



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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 #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2005

September 30, 2005

Note: The last situation report was dated August 27, 2004.

BACKGROUND

From 1989 to 2003, Liberia experienced intermittent civil war sparked by Charles Taylor’s rebellion against the military regime of Samuel Doe. In July 1997, Taylor won Liberia’s presidential election, but in April 1999, an armed opposition group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), launched attacks against Government of Liberia (GOL) forces in an attempt to oust Taylor from power. A second opposition group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), began incursions into Liberia from Côte d’Ivoire in April 2003. Under considerable international pressure, Taylor resigned in August 2003, accepting asylum in Nigeria. On August 17, 2003, GOL, LURD, and MODEL representatives signed a comprehensive peace agreement in Accra, Ghana, allowing for a transitional government to assume power. In total, the 14 years of war resulted in the deaths of 200,000 people, the flight of tens of thousands of refugees to neighboring countries, and the internal displacement of approximately 500,000 of Liberia’s 3 million inhabitants. The conflict also destroyed Liberia’s health and education systems, as well as the country’s infrastructure. Unemployment stands at 85 percent.

Since October 2004, the United Nations Mission to Liberia (UNMIL) has been active, with 15,000 peacekeepers deployed throughout the country, assisting in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants, aiding the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs), overseeing the repatriation of refugees, supporting the election process, and monitoring the security situation. UNMIL’s mandate extends until March 31, 2006. The current National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) will be replaced with the election of a new president, vice president, and legislature. Elections will be held in October, and the new government will take office on January 6, 2006. The upcoming elections mark the official end of the political transition in Liberia, but numerous challenges will continue to confront both the GOL and the international community including reintegrating ex-combatants into society, establishing mechanisms for sound and transparent governance, and meeting the basic needs of a population marked by an extreme poverty rate of 76 percent.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE	SOURCE	
Total IDPs	314,000	OCHA* – September 2005
IDPs who have received return assistance	221,828	UNMIL – September 2005
Total Liberian Refugees (in West Africa)	220,000	U.S. Department of State – September 2005
Liberian Refugees Repatriated since October 2004	38,530	UNHCR** – September 2005

*U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

** U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Total FY 2005 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Liberia\$9,706,324
Total FY 2005 U.S. Government (USG) Humanitarian Assistance to Liberia.....\$70,889,948

CURRENT SITUATION

Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration.

UNMIL has registered, disarmed, and demobilized 101,495 ex-combatants, more than double initial estimates of 40,000 combatants. However, as of August, approximately 26,000 ex-combatants have been unable to participate in the DDR program, which faces a funding shortfall of approximately \$18.5 million, according to UNMIL.

Return of Liberian refugee and IDPs. Between October 2004 and August 2005, UNHCR repatriated more than 38,000 Liberian refugees, primarily from Guinea, Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia. UNHCR estimates that 150,000 refugees have returned

spontaneously since the end of conflict. However, according to the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia, many refugees plan to wait until after the October elections to return to Liberia. UNHCR will not begin the promotion phase of the voluntary repatriation program until after the October 2005 elections.

Conflict in Côte d’Ivoire over the past year has resulted in up to 20,000 Ivorian refugees crossing into Liberia, according to UNHCR estimates. In response to ongoing instability in Côte d’Ivoire and reports of cross-border massacres between rival ethnic groups in June 2005, UNMIL Military Observers recommended increasing the presence of peacekeepers along the Ivorian-Liberian

border. NGOs have reported that hundreds of recently demobilized Liberian combatants have been re-recruited to fight in Côte d'Ivoire.

All of Liberia's 15 counties have been declared ready to receive returnees, according to the NTGL and UNMIL. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNCHR have been facilitating returns for the past year. As of September 23, a total of 221,828 IDPs had received assistance to return to and resettle in home counties, according to UNMIL. The number of facilitated returns peaked in June with 33,628 IDPs returning to home counties. That number dropped to a low of 7,682 IDP returns in July, mainly attributed to operational delays in distributing return assistance. The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) and UNHCR provide returning IDPs, as well as refugees, a resettlement package consisting of a four-month food ration, provided in two installments, a set of household items, and a small allowance for onward transportation.

During the civil war, Lofa County had the highest concentration of displaced persons — approximately 15 percent of all Liberian IDPs, refugees, and ex-combatants — and consequently has the largest number of returnees. However, the deterioration of roads countrywide due to neglect and flooding has limited the return of refugees, the movement of IDPs, and the ability of the humanitarian community to deliver aid. Humanitarian agencies report that some IDPs face continuing violence including increased domestic violence and sexual and gender-based violence, according to OCHA. The NTGL and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also report that IDPs lack access to safe drinking water, adequate housing and infrastructure, and food security in home villages.

