

Trans-Border Migration and Humanitarian Crisis on Cameroonian Refugees in the Ogoja Camp, Nigeria

Primus Fonkeng

University of Buea, Cameroon

Abstract

In 2017, the shared border between south eastern states of Nigeria and the Manyu and Ndian Divisions of Cameroon observed repeated assaults and violent counter offensives from Cameroonian army and Separatist Fighters which provoked massive population exodus into Nigeria as refugees. Although the International Humanitarian Law and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees accord protection and benefits to refugees on foreign territories, Cameroonian refugees faced gross humanitarian challenges in the camp. A recent assessment through field work showed that refugees live in deplorable conditions in the camp. About seventy-five percent of refugees received less than two meals per day while unregistered refugees received three meals for three days. The objective of this contribution is to show how these violent attacks engendered the depopulation of the frontier zones, the influx of refugees to Nigeria and augmented humanitarian Crisis in Ogoja Refugee Camp in the Cross River State of Nigeria. The study adopts the qualitative method and the descriptive and analytical approaches to assess the complex humanitarian crisis that persists in the Camp. Our findings revealed that the complex humanitarian crisis resulted from the shortages of trained staff in the Camp and the late intervention of humanitarian organizations. We recommend that humanitarian organizations and the Nigerian Government should implement reforms to ameliorate the conditions of the Refugees.

Key words: Trans-Border Migration, Cameroonian Refugees, Humanitarian Crisis, Anglophone Crisis, Cameroon-Nigeria Border.

Introduction

Trans-border migration is recurrent on the African Continent as a result of the numerous conflicts that plagued the various states since independence from colonial domination. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), states that, more than 65 million people around the world fled their homes due to war, persecution, violence and human rights violations after the Second World War. These figures were reduced after the establishment of UNHCR in 1950 with the African continent being the most affected. In late 2014, about 16 million people in Africa were either displaced or forced to flee to other countries as refugees. This figure increased by 1.5 million in 2015 with refugee camps created in several countries on the continent.¹ In recent years, the refugee situation in Africa increasingly assumed a disturbing dimension in terms of the number and composition of persons involved, the causes and the limited success obtained this far in the search for a permanent solution. On the African continent, the traditional African hospitality towards refugees is wavering in several parts of the continent. Genuine refugees have been rejected at borders and in some cases, this has resulted in humanitarian crisis and death.

The two most prominent refugee camps in Africa are the Dadaab Refugee Complex in Kenya and the Minawao Camp in the Far North Region of Cameroon. The Dadaab refugee complex has a population of 235,269 registered refugees and asylum seekers. At the end of January 2018 Dadaab refugee complex consisted of four camps. The first camp was established in 1991, when refugees fleeing the civil war in Somalia crossed the border into Kenya.² A second large influx occurred in 2011, when some 130,000 refugees arrived. They were fleeing from drought and famine in Southern Somalia and these camps faced challenges such as poor communication or relationship between the refugees and local communities and capital generating activities among

¹ Aderanti, Adepoju. "The Dimension of the Refugee Problem in Africa", African Affairs vol. 81 p.21, 1st January 1982, p.17.

² Jan, Philip. "Worsening Refugee Situation in Africa" last updated February 2016, accessed June 10, 2018. [http://relief.int/report/Cameroon-weekly notes-92-19 June -02- July](http://relief.int/report/Cameroon-weekly%20notes-92-19%20June-02-July).

the refugees. The Minawao refugee camp in Cameroon was first opened in Cameroon in July 2013. It housed 7,000 refugees who fled from Nigeria as a result of attacks by Boko Haram insurgents. By May 2015, over 44,000 refugees from Nigeria were living in the camp.

Cameroon as a signatory to both the international (Geneva Convention 1951 and 1967) and the African Union (AU) Conventions and Protocols on Refugees and has hosted thousands of refugees and displaced persons from several countries. Cameroon's reputation as a generous country towards refugees' dates back to 1972 when it took in over 20,000 refugees from Equatorial Guinea, with tens of thousands arriving in 1973³, and by 1982, the country sheltered 200,000 refugees from Chad. According to UNHCR Report Cameroon hosted approximately 50,000 refugees from countries such as Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and the Republic of Congo. In the early 2000s, about 230,000 refugees arrived in Cameroon from the Central African Republic (CAR), bringing the total number of refugees to just fewer than 350,000⁴, including the 100,000 officially registered refugees from Nigeria.

