



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

***LIBERIA – Complex Emergency***

Situation Report #4, Fiscal Year (FY) 2003

August 1, 2003

*Note: The last Liberia Situation Report was dated July 25, 2003.*

**BACKGROUND**

Liberia has been marked by intermittent civil war since Charles Taylor launched a rebellion against the military regime of Samuel Doe in 1989. More than 200,000 people were killed during the ongoing conflict in Liberia in the 1990s. In 1997, Taylor emerged the dominant power, winning the 1997 presidential election. Two opposition groups, controlling between 60 and 80 percent of the country, are currently attempting to oust Taylor from power. The main opposition group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), has been fighting President Taylor since 1999 and has grown from a northern-based insurgent movement to a force that now controls the majority of the country. The second opposition group, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), based in southern Liberia, began incursions into Liberia from Côte d’Ivoire in April 2003 resulting in large-scale population displacement. Years of conflict have had devastating consequences for the humanitarian situation in Liberia, which is currently ranked 174 out of 175 countries by the United Nations (U.N.) World Human Development Index, which measures health and living conditions.

NUMBERS AT A GLANCE		SOURCE
Internally Displaced	<b>Total : 500,000-600,000 in Liberia</b> 150,000 – IDP camps and irregular settlements in Monrovia 200,000-300,000 – Unidentified locations in Monrovia 160,000 – Outside of Monrovia	UN OCHA and NGOs, July 2003 UN OCHA and NGOs, July 2003 European Commission, July 2003
Refugees	70,000 Liberians in Guinea 53,000 Liberians in Sierra Leone 50,000 Liberians in Côte d’Ivoire 35,000 Ivoirians 14,000 Sierra Leoneans in Liberia	UNHCR, July 2003 UNHCR, June 2003 UNHCR, June 2003 UNHCR, July 2003 UNHCR, July 2003

**Total FY 2003 USAID/OFDA Assistance to Liberia (To Date) ..... \$2,536,220**  
**Total FY 2003 USG Humanitarian Assistance to Liberia (To Date) ..... \$9,536,220**

**CURRENT SITUATION**

**(Updated weekly)**

*Political*

On July 19, following the complete breakdown of a June 17 cease-fire agreement, LURD launched their third major offensive since June in Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia. Heavy fighting between LURD and GOL forces has continued in and around Monrovia since the July 19 attack, as LURD has gained control of strategic areas of the city, including the Free Port of Monrovia. Estimates of the number killed in the most recent outbreak of the fighting vary widely from 300 to 1,000 people.

Fighting between GOL and LURD forces has intensified outside of Monrovia as well. The U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and other sources reported on July 30 that GOL and LURD

forces have been fighting for control of Gbarnga city in Bong County, located 120 km northeast of Monrovia, since July 27.

The current political and humanitarian crisis has further deteriorated with the reintroduction of the MODEL opposition group into the civil war. On July 28, MODEL attacked and assumed control of the port city of Buchanan, Liberia’s second most populated city located 120 km southeast of Monrovia. Unconfirmed reports from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) estimate that the fighting in Buchanan since July 28 has killed hundreds of people.

After capturing Buchanan, MODEL announced on July 29 its intention to target Roberts International Airport, located 50 km east of Monrovia. GOL officials stated on July 30 that MODEL forces were advancing toward the airport.

On July 25, U.S. President George W. Bush ordered the positioning of an unspecified number of U.S. troops off the coast of Liberia to assist West African peace-keeping troops.

Cease-fire negotiations in Accra, Ghana that have been ongoing since July 4 have failed to generate an agreement. On July 27, LURD rejected calls that they participate in a cease-fire and retreat to the outskirts of Monrovia, stating that they would not withdraw from the capital until President Taylor relinquishes power. On July 29, President Taylor retracted a promise to step down and leave the country.

On July 31, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sent a 10-person reconnaissance mission composed of representatives from Nigeria, other West African nations, and the United States, to Monrovia. ECOWAS stated that the purpose of the mission was to assess conditions for the deployment of a vanguard peace-keeping force of approximately 1,500 Nigerian troops. ECOWAS indicated on July 31 that the peace-keeping force would deploy to Monrovia by August 4. Upon arrival of the mission, fighting in Monrovia abated significantly and the city remained relatively calm, according to international news reports. Monrovia residents have expressed concern that intense fighting will resume if the reconnaissance mission departs prior to the arrival of peace-keeping troops.

#### *Security*

As of August 1, most NGOs and international organizations (IOs) have evacuated their international staff, and local staff are largely confined to their homes or offices. The operations of NGOs that remain in Liberia are hindered by constant shelling and gunfire and the threat of looting or violent assault.

