

# West Africa: Emergency needs for the Côte d'Ivoire Situation

UNHCR  
Regional Bureau  
for Africa

No. 3, 15 March 2011



Liberia / refugees from Ivory Coast / A small girl waits to be loaded into a UNHCR truck to be taken from the Liberia-Ivory Coast border to the Bahn Refugee camp. UNHCR G. Gordon/February 2011

**The upsurge of violence in Côte d'Ivoire**, in particular in the west, sent new waves of refugees into Liberia. Violent clashes in Abidjan's northern suburb of Abobo and the neighbouring district of Anyama displaced up to an estimated 350,000 people internally. As the political deadlock continues the security situation is sharply deteriorating in many parts of the country, as is the humanitarian situation. Côte d'Ivoire also hosts some 24,000 Liberian refugees, many of whom feel at risk. On 19 March, UNHCR will start the airlift of Liberian refugees back to their country. Thus far, some 300 have signed up for this programme.

Since violence erupted near Toulepleu, in the western part of the country on 24 February, more than 46,000 refugees streamed into **Liberia**. Until that date, UNHCR had already registered close to 40,000 Ivorian refugees who had left their country since late November 2010, living in 76 host communities along the border. In some communities, there are twice as many refugees as local population, a situation which is clearly unsustainable. The Office set up a rapid emergency registration system for the new arrivals, and is currently verifying data to check possible double entries. To ensure adequate protection and assistance, UNHCR encourages the refugees to move away from the border and relocate to the refugee camp or designated host villages. Relocation, however, is on a voluntary basis, and some refugees prefer to remain close to the border in spite of the dangers, to be able to return to Côte d'Ivoire as soon as the violence subsides. The presence of the refugees puts additional strain on existing facilities and services in Nimba, Grande Geddeh River Gee and Maryland counties, where most facilities are already in a dilapidated state.

The worsening situation in Côte d'Ivoire has prompted UNHCR and its partners to **revise the emergency response plan** and review the basic planning parameters to respond to the humanitarian crisis generated by the massive influx of Ivorian refugees into Liberia. The plan includes all sectorial assistance requirements to ensure an adequate response to the immediate needs of the refugees and to improve and strengthen basic services in the local communities.

The revised emergency response plan focuses on an increase in the number of beneficiaries in three phases. The estimated planning figure totals 250,000 individuals, with the following time frame:

- Phase I, until the end of February, 50,000 refugees (10,000 families) scattered along side the border;
- Phase II, March – April 2011, an additional 100,000 people (20,000 families) may seek refuge in Liberia; and
- Phase III, April – June 2011, contingency planning for a further 100,000 refugees who may cross the border into Liberia.

The requirements presented in the revised United Nations Emergency Humanitarian Action Plan and included in this note cover the first two phases, i.e. 150,000 beneficiaries until 31 June 2011.

With regard to the **protection and assistance strategy**, the objective is to move people away from the border area. It is expected that the majority of the refugees (70 %) will be accommodated in a refugee camp and the rest will be moved away from the border to designated villages. To accommodate the refugees in camps, UNHCR is planning for five refugee camps, each with a capacity to host some 20,000 refugees.

To facilitate the transport inland, UNHCR has established four transit centres and two way stations, and is planning to set up an additional 10 transit centres. Transit centres have an average capacity to host some 2,000 people for one or two weeks, while a way station has the capacity to accommodate some 500 refugees for a limited period of time. The United Nations Mission in Liberia, UNMIL, is providing five trucks to support the relocation operation and UNHCR has airlifted 10 additional trucks into Liberia for the humanitarian assistance programme. Roads and bridges along the routes are being repaired. Up to a 100 people are being moved each day. To date more than 1,300 Ivorians have been relocated to the Bahn refugee camp, some 50 kms away from the border. Preparations for a 250-acre camp in Garwee are being accelerated in anticipation of further population movement. The authorities in Liberia are in the process of identifying three additional camp sites.

In addition, refugees are being moved away from the unsafe and porous border to designated villages that have better absorption capacity. Thus far, 15 villages that are at a reasonable distance from the border have been designated for this purpose. The planning process takes into account that the refugee population should not exceed 50 % of the total host population. UNHCR and its partners will assess the existing basic infrastructure in these villages with a view to increasing and strengthening facilities and services for refugees and host population. It is critical to invest in basic infrastructure in this impoverished part of Liberia. Failing to do will not only have a negative impact on the current favourable protection environment for Ivorian refugees, but has indeed the potential to destabilize Liberia's fragile post conflict-environment.

