



A young refugee boy washing his hands in the Little Wlebo Camp; Code of Conduct Refresher Training Workshop in Monrovia; Ebola awareness continuing in Little Wlebo Camp. Vegetable land preparation in Bahn Camp

PROTECTION SITUATION REPORT

Covering the period: 01 - 31 January 2015

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Liberia operation started off the year 2015 on a positive note; two (2) Ivorian refugees who have been detained in the Monrovia Central Prison without charge for almost three years have been released. President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf mentioned in her annual message to the 4th Session of the 53rd National Legislature that the Amendment to the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission Act to expand provisions for refugees and make provisions for asylum seekers and stateless persons had been submitted to the legislature. The Ministry of Education announced the reopening of schools in February 2015. The Government of Cote d'Ivoire was positively looking at resumption of voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees from Liberia pending agreement on the modalities to ensure EVD is contained at the border. Food was distributed twice in January as the December 2014 food distribution had been delayed.

UNHCR Liberia had a Code of Conduct session in Monrovia on 28 January 2015. This session was the annual refresher to remind staff about UNHCR's core values and guiding principles.

1. Persons of Concern

Liberia is currently hosting 39,783 refugees, asylum-seekers, and other persons of concern.

The Ivorian refugee population stood at 37,847 – a decrease of 262, mainly due to inactivation of no-show cases during three consecutive emergency food distributions for urban refugees in Montserrado County. The breakdown of the Ivorian population per locations is as below:

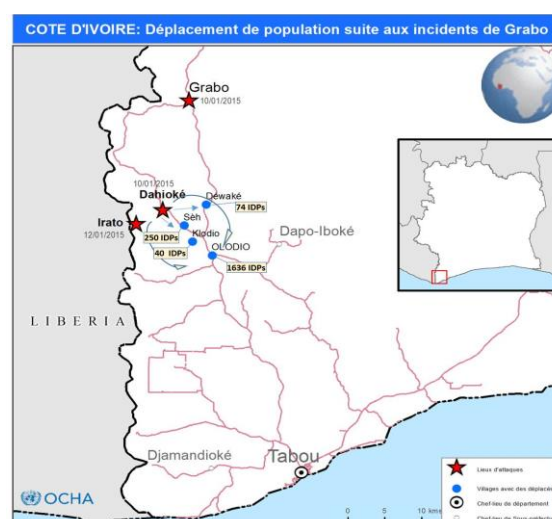
	Location	Population	Total	%
Refugee camps	Bahn (Nimba)	5,288	29,083	76.8%
	PTP (Grand Gedeh)	15,300		
	Little Wlebo (Maryland)	8,495		
Communities	Nimba	435	8,764	23.2%
	Grand Gedeh	4,742		
	Maryland	1,521		
	River Gee	1,786		
	Montserrado	280		
Total			37,847	

2. Registration & Documentation

Refugee identity cards:

Sub-Office Zwedru continued distribution of the ID cards. During the month of January, ID cards distribution to camp based refugees was still on-going and so far, 5800 cards have been distributed.

As UNHCR continues to update the population of the camp, 110 (57 male and 53 female) new births (refugee children) were documented for photo capturing to ensure updating of individual family composition in PTP camp.



In other developments, UNHCR and partners have been involved in the exchange of Ration Cards to the refugee households and the update of the new card numbers in the Progres database for the 3 refugee camps (Bahn, PTP and Little Wlebo). This exercise became necessary as the punching space on the old ration cards had been exhausted, following the completion of the 12 month period of validity and some of the cards were torn as they have.

3. Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

The eligibility committee did not meet during the month.

4. Access to Asylum/Border Monitoring

The land borders remained officially closed due to the EVD outbreak in Liberia and the West Africa sub-region.

The assailant's attack on FRCI in Dahioké and Grabo in the South Western region of Cote d'Ivoire between 9 to 10 January 2015, and the subsequent attack on the village of Iratoké broke the one-month peace sustained in the border area, resulting in 3 casualties, as well as internal displacement of about 2,960 individuals to four locations (Ouledio, Sêh, Dewaké and Klodio) and cross-border displacement of some 23 individuals to Poken in Liberia. The incidents indicate a still fragile security situation in the south west region in Cote d'Ivoire.

In Harper, UNHCR received reports on new arrivals (Asylum Seekers) from LRRRC Field Monitors. A total of 23 individuals in 8 families arrived during the month in the Liberian border town of Poken after an alleged armed attack in parts of Cote d'Ivoire. According to the source the armed attack is reported to have taken place on 10 January 2015.

Protection Highlights (Achievements and Challenges)

Security awareness:

The Grand Gedeh County Superintendent and an entourage of Immigration & Police officers visited the PTP refugee camp. The purpose of the visit was to speak with the refugees on issues bordering on national security. The superintendent was accompanied by the UNMIL-Head of Field Office, Police and BIN (Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization) regional commanders. The Superintendent and delegation used the occasion to inform the refugees to stay within Liberia peacefully and cautioned them to not get involved in the on-going politics in Cote d'Ivoire.