According to media and NGO reports, both GOL militiamen and MODEL forces looted property belonging to businesses, international humanitarian organizations, and homes in Buchanan following the July 28 attack. Medical Emergency Relief International (Merlin) reported that its offices in Buchanan were looted and all of the drugs stolen on July 29.

Action Against Hunger (ACF) temporarily suspended a screening assessment and water distribution in Mamba Point on July 25 due to heavy shelling. On the same day, a shell landed between the offices of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-France and MSF-Belgium, killing 11 people and wounding more than 50. Dozens of stray bullets have fallen in the MSF compounds and hospitals. On July 31, ACF reported shooting close to its therapeutic feeding center (TFC) in Sinkor.

#### *Displaced Populations*

Due to the current level of insecurity and constant flux of internally displaced persons (IDP) movements in and around Monrovia and Buchanan since July 19, humanitarian organizations have not been able to develop reliable and consistent estimates of IDP populations. Current estimates of IDPs in camps, irregular settlements, and unidentified locations in Monrovia range from 250,000 to 450,000 people. There are more than 90 temporary IDP sites in Monrovia.

Prior to the July 19 outbreak of fighting, combined estimates from UN OCHA and NGOs in Liberia indicated that approximately 600,000 Liberians are currently displaced as a result of the ongoing civil war.

According to UN OCHA, the July 28 MODEL attack on Buchanan displaced thousands of residents northwest toward the city of Harbel. The Liberian Refugee Repatriation, and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) reported that more than 20,000 IDPs sought refuge in Harbel following the attack. A July 29 UN OCHA report indicated that fighting between GOL and MODEL forces in the area surrounding Buchanan displaced approximately 9,000 people into Buchanan, adding to an existing caseload of approximately 6,000 IDPs.

Thousands of IDPs reportedly settled at the Firestone rubber plantation in Harbel following the attack on Buchanan, adding to the existing 50,000 IDPs that have settled at the plantation since June. Local Red Cross officials report that the four Firestone IDP camps established by the GOL house approximately 20,000 of the IDPs at the plantation.

Merlin visited the Firestone plantation on July 29, and indicated that it plans to establish a humanitarian program in Harbel that would include health, water and sanitation, and shelter assistance for approximately 100,000 IDPs.

Recent fighting on the outskirts of Monrovia has also reportedly caused displacement movements. The U.N. reported on July 29 that thousands of people are fleeing the fighting in Gardnersville, approximately 20 km east of Monrovia, and heading towards Paynesville, approximately 30 km southeast of Monrovia. IDP camps in this region are already overcrowded with influxes of IDPs from the recent fighting. Others are moving toward Kakata, approximately 50 km north of Monrovia.

#### *Refugees*

According to a July 29 U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) report, many of the 15,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in Monrovia continue to await evacuation through the UNHCR's emergency evacuation program. From July 4 to 20, the UNHCR's Motor Vessel

(MV) Overbeck conducted four evacuations of Sierra Leonean refugees from Monrovia to Freetown, Sierra Leone. On July 21, the MV Overbeck returned to Freetown without refugees onboard because it was unable to dock safely in Monrovia. UNHCR reports that once the security situation permits, the MV Overbeck will resume the evacuation operation. From July 4 until the suspension of operations, UNHCR evacuated more than 1,250 Sierra Leonean refugees.

UNHCR also reported on July 29 that fighting between LURD and GOL forces spread to the Samukai area on the outskirts of Monrovia, affecting a camp hosting more than 3,500 Sierra Leonean refugees. The fighting dispersed thousands of Sierra Leoneans, some of whom had been waiting to be repatriated on the MV Overbeck.

#### *Water and Sanitation*

According to a July 28 U.N. World Food Program (WFP) report, supplies of potable water have been exhausted in most parts of Monrovia. UNHCR reported on July 31 that due to the prevailing rainy season, the water yield in most of Monrovia's deep wells has increased. However, the water is in serious need of chlorination. Oxfam and Merlin report that the majority of IDPs are using water from potentially contaminated sources such as surface water and dilapidated wells, increasing fears that cholera and other water-borne diseases are likely to spread rapidly.

On July 21, mortar fire damaged the White Plains water pumping center, which is the primary supply of clean water for Monrovia, including IDP camps. On July 30, the European Commission (EC) began to conduct a damage assessment at the EC-supported White Plains pumping station, but terminated the assessment prematurely upon receiving mortar fire from LURD forces. Before termination of the assessment, an EC engineer noted that the main pumps at the station appeared to be submerged in water. The submersion of the pumps indicates that repair to the pumping station will be complicated, and the plant will remain inoperable for an indefinite period of time.

Merlin, ACF, Oxfam, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the EC continue to operate water distribution trucks on an intermittent basis due to the security situation. These organizations currently operate four water trucks.

