



## **PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : LIBERIA**

Compilation of the information available in the Global IDP  
Database of the Norwegian Refugee Council

(as of 6 August, 2001)

Also available at <http://www.idpproject.org>

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## PROFILE SUMMARY

Five years since the end of its brutal and protracted civil war, Liberia is still far from lasting peace. Further to Liberia's internal post-conflict problems, the escalation of violence throughout the whole of West Africa over the last months has resulted in a renewed destabilization of the country and its peoples. As a result of the resurgence of fighting between armed insurgents and government forces in the northern border regions of Liberia, it was reported that some 60,000 persons were newly displaced (World Vision, 29 May 2001). As of the 24th of July 2001, the total population of IDPs stood at approximately 41,000 (International Organisation email 24 July 2001).

In addition to these newly displaced populations, the Government estimates that as many as 100,000 Liberians displaced during the civil war remain in and around the country's capital of Monrovia (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, para. 2). However, it should be noted that the number of "old caseload" IDPs varies greatly according to the source. In fact, some observers argue that no figures are really accurate as there are no longer any government-recognized shelters, and the situation of the internally displaced has not been systematically monitored since 1999 (Nowrojee 13 October 2000; UNDP 26 September 1999).

The internal displacement of civilians began in Liberia with the civil war. At its outset in 1989, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, mounted an uprising against the Samuel Doe regime. The early rebellion began in the North, but quickly spread down to the capital. ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) deployed a peacekeeping mission to the country in 1990 to contain the violence. However, ECOMOG troops were only able to restore order to Monrovia. As a result, Liberia became a partitioned state with ECOMOG controlling the capital and the NPFL and other factions reigning over the rest of the country (Minear and Scott 1995).

During the whole of the civil conflict, numerous attempts at peace were made. However, each time an accord was signed, it was soon broken. Although prospects for peace seemed promising in 1995, intense fighting broke out in Monrovia in April 1996 resulting in the death of 3,000 persons and the displacement of another 300,000 (DHA 23 October 1996). In the wake of the Monrovia violence, the war was said to have taken the lives of some 200,000 persons, to have resulted in the internal displacement of 1.2 million and to have forced another 750,000 to flee to neighboring countries (US DOS 30 January 1998, para. 1).

Finally, in August 1996, a new accord was signed calling for the disarmament of the warring factions and the holding of national elections. The peace accord permitted the deployment of ECOMOG troops to the countryside to support the demobilization process and to oversee the return of refugees and displaced persons. By the following year, former rebel leader Charles Taylor was elected president, and Liberia looked as though it might be on the road toward post-war reconstruction.

However, continual outbreaks of violence in the northern region of the country since 1999 have plagued Liberia's national recovery. By October 2000, fighting in the north between armed insurgents and government forces had intensified, and tens of thousands of people from Upper Lofa county, particularly from the Voinjama and Zorzor areas, were once again forced to flee their homes. Resurgence of fighting occurred in Lofa County in February 2001, and still continues, uprooting some 60,000 persons. Following the renewed fighting, the Liberian government accused the Guinean army and a Sierra Leonean militia of supporting rebel forces fighting in northern Lofa County (IRIN-WA, 30 April 2001). The fleeing population mainly headed south towards Tarvey, Gbapolu County, overstressing the already limited basic infrastructure and challenged the resilience as well as the coping mechanisms of the host communities (UNICEF 13 June 2001).

The plight of those persons newly displaced in the north cannot be overestimated. Some IDPs are reported to have walked extremely long distances before reaching the relative safety of Salayea, Kolahun or

Gbarnga districts (PANA 14 February 2001; ICRC 15 December 2000; PANA 10 October 2000; AFP 10 October 2000). Once arrived in the camps, IDPs lacked clean water, shelter, food, medicine, and sanitation. Initial assessments in the camps indicated rising diarrhoea prevalence, malaria, and growing incidences of vaccine preventable diseases.

Shortage of relief food items is another concern which threatens survival of the IDP population. The threat of food insecurity in Lofa County is particularly high, not least because Lofa County is Liberia's bread basket and as long as fighting will go on, there will not be a harvest in the next season (AFP 7 June 2001). This shortage concerned more than 80,000 persons displaced as of June 2001. Besides food, shelter is inadequate to meet the needs of the displaced (PANA 22 May 2001). As concerns the "old caseload" internally displaced in and around Monrovia, many are said to remain in dilapidated, abandoned buildings or with family and friends (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, para. 2).

The needs and protection concerns of the new wave of IDPs fleeing fighting in Lofa County in the spring of 2001 were threatened, and the capacity of host communities was stretched beyond the limit. IDPs were initially restricted in their flight at the Lofa Bridge, but this restriction was later on lifted. They faced severe threats to life and health during and after flight, with girls and women being raped and tortured, and boys and men being forcibly recruited in the army (ACT 25 May 2001).

With regard to humanitarian agencies coming to the help of the thousands of IDPs fleeing Lofa County in 2001, a decision by Liberia's government to restrict diplomats and representatives of intergovernmental organizations to within 60 km of the capital severely hampered the work of these relief agencies. Moreover, Liberian security forces denied access to the humanitarian community to 12,168 IDPs staying in Bellefanai and Gbalatuah areas, but in June 2001 the government finally gave authorization for access (WFP 29 June 2001).

Foreign skepticism of the Charles Taylor administration remains high. Since taking office, Taylor's government has been accused of increasing human rights violations, misguided economic policies, and unscrupulous use of the nation's natural resources (USCR 2000). On the 7th of March 2001, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1344, replacing the previous arms embargo against Liberia with a new one prohibiting the sale or supply to Liberia of arms and related material of all types, as well as of any military training or technical assistance. The resolution stated that, unless Liberia complied within two months, additional sanctions would go into effect, including a ban on the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Liberia, and measures to prevent travel by senior members of the Government of Liberia or their spouses. These sanctions took effect as of May 2001, as Liberia was judged not to demonstrate sufficient compliance with the Council's demands.

(6 August 2001)

# CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

## Main causes of displacement

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### **Hundreds of thousands of civilians were forced to flee their homes during country's civil war (1989-1997)**

- Liberians began to flee their homes with onset of civil war in 1989
- All warring factions were responsible for displacement of local populations
- April 1996 crisis caused thousands more to flee homes in Monrovia

"Like the 750,000 Liberian refugees who managed to flee to Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Nigeria, the troubles of Liberia's internally displaced began in December 1989, when the NPFL rebels took up arms to overthrow the regime of Samuel K. Doe. Caught in the crossfire, many civilians had no option but to head for neighboring countries – especially Cote d'Ivoire and Guinea – or to the capital, which was considered a safe haven once the ECOMOG troops had established control there in 1990. Subsequently, factions proliferated, essentially along ethnic lines, and anarchy reigned, forcing an ever-increasing number of Liberians to flee first to Monrovia and then on to the neighboring countries." (Kpatindé 1996, "Internally Displaced Persons", para. 8)

"The warring factions have terrorized the local population. Fighters have mutilated captives, using their victims' intestines to cordon off areas newly controlled by the victorious group. They have cut up human bodies and scattered them around villages. Many areas have passed under the control of successive warring factions and Liberia has effectively become a series of competing fiefdoms ruled by faction leaders.

[...]

All parties to the continuing conflict committed gross human rights abuses. Fighters from all the warring factions tortured and deliberately killed unarmed civilians suspected of opposing them, as they seized territory or raided another group's territory. All armed groups were responsible for deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, although in many cases it was not possible to establish which group was responsible. (AI 20 June 1997, "Liberian Tragedy")

"Tens of thousands of Liberians were killed during the war and almost half the country's population displaced. Despite the presence of regional peacekeepers and a United Nations military observer mission, fighting resumed numerous times during the war, and the number of factions proliferated over the years. All the factions, including Charles Taylor's faction, were responsible for terrorizing the local populations in order to loot and to discourage support for rival factions. Widespread atrocities against civilians were committed including killings, torture, forced labor, and extortion." (HRW 17 November 1997, para. 4)

### ***Many thousands of persons were forced to flee Monrovia in 1996:***

"Prior to the 6 April [1996] fighting there were approximately 750,000 IDPs in Liberia. Of these, an estimated 300,000 were located in shelters in and around Monrovia. The 6 April fighting has exacerbated the situation. Approximately 46 percent, some 361,880, of the estimated 780,000 inhabitants of Monrovia had to abandon their homes. Of these, 30 percent are in shelters and 17 percent have fled the greater Monrovia area. These populations are completely dependent on the international community for all their basic needs." (DHA 23 October 1996, sect. 4.5)



"Renewed violence in April [1996] pushed an estimated 300,000 persons from their homes in Monrovia and devastated the morale of many Liberians. Families fled to Monrovia's schools, warehouses, dilapidated government buildings, and to private homes in safer parts of the city. Up to 20,000 fled to a Monrovia military base that subsequently came under attack. Another 20,000 took refuge in the U.S. embassy's residential compound. Outside Monrovia, tens of thousands fled to the central Liberian town of Gbarnga in search of safety." (USCR 1997, p. 77)

### **Thousands of civilians newly displaced with resurgence of violence in northern Lofa County (July-October 2000)**

- Armed insurgency and gun battles forces people to flee (July 2000)
- Shelling of Zorzor district by Guinean security forces resulted in 1,500 IDPs fleeing the war zone
- Mass movement was started by instructions from military that women and children leave the areas
- On October 7th 2000, Zorzor town came under attack for the second time in the space of 2 weeks

"In July 2000, armed insurgency and sporadic gun battles occurred at the border towns of Voinjama in Lofa County, causing loss of life, the destruction of property, the looting of homes and the displacement of over 45,000 persons to Salayea District, close to Bong County, in Upper Lofa and Camp Antheil in Lower Lofa Counties. Recently, the government announced the expulsion of the armed insurgents. In October 2000, ethnic violence erupted between the Mandingos and Mano people in Nimba County. Several people were injured, and houses and vehicles were destroyed." (IFRC 20 February 2001)

"On 8 July [2000], the Government of Liberia reported that an armed group of Liberian dissidents operating from neighbouring Guinea, attacked the provincial town of Voinjama in Lofa county (approximately 384 kms north of the capital of Monrovia). Thousands of civilians fled the town into the bush and nearby towns and villages. Accusations by both sides over border raids launched by unidentified gunmen have created poor diplomatic relations between the two countries. President Lansana Conte of Guinea has accused Liberians of involvement in cross-border attacks on Guinean villages, while Liberia accuses Guinea of harbouring insurgents who are fighting government forces in northern Liberia.

Most recently, the Government has reported the shelling of Zorzor district by Guinean security forces. Reports say that the incident has resulted in some casualties of IDPs from Voinjama, who had taken refuge in Zorzor town. Over 1,500 IDPs have fled the war zone, traveling (sic!) through the bush to towns as far away as Camp Anthe (125 kms from Voinjama) in Lower Lofa County." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

"Liberian government officials claimed that an incursion by armed dissidents in July took control of several towns in northern Liberia's Upper Lofa County and forced 30,000 people to flee their villages. The government declared a state of emergency in the county in mid-July." (USCR 28 August 2000, para. 2)

The independent Inquirer newspaper said that hundreds of residents were fleeing Zorzor, 210 kilometres (130 miles) northeast of Monrovia, following the attack Saturday [8 October 2000], saying the town was being shelled from the Liberian border town of Yeala, eight kilometers (five miles) away.

[...]

The people were reported to be fleeing to the regional town of Gbarnga, 150 kilometres (95 miles) east of Monrovia." (AFP 9 October 2000)

"The relief workers also said the mass movement of the people was started by instructions from military personnel in Zorzor and surrounding towns and villages, that women and children leave the areas in the wake of the attack." (PANA 10 October 2000)

"On October 7th [2000] Zorzor town came under attack for the second time in the space of 2 weeks. An estimated 30,000 civilians deserted the town of Zorzor after it was shelled by rebel forces believed to be

operating from Guinea. The shelling has forced civilians to head towards the town of Gbarnga, although many are now staying in towns between Zorzor and Gbarnga in neighbouring Bong County and are in need of food, shelter and sanitation facilities. It seems that only those who have family to stay with have been permitted to enter Gbarnga." (SCF 24 November 2000, Current Situation)

### **Violence in northern Lofa County between Liberian forces and dissidents creates new wave of IDPs (January-July 2001)**

- Fighting in Lofa County between Liberian forces and dissidents on the border with Guinea breaks out in February 2001
- Thousands of civilians flee heavy fighting between government troops and insurgents in upper Lofa County, northern Liberia, heading to lower Lofa County
- Increased conflict, fear of conflict and the high numbers of ill-disciplined troops and armed personnel in Lofa continued to force people to move
- Heavy mortar and artillery attack around the towns of Barkedou and Sakonadu leads to the flight of thousands of civilians, mainly women and children who had returned to Voinjama after pro-government forces expelled the dissidents from Lofa in June 2001
- In July 2001, fighting was ongoing in Lofa, and Liberians were still moving southwards as a result of the fighting

#### ***February***

"In February 2001, the latest fighting erupted in Kolahun District in Lofa [which] [...] produced a new wave of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

[...]

[...] an estimated 150,000 persons are on the run for their lives, most of them having abandoned the major towns and took refuge in remote villages, running from the fighting forces. Homes of civilians fleeing the fighting have been completely looted; while some homes have been burned." (ACT Appeal Liberia 30 March 2001, p3)

"Liberian forces are engaged in 'serious fighting' with dissidents on the border with Guinea after bloody attacks last week on three villages, press reports said Tuesday [6 February 2001].

Quoting Defense Minister Daniel Chea, the reports said the fighting was taking place in far northern Lofa County, which borders Guinea and Sierra Leone.

'Even as I speak, there is serious fighting taking place around the border town of Kigbemou where we have pushed them since we engaged them over the last 45 hours,' Chea was quoted as telling a media conference on Monday [5 February 2001].

Chea said the three villages, near the Lofa capital of Voinjama, 260 kilometres (160 miles) north of Monrovia, had been attacked last Friday [2 February 2001] by dissidents operating out of bases in Guinea.

[...]

According to Liberia, Guinea has backed four incursions into its territory over the last two years.

Guinea, meanwhile, claims Liberia has masterminded (sic!) 30 armed attacks in Guinean territory since last September [2000]. It also accuses Sierra Leone rebels are involved in the attacks." (AFP 6 February 2001)

"Heavy fighting has broken out between the Liberian army and dissident forces near the northern county of Lofa, according to media reports.

A diplomatic source in Monrovia said he had heard the reports. However, he told IRIN: 'News about fighting along the border with Guinea has become almost routine to the point that most people are now indifferent.' He said many Liberians perceived the frequent reports of fighting as a 'a government pretext ... to justify the diversion of resources into security and not development.' (IRIN-WA 7 February 2001)

### ***March***

"Liberian Defence Minister Daniel Chea on Monday [5 March 2001] said rebels had seized the key northern town of Voinjama, which lies near the Guinean border.

Chea made the remarks to AFP after unconfirmed reports reached the Liberian capital that "dissidents" had hoisted a flag in Voinjama, about 260 kilometres (160 miles) north of Monrovia.

[...]

The defense minister said between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians displaced by the fighting were moving in large groups away from the conflict area." (AFP 5 March 2001)

"Defence Ministry has informed that fighting against rebels who invaded Voinjama and other town in northern Lofa County has intensified. The rebels attacked the region last week and are said to be still occupying Voinjama." (WFP 9 March 2001)

"Thousands of civilians have been fleeing heavy fighting between government troops and insurgents in upper Lofa County, northern Liberia, Defence Minister Daniel Chea told reporters on Wednesday. He said the civilians were going to lower Lofa County.

Chea described the fighting - in Foya and Kolahun - as serious but denied claims that the insurgents, who call themselves Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, had seized control of a vast swathe of territory. Chea said government troops still controlled the provincial towns of Voinjama, Vahun and Zorzor. He blamed the cross-border attacks on Guinea, which has made similar charges against Liberia." (IRIN-WA 6 April 2001)

"Since February increased conflict, fear of conflict and the high numbers of ill-disciplined troops and armed personnel in Lofa have continued to force people to move." (SCF 22 May 2001)

"In March, fighting between dissidents and government forces moved further southwards towards Tarvey, Gbapolu County. The latest reports of fighting come from Gelmah to the south of Kolahun. This movement southwards has caused previously internally displaced people (IDPs) to flee again further south. Almost all of the 2,000 registered IDPs who were in Tarvey until recently, left there at the end of March, some of them moving on foot further south to Amtel and the rest fleeing into the bush." (SCF 6 April 2001)

### ***April***

"Liberian authorities said Wednesday [25 April 2001] that fighting in northern Lofa County had stepped up with "dissidents" occupying five key border towns.

Information Minister Reginald Goodrich told reporters the government had launched simultaneous counter-attacks on the towns of Foya, Kolahun, Vahun, Voinjama and Zorzor in a bid to recapture them.

He said the fighting had displaced about 60,000 people according to the Liberia refugee agency.

The pro-government Guardian newspaper said fighting had intensified in the provincial capital Voinjama since sports minister Francois Massaquoi was killed there last week.

"Government troops, apparently troubled by the killing of the late youth and sports minister, have launched an all-out counter-attack aimed at regaining control of Voinjama," the paper said Wednesday.

Reports reaching Monrovia say the fighting in northern Liberia is spreading westwards.

An escapee who identified himself as Yanquoi Zayzay said rebel forces over the weekend attacked Cooper Town in the newly-created County of Gbarpolu about 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of here." (AFP 25 April 2001)

"A UN official Wednesday expressed concern about "what appears to be prospects of increased fighting in Liberia."

[...]

