



Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessment

LIBERIA

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ECOWAS COMMISSION
COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
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USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE





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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AfDB	African Development Bank
CPIA	World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment
CRA	Conflict Risk Assessment
CRVA	Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DPA	ECOWAS Directorate of Political Affairs
DPKRS	ECOWAS Directorate of Peacekeeping and Regional Security
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group (Liberia)
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Early Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EWD	ECOWAS Directorate of Early Warning
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Resource Centre
ICC	International Criminal Court
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IncReps	ECOWARN's Incident Reports
KII	Key Informant Interview
LERN	Liberia Early Response Network
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NDP	National Development Plan
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
PBO	Peacebuilding Office (Liberia Ministry of the Interior)
REWARD	Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa
SitReps	ECOWARN Situation Reports
SNA	Stakeholder Network Analysis
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UMEOA	West Africa Economy and Monetary Union
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WANEP	West African Network for Peacebuilding

Message from the President of the ECOWAS Commission

The 15 Member-States of the ECOWAS Community represent a thriving region of the world, with a population of approximately 366 million and a rich human and topographical diversity. From the coastline to the mountain peaks of Fouta Djallon, across the Sahara and the mangroves of the Niger Delta, ECOWAS is home to diverse families, communities, and nations.

Over the last decade, the region has witnessed significant progress in lifting the standard of living for millions. However, along with the richness of natural resources, human capital and great opportunity, there are also challenges to contend with such as natural disasters, pandemics, ethno-sectarian tensions, and security threats caused by extremism and terrorism.

Global developments and changes such as advances in technology, human migration and climate change, have added new levels of complexity, presenting new challenges for strategic planning and preparedness as we look ahead to the future.

This is where Early Warning plays a critical role in helping ECOWAS to understand the changing dynamics so as to strengthen decision making and early response at the regional and national levels. The Country Risk and Vulnerability Assessments (CRVAs) serve as an important resource in this regard. These reports are useful for strengthening the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework action plans as well as to serve as reference materials for an in-depth understanding of the human security dynamics in our Member States, and for our partners across the region.

I therefore invite national stakeholders, all ECOWAS institutions and our partners to make use of these reports for the entrenchment of peace and progress for the benefit of the Citizens of ECOWAS.

Jean-Claude Brou
President of the ECOWAS Commission

Statement from the Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission

ECOWAS takes pride in finalizing this CRVA report which aims to identify structural vulnerabilities, event driven risks and existing resilience factors in each Member State of the Community. Indeed, this is a remarkable feat towards boosting the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union, with ECOWAS setting the pace for the development of an African-owned data set that can be tapped into to enhance human security analysis and accurate forecasting to assist policymakers to make informed decisions on pressing issues in the region. This information can be used as a baseline for ECOWAS and its partners to inform early warning and response efforts, particularly in this time when Early Warning and Response Mechanism is being deployed at the National level.

The CRVA research leverages ECOWARN data—gathered by Field Monitors—to establish a country baseline for monitoring patterns and trends across human security pillars. By comparing ECOWARN data to other data sets, and complementing quantitative data with qualitative findings, the assessments also help the Early Warning Directorate of ECOWAS to gather more robust data that is rich, reliable and empirical. The resulting findings are more representative in terms of geography, time, and theme for each country and needs to be updated periodically.

ECOWAS will consolidate this achievement by applying the knowledge and skills embodied in the CRVA Manual. My conviction for this emanates from the fact that the training of all EWD staff in the development of the CRVA Index, which marks the climax of transfer of knowledge and skills from the USAID REWARD technical staff to ECOWAS, will allow ECOWAS to independently conduct future CRVAs. Already, the EWD has initiated a process to put to practice the defined methodological framework to conduct Regional Risk and Resilience Assessment in the Lake Chad Basin, thereby serving as the first pillar in implementing the decision of the joint ECOWAS and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to engage communities in peacebuilding processes.

We hope the Member States of our Community take ownership of this report and anchor development and peace initiatives upon it, in addressing the risks and vulnerabilities in their communities. As we decentralize Early Warning and Response to the ECOWAS countries, the Commission stands ready to accompany each Member States in the implementation of the actionable recommendations embodied in the CRVA report.

Finda Koroma
Vice President, ECOWAS Commission

Preface

The ECOWAS Early Warning Directorate has made giant strides in the practice of data driven early warning, through the qualitative and quantitative analysis of incidents and situations from multiple sources, with the added benefit of original data generated through the ECOWARN system. Indeed, the Center's state-of-the-art technological tools places it at a vantage position to monitor and analyze risks and vulnerabilities in the ECOWAS region, cutting across the key areas of human security.

ECOWAS has played, and continues to play, a critical role in the monitoring of threats to human security across the region including the Sahelo-Saharan, Mano River, Gulf of Guinea, Lake Chad and Senegambia conflict systems to improve response for the prevention and management of conflict escalation.

Beyond a narrow focus on violent conflict alone, and consistent with its mandate to promote the socioeconomic and political integration of the sub-region, ECOWAS applies a human security lens with a view towards enhancing the well-being of the population in accordance with the ECOWAS Vision 2020. Thus, this report highlights risks, structural vulnerabilities and resilience factors across five dimensions (demographic, economic, security, governance and rule of law) at the national and sub-national levels.

Each CRVA report represents a myriad of perspectives and experiences from affected stakeholders including community leaders, civil society, administrative officials, security agents, traditional and religious leaders, just to mention a few. In this way, the CRVA report serves as a strategic document to provide an overview of the human security challenges in each ECOWAS member state as well as the social and institutional resilience factors that can help manage those challenges.

We hope that this report will be useful for strategic planning in addressing issues of human security as well as to provide insights to a multitude of stakeholders including policy and decision makers in the public and private sectors for conflict-sensitive engagement within the region.

Dr. Abdou Lat Gueye
Director, ECOWAS Early Warning

Executive Summary

From 2016 to 2019, ECOWAS collected quantitative and qualitative data in Liberia to better understand the structural vulnerabilities that may exist, and how those vulnerabilities affect the everyday lives of individuals and communities. This research was done in collaboration with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Reacting to Early Warning and Response Data in West Africa (REWARD) project, as part of a broader assessment of the entire West African region. As part of this process, a series of focus group discussions and interviews were conducted in November and December 2016 in Liberia to contextualize the findings and to learn more about resilience factors that mitigate risk and promote human security. The purpose of this report is to summarize these insights and perspectives, so that national stakeholders can build on their successes, and also to serve as a baseline for ECOWAS's monitoring of patterns and trends. The report provides an overview of national and subnational vulnerabilities, risks, and resilience factors, as well as conclusions and recommendations.

The CRVA was conducted by ECOWAS to update and expand upon the Conflict Risk Assessment (CRA) 2013-2014 country reports. To better understand the sub-national patterns and trends, the research design began with a desktop study involving a social network analysis based on a survey of peace and security actors in the country and a scoping of experts to be consulted during the fieldwork. This was followed by a Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis of patterns and trends in escalation dynamics and a quantitative analysis of relative structural vulnerabilities by country and human security pillar.

In Liberia, high levels of vulnerability were found in Economics/Resources, while moderate levels of vulnerability were found in Politics/Governance,

Population/Demographics, and Security, and lower levels of vulnerability were found in Rule of Law.

Challenges included vulnerability to external economic shocks, as Liberia imports close to two-thirds of its food supply and relies heavily on mining, rubber, iron ore and palm oil exports. Porous borders and a history of conflict in the region makes Liberia susceptible to refugees and internally displaced people, including thousands who fled Côte d'Ivoire in late 2010, putting significant pressure on infrastructure and basic services. Sexual and gender-based violence, which were used as weapons of war during the years of Liberia's civil conflict, continue to be prevalent in Liberia, despite the cessation of hostilities more than a decade ago. Data from Liberia's Demographic and Health Survey suggest a rate of sexual violence far higher than in other countries that have experienced conflict. A majority of reported cases involved girls under the age of 18. The Ebola crisis also led to the closure of many sexual and gender-based violence treatment facilities.

However, there were strong social and institutional resilience factors for effective dispute resolution and peacebuilding in Liberia, all of which have been increasingly important as the UN Peacekeeping Mission (UNMIL) completed its mandate in 2018. Community Watch Forums, Civil Society Organizations, Women Peacebuilding Networks, as well as institutions such as the police and SGBV Monitors, the Peace Building Office and the National Council of Chiefs and Elders, all play very important roles.

The following report aims to provide an overview so that regional and national stakeholders can have a clear picture of the challenges faced by the country, as well as the capacities that can be leveraged and

built upon for the promotion of sustainable human security in Liberia

Though risk/incident data naturally fluctuates and may therefore have changed since the publication of this report, the structural vulnerabilities are reflective of medium- and long-term trends. These reports focus on the identification of structural vulnerabilities and resiliencies, and how they may impact upon events and developments as they occur.

Introduction

Research Process

The CRVA assesses structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risks, and social and institutional resilience factors according to five human security pillars as identified by ECOWAS in a 2016 scoping paper.¹ The pillars are: 1) Economics and Resources, 2) Politics and Governance, 3) Population and Demographics, 4) Rule of Law, and 5) Security. Findings in this report describe how risks flow from vulnerabilities in the context of Liberia both within and across the five pillars. In recognition of the fact that violent conflict has underlying social, economic, political, and security drivers but expresses itself differently depending on the context, a holistic human security framework was used in this assessment, and will be used for the CRVAs in all ECOWAS member states. Furthermore, the analysis also breaks out gender considerations and external factors as cross-cutting issues that need to be

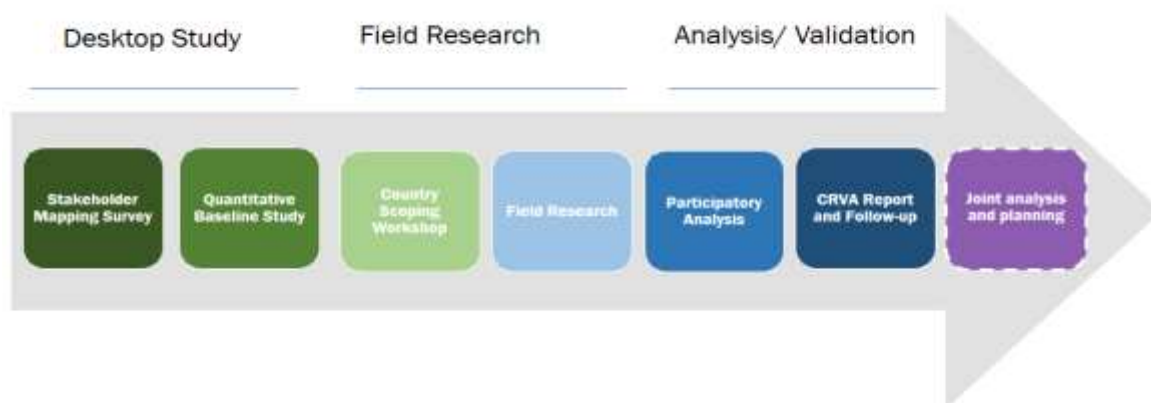
understood for effective early warning and response.²

As shown in the graphic below, the research was conducted in three main phases: Desktop Study, Field Research, and Analysis and Validation.

Phase 1: Desktop Study

The Desktop Study included a preliminary assessment of structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risks, and social and institutional resilience factors.

For the assessment of structural vulnerabilities, the research used data from dozens of sources, including ECOWARN Situation Reports (SitReps). Drawing on these pre-existing data sets,³ a CRVA Index was created to measure the relative levels of vulnerability across five human security dimensions in Liberia.



¹ The EWD Scoping Paper was developed by ECOWAS to help inform the CRVA process, with the human security pillars identified based on best practice approaches such as ECOWARN guidelines and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) framework.

² EWD Scoping Paper on “Risk Assessment of Five ECOWAS Pilot Countries: Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau, and Burkina Faso”

³ Data sources used in the development of the CRVA Index include Global Integrity, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Transparency International, Freedom House, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, World Bank, the Center for Security Studies ETH Zurich, Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, Political Terror Scale, United Nations Refugee Agency, Uppsala University, UN Statistics, and Institute for Economics and Peace.

For the assessment of event-driven risks, event data, including from ECOWARN's Incident Reports (IncReps), was triangulated against data from the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) to estimate the locations and type of conflict issues at the sub-national level over time. Using multiple sources allowed for cross-validation, the filling of gaps, and the ability to identify trends in indicators and sub-indicators using queries and key word searches.

For the assessment of social and institutional resilience factors, a survey was deployed to all of ECOWAS's in-country contacts to learn more about the peace and security actors working to manage and reduce risks and vulnerabilities in the country. Respondents (including representatives of religious institutions, public sector actors, civil society, youth groups, and development actors, among others) were also asked to name organizations that they have partnered with in the last two years on issues of peace and security. Data was then uploaded to a Stakeholder Network Map for quantitative analysis and to identify leverage points, spheres of influence, and social capital. Based on this analysis, key technical experts were identified and were contacted for the next phase of the research.

Phase 2: Field Research

The Field Research began with a scoping workshop in Monrovia. Using the Stakeholder Network Map, highly-networked technical experts were convened in a workshop to validate the initial desktop findings and suggest a way forward for the qualitative analysis in the field. The Scoping Workshop was also used to tailor and sensitize the broader research questions and the Key Informant Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) instruments and questionnaires based on local context. Additionally, the Scoping Workshop also served to attain references and contacts for key actors and stakeholders in the field who would be consulted over the course of the next two weeks during the KIIs and FGDs. Thus, the desktop study

phase informed the research questions that needed further context and validation in the field, as well as the sample of respondents to be engaged (what was asked, where, and to whom).

A team of experts and researchers then conducted an in-country assessment between November 30th and December 14th, 2016 with participants from the counties of Montserrado, Lofa, Nimba, Bong, Bomi, Grand Gedeh, Grand Cape Mount, Grand Bassa, and Margibi. The team traveled to the various hotspots identified in the desktop study and validated in the Scoping Workshop to interview key stakeholders affected by violence and with knowledge of local context and capacities. This team included representatives from the ECOWAS Directorates of Early Warning (EWD) and Political Affairs (DPA), as well as participants from USAID and affiliated experts. The KIIs and FGDs conducted during this in-country assessment collected qualitative data and information regarding various perspectives on structural vulnerabilities, event-driven risk factors, and social and institutional resilience factors relating to the different conflict issues across the country. These transcripts have been collated, streamlined to reduce repetition and vagueness, and categorized for analysis and prioritization during Phase 3.

