

# Cameroon Situation

February 2020

**54,414** *Cameroonian refugees are registered in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States in Nigeria.*

**2,526** *new Cameroonian refugees were registered in Nigeria during the month of February.*

**UNHCR financial requirements for 2020 stand at \$55.1 million** for Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria and IDPs in Cameroon.

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## KEY INDICATORS

**25,679** | Cameroonian refugees are registered in Adagom, Adagom-3 and Ukende settlements in Cross River State and in Ikyogen settlement in Benue State.

**53%** | Of Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria live in host communities.



*In February, a Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration delegation meet with Cameroonian refugees in Adagom refugee settlement, Ogoja, Cross River State, Nigeria. In 2019, funding by the USA government enabled UNHCR to provide education, health, shelter, food and non-food items to vulnerable Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria. ©UNHCR/Tony Aseh.*

## Highlights

- From 4 to 5 February, a delegation from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) undertook a mission to Cross River State (CRS) to assess the impact of the influx of Cameroonian refugees in Cross River State and challenges to the response. Meetings and focus group discussions were held with UNHCR, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), National Commission for Refugees Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), partners and refugees in Adagom, Ukende and Ikom, CRS.

## Achievements



### Protection:

- Over 2,000 new Cameroonian refugee arrivals were reported in Taraba State. The influx began in January 2020 following reports of renewed violence. According to the new arrivals, most trekked across savannah and forests to reach Nigeria. Meanwhile, 14 border monitoring visits carried out in Sardauna, Takum, Kurmi and Ussa Local Government Areas (LGA) found that the new arrivals were in urgent need of food, shelter and healthcare.
- On 24 February, the Office and SEMA met with a Community Based Organization called Great Step Initiative established by refugees and host community members in Adagom settlement. The group is made up of 120 volunteers (50M, 70F) that aim to promote prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence, school enrolment and prevent cultism.
- Three committees (youth, women and child protection) were set-up in the Ikyogen settlement, comprising of 12 (5F, 7M) child protection committee members, 36 refugee women and 36 youths (13M, 23W), selected across the 12 communities in the settlement. The committee members will monitor and report protection related cases and conduct sensitization. The committees were inaugurated on 18 February.
- In Benue State, a joint assessment of basic social services was carried out on 27 February by UNHCR, Kwande LGA and host communities to identify gaps for future intervention. The projects include rehabilitation/construction of health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in the refugee affected communities.
- On 26 February, a stakeholder meeting aimed at enlightening stakeholders on UNHCR's 2020 support in improving basic social services for communities hosting over 1,000 refugees, strengthening collaboration with relevant authorities and introduction of project partners was held in Benue State, and attended by SEMA, Kwande Chairman's Office and relevant departments (Health, Education and WASH).
- UNHCR and partners visited Heads of Security agencies of the Police, Immigration and Department of State Security in Taraba State, with the aim to advocate for freedom of movement, access to territory and protection from arbitrary arrest and detention of refugees. The agencies committed to ensuring that refugees' rights are protected.
- In CRS, 15 support group meetings for adolescent boys, adolescent girls, men and women were held in Ukende and Adagom settlements. Meanwhile, UNHCR made 67 home visits in Akamkpa, Bakassi, Boki, Adagom, Okende, Obanliku. Also, assistance was provided to 39 persons with specific needs (elderly persons, disabled and individuals with medical conditions).

### DETENTION

- In Ogoja, CRS, the Office secured the release of a refugee on bail detained over allegations of child trafficking. Court hearing is still ongoing with the support of a legal counsel.
- On 24 February, a refugee in Taraba State was arrested by the Nigeria police for allegedly taking part in combatant activities. UNHCR is following up on the case to ensure a fair process.
- In CRS and Benue, detention monitoring was conducted at the police stations to advocate against the arbitrary arrest of refugees. No refugee was in detention.

**Border monitoring**

- In CRS and Benue, some 129 new arrivals were recorded following border monitoring visits to 23 border communities. Most of them women and children reportedly fled as a result of renewed armed attacks in their communities.

**Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):**

- On 6 February 2020, Human Security Trust Fund Project staff were trained on SGBV and child protection by UNHCR and FJDP. The aim of the training was to prepare them to train Protection Action Group members at various community levels.
- The Office convened women support group leaders and adolescent girls in Adagom settlement on 25 February, to understand the community's engagement in prevention and response to SGBV, raise awareness on other emerging SGBV issues affecting them, strengthen their participation and raise more awareness on referral systems in the community. Their major concerns were the need to engage more women who will reach out to adolescent girls in the community, to prevent negative coping mechanisms through positive parental disciplinary measures. At least 21 women were in attendance.
- In CRS, two SGBV committee meetings and focus group discussions on prevention of sexual exploitation/abuse and harmful cultural practices were held in Adagom and Ukende settlements. Similarly, an SGBV committee was established in Adagom, to prevent and provide response to SGBV issues. Discussions to identify the needs of adolescent girls were organized in Adagom to mentor and empower the girls so that they can become role models.
- The monthly Child Protection (CP) and SGBV coordination meeting was held on 28 February in Ogoja. Strengthening of community-based structures, enabling key messages for CP-SGBV in the community, emerging issues and concerns on CP/SGBV and preventive measures were discussed. Partners present were CARITAS, Rhema Care, NCFRMI, Mediatix, CUSO, FHI360 and representative from the Children's Department.
- On 24 February 2020, 35 refugee women's group members were sensitized to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, domestic violence and SGBV prevention and response in Ikyogen settlement. A short movie depicting intimate partner violence and abuse was broadcasted, followed by discussions.
- In Ikyogen settlement, eight SGBV survivors received material assistance, including liquid antiseptic, detergent, body lotion, toilet disinfectant, toilet roll, torchlight, bathing towel, toothpaste/brush, comb, hand sanitizer, sanitary pad, flip wear and underwears, to promote their wellbeing.

**Child protection (CP):**

- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched the Restoration of Family Links (RFL) for refugees in Adagom settlement. Their aim is to facilitate tracing of family members for unaccompanied and separated children. UNHCR highlighted procedures in relation to children reunification to ensure that children whose tracing were successful undergo the best interest determination processing before reunification. Meanwhile, verification and linking of family members and unaccompanied/separated children to their families on the database is ongoing by UNHCR in the Adagom settlement.
- In CRS and Benue States, birth certificates were issued to 143 refugee children (80M, 63F) in Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements. In collaboration with the National Population Commission, sensitization sessions on the needs and benefits of birth registration among refugee children reached about 1,400 refugees in the settlements and host communities.
- In Benue, six Best Interest Assessments were carried out for refugee children (Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), family reunification, teenage pregnancy, physical assault and child labour). Material support and psychosocial counselling was provided for a pregnant teenager, the UASC were placed with foster care parents, and a child was successfully reunified with her mother in Ikyogen settlement. Meanwhile, a child protection committee was established among refugees and inaugurated on 18 February 2020. The committee is comprised of 12 members selected from the 12 communities with the mandate to monitor/report child-related cases and sensitize refugees on the rights and responsibility of children.
- Some 12 separated children (10 boys, 2 girls) were identified during registration/profiling of new arrivals in Taraba State and were placed under volunteer caregivers. Follow-up and monitoring will be

undertaken regularly to ensure their wellbeing. Furthermore, 25 refugee and host community children received vaccination for measles and PENTA, while 11 refugee children were evaluated for malnutrition. However, no case of severe acute malnutrition, moderate acute malnutrition or stunting was identified.

- At the child-friendly space in Adagom and Ukende settlements, 30 sessions of various recreational and educational activities were conducted reaching some 524 children (221M, 303F). Advocacy was conducted with the school authorities for the creation of a child-friendly space in two primary schools hosting refugee pupils in Benue State.
- In CRS, a total of 90 child protection cases, including child labour, exploitation and abuse were identified in the refugee settlements (61 Adagom and 29 in Ukende). In order to promote child rights, 16 awareness sessions were carried out in the settlements and host communities.

#### Challenges

- The two years Temporary Protection Status (TPS) granted to Cameroonian refugees will expire in May 2020.



#### Education:

- In Benue State, UNHCR and FJDP distributed educational materials (school uniforms and writing materials) to refugees and writing material to host community students. A total of 823 pupils (401 boys and 422 girls) received writing material, while 532 refugee pupil (271 boys and 261 girls) were given school shoes. Meanwhile, 48 students (22 boys and 26 Girls) were successfully enrolled in primary and secondary schools. Four sensitization sessions were carried out across the 12 communities in Ikyogen settlement to promote enrolment of refugee school-aged children.

#### Challenges

- About 12,126 refugee children are at risk of not attending school, including children with specific needs. Challenges include lack of finances, non-existence of school nearby, young people out of school age who wish to do vocational training/business, youth at university level that have recently obtained their GCE and are waiting for the JAMB results to be admitted to university, and admitted students that cannot afford registration fees.
- Furthermore, inadequate teachers, lack of teaching aids, furniture and WASH facilities in schools accommodation for refugee students, are major barriers to quality education for refugee and host community students.



#### Health:

- A total of 2,283 refugees received medical care at the various health care facilities in Benue, CRS and Taraba. Referral and logistics support was provided to refugees in need of tertiary health care services, including mental health for treatment/drug refills, Von Willbrands Syndrome and Vesico-Vagina Fistula (VVF) repair. In addition, the health community development group of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) organized a one-day health outreach in Taraba State, reaching about 175 refugees. Malaria remains the major cause of illness.
- Information, Educational and Communication materials on case definition and prevention of COVID-19 were placed at strategic positions at the Primary Health Centres in Taraba State for sensitization of health care workers, refugees and the hosts. In all the refugee settlements, refugees were enlightened on the preventive measures to mitigate the risk of contracting corona virus.