Cameroon is one of the three countries sharing boundaries with Nigeria and has one of the longest border zones in Africa. Cameroon's 1800km border with Nigeria stretches from the Lake Chad Region in the North to the Atlantic Ocean in the South. By 2014, Boko Haram had firmly established itself in the Northern Region of Nigeria, and launched attacks on the Cameroonian military and populations.⁵ The recurrent insurgency influenced the crossing of some 13,000 Nigerian Refugees from Adamawa State, Nigeria into Cameroon in November 2014. But in 2017, the situation changed as Nigeria instead received

³ UNHCR Emergency and Security Service. 'Equatorial Guinea: The Position of Refugees and Exiles in 200,' December 2001.

⁴ Kieran, Gilbert. "Central African Republic: 10 facts About Refugees in Cameroon", Reuters, November 8 2016, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201611080754.html> (accessed January 31 2019).

⁵ International Crisis Group, "Cameroon Confronting Boko Haram "November 2016, https://d201iandvipowj.cloudfront.net/241-Cameroon-Confronting-Boko-Haram_1.pdf (accessed May 2018). Pp.8.

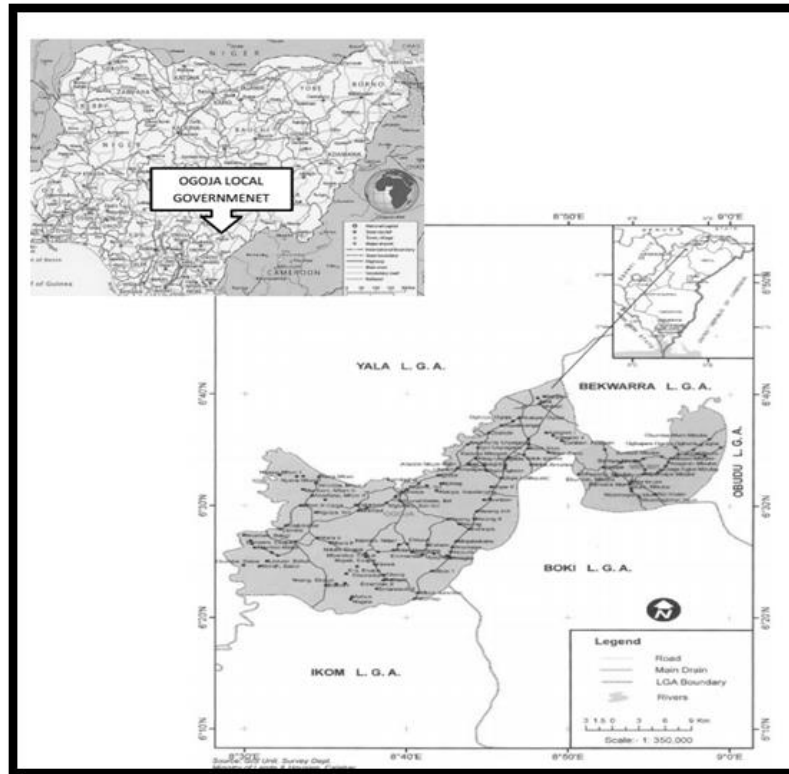
thousands of refugees from Cameroon due to the deadly clashes that occurred between the Anglophone Separatist Fighters and the Military Forces on 1st October 2017. The politicization of the conflict and the radicalization of the protagonists led to a series of events such as civil disobedience, ghost cities, economic meltdown and armed insurgencies between separatists and government forces that engendered the forced displacement of tens of thousands of refugees into Nigeria and turned local inhabitants into Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Displaced Persons from Cameroon mostly settled in Ogoja a Local Government Area under the Cross River State in Nigeria as Refugees. Cross River state derives its name from the cross river which passes through the state. It is a coastal state located in the Niger Delta region, and occupies 20,156 square kilo meters⁶. It shares boundaries with Benue state to the North, Ebonyi and Abia states to the west, to the east by Cameroon Republic and to the south by Akwa-Ibom and the Atlantic Ocean.⁷

⁶ Bejamin Obi Nwabueze, *A Constitutional History of Cross River State*” Calabar: University of Calabar, 1982, 45.

⁷ *Greener Journal of Biological Science*, 3 (7): 258-264

The Map of Ogoja Local Government Area in Nigeria



Source: Adapted from Benjamin Obi Nwabueze, *A Constitutional History of Cross River State* Calabar: University of Calabar, 1982, 25.

