



IVOIRIAN-LIBERIAN BORDER LONG WAY HOME

A report on food security and living conditions



World Food Programme

wfp.org

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document draws on two reports jointly produced by the World Food Programme and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees produced at the end of 2012. The joint reports looked at the food security and nutrition situation of refugees in Liberia and Internally Displaced Persons in Ivory Coast.

This report provides a synthesis of both missions and was prepared by the WFP Regional Bureau in Dakar, Senegal with the support of the Liberia and Ivory Coast Country Offices. The report draws on previous work on the border region and in particular the research done by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) for FAO.

The aim of the report is to draw attention on the persisting issues affecting the Liberian/Ivorian border region.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDI - Côte d'Ivoire
GoL - Government of Liberia
HH - Household
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
JAM- Joint Assessment Mission
LRRRC - Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP - World Food Programme

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	7
DEMOGRAPHICS.....	9
MOVEMENTS, RAPATRIATION AND PRIORITIES.....	13
MARKET ACCESS.....	15
FOOD AVAILABILITY AND PRICES.....	17
AGRICULTURE.....	19
FOOD CONSUMPTION.....	21
HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY.....	23
LIVING CONDITIONS.....	26
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30

© Photo credits
(in order of appearance)

WFP/Charles Hatch BARNWELL
WFP/Debbi Morello
WFP/Rein SKULLERUD
WFP/Christian FARMSWORTH
WFP/Debbi Morello

WFP/David ORR
WFP/Gabrielle MENEZES
WFP/Diego FERNANDEZ
WFP/Robert MAAS
WFP/Rein SKULLERUD

WFP/Guillaume FOLIOT
WFP/Neil BRANDER
WFP/Judith MELBY
WFP/Rein SKULLERUD
WFP/VAM Liberia
WFP/Rein SKULLERUD

BACKGROUND

Political background

Despite the official end of Ivorian political crisis, the security situation close to the border with Liberia is still fragile. The limited capacity of the Ivorian Government for reconciliation, the recurrent population displacements and unsolved land tenure issues continue to plague the border region. Continued insecurity poses a major deterrent to many refugees from Nimba, Grand Gedeh, Maryland and River Gee counties in Liberia from returning home. This is especially the case for Krumen and Guéré ethnic groups who originate from pro-Gbagbo areas and who continue to reside in Liberia for fear of violent reprisals and due to loss of assets.

Relocation policies

The Government of Liberia (GoL), supported by UNHCR and the international community, has established a number of designated refugee camps in the counties bordering Côte d'Ivoire (CDI), namely in Grand Gedeh, Maryland and Nimba Counties (see map). GoL and CDI government had bilateral discussions and also during Mono River Union (MRU) to improve the security situation in the border areas and enhance humanitarian assistance towards affected population. In line with this, GoL has indicated since mid-2012 that refugees who choose to remain in Liberian host communities will receive same assistance as Liberian, in addition to basic protection services from UNHCR.

In CDI, Since the end the post-election crisis, the Ivorian government has signed several tripartite agreements with host countries and UNHCR to encourage Ivorian refugees to return to their country. Thus, massive returns of IDPs and refugees were observed in the first quarter of 2012 in Western CDI as in Abidjan. In April 2012, a series of armed attacks in western CDI disrupted the return of IDPs and refugees.

Nov 20, 2010	Election dispute in CIV
Mid- Dec, 2010	Clashes begin in Abidjan and Yamoussoukro
March 30, 2011	UN passes resolution 1975 recognizing A. Ouattara as president
Apr 11, 2011	L. Gbagbo captured and arrested
May 21, 2011	President A. Ouattara inaugurated
Aug 11, 2011	Tripartite agreement between UNHCR, GoL and GoCI signed for voluntary return of refugees
Sep 28, 2011	DTRC in Abidjan established
Nov 15, 2011	E. Johnson-Sirleaf declared winner of presidential elections
Jan 16, 2012	President E. Johnson-Sirleaf declared inaugurated
Jun 8, 2012	Ivorian cross-border attack killed 8 UN peacekeeper in Liberia
Jun 12, 2012	GoL close Ivorian-Liberian border
Sep 14, 2012	Partial re-opening of the border
Octobre 2012- Early 3013	Sporadic attacks in West CDI