Phase 3: Analysis and Validation

After the quantitative, GIS, and survey data was validated and contextualized in the field, and the qualitative data was collected, organized and summarized, this report was drafted and was then validated by ECOWAS and USAID. This report will serve as a baseline and resource for more targeted early warning products and analysis/planning towards strategic and operational prevention of human insecurity within the country of Liberia as well as associated conflict systems (e.g. Mano River) more broadly.

Terminology and Conceptual Definitions

In this CRVA report:

“Vulnerability” is defined as any structural factor that has the potential to be a conflict driver. These can include such things as youth unemployment, poverty, inequality, climate, patronage, demographic factors, etc.

“Risk” is defined as any event-driven factor that has the potential to be a conflict trigger. Risk factors can include specific controversies or events such as disasters or elections that may occur.

“Resilience” is defined as any social or institutional factor that has the potential to help mitigate or manage risks and vulnerabilities. These include political, cultural, and community leadership with significant social capital to influence conflict dynamics in a constructive way, including public sector, private sector, religious institutions, civil society, opinion leaders, development workers, etc. Resilience factors can include institutions that play a stabilizing role in the short, medium, or longer term.

The CRVA analysis was conducted according to the framework depicted in the figure below, whereby event-driven risk factors flow out of the structural vulnerabilities (per the red downward arrow) while social and institutional resilience factors mitigate and prevent those risks and vulnerabilities (per the green upward arrow).

For ECOWAS, this framework is useful in that it is aligned with the existing ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), which is a strategic tool to strengthen the human security architecture in West Africa. Key to the ECPF are the categories of **“Operational Prevention,”** or measures applicable in the face of crisis, and **“Structural Prevention,”** or measures that ensure that crises do not arise or re-occur. The CRVA framework is aligned with the ECPF such that identified Vulnerability Factors are to be mitigated by Structural Prevention measures, and Risk Factors are to be mitigated by Operational Prevention measures. This alignment is important for the utility and actionability of this report by users in West Africa.



Literature Review

A Human-Centric Approach to Early Warning

In academic literature, the human security lens to conflict early warning is a change from the more state-centric approaches that were in vogue throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Historically, early warning was focused on prevention and mitigation of conflict between states. In the post-Cold War period with a surge in intra-state conflict, early warning was focused on identifying the drivers and impacts of civil conflict on states. At that time, analysis focused on terminology of state “collapse” and “failure,” emphasizing impacts to neighboring countries or regions, and perpetuating a comparative paradigm of poverty and limited economic growth and conflict in contrast to more developed countries.⁴

However, as a more interconnected human and global security approach emerged in the 2000s, conceptions of state fragility and conflict analysis evolved in both development aid and policy approaches. As the Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC) describes, “At a very broad level, fragility is the result of a dynamic interplay between internal factors (including violent conflict, poverty, economic and structural conditions, weak formal institutions), and external factors (including international political economy, regional and global insecurity).”⁵ While not discounting the role of the state as a key vehicle for managing and preventing conflict, the human-centric approach looks first and foremost at the impact of demographic, economic, political, and security conflict drivers on individuals and communities as well as the role that a wide variety of social and

institutional factors play in preventing conflict. Thus, the human security framework provides a holistic approach to understanding different threats that affect individuals’ lives, whether this is through conflict, health, food, environment, or other social, political or economic factors.

The United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security outlines a human-centric approach to security in five principles: 1) *People-centered*, with a focus on protecting basic human freedoms; 2) *Multi-sectoral*, encompassing a broad understanding of threats and causes of insecurity; 3) *Comprehensive*, taking into account different types of individuals’ security from economic to social; 4) *Context-specific*, emphasizing the need to analyze specific conflict contexts and root causes of insecurity; and 5) *Prevention-oriented*, highlighting locally tailored risk prevention and mitigation measures through early warning mechanisms.⁶ This focus on cross-cutting issues and situation-specific analysis and response are central to the CRVA process and broader objectives of integrated conflict early warning and response by ECOWAS and its partners. For the CRVAs, this involves identifying conflict risks, vulnerabilities and resiliencies across the human security pillars of Population and Demographics, Politics and Governance, Security, Economics and Resources, and Rule of Law.

Many indices and development frameworks have emerged for measuring resilience and fragility, from the Fund For Peace’s *Fragile States Index*⁷ to the African Development Bank (AfDB) and World Bank’s *Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA)*⁸ and Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s *Index of African Governance*.⁹ Today, leading international development actors and multilateral

⁴ “Defining and measuring state fragility: a new proposal”, Ferreira, I., The Annual Bank Conference on Africa, June 2015

⁵ “Topic Guide on Fragile States”, Mcloughlin, C., Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC), August 2009

⁶ “Human Security in Theory and Practice”, Human Security Unit, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations, January 2009

⁷ Fragile States Index, The Fund for Peace

⁸ Country Policy and Institutional Assessment (CPIA), World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB)

⁹ Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Mo Ibrahim Foundation

agencies such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the AfDB have also produced strategies, practice areas, and tools, which seek to address the drivers of fragility. The AfDB, for example, has a 2014-2019 Strategy for *Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa*, with a focus on building member state capacities and focusing on “fragile situations rather than fragile states alone.”¹⁰

As the AfDB Strategy notes, however, “there is no single solution and no predefined ‘toolbox’ for addressing fragility.”¹¹ Older academic and policy conceptions of “state failure” used analysis centered on “traditional, state-centric conceptions of security that focused primarily on the safety of states from military aggression,” as outlined in a 2009 paper by the United Nations Human Security Unit. Newer models of analysis have taken on a broader human security lens, which was in “response to the complexity and the interrelatedness of both old and new security threats – from chronic and persistent poverty to ethnic violence, human trafficking, climate change, health pandemics, international terrorism, and sudden economic and financial downturns. Such threats tend to acquire transnational dimensions and move beyond traditional notions of security that focus on external military aggressions alone.”¹²

Thus, a human-centric approach, as opposed to a state-centric approach, is important for analyzing risks and vulnerabilities to society for robust early warning and response mechanisms. Human security provides a holistic approach to understanding different threats which affect individuals’ lives, whether through conflict, health, food, environment, or other social, political, or economic factors. As such, the CRVAs seek to draw upon the more dynamic and interrelated aspects of risk and vulnerability, which look at capacities and

pressures within a society with a view to identifying structural vulnerabilities, resiliencies and risks across key human security pillars. As defined by the United Nations General Assembly, “human security is an approach to assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of their people.”¹³ This approach is also in line with the ECOWAS Vision 2020 which seeks to promote peace, prosperity, and cohesion across the region,¹⁴ and includes a focus on strengthening many human security aspects within member states.

Research Questions

Based on the initial desktop findings, the team developed a set of framing questions broken out by the five human security pillars. These framing questions were not asked verbatim in the field, but rather informed the design of the KII and FGD instruments. These instruments included simple, open-ended questions intended to prompt a discussion during which respondents could express their opinions, experiences, and perceptions about the ways in which they had been impacted by vulnerabilities, risks, and resilience factors in Liberia.

Politics and Governance: After two successful post-conflict national elections, held in 2005 and 2011, respectively, the country faces its third national election in October 2017. What are some of the main concerns with the upcoming elections? Are you going to participate in the elections? As a citizen, what will you do to ensure the elections are conducted without violence in your community? What measures are in place to ensure free and fair elections in Liberia? Are there groups, which are marginalized/excluded from the political process? To what extent do women participate in the political

¹⁰ “Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa, 2014 – 2019”, AfDB

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “Human Security in Theory and Practice”, Human Security Unit, OCHA, United Nations, January 2009

¹³ General Assembly resolution 66/290, October 2012

¹⁴ ECOWAS Vision 2020: Towards a Democratic and Prosperous Community, ECOWAS, June 2010

decision-making process in Liberia? How has the emergence of female President impacted the participation of women in politics in Liberia? Are there barriers to women's (same for youth) participation in (a) peacebuilding (b) politics and (c) governance in Liberia?

Population and Demographics: Describe the relationships among various groups (ethnic, religious, political) in your communities. Are there tensions among communities that you know of? What are the main issues affecting your community? Are there issues around land ownership/land tenure in your community? Who are the parties? Are the issues usually resolved? If no, why? If yes, how and by whom? To what extent do the presence of refugee communities and internal displacement affect social cohesion in your community? To what extent does migration and displacement contribute to competition over land and resources in your community? What types of social services are available/accessible in your community (health, education, sanitation, water, electricity, etc.)? What is the role of youth in your community? Is a growing youth population with few economic opportunities identified as a problem in your community? How does it affect resources such as the delivery of public and social services? To what extent do adverse weather conditions effect food security and security in general?

Economics and Resources: Has life improved since the end of the civil war? What has improved? What challenges remain? How did the Ebola crisis affect your community? How does it continue to affect you? Are traders and convoys able to transport goods to and from the market across the country? Beyond security assistance, to what extent has your community benefited from foreign assistance? (health, education, water, infrastructure, etc.) Are there mining or extractive operations occurring in your town/county? Are you aware of their operations and have you had any interaction with company representatives? Is there friction or tensions between

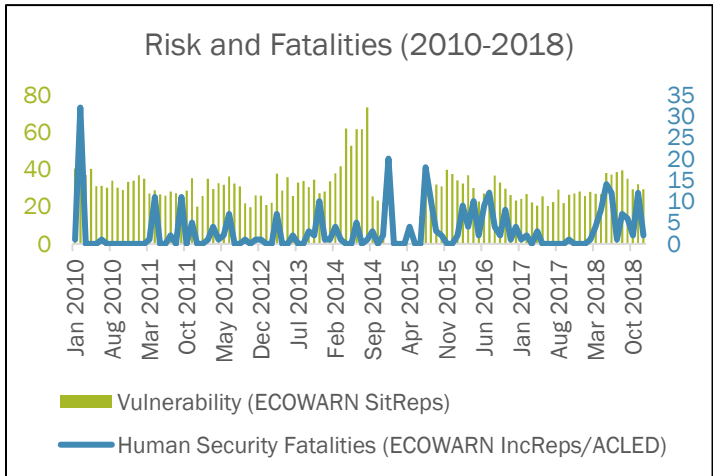
extractive/mining/timber operations and the local community? If so, how are they resolved?

Security: What is the prevailing security situation in your county or region? Who provides security/law and order in your community/area? To what extent does the government rely on proxies or outsiders to maintain peace and security as well as law and order? With the prevailing socio-political and security environment, do you feel that the government of Liberia can protect its citizens and borders without outside assistance? To what extent can women help strengthen safety and security in Liberian communities? (Conflict prevention and peacebuilding) What role are women leaders and women's groups playing in enhancing security in your communities? To what extent can youth help strengthen safety and security in Liberian communities? (Conflict prevention and peacebuilding) What role might youth leaders and youth groups play in enhancing security in your communities? Are there some current examples of both or either?

Rule of Law: To what extent are criminality and issues of drug trafficking, human trafficking a potential source(s) of conflict in Liberia? What types of criminal activities do you encounter in your community? When you have a dispute, where do you go for resolution? Have you used the court system in the past? Do you know someone who has used the court system? How did the process transpire? Do you feel you have access to fair and equal justice and legal services? Are there constraints or limitations to the functioning of the judicial system? To what extent is corruption, political patronage, impunity or nepotism a problem in Liberia? Are you aware of any cases of violence against women and girls? If yes, who were the perpetrators? How was the situation dealt with for both the victim and the perpetrator? Are you aware of any legal frameworks or other mechanisms for protecting women and girls, as well as other vulnerable communities (such as albinos) against violence?



The heatmap of event data above shows hot spots of human security incidents between 2015 and 2018.



The graph above shows the trends in risk layered against vulnerability. The y axis on the left (0-80) shows the level of vulnerability with a score of over 60 reflecting higher levels of vulnerability. The y axis on the right (0-35) shows the number of fatalities, excluding Ebola-related fatalities, by month as a result of social, economic, political, and security factors.



The map above shows the locations where fieldwork was completed in November and December 2016

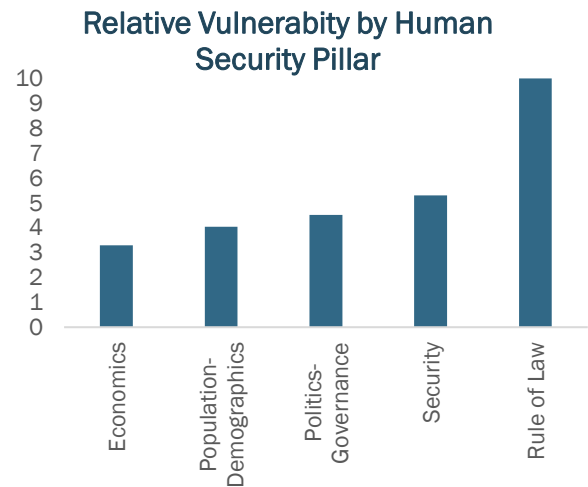
Description of the Sample

Data collected and analyzed for this research included hundreds of ECOWARN SitReps, ECOWARN IncReps, ACLED event data, and a scoping survey, as well as transcripts and notes from FGDs and KIIs in the field. Other sources, integrated to form a vulnerability index (the CRVA Index), included Global Integrity, the Economist Intelligence Unit, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, Transparency International, Freedom House, Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, World Bank, Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index, Political Terror Scale, United Nations Refugee Agency, Uppsala University, UN Statistics, and Institute for Economics and Peace. A complete breakdown is included in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

ECOWARN data shows a huge spike in vulnerability in April 2014 at the very beginning of the Ebola crisis (as measured by taking a monthly average of the ECOWARN SitReps). Risks, as measured by conflict fatalities using ECOWARN IncReps, ACLED, and LERN data) shows a spike in fatalities in 2010 when 32 people were reportedly killed in communal violence and in December 2014 when over a dozen rioters reportedly died protesting at a gold mine.

The CRVA Index, shown at the upper right, indicates that in Liberia the human security pillar that exhibits the most severe levels of vulnerability is Economics and Resources. Data suggests Rule of Law is the strongest in terms of resilience. See Appendix B for a brief description of how the indicators and sources were selected as well as how the data was normalized, scaled, and integrated. In the graph below, the lower the score on the y axis (0-10), the more vulnerable the human security pillar.