She said figures presented by the Liberia agency responsible for internally displaced persons show some 60,000 persons have been uprooted, 15,000 of them generated in the past few weeks of intense fighting." (PANA 25 April 2001)

### **July**

"Liberia's Defence Ministry reported renewed fighting in the northern county of Lofa even as relief organisations continued to appeal for assistance for people displaced by the insecurity there. Defence Minister Daniel Chea said on Tuesday [3 July 2001] that Lofa was under attack by Guinea-based rebels, AFP and humanitarian sources reported.

Chea urged the international community to pressure Conakry into stopping "armed incursions" into Liberian territory, AFP said.

[...] my forces in Voinjama (the main town in Lofa) informed me about renewed attacks in the area from Guinea," AFP quoted Chea as saying on Tuesday. "They came under heavy mortar and artillery attack." He said the worst-affected areas were the towns of Barkedou and Sakonadu, about 170 km north of Monrovia on the Guinea border.

Chea said thousands of civilians, mainly women and children who had returned to Voinjama after pro-government forces expelled the dissidents from Lofa in June, were reported to have fled into the forest. He also reported rebel attacks in Kolahun, about 310 km north of the Liberian capital." (IRIN-WA, 4 July 2001)

"Most IDPs interviewed about the security situation did not witness the actual fighting. They stated that they heard the echoes of guns and saw the movement of surrounding villagers who informed them that the invading forces were coming. A few IDPs saw the dissidents who they claimed were trying to lure them into recruitment.

[...]

Fighting is ongoing in Lofa. According to the Minister of Defence, the GOL is not in complete control of Kolahun, Vahun and other surrounding villages. Liberians are still moving southwards as a result of the fighting." (International Organisation e-mail, 27 July 2001)

## **Background of the conflict**

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### **A chronology of significant events (1980-2000)**

1980: Samuel Doe leads military coup ending 150 years of domination by Americo Liberians.

1980-1990: Doe's regime (supported by the United States) marked by violence and suppression of repeated coup attempts.

1989: NPFL under the leadership of Charles Taylor commences rebellion in northern Liberia (December).

1990: NPFL reaches Monrovia but is repelled by ECOMOG (Economic Community Monitoring Group, ECOWAS) peacekeeping force (August). Doe killed. Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) installed under Amost Sawyer.

1991: First peace talks fail. Yamoussoukro (Cote d'Ivoire) talks begin. United Liberation Movement for Democracy (ULIMO) begins operations against NPFL.

1992: NPFL launches new attack on Monrovia, repulsed by ECOMOG (October). UN secretary-general appoints special representative (November).

1993: New peace agreement signed at Cotonou, Benin (July). Disarmament fails amid increased factional fighting. UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) created and deployed.

1994: Sawyer resigns (March). IGNU replaced by Liberian National Transitional Government (LNTG). New peace process started in Akosombo, Ghana (September) under President Jerry Rawlings.

1995: Continuation of fighting. New peace accord signed at Abuja, Nigeria (August). LNTG II installed. Wider ECOMOG deployment halted by renewed fighting.

1996: Renewed factional fighting leads to all-out conflict in Monrovia (April). ECOMOG does not intervene. Fresh peace accord signed in Abuja (August). New timetable for disarmament (November) and elections (May 1997) adopted.  
(Scott 1998, pp. 100-101)

1997 July - Presidential and legislative elections held. Charles Taylor wins a landslide and his National Patriotic Party wins a majority of seats in the National Assembly. International observers declare the elections free and fair.

#### Border fighting

1999 January - Ghana and Nigeria accuse Liberia of supporting Revolutionary United Front rebels in Sierra Leone. Britain and the US threaten to suspend international aid to Liberia.

1999 April - Rebel forces thought to have crossed from Guinea attack the town of Voinjama. Subsequent fighting leads to the displacement of more than 25,000 people.

1999 September - Guinea accuses Liberian forces of entering its territory and attacking border villages.

2000 July - The US threatens to impose sanctions on Liberia unless it curtails its ties with Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front.

2000 September - Liberian forces launch "massive offensive" against rebels in the north. Liberia [sic!] accuses Guinean troops of shelling border villages.

(BBC, January 10, 2001, "TIMELINE LIBERIA")

## **Peace initiatives were continually thwarted during 1990s**

- Over ten cease-fire agreements were signed and broken during period of war

"Over 10 cease fire agreements were signed and broken before the final 'Abuja Agreement' was reached in November 1996." (IRC 2000)

"In November 1990, a fragile cease-fire was undertaken and lasted for almost 2 years. Upon the intervention of the United Liberation Movement for a Democratic Liberia (Ulimo) troops based in Sierra Leone, the N.P.F.L. responded by launching a violent attack on Monrovia in October 1992.

During 1993 and 1994 a series of cease-fire agreements were signed, but they were always broken, sometimes even before coming into effect. The peace agreement signed between the different factions in August 1995 seemed promising. Yet, the fighting resumed in April 1996 and violent battles between the different factions took place in Monrovia for 7 weeks." (ACF 2000)

"Numerous attempts were made at the regional level to resolve the conflict through peaceful means. ECOWAS brokered a series of peace agreements, including the Yamoussoukro Accord of October 1991, the Cotonou Agreement of July 1993, the Akosombo Agreement of September 1994, the Accra Agreement of December 1994 and the Abuja Agreement of August 1995, which provided for a cease-fire, disarmament and elections to be held in August 1996." (UNSG 12 September 1997, para. 24)

## **Violence broke out again with April 1996 crisis in Monrovia**

- Monrovia is engulfed by violence for several weeks in April 1996
- 3,000 killed and over 300,000 forced to flee their homes
- Non-essential humanitarian personnel evacuated and aid looted

"1996 has been a year marked by a renewal of violence, especially in Monrovia, which had until then been considered a haven of peace. The fighting began on 6 April when the provisional authorities tried to arrest the leader of one of the factions, Roosevelt Johnson, who is a suspected accomplice in a murder case.

Starting on 6 April and for several weeks, Monrovia was engulfed by violence and horror. Stores were looted. Offices and warehouses of the humanitarian agencies were sacked, forcing them to evacuate all non-essential personnel. Nothing seemed to stop the spiral of violence. Not even an orphanage was spared. On 30 April armed men assaulted and looted the Vahun Children's Center, an orphanage run jointly by a local agency and UNHCR, where 75 unaccompanied Sierra Leonean children and some 20 Liberian orphans were sheltered.

The Ministry of Health building that sheltered 1,200 Sierra Leonean refugees and 4,300 displaced Liberians were seized by armed men, who made it their barracks. Refugees and displaced persons fled and ended up crammed in a former UNICEF warehouse that had been looted at the onset of the hostilities and had no water or toilet facilities.

Part of the population sought refuge in the compound of the United States Embassy, protected by American soldiers and located in the residential district of Mamba Point. Thousands of others tried to leave Monrovia, a city at the mercy of drugged teen-agers, their bodies wound with amulets in a mad search for invincibility." (Kpatindé 1996, "1996 in Review", paras. 3-6)

"The 6 April crisis marked yet another tragic episode in the more than six-year-old conflict. It is estimated that 46 percent of Monrovia's population, some 361,880 persons, were displaced and some 3,000 persons killed in the fighting." (DHA 23 October 1996, sect. 2.3)

### **Abuja Peace Agreement finally reached in August 1996 and president elected in 1997**

- Peace agreement reached once ECOMOG re-asserts control over Monrovia
- Agreement calls for disarmament, demobilization, and national elections
- Presidential elections conducted in atmosphere of intimidation
- Charles Taylor wins presidency

"The fighting that erupted in Monrovia on 6 April 1996 paralysed the Abuja peace process launched in August 1995. The April crisis, characterised by widespread looting and a complete breakdown of law and order, continued until the Military Observer Group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) peace-keeping force asserted a tenuous control over the city in late May.

Intensive diplomacy by various parties to put the peace process back on track culminated in the Abuja Agreement of 17 August 1996, reached exactly one year after the Abuja Agreement of 1995." (DHA 23 October 1996, sect. 2.1)

"The agreement provides for disarmament under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Group, demobilization and reintegration of fighters with the help of the United Nations and the donor community and national elections by May 31, 1997." (USAID 1998, FY 1998 Congressional Presentation, "The Development Challenge")

"In July 1997 Taylor won the presidency, and his National Patriotic Party (NPP) won three-quarters of the seats in the Congress, in elections that were administratively free and transparent, but were conducted in an atmosphere of intimidation, as most voters believed that Taylor's forces would resume fighting if Taylor were to lose. The leaders of the former warring factions, including Taylor, did not make any serious attempt to reconcile their differences. In his first year in office, Taylor restored the trappings and ceremony customarily associated with the presidency, but his NPP Government did not pass any significant legislation. The judiciary is subject to political influence, economic pressure, and corruption." (US DOS 26 February 1999, para. 1)

### **Guinea-based Liberian dissidents attack and destabilise Lofa County, causing displacements (2000-2001)**

- Liberian rebels operating from Guinea carry out attacks in Lofa County
- Liberian government expels ambassadors, closes borders, March 2001
- Liberian National Security Adviser accused the Guinean army and a Sierra Leonean militia of supporting rebel forces fighting in northern Lofa County in March/April 2001

#### ***General:***

"In April and August 1999, Liberian rebels operating from neighboring Guinea carried out attacks in Lofa County, northern Liberia. Although not confirmed, the rebel attacks were thought to be led by former fighters from the ULIMO-K faction who were largely ethnic Mandingos. The fighting resulted in civilian deaths and displacement, forcing thousands of Liberians and Sierra Leonean refugees to flee.

In July 2000, another invasion was launched by a group calling itself Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) from the Guinea border into Liberia, resulting in fighting and displacement yet again in Lofa County. These periodic eruptions of violence contributed to the continuing destabilization of the subregion, and within Liberia assumed an ethnic dimension as the government indiscriminately blamed members of the Krahn and Mandingo communities for the attacks." (HRW 2000, Human Rights Developments)

***Liberian government expels ambassadors, closes borders (March 2001)***

"President Charles Taylor closed Liberia's border with Sierra Leone at midnight on Monday [19 March 2001] and ordered the ambassadors of that country and Guinea to leave within three days, diplomatic sources said.

The government said its measure followed serious incidents of border insecurity. It did not elaborate, diplomatic sources in Monrovia told IRIN. However, the city's newspapers reported on Tuesday that the envoys, Kemoh Salia-Bao and Baba Soare of Sierra Leone and Guinea, were declared unwelcome because of what the government said were "acts incompatible with their status"." (IRIN-WA 20 March 2001)

***Liberian National Security Adviser accused the Guinean army and a Sierra Leonean militia of supporting rebel forces (March/April 2001)***

"[Following renewed fighting in Lofa County in March 2001] the Liberian government has accused the Guinean army and a Sierra Leonean militia of supporting rebel forces fighting in northern Lofa County, the BBC reported on Sunday [29 April 2001].

Liberian National Security Adviser Lewis Brown said that in the past few days "serious artillery and aerial support from Guinea" had been used against Liberian troops. He said intelligence reports confirmed that the Kamajors, a militia force loyal to the Sierra Leonean government, had teamed up with Liberian dissident forces to provide ground support. There has been no independent confirmation of the minister's claims, the BBC said." (IRIN-WA 30 April 2001)

## **Other factors fuelling the conflict**

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### **Element of ethnicity to be considered in Liberian context (2000-2001)**

- Government has blamed Krahn and Mandingo groups for recent violence in North
- Mandingos are considered by many Liberians to have strong affinities with Guinea

"Liberia's vice-president, Moses Blah, has warned against rising ethnic unrest in the northern county of Nimba.

Blah, quoted on state-run radio, described the tension between members of the Mandingo and Mano ethnic groups as 'disturbing'. Blah headed a presidential committee that visited Nimba County last weekend to investigate the ethnic clashes.

Liberian newspapers reported on 10 October [2000] that armed police had been deployed to the Nimba town of Ganta to quell riots between groups of Manos and Mandingos. Reports said the riots in Ganta, which is located about 220 km northeast of Monrovia, had left the city centre deserted and some homes and businesses looted.



Some reports said the clashes are rooted in a land dispute. The unrest has been aggravated by tension between the Liberian and Guinean governments, which have accused each other of backing dissidents. Mandingos are considered by many Liberians to be close to Guinea." (IRIN-WA 15 October 2000)

"The festering ethnic clashes between the Mandingo, Gio and Mano tribes in Nimba and Bong Counties could continue and cause further internal displacement." (UN November 2000, Republic of Liberia)

"Ethnic Krahn and Mandingo people, historically seen to be allied with the repression of the former Doe government and with anti-Taylor factions during the war, were particularly susceptible to harassment at the hands of the state security apparatus. Following the violence in Monrovia in 1998, Krahn were targeted for extrajudicial executions, harassment, and politically motivated criminal charges. In the aftermath of the Lofa County incursions in 1999, security forces killed, tortured, and mistreated civilians, particularly members of the Mandingo ethnic group. During the incursions and counter-attacks in Lofa County, hundreds were killed and thousands of citizens as well as Sierra Leonean refugees were forced to flee the area. Although some of the alleged abuses by the security forces were investigated by the government, in all cases security personnel were treated leniently or exonerated. Since the 1999 and 2000 rebel incursions in Lofa County, Mandingo residents remain afraid to return to their homes." (HRW 2000, Human Rights Developments)

# POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

## Global figures

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### **Upsurge of conflict in Lofa County creates some 60,000 IDPs (February-May 2001)**

- As of May 2001, the registered IDP population from Lofa stood at 21,739, with additionally thousands of people displaced living in Monrovia
- As of May 2001, the total IDP population is estimated at 60,000
- The Liberian government estimated the number at 80,000 IDPs
- As of 31 July 2001, still 10,000 IDPs remained in flight
- In July 2001, the total IDP population stood at 41,000

"The upsurge in conflict along the Guinea border in February this year first triggered the movement of people out of Lofa county into West and Central areas of the country. [...] As of May 17th the total registered displaced population from Lofa stood at 21,739. There are additionally thousands of people displaced living in Monrovia." (SCF 22 May 2001)

"From the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, the estimated number of IDPs is 60,000. With Lofa County's huge population of over 200,000, this number looks conservative. Already, about 30,000 IDPs have been registered at campsites, with between 500-700 arriving daily." (World Vision 29 May 2001)

"A UN official Wednesday [25 April 2001] expressed concern about "what appears to be prospects of increased fighting in Liberia."

[...]

She said figures presented by the Liberia agency responsible for internally displaced persons show some 60,000 persons have been uprooted, 15,000 of them generated in the past few weeks of intense fighting." (PANA 25 April 2001)

### ***While the government spoke of 80,000 IDPs (May 2001)***

"The flow of IDPs fleeing the fighting in Lofa into Bong, Nimba and Cape Mount counties as well as Monrovia itself created pressure for emergency humanitarian assistance. An estimated 14,000 IDPs camped in Bong, Nimba and Cape Mount required immediate assistance with additional hundreds streaming daily. The government placed the figure at 80,000." (UNICEF Liberia Situation Report April/May 2001)

### ***As of 31 July 2001, still 10,000 IDPs remained in flight***

"Population movements from Lofa County have temporarily stabilised, however, an estimated 10,000 people are thought to be on the road or gathered in inaccessible areas." (ICRC 31 July 2001)

### ***Following is a figure as of 24 July 2001:***

"The total population of IDPs stands at approximately 41,000" (International Organisation email 27 July 2001)

## **As many as 46,000 persons were said to have been newly displaced in 2000**

- Estimates of newly displaced in 2000 range from 15,000 to 46,000
- The newly displaced originate mainly from Upper Lofa County
- ICRC reports a number of displaced people headed towards Kolahun (near the Sierra Leonean border) or towards the central part of the country (Zorzor, Gbarnga), and are reported to have returned home

" In October [2000] the fighting in northern Lofa county further increased the number of displaced persons. There were an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 IDPs in the country at year's end. International and local NGOs faced limited funding and resources to assist these IDPs." (USDOS February 2001, sect. 2, d)

"In response to the current crisis Save the Children UK participated in a series of joint interagency assessments. The assessments concluded that an estimated 30,000 persons were displaced [in the Upper Lofa county] and had difficulties in accessing their farms to harvest their crops." (SCF 24 November 2000, Save the Children's response)

"The present IDP population is estimated at about 46,000 located in Zorzor and Salayea districts in Lofa county and a few parts of Bong; ..." (UN November 2000, Sub-regional Context)

"As a result of the continuous attacks since July [2000], an estimated 15,000 Liberian[s] have been displaced from Upper Lofa county and fled to other regions within the country. The Government of Liberia estimates that many more thousands are currently displaced within Liberia itself, while another 3,000 are remaining in Guinea to be repatriated." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

"Although it is difficult to gather reliable information on the events in Lofa county, Liberia, there are indications that following the violence there in July [2000] a number of displaced people headed towards **Kolahun** (near the Sierra Leonean border) or towards the central part of the country (**Zorzor, Gbarnga**). They are since reported to have returned home." (ICRC 15 December 2000, Humanitarian situation)

## **Differing estimates exist regarding the current number of "old caseload" IDPs (2000)**

*Concerning the number of persons still displaced from the civil conflict of 1989-1997, the Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) states:*

"The LRRRC say it needs to strengthen the capacity of the remaining communities to attract people, including some of the close to 100,000 IDPs in and around Monrovia to return to the countryside and stay." (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, para. 2)

*whereas the UN Sub-Committee on Nutrition indicates:*

"An estimated 75% of IDPs have returned to their places of origin and it is probable that the remaining 25% may settle permanently where they are. The Government of Liberia and WFP no longer consider these people to be displaced." (UN Sub-Committee on Nutrition 25 July 2000, p. 22)

*whereas UNHCR estimates:*

"In Liberia, some 12,200 IDPs returned to their place of origin [during the first quarter 2000]. Consequently, the IDP population estimate decreased to 78,300 (-14%)." (UNHCR Statistics, 31 May 2000, sect. 2)

