

Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

April 2021

66,718 *Cameroonian refugee men, women and children are registered in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States in Nigeria.*

At least 3,000 refugees and locals received free medical care at the various UNHCR supported facilities in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.

Some 371 refugee families received agricultural inputs to improve food security and self reliance in Ikyogen Settlement Benue State this month.



Registration of new Cameroonian refugees by UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons in Wakaka community, Taraba State. ©UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

Operational Highlights

- The UNHCR Representative to Nigeria, Ms. Chansa Kapaya, undertook a mission to Taraba State to meet with the Governor, refugees, and host community members. The Representative appreciated the Governor for supporting and hosting refugees and called for continuous support and collaboration. Governor Darius Ishaku commended UNHCR for the humanitarian assistance to refugees and host communities and pledged his support. Focus group discussions were held with refugee women who highlighted food, cooking utensils, blankets, healthcare, education, shelter, and livelihoods as their major concern.



PROTECTION

Protection Monitoring

- UNHCR collaborated with twelve government agencies, national and international partners to systematically **identify protection incidents**, analyse the protection risk and refer cases to partners providing protection and multisectoral assistance, including **legal assistance**, advocacy, **capacity building**, awareness sessions, services related to gender-based violence and material assistance.
- In Benue, Cross River and Taraba (BCT) States, no case of refolement was reported during over **20 joint border monitoring** visits undertaken by UNHCR and partners. The borders were regular monitored to assess the presence and needs of new arrivals, advocate for the protection of refugees and ensure that refugees have access to territory.
- UNHCR and partners conducted over 90 detention monitoring visits to various Police stations, Correctional Centres, and Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, to advocate against arbitrary arrest/detention of refugees and provide **legal support to refugees in detention** in BCT States.

Protection Response

- In BCT States, protection desks have been established to provide information on legal issues, rights, and obligations of refugees and facilitate the registration process. The Protection team identified more than 100 refugees with specific needs, including unaccompanied/separated children, pregnant women, critically sick individuals, persons with disabilities and older persons and referred them to specialized services.
- **Registration:** UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria **registered 1,223 additional refugees** in Taraba and Cross River States during the month of April, while adhering to WHO's COVID-19 prevention protocols.
- In Cross River State (CRS), **247 refugees** received **identity cards** issued by the National Commission for Refugee, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) in collaboration with UNHCR. The ID card is key to freedom of movement and access to basic social services including health care and banking.
- UNHCR met with the First Lady of Benue State to strengthen collaboration and response to the refugee and Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) situation in Benue State. The first Lady commended the support of UNHCR to refugees and IDP's including the provision of shelters, infrastructures, and expertise in responding to the volatile refugee and IDP crisis, and assured UNHCR of her continuous support to mitigate the upsurge of gender-based violence incidences among IDP's in Makurdi.

