



HIGHLIGHTS

- Ivorian refugees' figures decreased following to the verification and biometric registration exercise
- The Government of Liberia continues to emphasize the voluntary repatriation of refugees
- The management of acute malnutrition in the health system remains a concern

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Ivorian refugees' figures decrease

On 16 February, United Nations High Commission for Refugee (UNHCR) announced the preliminary results of its verification and biometric registration exercise revealing a significant reduction in refugee figures. The current estimate stands at 69,561 as opposed to 128,067 in the December 15 estimate. Of these, 35,042 live in camps and relocation villages. Grand Gedeh county continues to host the largest number of refugees (36,720) followed by Nimba (18,400). Bahn camp, the only site with completed biometric registration, saw a reduction of 38 per cent. UNHCR expects additional reductions in refugee numbers as other sites undergo biometric registration. Based on current trends and assuming a stable situation in Cote d'Ivoire, UNHCR anticipates a reduction to approximately 44,000 refugees by end of June 2012 and 29,000 by end of 2012.



UNHCR:Biometric registration exercise

FIGURES

Ivorian refugees	69,561
Vuln. Liberians	140,000
TCNs	2,000

2011 EHAP

166 million requested (USD)

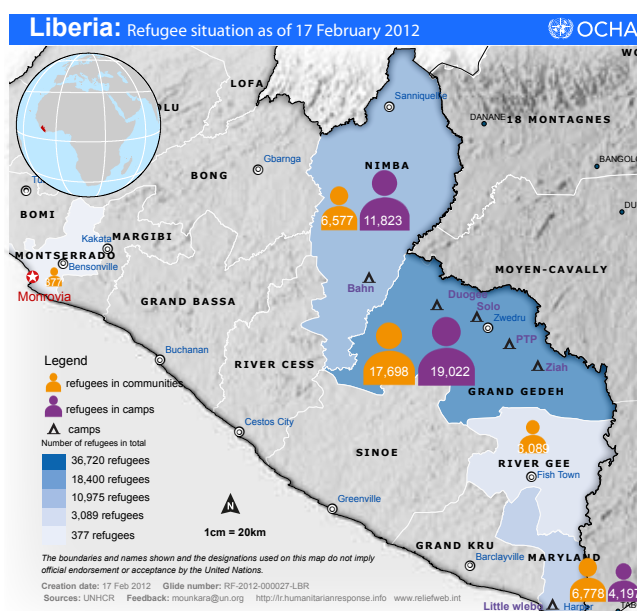
59 % funded

2012 CAP

121 million requested (USD)

1% funded

UNHCR highlighted a number of implications resulting from the revised figures, including the need to consider consolidating camps and a possible reduction in host community aid. On the positive side, more funds would be available for refugee programming on a per capita basis.



Voluntary repatriation

Despite the important decrease in the refugee figures, the Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) continues to promote voluntary repatriation as outlined in the tripartite agreement (Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire Governments, UNHCR) of refugees.

In line with the tripartite agreement, some 204 Liberian refugees were voluntarily repatriated by UNHCR and its partners in 2 convoys from Guinea through Nimba on 7 and 9 February 2012.

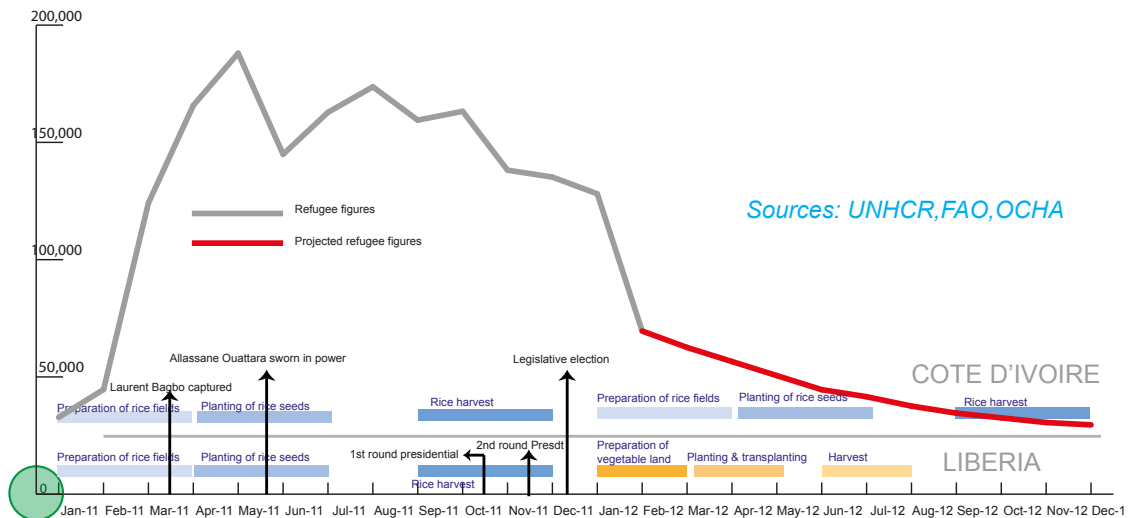
On the other hand, around 197 Liberian refugees from Cote d'Ivoire were received in Maryland on 10 February 2012. Their voluntary repatriation was

facilitated using UNHCR's ferry at the Duokodi Border Post. Other 11 Liberian refugees are expected to be received on 16 February from Gambia by Air in Monrovia

Technical Assessment Mission

From 12 to 13 February, a Technical Assessment Mission (TAM) visited the border region between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. With TAM participation from UNOCI, UNMIL and UNHQ, the mission visited Toulepleu in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as the areas around Zwedru and Harper in Liberia. The objective of the Mission was for participants to gain a better understanding of current challenges in the border region as well as discuss potential solutions. The mission team interacted with UNMIL, UNOCI and UN Agency staff in the visited locations, local government authorities (civilian as well as security), community leaders and Ivorian refugees residing in the refugee camps. The outcome of the Mission will feed into ongoing discussions between the two peacekeeping operations and UNCT's on enhanced cross-border collaboration.

