

Cameroon Situation

May 2020

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

19,782 *Cameroonian refugees* received face masks, soap, hand sanitizers and buckets in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in May.

UNHCR revised its **Coronavirus Emergency Appeal to \$4 Million** to protect the most vulnerable persons of concern from the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

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.



Ms. Mama Edet, NCFRMI Deputy Director, Planning and Research and Mr. Mulugeta Zewdie, UNHCR Head of Sub-office Ogoja, CRS, hand non-food items to a Cameroonian refugee in the Adagom refugee settlement, Ogoja LGA, Cross River State, Nigeria. No case of a Cameroonian refugee infected with COVID-19 has been registered so far. 21 May 2020 ©UNHCR/Tony Aseh

Highlights

- In Ogoja, Cross River State (CRS), UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI) distributed 5,800 face masks, 40,800 soap bars, 7,356 hand sanitizers and 5,000 buckets to refugees in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 19,782 individuals (2,332 households) in Adagom and Ukende refugee settlements, CRS, received the items. During the distribution, WHO guidelines to prevent COVID-19 infection and spread were respected. Beneficiaries wore face masks, washed their hands and respected distancing.
- The Office completed the renovation of a six-bed isolation and treatment facility at the General Hospital Ogoja, CRS. Post COVID-19, this facility will be used as an Infectious Disease Ward. A 30-bed capacity children's ward is also being rehabilitated to meet the infection control requirements for spill over COVID-19 care. Knapsack sprayers were provided to the Ogoja isolation centre to improve infection control. Meanwhile, two quarantine centres for new refugee arrivals have been completed in Adagom and Ikyogen settlements in CRS and Benue, as part of the COVID-19 preventive measures.

Achievements



Protection:

- Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, UNHCR has set-up remote protection response systems for Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria. Presence among refugees has been reduced to critical UNHCR and Partner staff. Refugee leaders and community protection action groups (C-PAG) have been empowered/trained to monitor protection needs among refugees. Hotlines and contact email have been shared with refugees to report all protection needs. Furthermore, 10 complaints boxes were installed in Ikyogen settlement, Benue State.
- Ikyogen Settlement, Benue, received new refugees from border communities in Cross River and Benue States. As of 29 May 2020, a total of 556 Cameroonian refugee (136F, 16M, 188G, 216B) were pre-screened by the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). They were hosted at the St. Paul Catholic Church near Ikyogen town pending relocation to the quarantine centre in Ikyogen settlement. Among these refugees, some came for registration, while others recently fled from various villages in Cameroon. The refugees reported continuing violence and unrest in Cameroon. Following an assessment, 134 new arrivals from Cameroon were recorded. They received various services, including medical assistance, food and non-food items, and sensitization on prevention of SGBV, child protection, and COVID-19.
- In order to promote positive social interactions and prevent negative coping mechanisms among refugee adolescents, several mentorship meetings were organized with 261 adolescents (108F, 153M) in Adagom and Ukende Settlements, CRS. The adolescents were organized into debate, acting and book club groups. Also, 32 refugee youth (9F, 23M) were trained on roles and responsibilities in the prevention and response to human rights violations and COVID-19 prevention measures at individual, family and community levels, to improve risk communication and community engagement.
- The Office is strengthening the response to the protection needs for persons with disabilities (PWD). In Ikyogen settlement prevention awareness-raising on COVID-19 with 23 (12F, 11M) was undertaken. Their needs are also addressed through social-economic activities or programs such as livelihoods, health, water, sanitation and hygiene.

Detention

- On 20 May, four refugees from the Ikyogen Settlement were arrested and detained on 15 May for inciting an unlawful protest on 15 April. These refugees were cautioned and released. Following their release, refugees and their leaders were advised to ensure adherence to the laws of the State.

- Furthermore, the Office secured the release of four refugees arbitrary arrested in Agbokim, CRS, and provided cash for food assistance to a refugee in detention at the Ikom police station, CRS.
- About 40 monitoring visits were conducted in Benue, CRS and Taraba to Police stations and the Nigerian Immigration service/Correctional centre (prison), to advocate against the arbitrary arrest/detention of refugees and provide assistance to refugees in detention.

Border monitoring

- During routine border monitoring and advocacy on access to territory in Benue, CRS and Taraba, UNHCR border monitors visited over 150 refugee communities at the border with Cameroon. Refugees are hired by the host community for farming, while other refugees farm on land provided for free by the host community. They coexist peacefully with the host communities and have access to water and primary healthcare. Border officials expressed concerns over the potential risk of COVID-19 transmission by new refugees arriving through unofficial entry points. At least 60 new arrivals - most of them women and children were profiled. They fled following an invasion of nearby villages by armed groups.