Timeline of political events in CDI and Liberia, 2010-2013

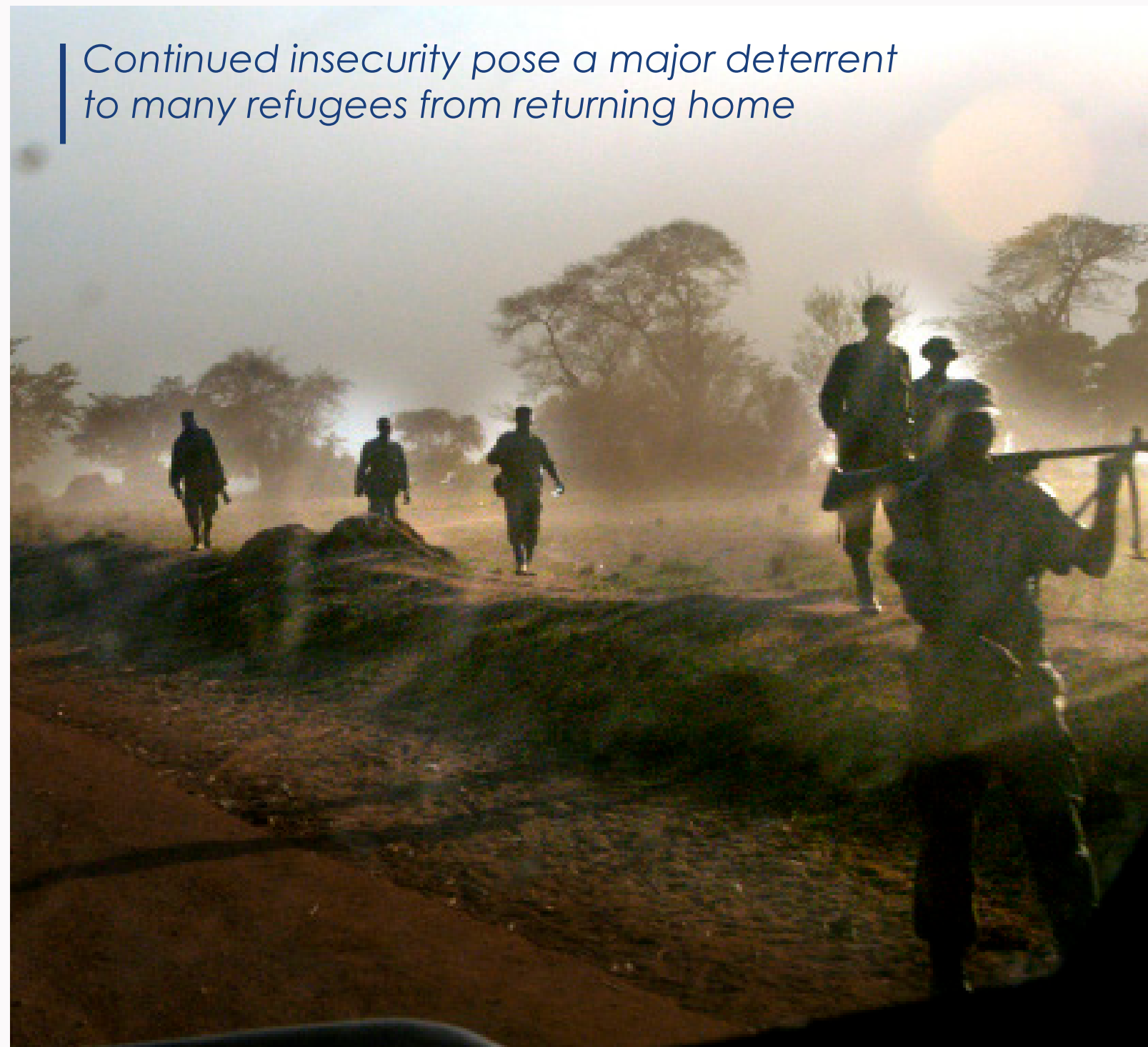
Border region

The border Region of Liberia and CDI is rich in natural resources such as gold, diamonds, iron ore, and timber. Due to the Cavalla River bordering this region, numerous water points across the region and direct access to the ocean, agriculture and fishes, the soil is fertile and fish thrive in its rivers and lakes.

Despite these natural resources and due to lack of overall development

since end of civil war, food insecurity is a major problem in this area. This situation has been execrated by years of conflict both in Liberia as in CDI. This instability discourages farmers to invest in agricultural production on commercial level which enables to improve their self sufficiency and reducing vulnerability to the shocks affecting food security.

Continued insecurity pose a major deterrent to many refugees from returning home



Food security situation

On the Liberian side, the refugee influx has put additional pressure on already precarious food security situations as populations densities have increased in refugee influx areas. Providing protection and assistance to these refugees' remains a significant challenge due to the fact that a significant number continue to reside across various spatially dispersed host communities (approximately 40% as of December 2012) and not in designated refugee camps.

In Ivory Coast, late 2012, approximately 120,000 IDPs and 32,000 returnees from Liberia are vulnerable to food insecurity. In the Bangolo zone, the main reason behind food insecurity lies in the constant insecurity and in the occupation of plantations and fields by populations that did not leave during the conflict. Despite the fact that returnees arrived before the agricultural season started, they faced difficulties in accessing and recuperating the land they used to cultivate. In the Duekoué area, displaced people returned too late to prepare the land for the 2012-2013 agricultural cycle and, like

in Bangolo, faced serious challenges (and often engaged in conflict) in getting their land back. As a consequence, these populations will not be able to secure food stocks and recover their livelihood and now largely depend on all kind of assistance they can manage to receive. For the Bloléquin/Toulepleu zone, recurrent insecurity is still the main deterrent of food security.

As the root causes of crisis are still to be addressed the situation will remain fragile and dynamic, populations are forced to be mobile. Continued attacks since April 2012 have further displaced families in the zones or back to Liberia. These displacements happen to the detriment of rebuilding livelihoods (in particular agriculture) and further increase vulnerability of these Ivorian families.

In both countries, food insecurity is a major problem with rates of 32.4% to 82.5% in Eastern Liberia hosting refugees. In CDI, rate is on average 40% in the Cavally region.

In Ivory Coast, late 2012, approximately 120,000 IDPs and 32,000 returnees from Liberia are vulnerable to food insecurity



INTRODUCTION

In Ivory Coast, late 2012, approximately 120,000 IDPs and 32,000 returnees from Liberia are vulnerable to food insecurity

The political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire in 2011 had a significant impact on food security, agriculture and livelihoods of Ivorian people and caused large population movements from western CIV to east of Liberia.

Taking into account developments on the CDI side of the border, opportunities for repatriation and the on-going operation for CDI returnees, UNHCR and WFP decided to conduct a cross border JAM which involved both countries.

