



**REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**  
**LIBERIA REFUGEE REPATRIATION AND**  
**RESETTLEMENT COMMISSION**



**SPECIAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE LIBERIAN GOVERNMENT AT THE**  
**72<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE HIGH**  
**COMMISSIONERS PROGRAMME IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**OCTOBER 4-8, 2021**

Excellencies:

We bring you greetings from H.E. the President of the Republic of Liberia, Dr. George M. Weah, and congratulates you for the warm hospitality in handling this very important meeting.

The Government and People of Liberia are honored and gratified to be invited to the Seventy-Second 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) worldwide especially in the midst of the very life threatening COVID-19 pandemic.

We are again pleased to share with this extraordinary body our achievements in providing Durable Solutions to refugees in Liberia especially in the midst of these difficult health emergency.

- **Overview of Refugee Regime in Liberia:**

The Government of Liberia in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Liberia completed a month long population verification exercise of Ivorian refugees living in Liberia.

The exercise targeted Ivorian asylum seekers and refugees living in the both the refugees `camps and host communities.

Before this exercise, Liberia hosted 8,112 Ivorian refugees before the last influx of 27,920 new arrivals between 2020/2021 thereby totaling 36,032 individuals.

At the end of the exercise, the total population of 31,944 refugees were verified to be currently living in Liberia. This figure represents 83% of the total persons of concern living in Liberia while 17% represents the No Show.

Finally, upon completion of the exercise, about 57% of the population representing 18, 208 refugees opted to voluntarily return to Cote d`Ivoire while about 4% of the refugees opted for local integration representing 1,278 individuals, while about 12, 458 of the population are undecided representing 39%.

The general refugee regime in Liberia has been peaceful and stable and the Government of Liberia remains committed to the implementation of the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol and 1969 OAU Protocols as it relates to the Status of Refugees in Africa.

- **Voluntary Repatriation:**

As a result of the last Durable Solution Survey conducted, about 18, 208 Ivorian refugees opted to return home. In our planning figure, we have projected about 15,000 to return in 2021 this year.

The Government of Liberia is a signatory to the Roadmap for Comprehensive Solutions for Ivorian Refugees updated in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire signed on September 6, 2021 by the following countries: the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, the Republic of Ghana, the Republic of Guinea, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Togo, the Republic of Liberia and the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugee (UNHCR).

The Government of Liberia is pleased to announce that the process of voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees is ongoing and will continue to 31 July 2022 taking into consideration all the health protocols and procedures for travels.

As of September 2021, the total number of 4,537 Ivorian refugees were repatriated to the Cote d'Ivoire as against the 15,000 targeted for this year.

The Government of Cote d'Ivoire has instituted administrative, judicial and security measures that would allow for return in safety and dignity and a durable reintegration such as:

**Administrative:**

- Recognition of civil documentations provided by country of asylum;
- Grant access to basic social services in country of origin

**Judicial:**

- Rights to real and personal properties
- Equal access to justice for return

**Security measures:**

- Create awareness on the rights of returnees by security forces
- Inform returnees on the their rights and obligations;

The Government of Liberia remains committed in the promotion of the voluntary return of Ivorian refugees in safety and dignity.

- **Local Integration of Ivorian Refugees**

From the last survey conducted, about 4% of the population totaling 1,278 individuals have opted to locally integrate in Liberia. 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 additional to the 315 acres acquired in Nimba County in 2019 totaling 1,428.1 acres of land for local integration purposes.

This is in fulfilment of the one of the pledges made by the Government of Liberia during the last Global Refugee Forum held in 2019.

Currently, 70 new shelters are being constructed in Grand Gedeh County with support from the UNHCR, while 15 new ones are being supported by the European Union under the Spotlight Initiative by UNFPA in Nimba County.

This is in addition to the 83 durable shelters constructed by the UNHCR and additional 10 funded by the European Union that were dedicated by H.E. Dr. George M. Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia early this year.

These shelters are intended to cater to about 1278 individuals who have opted to locally integrate in Liberia and 20% of the host community.

The Bahn Refugee Camp is now transformed to the Bahn Settlement with solar electricity, health center, elementary and Junior High school with full adaption of the Ministry of Liberia school curriculum and English as the major language.

The Government has made pledges to support the integration of refugee education eg: the inclusion of teachers on the Government of Liberia's payroll and other services into government run services. Refugees can own businesses, and some are engaged in petty trading

Furthermore the Government of Liberia has affirmed her support and willingness in the issuance of civil documentation including work permits, resident permits, among others to refugees and integrating refugees families.

- **Refugee Status Determination (RSD)**

With respect to Refugee Status Determination and registration related matters, the RSD Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) have been updated to meet current realities. The UNHCR in collaboration with the Government of Liberia has jointly reviewed the RSD SOP.

During the period under review, eleven (11) asylum claims were adjudicated by the eligibility/asylum committee and were all granted status having met all requirement 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.

The Government of Liberia is grateful to the UNHCR for the continued support to capacity building of the Asylum Committee members of Liberia and is pleased to use this medium for call for more logistical support for the asylum regime in Liberia as we move individual RSD for those Ivorian refugees who may opt to apply for exemption to remain in Liberia after the cessation clause is invoked.

- **Recommendations**

On behalf of the Government of Liberia, I am pleased to use this medium to call on the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR) to kindly facilitate a humanitarian convoy of the over 2,778 Ivoirians in host communities deactivated due to “NO SHOW” during the verification exercise of 2012 to return home.

Also from the result of the statistics of the just concluded population verification, about 12,450 of the population are undecided representing 39%. This number is alarming and

we will need to intensify awareness on voluntary repatriation and conduct another survey to reduce said number.

The Government of Liberia will need all necessary support to enhance the voluntary repatriation process of our Ivorian brothers and sisters back home in safety and dignity and also provide local integration opportunities for those opting to remain in Liberia.

We the Government of Liberia also wish to call on the international community to join hands with the UNHCR to increase financial support for voluntary repatriation so as to enable it the reach the targeted number of about 20,000 returns.

**Thank you Excellency and Distinguished Members.**