



**THE TRIPARTITE COMMISSION MEETING FOR THE VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF
NIGERIAN REFUGEES IN CAMEROON
MAROUA, 10 FEBRUARY 2021**

Final Joint Communiqué

- Following the invitation of Cameroon Government dated 02 February 2021, the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Nigerian refugees living in Cameroon met on 10th February 2021 in Maroua to discuss the modalities for the implementation of the voluntary repatriation.
- The meeting, hosted by Mr Paul ATANGA NJI Minister of Territorial Administration, His Excellency BABAGANA UMARA ZULUM, EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF BORNO State in the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Cameroon, Mr Olivier Guillaume BEER in the presence of other members of the Commission.
- **ACKNOWLEDGING THE LETTER AND THE SPIRIT** and the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Repatriation of Nigerian refugees signed on 2nd March 2017 by the Government of Cameroon, the Federal Republic of Nigeria and UNHCR, which has guided all voluntary returns from Cameroon to Nigeria since then;
- **RECOGNIZING** the traditional hospitality and generosity of the Government and the people of Cameroon which has been host to thousands of refugees since 2013;
- **TO REAFFIRM** that in the pursuit of its international obligations, the Government of Cameroon will continue to keep her doors open to those refugees who meet the relevant criteria of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 OAU Convention; as well as Cameroonian Refugee Law 2005/006 of July 27th 2005;
- **TAKING NOTE** of the recent developments in which, the Government of Nigeria has encouraged its citizens to return home, as well as the series of consultations between the Governments of Nigeria and Cameroon since November 2020;

- **RECOGNIZING** the willingness of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to receive all its citizens who are taking refuge in the Republic of Cameroon,
- **TAKING NOTE** of the commitment of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to reinforce security in refugee returning areas and the on-going reconstruction efforts and planned reintegration programs.
- **TAKING FURTHER NOTE** of the clear will of some refugees to return to their country of origin.
- **BEARING IN MIND** that while some refugees may opt to return now, others may still have well-founded reasons for not seeking to return at the present time and will continue to be in need of international protection.

The Tripartite Commission agreed to:

1. Implement an action plan covering the period from February 2021 (As per Annexe III) which covers the modalities of the voluntarily repatriation of Nigerian refugees in the Minawao camp who wish to return to the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
2. Ensure that refugees make an informed decision about voluntary repatriation, an information note on the return assistance package will be updated and shared with the entire refugee community.
3. Undertake in the first phase the voluntary repatriation of 4982 Nigerian refugees of 751 households pre-identified by the Borno State Government as owning houses in Bama and Banki towns and to follow UNHCR voluntary repatriation procedures. The process for subsequent phases of the repatriation should be initiated immediately by the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Republic of Cameroon and UNHCR.
4. Ensure that UNHCR and its partners are granted unfettered access to refugees and returnees on both sides of Cameroonian and Nigerian borders for purposes of the voluntary repatriation.
5. The commission agreed to facilitate the safe and dignified return movement using buses for individuals, with social distancing, and trucks for luggage by road, with security and medical escorts.

Handwritten signatures in red and blue ink, likely representing the representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic of Cameroon.

6. The voluntary repatriation will be done in adherence to the agreed COVID-19 protocols in both countries.
7. The Federal Republic of Nigeria and UNHCR commit to integrate the returnees in existing humanitarian assistance, Livelihood and Social Investment Programs and will advocate for other organizations to do the same paying particular attention to those with specific needs.
8. The Federal Republic of Nigeria and UNHCR Nigeria to advocate for the returnees to be included in the existing food assistance schemes of WFP and the livelihood programmes of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO).
9. Continuation of education for the returnees is the responsibility of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
10. All parties to the Tripartite Agreement should be committed to the mobilization of material and financial resources for the voluntary repatriation of Nigerian refugees.
11. The first convoy should take place between 27th of February to 7th of March 2021.
12. The Technical Working Group will meet as deemed appropriate to review the progress made as per the attached action plan.

Done in Maroua, Cameroon, on the 10th day of February 2021 in three (03) original copies in French and English.

For the Federal Republic of Nigeria


H.E. Prof. Babagana UMARA ZULUM

For the Republic of Cameroon


Mr. ATANGA NJI Paul

For the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees


Olivier Guillaume BEER
Representative