This mission took place in Côte d'Ivoire, in the department of Bangolo (sub-prefectures of Zeo and Gohouo-Zagna) in the department of Duekoué (Toazéo, villages, and Blody Niambly) in the department of Bloléquin (sub-prefectures Zéaglo, Doké) in the department of Toulepleu (Sub-prefectures Péhé, Bakoubly, Tiobly, villages Toyébly, Bakpahi-Diole and Koarho).

In Liberia, Field visits were conducted in four refugee camps (Little Weebo, PTP, Solo and Bahn) and five refugee relocation communities (River Gbeh (River Gee), Janzon and Toe Town (Grand Gedeh), Old Yourpea and Mahdiplay (Nimba).

The overall objective of the cross border JAM is to better understand the dynamics of population movements in this area, determine vulnerable populations, assess food assistance provided and make recommendations and improvements for current operations and policies applied in the region.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Refugee numbers

According to the latest UNHCR biometric registration, the total refugee population in Liberia at the time of the JAM was close to 65,000 (or 24,000) households. Out of the total population, 81 percent of the refugee population is composed of women and children under the age of 18 as men stay in Ivory Coast to farm and/or take care of their property. More than half of these refugees are currently residing in six refugee camps.

Recurrent movements across the border (some of which not related to insecurity but to livelihoods) make it difficult to estimate the exact number of refugees. From October 2011 to September 2012, around 160,000 Ivoirians went back home, more than 90% of them were spontaneous returnees. More than 15,000 returnees were also helped by UNHCR to return from Liberia, especially in assisting them with security matters. As stated above, despite the intent to return to their communities in Ivory Coast, most of the refugees fear the strong presence of armed men in the region responsible for repeated attacks (especially as refugees are mainly women and children).

The other important group constituting the refugee population in Liberia is 'young people' and in particular the ones who played an active role in the post electoral crisis. Understandably, these young refugees (mostly males) fear retaliation if they return to their community. Enrollment in armed groups and illicit commercial activities (such as mining) are potential livelihoods for the young refugees who sometimes already engaged in similar activities on the other side of the border.

According to the latest UNHCR biometric registration, the total refugee population in Liberia at the time of the JAM was close to 65,000 (or 24,000) households



Vulnerable groups

In Liberia, a large number of vulnerable refugee households are headed by women (almost 50%). Having less access to employment opportunities or being less paid than their male counterparts, women face additional constraints, including inability to work due to child caring commitments. This brings some of them to adopt some sensitive coping strategies such as living with Liberian men in order to benefit from perceived protection and support.

Households headed by elderly refugees represent the second most vulnerable group. When living within host communities, elderly groups are able to utilize strong social links to access support from neighbors while in the camps elderly are much more isolated and vulnerable.

Young refugees (teenagers and children) are also among the most vulnerable. Conditions in the camps and communities are not conducive of the right development for children: lack of clean water increase morbidity (further compounded by poor health services), accessing secondary school (especially for a high number of will-

ing teenagers) is not easy and the lack of psychological support, especially for those involved in fighting during the crisis is badly needed. The long-term consequences this environment can have on young children and adults are of particular concerns.

On the Ivorian side, populations who fled the country but managed to return only after the 2012 - 2013 crop season, including an important number of women and children are particularly vulnerable to acute hunger. This vulnerability will further continue as a great number of them could not get their land back. Ivorian having settled in isolated villages bordering Liberia are also quite insecure as the lack of access to land and income opportunities remain precarious with lack of basic services. The constant and repeated disruption of livelihoods and forced movements are major constraints for small scale subsistence farmers and agro-pastoralists, who by definition need to be close to their most important asset (land and markets) make these two groups very vulnerable to hunger.



When living in host communities, elderly groups are able to utilize strong social links to access support from neighbors while in the camps, elderly are much more isolated and vulnerable

MOVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES

Movements

Given the ethnic ties between Ivorians and Liberians, movements across borders are fluid and frequent, due to various socio-economic factors and the porosity of border. At the end of July 2012, more than 6,800 new refugees crossed the border from Ivory Coast into Liberia due to ongoing insecurity. Some Ivorian refugees regularly cross the Liberian border back to Ivory Coast to their home villages to monitor their farms or to assess the prospects for next season. In addition, some Liberian refugees are migrants who have established a semi-permanent basis in Ivory Coast, but they were forced to return permanently to Liberia after the crisis. It is not clear if they have or will come back.