Anglophone Cameroonians began fleeing violence in October 2017 and continued to settle into Nigeria's Cross River State, Taraba, Benue and Akwa-Ibom States. Ogoja a neighboring town in the Cross River State of Nigeria received huge influx of refugees from Cameroon as a result of the Anglophone crisis. In Ogoja Camp, women and children account for four-fifths of the population. Assessment by humanitarian groups showed a worsening situation of Refugees in the Refugee Camps. About

ninety-five percent of refugees interviewed had stayed for over three days without food and most families received only one meal per day. Most refugees said they drank water from streams, ponds and other unsafe sources, because of inadequate or dysfunctional drinking water facilities. This article analyses the phenomenon of trans-border migration of Cameroonians in to Nigeria as a result of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon, the gross humanitarian crisis faced by Cameroonian Refugees in Ogoja Camp, Nigeria, and provides recommendations for the amelioration of lives of Cameroonian Refugees in the camp.

Conceptualizing Trans-Border Migration and Refugee Status

Several factors explain trans-border migration dynamics. We should recognize that fear, poverty, social or economic insecurity and instability in any society largely impact on or informs human mobility. People leave their homelands for vital reasons (such as the pursuit of well-being, prosperity, social harmony, better working conditions or career prospects). In this study, we achieve a better understanding of the migration phenomenon in terms of borders. However, just after African independences and especially with the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the principle of the inviolability of African borders was firmly established⁸. This clearly requires that there should be no change, for fear of creating new divisions. But what does an arbitrary line customarily invalid for trans-border or transnational populations in whose mind borders are neither boundaries nor barriers really represent? This reality simply seems to involve politics forced to bow to political hegemony.

The porous nature of the Cameroon-Nigeria border further reinforces this perception of the border as a line of continuity. These boundaries remain in effect like sieves for both nomadic people, trans-border bandits and people affected by conflicts⁹. This complex framework created by colonization is, however, unable to

⁸ The 1951 Convention of the Status of a Refugee. www.refugeelawreader.org/en/African-framework-refugee-protection/2-the-OAU-Refugee-Convention.

⁹ Suoahibou, Issa. *Les Coupeurs de Route. Histoire du Banditisme Rural et Transfrontalier dans le Bassin du Lac Tchad*. Paris : Karthala, 2010, p.25.

reduce the essential mobility of trans-border communities for which family and community connections overrule border considerations. These connections are also amplified and relayed by broad economic and social exchanges.¹⁰ Conflicts are an important asset for perpetual migration or trans-border mobility. Conflicts along the Cameroon-Nigeria border probably reflect refusal and or rejection of the idea of borders, of which perception as exclusion or separation zones is more negative.

The colonial demarcation separated several communities along the Cameroon-Nigeria border and as a result, each time a community is plagued with conflict, its citizens cross the border to seek refuge among its relations in the other country. The cultural affinities that bind the citizens along the Cameroon-Nigeria border facilitates trans-border migration in the area. This accounts for the thousands of Cameroonian citizens who crossed the border to settle in Nigeria as refugees during the Anglophone Crisis. While some people settled peacefully with their relatives in border towns and villages, others who had lost contacts with their relatives and had nowhere to settle were harbored in refugee camps. Trans-border migrations along the Cameroon-Nigeria border in most cases have been voluntary because of cultural affinities and economic pursuits. However, the migration that occurred as a result of the Anglophone crisis was forced migration and this generated refugee and humanitarian crisis in Nigeria.¹¹

In migration discourse, the debate revolves around voluntary migration as opposed to forced migration. Although it is difficult to conceptualize, let alone measure the degree of voluntariness with regard to migration processes, the generally agreed interpretation is that voluntary migration or displacement is informed by search for economic opportunities. Forced migration, by contrast, is associated with the threat and/or fear that force people to flee their places of residence in

¹⁰ Youssouf, Bangoura. "Frontières et espaces frontaliers en Afrique centrale", *Enjeux*, 6: 2001, p.4.

¹¹ Primus, Fonkeng. "Insecurity, Forced Migration and Internally Displaced Persons along the Cameroon-Nigeria Border 2003-2018." *AfriHeritage Research Working Papers*, 002, 2019, p.17.

search for security and safety.¹² Forced migrations are also divided into two categories depending on the causes of displacement. We can distinguish between forced migration caused by natural disasters on one hand and migration caused by violence and/or armed conflict, also known as man-made displacement as well as migration in response to repressive state policies and persecution, that is, refugee migration in a narrow sense, as defined by International Humanitarian Law.