Quantitative data show rising vulnerability in Liberia during the Ebola crisis, and areas of greatest weakness generally in the Economics and Resources pillar. Corroborating these findings on structural vulnerabilities, the GIS and event data primarily shows relatively low levels of lethal violence. Incidents often related to crime linked with economics. Field research was then conducted to validate and contextualize these preliminary findings. As illustrated in the pages below, FGDs and KIIs brought out the longer term impacts of the Ebola crisis and pressures associated with the lack of infrastructure, especially roads.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

This report seeks to layer, triangulate, and juxtapose quantitative, GIS, and qualitative data in a way that is accurate, meaningful, and representative. However, limitations to this analysis include the two-year date range for the event/GIS data and the seven-year date range for the ECOWARN SitReps. If there are conflict cycles that fall outside those parameters, there will be constraints on the ability to analyze those patterns in this report. Furthermore, this research sought to ensure representativeness of the sample of stakeholders engaged through KIIs (12 prominent individuals) and FGDs (23 focus group discussions). To the extent that these stakeholders were representative, they added vital

contextualization and validation of the desktop research.

Scope and limitations also apply to the use and purpose of the study. The CRVA reports support the objectives of ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF). In particular, the CRVA reports identify vulnerabilities across the human security pillars in order to inform structural prevention. Structural prevention, as defined in the ECPF, comprises “political, institutional (governance) and developmental reforms, capacity enhancement and advocacy on the culture of peace.” While this report can also be used to inform operational prevention, which includes “early warning, mediation, conciliation, preventive disarmament and preventive deployment using interactive means such as good offices and the ECOWAS Standby Force,” it seeks primarily to identify the key areas of structural vulnerability at the national and sub-national levels for strategic planning by ECOWAS and other partners in the peace and security space. However, inasmuch that operational prevention can be informed by patterns and trends in the event-driven risk factors highlighted in this report, the CRVA should serve as a baseline analysis of dynamics that are closely monitored over time. Thereby, in addition to informing strategic planning on structural vulnerability issues, the CRVA will also inform early warning products such as weekly, monthly, and quarterly situation reports that inform analysts and potential responders as to heightened conflict risk across one or more indicators, and propose recommendations on response. The CRVA reports can also be used as a foundation to inform more detailed case studies around identified risks, vulnerabilities and resiliencies for a country of interest or concern.

While many reports that seek to identify structural vulnerabilities and resilience factors focus almost exclusively at the national level, ECOWAS seeks to support a more decentralized early warning and response infrastructure across the region. As such, the CRVA reports also take into consideration dynamics at the sub-national level. These sub-national factors are critical to consider as they help analysts and potential responders understand the context in which specific events (risks) are occurring, which may be markedly different from the national context. A mapping of sub-national level risks, vulnerabilities, and resiliencies can also help inform strategies for engaging at the local level for structural prevention. In particular, as defined by the ECPF, taking “measures to ensure the crises do not arise in the first place or, if they do, that they do no re-occur.”

Finally, as also noted in the ECPF, conflict in West Africa tends to be highly interconnected, which often leads to cycles of violence that cross borders and can keep countries emmeshed for decades. The CRVA reports, covering all fifteen member states of ECOWAS, are also useful in helping to inform and understand the dynamics of specific regional conflict systems, such as those that occur across the Mano River and Sahel. These regional conflict systems are influenced and interconnected not only historically and culturally, but also share many of the same structural vulnerabilities that give rise to risks and the eventual outbreak of violence, decade after decade. Thus, the CRVA reports present an opportunity to view not only the specific national and sub-national factors that lead to structural vulnerability and heightened risk, they also help highlight the nature of regional conflict systems, and the need for a holistic and systemic lens in both analysis and response.

Country Background

Founded in 1822 by the American Colonization Society to resettle freed American slaves, Liberia officially became a Republic in 1847. Between 1822 and 1847, up to 13,000 freed American slaves settled in Liberia, although some estimates place the number higher. Historians estimate that approximately 3-5 percent of Liberia's current population are descended from the original American settlers. These colonization efforts in Liberia had far-reaching political, social and economic impacts that lasted well into the next century. Despite comprising a small portion of the overall population, for example, descendants of the freed American slaves, known widely as Americo-Liberians, maintained control of the country until 1980, when a coup d'état led by Army Sergeant Samuel Doe overthrew the Americo-Liberian President, William Tolbert. Following the coup, Tolbert was killed and members of his cabinet were publicly executed, causing many Americo-Liberians to flee the country.

The 1980 coup d'état set the stage for nine years of increasing unrest and turmoil within and outside of the government, characterized by more coup attempts and increased inter-ethnic hostilities, particularly centered in Nimba County. Elections in October 1985 resulted in a victory for Samuel Doe, although many national and international observers contended that these elections were neither free nor fair. The following month, Doe's former second-in-command, Thomas Quiwonkpa, a native of Nimba County, entered Liberia through neighboring Sierra Leone with the intent to unseat President Doe. The coup attempt failed, however, and Quiwonkpa was executed. In retaliation, the Doe government unleashed a revenge campaign on Nimba County and killed scores of ethnic Gio and Mano citizens. In 1989, Charles Taylor and a group of rebels known as the National Patriotic

Front of Liberia (NPFL) entered Liberia through Côte d'Ivoire in another attempt to overthrow Doe. This uprising marked the beginning of the First Liberian Civil War, which raged on and off from 1989 to 1997. To quell the violence, an ECOWAS peacekeeping force was deployed in 1990 and an interim government set up this same year. However, these efforts proved futile and fighting continued.¹⁵

As the civil war worsened in Liberia, Taylor refused to recognize the interim government. Taylor's rebel group also began to fracture internally along ethnic lines as the civil war drew in other groups. By 1995, there were seven major groups, often divided along ethnic lines, fighting for control throughout the country. In November 1995, the seven main factions agreed to a ceasefire as part of the Abuja Peace Accords, and agreed to form another government. The peace, however, was short-lived. Fighting soon broke out again and 1996 became one of the bloodiest years of the war. In accordance with the peace agreement, an election in July 1997 brought Charles Taylor to power, with an estimated 75 percent of the vote. Though hopes for an end to this violent conflict were high, peace appeared elusive as Taylor became increasingly embroiled in the neighboring conflict in Sierra Leone, while opposition groups began to attack Monrovia from the countryside. The failure of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs also contributed to an environment of insecurity, and a second civil war broke out in 1999, plunging the country back into chaos.¹⁶ Finally, in 2003, ECOWAS-led peace talks in Ghana prompted the resignation of President Taylor and ushered in another ECOWAS peacekeeping force to maintain a ceasefire and begin the DDR process, a mission later taken over by the United Nations.¹⁷ The civil wars that gripped Liberia for the better part of two

¹⁵ "Liberia country profile", BBC, January 2018.

¹⁶ "The Roots of the Second Liberian Civil War", Kieh, G., International Journal on World Peace, March 2009.

¹⁷ "United Nation Mission in Liberia", United Nations Peacekeeping

decades led to the complete breakdown of law and order and the extensive loss of life and property.

Liberia experienced relative political stability in the two years following the conflict while the country was run by the National Transitional Government headed by Chairman Charles Gyude Bryant. In 2005, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first African female head of state in elections declared free and fair by the international community. Her

re-election in 2011, although contentious among candidates, was deemed fair and transparent. However, despite the success of democratic governance over the past decade in Liberia, peace and security remain fragile. The upcoming presidential election in October 2017 will be only the third in post-conflict Liberia, and latent security threats are a concern as the country prepares to transfer power to a new administration in 2018.¹⁸

¹⁸ "Liberians Acknowledge Historic Nature of Upcoming Polls, Eager for Inclusive, Peaceful, and Credible Elections, NDI

Delegation Finds", National Democratic Institute (NDI), February 2017.

National-Level Vulnerabilities, Risks and Resiliencies

Based on desktop research using the ECOWARN, ACLED, and LERN data sets, surveys of peace and security actors in key regions in Liberia, field research that included KIIs and FGDs, and participatory analysis by the CRVA field research team, the following national-level risks, vulnerabilities, and resilience factors were identified:

Structural Vulnerabilities	<p>Economics and Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poverty and unemployment, including youth and women unemployment• Poor road infrastructure• Lack of access to essential services (water, electricity, education)• Food Insecurity• Undiversified economy• Limitations of government business regulations and enforcement• Low level of intra-national economic integration at county level• Low level of economic integration at the regional level• Lack of uniformity in civil service salary scheme due to the absence of a national policy• High level of discrimination among citizens based on class system• High rate of capital flight inhibiting local economic development <p>Population and Demographics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• High price of healthcare• Drug abuse• Large youth population (youth bulge)• Land tenure and ownership issues• High maternal mortality rates, especially in rural areas• Ethnically diverse population with history of inter-ethnic grievances• Transboundary water insecurity• Environmental pressures, including flooding, fire, and drought• Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)• Early marriage• Low number of gender-based/sexual violence (GBV) cases litigated in court <p>Politics and Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factionalized political parties• Limited access to voting process in rural areas• Limited representation of women in national legislature
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- Low capacity of government institutions
- Perceived lack of patriotism/ Elitism
- Lack of uniformity in civil service salary scheme due to the absence of a national policy
- High level of discrimination among citizens based on class system

Security

- Limited capacity of police deployments, training and equipment
- Porous borders
- Poor implementation of the DDR Process
- High rate of criminality

Rule of Law

- Poor law enforcement (logistics, equipment)
- Impunity
- Local controversy over international businesses, e.g. land concessions and employment practices
- Low capacity of law and order institutions, particularly in rural areas
- Incomplete or inadequate post-conflict reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants

Event-Driven Risks

Economics and Resources

- Disruptions to agricultural supply chains from lack of road access
- Economic shocks from volatile commodity markets
- Protests related to economic governance and unemployment
- Limited GDP growth as a result of low foreign investment and regional integration
- Dollarization (USD) of the economy

Population and Demographics

- IDPs and cross-border population movements
- Exposure to regional health pandemics
- Clashes between groups over water/livelihood resource access
- Reduced agricultural production from environmental disasters and pandemics

Politics and Governance

- Political violence and protests
- Polarizing political rhetoric
- Electoral fraud
- Government corruption
- Elections (security, roads, voter confusion/skepticism/apathy)

Security

- Withdrawal of military and police component of UNMIL before the 2017 elections

- Rape and gender-based violence
- Impunity of former combatants
- Inadequate Security Sector Reform (SSR) Initiatives
- Ethnic/communal tensions
- Inflammatory speech on radio and broadcast media
- Mob/vigilante justice
- Legacy of the Memories of the Civil war
- Drug and arms trafficking
- Drug abuse

Rule of Law

- Mob justice/vigilantism
- Land grabbing
- Perception of corruption
- Culture of silence around gender-based violence

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Economics and Resources

- Support from donor community
- Youth clubs and public works projects
- Remittances from the diaspora
- Extractive industry transparency initiatives
- Natural resources governance initiatives

Population and Demographics

- Mano River Union (MRU)
- International Community support
- Environmental Protection Agency
- CSOs, especially Women's groups
- Existence of a National Gender Policy
- Youth organizations

Politics and Governance

- Female political representatives
- Youth representation in government
- NEC Liberia
- Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission

Security

- Peacebuilding Office
- Religious leaders
- Women networks
- Community peacebuilding, including traditional conflict resolution practices

- Community Watch
- Memories of the Civil war as a deterrent
- Legacy of UNMIL and ECOWAS representations
- National Small Arms Commission

Rule of Law

- Emerging CSOs
- Existence of national infrastructures for conflict resolution
 - Palaver hut
 - Peace Committees at the county and community levels
 - Peacebuilding office
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
- Independent National Commission of Human Rights
- Land Commission

Key themes identified in the CRVA research include ongoing challenges as the communities recover from the Ebola crisis. This has had impacts on all five human security pillars, from the economic and social spheres as well as governance, with the

postponing of elections and street protests. Another key theme included challenges around infrastructure, especially roads, which undermine economic and social integration throughout the country.

Economics and Resources (Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poverty and unemployment, including youth and women unemployment• Poor road infrastructure• Lack of access to essential services (water, electricity, education)• Food insecurity• Undiversified economy• Limitations of government business regulations and enforcement• Low level of intra-national economic integration at county level• Low level of economic integration at the regional level• Lack of uniformity in civil service salary scheme due to the absence of a national policy• High level of discrimination among citizens based on class system• High rate of capital flight inhibiting local economic development
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disruptions to agricultural supply chains from lack of road access• Economic shocks from volatile commodity markets• Protests related to economic governance and unemployment• Limited GDP growth as a result of low foreign investment and regional integration• “Dollarization” (USD) of the economy

Vulnerabilities and Risks

According to an analysis of quantitative data, Economics and Resources is Liberia’s most vulnerable risk category. Liberia’s economy has struggled to recover since the 2014-2015 Ebola outbreak. During the epidemic, Liberia closed its borders to prevent the spread of the disease, which negatively affected the economy.¹⁹ In 2015, Liberia had a GDP per capita of US\$455.90, which had steadily increased since 2005.²⁰ Liberia’s food deficit, as well as underemployment of women in the labor force, has inhibited the overall growth of the country’s GDP and productivity. Food insecurity is highest in rural areas, where around 51 percent of the country lives. The leading causes of food insecurity in Liberia include poverty, low agricultural production, and access to markets and

credit.²¹ The lack of skilled labor also contributes to the country’s low economic productivity per capita. In recent years, economic inequality, low wages and competition for land have sparked protests and confrontations with government or industry representatives, some of which turned violent, highlighting the county’s vulnerability in this area.

One critical issue that cuts across economic – as well as social, political, and security – factors is the poor road infrastructure in the country. While about a quarter of the country’s population lives in Greater Monrovia, it is difficult and expensive to transport goods and commodities to and from market in the rural areas, especially during the rainy season when transportation between urban and rural areas can be halted for months. This has

¹⁹ “Ebola: Most African Countries Avoid Major Economic Loss but Impact on Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone Remains Crippling”, World Bank, January 2015.