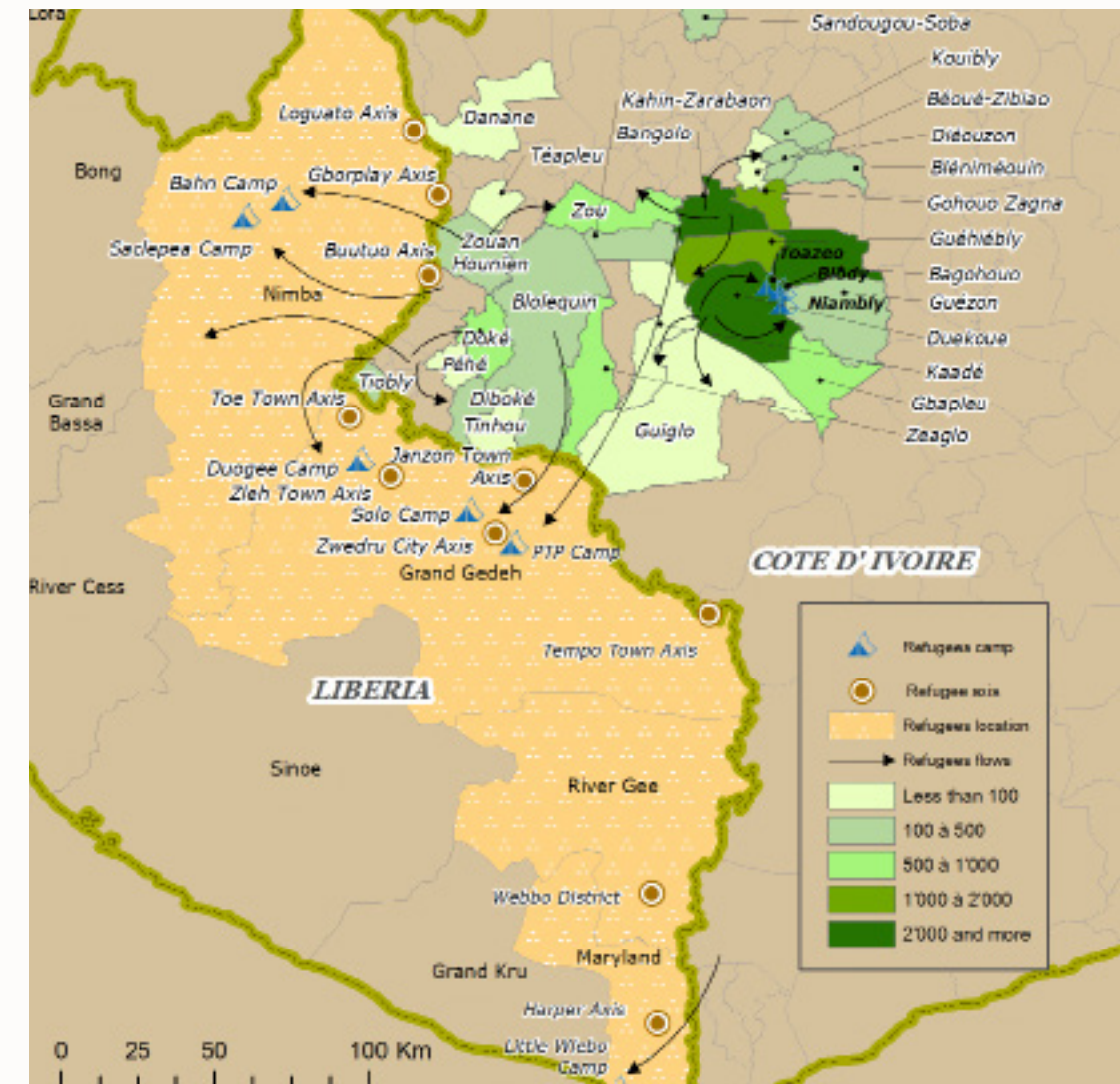
Repatriation

Most refugees interviewed during the joint assessment reported that they would be willing to return to Ivorian Coast if and when UNHCR informs them that conditions are safe for them to return. For refugees living in host communities, there are fears that a failure to relocate to designated camps may result in their exclusion from the repatriation process. Despite enormous efforts made in communities to address refugee concerns about relocation and repatriation, some refugee still expressed fear, anxiety and concerns about returning home. Indeed, when asked about repatri-

Spontaneous returns and organized repatriation of CDI refugees started in mid-2011 and continued till July 2012. The targeted figure for voluntary repatriation of Ivorian refugees was 50,000 between January and December 2012. However, due to continued insecurity, only 11,456 refugees were willing to return home assisted by UNHCR and its partners. Many refugees remain reluctant to return to CDI due to fear of retributions or insecurity and loss of land or livelihood activities.

The map (next page) shows the movements across the border.

ation, most refugees reported that they are still unwilling to return home as they hear stories about continued insecurity in their home communities. This indicates that most refugees remain in regular contact with their families or relatives on the other side of the border through various humanitarian actors and telephones, and listen to local radios. In addition, many male refugees regularly cross the border to check on their house and farms, at which times they also assess the security situation in their communities.



Priorities for refugees

Apart from specific problems in each location, one of the consistent requests made by refugees and host community members was the need for livelihood support. Many respondents requested support for agriculture activities, including: enhanced access to land and distribution of improved variety of seeds, tools and small livestock like chicken and goats. Most refugees coming from Ivory Coast are farmers, or agro-pastoralists who wish to continue their farming activities in some way to preserve their skills, income and access to food. In many instances, Liberians interviewed during the mission recognized that refugees are generally more skilled and have more experience in farming than they have. There are clear indications from local authorities and interviewed Liberians that

land cultivated in 2012 has slightly increased with the presence of Ivorian refugees in the host communities.

Refugees also requested assistance with accessing credit in order to support in establishing small businesses. To enhance livelihoods, refugees expressed the need for an increased coverage of vocational training activities. Many women trained in tailoring, hairdressing or other skills have been able to diversify their livelihoods and increase their income. Women also voiced how they felt discriminated against in terms of the salary they receive for the same tasks performed by men, and are thus eager to acquire new skills to avoid direct competition.

Many refugees remain reluctant to return to CDI due to fear of retributions and loss of livelihood activities

MARKET ACCESS

Market access

In Liberia, refugee camps are located on average 12-15 km from neighboring towns, enabling a certain access to large markets where a wide range of commodities can be found and sold. For example, Bahn camp is closely located to the Sa-clapea market, which is one of Liberia's most active rural markets, hosting numerous traders selling palm oil, cane juice, imported rice and a variety of other food and non-food commodities.

For refugees living in host communities, some are located at a great distance from larger markets. For example, the nearest big market for refugees residing in the community of River Gbeh in River Gee County is Fish Town, approximately 45 kilometers away. This distance is too far to access it on a daily basis, especially during the rainy season when roads become impassable. Therefore, refugees in camps tend to have better access to

market than those living in host communities, increasing their income opportunity and access to basic food.