## **Figures for internally displaced in 1999 are incongruent**

### *LRRRC figures indicate:*

"Although accurate statistics on the return of internally displaced populations were difficult to obtain, the Liberian Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission estimated in September [1999] that 110,000 displaced persons living in camps had returned to their home areas and that an estimated 40,000 displaced persons remained in Monrovia." (HRW 2000, sect. 1, para. 9)

*UNHCR statistical overview table indicates that there were 90,600 internally displaced persons assisted by UNHCR at the end of 1999* (UNHCR 1999, Table 1.3)

### *and U.S. Committee for Refugees estimates:*

"About 50,000 Liberians remained internally displaced at year's end [1999]. The exact number was difficult to estimate because many displaced persons lived with friends and relatives rather than in official displacement shelters." (USCR 2000, p. 99)

## **Numbers of internally displaced have gradually decreased since end of war (1996-1998)**

- Between 75,000 and 115,000 displaced at end of 1998
- Some 500,000 displaced at end of 1997

*In 1998, the UNHCR statistical overview indicated that there were 112,600 internally displaced persons in Liberia at the end of 1998* (UNHCR 1998, Table 1.3)

### *whereas U.S. Committee for Refugees stated:*

"By year's end [1998], more than 75,000 Liberians were still living in shelters for the internally displaced, according to some estimates. Many more uprooted Liberians may have continued to live on their own. Large numbers of internally displaced persons left shelters in Monrovia during the year and presumably returned to their home areas." (USCR 1999, p. 74)

### *In 1997:*

"The UN estimated that some 750,000 Liberians were internally displaced at the beginning of the year [1997]. That this estimate remained essentially unchanged at year's end reflected the uncertainty about the number of displaced persons living outside formal shelters. In the absence of definitive reports, USCR estimated that at least 500,000 Liberians remained internally displaced at year's end [1997]. Most displaced persons lived in Monrovia." (USCR 1998, p. 77)

## **Geographical distribution**

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## Major relocations of IDPs fleeing violence in Lofa County (May 2001)

"With the relaxation of restrictions on crossing the Lofa Bridge, more IDPs are arriving from Lofa County to Bong County. As of 23 May, about 17,566 persons have been relocated to Gbalatuah, Bellefanai and CARI, after being verified by the Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission. An estimated 5,000 IDPs have been relocated to Jennemanna in Grand Cape Mount County from Kumgbor, AMTEL, Tarvey and other villages in Gbarpolu County." (WFP 25 May 2001)

## The newly displaced in the North have sought refuge in various districts and towns (2000-2001)

- IDP population living in seven camps (July 2001)
- After renewed fighting in the first half of 2001, IDPs flee mainly to Bong County and Bomi County
- Majority of displaced persons flee to Gbarnga, Kolahun and Zorzor
- Many persons have found refuge at Gbarma, Amtel and Camp Alpha
- A small percentage has moved on to Monrovia

### *Geographical distribution as of July 2001:*

"The total population of IDPs stands at approximately 41,000. They are spread in seven camps, five in Bong County, (CARI—I, CARI--II, TV Tower, Belafanai and Gbalatuah), Jenemana, in Cape Mount County and Bopolu in Gbarpolu County.

### IDP STATISTICS:

<u>NO.</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
1.	Jenemana	4,331
2.	Bopolu	2,432
3.	CARI -- I	9,127
4.	CARI—II	7,443
5.	TV Tower	6,020
6.	Belefenai:	
a.	Gorpu Dolo Public School-	4,750
b.	Lutheran School	2,660
c.	Belefenai Market	3,190
Total		10,600
7.	Gbalatuah	1,109

**TOTAL 41,062"**

(International Organisation e-mail 27 July 2001)

"The fighting in Lofa has displaced thousands of people. Save the Children, a non-governmental organisation, reported that up to 21 May, 27,647 IDPs had been registered, 20,597 of them in neighbouring Bong County. Thousands of IDPs waiting to cross into Bong were being held up by security forces at a bridge over a river between the two counties." (IRIN-WA 25 May 2001)

"More IDPs are arriving in these counties from Lofa County with the relaxation of restriction on crossing the Lofa Bridge. An estimated 30,000 IDPs are presently sheltered in Gbalatuah, Bellefanai, CARI, Melekie and TV Tower, outside Gbarnga in Bong County. 17,000 IDPs residing in Gbalatuah and Bellefanai will be relocated shortly. ACF has registered 4,026 IDPs in Jennemanna, Grand Cape Mount County. There are reports of IDPs still sheltered in Kumgbor, and Lofa Congo. A group of 3,052 IDPs were also registered in Fassama and Baloma in Belle-Baloma District, Gbarpolu County but will be relocated to more accessible sites." (WFP 1 June 2001)

It [WFP] said 30,000 of the displaced were in Bong County and 10,000 in Grand Cape Mount County. WFP regional spokesman Ramin Rafirasme told IRIN that about 70 percent of them were women and children, living in the open air and in abandoned buildings." (IRIN-WA 14 June 2001)

***figures and locations as of March 2001***

"In February 2001, the latest fighting erupted in Kolahun District in Lofa, close to the Sierra Leonean border. This fighting has produced a new wave of internally displaced persons (IDPs). In addition to the 20,000 IDPs who moved to Salayea District following the October, 2000 fighting, an estimated 5,000 have moved further west and taken refuge in the districts of Kongba, Gbarma and Tubmanburg city in Bomi County. [...] Below is a breakdown of displaced people and their present locations."

No.	COUNTY	DISTRICT	Towns	Population IDPS
1.	Lofa	Salayea	Kpaiyea	3,000
2.	"	"	Gbanway	2,500
3.	"	"	Yarpuah	3,000
4.	"	"	Telemai	1,500
5.	"	"	Salayea	3,500
6.	"	"	Telemu	1,000
7.	"	"	Gorlue	3,000
8.	"	"	Ganglota	2,000
9.	"	Kongba	Tabay	1,100
10.	"	"	Kumgbo	300
12.	"	Gbarma	Gbarma Town	500
11.	Bomi	Klay	Tubmanburg	700
12.	Lofa-Bomi	Kongba, Gbarma	Various	2,900
Total				25,000

(ACT Appeal, 30 March 2001, pp.3-5)

***Reports from February 2001:***

"The medical charity, Medecins Sans Frontieres has dispatched a team of doctors to western Liberia where hundreds of civilians have fled fighting in embattled Lofa county, MSF coordinator Robert Parker said Wednesday [14 February 2001].

Parker said the team will visit **Gbarma**, **Amtel** and **Camp Alpha** where nearly 1,000 internally displaced persons are currently residing and sleeping in the open air." (PANA 14 February 2001)

***Reports from October 2000:***

"On October 7th [2000] Zorzor town came under attack for the second time in the space of 2 weeks. An estimated 30,000 civilians deserted the town of Zorzor after it was shelled by rebel forces believed to be operating from Guinea. The shelling has forced civilians to head towards the town of **Gbarnga**, although

many are now staying in **towns between Zorzor and Gbarnga in neighbouring Bong County** and are in need of food, shelter and sanitation facilities. It seems that only those who have family to stay with have been permitted to enter Gbarnga." (SCF 24 November 2000, Current Situation)

" A two-day (28-29 September [2000]) joint assessment to Lower Lofa County (Camp Anthel which is a logging company camp located in western Liberia, 175 kms from Monrovia) was conducted by the LNRCS and Federation Relief and Health departments. The LNRCS's Gbarma and Bopolu Branches report that the IDPs started arriving from Voinjama, Foyah and Kolahun districts (travelling through the forest and bush for eight days) on 28 August [2000] seeking refuge at **Camp Anthel**. The first arrivals (150 persons) were led by the Majesty of Voinjama. Approximately ten persons arrived daily, while six persons departed daily to villages nearby and **Monrovia**. During a two-week period, 790 persons were registered. The remaining IDPs have integrated into the local population in the camp. Also, in other nearby towns an additional 200 IDPs have taken refuge in **Joseph Town** and 150 in **Mulbah Town**...

[...]

**Table 1**

The estimated number of Internally Displaced Persons in Zorzor and Salayea Districts in Upper Lofa County:

Towns	Adults		Elderly		Lac. Mothers	Preg Women	Children 0-4 yrs		Children 6-15 yrs		Total		
	M	F	M	F			M	F	M	F	Families	Persons	
Salayea	4	5	6	13	15	3	11	16	7	9	35	89	
Kpayea	4	2	3	0	0	0	10	12	12	16	15	59	
Fissibu	3	5	52	26	38	45	0	51	98	75	78	100	498
Konia	1	8	248	195	209	168	104	768	821	1,104	1,492	843	5,298
Sucreeamu	6	8	9	6	16	8	29	45		53	50	248	
Yarpuah	5	1	0	0	0	0	9	7	3	5	7	30	
Zorzor	8	9	95	26	24	13	10	153	168	54	69	70	701
Borkeza	8	11	22	35	11	9	69	53	39	45	60	302	
Gbanway	2	5	3	3	2	0	9	9	5	3	10	32	
Telemai	5	6	8	2	2	0	4	2	12	8	5	13	
Total	3	4	433	298	330	272	134	1,113	1,231	1,379	1,778	1,195	7,270

(IFRC 19 October 2000)

"He [Patrick David of Action contre la Faim] said 'some thousands' [of internally displaced persons] were sighted in the towns of **Gorlu**, **Ganglota** and **Selayae**, as well as a village known as the **Selayae Lutheran Technical Institute**. About 300 displaced were travelling along the 40-km **road between Selayae and the St. Paul River Bridge**. Thousands of others could be hiding in the bush or stranded in towns inaccessible by the fighting, David said.

[...]

He expressed concern for 800 IDPs whom humanitarian agencies had identified in the town of **Luyema**, also in Lofa County, in late September [2000]. They are inaccessible now because of the fighting. The latest assessment mission, led by the Liberian Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, included ACF and a number of other international and local humanitarian agencies." (IRIN-WA 16 October 2000)

"More than 15,000 people have fled fighting in Liberia's northern Lofa County and settled in the central town of **Gbarnga**, relief workers disclosed Tuesday [10 October 2000]." (PANA 10 October 2000, "Thousands Flee Fresh Fighting")

### ***Reports from July 2000:***

"Although it is difficult to gather reliable information on the events in Lofa county, Liberia, there are indications that following the violence there in July [2000] a number of displaced people headed towards **Kolahun** (near the Sierra Leonean border) or towards the central part of the country (**Zorzor, Gbarnga**). They are since reported to have returned home." (ICRC 15 December 2000, Humanitarian situation)

### **Majority of "old caseload" internally displaced in and around Monrovia (1996-2000)**

- ICRC reports in March 2001 that there are 3,000 IDPs in Monrovia from the south of Liberia
- According to government, as many as 100,000 internally displaced persons reportedly still in Monrovia
- At height of displacement, pre-war population of Monrovia tripled

"Today, Monrovia is still temporary home to almost 3,000 displaced persons from the south. For nearly a decade, unusable or dangerous roads have prevented these people from returning to their homes. But this is changing." (ICRC 2 March 2001)

"Many IDPs still remain in former VOA (Voice of America) compound with the Sierra Leonean refugees." (Nowrojee, 13 October 2000)

"The LRRRC says it needs to strengthen the capacity of the remaining communities to attract people, including some of the close to 100,000 IDPs in and around Monrovia . . ." (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, para. 2)

"The pre-war population of Monrovia was estimated at 500,000. With the massive inflow of displaced persons, it has practically tripled in six years. 'The greatest concentration of displaced persons is found in Monrovia and its outskirts,' said Kallu Kalumiya, UNHCR's representative in Liberia...

[...]

UNHCR's office in Liberia, which opened in 1991, estimates the total number of displaced persons at around 1.2 million, of which 800,000 are in Monrovia or its suburbs; 110,000 in Margibi county, near the capital; 82,000 in Grand Bassa county (whose main city is the port of Buchanan); 80,000 in Cape Mount county, on the Liberian-Sierra Leonean border; and 56,000 and 40,000 respectively in Bong and in Bomi counties." (Kpatindé 1996, "Internally Displaced Persons", paras. 9-10)

"Most of the internally displaced are currently on the fringes of the capital – Monrovia, in the cities of Harbel and Buchanan east of Monrovia, in the Kakata and Gbamga areas to the north-east of Monrovia, or in Tubmanburng and parts of Grand Cape Mount towards the north-west of the capital." (UNDP 1997, sect. A.1)

## **Disaggregated figures**

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### **Majority of IDPs are women and children (2000-2001)**

- Some 70 percent of 40,000 IDPs who fled violence in Lofa County are women and children, June 2001
- In October 2000, IFRC reported that women and children constitute the majority of IDPs



"The World Food Programme has finished delivering emergency rations to 40,000 Liberians fleeing fighting between government troops and dissidents in Lofa County, the WFP regional office in Abidjan reported on Thursday [14 June 2001].

It said 30,000 of the displaced were in Bong County and 10,000 in Grand Cape Mount County. WFP regional spokesman Ramin Rafirasme told IRIN that about 70 percent of them were women and children, living in the open air and in abandoned buildings." (IRIN-WA 14 June 2001)

"The IDPs lack food, shelter and clothing, and they appear to be moving from one place to another in search of food and shelter. Some households are headed by children, and women and children constitute the highest percentage of IDPs and are the most vulnerable beneficiaries. An estimated 600 IDPs are staying at the Lutheran hospital grounds in Zorzor." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

# PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

## General

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### **In 2001, renewed fighting in the Lofa County forced previously displaced further south**

- Previously internally displaced flee southwards to Amtel in March 2001
- IDPs from Lofa have been reportedly seeking refugee in Bomi County
- Some 700 to 1,000 people arrived at Bong County camp each day by May 2001
- Many IDPs blocked at Saint Paul Bridge, close to Gbarnga, by Liberian soldiers, May 2001

"In March, fighting between dissidents and government forces moved further southwards towards Tarvey, Gbapolu County. The latest reports of fighting come from Gelmah to the south of Kolahun. This movement southwards has caused previously internally displaced people (IDPs) to flee again further south." (SCF 6 April 2001)

"A humanitarian source in Monrovia told IRIN that people from Lofa have been reportedly seeking refuge in Bomi County, whose main towns are about half an hour's drive from the capital. The source said some reports were quoting up to 10,000 IDPs between Lofa and Bomi.

There have also been reports from credible sources that students from Cuttington University just outside Gbarnga, capital of Bong County, have been leaving for Monrovia for fear of being overtaken by the instability." (IRIN-WA 27 April 2001)

Some 700 to 1,000 people are arriving at the Bong County camp each day. About 12,000 others are waiting at a bridge between Lofa and Bong counties, with the Liberian Army strictly controlling how many can escape to safety each day." (ARC 10 May 2001)

"For the past two weeks [end of May 2001], thousands of people have been fleeing the fighting in Liberia's northern Lofa County, heading for the Gbarnga region, in the center of the country. Similar population movements had taken place in previous weeks, heading toward Jenne Manna, in the southwestern part of the region.

[...]

Furthermore, hundreds of people are still blocked at the Saint Paul Bridge, close to Gbarnga. Although authorization to cross the bridge was given last week, only women, children and the elderly are effectively being allowed to cross, under the supervision of Liberian soldiers." (MSF 21 May 2001)

Lofa county, with a population of around 60.000 people, is emptying and the stream of IDP's continues. Some 15 - 18.000 have come out via the bridge and the aid agencies are estimating that a further 12.000 or so may choose this route to come out. Another 6.000 people have come out on the western side into Grand Cape Mount county and are safe for now at Jenemana." (ACT 25 May 2001)

### **Some of the newly displaced crossed difficult terrain to find safety in Gbarnga at end of 2000**

- Displaced are arriving in Gbarnga wounded and haggard

"Relief workers told PANA the displaced people reached Gbarnga after 'travelling through dense forests and other difficult terrain, something that has taken a toll on their physical state.'" (PANA 10 October 2000, "Thousands Flee Fresh Fighting")

"It said as a result of the dissident attacks on Zorzor District, thousands of persons displaced by the war are now trekking to Gbarnga, 60 kilometres (37 miles) to the south." (AFP 10 October 2000)

"The paper [the independent Inquirer newspaper] quoted the fleeing residents, who are mainly women, children, and the elderly, as saying heavy artillery was used in the attack.

'They are launching sporadically while the particles are wounding are people,' one displaced persons told the Inquirer.

The paper's correspondent in Gbarnga said one of the displaced, an elderly woman, sustained deep shrapnel wounds in the leg.

Many of the displaced, the paper observed, arrived in Gbarnga half-naked and looking haggard." (AFP 9 October 2000)

### **Internally displaced fled to Monrovia during civil war (1995-2000)**

- Displaced families seek safety in ECOMOG-controlled areas
- Internally displaced squat in abandoned buildings
- The Liberian population is very mobile and many upcountry families have relatives in the city

"Humanitarian agencies estimated in July 1997 that by the end of the civil war over 130,000 IDPs had crowded into areas around Monrovia protected by the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG." (IRIN-WA 30 October 1998, "Liberia")

". . . 750,000 internally displaced persons who have flocked to the ECOMOG controlled areas of Grand Bassa, Margibi and Montserrado counties, 320,000 of who are living in shelters." (DHA 1 September 1995, para. 2)

"In Liberia, about 500,000 IDPs fled to the capital, Monrovia, during the fighting from 1990 onwards. The Liberian population is very mobile and many upcountry families have relatives in the city. With only a few exceptions, protection was effectively ensured by the presence of ECOMOG forces." (Nowrojee 1998, p. 15)

### **Liberia underwent three types of population movements during civil war (1998)**

"In essence, Liberia has undergone three types of population change: areas like Lofa and Grand Gedeh have been effectively *deserted*; areas like Bong and Nimba have been heavily *depopulated*; and havens like Montserrado have been substantially *swollen*. The patterns of displacement have been driven by factional and ECOMOG activities; ethnic factors, both negative and positive, such as targeting by factions (negative) or maintaining links (positive); and levels of aid." (Scott 1998, p. 114)

# PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

## Physical security

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### ACF mission highlights plight of IDPs within Lofa County (July 2001)

- Thousands of people caught in the fighting in Lofa County surviving in very unsafe conditions
- Protection and assistance urgent and primordial for their survival

"Action against Hunger (ACF-French acronym) said on Wednesday it was worried about the many civilians caught in the fighting in Lofa county, northern Liberia.

