

ACTIVITIES REPORT SUMMARY

Fourteen (14) days Internal Joint Security Border Patrol REPORT SUMMARY

Activity: 1.2.5: *Facilitate the organization and institutionalization of joint and cross-border patrols by the security agencies of both countries at the local level.*

REPORT TITLE: Cross Border Engagement between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia to reinforce Social Cohesion and Border Security – Phase II (PBF)
ACTIVITIES REPORT

SUBMITTED BY: Jonathan T. Roberts, IOM Cross-Border Field Coordinator, Grand Gedeh Count-	DATE: September 4 th 2020
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Activities Date: August 12 th - 25 th 2020	LOCATION: Zwedru City, Grand Gedeh County
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I PARTICIPANTS

-  Jonathan T. Roberts – IOM Field Coordinator Grand County (Activity Coordinator)
- 1. Philip P. Mawamon- Deputy Commander for Operation LIS
- 2. Morris K. Kamara- County Commander LIS (Mission/Team Leader)
- 3. Ebrahimi B. Morris- County Border Patrol Commander - LIS
- 4. Augustine B. Zlanwea- Acting Chief of Security - LIS
- 5. James Gayflor – BPU Chief of Operation - LIS
- 6. Alphonso M. Sonnie- Chief of Operation- LIS
- 7. Sampson Collins- BPU Commander Tempo POE
- 8. James Y. Tarper – BPU Commander Bhai POE
- 9. John Fallah – BPU Commander Bartijam POE
- 10. Tanyon Choloplay – BPU Commander Garley Town POE
- 11. D. Morgan Mehn – County Commander – LDEA
- 12. Darlington Saye – County Investigator – LDEA
- 13. Gaye Moore – Special Assistant – LDEA
- 14. Lt. Jallah Koiyah – County Commander - Arm Forces of Liberia Grand Gedeh County
- 15. SSgt. Elijah C. Johnson – Deputy County Commander – Arm Forces of Liberia Grand Gedeh County
- 16. SSgt. James Kpingbah- Square Leader - Arm Forces of Liberia Grand Gedeh County
- 17. Sgt. Prince Karmo – Radio Operator - Arm Forces of Liberia Grand Gedeh County
- 18. Cpl. Benjamin R. Miller – Medic - Arm Forces of Liberia Grand Gedeh County
- 19. Joshua N. During - Assistant Commissioner of Police / General Commander Liberia Nation Police G. Gedeh
- 20. Lexington T. Beh – Chief of Operation – Liberia National Police Grand Gedeh County
- 21. Eugene J. Yoko – Inspector Police Support Unit / LNP Grand Gedeh County
- 22. Aries Sherman – Patrolwoman LNP Grand Gedeh County
- 23. Hon. Paul T. Neo Snr. Grand Gedeh County Inspector – Ministry of Internal Affairs

The specific objectives of the mission/internal joint patrol are thus:

- To use the internal joint security patrols in fostering trust, confidence and collaboration amongst all security actors and communities' dwellers along the borders.
- To identify security gaps and other border issues for appropriate redress.
- To create awareness on COVID-19 prevention health protocol and social distances

III Expected Results: At the end of the internal joint security patrols, it is anticipated that:

- Confidence, trust, and peaceful co-existence along and among border security agencies and communities will be enhanced.
- Relationship and collaboration between communities and security apparatus will be improved.
- Tension and violent conflicts along and among border communities will be reduced, and the use of recognized border crossing points will be encouraged.
- Communities dwellers knowledge on Health Protocol on COVID-19 including wearing of facemask, hand washing and social distances as well as perception will improved.
- Securities personnel fully ascertained facts on the alleged Illegal entry of Burkinabe's living and cultivating huge portion of the Liberia forest specifically in the Cavalla river belt, in Grand Gedeh County and report finding to relevant authorities for redress.
- Strengthen border patrol and security to prevent illegal migration to avoid endangering lives of migrant, especially Burkinabe.