According to a July 29 UN OCHA report, sanitation is a major problem at IDP camps and irregular settlements. The LRRRC reported that sanitary conditions at Samuel K. Doe (SKD) Stadium, the largest IDP settlement in Monrovia, are deteriorating. Estimates of the IDP population at the 35,000-seat stadium range from 25,000 to 50,000 people. The LRRRC reported on July 29 that

more than 50 pit latrines were dug to supplement the 16 functional toilets in the stadium; however, many people defecate in the open due to the inadequate facilities.

#### *Fuel*

Water distributions have been hindered by a severe fuel shortage. Gasoline now costs approximately USD 11 per gallon, and kerosene is USD 7 per gallon. UN OCHA reported on July 31 that Merlin is considering flying in fuel from Sierra Leone to enable continued water distributions. According to a July 31 UN OCHA report, Monrovia's main hospitals are also experiencing fuel shortages and indicate that within two weeks they will have exhausted currently available medicines and fuel for generators.

#### *Health*

UN OCHA reported on July 28 that humanitarian organizations have expressed concern regarding the decrease in the number of cholera cases reported, given that the disease should now be in its peak season. MSF-Belgium noted that prior to the recent fighting in Monrovia, most of the reported cholera cases were from Clara Town and D. Tuh High School, which are currently under LURD control. MSF reported on July 30 that prior to the July 19 outbreak of fighting, it was treating more than 350 cholera patients per week in four cholera treatment units in the city. Two of these units closed during the week of July 21, decreasing MSF's ability to monitor the outbreak and treat those affected by the epidemic. Merlin indicated on July 28 that it will conduct an assessment to determine the reasons for the falling caseloads.

UN OCHA reported on July 29 that the fighting in Monrovia has overwhelmed health facilities and drastically reduced access to medical care.

MSF reported on July 31 that the transport of civilian casualties is extremely difficult. In the West Point area of Monrovia, where fighting has been heavy, MSF reported that one of its oral-hydration teams has transformed itself into a wheelbarrow ambulance brigade, transporting severely wounded patients to the MSF Hospital in Mamba Point by stretcher and wheelbarrow. Merlin continues to operate an ambulance service to transport the most critically wounded to John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital.

ICRC reported on July 31 that it has registered nearly 1,000 war wounded since July 19 at the John F. Kennedy (JFK) Memorial Hospital. Six ICRC medical staff members and 240 Liberian staff currently work at the JFK Hospital, which is the main hospital in Monrovia. NGOs have expressed concern over the lack of information regarding health conditions outside of Monrovia where little or no medical care is available.

MSF reported on July 30 that the health status of Liberians in more than 75 percent of the country remains unknown.

#### *Food*

The rainy season (June to October) is a traditional period of food insecurity in Liberia, as food stocks from the end of one harvest run low as planting begins for the next. Given the current conflict and its effect on food security, food stocks are now extremely scarce and costly. UN OCHA reported on July 31 that prices of some food commodities, particularly rice and bread, have increased fourfold in recent weeks.

July 31 news reports indicate that the relative calm in Monrovia allowed residents to travel to Paynesville to buy food items brought from Kakata, Bensonville, and Harbel.

The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) reported on July 31 that it currently has 16,000 metric tons (MT) of food in stockpiles in the region that could be shipped quickly to Monrovia. These commodities could support at least 500,000 people for two months. WFP reported on August 1 that LURD forces opened and distributed food stocks located in the Free Port of Monrovia. LURD forces reportedly used WFP trucks for the distributions in Daola, Kru Town, and other locations under LURD control. Although it cannot confirm the current level of food stocks, WFP reported on July 30 that there were 8,000 MT of food in warehouses and 2,000 MT in containers in Monrovia's port, which is enough food to feed 250,000 people for three months.

WFP indicated that, under the current circumstances, food distribution would require negotiation with GOL and LURD forces and the presence of a peace-keeping force to guarantee a safe humanitarian corridor to relief workers. WFP noted that, should a ceasefire prevail, the targeted caseload could increase dramatically, particularly if the security situation permitted WFP to operate country-wide.

WFP reported on August 1 that it will transport high-energy biscuits into Roberts International Airport by commercial aircraft prior to August 2. ICRC intends to distribute the biscuits to IDPs at Firestone plantation and in the area surrounding Roberts International Airport.

WFP reported on August 1 that it chartered a supply ship for an initial period of 60 days to function as a mobile office off the coast of Monrovia. The ship will be shared with staff of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN OCHA, UNHCR, and key staff of the NGO humanitarian community. The ship can accommodate nearly 27 people but houses approximately half that number comfortably. The ship will also provide

space for the storage and transport of technical equipment and light relief items, including high-energy biscuits and medicines.

