

# Cameroon Situation

March 2020

**57,809** *Cameroonian refugees are registered* in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States in Nigeria.

**3,409** *new Cameroonian refugees* were registered in Nigeria during the month of March.

**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

**25,782** | Cameroonian refugees are registered in Adagom, Adagom-3 and Ukende settlements in Cross River State and in Ikyogen settlement in Benue State.

**55%** | Of Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria live in host communities.



Mrs. Sarama, first left, a Nigerian, from Takum LGA, Taraba State, is hosting Mr. Irama, a Cameroonian refugee, his wife, sister and nine children. The refugee family of 12 trekked for three days to get to Mrs. Sarama's village in Takum. Cameroonian refugees in Taraba are in urgent need of shelter, health and food. From January to March 2020, there was a significant influx of 2,767 Cameroonian refugees into Taraba State seeking protection from unrest in their localities of origin. ©UNHCR/Tony Aseh.

## Highlights

- The commemoration of the International Women’s Day took place in Cross River (CRS) and Taraba States, with the theme “Each for Equality”. Government officials, students, refugees and community leaders were sensitized on the need to empower women on their rights, participation in leadership and decision-making processes, and advocate against all forms of discrimination and stereotypical behaviour directed towards women.
- In March, the CRS government established a COVID-19 committee led by the Ministry of Health. The United Nations Team, including UNHCR, World Health Organization, and United Nations Population Fund in CRS is part of the committee. In Benue, Cross River and Taraba, UNHCR is represented in the government-led COVID-19 Response Committees. The Office is actively undertaking COVID-19 prevention sensitization with refugees and improving health, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities for refugees and host communities.

## Achievements



### Protection:

- As of 31 March 2020, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) have registered a total of **57,809** Cameroonian refugees in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States, of which 46,607 are biometrically verified.
- UNHCR conducted an assessment in Ogoja, CRS, to identify the need for dignity kits among refugee women and girls of reproductive age (11 to 49 years). The assessment aimed to ensure the participation of women and girls in their personal safety and menstrual hygiene management practice, understanding their specific needs and responding with material support. Focus group discussions were held with refugee women and girls in the Adagom and Ukende settlements, CRS.
- Protection Unit met with the Adagom and Ukende settlements refugee sports teams to discuss the inclusion of host community and refugee youth in sports activities, identification of football and volleyball playgrounds in both settlements. UNHCR has provided the sports teams with sports kits including footballs, goal posts, nets, jerseys, first aid kits and boots for both football and volleyball teams. As an outcome of the discussions, committees will be established to manage the sports teams, sports kits, football and volleyball playgrounds. Furthermore, to promote peaceful coexistence and integration, the playgrounds will be situated where refugees and host community youth can both have access.
- Some 63 members of refugee community-based structures (38 women’s group, 16 men’s group, and 9 child protection committees) in Ikyogen settlement were trained on work ethics, roles and responsibilities to strengthen identification, reporting and referral of individual cases in their respective communities.

### DETENTION

- A 2-day seminar on ‘Refugees’ rights to freedom of movement and unlawful detention’ was organized in Makurdi, Benue, for the Nigerian Immigration Service, Correctional Service, Police Force, Security and Civil Defense Corp, Kwande Local Government Security, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking In Persons, Department of State Services, Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA) and the National Human Rights Commission.
- The Office monitored seven detention centres in Benue and CRS. No refugees were in detention.

### Border monitoring

- On 6 March 2020, a meeting was held with host community chiefs and Immigration border control unit at the Abande and Ityukase border areas, Benue State, to advocate for freedom of movement and access to territory for new arrivals fleeing violence in Cameroon.
- UNHCR and its partners met with host community leaders and the Immigration officials at the various border areas to advocate for freedom of movement and access to territory for new arrivals fleeing

violence in Cameroon amidst the COVID 19 pandemic. In Benue and CRS, 76 border monitoring visits to 22 border community/entry points were undertaken and the arrival of 58 new Cameroonian refugees was recorded.

- Monitoring visits to five detention centres found no refugee in detention.

