

Liberia



Introduction Liberia

Background: Settlement of freed slaves from the US in what is today Liberia began in 1822; by 1847, the Americo-Liberians were able to establish a republic. William TUBMAN, president from 1944-71, did much to promote foreign investment and to bridge the economic, social, and political gaps between the descendents of the original settlers and the inhabitants of the interior. In 1980, a military coup led by Samuel DOE ushered in a decade of authoritarian rule. In December 1989, Charles TAYLOR launched a rebellion against DOE's regime that led to a prolonged civil war in which DOE himself was killed. A period of relative peace in 1997 allowed for elections that brought TAYLOR to power, but major fighting resumed in 2000. An August 2003, peace agreement ended the war and prompted the resignation of former president Charles TAYLOR, who was exiled to Nigeria. After two years of rule by a transitional government, democratic elections in late 2005 brought President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF to power. The UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), which maintains a strong presence throughout the country, completed a disarmament program for former combatants in late 2004, but the security situation is still volatile and the process of rebuilding the social and economic structure of this war-torn country remains sluggish.

Geography Liberia

Location: Western Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone

Geographic coordinates: 6 30 N, 9 30 W

Map references: Africa

Area: *total:* 111,370 sq km
land: 96,320 sq km
water: 15,050 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly larger than Tennessee

Land boundaries: *total:* 1,585 km
border countries: Guinea 563 km, Cote d'Ivoire 716 km, Sierra Leone 306 km

Coastline: 579 km

Maritime claims: *territorial sea:* 200 nm

Climate: tropical; hot, humid; dry winters with hot days and cool to cold nights; wet, cloudy summers with frequent heavy showers

Terrain: mostly flat to rolling coastal plains rising to rolling plateau and low mountains in northeast

Elevation extremes: *lowest point:* Atlantic Ocean 0 m
highest point: Mount Wuteve 1,380 m

Natural resources: iron ore, timber, diamonds, gold, hydropower

Land use: *arable land:* 3.43%
permanent crops: 1.98%
other: 94.59% (2005)

Irrigated land: 30 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards: dust-laden harmattan winds blow from the Sahara (December to March)

Environment - current issues: tropical rain forest deforestation; soil erosion; loss of biodiversity; pollution of coastal waters from oil residue and raw sewage

Environment *party to:* Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-

international agreements: - Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94
signed, but not ratified: Environmental Modification, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation

Geography - note: facing the Atlantic Ocean, the coastline is characterized by lagoons, mangrove swamps, and river-deposited sandbars; the inland grassy plateau supports limited agriculture

People	Liberia
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Population: 3,042,004 (July 2006 est.)

Age structure: *0-14 years:* 43.1% (male 656,016/female 653,734)
15-64 years: 54.2% (male 816,443/female 832,152)
65 years and over: 2.8% (male 40,591/female 43,068) (2006 est.)

Median age: *total:* 18.1 years
male: 18 years
female: 18.3 years (2006 est.)

Population growth rate: 4.91% (2006 est.)

Birth rate: 44.77 births/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Death rate: 23.1 deaths/1,000 population (2006 est.)

Net migration rate: 27.39 migrant(s)/1,000 population
note: at least 238,500 Liberian refugees are in surrounding countries; the uncertain security situation has hindered their ability to return (2006 est.)

Sex ratio: *at birth:* 1.03 male(s)/female
under 15 years: 1 male(s)/female
15-64 years: 0.98 male(s)/female
65 years and over: 0.94 male(s)/female
total population: 0.99 male(s)/female (2006 est.)

Infant mortality rate: *total:* 155.76 deaths/1,000 live births
male: 171.96 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 139.06 deaths/1,000 live births (2006 est.)

Life expectancy at birth: *total population:* 39.65 years
male: 37.99 years
female: 41.35 years (2006 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.02 children born/woman (2006 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult 5.9% (2003 est.)

