

Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

May 2022

Over **77,000 Cameroonian refugee men, women, and children are registered** in Akwa-Ibom, Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Enugu, and Taraba States.

At least **300 refugees** and locals **received non-food** items including blankets, kitchen sets and mosquito nets in Benue and Cross River State (CRS).

UNHCR launched the **Network on Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)** for the Cameroonian refugee response in CRS.



Cameroonian refugees process and produce local cassava meal/flour, using equipment provided by UNHCR to help improve food security and self-reliance for refugees in Ukende refugee settlement, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Ajiende.

Operational Highlights

- On 29 May, **over 500 Cameroonian refugees** reportedly fled from Obonyi 2 village in Cameroon, following a renewed violence by separatist fighters in the Southwest region into border communities in Cross River State (CRS). According to reports, **scores of individuals were allegedly killed, injured, and held hostage** by the **combatants**. Some of the injured are receiving medical assistance at UNHCR-supported health centers in the State. More arrivals are anticipated.



PROTECTION

Protection Monitoring

- UNHCR collaborated with 12 government, national and international partners to **identify** over **100 protection incidents** including **medical care**, documentation, **child protection**, education, and **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**. Protection risks were examined and cases were referred to partners providing protection and multisectoral assistance in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba (ABCT) States.
- A two-day joint **detention monitoring** visit was conducted by UNHCR, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP), Save the Children and Rhema Care to **advocate against the arbitrary detention of refugees** and access to fair hearing and justice. The team met with the Police Area Command, Immigration Service, Security Civil Defence Corps, Medium Correctional Centre, and Juvenile Correctional Centre in Benue State. The officials were sensitized on refugee protection, **Prevention from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, **child protection**, and the inclusion of refugees in National Identity Number registration.
- On 30 May, UNHCR and its partners visited the Bashu border community of Boki CRS, **to verify reports** of the arrival of over **500 new refugees** and **assess their urgent needs**. The team interacted with the Nigerian soldiers, community leaders, health personnel, and the refugees. The newly arrived refugees informed that their village Obonyi 2 in Cameroon was attacked on 29 May by the separatist fighters following the refusal of the villagers to pay their demand for cash. Scores of villagers were shot dead, others were burnt, lynched and robbed of several millions of CFA francs and food supplies. Health workers at the Bashu Primary Healthcare Centre noted that **15 persons have been treated for gunshot injuries** and **machete wounds**, while four refugees with severe injuries were referred to a secondary health facility. The new arrivals are hosted by locals who keep sharing their limited resources, including food and shelter. UNHCR and partners will continue to monitor the situation, conduct registration, and provide healthcare services for the new arrivals.

Protection Response

- On 13 May 2022, UNHCR **launched** the **PSEA network** for the Cameroonian refugee response in CRS. The meeting was co-chaired by UNHCR and NCFRMI with the representation from nine agencies/ partners responding to the Cameroonian refugee situation in ABCT States. The PSEA network includes at least one focal point designated by agencies to promote awareness, prevention, coordination, and oversight of sexual

exploitation and abuse. A refresher session on PSEA was conducted and the 2022 PSEA workplan was disseminated.

- An additional **152 Cameroonian refugees**, mostly **women**, and **children** from the Northwest and Southwest regions, received evidence of documentation following registration by NCFRMI and UNHCR.
- UNHCR and partners sensitized at least **2,000 refugees** and locals including students on **GBV, child protection, PSEA**, personal hygiene, referral, and reporting channels at the refugee settlements and host communities in ABCT States. A complaint box was installed at the Abande Primary Healthcare Centre in Benue State **to strengthen the community feedback response mechanism on sexual exploitation and abuse**.
- In Taraba State, UNHCR and its partner Jesuit Refugee Service **trained 15 host community leaders** on the **rights and obligations of refugees**.

Challenges

- Survivors of GBV are reluctant to disclose details of perpetrators for fear of reprisal.
- Poor attitude of refugee parents to document the birth of their children, despite continuous sensitization by UNHCR and partners.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

- On 28 May, UNHCR, in collaboration with Save the Children International, Nigerian Red Cross Society, and Rhema Care, **sensitized over 300 women and girls of reproductive age on personal/menstrual hygiene** management to commemorate the World Menstrual Hygiene Management Day, in schools and primary health centers in Benue and CRS. Some **250 vulnerable women and girls received sanitary pads** to help promote their personal hygiene.