A joint delegation of the United States and the European Commission visited Liberia in February and June 2005 to monitor the voluntary return of Liberian refugees and IDPs. The delegation traveled overland through major areas of refugee and IDP return in Lofa, Bong, Margibi, and Montserrado counties and met with NTGL officials, U.N. agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and international NGOs. Following the June visit, the delegation concluded that while improvements had been made in facilitating and assisting voluntary returns, many challenges remain in the return process including developing an overall operational plan to effectively return displaced people, rehabilitating roads throughout Liberia, and expanding basic services and job opportunities in areas of return.

Humanitarian access and delivery of basic services.

The condition of Liberia's road network is a major constraint to humanitarian access to populations in need, as well as a hindrance to IDP and refugee returns, the delivery of essential services, and the re-establishment of livelihoods and markets. Many areas are completely inaccessible by land due to the poor conditions of roads

and bridges, with a large number being completely washed out.

According to humanitarian agencies on the ground, local capacity to deliver basic services, particularly to remote areas, is severely limited, and the majority of the population remains entirely dependant on internationally-provided services. The brain-drain caused by the 14 years of conflict has resulted in a dearth of local professionals, making the goal of creating self-sufficiency in meeting basic needs, like health care, illusive.

Health. While reliable data on health and nutrition indicators in Liberia is extremely limited, according to the NTGL, in 2004 less than 10 percent of the Liberia's population had access to health care. What health care is available is provided with support from the international humanitarian community, and is mainly concentrated in the Monrovia area. According to the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), the mortality rate for children under five is 235 per 1,000 live births. Liberia's maternal mortality rate is among the highest in the world: 578 per 100,000, according to the U.N. Development Program (UNDP). Malnutrition is widespread as are incidents of communicable diseases, especially malaria, diarrhea, and acute respiratory infections. Liberia has no national surveillance system for HIV/AIDS, and thus the prevalence rate is unknown, but is estimated to be eight percent.

According to some international organizations, a lack of qualified health staff and corruption in rural areas are hindering the delivery of medical services. Theft of supplies and vandalism of clinics are negatively impacting the ability of the humanitarian community to provide health care in many areas.

Water and Sanitation. Liberia's high levels of morbidity and mortality result in part from the continued lack of access to safe drinking water. Humanitarian estimates indicate that only 24 percent of the population has access to safe drinking water and less than 5 percent of the population has access to improved sanitation. Hygiene practices are also poor. As a result, cholera, dysentery, and other waterborne diseases are endemic.

Cholera outbreak and polio vaccinations.

Between August 1 and 21, the U.N. World Health Organization (WHO) reported 703 cases of cholera in southeastern counties, including 29 deaths. From August 12 to 17, a multi-agency health assessment mission traveled to Sinoe County and found that the outbreak, part of a broader regional epidemic, had largely been contained.

More than 1 million children were vaccinated against polio in a national campaign during the first half of 2005. The campaign, run by the Ministry of Health in cooperation with UNICEF, WHO, and other NGOs, will

consist of two additional rounds of vaccinations scheduled for November and December 2005.

Food assistance. In calendar year 2005, WFP has targeted more than 940,000 beneficiaries with approximately 89,000 metric tons (MT) of food commodities. Emergency food assistance provided by WFP and implementing partners has made significant progress toward sustaining IDPs living in camps and helping to facilitate their return and resettlement prior to the October 2005 elections.

USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

On November 12, 2004, Ambassador John W. Blaney redeclared a disaster in Liberia due to the ongoing complex emergency. In FY 2005, USAID provided more than \$42.7 million in emergency assistance for affected populations. In addition, the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) provided more than \$28.1 million to assist emergency programs for refugee and other conflict-affected populations.

Emergency non-food assistance In FY 2005, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$9.7 million in humanitarian assistance to Liberia. USAID/OFDA supported health programs through implementing partners Equip Liberia, the International Medical Corps (IMC), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Merlin, and World Vision. In addition, USAID/OFDA provided funds to WHO's Lassa Fever Strategy. To support nutritional and agricultural programs, including the provision of seeds and tools, USAID/OFDA funded programs run by Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Christian Children's Fund (CCF), and Equip Liberia. To address water and sanitation needs, USAID/OFDA funded Action Contre la Faim (ACF), CCF, and IRC. To support camp management activities, the provision of emergency relief supplies, IDP protection, and sexual and gender-based violence programs, USAID/OFDA provided funding to the American Refugee Committee (ARC), IRC, and Northwest Medical Teams International, Inc.

