

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The security situation in the Far North Region remained unstable in May 2016. Despite on-going operations by the Multinational Force, incursions by Boko Haram fighters and suicide bombers were reported in several communities along the border with Nigeria, where they conducted attacks, reprisals and looting. Despite the calm observed at the end of May 2016, the level of security remained at security level 5 (SL5).

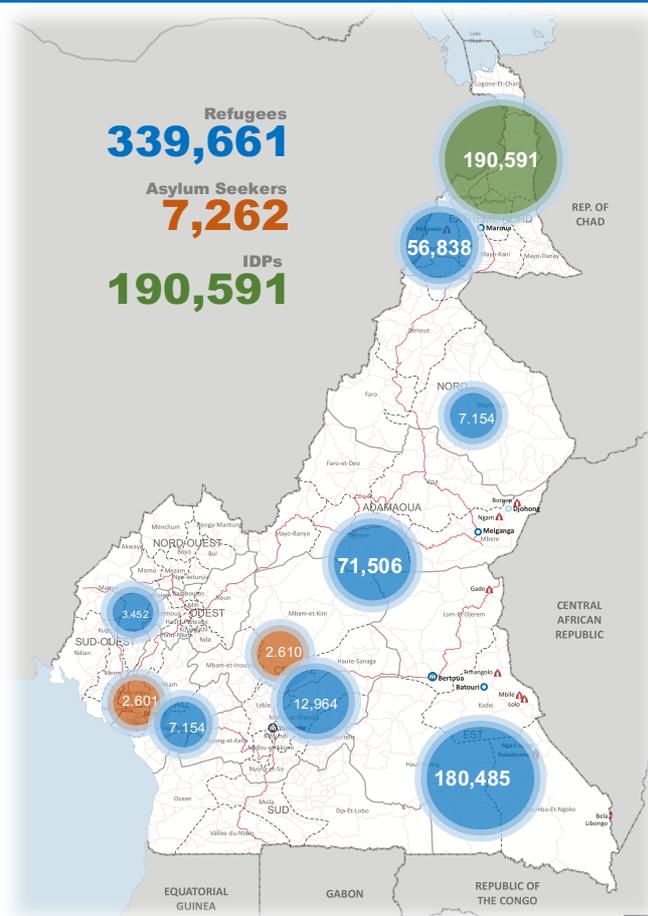
The month of May was characterized by a large number of incidents, which included suicide bombing, attacks by Boko Haram members and mine explosions.

Despite the tense security situation, UNHCR continued its protection and assistance activities to persons of concern and host communities in the Far North Region where asylum seekers continue to arrive in fewer numbers in the transit center.

From 24th- 25th May 2016, a joint UNHCR/ IMC mission went to Boukoula village to temporarily transfer 412 returnees from Nigeria to the Gourenouel transit center.

In the eastern part of the country, the general security situation was relatively calm during the month of May 2016.

UNHCR Representative visited the East/Adamaoua region to inform authorities on the progress made with the Ministry of External Relations on the initiation of discussions on the voluntary repatriation of CAR refugees.



Registration and documentation

Urban caseload

Registration activities in Yaoundé continued to be hampered by the lack of an appropriate site to receive and register asylum-seekers. Despite these limitations, 29 new arrivals were registered in May 2016.

The Registration Unit continued to issue documents and verify refugees and asylum-seekers who were absent during the biometric verification in December 2015.

During the reporting period UNHCR Field Office Douala had a registered total of 9886 persons of concern of which 7709 had been verified whereas 2177 persons were not yet verified. A total of 6478 refugees stood verified by the end of the reporting period.

East and Adamaoua Regions

Issuance and renewal of protection documents including family composition attestations continued in the East during the reporting period.

41 households of 139 individuals were registered in Gado on the 5th May 2016 and 06 households (18 individuals) transferred from Bertoua to Mandjou. Issuance of documents and birth certificate advocacy for refugees continued mostly for children delivered in Cameroon.

Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

In Douala, 62 cases (92 persons) were processed by eligibility staff in May and submitted for review.

46 cases (75 individuals) were submitted for review. 45 persons were recognized. 42 were recognized at first instance and 3 on appeal. 22 were rejected at first instance and 08 on appeal.

In Yaoundé, 50 (78) cases were interviewed at first instance and 10 cases (21 individuals) on appeal. During May 2016, a total of 69 cases (115 individuals) were granted refugee status at first instance and 01 case (02 individuals) on appeal. In addition, 11 cases (17 individuals) were rejected at first instance and 6 appeal cases (16 individuals) were submitted for review. 101 (170 individuals) were submitted for review at first instance. 03 cases (04 individuals) were recognized on derivative status while 03 others cases (13 individuals) were submitted for review.

