

Cameroonian Refugees in Nigeria

February 2022

Some **76,000 Cameroonian refugee men, women and children** are registered in Akwa Ibom, Anambra, Benue, Cross River, Enugu, and Taraba States.

About **300 refugee women and girls** received **dignity kits** to promote their personal hygiene in Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River States.

UNHCR and partners have distributed **mosquito nets** to over **4,600 refugees** and host community members, to help **prevent malaria** in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.



UNHCR and partner handed out mosquito nets to over 4,600 Cameroonian refugees and nationals in Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba States, including this elderly refugee in a refugee settlement in Ogoja. © UNHCR/Lucy Agiende.

Operational Highlights

- A joint mission by UNHCR and the Government of Nigeria to Cross River State (CRS) took place from 13 to 19 February 2022. Led by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), the team examined the **urgent humanitarian situation caused by the influx of refugees** and opportunities for implementing the Road Map for the **Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)**, adopted in November 2021. The mission met with key stakeholders, including the Deputy Governor, several Commissioners, and partners, and held focus group discussions with host community leaders and refugees, which brought insights into protection, health/water/sanitation/hygiene, education, and livelihoods needs. The Deputy Governor reaffirmed the commitment of the State Government to **implement the GCR pledges** and **include refugees** in State programmes.



PROTECTION

Protection Monitoring

- In collaboration with 12 government agencies, national and international partners, UNHCR systematically **identified protection incidents** linked to **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**, **unaccompanied and separated children**, documentation, water, sanitation/hygiene, as well as medical care, analysed the protection risks and referred cases to partners providing protection and multisectoral assistance.
- In Akwa Ibom, Benue, Cross River and Taraba (ABCT) States, UNHCR and partners monitored over 30 border communities and 40 detention facilities including police stations and correctional facilities, to provide assistance to newly arrived refugees and legal assistance to those in detention.
- Nine refugees including GBV survivors received **legal counselling** and **assistance** in Benue and CRS. Awareness sessions on **access to justice** and referral pathways were provided by UNHCR and its partners to over **1,000 refugees** in the refugee settlements and host communities in ABCT States.

Protection Response

- UNHCR and NCFRMI registered and provided evidence of documentation to **2,592** additional **Cameroonian refugees** in Benue and CRS. As of 28 February, **75,559 individuals**, mostly women and children predominantly from the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon were registered.
- Some **140 Cameroonian refugee children** received **birth certificates** issued by the National Population Commission, with support from UNHCR and partners in Akwa Ibom, Benue and Cross River States.
- At least **200 refugees** received **ID cards** issued by NCFRMI and UNHCR, to help them access basic social services including health care and banking in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.

- Over **300 refugee women** and **girls** of reproductive age including GBV survivors received **dignity kits** (soap, sanitary pads, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, towel, underwear, and wrapper) provided by UNHCR in Calabar, Bakassi and Ikyogen (Cross River and Benue States).
- UNHCR and partner Caritas **trained 68 law enforcement** and **government agencies** in CRS on **humanitarian principles, refugee law**, International Human Rights Law, child protection and **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, to enhance humanitarian assistance and protection of refugees. Participants included officials of the Immigration Service, Federal Road Safety Commission, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, Police, Security and Civil Defence Corp, Federal Investigation Bureau, Nigeria Correctional Service, National Population Commission, National Identity Management Commission and Ministry of Education.
- UNHCR and its partners **sensitized over 4,000 refugees** and locals on **GBV prevention** and risk mitigation including PSEA, survival sex, physical assault, child marriage, rape, teenage pregnancy, menstrual hygiene, referral pathways and reporting channels, to improve GBV response in ABCT States.
- In ABCT States, about **30 GBV survivors** of sexual assault, denial of resources, physical assault, and emotional/psychological abuse received multisectoral assistance including **medical care**, counselling, legal and material assistance.
- Three refugees with **disabilities** received **walking aid** (tripod stand), lumbar corset/knee bracelet and **medicated glasses** to improve their living conditions in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.

Challenges

- Some refugees reported limitations in freedom of movement, following **incidences of harassment** by security officials who are not familiar with international refugee rights or national refugee policy.
- **Short validity of ID cards** remains a major concern for refugees and UNHCR. The current two-year temporary protection status will expire in June 2022, along with the ID cards. In view of this, **UNHCR is advocating for a 5-year extension** to guarantee effective protection for Cameroonian refugees.



WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH):

- UNHCR partner Save the Children **disinfected over 1,000 latrines** and **bathing facilities**, and refilled 552 handwashing facilities with chlorine solution to reduce the spread of diarrhoea and cholera in Adagom, Adagom 3 and Ukende refugee settlements (CRS).
- In CRS, Malteser International installed a **20,000-litre capacity solarized borehole** with five collection water points, 12 bathing facilities and 12 ventilated improved pit latrines, through Rhema Care in Adagom, Adagom 3 and Ukende refugee settlements, to compliment UNHCR's efforts and improve WASH facilities for refugees.

Challenges

- Some refugee hosting **schools** in Cross River, Benue, and Taraba States still **lack WASH facilities** causing difficulties to pupils. This causes children to resort to open defecation and results in environmental hygiene issues.



