

Liberia

Response to Information Request Number:	LIB99003. RIC
Date:	13 January 1999
Subject:	Liberia: Information on which ethnic group an individual would identify with, if his mother was a Mandingo and his father was a Mano
From:	INS Resource Information Center
Keywords:	Liberia / Cultural assimilation / Cultural identity / Discrimination based on family status / Discrimination based on marital status / Displaced persons / Ethnic conflict / Ethnic minorities / Harassment / Territorial integrity

Query:

What ethnic group would an individual identify with if his mother is Mandingo and his father is Mano?

Response:

Ethnicity generally passes patrilineally, or through the father in Liberia. However, a representative of the Liberian-based human rights group, National Human Rights Monitor (NHRM), stated that Liberians attempted to "adopt" other ethnic identities to survive during the war (NHRM 10 Dec. 1998; Nowrojee 17 Dec. 1998). The Mano ethnic group generally resides in Nimba County (MRG 1997, 427-428). The Mandingo ethnic group immigrated into Liberia from Guinea over the past 200 to 300 years, and has thus been viewed as outsiders. They typically settled among other peoples as traders, often marrying non-Mandingo women. There has been a concentration of Mandingos in upper Lofa County bordering Guinea, but they are widely scattered throughout Liberia. The Mandingos were viewed as a distinct group because of their language and Islamic faith, Sunni branch (MRG 1997, 427; *A Country Study*, 93,120). Most Mandingos are traders, and many work in the transportation business (*Liberia: A Country Study*, 1985, 94; MRG 1997, 427).

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

References:

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