Far North

Registration activities continued in Minawao camp and Gouroungel transit center. 863 new arrivals were registered in May 2016, representing a 12.08% increase compared to figures for April 2016. The issuance of refugee certificates for new spontaneous arrivals after protection screening was ongoing.

In addition to issuing certificates for spontaneous arrivals, renewal of certificates in Minawao camp continued for refugees with certificates dating more than a year back. During this exercise, the data of all family members was verified and completed. In total, the data of 2,166 individuals had been verified and completed in the course of the reporting period.

As of 27 May 2016, Minawao camp hosted 56,838 individuals of 15, 507 households which comprised 53, 34% women, 46, 66% of men and 60, 80% of children.

Access to asylum and border monitoring

Douala

During the reporting period, 110 new cases (185 persons) from several countries were registered. Most of the cases were from the Central African Republic (101 cases for 173 persons).

Far North

Local authorities organized forced border returns from Kolofata zone in Mayo Sava Division. Monitoring is ongoing and updates will be given in the next report.

Protection highlights

Urban Caseload

A Monitoring visit was organized in Kodengui central Prison on 12 May 2016 by Protection and Community Services Staff in coordination with UNHCR Implementing partners. The purpose of the visit was to assess the living conditions of detained persons of concern to UNHCR. A total of 29 persons of concern were in detention in Kodengui Prison including 28 old cases and 01 new case.

UNHCR protection staff and its legal partner FADEC continued to follow up and intervene in protection cases. A total of 32 new protection cases were reported to FADEC including 01 rape case, 03 cases of physical assault, 01 theft case, 01 divorce, 01 detention case and 03 unpaid wages complaints.

On the 27th May 2016, Yaoundé protection unit facilitated the transfer of 02 families (07 persons (Central Africans and Congolese) in Lolo and Gado refugee's camps in east Cameroon.

Every Wednesday, the protection unit carries out protection preliminary interviews at the Yaoundé community center and received 45 persons of concern during May 2016. Applications for Conventional Travel Documents and renewal were received and 40 CTD were processed and sent to MINREX (Ministry of External Relations)

Douala Field unit protection staff was deployed with the legal partner FADEC in various field locations to, provide legal support to refugees and asylum seekers in Douala town during the month of May. Protection cases continued to be followed up by the legal partner which include 28 new cases (18 men and 10 women). Most of the refugee complaints were based on physical assault, fraud, unpaid wages and abuse of authority.

Far North

A visit to Mora prison visit took place on 10 May 2016 with the protection unit. The objective of the mission was to monitor the prison and obtain information on the number of refugees and asylum seekers in detention in Mora prison, monitor the detention conditions and assistance needs. 289 individuals were in Mora's prison during the reporting period. Detention conditions were found to be poor.

The Protection Unit secured the release of 06 refugees from detention at police stations in the city, during the reporting period.

Based Cash Transfers (Money Transfer)

The first phase of the Cash Based Transfers (CBT) activities was completed in Gado site. 92% of households benefited from the exercise. Unfortunately various constraints did not permit all beneficiaries to receive transfers. Corrective measures to resolve the difficulties encountered in the first phase have been put in place.

East and Adamaoua Regions

Border monitoring activities continued during the month of May 2016. The borders remained open throughout the operational zone and with the gradual return of stability in CAR; relations at the border are increasing.

At the Gbiti border, a mechanism is being gradually set up for cooperation in the fight against cross-border insecurity (abduction) between Cameroonian forces (FMO/Forces de Maintien de L'ordre) and Anti-Balaka in lieu of the Cameroon forces on the Central African Republican side. The arrangement appears to be with the consent of the Attorney General of Berberati and raises concerns as legitimacy is being conferred on a rebel/militia group.

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East and Adamaoua regions

In Batouri Individual cases were followed up. The cases related to denial of resources (12), psychological violence (26); assault (14); early marriages (06) and 01 rape case. Bimonthly meetings on GBV cases of Djohong and Gado site were regularly held during the reporting period. Both old and new cases were discussed and follow up recommendations made.

The protection unit received a number of cases; some were resolved while the monitoring of others continued. During the reporting period, three cases were under investigation and related to physical violence on a refugee; assassination of a refugee in CAR and cattle theft.

Monitoring was conducted in Batouri prison on 21 May 2016. 29 refugees were in detention during the reporting period. Among them 15 is pending trial whereas 14 are convicts. Offences related to mainly, murder, theft, and drug abuse.

In Bertoua, prison monitoring was conducted and a total of 42 prisoners were in detention. These included 33 asylum seekers and 09 refugees. Police stations were also checked to secure the release of refugees arrested without documentation. 25 Persons of concern from CAR including 08 girls were released following UNHCR intervention.

