

URBAN REFUGEES IN NIGERIA

July – September 2022

Nigeria currently hosts **87,784** refugees and asylum seekers. Of these, **6,829** reside in urban areas, including Lagos, Ijebu, Abuja, Kano, and urban areas in other States.

Most of them are individually recognized through refugee status determination by the Government of Nigeria.

They originate from **41 countries**, with the majority from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Niger, Central Africa Republic, Cameroon, Syria, Turkey, Mali, and 34 other countries.

With UNHCR's support, the authorities register them and assess their asylum claims. Despite all its challenges, Nigeria has been a generous host country to asylum-seekers and refugees for decades.

It has become a safe haven, especially for Cameroonian refugees and asylum seekers.

Nigeria's inclusive approach to granting refugees freedom of movement, unhindered access to the labour market, and health insurance is commendable. Refugee children also attend local schools where they receive a quality education.



Pictures from the launch of the NAP for Nigeria. From left to right is the Federal Commissioner for NCFRMI, UNHCR Nigeria Representative, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, the Minister of Interior, and the Minister of Women Affairs ©UNHCR/Gabriel Damilare Adeyemo.

Operational Highlights

- On 02 September, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministries of Interior (MOI) and Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development (FMHDSD), launched a National Action Plan (NAP) to end statelessness in Nigeria
- 225 refugees participated in Town Hall meetings in Ikorodu, Lagos Island, and Ijebu-Ode. During the sessions, UNHCR and partners provided refugees with information on health, education, livelihoods, housing, and other refugee-related opportunities.
- The Fountain of Life Church (TFOLC), a faith-based organization based in Lagos, Nigeria, made a donation to support Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Nigeria in August 2022. The church began assisting IDPs in Northeast Nigeria through UNHCR in 2020. With over 3.1 million IDPs and 87,784 refugees, society as a whole - governments, humanitarians, development actors, private companies, faith-based organizations, and communities - must work together to protect, support, and find long-term solutions for refugees and IDPs.



PROTECTION

Access to Asylum

- There were 142 new asylum applications, 94 in Lagos and 48 in Abuja. The asylum seekers are primarily from the Central African Republic, Syria, Cameroon, and Lebanon.
- Asylum seekers' certificates were issued to 143 people in Lagos and 28 in Abuja. In Lagos, 146 refugee identity cards were issued, while 29 were issued in Abuja. The UN Convention Travel Document (UNCTD) was issued to 23 refugees, allowing them to travel.

General Protection

- Between July and September, 50 asylum seekers and refugees (20 male and 30 female) based in Lagos and Ijebu-Ode received multipurpose cash grants to address their needs. The beneficiaries were identified individually during counselling sessions and periodic assessments by NCFRMI, JDPC, and UNHCR. Regular monitoring/follow-ups are conducted to assess the vulnerabilities/needs of the beneficiaries.
- In the reporting period, counselling sessions were undertaken for 33 refugees on skill training, education support, and health. Forty-five refugees were referred to JDPC, NCFRMI, and NRC for targeted assistance (accommodation, health, and Livelihood support). The beneficiaries were identified individually during counselling sessions and periodic assessments by NCFRMI, JDPC, and UNHCR.
- On 10, 23, and 25 August, joint Town Hall meetings were organized for 225 refugees in Ikorodu, Lagos Island, and Ijebu-Ode, respectively, with the representatives of UNHCR, NCFRMI, JDPC, and NRCS in attendance. In Ikorodu, 31 (12 male and 19 female) refugees were in attendance; in Lagos Island, 164 (82 male and 82 female) refugees, and in Ijebu-Ode, 30 (15 male and 15 female) refugees attended. The meetings were participatory, and refugees shared their concerns. It was also an avenue for partners to share important information on education, livelihoods, accommodation, health, security, and other available opportunities for refugees.
- On August 24, a coordination meeting was held between UNHCR, NCFRMI, JDPC, and NRCS at the JDPC Office in Ijebu-Ode to discuss refugee welfare and protection issues. The issue of the

national identity number (NIN) was discussed and agreed that NCFRMI will continue to work with the southwest NIMC coordinator to ensure that refugees in its area of responsibility have quick access to NIN registration and enrolment.

Statelessness

- On 02 September, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Ministries of Interior (MOI) and Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management, and Social Development (FMHDS), launched a National Action Plan (NAP) to end statelessness in Nigeria, culminating in the establishment of the Steering Committee for its implementation. Nigeria has joined 66 other countries around the world in adopting and launching a NAP, marking an important step toward preventing and reducing the risk of statelessness in Nigeria.
- On 15 September, His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, conferred Nigerian citizenship on 286 foreign nationals, four of whom were refugees. In his remarks, the President recalled the NAP launch to eradicate statelessness on 02 September and emphasized Nigeria's commitment to strengthen all actions that will reduce the risk of statelessness by 2024 in accordance with the NAP priorities.