ACF reported on July 30 that it is currently involved in nutritional screening and supplementary feeding at the Sport Stadium in Paynsville and the Tubman High School in Sinkor. ACF's two TFCs at Mamba Point and Sinkor have remained operational since the crisis. On July 31, ACF opened a new supplementary feeding center in Sinkor.

UNICEF and Merlin reported on July 31 that they plan to distribute supplementary biscuits to targeted beneficiaries at IDP sites in Monrovia and other accessible areas.

## **USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE**

**(New information is underlined.)**

### *Non-food Assistance*

In FY 2003, USAID/OFDA has provided more than \$2.5 million to support humanitarian needs in Liberia. USAID/OFDA provided more than \$517,000 to Action Against Hunger (ACF) in support of emergency nutrition needs in Monrovia and more than \$751,000 to Merlin to address emergency health and water and sanitation needs throughout Liberia. USAID/OFDA provided more than \$616,000 to IRC to support water and sanitation activities and the provision of non-food items to IDPs in Monrovia. USAID/OFDA provided more than \$330,000 to Oxfam to support multi-sector IDP response activities in Monrovia. USAID/OFDA provided more than \$320,000 to UN OCHA to support coordination and protection of IDPs.

USAID/OFDA deployed a three-person Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Liberia that arrived in Freetown, Sierra Leone on July 20. The DART will remain in Freetown until the security situation in Monrovia becomes permissive for the deployment of the DART. Additional DART members, including a Water and Sanitation Officer, a Logistics Officer, and a Communications Officer, will deploy to Freetown during the week of August 4.

### *Emergency Food Assistance*

Thus far in FY 2003, USAID's Office of Food for Peace (USAID/FFP) has provided 9,260 metric tons of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance, valued at \$6 million, to Liberia. The commodities provided by USAID/FFP include a combination of cereals, pulses, and vegetable oil, and Corn Soya Blend for therapeutic and supplementary feeding. USAID/FFP emergency food assistance is provided to vulnerable populations through direct distribution, food for work programs, emergency school feeding, maternal and child health programs, and supplementary and therapeutic feeding programs. USAID/FFP programs are implemented in Liberia through WFP.

*Refugee Assistance*

The State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) has provided support for Liberian refugees since 1989 and for Sierra Leonean refugees in Liberia since 1991. To date in FY 2003, State/PRM has provided \$1 million in assistance for refugees in Liberia through UNHCR. State/PRM has also provided nearly \$13 million to UNHCR and more than \$13 million to various NGOs to support Liberian refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. This is in addition to unearmarked funding for UNHCR for Africa (\$55.1 million) and ICRC for Africa (\$29.2 million).

**U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA**

<i>Agency</i>	<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Sector</i>		<i>Amount</i>
<b>LIBERIA – FY 2003 (TO DATE)</b>				
<b>USAID Total .....</b>				<b>\$8,536,220</b>
<b>USAID/OFDA .....</b>				<b>\$2,536,220</b>
	ACF	Nutrition	Monrovia	\$517,773
	Merlin	Health and Water/Sanitation	Country-wide	\$751,011
	IRC	Water/Sanitation and non-food items	Monrovia	\$616,774
	Oxfam	Multi-sector IDP response	Monrovia	\$330,662
	UN OCHA	Coordination and protection of IDPs	Monrovia	\$320,000
<b>USAID/FFP .....</b>				<b>\$6,000,000</b>
	WFP	P.L. 480 Title II Food Assistance – 9,260 MT	Country-wide	\$6,000,000
<b>STATE/PRM* .....</b>				<b>\$1,000,000</b>
	UNHCR	Annual Refugee Operations	Country-wide	\$1,000,000
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO LIBERIA IN FY 2003 (TO DATE) .....</b>				<b>\$9,536,220</b>

\* State/PRM figures include funding within Liberia. State/PRM also provides additional Africa-wide and regional assistance not reflected in this total. Please see the USG Humanitarian Assistance section for further details.



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**Public Donation Information**

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for their drought response efforts in Liberia can be found at <http://www.interaction.org/liberia/index.html>. Information on other organizations responding may be available at [www.reliefweb.org](http://www.reliefweb.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they: allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed (often in the affected region); reduce the burden on scarce resources (such as transportation routes, staff time, warehouse space, etc); can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; ensure culturally, dietary, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information on making donations and volunteering services can be found at:
  - [http://www.usaid.gov/our\\_work/humanitarian\\_assistance/disaster\\_assistance/help/index.html](http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/help/index.html)
  - The Center for International Disaster Information: [www.cidi.org](http://www.cidi.org) or 703-276-1914
  - InterAction: [www.interaction.org](http://www.interaction.org) → “Guide to Appropriate Giving”
- Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [www.reliefweb.org](http://www.reliefweb.org)