A psychiatric follow up of a minor detained in Meiganga's central prison was made with support from the UNHCR health partner. While awaiting the psychiatric report, assistance was provided to the minor. In over all, the monitoring of prisons continued to assist in determining detention conditions and reinforcing the need for medical follow up of detainees and provision of NFI assistance

105 persons with specific needs were identified by Bertoua Sub Office. In determining the provision of assistance to persons with specific needs, 20 home visits were done in Tongo Gandima, Guiwa and Guilembe villages. An evaluation of their needs has been made and pertinent actions are to be taken.

A mission was undertaken to collect data on children without birth certificates in several villages namely; Ndanga Gandima, Tongo Gandima, Guiwa Yangamo, Samba, Petit Ngaoundéré, Garga Sarali, Woumbou and Colomine. 500 children were found not to have birth certificates.

Child Protection

Far North

During the reporting period, four Child Protection meetings were held in Minawao camp to ensure follow up cases of child protection.

The main recommendations from these meetings included the following: Monitoring of newly registered and out of school/non-schooling children by community leaders; Planning a general awareness on peace education, community solidarity and the rights and duties of refugees in the camp; continued social surveys of families with children in risk situation who have not yet received NFIs; Organization by mental health personnel of focused group discussions with adolescents involved in drugs use in the camp; assessment of the needs of unaccompanied children in the camp and support them with kitchen sets; assessment of the situation of the education of deaf-mute children in the camp; a hold a work session with the authorities on the reporting of cases of defilement of minors in the camp and continued sensitization of the community in denouncing and reporting of rape/defilement cases; sensitization of religious leaders (Pastors and Imams) on the Cameroon legislation against early and forced marriage in Cameroon and the identification by all child protection partners of all unaccompanied children living alone at the camp.

Plan International, undertook the following activities in the camp:

The placement of two (02) unaccompanied children in foster families; Provision of Psychosocial support to eight (08) physically handicapped children and their parents. Parents were sensitized on the rights of the child and right for children with disabilities not to be stigmatized; follow up on the reunification of a separated 14 years old child who was a victim of abuse in the family.

64 cases (44 old cases and 20 new cases) were followed up by the child protection network. The cases related to unaccompanied and separated children, victims of neglect and abuse, cases of early marriages, children and parents in need of psychological follow up/counselling and family reunification.

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)

Far North

15 new cases of violence were identified during May 2016. Of the 15 cases, 04 related to physical violence, 04 cases of early/forced marriages, 03 in need of assistance, 03 victims of psychological violence and 01 case of rape.

6.800 persons (3.100 men, 1.000 women, 900 boys and 1.800 girls) attended SGBV awareness sessions organized by Plan International under the themes "consequences of early and forced marriages and its penalties.

2.677 persons (735 men, 939 women, 474 boys and 529 girls) were sensitized in discussion groups on the different types of violence in the camp.

East and Adamaoua Regions

In Garoua, an SGBV coordination meeting was held on 12 May 2016. The participants discussed issues relating to the Strengthening of the partnership with Ministry of Justice and the urge for more involvement of the community in denouncing cases of SGBV; updating list of focal points and the need to strategically harmonize activities at the field level in order to better coordinate the fight against SGBV.

The UNHCR Social partner IMC continued its activities on sites in Kadey. These activities included: the identification of SGBV cases, support for survivors, sensitization activities, organizing weekly meetings, case management and advocacy.

Recurring types of GBV cases included denial of resources, psychological and physical violence, forced early marriage and rape.

Survivors benefited from counseling, social mediation and psychological support.

In Meiganga, trainings sessions on the prevention of SGBV were ongoing in Gado, Djohong, Mbaiboum, Dompla and Djom. 1,157 persons (328 men, 383 women, 211 boys and 235 girls) were sensitized.

Urban Caseload

During the month of May 2016, 01 BID (Best Interest Determination) decision was finalized. The BID was conducted to facilitate family reunification of a 13 years old unaccompanied minor with his mother leaving in Canada.

A Best Interest Assessment (BIA) was conducted for 03 unaccompanied minors reported to be mistreated by their foster family. UNHCR and its community services partners are in the process of identifying another foster family to foster the children.

03 CAR children were identified by UNHCR and its community services partners in some catholic charity institutions and were immediately registered and scheduled for RSD interviews.

In addition, 04 new cases of children at risk (03 separated children and 01 unaccompanied minor) were identified among the CAR community and were also registered and issued asylum seeker documents. 01 case of early marriage involving a 14 years old CAR separated girl was identified during the reporting period.