[...]

The county has been inaccessible to humanitarian workers. However, the head of ACF's Liberia mission, Florence Descacq, and ACF volunteer Karine Michotte went recently to Zorzor, eastern Lofa, with permits from the government and found that thousands of people were surviving in very unsafe conditions, without any help, in villages and forests, ACF said. They also found that the tension in the zone was extremely high and the people there lived in fear. "Many have been victims of abuses perpetrated by combatants," ACF said.

Lofa is traditionally Liberia's rice bowl, but its people have few resources and have not been able to reap their rice harvests. "It is urgent and primordial for their survival that they be guaranteed protection and given assistance," ACF said." (IRIN-WA 25 July 2001)

### Vulnerable groups within the IDP population face protection problems

- Female IDPs fleeing violence subject to torture and rape (Spring 2001)
- Internally displaced children are at risk both physically and emotionally, and are often exposed to exploitation and abuse (2000-2001)

"In early March 2001, four other women, two of them Mandingos, and another 17-year-old girl, also suspected of supporting the dissidents, were reportedly arrested at checkpoints in upper Lofa County, held in Vahun for a few weeks and gang-raped by members of the ATU and the SOD. Two of the victims were wounded with a knife when they refused to have sex with the security officers who then raped them." (AI 30 April 2001)

"Since the renewal of armed incursions from Guinea into Lofa County in July 2000, the human rights situation has progressively deteriorated. Women and girls fleeing the outbreak of hostilities since February 2001 have been arrested at checkpoints and gang-raped by Liberian government forces. In early April 2001, a pregnant woman was grabbed near Zorzor, Lofa County, by an officer of the Anti-Terrorist Unit (ATU), a special government security unit. She was repeatedly raped until being released a few days later. ATU officers beat her and stamped on her stomach, as a result of which she lost her baby." (AI 30 April 2001)

"Children are vulnerable to attacks by both rebel and government forces; women and girls are reportedly being raped; there is a serious lack of access to food supplies and clean water; there is a lack of access to adequate health provision; diarrhoea amongst IDPs is on the increase; child protection relating to status of young boys; separation of children from parents and families." (SCF 22 May 2001)

"Displaced children suffer the emotional disorder of being uprooted from their homes, as well as extreme material deprivation. These children experience little or no access to educational opportunities and livelihood options that are not exploitative. Variable access to food sources does not allow the children to sustain a good level of nutrition and variable access to health services including few if any reproductive and sexual health services means it is difficult for them to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Minimal access to water and sanitation services exposes them to the risk of disease. In addition to all of this, inadequate legal frameworks to protect children leaves them open to abuse in the form of rape, exploitation and recruitment into the armed forces." (SCF 24 November 2000, Key issues affecting children)

"Separated children are often particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. They can be recruited as soldiers in the fighting forces or, as in the case of young girls, may be abducted as wives or domestic slaves, forced into exploitative labour or commercial sex or into abusive foster care situations and suffer long term or perhaps permanent family separation. Most of the teenage girls who were reunited with their families this year were either pregnant mothers, or had experienced either sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. Some of the boys and girls have experienced multiple foster care or have lived in abusive foster family situations. Those who came into conflict with the law also suffered from abusive treatments at the hands of the law enforcement agencies." (SCF 24 November 2000, Key issues affecting children and Save the Children's response)

### **Dissident attacks and overall insecurity in North threaten the lives of internally displaced and residents alike (2000)**

- Heavy artillery fighting in Zorzor threatens lives of displaced and residents

"The paper [the independent Inquirer newspaper] quoted the fleeing residents, who are mainly women, children, and the elderly, as saying heavy artillery was used in the attack.

'They are launching sporadically while the particles are wounding are people,' one displaced persons told the Inquirer.

The paper's correspondent in Gbarnga said one of the displaced, an elderly woman, sustained deep shrapnel wounds in the leg.

Many of the displaced, the paper observed, arrived in Gbarnga half-naked and looking haggard." (AFP 9 October 2000)

### **Internally displaced fear harassment by security personnel (1999-2000)**

- Liberians from same region as Samuel Doe feel unsafe
- Lack of discipline among security forces is reason for worry

"The LRRRC gave priority to moving southeasterners from Monrovia because they came from the same region as the late President Samuel Doe. Since Doe's former enemies now rule Liberia, Youquoi said, people from the southeast felt they might be associated with the former leader and thus become targets.

'So staying in Monrovia was almost like a threat to them, through (sic!) people were not directly pursuing them,' he said." (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, sect. 3, para. 1)

"In general, there is a relatively low incidence of random violence in Liberia, considering that the country is only now emerging from a long and bitter war. However, the indiscipline [sic!] and material deprivation among members of the security forces are a problem for refugees and ordinary Liberian citizens, including returnees." (UNHCR September 1999, para. 2)

". . . the human rights situation continues to be a major concern. There are frequent reports of violent attacks on opposition groups, harassment of the press, intimidation of individuals critical of the GOL, and irresponsible police actions." (USAID 2000 "Congressional Presentation FY 2000, "The Development Challenge")

## **Freedom of Movement**

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### **IDPs are restricted in their flight at Saint Paul Bridge by the Liberian army**

- IDPs face rigorous scrutiny at bridge by Liberian army
- IDPs fear conscription, harassment and rape by Liberian soldiers

"People on the run are crossing the bridge [Saint Paul Bridge, close to Gbarnga] on foot, after having gone through rigorous army scrutiny on the Lofa side. Most of those who pass through are women and young children. It is rumored that young boys of above 12 years and able bodied men are afraid to go through the army checkpoints for fear of being conscripted into the army.

[...]

Most of the IDP's have been on the way for four to six weeks, trekking through the bush while heading for Belefanaï. St Paul's river is quite big and only few people attempt to cross on self-made rafts. When reaching Belefanaï, IDP's are scared to go into town for fear of being harassed, and raped. They wait in hiding until a group of IDP's has crossed the bridge and then go into town to be screened by the soldiers. Aid agencies are not allowed to be present." (ACT 25 May 2001)

"Thousands of IDPs waiting to cross into Bong were being held up by security forces at a bridge over a river between the two counties." (IRIN-WA 25 May 2001)

## **SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)**

### **Multiple needs**

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#### **Humanitarian aid insufficient to meet water, food and health needs of the displaced in northern Lofa County (March-July 2001)**

- Massive displacement leads to escalation in the risk of communicable diseases and threatens subsistence needs of displaced
- Level of operations is not enough to meet all the people's water, food and health care needs
- The number of malnourished children has been increasing as the families have used up their food stocks
- In addition to respiratory infections and malaria, cases of bloody diarrhea have also been reported
- IDPs fleeing fighting in Lofa County in need of shelter, food, medicine, water and construction material

"The extremely low access to clean water for human use sustains the high incidence of preventable disease causing increased morbidity and mortality throughout the sub-region. The massive displacement of populations has escalated the risk of communicable diseases in overcrowded refugee and IDP camps. Access to health care among the population, particularly along the border of the three countries, has diminished dramatically because of fighting, the destruction of health facilities, and lack of access for humanitarian actors." (UN OCHA 23 March 2001, p.111)

"As the security situation in Lofa County continues to deteriorate, the level of aid being provided to those displaced by the fighting remains wholly inadequate.

The clashes between Government forces, armed groups and the displaced populations have now [July 2001] spread throughout Lofa County (located in the north of the country). After walking through the forest for three weeks, 35,000 people have now been settled into camps set up on the Jenne Manna, Bopulu and Gbarnga roads. The total number of people fleeing the fighting is probably higher. Unless adequate relief is provided, the plight of those displaced threatens to deteriorate rapidly.

For the past few days, at those sites which MSF teams have been able to access, the number of malnourished children has been increasing as the families have used up their food stocks. In addition to respiratory infections and malaria, cases of bloody diarrhea have also been reported. At Belefannah, where humanitarian organizations have had limited access for the past month, the fate of around 6,000 people is particularly alarming." (MSF 3 July 2001)

"[ARC reported in May 2001 that] desperate Liberians from Lofa County are moving south by foot to locations where they lack clean water, sanitation, shelter, medical care and food. More than 5,000 have gathered at an ill-equipped camp at an old agricultural compound in central Bong County.

"There is no adequate water system, the displaced persons are taking water from a nearby swamp," ARC Liberia Country Director Shaun Skelton reports. "There is no sanitation at all, not even pit latrines. Some corn meal and oil has been distributed by the World Food Program, but it is insufficient." (ARC 10 May 2001)

"The status of mothers and children on the road is particularly bad. In addition there is great concern for those who continue to make their way southwards through the forest on their way to Tarvey. As of the first week of April, 2001 Amtel was reported to be hosting over two and a half thousand IDPs who are in urgent need of clean water and food. People have no shelter and are sleeping mostly out in the open in the rainy season. Diarrhoea is on the rise and there are a number of heavily pregnant women with no facilities to ensure a safe, clean birth. The security situation is fragile and as a logging camp the area is unsafe with children and adults being injured by equipment lying around." (SCF 6 April 2001)

### **Subsistence needs of IDPs as well as host communities are affected (June 2001)**

- More than 10,000 families of the host communities need assistance in the provision of basic education, health care, clean water and adequate sanitation
- Basic social services for IDPs are virtually non-existent, and infant mortality is close to twice the national average of 159 per 1,000 live births

"Due to the worsening insecurity, health and sanitation situation of IDPs in two poorly served camps (Gbalatuah and Belefane), UNICEF organised their trucking to other camps. Other IDPs have moved into the villages, a factor that has over-stretched the already limited basic infrastructure and challenged the resilience as well as the coping mechanisms of the host communities. More than 10,000 families of the host communities cannot cope with the additional stress. They require assistance especially in the provision of basic education, health care, clean water and adequate sanitation and shelter.

[...]

Aid workers believe that there are more people still hiding in the bush from the fighting in Lofa in the forest north of the St Paul Bridge.

UN agencies and the NGO community are worried that if the war persists, the condition of the IDPs could worsen in the coming months when heavy rains and the resulting bad road conditions are expected to seriously hamper aid delivery." (UNICEF 13 June 2001)

## **Health**

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### **IDPs are being denied their rights to basic health and education (June 2001)**

- Basic social services are non-existent in remote areas
- Infant mortality is close to twice the national average of 159 per 1,000 live births
- Rising diarrhoea prevalence, malaria, and growing incidences of vaccine preventable diseases in camps

"As a result of the volatile situation and the massive displacement of people, children are being denied of their rights to basic health and education. Basic social services are virtually non-existent in the inaccessible and difficult-to-reach areas. The increased vulnerability and low capacity of the families to provide care, infant mortality is reportedly unacceptably high - close to twice the national average of 159 per 1,000 live births.

Schooling is out of reach for all children. Girls face the highest risk both during the migration and in the camps where they are exposed to rape and prostitution.



Initial assessments in the camps indicate rising diarrhoea prevalence, malaria, and growing incidences of vaccine preventable diseases." (UNICEF 13 June 2001)

### **Children's survival is at risk as a result of fighting and displacement (March 2001)**

- A a result of fighting, an estimated 40,000 children's basic survival is at risk and an estimated 80,000 in other counties affected by displacement
- Malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases are the major causes of morbidity and mortality in children under five years of age
- As a result of the low vaccine coverage rates, Liberian children frequently face outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases

"Post-war Liberia is faced with enormous challenges including increasing numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees and impoverished communities who have had to begin resettlement from scratch. This has been made more difficult by frequent cross-border incursions by rebel groups and the movement of thousands of families seeking refuge in outlying counties - most notably Lofa, Bong and Nimba. As a result of recent hostilities, an estimated additional 40,000 children's basic survival is at risk in those counties and an estimated 80,000 in other counties affected by displacement. Consequently the additional load to the already minimal basic services will severely stretch capacity.

The under-five mortality rate in the affected areas is above the national average of 159 per 1,000 live births. Malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoeal diseases are the major causes of morbidity and mortality in children under five years of age. These preventable diseases are closely linked to the lack of safe drinking water, environmental sanitation and inadequate knowledge and inappropriate practices by household/community. The proportion of fully immunised children under the age of one remains alarmingly low at 33%. The proportion of pregnant women vaccinated against tetanus stands at 14%. As a result of the currently low vaccine coverage rates, Liberian children frequently face outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases. This is particularly complex when a community experiences a population influx – which dramatically increases the potential for epidemics. The availability of qualified staff, particularly at the rural and peripheral health facilities is limited." (UN OCHA 23 March 2001, p.125)

### **Health requirements are priority for newly displaced in North (October 2000)**

- ACF notes that the first need of the newly displaced is health care
- IFRC indicates the need for immediate health and sanitation inputs in Upper Lofa county
- Newly displaced are diagnosed with scabies, malaria and respiratory tract infection

#### ***From ACF:***

"David [Patrick David of Action contre la Faim] said the [newly] displaced [from the North] first need health care. Clinics in Selayae, Gorlu and Ganglota lack staff and medicine. 'In a very short time, if there are no drugs provided there will be a humanitarian problem and the same can be said of food,' he said." (IRIN-WA 16 October 2000)

#### ***From IFRC:***

**Table 2**  
**Watsan and Health Survey in Upper Lofa county:**

Town	No. IDPs	No. Hand pumps	No. Latrines	Clinic	Recommendations
Barzewien	1,300	2	2 IL	1 clinic Malaria, Diarrhoea, ARI	H/pumps repairs. Drug supply is insufficient and should be supplemented.
Luyema	1,442	4	2 IL	Same as above	Repair 2 h/pumps and FLS is needed.
Konia	1,820	3	3 IL	Same, and in addition cases of bloody diarrhoea.	Repair 1 h/pump and replace one. FLS needed.
Zuwulor	853	1	0	1 clinic Malaria, diarrhoea, ARI	Repair 1 h/pump, FIs and 1IL needed.
Fessibu	700	3	2 IL	Same as above	FIs and 1 IL needed.
Zorzor	815	8	5 IL	Same and treatment of wounded soldiers	Repair 4 h/pumps and an additional FIs needed.
Sucromu	620	6	1 IL	1 clinic Malaria, diarrhoea, ARI	Repair 4 h/pumps and FIs needed.
Salayea	2,675	8	1 IL	Same as above	Repair 2 h/pumps and FIs is needed.

*IL = Institutional latrine*  
*FIs = Family latrine*

"Also, in other nearby towns an additional 200 IDPs have taken refuge in Joseph Town and 150 in Mulbah Town...Many IDPs were diagnosed with malaria, scabies, respiratory tract infection (RTI) and possible worm infection. Based on the urgent emergency needs, relief assistance was provided to 25 families." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

***From the international press:***

"Physician assistant Augustine Daniels of the Konia health centre said the wild yams the displaced are surviving on were a source of diarrhoea and other health related problems.

He identified diseases plaguing the displaced persons as malaria, acute respiratory infection, diarrhoea, scabies, worms and wounds sustained while foraging the bush for food.

[...]

The influx of displaced into the towns and villages have resulted into an acute shortage of safe drinking water, as there are insufficient hand pumps while the absence of public latrines for the growing population is degenerating into a sanitation disaster." (PANA 19 September 2000)

## **Nutrition**

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### **Some 80,000 IDPs face shortage of relief food items (May-June 2001)**

- Fighting seriously undermined food supplies, threatening the survival of IDPs
- Some 12 relief groups rushed to the camps in the central region, but aid fell short of demands

"She [the resident head of UNICEF, Scholastica Kimaryo] said the fighting had seriously undermined food supplies. "The threat of food insecurity is very high, not least because Lofa County is Liberia's bread basket and as long as the war is going on and people are on the run, it means there will not be a harvest in the next season," she said." (AFP 7 June 2001)

"The shortage of relief food items to adequately cater for more than 80,000 persons displaced by fighting in Liberia has posed questions about their survival, an official has said.

"The plight of the displaced is very pathetic, and it is difficult to find relief assistance for them," says G. Wamleh Elliott, central region director for the government relief agency.

The displaced come from all six districts in northern Lofa County where government troops and dissidents have battled since 1999.

Recent intense fighting in the area gushed out nearly 25,000 new displaced now hosted in the western and central regions.

Elliott told PANA in the central Liberian city of Gbarnga both national and international institutions "must heed the urgency and come to the aid of the innocent war-stricken civilians."

Some 12 relief groups have rushed to the camps in the central region, but their aid has fallen short of demands, PANA observed at many camps.

"The relief agencies are trying their best, but it's like a drop in the bucket... And they need to stop this fire brigade approach. We need a sustained relief program," said one school teacher who spoke for his camp.

