

Operational Context

In 2016, some minority Anglophone Cameroonians started civil society-led demonstrations following allegations of marginalization by the government of President Paul Biya. They accused the government of using only of French in courts and schools. The protestors had initially called for the return to federal system of government and greater autonomy for Anglophone Cameroon. After the unilateral declaration of independence on October 1, 2017 by the Ambazonia Governing Council of Southern Cameroon, government security forces deployed into areas occupied by Anglophone Cameroonians clashed with the secessionists, resulting to injuries and deaths. This caused thousands of English-speaking Cameroonians to begin fleeing across the border into Nigeria.

New Arrivals

On 4 December, more Cameroonians crossed into Nigeria's Cross River State via four entry points with Cameroon. The UNHCR partner in the area, Rhema Care reported that the new asylum seekers arrived at Amana, Akamkpa, Agbokim, Ikom/Ajasso and Boki in Cross River State in South-South Nigeria from the Cameroonian border towns of Akwaya, Otu, Eyumojock, Nsan, Dadi & Bodam.

Response & Advocacy Efforts

A joint registration team of UNHCR and National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) will continue the biometric registration for the new arrivals in Cross River State. UNHCR is providing food and non-food items (NFIs) to the 5,277 already registered asylum seekers. The NFIs include mattresses, blankets, mosquito nets, cooking utensils and hygiene kits. In addition, NCFRMI has also distributed NFIs and medical supplies in Ikom Local Government Area (LGA). So far, UNHCR is able to provide food and NFIs to the population registered, but as the conflict in Cameroon escalates and more asylum seekers arrive, the agency's capacity to respond will soon be impacted by the lack of additional resources to support the new arrivals. Such resource gap will critically undermine the effective response to the surge in the number of asylum seekers over the coming weeks. The recent declaration of war on the secessionist group by Cameroon's government after the death of four soldiers and two policemen points to the deepening nature of the crisis.

UNHCR and its partner, Rhema Care in consultation with the Cross River State Government (CRSG) are responding to health related issues on the ground and are providing community assistance in the in the areas of health care and shelter for the most vulnerable in Obanliku, Etung, and Ikom in the Cross River state. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is also in Obanliku providing water and sanitation services to health facilities. Save the Children is expected to start supporting child protection activities following an assessment it conducted in Cross River State. UNHCR is sensitising host communities and government counterparts on the rights of asylum seekers, protection principles and the need to continue supporting individuals forced to flee their homes.

Meanwhile, it is also important to note that all the asylum seekers are being accommodated by local community members in Nigeria, but as the conflict drags on and more asylum seekers cross the border, the local population's capacity to support is being stretched with reports that some host communities are requesting monies from asylum seekers for rental expenses. Bad roads linking Cameroon and Nigeria continue to hamper efforts to access new arrivals for registration and service delivery.

In the meantime, UNHCR is considering the establishment of an office presence in Cross River State with the required staff to effectively respond to the influx and the attending protection challenges. This will be in addition to the frequent rotational field missions to the affected states.

UNHCR's approach to managing the influx of Cameroonians has been to advocate with the Nigerian authorities to provide asylum to those fleeing the violence without individual interviews. This approach will ensure that protection and humanitarian assistance responds to the possible large-scale inflow of persons.

Additional resources will be necessary to support the new arrivals and reinforce UNHCR's coordination and response efforts. Currently, UNHCR Nigeria and partners have elaborated a contingency plan for an estimated 40,000 new arrivals from Cameroon with a nominal budget of \$18 million.

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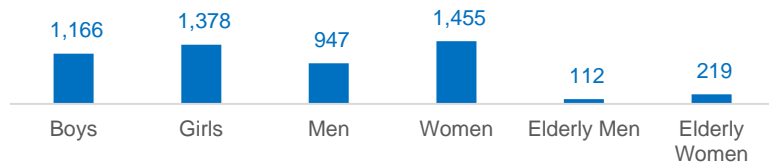




5,277

REGISTERED ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM CAMEROON

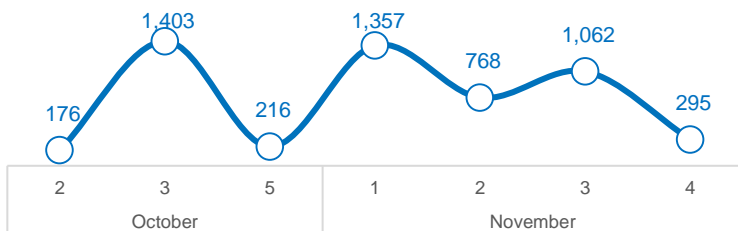
ASYLUM SEEKERS BY AGE AND GENDER



AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN OF ASYLUM SEEKERS PER LGA

LGAs	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	Elderly Men	Elderly Women
Boki	21	34	116	70	11	5
Etung	78	72	324	90	1	11
Ikom	71	103	131	212	5	6
Obanliku	996	1,165	376	1,082	95	197
Odukpani	-	4	-	1	-	-

REGISTERED ASYLUM SEEKERS PER WEEK



METHODOLOGY

UNHCR in collaboration with the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and IDPs (NCFRMI) launched a registration exercise for newly arrived Cameroonian asylum seekers in Cross Rivers State. The information helps identify vulnerabilities among the asylum seekers population as well as baseline data in order to plan and coordinate the humanitarian response.