In Ivory Coast, the market and the supply chain for food and non-food items remain disrupted due to insecurity, the decline of local production of food crops, bad conditions of roads all leading to a reduced number of traders. For villages with no functional markets (either destroyed during the post-election crisis, or never existed), the local population travel between two and seven kilometers to have access to markets. Functional markets are fairly well supplied but will have difficulty reaching the level of a normal year supply until security resumes.

Market and supply chain for food and non-food items remains disrupted due to insecurity



FOOD AVAILABILITY AND PRICES

Prices and food availability

Visits to markets conducted during the harvest period in November 2012 coincided with a period where the prices of rice and cassava had started to fall in response to increased local supply. However, the deplorable state of the roads has significantly contributed to huge price differentials between Monrovia, the capital and main port of entry, and remote markets located in rural areas. In addition, the refugee influx exerted a strong upward pressure on prices in the four affected border counties.

Food availability did not appear to be a major issue on Liberian markets or in any of the refugee camps or host communities visited. Inside the camps, various food and non-food commodities were readily available as Liberians and Ivorian refugees have established active systems for exchanging and bartering goods.

In Ivory Coast, populations are highly dependent on markets, especially for imported rice. Prices in the border region for rice and maize, the two most consumed staple food, have decreased in the second half thanks in part to Governmental programs but are still above or around the five-year average.

According to traders, market functioning in the region is not yet back to normal due to the latent insecurity even though availability on market is good and maintaining prices affordable enough for local populations especially as the terms of trade for cash crop producers are advantageous this year (a kilo of cacao buying 2.7 kilos of imported rice against only 1.7 kilo last year).

In Liberia, deplorable state of roads has significantly contributed to huge price differentials between Monrovia and rural areas markets



AGRICULTURE

In the border area, on the Ivory Coast side, where the main crops are rice, corn, banana, cassava and cash crops are cocoa and coffee, agricultural problems are mainly due to population movements, lack of inputs, late sowing of returnees and access to land. In addition, attacks and rumors of attacks do not help populations farming in a serene way.

Thus in Toulepleu and in the south of Tai, especially in communities along the border with Liberia, people had to abandon their plantations following attacks that occurred in 2012. Despite this abandon, harvest prospects are thought to be good in 2012-2013 in the region except in the Bas-Sassandra area and along the border with Liberia as confirmed by exchanges with the farmers in all localities at the border.

Most of the refugees who returned to the area of Bangolo, Ivory Coast, before the sowing period were able to farm during this 2012-2013 campaign. However, they do not expect a good harvest. They report that their food stocks coming from own production and purchase are low and they esti-

mate the average duration of these stocks between two to four months against the usual seven months in a normal year, because of the anticipated bad harvest. In the area of Duekoué, Ivorian who decided to stay during the crisis despite the insecurity plan on a better food crop than last year. However, the displaced who returned before the planting season do not expect a good crop due to the occupation of land by strangers and the lack of agricultural seeds. In Toulepleu, people remain highly dependent on food assistance and farming for those who left is marginal.

Access to land represents a primary concern for refugees and host communities leaders

Access to land

In Liberia, access to land represents a primary concern for refugees and host communities leaders, without a clear legal framework. However due to strong ethnic ties and support Liberians received while they stayed in CDI during Liberian civil war, many of refugees living in host communities have gained access to farming land and able to cultivate community vegetables gardens, thus serving to reduce their dependency to purchase food on the local market. This land access allows close to half of the refugees living in host communities to source rice, cassava and vegetables from their own production, crucial to maintaining decent and diverse food consumption.

Access to land and livelihood opportunities is therefore a key motivating factor encouraging refugees to continue to reside in host communities.

In contrast, for refugees living in camps, access to farm land remains a critical issue. With the refugee population living in camps increasing, land access issues

and possible conflicts are anticipated to intensify over time. UN agencies and INGOs have only managed to negotiate access to a minimal amount of land for agricultural cultivation in the vicinity of the refugee camps, as the investment required to clear available land is extremely high.

In Ivory Coast, access to land is a problem recurrently mentioned by returnees and the local population in different areas visited. After their return to Ivory Coast, population who fled insecurity faces difficulties accessing their lands, plantations and fields. Many find their fields and lands occupied by strangers and neighboring Yacouba (from Lougoulé). This hold on land is sometimes secured by the presence of armed men dissuading returning populations from claiming back their seek farmland and pushing populations far from their village. Intimidation and lack of clear and enforced land tenure policies need to be addressed by the Governments on both sides of the border.