HEALTH:

- In ABCT States, at least **13,000 refugees** and **locals** received **health care services** including **antenatal/post-natal** services, **nutrition**, **mental health**, and **vaccination** in about 30 UNHCR-supported facilities.
- Over **2,000 refugee** and **host community children** were assessed for malnutrition at the refugee settlements, host communities, and UNHCR-supported health facilities in ABCT States. Some **150 children** identified with severe and moderate malnutrition received **supplementary feeding** provided by UNHCR with support from Foundation Probitas, to improve their growth and wellbeing.
- Some **150 refugees** and locals particularly the **disabled, pregnant women, children under 5 years**, and the elderly received **mosquito nets** to help prevent malaria in ABCT States.
- **74 refugee** and **host community women received delivery kits** during childbirth at the UNHCR-supported health facilities in ABCT States.



LIVELIHOODS

- On 5 May, UNHCR partner CUSO International held a **business training session** with **184 refugees** in the Ikyogen refugee settlement and host community in Benue State, to provide professional consulting services including the review of their business plans to promote their business ventures.



EDUCATION:

- UNHCR **paid tuition fees** to the school authorities for over **1,140 refugee students** in public primary and secondary schools for the second term 2021/2022 academic year in Benue State.
- From 28 to 30 May, the University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE) project team from Italy, including UNHCR and Caritas, conducted a familiarization visit to **assess tertiary educational opportunities for Cameroonian refugee students** in Nigeria. The team met with potential refugee candidates and UNHCR partners to discuss educational activities, priorities, scholarship opportunities, and challenges with the application process. Challenges identified included **lack of internet access, lack of access to academic transcripts**, and a **low number of eligible candidates** due to the restriction in the year of graduation. The UNICORE program is promoted by 33 Italian universities with the support of UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Caritas Italiana, and other partners. It aims to increase scholarship opportunities in 2022 for 69 refugees currently residing in Niger, Nigeria, and Cameroon. The call for application was disseminated widely in all refugee locations by UNHCR and partners in ABCT States.
- UNHCR **distributed** about **100 textbooks** donated by the Benue State Ministry of Education to two primary schools in Ikyogen, Benue State, **to improve the quality of education** for refugee pupils and locals.
- On 27 May, UNHCR and partner FJDP celebrated **Children's Day** for **refugee and host community children** at a primary school in Ikyogen, Benue State. Various primary schools participated in cultural dances, and sports activities.

Challenges

- Most refugee parents and students moved to the border communities for farming activities and are yet to resume school.
- Insufficient classrooms to accommodate the early childhood care and development classes for refugee and host community students in Benue State.



SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS

- Some **300 vulnerable refugees, new arrivals**, and locals received **non-food items** including **blankets, solar lanterns, mosquito nets**, wrappers, underwear, **kitchen set, buckets**, sanitary pads, **soaps**, shaving sticks, and toothbrushes in Benue and CRS.
- UNHCR provided **transitional shelters** to **four refugee households** of 18 individuals whose accommodations were destroyed by strong wind and heavy rain in the Ikyogen refugee settlement, Benue State.

- UNHCR and partners sensitized some **500 refugees** on **environmental protection, flood/erosion prevention, and waste management/disposal** in Ikyogen settlement, to promote environmental preservation and mitigate the effect of climate change.
- The State Emergency Management Agency collaborated with UNHCR in Benue, Cross River, and Taraba States to manage and **provide security to refugees and to ensure integration, conflict resolution, and peaceful co-existence** among refugees and host communities.

Challenges

- There is an urgent need to rehabilitate damaged emergency shelters and construct additional transitional shelters in Ikyogen refugee settlement, to address the shelter concerns of refugees in emergency shelters, especially during heavy rainfall.

Working in partnership

Together with the Government of Nigeria, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to Cameroonian refugees. The Agency holds regular coordination meetings at the State and Local Governments and humanitarian actors. The following partners implement specific sector activities: NCFRMI, SEMA, Save the Children International, CUSO International, Catholic Caritas Foundation Nigeria, Catholic Diocese of Makurdi Foundation for Justice Development and Peace, Mediatrix Development Foundation, Rhema Care Integrated Development Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Nigeria Red Cross.

External/Donors Relations

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