The Superintendent reiterated to the refugees that any involvement in cross border activities would be a breach of law and will be dealt with as such. He further stated that any refugee wanting to take part in the upcoming elections in Cote d'Ivoire, should opt for voluntary repatriation and return home.

Empowerment of Refugee women:

During the month, one (1) group session was held with refugee women at PTP Camp. The main issues discussed were the distribution of sanitary napkins and the equal participation of refugee women in the upcoming camp leadership general election.

In response, the women were informed that modalities are being worked out with UNHCR's new GBV partner (SCI) for the sanitary material distribution. On the issue of their participation, women were encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to ensure their participation in community development and decision-making processes on issues that concern them in the camp.

5. Protection monitoring

I. Monitoring of detention centers

FO Saclepea conducted a mission to Sanniquelle, the capital of Nimba County, during the reporting month. The objectives of the mission were to assess the condition of the 3 refugees in detention for their alleged involvement in assaulting a peaceful Police officer and their alleged role in vandalizing the fence of the camp clinic. The mission also visited the central prison to see the needs of the 2 refugees charged and sentenced for arson and rape. The

team held talks with the Magistrate at the magisterial court and met briefly with UNMIL Human Rights protection colleagues assigned at the court.

II. No Shows

UNHCR Field Office Harper Protection Unit along with LRRRC Protection Team conducted joint in-depth interviews with refugees who were inactivated in December 2014 for not being present in the camp for NFI and food distribution. A total of 361 were inactivated for this reason but 29 families showed up during December food distribution, which took place in January 2015 and has been in the camp since that time. Many of them explained that they had gone to stay with relatives and friends in nearby communities in both Maryland and River Gee Counties. The purpose of the exercise was to monitor and obtain detailed information and reasons why they were absent from the camp for such a long period.

III. Protection of Refugee Children

As UNHCR Zwedru Sub-Office intends to commence the printing of birth certificates, a total of 319 (174 male and 145 female) refugee children have been identified. It is anticipated that the printing of certificates will commence in early March 2015.

UNHCR Field Office Harper during the month under review distributed a total of 14 Birth Certificates (9 female and 5 male) to parents of refugee children born in the Little Wlebo Refugee Camp.

IV. Prevention of and Response to SGBV

UNHCR FO Harper and SEARCH followed up and received from the Danish Refugee Council 78 individual refugee files related to Child Protection and Sexual and Gender Based Violence issues. The files received are being reviewed and follow-up links established.

UNHCR Field Office Harper conducted a short session on the Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) for its staff members. The staff members were opportune to ask questions on reporting mechanisms.

6. Durable solutions

Voluntary Repatriation of Ivorian refugees:

Voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees remained suspended by the Ivorian government since the second wave of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).

Meanwhile, in anticipation of the resumption of voluntary repatriation, as part of UNHCR's preparatory efforts, intention surveys were conducted in the 3 camps in January 2015. The exercises were jointly implemented by UNHCR, LRRRC and Implementing partners. Some 8,000 refugees have declared their intentions to return to Cote d'Ivoire, once the voluntary repatriation exercise is resumed.

7. Access to Education

In preparation for the re-opening of schools, the educational partners in the field in close coordination with the principals and teachers are continuing the registration of students. In other developments, home studies are still on-going for refugee children in the wake of Ebola Prevention. The Government has announced the reopening of schools on 16 February 2015,

with the caveat that schools meet the minimum standards to prevent EVD spread according to the Ministry of Education's EVD protocol.

The Principal and teachers of the Secondary schools have conducted general cleaning up campaigns to give the school environments a face-lift for the academic year. At present, the registration process is still on-going.

School authorities in the 3 camps have completed the assessments of various safety requirements to be implemented in order to ensure that the schools in the camps are in compliance with the safe school reopening requirements. As a follow-up to this, the schools will be fenced, provided with hand washing facilities and temperature screening equipment.

Two (2) male refugees from the PTP refugee camp has taken self-initiatives and gained admission at the Grand Gedeh Community College for three (3) year studies in Business & Public Administration and Science & Technology in pursuit of higher education. They are still anticipating the DAFI Scholarship.

Additionally, the Partners also distributed assorted school materials including uniforms, copybooks, pens, pencils and erasers to all registered ECD and primary school students in the camps. Shoes and school bags were also distributed to the registered students.

8. Livelihood/Self-reliance

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) continued its Agriculture production during the reporting week: during the period under review, PoCs in food production implemented activities of land clearing in the different areas in Bahn camp as they still await additional fertile land out of the camp. 4.8 acres were cleared and the activities are still ongoing.

In Zwedru, the women's self-initiative activities (baking and soap making) commenced. From the baking activities, an amount of \$560.00 LD was generated while 58 pieces of Iron Soap were made and sold at \$20.00 LD a piece). All funds generated are put back into the enterprise to buy more material.

**Compilation of protection reports from:
SO Zwedru/FO Saclepea & Harper/BO Monrovia
UNHCR Liberia**