

Liberia: Eruption of Faction fighting threatens Monrovia Again

Monday April 8, 1996

Summary

Since the last peace agreement was signed in August 1995 among the seven Liberian armed factions, Monrovia has again experienced faction fighting for the second time from Friday April 5 to Saturday 6, 1996.

The reason of this fight seems to be linked to the decision taken on Friday by the State Council to arrest General Johnson, who has been accused of a murder.

Fighting has since been ongoing in Sinko area (North East Monrovia), causing tens of wounded casualties who have been evacuated to different hospitals in the city.

The airport, where three UN helicopters as well as WESUA - a civilian Liberian commercial flight - have been burnt, is closed.

Several factions seem to be engaged in this fight. The last similar fighting was in December when ULIMO-K attacked ECOMOG troops in Tubmanburg, causing the death of 20 ECOMOG soldiers and tens of civilians.

The UN system in Monrovia is considering evacuation for expatriate personnel. A decision will probably be taken today.

LNRCs/Federation action

On Saturday, several wounded patients have been evacuated to the hospitals by some humanitarian organisations as well as by the Liberian Red Cross first aiders who have planned to establish a 24 hours service clinic at the National Society Headquarters, in collaboration with the Federation Delegates.

On Sunday, the main office of the Liberian Red Cross was invaded by four armed men. The National Society staff was put on gun point and money was demanded. Two handgrenades were thrown in the National Society radio room and caused damage to the building.

Radio and office equipment - desktops, two hand sets, keyboard, bicycle - and food stuff have been carried away by the armed group.

The National society staff evacuated the Office in small group by foot and found refuge in Federation Residence.

Since the beginning of the events, the Head of Delegation took several contacts with UN systems in Liberia. The Delegation is in permanent contact with the ICRC Delegation. An evacuation plan is under discussion.

The Federation Delegation in Liberia is composed of five expatriates . All of them are safe and are in the Federation residence with food , water and fuel for a minimum of four to five days. They are in regular contact with the Abidjan Regional Delegation and with Geneva.

We will keep you informed about the evolution of the situation. For additional information, please contact Africa Department in Geneva, phone number (041) 22.730.43.14.

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