The term 'refugee' not only carries empirical sociological and socio-political connotations, but above all, is a normative and legal category, enshrined as such in international law. Thus, there exists a body of legal instruments regulating and defining 'refugees' at international and regional levels. For instance, the 1951 Refugee Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol defines a refugee as a person who lives outside his own country and is unable or unwilling to return to his/her country or to avail him/herself to the protection of his/her government because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (art 1A (2)). The 1969 OAU Refugee Convention broadens this definition to include every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his/her country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his/her place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his/her country of origin or nationality (art 1(2)).¹³

The UNHCR is mandated to assist governments to follow the rules and procedures in granting refugee status, providing assistance and protection to qualified refugees and asylum seekers. The UNHCR is also mandated to find durable solutions to people's plight under extreme humanitarian conditions like Cameroonian Refugees in Ogoja Refugee Camps in Nigeria. Three

¹² Francis, Deng. *Protecting the Dispossessed: A Challenge for the International Community*, Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1993, p. 20.

¹³ The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Exclusion from International Refugee Protection, *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, Vol 27, pp.53-75.

solutions have traditionally been suggested to address 'refugee problems', namely, (1) voluntary repatriation, (2) permanent settlement in the host country and (3) resettlement in a third country.¹⁴ Without entering in a debate about the best and/or the successes of any of the three envisaged durable solutions of the refugee problem, it is worth noting that the search for durable solutions to refugee crises requires more alternatives considering the magnitude and the recurrence of refugee crises that often display similar features. This is linked to the objectives of this study which seeks to analyze the humanitarian crisis plaguing the thousands of Cameroonian refugees in Nigeria that occurred as a result of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon.

Manifestation of the Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon

The Anglophone section of Cameroon accounts for two of its ten regions namely the North-West and South-West; which together represent 16,364 square kilometers over a total area of 475,442 square kilometers with approximately 8 million inhabitants (Before the Anglophone Crisis) out of a total Cameroonian population of an estimated 26 million. So far, the English-speaking Cameroon plays an important role economically, thanks to the petroleum, agricultural and commercial revenue generated from the South West and North West Regions. The Anglophone crisis is a manifestation of frustration arising from the long-term deprivation as well as the discrimination which was unjustly imposed on Anglophones since the advent of Federalism in 1961. In the wake of Government's political, economic and social injustices against the Anglophones, agitations germinated. Bernard Fonlon felt betrayed and wrote series of letters to the Government and President Ahidjo in particular complaining that the basis on which Federalism was built was never respected. He expressed disappointment at the fact that the leaders of the Kamerun National Democratic Party (K.N.D.P.) which headed the West Cameroon Government (Anglophone Cameroon) were not highly involved in the framing of

¹⁴ UNHCR 0207 Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of a Refugee. Geneva: Media Relation and Public Information Service, 2015.

policies in Cameroon. This and several other grievances advanced by the Anglophones culminated in the 'Anglophone Problem in Cameroon'.

The government of the Republic of Cameroon's continued denial of any "Anglophone Problem" in Cameroon, and its determination to defend the Unitary State by all available means, including the use of repression, worsen the Anglophone Problem that escalated in to a crisis in November 2016. The obsessed use of force rather than dialogue by the Government in settling the Anglophone Crisis during the early period of the crisis, worsened the crisis making peaceful negotiation an exercise in futility. This influenced the use of arms by the Anglophone Separatist Movements to defend its militants against continuing Government armed forces onslaught in the Anglophone regions of Northwest and Southwest. This situation led to violent clashes in the Anglophone Cameroon Regions between the Cameroon Armed Forces and Separatist Movements that resulted in displacing women and children both within and out of the country¹⁵.