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

- From 3 to 6 March, the Office conducted a capacity building training on SGBV for 33 (12W, 21M) implementing partners and government officials. The objective of the training was to equip newly employed staff and government officials directly engaged in SGBV prevention and response work with skills and knowledge on the scope of SGBV and its relevance to UNHCR programming. The training centered on UNHCR mandate, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and SGBV in displacement settings. The Nigeria Police Force, Detention Police, SEMA, Women Development, Social Welfare department, Head of Local Government Administration, NCFRMI, Caritas, Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP), Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Save the Children International (SCI) and Family Health International (FHI360) took part in the training.
- UNHCR and Kwande local government Youth and Women's affairs department convened the SGBV and Child Protection working group meeting. Participants, including SEMA, FJDP and traditional leaders discussed the terms of reference for the working group.
- Legal and material support was provided to a survivor of forced marriage in the Ikyogen settlement. The survivor received fabric, soap, liquid antiseptic, detergent, body lotion, disinfectant, toilet-roll, torchlight, towel, toothpaste/brush, comb, hand sanitizer, sanitary pad, flip wear and underwear.
- In Benue and CRS, a total of 36 SGBV cases were reported and managed through psychosocial counselling and support. Awareness sessions on SGBV response system, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, referral pathways, domestic violence and harmful cultural practices were organized for refugees in all settlements.
- A one-day training was organized for 35 SGBV Committee members and SEMA officials from the settlements in CRS, while 285 refugees (107M, 178F) were sensitized on preserving, promoting and protecting their individual rights, Child Rights Law and Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law in Benue State.

#### **Child protection (CP):**

- A total of 22 separated children were identified during registration of new arrivals in Taraba State. They were placed under volunteer caregivers, pending the availability of alternative caregivers. Continuous follow-up will be conducted to ensure the children are safe with their caregivers.
- From 10 to 13 March 2020, the Office facilitated a Child Protection training for 38 participants, including government officials from NCFRMI, SEMA, Police, Ogoja and Kwande LGAs, FJDP, Caritas and SCI protection staff. The training focused on the National, regional and international Legal Frameworks, key Articles on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), protection mainstreaming, UNHCR child protection tools - Best Interest Assessment/ Best Interest Determination (BIA/BID), compressive child protection, BID Panel (guiding principles and quality of panel members) and family reunification.
- In CRS and Taraba State, 217 birth certificates were issued to refugee children born in Nigeria, by the National Population Commission. UNHCR and its partners will continue to advocate for the issuance of birth certificate to new-born babies.
- As part of the measures to strengthen community structures' response to SGBV, child protection and issues affecting women, training sessions were held for members of the child protection/SGBV committees and the women's groups from Adagom and Ukende settlements, CRS. Participants were equipped with knowledge and skills on prevention/response of SGBV, child protection cases and self-reliance for women.
- In CRS, the following child protection interventions were undertaken; 59 child protection cases (54 in Adagom and 5 in Ukende) were reported and managed; 12 child protection sensitizations were conducted in Akamkpa, Bakassi and Obanliku communities. Training of 40 child protection committee members was also undertaken. Meanwhile, 40 recreational and educational sessions took place at the child-friendly spaces in Adagom and Ukende settlements, reaching 674 refugee children.

- In Benue State, seven best interest assessments were carried out for five cases of separated children, whom were successfully placed under caregivers. Two cases of physical violence received psychosocial support.

#### Challenges

- Refugee children in Ikyogen settlement need a child-friendly space for structured play, recreation, leisure and learning.



#### Education:

- The first inter-house sports competition for refugees and host community pupils was organized at St. Peter's Primary School Adagom, Ogoja LGA. The grand finale took place on 6 March, following a three-day event. The sports event aimed to complement pupils mental/physical health and promote the spirit of friendship and sportsmanship among refugees and host community students. Trophies and prizes were presented to winners of the various games, including football, track and field.
- In Benue, the following educational materials were distributed to refugee students: 854 uniforms (433 boys and 421 girls); writing material to 777 pupils (381 boys and 396 girls); 633 students received school shoes and socks (333 boys and 300 girls); tuition fees was paid for 1,281 pupils in primary and secondary schools; admission fee was cleared for 33 refugee students covering the second term of the academic year. In CRS, educational materials were distributed to 598 primary and secondary school refugee students.