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)

- In Benue, CRS and Taraba, 48 SGBV incidents (43F, 5M) were reported and provided with medical and psychosocial support in the refugee settlements and host communities. According to the needs, survivors received legal support and material assistance namely, wrapper, bathing towel, toilet tissue, soap, detergent, antiseptic, disinfectant, hand sanitizer, underwear, toothpaste/brush, comb, body lotion, Sponge, face powder, flip wear and flashlight.
- Two Gender-Based Violence reporting desks were established at the police stations in Takum and Kurmi, Taraba State, following an advocacy by the Office. The Divisional Police Officers in the stations have assigned gender desk officers to oversee and manage all cases of SGBV among refugees and members of the host communities. Furthermore, in order to strengthen awareness-raising, identification and reporting of SGBV and protection issues within the various communities, a protection monitoring team comprised of 25 monitors (17W, 8M) was established in five Local Government Areas in Taraba State.
- Sensitization of parents and refugee teenagers on the benefits of sex education and effect of teenage pregnancy was undertaken to curb the increasing number of teenage pregnancies among teenage refugee girls in Ikyogen settlement. Some 23 individuals (17F, 6M) were reached.

Child protection (CP)

- Birth certificates were issued to 58 refugee children (23F, 35M) by the National Population Commission in CRS and Taraba. UNHCR through its partners, Caritas, FJDP and JRS continue to advocate with the National Population Commission, National Identity Commission and hospitals, to facilitate the issuance of birth certificates to refugee children.
- In Benue and CRS, 47 child protection issues (24F, 23M) were recorded and managed following a Best Interest Assessment. Sensitization sessions on the rights of children and reporting/referral pathways for child protection issues reached some 1,021 refugees and host communities in the refugee settlements and host communities through house to house visitations.

Challenges

- To ensure better protection of refugees from the COVID-19 outbreak, UNHCR is seeking to provide all refugees with facemasks and handwashing soap. Recent distributions of face masks and water buckets were insufficient. Households received one facemask each.
- The two years Temporary Protection Status (TPS) granted to Cameroonian refugees expired in May 2020. Immigration Officials have begun intercepting refugees due to the expiration of the identity cards, thereby limiting freedom of movement.



Health:

- UNHCR has installed solar panels/inverters and solar-powered refrigerators to supply uninterrupted power to Primary Health Centres (PHCs) in Adagom, Ogoja (CRS) and Ikyogen (Benue). This move will improve healthcare for refugees, host communities. These PHCs will also serve as cold chain immunization hubs to other PHCs in CRS and Benue.
- In Taraba State, a 32-bed capacity paediatrics ward at General Hospital Takum is undergoing rehabilitation to ensure it conforms with COVID-19 infection prevention and control requirements. Also, to improve healthcare waste management, locally fabricated brick incinerators were constructed at the General Hospitals in Takum and Gembu, Taraba State. Refugee and host community women were trained/certified and organized in a Mothers' Club to mentor fellow refugee mothers on antenatal care, immunization, and infant/young child feeding practices.
- UNHCR has deployed 48 health personnel (medical doctors, nurses, pharmacy technicians, laboratory technicians and data assistants) to 12 PHCs in Benue and CRS to enhance the quality of healthcare delivery to refugees and host communities. Before the arrival of refugees, some of these PHCs were already overwhelmed and struggling with insufficient personnel and lack of equipment to provide quality healthcare. Drugs and medical consumables were also supplied to the health facilities.
- At least 4,000 refugees and hosts received healthcare at the various primary, secondary and tertiary health care facilities in Benue, CRS and Taraba. Among them, 2,013 (1,261F, 752M) persons accessed healthcare for the first time. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials were posted at strategic locations, while Personal Protective Equipment's and health commodities were deployed to the health facilities to prevent COVID-19 and improve health care. The items included suits, gloves, face shields, face masks, goggles, buckets, liquid soap, sanitizers, anti-bacteria wipes and drugs.

Challenges

- Amid COVID-19 pandemic, there is no safe ambulance in the Cameroon refugee situation operation and testing of patients with symptoms is not available.



Food and Non-Food Items:

- In CRS, a total of 8,586 refugees received cash covering four months (March – June) in Adagom and Ukende settlements. Food and non-food items were distributed to 350 vulnerable refugees and host community members in Akamkpa. Items distributed included kitchen wares, buckets, jerrycans, sugar, solar lamp (for pregnant women and elderly persons), vegetable oil and Bournvita beverage donated by Cadbury. In addition, the Ejagham Community and the Rev. Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus in Calabar donated 100 face masks, bar soaps and 25 bags of food items to refugees.
- The Cash Based Intervention for food reached 6,957 individuals (1,689 refugee households) in Ikyogen settlement for the months of May and June 2020. This is to enable refugees make necessary purchases such as food and other basic needs, and thus mitigate some of the negative socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.
- Food items were distributed to 6,742 refugees and hosts (4,845 refugees and 1,897 vulnerable host community members) in Taraba State. The items included rice, beans, cassava flour, corn flour, salt and palm-oil. During the distribution, community volunteers contributed to the response and awareness-raising on COVID-19 prevention. The food distribution will benefit almost 12,000 refugees hosted in Taraba state.