Resolving land ownership is key to stability in CDI and Liberia border

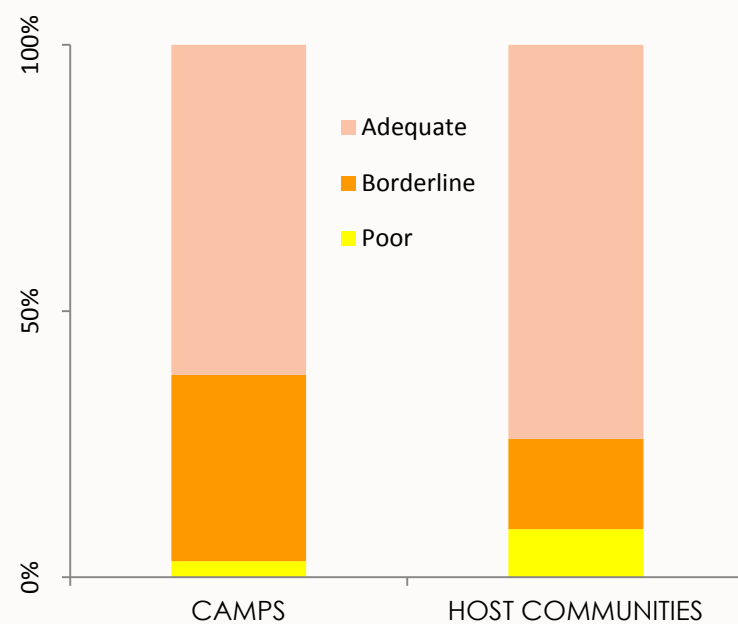
FOOD CONSUMPTION

More than one third (38%) of refugees residing in camps in Liberia do not have an adequate balanced diet, and thus remain extremely vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and to hunger. The story is somewhat different for refugees living in host communities as approximately one quarter (26%) of refugees are extremely vulnerable to food insecurity.

Refugees' food consumption mainly consists of rice, green leaves and small quantities of fish, offering limited nutritional value. With many refugees unable to complement their food ration, some exchange a portion of the rice or pulses they receive for other food commodities and non-food items, reducing the amount of food that

they end-up consuming. Whilst longer-term refugees are more likely to have access to a vegetable garden to complement their rations, recent arrivals often lack this opportunity. Furthermore, refugees living in host communities have better access to fruits and other vegetables compared to those living in camps as they have more opportunities to crop their own garden. Nonetheless, access to food aid remains an important factor in refugees' food consumption status as fewer refugees with poor dietary diversity are found in camps. While most refugees have a good consumption of staple (mostly thanks to the aid received), micronutrient-rich foods are not eaten every day by refugees.

Food consumption groups of refugees living in camps and host communities



More than 30% of refugees residing in camps in Liberia do not have an adequate balanced diet and thus remain extremely vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and to hunger



Current food assistance

WFP is providing a monthly food ration of rice, pulses, supercereal, salt and vegetable oil. The current food ration provides the daily need of 2100 kcal per person, per day. General food assistance targeting refugees living within host communities was discontinued in March 2012. In line with government policy which states that refugees should relocate to camps in order to receive humanitarian assistance, WFP discontinued food assistance to refugees living in relocation communities in December 2012.

During the Ivorian crisis, humanitarian actors provided food assistance, cash transfers, agricultural support and assistance in non-food to vulnerable people. WFP has provided family rations of rice, oil, salt and legume. This support has targeted IDPs, returnees and host families. As from March 2012, WFP with CDI government provided kits to returnees to encourage displaced families to return to their home places.

HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

Source of income

A number of refugees living in camps are able to access employment opportunities in surrounding communities and markets such as daily wage labour or other non-skilled job, exerting pressure on wage rates in local markets and communities. Some disturbances have been reported involving refugees and local populations due to labour competition.

Petty trade is well established and functioning within and around refugee camps. More could be done if refugees could access credit to start their business.

In Liberian refugee camps, refugees working for INGOs represent a small minority but benefit from a secure source of additional income (70 to 100 USD a month). This creates tensions as Ivorian refugees are under the impression of discrimination as they are paid less than their Liberian counterparts. Analysis of households interviews revealed

that over 30% of HHs are extremely dependent on others and in need of support. A sizeable number of youth male are engaged in a new activity called motorbike taxis which is slowly developing in all camps.

In Ivory Coast, the cost of labor has increased in some places since the official end of the conflict reaching around 1,250 CFA a day. The return of the labor force and therefore the number of opportunities to farm land or other non-skilled activities and the higher price of some cash crops can explain part of this increase in wages. But this slow recovery of farming activity (foreign and local) is not yet sufficient as the majority of the able bodies (young males) are still in Liberia. The slow return of the workforce and the rising costs of labor still limit the maintenance of cash crop plantations abandoned during the post-election crisis

Over 30% of HHs are extremely dependent on others and are in need of support



Women and work

On both sides of the border, women have less access to organized employment opportunities and are often paid less than their male counterparts. Women also face additional constraints such as the inability to work due to child caring commitments. Wages paid were generally reported to discriminate against women, who are paid less than men for completing the same work. Only women with desirable or enhanced skills have been able to procure a decent living for their families.

Being often the only bread winner of the family (as the men have stayed in Ivory Coast), women have no other choice but to accept lower conditions. Women also complain that most construction, mining and better paid opportunities are given in priority to men excluding them from certain labor markets.

Women have less access to organized employment opportunities

Expenditure patterns and purchasing power

On average, refugees living in host communities Liberia spent 66% of their household income on food, while those in camps spend 73%. Transportation represented the second biggest expenditure (9%), usually spent in order to travel to markets, work or to cross the border to check on houses, family and farms.

Transportation to Ivory Coast, depending on the distance, was reported to cost an average of approximately 10,000 LRD for a round trip. Refugees reported a dependence on credit to pay for journeys home, but most expressed confidence that upon arrival they can receive support from family and friends in their home

communities. Both in camps and host communities, a large proportion of refugees borrow food to meet their food needs or decrease their food expenditures (and intake) if they cannot borrow.

For those returning to Ivory Coast, expenditures on food tend to decrease if they were able to access and crop their land. Expenditures on construction to (for those whose houses have been damaged) and education became more important. Returnees cultivating cocoa can afford invest in health, education and other non-food but essential needs such as small livestock.

