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# UNHCR LIBERIA 2013 IN REVIEW



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## Message from the Representative

**A**s we begin 2014, it is time to make an overall assessment of our achievements and challenges over the past year.

It is now three years since thousands of Ivorians fled to seek refuge in Liberia following the disputed presidential run-off election in Côte d'Ivoire. At the peak of the refugee emergency, which started in November 2010, an estimated 220,000 Ivorians had crossed over into Liberia. Most of them have now returned home either on their own, or through UNHCR's assistance. As of 30 November, some 54,000 Ivorian refugees were in Liberia.

Facilitated voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees started in late 2011 following the signing of the Tripartite Agreement between the governments of Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, and UNHCR. In 2013, UNHCR, in collaboration with partners, exceeded the 16,000 repatriation target set for the year. More than 18,000 Ivorian refugees were voluntarily repatriated mainly from refugee camps and communities in Nimba, Grand Gedeh, and Maryland counties.

In view of challenging roads and adverse weather conditions, exceeding the repatriation goal in 2013 was a remarkable achievement. This feat was only possible through the support of the Government of Liberia, the generous contribution of donors, and the outstanding commitment of our staff and partners. I salute you all.

In addition to voluntary repatriation, during the past year the Government of Liberia represented by the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) and UNHCR closed the Dougee Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County. At the official closing ceremony of the camp in March, UNHCR and partners handed over a number of assets to the host community as a token of our appreciation to them for hosting refugees. Currently, UNHCR is building a clinic in Dougee as part of our continued assistance to communities hosting refugees. The decommissioning of Solo Refugee Camp also commenced last year and is expected to close in 2014.

In finding durable solutions to refugee problems, some 300 former Sierra Leonean refugees were conferred Liberian citizenship. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Government of Liberia for embracing the local integration process which is one of the durable solutions to refugee problems.

Looking ahead as we begin 2014 in earnest, we renew our commitment to providing protection and assistance to refugees. In so doing over the next twelve months, the strategic directions of our operation will be structured around the following four pillars:

- To protect and assist refugees in Liberia
- To find durable solutions to their situation mainly through voluntary repatriation for the Ivorian refugee caseload and local integration as the case may be appropriate for other persons of concern
- To reinforce existing partnerships and identify new ones in order to enhance programme delivery especially in the areas of livelihoods and secondary education
- To manage the operations in a cost effective way and deliver our programmes in a secure environment

As we collectively continue to render humanitarian services to refugees who are among the most vulnerable people in the world, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Government and people of Liberia for supporting the cause of UNHCR.

I wish all Liberians, donors, partners, staff, our colleagues in the UN family, and all refugees a very happy and peaceful New Year.

KHASSIM DIAGNE  
Representative

"We renew our commitment to providing protection and assistance to refugees."



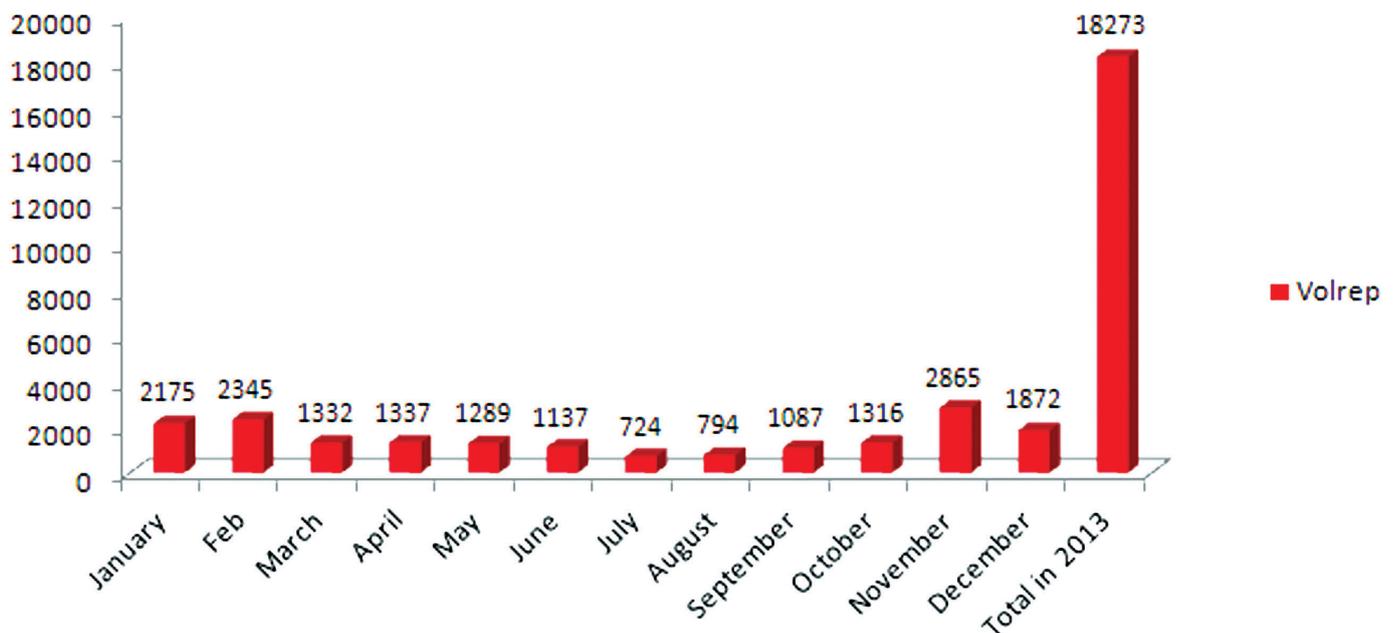
Repatriation convoy crosses into Côte d'Ivoire

