Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

September 2021

Some **68,000 Cameroonian refugees** men, women and children have been **registered** in Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States so far.

UNHCR **constructed staff accommodation for health care workers and installed latrines** to improve medical care, personal hygiene and sanitation for refugees and locals in Benue State.

Almost **9,000 refugees** received **cash** to purchase the **food of their choice** for three months in Benue and Cross River States during the month of September, as **food prices** keep on increasing.

Local and refugee pupils study and play together in school buildings and playgrounds built by UNHCR in St. Peter’s Primary School Adagom, Cross River State. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.
Operational Highlights

- On 14 September, government partners of UNHCR handed over various infrastructure projects that were completed in Ikyogen community to the Chairperson of Kwande local government area (LGA) and traditional leaders of Ikyogen community in Benue State. The projects included a three-bedroom self-contained staff quarters for health care workers in Ikyogen Primary Health Centre, four latrines and two bathrooms near Ikyogen market.

- In Akwa Ibom State, UNHCR is expanding its services for about 1,600 refugees to complement the shelter response by the State. UNHCR has committed to providing health care, upgrade of water and sanitation facilities and protection services to refugees and locals through partners. The Deputy Governor commended UNHCR for supporting refugees and assured the agency of the State’s support and readiness to partner and ensure access to free education for refugees in primary and secondary schools.

Protection Monitoring

- UNHCR collaborated with 12 government agencies and national as well as international partners to systematically identify protection incidents, analyse protection risks and refer cases to partners for the provision of protection and multisectoral assistance, including legal assistance, registration/documentation, healthcare, and services related to Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and material assistance.

- In Benue, Cross River and Taraba (BCT) States, UNHCR and partners undertook at least 50 Joint border monitoring visits to assess the presence and needs of new arrivals, advocate for the protection of refugees from abuse, exploitation, violation or neglect as well as ensure that they have access to territory. No cases of refoulement were recorded during the reporting period.

- More than 450 additional refugees arrived in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State, and border communities in Cross River and Taraba States in a matter of a few days, due to fear of violence associated with the Independence Day of 1 October, declared by secessionist groups in Cameroon back in 2017. Most of the new arrivals are women and children from Akwaya subdivision and in urgent need of food, health care and CRIs. According to them, armed groups and individuals were kidnapping women, girls and young boys to unknown locations.

Protection Response

- UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria registered and provided proof of documentation to more than 1,100 additional refugees, including new births in Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River States.

- Some 170 refugee children born in Nigeria received birth certificates issued by the National Population Commission at the refugee settlements and host communities in Benue and Cross River States.

- UNHCR and partners established protection desks in the refugee settlements and host communities to provide support to refugees on GBV prevention/response, legal matters, and registration in BCT States. About 1,000 refugees with specific needs such as critically
sick individuals, individuals with disabilities, unaccompanied/separated children, pregnant women, and older persons were referred to specialized services.

- Over 1,000 refugees received ID cards issued by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Person’s (NCFRMI) and UNHCR, to help them move freely and access basic social services like healthcare and banking in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State (CRS).

- In CRS, UNHCR and NCFRMI trained 38 recently elected refugee leaders of Adagom 1 settlement on refugee rights and obligations, leadership and conflict management, community-based protection, roles and responsibilities of community leaders, sexual exploitation and abuse and UNHCR’s Code of Conduct.

- More than 45 GBV survivors received multisectoral assistance in BCT States, including medical, psychosocial, legal, and material assistance through established referral pathways to enhance their coping skills.

- More than 15 awareness sessions on child protection, death registration, child rights, birth registrations, prevention of GBV, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse response and reporting channels reached over 2,000 refugees and locals, including students in BCT States.

**Challenges**

- Limited food and livelihood support pushed youth and women-headed households to negative coping mechanisms in all refugee hosting locations, including survival sex leading to an increase in teenage pregnancies and alcohol abuse.

- Under-reporting of GBV incidences remains a major concern, as most survivors tend to endure with their abusers for fear of reprisal attacks and stigma.

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):**

- In Benue State, UNHCR trained 15 individuals from the Ikyogen community, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), NCFRMI and Kwande local government officials on community WASH management process and maintenance of WASH facilities, following the installation of latrines and bathing shelters at the Ikyogen market.

- UNHCR installed nine blocks of improved emergency latrines, rehabilitated 16 bathing shelters and commissioned 17 emergency latrines in Ikyogen, Adagom and Ukende settlements, through Save the Children International, to improve sanitation and hygiene facilities for refugees in Benue and Cross River States.