Over 30% of HHs are extremely dependent on others and are in need of support



LIVING CONDITIONS

Nutrition

In Liberia, the nutrition situation among Ivorian refugees residing in camps remains within WHO emergency levels for acute malnutrition. The GAM rate of 3.9% among children aged 6 – 59 months is acceptable according to the WHO cut-off point of 5%. However, a very high prevalence of anemia was recorded for women of reproductive age and children. Stunting levels were found to be 45.2% (41.2-49.1% in CDI regions), representing a critical level according to WHO standards.

According to SMART 2012, severe acute malnutrition rate is 4% in western Côte d'Ivoire and the chronic malnutrition rate is 40%.

WFP is actively engaged in the treatment of malnutrition through a supplementary feeding program (SFP) to treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). The SFP targets pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) and children under two among host populations and refugees living in host communities.

Health and water

Within camps, refugees have access to comprehensive and integrated free primary health care including nutrition, reproductive health, mental health/psychosocial support and HIV/AIDS assistance. Refugees living in host communities have access to existing government health facilities free of charge. For refugees in some of the relocation communities in Nimba County, mobile clinics are in place for villages where the distance to the nearest health facility is more than one hour walk or over 5 kilometers.


However, there is a shortage of trained medical staff in some camps, particularly in Solo and LW Camps.

Another problematic issue facing medical staff is the language barrier, sometimes leading to poor communication between refugees and healthcare providers, resulting in inadequate quality, underutilization and decreased confidence in health services.

In both camps and host communities, refugees complained that medicines provided by clinics were often disbursed in insufficient quantities (less than what was prescribed), and on several occasions, refugees reported having to purchase their own medicine from private pharmacies and or shops in local markets.

In CDI, conditions of access to water has worsen in almost all villages visited since the post-election crisis. This situation exposes the population to diseases due to consumption of water from unsafe sources such as wells, pounds and rivers. Consumption of non-potable water is the leading cause of diarrheal disease among children. The proportion of villages without a functional water point increased from 14% before the crisis to 25%. The people of nearly six out of ten villages (58%) believe that access to water has deteriorated since the beginning of the post-election crisis. According to OCHA, 400,000 people are still without access to safe drinking water in western Ivory Coast.

Concerning health structures, two-thirds of the localities visited do not have a functioning maternity and 38% have neither a maternity nor clinic. In some areas, population must travel between 5 and 13 km to access precarious health care.



400,000 people are still without access to safe drinking water in western CDI

Shelter and environment

In Ivory Coast, an estimated 24,000 houses have been either damaged or destroyed during the post-election crisis. The assessment revealed that this phenomenon is even more acute in areas near the border with Liberia and the rehabilitation of shelters remains a major concern for affected households who return to their communities. Roughly 6,000 most vulnerable households have lost everything during their displacement and are struggling to restore or rebuild their homes.

On the Liberian side, refugees in camps are mostly living in semi-permanent structures. These semi-permanent shelters are built with plastic sheeting, which are then daubed with red earth in most cases. The quality of materials provided for temporary shelters is often unsuitable for the climatic conditions in Liberia, with plastic sheets and

tents too hot to be used during the day, whilst at night shelters become transparent and lack privacy. Refugees are encouraged to take responsibility to improve their own shelters by taking advantage of locally available materials such as bamboo, palm leaves and wood.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is the IP responsible for environmental activities in refugee camps in Grand Gedeh and in Nimba. They provided training to refugees in the construction of eco-stoves and reduction of firewood consumption. Forest rangers, mainly composed of refugees, are trained to conduct sensitization activities that promote the importance of environmental protection. Sensitization activities also include the discouragement of charcoal production and emphasize its negative impact on the overall ecosystem.

Education

Free primary school education is available to all children residing in designated refugee camps, and is provided by UN-HCR, UNICEF and their partners. Despite overcrowding and an already high student-teacher ratio, teachers report that some school age children are not attending schools. Children are often required to look after their younger siblings as mother is engaged in livelihood activities or to participate in household chores. The lack of sufficient student learning materials and insufficient curriculums for teachers also impact on the quality of the service they provide. However the refugee children residing in host communities are able to access education in CDI curriculum starting September 2012 due to GoL policy of

providing same assistance as Liberian. The policy has forced majority of Ivorian children not enrolling into local schools due to difference in language of teaching and curriculum.

In Ivory Coast, schools in most visited localities visited reopened. However, there is a shortage of classrooms due to the destruction of several school facilities leading to some classes having sometimes more than 100 students. Education is free in the Toulepleu departement, whereas in Duekoué and Bangolo parents complain about school fees out of reach (while supposed to also be free). School feeding in the localities visited is no longer offered or functioning as the facilities cannot accommodate this activity.

In CIV, there is a shortage of classrooms due to the destruction of several school facilities leading to some classes having sometimes more than 100 students



In Liberia refugee children in host communities are not going to schools due to change in curriculum

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The situation across the Liberian-Ivorian border remains volatile with sporadic attacks still taking place, preventing refugees to come home. At the same time, the region is coming back to its more normal rhythm and the refugees who could come back have resumed their livelihoods, sometimes with the help of international and national organizations.