## Exceeding **Repatriation** Target in 2013

UNHCR, in collaboration with partners, exceeded the 16,000 Ivorian refugee repatriation goal for 2013, double the total number of about 8,000 refugees repatriated in 2011 and 2012. More than 18,000 refugees were repatriated in 2013 mainly from camps and communities

in Grand Gedeh, Nimba, and Marlyland counties. Most of the repatriating refugees have been staying in Liberia for three years. They fled to seek refuge following disputed presidential run-off elections in Côte d'Ivoire in late 2010. Most of them are returning because of improvement in safety and security in their country.

IVORIAN REFUGEE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION BY MONTH IN 2013





Dougee Refugee Camp closed in March 2013

## Key Achievements in 2013

- Ivorian refugee population reduced from an estimated 224,000 refugees in 2011 to about 54,000 in 2013
- A comprehensive online database of refugee population established
- Achieving the 16,000 Ivorian refugees voluntary repatriation target for 2013
- Consolidation of camps and the closure of Dougee Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County
- Relocation of nearly 8,000 Ivorian refugees from host communities to refugee camps
- Improvements in water, sanitation and health facilities
- Strengthening the capacity of LRRRC and other partners to work along with UNHCR
- Conferment of Liberian citizenship on 300 former Sierra Leonean refugees
- Supported government health facilities in refugee affected counties ( Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee, and Maryland) with medical items worth more than US\$ 200,000, HIV/AIDS programmes worth US\$ 90,000, and capacity building

Some former S. L. refugees became Liberian citizens on World Refugee Day



## Basic Facts

### PARTNERS IN 2014

Special Emergency Activity to Restore Children’s Hope (SEARCH), Africa Humanitarian Action, AIRD, ADRA, NRC, DRC, IRC, SCF-UK, CARE and CARITAS

### GOVERNMENT AGENCY

Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC)

### COLLABORATING UN ENTITIES

UNDP, UNICEF, UN Mission in Liberia, UNFPA, WFP, FAO, WHO, OCHA, UN Women, UNV& UN AIDS

### REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	INDIVIDUALS
Côte d’Ivoire(Refugees)	54,621
Others (Refugees)	375
Others (Asylum Seekers)	48
Other persons of Concern	1,540
<b>Total</b>	<b>56,584</b>

Figures as of 30 November 2013

### UNHCR OFFICES

- Representation Monrovia, Montserrado County
- Sub-Office Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County
- Field Office Saclepea, Nimba County
- Field Office Harper, Maryland County

### REFUGEE CAMPS

- PTP – Grand Gedeh County
- Solo – Grand Gedeh County (will close by March 2014)
- Little Wlebo – Maryland County
- Bahn – Nimba County