#### Challenges:

- The Primary health care centre in Gembu is dilapidated and require urgent rehabilitation, to improve health care services for refugees and hosts. Also, urgent medical support is required for refugees in Kurmi and Ussa LGA's (Taraba State) as they currently do not have access to health care.



## Food and Non-Food Items:

- In Benue and CRS, a total of 17,741 Individuals (4,966 households) received cash for food and basic needs at Ukende and Ikyogen settlements, for the months of January and February 2020. Preliminary measures for opening of bank accounts to facilitate the disbursement of CBI to refugees took place at the Ikyogen settlement. A total of 1,558 household heads were photographed.
- In Taraba State, a market assessment to determine the availability of food items was conducted by UNHCR through its partner JRS, to procure food and core relief items for 20,000 refugees. A UN World Food Programme assessment revealed that 71% of Cameroonian refugees in Taraba State are moderately and severely food insecure.
- Food and non-food items, including rice, palm oil, sugar, buckets and soap were distributed to 200 most vulnerable refugees in Calabar (including female-headed households, separated/unaccompanied children, elderly persons, lactating mothers, pregnant women and the disabled). Additionally, six bags of rice donated to refugees by a philanthropist in Taraba State were distributed among the most vulnerable refugees in Gembu.

### Challenges

- Cash for food is received by only 60% of the refugees who live mainly in the three refugee settlements and the nearby host communities. The remaining 40% of refugees who live in Taraba State and urban areas are not receiving cash assistance.
- Food and household items such as buckets, cup, pot, plates, jerrycan, mat, blanket, mattress remain the major challenge for refugees living in host communities. In Taraba State, most of the new arrivals were reportedly returning to Cameroon due to lack of basic needs.



## Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):

- In CRS, WASH assessments were carried out in seven LGA's heavily impacted by refugee population (over 1,000 refugees), in line with plans for rehabilitation and construction of WASH facilities.
- More than 4,000 households from the refugee and host communities in CRS and Benue were supplied with portable water for personal and domestic purposes, through motorized and solarized borehole systems. Routine water treatment and analysis were carried out on all the boreholes to improve water quality. Meanwhile, digging of a hand-dug well in Ukende settlement is in progress as a pilot to verify the salinity of the groundwater.
- Sanitation campaign was conducted by members of the water, sanitation and hygiene committees in the settlements, through routine clean-up of the environment and sanitation structures. Moreover, nine dilapidated latrines were decommissioned and seven bathing showers were rehabilitated.

### Challenges

- In Ikyogen settlement WASH facilities are not easily accessible to persons with disability. Also, water facilities, bathrooms and toilets are inadequate in all the refugee settlements.



## Shelter:

- A total of 443 households received shelter kits for the construction of transitional shelters in Ikyogen settlement. Meanwhile, 18 transitional shelters were completed bringing the total number of completed shelters to 305.



## Community empowerment/Self Reliance:

- In CRS, a cooperative group established by refugees called Unifarm comprised of 18 vegetable farmers have acquired two hectares of land (lease) from the CRS Basin Authority for cultivation. To mitigate the challenge of irrigation during the dry season, the Office provided a water pump to the group.



## Settlement coordination and management

- Cross River SEMA intervened in over 20 reported cases among refugees and members of the host communities, ensuring conflict resolution and peacebuilding with refugee host communities. In order to maintain law and order, SEMA in collaboration with security officials made possible the arrest and investigation of five suspected refugee and host community cultists causing unrest in the settlements.

## Working in partnership

- The Office conducted advocacy visits to the Commissioners of International Development and Donor Cooperation (MIDC), Education and Humanity/Social Welfare, to provide an insight on its strategic direction in line with the Global Compact on refugees, and the need for the refugee operation to move from humanitarian assistance to the developmental nexus. This requires active participation and synergies with development actors and various Government institutions. The formulation of a joint action plan for the planned activities in the seven LGAs was discussed.
- UNHCR participated in the WHO initiated high-level joint UN interagency mission on non-communicable diseases and Tuberculosis (NCDs/TB), held in Abuja from 23 to 28 February. The team interfaced with several government ministers and presented a final report to the Vice President of Nigeria. The UN system and other stakeholders expressed commitment to supporting the government's action on the path to universal health coverage. The Office advocated for a multisectoral human rights-based and people centered response that leaves no one behind, including refugees, migrants and Internally Displaced Persons.

## Financial Information

UNHCR financial requirements for 2020 stand at \$55.1 million for Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria and IDPs in Cameroon. **As of 27 February 2020, funding of the budget stood at 4% of USD 55.1 million.**

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### CONTACTS

**Mulugeta Zewdie**, Head of Sub-office, Ogoja, Nigeria.

[zewdiemu@unhcr.org](mailto:zewdiemu@unhcr.org), Cell + 234 901 066 0624

**Tony Aseh**, Reporting Officer, UNHCR Sub-office, Ogoja, Nigeria.

[aseh@unhcr.org](mailto:aseh@unhcr.org), Cell + 234 901 066 0625

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