Given the ongoing refugee movement and prior to being transferred to the transit centre or way stations, refugees along the border need immediate humanitarian assistance. Immediate lifesaving interventions along the border will continue, including distribution of basic relief items, i.e. sleeping mats, blankets, jerry cans, hygiene items and plastic sheeting. Thus far, more than 20,000 refugees in the border area received food and basic relief items. In the border community of Buutuo, where most of the new arrivals are, partners have undertaken a preliminary health screening and set up a water treatment and distribution system.

The **activities** under the revised emergency plan include protection and registration of refugees, including: rapid emergency registration; border monitoring and developing local reporting systems; repair of roads and bridges; transport and logistics; procurement, transport and storage of basic relief items; provision of shelter as well as building materials; planning and establishing refugee camps and its facilities, including warehouses; construct transit centres; construction of temporary schools at the camp and building additional class rooms for local primary schools; strengthening basic health care services and referral systems for secondary care in designated villages; organize rapid nutrition assessments; procure supplementary and therapeutic food; increase water supply and treatment capacity; coordination and programme support. In addition to

sanitation and waste management activities in the camps, further efforts will be made to limit the impact on the environment. These include: establishing tree nurseries and wood lots in the camps, as well as raising awareness on and promoting environmental friendly behaviour.

To assist in the delivery of protection and assistance to the Ivorian refugees UNHCR has concluded agreements with eleven **partners**. At least seven additional partners will need to be engaged to ensure that services are delivered to all Counties affected by the refugee influx. Implementing partners include the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, the International Rescue Committee, EQUIP, Childfund, the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils, *Action contre le faim*, CHESS, CHT, NAC, and Mentor Initiative.

In line with its mandate, UNHCR is leading the international community providing urgent protection and assistance to Ivorian refugees in Liberia. It is **coordinating** the response with the Liberian authorities, in particular the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission. Regular coordination meeting are held with the UN Country team in Monrovia and with humanitarian partners and UNMIL in Sacleapea and other field locations.

## Financial Requirements

In addition to the emergency response programme, UNHCR is running a repatriation and reintegration operation for Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries who wish to return. The financial requirements for that programme are included in the Office's budget approved by the Executive Committee. The current financial requirements for all UNHCR's operations in Liberia in 2011 are as follows:

	USD	Planned beneficiaries
Excom Approved Budget	10,666,000	10,000
Revised Emergency Response Plan	79,776,000	150,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,442,000</b>	<b>160,000</b>

As of 15 March, UNHCR received some USD 16 million for the Côte d'Ivoire Situation in 2011, including the Emergency response plan for Liberia. Thus far, 14.8 % of UNHCR's requirements in Liberia have been funded. The following contributions have been received:

Donor	Liberia (USD)	Côte d' Ivoire (+4) (USD)	Total (USD)
Canada	500,501		500,501
CERF	2,255,737		2,255,737
EC/ ECHO	686,813		686,813
ECOWAS	500,000		500,000
Germany	340,599		340,599
Ireland	544,959		544,959
Private donors Canada		2,935	2,935
Rep. of Korea	200,000	100,000	300,000
Switzerland	637,767		637,767
USA	7,800,000	2,500,000	10,300,000
<b>TOTAL(*)</b>	<b>13,466,376</b>	<b>2,602,935</b>	<b>16,069,311</b>

\* In 2010, Luxembourg contributed USD 87,015 for UNHCR's initial response to the Côte d'Ivoire emergency



# Liberia Operation

## Liberia (Nimba County) - Côte d'Ivoire border

Period: 1 December 2010 - 6 March 2011



**FIGS**  
Field Information and  
Coordinate Support Section

Sources:  
UNHCR Global Height Digital Mapping  
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UNLCC - UNSD-7

The boundaries and names shown  
and the designations used on this  
map do not imply official endorsement  
or acceptance by the United Nations

**Legend**

- Capital
- UNHCR Sub-Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- UNHCR Field Unit
- Refugee camp
- Refugee location
- Urban refugee location
- Main town or village
- Secondary town or village
- Artificial
- International boundary
- Main road
- Secondary road
- Unspecified road / track
- Railway
- Main entry point
- Former 'Open Area'
- Former Zone of Confidence
- UNHCR website

