



UNHCR

The UN Refugee Agency

60
YEARS

Geneva: Tuesday 11 January 2011

Briefer: Adrian Edwards / UNHCR Spokesman

Topics: 1 - UNHCR building refugee camp for Ivorians in Liberia, assisting displaced in Cote d'Ivoire

This is a summary of what was said by the UNHCR spokesperson at today's Palais des Nations press briefing in Geneva. Further information can be found on the UNHCR websites, www.unhcr.org and www.unhcr.fr, which should also be checked for regular media updates on non-briefing days.

1 - UNHCR building refugee camp for Ivorians in Liberia, assisting displaced in Cote d'Ivoire

With people continuing to flee westwards from Cote d'Ivoire UNHCR started work this past weekend on a new camp for refugees in the eastern Liberian town of Bahn. The camp will initially be capable of housing some 18,000 refugees.

Our site planners and the local community are working hand in hand to clear 80 hectares of jungle for the camp, which lies on land provided by the Liberian authorities.

There are now some 25,000 Ivorian refugees in Liberia, with around 600 people arriving daily. The camp is urgently needed to better protect the refugees and to ease pressure on Liberian communities that have been hosting people in some 23 villages along the border with Cote d'Ivoire. UNHCR hopes to complete work over the next two weeks on a reception area at the Bahn site from which refugees will be relocated into the main camp. The site will provide services including health, water, sanitation, and schooling.

Meanwhile, we are continuing to deliver aid to villages where refugees are located. This morning, we began distribution of plastic sheeting, blankets, mats, kitchen sets and other household items to the more than 10,000 refugees in the Buutuo area bordering Cote d'Ivoire's Guiglo Department.

In eastern Liberia UNHCR is operating from its field office in Saclepea, a five hour drive from Buutuo, over an extremely poor road connected by more than 22 bridges made of sticks and tree trunks. The camp at Bahn will be more manageable, as it is located 12 km from Saclepea and requires only 20 minutes of driving time.

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UNHCR
Communications
Service

HQPI00
P.O. Box 2500
CH-1211 Geneva 2

Tel (41 22) 739 85 02
Fax (41 22) 739 73 14
www.unhcr.org



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Refugees continue to tell us that in most cases they are fleeing fear of violence rather than actual violence against them.

UNHCR has sufficient relief supplies for some 30,000 people in Liberia. However, we are ready to mobilize stocks from Ghana for an additional 30,000 people if the need arises.

Meanwhile in western Cote d'Ivoire, some 16,000 people have been forced to leave their villages and take refuge in the towns of Duékoué, Man and Danané. In Duékoué calm has returned to the town over the past three days which is allowing humanitarian agencies including UNHCR to assist the displaced.

For further information on this topic, please contact:

*In Liberia: Ibrahima Coly, UNHCR Representative on mobile +231 660 46 08
Fatoumata Lejeune-Kaba (on mission) on mobile +41 79 249 3483,
Thuraya +882 1651 107 817*

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