The crises in the Anglophone Regions of Cameroon, intensified on the 22nd of September and 1st of October 2017. On the 22nd of September, close to 80,000 people protested across thirty Anglophone towns and communities (Bamenda, Buea, Kumba, Kumbo, Limbe, etc.) to demand the release of Anglophone political prisoners, the disillusion of the Government, the implementation of federalism, and secession. The demonstrations were organized to coincide with President Biya's speech at the UN General Assembly. Initially peaceful, these protest marches turned violent in some areas. In Buea, some protesters vandalized the home of the town's mayor, late Ekema Patrick, an Anglophone but a fierce opponent and a staunch supporter of the regime. In Mamfe, a police station was set on fire. Overreaction on the part of the defense and security forces in Santa, Bamenda, Ekona and Limbe resulted in the death of four protesters, with dozens injured. The scale of the demonstrations on 22 September, the largest in Cameroon since February 2008, surprised authorities who had underestimated Anglophone discontent and the weight

¹⁵ Fonkeng. "Insecurity, Forced Migration and Internally Displaced Persons along the Cameroon-Nigeria Border 2003-2018." p.12.

of the secessionist movement¹⁶. This is probably what prompted the government to deploy a further 1,000 soldiers and imposed a *de facto* state of emergency and martial law and the military arrested civilians who were transported to the capital city Yaounde, judged in military courts and sentences passed following the Terrorism Law.

On October 1, tens of thousands of people began a peaceful march (holding a plant symbolizing peace and chanting “no violence”) to proclaim the independence of Ambazonia (the name given by secessionists to their future state). In Bamenda, Buea and across dozens of towns and communities, people marched and hoisted Ambazonian flags at intersections and at the residences of traditional chiefs as well as at a police station and a gendarmerie post. Independence was symbolically proclaimed in chiefs’ compounds. Defense and security forces responded with disproportionate force, leading to at least 40 deaths and over 100 injured protesters between September and October. This death toll is the result of live ammunition and excessive use of tear gas, including in homes and against the faithful as they left church. Defense and security forces arrested hundreds of people along the streets and in their houses without warrant¹⁷. They made use of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. Sexual abuse, destruction of property and looting of homes by soldiers and police, as well as shooting from helicopters at protesters in Kumba, Bamenda and near Buea were reported by a dozen residents, local politicians, senior officials, the press, human rights organizations and the Catholic Bishops of the two regions.

Insecurity, poor and difficult terrain, erection of road blocks by the armed separatist groups towards the affected areas, and high handedness of the government security forces was identified as the greatest challenges facing quick response to the humanitarian needs of the internally displaced people in Cameroon. UNHCR revealed that an estimated 160,000 people were uprooted from their ancestral homes into bushes and forest

¹⁶ *NewAfrican Magazine*. “Winnie: The Undefeated” No. 583, May, 2018.

¹⁷ International Crisis Group Africa. “Cameroon: A Worsening Anglophone Crisis, Calls for Strong Measures” No. 130, Nairobi/Brussels, 2017.

for fear of being killed. An estimated 26,000 thousand Cameroonians of Anglophone descent due to the conflict in the northwest and southwest regions crossed into Nigeria as refugees requiring the assistance of the Nigerian government. Lack of food, water and other essential need of the refugees became severed. There was also lack of health care facilities for refugees as reports of the outbreak of sickness and disease increased. The settlement of Cameroonians as refugees in Nigeria engendered gross humanitarian crisis in the refugee camps.

Humanitarian Crisis on Cameroonian Refugees in Ogoja Camp, Nigeria

Since Cameroonian were displaced from their homes in 2017 to Nigeria, they faced several challenges. The Cameroonian refugees living in Ogoja Camps, Nigeria reported several challenges that they faced on daily basis. They stated that one of the challenges they faced was the fact that they we're not given access to good water and rivers of the host community.¹⁸ The lone river that flows beside the camp was constantly over crowded by natives of the area and this made it impossible for refugees to benefit from it because they were considered as strangers by the host community. Also, the water donated by some NGOs was not enough for the population and the method of distribution was discriminatory.

Hunger and starvation were a major problem experienced by several refugees in the camp. On the 13th of August 2018, an Akwaya lady sold her eight months child for 70000 Naira to a man. When interrogated by SEMA officers. She said "I sold the child because of hunger and starvation we experienced for several days. I had to sell the baby to someone just to survive¹⁹". Some refugee's complaint that there were enough food stuffs in the warehouse and some even got spoiled but the stakeholders refused to release the food items, they waited till they were damaged by weevils before they were distributed to the refugees. A respondent said "we were given weevils infested beans to eat whereas those bags of beans were donated since December 2018".

¹⁸ Field Research conducted by Author in the Refugee Camps from 10th -30th August 2019.

¹⁹ Ibid.

