



# The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund Liberia




PEACEBUILDING  
FUND

JUNE 2021

## PBF Investments in

**TOTAL**  
APPROVED  \$76 M

**CURRENT**  
PORTFOLIO  \$11.8 M

## Focusing on

-  Women's empowerment
-  Youth political engagement and socio-economic empowerment
-  Rule of law, transitional justice and human rights
-  Peaceful management of land-related conflicts

## Partners



Kvinna till Kvinna and Stichting ZOA

## PEACEBUILDING CHALLENGES

Liberia has made remarkable peace gains over the past 15 years. The election of President George Weah in December 2017 marked an important milestone with the peaceful transition between two democratically elected governments. Yet many root causes of Liberia's conflict remain unaddressed. The concentration of power in Monrovia and the imbalance in the provision of public services persist as sources of discontent, while land disputes, corruption, and socio-economic marginalization have led to tensions in the country.

## PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

The UN Peacebuilding Commission's Liberia configuration, chaired by Sweden, has long supported efforts to ensure that the international community's support to Liberia is sustained and coordinated and focused on national peacebuilding needs. This has included supporting the Government's submission of a peacebuilding plan to the Security Council in 2017, pursuant to Security Council resolution 2333 (2016), and providing a platform for UN leadership in Liberia to identify with Member States financing and expertise gaps expected following the departure of UNMIL in 2018. In January 2019, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development (PAPD) for 2018-2023 was presented to the Commission by the Government of Liberia, linking peacebuilding priorities to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Peacebuilding Commission has remained engaged in support of Liberia's peacebuilding priorities, such as social cohesion, reconciliation and inclusivity, with a strong focus on gender equality as well as mitigating the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission has continuously explored opportunities for strengthening partnerships in support of these priorities, including through the Chair's recurring consultations with International Financial Institutions in 2020 and 2021 and the Commission's visit to the Mano River Union in November 2019. The Commission has also championed a strong regional approach, as evidenced by the regular support of the African Union and ECOWAS as well as UNOWAS.



## PEACEBUILDING FUND IN ACTION

In support of Liberia's peacebuilding priorities and to help avoid a significant gap in support following UNMIL withdrawal, the PBF approved nearly \$27 million for Liberia in the period 2017-2020, including towards:

- 1 **Women's empowerment:** the PBF has supported the strengthening of gender taskforces in the military and police and operation of women peace huts as local dispute resolution venues. The PBF has enabled women filmmakers to depict the role of women in the Liberia peace process. The PBF support has also contributed to the release of the Second National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security and to the development of the Government's first Innovative Financing Strategy for gender equality. PBF is also supporting women's local leadership and the Women Situation Room mechanism in Montserrado and Bong Counties.
- 2 **Youth political engagement and socio-economic empowerment:** the PBF has supported a large-scale effort to involve youth in the 2017 elections and post-elections, contributing to a peaceful environment during the contested election. The PBF has also supported socio-economic empowerment of ex-combatant and marginalized youth in Monrovia and in targeted rural areas resulting in improved life skills and greater youth involvement in preventing and resolving conflicts. The PBF also worked with the police to ensure stronger protection measures when dealing with at-risk youth in the outskirts of Monrovia and with health specialists to improve psycho-social support for at-risk communities. Over 500 vulnerable youth have been placed in vocational training programs, in addition to being provided with life skills and other support. The PBF support has also strengthened trust between the targeted youth and their communities.
- 3 **Rule of law, transitional justice and human rights:** the PBF has supported the implementation of Liberia's community policing policy, improving access to justice for the most vulnerable, and the national human rights monitoring capacity after UNMIL's closure. PBF has also supported legislative reform processes and frameworks protecting human rights as well as platforms to discuss the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) recommendations, including over 40 local reconciliation dialogues in 7 counties, the 2019 National Economic Dialogue, and the 2020 National Reconciliation Conference. The Fund strengthened the national institutional and CSO capacity to monitor the implementation of the TRC recommendations and helped identify 15 memorial sites. The PBF is now providing support to protect the rights and empower marginalized groups, such as LGBTQI community and women human rights protectors.
- 4 **Prevention and peaceful management of land-related conflicts:** the PBF has brought national and local government institutions, affected communities, civil society and the concession companies together in concession zones to discuss and resolve land issues, one of the root causes of conflicts in the country, through an innovative multi-stakeholder platform approach and targeted livelihoods activities. The PBF is supporting the Government to implement its land decentralization policy and to strengthen land conflict resolution mechanism, strengthening county land offices and boards and empowering women and youth within the communities to enable more inclusive and human rights-based customary land formalization.
- 5 **Cross-border cooperation with Cote d'Ivoire:** the PBF supported an initial project of community and security sector cooperation in border areas between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, leading to better security sector and inter-community collaboration. The PBF is now funding a second phase of the project, extending it to 21 border communities in Grand Gedeh and Nimba Counties. The support is improving social cohesion between security forces on both sides of the border as well as encouraging cross border trade. A warehouse is being constructed for local businesswomen involved in cross border trade, to address the obstacle of storing goods, and several key border posts are being rehabilitated.

In 2020 the PBF support in Liberia was affected by the COVID pandemic, which slowed down or put on hold some of the activities necessitating gatherings of large numbers of people. The portfolio has adapted to the pandemic context by shifting some of the activities, adopting the health protocols and raising awareness on safety measures. In 2021 the PBF is working with the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN Country Team and the Government towards the approval of two projects: (i) furthering local reconciliation and transitional justice recommendations while providing socio-economic peace dividends for marginalized communities; and (ii) supporting women's empowerment in governance and politics while preventing violence against women in politics in support of the Electoral Needs Assessment recommendations.

## ABOUT THE PEACEBUILDING FUND

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The Fund may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. The Fund works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to peacebuilding opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.



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