- In Benue State, UNHCR and partner the Foundation for Justice, Development and Peace (FJDP) conducted a **protection training** for some **50 government officials** from NCFRMI, Ministry of Justice, National Human Rights Commission, Nigerian Correctional Service, Nigerian Immigration Service, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons, Police Force, Department of State Services and the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). The training focused on improving protection response to refugees and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.
- **50 Gender-Based Violence (GBV)** survivors received multisectoral assistance including medical, psychosocial, legal, and material assistance through established referral pathways in Cross River, Benue, and Taraba States. Among them, **four** survivors received **legal assistance**, **10** received **dignity kits**, rechargeable lamps, hand sanitizers and disinfectants and forty-six received **counseling** support to promote their wellbeing.
- Child Protection-GBV monthly coordination meeting was held at the inter-agency level and chaired by the Women Development Officer and SEMA. In participation were Social Welfare Department, UNHCR, protection partners (FJDP and Caritas) and other implementing partners, Rhema Care, Mediatrix, Sabe the Children, Cuso International and Nigeria Red Cross Society.
- **30 refugee children** born in Nigeria received **birth certificates** issued by the National Population Commission in Benue and Taraba States. UNHCR and its partners initiated best interest assessments for five children at risk to ensure their wellbeing in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.
- UNHCR conducted an International **Protection training** covering GBV, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and code of conduct for **35 security agencies**, government line ministries and refugee led organization in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, to improve protection response to refugees.
- **Awareness sessions on child rights and GBV prevention**, response and reporting channels reached over **1,000** refugees and locals including students and health care workers in BCT States.
- The Benue SEMA in collaboration with UNHCR launched a State-level coordination meeting on the IDP and refugee situation in Makurdi, Benue State. Some 57 representatives from the government including NCFRMI, Ministries of Justice, agriculture, Women Affairs/Youth Development and Education, security officials, NGO's, media, UNHCR and International Organisation for Migration participated. Various sectors including WASH, Education, Agriculture, Health, livelihood/self-reliance, and protection/security held group discussions/presentations in plenary, to identify gaps through interagency coordination and address the challenges through focal government agencies.
- UNHCR and partner FJDP carried out a 2-day **training** for **20 Protection Action Group** members on **child protection, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, and abuse** in Benue State. The group will create awareness in their communities afterward.
- In Benue State, UNHCR met with the National Youth Service Corp to advocate for collaboration and support to refugees and IDP's. The director of the Youth Service Corp pledged to deploy professional teachers and medical personnel to schools and health centers hosting refugees, as well as vocational tutors to equip refugee and IDP youths with skills for self-reliance.

- UNHCR and Great Step Initiative (winner of the Refugee Innovation Award) trained some **58 refugees and host community volunteers** on **COVID-19 prevention, menstrual hygiene management** and code of conduct in six communities of CRS. Subsequently, volunteers will conduct sensitization on COVID-19 prevention in their communities and distribute facemasks, dignity kits, liquid soap, tablet soap, disinfectants, and hand washing buckets to refugees and locals including students, to help prevent COVID-19.
- In CRS, UNHCR undertook GBV safety audits in Boki, Ikom, Etung and Obanliku local government areas, to help improve on the existing GBV security risks, prevention, risks mitigation and response measures among refugees and the local population.

Challenges

- Bad road terrains, heavy rainfall and flowing rivers hindered the movement of the registration team to some communities hosting new arrivals in Taraba State.
- In all refugee hosting locations, negative coping mechanisms including alcohol abuse and survival sex have been reported among youths and women-headed households, due to limited food and livelihood support.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

- UNHCR supplied more than **4,000** refugee households with **portable water** for personal and domestic use following routine treatment and analysis in the Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen refugee settlements, through motorized/solarized borehole systems and water treatment plants.

Challenges

- The main gap in the WASH sector remains **inadequate water supply** in the refugee settlements, despite the construction and rehabilitation of over 15 boreholes and hand dug wells by UNHCR. The yield remains insufficient and merely meets about 20 percent of refugees' water need. UNHCR is currently operating a water treatment plant at a very high cost to supplement the water needs of refugees.



HEALTH:

- UNHCR is providing technical support to health facilities and workers through provision of medical equipment, on-site mentoring, capacity-building, and supply of **lifesaving medication to 22 health facilities** in Benue, CRS, and Taraba States.
- More than **3,000 refugees** and **locals** received **free medical care**, including prenatal/postnatal care, family planning and mental health at the UNHCR supported facilities in BCT States. Malaria, gastric/peptic ulcer, watery diarrhea, malnutrition, upper respiratory tract infection, hypertension were the most common illnesses recorded.
- UNHCR continues to support national health systems at local level to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to healthcare ensures detection and response to possible COVID-19 cases among refugees and host community members. In an environment with poor testing, no refugee was found COVID-19 positive to date.

- In CRS, UNHCR supplied **essential medicines** and **laboratory consumables** including cotton wool, needles/syringes, and hand gloves to Adagom and Ukende Primary Health Centers through the NRCS.
- **Sensitization** on infant young child feeding, hospital delivery and personal hygiene reached more than **20 pregnant and lactating mothers (refugees and locals)** of the mother's club established in Ukende settlement, CRS.

Challenges

- There is no COVID-19 compliant **ambulance** for emergency evacuations in Adikpo, Ogoja and Takum (BCT States). Lack of transportation to facilitate emergency cases and other referrals in these locations remains a major challenge for refugees and locals.