IV BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The porousness and artificial nature of the border between Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, as well as the ethnic diversity of communities on both sides, have rendered this region prone to recurring inter-community tensions, with political crises in both countries over the last decade fuelling and exploiting these tensions as part of broader national and regional dynamics. Inter-community conflicts over land and natural resources, for example, have been amplified by regional migration and an influx of migrants driven by socio-economic needs and/or the presence of refugees and returnees because of civil conflicts in both Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire. Similarly, ethnic, and cultural cross-border ties have been exploited for electoral purposes, with candidates ferrying truckloads of people across the border to register as voters and influence electoral outcomes in the neighbouring country. In addition, transnational crime has also been thriving, taking advantage of instability and porous borders with many illegal border crossing points. This has led to a fraying of the social fabric, further reinforced by the limited state presence in remote areas and a deep mistrust of the security forces. In a 2017 study conducted by the Peacebuilding Office of Liberia to identify conflict drivers throughout the country, the respondents in the south-eastern border area stood out for including ethnic tensions and weak social integration among its conflict drivers, in addition to land/property disputes and corruption (Mapping Opportunities for the Consolidation of Peace in Liberia, Peacebuilding Office, April 2017).

Conclusively, the cross-border areas are expected to experience increased tensions in the coming months in view of the upcoming Ivorian presidential election and the Liberian special senatorial election, both scheduled for October and December 2020. These elections have the potential to ignite latent tensions and fuel existing conflicts, including, but not limited to, the "trucking" of voters. Certainly, the risk of electoral violence remains significant, as demonstrated by the recent local and regional elections in Côte d'Ivoire in October 2018, which left at least seven people dead, and the border remains a 'hotspot' for all the reasons outlined above. Growing pre-electoral inflammatory rhetoric around exploitation of natural resources and identity are already visible, thus increasing the probability for election-related violence particularly in the border area where nationals of both countries co-exist.

Against this background, with several intelligent reports from officers assigned and residence along the Liberian-Ivorian Borders and targeted communities raised an early-warning that seeks to justify why IOM/UNDP should support or funds this all-important internal borders joint security patrol within the Borderline of Liberia.

- Illegal entry of Burkinabe's believes to be in the numbers of 500-2000 living and cultivating huge portion of the Liberia forest specifically in the Cavalla river belt, in Grand Gedeh County. They are believed to be engaged into illegal farming and hunting activities
- The involvement of some Ghanaian in illicit mining of gold and diamond along the Cavalla river using drags
- Illegal Cross-borders activities along the Cavalla river/ Liberian-Ivorian creating fear among local inhabitants and serious security threat to the states especially the people of Grand Gedeh County.

V. Methodology/Approach:

The initial engagement between Cote d' Ivoire and Liberia to reinforce Social Cohesion and Border Security in Phase II was pursued through one of the specified activities to facilitate the organization and institutionalization of joint and cross-border patrols by the security agencies of both countries at the local level.

The planned and organized internal joint security patrols is been initially through consultative County security council or Intelligence meetings with relevant security stakeholders with focus on border security actors, in determining modalities for the joint patrols, dates, venues, assembly points, procuring relevant materials, services and determining the mode of the patrol e.g. foot, mobile (vehicular) or riverine. These internal joint patrols mission was conducted in three phrases (August 12th to August 25th, 2020). executed as follows:

- Initial consultative meeting between the security leadership of the joint security at the county level and after the State of emergency or opening of both Country borders between both countries' security actors hopefully October 2020.
- Orientation of the involved actors (security officers) August 10,2020
- Acquisition and mobilization of resources for the patrol.
- Assembling, instructions/mission brief and deployment of the patrol teams on the patrol day.
- Execution of joint patrols
- Re-assembling of men at the point of deployment and dismissal (step in and step down).
- Town hall meetings with stakeholders, footpath patrol along the Cavalla river and landscape/ forest from Bhai to Tempo

VI. Outcomes from the Fourteen (14) days Internal Joint Security Border Patrol from August 12th – 25th, 2020

Activity: 1.2.5: *Facilitate the organization and institutionalization of joint and cross-border patrols by the security agencies of both countries at the local level*