Even 50 bags of rice and 100,000 Liberian dollars (about 2,000 US dollars) donated by Liberian president Charles Taylor represented a tip of the relief iceberg, in spite of Elliott's assertions that it brought "so much relief" to the 50,000 displaced in the central region." (PANA 22 May 2001)

### **Newly displaced in North face severe food shortages (September-October 2000)**

- The displaced are living on wild yams and leaves
- Adults and children reportedly are venturing into war zones for food
- Influx of displaced has led to hike in cost of food

"Also, in other nearby towns an additional 200 IDPs have taken refuge in Joseph Town and 150 in Mulbah Town. The IDPs are suffering from chronic food shortage and are living mainly on wild yams and sugar cane. To help feed their families, the male IDPs work as labourers carrying out tasks such as brushing, hauling sand, and doing local chores. According to the IDPs, they left all their personal and household belongings behind, and only escaped with the clothes they were wearing." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

"More than 13,000 internally displaced persons in embattled northern Liberia are facing severe food shortages as fighting between dissidents and government troops continue.

The majority of displaced are surviving on wild yams from the forest, leaves prepared with palm oil and cassava from farms of host villages that they have to labour to obtain.

Rice, the Liberian staple, is almost non-existent in many areas, including Zorzor, a provincial headquarters, 210 km from Monrovia, and the major buffer for people en route to or from the war zone.

The influx of displaced persons into nearly 14 towns and villages in Zorzor and Salayea districts has impacted on food security and availability, triggering a triple hike in the cost of food and other items in the area.

The severe food scarcity has compelled adults and children to venture into war zones to fetch food on farms abandoned by fleeing villagers." (PANA 19 September 2000)

"The report by local and foreign NGOs, including Save the Children and Catholic Relief Services, spoke of 'acute food shortages' in Zorzor and Salayea districts, some 60 kilometres (40 miles) from the provincial capital of Voinjama." (AFP 20 September 2000)

## **Shelter**

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### **Inadequate shelters available for IDPs fleeing insecurity in Lofa County (June 2001)**

- Many of the IDPs in Bong are living in partially destroyed abandoned buildings, warehouses, an agricultural centre and the open air, June 2001
- More than 5,000 have gathered at an ill-equipped camp at an old agricultural compound in central Bong County, May 2001

"Thousands of people who fled insecurity in Lofa County, northern Liberia, for neighbouring Bong County need shelter, according to WFP, which is providing food for the IDPs. "NGOs are doing the best they can but there is an obvious need for non-food items such as plastic sheeting for tents," a WFP source told IRIN. Many of the IDPs in Bong are living in abandoned buildings that were partially destroyed during civil war in the 1990s, warehouses, an agricultural centre and the open air." (IRIN-WA 1 June 2001)

"[ARC reported in May 2001 that] desperate Liberians from Lofa County are moving south by foot to locations where they lack clean water, sanitation, shelter, medical care and food. More than 5,000 have gathered at an ill-equipped camp at an old agricultural compound in central Bong County." (ARC 10 May 2001)

### **Newly displaced in North have little means of shelter (September-November 2000)**

- Internally displaced persons from the North appear to be moving from one place to another in search of food and shelter
- Assessments since October 2000 have noted the urgent need for shelter

"In response to the current crisis Save the Children UK participated in a series of joint interagency assessments. The assessments concluded that an estimated 30,000 persons were displaced [in the Upper Lofa county] and had difficulties in accessing their farms to harvest their crops. Some were in dire need of shelter and sanitation facilities." (SCF 24 November 2000, Save the Children's response)

"The IDPs lack food, shelter and clothing, and they appear to be moving from one place to another in search of food and shelter. Some households are headed by children, and women and children constitute the highest percentage of IDPs and are the most vulnerable beneficiaries. An estimated 600 IDPs are staying at the Lutheran hospital grounds in Zorzor." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

"Newly displaced Liberians are in need of shelter, food and non-food items. Violence in northern Liberia has fuelled the internal displacement of thousands of people as attacks in Lofa County spread south to the town of Zorzor on the weekend of 6-8 October.

[...]

Shelter also is insufficient. Many internally displaced people are sleeping in schools, clinics and markets. (JRS 16 October 2000)

"The team [NGO assessment] also noticed that internally displaced persons lack shelter and are presently sleeping in the open air and in cramped up huts, churches, schools and market stalls in the district headquarters of Salayea and Zorzor." (AFP 20 September 2000)

### **"Old caseload" IDPs in Monrovia either lived in squalid make-shift shelters of with family and friends (1998-2000)**

- Over half of internally displaced living in abandoned buildings
- Displaced persons living with family and friends often remain uncounted
- Between 4,000 and 5,000 displaced persons squat in Monrovia in unfinished highrises, homes, schools and other abandoned buildings
- Of displaced, there are 226,000 displaced persons residing in approved shelters, another 45,000 are living as squatters

"At the start of 1999, an estimated 75,000 Liberians resided at designated displacement sites in Monrovia. By the year's end, about 10,000 remained. Thousands of other displaced Liberian families living with friends or on their own remained uncounted in Monrovia." (USCR 2000, p. 101)

"The size of the internally displaced population in Liberia has long been uncertain because large numbers of Liberians live outside formal shelters." (USCR 1999, p. 74)

"Most internally displaced people have been living in squalid and destitute conditions for a number of years, some displaced several times during the course of the war.  
[...]

In July 1997, the Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) estimated that over half of all the internally displaced people were living in abandoned buildings, such as the shell of the Ministry of Health building, under construction when the war broke out, where some 3000 have lived for years in makeshift overcrowded rooms. There were six toilets and one water pump for these residents. At Samukai camp, some 9000 internally displaced Liberians and Sierra Leonean refugees lived side by side. There were only seven toilets and a few water pumps in working order. Because these camps grew gradually, without humanitarian assistance, they were not well laid out in terms of services." (Nowrojee 1998, pp. 42, 44)

Displaced persons in Monrovia, including an estimated 40,000 or more people in unapproved shelters, often inhabited filthy, overcrowded, government-owned buildings, which government officials sought to empty so that their offices could reopen." (USCR 1998, p. 77)

"Between 4,000 and 5,000 displaced persons squat in Monrovia in unfinished highrises, homes, schools and other abandoned buildings such as the once elegant but now mildewed Ducor Intercontinental Hotel and the unfinished housing bank." (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, para. 3)

Of displaced, there are 226,000 displaced persons residing in approved shelters, another 45,000 are living as squatters . . . (OCHA 20 January 1998, UNDP project for IDPs, "Summary")

# ACCESS TO EDUCATION

## General

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### **Few internally displaced receive schooling (1998-2000)**

- Renewed fighting in February/March 2001 hits education opportunities
- Less than 50% of all children attending school
- Displaced children of high school age had little educational opportunities
- Only refugee children received scholarships from UNHCR

"[After the flaring up of fighting in the Lofa County in February and March 2001], schools [were] closed in the area. Once again the education of hundreds of thousands of Liberian children from this area, who had earlier lost a decade of schooling during the civil crisis, are again out of school." (ACT Appeal Liberia, 30 March 2001, p. 4)

"Although secondary school enrollment more than doubled during the year as families returned home and some schools re-opened, more than half of school-age children still did not attend school, according to one estimate. Low teacher salaries equivalent to as little as \$10 per month, coupled with late payment of salaries and lack of school supplies, triggered frequent strikes by teachers and students in some areas of the country." (USCR 2000, p. 101)

"For instance, in a number of displaced persons' camps, Liberian children at the elementary school level were able to attend the schooling provided by UNHCR. At the high school level, however, only Sierra Leonean refugees received scholarships from UNHCR. In other cases, children were attending elementary schools set up by humanitarian organizations in the area. However, little or no educational opportunities were available for displaced children of high school age. In some camps, children were not at school at all. In Kakata, one teacher noted that their makeshift schools were full, even though many children were not in school. However, even when children attended school, teachers found it difficult to get them to concentrate, often because they were hungry." (Nowrojee 1998, p. 44)

# ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

## General

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### **Male IDPs in the North work as labourers to feed their families (October 2000)**

"Also, in other nearby towns an additional 200 IDPs have taken refuge in Joseph Town and 150 in Mulbah Town. The IDPs are suffering from chronic food shortage and are living mainly on wild yams and sugar cane. To help feed their families, the male IDPs work as labourers carrying out tasks such as brushing, hauling sand, and doing local chores. According to the IDPs, they left all their personal and household belongings behind, and only escaped with the clothes they were wearing." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

### **Crop production is still heavily affected by war (2000)**

"Even as displaced people and refugees return to their communities of origin, it is expected that the food situation – already precarious in receiving communities – may worsen before it gets better. Food insecurity is likely to remain an acute problem in all countries except Grand Gedeh, Bong and Lofa countries (sic!) where returnee populations have resumed farming on pre-war scale. Food shortages are most severe in Grand Cape Mount, Bomi, Rivercess and Grand Bassa counties." (WFP 31 May 2000)

"Although local rice production in 1999 tripled wartime yields, rice crops were only 70 percent of pre-war levels, the international Food and Agriculture Organization stated." (USCR 2000, p. 101)

# ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

## General

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### **Fighting in Lofa creates need to help separated families re-establish contact (July 2001)**

- 153 children (89 boys and 64 girls) are waiting reunification.
- SCF has documented 6,000 cases of children separated from their families (August 2001)

"Between February and June of this year [2001] 241 children (145 boys and 96 girls) from current conflict related displacement were identified and rapidly reunified with their families, mainly by SCF's CBO partners. 153 children (89 boys and 64 girls) are waiting reunification.

[...]

Many displaced children became separated from their families; SCUK has documented over 6,000 such cases, and there are now new family separations as a result of the recent displacement of people from Lofa County." (SCF 2 August 2001)

"There is also a major need to help separated families re-establish contact [...] the tracing network is being strengthened to respond to increased needs; so far the ICRC has set up tracing antennae in all the camps to enable separated families to make use of the Red Cross message network to re-establish contact with their family members; the family reunification of unaccompanied children (UACs) will be extended to include Liberian refugees children and displaced UACs." (ICRC 31 July 2001)

### **Many internally displaced children are separated from their families (November 2000)**

- SCF has documented 4,993 cases of children separated from their families
- SCF has succeeded in reuniting some 2,000 separated children with their families in Liberia
- Separated children are often particularly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse

"Many displaced children became separated from their families; SCUK has documented 4,993 such cases, and there are now reports of further separation as a result of the recent displacement of people from Zorzor town.

[...]

Seven years of war and displacement have hampered reunification efforts: in many cases all the family members are dead. In others they have moved so many times that they are impossible to trace. But even when parents or relatives can be found, reunification may be difficult. Families may not be able to support their children. Or, if the child has been separated for a long period, difficulties during the reintegration process could lead to the children dropping out of their families.

[...]

"At present, there are an estimated 20,000 separated children in Liberia and neighbouring countries. SCUK has helped to reunite over 2,000 of these children in Liberia alone with their families." (SCF 24 November 2000, Key issues affecting children and Save the Children's response)

"The Red Cross tracing network in the three countries of the region [Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone] is instrumental in restoring family links between displaced people, refugees and returnees and their relatives



who have been separated. Between January and September [2000], the ICRC, together with the Sierra Leone Red Cross, handled more than 46,000 Red Cross messages (RCMs) inside Sierra Leone as well as between Sierra Leone and other countries. In Liberia 2,437 RCMs were handled in cooperation with the Liberian Red Cross Society and 7,638 RCMs were handled by the ICRC in Guinea over the same period." (ICRC 15 December 2000, ICRC activities)

# PROPERTY ISSUES

## General

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### **Fighting in Lofa County leads to massive destruction of property and infrastructure (April 2001)**

- The crisis has adverse effect on infrastructure, including churches, schools, health facilities and communities
- There is a lost of harvest, tools, seeds and other properties including household utensils, with fighters massively looting these items

"Reports from conflict areas speak of wanton destruction of properties and lives. In the absence of a settlement to the conflict, people are using feeder and bush routes to find their way to safety. In Liberia, serious damage has been done to public and private properties in western Liberia. About three years ago, farmers abandoned the border areas where about 12,500 hectares of rice and cassava were cultivated before the civil war. The situation is much worse now on the north-west border with Sierra Leone and Guinea.

The crisis has had an adverse effect on infrastructure including churches, schools, health facilities and communities. For example, the major town of north-west Liberia, Voinjama (the seat of Lofa County) has almost been completely destroyed with few houses left standing. Foya district has seen several bombardments in recent times and massive property destruction. Currently, reports abound of Guinean forces taking over two border towns within Liberia. Should this be true, it is clear that any attempt to remove those forces from that area will lead to the destruction of lives and properties.

[...]

Homes of civilians fleeing the fighting have been completely looted; while some homes have been burned.

[...]

The war in Liberia destroyed nearly all infrastructures including private homes, public buildings, schools, hospitals and clinics. Opposing forces indiscriminately burned down buildings. There is a lost of harvest, tools, seeds and other properties including household utensils. Fighters massively looted these items.

In the part of the country (upper part of Lofa County) with the current fighting, whatever little infrastructure was left up to the end of the Liberian civil crisis (1997), has now been destroyed. [...]

Example of the damages is the destruction of Curran Hospital, a Lutheran Church run hospital in Zorzor, which up to October, 2000 served thousands of residents and displaced in the area. Furniture, hospital equipment, drugs, doors belonging to this health center were all looted." (ACT Appeal Liberia, 23 April 2001)

### **Ethnic Mandingoes unable to reclaim land from squatters (1998-2000)**

"Returnees in some areas, particularly ethnic Mandingoes in northern Liberia's Lofa and Nimba counties, reportedly were unable to reclaim their land from squatters. Farmers in some areas complained that land disputes, harassment by government security personnel, and shortages of seeds and tools were hurting crop production." (USCR 2000, p. 101)

"In some cases, displaced people returned to find what remained of their homes occupied. In particular, returnees of Mandingo origin returned to find their houses occupied. The long-standing discrimination in Liberia against Mandingos as 'aliens' or 'foreigners' has contributed to the sentiment that Mandingo-owned property could be appropriated." (Nowrojee 1998, pp. 44-45)

# PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

## General

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### **Some newly displaced persons in the North have been able to return home (December 2000-January 2001)**

- Some 600 persons displaced by violence in the North in 2000 were transported to their homes in Voinjama, Kolahun and Foya in February 2001
- Another 200 decided to remain in Lower Lofa where they had found jobs

"Throughout the last week [mid-January 2001], with the assistance of volunteers from the Liberia National Red Cross Society, the ICRC helped 600 displaced people return to their homes. The displaced, more than half of whom were children and teenagers, were transported by truck to their villages – Voinjama, Kolahun and Foya – in Upper Lofa (north-western Liberia), near the border with Guinea. Each family received blankets upon its arrival.

All of these people had fled to Lower Lofa after the incidents that occurred last summer in conflict-ridden Upper Lofa. Some of them were living on the premises of an oil company and others with relatives. Around 200 decided to remain in Lower Lofa, where they had found jobs with logging companies." (ICRC 18 January 2001)

"Although it is difficult to gather reliable information on the events in Lofa county, Liberia, there are indications that following the violence there in July [2000] a number of displaced people headed towards Kolahun (near the Sierra Leoneon border) or towards the central part of the country (Zorzor, Gbarnga). They are since reported to have returned home." (ICRC 15 December 2000, Humanitarian situation)

### **IDPs in Monrovia make assisted move home (February 2001)**

- By March 2001, 1,500 IDPs returned home from Monrovia to Sinoe County with the help of ICRC
- LRRRC has been able to resettle some 126,243 displaced persons since 1998
- The Red Cross has transported 2,321 IDPs to the Southeast since 1998
- Internally displaced persons are supplied with shelter materials and tools
- Nearly 90 percent of all internally displaced to have returned home by end of 1999

"Today, Monrovia is still temporary home to almost 3,000 displaced persons from the south. For nearly a decade, unusable or dangerous roads have prevented these people from returning to their homes. But this is changing.

On 27 February, an ICRC-chartered ship began taking on board the first 288 persons prepared to return to the area of Greenville, in Sinoe county. " (ICRC 1 March 2001)"Between 27 February and 28 March, more than 1,500 displaced people were brought back by boat from Monrovia, the Liberian capital, to the coastal cities of Greenville and Harper. This marked the end of a four-stage operation organized by the ICRC in cooperation with the Liberia National Red Cross Society and the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and

Resettlement Commission. Those returning to their homes had fled the conflict area in south-eastern Liberia during the 1990s to take refuge in Monrovia, where they had lived a precarious existence ever since.

For their journey by boat, which lasted between 36 and 48 hours, the passengers were given food, water and blankets. Upon arrival in Greenville and Harper, they were cared for in a transit centre. Most were then ferried by truck to their home regions. They were given tarpaulins and soap by the ICRC and dry food rations (50 kg for four persons) by the World Food Programme.

Of the 2,700 or so displaced people registered by the ICRC, nearly 1,200 decided in the end to remain in Monrovia. The other 1,500 chose to return to their home villages with the help of the ICRC. The majority of these were women (45% of the registered heads of households) and children. Several international humanitarian organizations took part in this operation." (ICRC 1 April 2001)

"In August 2000, the Red Cross helped some 604 IDPs, from 348 families, to return to their homesteads in the Southeast (counties of Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Sinoe, Maryland). This brought to 2,321 the total number of IDPs transported back to the region since the operation started in 1998. Family kits were distributed to the returnees, as well as 23 community kits of shelter materials and tools. The community kits, which are intended to boost communities' efforts to rehabilitate basic social services, were distributed after a joint chapter and relief department assessment targeting the most vulnerable." (IFRC 20 February 2001)

"As a result of the civil war, there were 157,000 IDPs in approximately 36 camps in 1997. International agencies and the Liberian Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) have been able to resettle approximately 126,243 displaced persons since 1998. In October [2000] the fighting in northern Lofa county further increased the number of displaced persons. There were an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 IDPs in the country at year's end. International and local NGOs faced limited funding and resources to assist these IDPs." (USDOS February 2001, sect. 2, d)

### **Nearly 90% of all internally displaced to have returned home by end of 1999**

"Approximately two-thirds of all Liberian refugees and nearly 90 percent of all internally displaced Liberians had returned to their home areas by the end of 1999. An estimated 350,000 refugees have repatriated since mid-1997. In 1999, some 80,000 to 100,000 refugees and tens of thousands of internally displaced persons returned home." (USCR 2000, p. 100)

"We [UNDP] assisted over 130,000 [IDPs] to relocate to communities of origin from late 1987 to early this year [2000]." (UNDP 26 September 2000)

# HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

## General

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### **Government restrictions affect humanitarian access (May-June 2001)**

- Liberian government finally authorized agencies to access IDP settlements (June 2001)
- Security forces deny access to IDPs (June 2001)
- Restrictions on travel hamper aid agencies' work (May 2001)
- About 40 percent of the World Food Programme's (WFP) operations affected by government restrictions
- It was not clear how the UN would monitor and co-ordinate programmes across the counties

"The Government finally authorised UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations to access the IDP settlements in Gbalatuah and Bellefanai in Bong County. An estimated 30,000 IDPs are expected to be relocated from these areas to Gbarnga in Bong County and provided with food aid.