EDUCATION:

- In Benue State, UNHCR paid **tuition fees** for **65 refugee students** attending primary and secondary school in Ikyogen and **17** were **enrolled** into the Senior and Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination.
- Sensitization on school resumption date for the 3rd term academic session reached at least 1,000 refugee parents and school children in BCT States.
- UNHCR and partner FJDP undertook an advocacy visit to the National Social Investment Programme in Makurdi, Benue State, for the deployment of additional teachers to refugee hosting schools and inclusion of over 565 refugee children into the home-grown school feeding programme.

Challenges

- In Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements, **refugee children with specific needs** have **limited access to education**, given the long distance from the refugee settlements to the schools.
- **Shortage of teachers** across public schools where refugees are enrolled, significantly affects the quality of education provided to refugees and locals. The teacher/student ratio is over 1:100. UNHCR continues to advocate to the national education authorities for deployment of teachers.



LIVELIHOODS

- In Benue and CRS, UNHCR trained about **267 refugees** and host community members on **entrepreneurship development** and **life skills**. The training focused on small business enterprise, cooperative management, operational plan, time management, stress management, negotiation skills, conflict management and personal/environmental hygiene through its partner CUSO International in Benue and CRS.
- UNHCR in partnership with the Food and Agricultural Organization provided **agricultural inputs/start-up kits** to 371 refugee families (over 1,700 individuals) in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State, to improve their **livelihoods and self-reliance**. Items provided included hoes, cutlasses, shovels, fertilizers, watering cans and seedlings (tomatoes, okra, huckleberry, pepper and Amaranthus).



FOOD SECURITY

- More than **800 individuals** (about 300 refugee families) received **food items** donated by the host community in Ikyogen settlement.

Challenges

- Because of COVID-19, prices of basic food commodities in refugee hosting areas have increased significantly, on average by 30% on core food commodities, compared to early 2020. The cash assistance for food provided to refugees has been inconsistent due to funding constraint. **Food** remains one of the **critical needs** of refugees in settlements and host communities.
- Refugees continue crossing back and forth to Cameroon in search of food and livelihood opportunities to sustain their families.



SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS

- UNHCR and its partner the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) monitored and managed the four refugee settlements (Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen), in CRS and Benue, ensuring integration with host communities and providing security for refugees. More than 20 potential crises between refugees and locals were resolved through **community engagement or negotiations**.
- In Ikyogen settlement, 44 transitional shelters, 83 emergency shelters, 37 latrines and 13 bathing shelters were damaged by strong wind and heavy rain on 8 April 2021. UNHCR and partners ensured that affected refugees received medical care and relocation to safety.
- **77 refugee families** affected by strong wind and heavy rain in Ikyogen settlement **received non-food items** including buckets, jerry cans, stoves, mats, blankets, solar lamps, kitchen sets, hand sanitizers and soaps.
- UNHCR launched the **badminton court** in Ikyogen settlement through SEMA, for **refugees and host community recreation and integration**.
- The Fomunyoh Foundation in Bamenda in Cameroon donated food and non-food items including 8 bags of 100kg rice, 10 bags of cassava flour, 6 cartoons of noodles, 6 cartoons of salt, 6 cartoons of detergents, 4 cartoons of vegetable oil, 6 cartoons of soft drinks and 6 cartoons of biscuits to refugees in Ikyogen settlement through the Community Refugee Initiative.

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 Government levels with UN agencies, government, 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, MEDATRIX Development Foundation, Rhema Care Integrated Development Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Nigeria Red Cross. Operational partners include ICRC, UNFPA, FAO and WHO.

External/Donors Relations

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Denmark 34.6 million | France 14 million | Germany 25.9 million | Italy 10.6 million | Japan 23.8 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Norway 41.4 million | Private donors Italy 17.6 million | Private donors Japan 27.8 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 37.5 million | Private donors Spain 73.5 million | Private donors Sweden 12.8 million | Private donors USA 10.8 million | Sweden 88.2 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | United Kingdom 45.7 million

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