Emergency food assistance. In FY 2005, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) provided more than 31,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance valued at nearly \$22.5 million. The commodities provided by USAID/FFP include a combination of cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil, as well as 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 and CRS.

Transitional initiatives. USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) launched the Liberia Transition Initiative (LTI) in February 2004 to advance prospects for an inclusive, peaceful, political transition in Liberia in the context of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Accord. By increasing public understanding of key political transition issues, and promoting community reintegration and peaceful resolution of conflict, LTI is helping to build the momentum for peace in Liberia. Activities include the Youth Education for Life Skills Program (YES), a community focused reintegration activity with the goal of enhancing peace through non-formal education. Small grant activities have been linked to communities where YES is taking place through a participatory process that reinforces community cohesion, assists in reconstruction and rural development, and facilitates youth leadership development. In FY05, OTI provided \$4.5 million to World Vision and Mercy Corps for the YES program, and \$6 million to Creative Associates International Inc. for small grant activities.

Refugee assistance. In FY 2005, State/PRM committed more than \$28.2 million in humanitarian assistance for Liberia, including \$13.2 million to UNHCR for the repatriation and reintegration of Liberian refugees and IDPs, \$6.5 million to ICRC for assistance to returnees and conflict victims, and \$2.9 million to UNICEF for child protection/family reunification and repatriation and reintegration support for refugee returnees. State/PRM has also provided \$1.4 million to ARC and \$269,000 to CCF for gender-based violence programming and micro-enterprise development. To support programs in health, education, and family reunification, State/PRM provided approximately \$1.3 million to the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), \$1.2 million to IMC, and approximately \$1.4 million to IRC. State/PRM also provided approximately \$17.1 million in funding for programs benefiting Liberian refugees in asylum countries. This funding is in addition to unearmarked Africa-wide contributions to UNHCR (\$53.5 million) and ICRC (\$34.7 million), a portion of which are used to support refugees and conflict victims in West Africa.

U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA

<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE¹			
ACF	Water and sanitation	Nimba	\$445,797
ARC	Coordination and shelter	Bong, Grand Bassa, Margibi	\$421,605
CRS	Food security and agriculture	Countrywide	\$1,946,282
CCF	Food security, agriculture, rehabilitation, water and sanitation	Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Garbopolu	\$1,468,085
IMC	Health	Lofa, Monsterrado	\$1,100,000
IRC	Health, resettlement, water and sanitation	Nimba, Bomi	\$1,000,000
MERLIN	Health	Grand Gedeh, Sinoe	\$897,622
Northwest Medical Teams International	Emergency relief supplies	Bomi, Grand Cape Mount, Margibi, Montserrado, Nimba	\$123,304
WHO	Health	Countrywide	\$100,000
Equip Liberia	Health and nutrition	Nimba, Bomi	\$499,997
World Vision - USA	Health	Bomi, Grand Cape Mount	\$1,050,204
Multiple	Emergency relief supplies and transportation	Countrywide	\$300,275
USAID	Administrative support		\$353,153
TOTAL USAID/OFDA			\$9,706,324
USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE			
CRS	4,280 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$4,170,900
WFP	26,730 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$18,325,200
TOTAL USAID/FFP			\$22,496,100
USAID/OTI ASSISTANCE			
Creative Associates	Transition Initiatives	Countrywide	\$6,000,000
Mercy Corps	Reintegration	Countrywide	\$2,250,000
World Vision - USA	Reintegration	Countrywide	\$2,250,000
TOTAL USAID/OTI			\$10,500,000
STATE/PRM ASSISTANCE			
ARC	Gender-based violence programs	Bong, Montserrado	\$1,362,444
CCF	Gender-based violence programs	Lofa, Bong	\$269,413
CVT	Mental health	Lofa	\$1,289,145
ICRC	Emergency humanitarian assistance	Countrywide	\$6,500,000
IMC	Health	Lofa	\$1,200,000
IRC	Refugee support	Lofa, Monsterrado	\$1,446,522
UNHCR	Liberia global appeal	Countrywide	\$13,200,000
UNICEF	Refugee support	Countrywide	\$2,900,000
U.S. Embassy	Ambassador's Fund	Countrywide	\$20,000
TOTAL STATE/PRM			\$28,187,524
TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IN FY 2005			\$42,702,424
TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IN FY 2005			\$70,889,948

¹ USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of September 30, 2005



Ken Isaacs
Director
Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

USAID/OFDA bulletins appear on the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/.