²⁰ “GDP per capita (current US\$)”, World Bank

²¹ “Emergency Food Security Assessment: Liberia”, World Food Programme, June 2015.

implications for livelihoods and economic growth as well as other issues such as access to police under the Rule of Law pillar and access to voting under the Politics and Governance pillar.

Despite significant cross-border movement for local level trade in rural counties, Liberia's regional trade lags behind other countries, according to the African Regional Integration Index.²² Its main export goods include commodities such as iron, diamonds, timber, rubber, cocoa, and coffee. Many of the mineral resources remain underdeveloped after the civil war, with limited foreign investment. The National Resource Governance Institute notes that additional investment in the production of these resources could be attracted through strengthening governance and rule of law.²³ Likewise, the 2017 World Bank's Doing Business Report also identifies business procedures and contract enforcement as areas which could improve the country's business climate.²⁴ The Liberian government has been pursuing economic diversification to reduce the risk of economic shocks such as fluctuating commodity prices.²⁵

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Based on a quantitative analysis, the Economics and Resources pillar presents the highest level of vulnerability across the human security framework. However, there are many social and institutional entities with influence on those pressures that play an important mitigating role in Liberia. Agricultural cooperatives play a key role in assisting local farmers to take their businesses to scale while women and youth entrepreneurs are key stakeholders and protagonists in the promotion of peaceable livelihoods at the local level. During the

Ebola crisis in particular, women and youth were able to mobilize around pre-existing informal cooperatives to continue the limited sale of agricultural products, while youth mobilized to fulfill vital health and sanitation roles. In addition, many interviewees, particularly from counties bordering Montserrado, were able to utilize materials and information from prior international workshops and trainings on delivering goods to market to disseminate information in rural areas and sensitize communities to health and sanitation protocols during epidemics.

Meanwhile, national and international companies (including mining companies), create jobs both directly and indirectly through their supply chains. Past initiatives by companies to collaborate with local officials to disseminate information on their operations through town halls and other community forums were essential in mitigating risks stemming from misunderstandings, particularly around fluctuations in local prices due to downturns in global commodity markets. In addition, in the mining and forestry sectors, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) and other multi-stakeholder forums help promote responsible natural resource management practices and mitigate controversies and other issues. At the national level, the ministries of agriculture, finance & development planning, and commerce & industry help to promote an enabling environment for economic growth and opportunity through information campaigns and community meetings. The Liberia Business Registry helps with networking and technical support to the private sector and also plays a role in ensuring that businesses promote transparency and information sharing in their operations.

²² "Liberia", Africa Regional Integration Index.

²³ "Liberia", Natural Resource Governance Institute

²⁴ "Doing Business: Liberia", World Bank

²⁵ "Liberia: Pres. Sirleaf Pushes Economic Diversification Policy", Yates, D., All Africa News, November 2016.

Population and Demographics (Second Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High price of healthcare• Drug abuse• Large youth population (youth bulge)• Land tenure and ownership issues• High maternal mortality rates, especially in rural areas• Ethnically diverse population with history of inter-ethnic grievances• Transboundary water insecurity• Environmental pressures, including flooding, fire, and drought• Female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C)• Early marriage• Low number of gender-based/sexual violence (GBV) cases litigated in court
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IDPs and cross-border population movements• Exposure to regional health pandemics• Clashes between groups over water/livelihood resource access• Reduced agricultural production from environmental disasters and pandemics

The civil wars of the 1990s and early 2000s had pronounced ethnic undertones, with the predominantly Gio and Mano rebellion overthrowing former President Samuel Doe, who was largely supported by his own Krahn ethnic group. After Doe’s death in 1990, fighting continued between the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), which had taken refuge in neighboring Sierra Leone and Guinea, and Charles Taylor’s National Patriotic Front (NPF), which had found sanctuary in Côte d’Ivoire. The first Liberian Civil War ended in 1997 with the election of Charles Taylor as President. War then broke out again in 1999 when Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) (made up predominantly of fighters from the Krahn and Mandingo ethnic groups) attacked, with support from neighboring Guinea.

Fortunately, the history of ethnic polarization that was central to the period of civil war has not continued to be a dominant risk factor. There do remain some ethnic/religious tensions, however, with issues of discrimination reported in the

northern counties of Nimba and Lofa relating to the Mandingo, which respondents link to the legacy of war. However, unlike the past, these issues now rarely lead to violence. Separately, localized clashes are reported with traditional Poro and Sande secret society members that have sometimes claimed lives. These clashes are not of an inter-ethnic nature, but rather over disputes related to traditional initiation practices that are reported to sometimes include abduction and female genital mutilation.

Vulnerabilities and Risks

Key vulnerabilities in this category include age and population distribution. Liberia is a small, ethnically diverse country with a population of 4.6 million, a quarter of which live in and around the capital, Monrovia. Despite some reported grievances in Lofa and Nimba counties, ethnic and religious tensions are not as prominent an issue as they once were. With a population growth of 2.3 percent

annually²⁶ and a median age of 18 years (42 percent of the population is under the age of 15)²⁷, however, there is pressure on the availability and delivery of basic services, especially health and education. Exacerbated by these Population/Demographics vulnerabilities, and compounded by the economic factors described above, epidemic disease was the overwhelming risk factor that affected Liberia most recently. Now, as Liberia recovers from the Ebola crisis, human capital is still being rebuilt in the public and private sectors, especially in the hardest-hit communities.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Social and institutional partnerships and associations have historically helped to manage environmental and demographic challenges in

Liberia, and continue to do so, albeit to a more limited extent, today. At the regional level, inter-government coordination mechanisms, such as the Mano River Union, are key to promoting economic development, peace, and social development in and around Liberia. International partners and development actors provide assistance in areas such as public and reproductive health, although this is still severely under-resourced in rural areas. Environmental pressures that can adversely affect livelihoods and put pressure on social cohesion are managed with the support of the Environmental Protection Agency of Liberia and conservation groups, including local youth actors. While these resiliency factors are by no means fully inclusive or widespread, they are a capacity that contributes to social and institutional coping mechanisms in the face of pressures.

²⁶ “Liberia Demographics Profile”, Index Mundi

²⁷ “Population ages 0-14 (% of total)”, World Bank

Politics and Governance (Third Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factionalized political parties• Limited access to voting process in rural areas• Limited representation of women in national legislature• Low capacity of government institutions• Perceived lack of patriotism/ Elitism• Lack of uniformity in civil service salary scheme due to the absence of a national policy• High level of discrimination among citizens based on class system
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Political violence and protests• Polarizing political rhetoric• Electoral fraud• Government corruption• Elections (security, roads, voter confusion/skepticism/apathy)

Vulnerabilities and Risks

Liberia came out of a period of over a decade of war and has held successful national elections twice (2005 and 2011), which indicates a level of significant resilience in this category in a post-conflict environment. During these elections, some high profile ex-rebels were elected to office, such as the Senior Senator of Nimba County, Prince Johnson, which may have helped to ease the transition from war to peace in the country, even if many outsiders found it highly unpalatable.

The 2015 elections were postponed several times due to the Ebola outbreak, and their delay resulted in pockets of social unrest. The epidemic also exposed a lack of trust in government institutions, as people were initially hesitant to believe government warnings about the severity of the crisis.²⁸ Following the Ebola outbreak, the government imposed a state of emergency and suspended Senate elections. Albeit necessary, the functioning of government also suffered when President Sirleaf suspended dozens of officials

who failed to report their incomes, and when she dismissed nonessential government officials during the Ebola epidemic. During the lead-up to the October 2017 elections, there have been reports of polarizing rhetoric from politicians on both sides in several counties as well as in the capital. There have also been cases of fraud within the government, which have led to demonstrations in Monrovia.²⁹

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

With a history of election violence and civil conflict, Liberia has taken great strides in the Politics and Governance pillar. However, issues of fragility remain as the country goes into upcoming election cycles. Youth clubs and civil society organizations, such as the Coalition of Political Parties Women in Liberia (COPPWIL), play an important role in managing the vulnerabilities and pressures listed above. Networks, including the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) are critical for the promotion of accountability and confidence in state institutions and electoral processes, in

²⁸ “The Politics behind the Ebola Crisis”, International Crisis Group, October 2015.

²⁹ “Tension Rising Ahead of Kenya, Liberia 2017 Elections”, Claes, J. and Muliru, S., United States Institute of Peace, September 2016.

collaboration with the Liberia National Elections Commission (NEC). More broadly, the Government of Liberia Peacebuilding Office is a valuable asset for early warning and management of security risks associated with politics and governance issues.

The Peacebuilding Office also maintains an online early warning platform to track incidents of potential conflict and helps mobilize local actors to mitigate risks and respond to violence.

Security (Fourth Most Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacity of police deployments, training and equipment • Porous borders • Poor implementation of the DDR Process • High rate of criminality
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal of military and police component of UNMIL before the 2017 elections • Rape and gender-based violence • Impunity of former combatants • Inadequate Security Sector Reform (SSR) Initiatives • Ethnic/communal tensions • Inflammatory speech on radio and broadcast media • Mob/vigilante justice • Legacy of the memories of the Civil war • Drug and arms trafficking • Drug abuse

Vulnerabilities and Risks

While security is the fourth most vulnerable category in the country, according to quantitative analysis based on ECOWARN, ACLED and LERN data, the situation in Liberia has been slowly improving over the last several years. Liberia has improved its resettlement of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) following the Ebola epidemic and has assisted in the return of Ivorian refugees to Côte d’Ivoire. Personal safety still presents vulnerabilities, in part due to the country’s continued challenges with the smuggling of drugs and small arms, and with human trafficking. Land-related disputes are also a security concern, including a lethal incident in February 2016 in Grand Gedeh, near the border of Côte d’Ivoire. The Liberian government’s attempt to attract foreign direct investment since the civil war has sometimes contributed to conflict between communities and companies,³⁰ including a case in Nimba, where communities clashed with security forces during protests over mining operations.

While the government, along with international partners such as UNMIL, has focused on strengthening the capacity of public security forces, limited police numbers and deficiencies in training and equipment, were highlighted as an ongoing challenge. As a result, particularly in rural areas, incidents involving vigilante or mob justice occur frequently, with citizens taking security into their own hands.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

Insecurity due to collective or group-based violence has been low in Liberia over the last several years. This is in part due to the presence and efforts of such actors as the United National Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), a source of temporary resiliency which is unfortunately scheduled to draw down over the coming months. Long-term resilience, however, may rest most firmly with civil society early warning networks (including WANEP) and community-based Watch Groups, who were identified as playing a critical role in identifying and

³⁰ “Liberia rising? Foreign direct investment, persistent inequalities and political tensions”, Paczynska, A., Peacebuilding, May 2016.

managing risks in collaboration with the security forces.

Rule of Law (Least Vulnerable Pillar)

Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor law enforcement (logistics, equipment)• Impunity• Local controversy over international businesses, e.g. land concessions and employment practices• Low capacity of law and order institutions, particularly in rural areas• Incomplete or inadequate post-conflict reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mob justice/vigilantism• Land grabbing• Perception of corruption• Culture of silence around GBV

Vulnerabilities and Risks

Like many of the vulnerabilities listed in this report across the five human security pillars, access to justice and legal services is constrained by uneven population distribution and poor road infrastructure and national integration. Where there are police, lawyers, judges, and courts, the system works relatively well. But there are gaps, particularly in rural areas. Respondents noted a reliance on community-based alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. In some places, such as Lofa County, respondents mentioned that mobs sometimes take justice into their own hands due to a lack of police, or a lack of trust in the police. Risks identified included significant levels of drug trafficking, and incidents of GBV that police are often unwilling or unable to handle. In many counties, it was believed that police and security forces regularly supplement their incomes through participation in illicit markets (particularly in communities where salaries don't arrive for weeks or months), and are thus inclined to look the other way when it comes to apprehending perpetrators or ring leaders.

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

One of the main Rule of Law challenges in Liberia has been related to transitional justice in the aftermath of the conflict. However, the Independent National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have played a valuable role in managing challenges around national reconciliation, and building confidence in the judicial system in a highly-polarized environment. Now, some of the main challenges within this pillar relate more to access to justice in the rural areas. In that context, civil society groups help educate community members as to their legal rights, while traditional authorities, religious leaders, and women's groups, assist with dispute resolution at the local level.

External Factors

In an environment with porous borders and limited public health infrastructure, Ebola spread from Guinea to Liberia in 2014. Development actors played a key role in responding to the Ebola crisis and in helping to enhance the capacity of Liberia's public health services. Deforestation undertaken to expand farm land is also ironically bringing on a decrease in agricultural production, with a recent increase in flooding, drought, and wildfires causing severe damage to newly cleared areas. Seasonal rains undermine road access, isolating rural communities and harming both livelihoods and access to food. Demographic and resource pressures from transboundary freshwater basins can contribute to environmental and security risk factors.

Conflict in the Mano River Basin has historically been a challenge for the sub-region. Historically, instability in the region has undermined politics and governance in neighboring countries, which has directly affected levels of insecurity and violence in Liberia. In times of war, neighbors have supported or given refuge to rebel groups. Most recently, in Côte d'Ivoire's political crisis in 2010-

2011, refugees and fighters moved back and forth across the border, sometimes making it difficult to distinguish between them. In the years since the end of the region's wars, though, initiatives such as the Mano River Union, which was reactivated in 2004 by the governments of Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea, have sought to promote resilience and regional integration.³¹ The United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has played a key role in electoral assistance, providing logistical and security support along with their robust peacekeeping mission. International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and donor partners have also provided democracy and governance support.

After the war, social reconciliation and accountability for perpetrators was a crucial step towards sustainable peace. As such, the international community played an important role as neutral advisers and mediators. Charles Taylor was held in Nigeria until being transferred to the War Crimes Tribunal in Sierra Leone and then later moved to The Hague for his trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Meanwhile, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) has played an important role in strengthening capacity at the community level and supported the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Liberia.

³¹ "Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone seek to revive bloc", Samb, S., Reuters, April 2007.