To cope with hunger, some of the refugees said they reduced their rate of eating and ate just once a day while others worked as laborers at the rice mill so as to earn some cups of rice that could sustain the family.²⁰

Poor health condition was also one of the challenges faced by the refugees. Poor health condition came as a result of lack of finances, lack of food and poor sanitary conditions²¹. As reported by the refugees, poor health conditions for some of them was as a result for lack of food while old person with poor health condition received little or no attention. They also reported that they were stigmatized by hospital staff who constantly jeered at them in the hospital with statements like “these refugees and their wahalas” which means refugees and their troubles. Statements like these worked negatively on their psychology and made them feel inferior hence leading to stigmatization. The coping strategy here was that the refugees received financial assistance from NGOs, drugs from local pharmacies or from hospital.

With reference to education, several refugee children do not attend schools and this was attributed to lack of finance and the system of education. Most refugee’s complaint that, their lack of concern for education was as a result of the poor educational curriculum which they considered as low standard because they had attained superior classes in Cameroon plus the fact that the subjects were different and that they faced difficulties in understanding the teachers. Others maintained that their children could not cover the long distance from the refugee camp to school while others said, they did not receive the 19,000 Naira subvention given to them by the UNHCR to cater for their children needs at the beginning of every academic year. Most of the refugees at the Okende refugee camp complaint of poor classrooms with of lack desks, boards, and that most classes and those classrooms constructed by UNHCR in Adagom 1 and Okende communities have just few desks which made the learning process difficult for the pupils.²² Hence, some of these refugees coped with the prevailing situation by teaching their

²⁰ Ojong, Aldolf. Refugee, Okende, Refugee Camp, 16 August, 2019.

²¹ Mbu, Ebot Beltha. Hygien Promoter, Ogoja Refugee Camp, 14 August, 2019.

²² Fedelis Asam. Refugee, Adagom 1 Refugee Camp, 16 August 2019.

children at home while others prefer their children to stay at home.

Inside view of a class at the Okende Primary School for Refugees



Source : Field work by researcher, 2019.

Most refugees in the camp lived in abject poverty because jobs in the area were occupied by the indigenes of the host community. About ninety percent of the refugees were unskilled and less educated for the types of jobs that were available in the area. Also considering the fact that they were refugees, they were being exploited by the host community because even those who were offered menial jobs were not well paid and some were not even compensated for the services they rendered to the businessmen in the area. Life became unbearable and so frustrating for some refugees who revealed that it would have been preferable for them to die in their country than escaping to Nigeria. Some of them complaint of the lack of electricity but this problem was common in the area because even the local inhabitants did not have constant supply of electricity.

Insecurity in the Camps was constantly perpetrated by the Boki and Akwaya people who hardly agreed to live in the same

rooms and most especially disputed during food sharing and appointment of administrative posts in the Camps. One of such confrontations led to the destruction of some shelters, several refugees were injured, stores were damaged while others loss some valuable items. This disagreement and tribalism between these two tribes influenced high level of insecurity in the camps. Some refugees' complaint of not having enough shelter to live with their families. Most of them were lodged in the refugee camps which had very few rooms and beds. The refugees slept on the floor, mats, while others shared their rooms with persons who were not their family members in overcrowded rooms. Refugees that were not registered slept in an open space under cold and mosquitoes infested areas because one of the clauses of the refugee status maintained that shelter should not be given to non-registered refugees. Overcrowded rooms resulted to high level of theft, infighting between the refugees which at times resulted to serious injuries.

Shelter for Unregistered Refugees at the Adagom Refugee Camp



Source : Field work by researcher, 2019.

Refugees also complained that a major challenge was the lack of good toilet facilities in the camps. One of the refugees said

“due to the shallow nature of the pit toilets, maggots entered our houses after heavy rain fall”²³. As a result, some refugees stool in buckets and emptied in the toilets to avoid being infected from the pit toilets and others erected blockage to stop maggots from flowing out during heavy rains. Notwithstanding, several illnesses were registered as a result of poor hygienic conditions. Couple with poor hygienic conditions which mostly affected women and young girls, gender discrimination was another challenge that affected women and young girls. Women and young girls reported cases of rape and sexual assault from men in the camps and the host communities.

