

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada

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Responses to Information Requests

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25 April 2008

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Liberia: Existence of a rebel group in the Monrovia area in 2007 and whether such a group forcibly recruits children
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

Information on the existence of a specific rebel group in the Monrovia area in 2007 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. However, there have been reports of growing levels of violent crime in Monrovia, often committed by former militants ([AI 2007](#); [BBC 19 Sept. 2006](#)). In September 2006, the Liberian Ministry of Justice asked the city's residents to organize vigilante groups to protect themselves ([AI 2007](#); [BBC 19 Sept. 2006](#)), because of a "police inability to decisively deal with this upsurge in criminal activities" (*ibid.*).

Former militants have also reportedly engaged in illegal activities outside of Monrovia, particularly in resource-rich areas ([UN 8 Aug. 2007](#), Para. 18, 32; [Freedom House 2007](#)), engaging in "extortion, theft, and general intimidation of the population" (*ibid.*). Many former combatants reportedly remain unemployed, despite a United Nations ([UN](#))-backed disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation program ([UN 8 Aug. 2007](#), Para. 31-32). A 2007 [UN](#) report on its mission in Liberia indicates that "thousands [of former fighters] have regrouped for the purpose of illegally exploiting natural resources" (*ibid.*, Para. 32). The report also notes that larger groups of ex-fighters "tend to maintain liaison with their former factional commanders" (*ibid.*, Para. 18).

Information on the forcible recruitment of child soldiers in the Monrovia area in 2007 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. According to *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2006*, there were no reports of children being recruited as soldiers in Liberia in 2006, unlike in previous years (US 6 Mar. 2007, Sec. 5). *Country Reports 2007* makes no mention of child recruitment in Liberia in 2007 (*ibid.* 11 Mar. 2008). However, several sources consulted by the Research Directorate indicate that there have been concerns that unemployed ex-combatants, including children, may be recruited as mercenaries to fight in Liberia's unstable neighbouring countries, such as Côte d'Ivoire (AI 2007; see also UN 9 Jan. 2007; *ibid.* 8 Aug. 2007, Para. 13; IDMC 27 July 2007, 69). According to a 9 January 2007 Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN) article, the media in Monrovia have published reports saying that Ivorian rebels and government forces have attempted to recruit former Liberian fighters (UN 9 Jan. 2007).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, including: AllAfrica, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Factiva, *The Guardian* [Manchester], Human Rights Watch (HRW), International Crisis Group, ReliefWeb, Reuters - Alertnet,

Small Arms Survey (SAS), United Kingdom Home Office.

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