COORDINATION OF MIXED-MOVEMENT INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS

World Day Against Human Trafficking

- As part of the activities marking this year's World Day Against Human Trafficking, UNHCR attended the Abuja premiere of the film 'Pound of Heart,' which was produced by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) in collaboration with the *Spanish Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP)*. The film's goal was to educate the public about the dangers of organ harvesting, one of the most recent and prevalent forms of human trafficking. Relevant Government Agencies, such as the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and other relevant UN Agencies, were present at the film's premiere.
- In Borno and Yobe States, between 25 July to 1 August, UNHCR, a member of the North-East Anti-Trafficking Taskforce, undertook several joint commemorative activities in the lead-up to the World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. The Task Force is co-chaired by the National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and the Borno State Ministry of Justice. Taskforce members include; members from the Federal and State level Governmental Agencies/Ministries (such as NEMA and SEMA), law enforcement agencies, border officials, members of the Protection Sector, and Sub-Sectors (including three "lead supporting organizations," namely UNHCR, International Organization for Migration (IOM) and Heartland Alliance), civil society organizations, INGOs and NGOs. The objective of the Task Force is to enhance prevention, protection, and legal and other services for trafficked victims in the Northeast through interagency coordination, capacity building, technical assistance, and institutional development directed to NAPTIP and other relevant partners.
- On the 25 and 28 of July, as part of the Anti-Human Trafficking (AHT) activities, a one-day stakeholders' engagement forum was organized by the Caritas Nigeria AHT in Cross River and Edo States, respectively. The Fora were also used to commemorate the 2022 World Day Against Human Trafficking, with the theme "Use and Abuse of Technology." The two events brought together state and non-state actors to explore the issues surrounding human trafficking in their different contexts. The events brought together 91 participants in Edo and 59 in Ogoja, Cross River State. They included representatives from relevant stakeholder organizations such as NAPTIP,

Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS), Network of Civil Society Organization Against Child Trafficking, Abuse And Labour (NACTAL), Nigeria Police Force (NPF), Edo State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking (ETAHT), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), SEMA, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Refugee leaders, religious groups, Community volunteers of the project, and the Community Watch Groups (CWGs).

- On 30 July, UNHCR participated in a 5-kilometer Road Walk to commemorate the 2022 World Day Against Trafficking in Persons in Benin City. The Road Walk was organized by NAPTIP in collaboration with UNHCR and IOM.
- Further to the 2022 commemoration of the World Day Against Trafficking in persons, on 30 July, UNHCR and its partner Caritas organized a one-day stakeholder interactive session/workshop that brought together 60 participants from the government and private sectors in Calabar, Cross River State. Discussions during the session highlighted the use and misuse of technology in combating human trafficking and promoting safe migration in Nigeria, with reference to the Cameroonian refugee context. The workshop also focused on measures to improve relationships, information sharing, and feedback between stakeholders, strengthening coordination and multi-agency partnerships, as well as community participation and ownership in the prevention and fight against human trafficking.
- On 1 August 2022, in commemoration of the World Day against Trafficking, a Town Hall meeting was held at the Conference Hall, Musa Usman State Secretariat, Maiduguri Borno State. The meeting was facilitated by NAPTIP and co-facilitated by UNHCR and IOM. Participants also included INGOs, NGOs, Government (SEMA, NEMA, and Security agencies), civil society organizations, and members of the public. Topics discussed include an overview of the Task Force, identifying potential human trafficking in person cases across Borno state, mainstreaming trafficking in person in areas where partners conduct their activities, such as the liberated LGAs and towns, and strengthening referral mechanisms among partners on trafficking in person (TIP) cases.



LIVELIHOODS

- Between July and September, provided allowance was paid to 29 refugees (16 female and 13 male) undergoing various internship training, skills on hairdressing, tailoring, computer training, and adult literacy classes with the Lagos State Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (WAPA) Vocational Training Centre in Lagos Island. In addition, allowance was paid to 16 female refugees undergoing training in hairdressing and make-up, fashion design, and adult literacy classes in Lagos with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (LAWAPA) in various locations such as Adeniji, Ikorodu, Surulere, and Lagos Island areas of Lagos State.
- On 17 August, 3,900 trainees graduated from the Isheri center of WAPA, among them eight female refugees.
- JDPC, a UNHCR partner, organized a two-day entrepreneurship training on July 19 and 20 to provide refugees with the knowledge, skills, and strategies they need to grow their businesses. The training was attended by 30 refugees (16 females and 14 males). An online platform for follow-up, mentorship, and feedback was created for refugees who participated in the training.
- On 20 July, JDPC conducted a monitoring exercise on four refugees (three female and one male) on internship and refugees in business in Lagos and Ijebu-Ode. The exercise aimed to evaluate how well the refugees are faring in their respective businesses.