Gender Considerations

In 2005, Liberia became the first African country to elect a female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who came to power, in part, by promising to help women and girls in the country. During the 14-year long civil war, women suffered disproportionately, not only from Gender-Based Violence (GBV), but also from the effects of having their communities and families torn apart. Liberia's women also became famous for their successful efforts to end the war in 2003, taking to the streets *en masse* to stage non-violent protests. One of the leaders of the protest movement, Leymah Gbowee, went on to win the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize (with Sirleaf and Tawakkul Karman) for her efforts. In the years following the end of the civil war in 2003, women played a crucial role in reconstructing and rebuilding their communities. In the meantime, the government has made empowering women in Liberia a priority, although often these efforts appear to be mainly concentrated in the capital and have not yet reached rural communities. Nevertheless, compared to many of its neighbors in the region, Liberia has made notable strides in promoting gender equity and encouraging women and girls to seek out educational and employment opportunities.

Although population growth is high, there is an effort to manage associated vulnerabilities when it comes to women and girls. For instance, Liberia has one of the highest percentages of contraceptive prevalence in the region (20.2 percent for women aged 15-49). Liberian women also marry slightly later than the regional average (36 percent of women aged 20-24 were married or in a union before age 18 in Liberia, compared to 38.9 percent for the region). On the other hand, Liberia suffers from a high maternal mortality rate (725 deaths per 100,000 live births compared to a regional average of 554). In rural areas, underage pregnancy continues to be a significant issue, with

girls as young as ten reportedly having children. Compounding the issue of high maternal mortality, inadequate access to hospitals and poorly stocked and equipped facilities was repeatedly mentioned in interviews. The lack of access to hospitals in rural communities places women at particularly high risk, as it necessitates travel on terrible roads, often during labor. It was also noted that many hospitals in rural areas simply do not have adequate supplies or facilities for delivering babies, and have no ability to cope with high-risk pregnancies or those that present with complications. This puts both older and younger women (girls), at even higher risk for death during childbirth.

As is often the case in post-conflict environments, GBV was identified in interviews as a persistent issue needing to be addressed. Prosecution of GBV has been a priority of the legal system, though given challenges with rural access to justice, it continues to be an issue. While there have been public awareness campaigns on the issue, cases of sexual assault or violence often go uninvestigated or are not litigated in court, especially in rural communities. However, as rape and sexual assault is considered a crime under the Liberian penal code, traditional leaders are reluctant to become involved as they do in other cases. Rape and assault cases are thus almost always referred to the police and courts, where they often languish or are dismissed due to a lack of capacity or training on the part of investigators, prosecutors, and judges.

Economic empowerment for women remains poor with less than 32 percent of girls aged 15-24 employed, which is much lower than the regional average. Liberia is also underperforming the region where gender parity in primary and secondary school enrollment is concerned.³² In interviews, KII and FGD participants noted that access to jobs training or skills training remained very limited, especially outside of the capital. Some mentioned

³² "School enrollment, primary and secondary (gross), gender parity index (GPI)", World Bank

that international NGOs and other donor agencies, sometimes in partnership with the government, had provided programs aimed at skills and capacity building for women and girls in the past that were considered valuable in filling this gap, and should consider doing so again.

At the county and local levels, women are increasingly involved in civic education, electoral processes, and outreach, although exclusion continues to be a challenge in formal government representation. However, at 11 percent, female representation in the national legislature is comparable to regional counterparts.³³ Despite limited representation in the national legislature, women are well represented at the highest levels of the judiciary (Liberia's constitutional court is comprised of 40 percent women).

Finally, women played a key role in the Ebola crisis that gripped the nation and, as in the civil war, often suffered disproportionately when their families and communities were devastated by the disease. Many women interviewed in the KIIs and FGDs spoke about their roles as the primary care

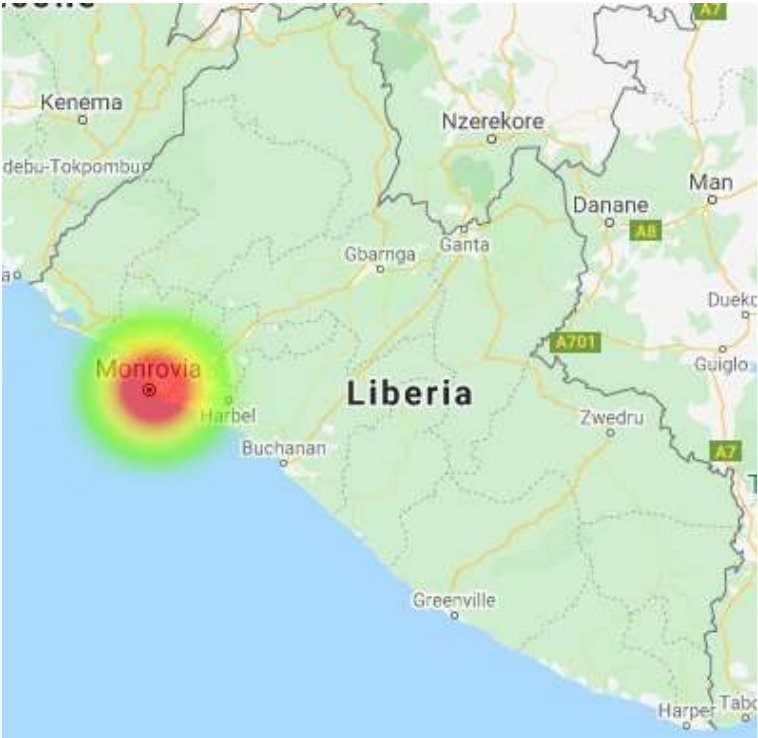
givers in particularly hard-hit communities, and having to balance this with also becoming the primary breadwinners when their husbands or adult children became too ill to work or died of the disease. As many women in more remote areas are responsible for providing for the livelihoods of the families through trade with other towns and selling their goods at markets, the restrictions on movement during the Ebola crisis were particularly devastating. One woman during a KII also noted that as most women borrowed money for initial investments in their businesses from market lenders, who were among the first to perish in the pandemic, they often were left with no ability to support themselves or their families, a problem that persists today. Some women interviewed also mentioned how some female members of the community turned to prostitution as a means of supporting themselves and their families during the Ebola crisis, with one woman stating, "Women are a source of resilience in Liberia and this has been true for as long as Liberia has been around. But this resilience takes a great toll when we have to sell our bodies and souls to take care of our children and our communities."

³³ "Proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (%)", World Bank

Sub-National Level Vulnerabilities, Risks and Resilience Factors: Observations by Region

Montserrado County

Montserrado County is the home of the national capital, Monrovia, and had a population of more than 1.1 million people as of the 2008 census.³⁴ Montserrado has the highest population density in the country. Key economic activities in the county include informal trade and small business, government administration activities, and agriculture.



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Competing currencies (US Dollar and Liberian Dollar)
- Inflation
- Crime
- Unemployment
- Poor infrastructure
- Drug trafficking and illicit economies
- Gender-based violence

Event-Driven Risks

- Health crises
- Political rallies
- Elections
- Protests

³⁴ “Montserrado”, Liberia Data Portal

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- International donor initiatives
- Peacebuilding Office
- Community Watch Forums
- Community leaders and elders
- Youth organizations
- Women's organizations

Economics and Resources

The economy in Montserrado was severely impacted by the Ebola epidemic and, while many businesses have returned, residents continue to report challenges. Competing currencies (the U.S. Dollar and the Liberian Dollar), the informal economy, and general inflation are issues and inhibitors to the growth of small businesses. Residents also highlighted the need for better education and social services, and for officials to curb the drug trade.

"I think business is not running like it was during the time of Ebola, because we notice that, before Ebola came, there were a lot of people that came in with their businesses to assist the country. But when Ebola came they all had to leave. And when they left, prices have increased. Goods and commodities are not coming into the country like it used to be. And we've noticed that the US dollar exchange rate is going up very high."

- Focus group discussion, Monrovia

Population and Demographics

Many youth are involved in community watch groups, though some residents reported that youth are also actively involved in crime and illicit activities, and the line between a "watch group" and a "vigilante gang" is occasionally blurred. Women's groups were noted as a source of

resilience, and have effectively mobilized around messaging campaigns and community issues.

Politics and Governance

Regarding the upcoming elections, interviewees identified a need for greater voter education and sensitization. The multiplicity of candidates was also cited as a concern. There were also apprehensions expressed around the potential manipulation of youth to engage in political violence, as there has been a historical precedent for this in the county as well as in other parts of the country.

Security

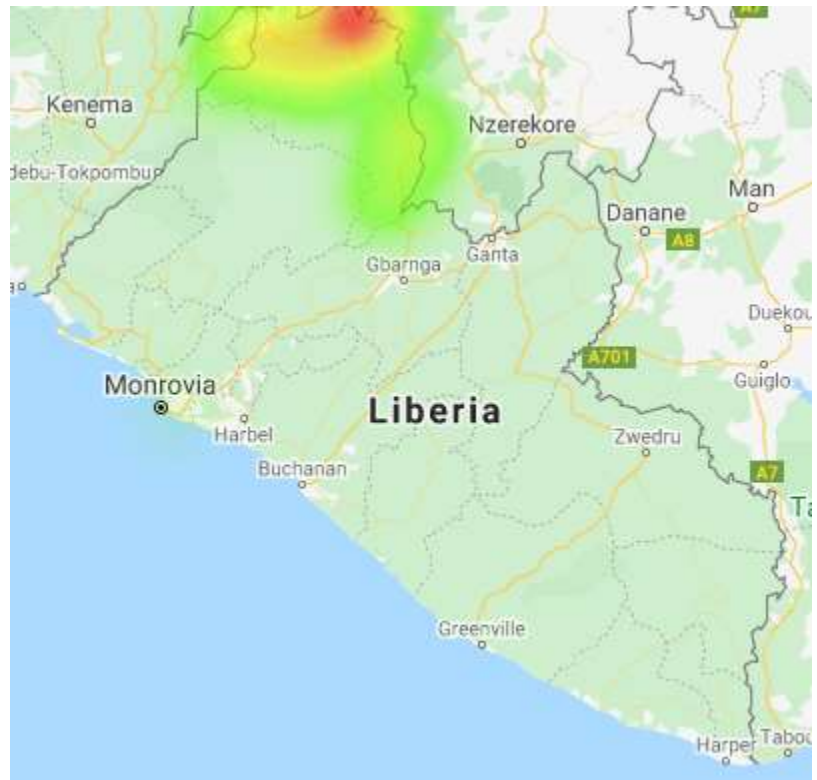
Key security concerns in Montserrado include crime, armed robbery, rape and gender-based violence. Residents identified a lack of training and equipment for security forces as a major impediment, as well as the reliance on vigilante groups to maintain security in impoverished neighborhoods. Other concerns included the perceived complicity of the police and vigilante groups in criminal activities, including the sale and trafficking of narcotics.

Rule of Law

Dispute resolution is handled both through traditional means (community leaders, elders) and the courts. While the formal judicial system is felt to be more competent and trained in Montserrado than in other parts of the country, some interviewees expressed that it is susceptible to outside political and financial influence.

Lofa County

Lofa County is located in northwestern Liberia, along the shared border with Sierra Leone and Guinea. As of the 2008 census, Lofa County was home to more than 276,000 people.³⁵ The two largest ethnic groups are the Lorma and Gbandi, with smaller populations of Kpelle, Kissi, Mandingo and Mende. The economy is primarily agricultural, and the county has historically been considered the “breadbasket” of Liberia.³⁶ The county suffered extensive damage during the civil war and, more recently, was seriously affected by the 2014-2015 Ebola epidemic.



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Poor road infrastructure resulting in perceived isolation by population
- Porous borders heighten insecurity, criminality and health risks
- Health care services limited, and mostly inaccessible because of high cost
- Limited availability of health, police and school workers

Event-Driven Risks

- Incidents of rape/gender-based violence, and abandonment of women
- Intercommunal violence relating to land, ethnicity and religion

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- Youth groups
- Inclusion of women in political process

Economics and Resources

The Ebola epidemic had a major impact on Lofa communities. The government’s movement restrictions in some areas to contain the outbreak meant many communities were unable to sell their goods which, particularly in rural communities, dealt a severe financial blow and left many

merchants impoverished. Some respondents noted that they had received loans during the period, but were now unable to pay them back.

³⁵ “Lofa”, Liberia Data Portal

³⁶ “Lofa County Development Agenda”, Liberia Ministry of Interior Affairs

Population and Demographics

Environmental pressures were highlighted as risk factors within the county. The poor infrastructure and road network has meant that during the rainy season, communities are isolated, and locals are unable to travel to markets to sell their goods. Other issues affecting agricultural livelihoods are wildfires, with respondents noting the devastating impacts of a 2016 fire on their crops and land biodiversity.

Politics and Governance

Located in the northwest of the Liberia bordering Guinea and Sierra Leone, Lofa County is vulnerable to cross-border pressures, including the Ebola health epidemic. Many participants highlighted the lack of access to public services, including the provision of roads, and shortage of skilled workers such as doctors and teachers. For some respondents, this equated to isolation and social exclusion from the rest of the country. In some interviews, people highlighted the positive role of youth in supporting communities to fill some of these gaps, often filling “public service” roles. One respondent described youth groups who act as first aid responders to help take people in urgent need of care to hospital, where no ambulances are available. Another noted the role they play in looking after the environment and cleaning up town areas. When the 2017 presidential and legislative elections were raised during discussions, some highlighted their doubts about transparency in the political system, while others expressed a general apathy towards the electoral process. One of the main contributors to this is the high illiteracy rates within the county. Several youths said that the low literacy rate meant that many were unaware about the voting process, and this sometimes also led to misinformation and

tension over politics. Outside of the county capital, Voinjama, there appeared to be little effort to educate rural populations about the upcoming election and, based on historical precedent, many felt that this would not be corrected.

Security

Insecurity in Lofa County was attributed by respondents to criminality and cross-border illicit trade from Guinea. In incident data, it was also reported that rebels were recruiting Liberian mercenaries in Foya for the conflict in Mali. Land, ethnic, and religious divides were also drivers of violence in the county. As some respondents described, tensions between ethnic groups are prevalent, as each community tends to live very homogeneously. Land was also noted as a conflict issue, related to the interpretation of the traditional boundary system versus the government-defined administrative boundaries.

“We’re still sitting on a time bomb in some ways because all the people from this tribe, let’s say 80-90 percent, are living in one community, with all the same tribe. If I try to go live among the other people, another tribe... there is a conflict.”

