

Summary

Recent events in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, have seen an increase in violence, particularly in the lead-up to the presidential elections. Clashes between different political party supporters resulted in injuries and deaths. With no candidate securing over 50% of the vote, a run-off election is expected in early November. The situation remains tense, with potential for more clashes between police forces and political supporters, as well as risks related to petty criminal activity and corruption, driven by poverty and limited job opportunities.

Recent events and developments

Liberia's capital experienced anomalous violence in the lead-up to the presidential elections, marking a shift from the relatively calm and non-violent period the country had previously enjoyed. On October 8, President George Weah's convoy was attacked during his final campaign in Monrovia by unidentified individuals, leaving an unknown number of casualties. Shortly after, violent incidents unfolded in Monrovia, particularly in the Greater Monrovia area of Montserrado. Supporters of the "Coalition for Democratic Change" (CDC) clashed with the opposition supporters of the "All Liberia Coalition Party" (ALCOP) at Bardnersville Junction, resulting in at least 15 injuries. Simultaneously, more incidents occurred as CDC supporters clashed with ALCOP supporters at St. Michael Junction, resulting in two deaths, including the CDC Campaign Manager's driver. The police used tear gas to disperse the crowd. Additionally, a separate incident on October 6 saw clashes between supporters of the Unity Party (UP) and CDC in Monrovia, leading to three deaths and several injuries. On the same date, ALCOP and CDC supporters clashed again in Gardnersville, leaving one CDC supporter critically injured and hospitalized in Sinkor, Monrovia.

Impact assessment

Despite the relatively passive period that Liberia has experienced, civil disturbances, often arising from socio-economic concerns and political changes are common and possess the potential to swiftly escalate into more severe disputes. In fact, this sudden surge in such violence can be attributed to the exceedingly close election results, where following 98% of the vote count, the former president secured 43.8% of the vote, while the new candidate Joseph Boakai received 43.5%, intensifying tensions. Since no candidate was able to achieve over 50% of the vote, a run-off will take place in early November. Clashes between police forces and political supporters due to riots, and even between supporters of different parties could erupt at any moment, especially in the capital and its vicinities. Such confrontations have the potential of growing into intense and even deadly clashes. In the past 2 weeks, supporters of political parties were seen throwing stones at each other and attacking motorcades, while police forces used teargas to disperse the crowds. Another notable risk stems from petty and violent criminal activity, as well as corruption on many levels, fueled by the prevalence of poverty and limited job opportunities.

Advice from Forth Global

- Advise staff to avoid campaign stands, political party infrastructure, as well as voting stations and demonstrations of any kind.
- Continuously monitor local news and liaise with local partners to stay up to date with any developments.
- Advise staff to avoid expressing their personal views on the political situation.
- Make sure all employees travelling to Liberia undertake a three-day HEAT training prior to deployment.

Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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