USAID/OFDA approved more than \$546,000 in funding to Johns Hopkins University (JHU) for malaria control and prevention.

USAID initially deployed a three-person DART, including a Team Leader, Program Officer, and Information Officer, on August 6. This team has since expanded to include a Health Officer, Security Officer, Water and Sanitation Officer, Communications Officer, USAID/FFP Officer, and a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Epidemiologist. In addition, a USAID Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (USAID/LPA) Officer is in Sierra Leone to assist the DART.

On August 15, USAID/OFDA airlifted 26,470 kg of relief commodities to Monrovia in support of emergency water, shelter, and health needs. The commodities include 300 rolls of plastic sheeting, 5,000 wool blankets, 5,000 10-liter jerry cans, and five 3,000-gallon water bladders. The relief items will benefit approximately 15,000 people. In addition, the airlift included a WHO emergency health kit that includes basic medical essentials for 30,000 people for one month. The total value of the commodities, including transport, is \$224,352.

The commodities were assigned to humanitarian organizations including the IRC, ACF, SCF, ICRC, and Merlin, and will be distributed to targeted clinics, orphanages, therapeutic feeding centers, and IDP centers in Monrovia and the Harbel and Firestone rubber plantation area.

### ***Emergency Food Assistance***

Including its latest \$10 million contribution provided in response to the U.N. Appeal, USAID/FFP has provided a total of 23,840 MTs of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance, valued at \$15.5 million, to Liberia. The commodities provided by USAID/FFP include a combination of cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil, and Corn Soya Blend for therapeutic and supplementary feeding. USAID/FFP emergency food assistance is provided to vulnerable populations through direct distribution, food for work programs, emergency school feeding, maternal and child health programs, and supplementary and therapeutic feeding programs. USAID/FFP programs are implemented in Liberia through WFP.

### ***Refugee Assistance***

The State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) has provided support for Liberian refugees since 1989 and for Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia since 1991. To date in FY 2003, State/PRM has provided \$1.2 million in assistance for refugees in Liberia through UNHCR. State/PRM also provided \$826,164 to WFP in support of WFP's trucking capacity in Liberia. State/PRM has provided more than \$1.5 million to UNICEF for water and sanitation efforts in support of populations in Liberia. State/PRM has provided \$298,000 to UNDP and the Office of the U.N. Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) in support of its field security offices. To support WHO's water and sanitation efforts as well as disease monitoring and assessment, State/PRM has provided \$738,095 in funding for WHO.

State/PRM has also provided nearly \$13 million to UNHCR and more than \$13 million to various NGOs to support Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. This is in addition to unearmarked funding for UNHCR for Africa (\$55.1 million) and ICRC for Africa (\$29.2 million).

**U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA**

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Sector</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>LIBERIA – FY 2003 (TO DATE)</b>				
<b>USAID Total</b> .....				<b>\$19,617,285</b>
<b>USAID/OFDA</b> .....				<b>\$4,117,285</b>
	ACF	Nutrition	Monrovia	\$517,773
	Merlin	Health and Water/Sanitation	Monrovia, Harbel	\$751,011
	IRC	Water/Sanitation and non-food items	Monrovia	\$616,774
	Oxfam	Multi-sector IDP response	Monrovia	\$330,662
	UN OCHA*	Coordination and protection of IDPs	Country-wide	\$320,000
	OFDA	Logistics and relief commodities	Monrovia	\$224,352
	WFP*	Joint Logistics Center	Country-wide	\$500,000
	UN OCHA*	Humanitarian Information Center	Country-wide	\$310,000
	Johns Hopkins	Malaria Control and Prevention	Country-wide	\$546,713
<b>USAID/FFP</b> .....				<b>\$15,500,000</b>
	WFP	P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance – 23,840 MTs	Country-wide	\$15,500,000
<b>STATE/PRM<sup>∞</sup></b> .....				<b>\$4,659,759</b>
	UNHCR	Annual Refugee Operations	Country-wide	\$1,200,000
	WFP	WFP Support	Country-wide	\$826,164
	UNICEF	Water/Sanitation for IDPs	Country-wide	\$1,597,500
	UNDP/ UNSECOORD	Field Security Office Operations	Country-wide	\$298,000
	WHO	Water/Sanitation, disease monitoring and assessment	Country-wide	\$738,095
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IN FY 2003 (TO DATE)</b> .....				<b>\$24,277,044</b>

\* Funding is in process; award to be made shortly.

<sup>∞</sup> State/PRM figures include funding within Liberia. State/PRM also provides additional Africa-wide and regional assistance not reflected in this total. Please see the USG Humanitarian Assistance section for further details.



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**Public Donation Information**

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their response efforts in Liberia can be found at: <http://www.interaction.org/liberia/index.html>. USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed; reduce the burden on scarce resources; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:
  - [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/help/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/help/index.html)
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or 703-276-1914
  - InterAction: [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org) → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.org](http://www.reliefweb.org).