Figure1: Refugee figures plan and the events calendar



With these new refugee figures, overall multisector planning activities have to be reviewed.

Humanitarian response

The management of acute malnutrition in the health system remains a concern

Continue to strengthen the nutrition interventions to respond to the malnutrition crisis in 4 counties hosting refugees.

In 2012, a total of 8,753 children under five were screened for acute malnutrition by UNICEF and its partners. Of the children screened, 26 per cent were refugees and 74 per cent Liberians. The screening data were taken to represent the intervention period. It showed that 14 per cent of all the children screened had moderate to severe acute malnutrition. The host population was more malnourished than their Ivorian counterparts, with 78 per cent of the malnourished children being Liberians and 22 per cent Ivoirians. These results

Figure 2: Nutrition planning figure in 2012

Under 5 Children	Screened	reached target	% Realization
Ivorian	26,160	2,256	9%
Liberians	17,440	6,497	37%
GAM	9,600	1,209	13%
Total	43,600	8,753	20%

Source: UNICEF

are in line with two previous nutrition surveys conducted in Nimba on December 2011, one in Zoegeh Health District and the other one in Bahn camp. The Global Acute Malnutrition rates were under acceptable threshold in Zoegeh Health District (2.5%) and in Bahn refugee camp (1.4%).

Of the 2,841 children under five screened under the reporting period for acute malnutrition, some 117 severely acutely malnourished children under five have been admitted and receiving appropriate treatment Outpatient Therapeutic Feeding Centres (OTPs), while 181 moderately malnourished children have been admitted into the supplementary feeding programme (SFP). Only 13 under five were admitted at the Inpatient Therapeutic Feeding Centers.

To strengthen the management of acute malnutrition, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MoHSW) sent a programme guidance note to county health teams and implementing partners stating that management of acute malnutrition is integral part of Essential Package of Health services (EPHS). All health facilities with OTP for treating severe malnutrition should now have also supplementary feeding service for moderately malnourished children.

Health support provided to women and children in camps

A total of 6,902 outpatient consultations were conducted in the camps, mobile clinics and in public health facilities. Out of this total, 61 per cent were refugees and 51 per cent of the consultations occur in the camps. Children under five constituted 31 per cent of all consultations. Some 1,282 children were immunized for different antigens during routine and outreach services, 1,249 pregnant women received antenatal care services in the camps and in public health facilities and three refugee deaths were reported (2 female and 1 male).

UNICEF is supporting the Ministry of Health to implement public health education programmes in refugee hosting counties of Nimba and Maryland. To date, 875 teachers have been trained in this collaborative programme. Some of the key interventions under this undertaking included awareness and sensitization on malaria prevention, hygiene promotion, immunization, breastfeeding and health seeking behavior through radio talk shows and use of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials. In Maryland County, the County Health Team implements the program and it has already benefited over 800 people.



Source UNHCR

Refugees in Bahn camp receive food assistance

During the reporting period World Food program (WFP) has provided food assistance to 3,858 refugees in Bahn camp in Nimba County.

The general food distribution to refugees residing in the relocation villages in Nimba as well as in the camps in Grand Gedeh and Maryland are expected to commence next week as the verification exercise carried out by UNHCR is finally completed. WFP has signed an agreement with the Ministry of Commerce to procure 1,066 metric tons (mt) of rice and will commence transporting the rice in the coming weeks. This procurement means that refugees will receive full rations of rice in March.

Food is a major concern for children attendance at school

Over 48,100 Ivorian and Liberian children have access to Primary Education, Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Vocational Skills Training services in Nimba, Grand Gedeh, River Gee and Maryland Counties respectively with 21,500; 12,108; 3,358 and 7,434. The number of children attending school decreased by 1,592 from the last reporting period (last period: 48,100).

On other hand, the distribution of an additional 90,000 Ivorian primary school textbooks will be completed by the end of February 2012 (a complete set for every child).

Sex and Gender Base Violence prevention and response in Grand Gedeh

Some 27 (S)GBV cases were reported by UNHCR's implementing partners. Food shortage is claimed to be making refugees anxious and prone to violence within their own families.

Out of the 27 cases of (S)GBV, 4 cases of rape were reported. 3 out of the 4 rape cases took place on the way to Liberia from Cote d'Ivoire. The other rape case took place in Boduoe Town, Grand Gedeh and involved a minor. Psychological and social consultations as well as legal aid was offered to all survivors.

Implications of refugee figures decrease: The bottleneck of the previously anticipated break in the food pipeline has passed for the time being

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