Nonetheless, structural issues remain that need to be addressed to bring this area back to speed. Land access and ownership, women conditions, water access, market access and prices, social cohesion are all slowing the economic development and the decrease in food insecurity and malnutrition. To face these challenges, the following actions could help populations overcome numerous difficulties;

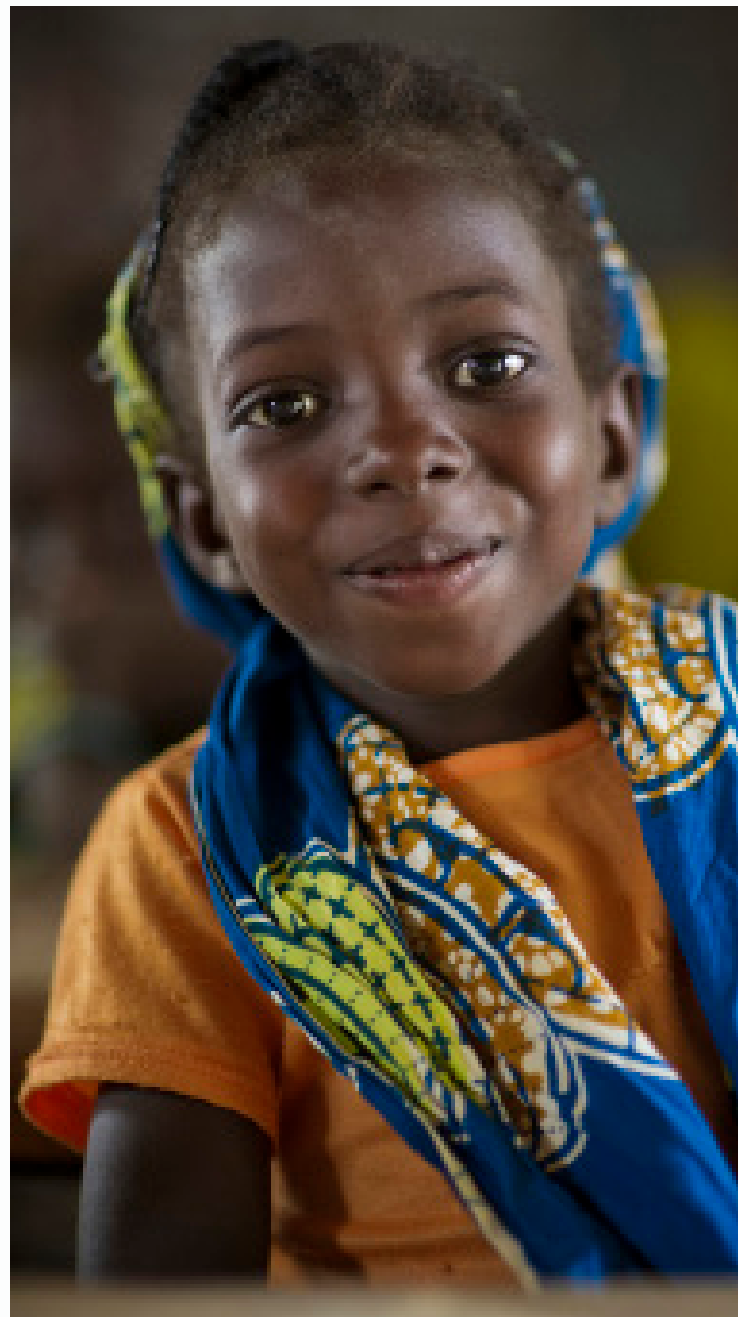
IN COTE D'IVOIRE

Population movements: All will rest on the Government's ability to secure the border area.

Access to shelter, education, water, land and health: Ongoing programs aiming at rebuilding houses, schools, health centers, and water points need to be continued. The refection of schools would also allow resuming school feeding activities. Awareness raising for free education needs to be reinforced to encourage children (and in particular young girls) to regularly attend school. The Government should promote and implement new land tenure policies.

Humanitarian assistance: support returnees and vulnerable families with non-food items. If market conditions allow, support household's food access with cash transfer activities and food distributions, especially in areas where food production was the lowest.

Returnees, vulnerable populations and host families: continue to support households most affected by insecurity, especially in Toulepleu, Bolequin and Duékoué. Support livelihood activities in Duékoué and Bangolo in order for households to restart their normal activities. This support could be done through Food for Work activities. Children affected by malnutrition and pregnant women should be provided with nutritious supplements. All partners should work towards a common strategy to assist returnees.



IN LIBERIA

Refugee's number: UNHCR should conduct a re-verification exercise in the first quarter of 2013 to establish an updated figure capturing refugee populations residing in camps and host communities. WFP should conduct a livelihood opportunities assessment in camps and host communities during the second quarter of 2013 to identify activities to enhance self-reliance and income generation.

Access to land, health, education and water: UNICEF and partners should seek to improve the access of refugee schoolchildren living in host communities to Ivorian primary school curriculum. At the same time, teacher-children ratios in schools in refugee camps should be reduced and aligned with international standards. In the camps, UNHCR could provide health staff with basic training in interpersonal communication skills and attitudes to improve relationships with refugees. A planned schedule for rehabilitating sanitation facilities and water points needs to be established.

Food security: WFP should continue general food distributions in all Ivorian refugees' camps for at least another six months. After this time, continuation should be reevaluated based on a livelihood opportunities assessment. For refugees living in host population explore suitable food-for-work/food-for-training and livelihood activities in order to optimize the allocation of resources and address disparities. Provide special food commodities to children under 5 years old to address high level of stunting. Continue implementation of school feeding assistance for primary school children inside camps as part of an enhanced safety net approach.

LRRRC: Review refugee camp security situations with a focus on increasing controls and deploying more diverse guards (by gender, and by nationality). Advocate with relevant GOL ministries to develop an enhanced legal framework to improve refugee land access and utilization by CDI refugees. Increase transparency and communication regarding relocation and repatriation of refugees.

Structural issues remain and need to be addressed to bring this area back to speed

Contacts

Nitesh PATEL

VAM Officer - Monrovia

Office: +231 7650 0218

Email: nitesh.patel@wfp.org

Ibrahima DIALLO

Programme Officer - Abidjan

Office: +225 2030 2800

Email: ibrahima.diallo@wfp.org