**EDUCATION:**

- In July, ten refugees from Nigeria were awarded scholarships to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees at various universities in Italy. Seven of the 10 refugees were awarded the University Corridors for Refugees (UNICORE) 4.0 scholarship, while two other refugees were awarded the *Progetto Mediterraneo* scholarship. 32 Italian universities promote the UNICORE 4.0 project with the support of UNHCR, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Caritas Italia, Diaconia Valdese, Centro Astalli, and other partners. While the *Progetto Mediterraneo*, launched in 2017, is a scholarship programme for refugees and disadvantaged students from the Mediterranean region. The refugees were able to secure these scholarships due to several sensitizations carried out by UNHCR Nigeria on various scholarships and complementary pathways of admission of refugees into third countries.
- On 4 August, JDPC undertook a monitoring exercise for a DAFI refugee scholar in his final year at Veritas University Abuja. The Head of Department (HOD) of the Department of Economics reported that the refugee is among the top students in his set and is scheduled for graduation in December 2022.
- On 5 July, JDPC conducted a monitoring exercise for 40 refugee children in primary and secondary schools (17 girls and 23 boys) in Lagos Island and Ijebu -Ode, respectively, to update progress performance at their various schools.
- On 20 July, JDPC visited DAFI students on an Internship at the Mkpani Health Centre, Ugep LGA of Cross River, to monitor their progress. The key feedback stated that the DAFI student's attitude toward work is satisfactory. No reports of insubordination have been recorded. While no stipend is available for interns, they benefit from free health insurance during their internship.
- On 21 July, the JDPC team visited the Exam Centre of Lead City Polytechnic, Calabar, to monitor and confirm the status of a DAFI student in the institution. The team also verified education documentation/records to ensure consistency with official records.
- JDPC, UNHCR urban refugees' education partner, conducted a monitoring exercise for 26 refugee children (14 girls and 12 boys) in primary and secondary schools in Ikorodu and Lagos Island. The objective of the exercise was to assess the performance of refugee children in primary and secondary school. The team was pleased with the report on the performances of the individual refugee in school. While commending the students, the team also used the opportunity to counsel them on the need to take their education very seriously.
- In the reporting period, UNHCR Nigeria finalized the 2021/2022 DAFI report, revealing that 111 refugees (45 female and 66 male) are currently enrolled in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Of this total: 73 refugees (31 female and 42 male) are currently on the DAFI scholarship, while 38 refugees (14 female and 24 male) are currently enrolled without DAFI assistance.
- Between 9 to 11 August, UNHCR participated in the Accelerating Change for Children and Youth's Education through Systems Strengthening (ACCESS) Task Team workshop in Abuja, with over 40 participants drawn from relevant government and non-governmental organizations, international and local non-governmental organizations. The event was organized by the ACCESS National Coordinator from the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERC), with the support of ACCESS Researchers from Oakland University, the Accelerated Education Working Group (AEWG), and Dubai Cares. The workshop discussed and agreed on a work plan for ACCESS in Nigeria, as well as established a Task Team for ACCESS. The Task Team will work to advance further opportunities for over-age out-of-school children and youth (OOSCY) to access accelerated education (AE) programmes in Nigeria and follow through with implementing the action plan and examining its impact.

Working in partnership

Together with the Government of Nigeria, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to urban refugees. The following partners implement specific sector activities: National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), and the Nigeria Red Cross Society (NRCS).

External/Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the flexible financial support provided by donors globally and those who have contributed directly to the Nigeria Operation. The operation's comprehensive budgetary needs for 2022 stand at 98.2 million. At the end of the reporting period, it was only 36 percent funded.

Direct contributions to UNHCR in Nigeria: United States of America | Country-Based Pooled Funds (UN) | Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum Global Initiatives | European Union | Germany | Spain | Muslim World League | France | Profuturo | Foundation Probitas | Nigeria | Private donors Nigeria | Other private donors

Unearmarked contributions: Sweden 99.3 million | Norway 72.5 million | Private donors Spain 45 million | United Kingdom 40.1 million | Netherlands 37.2 million | Denmark 35.6 million | Private donors Japan 31.7 million | Germany 27 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 22.6 million | Japan 21.7 million | Private donors USA 19.5 million | France 18.5 million | Switzerland 18.4 million | Private donors Italy 12.9 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Ireland 11.8 million | Private donors Canada 10.5 million | Italy 10 million | Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Azerbaijan | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | Thailand | Türkiye | Uruguay | Private donors.

Softly earmarked contributions: United States of America 28.8 million | Canada 7.8 million | Private donors Australia 7.4 million | Private donors USA 6.2 million | Private donors Germany 3.4 million | Japan | Norway | Private donors

MORE INFORMATION



CONTACTS

Mwihaki Kinyanjui | Senior Protection Officer, Abuja | kinyanjm@unhcr.org

Ephraim Kabura | Head of Field Office - Lagos | kaburae@unhcr.org

Edward Ogolla | External Relations Officer, Abuja | ogolla@unhcr.org