**prevalence
rate:**

**HIV/AIDS -
people
living with
HIV/AIDS:** 100,000 (2003 est.)

**HIV/AIDS -
deaths:** 7,200 (2003 est.)

**Major
infectious
diseases:** *degree of risk:* very high
food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal
diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever
vectorborne diseases: malaria and yellow fever are high risks
in some locations
water contact disease: schistosomiasis
aerosolized dust or soil contact disease: Lassa fever (2005)

Nationality: *noun:* Liberian(s)
adjective: Liberian

**Ethnic
groups:** indigenous African 95% (including Kpelle, Bassa, Gio, Kru,
Grebo, Mano, Krahn, Gola, Gbandi, Loma, Kissi, Vai, Dei,
Bella, Mandingo, and Mende), Americo-Liberians 2.5%
(descendants of immigrants from the US who had been
slaves), Congo People 2.5% (descendants of immigrants
from the Caribbean who had been slaves)

Religions: indigenous beliefs 40%, Christian 40%, Muslim 20%

Languages: English 20% (official), some 20 ethnic group languages, of
which a few can be written and are used in correspondence

Literacy: *definition:* age 15 and over can read and write
total population: 57.5%
male: 73.3%
female: 41.6% (2003 est.)

Government	Liberia
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Country name: *conventional long form:* Republic of Liberia
conventional short form: Liberia

**Government
type:** republic

Capital: *name:* Monrovia
geographic coordinates: 6 18 N, 10 47 W
time difference: UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC
during Standard Time)

**Administrative
divisions:** 15 counties; Bomi, Bong, Gbarpolu, Grand Bassa, Grand
Cape Mount, Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Lofa, Margibi,

Maryland, Montserrado, Nimba, River Cess, River Gee, Sinoe

Independence: 26 July 1847

National holiday: Independence Day, 26 July (1847)

Constitution: 6 January 1986

Legal system: dual system of statutory law based on Anglo-American common law for the modern sector and customary law based on unwritten tribal practices for indigenous sector; accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction, with reservations

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Executive branch: *chief of state:* President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF (since 16 January 2006); note - the President is both the chief of state and head of government

head of government: President Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF (since 16 January 2006); note - the President is both the chief of state and head of government

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate

elections: president elected by popular vote for a six-year term (eligible for a second term); election last held 8 November 2005 (next to be held in 2011)

election results: Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF elected president; percent of vote, second round - Ellen JOHNSON SIRLEAF (UP) 59.6%, George WEAH (CDC) 40.4%

Legislative branch: bicameral National Assembly consists of the Senate (30 seats - number of seats changed in 11 October 2005

elections; members elected by popular vote to serve nine-year terms) and the House of Representatives (64 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve six-year terms)

elections: Senate - last held 11 October 2005 (next to be held in 2011); House of Representatives - last held 11 October 2005 (next to be held in 2011)

election results: Senate - percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - COTOL 7, NPP 4, CDC 3, LP 3, UP 3, APD 3, other 7; House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - NA%; seats by party - CDC 15, LP 9, UP 8, COTOL 8, APD 5, NPP 4, other 15

note: junior senators - those who received the second most votes in each county in the 11 October 2005 election - will only serve a six-year first term because the Liberian constitution mandates staggered Senate elections to ensure continuity of government; all senators will be eligible for nine-year terms thereafter

Judicial branch: Supreme Court

Political parties and leaders: Alliance for Peace and Democracy or APD [Togba-na TIPOTEH]; Coalition for the Transformation of Liberia or COTOL; Congress for Democratic Change or CDC [George WEAH]; Liberian Action Party or LAP [H. Varney SHERMAN]; Liberty Party or LP [Charles BRUMSKINE]; National Patriotic Party or NPP [Cyril ALLEN]; Unity Party or UP [Charles CLARKE]

Political pressure groups and leaders: Demobilized former military officers

International organization participation: ACP, AfDB, AU, ECOWAS, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICt, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ITU, ITUC, NAM, OPCW (signatory), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCL, WCO, WFTU, WHO, WIPO, WMO

Diplomatic representation in the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Charles A. MINOR
chancery: 5201 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20011
telephone: [1] (202) 723-0437
FAX: [1] (202) 723-0436
consulate(s) general: New York