UNHCR staff at the Strategic Retreat in Monrovia

## 2014 Strategic Directions

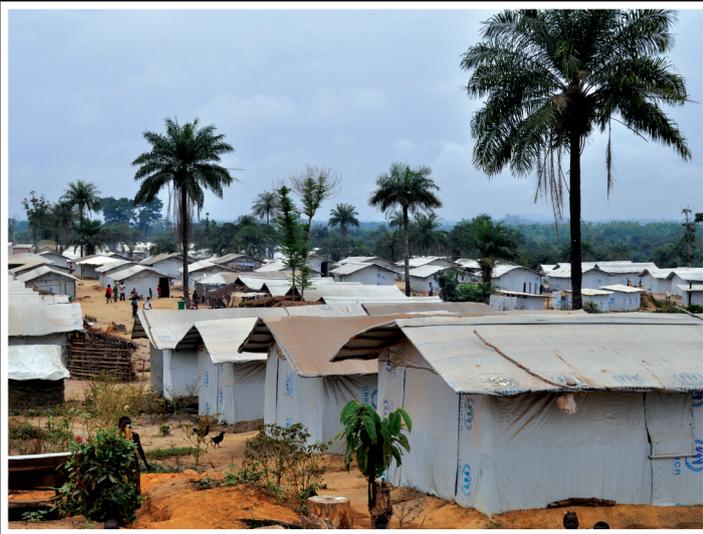
**U**NHCR Strategic Directions Retreat was held in Monrovia from 18 – 19 November with staff from Monrovia, the Sub and Field offices attending and discussing the focus of the operation for 2014. Protection, durable solutions, assistance, management, partnership and external relations, and logistics issues were discussed and recommendations made. The Strategic Directions of the operation for 2014 include:

- Increase facilitated voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees at all locations
- Facilitate “Go-and-see” visits to Côte d’Ivoire by Ivorian refugees and “Come-and-tell” visits by returnees to encourage returns
- Explore resettlement opportunities for extremely vulnerable refugees
- Review the urban refugee policy
- Consolidation of refugee camps
- Efficient use of logistics
- Strengthening of partnership for programme purposes

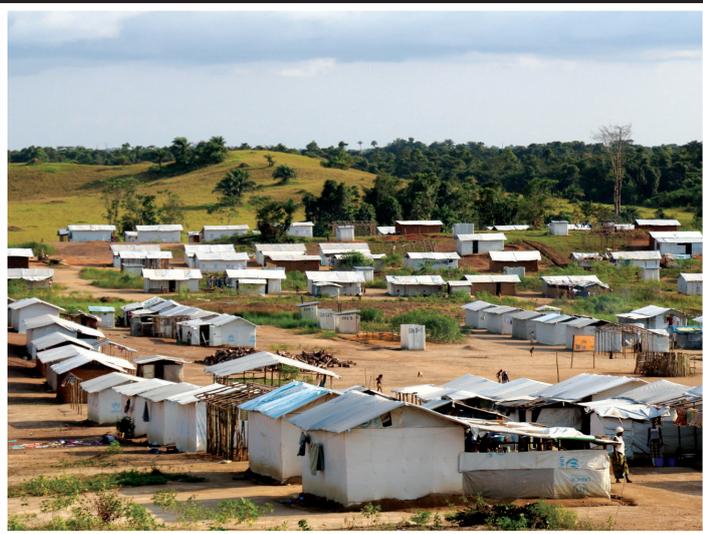
UNHCR staff assisting repatriating Ivorian refugees



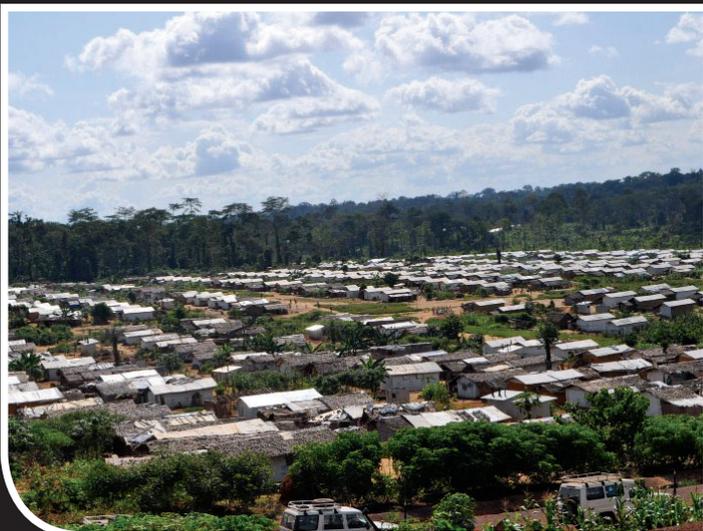
# UNHCR Operations At a Glance



Bahn Refugee Camp - Nimba County



Little Wlebo Refugee Camp - Maryland County



PTP Refugee Camp - Grand Gedeh County



Saclepea Refugee Settlement



Solo Refugee Camp - Grand Gedeh County (To close in 2014)