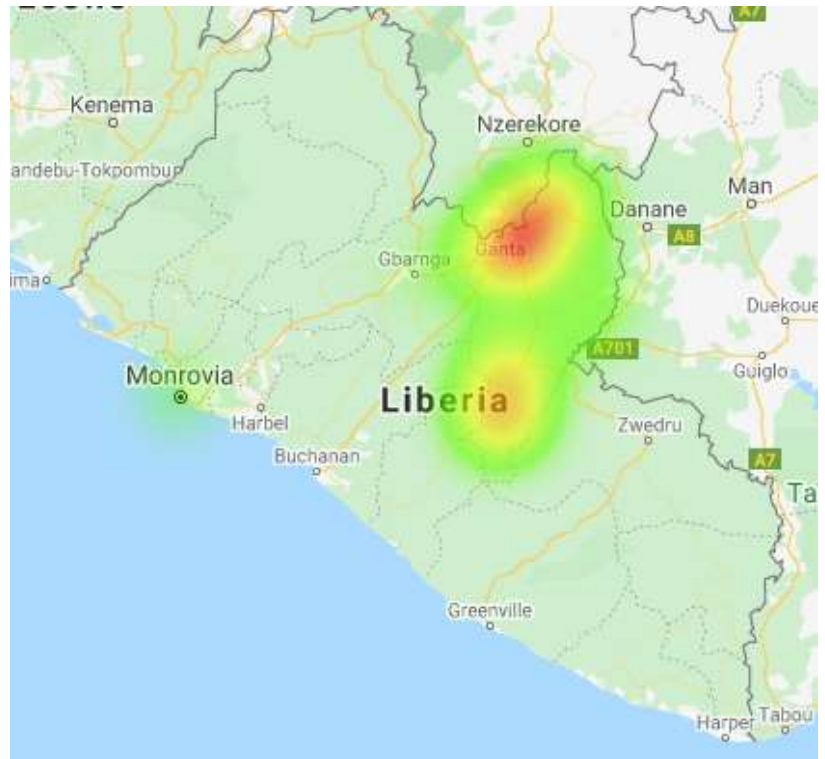
- Youth focus group discussion, Lofa County

Rule of Law

Traditional justice processes were highlighted as an influential part of dispute resolution in communities. Some respondents expressed concerns about corruption and lack of capacity within the government court system. Respondents noted that rape cases were rarely tried in court, with the perpetrator’s family often able to negotiate with the victim’s family or the local authorities.

Nimba County

Nimba County is located in northeastern Liberia, along the shared borders with Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. As of 2008, the county was home to more than 462,000 people, and is Liberia's second-largest county.³⁷ Key ethnic groups in Nimba county include the Dan (also known as the Gio or Mano), Mandingo, Kissi, Krahn and Gbi.³⁸ Nimba is rich in natural resources, including iron ore, gold, timber and diamonds. Much of the county's infrastructure was destroyed during the civil war.



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Youth unemployment which contributes to insecurity
- Lack of capacity in law enforcement and judicial system

Event-Driven Risks

- Ethnic, land and religious tensions and violence
- Clashes over rubber and steel company operations

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- Women in communities
- Electoral commission
- Youth groups

³⁷ "Nimba", Liberia Data Portal

³⁸ "Nimba's Profile", Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services

Economics and Resources

Some respondents identified high government taxation rates and the weak Liberian Dollar as key pressures affecting their livelihoods. Linkages to poor road infrastructure also highlighted the perceived isolation of communities, particularly in rural areas, from other markets in the country.

“The only way the economic system can boom is when there is connectivity of road, because you find someone in there who has agricultural products in abundance, but how to get it into the market? There is no way.”

- Youth focus group discussion, Nimba County

Population and Demographics

During interviews, some farmers expressed disappointment that more information had not been shared with them from the government relating to environmental pressures from climate change (for example, access to climate forecasting information that could have helped in choosing which crop to grow and in determining planting cycles).

Politics and Governance

Many respondents are engaged in political discourse and are aware of the upcoming elections, though they expressed concerns about the high number of political parties, many of whom had no clear policy positions. Government officials highlighted that transparency in the process was key to reducing possible violence or vandalism in the upcoming elections, although citizens interviewed did not feel that the government was doing enough in this regard. Women were also

identified as an important part of the political process, including supporting civic education

“In the past, women were not too involved in activities, especially when it comes to civic education. But today with the gender session established, NEC and other civil society organizations are providing a lot of education concerning the involvement of women in peacebuilding, especially in elections.”

- Focus group discussion, Nimba County

efforts, and a were noted as a key resilience factor in the rural areas of the county.

Security

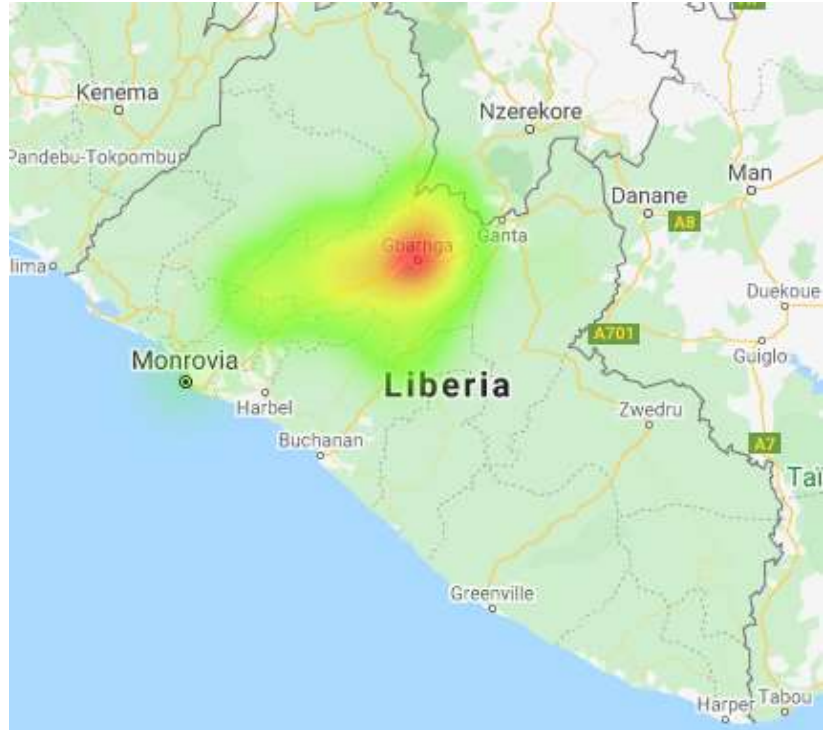
Inter-communal violence remains a risk factor in Nimba. Respondents noted ongoing tensions with the Mandingo ethnic group, which was also voiced by some Mandingo respondents, who further perceived their marginalization by the government. Religious and land conflicts were also noted as security issues. In the event data, protests and clashes with police over steel company and rubber plantation operations were a recurring issue, along with incidents of gender-based violence. Some respondents noted high levels of youth unemployment, which also contribute to the proliferation of crime and insecurity.

Rule of Law

Lack of law enforcement capacities was noted in several respondent interviews, and this in turn weakened the credibility of the judicial system. Traditional justice systems were favored above reporting crimes to the police for some respondents.

Bong County

Bong County is located in north-central Liberia and shares its northeastern border with Guinea. As of the 2008 census, the county had a population of more than 333,000 people.³⁹ The largest ethnic group is the Kpelle, although all of Liberia's 16 ethnic groups live in the county.⁴⁰ Bong County is rich in natural resources such as gold and iron ore and the mining sector plays an important role in the local economy. During the civil war Bong County saw heavy fighting and destruction, and Gbarnga served as a base for Charles Taylor's NPFL and the National Patriotic Reconstruction Assembly Government (NPRAG) in the early 1990s.



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Widespread poverty
- Disparities between rural and urban populations
- Lack of employment and business opportunities
- Drug trafficking

Event-Driven Risks

- Potential for violence related to upcoming elections
- Ongoing reports of ritual killings
- Health crises
- Elections
- Drug use, especially among youth
- Tension between ex-combatants and security forces

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- Women's groups
- Youth groups

³⁹ "Bong County Profile", Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services

⁴⁰ "Bong County Development Agenda", Liberia Ministry of Interior Affairs

Economics and Resources

Widespread poverty remains a major vulnerability in Bong County. Field respondents noted that there are few business opportunities and that there is limited access to loans. Many women in Bong are single parents, making sustainable economic livelihood even more difficult. Payment of school fees is a challenge for many single parents. Additionally, there are economic disparities between rural and urban communities. Bomi has experienced high levels of homelessness among the population due to economic troubles and lack of government initiatives to address this growing phenomenon.

Population and Demographics

Youth are a vulnerable population in Bong. Drugs have become a major concern and lack of employment opportunities has pushed youth toward criminality and away from education.

Politics and Governance

There are concerns about violence surrounding the elections. Field respondents also noted a perception of corruption surrounding elections and a feeling of disconnect between the general population and politicians. Often, messages from community leadership are conflicting or confusing. Another vulnerability is that few women are involved in local leadership and many interviewed felt that they were being systematically marginalized from the political process.

Security

In Bong, there are reports of ritual killings and the prevalence of ex-combatants engaging in illicit activities, both of which threaten security in the county. Severe poverty has exacerbated the security situation, pushing people toward crime and drug trafficking. Field respondents also noted that security forces are often underpaid, which leads to corruption. This allows illicit economic activities, such as drug trafficking, to grow without fear of consequence.

Rule of Law

Field respondents noted that disputes are often resolved by community leaders, rather than through the court system. The official judicial system is generally perceived as inefficient and corrupt, with police underequipped and unable to respond to even basic crimes, such as break-ins or robberies.

“We have land [disputes], we have a lot of things that people have problems within the community. Land disputes where, in the village, Alice will come and say that ‘this is my place, my parents have been farming in this place for a long time, so that is my place.’ And another person will come and claim it is his. So such a dispute is stuck on the local level, where you invite both parties [to discuss] with others in the village.”

- Women’s focus group discussion, Bong County

Bomi County

Bomi County is located in northwestern Liberia and, as of the 2008 census, had a population of approximately 85,000 people.⁴¹ The largest ethnic groups in Bomi County are the Gola, Dei, Mandingo and Kpelle.⁴² The region's economy is largely agrarian, with an estimated 70 percent of the population engaged in agricultural activities.⁴³ Iron ore mining and rubber cultivation are also important economic drivers.



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Lack of employment opportunities
- Lack of businesses

Event-Driven Risks

- Elections
- Health crises

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- Women's groups working toward peace
- Clan meetings and informal networks provide support to communities, especially in rural areas
- Conflict resolution through traditional courts

⁴¹ "Bomi", Liberia Data Portal

⁴² "Bomi County Profile", Liberia Institute of Statistics & Geo-Information Services

⁴³ Ibid.

Economics and Resources

Lack of business and employment opportunities are major economic vulnerabilities in Bomi County. The vulnerable economic status of Bomi County has disproportionately affected women and children. There are many single mothers in Bomi that have struggled to provide basic needs, such as food and housing, for themselves and their children. The region also suffers from severe inequality.

Population and Demographics

Bomi County has a large population of orphans due to the Ebola epidemic. Field respondents noted that local youth are involved in government and peacebuilding activities, and that women-run organizations have grown and gained influence in Bomi.

Politics and Governance

Field respondents in Bomi expressed concern that civic education campaigns and awareness-raising related to the 2017 elections would not be carried out effectively. Additionally, there is worry that voting stations will be difficult to reach, especially for rural populations.

Security

A lack of reliable security forces in Bomi County is an ongoing vulnerability that has threatened security. The county has experienced ongoing illicit economic activity, mostly in the form of drug trafficking from Sierra Leone and Guinea. This

“...my concern is how our partners can help us to at least reach out to the unreachable, tell them how to vote and why it is important to vote. The last election, the turnout was very low compared to the population we have, because people were not educated on how to vote.”

- Interviewee, Bomi County

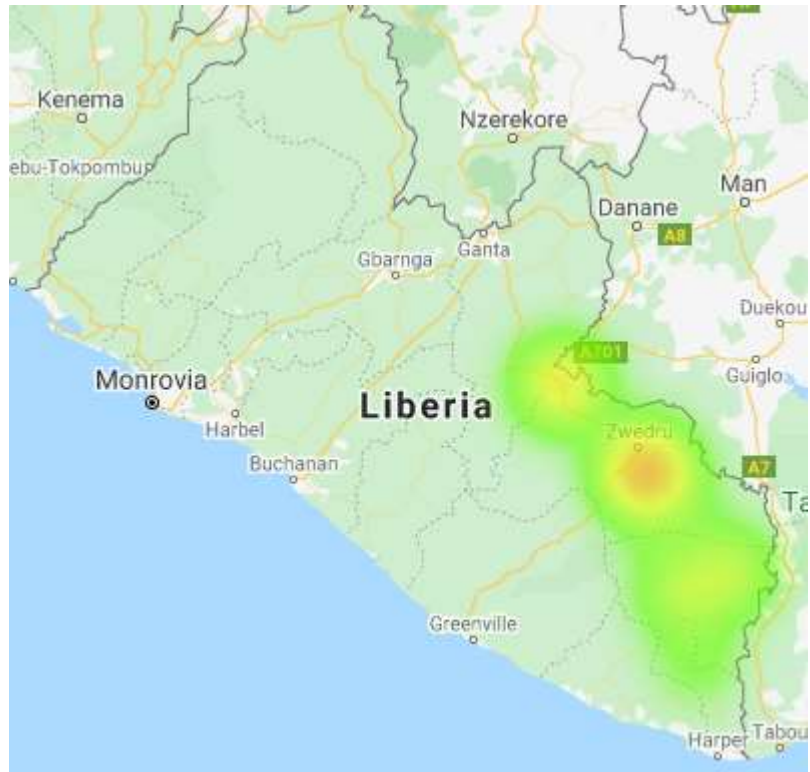
issue is perceived to be exacerbated by corruption amongst security forces, who reportedly will allow drugs to pass through the region for a bribe. There is also a general distrust of police in the county.

Rule of Law

Disputes are generally resolved at the local level in traditional courts. Field respondents noted that there is a good level of resiliency in the area of conflict resolution.

Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties

Grand Gedeh and River Gee Counties are located in southeastern Liberia, along the shared border with Côte d'Ivoire. As of the 2008 census, Grand Gedeh had a population of approximately 125,000 people, and River Gee had a population of more than 66,000 people.^{44,45} The primary ethnic group in Grand Gedeh County is the Krahn, while in River Gee County the largest ethnic group is the Grebo.⁴⁶ Much of the population in River Gee is dependent on subsistence agriculture.⁴⁷ In Grand Gedeh, agriculture and small trade are important to the local economy, and the country has large reserves of timber and other natural resources.⁴⁸



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Cross-border insecurity with Côte d'Ivoire
- Limited training, equipment and deployment numbers of police
- Criminality and illicit drug trade
- Domestic violence

Event-Driven Risks

- Establishment of a training camp for pro-Gbagbo forces after the Côte d'Ivoire civil crisis

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- Strong women's network
- Local community groups

⁴⁴ "Grand Gedeh", Liberia Data Portal

⁴⁵ "River Gee", Liberia Data Portal

⁴⁶ "River Gee County Development Agenda", Liberia Ministry of Interior Affairs

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Grand Gedeh County Development Agenda", Liberia Ministry of Interior Affairs

Economics and Resources

The mining sector in Grand Gedeh was a key theme in discussions. Illegal small-scale mining operations are perceived to increase the circulation of illicit drugs in their localities, as operations draw in workers from all over the region who sometimes also bring in other illicit activities. Mining was also a source of dispute between traditional landowners and government, particularly concerning revenues from the small-scale operations.

Population and Demographics

Many respondents in River Gee and Grand Gedeh Counties expressed concern about large youth populations within their communities, many of whom have degrees, but are not able to find work.

Politics and Governance

The upcoming election process remains a key concern for many within both counties. Some remarked that voters were registered at multiple voter centers, while others noted the crowded field of politicians in the race, and other logistical obstacles that could undermine electoral results. There was concern that the influence of negative or inflammatory radio messaging by political parties could increase the potential for violence and corruption surrounding the election cycle.

Security

Cross-border issues with Côte d'Ivoire were noted as a potential security concern, with reports of pro-Gbagbo rebels establishing a base in Eastern Liberia. Respondents noted that armed robbery, criminality, and proliferation of weapons and illicit drugs were prevalent in the counties. Many expressed low confidence in the police's capacity to respond to incidents or protect civilians. They attributed this to insufficient deployment numbers, poor training, and lack of equipment. In a men's focus group discussion, respondents explained that too many local communities have set up watch

"Security officials are not well-protected themselves. For instance, policemen are not armed and so if something happens in the community, they can't do much..."

- Focus group discussion, Grand Gedeh County

"The criminality in our area right now is drugs. Everybody is doing drugs, especially the youth. Also, armed robbery is an issue ... They are breaking into houses with axes."

- Resident of Grand Gedeh County

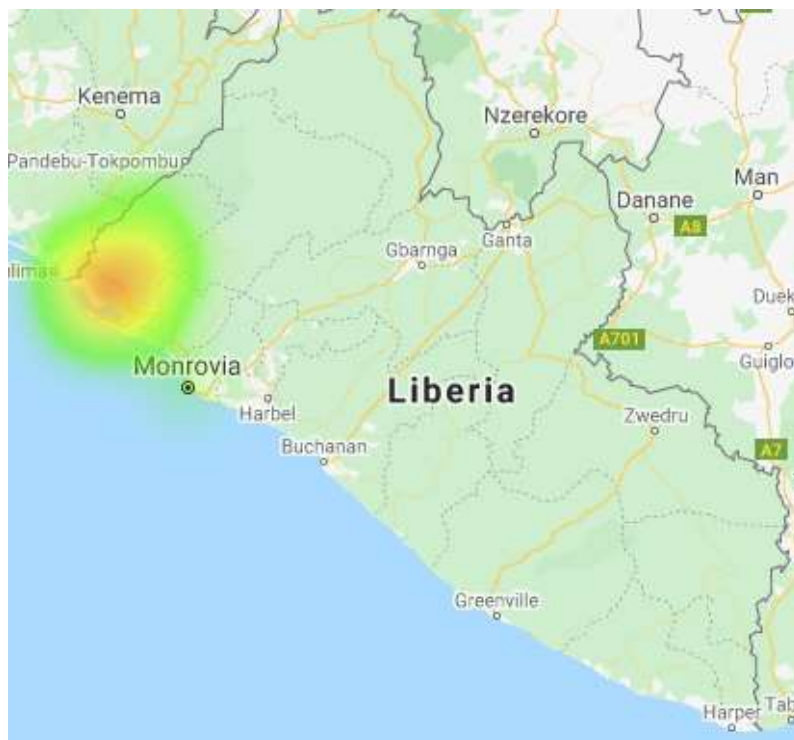
groups which they pay for themselves. While these watch groups have increased security for local communities, they have also been known to act as "vigilantes" in certain cases, with some individuals voicing conflicting feelings about having to take security into their own hands. Some also expressed concern that UNMIL was drawing down, and a void in trained security personnel would be left. Women from these communities highlighted the issue of domestic violence as a main personal security concern.

Rule of Law

Local networks, including religious institutions and women's groups, were noted as being influential in community dispute resolution processes. A women's task force was identified in Grand Gedeh and River Gee as being instrumental in supporting women to go to court, and in following up to ensure the cases are seen through.

Grand Cape Mount County

Grand Cape Mount County is located in northwestern Liberia, along the shared border with Sierra Leone. As of the 2008 census, Grand Cape Mount had a population of more than 127,000 people.⁴⁹ The largest ethnic groups in the region are the Vai, Gola, Mende, Mandingo, and Kissi.⁵⁰ Important economic activities include subsistence agriculture, small trade, mining and fishing.



Structural Vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land use by international business • Poorly maintained infrastructure • Lack of employment opportunities • Widespread poverty • Cross-border drug trafficking and drug use
Event-Driven Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protests over controversies related to land use by international businesses • Land conflicts
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local women leadership • Youth groups and youth leadership

⁴⁹ “Grand Cape Mount”, Liberia Data Portal

⁵⁰ “Grand Cape Mount County Development Agenda”, Liberia Ministry of Internal Affairs

Economics and Resources

Like most of the country, Grand Cape Mount County is still struggling to recover from the economic implications of Ebola. Poor infrastructure, especially poorly maintained roads, has had negative implications for trade in and out of the county and continues to make it difficult for people to access jobs. Markets have suffered because of difficulties transporting goods.

Population and Demographics

Field respondents noted that drug use and lack of economic opportunity are vulnerability factors for the youth population in particular.

Politics and Governance

Field respondents noted some resilience regarding politics and governance. Political participation has been positive. Also, women are well-represented and organized in the political space in the county. There were also concerns about upcoming elections; in particular, voter awareness, education and access to polling places were all identified as vulnerabilities.

Security

A major security vulnerability in Grand Cape Mount is the porous border with Sierra Leone.

Field respondents emphasized the prevalence of illicit economic activity, especially drug trafficking. Land conflict has also threatened security in the county as difficulties surrounding traditional land boundaries can trigger conflict. These issues have been exacerbated by land concessions to international business. Domestic violence and rape are also security concerns in the county.

“Now women are taking the lead. They’re working in their groups to ensure a better life quality, working on awareness, peace, development, progress. ... Once women are gathered like this they’re empowered with the mission of making things move on.”

- Women’s focus group discussion, Grand Cape Mount County

Rule of Law

Field respondents noted that many people in the county perceive the justice system as corrupt. The courts are thought to only be effective if a person has money or political ties. Minor issues are usually resolved at the community level by local leaders and only elevated to the formal justice system as a last resort.

Grand Bassa County

Grand Bassa County is located in west-central Liberia and had a population of more than 221,000 people at the time of the 2008 census.⁵¹ The two largest ethnic groups in the region are the Bassa and Kpelle. Agriculture and palm oil production are key economic activities in Grand Bassa, as well as fishing and small trade.⁵²



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Poverty
- Youth unemployment
- Inadequate social services
- Poor infrastructure, particularly roads
- Drug and arms trafficking
- Land disputes and resource concessions
- Proliferation of electoral candidates and parties
- Perceptions of international interference in elections
- Crime
- Gender-based violence
- Lack of security force capacity and equipment
- Perceptions of corruption and nepotism
- Weak border security
- Food insecurity
- Climate change affecting farming yields and food security

⁵¹ "Grand Bassa", Liberia Data Portal

⁵² "Grand Bassa County Development Agenda", Liberia Ministry of Internal Affairs

Event-Driven Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protests • Elections • Land conflicts
Social and Institutional Resilience Factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio and broadcast media • Youth organizations • Women’s organizations (“mother’s clubs”) • Community leaders/elders • Investment from international donors • Religion (Islam) as a source of community cohesion

Economics and Resources

Grand Bassa County experienced an economic slowdown during the Ebola epidemic, but the

economy has since recovered and residents report that business in the region is improving. Respondents in the field felt that the government is making a clear effort to provide social services, but infrastructure and access to services such as education and health care remain limited. Poor road conditions are a particular concern in Grand Bassa, as bad roads inhibit rural communities from voting, limit development activities, and hurt economic and food security prospects by making it difficult to transport goods. Furthermore, land is a key source of conflict in the region and there was a perception among residents that local communities are not benefitting from resource

“There is a major slowdown in economic activities. For a majority of the young people the only source of survival is motorbike riding. ... Few other young people are engaging in trading. But [there are] a lot of young people who are just sitting, not that they want to do nothing but there is no opportunity for them.”

- Interviewee, Grand Bassa County

concessions. While it was noted that women have taken on a greater economic role in recent years, youth unemployment is a key concern in the county.

Population and Demographics

Youth in Grand Bassa are well-organized and actively involved in community affairs. However, the high rate of unemployment remains a vulnerability for youth in the county. Residents noted that the Christian and Muslim communities in Grand Bassa coexist and that religion is not a source of conflict. Women face high rates of rape and GBV and some respondents noted an under-representation of women in government and decision-making processes.

Politics and Governance

Regarding elections, residents interviewed in the field identified a need for greater civic education and voter awareness. It was noted that the poor roads in the region hinder voter education efforts and make it difficult for rural communities to travel to register and vote. Some residents also expressed concern about the proliferation of political parties and candidates and the belief among some voters that international actors interfere in the outcome of elections. There is also a perception of corruption and nepotism within the government.

Security

The key security concerns in Grand Bassa are armed robbery, crime, and disputes over land and resource concessions. Residents reported that security forces are inadequately equipped to deal with insecurity, and many communities have

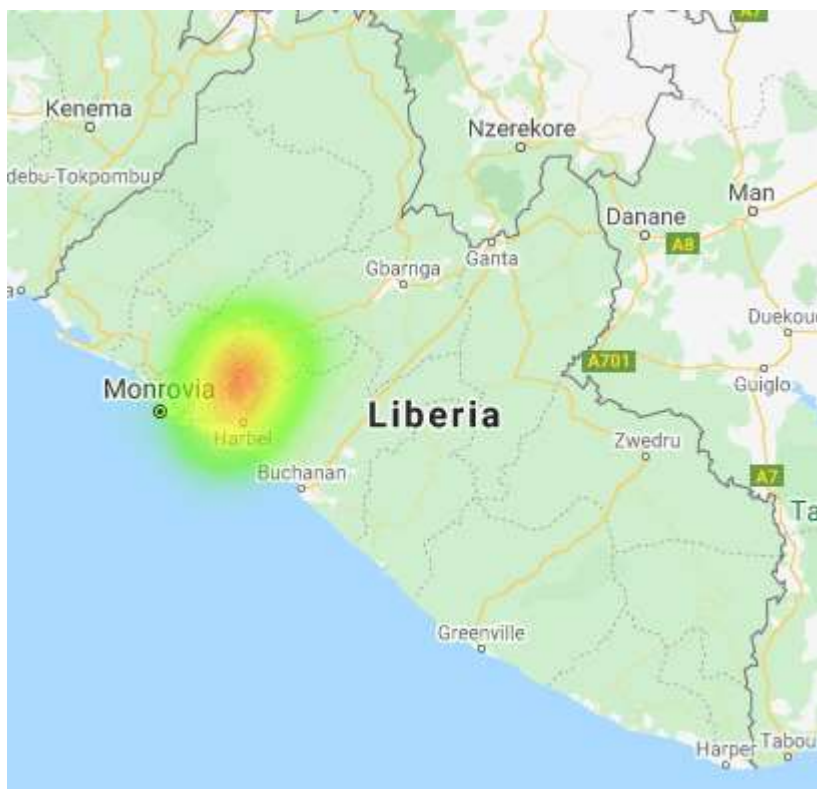
formed vigilante or community policing groups to fill this gap.

Rule of Law

Dispute resolution in the county is primarily handled by community leaders and elders. In most cases, including land-based conflicts, disputes are only referred to the judicial system if community leaders fail to reach a resolution at the local level. There is also a reported sense among residents that the legal system is unable or unwilling to prosecute people in power and has failed to address issues of corruption and mismanagement.

Margibi County

Margibi County is located in west-central Liberia, and had a population of nearly 210,000 people at the time of the 2008 census.⁵³ The Bassa are the largest ethnic group in the county.⁵⁴ The primary economic activities in the County are subsistence agriculture, rubber tapping and charcoal production.⁵⁵



Structural Vulnerabilities

- Lack of social services
- Poor infrastructure
- High rates of unemployment
- Proliferation of political candidates and parties
- Perceived corruption in government and security forces
- Drug trafficking
- Lack of equipment for security forces
- Crime (especially armed robbery)
- Land disputes

Event-Driven Risks

- Protests
- Elections

Social and Institutional Resilience Factors

- Youth organizations
- Women's organizations
- Community leaders and elders
- Community watch groups
- Land commissions

⁵³ "Margibi", Liberia Data Portal

⁵⁴ "Margibi County Development Agenda", Liberia Ministry of Internal Affairs

⁵⁵ Ibid.

Economics and Resources

The economy in Margibi County was negatively impacted by the Ebola epidemic and, although business has improved somewhat since the end of the crisis, prices remain high. Residents also reported a lack of social services (specifically clean drinking water, schools and health care facilities) and poor infrastructure, which is seen to affect food security. Youth unemployment is a key issue in the region, as is the drug trade.

Population and Demographics

Youth are generally very involved and organized, including through community watch groups that provide security. Women in Margibi face high illiteracy rates and widespread gender-based violence.