On August 12th, 2020 at about 8:30 am, the team assemble at the Liberia National Police headquarter in Zwredu City for formation and final briefing before departure for the mission. The teams departed from Zwredu City by 10:00am and arrived in Toe City at the hour of 3:30 PM five (5) hours 30 minutes. The team briefly stop at the offices of the Bhai Administrative District Commissioner Hon. William J. Quartis. And briefed him on the mission objective and goal, in returned he wholeheartedly welcomed the team and commit his full support for the team while in the district. The team later departed for Bhai POE where they spent a night. On August 13th, 2020, a mass citizens town hall meeting was held at the Bhai Community town hall with cross session of community dwellers and security personnel. In attendance was two senior Ivorian security officers at the Peken POE that was invited by their Liberian security colleagued. During the 3 hours community town hall meeting, the head of the mission/ team Morris K. Kamara took the lead to informed citizens the objective and goals of the mission/ internal border joint security patrol. He stressed the needs for effective citizens – securities relationship be strengthened because without information sharing there is

no way security can effectively carry out their functions. He reiterated that it is now time for community dwellers to take their own security in their hand by collaborating and coordinating with state securities in sharing any security concerned with securities assigned at the POE especially for illegal entry of migrant believed to be Burkinabe and illicit miners along the Cavalla river belt. The three (3) hours interactive town hall meeting also involved the County Surveillance officer and the County Inspector with both sensitizing communities dwellers knowledge on COVID-19 on health protocol including wearing of facemask, hand washing and social distances as well as perception that the virus doesn't exit. At the end of the meetings stakeholders and citizens applauded IOM for sponsoring the patrol and the joint securities for taking security to the people at community level. And assured the team of their unflinching commitment to border security and monitoring

In a separate meeting with senior Ivorian security official, they expressed their gratitude to the joint security in taking the lead to patrol the Liberia side of the borders, and requested that due to the closer of both Countries borders there is a need to re-join the patrol in October at which time both Countries security actors will be fully involved to assure and build trust and confidence among state security and communities dwellers living along bordering communities.

On August 14th-15th, 2020. The team embarked on a 8 hours footpath patrol deep into the Bhai-Joeszon forest. During the two days patrol the following were observed:

- There are over 5000 Burkinabe migrants deep in the Bhai Jazon forest cultivating and planting life/cash crops Cocoa and Coffee.
- There is trafficking in person and human trafficking ongoing at the region/forest.
- There is an existing conflict breeding within the forest/ Bhai forest because those cash or life crops been planned when harvesting time reach the citizens might like to claim ownership while the Burkinabe will not allow it to happen thus. creating tension that may lead to violent conflict and loss of human life.
- The district authorities are planning to forcefully remove the Burkinabe from the forest.
- The Bhai Joeszon reserve forest is been depleted.
- The region is been used for illegal entry of migrant and the possibility of terrorist or insurgent based.
- Land disputes and boundaries harmonization issues are key conflict issues in the Bhai region as mentioned by both local community dwellers and cross-border security actors during a town hall meeting. In addition to inter-community-and ethnic land ownership disputes, the illegal migration of Burkinabe into the forest areas for cultivation will degenerate into serious prejudiced conflict and cross-border tensions. It was allegedly reported that the Burkinabe are being brought into the forest by local stakeholders in the reserve forest to cultivate cocoa and exploit other natural resources. Citizens at border communities believe that this will deprive them of their customary land rights and affect their livelihoods if not address as quick as possible.

At the Sayquee Village and Bartijam Region.

A highly populated gold mining camp with an estimated total population of 7250 inhabitant (Children under 1-15yrs =1780) teenage girls under 16-18yrs = 360, Women under 19-40 yrs. =3070 while men =2040

Bartijam gold camp is well known for violent protest, destruction of government property especially Police facility, increase of rape cases and the use of drugs and abuse of harmful substance by ex-combatant and youths. During a well attendance town hall meeting with over 500 community dwellers. The team leader explained the mission objective and goal and reiterated the needs for citizens to seek justice and avoid violent protest and destroying government property because it is taxpayer money that is usually spent to construct those facility.

The following was observed during the town hall meeting:

- Citizens lack the full knowledge of the rules of law

- Citizens are not adhering to COVID-19 health protocol including the wearing of facemask and hand washing
- The Liberia Drugs Enforcement Agencies present is highly needed
- Trafficking in person and human trafficking on the increase
- Teenage pregnancy on the increase
- Increase of rape of underage girls
- Prostitution on the high increase
- The used of harmful substances by youths on the increase.
- Illicit mining of gold along the Cavalla river
- Porousness of the Border /POE and bad road
- Limited security personnel present at the POE

From August 16th – 20,2020. The team also embarked on a footpath patrol deep in the Kpouwen forest with a specific target in Togbayee and Vlehyee town. During this period, the team met with cross-session of community's dwellers in a town hall meeting and explained the mission objective and goal. Citizens was alerted on the importance of taking their own security into their hand and closely liaising with state security to improve border security at all time report unusual movement of strange individual along the borderline. In responses, local stakeholders expressed their gratitude to both IOM and the joint security for the imitative bringing security to the ordinaries citizens as this will helped to improve cordial working relationship among local and state security assigned at various crossing point/POE especially those remote point.