East and Adamaoua Regions

The Child Protection meeting was held on Friday 27 May 2016 in Batouri and focused on data collection on girls and women at risk received during biometric exercise. The meeting also focused on strategies to reduce non official fees required from parents to obtain birth declarations.

In Meiganga, an inter-sectorial Child Protection meeting was held with the participation of all operational partners as well as all UNHCR intervention sectors. The main aspect of the meeting was to establish a link between various Child Protection sectors. Bimonthly meetings on child protection were held in Gado and SGBV in Djohong zone (Borgop, Ngam, Ngaoui, Garga Pela to discuss child protection cases and find suitable solutions.

Access to education

Douala

An education panel was set up before which 139 files were presented for consideration of education assistance under the UNHCR assistance programme. 47 cases (30 girls and 17 boys) were selected for primary school out of the 139 cases presented to the panel.

Concerning secondary school 43 news cases were selected out of 69 cases presented to the panel. Among them, were 24 girls and 19 boys. The school assistance was already being paid to the beneficiaries during the reporting period.

Far North

Nursery

A meeting was held between UNHCR and partner Plan International on 6 May 2016 with the objective of monitoring pre-school sports activities in the education sector in Minawao camp. The meeting sought to emphasize to partners UNHCR expectations in the partners monitoring of children's enrollment in pre-school following the drop in attendance rates. Officials in Plan International committed to double their efforts to raise the education levels and continue to monitor school activities.

Primary

Following the decrease in attendance rates in primary schools, parents were sensitized about the importance of schooling for children.

Secondary School

During the reporting period, a plea for the creation of a test center in Minawao was made to the new Regional Delegate for Secondary Education by the Principal of Lycée Bilingue de Minawao. The plea has led to the creation of an examination center at Minawao by Government.

East and Adamaoua Regions

46 primary students in class 6: 14 in Mbile, 17 in Lolo, 12 in Timangolo and 03 in Yokadouma went through first form I entry exams. Students of Lolo and Mbile all succeeded whereas 01 failed in Timangolo and 01 in Yokadouma.

A consultation workshop was held at Djohong on 12 May 2016 with the host community concerning the establishment of a community preschool. Participants included: the divisional officer for Djohong, Lamido, community leaders, teachers in kindergartens and schools. Participants were all in favour of establishing a community preschool.

147 solar lamps were distributed to primary school students in Meiganga subdivisions. These included: (Nghanhi (42) and Meiganga groupe 3B (105).

252 solar lamps were also distributed to primary school students and teachers of Touboro subdivisions in the North Region. 74 (42 boys and 32 girls) best Cameroonians students and 40 teachers also each received a solar lamp.

IMC also distributed pens, books and solar lamps to 105 children (57 girls and 48 boys).

Durable solutions

Voluntary Repatriation

UNHCR in Yaoundé facilitated the voluntary repatriation of one individual from Central African Republic to Bangui. UNHCR continues to receive voluntary repatriation requests.

Resettlement

Resettlement activities continued in Yaoundé, Douala, Meiganga and Batouri. However, challenges in accessing the UNHCR proGres database continued to be faced in Meiganga and Batouri due to the ongoing biometric exercise. Case identification and referral of potential resettlement cases continued to improve following training provided to UNHCR protection and community services staff.

Resettlement Support Mission to the East.

The Resettlement Officer undertook a mission to the UNHCR Field Offices Meiganga and Batouri from 30 May to 3 June 2016. The primary objective of the mission was to follow up on the progress of resettlement activities in Meiganga and Batouri.

In a bid to improve resettlement case identification, the Resettlement Officer held interactive meetings with UNHCR protection staff and partners to discuss protection issues faced by refugees in the sites. Emphasis was laid on the need to refer vulnerable and protection cases to the respective UNHCR units for further assessment and search for alternative remedies including durable solutions.

Referrals and submissions

2 cases comprising 3 individuals were referred to the Regional Office in Dakar for review and submission to the USA. 1 case comprising 2 individuals was submitted to the USA by the Regional Office in Dakar.

Technical Assistance (Anti-Fraud) Assessment Mission

A Technical Assistance (Anti-Fraud) Assessment Mission was undertaken in Cameroon from 16 May – 19 May 2016. The mission consisted of staff from RSD Section (Division for International Protection), Registration (RO Dakar) and Resettlement Service (Division for International Protection). The objectives of the mission were to review all stages of the case management processes, with a view to assessing and analyzing potential fraud risks as well as measures for fraud awareness, prevention, detection, response as well as oversight currently in place and to provide recommendations to strengthen anti-fraud mechanisms at all stages of the case management processes.

The mission had bilateral meetings with protection staff and observed processes in Yaoundé from 16 – 17 and Douala from 18