Diplomatic representation from the US: *chief of mission:* Ambassador Donald E. BOOTH
embassy: 111 United Nations Drive, P. O. Box 10-0098, Mamba Point, 1000 Monrovia, 10
mailing address: use embassy street address
telephone: [231] 226-370 through 226-380
FAX: [231] 226-148

Flag description: 11 equal horizontal stripes of red (top and bottom) alternating with white; there is a white five-pointed star on a blue square in the upper hoist-side corner; the design was based on the US flag

Economy Liberia

Economy - overview: Civil war and government mismanagement have destroyed much of Liberia's economy, especially the infrastructure in and around Monrovia. Many businessmen have fled the country, taking capital and expertise with them. Some have returned, but many will not. Richly endowed with water, mineral resources, forests, and a climate favorable to agriculture, Liberia had been a producer and exporter of basic products - primarily raw timber and rubber. Local manufacturing, mainly foreign owned, had been small in scope. President

JOHNSON SIRLEAF, a Harvard-trained economist, has taken steps to reduce corruption, build support from international donors, and encourage private investment. An embargo on timber exports has been lifted, opening a source of revenue for the government, but diamonds remain under UN sanctions. The reconstruction of infrastructure and the raising of incomes in this ravaged economy will largely depend on generous financial support and technical assistance from donor countries.

GDP (purchasing power parity):	\$2.911 billion (2006 est.)
GDP (official exchange rate):	\$902.9 million (2006 est.)
GDP - real growth rate:	6.7% (2006 est.)
GDP - per capita (PPP):	\$1,000 (2006 est.)
GDP - composition by sector:	<i>agriculture: 76.9%</i> <i>industry: 5.4%</i> <i>services: 17.7%</i> (2002 est.)
Labor force - by occupation:	<i>agriculture: 70%</i> <i>industry: 8%</i> <i>services: 22%</i> (2000 est.)
Unemployment rate:	85% (2003 est.)
Population below poverty line:	80%
Household income or consumption by percentage share:	<i>lowest 10%: NA%</i> <i>highest 10%: NA%</i>
Inflation rate (consumer prices):	15% (2003 est.)
Budget:	<i>revenues: \$85.4 million</i> <i>expenditures: \$90.5 million; including capital expenditures of \$NA</i> (2000 est.)
Agriculture - products:	rubber, coffee, cocoa, rice, cassava (tapioca), palm oil, sugarcane, bananas; sheep, goats; timber

Industries: rubber processing, palm oil processing, timber, diamonds

Industrial production growth rate: NA%

Electricity - production: 325 million kWh (2004)

Electricity - production by source: *fossil fuel:* 100%
hydro: 0%
nuclear: 0%
other: 0% (2001)

Electricity - consumption: 302.3 million kWh (2004)

Electricity - exports: 0 kWh (2004)

Electricity - imports: 0 kWh (2004)

Oil - production: 0 bbl/day (2004 est.)

Oil - consumption: 3,500 bbl/day (2004 est.)

Oil - imports: NA bbl/day (2001)

Natural gas - production: 0 cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - consumption: 0 cu m (2004 est.)

Exports: \$910 million f.o.b. (2004 est.)

Exports - commodities: rubber, timber, iron, diamonds, cocoa, coffee

Exports - partners: Belgium 40.7%, Spain 15.2%, US 8.9%, Malaysia 5.4%, Thailand 4.5%, Poland 4.5%, Germany 4.3% (2005)

Imports: \$4.839 billion f.o.b. (2004 est.)

Imports - commodities: fuels, chemicals, machinery, transportation equipment, manufactured goods; foodstuffs

Imports - partners: South Korea 38.1%, Japan 21.2%, Singapore 14.2%, Croatia 4.7% (2005)

Debt - external: \$3.2 billion (2005 est.)