HEALTH:

- In ABCT States, UNHCR is supporting over **30 public health facilities** to **respond** to the medical needs of refugees by improving public health care systems through rehabilitation and construction of hospitals, provision of **medical equipment and furniture**, **COVID-19 prevention items**, laboratory consumables, and capacity-building for staff.
- Over **600 refugees** and **locals** received **COVID-19 vaccine** at the UNHCR supported health facilities in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States. Some **500 refugees** and locals were **tested** for COVID-19 and no positive cases were recorded in ABCT States.
- UNHCR provided **180 COVID-19 sample collection kits** to the Alex Ekwueme Federal University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki in Ebonyi State, to support **COVID-19 testing**. The test kits were also deployed to primary health centres in Benue, Cross River and Taraba States.
- Thanks to a donation from Probitas Foundation, UNHCR and partners were able to distribute special **mosquito nets** to some **4,600 Cameroonian refugees** and **nationals** particularly pregnant women, children less than 5 years and elderly refugees in ABCT States.
- In Benue and CRS, the Nigerian Red Cross Society, a UNHCR partner, identified some **20 malnourished refugee** children during **nutritional assessment** and enrolled them into the **supplementary feeding program**, to monitor their recovery and growth process. Over **200 refugee** children and nationals less than 5 years were assessed for malnutrition.
- More than **5,000 refugees** and locals received **medical care** at the UNHCR-supported facilities in ABCT States. Diarrhoea, malaria, malnutrition, and upper respiratory tract infection were the major causes of illness.
- An **outbreak** of over 100 **diarrhoea** cases (including 70 refugees) and two **cholera** cases (one refugee and one local) were confirmed in Adagom and Ukende Primary Health Centres in CRS. UNHCR **responded** by providing **essential supplies** including intravenous fluids, cholera rapid diagnostic tests kits and oral rehydration solution, to ensure treatment of reported cases. Meanwhile, three refugees died reportedly from diarrhoea after relying on traditional remedies, despite access to medical services at UNHCR-supported facilities.
- In response to the outbreak, UNHCR and partners intensified contact tracing and **cholera/diarrhoea hygiene awareness** sessions, reaching more than **3,000 refugees** and locals in ABCT States.
- Some **40 refugee** and host community women received **delivery kits** provided by UNHCR in Benue, CRS and Taraba States.

Challenges

- In most refugee hosting communities, primary health facilities do not have sufficient or adequately trained staff.
- Meanwhile, some refugees rely on traditional medicine/remedies, due to **unavailability of drugs at the primary health centres** and lack of funds to purchase at the drug stores.



EDUCATION:

- UNHCR **registered** some **110 refugee students** to participate in the examinations held by West African Examination Council and National Business and Technical Examination Board in Benue and CRS. The exam is one of the entry requirements into **tertiary institutions**.
- In Benue and CRS, **UNHCR enrolled about 1,300 refugee students** into public primary and secondary schools for the second term of the 2021/2022 academic year. The Agency also paid tuition fees for 58 high school students in Ogoja and enrolled 27 students in other basic school examinations in Benue State. **Sensitization** on **school enrolment** and resumption reached over **1,500 refugees**.
- More than **90 refugee students** and locals received **educational materials** including school uniforms, pens, pencils, erasers, shoes, and school bags in Benue State.

Challenges

- Up to **50 per cent of refugee children are reportedly out of school**, particularly at secondary level and primary level, due to inability to afford tuition fees or other school-related costs such as school uniforms, examination costs, textbooks and writing materials.
- Many cases of **teenage pregnancies** have been reported among refugees, most of them after girls dropped out of school.



SETTLEMENT COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT, SHELTER AND NFIS

- UNHCR and its partners, the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) in Benue, Cross River, and Taraba, monitored and managed at least ten potential conflicts including crises arising from **competition for natural resources** (firewood, water usage, etc.) between refugees and locals, through **community engagement and negotiations** in the four refugee settlements (Adagom, Adagom 3, Ukende and Ikyogen) and host communities.
- On 21 and 22 February, SEMA together with UNHCR and its partners organized the **election for refugee leadership** in Ukende settlement, CRS. At the end of the election, 13 community leaders were elected. SEMA presented certificates of return to the newly elected leaders and encouraged them to serve without sentiments and favouritism.
- In Taraba, SEMA, security officials, UNHCR and its partners organized the refugee elections and **refugee committees constituted** themselves in eight localities (Sarkaka, Warkaka, Ndumiyaji, Antere, Inkiri, Yeremaro, Nguroje and Gembu). The security officials pledged to collaborate with the newly elected leaders to **promote peace and integration** among refugees and locals.

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, 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, Mediatrix Development Foundation, Rhema Care Integrated Development Centre, Jesuit Refugee Service, and the Nigeria Red Cross. Operational partners include UNFPA, FAO, ICRC and WHO.

External/Donors Relations

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Softly earmarked contributions: Germany 37 million | United States of America 33 million | Private donors Australia 8.7 million | Canada 5.6 million | Private donors Germany 2.6 million.

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