- Sensitization sessions on personal and environmental hygiene, open defecation, and cholera prevention reached over 1,500 refugees through hygiene volunteers in BCT States.

**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 by UNHCR. The yield remains insufficient and merely meets about 40 percent of refugees’ water need. UNHCR is currently operating a water treatment plant at a very high cost to cover the needs of refugees. Moreover, latrines and bathing facilities in the refugee settlements are inadequate.
HEALTH:

- UNHCR continued providing support to more than 20 health facilities through the provision of medical equipment, incinerators, laboratory consumables, COVID-19 prevention items, and capacity-building for staff in BCT States.

- In Taraba State, UNHCR completed the remodeling of Model Primary Health Centre Abong in Kurmi LGA, to improve health care services for refugees and locals.

- Over 200 refugees received COVID-19 vaccination and 2,000 refugees and locals received face masks provided by UNHCR, to help prevent COVID-19 in Benue and CRS.

- Through the Nigerian Red Cross Society, UNHCR trained some 70 pregnant and lactating women - refugees and locals - on the preparation of iron rich food, using locally available resources, to help improve nutrition for children at Adagom and Ukende refugee settlements in Cross River State.

- Over 500 refugees and members of the host community, particularly pregnant women and children younger than five years, received mosquito nets to help prevent malaria, which remains the major cause of illness among refugees and locals.

Challenges

- Lack of medication in the health facilities hinders access to health care for most refugees who cannot pay for health services.

EDUCATION:

- In Benue and Cross River States, UNHCR enrolled about 2,000 refugee students into public primary and secondary schools for the first term school session, following school resumption this month. UNHCR is supporting the government to host refugee students by providing additional classrooms, furniture and WASH facilities, to improve the learning environment for refugees and locals.

- UNHCR registered more than 135 refugee students for the 2021 primary-six placement examination into junior secondary or high schools, in CRS.

Challenges

- Refugee students aspiring for higher education cannot register for the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board examination – a prerequisite for university admission, due to lack of a National Identity Number.

- Levels of school and university enrolment remain critically low for refugee children and youth because of the limited funding and support.

- Refugee children with specific needs have limited access to education, given the long distance from the settlements of Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen to the schools.

LIVELIHOODS

- In BCT States, UNHCR and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) undertook a joint livelihood and energy needs assessment for refugees and host community members, using key informant interviews and focus group discussions.
Challenges

- Refugees continue crossing the border to Cameroon in search of food and livelihood opportunities to sustain their families. In addition, inadequate access to land for refugees limits the livelihoods options, especially for crop farming.

FOOD SECURITY

- Some 9,000 refugees from 2,200 families received cash to purchase the food of their choice for three months in Benue and Cross River States. Over 35,000 refugees received the cash for food in August and September.

- More than 19,735 individuals of over 4,880 families representing 65 per cent of the targeted households have undergone a Multi-Sectoral Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment across Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements.

Challenges

- Because of COVID-19, prices of basic food commodities in refugee hosting areas have increased significantly. 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.

SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND CRIS

- UNHCR and SEMA monitored and managed the four refugee settlements (Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen), in Cross River and Benue States to ensure refugee integration with host communities and providing security for refugees. At least 35 potential crises between refugees and locals were resolved through community engagement and negotiations.

- Over 800 refugees, mainly new arrivals and individuals with specific needs received CRIs including blankets, solar lamps, towels, and buckets, while some 100 refugee women in reproductive age received dignity kits, provided by UNHCR, in Benue and Cross River States.

- More than 35 refugee families of people with disabilities received energy saving stoves in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.

- In CRS, UNHCR constructed 12 additional transitional shelters for vulnerable refugees in Adagom and Ukende settlements, while ten additional shelters are at different stages of completion.

Working in partnership

External/Donors Relations

UNHCR is grateful for the following support:


Unearmarked contributions: Norway 80 million | Sweden 66.9 million | Private donors Spain 55.7 million | Netherlands 36.1 million | Denmark 34.6 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 28.5 million | United Kingdom 28.4 million | Germany 26 million | Private donors Japan 23.6 million | Japan 23.4 million | France 20.2 million | Switzerland 16.4 million | Private donors Italy 14 million | Private donors Sweden 13 million | Ireland 12.5 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Italy 10.7 million.


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CONTACT US

Tесsfеуе Bekele, Head of Sub-Office, Ogoja, Cross River State
bekelet@unhcr.org; Cell + 234 901 066 0624

Roland Schönbauer, Senior External Relations Officer, Abuja
schoenb@unhcr.org; Cell +234 901 066 0695

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