UNHCR staff assisting a repatriating Ivorian refugee

Optimized by www.Ima



A mass information campaign in Little Wlebo Refugee Camp



Ivorian refugee children on World Refugee Day



Repatriating Ivorian refugees in Maryland County



Toe Town-Bhai Border Road before rehabilitation



Food distribution at PTP Refugee Camp



UNHCR-supported Toe Town-Bhai Border Road rehabilitation, Grand Gedeh County



UNHCR-constructed clinic at Little Wlebo Refugee Camp, Maryland County

## Dates to Remember in 2013

**21 JANUARY** - UNHCR, LRRRC launch awareness campaign in Ivorian Refugee Camps and host communities to create awareness among Ivorian refugees about their rights and obligations and the facilitated voluntary repatriation to Côte d'Ivoire

**18 MARCH** - The last batch of Ivorian refugees left the Dougee Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County. The camp officially closed on 28 March

**10 JUNE** - Mass birth registration begins in Ivorian refugee camps

**20 JUNE** - After two decades of living in Liberia, 300 former Sierra Leonean refugees were conferred Liberian citizenship on World Refugee Day. UNHCR constructed Little Wlebo Clinic handed over to Government of Liberia

**27 – 28 JUNE** - Tripartite Technical Meeting on Ivorian Refugee Matters held in Monrovia

**1 AUGUST** - The Government of Liberia, through LRRRC and UNHCR commenced the closure of the Solo Refugee Camp in Grand Gedeh County

**10 SEPTEMBER** - After 10 years of existence, Liberia's oldest Saclepea Refugee Camp was downgraded to a settlement

**27 SEPTEMBER** - A team of 18 Ivorian refugees from refugee camps and communities in Grand Gedeh County left Liberia on "Go and See" visit to Côte d'Ivoire

**11 OCTOBER** - Representative Khassim Diagne briefs President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on UNHCR's activities including the ongoing voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees

**17 OCTOBER** - The UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Consolidation of Democratic Governance, Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator, Aeneas Chuma, visited PTP Refugee Camp

**18 OCTOBER** - President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and President Alassane Ouattara called on Ivorian refugees living in Liberia to return home at the end of the four-day Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders Meeting held in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County

**18-19 NOVEMBER** – UNHCR Strategic Direction Retreat held in Monrovia

**22 NOVEMBER** - UNHCR exceeded 2013 Ivorian refugees repatriation target of 16,000

**11 DECEMBER** - Ivorian refugees repatriation exceeded 18,000

## UNHCR Provides Supports to Government



LRRRC Executive Director Cllr. Williams on one of the donated motorcycles

As part of its institutional capacity building efforts, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) donated 32 Yamaha motorcycles DT 175 model and dozens of assorted office equipment and supplies to the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) and the Ministry of Justice valued at over US\$150,000.

Twenty-seven of the motorcycles were donated to the LRRRC, while five of them were donated to the Ministry of Justice in October. The Ministry of Justice also received various office equipment and supplies such as desktop computers, typewriters, chairs, drawers, and tables.

The UNHCR Representative, Khassim Diagne, handed over the keys to the motorcycles to the Executive Director of the LRRRC, Cllr. Abl G. Williams while the items for the Ministry of Justice

were handed over to the Deputy Minister of Justice for Administration and Public Safety, Cllr. Wheatonia Y. Dixon Barnes.

Representative Diagne said the donation to the LRRRC, UNHCR's main Government partner, was part of the UN refugee agency's continued support to the Government of Liberia for the protection of refugees, while the Ministry of Justice is one of the key ministries the UNHCR works with as it deals with issues of asylum and refugee laws.

Cllr. Williams expressed sincere gratitude to UNHCR "for once again demonstrating its sense of duty to the cause and safety of refugees and other persons of concern in Liberia".

For her part, Deputy Minister Barnes, who is a former Executive Director of the LRRRC, lauded the UNHCR for its continued collaboration with the Ministry of Justice.

Representative Diagne hands over motorcycle keys to Deputy Minister Cllr. Barnes



Some of the donated motorcycles



## Bishop Ferguson School Rehabilitated

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) handed over a refurbished Bishop Ferguson High School to the Episcopal Church of Liberia in August. The school was one of the leading institutions of learning in the county before it was comprehensively looted and vandalized during Liberia's civil crisis.