The team finally arrived at the Gleo Tempo POE on August 21,2020 at 9:00 PM, the next morning on August 22,2020 at 9:30 am a mass town hall meeting commence at the town square with the total attended of 150 persons involving 55 women, 60 men, and 35 youths. The team leader Morris K. Kamara took the lead to explain the mission objective and goal to the community dwellers and reiterated the needs for community-security relationship improvement. He added that **security is everybody business**, and **in times of peace we should prepare for more peace**. For his part, the Arm Forces of Liberia County Commander **Lt. Jallah Koiyah** reminded community that border security is very essential as the history of the Liberian civil was perpetrated at one of the POE in Nimba County in late December 1989. He encouraged citizens to report any unusual movement of illegal migrant crossing from any country to Liberia.

On August 23 – 25 2020, the team embarked on a footpath patrol deep into the Twabo forest and the Cavalla river belt. The following was observed during the patrol.

- There is an increase of illicit miner using dreggiest on the Cavalla river mining gold
- Trafficking in person and human trafficking on the increase
- Only three LIS officers currently assigned at the POE no others security or government entity present
- There is no Liberia GSM network
- Citizens only listen to community radio and GSM network from Ivory Coast
- Bad road connectivity on the increase

Key Achievements:

- Confidence, trust, and peaceful co-existence along and among border security agencies and communities was re-established and enhanced.
- Relationship and collaboration between communities and security apparatus was highlighted and improved.
- Tension and violent conflicts along and among border communities will be reduced, and the use of recognized border crossing points was encouraged.

- Communities dwellers knowledge on Health Protocol on COVID-19 including wearing of facemask, hand washing and social distances as well as perception will improved.
- The patrol covers all 21 unofficial and the 4 official crossing points in Grand Gedeh County bordering Ivory coast
- Securities personnel fully ascertained facts on the alleged Illegal entry of Burkinabe's living and cultivating huge portion of the Liberia forest specifically in the Cavalla river belt, in Grand Gedeh County and report finding to relevant authorities for redress.
- Strengthen border patrol and security to prevent illegal migration to avoid endangering lives of migrant, especially Burkinabe was highlighted.

Key Challenges

- **Road accessibility and connectivity** -Roads leading to all the border port, are critically unacceptable and impassable and would entail rehabilitation to effectively and timely deliver key project activities especially in the Gleo Tempo border and community. In fact, the entire patrol team hired and use fourteen (14) motorbikes to be able to reach the target bordering communities during the mission period in order to conduct various town hall meeting and information from the relevant security actors and community stakeholders.
- Limited numbers of security actors present of POE.
- The inability of national and local government authorities to take prompt or robust actions on serious reported security issues e.g. the illegal presence of over 5,000 Burkinabe's nationals in the Liberian forest.
- The lack of logistic for state security in execution of continue joint border patrol
- The closure of borders because of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Bad road connectivity and lack of GSM network at POE
- lack of Structure build at POE for security personnel assigned

VI CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A joint security border patrol be initiated as soon as possible involving both Ivorian and Liberian joint security before the Ivorian election in October.
- Improve communication and information dissemination between security and local stakeholders to avoid tensions and community-security related conflicts.
- Decentralize and rotate cross-border meetings from the urban community to rural border community level
- The national and local government officials along with peace-building actors should immediately/urgently settle the emerging border crisis involving the over 5000 Burkinabe migrants deep in the Bhai Jazon forest cultivating and planting life/cash crops Cocoa and Coffee through mediation / conflict resolution approaches before it escalates.
- A five (5) days training/ awareness in rules of law and youth's participation in non-violence election be conducted at the Bartijam gold mining camp.
- Establish cross-border dialogues with mirroring communities to improve the relationship between Liberian border communities and Ivorian security actors and communities to advance cross-border social cohesion and discourages illegal migration
- A massive COVID-19 awareness campaign be launch along bordering community and the distribution of facemask and hand washing materials.
- Support dialogue and engagement town hall meeting between the communities and border security actors
- Increase community participation in cross-border security patrol and border management meetings and initiatives
- Deployment of Arm Forces of Liberia Personnel at Bhai, Bartejam & Gleo Tempo POE