#### Challenges

- It is estimated that some 12,126 refugee children may not be able to attend school due to lack of adequate funding, non-existence of nearby schools, interest in vocational training/business instead of school, some await their JAMB results for admission to university, others can not afford registration fees.
- Lack of teachers, teaching aid, furniture and WASH facilities in schools hosting refugee students, are major barriers to quality education for refugee and host community pupils/students. WASH facilities in some schools are inexistent or in bad condition.



#### Health:

- In Benue, CRS and Taraba, 1,000 refugees received health assistance.
- In Taraba, UNHCR supported the Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Shibung, Takum LGA, with medical equipment to improve health care services for refugees and host communities. A total of 52 items were delivered to the Health Centre, including, beds, centrifuge, weighing scales, stethoscopes, bedsheets, sanitizers, information, education, and communication materials on COVID-19 prevention.
- Two women from the Ikyogen and Adagom settlements, Benue and CRS respectively, underwent treatment for vesicovaginal fistula repair at General Hospital Calabar Fistula Repair Centre, CRS. Meanwhile, NCFRMI conducted a sensitisation campaign on COVID-19 and distributed hand sanitizers to over 50 refugees in Calabar.
- Rehabilitation of the abandoned PHC in Gembu, Taraba to improve health care for refugees and host community has commenced.
- Some 291 pregnant women received prenatal services at the health centers in Taraba.
- As part of the measures to create awareness on COVID-19, sensitization of healthcare workers on prevention of the virus was conducted at the health care facilities, settlements and host communities in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States. Refugees were sensitized on handwashing techniques, social distancing and cautioned about risky irregular movements between Nigeria and Cameroon. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers and N95 masks were provided to health facilities and demonstrations on proper use was conducted. In addition, two triage points were set up at the health facilities and cash-based intervention points in the settlements.
- Health insurance cards were issued to 35 refugees in Calabar to facilitate access to medical care at designated health facilities.

**Challenges:**

- Urgent medical support is required for refugees in Kurmi and Ussa LGA's, Taraba State, including new arrivals, as they currently do not have access to health care.

**Food and Non-Food Items:**

- In **Benue**, from 18 March to 26 March, cash for food assistance for the months of March and April 2020 was distributed to 7,001 refugees (1,694 households) in Ikyogen settlement. Food and non-food items were distributed to 239 spontaneous arrivals (51F, 44M) registered in February 2020. The Holy Childhood Association of Hand Maid Girls College Obudu, CRS, donated food and non-food items to refugees in Ikyogen settlement, through SEMA. The items included clothes, babies wear, soap, shoes, head ties, towels, toilet rolls and biscuits. The items will be distributed to persons with specific needs in the settlement.
- In **CRS**, 453 vulnerable refugees including women at risk, separated/unaccompanied children, elderly persons, lactating mothers, pregnant women and the disabled, received food and non-food items (rice, palm oil, sugar, buckets, jerrycans and soap) in Calabar, Akamkpa and Bakassi LGA's. On 4 and 5 March, refugees began the process for opening of bank accounts in the Adagom and Ukende settlements. From 9 to 11 March refugees took photographs in Adagom (3,786 household representatives). When finalized, the digital banking platform will ease disbursement of cash-based assistance to refugees.
- In **Taraba**, the government, through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), donated relief materials including rice, beans, maize, pasta, diapers, sanitary pads, mosquito nets, noodles, seasoning cubes, oil, millet, soap, beans, salt, milk, mattresses, blankets, bedsheets and mats to a total of 928 refugees (552F, 377M).

**Challenges**

- Cash for food is received by only refugees who live in the refugee settlements and nearby host communities. The remaining 40% of refugees who live in Taraba and urban, rural areas are not receiving cash assistance due to insufficient funds.