- Some 8,586 refugees received cash for food assistance for the months of March to June in Adagom and Ukende settlements. Food and non-food items were distributed to 350 vulnerable refugees and host community members in Akamkpa, CRS. Items distributed included kitchen wares, buckets, jerrycans, sugar, solar lamp (for pregnant women and elderly persons), vegetable oil and Bournvita beverage donated by Cadbury. In addition, the Ejagham Community and the Reverend Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus donated 100 face masks, bar soaps and 25 bags of food items to refugees in Calabar, CRS.
- Cameroonians living in diaspora donated 26 hand-washing buckets and 24 detergent to 12 refugee communities in Ikyogen settlement.

Challenges

- Cash for food distributions covered 60% of Cameroonian refugees who live mainly in the Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements and among nearby host communities. Meanwhile, the remaining 40% of refugees who live within the host communities in Cross River, Benue, Taraba and urban areas are not receiving cash assistance due to insufficient funds.



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):

- The Office has completed construction of a 16,000 litres capacity solar borehole with 9m tower for the Adagom refugee host (Ndok) community, Ogoja, CRS. The water system is currently being tested, while plans are underway for an official hand-over of the facility to the host community. UNHCR appreciates the Ndok community for hosting Cameroonian refugees and for donating 100 hectares of farmland to support refugees' livelihoods.
- In Benue and CRS, 1,802 households received WASH kits in Adagom and Ikyogen settlements, while 500 women of reproductive age received menstrual hygiene kits containing sanitary pads, soap, pegs, rope and under wears in the Ikyogen settlement to promote their dignity and personal hygiene.
- At least 3,484 refugee households were sensitized on good hygiene practices and COVID-19 prevention through door to door visit in all the refugee Settlements. At the Ikyogen quarantine centre, three handwashing facilities were installed while construction of 10 gender-segregated latrines and 10 gender-segregated bathrooms is ongoing.
- More than 4,000 refugee households were supplied with portable water for personal and domestic use following routine treatment and analysis in the Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen refugee settlements through motorized and solarized borehole systems. an additional bladder was installed within the treatment plant in Ikyogen to increase the quantity of water supply.
- Excavation of eight large size waste pits was completed in Adagom, Ukende and Ikyogen settlements to improve environmental sanitation. Meanwhile, two water fetching points were rehabilitated in Ukende, 200 drop-hole covers were constructed at Ikyogen, and six latrines were decommissioned in Adagom and Ukende settlements.
- Some parts of Ukende and Adagom refugee settlements have saline water coming out of the boreholes, the Office is working to provide fresh water to refugees in these settlements. Two additional hand-dug wells were constructed in Ukende settlement. Thus far, three hand-dug wells have been constructed to improve water quality.
- Training was organized for 93 WASH Committees (WASHCOMs) and 65 Volunteer Hygiene Promoters made up of refugees and host community members on COVID-19 prevention, mitigation, safe water chain and community management processes. They carry out routine awareness campaigns on COVID19 prevention and hygiene improvement. Also, 22 WASHCOM members in Ukende settlement were trained on the installation and maintenance of hand pumps.

Challenges

- With the arrival of new refugees to the settlements in Benue and CRS, WASH facilities are deteriorating, despite the construction of additional boreholes, hand-dug wells and latrines. Water supply remains inadequate and more latrines are getting filled up within six months of construction. The settlements presently have an estimated 50 persons per latrine drop-hole against the planned 25 persons per latrine drop-hole.



Community empowerment/Self Reliance:

- In CRS, UNHCR began distribution of start-up business kits to 269 refugees trained last year in Calabar. Also, 34 refugees received inputs for poultry business in Calabar, Akamkpa and Etung LGAs, while entrepreneurial skills training was conducted for 152 refugees in Calabar, Akamkpa and Bakassi. Out of the 1,000-targeted beneficiaries for the entrepreneurship development program, a total of 293 beneficiaries have been trained so far to enable them to set up small scale businesses.
- The Farmers Field School (FFS) program was set up for refugees interested in farming with practical sessions on demonstration plots through the support of the State Agriculture Extension workers in CRS and Benue. A total of 44 FFS groups have been established with an average of 25 persons per group. Training sessions have commenced in five groups. At the end of the FFS training, 15 Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) groups were formed in Ikyogen, while formation of more groups will be completed at the end of the entrepreneurship development trainings across various locations in CRS and Benue.



Shelter:

- UNHCR is constructing 800 additional household emergency shelters to decongest communal shelters amid the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 352 shelters have been completed in Adagom settlement, CRS.



Settlement coordination and management:

- Benue and CRS SEMA monitored activities among refugees living in the settlements and host communities, to foster peaceful coexistence. Over 40 potential crises cases between refugees and host community members were resolved amicably. An awareness-raising session was organized with refugee leaders on the health risk of back and forth movements between Nigeria and Cameroon amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 the 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.

Financial Information

In May, UNHCR revised its global Coronavirus Emergency Appeal including **USD4 Million** to protect the most vulnerable persons of concern in Nigeria from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regular requirements for the response to the Cameroon situation stands at USD52.5 million for 2020. **As of May 2020, funding of the requirements for the Cameroon refugee situation stood at 11% of USD 52.5 million**

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with un-earmarked and broadly earmarked funds including:

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