

# Situation Report

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## Country – LIBERIA

**Monrovia, Friday, March 11, 2011**

**Thousands of Ivorians are reaching Liberia as fighting in Ivory Coast intensifies. ACT Alliance members and implementing partners are helping refugees and host communities.**

The Liberian border areas facing the Ivory Coast have been severely affected by the violent conflict in Ivory Coast. Liberia's Nimba County has received more than 70,000 refugees since December 2010, and this has affected the lives of more than 19,000 host families in the community.

The refugees have reached Liberia in two waves. The first one started after the clashes between the supporters of incumbent president, Mr. Gbagbo, and the internationally recognized election winner, Mr. Outtara. The second bigger wave of refugees has been going on for the last one and a half weeks. It was triggered by the escalating fighting between pro Outtara New Forces and pro Gbagbo government security forces in Abidjan and also close to Liberian border areas. According to UNHCR, an estimated 34,359 refugees have crossed into Liberia since 24 February 2011. In addition, a further 19,290 new arrivals have been reported from local government sources.

According to the Finn Church Aid Representative in Western Africa on Thursday 10th March, the situation on the Ivorian border is now alarming as fighting along the border is spreading towards Maryland in the south and that there are reports of 8 deaths associated with diarrhoea. There have been food distributions to a small number of the refugee population with the biggest constraint being the poor road connections to the area where the refugees have settled.

The response by the international community has been slow and inadequate, leaving the people in border areas with insufficient support for shelter, food, water, drugs, sanitation and protection. Last week there were thousands of newcomers in the border town of Buutuo. The wells were running dry and food distribution didn't take place as planned due to difficult transportation as trucks of food and medicines got stuck in the muddy roads leading to Buutuo. The local school was not opened either as each classroom hosted 70 to 100 refugees seeking shelter. Houses in the town are full and many refugees have had to stay overnight in the open.

Finn Church Aid's (FCA) implementing partner EQUIP Liberia, who operates three health centers in the Buutuo area, has been working extra hours to take care of more refugees suffering from malaria, watery diarrhea, respiratory infections, as well as open gunshot wounds they received when fleeing from Ivory Coast. Many of them have symptoms of anxiety. The sound of gunfire echoing from the Ivorian side could still be heard from the border crossing last week.

FCA and implementing partners have been able to react quickly to this second wave of refugees, due to their presence and involvement since the beginning of the crisis.

ACT Liberia forum members have launched an Appeal (**LBR111**) in response to the humanitarian situation, aiming to raise 2,031,157 USD. FCA has already allocated 568,000 USD, towards the appeal; mainly through implementing partner EQUIP Liberia. FCA and Lutheran Development Service (LDS) are the two requesting members in the appeal. The web link for the appeal at the ACT Alliance website is: <http://www.actalliance.org/resources/appeals/LBR111FullAppeal.pdf/view>

Finn Church Aid and Lutheran Development Service hope to undertake basic repair of the road connection to communities receiving refugees, expand health services, improve access to clean drinking water and better sanitation, provide psychosocial support, distribute NFI and provide livelihood support. Other ACT Alliance members responding to other needs of the people affected by this crisis include: ICCO and Kerk in Actie, Church of Sweden (CoS), Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH), Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (Presbyterian Church USA).

The situation is likely to be a worst case scenario identified during the assessment: *that the conflict may lead to an increase in the number of refugees on the Liberian side.*

According to UN planning figures, as many as 150,000 refugees may finally come to Liberia.

ACT alliance members will continue to respond to the needs of the people affected by the crisis and will continue to provide information on the situation.

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**Any funding indication or pledge should be communicated to ACT Chief Finance Officer, Jean-Daniel Birmele ([jbi@actalliance.org](mailto:jbi@actalliance.org)).**

**Thank you for your attention.**

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