"Liberian security forces have been denying access to the humanitarian community to 12,168 IDPs currently staying in Bellefanai and Gbalatuah areas and halting their relocation to the TV Tower site in Gbarnga. This comes in the wake of 'supposed identification' of dissidents in Gbarnga, Bong County." (WFP 15 June 2001)

"About 40 percent of the World Food Programme's (WFP) operations in Liberia have been affected by government restrictions on UN officials and diplomats, a spokesperson in Abidjan said Monday." (AFP 21 May 2001)

"A decision by Liberia's government to restrict diplomats and representatives of intergovernmental organisations to within 60 km of the capital is hampering the work of relief agencies, according to a UN source.

[...]

In a letter dated 30 April to representatives of the international community, Liberia's government said the move was meant to protect the officials from an insurgency in the northern county of Lofa. Anyone wanting to go farther away from Monrovia has to apply for permission from the Foreign Ministry." (IRIN-WA 14 May 2001)

"The events of April and early May [2001] have had adverse implications on UN operations in the country. It was not clear how the UN will monitor and co-ordinate programmes across the counties. WFP in particular was finding it difficult servicing their regional offices. UNICEF's programmes with communities, schools and health facilities are spread in thirteen of the fifteen counties in Liberia.

The flow of IDPs fleeing the fighting in Lofa into Bong, Nimba and Cape Mount counties as well as Monrovia itself created pressure for emergency humanitarian assistance. An estimated 14,000 IDPs camped in Bong, Nimba and Cape Mount required immediate assistance with additional hundreds streaming daily. The government placed the figure at 80,000." (UNICEF 12 May 2001)

### **Access to Lofa county has been cut off repeatedly by armed attacks and fighting (September 2000-May 2001)**

- Renewed fighting forces humanitarian agencies to scale down or pull out
- UN Country Team cites access in Lofa as serious concern
- Humanitarian agencies make various humanitarian and security assessment visits to Lofa

"In February 2001, the latest fighting erupted in Kolahun District in Lofa [which] [...] produced a new wave of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

[...]

The situation forced humanitarian agencies working in the area to either scale down their activities, while others have pulled out completely.

[...]

"A UN official Wednesday expressed concern about "what appears to be prospects of increased fighting in Liberia."

[...]

McAskie said relief groups are catering for the victims from a distance since because they have seen it to be "too dangerous to go deeper" into the crisis area." (PANA 25 April 2001)

#### ***Access restricted by military theatre of operations in late 2000:***

"We were also advised not to beyond Zorzor by the government forces,' a relief worker said.

The relief workers had gone into embattled Lofa County as part of a consortium of non-governmental organizations to distribute food and other relief items to some 13,000 internally displaced persons after an earlier assessment mission.

The aid workers said the relief distribution had to be called off as a result of the attack.

Other convoys of relief items headed for the area were ordered back due to insecurity in the operational areas." (PANA 10 October 2000, "Thousands Flee Fresh Fighting")

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

### General

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#### **No agency with an exclusive mandate for the internally displaced has meant insufficient and irregular aid during period of national recovery (1996-1998)**

- Without a specific agency tasked to care for displaced persons, assistance has been less than satisfactory
- Responsibility for caring for internally displaced often fell, by default, on the UN

"[T]here appeared to be little or no preparation at the national or international level to plan for the return of this huge population to their homes'. Even information on the numbers and location of the internally displaced was much more scarce than on refugees, because no national or international body has had the exclusive task of addressing the needs of the internally displaced. As a result, conditions for the internally displaced remained much worse than those of Liberian refugees in neighbouring countries." (Nowrojee 1998, pp. 42-44)

"As with internally displaced populations in many parts of the world, most of Liberia's IDPs are, unfortunately, very much on their own. UNHCR has been in the country to help refugees and to map plans for a long-awaited return of those who fled the country. But funding even these mandate activities is difficult, particularly in view of the renewed violence in Monrovia in April (1996), which resulted in the looting of many aid agency offices – UNHCR included – and the evacuations of some staff members. 'No international humanitarian agency has a specific mandate to care for displaced persons,' explained Kalumiya, UNHCR's representative in Liberia." (Kpatindé 1996, "Internally Displaced Persons", para. 13)

"Many of the dilemmas of meeting the needs of the displaced fell, often by default, into the UN system where political, security, and humanitarian concerns intersect . . . There was no agency specifically responsible for the welfare of the internally displaced." (Scott 1998, p. 120)

### National response

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#### **Liberia Refugee, Repatriation, and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) is national agency responsible for return of internally displaced persons (1998-2001)**

- LRRRC plays lead role in coordination of humanitarian assistance for IDPs
- LRRRC has relocated 126,243 internally displaced persons since 1998
- LRRRC has had trouble with funding in the past and has been helped by UNDP and IFRC
- LRRRC verifies and relocates IDPs from Lofa County to Bong County, in collaboration with humanitarian agencies (May 2001)

"The Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) plays a lead role in the coordination of humanitarian assistance to IDPs. The 46,000 IDPs are currently not receiving any



assistance as no detailed needs assessment has been conducted due to insecurity in the area." (UN November 2000, Republic of Liberia)

"The LRRRC's programme officer, James Youquoi, said although the United Nations did not have a specific mandate on IDPs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) 'has consistently assisted' his commission in getting funds. The International Federation of the Red Cross, the British Red Cross and SIDA, the Swedish aid agency, have also helped, he said.

With this aid, the LRRRC has been able to relocate 126,243 IDPs since 1998. Youquoi said 300 more were registered for transportation to the southeastern counties of Grand Gedeh, Sinoe and Maryland, but there was no money for the operation.

[...]

Each individual gets one 10 X 16-foot (3 X 4.8-metre) sheet of plastic, two cutlasses, one hoe, one kilogramme of nails, twine and a bag of laundry soap. The Liberian Red Cross provides footwear and used clothing.

[...]

The LRRRC is still looking for aid for the IDPs and needs between US\$1 million to \$1.5 million to strengthen its capacity for intervention. It needs communications to link its regional offices to each other and to headquarters so that coordination can be possible but money has not been forthcoming from the cash-strapped government." (IRIN-WA 20 July 2000, paras. 6-7,10,15)

"More than 6,000 IDPs who have been hosted in the town of Beyan, in Lofa County, are being verified and relocated to Gbalatuah, Bellefanai and Wainsue in Bong County. The exercise which started this week, is jointly undertaken by the LRRRC and humanitarian agencies. It is expected to last for a week. Exact figures will be provided upon verification .

WFP, in collaboration with LRRRC and LNRCS, is carrying a verification exercises in Bong County. 2,524 IDPs were verified at Gbalatuah and CARI and 3,643 additional IDPs arrived in Bong County. Once verified and relocated, the IDPs are provided with food by WFP." (WFP, 18 May 2001)

### **Liberian National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LNRCS) assist IDP populations (October 2000-February 2001)**

- Programmes in 2000 focused inter alia on relief assistance to the most vulnerable returning to their villages of origin
- LNRCS, supported by IFRC and in conjunction with ICRC, is active in Upper and Lower Lofa counties.
- LNRCS has registered IDPs at various sites and distributed food and non-food items

"As a result of the deteriorating health and social situation throughout the country, the role of the Liberian Red Cross has increased. The Federation continues to concentrate its efforts on strengthening the capacity of the Society's headquarters and its 13 chapters, in order to provide a self-sustaining infrastructure for relief and rehabilitation. Programmes in 2000 have focused on the need to provide relief assistance to the most vulnerable returning to their villages of origin; the rehabilitation and revitalization of LNRCS Chapter facilities; the implementation of a chapter resources development plan linked to income generation; and the rehabilitation of health centres, including the construction of water and sanitation facilities." (IFRC 20 February 2001)

"The LNRCS is operational in the Upper Lofa conflict area (supported by the ICRC) as well as in Lower Lofa (a safe haven area where IDPs are taking refuge), supported by the Federation. Both areas accommodate large displaced populations.

[...]

From 1 to 5 October [2000], the LNRCS and ICRC completed the distribution of non-food items to 4,565 persons (979 families) in ten communities in Zorzor and Salayea districts. The relief assistance for 236 families that were not present during the distribution was handed over to the LNRCS Bong Chapter for storage in the Gbarnga warehouse. ICRC also provided an additional consignment of plastic sheeting to the LNRCS Chapter, and food commodities will be released once the security situation has improved and it is safe to return to the districts. Due to the present circumstances, however, activities have been halted for security reasons in Upper Lofa county, while limited operational work is continuing in the relatively safe areas of Lower Lofa county.

A two-day (28-29 September [2000]) joint assessment to Lower Lofa County (Camp Anthel which is a ILRogging company camp located in western Liberia, 175 kms from Monrovia) was conducted by the LNRCS and Federation Relief and Health departments. The LNRCS's Gbarma and Bopolu Branches report that the IDPs started arriving from Voinjama, Foyah and Kolahun districts (travelling through the forest and bush for eight days) on 28 August [2000] seeking refuge at Camp Anthel.

[...]

"The LNRCS Gbarma Branch Relief Officer and a Government Field Officer conducted a three day (30 September – 2 October [2000]) assessment and registration of IDPs at Camp Anthel, Mulbah Town and Joseph Hadie villages. A targeted population of 615 persons (197 families) was registered and distribution was scheduled to start on Saturday, 14 October at Camp Anthel. An emergency package consists of one cooking pot set, one jerry can, 2 pieces of laundry soap, 2 blankets and one mosquito net, plus 2 pieces of clothing. The distribution will be conducted by the LNRCS Branch and monitored by the LNRCS and Federation Relief department.

[...]

A three-day joint assessment consisting of the Red Cross and several International NGOs and led by the LRRRC was conducted on 14 September covering 15 towns. The assessment findings concluded that there was a chronic food shortage problem, and the presence of malaria, diarrhoea, acute respiratory infection, worms and wounds in a population of 12,487 displaced persons.

WFP had agreed to provide a one month-ration of food (consisting of maize meal, vegetable oil, and pulses) for IDPs affected by the conflict. The emergency food commodities will be released to the ICRC and distributed by the LNRCS Chapters and Branches. The first consignment, an estimated 62.5 metric tons, will be released to assist 7,217 persons. Several national and regional meetings were held among the member states of the Mano River Union of Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea during the past months. Efforts have also been made by the Interfaith Council of Liberia, the ECOWAS and OAU.

In the event of an additional influx of IDPs from the conflict areas in Upper Lofa County, the LNRCS proposes to assist an estimated 2,000 internally displaced families (10,000 persons) plus another 3,000 returnees from Guinea. The LNRCS and Federation plan to provide basic emergency mass care feeding, water and sanitation facilities, emergency health services, and a distribution of non-food relief items (clothing, cooking pots, jerry cans, plastic sheeting, blankets, bath and laundry soap and plastic mats)." (IFRC 19 October 2000)

## **Regional response**

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### **ECOWAS has played integral role in efforts to re-establish peace and stability in West Africa (2000-2001)**

- ECOWAS establishes monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of promises made by Liberia after sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council (April 2001)

- ECOWAS has made a number of commitments aimed at lessening tensions between Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone
- One such commitment involved the deployment of troops on the Liberia/Sierra Leone/Guinea borders
- Regional body's ability to help is compromised by lack of resources and capacity

"The extra-ordinary Summit of the ECOWAS [The Economic Community of West African States] Heads of State and Government ended in Abuja Wednesday [11 April 2001] with far-reaching decisions aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the West African sub-region.

Highlights of the decisions include the establishment of a Mediation Committee to encourage the process of "open dialogue" as a means of rebuilding trust among the Heads of State of the Mano River Union.

[...]

The Summit also decided to establish a monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of promises made by Liberia to the UN Security Council, which has slammed sanctions on the country, accused of backing the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against the government of Sierra Leone and using the rebel group to destabilise Guinea.

Tagged the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council Mission, the monitoring panel will visit Liberia 18 April, the same time a UN fact-finding mission is due in that country. The ECOWAS mission comprises Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Togo as well as the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat." (PANA 11 April 2001)

"The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has remained an essential vehicle in the efforts to re-establish peace and stability in the countries concerned. The first ECOWAS peacekeeping initiative (ECOMOG) was launched in Liberia in 1990, and was later extended to Sierra Leone in 1997 to assist the country's peace efforts. Although ECOMOG troops were withdrawn from Sierra Leone by the beginning of 2000, ECOWAS member states have contributed generously to the UN peacekeeping mission there.

The current ECOWAS chairman and President of Mali, Alpha Oumar Konare, informed a visiting UN Security Council mission that three important initiatives were being taken to reduce tensions between the Mano River Union member states, which include Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Republic of Guinea. First, it would station an ECOWAS political representative in Freetown, convene a meeting of the Joint Security Committee of the Mano River Union at the ministerial level, and a meeting of the Committee of Six on Sierra Leone on the cease-fire. ECOWAS is also preparing to implement its decision to deploy military personnel to the Guinean borders.

Despite these commitments, the role of ECOWAS in resolving the region's problems continues to be compromised by severe lack of resources and capacity. Further, sub-regional leaders have been largely divided and some have supported one belligerent against the other, or a rebel group against a government." (UN November 2000, Executive Summary)

"The sub-regional Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) at a just-ended council of ministers meeting in Abuja, Nigeria, agreed to send troops to monitor the Liberia-Guinea-Sierra Leone borders. The three countries belong to an economic bloc called the Mano River Union.

Liberian foreign minister Monie Captan told journalists the monitoring troops from Nigeria, Mali, Senegal and Gambia are expected to begin arriving for their assignments in two weeks." (PANA 10 October 2000, "Thousands Flee Fresh Fighting")

## **ECOMOG and UNOMIL provided security and peacekeeping following outbreak of war (1989-1997)**

- War started in 1989 between NPFL and government forces
- ECOMOG arrived in 1990 and created security zone in Monrovia
- UNOMIL troops arrived in September 1993
- UNOMIL mission completed four years later

### ***ECOMOG mission operates from 1989 to 1990:***

"Liberia's armed conflict began in late 1989 when the rebel National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), led by Charles Taylor, attacked government forces. Fighting quickly degenerated into largely inter-ethnic massacres. Hundreds of thousands of civilians fled to neighboring countries or to Monrovia, the capital." (USCR 1998, p. 75)

"West African countries operating under the auspices of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) deployed peacekeeping troops, known as ECOMOG (ECOWAS Monitoring Group). A two-year cease-fire froze Liberia into a divided country: NPFL rebels controlled 95 percent of the countryside; an interim Liberian government ruled Monrovia, protected by ECOMOG troops." (USCR 1997, p. 76)

"During the early phases of the crisis, Liberia was essentially a partitioned state. The ECOWAS cease-fire monitoring force, ECOMOG, provided a security zone that spread out from Monrovia, within which the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU) could operate. Outside the zone, Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and its civilian counterpart, the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly, provided an alternative government for the bulk of 'Greater Liberia'." (Minear and Scott 1995, "The Political-Security Framework")

### ***UNOMIL operates in Liberia from 1993 to 1997:***

"UNOMIL was deployed for an initial period of seven months in September 1993 pursuant to Security Council resolution 866 (1993). The mission was established in the context of a war that had claimed the lives of as many as 150,000 civilians and driven some 700,000 Liberians to flee to neighbouring countries as refugees. ECOWAS efforts to resolve the conflict had led to the creation of ECOMOG with 4,000 troops in August 1990. UNOMIL was therefore the first United Nations peacekeeping mission undertaken in cooperation with a peacekeeping operation already established by another organization." (UNSG 12 September 1997, para. 22)

"With free and fair elections declared and after the election of the president, the UN Security Council decided that UNOMIL's mission had been successfully completed. At the end of September 1997, four years after its establishment, UNOMIL was withdrawn. However, a United Nations Peace-Building Office will be established in January 1998 to contribute towards the consolidation of peace in the post-conflict period." (OCHA 20 January 1998, sect. 1.2)

## **United Nations response**

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### **WFP conducts bi-monthly food distribution to IDPs in camps (June 2001)**

- WFP continues bi-monthly food distribution to all registered IDPs in Bong and Grand Cape Mount Counties

- WFP distributed food to IDPs residing in Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties, in collaboration with ACF, with 5,535 IDPs expected to receive food rations (June 2001)
- WFP implemented monthly food distribution to 22,000 IDPs in the TV Tower and CARI sites in Bong County (July 2001)

"WFP continues bi-monthly food distribution to all registered IDPs in Bong and Grand Cape Mount Counties, in collaboration with the National Red Cross Society and ACF." (WFP 1 June 2001)

"On 22 June, WFP started another round of food distribution to IDPs residing in Grand Cape Mount and Gbarpolu Counties, in collaboration with ACF. 5,535 IDPs are expected to receive food rations. In Bong County, the distribution started on 25 June and 8,875 IDPs in CARI and TV Tower centers have been assisted so far. IDPs continue to arrive at CARI in Bong County." (WFP 29 June 2001)

"On 4 July, WFP has started the monthly food distribution to 22,000 IDPs in the TV Tower and CARI sites in Bong County. The food distribution is being done by WFP in collaboration with the National Red Cross and the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission. Similarly distributions have also started for IDPs located in Jenemana and Bopolu in Cape Mount and Gbarpolu counties respectively." (WFP 6 July 2001)

"WFP dispatched a total of 390 tons of food to various locations in the country. WFP started distributing food to 15,374 IDPs in CARI camps and 6,705 IDPs in TV Towers in Bong County on 6 July. The distribution of the first 15 days ration to 4,077 IDPs in Jene Mana and 2,038 Bopolo camps (Cape Mount and Gbarpolu counties) was completed during this week." (WFP 13 Jul 2001)

"WFP distributed 150 tons of food to 12,532 beneficiaries in Bong, Harper and Zwedru areas during the week, under various programmes. This included the second distribution of a two-week ration to 5,973 IDPs in Gbalatuah and Bellefanai." (WFP 20 July 2001)

### **UNICEF immunizes IDP children and women, along with the host communities (May 2001)**

"UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Community Health Teams, is to undertake a mini campaign to immunize internally displaced children under five years of age and women of child-bearing age, along with their host communities in Cape Mount and Bomi Counties as a means of protecting the displaced populations and their hosts against preventable childhood diseases. Vaccines to be administered include OPV, DPT, measles, and TT." (UNICEF 12 May 2001)

#### ***UNICEF reports in June 2001:***

"We are also providing pit latrines, household utensils, blankets and clothing so that when the displaced get to the camps they are able to start their lives," Kimaryo told a news conference here.