Economic aid - \$94 million (1999)

recipient:

Currency (code): Liberian dollar (LRD)

Currency code: LRD

Exchange rates: Liberian dollars per US dollar - NA (2005), 54.906 (2004), 59.379 (2003), 61.754 (2002)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications Liberia

Telephones - main lines in use: 6,900 (2002)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 160,000 (2005)

Telephone system: *general assessment:* the limited services available are found almost exclusively in the capital Monrovia
domestic: fully automatic system with very low density of .23 fixed main lines per 100 persons; limited wireless service available
international: country code - 231; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Atlantic Ocean)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 0, FM 7, shortwave 2 (2001)

Radios: 790,000 (1997)

Television broadcast stations: 1 (plus four low-power repeaters) (2001)

Televisions: 70,000 (1997)

Internet country code: .lr

Internet hosts: 8 (2006)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 2 (2001)

Internet users: 1,000 (2002)

Transportation Liberia

Airports: 53 (2006)

Airports - total: 2
with paved runways: over 3,047 m: 1
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1 (2006)

Airports - total: 51
with unpaved runways: 1,524 to 2,437 m: 5
914 to 1,523 m: 8
under 914 m: 38 (2006)

Railways: *total:* 490 km
standard gauge: 345 km 1.435-m gauge
narrow gauge: 145 km 1.067-m gauge
note: railway is inoperable because of damage suffered during the civil war (2005)

Roadways: *total:* 10,600 km
paved: 657 km
unpaved: 9,943 km (1999)

Merchant marine: *total:* 1,687 ships (1000 GRT or over) 62,522,787 GRT/96,776,521 DWT
by type: barge carrier 3, bulk carrier 322, cargo 83, chemical tanker 199, combination ore/oil 2, container 477, liquefied gas 75, passenger 2, passenger/cargo 1, petroleum tanker 397, refrigerated cargo 76, roll on/roll off 4, specialized tanker 11, vehicle carrier 35
foreign-owned: 1,611 (Argentina 7, Australia 2, Austria 13, Bahamas, The 1, Bermuda 1, Brazil 3, Canada 2, China 35, Croatia 7, Cyprus 3, Denmark 8, Estonia 1, France 3, Germany 587, Greece 267, Hong Kong 37, India 3, Indonesia 1, Isle of Man 5, Israel 5, Italy 16, Japan 102, South Korea 3, Kuwait 1, Latvia 14, Lebanon 2, Mexico 1, Monaco 10, Netherlands 29, Norway 38, Poland 14, Qatar 2, Russia 77, Saudi Arabia 24, Singapore 28, Slovenia 2, Sweden 8, Switzerland 7, Taiwan 69, Turkey 1, UAE 18, UK 41, Ukraine 16, Uruguay 3, US 93, unknown 1) (2006)

Ports and terminals: Buchanan, Monrovia

Military Liberia

Military branches: Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL): Army, Navy, Air Force

Military service age and obligation:	18 years of age for voluntary military service; no conscription (2001)
Manpower available for military service:	<i>males age 18-49: 575,384</i> <i>females age 18-49: 588,780 (2005 est.)</i>
Manpower fit for military service:	<i>males age 18-49: 267,430</i> <i>females age 18-49: 286,231 (2005 est.)</i>
Military expenditures - dollar figure:	\$67.4 million (2005 est.)
Military expenditures - percent of GDP:	7.5% (2005 est.)

Transnational Issues	Liberia
Disputes - international:	although Liberia's domestic fighting among disparate rebel groups, warlords, and youth gangs was declared over in 2003, civil unrest persists, and in 2004, 133,000 Liberian refugees remained in Guinea, 72,000 in Cote d'Ivoire, 67,000 in Sierra Leone, and 43,000 in Ghana; Liberia, in turn, shelters refugees fleeing turmoil in Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone; since 2003, the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) has maintained about 18,000 peacekeepers in Liberia; the Cote d'Ivoire Government accuses Liberia of supporting Ivoirian rebels; UN sanctions ban Liberia from exporting diamonds and timber
Refugees and internally displaced persons:	<i>refugees (country of origin): 6,592 (Cote d'Ivoire)</i> <i>IDPs: 13,000 (civil war from 1990-2004; IDP resettlement began in November 2004) (2006)</i>
Illicit drugs:	transshipment point for Southeast and Southwest Asian heroin and South American cocaine for the European and US markets; corruption, criminal activity, arms-dealing, and diamond trade provide significant potential for money laundering, but the lack of well-developed financial system limits the country's utility as a major money-laundering center