

River Cess Profile



With a coast line of 62 km, and situated in the south east of Monrovia at a distance of 220 km, River Cess is one of Liberia's least developed and most isolated counties. The County derives its name from the Cestos River which originally was a district in River Cess County. The River Cess area became a Statutory District in 1912 and subsequently it became a County in 1984. Initially, the entire county was made up of two districts – Timbo and Morweh. Since 1984, there has been a concerted effort by national government in establishing districts, chiefdoms, clans, townships and cities across the country. This exercise has resulted to additional six districts, bringing the total number of districts to eight.

The county is rich in terms of timber reserves and fishery, but has very little road infrastructure. In the past tensions arose on account of logging activities. The local populace felt that timber was been exploited from their community without any benefit to them and hence they demanded some compensation. This often resulted to stopping trucks transporting logs/timbers and even harassing staff members accompanying the consignment. With the lifting of the sanctions on timber, this problem could again resurface. Government needs to robustly ensure that the Forestry Reform Laws are adhered to. Government must also be clear about ensuring communities where logging and other extraction activities are undertaken benefit from the trade.

In 2005 there was a serious problem regarding acceptance of the authority of the Liberia National Police in Rivercess. Some citizens during that time refused court arrest in events where the LNP acted alone. The LNP had to be accompanied by UNMIL military to affect such arrests in a peaceful manner.

Most households in the county were displaced during the course of the civil war. The main livelihood activities today include palm oil production, hunting,

food crops production and fishing. The county according to the Comprehensive Food Security and Nutrition survey (CFSNS, October 2006) is doing relatively well in terms of food consumption and access to food. Acute and chronic malnutrition rates are alarmingly high. This in part could be explained by the geographical isolation of River Cess which makes most households to be completely without access to improved drinking water and health facilities.

Table 1: Basic Information about River Cess County

County Capital	Cestos City
Districts	Jo-River, Dodain, Central River Cess, Nyuehwein, Timbo, Yarnee, Jehn River, Zalflahn, Sangblor and Bearwo
Area	5,263.40 square kilometers
Languages	Bassa, Grebo, Kpelle and Kru
Population (census 1984)	37,849
1997 Population Projection	58,885 (LISGIS Population Projection 1995-2006)
2006 Population Projection	30,165 (LISGIS Population Projection 1995-2006)
2006 Household Projection	5,027.49 (LISGIS Population Projection 1995-2006)
Population (as provided by the NRC, 2006)	124,765
Functioning health facilities	10 (NRC Needs Assessment Report 2006)
Education Facilities in Use	65 (NRC Needs Assessment Report 2006)
IDP's	23 (as of January 2007- NRC Needs Assessment Report)
Refugees	(as of January 2007- NRC Needs Assessment Report)
Returnees	258 (as of January 2007- NRC Needs Assessment Report)