Many refugee’s complaint of high level of corruption in the camps. Some refugees maintained that, “most people who hold post of authority in the camps were from Akwaya because they constitute the majority and thus dominate other villages. The minority population from the Boki, Ndian and Upper Bayang did not benefit fully when food items were distributed to those leaders to share because they favor their native people.”²⁴ Refugees from villages with lesser population were marginalized by the other tribes who exhibited power. It was also discovered that some officials from the Government and NGOs refused to distribute some items donated to the refugees. Some workers transported the items to their houses to consume with their families while others sold them to the refugees and to the host communities. Some workers maintained that, moneys allocated to the refugees by UNHCR for the months of June and July 2019 were not disbursed to the refugees in spite of their deplorable conditions.²⁵

Conclusion

This study on trans-border migrations and humanitarian challenges faced by Cameroonian Refugees in Ogoja Refugee Camps Nigeria was an attempt to assess the life of the refugees in the Camps. Several humanitarian organizations maintained that, a major reason for the high prevalence of humanitarian crisis in Ogoja Refugee Camp was the late intervention of UNHCR which

²³ Sarah Enu. Refugee, Adagom1 Refugee Camp, August 14 2019.

²⁴ Frida Oben. Refugee, Okende Refugee Camp. 12 August 2019.

²⁵ Jannet, Adaku, Field Officer, REMA CARE, Adagom 1 Refugee Camp, 14 August, 2019.

is the main agency of the United Nations in Refugee issues. -- Before the UNHCR came to the refugee sites, accommodation was already provided by the Nigerian Government. Also, Refugees had already gone through much stress like, lack of shelters, insufficient food and lack of medical attention. This accounted for the high prevalence of humanitarian crisis in these camps. UNHCR Officials only came months later when some refugees had already settled in Adagom and Okende Camps.

After the migration of Cameroonian Refugees to Nigeria in 2017, they adjusted to their new environment and hoped the situation at the camp will change though their rights to own landed properties and access to some other amenities were lost through their status as refugees. Refugee hood in itself threatens self-sufficiency of refugees, since they left behind most of their assets and many had limited access to livestock's, jobs and other sources of living in the camps. These challenges forced refugees to take up new roles including adapting to the new circumstances they faced in the camps. Therefore, this study represents an attempt to understand the livelihood and daily struggle among these refugees and how their challenges could be solved through absorbing some of the recommendations listed below in dealing with the problems of refugees.

The study recommends that, agencies dealing with refugees should endeavor to empower refugees economically, socially and materially by training them in income generating activities. Professionally qualified refugees could be considered to work with the agencies and be granted work permit to supplement what the camps lack in terms of specialized human resources. This would make the refugees self-reliant and stop the culture and dependency syndrome. There is urgent need to address the issue of training as a priority in order to keep the youth gainfully employed so that they cannot be lured into criminal acts. Concerning the lack of shelter, food, security, water and health benefits, the UNHCR and other stakeholders not leaving out the host country should try as much as possible to provide all these to the refugees either registered or not registered rather than leaving some people to sleep in the cold because they were not registered or leaving people to die of hunger while foodstuffs get spoiled in the warehouse. Registration or identification can always come later.

The Nigerian Government and the Ogoja local community government should oblige the natives of the Adagom and the Okende communities where several refugees settled to allow the refugees make use of their streams and rivers since they suffered from water shortage from the boreholes. They should also allow the refugees to cultivate crops from their bushes and cut down some non-economic trees as firewood since most refugees could not afford gas cookers hence, they faced difficulty in preparing their food. Also, NGOs in charge of the distribution of monthly CBI (7200 Naira) should make sure that at the end of each month, they should endeavor to give out these allowances to the refugees and also to increase this allowance since most of the refugee's complaint that the CBI of 7,200 Naira could not sustain them for a month due to the high demands of their needs. Concerning the stigmatization suffered by some the refugees in the Hospitals during treatment, the UNHCR should sensitize some of the hospitals staff on their actions and their negative effects on the psychology of the refugees.

Despite the fact that these refugees devised mechanism to cope with the challenges in the Ogoja refugee camps, most of these mechanisms however were short term in addressing the numerous challenges they faced. Hence, there is need for knowledge and skill that have a long-term effect whilst aiding refugees to overcome some of these challenges. Finally, the various stakeholders should have a consultative forum to ventilate very seriously on why the legal framework for Refugee Status in both local and international laws are very wanting in implementation. The refugees host country and refugees related organizations should come together in consultative forums and address the challenges faced by the refugees.

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