



REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA
LIBERIA REFUGEE REPATRIATION AND
RESETTLEMENT COMMISSION



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GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA
STATEMENT

73rd SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH
COMMISSIONER`S PROGRAMME

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

By
Hon. Varney A. Sirleaf
Minister
Ministry of Internal Affairs
Republic of Liberia

OCTOBER 10-14, 2022

Excellences:

We bring you greetings from His Excellency, Dr. George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, and congratulate you for the warm hospitality in handling this very important meeting this year.

The Government and People of Liberia are honored and gratified to be invited to the Seventy-Third Session of the Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme (ExCom) which is essential to finding durable solutions for all refugees and Persons of Concern (PoCs) in Liberia, the sub-region and the world at large. Liberia would like to extend its appreciation to the Chairman of the Seventy Third Executive Committee for the extemporary leadership in organizing this meeting.

We wish to use this occasion to extend our profound gratitude to Your Excellency Fillipo Grandi, High Commissioner for the leadership shown on your recent visit to the West Africa Region and by extension the Republic of Liberia in June this year and your subsequent participation in the Voluntary Repatriation of Ivoirian refugees to the Cote d'Ivoire in safety and dignity.

Excellences, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are indeed honored to share with this extraordinary body our achievements in finding durable solutions for refugees and other Persons of Concern within the borders of the Republic of Liberia.

The overall refugee regime in Liberia remains very peaceful and stable and the Government of Liberia reaffirms its commitments to the implementation of the 1951 Refugees Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 OAU Protocols as it relates to the status of refugees in Africa.

In October last of year, Liberia reported the total number of refugee population as being 32, 475. As of August 30th this year that number has reduced to 3,297, thanks to the voluntary repatriation of the Ivoirian refugee back home in safety and dignity.

Excellences, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in September of 2021, the Government of Liberia along with other countries (the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Guinea, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Togo and the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugee (UNHCR) hosting Ivorian refugees agreed on a Roadmap for Comprehensive Solutions for Ivorian refugees.

In keeping with these agreements and roadmap, the Government of Liberia is pleased to inform this extraordinary body that in February 2022, Liberia announced Cessation for Ivorian refugees living in Liberia, and said announcement came into effect on July 30, 2022.

We are pleased to inform this body that with support from the UNHCR and the total number of 12,819 individuals were voluntarily repatriated to Cote d'Ivoire from January 10, 2022 to August 2022. This number exceeds this year's targeted figure of 11,000 by 16 percent.

According to the Durable solution survey conducted by both the Government of Liberia and the UNHCR, 865 Ivorian refugees opted to locally integrate in the Republic of Liberia. Of that number, 828 have opted for resident permit while 37 opted for naturalization.

In support of this process, the Government of Liberia with UNHCR's support, negotiated, surveyed and deeded 1,113.1 acres of land in Grand Gedeh County in addition to the 315 acres acquired in Nimba County in 2019 totaling 1,428.1 acres of land for local integration purposes.

70 new shelters were constructed in Grand Gedeh County while additional 63 shelters are under construction with 87 expected to commence.

This is in addition to the 94 durable shelters constructed by the UNHCR and UNFPA in 2020 and subsequently dedicated by H.E. Dr. George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia.

The Government of Liberia has affirmed its support and willingness in the issuance of civil documentation to integrating families.

This was demonstrated by an Executive Order issued by H.E. Dr. George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia instructing all government's ministries and agencies to accord all integrating Ivorian refugees the

opportunity to access civil documentation and admission into the National Identity Registry.

The Government of Liberia with support from UNHCR following the invocation coming into force of the Cessation is pleased to report the following as of September 2022

- 584 applications for exemption were received totaling 3,504 pocs.
- 570 cases were interviewed;
- 240 cases were assessed
- 182 assessed cases were reviewed
- 42 cases are pending review
- Applicants granted Exemption were 15 individuals (5 cases) were granted refugee status.
- 176 cases (582 individuals) were rejected. and
- A total of 3 (1 case) individuals were excluded/cancelled from the process.
- 65 appeal cases were received totaling 96 individuals.

During the period under review, six (6) asylum claims were adjudicated by the eligibility/asylum committee and were all granted status having met all requirements as indicated under the 1951 Refugees Convention, the 1967 Protocol and 1969 OAU/AU Protocols as it relates to the status of refugees in Africa.

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, we wish to commend all donor countries for their support to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee.

Permit me to take this time to call on the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) to kindly facilitate a humanitarian convoy of over 2,778 Ivoirians in host communities who were deactivated due to “NO SHOW” during the verification exercise of 2012 to return home.

Secondly, we wish to rally all necessary supports to enhance the economic livelihood of the integrating Ivoirians in providing local integration opportunities for those opting to remain in Liberia.

The Government of Liberia wish to make a special appeal to the UNHCR to assist in the repatriation of 1539 former Liberian refugees in the Republic Ghana who have expressed their willingness to return home due to the eviction and demolition notice issued in 2021 by the Ghanaian authorities from the former Buduburum camp to avoid massive displacement and thereby create a serious humanitarian crisis.

Excellences and Distinguished Delegates, I thank you.