Politics and Governance

Residents reported a general sense of apathy toward the political process, caused in part by perceptions of political corruption and a lack of investment in local communities. There were also reported incidents of hate speech by politicians and concerns around voting manipulation in upcoming elections.

Security

Margibi residents interviewed in the field work reported a lack of security in the county, and

specifically noted armed robbery and drug trafficking as security concerns. GBV was also identified as a key issue facing women. Several interviewees noted that security forces do not have adequate equipment to ensure security, while others expressed concern about corruption and impunity for past human rights abuses. Youth-organized community watch groups were identified as a resilience factor in the county, and these groups reportedly coordinate closely with police.

“You don’t even find security in the community. There’s no police. Only the community safety [groups] are taking risks to protect people. But their life is at risk because the robbers are armed, and the community guys are not.”

- Youth focus group discussion, Margibi County

Rule of Law

Community leaders and land commissions primarily handle dispute resolution at the local level. Residents interviewed in the field expressed that many community members feel that the courts are biased toward the wealthy and that there is impunity for human rights violations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The category of Economics and Resources remains the most prevalent structural vulnerability within Liberia. While issues were identified across all human security pillars, both the quantitative data and qualitative field data suggested that economic factors are the main factor in weakening the country's resiliency. Liberia has faced significant pressures in recent decades, including long periods of civil war and a major health crisis. This has limited the ability of the country's leaders and institutions to build infrastructure, develop industries, maintain a skilled workforce, build regional integration, and attract investment. Thus, youth unemployment and poverty rates remain high, roads linking urban areas to rural counties are poor, brain drain of skilled workers such as doctors and teachers is common, government services are depleted, and the country remains largely dependent on foreign aid. Within the broader system, these economic factors impact security, governance, rule of law, and demographics in different ways. The following recommendations are proposed:

Economics and Resources

- Increase investment in road infrastructure to link counties to urban centers
- Support programs to address unemployment
- Encourage platforms for dialogue between business leaders and local communities, particularly around extractive operations
- Strengthen natural resources governance initiatives, like corporate social responsibility, Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative, etc.
- Invest in development of social and economic infrastructures, especially energy health, water and education
- Enact policies to promote equal opportunities
- Enact policies for a fair wage system

Population and Demographics

- Expand provision of social services in rural areas
- Encourage the use of radio programming in rural areas to share critical information around elections, health concerns and weather reports
- Support programs to engage unemployed or dissatisfied youth
- Encourage the full implementation of the provisions of the National Gender Policy
- Encourage the inclusiveness of the economy
- Promote sustainable environmental policies for natural resource management

Politics and Governance

- Enhance the capacity of women and youth to participate in political decision-making
- Encourage local electoral commissions to disseminate information around elections
- Enact policies to promote equal opportunities
- Enact policies for a fair wage system
- Strengthen the Anti-Corruption Commission and transparency measures

Security

- Enhance the operational and institutional capacity of the police forces and expand police presence in underserved rural areas
- Strengthen security and customs protocols at border crossings, in partnership with neighboring countries
- Promote the culture of peace through conflict sensitive messaging in the media
- Enhance NatCom's capacity to implement the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Rule of Law

- Capitalize on the strength of traditional leaders and religious communities for dispute resolution and mediation
- Implement the recommendations of the TRC
- Strengthening due diligence and judicial processes for improved rule of law
- Facilitate access to justice through the provisions of legal aid services
- Provide adequate resources to strengthen the effectiveness of the Land Commission

Appendix A: Data Sample

Phase	Dimension	Source	Metric	Sample
Phase 1: Desktop	Resilience	SNA	Survey	49 Peace/Security Actors
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	ECOWARN	SitReps	590 reports
Phase 1: Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organize and monitor national elections is/are protected from political interference	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organize and monitor national elections make/s timely, publicly available reports before and after a national election.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	EIU Democracy Index	Electoral process and pluralism	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	EIU Democracy Index	Political Participation	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	EIU Democracy Index	Functioning of Government	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	IDEA	Average Voter Turnout Parliamentary	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Transparency International	Corruption Perception	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	BTI	Political and Social Integration	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Freedom House	Political Rights	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Mo Ibrahim Index	Personal Safety	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UN, ECOWAS, AU	Peace Operations	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	ACLED	Conflict Fatalities per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)

Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UPPSALA	Presence/Conflict with Non-State Armed Groups	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	PTS	Political Terror Scale – Amnesty	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	PTS	Political Terror Scale – State	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	PTS	Political Terror Scale – HRW	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	Refugees by country of origin per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	Refugees by country of origin (difference 2015-2014) per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	IDPs by Country of Asylum per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UNHCR	IDPs by country of asylum (difference 2015-2014) per capita	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, national-level judges give reasons for their decisions/judgments.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, allegations of corruption against senior level politicians and/or civil servants of any level are investigated by an independent body.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the body/bodies that investigate/s allegations of public sector corruption is/are effective.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	Global Integrity	In practice, the mechanism for citizens to report police misconduct or abuse of force is effective.	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	WB Human Rights and Law Report	% of Women on Constitutional Court	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)

Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Does the law mandate equal remuneration for work of equal value?	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Does the law mandate nondiscrimination based on gender in hiring?	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Is dismissal of pregnant workers prohibited?	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Gini coefficient	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Gini WYD	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Income Share Held by Highest 10%	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Population with Improved Sanitation (Urban-Rural Difference)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Population with Improved Water Source (Urban-Rural Difference)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Children under 5 moderately or severely underweight, percentage	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Depth of the food deficit (kilocalories per person per day)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Prevalence of Underweight, weight for age (% of children under 5)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	GDP per capita, PPP (current international \$)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Literacy, 15-24, Women	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	School enrollment, primary and secondary (gross), gender parity index (GPI)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Employment to population ratio, ages 15-24, female (%) (modeled ILO estimate)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)

Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Median Age	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Population Growth	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	UN Stats	Prevalence of underweight, weight for age, female (% of children under 5)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Maternal mortality ratio (modeled estimate, per 100,000 live births)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Contraceptive prevalence, any methods (% of women ages 15-49)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	World Bank Data	Life expectancy at birth, female (years)	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Vulnerability	WB – Women, Business, and Law	Percentage of women aged 20-24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18	15 (all ECOWAS member states normalized and scaled)
Phase 1 Desktop	Risk	ECOWARN	IncReps	687 (after reducing for duplicates and relevance)
Phase 1 Desktop	Risk	ACLED	Incidents	361
Phase 1 Desktop	Risk	LERN	Incidents	330
Phase 2 Field Research	Risk and Vulnerability	Focus Group Discussions	Broken out by Men, Women, and Youth	23
Phase 2 Field Research	Risk and Vulnerability	Key Informant Interviews	Prominent individuals and local experts	12

Appendix B: Vulnerability Index

Index Data Sources

Based on the five human security pillars, a series of indicators were identified based on relevance and measurability. Data sources were then identified from recognized institutions such as the World Bank, United Nations, as well as universities, research institutions, and think tanks. A full list of data sources is attached in **Appendix A**. During selection and testing of the index, the availability of data was assessed to ensure an even distribution of scores.

Process: Calculating the Scores

The index is scored on a scale of 1-10, with 1 representing the highest level of vulnerability, and 10 the lowest level of vulnerability. Each raw data set is normalized and scaled, before being integrated into the indicator and pillar scores.

1. Normalization

An index, by definition, integrates and compares data sets with very different curves and distribution. As a first step, therefore, it is necessary to normalize the data so that it can be properly compared. Without framing the data within the context of the wider group of numbers, its meaning can become skewed. Therefore, the process of finding the mean and calculating the Standard Deviation (SD) of the data set, then using those elements to approximate a normal distribution, can be used to provide this meaning. The Gaussian normalization formula is outlined below.

Where μ is the mean

σ^2 is the variance

$$f(x, \mu, \sigma) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi} \sigma} e^{-\frac{(x-\mu)^2}{2\sigma^2}}$$

SD is the quantity calculated to indicate the extent of deviation for a group of numbers as a whole. Normal distribution is then used to find how the variables are approximately normally distributed. In the context of this tool, it will help to understand where countries sit in relation to each other within the group distribution of a particular data set.

For raw data sets that have gaps (e.g. data is unavailable for some countries but not others), country data points are left blank. This ensures countries are not provided with an artificial score, where data does not exist.

2. Scaling

To create an index where countries are scored within a defined range, the data sets must be scaled so the scores can be integrated. This process of scaling transforms the normalized data into a number between 1 and 10, with 10 representing the lowest level of vulnerability. The below formula was applied to standardize the distribution values from [min, max] to [MIN, MAX], matching the new scale of values both for the highest and lowest edges of the distribution.

$$X = MIN + \frac{(MAX - MIN)}{(max - min)} \times (x - min)$$

3. Aggregation

Each indicator may be made up of either one or multiple data sources. In cases where multiple data sets were used to make up the one indicator, the data sets were each scaled to preliminary index scores (1-10), as outlined in the above steps. The average was then taken of these scores to reach a final index score for that indicator. This process was repeated at the pillar level, first averaging, then scaling the indicator scores.

Appendix C: Additional References

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Appendix D: Matrix of Vulnerabilities, Risks, Resilience Factors, and Recommendations by Human Security Pillar

	Vulnerabilities	Risks	Resiliencies	Recommendations
Economics & Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poverty and unemployment including youth and women unemployment ➤ Poor road infrastructure ➤ Lack of access to essential services (water, electricity, education) ➤ Food Insecurity ➤ Undiversified economy ➤ Limitations of government business regulations and enforcement ➤ Low level of intra-national economic integration at county level ➤ Low level of economic integration at the regional level ➤ Lack of uniformity in civil service salary scheme due to the absence of a national policy ➤ High level of discrimination among citizens based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disruptions to agricultural supply chains from lack of road access ➤ Economic shocks from volatile commodity markets ➤ Protests related to economic governance and unemployment ➤ Limited GDP growth as a result of low foreign investment and regional integration ➤ Dollarization(USD) of the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support from donor community ➤ Youth clubs and public works projects ➤ Remittances from the diaspora ➤ Extractive industry transparency initiatives ➤ Natural resources governance initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increase investment in road infrastructure to link counties to urban centers ➤ Support programs to address unemployment ➤ Encourage platforms for dialogue between business leaders and local communities, particularly around extractive operations ➤ Strengthen natural resources governance initiatives like corporate social responsibilities, EITI etc. ➤ Promulgate regulations promoting local content ➤ Invest in development of social and economic infrastructures, especially energy health, water and education ➤ Enact policies to promote equal opportunities

	<p>on class system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High rate of capital flight inhibiting local economic development 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enact policies for a fair wage system
Rule of Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poor law enforcement (logistics, equipment) ➤ Impunity ➤ Local controversy over international businesses, e.g. land concessions and employment practices ➤ Low capacity of law and order institutions, particularly in rural areas ➤ Incomplete or inadequate post-conflict reconciliation and reintegration of ex-combatants ➤ Low number of gender-based/sexual violence (GBV) cases litigated in court 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Mob justice/vigilantism ➤ Land grabbing ➤ Perception of corruption ➤ Culture of silence around GBV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Emerging CSOs ➤ Existence of national infrastructures for conflict resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Palaver hut ○ Peace Committees at the County and Community levels ○ Peace building office ➤ Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) ➤ Independent National Commission of Human Rights ➤ Land Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capitalize on the strength of traditional leaders and religious communities for dispute resolution and mediation ➤ Implementation of the recommendations of the TRC ➤ Strengthening due diligence and judicial processes for improved rule of law ➤ Facilitate access to justice through the provisions of legal aid services ➤ Provide adequate resources to strengthen the effectiveness of the Land Commission
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Limited capacity of police deployments, training and equipment ➤ Porous borders ➤ Poor implementation of the DDR Process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Withdrawal of military and police component of UNMIL before the 2017 elections ➤ Rape and gender-based violence ➤ Impunity of former combatants ➤ Inadequate Security Sector Reform (SSR) Initiatives ➤ Ethnic/communal tensions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Peacebuilding Office ➤ Religious leaders ➤ Women networks ➤ Community peacebuilding, including traditional conflict resolution practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Enhance the operational and institutional capacity of the police forces and expand police presence in underserved rural areas ➤ Strengthen security and customs protocols at

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High rate of criminality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Inflammatory speech on radio and broadcast media ➤ Mob/vigilante justice ➤ Legacy of the Memories of the Civil war ➤ Drug and arms trafficking ➤ Drug abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Community Watch ➤ Memories of the Civil war as a deterrent ➤ Legacy of UNMIL and ECOWAS representations ➤ National Small Arms Commission 	<p>border crossings, in partnership with neighboring countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote the culture of peace through the conflict sensitive messaging in the media Enhance NatCom's capacity to implement the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons
Politics & Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Factionalized political parties ➤ Limited access to voting process in rural areas ➤ Limited representation of women in national legislature ➤ Low capacity of government institutions ➤ Perceived lack of patriotism/ Elitism ➤ Lack of uniformity in civil service salary scheme due to the absence of a national policy ➤ High level of discrimination among citizens based on class system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Political violence and protests ➤ Polarizing political rhetoric ➤ Electoral fraud ➤ Government corruption ➤ Elections (security, roads, voter confusion/skepticism/apathy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Female political representatives ➤ Youth representation in government ➤ NEC Liberia ➤ Liberia Anti-Corruption Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Politics and Governance ➤ Enhance the capacity of women and youth to participate in political decision-making ➤ Encourage local electoral commissions to disseminate information around elections ➤ Enact policies to promote equal opportunities ➤ Enact policies for a fair wage system ➤ Strengthening the Anti-Corruption Commission and measures

Population and Demographics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High price of health care ➤ Drug abuse ➤ High youth population (Youth Bulge) ➤ Land tenure and ownership ➤ High maternal mortality rates, especially in rural areas ➤ Ethnically diverse population with history of inter-ethnic grievances ➤ Porous borders ➤ Poor access to potable water ➤ Environmental pressures including flooding, wild fires and drought ➤ FGM, Early marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ IDPs and cross-border population movements ➤ Exposure to regional health pandemics ➤ Clashes between groups over water/livelihood resource access ➤ Reduced agricultural production from environmental disasters and pandemics 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage the full implementation of the provisions of the National Gender Policy ➤ Encourage the inclusiveness of the economy ➤ Promote sustainable environmental policies for natural resource management
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