

Operational Context

As the crisis in Cameroon's South-West and North-West Anglophone regions continues, and the government in Yaoundé intensifies its actions against the pro-independent movement, the number of people crossing the border into neighbouring Nigeria is increasing. Critics have accused government forces of killing dozens of civilians, while the administration is also alleging that suspected separatists have killed more than 10 security personnel since the crisis intensified following the unilateral declaration of independence on October 1, 2017. Prior to this, there were protests in 2016 with English-speaking Cameroon calling for more autonomy from the majority French-speaking regions. The protesters had accused the government of imposing the French language in schools and courts; and also subjecting them to economic marginalisation including in allocation of resources.

New Arrivals

More Cameroonians are arriving through Cross River, Taraba and Benue States in South-South and Middle-Belt Nigeria. Those crossing over continue to use informal entry points because official borders between Cameroon and Nigeria remain closed in the above mentioned states. The receiving communities largely are Amana, Akamkpa, Agbokim, Ikom/Ajasso and Boki in Cross River State and Abande in Benue State. The asylum seekers are mainly coming from Akwaya, Otu, Eyumojock, Nsan, Dadi & Bodam in Cameroon's South-West Anglophone region. Women and children represent 80 percent of those registered so far. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, remains generally concerned that, as the crisis in Cameroon continues, and the government adopts extra security measures, more asylum seekers will arrive.

Response & Advocacy Efforts

UNHCR and its main government counterpart, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) are working together to register the new arrivals. By 12 January, **9,620** asylum seekers had been officially registered. UNHCR and partners are providing protection and life-saving support such as food, non-food items (NFIs), health and water and sanitation facilities. UNHCR is working with the government to ensure that the proper management of the influx is done in line with international humanitarian principles including advocating with Nigerian authorities to provide asylum to those fleeing the violence and ensure that the protection and humanitarian assistance responds to the needs of those arriving.

The UNHCR Representative to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Antonio Jose Canhandula, undertook a fact-finding mission to Cross River and Benue States from 8 to 10 January to see first-hand the situation and to interact with refugees and asylum seekers about their conditions. The Representative reassured state government and traditional leaders of UNHCR's commitment to working closely with local authorities to provide assistance to the refugees without neglecting vulnerable host community members.

In addition to current services being provided, UNHCR's immediate priorities include working with State authorities to establish permanent office presence, and create temporary camps, pending identification, with a long-term view to exploring avenues that should allow refugees to live in host communities, gain access to opportunities where they can become more self-reliant and contribute to the local economy, thus contributing to the development of the communities hosting them.

Meanwhile, asylum seekers at Ikom Local Government Area have begun taking steps to make the building donated to them at the council secretariat more conducive for habitation. One of the asylum seekers who is a water borehole expert assisted the community in constructing a water pumping facility from a nearby spring to the accommodation. The water project is supported with an electric generator and a water pumping machine and 3 overhead tanks donated. The asylum seekers have also started working to restore electricity to the facility by repairing the electric wiring system.

Coordination

To reinforce coordination and response efforts, UNHCR and partners met on 18 December 2017 in Calabar, Cross River State to discuss the Contingency Plan for an estimated 40,000 new arrivals from Cameroon with a projected budget of \$18 million. The meeting discussed arrival trends, intervention priorities and response capacities of other UN agencies and NGOs as well as relevant government ministries and parastatals. To further ensure inter-agency collaboration and participation, the agencies requested UNHCR and the government to take the lead sharing the following: - harmonized detailed registration data, findings of assessments done so far and the Contingency Plan. The meeting also recommended the training of stakeholders, setting up of an Emergency Office for Coordination (EOC), a review of the Host Community Strategy and 3W (who does what, where and when) matrix.

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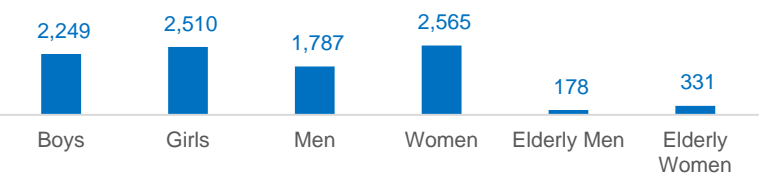
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9,620

REGISTERED ASYLUM SEEKERS FROM CAMEROON

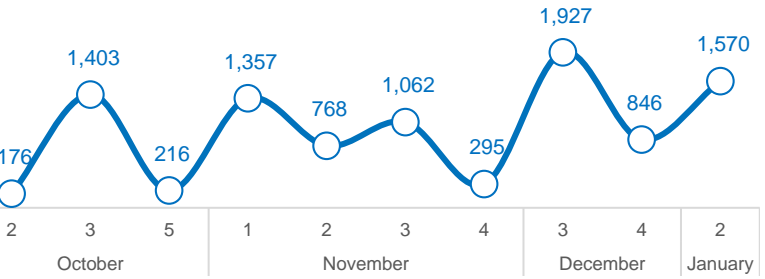
ASYLUM SEEKERS BY AGE AND GENDER



AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN OF ASYLUM SEEKERS PER LGA

LGAs	Boys	Girls	Men	Women	Elderly Men	Elderly Women	Total
Boki	591	644	545	647	43	70	2,540
Etung	474	455	682	468	27	40	2,146
Ikom	71	103	131	212	5	6	528
OBANLIKU	1,113	1,304	429	1,237	103	215	4,401
Odukpani	-	4	-	1	-	-	5

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.

