



The Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund

Liberia



PEACEBUILDING FUND

April 2022

PBF Investments in

TOTAL APPROVED  **\$82 M**

CURRENT PORTFOLIO  **\$13.5 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, Stichting ZOA and ActionAid

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 and for many people, especially in rural communities, the peace dividends are not yet sufficiently felt. The concentration of power in Monrovia and the imbalance in the provision of public services persist as sources of discontent, while land disputes, corruption, impunity, 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 and of climate change. 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 visits to the Mano River Union in. 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 INVESTMENTS OVERVIEW

In support of Liberia's peacebuilding priorities and to help avoid a significant gap in support following UNMIL withdrawal, the PBF approved nearly \$33 million for Liberia in the period 2017-2021, 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 also supported 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 supported a large-scale effort to involve youth in the 2017 elections and post-elections through dialogue and early warning initiatives, contributing to a peaceful environment during the contested election. The PBF has also supported psycho-social assistance and 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 were placed in vocational training programs, in addition to being provided with life skills and other support.
- 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, the 2020 National Reconciliation Conference, and the preparation of County Reconciliation Plans. 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 providing support to protect the rights and empower marginalized groups, such as LGBTQI community and women human rights protectors. The Fund is also supporting the implementation of Country Reconciliation Plans in targeted counties with a focus on peace dividends for marginalized communities.
- 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. The PBF support has led to agreements between concession companies and communities to resolve ongoing disputes in Grand Cape Mount County and has incentivized concession companies to compensate the affected communities, for example in Nimba County with Nimba Rubber Inc, providing communities with funds for education and livelihood opportunities. The Fund has also supported the authorities to undertake Environmental and Social impact assessments of concession projects.
- 5 Cross-border cooperation with Cote d'Ivoire:** the PBF supported two phases of community and security sector cooperation in border areas between Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia, leading to better security sector and inter-community collaboration along the border. The support has improving social cohesion between security forces on both sides of the border as well as encouraging cross border trade. A warehouse was 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. Three border posts were also rehabilitated.

In 2022 the PBF is working with the UN Resident Coordinator, the UN Country Team and the Government towards the approval of a project in support of a peaceful electoral environment for the 2023 elections, in line with the recommendations of the UN Electoral Needs Assessment Mission.

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.