**WASH:**

- Potable water was supplied to over 4,000 refugees and host community members for personal and domestic purposes through motorized and solarized borehole systems. In order to boost water supply to refugees in the settlements, the Office is supporting solar boreholes with generators.
- In Ikyogen settlement, the water treatment plant is finally operational. Hence, water is being sourced from the Amire river located at about 1.3km away from the settlement where it is treated and distributed to refugees. Supply to refugees is expected to gradually improve upon completion of more distribution points. Meanwhile, preparation activities to drill boreholes are underway to provide potable water permanently.
- In Ogoja, surveys for freshwater and construction of shallow wells are ongoing in Ukende settlement, in a bid to close the prevailing challenge of the saline water characterizing boreholes in the area. Business continuity plans have been drawn to ensure sustained support to refugees during the anticipated total lock-down by the Government. Key workers were designated among volunteers, refugee and host community committees.
- Some 708 refugee women and girls of reproductive age in the settlements received menstrual hygiene kits and were sensitized on personal hygiene.

- In addition, 413 households received non-food items including jerry cans, bathing and laundry soap basins, towels, ropes, clothing pegs, panties, sanitary pad, bleach and children potties at the Adagom and Ukende settlements, CRS.
- In order to improve access to potable drinking water, aqua tabs were distributed to 347 households for water purification at the Ikyogen settlement. Proper demonstration on effective usage was also conducted.
- Soap was distributed to 246 households at the Ikyogen settlement, to promote handwashing and prevention of COVID19. Thus far, out of 1,888 registered households, 996 received soap. Soap distribution is ongoing.

#### Challenges

- Addressing the increasing water demand in the refugee settlements remains a major concern, given that the boreholes and stream water in use are yielding low supply. Moreover, WASH facilities are not easily accessible to persons with disabilities in Ikyogen settlement.



#### Community empowerment/Self Reliance:

- On 1 March, the Community Refugee Response Initiative (CRRRI) Empowerment Centre was launched in the Adagom community. Present at the launching were SEMA, CRRRI staff, Chief of Adagom community, Adagom community youth, Adagom settlement chairperson and UNHCR. The centre is expected to provide skills acquisition and training for 100 individuals, including refugees and host community on the basics of Microsoft Office, programming, digital marketing, computer maintenance, and also provide empowerment programs such as hair making, tailoring and furniture making.
- The Office consulted with the YESSO (Youth Employment and Social Support Operation) project officials, to establish a basis for future collaboration for refugees. The YESSO project is a long-term government project supported by the World Bank, with focus on Coordination of Social Safety Net, Public Welfare, Skills for Jobs and Targeted Grant Transfer.
- Training was organized for 30 refugees in Calabar on soap production, bleach and hand sanitizers, as a preventive measure against COVID-19 by NCFRMI, in collaboration with MAWUH Global Solutions. Hand sanitizers, bleach and liquid soap for hand washing were distributed to refugees after the training.



#### Settlement coordination and management

- The Benue and CRS State Emergency Management Agencies mediated and resolved over 30 conflict cases between refugees and hosts and held settlement management meetings with host communities and refugee leaders to promote peaceful coexistence.

## Working in partnership

In collaboration with the Nigerian Government, UNHCR ensures international protection and delivery of multi-sectoral assistance to Cameroonian refugees. The Office holds regular coordination meetings in Ogoja, CRS, to foster collaboration with UN agencies and humanitarian actors. The following partners implement specific sector activities in response to the Cameroon refugee situation: Family Health International (FHI 360), Save the Children International, CUSO International, Catholic Caritas Foundation Nigeria (CCFN); Catholic Diocese of Makurdi Foundation for Justice Development and Peace (FJDP); MEDATRIX Development Foundation, Rhema Care Integrated Development Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). Operational partners include ICRC, UNFPA and WHO.

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## Financial Information

UNHCR financial requirements for 2020 stand at \$55.1 million for Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria and IDPs in Cameroon. **For the month of March 2020, funding of the budget stood at 6% of USD 55.1 million.**

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