[...]

Kimaryo said UNICEF was transporting internally displaced people from temporary camps to areas identified by the government where they could be resettled on a more permanent basis." (AFP 7 June 2001)

### **UN engages in cooperation and dialogue with Liberian government to respond to crisis (May 2001)**

- UN Resident Co-ordinator would request Liberia to co-ordinate a joint UN/Government/NGO assessment of the humanitarian needs, enabling the UN to respond to the evolving humanitarian emergency
- UN Resident Co-ordinator in constant communication with Liberian government

"UNICEF is working with other members of the UN Country Team to respond to the evolving humanitarian crisis. During emergency meetings held on 8 and 9 May [2001], the UN Country Team agreed on the need for joint assessments together with government. It was agreed that the UN Resident Co-ordinator would request the Ministry of Planning and Economic Affairs to co-ordinate a joint UN/Government/NGO assessment of the humanitarian needs. This would enable the UN to respond to the evolving humanitarian emergency. With the humanitarian needs building up in the IDP camps, the UN will have to move faster to avert catastrophes. However, these missions will depend on whether security clearances being obtained from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The UN Resident Co-ordinator is in constant communication with government at the highest level. As agreed at the UN Country Team meetings, the Co-ordinator is to dialogue with government with a view to normalising travel for the UN community, and explore ways of teaming up with senior government officials to mount a public relations campaign on the role of the UN in Liberia." (UNICEF 12 May 2001)

### **UN appeals for funds and outlines plans to meet needs of children in Nimba, Bong and Lofa Counties (March 2001)**

- Situation of children in war-affected counties can be reversed through an integrated community approach
- Training and re-training of health personnel is an essential ingredient towards effectiveness
- Clinics and schools will be used as focal points for hygiene education and awareness raising about the relationship between sanitation, hygiene and child health
- Supplies will be pre-positioned to cater for the potential outbreak of cholera in over crowded areas such as IDP camps or in the overpopulated urban sites

"The situation of children in these counties can be reversed through an integrated community approach. Additional funds will be used in the training of more health workers, supplying essential drugs including ORS, and insecticide impregnated bed nets. Using the Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) strategy, health workers, village technicians and community leaders will be trained and health systems improved. Caregivers will be made aware of appropriate household practices, care-seeking behaviour and of management of the common illnesses. Where the security situation permits, existing health facilities will be renovated by UNOPS, and stocked with essential drugs and the minimum equipment for running the facilities will be provided. These will be particularly needed in Bong - where it is likely that the largest influx would be experienced. Malnourished children identified through the Primary Health care network will receive support through supplementary feeding provided by WFP. Food security will also be enhanced through the support of FAO to the distribution of seeds and tools.

To protect children against communicable diseases and women against tetanus, EPI vaccines including TT will be provided. Additionally, the requisite stationary supplies such as reporting forms to support the monitoring of utilisation of vaccines, activity reporting forms, and EPI ledger books will be supplied. 40 kerosene operated refrigerators (ZERO type) and 2 solar powered refrigerators are required to ensure cold chain capacity in the host communities. Training and re-training of health personnel is an essential ingredient towards the effectiveness of the project. Social mobilisation activities in these counties will be undertaken to ensure awareness of the importance of vaccination. WHO will complement this activity through the implementation of epidemiological surveillance techniques.

Clinics and schools will be used as focal points for hygiene education and awareness raising about the relationship between sanitation, hygiene and child health. Implementing partners will closely coordinate further actions leading to the installation of the water and sanitation facilities and their management. Funds provided will be used to expand coverage to areas receiving significant numbers of returnees and IDPs. Each participating village will also appoint a Water/Sanitation Technician who will be the focal person and will be trained as the village technician for water and sanitation facilities. Support for water, sanitation and hygiene education will be given, based on local initiatives at the community level and using participatory methodologies for information dissemination and action oriented awareness of water borne childhood illnesses. Chlorinating water sources, installation, repairs and rehabilitation of hand pumps will be carried out in partnership with local NGOs.

Supplies will be pre-positioned to cater for the potential outbreak of cholera in over crowded areas such as IDP camps or in the overpopulated urban sites, and will include four cholera kits with ORS, IV solutions and medical supplies to facilitate isolation and treatment. This preparedness measure will also require training of health personnel to ensure quick response." (UN OCHA 23 March 2001, pp.125-126)

### **UN appeals for funds for UNDP shelter project (March 2001)**

- UNDP project targets about 80,000 IDPs and returnees for shelter and NFI assistance, as well as their host communities, with priority to women and children victims of conflict.
- Activities will include provision of shelter materials for reconstruction and skills training for local production of material

"The most affected by the insurgency activities are mainly vulnerable groups in Lofa and Nimba counties. This project targets about 80,000 IDPs and returnees for shelter and NFI assistance, as well as their host communities in the accessible parts of the affected areas. Priority will be given in particular, to women and children victims of conflict.

This project is designed to complement the overall reconstruction programme. Support is requested in line with UNDP's focus for the year – to contribute towards strengthening institutional capacities and the reconstruction of social infrastructure at the grassroots level; resettle and reintegrate IDPs and returnees and to empower vulnerable populations through sustainable livelihood programmes. Primary focus of this project is to satisfy the critical need for shelter for those most affected by the recent conflicts. Activities will include provision of shelter materials for reconstruction and skills training for local production of material.

#### **Key Outputs**

- Basic shelter assistance provided to at least 20,000 IDPs and returnees in war affected areas;
- Four community-based building materials production and training centres established in Lofa county;
- Vocational skills training in building construction trades provided for IDPs and returnees.

#### **Main Activities**

- Identify and train 5,000 IDPs in local building materials production and appropriate construction technology;
- Establish four community-based building materials production and training centres;
- Establish shelter reconstruction management committees in host communities;
- Assist IDPs to set up small scale enterprises for production and marketing of construction materials;
- Provide building material kits to beneficiaries."

(UN OCHA, 23 March 2001, pp.165-166)

### **UN takes regional approach to displacement in West Africa (November 2000)**

- UNSG requested senior management team to develop a coherent regional strategy to the violence in West Africa in 2000
- The UN Emergency Relief Coordinators, ad interim, together with representatives of UN specialized agencies put together priority recommendations for the region
- Thereafter, the UN produced various scenarios, the most likely of which estimated a figure of internal displacement in Liberia of 214,000 persons
- UNSG called for inter-agency mission to West Africa in March 2001

"As an initial response to the evolving crisis [in West Africa], the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, on 25 September 2000, requested his senior management team to develop a coherent strategy to address the threats to peace, security and stability in Sierra Leone and the neighbouring countries. To shape the humanitarian contribution to the above, the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator ad interim, after appropriate consultations, convened a meeting on 5 and 6 September 2000 in Accra Ghana, of relevant UN Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes operating in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Its deliberations produced the following major recommendations:

Sustained and comprehensive political initiatives are required to address immediate humanitarian needs and diffuse imminent crises;

Parties to the conflict and their adherents should be reminded of their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law and of the sanctions to be meted out for infringement;

Urgent actions are needed to improve the economic performance and prospects of the countries to reduce poverty, high unemployment and social exclusion (sic!);

Immediate elaboration of an appropriate preparedness plan for humanitarian intervention in response to additional needs, beyond resources already programmed by UN organisations for 2001.

#### ***UN Secretary-General called for an inter-agency mission to West Africa:***

"The Secretary-General has decided to dispatch an inter-agency mission to West Africa, from 6 to 26 March, led by Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Political Affairs. The mission will visit Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

The primary objective of the mission is to take stock of the priority needs and challenges in West Africa and make recommendations on a coordinated United Nations response to the multifaceted problems confronting the region, taking into account initiatives already under way or being proposed by the various actors.

The inter-agency mission will include 10 United Nations departments, agencies and programmes. A representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) will also participate in the mission." (UNSG 2 March 2001)

## **NGO response**

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## **Programs for internally displaced persons during 1999-2000 focused on recovery and sustainable development**

- International agencies concentrate efforts on resettlement and reintegration
- The IFRC and LFRC have provided family and community kits to returning displaced

"Despite security concerns and limited funding, international and local aid organizations operate a range of assistance programs. Catholic Relief Services delivers food used in food-for-work programs and supports agricultural projects in selected counties.

The American Refugee Committee operates a micro-credit loan program that will provide up to a quarter-million dollars in small loans, \$100 to \$225 each, to help jump-start new local businesses. Adventist Development and Relief Agency renovates schools buildings, conducts teacher training workshops, and sponsors income generation projects.

The International Foundation for Education and Self-Help operates programs in health education, women's literacy, social reconciliation, small loans, and school renovation. Search for Common Ground supports local production of radio broadcasts specially geared to facilitate reintegration and social reconciliation.

The Carter Center operates a \$600,000 "democracy and governance" program aimed at strengthening local human rights organizations and improving the skills and independence of local journalists. Recent cutbacks in U.S. funding have endangered the Carter Center program, however, and forced the National Democratic Institute to suspend similar programs intended to strengthen democratic practices in Liberia." (USCR November 1999, "Aid Strategies Limited")

## **Overall situation of relief effort for IDPs fleeing Lofa County (June 2001)**

- More than 30 tonnes of relief items were given to some 30,000 people displaced by war in Liberia's northern Lofa County
- Low funding of activities and needs in Liberia is becoming a chronic situation, paralysing those trying to help
- Food is provided by WFP, but no supplementary food is available

"Local and international non-governmental organisations have given more than 30 tonnes of relief items to some 30,000 people displaced by war in Liberia's northern Lofa County, UNICEF said Thursday [7 June 2001].

The items, distributed since the start of this week, include high protein biscuits, emergency health kits, oral rehydration salts and tarpaulins for makeshift tents, the resident head of the UN Children's Fund, Scholastica Kimaryo, said.

Relief programmes for the internally displaced people were under way in Bong, 160 kilometres (100 miles) west of Monrovia; Bomi, about 45 kilometres (28 miles) west of the capital and Gbarppolu, some 90 kilometres (56 miles) northwest of here." (AFP 7 June 2001)

### ***In May 2001, after renewed fighting in Lofa County, the humanitarian crisis worsened:***

"People on the run are crossing the bridge on foot, after having gone through rigorous army scrutiny on the Lofa side. Most of those who pass through are women and young children. It is rumored that young boys of

above 12 years and able bodied men are afraid to go through the army checkpoints for fear of being conscripted into the army.

Five trucks are operating to haul people from the bridge to transit camps at some 2 and 10 km away from the bridge. From there the IDP's are being moved to an abandoned agricultural research institute (CARI) some 65 km into Bong county. There are several aid agencies involved in the operations, working closely together with the little means they have. Low funding of activities and needs in Liberia is becoming a chronic situation, paralysing those trying to help. The NGO's involved in the operation have officially briefed the UNDP Representative in Liberia on the situation."

"Those that come out are tired, hungry and very depressed as they are being shepherded into the make-shift camps where conditions are dismal. With the little bit of plastic sheeting from ACT-LWF and a few others, huts are built and leaking roofs on abandoned buildings repaired. Every covered space is crammed with people and many end up staying outside, even when it rains. One can imagine the sanitary conditions in this situation. Food is provided by WFP. But no supplementary food is available." (ACT 25 May 2001)

"WFP continues bi-monthly food distribution to all registered IDPs in Bong and Grand Cape Mount Counties, in collaboration with the National Red Cross Society and ACF." (WFP 1 June 2001)

### **Response by international NGO's: ACT**

- Action contre la Faim implemented urgency food-aid programmes and water provision programmes

[In May-June 2001] "Face à cette situation, Action contre la Faim a rapidement mis en place des programmes d'aide alimentaire d'urgence : dans le district de Bong, des évaluations nutritionnelles ont permis d'identifier les enfants souffrant de malnutrition modérée, auxquels les volontaires distribuent des rations alimentaires supplémentaires composées d'une farine enrichie, de sucre et d'huile. Les enfants plus gravement atteints sont référés à l'hôpital de Phebe (non loin de Gbarnga), où depuis plusieurs années le personnel de santé est formé par Action contre la Faim au traitement de la malnutrition. Les équipes ont également lancé des programmes d'approvisionnement en eau potable : mise à disposition de réservoirs d'eau dans le camp de Cari, soit 40 000 litres d'eau par jour ; chloration des réservoirs individuels que les déplacés apportent avec eux, dans les camps de transit,... Dans le district de Grand Cape Mount, Action contre la Faim distribue à l'ensemble des déplacés du camp de Jenne Mana des rations alimentaires composées de céréales, de pois et d'huile." (ACF 1 June 2001)

"Action by Churches Together (ACT) International has issued 25,000 USD in rapid response funds for the relocation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the north of Liberia after renewed fighting between rebels and government forces.

[...]

There are reportedly 10,000 IDPs between Lofa and Bomi who have to be relocated.

[...]

ACT issued an appeal for Liberia in March 2001 with a target of nearly 640,000 USD to assist internally displaced and returnees from neighbouring countries who had fled Liberia during the civil war." (ACT 4 May 2001)

### **Response by international NGO's: Lutheran World Federation (LWF)**

"In cooperation with other aid agencies LWF plans to provide water and sanitation facilities, agricultural tool kits, non-food items such as clothes, blankets, soap and health kits and to assist with the transportation

of IDPs from Lower Lofa to Grand Cape Mount County. An estimated 400 families or 2000 persons will benefit from this programme.

[...]

ACT member LWF proposes to assist 25,000 IDPs in Lofa and Bomi Counties, affected by the hostilities between rebels and government forces. They will focus especially on the district of Salayea with food, blankets, clothes, seeds and tools as well as improvement of water and sanitation and support for a mobile clinic." (ACT 4 May 2001)

### **Response by international NGO's: Concerned Christian Community (CCC)**

ACT member Concerned Christian Community (CCC) a member of the Liberia Council of Churches (LCC) is targeting about 600 women who have experienced torture, rape and witnessed their husbands and other relatives killed. CCC proposes to assist the women with food and non food items, trauma counselling, provision of basic health care and small grants for income generating activities. Also skills training in basic trades such as soap making cookery or sewing and provision of seeds and tools aiming at household food security." (ACT 4 May 2001)

### **Response by international NGO's: World Vision**

- World Vision ferries stranded IDPs from danger zones to designated IDP sites
- World Vision Liberia opened two clinics in Bomi County, located in Gonjeh and Weawolo, and will be open to more than 10,000 people in the surrounding area

"World Vision has begun responding to Liberia's mounting humanitarian crisis caused by months of rebel war in Lofa County in the north, using meager resources.

The assistance includes a hired EU truck to ferry stranded Internally Displaced People (IDPs) from danger zones to designated IDPs sites, 7,000 pieces of bath soap, 600 bed sheets and a consignment of assorted drugs delivered on, May 29 to the CARI IDPs centre, Bong County, which currently hosts more than 8,381 IDPs.

In addition, World Vision is providing a vehicle from its CARI agricultural project transport people to fetch construction materials for CARI-based IDPs.

In the meantime, World Vision is participating in a special Expanded Program on Immunisation (EPI) campaign for IDPs in Grand Cape Mount County, in the west.

[...]

Due to their efforts, the UN has requested funds from New York for the hiring of private transport vehicles for the humanitarian operation. Seven trucks have already been hired to transport IDPs to CARI from Gbalatuah and Belefana, near the border between Bong and Lofa Counties." (World Vision 29 May 2001)

"World Vision Liberia in early September opened two clinics in Bomi County under its US Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Vision US-funded maternal child health programme.

The facilities, located in Gonjeh and Weawolo, were constructed and rehabilitated at a cost of US \$11,305 and will be open to more than 10,000 people in the surrounding area, ...

[...]