The UN refugee agency rehabilitated the one-storey building and its annex at the cost of about US\$ 70,000. The school served as a transit centre during the Ivorian refugee emergency in 2011.

The rehabilitation of the building is among projects the UNHCR

has undertaken in communities hosting Ivorian refugees in the country. Earlier, the UNHCR donated one sugar cane milling machine to the Ferguson community where the refurbished school is located.



School before rehabilitation.

School rehabilitated by UNHCR.



## UNIQLO Donates to Refugees

Unique Clothing (UNIQLO), a Japanese company and one of the world's leading textiles manufacturers, donated a consignment of 744 bales of assorted clothes to alleviate the clothing needs of more than 54,000 Ivorian refugees currently living in Liberia most of whom are in dire need of something to wear.

The bales of clothing were donated through the UNHCR. The prime targets for the distribution of the consignment were boys and girls who had been separated from their parents, the elderly, the physically challenged, and nursing mothers.

The presentation of the donation was made at Liberia's largest PTP Refugee Camp. The UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Consolidation of Democratic Governance, Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Coordinator, Aeneas Chuma, and UNHCR Representative Khassim Diagne presented the gift to refugees. Other officials who presented the donated clothes were: the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) Executive Director, Cllr. Ablā G. Williams; the UNDP Country Director, Dr. Kamil Kamaluddeen, and Acting Police Commissioner Cesar Binag of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).



DSRSG Chuma with an Ivorian refugee at PTP Camp

## Quote Unquote - 2013

**"I am glad that the repatriation process is moving on very well."**

*President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf commending UNHCR for assisting Ivorian refugees to return home after briefing by Representative Khassim Diagne*

**"The country needs you. The country needs your contribution to the ongoing reconstruction efforts."**

*President Alassane Ouattara calling on Ivorian refugees living in Liberia to return home*

**"It is with very great sadness that I have heard the news of the death of Nelson Mandela ...For a world in which conflicts force millions from their homes every year, the death of such an outstanding champion of peace should give us all pause for thought. His passing is a profound loss."**

*António Guterres, UN High Commissioner for Refugees on the passing of Mr. Nelson Mandela, the former president of South Africa*

**"We are very grateful for this continuous collaboration with the UNHCR as we implement our activities aimed at strengthening the justice system for the promotion of peace and stability in our country."**

*Cllr. Wheatonia Y. Dixon Barnes, Deputy Minister of Justice for Administration and Public Safety receiving motorcycles, office equipment and supplies from UNHCR*

**"I am very delighted to see that some of you are engaged in very impressive agricultural endeavours including gardening, rice and poultry production. I would like to urge others to emulate your good example....UNHCR will fully support those that are willing to work for themselves."**

*Representative Khassim Diagne giving agricultural tools to Ivorian refugees and urging them to be more self-reliant*

**"Children with no birth certificates do not exist before the law."**

*Robert Tibagwa, UNHCR Deputy Representative as a mass birth registration of all Ivorian refugee children born in Liberia from 0 – 2.5 years got underway in refugee camps*

**"We cannot repay you for your kind humanitarian gesture by making available your land for the establishment of a camp. The assets we are turning over are just a token of our appreciation."**

*Madam Fatima Mohammed thanking Dougee community and handing over assets to the community through the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) as Dougee Refugee Camp closed*

**"We never knew that this facility would be like this."**

*Tabie Thompson, technical coordinator for the Episcopal Church in Liberia, thanking UNHCR for rehabilitating the Bishop Ferguson High School in Maryland County*

**"We are happy that our brothers and sisters that came over to Liberia since the early 1990s are now citizens."**

*Cllr. Wheatonia Y. Dixon Barnes as 300 former Sierra Leonean refugees were conferred Liberian citizenship*

**"Things are calm at the border so this has encouraged us to return."**

*Didier, an Ivorian refugee planning to repatriate, in an interview with IRIN news*

**"I lost my wife, and it hurts me so much. But all hope is not lost - my kids have given me hope. All we can say is that Ivorians must... move the country forward."**

*Dede, an Ivorian refugee, in an interview with IRIN news*

**"We are doing all we can to encourage and facilitate return."**

*UNHCR Representative Khassim Diagne briefing President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on the ongoing repatriation of Ivorian refugees*

**"UNHCR has once again demonstrated its sense of duty to the cause and safety of refugees and other persons of concern in Liberia."**

*Cllr. Ablah G. Williams, Executive Director of the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission on receiving 27 Yamaha motorcycles from UNHCR*

“1 family torn apart by war is too many”



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