- IOM facilitate the erection of temporarily structures including LAP at POE for any COVID-19 suspected cases to enable the CHT/IMS swap specimen for investigation.
- The CHT should deployed health and laboratory technicians at the 4 official POE especially the Bhai & Tempo POE
- Training of health staff including Laboratories technician in 6 health districts in Grand Gedeh County

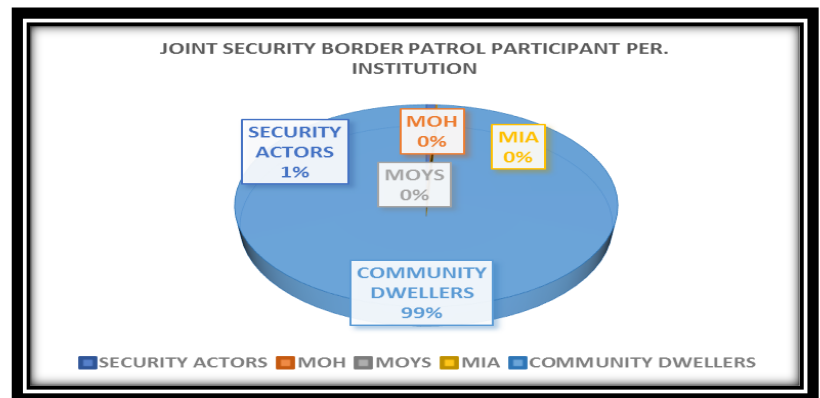
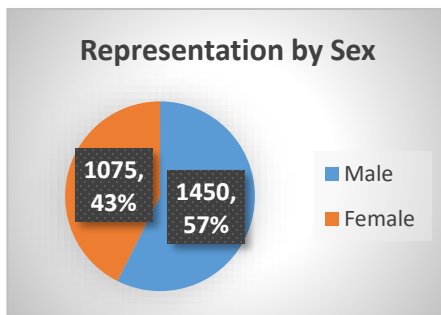
VIII Way forward

- Follow-up on various observation during the patrol and the continue joint patrol activity on a quarterly basis.
- Dialogues between communities and county officials should be organized to resolve the illegal migration of Burkinabe and any latent conflict between the communities and local stakeholders on land disputes and boundary harmonization struggle.

Selection Participants' Rationale:

In order to achieve the objectives and outcomes of the project (mission/patrol), participants were drawn from various security institution within the County, Security Agencies (LIS/BPU, NSA, LNP, LDEA, AFL), and other stakeholders MIA, MOH & MOYS to get the anticipated results based on Results Based Management (RBM) mechanism on project management. Henceforth, the participants represented the needed population (stakeholders) to reflect the outputs and outcomes of the project's activities as per the project proposal. The total of 22 security personnel and 3 Civilians attended along with 2500 approximately citizens participated in various town hall meeting during the 14 days joint security patrol with 1075 females and 1450 males in attendance.

Below is a graphic picture of the participants' representation by sex and institutions.



Institutions: MIA- 1, MOH.1 MOYS 1 and SSA-22, Others

2500
Males 1450 and Females 1075

Some Pictorials of the just ended 14 days Internal Joint Security Border Patrol



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



Mission Briefing Bhai Commissioner



Bhai Town Hall Meeting



Snr. Ivorian Security personnel at Bhai Town Hall meeting Social Interaction with kids at Bhai POE



Team Formation for Briefing

Over-view of Bartejam Gold Mining Camp



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



Mass Citizens town hall meeting @ Bartejam

Town hall meeting at Cole town



Interaction with Ivorian security from the Liberia Bartejam POE



Ivorian side of the POE Bartejam



Town Hall meeting at Garley town POE



Hired Motorcycles transporting Patrol teams





International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency



Gleo Tempo Town Hall meeting



Team arrival @ Tempo POE



Gleo Tempo POE



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