Drugs and medical equipment worth about US \$2 million has arrived in Liberia from the United States for distribution among four leading hospitals." (IRIN-WA 26 September 2000, paras. 1-3)

## Response by international NGO's: SCF

- Save the Children's Fund relocated just under 1,900 people to Bopolu, the main town in Gbarpolu, by Wednesday 20 June 2001 and monitored the situation around Fassama and Baloma
- Save the Children assisted the movement of displaced people to safety in the north east corner of Bong county, with about 2,500 people daily
- Save the Children also provided non-food items, undertaking emergency immunisation of children and child protection activities especially with separated children
- SC UK gave out clothing to children and mothers, carried out an expanded programme of immunisation to all IDP children and children in host communities in three IDP areas of Tarvey, Amtel and Cumgbor; provided drugs and training to local Ministry of Health staff and some school supplies to local schools who are taking in IDP children
- Emergency assessment teams monitor the security situation, the protection of children against abuse and exploitation, the availability of food and the displacement of people

"Some of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) were relocated this week [22 June 2001] from the Fassama and Baloma areas to Bopolu in Gbarpolu County (formerly Lower Lofa). A humanitarian source told IRIN that Save the Children's Fund had relocated just under 1,900 people to Bopolu, the main town in Gbarpolu, by Wednesday [20 June 2001] and was monitoring the situation around Fassama and Baloma to see if there were more IDPs in the surrounding bushes." (IRIN-WA 22 June 2001)

"After extensive lobbying and advocacy efforts, Save the Children has been involved in assisting the movement of displaced people in the north east corner of Bong county, to safety. The exercise began on Sunday 13th May and by 18th May about 2,500 people were being trucked out every day. This includes those who had previously fled fighting to take refuge in the surrounding bush country. The trucking operation is being supervised by Liberian soldiers. There are some allegations that only women and children are being allowed to cross. This has child protection implications.

In other areas bordering Lofa County, in Jenemane to the west some 4,000 displaced people are in a camp situation and NGOs despite lack of funds are rapidly trying to provide services including Save the Children who are providing non-food items, undertaking emergency immunisation of children and child protection activities especially with separated children. In the central area near Fassema some 3,000 people are sheltering in schools, churches and with host families." (SCF 22 May 2001)

"At the beginning of April [2001], a team comprising international and national humanitarian agencies monitored the movement of people from Tarvey southwards. SC UK was primarily responsible for monitoring the number of separations of children from their families. Happily there were none. SC UK also assisted women and children in a bad condition to reach Amtel.

SC UK has given out clothing to children and mothers, carried out an expanded programme of immunisation to all IDP children and children in host communities in three IDP areas of Tarvey, Amtel and Cumgbor; provided drugs and training to local Ministry of Health staff and some school supplies to local schools who are taking in IDP children. From Friday 6th April SC UK will be involved in the following activities:

1. arranging for deliveries of clothing to new mothers and new borns;
2. preparing food for a one-off distribution to children to cover five days;
3. setting up oral rehydration therapy corners to be run by IDPs who are trained health staff;
4. working with the local co-ordination organisation to arrange re-location of IDPs to south of Lofa Bridge;

5. trying to provide some protection against recruitment and sexual exploitation for children."  
(SCF 6 April 2001)

"Emergency assessment teams work in five high-risk counties. They monitor the security situation, the protection of children against abuse and exploitation, the availability of food and the displacement of people. This information is shared with the World Food Programme and other agencies.  
[...]

What distinguishes Save the Children UK's assessment teams from those of other organisations is that these teams are made up of members of health, food security and child protection staff. The team works closely with communities to monitor children: are the children going to school; do the children have access to good health care; what is their nutritional status; are the children abused or exploited; do they participate in decisions that affect their lives. This information is then shared with the children and their communities. In areas where children are at risk, SC UK, working with and through local NGOs, will support the children and communities in developing structures to address those issues.

Save the Children UK child protection teams working with local child protection organisations are supporting community and children's groups in the border region to carry out emergency preparedness and response using a child protection, education and livelihoods base through an inter-sectoral approach. This involves preparing children and families on how to prevent family separation, sexual abuse and exploitation and recruitment of children. It also includes working with the communities on the protection of children and young people against HIV/AIDS." (SCF 24 November 2000, Save the Children's response)

"Save the Children UK has rehabilitated and is currently supporting 21 health facilities in Bomi, lower Lofa, Bong, Margibi and Monteserrado counties that between them serve a population of around 200,000." (SCF 24 November 2000, Save the Children's response)

### **Response by international NGO's: ICRC**

- Relief assistance given to 20,500 IDPs fleeing fighting in Lofa County (July 2001)
- Non-food items and shelter material provided for approximately 14,500 IDPs in other camps
- Permanent non-food contingency stock for 17,000 persons (5,000 families) set up in Monrovia
- ICRC helps to improve access to clean water and proper sanitation
- Health clinic structure has been set up at TV Tower camp and supplied with drugs and medical items
- In October 2000, the ICRC provided non-food assistance to 7,200 people displaced and had started distributing food donated by WFP
- On 21 September 2000, the ICRC and the Liberia National Red Cross Society began distributing relief supplies to displaced people, most of them women and children, in the north-west of the country

#### *"Relief*

Out of the 35,000 IDPs whom the Red Cross Movement intends to help, so far approximately 20,500 have been assisted with essential non-food items and shelter material. These include some 6,000 people who are staying at TV Tower camp (run by the ICRC/Liberia National Red Cross Society (LNRCS)); 32 large tents have been erected by the International Federation and roofs built by ICRC teams and American Refugee Council for 13 semi-complete concrete buildings for approx. 6,000 persons. Tents shall gradually be replaced with semi-permanent structures;

non-food items and shelter material have also been provided for approximately 14,500 IDPs in other camps (Belafanai, Cari 1&2 and Bopolu); Jene Mannah camp (approximately 5,000 people) is soon to be assisted; [...]

the ICRC has set up a permanent non-food contingency stock for 17,000 persons (5,000 families) in Monrovia; an emergency stock for 100 war-wounded is also planned to be kept at Monrovia for reference hospitals;

agricultural assistance will be provided to support the creation of vegetable gardens for 4,000 families staying in the camps in Bopolu, Jene Mannah and TV Tower to complement the food rations provided by WFP or to serve as cash crops.

#### *Water and sanitation*

to improve access to clean water and proper sanitation, at TV Tower camp, five wells have been completed, one more is under construction and two 5,000 litre bladder tanks have been installed. There are also 11 existing private/communal wells in the close vicinity that the ICRC will maintain if necessary. A total of 70 latrines and 50 bath houses have been built; at Belafanai 8 latrines have been constructed and one well rehabilitated; at Bopolu 20 latrines have been built and two wells are under construction.

#### *Health*

An efficient health clinic structure has been set up at TV Tower camp, relying on a joint medical team (Hospital/LNRCS) and supplied with drugs and medical items. Red Cross hygiene teams (total: 20 people) are monitoring the situation in the camp, and refer cases to the camp clinic; The clinic officially opened on 5 June and has since treated a total of 2,276 people. In addition, 690 people have been vaccinated (yellow fever, polio, measles etc.) and health education sessions has been held for 3,600 people in the camp;

The transfer and treatment of sick displaced people by Red Cross ambulance from the camps in the Gbargna area to Phebe Hospital or to an MSF isolation ward at Cari camp has been set up;

[...]

increased support is being given to three health clinics run by the LNRCS and to government health structures so that IDPs have access to health care of a similar standard to local resident communities." (ICRC 31 July 2001)

"In Liberia, the ICRC assists displaced victims of violence in Lofa county. In October [2000], the ICRC provided non-food assistance to 7,200 people displaced and had started distributing food donated by WFP, however, distributions currently remain on hold for security reasons.

[...]

The ICRC continues to assist two clinics run by the Liberian Red Cross with medical supplies and staff incentives. During the rainy season there was a large increase in the number of patients treated, with one of the clinics treating 2,000 people per month between July and September [2000]. The ICRC has also provided similar assistance to a health post run by the National Society in Lofa county.

In Liberia, the ICRC carries out water and habitat programmes around Monrovia and in remote areas in the counties of Bong, Grand Geddeh, Sinoe and Rivercess, drilling and repairing wells, installing hand pumps and building community latrines. In Sierra Leone the ICRC plans to provide water and sanitation material in Freetown for 60,000 newly displaced people by April 2001 and maintain sufficient material pre-positioned for 20,000 people in case of emergency. It also hopes to carry out water and sanitation projects and health awareness programmes in rural areas." (ICRC 15 December 2000, ICRC activities)

"On 21 September [2000] the ICRC and the Liberia National Red Cross Society began distributing relief supplies to displaced people, most of them women and children, in the north-west of the country... The displaced, who number some 7,700 (1,375 families), will receive food for one month thanks to a donation from the World Food Programme.

Last week the ICRC and the National Society distributed cooking pots, blankets and soap to an initial group of 600 individuals (102) families." (ICRC 28 September 2000)

### **Response by international NGO's: IFRC**

"The difficult security situation, the rainy season, which disrupted road access, and the frequent changes in the National Society's governance, were serious obstacles to the successful implementation of programmes. Nevertheless, the building of rural schools began, health and water and sanitation activities continued in local clinics, and an AIDS/STD information project for youth was maintained. On the relief front, assistance to IDPs continued, with several hundred returnees being given material support and transport." (IFRC 20 February 2001)

### **Response by international NGO's: MSF**

- MSF sent a cargo plane carrying 30 tonnes of emergency medical supplies and logistical equipment to Monrovia (May 2001)
- A third MSF cargo plane carried 35 tonnes of medical and logistical equipment, to be used by MSF relief programmes for displaced persons in northern Lofa (July 2001)

"In an effort to assist those displaced, and in the expectation of further population movements, MSF has decided to strengthen its operations in the region by sending a cargo plane carrying 30 tonnes of emergency medical supplies and logistical equipment to Monrovia." (MSF 21 May 2001)

"MSF, which is among the few humanitarian organizations operational on the ground, is providing medical and logistical assistance to those displaced. But the present level of operations is not enough to meet all the people's water, food and health care needs.

A third MSF cargo plane is leaving today for Monrovia, carrying 35 tonnes of medical and logistical equipment, to be used by MSF relief programmes for displaced persons in northern Lofa.

The eight MSF volunteers currently working in the area have set up displacement camps - including health clinics - at both Cari and Jenne Manna. MSF is also setting up a relief operation at Belefannah." (MSF 3 July 2001)

"The medical charity, Medecins Sans Frontieres has dispatched a team of doctors to western Liberia where hundreds of civilians have fled fighting in embattled Lofa county, MSF coordinator Robert Parker said Wednesday [14 February 2001].

Parker said the team will visit Gbarma, Amtel and Camp Alpha where nearly 1,000 internally displaced persons are currently residing and sleeping in the open air.

He said the team was carrying a consignment of drugs, plastic sheeting tents and food as emergency assistance for the internal refugees.

He said the team, also comprising nurses and logisticians, will carry out a comprehensive assessment of the humanitarian situation to determine further action, including the setting up of a temporary health post." (PANA 14 February 2001)

## **Response by international NGO's: Children's Aid Direct**

"Now, as the majority of refugees and internally displaced families have returned to their homes, CAD is aiming to promote self-reliance among the communities [...]"

The agriculture project's purpose is to enable farm families to increase the productivity of their existing farms and their food self-sufficiency, thereby reducing their vulnerability." (CAD, summary update: 29 March 2001, p. 3)

## **Response by international NGO's: MCC**

- MCC shipped 7,000 school kits to Liberia

"MCC is shipping 7,000 school kits to Liberia, a country recovering from seven years of civil war. The recipient, Church Related Education Development Organization (CREDO), is a consortium of Christian schools that helps to supply basic school supplies to more than 75,000 pupils. An earlier shipment in October 1999 contained a similar number of these kits.

CREDO worker Nathaniel Bimba, now living in Alberta, writes, 'Since the end of the Liberian war in 1996, tens of thousands of children have resumed education or intend to go to school. Many of these children do not have basic school supplies and books. Tuition is also a hurdle that keeps children from school.

'The war continues to create devastating impact on education as in other social and economic aspects of life,' Bimba added. 'CREDO has been performing an excellent role. Seventy-five percent of the schools and hospitals in Liberia are church operated. The government has not been able to do good service even before the war.'" (MCC 25 October 2000)

## **Response by international NGO's: MERLIN**

"In Liberia (Nimba County)

Training local health professionals and providing extensive disease-control programmes. Running vaccination campaigns, laboratory training, bed-net distribution and community education." (MERLIN 10 November 2000)

## **International community imposes sanctions on Liberia**

### **International community calls for sanctions against Liberia in 2001**

- Tighter UN sanctions take effect against Liberia (May 2001)
- ECOWAS establishes a monitoring mechanism (April 2001)
- UN decides to broaden sanctions on Liberia (March 2001)
- Liberia announces diamond export ban ahead of UN meeting on sanctions (March 2001)

*Tighter UN sanctions take effect against Liberia (May 2001)*



"New sanctions against Liberia, set out in a Security Council resolution adopted two months ago, will automatically take effect next week because Monrovia has not demonstrated compliance with the Council's demands, the President of that body said today.

Ambassador James Cunningham of the United States made his statement following closed-door consultations on the Secretary-General's latest report on Liberia and a briefing by Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani of Singapore, who chairs the Council's Liberia sanctions committee.

The President told reporters that Council members had concluded that the information available on steps taken by the Government of Liberia was "not sufficient for the Council to conclude that sanctions under resolution 1343 should be postponed." (DPI 4 May 2001)

#### ***ECOWAS establishes monitoring mechanism (April 2001)***

"The extra-ordinary Summit of the ECOWAS Heads of State and Government ended in Abuja Wednesday [11 April 2001] with far-reaching decisions aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the West African sub-region.

Highlights of the decisions include the establishment of a Mediation Committee to encourage the process of "open dialogue" as a means of rebuilding trust among the Heads of State of the Mano River Union.

[...]

The Summit also decided to establish a monitoring mechanism to oversee the implementation of promises made by Liberia to the UN Security Council, which has slammed sanctions on the country, accused of backing the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) against the government of Sierra Leone and using the rebel group to destabilise Guinea.

Tagged the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council Mission, the monitoring panel will visit Liberia 18 April, the same time a UN fact-finding mission is due in that country.

The ECOWAS mission comprises Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Togo as well as the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat." (PANA 11 April 2001)

#### ***UN decides to broaden sanctions on Liberia (March 2001)***

"The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday [7 March 2001] demanded that Liberia "immediately" stop supporting the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone and other armed groups in the region by expelling RUF members from Liberia and ending financial and military aid to the Front.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1344, the Council replaced the previous arms embargo against Liberia with a new one prohibiting the sale or supply to Liberia of arms and related material of all types, as well as of any military training or technical assistance.

The resolution stated that, unless Liberia has complied with the Security Council's demands within two months, additional sanctions would go into effect, including a ban on the direct or indirect import of all rough diamonds from Liberia, and measures to prevent travel by senior members of the Government of Liberia or their spouses.

The Council demanded that Liberia cease all direct or indirect import of Sierra Leone rough diamonds not controlled through that Government's Certificate of Origin regime, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1306 (2000), and decided that all States should prevent the import of all rough diamonds from Liberia, whether or not they originated in that country.

In terms of security, the Council demanded that all States in the region take action to prevent armed individuals and groups from using their territory to attack neighbouring countries, and refrain from actions that might further destabilize the situation on the borders between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

The Council decided that all States should prevent the entry into or transit through their territories by senior members of the Government of Liberia and its armed forces, their spouses and any other individuals providing financial and military support to armed rebel groups in countries neighbouring Liberia, in particular the RUF." (UNAMSIL 9 March 2001)

### ***Liberia tries to avoid UN sanctions (March 2001)***

"Liberia on Wednesday [7 March 2001] banned the export of the so-called "blood diamonds" for 120 days in a last-ditch attempt to avoid further UN sanctions.

[...]

The move came ahead of a meeting of the UN Security Council meeting later Wednesday to vote on a draft resolution to strengthen UN sanctions on Liberia over Monrovia's support for rebels in Sierra Leone and its alleged involvement in the so-called "blood diamonds" trade.

If adopted, the resolution would broaden the scope of an eight-year-old arms embargo on Liberia to include a ban on sales of Liberian diamonds, and another on air travel by senior Liberian government and military officers and their wives.

Those sanctions will kick in two months after the resolution is adopted, and last for 12 months, unless Liberia takes a series of steps to break its ties with the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone." (AFP 7 March 2001)

### **Carter Center closes at end of 2000**

- Former US President Jimmy Carter cites "prevailing conditions" in Liberia and the actions of the Liberian government as reasons that Center can no longer continue its human rights and democracy work

"The US-based Carter Center has closed its office in Liberia, where it worked for a decade to promote human rights and democracy through local nongovernmental organisations and other groups.

Former US President Jimmy Carter said in a letter to President Charles Taylor that 'prevailing conditions and the actions of your government have made it increasingly difficult for the center and others to be effective in supporting democracy, human rights and the rule of law'.

'Much to our dismay, Liberia is a country where reports of serious human rights abuses are common, where journalists, human rights organisations and political activists work in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, and where there is little political space for meaningful democratic debate,' Carter said." (IRIN-WA 10 November 2000)

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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AFL	Armed forces of Liberia
BHR	Bureau for Humanitarian Response (United States)
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
CGP	Common Ground Productions (Search for Common Ground)
FFP	Food for Peace Office (United States)
FY	Fiscal year
GOL	Government of Liberia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally displaced person
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LNRCS	Liberian National Red Cross Society
LNTG	Liberian National Transitional Government
LNTG II	Liberian National Transitional Government II
LRRRC	Liberia Refugee, Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
MP	Military police
MSF	Medecins sans Frontieres
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPP	National Patriotic Party
OFDA	Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SCG	Search for Common Ground
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission to Liberia
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USCR	United States Committee for Refugees
USD	United States Dollars
VOA	Voice of America
WFP	World Food Programme
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
AFP	Agence France Presse
SOD	Special Operations Division
ORS	Oral Rehydration Solution
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
WHO	World Health Organization
NFI	Non Food Items



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