**Elevation (above mean sea level)**

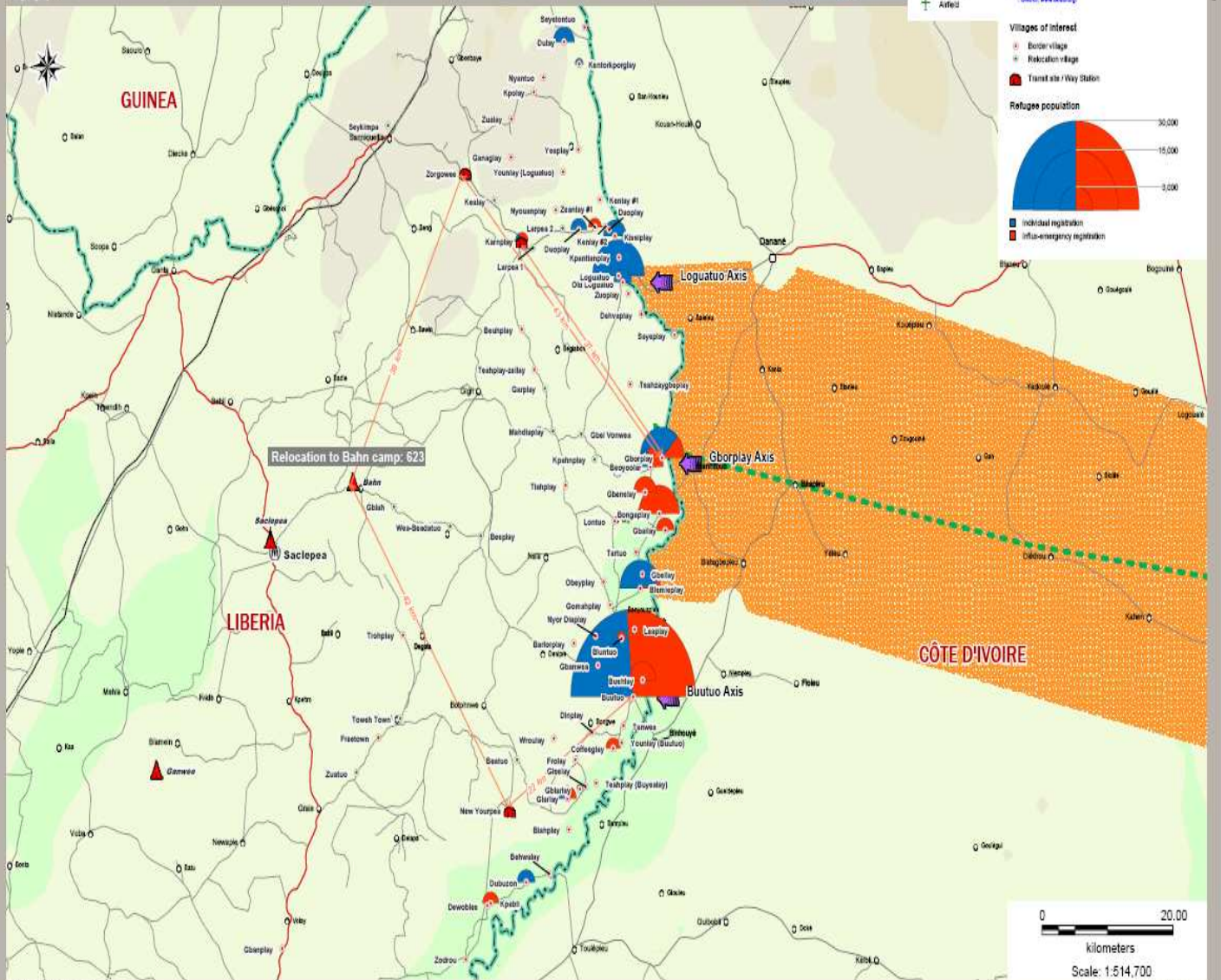
- 3,200 to 4,000 meters
- 2,500 to 3,200 meters
- 1,700 to 2,500 meters
- 1,000 to 1,700 meters
- 750 to 1,000 meters
- 500 to 750 meters
- 250 to 500 meters
- 0 to 250 meters
- Below mean sea level

**Villages of interest**

- Border village
- Relocation village
- Train site / Way Station

**Refugee population**

- Individual registration
- Info-emergency registration



For more information, please visit UNHCR's Liberia emergency portal at <http://info.unhcr.org/liberia>.